



London Underground: A Cultural Geography

David Ashford

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In *London Underground: A Cultural Geography*, David Ashford sets out to chart one of the strangest, as well as the most familiar, spaces in London. This book provides a theoretical account of the evolution of an archetypal modern environment. The first to complete that slow process of estrangement from the natural topography initiated by the Industrial Revolution, the London Underground is shown to be what French anthropologist Marc Augé has termed non-lieu - a non-place, like motorway, supermarket or airport lounge, compelled to interpret its relationship to the invisible landscape it traverses through the medium of signs and maps. Surveying an unusually wide variety of material, ranging from the Victorian triple-decker novel, to Modernist art and architecture, to Pop music and graffiti, this cultural geography suggests that the tube-network is a transitional form, linking the alienated spaces of Victorian England to the virtual spaces of our contemporary consumer-capitalism. Recounting the history of the production of this new space, and of the struggles it has generated, *London Underground* is nothing less than the story of how people have attempted to make a home in the psychopathological spaces of the modern world.

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