



Possible Worlds in Jack London's "The Call of the Wild"

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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 Jack London's master piece, *The Call of the Wild* (1903), to show how characters' different treatments of the world define and move the narrative structure of the story forward. The aim of this study is thus to look into how the characters, mainly Buck, in London's novel 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. 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: "Marie-Laure Ryan," "possible worlds," "Jack London," "The Call of the Wild," "tellability"