



Naturalism and Naturalist Elements in Jack London's Short Story "To Build a Fire" (1908)

By Stephan Katzwichler

GRIN Publishing Okt 2013, 2013. sonst. Bücher. Condition: Neu. Neuware - Seminar paper from the year 2010 in the subject English - History of Literature, Eras, grade: 1,0, University of Passau, course: American Short Stories, language: English, abstract: The short story 'To Build a Fire' written by Jack London was first published in 1908 and is seen as a 'masterpiece of short fiction' (Reesman 39) and 'his best short story' (Peterson 3). Jack London demonstrates in 'To Build a Fire' a 'strong narration, fresh fictional subject, and ability to create atmosphere' (Nuernberg XXXII). The story is furthermore claimed as his 'most often cited example for naturalism' (Reesman 39), which came up in the 1880s and lasted until the 1940s. This literary movement is seen as an outgrowth of Realism with the addition of pessimistic determinism and was influenced by Social Darwinism (cf. Campbell). Thus the most characteristic for naturalist stories is the fact that people are helpless victims of unchangeable natural laws, a harsh environment and their inner 'animal drives'. These attributes and the naturalist typical 'man vs. nature -theme can also be found in 'To Build a Fire' and other stories by Jack London, which is one of the...



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