



Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality

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The concept of camp has never been easy to define. Derived from the French verb *camper*, "to pose," it has been variously interpreted as a style that favors exaggeration, an ironic attitude toward the cultural mainstream, and a form of aestheticism that celebrates artifice over beauty. At the same time, camp has been long associated with homosexual culture, or at least with a self-conscious eroticism that questions traditional gender constructions.

The sixteen essays on camp included in this book explore further the relationship between style and homosexuality, showing how camp has made its way into every aspect of our cultural lives: theater, popular music, opera, film, and literature. Beginning with an overview of what camp is, where it came from, and how it operates, the chapter addresses topics ranging from the "high camp" of Whitman and Proust to the "low camp" of drag queen culture and gay fanzines. Together they carry forward a conversation that began more than twenty-five years ago, before Stonewall and AIDS, when Susan Sontag published her memorable "Notes on Camp."

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