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Operators that map convex bodies to star bodies and are $GL(n)$ covariant play an important role in the geometry of convex bodies. The standard example, the intersection body operator, is defined using the Radon transform and is a valuation (that is, an additive function) with respect to radial addition. We classify all $GL(n)$ covariant L_p radial valuations on convex bodies and show that for $0 < p < 1$ there is a unique non-trivial such valuation with centrally symmetric images. This establishes a characterization of L_p intersection bodies. Important inequalities and open problems connected with these operators are discussed. (Received September 19, 2006)