

Possible Worlds, Frozen Realities: Constructing Fictional Space in Jack Frost

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Abstract

Children's crossover fantasy fiction, i.e. literary texts written for children but equally appealing to adults, has increasingly been recognized as a site of sophisticated narrative strategies and thematic depth (Falconer, 2008). This study explores Joyce's *Jack Frost* through a dual framework of **cognitive stylistics** (Semino & Culpeper, 2002; Stockwell, 2002) and **Possible Worlds Theory** (Doležel, 1998; Ryan, 1991), thus providing comprehensive analysis that bridges linguistic theory and literary interpretation. Cognitive stylistics highlights the role of **conceptual metaphor, deixis, schema activation, and conceptual blending**, while Possible Worlds Theory accounts for accessibility relations, private worlds, and conflicts. The analysis of five extracts demonstrates that universal themes such as friendship, sacrifice, identity, and the struggle between good and evil are not treated as abstract concepts but are uniquely **linguistically embodied** through stylistic features that make them cognitively vivid to readers. In doing so, the study shows that *Jack Frost*'s unique contribution to the genre of crossover fantasy fiction relies on stylistic embodiment and linguistic immediacy, which transform universal motifs into text-specific experiences. The study argues that combining Possible Worlds Theory and cognitive stylistics provides a fuller account of crossover fantasy fiction, illustrating how Joyce's *Jack Frost* achieves both structural richness and cognitive accessibility.

Key Words

Cognitive Stylistics, Possible Worlds Theory, Conflict, Private Worlds, Narrative Points

المستخلص

لقد حظيت روايات الفانتازيا العبوريّة للأطفال — أي النصوص الأدبية الموجهة للأطفال ولكنها تجذب الكبار بالقدر نفسه — باهتمام متزايد باعتبارها مجالاً يستعرض استراتيجيات سردية متقدمة وعمقاً موضوعياً. (Falconer, 2008) تستكشف هذه الدراسة رواية *Jack Frost* لجويس من خلال إطار مزدوج يجمع بين الأسلوبيات الإدراكية (Doležel, 2002; Semino & Culpeper, 2002; Stockwell, 2002) ونظرية العوالم الممكنة (Doležel, 1991; Ryan, 1998)، بما يقدّم تحليلاً شاملاً يربط بين النظرية اللغوية والتفسير الأدبي. تسلّط الأسلوبيات الإدراكية الضوء على دور الاستعارة المفهومية، والموضوعة (deixis)، وتنشيط المخططات الذهنية، والدمج المفهومي، بينما تفسّر نظرية العوالم الممكنة علاقات الإتاحة، والعوالم الخاصة، والصراعات. يبيّن تحليل خمسة مقاطع أن الموضوعات الإنسانية العالمية مثل الصداقة، والتضحية، والهوية، والصراع بين الخير والشر لا تُقدّم بوصفها مفاهيم مجردة، بل تُجسّد لغوياً عبر سمات أسلوبية تجعلها حيّة إدراكياً لدى القراء. ومن خلال ذلك، تُظهر الدراسة أن الإسهام المميّز لرواية *Jack Frost* في أدب الفانتازيا العبوريّة يعتمد على التجسيد الأسلوبى والفورية اللغوية، اللذين يحوّلان الموضوعات الكونية إلى تجارب مخصصة بالنص. وتجادل الدراسة بأن الجمع بين نظرية العوالم الممكنة والأسلوبيات الإدراكية يقدّم تفسيراً أكمل لأدب الفانتازيا العبوريّة، موضحةً كيف يحقق نص جويس *Jack Frost* ثراءً بنيوياً وسهولة إدراكية في آن واحد.

الكلمات المفتاحية

الأسلوبيات الإدراكية، نظرية العوالم الممكنة، الصراع، العوالم الخاصة، المنظورات السردية

1. Introduction

The term *Children's Literature* refers both to a body of texts and to an academic discipline; however, it has often been regarded as something of an oxymoron (Nikolajeva, 1996). As Nel and Paul (2011) argue, the term carries several practical and theoretical limitations, which is why expressions such as *books for children* or *children's fiction* are frequently used as alternatives (p. 42). For much of its history, children's literature has been considered less serious or legitimate than mainstream literary works, but it has increasingly been recognized as a significant field of scholarly inquiry (Hunt, 1994).

Godfriend (2011) points out a frequently appearing theme in children's books: while families may be flawed, they remain an emotional backbone for their children. She argues that children's books often avoid depicting direct hatred of family members, instead using figures such as stepmothers to externalize conflict (p. 5). This reflects a broader tendency for children's literature to balance realism with imaginative displacement (Nikolajeva, 2002; Stephens, 1992).

Within the broader field, crossover fantasy has emerged as a pivotal genre, appealing simultaneously to children and adults (Beckett, 2009; Falconer, 2008). According to Falconer (2008), the *crossover novel* has emerged as a distinctive form that bridges the gap between children's and adult fiction by embedding sophisticated themes within fantastical narratives. Beckett (2009) similarly emphasizes that the wide appeal of fantasy is due to its ability to layer philosophical subtexts with adventure, thereby engaging diverse readerships. According to Nikolajeva (2010), crossover fantasy texts tend to incorporate metafictional elements, moral ambiguity, or unreliable narration that require more sophisticated reading capabilities and thus appeal to adult readers, without repelling younger readers. Such multi-level structuring enables cognitive engagement across different age groups, making crossover fiction a rich source for cognitive stylistic analysis.

Like other prominent crossover fantasies such as J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* (1997–2007), Joyce's (2015) *Jack Frost* engages with universal themes of friendship, sacrifice, identity, and the battle between good and evil (Falconer, 2008; Levy & Mendlesohn, 2016). For example, while Rowling's *Harry Potter* often frames sacrifice through explicit moral dialogue (Nikolajeva, 2010), Lewis's *Narnia* encodes betrayal and identity within a theological allegory (Stephens, 1992; Manlove, 1993). In Joyce's *Jack Frost*, however, these motifs are not treated as abstract universals but are linguistically realized through stylistic choices. That is, sacrifice is symbolized in the loss of Jack's bright uniform, good versus evil is polarized through metaphors of light and darkness, identity is externalized in the imagery of coldness and snow, and guardianship is anchored in parallel vows. This focus on cognitive stylistic encoding situates *Jack Frost* as a distinctive contribution to the genre of crossover fantasy fiction.

Furthermore, crossover fantasy fiction relies heavily on fantasy motifs and tropes, such as quests, magical environments, legendary creatures, and parallel worlds, which often intertwine with psychological depth and realism (Beckett, 2009). Additionally, the genre's transmedia presence, through adaptations into film, games, and merchandise, further demonstrates its cross-generational significance (Falconer, 2008). Yet its appeal depends not only on content but also on its cultural significance, i.e. through dual marketing strategies, bestseller status, or critical acclaim (Falconer, 2008; Beckett, 2009).

To sum up, dual address, layered narrative structures, and the integration of universal themes are hallmarks of crossover fantasy, reinforcing its scholarly importance. This study analyzes Joyce's *Jack Frost* from a dual theoretical perspective: Possible Worlds Theory (Ryan, 1991; Doležel, 1998) provides a framework for understanding the construction of layered fictional domains, while cognitive stylistics (Semino, 1997; Stockwell, 2002) highlights the linguistic cues—metaphor, deixis, schema activation, and

conceptual blending—that shape readerly engagement. By combining these approaches, the analysis demonstrates how *Jack Frost* constructs fictional realities that are both cognitively rich and emotionally resonant, situating Joyce’s work within the broader tradition of crossover fantasy fiction.

2. Possible Worlds Theory

Possible Worlds Theory (PWT) has been widely adopted in literary studies to explain the construction and interpretation of fictional worlds. Scholars such as Ronen (1994), Doležel (1998), and Semino (1997) point out that fictional worlds differ from logical possible worlds in being incomplete, inconsistent, and dependent on readers’ knowledge of the actual world. Fictional worlds are accessed and reconstructed by readers through interpretive cues provided by the text, following the “principle of minimal departure” (Ryan, 1980, p. 406). That is, readers assume maximum similarity between their own world and the fictional world (Ryan, 1980). Such interaction between textual gaps and reader inference makes PWT particularly useful for analyzing fantasy, where departures from real-world logic are essential.

Doležel (1998) emphasizes that fictional worlds are artistic constructs, which are incomplete, yet coherent within their narrative logic and parasitic on the actual world. Semino (1997) extends this argument by stressing that this parasitic relationship is not a weakness but a defining feature, enabling fiction to manipulate real-world logic while remaining interpretable. In contrast to logically possible worlds, fictional worlds are marked by gaps and contradictions (Fort, 2006). They typically feature fantastical entities that are radically different from real-world entities (Doležel, 1998; Ibrahim, 2010; Semino, 1997). PWT, thus, offers a framework for exploring how texts balance familiarity with imaginative creation.

Fictional worlds also vary in structural complexity. Doležel (1989, 1998) distinguishes between homogeneous worlds, such as fairy tales, where natural and supernatural laws align, and heterogeneous or dyadic worlds, such as myth, where natural and supernatural realms coexist. This complexity supports multi-layered interpretation and enhances the cognitive and thematic richness of a narrative.

The concept of accessibility discussed by Ryan (1991) is significant in analyzing the internal logic of fictional worlds. She claims that fictional narratives often comprise many co-existing sub-worlds, such as the private worlds of the characters, each having its own modal and epistemic limitations and rules. Again, the interaction of these sub-worlds adds greater narrative richness and contributes to the complexity of themes. Thus, Ryan (1991) expands the use of PWT by proposing a typology of fictional worlds based on accessibility, modality, and internal consistency. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of narrative structure, especially in genres like crossover fantasy, where various ontological domains can co-exist or conflict with one another.

2.1 The Notion of Accessibility

Ryan (1991) proposes a model of accessibility relations to explain how fictional worlds resemble or diverge from the actual world. These accessibility relations indicate to what extent fictional worlds can align with or deviate from the actual world (i.e. realism vs. fantasy), thus shaping readers' expectations (Semino, 1997; Ibrahim, 2010).

It follows that a fictional world may appear accessible when it shares these features with the actual world, and inaccessible when such conditions are violated (Ryan, 1991; Doležel, 1998). For instance, fantasy narratives often break physical or taxonomic compatibility (e.g., magical powers, talking animals), while

maintaining partial continuity with the real world in chronology or cultural schemas (Ryan, 1991; Eco, 1994). Thus, by identifying the conditions that are fulfilled or violated, Ryan's (1991) typology gives a precise template for how fictional worlds are cognitively processed and culturally framed, and for distinguishing between genres, such as realism, science fiction, and fantasy.

2.2 Characters' Private Worlds

Ryan (1991) also demonstrates that fictional texts construct not only a central "textual actual world" but also multiple satellite sub-worlds, reflecting the knowledge, intentions, obligations, and wishes of characters. According to Ryan (1991) and Doležal (1998), these Worlds are subdivisions within PWT that map different dimensions of narrative accessibility. I-Worlds refer to private or internal worlds (thoughts, desires, memory); O-Worlds to obligation worlds (duties and responsibilities); K-Worlds to knowledge worlds (what characters know or believe); W-Worlds to wish worlds (hopes and aspirations); and F-Worlds to the broader fictional universes in which magical beings, mythical settings, and taxonomic expansions are possible. Semino et al. (1999) later add **P-Worlds** (predictions) and **H-Worlds** (hypotheticals).

These Worlds provide a framework for analyzing how fictional domains overlap, conflict, or remain inaccessible (Ryan, 1991; Doležal, 1998; Bell, 2010). Together, these categories of sub-worlds demonstrate how characters navigate multiple fictional domains, and how conflicts arise when private worlds clash with one another or with the textual actual world. This typology is especially relevant for crossover fantasy fiction, where desire, duty, and imagination frequently conflict (Beckett, 2008; Falconer, 2008).

2.3 Literary Transduction and Intertextual Relationships

Doležel (1998) introduces the concept of literary transduction to describe the process by which fictional universes created in previous texts are reinterpreted and restructured in subsequent ones. Rather than examining those connections solely in terms of the traditional literary influence, he situates them within the broader framework of intertextuality (p. 199). He holds that literary works can be connected on two levels: the textual level (the language and stylistic composition of the narrative) and the level of fictional worlds (the conceptual world the narrative constructs).

For Doležel (1998) fictional worlds are not limited to an individual text; they may evolve across literary traditions, pass through periods of history, and traverse cultural boundaries. He argues that such worlds can be conveyed as "extensional entities", i.e. coherent structures that endure and develop across various narrative environments (p. 201). Doležel (1998) uses the term "literary transduction" (p. 202), covering both intensional (i.e. textual and stylistic) and extensional (i.e. fictional world-related) modes of transmission between literary works, to define both textual and world-level continuity. He identifies three modes of literary transduction: **transposition** (retelling in a new temporal or cultural setting), **expansion** (adding sequels, prequels, or backstories), and **displacement** (radical reinterpretation of a source world) (Doležel, 1998).

One particularly significant application of literary transduction is in postmodern fiction, where authors typically rework classical or canonical work in entirely new forms. Crossover fantasy fiction frequently employs literary transduction strategies by reworking myths and folktales (Zipes, 2006; Beckett, 2009). Joyce's *Jack Frost* exemplifies this process: it displaces earlier folkloric depictions of Jack as a mischievous winter spirit, and a personification of winter frost (Merriam Webster, n. d.) and expands the myth by embedding him in a cosmic struggle between light and darkness. Thus, crossover fantasy fiction both inherits and

transforms familiar cultural narratives, producing new fictional worlds that resonate with contemporary readers (Beckett, 2009; Falconer, 2008).

2.4 Narrative Points and Tellability

Ryan (1991) uses the term **narrative points** to describe the tacit structures that define the potential content of a story. Narrative points are classified into “external” and “internal” points (p. 151). External points represent the goal beyond storytelling, such as moral guidance or emotional impact. Internal points constitute the structural and thematic elements that give coherence to a narrative (Ryan, 1991).

Ryan (1991) lists four types of internal narrative points: static, dynamic, strategic, and substantial (p. 153). Static points confirm the expectations of the readers and characters, while dynamic points challenge such expectations through irony, surprise, or humor. Strategic points consist of narrative techniques, such as flashbacks, foreshadowing, or ambiguity which manipulate readers' expectations. Substantial points comprise motifs of a narrative, i.e. topics like love, death, power, threat, or mystery, which may appeal to readers due to their universal human relevance or cultural value (Ibrahim, 2010, p. 144).

Closely related to narrative points is Ryan's notion of **tellability**, which is the degree to which a story is worth telling (Ryan, 1991, 2001). Tellability depends on the richness of fictional space, the presence of conflict, and the universality of its themes. Narrative points can be seen as the mechanisms that produce tellability: external points explain *why* a story is told, while internal points show *how* it is organized to achieve narrative significance (Ryan, 1991). In *Jack Frost*, universal themes like friendship, sacrifice, and identity are rendered tellable through

linguistic and stylistic features such as oath-parallelism, metaphorical imagery, and narrative focalization.

2.5 Conflict

Ryan (1991) points out that conflict is indispensable for the diversification of a fictional world. She describes plot development as arising from "knots" (i.e. points of intersection between the narrative worlds rather than alignment), forcing characters to devise plans to resolve such tensions. However, such attempts often cause complications in the narrative world (p. 119). Eventually, without conflict, there is no plot development or purpose. Characters may pursue something they lack, resist existing realities, or must overcome obstacles, all of which serve to develop narrative tension and advance the storyline.

Ryan (1991) divides conflict in fiction into two types: primary and secondary. Primary conflict occurs when there is tension between the factual domain of the fictional world and the private worlds of the characters. She identifies three subtypes of primary conflict:

- a) **Conflict with the wish worlds:** This occurs when the characters desire to obtain something they lack. This drives quest stories, where the character executes plans for attaining what they aspire for.
- b) **Conflict with the obligation-worlds:** In this case, characters are faced with moral or societal constraints. The conflict can derive narrative arcs of transgression and punishment (e.g., violating rules followed by punishment), or success and reward (e.g., fulfillment of a mission or duty).
- c) **Conflict with the epistemic worlds:** This involves a mismatch between the factual domain and characters' knowledge of the world. Two narrative forms are at work: the error, which results from misinformation or deceit, and the enigma, where incomplete knowledge prompts investigation and discovery (Ryan, 1991, p. 123)

For the secondary conflict, Ryan (1991) presupposes the presence of a primary conflict and involves one of the following types:

1. **Intra-character conflict:** This happens when different private worlds within a single character are incompatible. For instance, fulfilling a personal desire (wish-world) may contradict an internal moral code (obligation-world).
2. **Conflict inside a character's private world:** In this type of conflict, an individual character's private world cannot be realized because of its logical inconsistency, resulting from mutually exclusive desires, for instance, thus making its realization impossible.
3. **Inter-character conflict:** This type of conflict arises when a character's private world can only be realized at the expense of another character's private world, thereby creating alliances or antagonisms, based on compatible or conflicting world views. (Ryan, 1991, p. 121-2).

Thus, primary conflicts typically generate quests, moral dilemmas, or enigmas, while secondary conflicts dramatize inner contradictions or interpersonal struggles (Ryan, 1991; Abbott, 2008).

Conflicts are also shaped by **power dynamics**, which dictate character relations and plot outcomes. Power, in a general sense, involves having the capacity to influence or determine the actions and decisions of others, and language plays a central role in this process (Fowler, 1985, p. 61). Power is also inherent in all relationships and may take multiple forms (Thomas, 1995). Thomas (1995) classifies power into: **legitimate power** (authority or social role), **referent power** (admiration), and **expert power** (specialized knowledge). El-Shazly (2006) adds **moral power**, a central feature of narratives of good vs. evil. In *Jack Frost*, these categories help explain the tensions between Jack's wish-worlds and obligation-worlds, and his moral battle with Pitch. By situating conflict within power dynamics, PWT highlights how narratives generate both plot movement and thematic depth.

In sum, PWT offers a robust framework for the analysis of the relationship between fictional worlds and the actual world. Such relationship can be assessed by employing Ryan's (1991) concept of accessibility relations, which describes the condition

under which fictional worlds can be seen as accessible or not, from the actual world. One of the strengths of PWT is its ability to account for impossibilities in fictional narratives, as well as the types of these impossibilities (Ryan, 1991; Doležel, 1998; Ryan, 2019). PWT also places significant emphasis on the internal logic of narratives, particularly the exploration of characters' private worlds and the conflicts that emerge within and between them (Ryan, 1991; Doležel, 1998; Ryan, 2019). Furthermore, the concept of literary transduction (Doležel, 1998) highlights how intertextual relationships are not only achieved at the textual level but also at the levels of fictional worlds, creating chains of succession and dialogue between literary texts over time and across cultures.

3. Cognitive Stylistics

Cognitive stylistics is an approach that combines insights from stylistics, linguistics, and cognitive science to explain how readers interpret and engage with literary texts (Stockwell, 2002; Semino & Culpeper, 2002). Cognitive stylistics focuses on the interaction between language, cognition, and imagination, assuming that reading is not a purely linguistic act, but a cognitive process shaped by embodied experience, real-world knowledge, and mental representation (Stockwell, 2002; Semino & Culpeper, 2002). Cognitive linguistics is particularly useful for analyzing crossover fantasy fiction, where readers are required to integrate impossible plots into coherent mental representations.

Several concepts from cognitive stylistics are central to this study. **Conceptual metaphor theory** (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010) shows how abstract ideas are understood through embodied domains, e.g. EVIL IS DARKNESS. **Deixis** refers to the linguistic markers, such as pronouns, temporal adverbs, and spatial expressions, which position readers into the fictional worlds, and within unfolding events (Semino, 1997; Stockwell, 2002). **Focalization**, traditionally defined in narratology as the

perspective through which events are filtered (Genette, 1980 /1972; Bal, 2009), is used in cognitive stylistics as the mechanism by which readers adopt and shift between viewpoints, aligning with characters' knowledge, emotions, and perceptions in constructing text-worlds (Semino, 1997; Stockwell, 2002). This makes focalization particularly useful when combined with PWT, since it describes how accessibility relations are not just abstract structures but are experienced through specific perspectives encoded in the text. **Schema theory** (Rumelhart, 1980; Semino, 1997) accounts for familiar cultural or narrative patterns, such as the *HERO VS. MONSTER* schema (Booker, 2004; Stephens, 1992), which guide readers' expectations and shape their interpretation of the narratives. Finally, **conceptual blending** (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) accounts for how dissimilar domains, such as natural phenomena and emotions, are merged in literature (e.g. moonlight functioning simultaneously as physical light and metaphorical memory in Joyce's text).

For the purposes of this study, cognitive stylistics complements Possible Worlds Theory (PWT) by highlighting the **linguistic and perspective cues** through which fictional worlds are made cognitively and emotionally accessible (Stockwell, 2002; Semino, 1997). While PWT accounts for the structural logic of domains, accessibility, and conflicts (Ryan, 1991; Doležel, 1998), cognitive stylistics shows how style—through metaphor, deixis, focalization, schema, and blending—guides readers in constructing and experiencing those worlds (Semino, 1997; Stockwell, 2002). This dual framework is particularly suited to crossover fantasy fiction, where impossible scenarios must be integrated into coherent mental models, and where narrative closure depends not only on structural resolution but also on embodied engagement with universal concerns such as friendship, sacrifice, identity, and guardianship (Nikolajeva, 2014).

4. Summary of *Jack Frost*

Before he became Jack Frost, the mischievous boy responsible for bringing winter and snow, he was Nightlight, loyal companion to MiM, the Man in the Moon. Nightlight was MiM's most trusted friend. Their world was, however, ruined by Pitch, the King of Nightmares, who sought to make MiM a prince of darkness to control the world. Amid the chaos, Pitch destroyed Nightlight, casting him down to earth. There, Nightlight was transformed and destined to remain a boy forever.

On Earth, the boy who would become Jack Frost soars through icy winds and rides the clouds, feeling a mix of freedom and isolation in his eternal childhood. To keep the cold emptiness in his heart from taking over, he spreads it to the landscapes around him and earns a new name, Jack Overland Frost. Jack met a lonely boy in a snowy landscape. He invites the boy to play but warns him to speak of warmth or spring. They race and play in the frozen landscape, bringing joy to the cold world. But when the boy mentions the coming of spring by mistake, Jack Frost disappears, as mysteriously as he had appeared.

However, on one night, MiM shines down and shows Jack a group of children in great need. Through helping them, Jack finds the warmth he has been yearning for and realizes that bringing joy to others can melt his own chill. Then he realizes that children will always need moments of bravery and joy. They will always need to build snowmen and play with snow to be eager for a spring day. This helps Jack realize the reason why he is a boy forever and why it is worthy to become a "Guardian of Childhood". In this story, Jack Frost and MiM are the main protagonists while Pitch is the main antagonist.

5. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative close-reading approach informed by a dual theoretical framework. The primary

foundation is Possible Worlds Theory (PWT) (Ryan, 1991; Doležal, 1998), which provides tools for analyzing the layered fictional domains in *Jack Frost*, including accessibility relations, characters' private worlds, and narrative conflicts. Complementing this, the study integrates cognitive stylistics (Stockwell, 2002; Semino, 1997), focusing on how Joyce's linguistic choices encode cognitive and emotional engagement. Specifically, the analysis draws on four cognitive stylistic mechanisms:

- **Conceptual Metaphor** (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010), such as EVIL IS DARKNESS;
- **Deixis** and **focalization** (Semino, 1997), which position readers in relation to narrative events;
- **Schema activation** (Rumelhart, 1980; Semino, 1997), including cultural and narrative schemas like the HERO VS MONSTER pattern;
- **Conceptual Blending** (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002), where natural phenomena and emotional states merge (e.g., moonlight as memory).

Five extracts from Joyce's *Jack Frost* were selected for analysis based on their centrality to the narrative arc (introduction, battle, aftermath, longing, and resolution). These extracts are examined to show how PWT explains the narrative architecture while cognitive stylistics illuminates the linguistic features that configure the fictional worlds. This combined approach ensures that the study addresses both the construction of fictional worlds and the cognitive stylistic embodiment of themes, offering a fuller account of Joyce's contribution to crossover fantasy fiction.

6. Analysis and Discussion

In *Jack Frost*, Joyce invites readers into a world where myth and memory intersect, framing Jack's transformation from Nightlight into guardian, through a series of conflicts and impossibilities. These impossibilities serve key cognitive and

narrative functions in *Jack Frost*. They diversify the fictional universe, which, according to Ryan (1991), is essential for conflict, plot development, and narrative tellability. By allowing the fictional world to deviate from actual-world logic, the story enables themes of loss, purpose, imagination, and childhood wonder to flourish. In Doležal's (1998) terms, the fictional world of *Jack Frost* is not just a fictional possibility but "poetic act" (p.489), blending myth, memory, and morality. As such, PWT offers a useful tool for analyzing the ways in which Jack Frost negotiates and rationalizes its impossibilities.

This section combines Possible Worlds Theory (PWT) with cognitive stylistics to examine how the text negotiates physical, taxonomic, and temporal impossibilities while anchoring universal themes such as friendship, sacrifice, identity, and guardianship. PWT highlights how accessibility relations and conflicts across fictional domains structure the narrative, while cognitive stylistics draws attention to the stylistic mechanisms—metaphor, deixis, schema, and conceptual blending—through which readers experience those worlds. Each extract shows how Joyce builds thematic depth through language, and how he transforms broad cultural concerns into text-specific expressions of conflict and resolution. The first extract lays the foundation by depicting Jack's initial confrontation with Pitch and by introducing guardianship and moral responsibility as motifs that continue to shape the narrative.

At the same time, the analysis situates *Jack Frost* within the broader tradition of crossover fantasy, comparing its strategies with texts such as *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Like these works, *Jack Frost* negotiates themes of morality, sacrifice, and belonging, but it also diverges by encoding them symbolically through embodiment, rather than through explicit dialogue or allegorical moral order (Nikolajeva, 2008; Manlove, 1993). This dual perspective—alignment with familiar genre conventions yet

differentiation through embodied stylistics—highlights Joyce's distinct contribution to crossover fantasy fiction.

Extract 1— Conflict and Power

- (1) There was once a remarkable boy who never grew up. A boy who had two lives, and so he had two names. We know him as Jack Frost. But once upon a time, during the Golden Age he was called Nightlight. He was a creature of light, with a bright uniform, and he glowed with courage and kindness. His very best friend was just a very little boy. It was Night light's duty to light his friend's way.
- (2) Like the trusted friend, Night light could feel when the little Man in the Moon was happy or sad or afraid. He'd promised the baby's parents that he'd protect him and had ever taken this oath:
Watch over our child; Guide him safely from the ways of harm. Keep happy his heart, brave his soul, rosy his cheeks. Guard with your life his hopes, and dreams. For he is all that we have, all that we are and all that we will ever be.
- (3) But Pitch, the Nightmare king, hoped to take the Man in the Moon and make him his darkling prince. Night light could feel his friend's fear as Pitch pursued them. He would never let the Nightmare king harm the boy (Joyce, 2015, pp. 1-3).

The opening scene introduces Jack's dual identity as Nightlight and Jack Frost, his vow to protect MiM, and the looming threat of Pitch, the Nightmare King. From the outset, readers are drawn into a struggle that doubles as an allegory of light versus darkness and friendship versus fear. Jack's oath, with its solemn

rhythm *“all that we have, all that we are, all that we will ever be”*, anchors him as a figure of loyalty and moral responsibility, while also resonating with the simplicity of a child’s prayer.

Pitch hopes to make MiM his darkling prince. This means that fear and nightmares are going to dominate children’s lives. Jack Frost does not want this to happen, as he promised to protect MiM with his life. This conflict, on the one hand, demonstrates the battle between good and evil since the Golden Age. On the other hand, this indicates that there is a kind of legitimate power between Jack and Pitch, in terms of Status and Age. Moreover, there is Referent power between Jack and MiM in terms of protection and support as well as Moral power in terms of Jack’s moral beliefs.

From a PWT perspective, the relationship between the fictional world and the real world is Transposition, as there is a pre-historical introduction about Jack Frost and the consequences of his relationship with Pitch. The scene sets up accessibility relations, across several Worlds, on two levels: externally, the author draws readers into the conflict by aligning them with Jack’s guardianship; internally, the clash between Jack and Pitch frames the story’s central battle. Impossibilities, such as Jack flying without wings, MiM speaking as a baby moon, Pitch scheming to claim him as a “darkling prince”, establish the fantastical terms of this universe and, as Ryan (1991) notes, increase the story’s tellability.

From a cognitive stylistic perspective, Joyce encodes morality through metaphor. For example, Joyce’s lexical choices in describing Nightlight as a “creature of light” foregrounds **GOODNESS IS LIGHT**, with its inverse implication **EVIL IS DARKNESS**. This positions the reader’s moral orientation before the battle with Pitch even begins. Furthermore, the oath sworn to MiM’s parents is stylistically reinforced through **parallelism and rhythmic repetition** (*“all that we have, all that we are, all that we will ever be”*), which magnifies its solemnity and renders

it cognitively salient. The extract also employs **deictic anchoring**, with phrases such as “our child” drawing the reader into the parents’ perspective and creating an intimate sense of immediacy. Furthermore, the scene is externally focalized through an omniscient perspective that presents Jack’s oath and Pitch’s corruption in visual, almost cinematic detail. This external focalization positions readers at the author–reader level of accessibility, enabling them to witness moral conflict as spectacle before entering Jack’s internal perspective in later extracts. These stylistic features ensure that the universal theme of friendship is grounded in specific cognitive linguistic cues that both children and adult readers can emotionally and cognitively process, thus setting *Jack Frost* apart in the crossover fantasy tradition.

This opening conflict sets the stage for the deeper costs of guardianship, i.e. sacrifice, which unfold in the following extract.

Extract 2 — *Sacrifice and Embodied Metaphor*

Describing the battle between Jack and Pitch.

- (1) After a fierce and valiant battle, Nightlight saved the young Man in the Moon from Pitch.
- (2) He brought Pitch and hid Nightmare Galleon down, but this victory came with a heavy price.
- (3) Nightlight could feel the little Man in the Moon was safe and unafraid, which gave him comfort. His bright uniform fell away, and for days and nights unending, he drifted, until all he knew of his life, and what had been his name, became lost. He was a boy forever frozen in time (Joyce, 2015, pp. 4-10).

This extract deepens Jack’s inner conflict through a **shift in accessibility**: whereas in the earlier scene he operates on the collective level as guardian of MiM (representing the external,

shared worlds of duty and protection), here the focus narrows to his private world, where his identity itself is fractured. In PWT terms, this marks a movement across **Worlds**, i.e. from the accessible communal domains (O-Worlds, or obligation worlds) into Jack's internal domain (I-Worlds, or private worlds of memory and desire). In Extract 1, impossibilities primarily established the fantastical framework and heightened the struggle between Jack and Pitch. In this extract, however, the same kinds of impossibilities (e.g. Jack's fall to Earth, and his transformation into a frozen boy) take on a different function. Rather than just constructing the fictional setting, they dramatize the cost of guardianship. By staging how Jack's protective victory strips him of memory and selfhood, these impossibilities foreground sacrifice and transform abstract loss into an embodied experience.

The depiction of Jack's "bright uniform fell away" functions as a **synecdoche for identity**, where the loss of clothing embodies the loss of memory. This enacts the metaphor **LOSS OF MEMORY IS LOSS OF CLOTHING**, allowing abstract sacrifice to be felt in embodied terms. Here, the narrative focalization narrows around Jack's embodied experience of loss; his perspective dominates the scene as the visual image of his "bright uniform falling away" reflects his own fading self-awareness. This internal focalization allows readers to feel the disorientation of identity loss from within Jack's consciousness, rather than viewing it from a detached narrator's stance.

The narrative simultaneously activates a **HERO VS MONSTER schema**, a culturally familiar structure, but Joyce disrupts readers' expectations by emphasizing Jack's personal loss rather than simply glorifying his triumph. Furthermore, the description of Jack as "a boy forever frozen in time" exemplifies the metaphor **EMOTION IS TEMPERATURE**, where grief and sacrifice are embodied and externalized as physical coldness. These stylistic strategies differentiate Joyce's portrayal of sacrifice

from other crossover fantasies, such as Rowling's *Harry Potter*, where sacrifice is often verbalized through dialogue rather than symbolized through embodiment (e.g. Rowling, 2007). **If sacrifice fractures Jack's identity, the third extract shows Jack's journey through loneliness and transformation.**

Extract 3 — *Loneliness and Transformation*

The aftermath of the battle between Jack and Pitch

- (1) Then one night he felt a light above him, and he once again opened his eyes. When he emerged, he was no longer a creature of the Golden Age, but an icy boy of Earth whose slightest breath or touch brought spirals of frost. And though the Man in the Moon was now grown up, he never forgot his best friend's courage and kindness. The Man in the Moon kept watch.
- (2) He kept watch as the boy sailed on icy winds, going around Earth from night to day and back again in less time than it takes to sing a lullaby.
- (3) He kept watch as the boy rode among the clouds while birds of every kind flew through the icy air with him. The rain, the wind, the clouds, and the creatures of the air and forest loved the boy, for he was as wild and free as they were (Joyce, 2015, pp. 11-16).

After his fall, Jack becomes an "icy boy of Earth," watched over by MiM as he drifts across the world on winds and among birds. His breath spins spirals of frost, the forest "loves" him, and he mingles by flying with birds and clouds. This extract dramatizes conflict within Jack's private world (I-Worlds), where accessibility is blocked by his memory loss. Lexical choices such as "*icy*," "*alone*," "*drifts*," and "*frost*" foreground isolation and emotional detachment, marking the I-World as a space of solitude. The narrative thus shifts accessibility from the external conflict of Extract 2 to Jack's I-World, a private domain defined by coldness

and disconnection. At the same time, MiM remains in a K-World of memory and anxiety, linguistically encoded through phrases such as “*he never forgets,*” “*he keeps watch,*” and “*he remembers.*” These expressions of vigilance and remembrance establish MiM’s epistemic role as the keeper of knowledge and emotional continuity.

Impossibilities in the scene (e.g. *physical*: Jack being an icy boy; *taxonomic*: Jack sailing on icy winds and navigating the Earth in no time) maintain the narrative tellability by embodying loneliness: Jack’s frosty breath and the personified forest literalize the metaphor **LONELINESS IS COLD**. Through such imagery, Jack’s inner emotions are projected outward, turning his sadness and solitude into cold snowy atmosphere.

In PWT terms, this shows how Jack’s I-World is reflected into the broader **F-World**, altering the texture of the fictional universe itself. In terms of the **character–character level of accessibility**, the scene also invites readers to reflect on the value of a true and caring friend, as MiM continues to watch over Jack, who no longer remembers his own name. This corresponds to **I-Worlds**, where Jack’s private isolation is foregrounded, and to **K-Worlds**, where MiM’s knowledge and memory of Jack remain intact. The transition across these fictional domains configures Jack’s transformation from Nightlight, the luminous guardian of the Golden Age, into Jack Frost, the icy boy of Earth. At the same time, **O-Worlds** are activated through MiM’s enduring responsibility toward his friend, while **F-Worlds** sustain the fantasy setting in which MiM has matured while Jack remains unchanged.

From a cognitive stylistic perspective, the aftermath of the battle between Jack and Pitch foregrounds gratitude and transformation through personification: “*the forest loved the boy.*” This phrase creates a conceptual blend between two spaces, one human, associated with emotion and affection, and one natural, associated with the forest as a non-human entity. Through selective projection, the human capacity for love is mapped onto the forest, while the forest’s natural vitality is mapped onto Jack. In the

blended space, Jack becomes one with nature: the forest assumes emotional agency, and Jack's isolation is momentarily alleviated through this imagined reciprocity. His breath producing "*spirals of frost*" literalizes the metaphor **EMOTION IS BREATH**, turning feeling into a tangible, visual manifestation of frozen identity.

Moreover, the anaphoric repetition of "*He kept watch*" anchors the passage in MiM's perspective, employing deictic shifts that sustain his focalization across time and guide readers to experience his enduring vigilance. Focalization alternates between Jack's limited awareness and MiM's distant, all-seeing perspective. That is Jack's perception is sensory (i.e. wind, frost, birds), while MiM's is cognitive and emotional, characterized by memory and longing. This dual focalization corresponds to the shifting accessibility between Jack's I-Worlds and MiM's K-Worlds.

These cognitive stylistic elements reinforce the thematic interplay of memory, loss, and friendship, demonstrating how Joyce encodes universal themes through specific linguistic devices. In addition, the linguistic choices underscore the crossover fantasy genre's capacity to make abstract emotions concrete for younger readers, while offering allegorical depth for adults (Falconer, 2008). Here, Joyce resonates with *Narnia*, where Edmund's isolation lies in personal betrayal (Manlove, 1993; Ford, 2005), but he diverges by converting Jack's solitude into a global condition. That is, Jack's solitude is not framed as a single act of betrayal but expands to cover the entire Earth, embodying the metaphorical process by which Jack's feeling of loneliness is transformed into external atmosphere. **This loneliness, however, does not remain static, as the next extract shifts toward Jack's struggle for identity and the possibility of remembering his past.**

Extract 4 — *Identity and Memory*

The reunion of Jack and MiM

- (1) But the boy was lonely, and his heart ached for something he could not quite remember. Always cold, he longed for

warmth. And as his longing grew, his coldness began to sweep down. The forest changed color, and the leaves turned to snowflakes.

- (2) The snow then came in great storms till all the world grew white. And so his name became Jackson Overland Frost.
 - (3) But the Man in the Moon, ever watchful, shined down and helped Jack Frost see what would soothe his cold and stormy heart and make him remember.
 - (4) As if carried by the light of the Moon, memories of courage and kindness surrounded Jack and guided him on.
- (Joyce, 2015, pp. 17- 22)

In the previous extract Jack is portrayed as free but isolated, yet this scene shows him being lonely and longing for something he cannot remember. Here, the importance of having one's own memories is articulated: memories, even unpleasant ones, are the evidence that we are alive. Jack's cold heart and longing for warmth symbolize the absence of self-knowledge, while his attempt to turn the world entirely "white" dramatizes indifference and detachment at the **author–reader level of accessibility**.

This scene, also, foregrounds an inner conflict within **Jack's I-World**. As he does not remember anything about his past, yet having a lingering feeling of duty, he struggles with self-realization. His sadness manifests outwardly, as he covers the Earth with storms and snow. Here, again, Jack's private conflict is reflected into the broader **F-World**, altering the fictional universe itself. At the same time, **K-Worlds** are activated as MiM retains memory and insight into Jack's identity, while **O-Worlds** highlight MiM's moral responsibility to guide him. **W-Worlds** are also at play, as Jack yearns for warmth and belonging, even as his longing deepens his despair. MiM's intervention (i.e. shining) brings flashes of memory to Jack, reminding him of his oath and reconfiguring his role as guardian.

The scene begins within Jack's subjective focalization as his perception of "aching" and "cold" encodes emotion through physical sensation. Then, gradually, focalization transitions to MiM's perspective as his light "shines down." This alternating focalization guides readers between internal affect and external guidance, mirroring the accessibility shift from I-World to K-World. The scene's central image of Jack's "aching heart" realizes the conceptual metaphor **SADNESS IS PAIN**, allowing readers to map embodied experiences of hurt onto his grief. His spreading of storms enacts **LONELINESS IS COLD**, a common metaphor in children's fantasy (Kövecses, 2010; Nikolajeva, 2014), but one that Joyce extends across the entire world, transforming private emotion into global atmosphere. MiM's shining light, framed through **conceptual blending**, merges two input spaces: the **physical domain** of celestial illumination and the **emotional domain** of memory and guidance. The physical warmth and visibility of the light are projected onto MiM's emotional connection with Jack, while Jack's longing and need for direction are projected back onto the moon's glow. In the blended space, MiM's light functions simultaneously as literal illumination and as metaphorical warmth of remembrance and care.

Together, the focalization shifts and stylistic blends Anchor readers in the dual perspectives of solitude and guardianship. The narrative, thus, configures a movement from Jack's sensory confinement toward MiM's cognitive awareness—a world-shift that deepens both the emotional and epistemic texture of the story. These cognitive stylistic processes transform abstract emotional states into sensory imagery, highlighting Jack's identity crisis through embodied cognition.

In contrast to *Harry Potter*, where identity is largely presented through heritage or dialogue (Heilman, 2009), Joyce portrays identity as embodied and reshaped through emotion and environment. As Nikolajeva (2014) notes, children's fantasy often

encodes identity through affect and embodiment, and Joyce extends this tendency by blending memory, metaphor, and impossibility. In *Jack Frost*, identity emerges not as inherited status but as an ongoing process of recovery and reconstruction, thus situating *Jack Frost* within crossover fantasy fiction while distinguishing it through its reliance on embodied imagery and mythic resonance. **This embodied reconstruction of identity prepares the way for the final extract, where Jack's restored memory and reconstructed identity expand into a universal mission of guardianship.**

Extract 5— *Guardianship and Closure*

The real Jack Frost

- (1) ... And he remembered his oath.
- (2) And as his lonely heart changed, so did the oath:
I will watch over the children of Earth, guide them
safely from ways of harm, keep happy their hearts,
brave their souls, and rosy their cheeks. I will guard
with my life their hopes and dreams, for they are all
that I have, all that I am, and all that I will ever be.
- (3) And his heart ached no more.
- (4) You can hear Jack's oath in the song of a bird or the
falling of a leaf or the changing of the seasons. Like
the stars and the Moon..
- (5) ... Jack Frost will always be there. (Joyce, 2015, pp. 24-38)

In the concluding extract, Jack completes his transformative journey. With MiM's support, he recalls not only his courage and kindness but also his original vow. Recalling his promise (i.e. oath) to MiM's parents enables him to resume his role as a guardian. Yet in revising it to protect "the children of Earth," Jack Frost expands his mission from a private to a universal one. His heart shifts from

cold and stormy to warm and purposeful, signaling the reconstruction of identity that had been fractured in earlier scenes. At the **author–reader level of accessibility**, this closing moment affirms the enduring presence of guardians of childhood and the value of kindness and honesty.

From a PWT perspective, this scene resolves both internal and external conflicts. Jack's I-World, once fractured, is now stabilized; **K-Worlds** confirm MiM's insight into his friend's potential; **O-Worlds** are realized in Jack's new duty toward children; and **W-Worlds** reflect his longing to bring happiness and hope. At the level of the **F-World**, impossibilities—birds and leaves echoing Jack's oath, Jack being “as real as the stars and the Moon”—convey the seamless blending of fantasy and reality that secures narrative closure.

The final extract returns to an external focalization that merges narrator and natural world: “you can hear Jack's oath in the song of a bird.” This collective focalization expands beyond any single consciousness, granting readers access to the F-World, where guardianship becomes universal and ever-present. Linguistically, Joyce signals this transformation through **parallelism**: the revised oath mirrors the earlier promise but shifts its focus from MiM to all children, underscoring Jack's growth from private guardian to universal protector. The metaphor **NATURE AS TEXT** in “you can hear Jack's oath in the song of a bird” inscribes guardianship into the fabric of the natural world, while the deictic “Jack Frost will always be there” collapses fictional and real domains, giving readers the sense of his presence beyond the story.

Compared with *Harry Potter*, where sacrifice and guardianship are expressed in dialogue or explicit moral lessons (Nikolajeva, 2008; Mendlesohn & James, 2012), Joyce encodes them symbolically and somatically, making them felt rather than told. Unlike *Narnia*, where the narrative often concludes by restoring order to the fictional world (Manlove, 1993), *Jack Frost* ends by embedding guardianship in seasonal cycles, creating an embodied, ongoing reminder of protection. These stylistic choices

highlight Joyce's distinct contribution to the crossover fantasy tradition: by integrating metaphor, deixis, and impossibility into Jack's reconstructed identity, the narrative secures cognitive resonance and a powerful sense of closure. **This resolution not only finalizes Jack's personal transformation but also positions him as a universal guardian, preparing the ground for the broader synthesis of how impossibility, world-building, and cognitive stylistic embodiment sustain the story's tellability.**

Synthesis

Across the five extracts, Joyce turns impossibility into the driving force of the narrative. Each type of impossibility contributes to the story's tellability (Ryan, 1991) and supports specific thematic functions. Each extract emphasizes a theme and a different stage in Jack's journey (i.e. conflict, sacrifice, loneliness, identity, and guardianship), while maintaining consistent navigation across possible worlds. PWT clarifies how accessibility relations shift: from the obligations of Jack's oath (O-Worlds) to the fractured self of memory loss (I-Worlds), through MiM's knowledge and guidance (K-Worlds), to Jack's desires for warmth and connection (W-Worlds), and finally into the broader fictional universes where guardianship becomes natural law (F-Worlds). These World-shifts chart Jack's transformation from an isolated figure to a universal guardian, showing how conflict and impossibility sustain the narrative's tellability (Ryan, 1991). The following tables (A, B, C) and figure (D) consolidate these findings by mapping impossibilities, World-shifts, and cognitive stylistic cues across the five extracts, offering a systematic overview of Joyce's narrative and linguistic strategies.

Table A. Impossibilities across extracts in *Jack Frost*.

Extract	Physical Impossibility	Taxonomic Impossibility	Chronological Impossibility	Property/Identity Impossibility
1. Conflict & Power	Jack flies without wings; creates snow; summons wind	MiM (baby moon) speaks and interacts	Golden Age setting; mythic time	Jack as 'creature of light'
2. Sacrifice	Jack's fall to Earth; frozen boy outside natural laws	MiM senses safety like a human	—	Loss of uniform = loss of memory
3. Loneliness	Jack's breath produces frost; rides winds instantly	Forest 'loves' Jack	Shift from Golden Age to Earth	—
4. Identity & Memory	Jack transforms landscapes with longing; eternal snow	MiM intervenes through moonlight	—	Jack's 'aching heart' literalized as cold
5. Guardianship & Closure	Jack's oath echoed in birds, leaves, seasons	Guardianship as cosmic presence	—	Jack 'as real as stars and Moon'

Note. This table summarizes physical, taxonomic, chronological, and property/identity impossibilities across the five extracts.

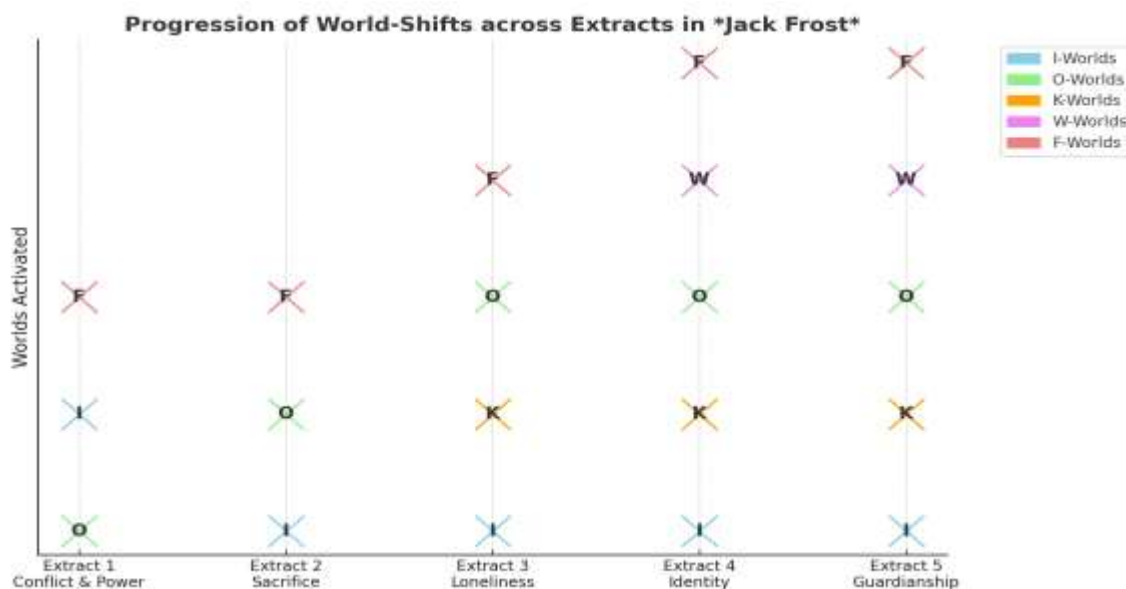


Figure D. *Progression of World-Shifts across Extracts in Jack Frost.*

Note. The diagram visualizes accessibility shifts across I-, O-, K-, W-, and F-Worlds.

Table B. *Fictional Worlds and Accessibility Relations across Extracts in Jack Frost.*

Extract	Worlds Involved	Accessibility Relations	Role in Narrative
1. Conflict & Power	O-Worlds, I-Worlds, F-Worlds	External: author–reader; Internal: Jack vs Pitch	Introduces conflict, establishes Jack as guardian
2. Sacrifice	I-Worlds, O-Worlds, F-Worlds	Shift from O-Worlds (guardian role) to I-Worlds (fractured identity)	Foregrounds sacrifice and loss of identity

3. Loneliness	I-Worlds, K-Worlds, O-Worlds, F-Worlds	Character—character: MiM watches Jack; transition I→K/O	Embodies loneliness as atmosphere, configures transformation
4. Identity & Memory	I-Worlds, K-Worlds, O-Worlds, W-Worlds, F-Worlds	Internal conflict: I-World blocked; K sustains memory; W drives longing; O = duty	Explores crisis of identity and memory
5. Guardianship & Closure	I-Worlds, K-Worlds, O-Worlds, W-Worlds, F-Worlds	Resolution: expands from I-Worlds to O-Worlds; F-Worlds	Provides closure; reconstructs identity

Note. This table summarizes how I-, O-, K-, W-, and F-Worlds are configured across the extracts.

Table C. *Cognitive Stylistic Features, Impossibilities, and World-Shifts across Extracts in Jack Frost.*

Extract	Cognitive Stylistic Features	Related Impossibilities	Linked World-Shifts	Narrative Function
1. Conflict & Power	Metaphor (LIGHT/DARK); Deixis; Parallelism (oath)	Jack flying; MiM speaking; Pitch as prince	O ↔ I I ↔ F	Establishes conflict; encodes moral stakes
2. Sacrifice	Synecdoche (uniform); Metaphor (LOSS=clothing; EMOTION=temp.)	Fall to Earth; frozen boy	O → I	Highlights cost of guardianship; sacrifice embodied
3. Loneliness	Personification; Anaphora; Metaphor (LONELINESS=cold)	Frosty breath; forest affection	I ↔ K ↔ O ↔ F	Embodies loneliness as atmosphere; configures transformation

4. Identity & Memory	Metaphor (SADNESS=pain; LONELINESS=cold); Blending (moonlight=memory+light)	Earth reshaped; MiM shining	I ↔ K ↔ W ↔ O ↔ F	Explores identity as embodied recovery
5. Guardianship & Closure	Parallelism (oath); Metaphor (NATURE=text); Deixis	Oath echoed in nature; Jack as real as stars	I ↔ O ↔ F	Provides closure; reconstructs identity

Note. This table shows how Joyce encodes Jack's transformation.

7. Conclusion

Joyce's *Jack Frost* demonstrates the narrative dynamics of crossover fantasy: an emotionally captivating conflict, an accessible narrative structure, and an ending that highlights loss and growth. These elements contribute to the story's tellability, i.e. its ability to engage readers across different age groups, through emotional depth, tension, rich fictional worlds, and universal themes of sacrifice, friendship, and identity.

From the perspective of PWT, *Jack Frost* presents a richly textured narrative that invites the reader to navigate between the actual world and interlinked alternative domains, such as wish-worlds, fantasy universes, and private epistemic domains, which are all evident in Jack's transformation. Ryan's (1991) accessibility relations model clarifies how these domains resemble or diverge from the reader's real world in terms of natural law, temporal structure, and emotional logic.

From a cognitive stylistic perspective, focalization mediates accessibility between worlds, aligning readers alternately with Jack's embodied experience and MiM's reflective consciousness. Thus, cognitive stylistics, with its focus on metaphor, deixis, focalization, schema, and blending helps explain how readers cognitively engage with these fictional worlds by means of

reconstructing them through embodied experience and real-world knowledge.

The analysis reveals that the intricate narrative structure of *Jack Frost* depends on a central actual world, in which Jack Frost, formerly the heavenly Nightlight, inhabits an eternal winter on Earth. Around this central world orbit a series of private possible worlds: Jack's wish-world of companionship, his memory-world of MiM, and his moral world as a "bringer of joy" and "guardian of childhood". These internal fictional domains are cognitively reconstructed by readers as they navigate between impossibility and cognitive stylistic cues. Conflict plays a central role: the tension between Jack's loneliness and his longing for emotional connection drives the plot forward, culminating in his realization that joy given to others alleviates his own emptiness and loss.

Situated within canonical crossover fantasies such as Rowling's *Harry Potter* and Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, *Jack Frost* both aligns with and diverges from the genre's conventions. Like these works, *Jack Frost* negotiates universal themes of morality, sacrifice, belonging, identity and friendship. Yet Joyce distinguishes his narrative by encoding such themes symbolically through embodiment rather than through dialogue, instruction, or allegorical restoration of fictional world order. In this way, *Jack Frost* contributes a unique mythic and embodied dimension to crossover fantasy fiction, showing how impossibility can serve as both narrative strategy and affective metaphor.

In summary, combining PWT with cognitive stylistics provides a robust methodology for analyzing the layered fictional worlds of crossover fantasy fiction. It shows how readers navigate between possible worlds and how cognitive stylistic features guide readers' mental engagement, thereby highlighting the cognitive depth of the genre. This dual framework not only sharpens our understanding of *Jack Frost* but also reinforces the literary value of crossover fantasy as a cognitively engaging genre that resonates

across age groups. Future studies might extend this approach by comparing a wider range of crossover fantasies to identify broader cognitive stylistic patterns, or by examining multimodal adaptations (e.g. films, illustrations, or digital media) that reconfigure accessibility relations and stylistic embodiment in new ways.

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