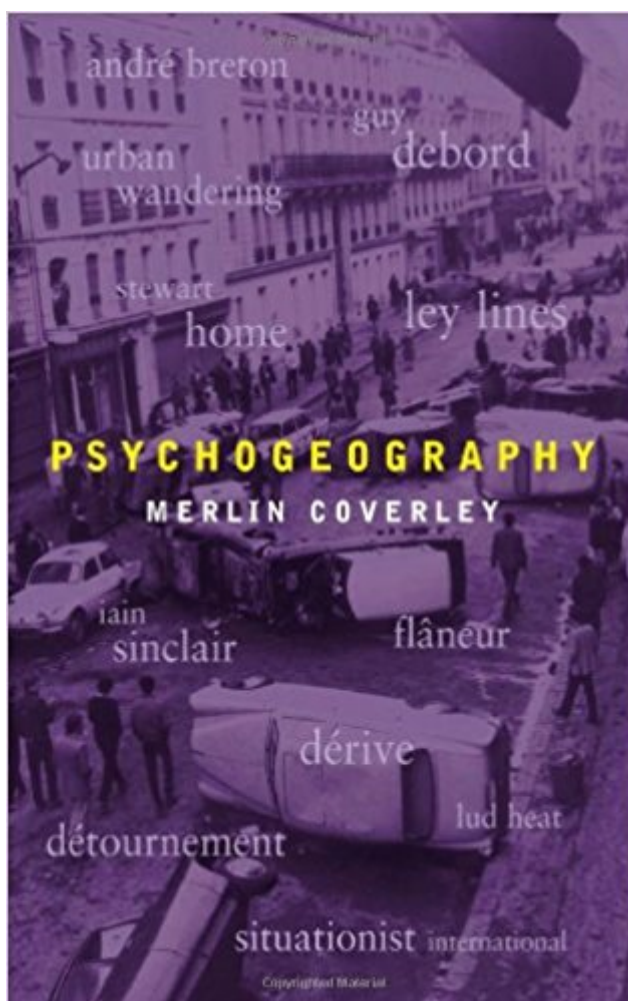


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Psychogeography (Pocket Essential Series)



Synopsis

The term "psychogeography" is used to illustrate a bewildering array of ideas, from ley lines and the occult to urban walking and political radicalism; where does it come from and what exactly does it mean? Psychogeography is the point where psychology and geography meet in assessing the emotional and behavioral impact of urban space. The relationship between a city and its inhabitants is measured firstly through an imaginative and literary response, secondly on foot through walking the city. This creates a tradition of the writer as walker and has both a literary and a political component. This guide examines the origins of psychogeography in the Situationist Movement of the 1950s, exploring the theoretical background and its political applications as well as the work of early practitioners such as Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem. Elsewhere, psychogeographic ideas continue to find retrospective validation in much earlier traditions from the visionary writing of William Blake and Thomas De Quincey to the rise of the flâneur on the streets of 19th century Paris and on through the avant-garde experimentation of the Surrealists. These precursors are discussed here alongside their modern counterparts, for today these ideas hold greater currency than ever through the popularity of writers and filmmakers such as Iain Sinclair and Peter Ackroyd, Stewart Home and Patrick Keiller. This guide offers both an explanation and definition of the terms involved, an analysis of the key figures and their work, and practical information on psychogeographical groups and organizations.

Book Information

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General

Customer Reviews

"This little book does exactly what an introduction should; it examines, explains, and whets the appetite . . . a short, but valuable, book." •Sunday Telegraph

Merlin Coverley is the author of London Writing, Occult London, and Utopia.

The first half of this book is a tedious read but do not give up Coverley makes very valid points during later half about how Psychogeography has evolved. The website addresses at the end of the book are definitely worth investigating, a few are dead ends while others are informal and yet some are quiet humorous.

This book presents itself as a starting point for readers to learn about psychogeography. The crux is that most people who even know the word psychogeography are already going to know enough that the material in this book will seem redundant. The information is on a very basic level, and primarily the book reads like an annotated bibliography of works touching on psychogeography than any kind of sustained argument. I suppose this bibliographic feel may derive from the fact that the author is a "bookseller" (as described on the jacket) and perhaps more used to viewing books as catalogue items. At any rate, the chapters are repetitive and the information is far too basic. Add to the simplicity a habit of annoying breeziness in the prose and the book becomes slightly more disappointing. For instance, in discussing Michel de Certeau, readers are treated to such outstanding insights as: "Upholding the finest traditions of contemporary French theory, de Certeau's comments display an utter disregard for clarity, instead favouring an approach that ensures his work a place within the burgeoning ranks of the unread." Ahem. Such dismissiveness really injures the author's credibility as an authority to introduce this subject at all. Overall, this book was a waste of money, save for one thing: a somewhat useful list of web addresses for resources relating to psychogeography. However, be warned that many of the addresses are already out of date, so just Googling may turn up better results than relying on this bibliography.

I am studying psychogeography for my MA. This book is a brilliant starting point. It is stimulating and well written.

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