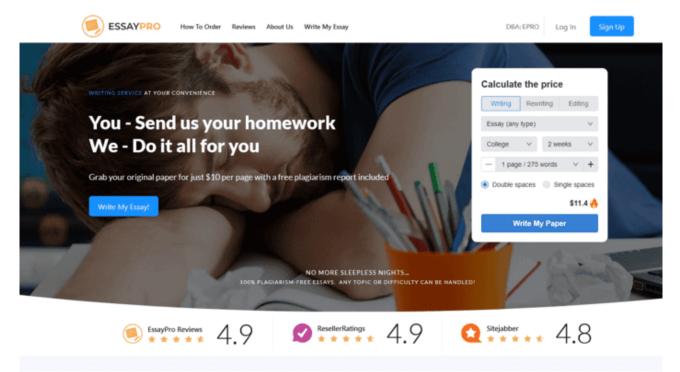
State Defined Reality in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four (1984)



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State Defined Reality in George Orwell's 1984

Reality can have a more fluid and complicated definition than we might realize. Instead of being a concrete ability to see 'black-and-white' differences between ideas and basing beliefs on outside evidence, a person's conception of reality might accommodate contradicting beliefs, reject and ignore truth when convenient, or embrace concepts seemingly preposterous in a 'sane' world. A postmodern work of fiction allows for the shifting and changing of reality, thus giving the audience an alternate reality to compare to the perceived reality outside the work. To this end, postmodernism employs the simulacrum to blot out reality and insert a fabricated concept in its place. In a passage involving Winston and O'Brien from George <u>Orwell</u>'s 1984, we witness part of the process of such a replacement of a simulacra-filled world for conventional reality. Winston's forced acceptance of the simulacra in place of reality by the Party's simulacra in 1984 illustrates the flexibility of reality in the use of creating simulacra to support the apparently illogical, contradictory world of Big Brother ideology.

Before examining the replacement of reality with the simulacrum, one might first examine the idea of reality itself. "Reality", as explained by Orwell's 1984 character O'Brien, "exists within the human mind, and nowhere else" (Orwell 205). What the human mind sees, it absorbs as truth. The novel's protagonist, Winston, believes "that reality is something objective, external, existing in its own right...that the nature of reality is self-evident" (Orwell 205). He sees reality as b...

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...rotherhood by uncovering thoughtcriminals (those guilty of thinking differently, against the Party's doctrine). As seen in the example made of Winston, the Party cannot allow anyone to perceive only the external reality because such perceptions threaten the power of the Party. The simulacra offered by the Party, however, can be accepted using doublethink, thereby eliminating the struggle between external reality, "existing in its own right," and the simulacrum, existing "in the human mind, and no where else" (Orwell 205).

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