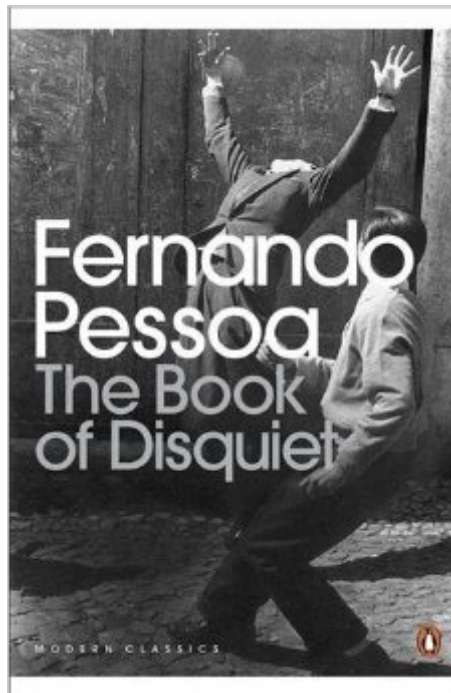


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The Book Of Disquiet (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Fernando Pessoa was many writers in one. He attributed his prolific writings to a wide range of alternate selves, each of which had a distinct biography, ideology, and horoscope. When he died in 1935, Pessoa left behind a trunk filled with unfinished and unpublished writings, among which were the remarkable pages that make up his posthumous masterpiece, *The Book of Disquiet*, an astonishing work that, in George Steiner's words, "gives to Lisbon the haunting spell of Joyce's Dublin or Kafka's Prague." Published for the first time some fifty years after his death, this unique collection of short, aphoristic paragraphs comprises the "autobiography" of Bernardo Soares, one of Pessoa's alternate selves. Part intimate diary, part prose poetry, part descriptive narrative, captivatingly translated by Richard Zenith, *The Book of Disquiet* is one of the greatest works of the twentieth century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Book of Disquiet is one of those great books that isn't for the great majority of people.

Basically a collection of fragments written over the good part of a lifetime and attributed to one of Pessoa's literary alter-egos Bernardo Soares, **Disquiet** was assembled and translated by editor Richard Zenith from a legendary trunkful of unpublished texts discovered after Pessoa's death. These semi-autobiographical reflections are dominated by an all-pervading world-weariness and negation of ordinary life--a book of disgust, as it were--saved from out and out nihilism only by a sort of idealistic solipsism--a perverse counter-celebration of dream, inertia, solitude, impotence,

and failure. From this unlikely recipe, Pessoa manages to distill a formula for taking a morbidly decadent pleasure from a total rejection of the bleak facts of human existence just this side of suicide! The short texts that make up *The Book of Disquiet* range from philosophical speculations to surrealistic prose poems, from misanthropic diatribes worthy of Dostoyevsky's "underground man," to daily diary entries that reflect on a wide-range of everyday subjects. The result is an exhaustive if uneven and often repetitive text, although through no fault of Pessoa's inasmuch as putting together a finished book from these fragments was a project that eluded him in his shortened life. As an editor, what Zenith has done here--for better and for worse--is give us a text almost scholarly in its completeness. As such, there is a great deal of redundancy in this edition of *Disquiet.* It's hard to imagine that Pessoa wouldn't have cut and shaped a finished version differently.

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