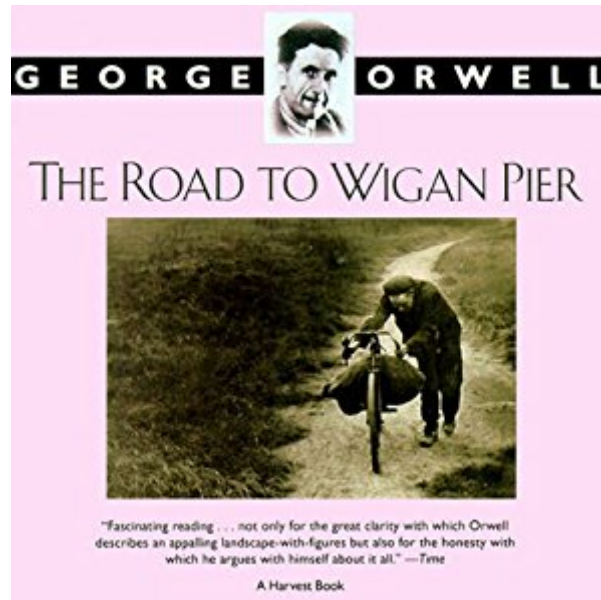




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The Road To Wigan Pier



Synopsis

In the 1930s Orwell was sent by a socialist book club to investigate the appalling mass unemployment in the industrial north of England. He went beyond his assignment to investigate the employed as well - to see the most typical section of the English working class. • Foreword by Victor Gollancz. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Absolutely brilliant. Both the outward-looking description of miners' lives and the introspection into Orwell's convictions are a first-rate read. The lyricism of the first part is complemented by a ruthless rationality and honesty about himself in the second. While his views on some specific economic and political issues may be controverted, especially in hindsight, the hope and depth of his commitment to democracy, justice and liberty shines through in the end. His analysis of the roots of fascism will surprise many readers.

An amazing set of ethnographic views of coal mining in NE England, set in the context of dire social conditions - low pay, poor housing, and none of the 'fringe benefits' we know today. Orwell wrote from the perspective of a 'participant observer'. Yet it is resonant of today's concerns about the effects of poverty on people's lives, everyday living and dreams. The second section is a useful overview of social politics, class divides, and ideologies of Socialism, Fascism, and Communism as

Orwell thought through, and clearly expressed his thinking. All for the 1930s, yet so pertinent to remind us 80 years later.

Mr. Orwell was an excellent writer. He went on a tour to find out about the lives of the coal miners and others. Reading this book it is easy to figure out how and why the Labor party evolved in England. Poor people were really trapped in their caste. No way out. After this book read *Black Diamonds*. We in America are blessed that the caste system was not brought to our country. The Declaration of Independence says we were all created equal, and no caste system found a place here, and for that we must give thanks.

I have just finished reading *The Road to Wigan Pier* and I have to admit that I did not enjoy it as much as I thought that I would. *While Down and Out in Paris and London* is darkly ironic and insightful (and, to a lesser extent, I have had similar experiences in my own life and share a similar feeling about them), the first part of TRWP -- the account of working and living conditions in Yorkshire and Lancashire towns in the 1930s -- is frankly bleak and historically interesting, but it is impossible to enjoy reading this part, and I find the second part -- the rant against socialists of his time -- to be too bitter and, to be quite honest, so unfair that it is more revealing of Orwell's snobbery and disillusionment than anything else. The second part is really all about Orwell's angst about his middle-class upbringing and I did not think that it did the first part any justice. I would have liked to have read more about what Orwell thought socialism should be, rather than his vague appeals to justice and decency, and his tirade against middle class prigs, parlour house Bolsheviks, and socialist intellectuals. Even though his complaints had some truth to them, I found myself agreeing with the rebuttal by Victor Gollancz -- the Left Book Club's editor --, which was printed as a preface, even though, with the benefit of hindsight, Orwell's comments about the Soviet Union were more insightful than the editor realized (though, given the preface was written in 1937, the editor should have had a little more hindsight than he did!). Having said that, it is important to remember that Orwell was going through something of a crisis of conscience at this point in his life and he was so deeply concerned with the failure of socialism and the rise of fascism that, by the time the book was published in 1937, he had already left to join up with the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. I think that this book shows the frustration and personal conflicts that had risen to a head in Orwell's life, and his experiences of northern industrial towns was the last straw. I think that his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, even though they deepened his disillusionment and confirmed all his suspicions about the Soviet Union and the Comintern, as well as confirming his fears about the

rise of fascism, helped him very much in dealing with his personal conflicts and his crisis of conscience. This is why his next book, *Homage to Catalonia* is, like *Down and Out in Paris & London*, darkly ironic, insightful, and, while clearly accounting tragedy and betrayal, is full of the 'warts and all' modesty and decency that I very much admire in Orwell's writings.

It's hard to speak truth, whether to power or to consensus and norms. Orwell struggles to find a voice against cant, and he always struggles to penetrate the fog of conformist thought and comfortable assumptions. This is a remarkable book of objective description as well as of rhetoric. The description of the life of coal miners is part of a timeless series of such. Wonderful book.

Perfect/

Terrible print-on-demand copy! No page numbers & numerous errors in text.

Some views of life never change and George Orwell could see the future better than anybody; some of it has long been with us, but it is scary to see how much more is still to come maybe!

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