



Reality, Imagination and Possible Worlds in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World"

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Abstract

The present paper attempts to apply Marie-Laure Ryan's theory of "Possible Worlds," as a branch of Cognitive Poetics, to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's short story, *The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World* (1968), to show how characters' different treatments of the world define and move the narrative structure of these stories forward. The aim of this study is thus to look into how the characters in Marquez's story define different types of alternative possible worlds, such as Knowledge worlds, Prospective Extensions of Knowledge worlds, Intention worlds, Obligation worlds, Wish worlds, and Fantasy Universes. This reading also hopes to examine what Ryan calls "the textual actual world," and pursue the internal conflicts between the actual world of the text and the private worlds of the different characters as a means of showing how reality and imagination stands as two incompatible worlds in modern society. The paper finally concludes in determining these worlds' interactions and their conflicts, and how they make possible the plot development and, in Ryan's terms, its "tellability." **Keywords:** "reality," "imagination," "possible worlds," "Gabriel Garcia Marquez," "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World," "tellability"