

Review of: "'The Unavoidable Order of Things': Fabricated Resistance in George Orwell's 1984"

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I am taken with the postmodern implications of this article, which argues that the entire trajectory of Winston Smith's life is predetermined and stage-managed by other characters, as well as by the base fact of his literary constructedness. In suggesting that Winston might be facing another cycle of thoughtcrime and re-making, it also raises the possibility that he has been through the whole process before. This is a convincing explanation for the "lost" years of his life that the author identifies.

The discussion surrounding the fabrication of Winston's childhood memory could be more robust. That Winston's mortal fear could stem from seeing his baby sister's remains defiled by rats makes a lot of sense, but it is unclear whether the author thinks that this did or didn't "really" happen.

The article's main contribution appears to be in reconciling the 'supernatural' and 'realist' schools of thought surrounding O'Brien's ability to read Winston's mind and the inevitability of his demise. A mechanism is proposed that works on its own terms, and allows for the innovative suggestion that Winston is engaged in doublethink as he colludes in the undoing of his own rebellion. At the same time, highlighting the lacunae in Wilson's timeline leaves space for more mystic and conceptual possibilities regarding the history and potential repetition of Winston's catastrophe.