Fictional Worlds and Focalisation in Works by Hermann Hesse and E.L. Doctorow

by

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SUMMARY

The main focus of this study concerns the contribution of focalisation to the creation of fictional worlds through the combination of the “building blocks” of a fictional world, namely the central focalising and focalised character(s), focalised social contexts, events and spaces, in Hermann Hesse’s Demian (1919), Narziß und Goldmund (1930), E.L. Doctorow’s Welcome to Hard Times (1960) and Homer & Langley (2009). The relationship between the focalisers and their social contexts influence their human, subjective perspectives and represented perceptions of their textual actual worlds. Focalisation is constructive in the synergistic relationship between the “building blocks” that leads to the creation of fictional worlds.

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical basis of the thesis which is formed by the concepts of M. Ryan, L. Doležel, R. Ronen and T.G. Pavel with regard to possible worlds and fictional worlds. G. Genette’s and M. Bal’s theories provide the foundation of this study with regard to this concept as regards focalisation. Chapter 3 contextualises focalisation and fictional worlds as possible worlds in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction and as such constitutes part of a twofold basis for the following analyses and comparisons. Four textual analyses of the individual novels by Hesse and Doctorow then follow. In the textual analysis of Demian the notions of M. Bal, M. Ryan and A. Nünning provide a theoretical basis that is specifically relevant for the argument that through his consciousness the individual, Emil Sinclair, creates the fictional world, i.e. by “transforming” textual actual world components into individualised fictional world ones. The views of Viktor Frankl, feminist activists against prostitution such as M. Farley, M.A. Baldwin and C.A. MacKinnon as well as the views of Talcott Parsons (in conjunction with those of G.M. Platt and N.J. Smelser) offer a theoretical underpinning for the analysis of the social context as the product of the mindset in the community in Doctorow’s Welcome to Hard Times and the mindset of the focaliser, Blue, that concurs with the mindset of the community. Focalised events are considered as psychologically credible and as contributing to the fictional world in Hesse’s Narziß und Goldmund. In this textual analysis the theoretical points of departure were based on theories proposed by D. Cohn, M. Ryan and S. Chatman. Concepts advanced by J. Lothe, J. Lotman, H. Lefèbvre, L. Doležel, N. Wolterstorff and D. Coste comprise the theoretical basis of the analysis of social spaces in Doctorow’s Homer & Langley. Chapter 8 consists of comparative analyses of the said focalised “building blocks” of Hesse’s and Doctorow’s novels.

The analyses and comparisons argue that focalising characters “filter” their actual worlds and “transform” them through their individualistic and subjective representations, as actual people do. Even if characters are “non-actual individuals” their mindsets or physical, social and mental properties (Margolin, 1989:4) are like those of actual people, i.e. “psychologically credible”.
Ryan (1991:45) identifies “psychological credibility” or “a plausible portrayal of human psychology” as an “accessibility relation”, i.e. one that allows the mental properties of a fictional character to be accessible from and possible for the actual world. The interaction between a focalising character and his social context that affects his consciousness and focalisation is comparable to the interaction between a hypothetical actual person and his social world, that would also influence his mindset and how he communicates about the actual world. Perspectives of characters such as Sinclair, Blue, Goldmund and Homer Collyer are recognisable to hypothetical actual world readers as psychologically credible. In the light of Bal’s (1990:9) argument that the whole text content is related to the (focalising) character(s), one could say that the elements of a textual actual world become, as it were, focalised “building blocks” of the fictional world.

The central finding is that focalisation contributes to the creation of fictional worlds. The relationship between a fictional world and the actual one becomes apparent in literary texts through focalisation that transforms the textual actual world and its elements, i.e. the central (self-focalising) character, the social context, events and space(s), through a focaliser’s consciousness. The focaliser’s consciousness in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction is marked by psychological credibility. A fictional world is comparable to the actual world with regard to other accessibility relations that Ryan (cf. 1991:31-47) identifies, but focalisation specifically allows a fictional world to become possible in actual world terms by creating credibility of this kind. A fictional world is plausible not in mimetic terms, as a factual text presents itself to be, but in possible terms, i.e. through the comparability of human psychology in fictional worlds and the actual world. Focalisation significantly contributes to the creation of a fictional world through the interaction between psychologically credible subjectivity and the imaginary level of the text on which the textual actual world obtains human value through focalisation. A fictional world is, in this sense, a possible world and, in fact, comes about through being a possible world.

Keywords: focalisation, fictional world(s), possible world(s), textual actual worlds, the actual world, Hermann Hesse, E.L. Doctorow, Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend/Demian, Welcome to Hard Times, Narziß und Goldmund/Narcissus and Goldmund, Homer & Langley.
ZUSAMMENFASSUNG


Kapitel 8 besteht aus vergleichenden Analysen der genannten fokalisierten “Bausteine” der Romane von Hesse und Doctorow.


OPSOMMING

Die sentrale fokus van hierdie studie is die bydrae van fokalisasie tot die skepping van fiksionele wêrelde deur die kombinasie van die “boustene” van ‘n fiksionele wêreld, naamlik die sentrale fokaliserende en gefokaliseerde karakter(s), gefokaliseerde sosiale kontekste, gebeurtenisse en ruimtes in Hermann Hesse se romans *Demian* (1919) en *Narziß und Goldmund* (1930) en E.L. Doctorow se romans *Welcome to Hard Times* (1960) en *Homer & Langley* (2009). Die verhouding tussen die fokaliseerders en hul sosiale kontekste beïnvloed hul menslike, subjektiewe perspektiewe en die gereg presenteerde waarnemings van hul tekstuele werklike wêrelede. Fokalisasie konstrueer die sinergistiese verhouding tussen die “boustene” wat tot die skepping van fiksionele wêrelede lei.

Hoofstuk 2 bespreek die teoretiese basis van die proefskrif wat gevorm is deur die konsepte van M. Ryan, L. Doležel, R. Ronen en T.G. Pavel oor moontlike wêrelede en fiksionele wêrelede. G. Genette en M. Bal se teorieë verskaf die grondslag van hierdie studie ten opsigte van fokalisasie. Hoofstuk 3 kontekstualiseer fokalisasie en fiksionele wêrelede as moontlike wêrelede as moontlike wêrelede in Hesse en Doctorow se fiksie en vorm sodoende deel van ‘n tweeledige basis vir die ontledings en vergelykings wat volg. Vier teksontledings van individuele romans deur Hesse en Doctorow volg dan. In die ontleiding van *Demian* verskaf die konsepte van M. Bal, M. Ryan en A. Nünning ‘n teoretiese basis wat spesifiek relevant is vir die argument dat die individu, Emil Sinclair, deur sy bewussyn die fiksionele wêreld vorm, dit wil sê deur die komponente van die tekstuele werklike wêreld in geïndividualiseerde fiksionele wêreld-komponente te “transformeer”. Die sienings van Viktor Frankl, feministiese aktiviste teen prostitutie soos M. Farley, M.A. Baldwin en C.A. MacKinnon sowel as die sienings van Talcott Parsons (in samewerking met G.M. Platt en N.J. Smelser) bied ‘n teoretiese basis vir die ontleiding van die sosiale konteks as die resultaat van die denkwyse van die gemeenskap in Doctorow se *Welcome to Hard Times* en die denkwyse van die fokaliseerder, Blue, wat met die denkwyse van die gemeenskap ooreenkom.

Gefokaliseerde gebeurtenisse word as psigologies geloofwaardig en as bydraend tot die fiksionele wêreld in Hesse se *Narziß und Goldmund* beskou. Die teoretiese vertrekpunte in hierdie teksontleding is gebaseer op die teorieë van D. Cohn, M. Ryan en S. Chatman. Konsepte ontleen aan J. Lothe, J. Lotman, H. Lefebvre, L. Doležel, N. Wolterstorff en D. Coste vorm die teoretiese basis van die ontleiding van sosiale ruimtes in Doctorow se *Homer & Langley*. Hoofstuk 8 bestaan uit vergelykende ontledings van die genoemde gefokaliseerde “boustene” in Hesse and Doctorow se romans.
Die ontledings en die vergelykings toon dat die gefokaliseerde karakters hul werklike wêrelde “filter” en sodoende deur hul individualistiese en subjektiewe representasies die tekstuele werklike wêrelde “transformeer”, soos wat mense dit ook met hulle weergawes van die werklike wêreld doen. Al is karakters “nie-werklike individue”, is hul denkwyses of fisiese, sosiale en mentale eienskappe (Margolin, 1989:4) vergelykbaar met dié van werklike mense, dit wil sê “psigologies geloofwaardig”. Ryan (1991:45) identifiseer “psigologiese geloofwaardigheid” of “’n geloofwaardige weergawe van menslike sielkunde” as ‘n “toeganklikheidsverhouding”, dit wil sê ‘n verhouding wat mentale eienskappe van ‘n fiksionele karakter as toeganklik en vir die werklike wêreld moontlik maak. Die wisselwerking tussen ‘n fokaliserende karakter en sy sosiale konteks wat sy bewussyn en fokalisasie beïnvloed, is vergelykbaar met die wisselwerking wat bestaan tussen ‘n hipotetiese werklike persoon en sy sosiale wêreld wat ook sy denkwyse en hoe hy oor die werklike wêreld kommunikeer, beïnvloed. Perspektiewe van karakters soos Sinclair, Blue, Goldmund en Homer Collyer is herkenbaar vir hipotetiese werklike wêreld-lesers as psigologies geloofwaardig. Aangesien Bal (1990:9) argumenteer dat die hele teksinhoud verband hou met die (fokaliserende) karakter(s), kan ‘n mens sê dat die elemente van ‘n tekstuele werklike wêreld as’t ware gefokaliseerde “boustene” van die fiksionele wêreld word.

Die sentrale bevinding is dat fokalisasie tot die skepping van fiksionele wêrelde bydra. Die verhouding tussen ‘n fiksionele wêreld en die werklike een word duidelijk in literêre tekste deurdat fokalisasie die tekstuele werklike wêreld en sy elemente transformeer, dit wil sê die sentrale (fokaliserende) karakter transformeer die sosiale konteks, gebeurtenisse en ruimte(s) deur sy bewussyn. Die bewussyn van die fokaliserender in Hesse en Doctorow se fiksie word gekenmerk deur psigologiese geloofwaardigheid. ‘n Fiksionele wêreld is vergelykbaar met die werklike wêreld ten opsigte van ander toeganklikheidsverhoudings wat Ryan (cf. 1991:31-47) identifiseer, maar deur fokalisasie word die fiksionele wêreld as moontlike wêreld spesifiek daardeur dat fokalisasie hierdie tipe geloofwaardigheid in ‘n tekstuele wêreld toelaat. ‘n Fiksionele wêreld is nie geloofwaardig in mimetiese terme nie, soos wat ‘n feitelike teks probeer om geloofwaardigheid af te dwing, maar in moontlike terme, dit wil sê deur die vergelykbaarheid van menslike sielkunde in fiksionele wêrele en die werklike wêreld. Fokalisasie dra beduidend by tot die skep van ‘n fiksionele wêreld deur die wisselwerking tussen psigologiese geloofwaardige subjektwiteit en die denkbeeldige vlak van die teks waarop die tekstuele werklike wêreld menslike waarde deur fokalisasie verkry. ‘n Fiksionele wêreld kom inderdaad daardeur tot stand dat dit ‘n moontlike wêreld is.
Sleuteltermen: fokalisasie, fiktionele wêreld(e), moontlike wêreld(e), tekstuele wêreld(e), die werklike wêreld, Hermann Hesse, E.L. Doctorow, Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend/Demian, Welcome to Hard Times, Narziss und Goldmund/Narcissus and Goldmund, Homer & Langley.
TEXTUAL NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

By and large I have worked with the original German versions of Hermann Hesse’s primary texts *Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend* and *Narziß und Goldmund*. I therefore use the German titles to refer to these works. However, I have provided translations of citations that I have taken from Michael Roloff’s and Michael Lebeck’s translation of *Demian (Demian: the story of Emil Sinclair’s youth)*, referred to by “DT”, and Ursule Molinaro’s translation of *Narziß und Goldmund (Narcissus and Goldmund)*, referred to by “NGT”. Translations of quotes and excerpts from these texts without references to these translations as well as translations of quotes from other primary and secondary sources are my own.

I do not intend to exclude female persons when using “he”, but use the male personal pronoun to refer to hypothetical persons for the sake of practicality.

Italicised words or phrases in quotations are only my own when I specifically point them out as such.

I have shortened the title *Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend* to *Demian*.

The publication dates of the editions used for this study are indicated in the bibliography. The first publication dates of the central fictional texts in this study are indicated below. The following abbreviations are used throughout the dissertation:

*Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend* (1919) D

*Narziß und Goldmund* (1930) NG

*Welcome to Hard Times* (1960) WHT

*Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair’s Youth* (Roloff’s and Lebeck’s translation)

(1965) DT

*Narcissus and Goldmund* (Molinaro’s translation) (1968) NGT

*Homer & Langley* (2009) HL
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Chapter 1

Fictional worlds and focalisation in works by Hermann Hesse and E.L. Doctorow

1. Introduction

1.1. The mindsets of focalisers

The main focus of this study falls on the contribution of focalisation in the creation of fictional worlds as possible worlds through the combination of individuals, social contexts, events and spaces as focalised textual actual world components in Hermann Hesse’s *Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend* (1919), *Narziß und Goldmund* (1930), in comparison with E.L. Doctorow’s *Welcome to Hard Times* (1960) and *Homer and Langley* (2009).

The mindsets/mental states of characters in Hesse’s works are often influenced by personal concerns that may be manifested as, for example, social, philosophical or quasi religious in nature, but always psychological. In short: The focus is placed on the inner life of the individual. Doctorow’s characters, in turn, are typified by often pragmatic political and social liberalism. Thus, the fictional worlds of both these authors are directly critical of the fictional social contexts, with indirect implications for actual world social contexts. The focaliser associates his social contexts with specific events and spaces (landscapes or places and accompanying elements such as objects). Spaces acquire a uniqueness arising from the events and interaction that take place between the focaliser and others in a specific space. Space is therefore psychologically grounded and is permeated with social meaning.

The particular works above have been selected because they display ways of focalising and creating fictional worlds that are highly interesting and relevant for the considerations of this study. *Narziß und Goldmund* relates the story of the sensually-artistically oriented life of Goldmund against the backdrop of the contemplative-spiritual lifestyle of his friend, Narziß (Singh, 2006:187). This dichotomy – a fluctuation between the worlds of the “Mother”

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1 This study’s understanding of an “individual” in a literary text approximates Margolin’s (1989:4) concept of a “non-actual individual”, i.e. an entity that can be “referred to, located in space-time points, and ascribed human or human-like properties and relations: physical, actantial (verbal, mental, physical), social (ethical, interpersonal). The mental dimension can be further subdivided into cognitive, emotive, volitional, and perceptual.” Referring to Ryan (1985:732), Margolin points out that the non-actual individual can be ascribed inner states, knowledge and belief sets, attitudes, wishes, goals, plans, intentions, and dispositions, i.e. “an ‘interiority’ or ‘personhood’” that are relevant in terms of the focus on focalisation. Cf. Margolin (1990:847-849) and Palmer (2004:38).
associated with the natural side of a human being\(^2\) and personal spiritual growth, and the “Father”, associated with artificial life in the form of compliance with conventional social life and principles) – is also found in Demian. Esselborn-Krumbiegel (1998:44) emphasises the (social) influence of characters/the social context on the psychological development of the main character and narrator of Demian, Emil Sinclair. Goldmund’s and Sinclair’s experiences are comparable to those of the central figures Blue (in Welcome to Hard Times) and Homer and Langley Collyer (in Homer & Langley) in the sense that the fictional worlds are intrinsically connected to their (and any other focalisers’) perception(s) of their contexts. Focalisation is central to the process in which a fictional world comes into existence, and it may be viewed as a subject-object relationship: Who sees? Who narrates? Who knows (and what)? And, most importantly: How?

The views of the focaliser determine the composition and the nature of the fictional worlds. Welcome to Hard Times is the tale of the catastrophic relationship between a community and the havoc seeking “Bad Man from Bodie”. Blue’s focalisation is representative of the way his community understands the nature of the “external” threat, the Bad Man. In the context of this allegorical work, the Bad Man turns out to be not only an external threat, but also a symbol of the town’s fears that lead to its own downfall. The community forms its perception of the external world through an “inner” or psychological process since the fictional world is the result of the mental or psychological states of Blue and the town’s residents. The object of Blue’s focalisation, the “outer” world, becomes a manifestation of the characters’ “inner” world.\(^3\) The other novels have similarly been selected for this study because of the prominence of focalised social contexts that contribute to the creation of the fictional world.

The correspondences between the works of these two authors – for instance, thematic similarities like the relationship between society and the individual, and power relations – are highly relevant for this study. Both authors’ works also express strong moral themes, for example, psychological oppression in Welcome to Hard Times and Demian, and the resistance to authority in Narziß und Goldmund and Homer & Langley – that are important for the connection between fictional worlds and the actual world which qualifies a fictional one as a “possible world”. Both

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\(^3\) Arnold (1983a:94) observes that “after the town has begun to take shape, it is peopled with grotesques, outcasts, and the physically and spiritually deformed”. On a spiritual level they could be considered the “children” of Clay Turner, who also has a grotesque appearance which complements his spiritual state. The Bad Man is an evil spirit that resides within their collective and individual psyches (Van der Merwe, 2007:61).
Hesse’s and Doctorow’s books are often political indictments that invoke social justice, and Hesse accordingly made a very big impact on the American Youth Movement of the 1960s that protested against such major aspects of industrialised society as the state, authority in general, capitalism, nationalism, the church, militarism, war etcetera (Schwarz, 1977:87-88). This is reminiscent of Doctorow’s protest against the self-seeking aspects of capitalism in Welcome to Hard Times, and in his protest novel, The book of Daniel (1971), which is based on McCarthyism or the Second Red Scare that led to an anti-communist witch hunt during the 1950s, of which the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg was an effect. The shared concern of their texts is ultimately the ideal of a humane attitude towards one’s fellow human beings. The emphasis on justice and its psychological and emotive aspects in these authors’ oeuvres frequently directs the focalisation in their works.

A further element of this study is the way that focalisers create fictional worlds as possible worlds by focalising themselves as well as a social context, events and space that are also reflections of themselves. The role of focalisation in the creation of a fictional world is rarely addressed in theoretical works, but Ronen does so in Possible worlds in literary theory (1994), and specifically in the chapter “Focalization and fictional perspective”. Critics of both Hesse and Doctorow have ignored the relationship between focalisation and the mindset or psychological state and the values of the individual, which are often in conflict with social realities.

Hesse himself referred to his works as Seelembiographien (biographies of the soul) (Cornils, 2009:8), also referred to as “spiritual autobiographies” by, for example, Kiryakakis (1988:14) and Zeller (1997:7). Although “spiritual” may be interpreted as synonymous with “mental” or...

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4 Solbach (2009:82) explains that Demian is “politically ambivalent” and that Hesse aspired to gain “approval from both the pacifists and defenders of the war”: “… on the one hand, the soldier achieves a mythic status, purified in spirit and intellect … his humanity renewed; on the other hand, one senses palpable regret that this renovatio and reformatio of the people of Europe is only possible with such destruction, to which Demian himself falls victim”. The American Youth Movement of the 1960s naturally preferred to identify itself with the “rebellious” occasions in the novel (cf. Timpe, 1977:141).

5 The book of Daniel features a couple, Paul and Rochelle Isaacson, whose lives resemble those of the Rosenbergs (Harter & Thompson, 1990:30-31; Gross, 1983:139). The novel is the product of the focalisation of the Isaacsons’ son, Daniel, who “survives” his parents’ execution. Tokarczyk’s (1987:3-15) article “From the lion’s den: Survivors in E.L. Doctorow’s The book of Daniel” includes considerations that compare the actual world and the fictional worlds, for example, with regard to the actual and fictional juries (Tokarczyk, 1987:5).

6 Works like Ryan’s Possible worlds, artificial intelligence, and narrative theory (1991), Thomas G. Pavel’s Fictional worlds (1986) and Doležel’s Heterocosmica: fiction and possible worlds (1998) do not explicitly address the relationship between possible worlds and focalisation. However, Doležel (1998:149) does refer to authoritative narrative to designate the “primary source of fictional facts”; first person narrative (ich-form) and third person narrative (er-form) that imply different kinds of focalisation.

7 Cornils (2009:8) aptly points out that Hesse’s texts are “not external carbon copies of his own psyche. Rather, Hesse explored his innermost thoughts and feelings as a starting point for constructing characters that serve as case studies both for the narrator and for the reader, who might or might not sense an affinity with them.”
“psychological”⁸ here, it also alludes to “religion”⁹ and philosophy as part of the individual’s mindset. Religion and philosophy in Hesse’s oeuvre have interested researchers so much that the theme of the sixth international Hermann Hesse colloquium in Calw (1990) was “Hermann Hesse und die Religion: die Einheit hinter den Gegensätzen” [Hermann Hesse and religion: The unity behind the oppositions] (Bran & Pfeifer, 1990). There are also numerous publications on the correspondences between Hesse’s works and psychological theory, and especially the theories of C.G. Jung; the relationship between the characters and their social contexts; and the reflexive relationship of characters with themselves. By contrast, E.L. Doctorow treats religion, philosophy and psychology very differently.¹⁰ In this study, however, “spirituality” (mindset or values in terms of religion and psychology) is not itself the focal point, but is regarded as an inductive facet of focalisation.

A fundamental similarity between the two authors is that figures in the books question their positions in their respective social contexts. Conflict between the individual and others arises from incompatibility between the individual’s ideals and his social environment. This conflict influences his view of himself, events, his social context and his personal environment, or the spaces in which he finds himself.

1.2. The focalised social context

The fictional world represents the interaction between the focalising consciousness that is also part of the social context, events and space that gain social significance due to the associations of the focaliser with his social environment. Hesse’s social contexts are often perceived in terms of “Father and Mother Worlds”, concepts related to C.G. Jung’s psychology¹¹, while Doctorow’s social contexts are often interpreted in terms of political power relations.

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⁸ In general, “spirituality” in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works of fiction – as in Viktor Frankl’s (1964:102-103) logotherapy – “does not have to have a primarily religious connotation, but refers to the specifically human dimension”. However, the “noölogical” (from the Greek “noos” meaning “mind”) or “human dimension” (Frankl, 1964:102) – related to existential aspects like the human existence itself, the meaning of existence and the will to find meaning in personal existence – does, of course, also often include not only mental and emotional elements, but also religious or pseudo-religious elements.

⁹ In Hesse’s work Christianity is the religion of the Father World. Characters such as Emil Sinclair and Goldmund, however, follow their personal “religions” that are influenced by philosophy and religions (also Eastern forms) as well as psychology.


The influence of Jung on, and Mother and Father Worlds in, Hesse’s fiction are well-known topics. Tusken (1992:628) points out that, in Demian, the god Abraxas, a unity of the divine and satanic, is a variation of the Father-Mother worlds as experienced by Sinclair. “Obedience” to this god which Frau Eva and Demian – who, as mother and son, together form a “magico-religious secret society” (Solbach, 2009:84) – advocate, is in the interest of finding one’s true self: “Das Leben jedes Menschen ist ein Weg zu sich selber hin …” (D, 10). “[“Each man’s life represents a road toward himself” (DT, 2; translation’s italics) or “The life of every person is a journey towards himself”] Throughout his life, Goldmund encounters his “mother” in various persons and forms that he associates with freedom from the restrictions of a life dictated by the ascetic, rational or dispassionate and scholarly values advocated by his father. This is already evident in the discussion between Narziß and Goldmund, when it becomes clear that Goldmund should not remain in the monastery: “Und nun wirst du ja wohl bald auch das noch erkennen, daß dein Leben im Kloster und dein Streben nach einem mönchischen Leben ein Irrtum war, eine Erfindung deines Vaters …” (NG, 69) [Soon you’ll probably also realize that cloister life and striving for monkhood were a mistake for you, an invention of your father’s (NGT, 63).]

However, although the consciousness of a Hesse figure is often influenced by Jungian notions, the reader has to be sensitive to Hesse’s manipulation of Jung’s psychology for his own narratological purposes. Hesse presents threatening “fathers” like Emil Sinclair’s and Goldmund’s fathers, but according to Jung (1977:197) the father may also act as a protection against the dangers of the external world and serve his son as a model persona. These are definitely neither Sinclair’s father’s nor Goldmund’s father’s functions. Narziß as a unique “responsible spiritual father-figure” ironically encourages Goldmund towards the Mother and is reduced to a “practical fatherhood” by negotiating Goldmund’s release from prison. The Jungian perspective that the mother always protects the child against the “darkness of his psyche” (Jung, 1977:197) opposes the notion that the Mother leads her “children” into threatening situations. This is an inevitable part of the liberation process which is recognisable in Demian and Narziß und Goldmund. Franz Kromer’s intimidation is a symptom of Sinclair’s liberation from his parents’ context, while Goldmund’s yearning for freedom as a result of his supplanted mother leads him to murder, theft and immorality (Drewermann, 1995:78-79).

The theme of either personal or collective liberation in Doctorow’s works does not necessarily exhibit specific ties to mother figures in terms of Jung’s psychology. Parks (1991:99) says of Edgar’s mother in World’s fair: “Rose is Apollonian, all order and efficiency and common sense” (cf. Doctorow, 1985b:13) (similar to Edgar’s brother, Donald) whereas his father personifies (somewhat irresponsible) “freedom”: “Dave is a free spirit, the Dionysian, the
impulsive, dreamy, but passionate” (Parks, 1991:99). Rose is reminiscent of Hesse’s Father Worlds whilst Dave’s world is to an extent reminiscent of Goldmund’s “carefree” life.

In another novel by Doctorow, *The waterworks*, the main character, Martin Pemberton, needs to denounce the world of his father, but Doctorow’s concern is less connected to Jung than to a rational, albeit subjective, sense of justice. The New York power structures in the novel are corrupt, marked by “vast-ill-gotten elite wealth in dialectic with mass poverty, squalor and wretchedness” (De Koven, 1995:77). Martin, like the Hesse characters, is not free from dualism: “…he realized in himself his father’s imperial presence, his father’s cruelty rising to a smile in the darkness …” (Doctorow, 1994b:53). However, this dualism is precisely what motivates Martin to distance himself from the self-seeking world of his father. That which distinguishes Martin from his father is his wish to discover the truth about abuse and victimisation (Tokarczyk, 1996:43). Augustus Pemberton, by contrast, hopes to conceal this truth. Martin is obsessed with the desire to find his father because he wants to differentiate himself from the men, including his father, whose “lives have been spent in a moral obtuseness” (Delbanco, 1994:47), in order to achieve his proper place within the social context.

In *Homer & Langley* Langley is disgusted by his authoritarian and bourgeois social context. References to the brothers’ parents are reminiscent of Sinclair’s conservative parents in *Demian*: “When he was going off to war, my parents had a dinner for him, just the family at table – a good roast of beef, and the smell of candle wax and my mother weeping and apologizing for weeping and my father clearing his throat as he proposed a toast” (HL, 16). His mother’s apology and his father proposing a toast are in line with a socially acceptable or requisite support of the War. Langley’s antisocial sentiments became prominent when he was “almost court-martialed for seeming to threaten an officer. He had said, Why am I killing men I don’t know? You have to know someone to want to kill them” (HL, 23). Both Langley and Sinclair are disappointed in their social contexts because they do not acknowledge human beings as valuable individuals (cf. D, 9; DT, 1). Langley’s subsequent “madness” seems to be a result of an attempt to create an alternative to the male-dominated bourgeois social world, namely (together with his brother) an alternative social context that finally becomes a reclusive world. As a result of the War, Langley becomes a social dropout, an *Aussteiger*, which Doctorow confirms in an

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12 “Authoritarian” is used here in the sense of forcing citizens like Langley (as also Demian and Sinclair) to participate in the First World War.
interview with Smallwood (2009:31): “They’re people who opted out. One of my friends found a comparison with Melville’s story “Bartleby, the Scrivener”. That withdrawal”. ¹³

The social context of Welcome to Hard Times is reflected in a “power struggle” between the residents of the town Hard Times and the “Bad Man from Bodie” which is not much of a challenge for the Bad Man because the latter is an incarnation of their own immoral values, ideals and fears. Freese (1987:213) also refers to the Bad Man as a force in the minds of the residents themselves. In the eyes of the town the Bad Man is larger than life and little resistance against him remains. It is also the same spiritual distortion that prompts Clay Turner to become a victimiser instead of a victim. When the Bad Man is “actualised” through the mental or psychological downfall caused by this fear, this ironically also causes a fatal physical downfall. Blue and the rest of the town realise too late that the Bad Man is not invincible as they had thought: “He was just a man …” (WHT, 207). The book portrays an inner struggle which the community had thought to be an external one. It is this mindset that directs Blue’s focalisation, which in turn determines that the fictional world ultimately represents spiritual or psychological defeat.

1.3. Focalised space(s) and events

The relationship between a social context, events and space(s) should be understood in terms of a hermeneutic circle. These are interrelated terms that can only be understood in the context of each other as well as that of the whole text (Blackburn, 1994:172; Abrams & Harpham, 2005:135). Space is essentially social, and social contexts and events are “spatial” in the sense that contexts are set in space and events occur within contexts and spaces. Social meanings are also often found in spaces that are either symbolic, like the wasteland in Welcome to Hard Times, or representative, for example, of abstemious and worldly ways of living, as in the monastery in Narziß und Goldmund.

The construct of a place, like a city, that emerges from the text could be perceived as the intersection between perspectival manipulations and (fictionally) objectified traits (Ronen, 1994:181). The fictional world comes into existence because of this intersection. This is illustrated by the (manipulated) perspectives of Sinclair, Goldmund, Blue and Homer in connection with their experiences of their respective social contexts. The epistemic worlds of

¹³ When Smallwood (2009:31) asks Doctorow, “What kind of opting-out is it to take the world into your home like a museum?” he also concretely presents the idea of an alternative world: “Making another world, pulling the world after you. But it’s a different world: a symbolic world, a doomed world.”
characters contain potentially inaccurate images of the worlds of the narrative, but from the focalising character’s point of view, this image is the actual world itself (Ryan, 2006:649). Lefebvre’s (1991:82-83) argument – that any space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationships – makes sense when considering that represented space is a result of the focaliser’s relationship with his society.

Space cannot be seen as independent from the subject’s (social) experiences. The character’s experience(s) of his social context dictate(s) that he subjectively reshapes his space through focalisation. The nature and atmosphere of the focalised space is embedded in the character’s associations with (social) experiences in a specific space/spaces. Bal (1990:113) recounts that perception is a psychological process dependent on the position of the perceiving person or subject. This process determines the nature of the fictional world because the subject’s consciousness either “colours” or “transforms” it or “disregards” it, in which case a space acquires a meaning reflecting the focaliser’s preoccupations. Esselborn-Krumbiegel (1998:44) maintains that the external settings in *Demian* become virtually irrelevant due to the emphasis of the “inner setting”. External space becomes the frame of the mental process. However, she also remarks that Sinclair’s familiar surroundings become strange and threatening once Franz Kromer starts to blackmail him (Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 1998:44). The way Sinclair focalises his parents’ home is, in fact, the result of his social experience with Kromer. To maintain that spaces become void of “atmospheric meaning” (Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 1998:44) would, however, overlook the uniqueness of space(s) within the personal and social contexts of the book. Where space does occur, it is also a product of focalisation.

In the texts selected for this study, spaces become representative of the characters’ relationships with their social contexts. The monastery is the religious community and contemplative setting that suits Narziß. This space is associated with the intellect and analytical thought that are characteristic of Narziß (Wolf, 2004:288). The “artificial” life of the monastery furthermore functions as a refuge from the external “real” world. “Goldmund’s world” is the sensual, precarious world of a vagabond (Singh, 2006:193) marked by intuition and “unbewusster genialischer Künstlernatur” (Wolf, 2004:288) [the unconscious ingenious nature of a genius] that merge with the world outside of the monastery. Goldmund’s textual actual world, transformed through focalisation as *his world*, is far from a neutral context. His life consists of sensual experiences such as aesthetic appreciation of nature and women and art, physical hardships because of the lack of shelter and injuries and emotional hardships owing to physical realities like the Black Plague. It is the antithesis of the more protected life in the monastery that his father intended for him. The fictional world of *Narziß und Goldmund* questions the social world
of Narziß in which conventional practices are valued as an ideal and acknowledges the worldly life of Goldmund as legitimate – a point which Demian also makes.

One immediately associates space in Homer & Langley with the disposophobic historical house of the actual Homer and Langley Collyer. Because a house that is “crammed with more than 100 tons of moldering junk” (Seaman, 2009:8) is different from “normal” houses, the details about the chaos do support the notion that the house functions as an alternative context, a context differing from conventional social contexts. Just as Hesse’s title Der Steppenwolf (1974a) also conveys a metaphoric spatial and social meaning, the house is also associated with the Collyers’ relationship to their social context. The “insider” identity of the social “outsiders” ironically strengthens the notion of the inevitability of being social beings (cf. HL, 2009:80-81).

Similarly, the treeless wasteland that surrounds the town in Welcome to Hard Times becomes a symbolic representation, not only of Blue’s way of looking at the textual actual world, but also of the other characters’ spiritual states. Since the Bad Man is a “spirit” residing in Hard Times, the title “Welcome to Hard Times” refers to more than just a geographical location: “It is an invitation not just to a place but to a condition” (Parks, 1991:27). The inhabitants of Hard Times strive to establish a “civilisation”, yet their desire for freedom is marked by selfishness and immorality. Consequently, the destruction of the town is not external, but internal/psychological.

Through focalisation, every individual’s experience of the same space, and of every detail of that space, takes on a unique meaning associated with such traits as oppression. In The book of Daniel, a physical space in New York City “becomes” the Cold War after Daniel’s parents have been executed: “Alone in the Cold War, Daniel and Susan run down Tremont Avenue” (Doctorow, 1971:173). Here, focalisation is marked by anamnesis (recollection or reminiscence). The objectified traits of the physical space of Tremont Avenue, representative of New York and the USA, do not remain neutral, but gain associations with the indirect effects of the abuse of power.

Many reviews of Homer & Langley refer to the actual people Homer and Langley Collyer. Alexander’s (1990:137) statement that the “confusion of fiction and history” is most evident in the Coalhouse Walker Jr. story in Ragtime is an example of a common concern expressed in criticism on Doctorow. Although Doctorow’s and Hesse’s settings and historical contexts are

14 “Haller has prided himself on being an outsider, a wolf from the steppes, cut off from bourgeois society and its values” (Ziolkowski, 1966:33).
realistic, their works are definitely not expressions of the “verifiable facts” that Doctorow terms “the power of the regime” (Doctorow, 1994c:152). Rather, the connection between the fictional worlds and the actual world should be regarded in terms of Ryan’s “accessibility relations”, i.e. compatibility between a possible world and a system of reality (cf. Ryan, 1991:31). Closely considering the “psychological credibility” of characters’ mindsets allows one to see behaviour as a possible and credible – a psychological possibility – “if we believe that the mental properties of the characters could be those of members of AW” (Ryan, 1991:45). This possibility is therefore relevant with regard to the contribution of focalisation to the creation of fictional worlds as well as to the relationship between such worlds and the actual one.

1.4. Overview of existing research


Criticism includes divergent focal points such as Hesse’s reception, for example, Drews’s “…bewundert viel und viel gescholten…‘: Hermann Hesse’s Werk zwischen Erfolg und Mißachtung bei Publikum und Literaturkritik” (2005:21-31); the interest in the influence of psychoanalysis, religion or/and considerations of Eastern influences evident in Stephenson’s book; Stephanie Bergold’s PhD dissertation Das west-östliche Lebensprinzip in Hermann Hesses Werk: eine Antwort auf existenzielle Fragen (2001); Joseph Mileck’s Hermann Hesse: between the perils of politics and the allure of the orient (2003) and Adrian Hsia’s Hermann

15 “According to Kripke, possibility is synonymous with accessibility: a world is possible in a system of reality if it is accessible from the world at the center of the system” (Ryan, 1991:31).


17 Because of the large scope of research carried out on Hesse during the past century I will only attempt to put forward recent (and a few relatively recent) representative studies in order to provide the “essence” of what has already been undertaken.
The theme of the individual or the self in Hesse’s works is explored in works such as Eugene L. Stelzig’s *Hermann Hesse’s fictions of the self: autobiography and the confessional imagination* (1988) and in the psychoanalysis-orientated study, David G. Richards’s *The hero’s quest for the self: an archetypal approach to Hesse’s Demian and other novels* (1987). Stelzig (1988:54-55) emphasises the Jungian concept of *Eigensinn* or self-will and the uniqueness of the individual. Richards (1987:27-28), for example, points out the similarity between the ways in which Jung and Hesse portray the self as a union of opposites to become a whole. In a more recent postgraduate study, Jian Ma devotes one chapter in *Stufen des Ich-Seins: Untersuchungen zur “Ich”-Problematik bei Hermann Hesse im europäisch-ostasiatischen Kontext* (2007) to “Das ‘Ich’ als soziales Wesen” (2007:117-135) [“the “I” as a social being”] in *Peter Camenzind, Der Steppenwolf, Gertrud, Ein Stückchen Theologie* and *Siddharta* (with little reference to space), focusing mainly on a comparison of the differences between “I”-concepts in the West and the East. Karalaschwili’s *Hermann Hesses Romanwelt* (1986) also pays attention to the self, defining it in a Jungian manner (Karalaschwili, 1986:138). Although the relevant chapter in this book does not specifically focus on the representation of focalised space it does recognise the symbolic value of space with regard to the inner life of the subject and his development.

Critics have addressed social contexts as a concept in Hesse’s works, for example, in “Hermann Hesse’s politics” by Marco Schickling in *A companion to works of Hermann Hesse* (2009) and Andreas Solbach’s “Alterität und Mobilität: Reisen am Rande der Gesellschaft bei Hermann Hesse” in *Hermann-Hesse-Jahrbuch: Band 1* (2004). However, as with the concept of spaces in Hesse’s works, criticism on the theme of social contexts does not focus directly on the combination of such concepts as focalisation, the individual, social contexts, events, space, fictional worlds and possible worlds.

In the past much attention has also been given to philosophical, religious and especially psychological focal points in Hesse’s works, and specifically C.G. Jung’s influence on Hesse. A postgraduate study, *Hesse im europäisch-ostasiatischen Kontext* (2007) by Mária Bieliková, focuses on religions and philosophy in Hesse’s works. Günter Baumann’s *Hermann Hesse: Dichter und Weiser* (1997b), *Der archetypische Heils Weg*  *Hermann Hesse, C.G. Jung und die*

Although E.L. Doctorow is regarded as a contemporary fiction writer of note and is the author of recently published novels such as Homer & Langley (2009), The march (2005), City of God (2000) and the short story collection Sweet land stories (2004a)\(^{18}\), substantial academic interest in Doctorow’s fiction has been lacking in recent years. This may be because The book of Daniel (1971) and Ragtime (1985a) [1974] – which did attract much critical attention in the form of journal articles in the 1970s and 1980s – are still regarded as his most prominent works. However, a substantial volume of academic literature dealing with a wider range of his fiction exists in the form of books.\(^{19}\) Most of the criticism on Doctorow deals with social concerns and the author’s literary style. Although none of the research on Doctorow specifically focuses on characters, social contexts, events and space(s) in terms of possible/fictional worlds, the available research is, in general, informative and relevant to this study.

1.5. Questions, aims and thesis

The primary questions of this study are: What is the relationship between focalisation and the construction of fictional worlds in the selected works by Hesse and Doctorow, and how can this relationship be explained? The secondary question that follows from this question is: What is the relationship between the focalising character(s), focalised social contexts, events and space(s) in the texts by Hesse and Doctorow in terms of fictional worlds, possible worlds and the actual world?

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\(^{18}\) The following are examples from a relatively small pool of research of which The march elicited the most interest and Sweet land stories the least: “Marching through memory: revising memory in E.L. Doctorow’s The march” by S. Hales (2009); “Reconstruction: photography and history in E.L. Doctorow’s The march” by Erich Seymour and Laura Barrett (2009); “The search for reconciliation in E.L. Doctorow’s City of God” (2006) by Lawrence Wilde; J.R. Griffith’s chapter “Nothing ethically important could happen here’: recovering agency, ethics, and faith in E.L. Doctorow’s City of God’ in his PhD dissertation Writing after the wreck: post-modern ethics and spirituality in fictions by Walker Percy, Toni Morrison, E.L. Doctorow, and Leslie Marmon Silko (2006). Recent studies of an older novel are rare. One such study is “A washerwoman wreaks havoc: moral reckoning in the ‘National Soul’ in E.L. Doctorow’s Ragtime” in Margaret I. Jordan’s African American servitude and historical imaginings: retrospective fiction and representation (2004).

The primary aim of this study is consequently to describe, analyse and explain the relationship between fictional worlds and focalisation in order to determine how fictional worlds are constructed in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s writings. The secondary aim that follows from this purpose is to show that the mindsets of the characters in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works determine focalisation which contributes to the creation of fictional worlds, i.e. that fictional world components like the central (self-focalising) characters, their social contexts, events and spaces are not neutral fictional constructs, but as focalised elements convey personal and social meaning. This is a result of the interaction between characters (the focaliser and his social context) and the consequent associations of the subjective focaliser(s).

The argument of this study is that focalisation in the works by Hermann Hesse and E.L. Doctorow is of narratological significance owing to the synergistic relationship between the focalising and (self-)focalised central character and the focalised social context, events and space of the fictional world. These “building blocks” of the fictional world give rise to a fictional world, a system that is a coherent possible world. The interactive emotional responses and reasonings of characters or Margolin’s “non-actual individuals” with their mindsets or physical, social and mental properties (Margolin, 1989:4) distinguish the focalisation. The perception of the focaliser is ultimately subjective, and in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s work the representation of the textual actual world is influenced by the relationship between the individual and his social context. Because the (non-actual) person/individual or character is not considered independently, but as related to the entire text content, which Bal (1979:7) maintains, the primary conclusion which this study pursues is therefore that focalisation does contribute to the creation of fictional worlds.

By analysing and comparing the fictional worlds of two divergent authors, Hermann Hesse and E.L. Doctorow, this study therefore endeavours to show that fictional worlds do maintain plausible relationships with the actual world. Social interaction affects the consciousness of a hypothetical person within the actual world who communicates about the actual world by filtering or transforming it because of his (or another person’s) affected mindset. Literary texts model this also by transforming the textual actual world20 and its elements like the central (self-

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20 Ryan (1991:unpaginated glossary) defines the “textual actual world” (TAW) as the “image of the TRW” or the “textual reference world”, i.e. the world for which the text claims facts. Doležel (1999:254) defines the “actual world” as the world including “what has actually existed or happened and what will actually exist or happen, as well as what now exists or happens.” The textual actual world is the real past, present and future world of a character as real people understand the real world.
focalising) character, characters as members of the social context, events and space (and everything belonging to it, for example, objects) through a focaliser’s consciousness.

1.6. Method

The focal points of the text analyses are determined by Van Luxemburg’s, Bal’s and Weststeijn’s (1981:181) notion that all elements are focalised: they consider persons, spaces and events to be the most important elements that constitute part of a specific and subjective interpretation. The text analyses and comparisons focus on four central elements derived from this concept: the individual or the central (self-) focalising character, social contexts (that are not explicitly referred to, but that are implied in the elements themselves), events and finally space(s) or landscapes and objects belonging to the space(s)/landscapes in question.

The foundation for considering Hesse’s and Doctorow’s books alongside each other in the text analyses, as well as comparatively, includes theoretical considerations regarding fictional worlds as possible worlds in Marie-Laure Ryan’s book *Possible worlds, artificial intelligence, and narrative theory* (1991) and Ruth Ronen’s principles regarding focalisation and possible worlds in her book *Possible worlds in literary theory* (1994). Theoretical principles with regard to focalisation are mainly those of Mieke Bal and Gérard Genette.21

1.6.1. Possible worlds and fictional worlds

Focalisation of the textual actual world consisting of the focalising consciousness, social contexts, events and space also allows one to perceive the unique world of a fictional text in terms of Ryan’s (1991:43-46) accessibility relations. These include thematic focus, stylistic filtering, historical coherence, socio-economic compatibility, categorial compatibility and psychological credibility. Psychological credibility is of specific importance to this study with regard to its emphasis on mindset-influenced focalisation. “The principle of minimal departure” that Ryan describes in the chapter “Reconstructing the textual universe: The principle of minimal departure” (Ryan, 1991:48-60) is also significant with regard to credible human responses. Ryan (2006:646) considers fiction as not merely a non-actual possible world, but a complete modal system centred around its own actual world, yet whose relations to the actual world make the fictional world “possible” in terms of the actual world as well. The principle of

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21 This study also makes use of theoretical considerations in Ryan’s article “From parallel universes to possible worlds: ontological pluralism in physics, narratology, and narrative” (2006); Lubomír Doležel’s *Heterocosmica: fiction and possible worlds* (1998); Alan Palmer’s *Fictional minds* (2004) and the concepts of theorists such as Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (1983), Seymore Chatman (1986) and William F. Edmiston (1989) with regard to focalisation.
minimal departure also complements Iser’s dynamic process in the sense that information about the textual actual world and the fictional world is not necessarily spelled out to the reader. The latter presupposes that natural laws and conventional principles which are normal in the actual world also apply to the fictional world (unless otherwise specified) (cf. Iser, 1978:170-179; Palmer, 2004:40-41). In this sense the parallel between all possible worlds is that non-actual possibilities can make perfectly coherent systems “which can be described and qualified, imagined and intended and to which one can refer” (Ronen, 1994:25).

Ryan (2006:649) explains that the ontological centres of the texts are surrounded by solar systems formed by private universes, and that each of these subsystems envelops its own epistemic world, which contains the character’s representation of both the actual world and the private worlds of the other characters, i.e. the whole system. The reader can therefore choose whether to see the (textual) actual world of the fictional system through the “coloured glasses” of the focaliser or to remain “objective”. Whereas Hesse’s possible worlds focus more on the individual’s inner world, Doctorow concentrates more closely on social contexts. However, in the texts of both writers, the central characters’ relationships to their social contexts in the fictional narratives (as possible worlds) contribute to the creation of the fictional narratives as possible worlds (Doležel, 1998:ix) – this involves focalisation.

### 1.6.2. Focalisation

As this study is primarily concerned with the creation of coherent fictional possible worlds, Ronen’s views on focalisation are particularly helpful. She explains that Genette aimed to distinguish, in the act of narrative mediation, between the mediating act of *perception* and the mediating act of *narration* (Ronen, 1994:179). However, Ronen also blends the approaches of Bal and Genette in describing focalisation as a principle that governs the elements of the fictional world which are arranged from a certain perspective or from a specific position, as well as what becomes narrated, i.e. “the factor filtering world-components” (Ronen, 1994:179-180). Liebenberg (1996:187) points out the common mistake among theorists and critics of confusing the limiting function of focalisation *à la* Genette and focalisation *à la* Mieke Bal. Yet, Ronen’s combination of Bal’s and Genette’s concepts is useful.

22 The narrated content is selected or restricted and presented to the reader by the narrator, as the focaliser who causes the reader to look at a story as if through a window or at contents passing through a *goulaut*, the neck of a bottle (Genette, 1980:162; Liebenberg, 1966:189,191,196,198; Edmiston, 1989:729).
Since fictional worlds and characters are in an interactive process of “creating” each other, Bal’s and Genette’s principles can be applied to guide the analysis of focalisation through which fictional worlds are created. Ronen (1994:180) argues, in line with Genette, that the modalised structure of a fictional world is the result of acts of focalisation and narration because focalisation stipulates the selection and combination of fictional world components. The focaliser’s choice with regard to what he focuses on and presents, is also psychologically determined. Bal’s argument entails that the perspective/specific position of a character (which is also psychological) “colours” the perceived world and its components.

Genette’s regulation of information, but also the focus and psychological involvement of the focaliser, are crucial with regard to the creation of fictional worlds. Bal (1990:120) poses questions that are very useful in this light: (1) What is focalised by the subject? What does he focus on? She points out here that this need not only be persons, but could be objects, landscapes or events – basically any element could be focalised; (2) How does he do it? What is his mindset? And (3) who focalises the element? In the first question, Bal implicitly refers to space(s) by referring to “landscape”. Places – or spaces – are susceptible to perspectival distortions and manipulations (Ronen, 1994:181). Writers, in this case Hesse and Doctorow, employ this feature specifically for characterisation and the creation of fictional worlds. This is also why Rimmon-Kenan (1983:71) explains that the visual sense of focalisation should include cognitive, emotive and ideological facets. Bal’s second question explicitly emphasises that focalised space(s) can reflect the mindset of the character who is focalising. The focaliser’s mindset also determines the selection of images and language that add to the nature and atmosphere of the focalised objects. All worlds, including the actual world, are perspective-dependent, and are therefore only versions of reality (Ronen, 1994:175). This corresponds with Doctorow’s views on factuality and fictionality, expressed in his essay “False documents” (1977) in which he claims that there is no fiction or non-fiction: there is only narrative (Doctorow, 1994c:163). Ronen (1994:181) asserts that world components in fiction do not exist prior to nor are independent of either focalisation or narration. According to Doctorow, a text that maintains...

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23 Liebenberg refers to Chatman (1986:196) who points out that the “narrator can either elect to tell a part of the whole of a story either neutrally or ‘from’ or ‘through’ one or another character’s ‘consciousness’”. Chatman (1986:196) proposes the term “center” to designate the function of character-mediation and the term “filter” to designate the function of using a character or characters as a “screen”, “filter”, “mirror” or “reflector” of the events, settings, and other characters in a story. “Filter”, as Chatman describes it, therefore refers to another character/other characters, not the narrator himself (the centre). However, it make sense to use the metaphor “filter” for both Sinclair as a retrospective “textual speaker (speech position, voice, source of utterances)” (Margolin, 1989:3) and as a non-actual individual, a member of “some non-actual state of affairs or possible world” (Margolin, 1989:4) because Bal’s filtering focaliser refers to the mindset of the focaliser through which aspects of the textual actual world are “transformed”. Liebenberg (1996:197) (following Genette) also points out that neither the character’s disposition or view, nor his ideology, are independent of the narrator. The characters’ experiences are, if not a reflection of the narrator’s mindset, at least a comment on it.
its own truth is marked by a “regime language” whilst a “language of freedom” (1994c:153) exists as part of Doctorow’s ideal of “a multiplicity of witnesses”.

1.7. Overview of the chapters

Chapter 2 presents the main theoretical points of departure for this study which, as indicated, argues that focalisation contributes to the creation of fictional worlds. It does so by examining the concepts “possible worlds”, “fictional worlds” and “focalisation”, critically considering existing research on these concepts and establishing the interrelations between focalisation, fictional worlds, possible worlds and the actual world. This chapter also expounds on the concept of “possible worlds” as the connection between “focalisation” and “fictional worlds”. This connection is based on the common factor of “possibility” that exists in both the actual world and fictional worlds. “Possibility” in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction relates to specifically credible human responses or what Ryan (1991:45) terms “psychological credibility”. Finally the chapter also provides working definitions of key concepts such as “focalisation”, “fictional worlds” and “possible worlds”.

Chapter 3 establishes Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works of fiction as comparable with regard to the way in which fictional worlds come about through focalisation. This chapter considers the literary concerns of the two writers individually and comparatively. Specific attention is paid to the connections between a fictional focalising individual/individuals, fictional worlds as possible worlds and the actual world that were introduced in Chapter 2. The chapter also refers to the notion of “psychological credibility” as a central and similar facet of focalisation in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s realistic fiction.

Chapter 4 furnishes the first text analysis, of Hesse’s Demian, that examines and illustrates how focalisation contributes to constituting a fictional world. As a central focalising individual, Emil Sinclair is a “building block” of the fictional world that relates to Van Luxemburg’s, Bal’s and Weststeijn’s (1981:181-182) “building block(s)”, namely “characters” apart from space(s) and events. As an introductory text analysis, this chapter offers an “overview” or illustration of the

24 Doctorow comments in an interview with Friedl and Schulz (1988b:113): “... since history can be composed, you see, then you want to have as many people active in the composition as possible. A kind of democracy of perception. ... And since we're not only talking about history, but reality as well, then it seems to me a noble aspiration of a human community to endow itself with a multiplicity of witnesses, all from this ideal of seeing through the phenomena to the truth”. This is reminiscent of the writer’s thought in Sherwood Anderson’s Winesburg, Ohio: A group of tales of Ohio small town life (1919:4) that “in the beginning when the world was young” each man-made truth was a “composite of a great many vague thoughts” which also had the ability to make people grotesques, becoming a falsehood when “one of the people took one of the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it” (Anderson, 1919:5). Doctorow similarly suggests that truth is attainable not as unified and absolute, but as an unspecified sense of truth via knowledge of a variety of possibly partly flawed or incomplete ideas that are nevertheless also partly accurate.
synergistic interrelationships that exist between all four of the “building blocks” addressed in this study. It discusses the central individual as a focaliser, focalised social contexts, space(s) and events as elements that contribute to the composition of the fictional world. This chapter also argues that the fictional world can be seen as a kind of “self-portrait” of Sinclair as the focaliser, through the focalised “building blocks”.

The second text analysis, Chapter 5, concentrates on a fictional “social context” as a “building block” in Doctorow’s *Welcome to Hard Times*. As Chapter 4 shows, the “building blocks” are so interdependent that an “exclusive” focus on one “building block” is impossible. The focus always returns to the focalising individual(s), such as Emil Sinclair in *Demian*, Blue in *Welcome to Hard Times*, Goldmund in *Narziß und Goldmund* and Homer and Langley Collyer in *Homer & Langley*. An analysis of *Welcome to Hard Times* reveals that the focalised textual actual world/the fictional world gains both a “personal” character as well as a “social” character because of the focalising individual’s experiences with his social context that influence his perceptions.

In *Narziß und Goldmund*, as in *Welcome to Hard Times* (as well as in *Demian* and *Homer & Langley*), events in social contexts necessarily imply interactions with other people. *Narziß und Goldmund* therefore also consists of the “events” of Goldmund’s life “intersecting” with other characters’ lives which are notably interdependent considerations of a social nature. Events are also formed through the “possible actual world value” of focalisation. Chapter 6 on *Narziß und Goldmund* therefore considers fictional events as a significant “building block”.

Not only characters, social contexts and events, but also spaces contribute to the fictional world of a novel, as in Doctorow’s *Homer & Langley*. By focusing on spaces in Chapter 7 one sees that this “building block” too is interdependent with the focalising character, his social context and events. This chapter also highlights the concept that realism in Doctorow’s work is not limited to external correspondences with the actual world with regard to locations and their (actual world) history. Rather, the fictional world comes into being through the “possible world-ness”, actual world possibility or psychological credibility of the experiences of the characters together with their inner/mental and emotional reactions which are based on the interactions with their social context(s) that affect their focalisation.

Chapter 8 contains a collection of comparisons between the novels of Hesse and Doctorow. Each novel, with its focus on the “building blocks” as presented in the text analyses, is compared to the other three novels with the relevant focus in mind. In this way one observes that in each novel a synergistic relationship exists between the “building blocks”, namely the focalising and
focalised central character(s), the focalised social contexts and the characters that constitute this social context, focalised events and focalised spaces. These “building blocks” collectively contribute to forming the fictional world.

1.8. Conclusion

This study advocates the view that all actual world features are significant with regard to establishing fictional worlds because of similarities between the mindsets, experiences and representations of real people and “nonactual individuals” (Margolin, 1987:107). However, the relationships between the fictional worlds in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works and the actual world have always been problematic. This is so in Hesse’s case because of sometimes indiscriminate references to Hesse’s works and their protagonists as based on the author’s own life, for example, observations like Serrano’s (1966:5) that Hesse “had been forced to find Demian within himself”; these blur the borders of the fictional and the actual world. Yet, Hesse’s experiences as relayed in autobiographic descriptions and letters by the author could of course be used to measure the “flesh and blood human being”, “radically different” from fictional individuals with regard to “the underlying differences in mode of existence and in ontological features between actual and nonactual human individuals” (Margolin, 1987:108) that would certainly yield a source of psychological relations.

However, the Hermann Hesse in, for example, Alois Prinz’s “Und jedem Anfang wohnt ein Zauber inne”: Die Lebensgeschichte des Hermann Hesse (2006) [“Every beginning has a magic beginning”: The story of Hermann Hesse’s life] or the “I” in his letters would also share the same mode of existence as a fictional character but, once again, not that of the “flesh and blood human being”. Yet, the reader has the capacity to access nonactual worlds through, for example, appreciating characters’ subjective mindsets marked by emotions of desire, despair, hope, delight, disappointment, love, hate and so forth that are just as real in the actual world as they are in fictional worlds.

In Doctorow’s case, the relationships between the fictional worlds and the actual world have also always been “problematic”. This “problematic relationship” arises from the author’s penchant for not only borrowing “brute facts” and “realemes”\(^\text{25}\) i.e. “semiotized things” that are

\(^{25}\) Even-Zohar (1980:67) points out that “realemes” or “items of reality”, i.e. all things extant “‘there’ in the outside world” such as persons, natural phenomena, voices and furniture, gestures and faces, constitute a cultural repertory and in literary works “must be taken as members of a structured system, which is the source of their existence and the principle governing their appearance in utterances, i.e., a constraint on their insertability.” Cf. Dolezel (1998:21).
reconstructions of real-world objects, individuals and properties (McHale, 1993:86), but also transmogrifying or transforming them. He “anchors” fictional stories like *The book of Daniel* and *Homer & Langley* in historical events and combines them with actual places to create a fictional location (Coste, 1989:100; cf. Doležel, 1998:21). Yet, Doctorow’s work is never meant as “factually accurate”, but it is *truthful* for the actual world. Doctorow (1994c:64) remarks in “False documents” about writers of fiction:

> [W]e have it in us to compose false documents more valid, more real, more truthful than the “true” documents of the politicians or the journalists or the psychologists. … “In a writer’s eyes”, said Emerson, “anything which can be thought can be written; the writer is the faculty of reporting and the universe is the possibility of being reported”.

Both Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works achieve this kind of truthfulness because the events they choose to report about, namely believable human experiences, are only “lies” with regard to the discrepancy between the modes of existence. Doctorow (1994c:164) refers to dreams as “the first false documents”: “They are never real, they are never factual; nevertheless they control us, purge us, mediate our baser natures, and prophesy our fate”. Dreams, like fictional worlds, are shaped by real human experiences that direct the dreamer’s focalisation (like a character’s focalisation) in order to create a nonactual world with undeniable connections to the actual world.

As this study endeavours to clarify the relationships between the fictional worlds of Hermann Hesse and E.L. Doctorow and the actual world in terms of possible worlds theory and its contribution to creating fictional worlds, a theoretical framework focusing on possible worlds, fictional worlds as possible worlds and focalisation is necessary – which Chapter 2 provides
Chapter 2

The interrelations between possible worlds, fictional worlds and focalisation in theory

2. Introduction

A discussion of how a fictional world comes about could be regarded as a constructivist narratological study in the sense that it explores a narrative’s “‘world-making activity’” (Ryan, 1991:110). Subjectivity, perspectivity, constructivity of experience, recollection, cognition and emotion constitute the individual perspectives of narrators and characters that shape the subjective-world models (Nünning, 2001:209-210). Nünning (2009:384) also identifies position, personality and values as factors that influence perspective/point of view (Niederhoff, 2009b:384). These factors enable one to regard a fictional world as a possible one because they are “actual world phenomena” that influence fictional perspective/point of view and focalisation. Focalisation is a significant aspect of this fictional world-making activity because the narrator represents his and/or other characters’ perceptions of their worlds through the act of narration. The central question of this chapter is therefore: What are the interconnections between possible worlds, fictional worlds and focalisation as part of narration? The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical basis for studying the selected novels by Hesse and Doctorow with regard to the said relationships.

The theoretical basis functions as a means of connecting actual world processes/experiences to a character’s subjectivity in his textual actual world. Fictional processes/experiences of a focalising narrator/character, akin to actual processes/experiences, comprise the “creative” or fictional world-constitutive impetus of focalisation that serves as a literary technique of the author in creating a fictional world. Through the relations of a fictional world to the actual world, a fictional world can be considered to be a possible world. The actual world processes/experiences contribute to the creation of the fictional world which is therefore a possible world. The “actual world nature” of focalisation, i.e. processes/experiences that characterise focalisation in fiction that are also possible in the actual world in the texts by Hesse and Doctorow, enables readers to regard a fictional world as a “possible world”. The world is “possible” not in the sense that a precise set of fictional circumstances has the potential to “(re)occur” in the actual world, but that a set of potential and actual circumstances in the actual world (that has occurred and/or may reoccur in the future) may be conceivable in a fictional world.
The interrelations between possible worlds, fictional worlds, the actual world and focalisation serve as a basis for comparing *Demian*, *Narziß und Goldmund*, *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Homer & Langley* to one another despite the different backgrounds of Hesse and Doctorow. The similarities between the fictional worlds, despite the marked differences, are indicative of fictional processes that one could also relate to other works of fiction.

This chapter will focus on the concepts of “possible worlds”, “fictional worlds” and “focalisation” and on identifying interrelations and relevant aspects for this study. The interest in possible worlds pertains specifically to the relationship between possible worlds and fictional worlds as well as their relationship to focalisation. The actual world is also an aspect of the interrelations between the main concepts that will be explored. Ryan (1991:vii) refers to the actual world as the centre of our system of reality, with “alternative possible worlds” that exist in a modal system of reality. Her definition of the “textual actual world” is “the image of the textual reference world proposed by the text. The authority that determines the facts of the textual actual world is the actual sender or the author” (1991:vii). The textual actual world is thus the actual world of the characters within the fictional world of the literary text.

However, the dependence on the textual reference world or the “world for which the text claims facts; the world in which the propositions asserted by the text are to be valued” (Ryan, 1991:vii), requiring an author, a narrator and characters, already points to the text’s dependence on a constructed consciousness. The fictional consciousnesses of the focalisers in the texts selected for this study consequently also bear similarities with actual (world) consciousnesses. Fictional worlds are the focalised versions of Ryan’s textual actual world – of which the “narratorial actual world”, what the narrator presents as a fact of the textual reference world (Ryan, 1991:vii), is necessarily also part. This chapter will also address focalisation and relevant aspects of different notions regarding this concept. The conclusion will present a set of working definitions and descriptions to serve as an analytical point of departure and framework for this study.
Chapter 2: The interrelations between possible worlds, fictional worlds and focalisation in theory

(a) actual world processes / experiences as the creative impulses for narration of which focalisation is necessarily a part

(c) the fictional world as a possible world because of actual world relations

(b) the fictional world

Figure 1: A schematic representation of the process by which a fictional world becomes a possible world.

Hermann Hesse  focalisation E. L. Doctorow

fictional worlds as possible worlds

Figure 2: A schematic representation of the comparable area between Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction: fictional worlds constituted by focalisation.
A central concept of this thesis is that focalisation changes the nature of objects in the textual actual world and consequently determines the fictional world and its state. The manner of perception that involves literal visual perception and metaphorical “sight”, or how a focaliser experiences and understands his world, transforms the nature of the objects that form the fictional world. The phrase “fictional world” here denotes the sum total of focalised objects, i.e. all the elements of the represented textual actual world, namely the central individual(s), the social context(s), characters, events and space(s). When Blue in Welcome to Hard Times comments that the Bad Man from Bodie never left the town, “it was waiting only for the proper light to see him where he’s been all the time” (WHT, 195), the focus and nature of the narration contribute to the forming of the fictional world marked by a recognition that the textual actual world is seen through Blue as a filter. Fear, detachment from any micro- and macro-community, self-centredness etcetera, i.e. all that the Bad Man represents, characterise the perspective/point of view of the filter or Blue’s disposition.

The representation through selection of what becomes narrated also comprises a fundamental aspect of how a fictional world is shaped. Genette describes this aspect of focalisation in terms of a goulot (Liebenberg, 1996:198) which Jane E. Lewin (Genette, 1988:74) translates as an “information-conveying pipe” and Liebenberg (1996:198) as “the neck of a bottle” that retains and lets information through. The represented experiences of narrators and characters – either reliably or unreliably represented – and selected for the narrated content, determine the composition of the fictional world. The content of the fictional world is therefore a matter of who conveys what information. Hence one needs to examine the nature of the subject matter, namely the components of the narratorial actual world. The choice or selection of the subject matter reflects either the direct or the indirect interest and commitment of the narrator to represent his world in a specific way, i.e. through either his own or another character’s or other characters’ frame(s) of mind.

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26 “Change” is used to denote the difference occurring between how the focaliser perceives and experiences his textual actual world and the hypothetically inferred state of the textual actual world, unaffected by focalisation of the central character and/or how other characters experience the textual actual world.

27 Jahn’s (1996:242-243) model of vision includes a field of vision “taken in by an eye and its shape determined by an angle of vision”. The eye is a lens (L) that collects rays by refraction – a kind of controlled distortion – in a ‘burning point’ or focus (F1) (Jahn, 1996:242). A world (W) surrounds a field of vision (V) that surrounds the focus or area in focus (F2). Within the framework of this study, this model applies perfectly to the actual world. However, a fictional world, as understood in this thesis, is in terms of this model the equivalent of the “subsection of the visual field”, the (selected) focus or area in focus (F2) (cf. Jahn, 1996:242) that is a focalised construct. The field of vision and the world are, within the terms of this study, not external to the (focalised) area in focus, but equivalent to it. Nieragden’s (2002:688) notion that a character’s perspective is never really autonomous supports this argument. What a character perceives and how he perceives situations, actions, persons (the objects of focalisation) of his fictional world are always part of the narrative act, being “directly dependent on the narrator’s criteria of inclusion and selection.” In the texts selected for this study, the contents selected and included are either mediated by a consciousness that focalises retrospectively, as Emil Sinclair does, and Blue and Homer Collyer mostly do, or through characters such as those in Narzilli und Goldmund.
The narrator as a focaliser or focalising character and all the focalised objects, i.e. the total focalised content of the fictional world, participate in an interactive process. As a result the collective content of the textual world does not remain neutral. Ronen (1994:180) describes focalisation as “one aspect determining what gets narrated, the factor filtering world-components” which, as remarked earlier, is a useful combination of Genette’s (cf. 1988:74,64 & 1980:162) and Bal’s (cf. 1990:119) understandings of focalisation. The narrator and characters do not perceive objects, i.e. the “people” of their world (the characters), events, spaces and tangible items in a detached manner. The narrator not only lets information about the textual actual world through, but this information is also “filtered” by himself and/or characters when relaying his own or others’ perspectives.28

There are certain factors that influence the selection and filtering, i.e. the focalisation of perceived objects that form the fictional world. For example, personality or individuality (character traits, predisposition and disposition, personal abilities, strengths and shortcomings), (social) identity (gender, age, roles and status) and experiences in the socio-historical context of the narrator and/or characters affect the manner in which the narrator and/or characters perceive components of their worlds.

To recapitulate: This chapter and study argue that one must consider the interrelations between fictional worlds as possible worlds mediated by a focaliser or focalisers. Regarding a fictional world as a possible world implies that a relationship between the actual world and the fictional world exists. This actual world “aspect” or “value” of a fictional world characterises focalisation which contributes to the forming of fictional worlds. It is important to consider the concept “possible worlds” because its relation to the actual world sheds light on how focalisation contributes to the construction of fictional worlds. Two useful and different notions of focalisation, namely the choice of narrated subject matter and how the narrator and/or characters “sees” or experiences selected objects are therefore relevant.

In order to establish the connections between possible worlds, fictional worlds and focalisation a point of departure with regard to these concepts is necessary. This chapter will work towards a

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28 First-person narrators like Emil Sinclair, Blue and Homer Collyer are examples of focalisers that are simultaneously bottle-necks and filters. Whilst it may appear that Goldmund and Langley do not determine what information is narrated, they certainly filter it. However, one could argue, focalising characters who are not narrators may also influence what information is chosen to be conveyed. The central role that Langley plays in the narrator’s, his brother’s, life contributes to Langley’s influence on the selection of the information. The omniscient narrator’s “interest” in and “sympathetic attitude” to Goldmund in combination with a narrative technique such as free indirect speech that the narrator uses to identify with the state of mind of a character (cf. Cohn, 1978:112) also determine that the narrator conveys information that is relevant for Goldmund.
reasonably eclectic and integrative approach, especially with regard to the concepts focalisation and fictional worlds as possible worlds. This is necessary due to differences among theoreticians with regard to these concepts.29

2.1. Possible worlds: The bridge between the actual world and the fictional world

2.1.1. The possibility of fictional worlds through actual world principles such as causality, imaginability and plausibility

Considering “actual world elements” such as causality, imaginability and plausibility30, one comes to the conclusion that a fictional world is indeed a kind of “possible world” – although “fictional worlds are finite and incomplete, whereas possible worlds of logic are infinite and complete” (Fořt, 2006:274). Ronen argues that possible worlds relate exclusively to the actual world and that fictional worlds would “require an alternative principle, or compatibility or the like, to distinguish between ‘possible’ and ‘impossible’ fictional worlds” (Ronen, 1996:25). This basically means that “fictional worlds” should not be termed “possible worlds”. In this section it is argued that qualifying fictional worlds as possible worlds does not imply that actual possibilities and fictional circumstances are the same. A fictional world is a kind of possible world because fictional circumstances, events, behaviour and the like could be regarded as “possible” in terms of the actual world on the basis of possibility in the sense of imaginability, plausibility and causal relations. Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works are comparable on this basis. The fictional worlds of both authors examined in this study generally share a similar relationship to actuality and its possibilities.

For example, the relationship between the characters and the textual reference world and its “physical” elements may, depending on the reader, either appear to be familiar or foreign. But the relationship between the fictional individual and his world is familiar for a hypothetical actual world reader on the basis of such (actual world) principles as the three just mentioned.

29 Niederhoff (2009a:115-123) has pinned down the differences and correspondences between focalisation according to Genette, who regards focalisation in terms of information regulation, and other theoreticians. Niederhoff argues that Bal’s use of the term “focalisation” approximates “point of view” and “perception” too closely – comparable to Margolin (2009), Herman & Vervaeck (2004) and Prince (2001): “Bal’s influential revision of Genette’s theory is another example of the reinterpretation of focalization in terms of point of view, although she is more aware of this than others” (Niederhoff, 2009a:118). Ronen (1996:25) argues that fictional worlds are not “possible worlds” whilst Dołężeł (1998:16) allows fictional worlds to be “nonactualized possible worlds” and Ryan (1991:109) explains that the “theory of possible worlds is applicable not only to the relation of a textual system of reality to our own native system, but also to the internal description of the semantic universe projected by the text – whether or not this universe is presented as a reflection of the system centered around AW” (i.e. the actual world).

30 These concepts are interrelated because causality is employed here to denote causes and effects that are imaginable and plausible in actual world terms, while imaginability and plausibility refer to any fictional manifestations such as causes and effects, human reactions or intellectual and emotional responses, the nature of social contexts, events and “recognisable” spaces, objects etcetera that are also possible in the actual world.
Some spaces in, for example, Haruki Murakami’s *Norwegian Wood* (1987) may be out of the ordinary for a Western reader, but they are still recognisable because of the reader’s knowledge of the actual world31 that the focaliser presents to the reader.32 Because possibilities in fictional worlds relate to actual world principles, Hesse’s, Doctorow’s (and other authors’) works of fiction can and do relate to the actual world.

A fictional world is possible in actual world terms in the sense that human behaviour and the experience of social contexts, events and spaces in a novel, a drama, a film, and so on may evoke actual human behaviour and experiences in general or correspond with specific actual human behaviour and experiences. The basis of possible worlds according to Ryan is the “set-theoretical idea that reality – the sum of the imaginable – is a universe composed of a plurality of distinct elements” (2006:446). Ryan (2006:446) draws on Kripke’s modal system to describe what possible worlds are: this reality or universe possesses a hierarchical structure with one “well-designated element”, namely the “actual world” in opposition to all the other members of the set of satellites that are the possible worlds. These satellites can only be “possible worlds” if there are “accessibility relations” (2006:446), i.e. “a world is possible in a system of reality if it is accessible from the world at the center of the system” (Ryan, 1991:31). There is a direct relation between “actual” and “imaginable” that is plausible. The sum of the imaginable includes both the real and the unreal.

The adjective “possible” implies a connection between the actual world and an alternative, non-existing or unreal world. For example, it is imaginable in the actual world that a future actual world exists in which a woman is the President of the USA. If one thinks of possible worlds as connected to the actual world, as non-realised versions, the actual world precedes the possible

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31 A Western reader is cognizant of the fact that though a “café”, a “dining hall”, Naoko’s “room” etc. (Murakami, 1987:193-195) would differ from cafés, dining halls and rooms in Western countries they would be similar to such spaces in the actual Japan, but he still uses his own spatial frame of reference to access the Japanese fictional world of *Norwegian Wood* just as a Japanese reader, who has not necessarily visited Europe before, would use his acquaintance with his actual world to access the beginning of the novel: “I was 37 then, strapped in my seat as the huge 747 plunged through dense cloud cover on approach to Hamburg airport. Cold November rains drenched the earth, lending everything the gloomy air of a Flemish landscape: the ground crew in waterproofs, a flag atop a squat building, a BMW bill-board. So – Germany again” (Murakami, 1987:1).

32 Fludernik (2001:623) uses the term “narrativization” to indicate that when readers read narrative texts, they “project real-life parameters into the reading process, and, if at all possible, treat the text as a real-life instance of narrating”. She considers “those modernist texts that present us with the very subjective world of a protagonist through whose consciousness the narrative is focalised” as “different from real life” or non-natural. “As Stanzel has outlined, in such reflectoral narratives, the reader has the illusion of direct access to the reflector’s mind and seems to experience the fictional world immediately, that is to say, unmediated by a narrator’s discourse” (Fludernik, 2001:624). Whether the reader willingly submits to this illusion, the fact remains that a fictional world is mediated and is therefore indeed artificial. Yet, the credibility of the illusion in terms of the actual world illustrates the specific possible-ness of fiction. One could infer that this is due to the “realism of perception and subjectivity” that Fludernik (2001:625) ascribes to the modernist consciousness novel. Nünning (2001:210) remarks that what Ryan (1991:21) terms the “pseudoreality that characters have for the reader” invites the reader “to project upon a fictional world everything he or she knows about real persons and the factors that influence their subjective worldviews”. Nünning (2001:211) furthermore identifies “the totality of an individual’s knowledge and belief sets, intentions, psychological traits, attitudes, ideological stance, and system of values and norms that have been internalized” as governing a character-perspective.
world that either materialises and then changes its status from possible to actual: Jane and Mark might have married at one point, and they did. It could also remain possible: A new species of life might evolve on earth; or it was in the past at one point possible, but now it is impossible. It could also remain a possibility that has been actualised differently: If Peter had driven slowly enough, he might have avoided the accident, but he crashed into a tree because he drove too fast. The possibilities imply different worlds from the one that actually is. The hypothetical worlds are non-actualised worlds that either could actualise, (still) can, will, will not actualise, could not have actualised or could have actualised.

These hypothetical possibilities do differ from fictional worlds, but maintaining that a fictional world is a kind of possible world does not mean ignoring similarities between possible worlds and fictional worlds. The possibilities above tie in with the way in which Ronen views possible worlds because a corresponding transworld identity exists between the possible worlds and the actual world. Regarding fictional worlds, Ronen (1996:24) argues that the notion of transworld identity is an aspect of a “possible world framework that welcomes, and at the same time problematizes an analogy with the notion of fictionality” and adds that possible worlds are “tied to the logic and probabilities of actuality”, which is reminiscent of Plantinga’s view of a possible world – a way things could have been or could be, and a possible state of affairs of some kind, that do not violate the laws of logic (Pavel, 1986:50). Fictional worlds, on the other hand, “should be able to accommodate a logic that deviates from standard logic” (Ronen, 1996:21). Possible worlds are, according to Ronen, therefore non-actual, but possible, states exclusively relating to the actual world. In this light fictional worlds are non-actual states that are impossible or illogical with regard to actuality.

However, relying on the indirectness of literary communication, Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictional worlds are “logical” and “possible” with regard to actuality. According to Ronen (1996:21; my italics – PvdM) a possible world is “a model constituted of a set of objects, related in certain ways and maintaining some relationship with the actual state of the world”. If one bears the actual world principles imaginability, plausibility and causality of fictional worlds in mind, Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction would then match this criterion. Their fictional worlds are certainly not possible worlds in the sense of precise “other ways the entire world might have
been” (Ronen, 1996:22) and, one might add, could be in the future. Rather, fictional worlds as individual constructs are finite and incomplete possibilities (cf. Fořt, 2006:274) that comment on how the actual world functions. As such they should be reconsidered as “possible worlds” in the sense Ronen (1996:24) describes the concept, namely as alternative worlds that allow trans-identification with actual object sets, i.e. as non-actual worlds with elements that are possible in the actual world.

2.1.2. The actual world and the textual actual world as subjected to “focalisation”/frames of mind and causality as elements of a connecting possibility

The relationship between a fictional world as a possible world and actuality must be considered if one were to describe a fictional world as the focalised textual actual world of the narrator or focalising character. One can differentiate between the textual actual world – hypothetically speaking – “as it really is” and the textual actual world as experienced and/or represented by the narrator and/or experienced by a character. The fictional world is in this sense “mimetic” of – or rather comparable to – the actual world, and possible. The interaction between an individual and the actual world also leads to the creation of a mental construct within the consciousness of the person. Its nature doubtlessly differs from the world “as it objectively really is” or from other mental constructs of others that have “processed” the world differently. In literary texts the textual actual world is “processed” through the human-like experiences of the focaliser. The focalised version of the textual actual world is the fictional world.

The implied image of a system of “reality” in the textual world is the basis of the focalised textual actual world. The fictional world is therefore a projection of a textual nature. As in the texts by Hesse and Doctorow, the fictional world cannot exist independently from the narrator and the focalising characters. The effects of the textual actual world on the narrator and the

33 Here one thinks of, for example, the theme of the abuse of political power in Oceania in George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) that evokes actual world appearances such as nationalism, Communism, dictatorship, the repression of individual rights etc., but that does not precisely mirror a specific political state in the actual world.

34 Ryan (1985:720) refers to the actual world of a narrative universe as intuitively clear to the reader. It is simply the sphere regarded as real by the characters, who “thus relate to it in the same way we do to the ‘reality’ of which we are members.”

35 Doležel (1988:483) states that although possible worlds semantics “has no trouble including the most fantastic worlds, far removed from, or contradictory to ‘reality’”, it “does not exclude from its scope fictional worlds similar or analogous to the actual world”. He explains that the “mimetic function is a formula for integrating fictions into the actual world. Mimetic semantics is situated within a one-world model frame. A radical alternative to mimesis will be a fictional semantics defined within a multiple-world model frame. Mimetic semantics will be replaced by possible-worlds semantics of fictionality” (Doležel, 1988:481).

36 The reader may be able to imagine by means of inference, and hypothetically describe, the textual actual world “as it really is”, i.e. free from a focalising consciousness. However, the reality of the textual world which one reads, is unalterably fixed to focalisation.
characters are represented by narration which shapes the textual actual world into the form that constitutes the textual reference world and the fictional world. Focalisation therefore turns the textual actual world into the textual reference world and the fictional world.

The textual reference world is a result of reactions to imaginable causality in a fictional world. A possible world-like intent: “John plans to study at Blarney University and to become a talk-show host” (Ryan, 1991:20) relies on causality. Fictional worlds and possible worlds are therefore connected with actuality because of imaginability, plausibility – and causality. A fictional world is credible if it models actual world causality relations logically – especially with regard to human reactions like subjective experiences – which lends it psychological credibility. “Psychological credibility” or “the plausible portrayal of human psychology” (Ryan, 1991:45) is crucial with regard to the “mental aspect” of focalisation. It is significant because a fictional world relies on the reader’s appreciation of the representation of the textual actual world as a credible psychologically processed construct, i.e. focalised by a narrator/character that the reader would consider a relatable “complete human being” (cf. Ryan, 1991:45). The hypothetical actual world reader who uses the actual world as a frame of reference for accessing the fictional world is therefore in this sense an indispensable common denominator between the actual world and the fictional world. Considering a fictional world as a possible world, one can think of the similarity between “imagined” and “imaginable”, for example, of what is psychologically credible. There is virtually no difference between the imaginable and the imagined because merely thinking of what is imaginable immediately causes it to be imagined. The moment when it is imagined, it could be a possibility or a fiction.

Transworld identification with regard to imaginable and plausible actual possible worlds is direct, but with regard to fiction one has to take an indirect route. The Bad Man’s return to Hard Times that coincides with the inhabitants’ dejected state may seem disconnected. As a “real” person in the textual actual world of the novel, his return seems to be merely accidental, but in terms of the book’s metaphoric and allegorical causality it makes sense. His return points to the “intangible, persistent quality of evil” and the recreation of the past (Tokarczyk, 2000:62) that are accompanied by causal motifs that one would also find in the actual world, namely ambition, self-centredness, fear and so on that are logical, imaginable and probable. These motifs function

37 “The world for which the text claims facts; the world in which the propositions asserted by the text are to be valued. TRW is the center of a system of reality comprising APWs” (alternative possible worlds in modal systems of reality) (Ryan, 1991: unpaginated glossary).
as accessibility relations between the actual world and the fictional world that allow transworld identification.

The similarity between the actual world and the textual actual world is that both are subject to literal and abstract perception. Possible worlds are in this sense a result of perceived actuality in both the actual world and in a textual actual world. This study does not argue that a possible world as Ronen describes it, i.e. the imaginable situated in the actual world, and a fictional world exhibit the same kind of relationship to actuality. However, the similarity is that focalising narrators/characters approach the textual actual world like the way in which actual people approach the actual world. During the narration and focalisation when the fictional world comes into being, the focalising character considers his own individuality, social context, events and spaces from his specific point of view and frame of mind.

How a fictional world is shaped can therefore be compared to the manner in which the actual world is approached by actual or real people. Actual worlds and textual actual worlds are presupposed, pre-interpreted but subject to “re-creation”. The whole actual world as planet earth, and also the actual world as represented by, for example, a place in a city that exists prior to being experienced, are constantly “re-created” differently by different people. A striking example of the way in which different “worlds” exist due to different experiences is Daniel’s focalisation of a space marked by an ironic coexistence of various people in the restaurant where Susan attempted to commit suicide in *The book of Daniel*.

Daniel leaving the Howard Johnson’s dining room perceived walking ahead of him toward the crowds of people waiting for a table, the draped aqua ass of the hostess ... Daniel made his way through the hungry families standing on tiptoe. Kids swarmed in front of the candy display. Popcorn lay in the carpet. ... On the other side of the wall, Susan had opened her veins and stood over the toilet until she fainted. He tried to get the picture (Doctorow, 1971:28).

The crowds of people and families focus on the possibility of obtaining food and might experience the world as uncomfortable. The hostess might focus on her tedious job and experience the world as dull. The children, focusing on the colourful candy, might experience the world as exciting. These superficial experiences are ironic, in contrast to Susan’s focus on her fate as a proxy victim and her interpretation of the world as unbearable.

It could be that a hypothetical reader of *The book of Daniel* has never paid attention to the possibility of a situation like the one above in the actual world, but because he is able to
transpose his understanding of the completeness of the actual world onto fiction he accepts that “personal parallel worlds” like these above could also exist in fiction. Referring to Cresswell, Proudfoot (2006:11) identifies possible worlds as complete situations that supply everything owing to the connections between possible worlds and actuality, but regards this as a difficulty for a possible worlds semantics of fictional discourse. The reader is therefore obliged to rely on his experience of the actual world as his frame of reference, to make sense of not only a possible world that is directly related to the actual world, but also of a fictional world as perceived and/or represented by the focalising narrator/characters.

2.1.3. The actual world as a frame of reference for accessing textual actual worlds and fictional worlds and truthfulness as a basis of inter-world comparisons

It is logical that a fictional world could never be as extensive as the actual world as it is contained by the parameters of mental conception, i.e. the finite span of a literary text. The reader, however, has no difficulty in thinking of the fictional world as “complete” by “extending” the fictional world with actual world elements. Pavel (1986:55) refers to Walton who argues that readers become, in a sense, part of a fictional world while reading and that the fictional world is “taken as real”. Ryan (1985:720) alludes to the reader’s/viewer’s willingness to understand/decode the fictional worlds in actual world terms by pointing out that: “We know of course that this world, like all its satellites, is the creation of the author’s mind; but the reader observing the rules of the game of fiction behaves as if it were autonomous.” Because the reader participates in a game of make-believe one might weep at the tragic end of a character such as Anna Karenina’s (Pavel, 1986:55). The reader applies his understanding of the actual world to the fictional world.

One’s understanding of both the actual world and fictional worlds involves accepting an implied completeness. A hypothetical reader attempts to cooperate with the narrator and to use his own knowledge and experience to fill in gaps or background as required (Dixon & Bortolussi, 2001:283-284). Although one cannot always think about or focus on all the other countries of the world or all the parts of one’s own country in the actual world, one knows that life also continues there. In a text like Welcome to Hard Times with its circumstances that bear

38 Doctorow describes the transaction between the consciousness of a reader in the actual world and the (focalising) consciousness in the fictional world in his essay “False documents”, writing that “instructive emotion is generated in the reader from the illusion of suffering an experience not his own. A novel is a printed circuit through which flows the force of a reader’s own life” (Doctorow, 1994c:151). Jannidis (2009:24) explains the relation of the reader to a character by pointing out that although identification is a psychological process and as such lies outside of the scope of narrative analysis, “it is widely recognized that to some extent identification results from and is controlled by various textual cues and devices.” Focalisation and its relation to fictional worlds as possible worlds in specific actual world terms are central in this regard.
resemblances to actual history, the reader automatically assumes that the fictional world includes implied (fictional) points of reference that are also to be found in the actual world. For example, the names of the presidents of the USA, Lincoln, Johnson, Grant and so forth, would not be “false” with regard to the fictional world of Doctorow’s novel. The Dakota Territory, Bodie, mining for gold in the nineteenth century, etcetera are markers signifying that the fictional world partly overlaps with the actual world. However, they are fictional because they become part of the novel’s ontology. This is a version of “bounded representation”, i.e. basically a limited scope implying completeness.

This limited scope with its implied completeness could be compared to the experience of watching certain motion pictures. The world that one sees on the screen is not the actual one, but a fictional one because of a manipulated/artistic perspective on the world. Yet, someone acquainted with New York will recognise the streets in a film set in the city. He will be able to say where other places are in relation to specific scenes because the actual world is utilised as the backdrop of places in the fictional world. It is true that the fictional world does not need to be faithful to the actual world, but one does recognise fictional “actual world backdrops” in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction.\(^{39}\)

In similar vein, Proudfoot (2006:22;37) uses the example of a map that provides “accurate” information. The relationship between the limited knowledge presented and the absence of a complete picture is that the partial information suggests the whole. Abraham Lincoln’s brief appearance in Doctorow’s *The march* (2005) could serve as a confirmation of this argument. Realistic settings that “match” the actual world, for example, references to and descriptions of places like the Mariabronn monastery\(^{40}\) and New York bestow credibility on the represented world. The correspondences between names and descriptions of places and people in a fictional world and the actual world suggest that it is to be expected that the fictional world would

\(^{39}\) Calw or towns like Calw in South-West Germany have a fictional counterpart in the form of Emil Sinclair’s hometown in Demian. The actual Dakota Territory and Bodie have a fictional version in the form of Hard Times in Welcome to Hard Times. The fictional form of the actual monastery of Maulbronn in Baden-Württemberg is Mariabronn in Narziß und Goldmund. The actual New York also becomes a fictional New York in Homer & Langley.

\(^{40}\) The actual world counterpart of “Mariabronn” is the former Cistercian monastery Maulbronn, founded 1147, whose church is dedicated to the Mother of God; which explains Hesse’s re-naming (NG, 387; in the “Wort- und Sacherläuterungen” [explanations of words and concepts]).
conform to Ryan’s accessibility relations and point of minimal departure to a greater or lesser degree.⁴¹

Subsequently, truthfulness with regard to representative characters and fictional causal relationships becomes possible. Coalhouse Walker Jr. is similar to David Walker, a black revolutionary who called for the population to use violence in the struggle for human rights (Kiefer, 1994:91): an atypical black man during a historical period when it was expected among white people that black people should be submissive, represents the racial problems of the United States.⁴² His world is very different from the actual historical person Michael Kohlhasen’s world. But the states of affairs that the fictional Coalhouse Walker Jr. and the fictional Michael Kohlhaas occupy, namely the two fictional worlds, are similar to the actual world circumstances of Michael Kohlhasen.⁴³ The fictional worlds are hypothetical or possible worlds in the light of the circumstances to which all three of them are subject. There are three comparable elements that belong to all three these “stories”. The first comparable element is injustice as a cause set in motion. The second element is authorities that are unwilling to help the victims of injustice which is another cause set in motion. Thirdly, the concept of taking the law in one’s own hands as an effect of the foregoing causes is another similarity between the stories. The latter also becomes a cause set in motion. Assuming, therefore, that the representation of, for example, Coalhouse Walker Jr., is accurate and true with regard to the actual historical person, Michael Kohlhasen, may be wholly incorrect, but with regard to Michael Kohlhasen’s spirit, character and principles and the similarities of their circumstances,

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⁴¹ This study is especially interested in relations linking the actual world and the textual actual world belonging to a “transuniverse domain” as opposed to the “intrauniverse domain of the relations linking TAW to its own alternatives (TAPWs)” (Ryan, 1991:32). Ryan’s principle of minimal departure involves “that we reconstrue the central world of a textual universe in the same way we reconstrue the alternate possible worlds of nonfactual statements: as conforming as far as possible to our representation of AW. We will project upon these worlds everything we know about reality, and we will make only the adjustments dictated by the text” (Ryan, 1991:51).

⁴² Cf. Tokarczyk (2000:93;100;104).

⁴³ Coalhouse Walker Jr., driving to New York in his Model T Ford, is stopped by the fire brigade and illicitly ordered to pay a toll fee. He refuses, and while he leaves his car to search for support, the firemen vandalise his car. His unsuccessful attempts to find a lawyer and his fiancée’s death lead him to taking an unremitting course of revenge. Hans Kohlhasen was accused of horse theft on the first of October 1632 at a border. In Kleist’s novella Kohlhaas is not allowed to pass on the basis of not having the correct transit documents. After returning after two weeks with proof of ownership, Kohlhasen found his horses in a haggard condition. Kohlhaas is also forced to leave his horses as collateral and on his return finds that they have been exploited. Kohlhaas’s and Walker’s stories are comparable to the historical Kohlhasen’s in the sense that all three of them are dissatisfied by the legal systems of their contexts and are led to terrorise their communities. This chosen path that ends with the execution of Kohlhasen and a few of his followers in 1540 (Kastner, 2000:21-23) is also comparable to Kohlhaas’s and Walker’s fates. Faber (1980:148) points out that Coalhouse’s surname, Walker, recalls the black revolutionary, David Walker: “Thus Doctorow’s protagonist unites the righteous Prussian outlaw and the black American rebel David Walker.”
one could consider both the fictional worlds of Coalhouse Walker Jr. and Michael Kohlhaas as possible worlds.44

To summarise: In defining the concept “possible worlds” one cannot disregard actuality. Nor should one disallow a fictional world the status of a kind of possible world. The concept “possible world” should not have a rigid, single meaning. One first needs to consider whether the adjective describes the actual world or a fictional one. Hypothetical worlds in terms of the fictional world are also “possible worlds”, but this study, rather, focuses on the relationship between fictional worlds as possible worlds and the actual world. A world that is possible with regard to the actual world corresponds with Ronen’s definition, but she excludes fictionality. Yet, recognising the similarity in, for example, the imaginability, plausibility and causality between possible worlds and fictional worlds that relate both these worlds to the actual world, allows one to perceive a fictional world as a kind of possible world. Fictional worlds are not per se modal hypotheses about the actual world, but they are complete entire separate non-actual systems that could contain, in terms of the actual world, credible, and also possible, aspects on the basis of actual world elements such as imaginability, plausibility and causality.

2.2. Fictional worlds: Possible worlds in terms of the actual world

2.2.1. Textuality, fictional logic and the fictional world’s relationship to the actual world

It would be a misconception to think that Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction is not about the actual world. Yet, one should also not assume that their fictional worlds are direct representations as non-fiction presents itself to be. It is therefore relevant to consider the similarities and differences between non-fiction and Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction. The first principle that one should consider with regard to fictional worlds is their textual nature. Written or spoken language and/or images that evoke a mental conception of a set of circumstances, from the first to the last word/image of a text, can constitute either a non-fictional or a fictional world. Texts that present themselves as reporting about the actual world share with fictional worlds the similarity of being textual. Newspaper articles, history books, letters, e-mails, telephone conversations etcetera in which a person relays information are, like artistic texts (novels,

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44 Doležel (1988:478), however, points out that “What appeals to us, what we love or hate, in artistic representations are concrete fictional persons in specific spatial and temporal settings, linked by peculiar relationships and engaged in unique struggles, quests, victories and frustrations. Without denying the significance of universalist interpretations for certain purposes of general and comparative literary studies, we must state emphatically that a semantics of the fictionality which cannot accommodate the concept of fictional particular is seriously defective.” Despite similarities one should be careful not to reduce the individuality of specific narratives due to a lack of appreciation for the uniqueness of individual (actual world and fictional) stories.
novellas, romances, short stories, plays, poetry, songs, and so on), textual constructs that represent the actual world, albeit in a different manner.

Compared to genres in which there are fantastic or supernatural elements, for example, science fiction, magic realism, fables, fairy tales, ghost stories, fictional descriptions in the texts selected for this study appear much more realistic. Yet, the link that Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction has with the actual world is not the superficial exterior reminiscent of non-fiction. The common threads between the fiction considered in this study and the actual world consist of credible causes and effects (for example, in the form of behaviour, situations, implications) that bear similarities between the actual and fictional worlds. Literally understood, (fictional) descriptions may be at times incompatible with actuality in the sense that fictional worlds “require a logic that is not the regular metalogic of nonfictional propositions, a logic including different laws of inference and reference” (Ronen, 1996:26).

Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictions do require “irregular” logic in this sense, but also seem to correspond to “the regular metalogic of nonfictional propositions”. “Direct representations” or “reflections of the real world” are certainly, as Ronen (1996:27) points out, obsolete notions in modern literary theory. However, a fictional world which is a possible world, “a world that is thinkable” constructed by a fictional text (Doležel, 1998:281), one that is either possible or impossible in certain actual world terms, can indirectly say something about actual world issues and elements like individuality, individual experiences of social contexts, events and spaces.

The actual world, possible worlds and Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictional worlds display resemblances specifically with regard to individuality and individual experiences (that also affect focalisation). While a possible world is, according to Ronen (1996:21), not independent from the actual world, a fictional world is ontologically and epistemically separate from what is external to it. However, it is also a world modelled after reality in certain ways (Ronen, 1996:210). Given this difference between possible worlds and fictional worlds, Ronen (1996:27) argues that a fictional world can be considered a possible world only in a radically modified fashion because possible world components (actuality, possibility, concrete and abstract modes of existence, accessibility, and transworld identity) differ from a fictional world’s relationship to actuality. But this does not mean that there is not a relationship between a fictional world and the actual world. Fictional worlds are indeed autonomous to a certain degree, yet not completely so.

The relationship between a fictional world and actuality entails its drawing one’s attention to certain aspects present in the actual world circumstances, but not as a mirror-like reflection of
the actual world which implies that the contents of the actual world and the contents of the text “match” as the contents of a news item in a newspaper and the actual world are supposed to do. It is common knowledge that news items in newspapers could contain non-intentional mistakes or biases that make the article untrustworthy. It is therefore interesting that Doctorow presents recognisable actual world elements and concomitantly introduces deviations from the actual world. There was really a magician named “Harry Houdini” born as Erik Weisz (1874-1926) who lived during the time of the events described in *Ragtime*. However, in the novel the Little Boy tells him to “warn the Duke” (Doctorow, 1985a:16-17). The Little Boy’s direction alludes to a meeting, prior to Houdini’s later recollection, between Houdini and Franz Ferdinand (Doctorow, 1985a:84) and the eventual, verifiable fate of the Archduke at Sarajevo. The meeting between the Little Boy and Houdini is factually incorrect, but it is meaningful in terms of the historical context and imaginability, plausibility and causality that are marked by international political tension and violence.

Similarly, one cannot declare that the fictional New York in *The waterworks* is a representation of the actual world of New York towards the end of the nineteenth century. Yet, at the same time, to exclude the actual historical New York from the fictional representation would also not be valid. One might ask how and to what extent a fictional world is related to or modelled after the actual world. However, reading Hesse’s and Doctorow’s novels as direct representations of actuality would be far less effective than to read them as fiction, but in comparison with actuality.

2.2.2. The truth value of fictional worlds and the mediator of textual worlds

Due to its accessibility much of Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction appears to be realistic. Nonetheless, the insights into the actual world that Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictions create, do not lie in any accurate factuality or “external” resemblances. According to Levine (1985:17) Doctorow is “more concerned with imaginative truth than with historical accuracy. That is, he is concerned with what truly happened rather than with what really happened.” The fictional world may therefore differ greatly from the actual world (as in science fiction) yet still have truth value.

Pavel (1986:47) points out that a fictional world may have a relation of accessibility with an actual world which makes it a “possible world”, for example, a world in which the statue of the Virgin Mary speaks to a layman, for a medieval writer and his public; or a world in which an FBI narcotics squad dismantles a network of drug dealers and arrests everybody, for a writer of a contemporary mystery novel and his reader. Pavel reasons that both cases take the same “logical attitude toward the information conveyed by literary discourse and its relationship to the actual
world” (1986:47). In Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction one often recognises this “reality effect”, i.e. the actual world possibilities in their work. However, what lends fiction its truth value is not the reality effect per se, but the combination of causal interrelations, imaginable and plausible aspects in terms of the actual world as represented by the focalising narrator/character(s). Focalised characters, social contexts, events, spaces and the like inform the reader not only about the fictional world itself, but also about the actual world against which the reader can measure the statements of the fictional world. Reports about the actual world, for example, news items in a newspaper, also present textual worlds which the reader “compares” to the actual world. The degree of indirectness is simply less, i.e. newspaper reports are intended to be more direct or “accurate” than fiction.

When considering the role that focalisation plays with regard to the creation of fictional worlds, one must also consider the relationship between the focaliser and the textual actual world. Accounts of the actual world, whether in news items, historical documentation or internal dimensions such as thoughts and opinions, also imply a relationship between the one who reports, even if only to oneself, and the actual world that is characterised by a certain frame of mind.

In both the actual world and the textual actual world such representations become other worlds as soon as the first words appear, constructing the first mental images, and concepts are created. These other textual worlds of both non-fiction and fiction present themselves as, or pretend to be, reliable and direct. According to Pavel (1986:11) integrationists would claim that no genuine ontological difference can be found between fictional and non-fictional descriptions of the actual world, reducing the differences between fiction and other kinds of discourse by considering all texts as “equally governed by arbitrary conventions” (Pavel, 1986:12). Pavel uses the example of a treatise on the history of early nineteenth-century England that would be just as untrustworthy or trustworthy as Dickens’s Pickwick Papers (1986:12). There is a fundamental ontological difference between the actual early nineteenth-century England and a textual one, whether it is fictional or non-fictional.

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45 Blue (cf. WHT, 210) and Homer Collyer (cf. HL, 175) do question the reliability of their narrations, but this also creates the impression of a desire to be reliable and create understanding.

46 In “False Documents” Doctorow presents himself as an integrationist and pseudo-constructivist, i.e. believing that individuals generate subject-dependent constructs of their world through their mental representations and verbal descriptions (Nünning, 2001:209). Doctorow (1994c:163) argues that ontologically there is no difference between fiction and nonfiction “as we commonly understand the distinction: There is only narrative”; that “... reality is amenable to any construction that is placed upon it” (1994c:164).
Ryan (1991:15) enquires: “If objects are inherently fictional or real, how can one explain the presence of historical individuals and real locations in a work of fiction? How can the invented Sherlock Holmes live on the geographically real Baker Street...?” She argues that fictionality does not apply to individual entities, but to entire semantic domains; the “Napoleon of War and Peace is a fictional object because he belongs to a world which as a whole is fictional” (1991:15). The monastery in Narziß und Goldmund that is “also in” the south-west of the actual Germany, and the New York in Homer & Langley that is “also in” the actual USA, are placed in the texts on the same ontological level as their characters. However, the fact that the characters and places do not actually exist in the actual world does not mean that a novel cannot express truth about the actual world. Whilst a possible world, as defined by Ronen, describes how things could be or could have been in the actual world, fiction is never a direct or precise representation of how things actually were or are or will be, but represents similarities with regard to the actual world that comment on the actual world.

Doctorow does include states of affairs that are unlikely as “possibilities” in terms of the actual world, like the marriage between Mother and Tatch in Ragtime and that between Pearl and Stephen in The march. The enlightened marriage in Ragtime entails an improvement in the role played by the wife when compared to Mother’s and Father’s marriage. Pearl’s and Stephen’s marriage is a union triumphing over racial barriers in a social context in which slavery is topical. These fictional conditions are similar to hypotheses – even if they are near impossibilities in terms of the actual world conditions. A reader experiences a fictional text as informative and valid with regard to his own actual world if, while reading, he compares the fictional text to the actual world and recognises its relevance. “Fictional world elements” may evoke natural forces, inanimate objects, persons, their mental lives, actions, interactions, etcetera that are also “actual world elements” (Fořt, 2006:276).

Situations or socio-political contexts also reveal relevance. For example, the “reduplication” of the concept of Stephen’s and Pearl’s union, an interracial marriage, would have been legally an “impossibility” in South Africa during the apartheid era. But as a hypothetical possibility and as a moral humanist ideal with regard to individual freedom and tolerance, the concept would have been then, and would be still today, an ideal for the post-apartheid South Africa. The difference between the past and the present is that now it is concretely possible whilst it was (legally speaking) only hypothetically possible in the past. In the light of Ryan’s (1991:51) principle of minimal departure, literary characters are “endowed with perspectives comparable to those of real human beings” (Nüming, 2001:211).
Dixon and Bortolussi (2001:279) also consider the relation between the actual world and a fictional world, arguing that “there is a “strong analogy between the representations and processes used in conversation and those that are used in understanding narratives”. In an actual world conversation the participants construct representations of the other participants including knowledge of them, their mental states, intentions and goals (Dixon & Bortolussi, 2001:279). Doležel (1988:485) states that the actual world “participates” in the formation of fictional worlds by providing models of the structure of the fictional world. This would then also explain why people tend, or find it possible, to equate fictional world and actual world planes (to a greater or lesser extent). Gerrig (2001:304) refers to “p-responses” or participatory responses, for instance when a viewer reacts to a “standard horror movie scenario in which a character approaches a door, behind which the viewer knows danger lurks”, and “mentally or literally, calls out ‘Don’t go through the door!’” The viewer therefore enters into a “dialogue” with the fictional character as if the character could hear him, which implies that in his participation the viewer either spontaneously or consciously ignores the ontological differences between the fictional world and the actual world.

If a text describes a fictional world that is reminiscent of the actual world with a focus on, for example, selected similar events characterised by the abuse of power and its effects, the two worlds are relatable. The reader therefore reads comparatively and interpretatively. A fictional text is only in this sense a “copy” of the actual world with truth value.

### 2.2.3. Characters with names of people in the actual world and “the power of freedom”

Truth value in a fictional text does not depend on factual accuracy, but on the “power of freedom” or “a private or ideal world that cannot be easily corroborated or verified” (Doctorow, 1994c:152). This also applies to characters. Characters bearing the names of real historical people remain fictional, but do comment on the real people and other people with similar character traits in the actual world. Similarities due to actions, personality traits, descriptions and circumstances that exist between fictional characters and people in the actual world are in any case more insightful, with regard to the connections between fictional worlds and the actual world, than the mere names themselves. Characters often share names with real people such as Emma Goldman, Evelyn Nesbit and Harry Houdini in *Ragtime*. Such names do highlight the

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48 Acts 4:12: “... for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” is an example of the danger that the signifier (the name Jesus Christ in this case) could be regarded as superior to the signified (or Signified).
relationship between the fictional figures and the actual historical people and associations with them, as well as the relationship between the actual world and the fictional world. The fictional political victims, the Isaacsons, in *The book of Daniel* are related to the actual political victims, Ethel Greenglass Rosenberg (1915-1953) and Julius Rosenberg (1918-1953). The double “H” of Harry Haller in *Der Steppenwolf* and Hermann Heilner in *Unterm Rad* evokes the double “H” in the name Hermann Hesse – and critics have discerned autobiographical relations between Hesse and his characters. In the first instance it is often the name of the textual persona that recalls the actual person – like Edgar Altschuler in *Edgar* (Lawrence) Doctorow’s *World’s fair* who shares his first name with the author; this suggests an “autobiographical” connection.

As Pavel (1986:15-16) points out, since every reader accepts that a fictional character does not really have an inhabitant of the actual world as a counterpart, “to build up defenses against fictional entities may be a waste of energy” when considering them in terms of the artistic constructs. Donnellan (Pavel, 1986:39) terms events that are accompanied by reference failure “blocks”. Beings nonexistent in the verifiable world, such as fictional characters, have no referential histories. Their histories also end in “blocks” or suffer “reference failure” in the actual world (Pavel, 1986:39). One does automatically accept that if a news item reports about a specific politician (Barack Obama, Jacob Zuma, Ronald Reagan, Oliver Tambo), for example, that the textual persona has (or had) a counterpart in the actual world. But this is not the case when one finds Edgar Altschuler in *World’s fair*, Hermann Heilner in *Unterm Rad*, Boss Tweed in *The waterworks* or Homer and Langley Collyer in *Homer & Langley*.

49 Prinz (2006:12) maintains that “Klein, Klingsor, Siddhartha und Harry Haller – in all diesen literarischen Figuren ist immer etwas von Hesse selbst.” (“Klein, Klingsor, Siddharta and Harry Haller – in all of these literary figures is always something of Hesse himself.”) Baumann (1989:17) remarks that a serious inner crisis of the author is documented in *Der Steppenwolf*; and Liebmann (1977:2-3) comments, in reaction to Hesse’s admission that his works of fiction consist of a repetition of matters congenial to himself in various forms: “His conflicts with family and society and the inner battles he fought within himself are of a piece with those of his heroes, from Knulp to Joseph Knecht” (Liebmann, 1977:2-3). Singh (2006:169) describes *Der Steppenwolf* as a literary processing, a “Verarbeitung”, of psychological developmental conflicts within the author himself, yet Singh (2006:192) points out that it is not merely a matter of self-stylisation and a game of deception between composition and truth, but a conscious subordination of the author as creator of fictional worlds. Philipp (2005:27) does not seem to make this distinction between the characters and the author when he observes that Hesse’s works essentially remain “narcissistic Selbstdarstellung” (“narcissistic self-portraits”) and “… auch wenn er z.B. von seinem Demian behauptete, es sei die ‘Geschichte […] eines wirklich, einmaligen, lebenden Menschen’ – also gerade keine Fiktion …” (“... also when he, for example, maintains about his Demian, it is the ‘story of a real, unique, living person’ – with other words no fiction to be precise.”) “Real, unique and living” are adjectives that still apply to the fictional world.

50 This counterpart would certainly also not be the author, even in cases like *Der Steppenwolf* and *World’s fair*, as Barthes argues in “The death of the author”. His views that the text is “a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture”, that “the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original” and that to “give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text” (Barthes, 2006:279) actually express the concept of possibility and truth value that could be extended to humanity and should not be limited to a single individual (the author). An individual fictional story may “harmonise” with regard to specific points in the biography/story of the author, but similarly other actual world hypothetical readers would also be able to identify with aspects of the fiction.

51 Schaeffer’s (2009-98) semantic definitions of factual and fictional narratives hold that a factual narrative is referential whereas a fictional narrative has no reference in the actual world; and her pragmatic definitions of these concepts maintain that a factual narrative advances claims of referential truthfulness whereas a fictional narrative advances no such claims.
Although the fictional character and the related actual historical person may not be altogether
dissimilar, references to the fictional characters “Hermann Heilner” or “Homer Collyer” will end
in “blocks” when read as identifying an actual historical person, because of the ontological
differences between the actual world and the fictional world. Indubitably the introduction of a
fictional character like “Boss Tweed”, read against the history of the real, historical New York
mayor, William M. Tweed (1823-1878), has an effect on how the reader considers the fictional
world. The historical person’s characteristics contribute to characterising the fictional
character and also to the fictional world’s “fitness with itself” as William Golding puts it.

A fictional character and a real person that share the same name may be ontologically different,
but are not disconnected because of either similarities – or interesting dissimilarities. If a news
item misrepresents a politician, the text is “false”, but it is still able to comment on the politician.
A news item becomes in this sense somewhat fictional because the reader then does not rely on
the “power of the regime” or “a manifest reference to the verifiable world” (Doctorow, 1994c:152) for the text’s truth value. The reader may recognise the error or exaggeration which
would draw attention to the circumstances as they actually are or the truth about the person.
Doctorow’s fiction explicitly utilises fiction’s capacity to be truthful despite inaccuracy.

References to the actual world draw attention to this aspect of fiction. The difficulty when a
naive reader is unable to recognise the falseness and accepts a “lie” for the truth is therefore less
problematic in fiction than in non-fiction because the reader may “freely” believe the “factual
inaccuracies” that he reads and still arrive at the truth of the fictional world that is (even if not
directly) also relatable to the actual world. Referring to the verifiable world of the late
nineteenth century, a “William M. Tweed” indeed existed. But there was never a William M.
Tweed, mayor of New York, who shared a world with people called Augustus Pemberton,
Martin Pemberton, McIlvaine and others. Fictional characters “are” not figures in the actual
world, but the characteristics of the fictional Boss Tweed in The waterworks may conceivably

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52 It is conceivable that a viewer of Braveheart (1995) would want to read about the actual William Wallace after having seen the film. This
effect also applies to events. For example, it is likewise conceivable that someone who had been an actual world refugee, fleeing from East
Prussia during the winter of 1944/1945 from the invading Russian Red Army, and who has seen Die Flucht (March of Millions) (2007), might
respond to the film by saying that the historical expulsion was “really” like the events in the film.

53 Golding (1984:146) once commented that the “strength, the profundity, truth of a novel lies not in a plausible likeness and rearrangement of
the phenomenal world but in a fitness with itself like the dissonances and consonances of harmony. Insight, intuition.” Golding’s notion about a
novel’s “fitness with itself” is striking, yet the actual world’s relationship to the fictional world should not be ignored. Carrol’s (2001:39)
perspective is convincing: “... narrative anticipation is a matter of forming expectations on the basis of what events are possible, given earlier
events in the story. Where do these expectations come from? Lots of places, including our knowledge of the world (our knowledge of what is
causally possible in everyday life), our knowledge of what is possible within the conventions of a certain narrative genre, and our knowledge of
what is thought possible given the beliefs of the culture in which the narrative is composed.” Gerrig (2001:323) also concludes that readers “can
take many perspectives on an unfolding narrative. Some of those perspectives they bring from the external world; others are, in some sense,
present in the text”.

Chapter 2: The interrelations between possible worlds, fictional worlds and focalisation in theory
resemble the characteristics of actual world people – and the actual historical Boss Tweed to a greater or lesser degree.

People like the non-actual Augustus Pemberton, Martin Pemberton, McIlvaine, Dr. Sartorius and so on have existed then as they do today. Similarities between “such” individuals in the actual world and these characters connect the worlds. The fictional and the actual Tweeds are therefore disconnected, but not completely. The fictional Boss Tweed may be seen as a transformation in certain senses, a reduction or amplification of the actual Boss Tweed. McIlvaine’s observations that Augustus Pemberton sometimes had “a charming twinkle in his blue eyes”, but that “in the odd moment when there was no hand to shake or toast to give, the eye went dead and you saw the soul of a savage” (Doctorow, 1994b:9) could not be considered a verifiable fact. Nevertheless, this description evokes one’s familiarity with the “typical” insincere joviality of some (sometimes ruthless) businessmen, politicians, etcetera. McIlvaine’s focalisation in this description shapes the fictional world in the sense that he characterises both Augustus Pemberton and Boss Tweed, who fraternise, as corrupt and evil. The reader can also infer that McIlvaine’s values differ from Boss Tweed’s. McIlvaine therefore also characterises himself as well as the kind of world in which he lives, so that one can relate him and the (fictional) people of his context to similar people in the actual world and certain actual world contexts.

2.2.4. Natives, immigrants and surrogates and names as “labels”

It is worthwhile to consider the names of characters because they do furnish clues about the relation of a fictional world to another fictional and/or the actual world. Parsons (Pavel, 1986:29) categorises characters invented or described by the author of the text as “native objects”. “Immigrants” in the text arrive from elsewhere. They could come from either the real world or another text (Pavel, 1986:29), for example, Dr. Satorius who made his first appearance in the short story “The water works” in Lives of the poets (Doctorow, 1985c:19-24). He reappears in the novels The waterworks (1994) and The march (2005). Parsons uses the term “surrogates” for fictional counterparts of real objects in fictional texts that substantially modify their description (Pavel, 1986:29), presumably like the characters “based” on Hermann Hesse. If, for example, Blue in Welcome to Hard Times does not have a “counterpart” in the verifiable world, i.e. if he ended in a “block”, one could regard him as a native or “indigenous” object – which he is. The question is whether one could regard characters like Homer and Langley Collyer who bear the names of actual people as “surrogates” or “immigrants”. Pavel distinguishes between immigrants as retaining their “genuine personalities” and surrogates as
“only well-designed dummies, more or less like the originals but irremediably interpreted and transformed by the writer” (1986:29).

One would need to know the actual person in order to determine whether a character is, in fact, a surrogate or an immigrant. If one does not know the actual person who possesses the same name as the character, one can only interpret the available information about the actual person which will lead to a reconstruction by the reader that could be used for a comparison, i.e. between the character and the reconstruction based on (other) textual accounts. The actual person becomes “textual” in the sense that he then exists within the consciousness of a person who has “recreated” the “actual person” based upon biographical/autobiographical accounts of the person’s actions, statements, appearance etc. that may also have been subjectively represented even if the text is not meant as fictional.54

The writer could also have given Boss Tweed another name yet might still have linked the fictional character to the historical figure and/or other corrupt politicians. As “Cordelia” is nothing more than an abbreviation for a group of properties belonging to the cluster (Pavel, 1986:35), “Goldmund” and “Boss Tweed” are abbreviations or signs for properties and behaviour. As Pavel (1986:25) avers:

Like theories, fictional texts refer as systems, and just as in physics it is often impossible to set apart ‘genuinely’ referential elements from the mathematical apparatus, in fiction one does not always need to keep track of pretended and genuine statements, since global relevance is apparent in spite of such distinctions.

The value of using names of people in the actual world, for example, Boss Tweed, lends a reality effect to the fictional world that supports the characterisation of both immigrants/surrogates as well as the characterising of a “native object” like Augustus Pemberton who consorts with Boss Tweed. This could be regarded as similar to using the names of places in the actual world and focalised representations of spaces and places that evoke the actual world, which also lend a reality effect to the fictional world that supports transworld identification.

54 A narrative voice in a biography also presents the content “factually”, yet still subjectively focalises the textual actual world and, for example, its (textual) people. It is interesting how Victoria appears like a fictional character who is used as a focalising filter in Lytton Strachey’s Queen Victoria (1921), for example: “Warm-hearted, responsive, she loved her dear Lehzen, and she loved her dear Feodora, and her dear Victoire, and her dear Madame de Späth. And her dear Mamma … of course, she loved her too; it was her duty; and yet – she could not tell why it was – she was always happier when she was staying with her Uncle Leopold at Claremont” (1921:26).
2.2.5. Fictional spaces/places and frame of mind as a comparable element in fictional worlds and the actual world

Familiar or accessible spaces in fictional worlds serve as credible settings for “actual world-like events”, i.e. the events are imaginable and plausible in actual world terms. Hesse and Doctorow, as many or most writers, “label” fictional places with the names of places in the actual world. Such fictional places are also immigrants/surrogates because the properties are similar to those found in the actual world. Ronen (1996:27) provides the example of a “fictional Paris” that cannot straightforwardly be connected to the actual city with the same name. The fictional Paris cannot simply be a “representation” of the actual Paris because it has a different and an autonomous ontology, with different inhabitants. However, the name of the fictional city also called “Paris” is such an immediate allusion to the actual one, that could be strengthened by further similarities such as landmarks, events and personages which match the actual Paris, that it would be illogical to leave the fictional city forever disconnected from the real Paris. Pavel (1986:46) explains that there are “many real historical and social settings in which writers and their public accept the assumption that a literary work speaks of something that is genuinely possible relative to the real world”. A similarity between how every person can subjectively conceptualise the actual world for himself and the conceptualisation of the textual actual world also exists. The fictional world is the subjective conceptualisation of the narrator and/or characters that is understood as focalisation in this study.

Similarities between the actual world and the fictional world(s) are also related to the similarity between perspective/frame of mind (in the actual world) and focalisation (in the textual actual worlds). The manner in which the historical figure Michael Kohlhasen reacted to being victimised is a credible, albeit an extreme, response. Also, although Coalhouse Walker Jr.’s response is predictable, “given his character and the racial climate of the times”, it is still extreme (cf. Tokarczyk, 2000:93). The reactions of the immigrants/surrogates Michael Kohlhaas and Coalhouse Walker Jr. are not only linked to their “actual world counterpart” by the similarity between their names, but also, and primarily, by how the world is perceived, which leads to their extreme reactions to injustice in the form of self-destructive retribution and its consequences. Pavel (1986:17) notes that in a realist perspective, the criterion of the truth and falsity of a

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55 A similarity exists between the surname “Kohlhasen” (Michael Kohlhasen) and the surname “Kohlhaas” (Michael Kohlhaas) in Kleist’s text as well as between the first name “Coalhouse” (Coalhouse Walker Jr.) in Doctorow’s text and the surnames above. In addition to David Walker, Kiefer (1994:91) also names George W. Walker, who was known for his racist “minstrel shows” (cf. Moraru, 1997:97), and Martin Luther King Jr. as actual historical prototypes that could be related to the name and the character Coalhouse Walker Jr.
literary text and of its details is based upon the notion of possibility, but not only logical possibility (thinking of the Bad Man’s magical reappearance) with respect to the actual world (Pavel, 1986:46). A fictional world presents a set of circumstances like the Kohlhasen/Kohlhaas/Coalhouse Walker Jr. stories that would also be “possible” in other fictional and actual places and spaces because of the similarities with regard to frames of mind.56

2.2.6. Events, their causal similarities, figurative appearances and their independence from factual accuracy in fictional worlds

When fictional world and actual world accounts of the circumstances of events, for example, the Romeo and Juliet scenario, remind one of each other, this is also because of causal similarities as the common denominator. “Events that unfold” as a concept is particularly relevant in Nolt’s (1986:432) definition of worlds as “spatiotemporal manifolds in which people live, time passes, and events unfold” (1986:432). Events can also unfold as they do because fictional causality is partially determined by how characters/people perceive their worlds.57

The fictional world of Romeo and Juliet is a world that is (to various extents) possible in the actual world whenever two young people are in love but their families do not approve of the relationship. The implication is not that actual world “Romeo and Juliet stories” would ever be nearly precise or (hypothetically) precise recurrences of the Shakespeare’s play, but that there would be similarities. Fiction does in this sense contain elements that are “possible” with regard to the actual world. Pavel argues that the micro-truth value may have no impact on the macro-truth value, as in the case of myths and allegories that possess more than one level of meaning, “consisting mostly or even only of false sentences [that] can nevertheless be felt as allegorically true as a whole” (1986:17). Aspects of the fictional worlds may appear to be “possible”, “likely”, “probable”, thus “plausible”, even if fictional worlds appear to be literally implausible, like a parable. Fictional worlds can remain comparable to the actual world because the focus is not on the events per se, but on what they imply. Fiction is “a discourse uncommitted to actual states of affairs, and hence requires a truth standard that will account for one’s ability to refer to non-existent objects and states” (Ronen, 1996:28). Truth standards are relativised or relaxed in fiction to such a degree that this genre “lies” about the actual world. The “less metaphysical and

56 The connection between the realism of the spaces in the fictional worlds of the films The brave one (2007), The jack bull (1999) (which was actually inspired by Michael Kohlhaas) and Falling down (1993) and the focus on the theme of taking the law into one’s own hands (in extreme ways) supports the credibility (imaginability, plausibility and causality) of the possible worlds.

57 Doctorow’s Ragtime portrays many coincidental or chance happenings and intersections of lives as in the actual world, but the narrator/focaliser also subjectively responds to these.
rigid, the more relativized and semiotic the concept of truth has become, the more appropriate it proves to be for a definition of truth in fiction” (Ronen, 1996:29). This conclusion makes sense since it confirms the conventional expectation of what fiction can do, namely to tolerate “improbability” unlike, for example, a news item. Fiction has the capacity to be completely false on the micro-level in terms of the actual world, yet at the same time imaginable, believable, conceivable, true and possible on the macro-level.

Fictional events, like spaces/places and characters, are therefore not dependent for their truth value on superficial accuracy, but especially on the implications of imaginable, plausible and causal aspects. The town Hard Times would be a poor factual reduplication of the Californian mining town Bodie. They are, in fact, so dissimilar that one does not immediately make the connection. The fictional town is, rather, a commentary on the social relationships and the socio-economic system that resemble those of Bodie and other mining towns as well as of other towns and cities. The character Boss Tweed is not, and does not need to be, a direct representation of the historical Boss Tweed for the character to comment on the historical figure. Moreover, a “direct representation” of Boss Tweed would limit itself to only the historical person. The literary creation also comments on any historical, living and future person in the actual world with the same qualities.

To summarise: A fictional world like that of a novel or a film is not the same kind of possible world as a hypothetical scenario set in the actual world. Yet, a fictional world is also relatable to the actual world, albeit in a different way, and is, as such, a possible world. The reader automatically relies on his knowledge of the actual world to comprehend the fictional world. This process of apparent “recognition” is essentially a “comparative reading”. This also applies to reading a factual report like a news item, but a fictional text does not require the pretence of truthfulness based on verifiability to be truthful. Fictional characters and places – although they might share the names of people and places that exist in the actual world – are not “factually accurate” representations. Using names of people and places in the actual world has an evocative effect that is a literary device used to characterise the fictional world, not to directly communicate about the actual world. Reference failure only takes place if the fictional text is incorrectly read, namely as a factual report. The objects that a fictional text refers to need not be verifiable facts, but aspects that may occur in both the actual and fictional worlds: for instance, events and strivings that often have interconnected causal powers – like fear and the abuse of power in Welcome to Hard Times, The waterworks and Homer & Langley or the longing for freedom from social constrictions and for self-realisation in Narziß und Goldmund and Demian. The effects that these have in the fictional world are also possible in the actual world – even if
only partially. Comparing the effects of, for example, similar abuses of power in fictional worlds could also, to a greater or lesser degree, have similar effects on different contexts in the actual world.

2.3. **Focalisation: The process by which the textual actual world becomes a fictional world**

2.3.1. **Fictional worlds as products of consciousness**

This study is primarily interested in the contribution of focalisation in the establishment of fictional worlds. However, one must also take into account possible worlds and the actual world when considering this role. Margolin (2009:45-46) identifies the semantics of fictional worlds as a framework which could serve as a basis for reconceptualising focalisation theory that is particularly relevant for this study, especially with regard to how the focaliser processes world items in his mind.\(^{58}\) In the previous sections reference was made to Ronen who defines a possible world as a non-actual and hypothetical world that exists in terms of the actual one. Ronen’s view approximates Ryan’s definition of possible worlds in the sense that they are satellites orbiting the actual world, with accessibility relations between the actual world and the possible world(s). The obvious similarity between possible worlds and fictional worlds is therefore that both are imaginary – both are products of consciousness. This is in agreement with Margolin’s (2009:42; my italics – PvdM) definition of the concept:

One can describe focalization informally as a view of a thing as it presents itself from the *personal subjective point of view of a character or narrator*. To be more precise …: focalization in narrative involves the textual representation of specific (pre)existing sensory elements of the text’s story world *as perceived* and registered (recorded, represented, encoded, modeled and stored) *by some mind or recording device* which is a member of this world. … Conversely, any state or event mentioned in the text which can possibly be thought of as being perceived in any way can be considered to be the product of an act of focalization, hence indexed to a particular individual, time and place.

In considering the influence of the consciousness of the person who contributes to creating fictional worlds, *how* a person “sees” or perceives the textual actual word, *and what* information

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58 “World items” are objects/elements/sectors of the story world such as states, entities, actions, events and processes that are either tangible, located in space and time, or internal or mental like memories “of previous acts of focalisation” (Margolin, 2009:43) which are typical of the story worlds of such retrospective narrators as Emil Sinclair and Homer Collyer.
he decides to take into account, determine the composition of the (textual) actual world in his consciousness.

If a person were to create a possible world considering a hypothetical situation, the person’s frame of mind (desires, intentions, fears, etc.) would determine both the contents and the nature of the world. A part of the actual world may not be perceived or taken into account – and just be as it is, not exposed to subjective consideration. The actual word *as perceived* is like a fictional world in the sense that both are products of consciousness and subjective representation – even if only in thought. The difference between the actual worlds and both possible and fictional worlds is that the actual world (or part of it) can and does exist independently of consciousness at times, whilst possible and fictional worlds cannot exist without a consciousness that determines what is narrated and how. In a fictional world, however, all components, even features of the textual actual world that seem to be incidental or marginal, are products of focalisation. The narrated content and the way in which the narrated content is presented by or “through” the focalising consciousness (of narrators such as Sinclair, Blue, Homer Collyer and a character like Goldmund) constitute central features of focalisation that are crucial for this study.

However, when Genette introduced the term he did not intend focalisation to include both these notions. Discussions, descriptions and definitions of focalisation that theoreticians have undertaken have not only enriched knowledge of the concept, but have also complicated it. The purpose here is, therefore, not an attempt to (re)define focalisation rigidly, but instead to propose a functional eclectic approach in which aspects belonging to different notions of focalisation could enrich the focus of this study, namely to shed light on how fictional worlds come about and how relations to the actual world contribute to the process of “focalisation”.

Focalisation is, for Genette, in the first instance a question of imparted knowledge and control over it. In the Genettian sense, a fictional world is a collection of information imparted by a narrator. In view of Niederhoff’s (2009a:115) Genettian definition of focalisation one could argue that the experience and knowledge that the actual world reader and characters share are subjective in the fictional worlds. The narrator(s)/character(s) accordingly “colour” and shape their fictional worlds. Selection is likewise a result of a conscious effort to foreground or to emphasise matters that the focaliser finds noteworthy. The nature of the selection of information, but also the manner of representation, are determined not only by the physical, but also by the mental position of the agent that directly or indirectly represents his fictional world.
2.3.2. Genette and Bal: Focalisation – not just a matter of regulated, but also “filtered”, information

By employing the term “focalisation”, Genette (1980:161-162) wanted to bring to light two aspects of “point of view”, namely who sees and who speaks; not two agents (Nelles, 1990:366). As Nelles (1990:366) points out, Genette indicates that focalisation is tied to the sense of sight only metaphorically and that focalisation addresses matters of cognition alone. Focalisation according to Genette contains three components that are determined by “how much the narrator tells the narratee about the story in relation to the characters’ knowledge of the story” (Nelles, 1990:366-367). A nonfocalised narrative or zero focalisation, which Nelles (1990:369) prefers to call “free focalisation”, exists where the narrator knows and says more than the character knows, roughly corresponding to the function of the omniscient narrator. “Free focalisation” occurs when no limitation exists (Genette, 1980:189; Liebenberg, 1996:188). Narration in Narziss und Goldmund, in which an omniscient narrator relays the content that includes information focalised by Goldmund and Narziss, as well as Sinclair’s, Blue’s and Homer Collyer’s narrations, cannot be seen as a detached process of selection and combination, i.e. without being characterised by a certain tone and a distinct choice of words; in other words, it cannot be regarded as a process devoid of the subjectivity of narrators and characters. This study concurs with Phelan’s (2001:52) notion that “even when narrators remain clearly in discourse space, they perform acts of perception that ought to be called ’focalisation’”, in contrast to Prince’s (2001:46) argument that the narrator is never the focaliser because he is an element of discourse and not of diegesis/the story that he presents, as well as to Chatman’s rejection of the narrator as a focaliser on the grounds of the situations and events narrated that are “always (significantly) past with regard to the narrator or even because the latter cannot perceive them physically” (Prince, 2001:46; cf. Chatman, 1986:194). Damsteegt (2005:53-54; cf. 39,43) also argues that present-tense sensory focalisation provides a clear link with a character’s mind at the time the character perceives and mentally digests the perception, and is unambiguously internal. On the other hand, past-tense sensory focalisation is ambiguous between external or internal status. The present (tense) at the end of Blue’s and Homer Collyer’s

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59 One should take note of Shen’s (2001:160) observation, with regard to the internal focalisation of a retrospective point of view of a first-person narrator (as in Demian and for the most part in Welcome to Hard Times and Homer & Langley), that if one were to regard “the narrator’s retrospective viewpoint as external because of the given gap between the narrating and experiencing self, it becomes difficult to account for the similarity between the two – not only in terms of restriction of field but also in terms of emotive stance …” Phelan (2001:57) explains that any path marked by the narrator’s perspective “will be not only a report on the story world but also a reflection of how the narrator perceives that world which, in turn, influences how audiences perceive that world. … Of course, the narrator’s perceptions may be unreliable or partial, but just as a character cannot act without revealing something of him or herself, a narrator cannot report without also revealing his or her perceptions.”
narrations confirms this notion as the narrations attain an affective climax in contrast to the “external” reflection on the past, yet the preceding past (tense) contents of neither Blue’s nor Homer Collyer’s narrations are emotionally insignificant.

When references are made in this study to a narrator or character who “focalises”, they signify that information is presented from an individual’s perspective/point of view about himself, characters, events, the fictional world’s setting or spaces etcetera that appear in the textual actual world and that the information is “coloured” by his frame of mind. Referring to Genette who contends that there is “no focalizing or focalized character”, Liebenberg (1996:196) points out that focalisation for Genette is exclusively performed by either the narrator or the author. Focalisation is the process of either narration or non-narration. Information about a character, for instance, could be part of focalisation, but for Genette, a “focalised character” could be “translated” into a nonsense combination like a “spoken figure” (Genette, 1988:73). This, however, could simply be understood as a character about whom the narrator reports, for example, when McIlvaine remarks about Martin Pemberton: “People wouldn’t take what Martin Pemberton said as literal truth, he was much too melodramatic or too tormented to speak plainly” (Doctorow, 1994b:1). A “focalising character” is narratologically also a strange combination for Genette. The moment that a character focalises, which coincides with narration, his status changes to that of a narrator (Genette, 1988:73). However, for the purposes of this study one could also understand this to refer to an intradiegetic narrator-character such as Homer Collyer or a character that influences the narrator to a large extent – which Goldmund does.60

The narrator’s choice is a matter of his focus, and since subjective or metaphoric vision is such an integral part of choice, it cannot be overlooked when considering how a fictional world comes about. For Liebenberg (1996:190) Genette would not deny that focalisation implies choice, like any other limitation of information which reveals the vision of the focalising party, but Genette would perceive this as an additional detail and not as part of focalisation (1996:190). In contrast to Genette, Bal’s (1981:177) description of external focalisation refers to an older “I” who retrospectively narrates. A distance exists between his narrative perspective and his earlier vision. However, the retrospective perspectives like Emil Sinclair’s in Demian or Edgar Altschuler’s in Doctorow’s World’s fair demonstrate that the focalising narrator may be still highly involved and that his perspective could still be highly personal. External narration

60 Free indirect discourse, addressed in Chapter 6, shows that information imparted by the narrator may be focalised through a character as it approximates the transference of subjective information by a character or characters.
certainly does not necessarily mean an impersonal perspective and limited access to a character’s thoughts. Considering basically any statement in the novel, Bal’s statement that the narrator might be external, but not impersonal (1981:177), makes sense.

Focalisation should therefore not be regarded only as a matter of knowledge. Nelles (1990:368) summarises focalisation, according to Genette, as a relation between the narrator’s report and the character’s thoughts to which the narrator has no, limited or total access. In internal focalisation the narrator says just as much as a given character knows (Nelles, 1990:366-367). The fact that McIlvaine does not have access to Martin Pemberton’s thoughts does not prevent him from relaying the available information about him, evaluating Martin’s behaviour and rendering his own impressions. The verb “to focalise” should therefore include the aspect of “colouring” (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:80,82) or “filtering” which Chatman (1986:196) uses to refer to a narrator who can elect to tell a part, or the whole, of the story neutrally or “from” or “through” a character’s consciousness. This study also regards filtering as possible through the consciousness of the narrator himself. Furthermore, if a story or a part of a story is told “neutrally” it also comments on the consciousness of the focaliser and his relationship to the subject matter which he focalises and “filters”. Neutrality can therefore be mere semblance.

The difference between Genette and Bal is that Genette regards the narrator as the focalising agent who might use the point of view of a character (Genette, 1988:73; Liebenberg, 1996:196), whereas Bal does not exclude the character as the focalising agent or the point from where elements are seen (Bal, 1990:119) as well as the way in which they are perceived. It is still the narrator who imparts the knowledge, but there is, as Liebenberg says, a shift from narrator to character (1996:191). Since the terms “perspective” and “point of view” could be meant either literally or figuratively/metaphorically and imply either a literal or figurative/metaphoric position, one needs to be clear on how theoreticians see the role of a character’s “point of view” or perspective. Genette (1980:162) uses the term “point of view” in relation to narrative information and its availability:

[T]he narrative can furnish the reader with more or fewer details, and in a more or less direct way, and can thus seem (to adopt a common and convenient spatial

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61 Claude-Edmonde Magny had already used this term in 1948 (Nelles, 1990:368).

62 This differs from Rimmon-Kenan’s (1983:80) differentiation between “‘the external/internal’ opposition” that “yields ‘objective’ (neutral, uninvolved) v. ‘subjective’ (coloured, involved) focalization.” Objectivity can be “false” and an indication of a chosen perspective that could be regarded as subjective.
metaphor, which is not to be taken literally) to keep at a greater or lesser distance from what it tells. The narrative can also choose to regulate the information it delivers, not with a sort of even screening, but according to the capacities of knowledge of one or another participating in the story (a character or group of characters), with the narrative adopting or seeming to adopt what we ordinarily call the participant’s “vision” or “point of view”; the narrative seems in that case (continuing the spatial metaphor) to take on, with regard to the story, one or another perspective.

Although Genette specifically points out that one should not take the spatial metaphor literally, his reference to the modalities of regulation of narrative information that he defines as mood, namely distance and perspective, does impart a very literal appearance to focalisation: “... as the view I have of a picture depends for precision on the distance separating me from it, and for breadth on my position with respect to whatever partial obstruction is more or less blocking it” (Genette, 1980:162). Liebenberg (1996:189) considers this kind of regulation through a character, a blocking out of certain particulars so that the whole picture is not visible, as what Genette means by focalisation. Focalisation is also represented in *Narrative discourse revisited* (1988) as primarily a matter of regulating information.

Niederhoff (2001) and Jesch and Stein (2009:59-61) propose that the terms focalisation (the selection of narrative information) and perspective (the focus of perception) are independent of one another and should be used in clear differentiation from one another. They argue that it is possible that “the fictional perceiving subject does not see (realize, comprehend, understand, etc.) something of which the reader is made fully aware” (Jesch & Stein, 2009:61). Niederhoff (2001:9) does acknowledge that subjectification and limitation of perception are common elements of both focalisation and perspective, but asserts that they are “bis zu einem gewissen Grad” [“to a certain extent”] independent from one another because perspective is the position of the observer, and focalisation is the selection of a specific section of reality. Jesch and Stein (2009:65) do also briefly allow that perspectivisation can become a means to achieve focalisation because a “connection between focalization and perspectivization can exist to the extent that perspectivization often serves to account for a restriction of information within the fictional world”. Yet, they immediately denounce this conclusion by saying: “Once again, however, perspectivization is not focalization, for a text can contain (implicit) information that transcends the figural and/or narratorial capacities of knowledge” (Jesch & Stein, 2009:65-66). In this study the combination of these factors is not considered, nor are they used independently from one another.
One certainly can refer to focalisation and perspective apart from each other, i.e. considering the “original” Genettian emphasis on focalisation exclusively on the narrative level as regulated information on the one hand and perspective on the other. However, as Fludernik (1996:344; my italics – PvdM) states, the neat distinction of the two entirely different issues (who sees versus who speaks) “proves intuitively incorrect whenever one looks at the voice factor outside the narrator’s language”:

Theories of focalization have started off from two different definitions: source of focalization and entity focalised, with some models combining the two. These distinctions are, however, untenable from a theoretical perspective. Focalization on the story level (i.e. one character observing another) does not properly belong to macro-focalization, i.e. the focalization of the entire text, but it is a small-scale management of the plot function. The only really important issue is that of the consistent or inconsistent rendering of the entire story by means of a particular slant or filter; and that, as Bal correctly notes, is a function that needs to be situated on the discourse level – on the same level as chronological rearrangement.

Because perspective and the regulation of information do coincide on the story level, the meaning of focalisation has become transformed by such theoriticians as Bal and Rimmon-Kenan to include the perspective of the narrator who presents the selected information, including the range of access by the fictional perceiving subject to knowledge with regard to the fictional world63 and/or character perspectives. Prevention from accessing knowledge is, per se, a kind of regulated information. It could also be a method to present the perceiving subject’s partial, subjective and/or unreliable perspective, either directly or indirectly.64

2.3.3. The focaliser’s mindset as determining the fictional world’s nature

One also needs to consider the “focalising” narrator’s/character’s frame of mind or subjective worldview as a factor in determining the narrative’s perspective. Nünning (2001:210) considers “character-perspective” as synonymous with “a fictional agent’s subjective worldview”. One of

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63 Kubíček (2009:183) confirms this by observing that focalisation is, for Genette, a matter of selection at the narrative level whilst Bal “situates the entire theory of focalization on the level at which the characters of a narrative focalize the world of narrative events most simply: the story.”

64 According to Jesch & Stein (2009:63) Rimmon-Kenan “consistently uses the term focalization as a synonym for perception (i.e. perspective)”. “Focalisation” has indeed become associated with Rimmon-Kenan and Bal. However, upon becoming acquainted with focalisation theory one soon realises that a huge difference exists between Genette’s use of the term and, for instance, Bal’s as well as Rimmon-Kenan’s, Fludernik’s, Margolin’s, etc. Kubíček (2009:184) quite rightly states that the concepts which Genette and Bal introduce “can never be reconciled, despite the fact that they both use the common term focalization. Both consider the question that they answer with the term ‘focalization’ quite legitimately – however … each on its own structural level.” In order to gain full benefit from the ideas of various focalisation theorists, this study will therefore use the term “focalisation” as including the notion of “perspective”.

Bal’s (1990:120) questions with regard to the focalising agent, namely “What is his mindset?” does imply emotive quality (or lack of it). Like Genette, Rimmon-Kenan (1983:71) regards cognition as part of focalisation, but she includes an emotive and ideological orientation.65

Pfister’s (1988:58; cf. Nünning, 2001:210) understanding of perspective is similar to aspects of Bal’s, Genette’s and Rimmon-Kenan’s concepts. The “level of advance information the figure has access to” evokes Genette’s regulation of knowledge or selection, but Pfister (1988:58) also includes “psychological disposition and ideological orientation”.66 The actual world that persists in the presence and absence of any consciousness that all living beings on earth experience from the moment of birth is markedly different from “the world” referred to by any person. As in fictional worlds, understandings of how the world actually is, differ greatly among all the inhabitants of the earth because one’s view of the world is determined by one’s circumstances that are affected by cultural, political, ideological, socio-economic, religious, personal and other factors.

Narrators and characters in the fictional world may believe, as actual people do with regard to their actual world, that they have an “objective understanding”, but it might be unreliable, incomplete or, either consciously or subconsciously, mixed with subjectivity. A version of the world is created in each instance which also stems from the individual’s personal interpretation. This implies that where there is no consciousness, the world is not interpreted. A fictional world is likewise dependent on consciousness for its existence and is therefore always a textual actual world “interpreted” by a focaliser and relayed either directly (as a narrator) or indirectly (as a character).

The narrator’s focus on a character as focaliser includes the manner in which the character sees himself and the textual actual world. The narrator of Narziß und Goldmund relays Goldmund’s experience of his own individuality and the effects that result from interacting with the textual actual world. The “world of Goldmund” is a focalised version of the textual actual world relayed by an omniscient narrator, but focalised by means of subjective interpretation, mostly by

65 Cf. Nelles (1990:366); Chatman (1986:192). Herman (1994:231; 248) considers ways of focalising a story as the narrative representation of “propositional attitudes” while Miall and Kuiken (2001:292) identify feelings as directly implicated in two of three components of perspective. Apart from the element consisting of the spatiotemporal point of view, including internal versus external perspective, the second is focalisation of the feeling experience of a character/characters, whereas the third is focalisation of the feelings and attitudes embodied in stylistic devices, i.e. the aesthetic features of literary texts (Miall & Kuiken, 2001:292).

66 Relevant to Pfister’s notion is Viljoen’s (2007:36) conclusion that “Wales (2001:54) underscores Rimmon-Kenan’s (1983) and Fludernik’s (1993) understanding of focalization as ‘the angle of vision through which the story is focused, but in a sense which includes not only the angle of physical perception … but also the cognitive orientation … and emotive orientation’”. 

Chapter 2: The interrelations between possible worlds, fictional worlds and focalisation in theory 55
Goldmund, determined by the various events and stations of his life. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:80) describes the interpretation or subjectivity of the internal focaliser Madame Bovary looking at her garden at Tostes before and after her great ennui, the first being “neutral” in character but the same garden later being seen as a place of disease, ruin and death. This corresponds to Bal’s (1990:113) argument that events are always represented from a specific perspective and that, for example, a small child perceives differently from an adult due to his size and the degree of acquaintance with what he sees, which affects his perception. Here one also recognises how individuality determines and influences the objects of focalisation.

In summary: A definition of focalisation cannot disregard psychological and emotional aspects. The focaliser’s reactions focus not only on what a character sees, hears, tastes, smells and touches (or not), but also on how. The fictional world is determined by the narrator’s and/or characters’ “filtering” conception of the textual actual world. One recognises this especially through direct and indirect descriptions and evaluations of the focalising self, other characters, events and spaces accompanied by specific ambiances and tones. These aspects imply a subjectivity that one could understand here mainly as a way of looking at (thinking about, evaluating etcetera) the textual actual world as if one could “filter” it or “see it through a coloured glass”. One may ask what the fictional world looks like were it not filtered or if the “coloured glass” were taken away. The only way one can do so is by inference, especially when one recognises a narrator as unreliable – because the fictional world is bound to the written words of focalised narration.

2.4. Conclusion

A possible world is first of all a world which is, according to Doležel (1998:282; my italics – PvdM), the “totality of material and mental entities that can be designated by linguistic or other semiotic means”: for instance novels, plays, films, and the like. The adjective “possible” distinguishes the world, if applied to a “totality of material entities”, as a world that is not material, physical or actual, but possible in terms of the actual world. As such, the possible world is one that is not concrete. It is a collection of components of a mind that can also be (artistically) represented by narrations and/or other media. The “totality of material entities” or the actual world can stand alone, i.e. without being “processed” by a consciousness. A possible world, however, is subject to the processes of a mind which one is able to recognise when it is represented by texts that rely on language or other semiotic means such as images, sounds and music.
The term “possible world” alone, however, does not distinguish what kind of world is possible. Ronen’s definition of a possible world could be adapted to the term “possible actual world”, but one could also talk about a “possible fictional world”. In a “possible fictional world” there are hypotheticals or “counterfactuals” in terms of the textual actual world.

A possible world is ultimately a world that is “thinkable” (Doležel, 1998:281), which pertains specifically to either a real or fictional person – whether in terms of the actual world, pertaining to (a) real person(s), or of a fictional world, pertaining to (a) fictional character(s). “Thinkable” as a substitute for “possible” seems to be closer to a mental conception than such “objective” adjectives as “likely”, “probable”, “potential”, and the like. The act of thinking about a non-actual, but likely, probable, potential or possible world makes of it a product of subjective consciousness.

As in the case of “possible worlds”, a fictional world is, in the first instance, a world dependent on a consciousness for its existence. Doležel’s definition of a world that is the totality of mental entities which can be designated by linguistic or other semiotic means (1998:282) comfortably applies to a fictional world. Doležel’s definition of a fictional world paraphrases the idea that it can be “designated by linguistic or other semiotic means”, employing the notion that it is “constructed by a fictional text or other performative semiotic medium” (1998:280). Whether the world is constituted by narration in prose or dialogue, by enacting fictional events, erecting sets and representing spaces and images, as in plays and films, the “performative semiotic medium” can create a fictional world.

In discussing focalisation, it becomes clear that a fictional world is, like a non-literary possible world, dependent on a consciousness, i.e. the narrator that relays a story from his and/or another character’s perspective constituting the fictional world. What is presented to the reader is the fictional world that starts with the first word on the first page and ends with the last word on the last page. Implied is the textual actual world which the narrator or a focalising character processes to become the fictional world. One could therefore summarise a “fictional world” as a “focalised textual actual world”. When Doležel (1998:280) terms a fictional world a possible world (1998:280), one could consider it as such in this sense.

Hypotheticals in terms of merely the fictional world, i.e. what is possible in a fictional world, for example, time travelling, are less relevant for this study than possibilities in terms of the actual world – unless time travelling would have metaphoric/allegorical dimensions. The truth value of fictional worlds is reflected not by any provable facts, but by their “simulation” of imaginability, plausibility and causality in actual world terms – especially with regard to an accessibility
relation like Ryan’s “psychological credibility” that is relevant for the mental and “emotive component” (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:80-81) of focalisation. It is in this sense that fictional worlds are also possible worlds.

Doctorow (1994c:152) maintains that fiction is a mode of communication that is able to express truth more proficiently than facts do. He rejects “the power of the regime” (factual language) in favour of “the power of freedom” (fictional language) (Doctorow, 1994c:152). A text that pretends to be factual could of course be faulty due to ignorance, incompleteness, subjectivity and manipulation. Consequently it is false. A fictional text, on the other hand, may be guilty of all these things and still be truthful. “False documents”, like Hesse’s and Doctorow’s texts that “mix” “verifiable information” and “erroneous statements”, may be more trustworthy than some factual reports, not because of their (partial) factual accuracy, but because of their causal implications, imaginability and plausibility. Examples of causality and if-situations (hypotheticals or counterfactuals) abound in Ragtime – especially with regard to the Coalhouse Walker Jr. story. The story’s origin in the actual world, i.e. the Michael Kohlhasen history which Kleist used as a basis for his novella Michael Kohlhaas, is not what lends Kleist’s and Doctorow’s texts their truth value. The stories are “true” because in each one the unique representation of a focalising consciousness and his employment of causal principles, imaginability and plausibility not only contribute to the story world’s “fitness with itself”, but are also possible in the actual world.

In this study focalisation is defined as the process by which information about the textual actual world is imparted and processed by a fictional human-like consciousness to become, collectively, the fictional world. The Genettian view of focalisation or perspective is performed primarily by the narrator (Du Plooy, 1986:202). However, as in Bal’s opinion, a focaliser may be a narrating-I or an experiencing-I (Phelan, 2001:53). The narrator may be the focaliser, representing his own perspective, but he may also relay the perspective of a character-focaliser.

An important aspect of focalisation is therefore the manner in which focalisation takes place. Because perception cannot be neutral – and even if it strives or pretends to be – it inevitably “colours” the textual actual world as the focaliser perceives it. The metaphor of colouring is similar to what Chatman (1986:196) calls “filtering”:
The narrator can elect to tell a part or the whole of a story neutrally or “from” or “through” one or another character’s consciousness. This function should I think be called “filter”. A character who serves as filter may be central (the protagonist) or not (the “witness”).

Chatman (1986:93) points out that the narrator may use a character as a “primary medium (screen, lens, vessel of consciousness or whatever) through which the events, other characters, and setting of the story are rendered, but rendered always in the words or ‘voice’ of the narrator”. The narrator himself, however, cannot “have” the Focus of Narration (he cannot himself be “focalised”, “bear the point of view”, or whatever), since he is not in the story. He is outside, in the discourse, and things have been so arranged in this kind of narrative that his report of what happened is screened or filtered through a single or a few characters’ consciousness (Chatman, 1986:93).

This is the case in *Narziß and Goldmund* where the identity of the omniscient extradiegetic narrator is never as clear as in *Demian, Welcome to Hard Times* and *Homer & Langley*. However, the nature of the information that such narrators as Sinclair, Blue and Homer Collyer relay does characterise them. One can reach a conclusion regarding what kind of person the narrator or focaliser is, based on the nature of the represented fictional world. The retrospective narrators that represent themselves as “focalising characters” in *Demian, Welcome to Hard Times* and *Narziß und Goldmund* focalise and filter their textual actual worlds and themselves as part of the fictional worlds.

Whatever optical metaphor one uses “when we try to name the narrator’s use of a character’s consciousness as the screen or filter through which the events of a story are perceived, conceived and so on” (Chatman, 1986:191), the purpose of it is to refer to a “transformed” textual actual world. The textual actual world is a construct refashioned by a focalising consciousness of which the product is the fictional world. The implication is therefore that focalisation contributes to the creation of fictional worlds.

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67 The filter’s modalities, for example, objectivity, subjectivity, reliability, unreliability, optimism and pessimism, determine what is focalised and determine how the textual actual world is focalised.
In conclusion: a possible world and a fictional world are similar because they cannot exist independently from a consciousness. As Phelan (2001:53) points out, Genette (1988:64) remarks that the question “Who sees?” is more adequately formulated as “Who perceives?” However, “seeing” is in this study understood not merely in terms of literal sight, but as conveying a metaphoric meaning referring to “inner sight” or cognition that could, but need not, coincide with visual perception. Being conscious of something through sight or mental cognition is not a neutral process, either in the actual world or in a fictional world – this may also affect visual perception as, for example, in Demian. Also, even the façade of a subject’s “objectivity” is a type of personal point of view (akin to subjectivity) because it points to the subject’s relationship with the focalised objects and preoccupations.

One could therefore contend that possible and fictional worlds are always “focalised”. Whatever the nature of possible worlds, i.e. whether they are hypotheticals or counterfactuals, reports of dreams, projections, fantasies, wishes, intents, beliefs or knowledge (Ryan, 1991:19-20), they cannot exist apart from a subjective consciousness. Whereas the actual world can exist independently from any consciousness, a possible world owes its existence to consciousness. The consciousness of the narrator or (a) character(s) in the possible world of a novel is therefore crucial. In a possible world, as in a fictional world like Homer & Langley, the known identity and character of Homer Collyer determine the nature of his focalisation, i.e. how he understands his textual actual world. If the narrator/focaliser were not Homer Collyer, but, for example, his brother Langley Collyer or another character like Mary Elizabeth Riordan, it would have been a completely different fictional world. The narrator’s/focalising character’s chosen subject matter, words and tone contribute to the forming of the fictional world. The reader may be able to distinguish between how the textual actual world really is by means of inference and how that narrator presents it, but the reader is primarily confronted with the world changed by the “colour of the light” that focalisation sheds on it. This potentially unreliable or subjective version of the textual actual world constitutes the defining nature of the fictional world.

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68 Acknowledging the actual world connections between the actual world and fictional worlds, i.e. the influence of focalisation’s effect on influencing readers’ “vision of the story and to recognize such phenomenon as dual-focalization”, Phelan (2001:63) regards focalisation as a “straightforward question of who perceives” whether it is a character or a narrator. Jahn (1996:243) notes that “perception, thought, recollection, and knowledge are often considered to be criterial features of focalization, and all these mental processes are closely related to seeing, albeit only metonymically or metaphorically”. As Prince (2001:44) similarly states: “… the verb ‘perceive’ is to be taken in a broad rather than narrow acceptation: to apprehend with the senses (to see, hear, touch, etc.) or with the mind, or with something like their equivalent. In other words, what is perceived may be abstract or concrete, tangible or intangible – sights, sounds, smells, or thoughts, feelings, dreams, and so on.” Niederhoff also allows for perspective to be a metaphoric extension “from vision in the literal sense to vision in the figurative sense, i.e. to interpretation and evaluation” (2009b:384) or “thinking” (2001:7-9).
The basis for the text analyses and comparisons of the novels *Demian, Welcome to Hard Times, Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley*, which differ quite considerably from each other, is twofold. By means of a contextualisation of the concepts “possible worlds”, “fictional worlds” and “focalisation” and their interrelationships this chapter has presented a theoretical basis.

The following chapter comprises an orientation with regard to Hermann Hesse’s and E.L. Doctorow’s concerns and themes. Chapter 3 aims to present a background concerning the comparability of these authors as a basis for considering how focalisation contributes to constituting fictional worlds.
Chapter 3

Contextualising focalisation and fictional worlds as possible worlds in Hermann Hesse’s and E.L. Doctorow’s fiction

3. Introduction

Despite the different kinds of fictional worlds in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s oeuvres, the focalising narrators/characters, such as Emil Sinclair, Goldmund, Blue and Homer Collyer, transform their textual actual worlds into fictional worlds by means of focalisation. Hesse does not present a variety of different kinds of fictional worlds even if distinctions can be made: for example, by regarding Unterm Rad as an “education novel” (“Erziehungsroman”), a novel critical of schooling practices (“Schulroman”) or “Schülerroman” (a novel about schoolboys) (cf. Murti, 2009:25;49), Demian as a kind of “Bildungsroman” and Narziß und Goldmund as a “Künstlerroman”. His fictional worlds are mostly profiles of biographical/autobiographical character that are reflected by the titles of his books. Hesse’s fictional worlds are famously known as “spiritual journeys” undertaken by these characters that aspire towards being faithful to their own selves. Because of the subjective nature of the individuals, for instance Emil Sinclair in Demian and Goldmund in Narziß und Goldmund, the contribution of focalisation in bringing fictional worlds about is distinctive.

Doctorow’s novels include a greater variety of genres/kinds of fictional worlds encompassing the Western Welcome to Hard Times, the science fiction novel Big as life, the “experimental” historical novels The book of Daniel, Ragtime, Loon lake, City of God, The march; a fictional historical autobiography/childhood memoir, World’s fair, “by” the fictional Edgar Altschuler, a figure based on the author; a fictional historical autobiographic novel, Homer & Langley “by” Homer Collyer based on the historical figure with the same name; a crime novel, Billy Bathgate; and a detective novel, The Waterworks.

69 Murti (2009:49) reads Unterm Rad as a “Schülerroman” against the “current canonical status” of the book as “an uncompromising Schulroman”.

70 For example, Peter Camenzind, Knulp, Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend, Der Steppenwolf and Das Glasperlenspiel: Versuch einer Lebensbeschreibung des Magister Ludi Josef Knecht samt Knechts hinterlassenen Schriften.

71 Publication of Big as life (1966) ceased after its initial appearance because it is the author’s self-acknowledged failure (McCaffery, 1983:37).
This chapter argues that Hesse’s and Doctorow’s novels are comparable with regard to their use of focalisation, the relationship of their fictional worlds to the actual world and truth value. Both authors employ focalisation that is characterised by the subjective selection of elements focused upon, and “filtering” or understanding and interpretation of, their textual actual worlds. Both authors’ fictional worlds are fairly “realistic” and the relationship between the individual and his social context is prominent. Nonetheless, the genuine relationship between the fictional worlds and the actual world as well as the truthfulness of both authors’ fictional worlds are not based on “realism” and factuality, as “accurate” or “verifiable” direct representations of the actual world. Rather, the truthfulness of, and only valid connection between, the fictional worlds and the actual world derives from the possibilities in a fictional world (for both fictional worlds and the actual one) with regard to causal and psychological phenomena that are imaginable, plausible and credible. Because “realised” (like the verifiable fact of the historical Collyers’ lives) and unrealised possibilities “reappear”, fictional worlds create the impression of having “universal” value. However, the fictional worlds of both authors are truthful as specific and unique fictional possibilities, i.e. as possible worlds – non-actual fictional worlds with actual world relevance.

Focalisation is, in the works of both writers, a key unifying element between the fictional world (the textual actual world “transformed” by focalisation) and the actual one. Although the fictional worlds of Hesse and Doctorow display characteristic actual world appearances, the most important “actual world connections” that their fictional worlds exhibit should be considered in terms of possible worlds – especially with regard to the accessibility relation “psychological credibility” (cf. Ryan, 1991:45) that contributes to the plausible and imaginable fictional world in terms of the actual world, with respect to causality as well. The main questions are therefore: What are the characteristic aspects of Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction? And, secondly: How do they contribute to a comparable basis when considering how fictional worlds come about through focalisation? The sections focusing on the two writers aim at preparing a foundation for showing that a comparison of works by Hesse and Doctorow is possible and meaningful – even though the cultural worlds of these works differ, as is to be expected from two very different authors.

Hesse’s works are set in German-speaking cultural contexts whilst Doctorow’s fiction is placed in American contexts, most often in New York. Hermann Hesse was born on the 2nd of July 1877 in Calw, Württemberg in Germany to a conservative Christian family: his parents had both professional and spiritual associations with the Pietist Church (Tusken, 1998:6). He grew up in a patriarchal, authoritarian family structure characteristic of the precapitalist period (Stephenson, 2009:34). He became a Swiss citizen in 1923 and died on the 9th of August 1962 in Montagnola,
Switzerland (Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 2000:5,12; Zeller, 1997:163-164). He lived and wrote during a time in the history of Europe which was marked by the First World War (1914-1918) and the Second World War (1939-1944) together with the concomitant turmoil prior to and following the wars.

Edgar Lawrence Doctorow was born on the 6th of January 1931 in the Bronx, New York (Harter & Thompson, 1990:xii) and still resides in New York. He is a contemporary author whose latest novel, *Homer & Langley*, was published in 2009. Doctorow says of himself that he was nourished by a Jewish humanist spirituality which was “not terribly religious”, another part of the New York mindset (Tokarczyk, 2000:202). These two authors produced works of fiction that bear the comparable trait of a “misleading” relationship between their fictional worlds and the actual world. The fictional worlds – specifically with regard to the works selected for this study – of both the authors come across as representative of the actual world. Yet, the “representational” value does not lie in a direct mimeticism, but in an indirect “possible-ness” in which focalisation is a central aspect.

Both authors are especially interested in creatively depicting often causally plausible and imaginable relations in the interaction between an individual and his society. Causal relations may also be symbolic (and to an extent incredible) like the Bad Man’s return in Doctorow’s *Welcome to Hard Times* coinciding with the community’s spiritual depression or Hans Giebenrath’s death in *Unterm Rad*; nevertheless “realistic”, i.e. mimetic and possible facets in terms of the actual world, remain prominent. A concern that is directly related to the interaction between the individual and his social context encompasses the mental, psychological or “spiritual” states of the character that contribute to the represented selection of information and the “filtering” or “colouring” of the textual actual worlds, i.e. aspects of focalisation.

There are, in a way, two “fictional” worlds: firstly, the fictional world to which the reader is exposed, the represented and focalised world. Secondly, a fictional world or rather the (fictional) textual actual world, i.e. the world “as it really is” and “behind” the focalised world. The reader would only be able to recognise it by means of inference. The employment of the I-narrator in *Demian*, through whose perspective the action is conveyed to the reader (Singh, 2006:120) indicates that the text is not an “objective representation” of the fictional world “as it really is”, but should be understood as a representation of a subjective psychological interior. Singh (2006:120) also refers to dreams and visions, as in *Klein und Wagner*, that exercise a changing and constituting power which anticipates the inner personal narrative perspective of the inner monologues, of Harry Haller, that objectify the experiences of the title figures (Singh,
Because the construction of a fictional world on the textual level depends so much on the experiences of the focalising consciousness, for example, because of the effects of the interaction between the (fictional) social context and the character/characters – and because the reader is exposed to the literary text which is a presentation of the “transfigured” textual actual world – the term “fictional world” used in this study will refer specifically to the focalised world.

As in Hesse’s works, Doctorow’s fictional worlds are specific focalised representations determined by characters’ inner states. When Wutz (1994:194) asked Doctorow whether there is an “essential Doctorow”, the author admitted one could identify certain preoccupations, thematic concerns and obsessions that reoccur. Although Doctorow suggested that identifying the “essential Doctorow” should be left to the critics, he confirmed in response to the interviewer that there are always children in his books, that he plays myths off against popular culture and history and that his books all have different voices. These are significant elements, but they do not really define “the essential Doctorow”. The natures of the individual’s inner states (like Blue’s in Welcome to Hard Times; Coalhouse Walker Jr.’s actions that indicate psychological turmoil and that are representative and have specific consequences, as well as Daniel Isaacson’s or Martin Pemberton’s experiences of abuse of power in their social contexts) are literary concerns that better define the “essential Doctorow”.

Another aspect of the “essential Doctorow” is the matter of the relationships of the stories to the historical actual world. His novels are often regarded as “historical novels”. The book of Daniel is listed in Quinn’s book History in literature: A reader’s guide to 20th-century history and the literature it inspired (2004) as a novel which included “accounts of the cultural and political atmosphere of the early 1950s” and a “bitter, angry tone” which suggests “an underlying conflict within Daniel about his parents’ political commitment and the price that he and his sister paid for it” (Quinn, 2004:279). Doctorow is certainly far from alone in writing fiction “rooted in historical events” (Quinn, 2004:x) or “imaginatively recreating facts” (Quinn, 2004:ix). However, the point of departure in this study is that a “fact” in a fictional text, even if immediately recognisable as “true” in the actual world, is “imaginatively recreated” because it becomes part of the fictional world.

The relation between Hesse’s fictional worlds and the actual world is similarly indirect. Furthermore, in their relation to the actual world Hesse’s “autobiographic” texts are fictional worlds that are possible worlds. Demian was first published in 1919 as an authentic autobiography of Emil Sinclair, the pseudonym Hesse used. Most, if not all, of Hesse’s works...
contain autobiographical elements, but to read them as such would restrict the significance of the literary texts. One would also decrease the literary, i.e. artistic value of the communication of, for example, World’s fair, if one were to read it solely as a historical autobiography or The book of Daniel as a historical text. Neither should one regard historical sources about the Cold War, the real historical execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, the “actual world counterparts” of the Isaacsens, essays by and interviews with the author as authoritative or decisive with regard to understandings of the primary texts. Yet, like other secondary sources such as reviews, journal articles and books about the primary sources they could be, as Morris (1999:viii) describes interviews with an author such as Doctorow, “occasions for learning” if selected and considered critically.

What is important is not that there are connections between the actual world and the fictional worlds, but why there are causal and psychological similarities in the actual world and fictional worlds. Because of their inner experiences fictional characters create individualised and to a more or lesser extent factually “unreliable”, but nevertheless revealing, “humanist” representations of their worlds. This aspect of Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works accords their fiction possibilities and means of conveying truths about the actual world and humanity.

This chapter also aims at considering the nature and function of the actual world in both Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictional worlds. In the first section on Hesse, the focus will be placed slightly more closely on the focalising fictional individual. The following section on Doctorow will put somewhat more emphasis on the actual world relevance and the truth value of his fictional worlds.

The first section will focus on fictional worlds and the actual world as “neighbouring” and on the centrality of the focalising individual in Hesse’s fiction. The examination of Hesse’s fiction will address the fictional individual as a focalising agent and the relationship between the fictional and the actual world. Subsequently, it will address reader identification and Hesse’s reception

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72 Doctorow’s and Hesse’s “humanism” may correspond with the “characteristics” of humanists as championing freedom of thought and opinion where “all opinions are open to revision and correction, they see human flourishing as dependent on open communication, discussion, criticism, and unforced consensus” (Audi, 2005:397). On a moral level their prose reflects the “concern to emphasize human welfare and dignity” (Blackburn, 1994: 178). Sheehan (2002:ix) writes that the various humanisms which have burgeoned since the Renaissance (Enlightenment, liberal, existential) have “assumed a degree of certainty about what it means to be human” and in most instances this is supported by “appeals to intrinsic rational, moral and axiological dimensions, and a belief in a universal human nature and/or condition”. However, the Shoah (the Holocaust) “has been a foreclosure of that certainty, a breakdown of the categories of rationality, morality etc.” (Sheehan, 2002:ix). It is a given that inhumanity is part of what it means to be human. He therefore calls for recognising how “inhuman the human really is, and the importance of inventing new ways of being human that might reflect this” (Sheehan, 2002:191). By means of their fiction, Hesse’s and Doctorow’s versions of humanism seem to meet this appeal. One immediately thinks of the concept of Abraxas in Demian and Martin Pemberton’s experience of recognising his father’s evil spirit within himself. Hence their novels reveal and acknowledge various aspects of natural human nature, for instance admirable aspects, private longings and ambitions, but also failings and inhuman aspects, etc. Simultaneously, their fiction can be described as promoting human welfare and human dignity.
because they so markedly represent the recognised connection between fictional worlds and the actual worlds, albeit often misunderstood. The section will then conclude by regarding Hesse’s “autobiographical” fiction in possible worlds terms, as well as the relationship between the focalising character and the textual actual world and the character’s social context.

The following section will address the actual world relevance and the truth value of Doctorow’s fictional worlds by considering his fictional worlds’ connections to the actual world; representing the fictional worlds by means of the lingual “power of freedom” instead of “the power of the regime”; truth value; artistically communicating as part of the “multiplicity of witnesses” and possible worlds. The section on Doctorow will end with a discussion of the exposure of injustice by means of fiction as a way of advocating justice also in the actual world.73 It will also deal with the nature of Doctorow’s focus on social contexts and the focalising frame of mind as part of considering social contexts and their realities, the focalising consciousness and his personal textual actual world. The chapter will then conclude by arguing in favour of Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictional worlds as comparable with regard to the ways in which their fictional worlds are created through their employment of focalisation.

3.1. Hermann Hesse: Fictional worlds and the actual world as “neighbouring” and the centrality of the focalising individual

Hesse’s fictional worlds are usually regarded by readers and critics as, first and foremost, portrayals of the human “soul” or psyche, often at odds with the values and norms of middle-class society. In “Eine Arbeitsnacht” (1928) [“A night of work”] Hesse indicated that he viewed his larger works of prose as reflections about the relationships which the individual has with the world74 – and not the world as such:

Beinahe alle Prosadichtungen, die ich geschrieben habe, sind Seelenbiographien, in allen handelt es sich nicht um Geschichten, Verwicklungen und Spannungen, sondern sie sind im Grunde Monologe, in denen eine einzige Person, eben jene mythische Figur, in ihren Beziehungen zur Welt und zum eigenen Ich betrachtet wird

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73 This is relevant because the experience of injustice affects the focalisation in the novel. Harris (2002:66; my emphasis – PvdM) argues that in Gore Vidal’s Burr and Doctorow’s The book of Daniel “we see a dramatised ‘argument’ between the individual’s experience and subsequent reading of the past, and the conflicting assumptions and claims communicated in the official historical accounts.”

74 Singh (2006:175) remarks that whilst Hans Giebenrath’s downfall could be ascribed to the strict, religious, morally repressive education system of his time, the basis of Harry Haller’s schizophrenic personality comprises the authoritarian norms in terms of which he is socialised. The focus in Hesse’s fiction is, however, on how social contexts affect the individual and how he subjectively experiences it. The function of the portrayals of social contexts is therefore to depict the inner world of the character(s).
Chapter 3: Contextualising focalisation and fictional worlds as possible worlds in Hermann Hesse’s and E.L. Doctorow’s fiction

[Hesse, 1977:247). [Almost all works of prose that I have written are biographies of the soul and none of them are stories, complications and tensions, but are basically monologues in which a single person, precisely that mythic figure, is contemplated in its relations to the world and its own self.]

Central literary concerns in Hesse’s works that are specifically relevant for this study are the character as a focalising agent and his relationship with his world, as well as the nature of this world and its actual world characteristics. This is also reflected by his reception: this is often conscious of the person in the actual world, Hermann Hesse, while considering his fictional characters that are autobiographically reminiscent. Because the nature of Hesse’s reception and reader identification are signs of the centrality of the “neighbouring” nature of the Hesse’s fictional worlds and the actual world, his reception warrants attention here. This section will also consider Hesse’s quasi autobiographical fiction as well as the relationship between the focalising character and his textual actual world and social context.

3.1.1. The fictional individual as a focalising agent

The confused inner experiences of Hans Giebenrath in Unterm Rad can be divided into a few intersecting and contradictory forces that affect his frame of mind, which determines the focalisation in the novel. Solbach (2005:72) notes that the image “eines selbstgewählten Strebertums aus persönlichem Hochmut und intellektueller Überheblichkeit” [“a self-chosen ambition towards academic success based on personal haughtiness and intellectual superiority”] problematises an unambiguous quality of the person owing to the dichotomous division between “Opfer/Individuum und Täter/Gesellschaft” [“victim/individual and perpetrator/society”]. Indeed a main force is Giebenrath’s ambition to transcend his social class and his “intense fear of staying common … of having to become an apprentice and live out his life in an office or shop” (Vahlbusch, 2009:42). Giebenrath becomes a “victim” because of the socio-cultural value of an expectation to excel that places physical and mental demands on him. Hermann Heilner rebels against the expectations of authority figures that he ought to be deferential by being diligent and obedient, i.e. by conforming.

These contradictory forces work towards determining a falseness with regard to Giebenrath’s being, i.e. against a third force, namely the desire for authenticity or “in Hesse’s world …

Jungian aspirations towards wholeness, towards a re-integration of the multi-faceted personality” (Swales, 2009:179), which is evident in various novels by Hesse. Singh (2006:86) points out that the romantic nature backdrop of forests, rivers, meadows and ponds, the summer sky and autumn fog initially adds to the contrast between the peacefulness and natural balance, on the one hand, and the abysmal social reality on the other. Nature then later also becomes “eine trügerische Idylle” [“a deceptive idyll”]. Nature, which was a world that opposed social reality, finally becomes overwhelmed by the terrible nature of this reality: “In der Welt Hans Giebenraths ist nichts mehr heil, zeugt nichts mehr von einer verlorenen Einheit zwischen menschlichem und natürlichem Sein ...” [“Nothing in the world of Hans Giebenrath is sound anymore, nothing attests to a lost unity between human and natural existence.”] It is therefore ironic that Giebenrath participates in the social forces, but experiences himself as a victim.

His friendship with Hermann Heilner seems to support and is ultimately part of the third force (an ally against the social world). Vahlbusch’s article “Notes toward a new reading of Hesse’s *Unterm Rad*” (2009:17-56) questions the validity of the novel’s criticism against “Hans’s teachers, tutors, father, or the state” (Vahlbusch, 2009:45). Vahlbusch (2009:47) argues that the true “opponent, antagonist, villain” is Hermann Heilner whose actions, “especially those accompanied by Heilner’s incessant Weltschmerz-laced outpourings of moon and mood” have dangerous effects on Hans Giebenrath. Vahlbusch (2009:51) sees Heilner’s flight as a trivial and self-defeating protest against a non-repressive “command”. This is a questionable argument about the textual actual world, not the fictional one. The indubitable experiences of the focalising self are reflected in Johann’s (2003:123-130) assessment of stark spaces and “imprisoning” customs in the monastery, ironically lacking acts of religious devotion.76

Longing and wishing are futile because Giebenrath is denied a relationship with Emma, who is, like most women in Hesse’s fiction, the symbolic figure of the extension or fulfilment of an authentic life amongst his male characters (even if this includes danger and death) (cf. Mecocci, 2004a:378-384). His existence therefore becomes pointless. After Emma has left, at first he experiences emotional torture, but after a few months he seems to have adapted to the existence of an artisan, which allows him to experience a false sense of comfort among the other artisans: “Das alles hatte etwas Anheimelndes, und wenn auch manches daran ein wenig naiv und lächerlich war, lag doch dahinter die Schönheit und der Stolz des Handwerks verborgen ...” (Hesse, 1972a:154). [“All that had something homey about it, and if some of it was also a bit

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76 Johann (2003:130).
naive and ridiculous, it nevertheless contained the beauty and pride of the craft.”] This “good news” or positive focalisation of his context, however, is the beginning of Giebenrath’s end. Having failed in both his social ambitions and with regard to his contradictory longing for personal “wholeness”, he could be regarded as an inauthentic socially diminished individual whose “soul” subsequently wanes. The concrete manifestation of this process is his death that also characterises the fictional world as a war between “personal” and “social” forces.

Hesse’s focus on the individual and his psyche, i.e. the thematic preoccupation of the individual’s longing to be himself and the difficulties in realising this ideal, cannot be separated from the way in which textual actual world contexts are represented. This indicates that focalisation is a key aspect of how fictional worlds are constituted. For example, when an ailing Knulp senses that his end is drawing near, one finds the following description:

> Es war ihm wenig mehr ums Leben zu tun, die Landstraße hatte in den letzten Jahren viel von ihrem Zauber verloren. Aber sterben wollte er nicht, ehe er Gerbersau wiedergesehen und allerlei heimlichen Abschied dort genommen hätte, von Fluß und Brücke, vom Marktplatz und vom einstigen Garten seines Vaters, und auch von jener Franziska (Hesse, 1979:100-101). [For him little more remained to do in life, the road had lost much of its magic in the last years. But he did not want to die before he had seen Gerbersau again and he would have secretly said some goodbyes to the river and the bridge, the market place, his father’s previous garden as well as Franziska.]

Here one finds that the narration focalises through Knulp. The physical road and the town Gerbersau in this excerpt are not neutral locations, but associated with Knulp’s inner experiences of his memories. The road of the construed textual actual world itself has not changed, but it has “lost its magic” in the fictional world, because Knulp has become weary and ill. The affection for the places in Gerbersau are therefore directly related to Knulp’s last ounce of remaining enthusiasm for life.

3.1.2. The relationship between the fictional world and the actual world

Hans Giebenrath’s and Knulp’s fictional experiences are conceivable to actual world readers because of their human-like “expression/vocalisation of focus” – or focalisation. Singh (2006:84-85) asks whether the oppression of the natural being of the individual regarded as a “subversive power for society and the state” does not pose a fundamental conflict between the human being and society, in the light of the fact that a century after the first appearance of
Unterm Rad the characteristic problems of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – for instance, an oppressive education system and society demanding conformity from the individual – are still relevant for young readers. This implies “jumping” between a fictional world and the actual world just as the publisher Suhrkamp does by adding a specific excerpt on Unterm Rad’s dust cover:

Ein Schulmeister hat lieber zehn notorische Esel als ein Genie in seiner Klasse, und genau betrachtet hat er ja recht, denn seine Aufgabe ist es nicht, extravagant Geister heranzubilden, sondern gute Lateiner, Rechner und Biedermänner. Wer aber mehr und Schweres vom anderen leidet, der Lehrer vom Knaben oder umgekehrt, wer von beiden mehr Tyrann, mehr Quälgeist ist, und wer von beiden es ist, der dem anderen Teile seiner Seele und seines Lebens verdirbt und schändet, das kann man nicht untersuchen, ohne bitter zu werden (Hesse, 1972a: dust cover). [A schoolmaster would prefer ten notorious donkeys to one genius in his class, and, if considered logically, he would indeed have a point because his task is not to foster extraordinary minds, but good Latinists, mathematicians and honest men. However, he who suffers more and harder things from the other, the teacher from the boy or the other way around, he who is the bigger bully, the bigger nuisance, and he who is, of the two, the one who ruins and violates parts of the other one’s soul and life and who disgraces the other one’s life, that one cannot explore without becoming bitter.]

The reason for the selection of precisely this slightly altered passage is self-evident. It is striking: it is able to stand as a statement on its own and focuses on Hesse’s quality of exploring themes that have a “possible (world)” nature. Not only the selection of this passage, but also the changes appear to invite reader identification and “jumping between worlds” which are possible because of the actual world elements in the fictional world.

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77 Singh (2006:287-288) writes that people who have become insecure in phases of crises and radical change find answers to questions about their own lives in the life stories, confessions and self-reflexions of literary figures. The fictional situation(s) in a literary world is (are) therefore regarded as possible and valuable (relevant, comforting, insightful, revealing, etc.) in terms of the actual world and experiences of the actual world.

78 The passage in the book refers to “einige Esel” [“some donkeys”] whereas the second sentence ends with “ohne mit Zorn und Scham an die eigene Jugend zu denken” [“without thinking with anger and shame of one’s own youth”] (Hesse, 1972a:90).
Human experience is the most powerful connection between the fictional world and the actual world\textsuperscript{79}, and is central to the basis of possibility in Hesse’s fiction. A reader instinctively knows that understanding and identifying with the fictional world is done by recognising the “actual world” in fiction, i.e. by appreciating, for example, the plausible causal and psychological parallels that exist in both the fictional world and the actual world. Hesse’s fictional worlds may or may not approximate actual contexts and places, but the “possible-ness” in his fiction is based on human experiences depicted in his fiction. For example, the epitaph in \textit{Demian}: “Ich wollte ja nichts als das zu leben versuchen, was von selber aus mir heraus wollte. Warum war das so sehr schwer?” (D, 9;100) [“I wanted only to try to live in accord with the promptings which came from my true self. Why was that so very difficult?” (DT, unpaginated motto;83)] is recognisable as a human problem\textsuperscript{80} whether the reader can, cannot, wants to or or does not want to, identify with it.

3.1.3. Reader identification and reception reflecting the connection between fictional worlds and the actual world

Interpreting actual world elements in novels such as \textit{Demian} and \textit{Narziß und Goldmund} as exclusively related to Hesse’s private experiences or knowledge of the actual world, is far more historically unreliable and limiting than considering these as artistic and unique, but possible. Many scholars (still) point out that parallels between Hesse’s life and his fiction exist.\textsuperscript{81} However, Cornils (2009:8-9) places the autobiographical nature of his fiction in a balanced perspective when noting that:

\textsuperscript{79} For example, the reader identification with the novel \textit{Homo faber} by Max Frisch provided the impetus for the film director Volker Schlöndorff to make the film \textit{Voyager} (in consultation with Frisch) based on the novel. Schlöndorff tells in an interview entitled “A journey to \textit{Voyager}: an interview with Volker Schlöndorf” (added as a bonus feature on the DVD release) about his depression while he lived in New York prior to having made this film: “So one day walking to my loft on 55th Street (corner of 10th Avenue), all of a sudden it hit me – \textit{Homo faber}, homo hubris … “that’s you, in the middle of your life you thought you have everything under control, you can control your emotions, there’s predictability, you can control your career – and here you are in the pits, depressed …”

\textsuperscript{80} The answer to this question is that rebelling against conforming to social norms may lead to various forms of conflict and distress (shock, criticism, punishment, rejection, and so on). This is ironically reminiscent of Luke 12:51: “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division …” In \textit{Demian} conformation brings along (temporary) “peace” in the relationship between Sinclair and his family and social context. However, finally the “dishonesty” of denying his “authentic self” causes inner conflict that forces Sinclair back to his individualistic path of self-realisation.

\textsuperscript{81} Höppner (2009:121) points out that the “most obvious features of \textit{Klein und Wagner} are the striking autobiographic parallels” and refers to Hesse’s letter to Joseph Bernhard Lang in which he stated that “Ich … war Sinclair, war Klingsor, war Klein …” [“I was Sinclair, was Klingsor, was Klein …”] (Feitknecht, 2006:159). For Freedman (2009:141) the autobiographical references with regard to Klingsor’s journey are “too clear to be ignored. From the first page on, step-by-step, we encounter a disguised Hermann Hesse. The novella becomes an allegory.” Particularly striking is Freedman’s (2009:141; 144) equation of the author and the fictional character by his use of the construction “Hesse/Klingsor”. Marti (2009:271,294) also refers to four sources which point out that Hesse’s works are “intensely autobiographical”. Jens & Künig (1989:160-161) formulated this sentiment by observing that his literary design time and again consisted of highly psychological self-portrayals, self-observations, self-analysis and “ja Selbstverwirklichung” [“indeed, self-realisation”].

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If we assume that all he did was write about himself, we neglect the fact that Hesse cleansed his works of all specific personal references (i.e. the mundane, the accidental) and came up with a modus of narration that focuses both on the individual (taking a single consciousness seriously), and at the same time the trans-individual (in that what is presented is understood and applicable to the life-experience of many readers).

Hesse’s fiction reveals personal experiences that are recognisable as simple or complicated, honest human experiences which are possible in the actual world: i.e. similar experiences may and do occur in the actual world despite either superficial or distinctive variations (like the similarities and differences between Walter Faber’s and Volker Schlöndorff’s experiences). However, this “honesty” may be misunderstood as autobiographical while it should be understood as possible. Hesse’s fiction noticeably does allow the reader to relate fictional experiences to the actual world. This, in combination with the fact that Hesse brought much from his own life into his fiction, may cause the flawed reading of a hypothetical reader who might identify himself with “Hesse” when reading, for example, Der Steppenwolf.

Referring to the American youth’s exploitation and concomitant false interpretations of Hesse’s work following the paperback publication of Siddharta in 1958 in the USA, Ponzi (2005:2) comments that: “Die jungen Leute fanden in seinen Romanen Bilder, Personen und Situationen, die für ihren eigenen alternativen und selbstbefreienden way of life umfunktioniert wurden.” [“The young people found in his novels images, persons and situations which they have converted for their own alternative, self-liberating ‘way of life’.”] This kind of process, of identifying with “Hesse” through his characters, confuses the author’s real life and the unique fictional characters with their human perspective that the reader senses on the basis of his own experiences. However, this erroneous reading also does convey the correct understanding that Hesse’s fiction does possess “actual world value”.

Licht (2005:6) refers to the potential embarrassment among members of the German public when admitting that they appreciate fiction by Hesse. This discomfiture is an acknowledgement of actual (world) inner experiences in the fictional world which the reader discerns and with which he previously identified or secretly still identifies or resists doing so:

Gelesen haben wir wohl fast alle Hesse, die sogenannten Kultbücher Siddharta and Steppenwolf wurden verschlungen, man fand sich in ihnen wieder und der Autor sprach einem aus der Seele. Das war im Alter zwischen 15 und 19, las man Hesse noch mit 25, so hatte man nach dem Urteil anderer die Adoleszenzphase immer noch
This cultural phenomenon, a kind of prescriptive adult peer pressure, implies that Hesse belongs on the shelves of a teenager’s room and not on the shelves of the living rooms or studies of adults. This judgement serves as confirmation that Hesse’s fictional worlds, which comment on the actual world via the experiences of characters, are indeed considered as “possible” and that readers do or did at one point in time identify with them – or do not want to identify with them (any longer) or are ashamed to admit that they do.

Earlier reader reception, namely the initial American reaction, and the reception by German readers at that time, was more accepting. In the USA especially, *Der Steppenwolf* and *Siddharta* have enjoyed widespread appreciation. Like Thoreau’s and Marcuse’s works, they have become utilised as programmatic texts by a non-conformist movement critical of their culture and civilisation (Singh, 2006:288). Towards the late 1950s and early 1960s the young American generation, exhibiting a growing interest in the “Gegenkultur” (counter culture) made Harry Haller into a figure symbolising the attitude of anti-middle class protest (Singh, 2006:184). Harry Haller became a representative figure of radical individualism which provided an opportunity for this generation, disappointed by American politics because of its subjection to increasing ideologisation and militarisation within the context of the Cold War, of which the Vietnam War was a concrete event (Singh, 2006:184). During this time the German reception among the reading public also echoed the American reception. Murti (2009:263-264; 291) remarks that “Hesse seemed to offer an escape” by means of the “utopian possibilities in his work” in the context of the “Achtundsechziger” (Achtundsechziger-Bewegung) [“the movement of 1968”], i.e. the counterculture German student movement that protested against “the perceived
authoritarianism and hypocrisy of the German government and other Western governments”, amongst other things inspired by protests against the Vietnam War. In the USA, conscientious objectors during the time of the governments of Johnson and Nixon, who understood the Vietnam politics as a type of imperialism, were able to identify with Hesse’s pacifism (Singh, 2006:288-289):

Die Entwicklungs- und Individuationsgeschichten, die Berichte über die innere Verweigerung und Revolte des Einzelnen gegen die Gesellschaft und nicht zuletzt die Mischung aus verspäteter Romantik, ostasiatischer Philosophie und modernem gespaltenem Bewusstsein erweisen sich als zeitlose literarische Manifestationen der ontologischen Verfasstheit des Menschen in der Moderne, die auch in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts nachwirkt (Singh, 2006:288-289). [The developmental and individuation stories, the reports about the inner refusal and revolt of the individual against society and not least the mixture of late romanticism, Eastern Asian philosophy and the modern fragmented consciousness shows itself as a timeless literary manifestation of the ontological composition of the human being in modern times that also reverberates in the second half of the twentieth century.]

The actual world value of the fictional worlds of Hesse’s works is also reflected in his earlier reception. His reception in Germany, up to the end of the Second World War, was not hugely favourable (Ponzi, 2005:1). However, a more positive reception of Hesse’s works among the reading public then ensued because of the possibility that readers could identify themselves, and their relationship with their actual social contexts, with Hesse’s fictional worlds and the perspectives of the fictional characters. An appreciation of Hesse’s fiction became recognisable among the later American readers, the German “68er” as well as among contemporary readers. Singh (2006:286) argues that the success of Demian can be attributed to the concurrence of a fictional individual’s problems and the collective crisis after the First World War, because the text offered the public a new possibility for identification and new meaning. Similarly, for the educated middle-class of the Adenauer era, the survivors of the Second World War and the Holocaust, Das Glasperlenspiel became a last authentic document of the lost idea of German culture, which they read with reference to the idealistic tradition of German intellectual history in an attempt to overcome their perversion which had been effected by the fascist ideology (Singh, 2006:287-288).

Still earlier criticism, appreciative of Knulp, demonstrates the occurrence of a perhaps involuntary acknowledgment of actual world value in Hesse’s work, namely in perceiving the
fictional world as a cultural ideal for the actual world. Eduard Korrodi’s (Hsia, 1975:137) review for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in 1915 refers to *Knulp* as refocusing the attention to a “friedlichere Zeit, in der die Herzensgeschichten noch wichtiger waren als die Weltgeschichte” [“a more peaceful time in which stories of the heart were still more important than world history”]. Referring to Knulp’s conversation with God, Hermann Missenharter (Hsia, 1975:139) wrote for the *Württemberger Zeitung* in 1915:

*Sind das nicht wunderbare Worte? Und so hell und warm, so von innen durchleuchtet, klar und tief ist diese ganze Geschichte. Sie macht reich und bringt Freude und Trost, und eine ganze weite Welt, eine deutsche Welt voll Lust und Leid und voll Frieden liegt darin. [Are these not wonderful words? And so bright and warm, so transparent, lucid and deep is this whole story. It enriches and gives joy and comfort, a whole wide world, a German world full of delight and sorrow and full of peace lies in it.]*

Similarly, Otto Flake (Hsia, 1975:141) refers in 1915 during the First World War to Hesse’s “Durchsichtigkeit seiner Güte” [“the transparency of his goodness”]. In the light of the political context in which these reviews were written, one can understand that these emotional assessments reflect on *Knulp* as a charming portrayal of a relatively far brighter world than the actual world, in fact, an ideal world juxtaposed with one pitched into the terror of the “war to end all wars”. This is reminiscent of the emerging, charming Biedermeier style after the Napoleonic Wars. However, Hesse’s fiction is not merely a delightful portrayal of an unusual character like a Carl Spitzweg painting because “sweet” passages like the description of Knulp’s interest in Bärberle, for whom he whistles, certainly do not form the whole picture. Knulp’s society, his inner experiences and fate are not as cosy as Missenharter reads them. In fact, they are relatively harsh. Thanks to Knulp’s charm, his middle-class acquaintances are fond of him and are generous towards him, but they do not really understand him. He is not quite the carefree person he is understood to be by his social contexts, but experiences inner conflict. They never take him seriously and he suffers all the physical hardship that a tramp experiences, including a lonely death in the snow. *Knulp* is in the first instance an exploration of humanity; as Cornils (2009:2) observes (of Hesse’s writings in general) they are “moments of sublime beauty and important clues for the understanding of the human psyche”.

Reader preoccupation and prejudice sometimes lead to confusion between the fictional worlds and the actual world, but reveal not only the actual world connections within Hesse’s fictional worlds as such, but also the attitudes towards the either misunderstood, subjectively viewed
and/or insightfully understood nature of the actual world value of his fiction. Paying attention to Hesse’s reception is therefore useful in the sense that it helps to consider his fiction’s relationship to the actual world. This relationship marks the nature of his fiction. Michels (2004) addresses the disapproval which Hesse’s fiction faces in “Teils ausgelacht, teils angespuckt, teils den sentimentalen Leserkreisen überlassen”. Zur Hermann Hesse-Rezeption in Deutschland. The impression which this title and the content of the article convey is that there is not merely a lack of interest in Hesse in German academic circles, but indeed that a tradition of intense dislike has existed since the First World War (Michels, 2004:31). One could interpret this as a rejection of the kind of possible worlds that Hesse represents, i.e. a dislike of Hesse’s expression of specific actual world-like phenomena. Such a critic/reader might be more inclined to appreciate fiction that represents possible worlds which match his personal expectations of what a fictional world should be, for example, a possible world which is impossible in actual world terms or a possible world that is possible in actual world terms, but – according to his limiting and challengeable view of Hesse’s fiction – less personal, emotional, sentimental and less “pop”, i.e. commercial, sensational and superficial.82

Criticism that is either contemptuous or “genuflecting” (revering Hesse’s writings and making of his books a pseudo-religion by its uncritical acceptance of or belief in ideas within his fiction and non-fiction, in which Hesse is a “pop culture prophet”), as well as “comparative readings” of fictional worlds and the actual world (i.e. based on either dislike or appreciation of actual world elements in fictional worlds), is limiting, but also confirms the proximity of the actual world and fictional worlds in Hesse’s fiction. However, a more objective or reasonable approach to him exists: one which is not marked by “kritiklose Affirmation” (Solbach, 2004:9) [“affirmation without criticism”]; which makes one suspect that such a critic is not part of the reading public that simply reveres Hesse as an idol or guru. Ponzi (2005:1) refers83 to such criticism. Solbach

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82 Criticism against Hesse often involves the author’s work being regarded as too sentimental and not sufficiently intellectual, which one also finds in Marcel Reich-Ranicki’s disparaging “Unser lieber Steppenwolf: Beitrag zur deutschen Sentimentalität – Der erste Band der gesammelten Briefe von Hermann Hesse” (1973) [“Our dear steppenwolf: Contribution to German sentimentality – The first volume of the collected letters of Hermann Hesse”]. Michels (2004:39) also refers to an article “In der Gartenlaube” which appeared in Der Spiegel in 1958 in which Hesse was presented as a spiritually-minded [“weltfremde”] “poet in the vegetable patch”. For Michels (2004:41) one cannot deny that “Gemüt” [“mood”] plays a more significant role in Hesse’s work than in the case of other intellectual authors. The implicit criterion that fiction should have an intellectual rather than an emotional slant in order to have literary merit seems to be related to a preference. Cornils (2009:2) points out that actual world connections with Hesse’s fiction rapidly alter the view that it is “somehow not worthy of ‘serious’ literary engagement” in his introduction of A companion to the works of Hermann Hesse (2009), a “new critical edition of his works, a re-evaluation of his political thought in the context of global environmental developments, and an appreciation of his seemingly simple yet profound message give rise to new research around the world. This volume presents the latest thinking on Hesse by leading scholars in the field, provides critical new readings, and demonstrates that his writings are eminently suited to literary study: they offer moments of sublime beauty and important clues for the understanding of the human psyche.”

83 Ponzi (2005:2) explains that many motifs which readers describe as aesthetic or literary characteristics of Hesse’s work are extra-textual (Ponzi, 2005:2-4) and are not original motifs of his novels, but, rather, added motivations that more fully concern readers’ personal experiences: “… in erster Linie handelt es sich um ihre Leserfahrung, aber auch ihr Weltelerlebnis” (Ponzi, 2005:2) [“it deals in the first instance with their
(2004:9) points out that Hesse can, may and must be criticised – and admired. Most importantly, balanced criticism, like Sikander Singh’s book *Hermann Hesse* (2006), does not base its ideas on either personal dislike or partiality, but on an understanding of the material as intellectually interesting, viewing academic exploration as a means to expand (instead of relativise) the field of knowledge.

A strange, unbalanced view that disregards Barthes’s “The death of the author” is one that rejects Hesse’s fiction on the basis of the apparently incongruous values between Hesse’s private life and his fictional worlds. Reich-Ranicki (2006) points out the “irony” that Hesse combined his criticism of middle-class life in his fiction with a longing for a solid and stable, ultimately still middle-class, order in his private life. This is an indiscriminate case of “jumping between worlds” and equating Hesse with his characters. Solbach (2004:9) suspects that Hesse’s fame, attained early, but also his idyllic and secure existence, have contributed to such resentment. However, Hesse’s fiction does not reject the middle-class per se at all, but, rather, the oppression, the lack of freedom and the suffocating atmosphere which prevent the individual from development, features that may be associated with middle-class society. This severs the character from his social context – and so he becomes an “outsider”. A reader who recognises Hesse’s fictional worlds as possible ones may or may not want to identify his (private) actual worlds with a fictional world created by Hesse. The resentment towards Hesse reveals a focus on his texts’ fictionalised autobiographic elements, instead of deeper and more valuable elements of his fiction that serve to create distinct and unique possible worlds.

3.1.4. **Hesse’s “autobiographic” fiction in possible world terms**

It may be elementary logic that the “autobiographic elements” in fiction, because belonging to another ontological plane, are no longer factual, but fictional. Nonetheless, if correspondences with the “former” ontological plane exist, i.e. if similarities between autobiographical “facts” and fictional worlds are present, one need not denounce the connection. However, one should regard them as what they are, not more, but also not less. Esselborn-Krumbiegel (2000:14) records that Hesse’s preoccupation with his own self and self-analysis became the dominating driver behind his literary production especially after 1917, namely after his war experiences, the collapse of his
family life and a psychological crisis. Cornils (2009:8) points out that Hesse’s texts, driven by his personal experiences, are not “externalised carbon copies of his own psyche. Rather, Hesse explored his innermost thoughts and feelings as a starting point for constructing characters that serve as case studies both for the narrator and for the reader, who might or might not sense an affinity with them.” It is also interesting that the author describes his prose as “Seelenbiographien” (biographies of the soul) (Hesse, 1977:247) and not as “autobiographies”. This indicates that Hesse did view his fiction as detached from himself, even though he used his personal life as a source for his fiction.

Hesse’s contemporary critics have indicated that his works from Peter Camenzind up to Der Steppenwolf constitute a literary shaping of the life and developmental conflicts of the author (Singh, 2006:191). But Hesse “fictionalised” not only himself by creating characters like Hans Giebenrath and Emil Sinclair, but also people whom he knew. From a distance Hesse admired Elisabeth La Roche, a dancer and choreographer, whom he saw at the beginning of 1900 during various music evenings in Berlin in the house of the historicist and state archivist, Rudolf Wackernagel (Singh, 2006:25). Singh (2006:25) describes her as the ideal figure of the unapproachable woman of highly ethical convictions who becomes a “literary expression”, as the character Elisabeth in Peter Camenzind and Gertrud in Gertrud. Just as one cannot say that Hans Giebenrath “is” Hesse, one cannot say Gertrud “is” Elisabeth La Roche. The name “Elisabeth” suggests that similarities exist with regard to the manner in which Peter Camenzind views Elisabeth, i.e. his focalisation of Elisabeth and Hermann Hesse’s perceptions of the actual person. The fictional characters and the actual Elisabeth La Roche can therefore be linked, despite the ontological differences between the characters and the actual person, because the focalised qualities of the fictional character are similar to those of the actual person as experienced by Hesse himself. However, whatever their sources may be, these “fictionalised”

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84 Haruki Murakami (2009:20) observes: “I quietly absorb the things I’m able to, releasing them later, and in an changed a form as possible, as part of the story line in a novel.” This modus operandi, which is certainly not unique to Hesse, illustrates that fiction exhibits actual world connections via the author’s experiences. Cornils (2009:8) points out in reference to Karaschwili (1986:13), that Hesse “had to re-function many of its components and set them into a new relation to each other in order to provide his readers with a model of the world that bears some similarity with universal laws.” It is noteworthy that Karaschwili specifically refers to “universal laws” or “actual world elements” which serve as a bridge between the fictional world and the actual one.

85 The relevance of Hesse’s fiction for a reader is similar to the relevance of Hesse’s fiction to the author’s life. However, it may also be possible that at times the fiction may be more relevant to a reader’s life than to the author’s. Vahlbusch (2009:22) argues that Heilner’s actual and Hesse’s apparent reasons for fleeing from the monastery at Maulbronn are incompatible and that “Unterm Rad is not Hesse’s life or psyche writ large, but a complex creative work in which every detail must be read and evaluated as fiction.” A poem (a fictional world and therefore not exclusively autobiographical) written by Hesse on 6 March 1892, a day before his own actual flight from the monastery, reflects emotions that the author was experiencing at that time, i.e. world weariness (Weltschmerz) and suicidal tendencies (“Der See ist so blau wie der Himmel;/Da wird mir so eigen zumut;/Als sollt’ ich hinein die Fluten;/als wäre dann alles gut”) (“The lake is as blue as the heavens;/ And I begin to feel quite odd./ As if I should enter the waters,/ As if that would make everything good”) that differ from Heilner’s flight, which is a vigorous rebellious escape from the commands and prohibitions of the cloister and not because of depression or “Weltschmerz” (Vahlbusch, 2009:20-21).
constructs are employed more in the service of the development of the central fictional character and the fictional world than as directly representative of their actual world counterparts.

Similarly, such characters as Emil Sinclair and Hermann Heilner are two diverging “possible constructs” inspired by sentiments that are akin to actualised possibilities related to autobiographical realities, of the author as well as his generation. Singh (2006:83) observes that Hesse’s literary rebellion against the traditional educational institutions and authorities, and the concomitant powers that finished Hans Giebenrath and almost destroyed himself, namely school, theology, tradition and authority⁸⁶, represents not only an individual psychological process occurring against the background of the rigid Pietistic tradition of his parents’ home, but also the portrayal of a national cultural state which was characteristic of the years before the First World War. In this sense “Hans Giebenrath” is not “Hermann Hesse” at all, but, according to Singh (2006:84), a representative figure of youth, a literary expression of the conflicts of a young generation with the cultural and spiritual, political and social reality of its time.⁸⁷ Unterm Rad depicts the wishes and expectations of a fictional individual, but also of an actual world generation that cannot be realised because they are inconsistent with the normative traditions and conventions of a society; this conflict leads to questioning the education ideals of a whole epoch (Singh, 2006:84):

Die altmodische Welt einer Kleinstadt im Schwarzwald, die Geschlossenheit eines moralischen Wertekanons, in dessen Kontext das Leben des Helden erzählt wird, dekuvriert eine tiefe Verzweiflung gegenüber der Gesellschaft, welche zugleich die Überzeitlichkeit des Erzählen ausmacht (Singh, 2006:84). [The old-fashioned world of a town in the Black Forest, the uniformity of a moral canon of values in whose context the life of the hero is told, reveals a deep despair about a society which at the same time amounts to the timelessness of the narrated.]

In possible world terms, Hans Giebenrath also does not simply represent this generation. He is a unique fictional construct that is comparable to the specific youth of the time, and an actual person, Hermann Hesse, who as a boy fled from the Maulbronn monastery in 1892, as well as

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⁸⁶ Hesse (1970:347-354) sketches this “autobiographical” relationship in his essay “Begegnungen mit Vergangenem” (1953) [“Encounters with the past”].

⁸⁷ Singh (2006:17) describes Hesse’s fiction as a “literary reflex” of his childhood experiences in Calw that retain a balance between the continuation of Swabian romanticism and the lyrical unrealistic idealisation of an archaic nature-orientated existence, in the context of the escapist anti-middle-class tendencies around the turn of the century.
any other actual persons or characters in fiction whose focus, circumstances and experiences are comparable to a greater or lesser extent. The story of Hans Giebenrath is therefore comparable to those of actual persons and fictional characters because of the human process of perspective and the principle of possibility, regardless of historical time and cultural contexts.

It is not the specific story that is “true” in terms of factual accuracy, but the experiences of a quiet, clever, adolescent boy, who is ultimately destroyed by the authoritarian, unjust and misanthropic education system of a whole generation that has been socialised into a system of implicit and explicit violence that denied each person’s individuality (Singh, 2006:87). The text is therefore not exclusively critical of a period in time, but of any time, past, present and future, in which this is possible, i.e. in which it did, could and would occur.

In *Demian* one also observes the theme of the expectation of a selfless humility and unconditional or unquestioning subordination to the strict norms of a Pietistic Christian social context that aimed at breaking the individual spirit or “Wille” to form the individual as a member of this society (Singh, 2006:14). Autobiographical conditions are “transferred” to a fictional world. By challenging the vices of this Protestantism within the fictional world that are possible in terms of specific actual world contexts, the text obtains the capacity to connect with the actual world. Possibility relates not only to “what was possible and was realised” (Hesse’s actual world), i.e. not only Hesse’s autobiographic microcosm, but also to any comparable social circumstances in the actual world relatable to the fictional world.

The actual world and what Hesse experienced himself therefore certainly did influence his literary production. Singh (2006:42) maintains that Hesse’s criticism of politics and tendencies of his contemporary intellectual history are, apart from psychoanalysis, the most important impulses behind his literary production during the years of the First World War – even though

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88 Vahlbusch (2009:49) observes that *Unterm Rad* should be read “as a drama of characters and character, a story of adolescent friendship and betrayal whose central scenes play out in a boarding school against a backdrop of illness, Angst, ambition, and loneliness.” The implication is that such characters as Giebenrath and Heilner are unique fictional individuals. Illness, Angst, ambition and loneliness distinguish Giebenrath’s frame of mind which determines the focalisation. Focus can here be regarded as related to focalisation, whether the person comparable to Hans Giebenrath is real or fictional. For example, Hans Giebenrath’s inclinations are dualistic: on the one hand he exhibits a socialised/artifical inclination, i.e. that of an individual who is self-disciplined with regard to his social ambitions, yet he also experiences the natural romantic and individualistic longing to spend time in nature. He is therefore dismayed when he is not allowed to go and fish: “Das Angeln! Das hatte er nun auch fast verlernt und vergessen, und im vergangenen Jahr hatte er so bitterlich geheult, als ihm verboten worden war, der Examensarbeit wegen. Das Angeln! Das war doch das Schönste in all den langen Schuljahren gewesen” (Hesse, 1972a:12). [“Fishing! He had almost forgotten how to fish and forgotten about it, and in the last year he cried bitterly when he was forbidden to go, due to the examination work. Fishing! And that in the end was the greatest joy during all those long school years.”] His “indictment” of authority and his social context is therefore ironic because he is complicit with regard to the expectations of him.

89 In *Narziß und Goldmund* Hesse veers away from a specific contemporary setting that could nevertheless also be seen as an “autobiographic reflection”, but one which Hesse places in a “fiktiv-zeitlose Vergangenheit” [“fictitious and timeless past”] (Singh, 2006:191). This has the effect of allowing a greater focus on the “possible-ness” of the fictional world.
Hesse maintained that his literary task was related to the human spirit and not politics\(^90\). Singh (2006:116) considers *Demian* on the one hand as a text which was triggered by personal crises of the author, but also as a reflection of the experiences of the First World War, the downfall of the old Europe following militaristic violence, the imperialistic-chauvinistic ideologies of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as the helplessness and distress of the individual confronted by the pointless, massive killing. On the other hand Singh regards *Demian* as the experience of a generation wrested away from the secluded and neo-romantic, post-Biedermeier-like idyll of the Wilhelminism that attempted to discover an artistic expression in expressionism and dadaism. The First World War inevitably influenced Hesse’s writing as part of actual world phenomena that affected his unique/individualistic frame of mind: these were not “transformed” or “translated” into a direct mimetic representation of his life, but prompted – in *Demian*'s case – the creation of a completely other unique/individualistic fictional persona that most likely did share similarities with Hesse, especially regarding inner experiences. However, these similarities might also exist between Emil Sinclair and anyone else.

### 3.1.5. The relationship between the focalising character and the textual actual world and his social context

The reader is able to infer and describe the nature of the textual actual world independently from the focalisation. One can imagine Knulp’s “Landstraße” as a picturesque road in Baden-Württemberg, or the German heather, forests, cities and towns as one imagines them or has seen them. The reader may refocus his attention on the fictional world from the perspective of his own consciousness or redirect it to a more neutral understanding in order to differentiate it from the character’s response. However, this is not how the fictional world is presented. The fictional world is presented as “processed” by a fictional consciousness, as a subjectively “coloured” construction.

This fictional consciousness is often a non-conformist, an outsider\(^91\), a tramp or/and a “(spiritual) traveller”. In *Knulp* as well as *Narziß und Goldmund* one finds the characteristic motif of “a

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\(^90\) Singh (2006:222) views the protagonists Josef Knecht, Emil Sinclair, Siddharta, Harry Haller, Goldmund and Hans Giebenrath as individuals whose subjective experiences are simultaneously expressions of appearances that are collective and symptomatic of the times.

\(^91\) Esselborn-Krumbiegel (2005a:58) distinguishes Hesse’s fiction in general as devising the fate of the outsider who tries to find and live his identity against inner and external resistance. The outsider necessarily provides “defamiliarising” perspectives that form the fictional world in a specific way which is unlike those of the conformist. Doctorow similarly utilises the perspective of the outsider and “derelict” for this purpose. A “derelict” “denotes a person outside the pale of respectable society”, like Wakefield, Jonathan and the Leather Man in “Lives of the Poets”, Joe in *Loon lake*, and others who see the world “as it is and tell the truth about it” (Parks, 2002:77) – of course from the subjective perspective of the experiencing focaliser.
spiritual journey”. The traveller is therefore also someone who is at odds with his social context and its values, for example, the norm of settling down, following a profession and having a family as in the middle-class society portrayed in *Knulp*. Singh (2006:110) notes that the idealisation of an escapist existence which is close to nature is carried out with regard to its motifs and genre; these are similar to the tramp and vagabond novel which is characterised by an individualistic anti-middle-class world pursuing a sensual-creative life principle opposed to a morally rigid middle-class social order. For Singh (2006:190) the travels of the tramp Goldmund are “eine Chiffre für den Weg zu sich selbst”92 [“a symbol for the way towards himself”]. This is also the case for Knulp who is caught between the life of an artist and tramp and the middle-class society with which he interacts. Towards the end of the book Knulp questions the value of his life when he enters into a dialogue with God, who argues that his way of life has been the right one:

‘Nun sei einmal zufrieden’, mahnte Gott, ‘was soll das Klagen nützen? Kannst du wirklich nicht sehen, daß alles gut und richtig zugegangen ist und daß nichts hätte anders sein dürfen?’ (Hesse, 1979:123). [‘Now be content for once’, urged God, ‘what is the use of complaining? Can you really not see that everything was good and has happened as it should have and that nothing should have been different?’]

At the end of the book, after this discussion with God, Knulp dies, but also arrives at his “true self”. For Knulp to conform to this kind of society would be to deny his own individuality. Hans Giebenrath’s social context denies him the opportunity to be his own self. The identity of the outsider or tramp is therefore emphasising the individuality of this person.

The individual’s need for self-actualisation is presented in the presence of what Hilscher (1992:100) terms a distrust of middle-class reality. The nature and effects of the interaction between characters and social contexts are vital in Hesse’s fiction because of the inner tension between the pressure of social expectations to conform and the resistance to doing so because of individualistic ambitions or needs. Singh (2006:131-132) provides some examples illustrating that the conflict of the individual with his society is one of Hesse’s major themes. Reviewers recognised in *Klingsors letzter Sommer*, a continuation of the romantic “Künstlernovelle” or artist novella, an expressionistic work critical of the time, but also containing a focus on the psychological interior of the outsider torn between his middle-class existence and his own

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92 This could of course be read in Jungian terms as Baumann (1989) does in Wege zum Selbst: Hermann Hesses Erzählungen im Lichte der Psychologie C.G. Jungs.
desires. *Unterm Rad* deals with the conflicts between an adolescent and the school system at the beginning of the twentieth century. *Der Steppenwolf* (1974a) focuses on the inner conflicts of an individual who is both an artist and an intellectual. *Knulp* centres on the story of a vagabond, an outsider. The story of Friedrich Klein in *Klein und Wagner* tells of the transformation and self-alienation of the human soul in a misanthropic, rational-mechanistic social order that reduces the individual to its function in a capitalistic system (cf. Singh, 2006:137). The social contexts affect the Hesse characters in a manner that contributes to the development of these characters and their perspectives which, in turn, contribute to shaping the fictional world through focalisation.

Even though Hesse was influenced by Swabian late romanticism (Esselborn-Krumbiegel: 2000:13) one could also describe him, as a writer who composed most of his literary works during the first half of the twentieth century, as a “modernist”: “[T]he dominant of modernist fiction is epistemological. That is, modernist fiction deploys strategies which engage and foreground questions such as those mentioned by Dick Higgins in my epigraph: ‘How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it?’” (McHale, 1993:9). These questions are highly relevant because the fictional world and the fictional individual/focaliser are fused. Hesse’s fictional worlds concentrate on the complex nature of the inner life of individuals, and how the character’s external world/textual actual world affects them. The *depictions* of Hesse’s textual actual worlds cannot be divorced from the “internal” life of his characters. Components of the textual actual world, like the self and characters, social contexts, events and spaces, once focalised, become part of such characters as Emil Sinclair and Goldmund.

External spaces, events, characters – literally everything which belongs to the fictional world – are not neutral in Hesse’s fiction, but selected and coloured by the subjective perspectives of the central character. The various facets of the fictional world therefore reflect various aspects of the focalising character at various times, altering according to the changing perspective of the focaliser. The constant feature of the relationship between the focaliser and the focalised content is that the focalised objects are, in a fictional world, part and parcel of the focaliser. Singh (2006:258) remarks about Hesse’s poetry that he follows the romantic tradition of investing a subjective emotional value in the picture of a landscape or nature which reduces the distinction between subject and object – a characteristic of Chinese poetry, in which a place in a landscape or a picture of nature corresponds with an emotional disposition. One can certainly also extend this principle to Hesse’s *prose*. It is therefore possible to argue that an expression such as “the
road has lost a lot of its magic in the last year” (Hesse, 1979:100-101) means that Knulp has lost a lot of his “desire for life”.

In conclusion: Despite the historical, cultural and autobiographic connections between the actual world and the fictional worlds of Hesse’s fiction, one needs to keep the fundamental ontological differences of the worlds in mind. It would be erroneous to understand Hesse’s fictional worlds as direct representations of specific actual world circumstances. Singh (2006:5-6;8) describes Hesse’s fiction as expressions of conditions of epochs that face individuals, and understands his fiction as cultural ideas that are timeless and surpass nationality, in which one finds a manifestation of the spiritual inheritance of humanity. Following the First World War, the post-war generation in Germany could identify with Siddharta (Singh, 2006:159) which also evokes a quasi romantic longing for another more peaceful, a more spiritual world. The abstraction of timelessness (“Überzeitliche”) and searching for a new beginning made the identification with Siddharta (1974b) not only possible for the generation of the twenties who had experienced the First World War, but also for the youth of the sixties in the USA and Germany, critical of civilisation and governments and focusing on a self-knowledge that they wanted to achieve via literary reflection: a new self-conception (Singh, 2006:159).

However, reading a text as having “universal value” has come to be regarded as a Eurocentric vice – especially in the postcolonial world. Bassnett (1993:19) describes this “vice” as “common trans-cultural sharing of emotional experience” and observes that it “disregarded the vicissitudes of literary history”. This study perceives the “universal” aspects of Hesse’s fiction in terms of possible worlds that occur, in both the actual world and in fictional worlds, as individual and unique “stories”. Its readings of Hesse’s works certainly do not propose disregarding the uniqueness of individual stories and individual cultures. Rather, they are intended to point out that the actual world possibilities in fiction create the connections between the actual world and fictional worlds that allow people from various cultures to recognise a shared humanity. Fictional worlds are, as Doctorow (1994c:164) remarks, like dreams that are “the first false documents” and “never real”, but through their connections with the actual world do affect people in this world.

One discerns many keywords that are relevant to the actual world, such as “individual”, “outsider”, “world”, “social context”, “conditions” and “timelessness”, which are integrated into the phenomenon of Hesse’s oeuvre. The relevance of Hesse’s fictional worlds to the actual one has led to misreading, exploitation and subsequently disrepute among German critics in particular. Such relevance is probably also the reason for the continuing commercial success of
his books. But one has to bear in mind that Hesse was first and foremost an artist whose (re)presentations focus on possible aspects of the actual world, but not the actual world itself. Hesse “humanises” his textual actual worlds by means of the psychologically credible focalisation of textual worlds and social contexts that lead to the creation of fictional worlds which are possible and truthful in actual world terms as well.

3.2. E.L. Doctorow: The relationship between fictional worlds and the actual world, actual world relevance and the truth mode of fictional worlds

Doctorow is generally regarded as an experimental historical novelist who blends fact and fiction, a leftist Jewish humanist from New York and a postmodernist (Williams, 1996:6). This section aims at contextualising and elucidating central and relevant aspects of his fiction. It will furthermore consider the precise nature of the connection between Doctorow’s fictional worlds and the actual world and how he achieves the communication of truth(s) through his fictional worlds. This is also necessary in the light of his “problematic reputation” of being a “historical novelist who uses ‘facts’ in his fiction”.

When considering him an experimental, postmodernist “blender” of fact and fiction one must understand his fiction in terms of the “power of freedom” and “the power of the regime” that refer to his disinclination to rely on factuality, despite the inclusion of facts and the “realist” nature of his fiction, along with the imaginative content of his fictional worlds. While interpreting him as a New York writer who writes “about New York and/or American social contexts” one should comprehend the nature of his fiction’s truth value and “universality” by recognising that his fictional worlds are unique expressions of possible worlds that belong to “the multiplicity of witnesses”. And when discussing him as a “leftist Jewish humanist”, one must consider the relationship between the focalising consciousness in his textual actual world and society in order to recognise that Doctorow’s “political” fictional worlds express ideals for justice and humane social contexts.

Doctorow is an artist whose fiction communicates noteworthy ideas that are relevant for the national conditions of his country, but that also have international resonance. Levine (1985:8) describes Doctorow as “a serious writer who is also popular; a political writer who is also a stylist; an original writer who is highly eclectic; a historical writer who invents the past.”

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93 Doctorow (1994c:149-164) introduces these concepts in his essay “False Documents”, addressed below in sub-section 3.3.2.
Doctorow’s fictional worlds convey meaning and truth. They are significant in terms of their possible elements that include a humanist outlook. His fiction is therefore relevant to a far larger context than just the actual New York/American worlds.

3.2.1. The connections between fictional worlds and the actual world

It is an illusion that a fictional world uses realism to represent aspects of the actual world directly. Although Doctorow (2004c) does voice his opinions directly in non-fiction, like his criticism of George W. Bush (“The unfeeling president”) in The Easthampton Star of 16 September, 2004, essays and interviews, his imaginative work offers an example of how a novelist can truthfully comment on the actual world by means of fictional worlds. An example of a “typically realistic” description is the following one from the short story “All the time in the world”:

What I’ve noticed: how fast they put up these buildings. Cart away the rubble, square off the excavation, lay in the steel, and up she goes. ... Another thing: how people in the street are pulled along by little dogs on the leash . ... And when it rains in the city? It might be just a few drops, but out floop the umbrellas (Doctorow, 2009:5).

Such “realism” indeed serves as an invitation to read a fictional world and the actual world “comparatively”. Because the fictional world can resemble the actual world, the fictional world draws attention to the actual one. According to Tokarczyk (2000:152) “the harsh urban scenes and historical veracity of Boss Tweed’s corrupt power constitute realistic actualities”. Doctorow is well-known for using the technique of intertextuality between actual history and “historical figures” by supplying altered or invented facts about them (Tokarczyk, 2000:141). Much of the content of his accounts of such characters as Harry Houdini, Boss Tweed, Homer and Langley Collyer could be regarded as “lies”. However, this would presuppose that truthfulness relies on verifiable accuracy, which Doctorow regards with distrust. The truthfulness of the fictional

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94 Girgus (2002:9) maintains that Doctorow’s “humanistic concerns” such as being “committed to community and politics, to a moral vision that includes individual responsibility, and to history itself, meaning a belief in the necessity of trying to understand the past as a means for attempting to deal intelligently with the present and future” place him in opposition to “a modern school of apocalyptic writers” (for instance, Nathanael West, John Barth, Joseph Heller and Thomas Pynchon).

95 For example, the New York/American worlds of De wereldtentoonstelling (Willem van Toorn’s translation of the novel into Dutch) will have for Dutch readers actual world relevance, regardless of the circumstance that the actual world with which they are more closely acquainted in the Netherlands differs from the New York/American actual world(s).

world is not related to superficial similarities, for example, descriptions of what a city looks like and information about characters with names of people in the actual world and other facts about them that are “accurate”. Rather, it is related to possible aspects or ideas such as the nature of the relationships between the individual and his social context and such influential factors as the abuse of power. This kind of truthfulness is also what one should bear in mind when considering Doctorow as a “historical novelist”. 97 But despite the role that actual world history plays in his fiction, as an artist, the author shows little regard for the “truthfulness” of the “historical fact”.

Bearing his primary artist’s identity in mind, Doctorow is historically as well as “politically involved”, indirectly so by way of his fictional worlds. He therefore stands apart from politicians – as well as from such academics as social scientists and historians. Yet, by “documenting” social circumstances like the frontier history in Welcome to Hard Times, America’s reaction to Communism after the Second World War in The book of Daniel, writing novels about industrialisation, capitalism and crime in Loon lake, The waterworks and Billy Bathgate, and so forth he does become a political commentator, a social scientist and a historian commenting on the actual world. Tokarczyk (2000:176) describes Doctorow’s fiction as representing society while maintaining some detachment, marked by a tension between postmodern indeterminacy and the need to assert truths, and as aspiring to be socially relevant work, yet retaining artistic detachment. As with Levine’s (cf. 1985:8) description this assessment includes binary distinctions that appear to be opposites, but function harmoniously within Doctorow’s fiction itself.

A crucial factor shared between Doctorow’s contemporary and historical fictional worlds and the actual world is his artistic employment of causality. Tokarczyk (2000:4) refers to the “trinity of oppression”, three forms of inequality. Race issues in Ragtime, class concerns in Welcome to Hard Times, The book of Daniel, Loon lake, Billy Bathgate and The waterworks as well as gender issues in Ragtime and World’s fair are central to the cause and effect relations of the

97 A few of his novels are set in the nineteenth century. The Western (or anti-Western), Welcome to Hard Times, is set in the historical period between 1861, when the Dakota Territory – of which the fictional town Hard Times is part – was organised, and 1889, when both Dakotas achieved statehood (Freese, 1987:204). The waterworks is set after the Civil War in 1871 in New York. The march takes place during the Civil War. The 20th century novels include Ragtime that is set in the early 20th century and contains fictional characters who are namesakes of historical figures at the time, for instance Henry Ford, Theodore Roosevelt, J.P. Morgan and others. Billy Bathgate is a Great Depression time gangster tale. World’s fair takes place in 1939 while in Doctorow’s latest novel, Homer & Langley, the fictional Collyer brothers live from the late 19th century past the first half of the 20th century (unlike the actual Collyer brothers who both passed away in 1947). The seminal event in The book of Daniel, the execution of Paul and Rochelle Isaacs which evokes the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1953, occurs during the McCarthy era while Daniel’s inner struggle later takes place still during the Cold War and the time of the “New Left” in the 1960s. City of God is in part set during the Second World War as well as during a contemporary time. Typical of Doctorow’s oeuvre is therefore his representation of an array of “actual historical contexts”, their societies and individuals within these societies. Despite deviations from factuality, most of Doctorow’s contexts are “historical”. Some works are set in contemporary/recent historical times, like the novella “Lives of the Poets” and his play Drinks before dinner. All of these “historical” fictional worlds deals more with the “accuracy” or truthfulness of humans and their social experiences than with “accurate history” per se.
stories. Fictional worlds are ontological suppositions that emphasise the interrelatedness of human lives and related effects of states of affairs; in other words, causes affect the lives in the textual actual world. The fictional causality functions as a semantic link (cf. Ryan, 1991:225) between the textual actual world and the actual world because of the resemblances between actual world causality and Doctorow’s fictional worlds.

The link is certainly not “factuality” since all the content of a fictional world in a novel such as Homer & Langley or The march is fictional. A great deal of information in these texts may be factual in the sense that it may correspond with actual world history. It is a fact that “Homer and Langley Collyer” existed, but in the novel Homer & Langley “Homer and Langley Collyer” are not factual, but textual/fictional individuals. It is a false impression that a “fact” can “merge” or “blend” with a fictional world or “blurs the borders” between the actual world and a fictional world. Everything, even if really historical and factually verifiable, changes its ontological nature, once part of the fictional world. As mentioned, Doctorow (1994c:163) proposes that there is no fiction or non-fiction: “There is only narrative”. Of course one does not decode a documentary film such as Black Box BRD98 (2001) like a fictional film world or read a novel as one does a newspaper, but by this utterance Doctorow means that one must be wary of the “truthfulness” of non-fiction. When Doctorow responds to Marranca’s question whether he has any favourite characters from Ragtime, “either real or fictional”, the author responds with a smile: “No, I loved them all” (Marranca, 1999:210). The absence of any distinction (and the smile) suggest not only that he really “loved them all”, but that there is no distinction, i.e. that they are all text constructions which do not directly refer to actual people.

The question then is, if they do not refer to actual people, whether fictional characters are indeed able to “represent” or comment in another way on actual people themselves? In the case of characters that share the names of famous historical persons, for instance, Emma Goldman, J.P. Morgan, Boss Tweed and Homer and Langley Collyer, the fictional character may be an “echo” of the actual person because, as Doctorow explains, he uses characters to respond to the “themes of the lives” of historically verifiable figures (Morris, 1999:xxi). Doctorow claims that a writer has the capacity to understand the essence of actual people, which corresponds with the claim that his fictional rendition of J.P. Morgan was “more accurate to the soul of that man than his

98 Despite artistic techniques used in the film, it factually represents the parallel actual world lives of Alfred Herrhausen (1930-1989), former chairman and member of the board of directors of the Deutsche Bank, and Wolfgang “Gaks” Grams (1953-1993); this implies that the latter and his girlfriend, Birgit Hogefeld (born 1956), both members of the Red Army Faction (RAF), were responsible for the bombing of Herrhausen’s car.
authorized biography” (Morris, 1999:xxi). Doctorow furthermore asserts that J.P. Morgan specifically, rather than Andrew Carnegie, occurred to him because Morgan and the other historically verifiable persons that he transfigured as fictional characters “carried for me the right overtones of the time” (Baker, 1999:1). The “essences” of the actual J.P. Morgan and Edgar Altschuler are “artistic assessments”, concerned more with the issues of power in Morgan’s case and “Bildung” in Edgar’s case than with the historical actual world individuals themselves. The fictional characters are therefore autonomous, yet not wholly disconnected from the actual figures. Bloom (2002:2) prefers to call Doctorow’s work “romances”, based on Northrop Frye’s (1957:304) distinction between the novel and prose romance which also echoes Hesse’s approach:

The romancer does not attempt to create ‘real people’ so much as stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes. It is in the romance that we find Jung’s libido, anima, and shadow reflected in our hero, heroine, and villain respectively. That is why the romance so often radiates a glow of subjective intensity that the novel lacks, and why a suggestion of allegory is constantly creeping in around its fringes.

In Ragtime Walker occupies Morgan’s library with the threat of an explosion if his vandalised Model T Ford is not returned to him in a restored condition. J.P. Morgan sends a telegram which orders to give Coalhouse Walker Jr. his automobile and to hang him (Doctorow, 1985a:212). Using the semblance of an actual historical figure, instead of a character with a name that bears no relation to actuality such as the name “J.P. Morgan”, emphasises actual world possibilities.

In referring to the fictional J.P. Morgan in Ragtime the “concept” of the actual historical person is implied, but it is adapted and exists as ontologically transfigured, i.e. as part of the fictional world. A character with a fictional name could, of course, also have been inspired by an actual person and could resemble an actual one – even more than a character bearing the name of an actual individual. But here the name “J.P. Morgan” and his actions draw attention to the divide between economic classes and races and its subsequent effects. The fictional world therefore becomes “true” in actual world terms as well, through its representation of non-actual circumstances that are possible.

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100 The District Attorney, Whitman, receives this message from Morgan (Doctorow, 1985a:212).
A fictional world does not present only characters that appear to be “taken from” the actual world. Just like the figures in Doctorow’s fiction, Blue’s document is certainly not “authentic”. When he says: “I am writing this and maybe it will be recovered and read ... ” (WHT, 184) the reader knows that the text is not an “actual document” – simply because *Welcome to Hard Times* is marketed as a novel. Nevertheless the story as a whole, focalised by Blue, metaphorically approximates causal relations in other (actual) contexts. The Bad Man from Bodie seems to be a wholly imaginary figure void of any verifiable features, basically a “lie” if measured against referentiality. However, the human experience of fear which surrounds him in the fictional world is comparable to, and truthful in, the actual world.

Doctorow’s approach indicates a modernist-like feature that corresponds with two of the salient characteristics of modernism: “the unparalleled complexity of modern urban life must be reflected in literary form, and supposedly primitive myths can help us to grasp and order the chaos of 20th-century experience” (Bergonzi, 1990:408). The Coalhouse Walker Jr. story, like Richard Wright’s *Native Son* (1940), not only reflects on the difficult coexistence of races in a metropolitan context, but also on the “archetypal” theme of taking the law into one’s own hands, preceded by Kleist’s tale and the actual history of Michael Kohlhasen. This calls to mind Brienza’s (1981:103) reflection: “One wonders if Doctorow as artistic historian writes to control and systematise our world, to impose at least a bit of order on our chaos”. In other words, Brienza considers the relationship between “our world”, the actual world and its relationship with fictional worlds and the value which his fictional worlds could have for actual people.

### 3.2.2. The “power of freedom” versus the “power of the regime”

In his essay “False Documents” (1977) Doctorow juxtaposes “the power of the regime” with “the power of freedom” which allows the writer to tell the truth by indirect means. These concepts are useful with regard to understanding the limited value of verifiability and the truthfulness of fiction. Doctorow (1994c:152) quotes from *The New York Times* which serves as

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101 Certain extra-textual indications suggest that the fictional world begins with the first words of the novel. The cover of the 1996 Plume edition immediately informs the reader that E.L. Doctorow is the “author of City of God”; inside, Norman Mailer praises it as a “superb novel”, prior to the list of Doctorow’s other works of fiction, while the back of the book also refers to it as the author’s first novel.

102 Ironically, even the mythical Bad Man from Bodie possesses links to people in the actual world. A book with the title *The Bad Man from Bodie: The life and violent death of John Franklin Showers* (2005) by J.P. Bowman connects the mythical figure to Showers, responsible for the brutal “Lexington murders”. According to various Internet sources, historically the “Bad Man from Bodie” is a composite of criminals by the names of Washoe Pete and Tom Adams (Anon., 2006a) who became a bogeyman used by nineteenth century mothers to frighten their children into behaving (Anon., 2006b).

an example of “the power of the regime” characterised by “the rational mentality” of this publication: “The Navy has announced base consolidations and other actions that it said would eliminate 500 civilian jobs and 16 military positions at an annual savings of about five million dollars.” Doctorow uses a sentence by Nabokov as an example of “the power of freedom” “whose occasion is in question, whose truth I cannot test” (Doctorow, 1994c:152): “As he crossed toward the pharmacy at the corner he involuntarily turned his head because of a burst of light that had ricocheted from his temple, and saw, with that quick smile with which we greet a rainbow or a rose, a blindingly white parallelogram of sky being unloaded from the van – a dresser with mirror …” Doctorow (1994c:152) explains the advantage that “the power of freedom” offers for the writer of fiction:

As a writer of fiction I could make the claim that a sentence spun from the imagination, i.e., a sentence composed as a lie, confers upon the writer a degree of perception or acuity or heightened awareness – some additional usefulness – that a sentence composed with the most strict reverence for fact does not. In any event, what can surely be distinguished here is two kinds of power in language, the power of the Navy’s announcement residing in its manifest reference to the verifiable world – let us call that the power of the regime – and the power of Nabokov’s description inhering in a private or ideal world that cannot be easily corroborated or verified – let us call that the power of freedom.

“Perception or acuity or heightened awareness” involves the focus on specific selected content – in Nabokov’s sentence relaying a focalised experience. Through a textual consciousness/focalisation such content, but also “verifiable facts”, “real historical figures”, “real places”, may reflect on actual history and the actual world as they are – but then only as part of the fictional world. Facts become part of the “power of freedom”, in the sense that they cannot be “tested”, and it becomes irrelevant whether they are accurate or not. The story lines in Ragtime may be “true to the ‘facts’” of American history as we understand race, class, and gender dynamics in the early 1900’s” (Tokarczyk, 2000:14), but fact and fiction are “levelled”. This is not really original, as Doctorow (Marranca, 1999:210) explains in an interview, adducing the example of Robinson Crusoe:

... way back in the beginnings of the English novel authors have been meddling, going over the line between fiction and fact, claiming truth for themselves, even if
they had to deny their own authorship as a device to persuade people that they are reading the truth. Besides that, a lot of public figures back in time discovered facts made fiction of themselves ... So we’re not really crossing borders anymore. We’re dealing with a fiction and doing a variant on it.

A prime characteristic of Doctorow’s fiction is therefore that in order to assert truth he does not rely on “the power of the regime”, i.e. “the modern consensus of sensibility that could be called realism” (Doctorow, 1994c:152-153) or “the Western world’s belief in the hegemony of reason to construe reality” (Wutz, 1994:195). The “realism” in Doctorow’s fiction is consequently an illusion. On its ontological level a fictional world may employ verifiable, even “verifying” content, in order to create the impression of a created world as directly representative of the actual world, unlike an imaginative world such as Kafka’s *Die Verwandlung* [Metamorphosis]. Doctorow’s fiction does contain much “realism” and “verifiable content”. Yet, “realistic” and verifiable descriptions in Doctorow’s fiction ultimately form part of the totality of the artistic unit/fictional world. Real footage of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is “factual”, but when it appears in a film like *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997) it becomes part of a fictional document. A “factual” sentence, for example, “What happened was that an antiwar rally was held in Central Park on the Great Lawn …” (HL, 140) becomes equal to fiction and the mode of relaying truth changes.

The only significance of “factual” and “direct autobiographical elements” in Doctorow’s work concerns their role in the fictional worlds of which they form part. Doctorow himself avers that the source which the author uses finally does not matter because “you’re making a composition”; “... the sources may be autobiographical, but a composition has been made, so it’s fiction. We can no longer think of it as autobiographical” (Silverblatt, 1999:217). *Lives of the poets: a novella and six short stories* (1985c) and *World’s fair* (1985b) are more directly autobiographically-based than any of Doctorow’s other works (Tokarczyk, 2000:5-6). However, it is also logical that – as in the case of any other writer – both specifically “autobiographical” experiences and knowledge of actual world phenomena that impressed the novelist, but without being necessarily of a highly personal nature, serve to inform the author’s fiction as possibilities

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104 Hesse did so by concealing his identity and “misleading” the public by causing them to believe that the author of *Demian* was an actual Emil Sinclair. The film *Fargo* (1996) by Joel and Ethan Coen begins with the following words that appear on the screen: “THIS IS A TRUE STORY. The events depicted in this film took place in Minnesota in 1987. At the request of the survivors, the names have been changed. Out of respect for the dead, the rest has been told exactly as it occurred.” The impression is given that the announcement is external to the fictional world and belongs to the actual world. It belongs, in fact, to the fictional world.
which are also relevant for the actual world: “Doctorow did draw upon his experiences to create the characters in all his fiction” (Tokarczyk, 2000:44). For example, the black janitor, the demented grandmother and the story of the accident of a woman squashed against a schoolyard fence by a car (Wutz, 1994:196) that appear in the autobiographical World’s fair also form part of Daniel’s consciousness in The book of Daniel. Even if specific characters are not particularly autobiographical, some pieces of the fictional world may be related to the actual world which might be part of Doctorow’s actual world frame of reference. The author changes the “factual nature” of such information to become part of the “power of freedom”. “Actual world elements” such as psychologically credible responses, causality, imaginability and plausibility are retained – not only to create a semblance of verisimilitude with the actual world, but also to make it a possible world with truth value that is valid for both the fictional and the actual world.

Morris (1999:viii) speculates that the reason why Doctorow asserts that his life is wholly irrelevant with regard to his fiction, World’s fair included, may be related to his contact with the New Critic John Crowe Ransom – which might have influenced him in his views that the work of art is autonomous:

Doctorow repeatedly asserted that autobiographical allusions in his work are to be understood as subordinated to the larger artistic effects he wants to achieve. While conceding that from one perspective ‘all art is autobiographical’, he consistently reminds readers that autobiographical details, like any others, are filtered through several prisms prior to their final incarnation in a text; this process makes such details interpretable on their own, within the created fiction, and effectively severs their original connection with the author (Morris, 1999:xvii).

Comparing the way the New Critics viewed a literary work to the title of Brooks’s The well-wrought urn, Tokarczyk (2000:2) explains that they did not believe that a critic could make progress with interpreting a text by focusing on the context in which it was written, but rather by valuing a text as a “self-contained artifact that could be understood by examining its formal techniques”. For the New Critics the significance of a fictional text lies in its expression through its internal relations, i.e. as a self-contained construct, and not in what the reader might recognise as correspondences between the writer’s own life, and those of himself and other actual people. Doctorow asserts that the morally complex life of a child is more important to him than the autobiographical details used to characterise Edgar Altschuler (Morris, 1999:xvii). However, the elements of the external context, or the external actual world, which do contribute to the truth value of the fictional text, are the causality and concomitant experiences that affect the focalisation of the textual actual world – which determines the nature of the fictional world.
“Accuracy” and “verifiability” are ironically “unreliable” next to actual world elements such as causality and the like with regard to what makes a text truthful as a whole. Tokarczyk (2000:68-69) employs “midfiction” as a relevant term relating to the postmodernism of Doctorow’s work. “Accuracy” is regarded with scepticism with regard to its guarantee to ensure truth of any textual representation of the actual world. Doctorow is attracted to the relative uncertainty of postmodernism (Tokarczyk, 2000:69). Correct and verifiable facts, for example, the origin of the name “teddy bear” which refers to Theodore Roosevelt’s reluctance to shoot a bear, may create a misrepresentation of the historical figure. Instead, Ragtime includes a reference to the animals that the fictional Roosevelt killed which shifts the focus to the brutality not only of the fictional world, but also, indirectly, to the historical colonial period of the actual world. Whether the historical Roosevelt did hunt or not is ultimately irrelevant. The truth is that humanity and civilised leaders in the past and the present have the capacity to be brutal.

3.2.3. Truth value and the “multiplicity of witnesses”

A “typical Doctorovian world” like the one in Homer & Langley contains, in terms of the “power of the regime”, information which to some extent is “verifiable” but is in part “erroneous”. As a whole the world presented to the reader is “fabricated”, false, in actual terms, yet truthful. In his essay “False documents” Doctorow (1994c:164) comments:

As clowns in the circus imitate the aerialists and tightrope walkers, first for laughs and then so that it can be seen that they do it better, we have it in us to compose false documents more valid, more real, more truthful than the ‘true’ documents of the politicians or the journalists or the psychologists. Novelists know explicitly that the world in which we live is still to be formed and that reality is amenable to any construction that is placed upon it. It is a world made for liars and we are born liars. But we are to be trusted because ours is the only profession forced to admit that it lies – and that bestows upon us the mantle of honesty.

Ragtime’s narrator relates that: “In the paper was the news of Teddy Roosevelt’s African safari. The great conservationist had bagged seventeen lions, eleven elephants, twenty-one rhinos, eight hippos, nine giraffes, forty-seven gazelles, twenty-nine zebras, and kudu, wildebeest, impala, eland, waterbuck, wart hog and bushbuck, beyond number” (Doctorow, 1985a:87). Roosevelt’s hunting expedition with his son, Kermit, did indeed take place (Bishop, 1947:239). According to one biography they shot “512 beasts and birds” (Thayer, 1919:320) and another one mentions that “296 specimens” (Pringle, 1956:360) were killed.

These constructions may include any oral, written and audio-visual texts, like the “factual”, “verifiable” and “accurate” speeches of politicians, newspaper articles, memoirs, the views of psychologists, historians, economists and others who are basing their writings on the available facts. These constructions may also be imaginative works: fairy tales, science fiction novels, Westerns, for instance.
“Honest imaginative works” would be oxymoronic in terms of the “power of the regime”, but not in terms of the “power of freedom”. The imaginative nature of Doctorow’s oeuvre ought to be obvious because all of his literary productions are experimental or inventive in some way or another, whether in terms of subject matter and plot construction like the fragmented Loon lake and City of God; choice of setting or literary techniques (such as shift in voice or point of view, or ambiguous narration); genres (such as the romance, the western, the crime story, or the “Bildungsroman”) and/or his “suspicion of objective truth, resistance to closure, suspicion of grand narratives, and a breakdown of the division between high and low culture” (Tokarczyk, 2000:1;68-69). Although Doctorow admits that that he has used postmodern techniques in some of his work (he refers to The book of Daniel, “perhaps Ragtime” and Loon lake), this has been “always for traditional storytelling purposes. So is that postmodern? I don’t think so. Maybe it’s post-postmodern” (Marranca, 1996:211; my emphasis – PvdM). Stories may explain the actual world, human nature and relationships and morally educate the reader. Doctorow’s fiction shows how the actual world functions and certainly suggests the necessity of humane behaviour in social contexts – without being a metanarrative. In this sense his fiction succeeds in being “honest” and “truthful”.107

This is also why it is a correct (postmodern) approach to regard fictional worlds such as Doctorow’s as “possible”, i.e. “repeatable” in the actual world with regard to some aspects, instead of regarding them as grand narratives. Tokarczyk (2000:116) remarks of Loon lake: “… the novel is both specific to the 1930s and timeless in its boundaries, evoking a sense that its themes are universal, much as the Coalhouse Walker subplot in Ragtime does”. “Timeless in its boundaries” and “universal” here involve the possible in, as well as beyond, the specific fictional context(s) of a novel.

Actual world phenomena in fictional worlds are specific hypothetical circumstances that serve as an example – even if extraordinary – of credible, plausible and imaginable conditions in the actual world. Tokarczyk (2000:59) explains that in writing the history of the town Hard Times, 108

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107 In this regard one could also consider Germano’s (2010) article “What are books good for?” that presents ideas regarding the value of books as important, as being useful contributions to knowledge and as part of an ever-changing evolution of human beings’ approach to knowledge: “… books produce knowledge by encasing it. Books take ideas and set them down, transforming them through the limitations of space into thinking usable by others” and “If we can get them right, books are luminous versions of our ideas, bound by narrative structure … Books make the case for us, for the identity of the individual as an embodiment of thinking in the world. The heart of what even scholars do is the endless task of making that world visible again and again by telling stories, complicated, nuanced, subtle stories that reshape us daily so that new forms of knowledge can shine out.”

108 A “hypothesis” may be an actual or possible condition or the state of things considered or dealt with as a basis for action; one of several such possible conditions, a case or an alternative (OED).
Blue attempts “not to recreate crucial events, but to develop an understanding of them”. This view is formulated in the light of Morris’s conclusion that Doctorow’s fictions are “models of misrepresentations” (cf. Morris, 1991): “… in the very attempt to represent, one is cut off from the world which one is representing” and La Capra’s utilisation of Freud’s transference theory by means of which the goal is not the recreation of events, but establishing a new understanding through dialogue with the actual world events (Tokarczyk, 2000:59). However, by acting as a “translator” of the fictional world, the reader decodes the fictional world in actual world terms and singles out ideas about the fictional world that may be perceptive and relevant with regard to the actual world. In this sense a new connection with the “represented” (actual) world is established.

This fictional “perspective” “has a say” which one should appreciate in terms of Doctorow’s understanding of the value/“reliability” of subjectivity as opposed to the unreliability of “objective facts”. Tokarczyk (2000:4) names Doctorow’s stance as resulting from his constant endeavour to “re-envision the familial, social, and historical forces that have shaped his life and inform his fiction”. The fictional world is therefore not a final and invariable determination of truth, but a case of co-determination (or “Mitsprache”). Whilst Doctorow is an envoy of the postmodern “belief that true knowledge or knowledge of a particular area is uncertain”, he is still passionately committed to certain ideas and causes (Tokarczyk, 2000:4), for instance justice in social contexts. Doctorow rejects the notion that absolute disbelief in all instances is required, which is why he is also “suspicious of radical uncertainty” but furthermore rejects trust in the fervour which maintains that some knowledge is certain (Tokarczyk, 2000:4).

This may be associated with what Doctorow terms the “multiplicity of witnesses” in an interview (Friedl & Schulz, 1988b:184).109 It involves and welcomes gaining an overview of many subjective perspectives, including fictional ones, that oppose the pretence of exclusive or absolute truth:

... since history can be composed, you see, then you want to have as many people active in the composition as possible. A kind of democracy of perception. Thousands of eyes, not just one. And since we’re not only talking about history, but reality as well, then it seems to me a noble aspiration of a human community to

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109 Friedl and Schulz are the editors of *E.L. Doctorow: A democracy of perception: a symposium with and on E.L. Doctorow* (1988a) in which the interview appears. This took the form of a discussion with students, moderated by Paul Levine, 19 June 1985 (Friedl and Schulz, 1988b:198). This interview (Friedl and Schulz, 1988c) also appears in *Conversations with E.L. Doctorow* (1999). C. Morris is the editor of this volume.
endow itself with a multiplicity of witnesses, all from this ideal of seeing through the phenomena to the truth. ... I think you may hope to reach the objective view with a multiplicity of witness\textsuperscript{110}; the important thing is to have as many sources of information, as many testimonies as possible – because if you don’t, history turns into mythology. If you don’t constantly recompose and re-interpret history, then it begins to tighten its grip on your throat as myth and you find yourself in some kind of totalitarian society, either secular or religious. So the test of any society is its resistance to the subjective.\textsuperscript{111} That is the way to truth and freedom.

Falsehood can easily be reflected by “factual” writing as a result of subjective personal experience and conviction – hence Doctorow’s resistance to a factual text that pretends to be “objective” and “reliable”, but which is in truth deviously manipulated, untrustworthy and subjective. Fiction as a medium involves the coincidence of ideas and causes which is more meaningful than the mere surface level of texts that just report facts. McIlvaine’s perspective in The waterworks and the novel as a whole contribute, through a subjective, “imperfect” account, to the multiplicity of witnesses. The story that McIlvaine tells is one “that conveys the importance of a historical event, but with the idiosyncracies and gaps of an old man remembering and reflecting” (Tokarczyk, 2000:165). Robbins (Tokarczyk, 2000:xii) points out in the foreword to Tokarczyk’s book\textsuperscript{112} that she presents The waterworks as an allegory of “Reaganism” or “Reaganomics” (Tokarczyk, 2000:18, 19; 151-169).\textsuperscript{113} The point is that Doctorow’s novel encompasses possible aspects in terms of the actual world\textsuperscript{114} – by using the “language of freedom”, i.e. the language of fictional worlds, to edify the reader about actual

\textsuperscript{110} This term also evokes the ideal of a multiplicity of theoretical views instead of absolute theories (Peters, 2001:7).

\textsuperscript{111} “Subjective” is understood here as the unavoidable subjectivity of language that presents itself as “objective”. Writers who use “the power of the regime” would not acknowledge the subjective nature of their writings. Ironically, the self-acknowledged subjectivity of “the power of freedom” contributes, through its participation in the “multiplicity of witness”, to a kind of democratically determined “objectivity” – or rather truthfulness.

\textsuperscript{112} E.L. Doctorow’s skeptical commitment (2000)


\textsuperscript{114} Doctorow evaluated Reaganomics/Reaganism/Reagan in his essay “The Character of Presidents” as follows: “Under the persona of this fervent charmer, we were released into our great decade of deregulated thievery, and learned that the paramount issues of our age were abortion and school prayer. Meanwhile, the rich got filthy rich, the middle class turned poor, the profession of begging for alms was restored to the streets, and the national debt rose to about $3 trillion. Now there was a president with character” (Doctorow, 1994e:96). The essay and its facts are limited to commenting on the politics of Ronald Reagan. The value of The waterworks as a possible world is that if the reader makes the connections it can comment on Reaganomics/Reaganism; however, the fictional world is not limited just to Reagan’s politics, but can also comment on other politics approximating the president’s approaches and actions.
world contexts. Self-centred ambitions to become wealthy at the expense of others, as an example, could be extended to specific national and cultural contexts.

3.2.4. Society and its realities, the focalising consciousness and his personal textual actual world

3.2.4.1. Exposing injustice as an implicit idealisation of justice by means of fiction

Because of the possible nature of his artistic medium – whether it is *The book of Daniel* or *Sweet land stories* 115 – Doctorow’s fiction is politically interesting in a moral sense, as Girgus (2002:7) points out when comparing Doctorow and Norman Mailer: “… Doctorow writes from the perspective of a moral consciousness to reexamine the meaning of the American experience and to revivify our moral imagination.” The author himself says: “If I’m a leftist, it’s because, as I think of them, the Ten Commandments is a very left dogma. What is just? What is unjust? That’s where it all begins with me” (Morris, 1999:x). The political vision of Doctorow’s fiction is a “pre-theoretical intuition of injustice which prompts his political convictions” (Morris:1999:x). Doctorow describes himself as “someone with a primitive sense of justice, of what’s fair and what’s not”, of what is right and wrong (Tokarczyk, 2000:4; Trenner, 1983:52). Morris (1999:vii) also distinguishes Doctorow’s oeuvre as a collection of “compelling images of the country suffering from an incurable corruption of its ideals” and “terrifying characterizations of America”. He provides examples such as *welcome to Hard Times* in which the “Emersonian doctrine of self-reliance embodied in the narrator, Blue is shown to be ludicrously naive, self-deluded, impotent in the face of evil, perhaps even complicit with it”; in *The Book of Daniel* state power exists for its own sake; in *Ragtime* “America’s power elite literally gets away with murder” while in *The waterworks* “the ruling class’s instinct for self-preservation mobilizes both science and the political system in support of a quest for immortality …” (Morris, 1999:vii). The representation of various forms of injustice and their effects, reminiscent of the consequences of actual world infringements, serves as an inherent idealisation of justice by means of fiction.

However, Doctorow is adamant that his books do not contain “a message”. He says in an interview (Marranca, 1999:208): “If I thought I had a message I’d deliver the message, I wouldn’t write a book. A message is a message – another form entirely”. This does not mean,

115 Johnson (2005:116) draws parallels (on the grounds of unethical “treatment of women and children” that varies in “political nature”) between the short stories “Child, dead, in the rose garden”, “Jolene: a life”, both in *Sweet land stories* and *The waterworks* and observes that: “Christina Stevens’ placement of Roberto Guzman’s body on the grounds of the White House symbolises her statement of the wealth of her father and men like him that creates political corruption”.

Chapter 3: Contextualising focalisation and fictional worlds as possible worlds in Hermann Hesse’s and E.L. Doctorow’s fiction
however, that the reader cannot infer a “point” or “significance” from these works. One can indeed interpret them as promoting social justice. Not only the implications of many, if not all of his books, but also many statements in interviews and essays match sentiments expressed by his fiction that could be interpreted as humanist, i.e. specifically with regard to the idealisation of humane societies. Doctorow’s fiction portrays characters as psychologically credible in possible world terms in combination with the presence of (sometimes covert) evil as part of how societies function.

3.2.4.2. The nature of Doctorow’s focus on society

Doctorow’s “social relevance” is first of all evident because he is a socially conscious explorer and “reveler” of human nature and social contexts. He honestly and insightfully portrays human experiences in their social contexts. The interaction between the individual and society is crucial in Doctorow’s works: “From *Welcome to Hard Times* through *The Waterworks* Doctorow’s work has grappled with the tensions between individual self-interest and communal welfare” (Tokarczyk, 2000:172). What Doctorow represents is a broader humanist concern, for the individual, but also with a specific awareness of society. The ramification depicted is often that a whole community is implicated, in other words either a town like Hard Times, a whole city as in *The waterworks* or a nation as in *Ragtime*. According to Tokarczyk (2000:14) characters in *Ragtime* represent ethnic and socioeconomic groups rather than individuals. Whilst detailed representations of individual psyches are Hesse’s main concern, Doctorow’s stories focus on representations of the social contexts of groups and their members, especially with regard to the effects of societies on individuals. Whereas Hesse’s whole fictional worlds are subordinate to the central individual, Doctorow’s are not.

Social contexts play a significant role in relation to the individual, but Doctorow’s emphasis does not regard the social context as inferior to his real concern and interest for the individual. His vision is one of a just society which would enable people to actualise themselves (Tokarczyk, 2000:4; cf. Trenner, 1983:55). In *The waterworks* McIllvaine’s interest, which is directed by his just sensibility and his interest in community welfare (Tokarczyk, 2000:154), affords an example of the fact that Doctorow is not exclusively interested in the portrayal of social contexts as supportive of the role of fictional individuals. Individuals’ stories comment on the states of societies and, in doing so, convey truth value for actual world social contexts.

*Welcome to Hard Times* is an example of Doctorow’s interest in the representation of social contexts to which the individual like Blue contributes, but who, like the rest of the town’s residents, is subordinate to the nature of the social context, in this case marked by the “ruling
power” of the Bad Man from Bodie which causes a debilitating fear. Tokarczyk (2000:4) notes that personal fulfilment has “ramifications far beyond the individual’s life, for in Doctorow’s fiction the personal is indeed political”. The individual’s “quest for personal fulfillment, or at least for some personal resolution” is, according to Tokarczyk (2000:5), part of the “commitment” which she relates to an allegiance to “some form of public action”. Here one also thinks of Daniel whose personal life as a child has already been affected by the antagonistic forces of society.

The perspectives of youths or children in The book of Daniel, World’s fair and Billy Bathgate have the advantage of defamiliarising focalisations of social contexts. The author recognises a “tremendous advantage writing from a child’s point of view” because one could recover “the capacity for wonder ... that you’ve lost as an adult. You can rhapsodize the ordinary” (Wutz, 1994:195). He also regards the child as the symbol of “the fully sensible mind and being who can’t control experiences. Childhood is full sentient being and powerlessness” (Wutz, 1994:195). For example, when the children Daniel and Susan flee from the orphanage they experience a busy street which could be seen, if taken out of context, as having an objective character, i.e. as just the textual actual world: “It is a busy, curving cobblestone avenue lined with stores and delicatessens, movies and automobile showrooms and bars and Chinese restaurants” (Doctorow, 1971:173). But it is “framed”, i.e. the experience of the space is “encircled”116, by another one: “Alone in the Cold War, Daniel and Susan run down Tremont Avenue”; “Daniel’s side hurts. Each step brings him pain. He is sweating. “No [sic] so fast”, his sister whines. “You’re going to make me fall” (Doctorow, 1971:173). The array of businesses appears differently when it is “framed”. They are excessive and worrisome in a world that is, for the children, merciless and synonymous with the Cold War. The reason why they find themselves in the city, fleeing, is indirectly the execution of their parents.

Doctorow also often uses the focalisation of the outsider figure who possesses a specific frame of mind which is the result of his interaction with his society. The reason is that such characters (whether Daniel, Joe, Martin Pemberton or Howard Wakefield, in the short story “Wakefield”, or Homer and Langley Collyer) are at odds with their societies. This is often due to “a lack of community” and “a lack of nurturance” (Tokarczyk, 2000:134:163) in the microcosm of the family. Consequently, some of Doctorow’s central outsider characters are also disagreeable. For example, Tokarczyk (2000:123) refers to Joe in Loon Lake who had “never been an

116 “Framed” and “encircled” here are metaphors of focalisation if viewed in connection with the experience of the focalisers, Daniel and Susan.
innocent; he begins the novel by telling of robbing a church box and kicking a priest in the testicles ... Rather than being from the upper echelon, he is poor and something of an outsider” (Tokarczyk, 2000:123). Both Hesse’s Knulp and Doctorow’s Joe are social outsiders and do not want to conform, but Joe is violent in contrast to the affable Knulp:

... I joined a gang and carried a penknife I had sharpened like an Arab, like a Dago, I stuck it in the vegetable peddler’s horse, I stuck it in a feeb with a watermelon head, I slit awnings with it, I played peg with it, I robbed little kids with it, I took a girl on the roof with it and got her to take off her clothes with it. I only wanted to be famous! (Doctorow, 1980:4).

From the beginning of *Loon lake* it is clear that Joe’s criminal tendencies are a form of rebellion against the suppressive factory culture of his town, i.e. the way in which he focalises his textual actual world. In addition, Daniel’s abuse of his wife and son is relevant with regard to his focalisation of the society of his textual actual world. Parks (1991:43) attributes Daniel’s violence to feelings of isolation and powerlessness that cause Daniel, like Hamlet, to be cruel, especially to the women in his life. Daniel violently reacts to “deceptive” situations like the peacefulness of a park or the encapsulating space of a car in the rain. He transforms a peaceful, yet for him “dishonest”, moment into an experience which is terrifying, yet “honest” and more in line with his conception of the nature of reality.117

3.2.4.3. The focalising frame of mind

Despite Doctorow’s focus on social contexts, as in Hesse’s fiction characters are vital for the the former’s creation of fictional worlds. The yearning for self-actualisation is particularly expressed through the artist figures in *Ragtime*, *Loon lake* and *Lives of the poets: a novella and six stories* (Tokarczyk, 2000:4). One could also add such characters as Daniel, Martin Pemberton, Edgar Altschuler and Homer Collyer to the list of characters that (modernistically) strive to comprehend their places in their social contexts. Doctorow’s fiction often uses an overarching central consciousness, fictional *individuals*, i.e. unique inhabitants of fictional worlds such as Blue in *Welcome to Hard Times* and Homer Collyer in *Homer & Langley* who “process” their textual actual world in terms of their individuality. When Joe sees the carnival he looks at it in terms of his own youth, self-actualisation and personal purpose. He does not

117 His marriage becomes a microcosm of America in which he is the tyrant and Phyllis and his son are the victims.
recognise what it really is: “Ah, what I felt standing there in the sun! A broken-down carnival – a few acts, a few rides and a contingent of freaks. But the sight of it made me a boy again. … I knew it was for me as sure as I knew my own face in the mirror (Doctorow, 1980:7). His focalisation changes when the illusion fades and he recognises that the carnival workers belong to the same cultural (immigrant) group as himself and his parents: “ … the same people but with a twist who worked for pennies in the sawmills or stood on the bread lines” (Doctorow, 1980:126). The human responses of the focaliser to his (social) world distinguish the fictional world as relevant, meaningful and truthful for the actual one.

The nature of the focaliser’s frame of mind is crucial with regard to focalisation in Doctorow’s fiction, whether he is “emotional” or “detached”, or both, within the course of one narrative. In “The writer in the family” in Lives of the poets: a nove lla and six short stories the boy bears witness to the emotional rather than the literal truth (Tokarczyk, 2000:28). Tokarczyk (2000:101) points out that Coalhouse Walker Jr.’s Model T Ford itself is not crucial, but that the vandalism of the car affronts his dignity because in a capitalist society material possessions such as a car express one’s individuality. Walker’s decisions are not altogether rational, but psychologically credible, as affected by possible human emotional reactions like resentment and desperation when one’s individuality and human rights are disregarded. His distraught acts are a frantic appeal to be acknowledged as an individual who is also a legitimate member of this American society. The vandalism and disregard of him when he attempts to obtain legal redress communicates to him that he is not acknowledged as a genuine American citizen, which leads him towards taking measures to ensure illegal justice: “Walker ultimately is destroyed because he is an African-American man trying to assimilate into American society” (Tokarczyk, 2000:104). Hence in this novel it is the focus on the relationship between himself and his social context which contributes not only to its credibility, but to its truth as a fictional world.

118 Barkhausen (1988:143) points out that they bear the surname Korzeniowski which carries the stigma of the poor Polish immigrant. Giving Joe Joseph Conrad’s Polish name could signify that Conrad is a symbol among Patersonians and New York East European immigrants. Conrad’s identity could convey the concept that it is possible that any individual like Joe, any Joe, i.e. “guy” or “fellow”, could possess “Conradian aspects”, namely being exceptional and having the capacity to be successful. Incidentally, when Doctorow was asked in an interview why he gave Joe (of Paterson) Joseph Conrad’s name his evasive answer was “Perhaps to confound the Ph.D.s” (Friedl and Schulz, 1988b:124-125).

119 The narrator of Ragtime is marked by a detachment (cf. Tokarczyk, 2000:154). However, a “detached” narrator may also employ the emotional focalisation of characters. Despite the semi-anonymous and detached narrator of Ragtime, Walker’s actions, speech and responses should be understood as emotional and as part of the novel’s focalisation. When Younger Brother looks at the vandalised car his emotional response is related to Walker’s: “There ran though him a small current of rage, perhaps one one-hundredth, he knew, of what Coalhouse Walker must have felt, and it was salutary” (Doctorow, 1985a:138).
A “detached” narrator as in *Ragtime*, an “emotional” one such as Daniel as well as one who shifts from “objective” to “emotional” narration like Homer Collyer constitute narrative choices that “reflect another strategy on Doctorow’s part to indirectly express his political and social concerns” (Tokarczyk, 2000:88). A “detached” narration does not mean that a humanising effect with regard to focalisation of the textual actual world is absent, because the personal/individualistic narrated content is still characterised by individualistic speech and tone, thoughts and representations of events and actions, aspects of social contexts; in other words, focalisation is still pertinent. McIlvaine, though intrigued and committed to his story, and the narrator of *Ragtime* appear to be less “troubled”. McIlvaine’s interest is directed by his sensibility towards right and wrong and his interest in community welfare (Tokarczyk, 2000:154). However, he does narrate the story of a very troubled character, Martin Pemberton, whose perceptions also colour the textual actual world. In *Ragtime*, though, the ironic effect of a world and all its terror and sadness, represented as lightly as a piece of ragtime music, has a defamiliarising effect which provides a fresh and insightful impression of the diversely constituted world. Like Homer’s focalisation, the mindset of the narrator in *Ragtime* is committed in its portrayal and intrigued by the nature of his social context.

To conclude: Although Doctorow’s fiction is specifically set in actual world American historical and contemporary contexts, most often in New York, his stories have a “universal quality” – better described as possible in other contexts, based on his fiction’s parallels with actual world phenomena. As Doctorow himself says, he uses selective imagery in the sense of Hawthorne’s definition of a romance, which “pushes in the direction of metaphor”, but could fall “into allegory, which Hawthorne lapsed into” (Marranca, 1999:214). The connections between the fictional world of Doctorow’s prose and the actual world are indirect and based on ideas rather than factual verisimilitude, but Doctorow’s fiction also differs considerably from the kind of allegory in which characters appear to embody virtue or lust simply and unproblematically: this Hansen (2005:670) finds to be forced. In modern allegories personification is only one characteristic that is far more subtly and indirectly used (O’Connell, 1988:87). This is indeed the case in “Doctorovian allegories” such as *The waterworks* and *Welcome to Hard Times*.

The latter was not only Doctorow’s first novel, but his first jeremiad in the form of allegory (Tokarczyk, 2000:136). Early critics described this novel as an “allegory of good and evil” (Williams, 1996:19-20); Arnold (1983a:94) concludes that the town, Hard Times, charts the rise and fall of civilisations and that the reason for its downfall is its immorality and lack of religious values. The history of the town Hard Times is “false” despite its connection with the actual
Californian mining town Bodie, but still has truth value based on possible causative elements (such as those mentioned by Arnold).

Including actual world places, people and events, but making them part of his use of the “power of freedom”, is typical of Doctorow’s oeuvre. The truth value of his fictional worlds, that is also valid in the actual world, is also possible through the “power of freedom”, i.e. a lingual power that functions independently from credibility based on “actual world places, people and events”, a “manifest reference to the verifiable world” or “the power of the regime”. Rather, truth is based on such features of focalisation as human perspective and psychological credibility, together with subsequent imaginability and plausibility. Fictional worlds do indeed allow “imaginability” and “plausibility” that are impossible in terms of the actual world. However, all that is “imaginable” and “plausible” in Doctorow’s work includes actual world possibilities like causal elements and the effect of human perspective on the representation of the textual actual world. In this sense Doctorow’s fictional worlds are “possible worlds”.

Doctorow expresses the truthfulness of his fictional worlds as contributing to “Truth” by advocating a “multiplicity of witnesses”. Levine (2002:58) maintains that both the idea of justice and the idea of truth in Doctorow’s fiction lie “beyond human grasp”. This is certainly the case with regard to truth(s) as verifiable and/or complete and uncontestable. Rather, Doctorow’s worlds function as “witnesses”, observing phenomena possible in both fictional worlds and the actual world along with the “perspectives” of other “voices”.120 In Doctorow’s case, central and overlapping topics of his fictional worlds are human nature in towns, cities and nations, the tendency towards injustice and the abuse of power, as well as the relationship between social contexts and individuals and the manner in which this relationship affects individual lives. The focalising consciousness, like Blue’s or Homer Collyer’s, is central with regard to the representation of the social context because the interaction between the individual and his social context affects his mindset. Due to focalisation’s selective and transforming nature – determined by the state of the focaliser’s mind – the focalising consciousness certainly participates in establishing the composition and nature of the fictional world. The fictional world of a novel by Doctorow is therefore a “symptom” of the relationship between the focaliser and his social context. In Doctorow’s fiction the social context is typically, in this sense, not inferior to any represented focalising and focalised fictional individual.

120 In reference to Homer & Langley, Doctorow asserts that the writing process became possible only once he had found the “voice” of Homer (Tanenhaus, Johnson & Hager, 2009). This statement points to the creative importance of focalisation as a function of the medium through which the text communicates its truths.
3.3. Conclusion: The comparability of Hermann Hesse and E.L. Doctorow

Doctorow’s first novel, *Welcome to Hard Times*, was published in 1960, approximately two years prior to Hesse’s death. It is unlikely that Hesse was ever aware of Doctorow. Although Hesse attained his fame and became a “cult writer” following his reception in America during the 1960s and 1970s when Doctorow published his first novels,121 as far as could have been established, no references to Hesse’s work exist in Doctorow’s essays and interviews. Neither do Doctorow’s literary works disclose any obvious connections with Hesse. The possibility that any genetic relations between Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works exist, is therefore highly unlikely.

Consequently this study focuses on typological similarities, namely the psycho-typological analogies that Zelle (2005:9) distinguishes as the affinity between mental dispositions and historical situations (Zelle, 2005:19). The actual world’s human perspectives and concomitant mental dispositions are similar to perspectives belonging to focalisation that are connected to the creation of texts. They are all of a “psychological nature”. This ties in with the “fourth type of comparison” that Schmeling identifies, which is of a historical nature and pursues a “structuralist interest” (Zelle, 2005:20). “Focalisation” is a textual “process” characterised by selection, focus and subjective interpretation of textual actual world objects. It is a literary “intra-textual” device that a focaliser uses to shape and create fictional worlds; it resembles actual world human perspectives. The focus is therefore not on literary historical questions, but belongs to the category of systematic questions in which questions of a formal-aesthetic, structuralist, linguistic or psychoanalytical nature fit (Zelle, 2005:20-21). The aim of this study involves a consideration of the “psychoanalytical nature” of Hesse’s and Doctorow’s literary works in combination with a concentration on formal-aesthetic matters. The worlds of the particular works of fiction “come about” or are influenced to such an extent by the focalising consciousnesses of characters and/or narrators that each fictional world is a unique possible world.

The inferred “unfocalised” textual actual worlds of Hesse’s and Doctorow’s texts may approximate the actual world, but this is not the factor which makes the fictional world a “possible world”. Rather, it is the “human factor” of non-actual worlds, i.e. the similarities between the focalised textual actual worlds or the fictional worlds and real people’s experiences in the actual world and the actual world itself as experienced (i.e. transformed by and within the

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experiencing consciousness). The actual world reader recognises that the fictional worlds are also possible in actual world terms.

In order to explain the relationship between the fictional world associated with the “power of freedom” and the actual world (and accounts of it associated with the “power of the regime”), one could use the example of the film *Rendition* (2007). The film deals with the “actual” CIA rendition programme in which terrorism suspects are captured, detained, transported to either Guantánamo or other unknown destinations in the world without having been brought before any court and are subsequently interrogated. The film depicts a fictional character, an Egyptian citizen married to an American who has lived the past 20 years of his life in the USA. This character, Anwar El-Ibrahimi, is completely innocent of any involvement in terrorism, yet is captured, interrogated and tortured. The director, Gavin Hood, explains that his goal is to approach a thematic idea not only intellectually, but emotionally as well – and in so doing to “humanise” the story. He creates, within the fictional world, actual world value for the viewer by means of developing causal relationships and human-like experiences as a significant part of the fictional world. The experiences of his characters are psychologically credible and their human behaviour, i.e. the human tendencies to be biased against racial groups, to generalise in a racist fashion, to victimise, as well as the physical and psychological effects of these on the victim, is plausible. Hood also says that a technique which he uses is to tell the story from multiple angles, once again “because it humanises the problem”. Here one finds, as in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s books, a semblance of the actual world, but the fictional world consists of the central, individual, characters, (international) social contexts, events and spaces that are represented through the “lens” of human experiences.

A documentary film entitled *Outlawed* dealing with the same theme as *Rendition* was added onto the DVD disc – at Hood’s request. This decision has interesting implications for the relationship between the actual world and the fictional world. The documentary draws on the “power of the regime” and is *assumed* to be true by the viewer. The stories of an actual released detainee, a German citizen, Khaled El-Masri, and an Ethiopian citizen, Binyam Mohamed, who was still being detained at the time when the documentary film was made, do have, as Hood says, “the effect of humanising the questions raised by the script” (authored by Kelley Sane) and make concepts like arbitrary detention and “enhanced interrogation techniques ... more personal”. The effect is that *Outlawed* presents “actual world manifestations” of the possibilities introduced by *Rendition*. The documentary film is not more “true” because of the documentary’s use of “the power of the regime”, but it does confirm causal and psychological similarities that validate the film’s character as a possible world. The viewer inevitably “compares” the film to the “factual”
documentary film, the causal “facts” of the victims’ experiences and their visible trauma. Similarly, when reading Hesse’s and Doctorow’s novels, the reader creates his own “documentary film” about the fictional worlds, i.e. the reader “translates” the fictional world into actual world terms by, for example, comparing it to similar actual world phenomena; sometimes the reader finds the actual world resonance, i.e. the “documentary”, in other people’s life experiences and thoughts – and sometimes in his own.

Portrayed experiences – regardless of the reader’s familiarity with or disconnectedness from them in the actual world – always change the nature of the textual actual world even if its appearance is not affected. Singh (2006:279) argues that whilst music uses an abstract form of expression which is independent of reality, fine arts and literature must deal with mimetic paradigms. The “mimetism” in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works is, however, deceptive: references and descriptions of “people” or fictional figures and “physical” objects, places and spaces, i.e. the representations of the characters’ “physical” contexts, are not representative of the actual world like a newspaper article or a documentary film, but as focalised constructs reflective of the possibilities of characters’/narrators’ inner worlds. Hesse reduces the value of “reality” or “actuality” in his poetry and paintings as follows:

Sowohl die Dichtungen, die ich dichte, wie die Bildchen, die ich male, entsprechen nicht der Wirklichkeit. ... In meinen Dichtungen vermißt man häufig die übliche Achtung vor der Wirklichkeit, und wenn ich male, dann haben die Bäume Gesichter, und die Häuser lachen oder tanzen, oder weinen, aber ob der Baum ein Birnbaum oder eine Kastanie ist, das kann man meistens nicht erkennen. ... oft sehe und fühle ich die Außenwelt mit meinem Innern in einem Zusammenhang und Einklang, den ich magisch nennen muß (Singh, 2006:279-280). [The literary works that I write as well as the little pictures that I paint do not correspond with reality. One often finds in my fiction the usual respect for actuality lacking and when I paint, then the trees have faces, the houses laugh or dance or cry, but whether the tree is a pear tree or a chestnut is usually not distinguishable. ... I often see and feel the external world with my interior in a connection and harmony which I have to call magical.]

122 In Max Frisch’s *Homo faber* Walter Faber intratextually tried to regard his textual actual world “as it was”, a disposition reflected by his matter-of-fact narration and expressing, for example, his indifference towards all things non-factual (like novels and dreams) (Frisch, 1977:15). However, every word from the first to the last is ultimately clouded by Faber’s experience of Sabeth’s death and its effects.

123 This “independence” is understood in terms of the external actual world, but does not apply to the internal world of actual (world) people.
Both Hesse’s and Doctorow’s textual worlds are “realistic” and their fictional worlds often retain much “realism”. However, even when a focalised world appears to be “neutral” and “realistic” (as in *Homer & Langley* and *Narziß und Goldmund*) fictional worlds are like art works, for example, paintings that express the subjective adaptation [“Anverwandlung’] of the appearance of external reality (cf. Singh, 2006:280). Fine arts and literature are forms of acquiring the world, the integration of its appearances into the mental interior of the individual and therefore a reflection of the individual, and so they open up the possibility of expressing connections, analogues and insights that are not visible in actuality (cf. Singh, 2006:280). In this way, the approach of both Hesse and Doctorow is to disclose truths that are also applicable to the actual world in an unforced artistic manner.

The portrayals in *Demian*, *Welcome to Hard Times*, *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley* possess definite allegorical and “universal” qualities that, in this study, are considered in terms of possible worlds theory. “Universality” is often associated with texts that veer away from “realism”, such as fairy-tales and parables. Despite Hesse’s and Doctorow’s “realistic” portrayals, the focus falls rather on human behaviour and causes and effects as actual world features that are imaginable, plausible and credible in actual world terms, especially with regard to the causality of fictional characters’ credible psychological states. Despite the lack of factual accuracy, the stories therefore retain the element of honesty. One aspect of this human behaviour that is closely linked to the individual’s relationship to his social context is a sense of justice. Hesse’s work is less directly “political” than, for example, *The book of Daniel* and *Ragtime* in which political oppression plays a significant role. But like Doctorow’s texts, Hesse’s fiction relays the often unfair and cruel relationship between the individual and his social context through the psychologically credible consciousness, reactions and actions of a fictional individual. The focus may be placed more on the personal experiences of the individual, but the exploration of oppressive forces of, or in, society is no less present than in Doctorow’s and, for example, George Orwell’s124 texts.

Because both Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictional worlds are more directly related to the inner world of their characters than the actual world of the reader, it is only through considering indirect relations between the fictional worlds and the actual world that their fictional worlds truly comment on the last mentioned. The content of their fiction is subjective “knowledge” that

124 Orwell’s *Coming up for air* (1939) might afford an example of the individual experience of a character, George Bowling, dejected because of his social context and its systems.
forms the fictional worlds. This calls to mind the Jungian scholar, Murray Stein’s, remark that: “Much that passes for knowledge among human beings is actually, upon closer and more critical inspection, merely prejudice or belief based on distortion, bias, hearsay, speculation, or pure fantasy. Beliefs pass as knowledge and are clung to as reliable certainties” (Stein, 1999:14). In fictional worlds this kind of “actual world subjectivity” transforms the represented from “what it really is” into extensions of the focalising subject. Doctorow therefore questions “objectively” and “factually” represented knowledge which clings to the pretention of being truthful. Fiction may be factually erroneous, but presents content that evokes the actual world through parallels which are based on ideas, implications, connotations, etcetera, but not actual world facts. Fiction is therefore not “obligated” to be “accurate” and “verifiable”, but still contains truths that are also applicable to the actual world with regard to matters that are not verifiable, but possible.  

Doctorow and Hesse do “exploit” the semblance of the “power of the regime” which – in fact – in a fictional world belongs to the “power of freedom”. Doctorow’s works are truthful in terms of “the multiplicity of witness”, i.e. contributing by means of artistically creating voices or perspectives. Hesse’s specific stories focusing on unique (fictional) individuals (and thus also eschewing the quality of a metanarrative) similarly contribute to an understanding of the human psyche through artistic depictions of “innate humanity” which Schickling (2009:304) regards, along with cosmopolitanism, as what Hesse appeals to as properties of art in his article “Oh Freunde, nicht diese Töne!” (“Oh friends, not these sounds!”) Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction, characterised by “humanised” involvement and credible causal interrelations, may seem to be truthful because of “realism” or “factuality”. But its truthfulness is more closely related to the literary explorations of the human psyche in interaction with its social context(s) and the social contexts themselves as focalised representations.

125 What is “possible” could include actual world phenomena that are natural, unnatural, common, uncommon, but credible, plausible and imaginable.

126 With regard to this notion “truth” is not absolute, i.e. it is not the “whole picture”, but consists of (independent) contributing pieces. These contributing elements are “truthful” in the sense that they do have actual world value. They are able to comment on, evaluate and disclose aspects of the actual world that stimulate the possibility of awareness and understanding within the actual world reader who inevitably uses his actual world frame of reference to access the non-actual fictional world.

127 In this article of September 1914 Hesse argues against the necessity of being biased towards art and literature from countries that were enemies of Germany during the First World War because they contribute to the superstructure of human culture. Human culture arises when animalistic drives are refined to become spiritual drives through shame, phantasy and insight (Hesse, 1946:26). Hesse then concludes the essay with the ideas that life is worth living is “der letzte Inhalt und Trost jeder Kunst” (Hesse, 1946:26) “[the ultimate content and comfort of all art]” and that the only function that the (First World) War could have is convincing humanity that love is supreme over hate, understanding love as supreme over anger, freedom more noble than war. Schickling (2009:305) points out that until 1916 Hesse persistently attempted to see the war’s positive aspects: “Hesse had never before yielded to such illusions, and he was never to do so again.”
The novels by Hermann Hesse and E.L. Doctorow are primarily comparable to each other as regards the contribution of focalisation (through the consciousness of narrators and characters) to the representation of textual actual worlds as fictional worlds that are also possible worlds, i.e. that have actual world relevance and are truthful. The following chapter, the first textual analysis, concentrating on Hesse’s *Demian*, will consider how a fictional world “comes about” as a product created by and as an extension of the individual, in this case Emil Sinclair. In this novel one notices that the focaliser’s subjective frame of mind focalises the components of the textual actual world, i.e. the central character, the social context, events and space(s), that collectively contribute to the construction of a fictional world.
Chapter 4

**Demian:** *Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jungend:* A fictional world as created by and as an extension of the individual, Emil Sinclair

4. Introduction

*Demian* comprises Emil Sinclair’s recollections, presumably written down in the textual world while he is still a young man, during or after the First World War\(^1\)\(^2\), “taking stock” of his youth and considering the process of his “spiritual development”, i.e. the process towards the realisation of his true self\(^3\)\(^4\) that is accompanied by mental and emotional turbulence: “Als eine Suche nach dem Selbst ist die Erzählung auch eine Suche nach Gott, ein wütendes, verzweifeltes und hoffendes, nicht aufgebendes Ringen …” (Singh, 2006:126). [“The narrative is a search for the self also, a search for God, a raging, despairing and hoping, a wrestling without giving up.”] This chapter argues that the whole fictional world is determined by Sinclair’s focus and frame of mind and that this world is therefore part of Sinclair’s “inner world” or his psyche. His frame of mind and mental and emotional experiences are synonymous with actual world processes (for instance focus, selection for representation and subjective or “individualistic” transformation of elements) that serve as the creative impetus for his focalisation.

Focalisation literally transforms all textual actual world elements – of which central components are characters, including Sinclair himself, his social contexts, events and spaces and objects of his external textual actual world – collectively into the fictional world. Singh (2006:120) points out that the text is not interested in objective representation, of which the representation of actions through the perspective of an I-narrator is an indication, and that the text should be understood as an image of the subjective interior of Sinclair. Because actual world human experiences of actual social contexts and processes connect the fictional world and the actual one through the reading process, the fictional world could be considered a possible one.

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\(^1\) In the actual world *Demian* was produced during the two months September and October in the year 1917, but was first published in 1919 (Michels, 1993:49, 52; Herforth, 2003a:16). There is no specific indication that Sinclair relates his story directly after the end of the narrated events that end with Demian’s death as a result of war injuries, but neither is there an indication that *Demian* is set in an unspecified time long after the First World War and the publication date of the book.

\(^2\) The notion of the “true self” is reminiscent of Frankl’s (1964:105) logotherapeutic approach: making a patient aware of what he actually longs for in the depth of his being.
The questions that this chapter pose are: How does Sinclair’s frame of mind become visible? What is the nature of his focalisation or what are the focalising techniques that he uses? How does he focalise the basic components of his textual actual world to collectively become the fictional world? And: In which way(s) could Sinclair’s fictional world be considered a possible world? Because the focus of this chapter is on the re-presentation of an individual’s (textual) actual world wholly directed by his mental disposition, the chapter will present theoretical points of departure: amongst these Ansgar Nünning’s, Marie-Laure Ryan’s and Mieke Bal’s ideas are particularly useful, mainly with regard to the concept that the fictional world of a novel such as *Demian* comprises the focalised textual actual world and the manner in which a fictional world functions as a possible one. This chapter will subsequently concentrate on placing the concepts God, the devil and Abraxas, the Biblical stories about Cain and Abel, the thieves crucified next to Jesus Christ and the parable of the lost son in relation to and as representative of Sinclair’s frame of mind, characterised by the notion of his spiritual ideal of an “authentic self”. Sinclair’s focalisation, that includes indirect representation such as metaphoric representations of his textual actual world and its people, is striking. Animal metaphors, images and paintings and dreams will here be discussed as examples. The chapter will thereafter focus on the components of the textual actual world which include central characters (Sinclair himself, Demian, Frau Eva, Pistorius and Beatrice), the social contexts consisting of “the bright world” (of which his Christian, well-ordered parental home is representative) and “the dark world” (all social contexts that contrast with his clean, orderly parental home and its moral principles), events and the external textual actual world and its spaces and objects. These components are focalised constructs and as such form part of Sinclair’s psyche, i.e. as an extension of the individual, Emil Sinclair.

Sinclair’s story begins when he is ten years old and notices that the world consists not only of his parents’ “good” “bright world”, but also of a “sinful” “dark world” that is denied within the “bright” version. Already focalising his parental home as “dishonest” with regard to his tendencies and human ones in general, he allows Franz Kromer, a neighbourhood boy, to blackmail and terrorise him because of an invented story of how he had stolen apples. This is Sinclair’s first, still ineffective, attempt to create a balance between good and evil. Once it becomes clear that a balance is unattainable through Kromer and that the power of the dark world is becoming too dominant, Max Demian appears and liberates Sinclair from the bully. Sinclair, however, does not immediately attach himself to Demian as an agent for his spiritual balance, namely an individualistic combination of good and evil. He returns to the bright world after the Kromer episode. Because Sinclair soon recognises the “dishonesty” of the bright world,
its tendency to force people to conform to its social context and to disallow people from being who they truly are, Sinclair once again returns to the dark world. This time he becomes a boastful and heavily drinking frequenter of pubs. Sinclair therefore allows the two worlds to dominate him in turn. Each time, his relationship with them affects how he focalises his textual actual world.

Likewise, his new phase of success with regard to his spiritual growth, which follows his drinking days as a hostel pupil who was on the verge of being expelled from his school, also affects his perspective of his textual actual world and his representation. On the event of seeing a girl whom he gives the name “Beatrice”, he starts focusing on true spiritual balance – instead of again allowing the bright world to dominate him. When he draws a picture of Beatrice, the features of Demian emerge from the image. Particularly through the dream of a bird emerging from an egg, symbolising spiritual liberation and rebirth, Sinclair and Demian reconnect. On his new spiritual path, a friendship with an organist, Pistorius, develops. Pistorius’s philosophy matches Demian’s, but he has a weakness for the artificiality of the social world. As a result of Sinclair’s emphasis on his spiritual progress that is in conflict with Pistorius’s preoccupations, their friendship ends. When Sinclair starts attending university, he meets Demian and his mother who live in a commune that idealises a world of honesty and loyalty to oneself. Being allowed into Frau Eva’s presence affords an indication of Sinclair’s perseverance and the success of his spiritual progress. The climax of the latter coincides with the First World War in which Demian dies, but also spiritually unites with Sinclair. Whilst dying Demian tells Sinclair that when Sinclair needs him again he should call him. He would then arrive, not physically, but spiritually.

The connection between Sinclair and Demian is similar to the spiritual connection that (actual world) people have with God through prayer. As a whole Demian is a possible world in the sense that, in the actual world, it is also plausible that spiritual balance is attained through a perspective or a philosophy characterised by loyalty to and belief in those moral principles and guidelines that are exemplified by a central figure such as Demian. This perspective and philosophy are related to the focalisation. Hesse’s book strongly presents the idea that this perspective should not be socially determined, but be as individualistic as possible. Demian is, in this sense, not only a fictional world, but also the possible world of an individual.
4.1. The fictional world as reflective of the focaliser’s mental and emotional disposition and as functioning as a possible world

4.1.1. Nünning, Bal and Ryan and the world-shaping power of subjective perspective

Sinclair’s representations do not objectively copy features of the external reality, but should be seen as a “subject-dependent construct” of his textual actual world (Nünning, 2001:209). Retrospectively, Sinclair explicitly states that when he experienced the events of his youth, it was not in terms of clear thoughts, but through feelings and strange emotions that hurt, yet filled him with pride (D, 36). As a retrospective narrator he also does not attempt to relay the events of youth “as they really are”¹³⁰, but represents them as filtered through his “feelings and strange emotions”. The remembered events as well as the social contexts, the spaces in which they take place and the characters are therefore inseparable from the focalising character’s mental disposition. Nünning (2001:218) explains that because the first-person narrator remembers what the narrated I knew, experienced, thought and felt, the character-perspective of the experiencing I is embedded in the cognitive domain of the narrating I. As such, Sinclair’s focalisation forms a representation of a specific, subjective interpretation of his textual actual world as well as of himself.¹³¹

This idea corresponds with Bal’s proposition that the focaliser’s, i.e. Sinclair’s, perspective leads to a unique or individualistic representation of the textual actual world because of his psychological mindset or “instelling” (Bal, 1990:114; cf. Bal, 1981:181-182). Ryan’s (1991:110) reference to “the mind’s involvement with external reality” echoes this concept: “Narrative semantics is rooted in an exploration of the world-making activity through which we interact with and try to shape the world we regard as actual.” The whole world of Sinclair’s fictional “memoir” is a mentally shaped version of the textual actual world that tends to be, as Nünning (2001:219) says of retrospective narrations, “highly partial, biased, or even distorted as a result of the cognitive limitations and inherent subjectivity of the human mind”. Esselborn-Krumbiegel (2004:275) points out that Sinclair alone determines the perspective of understanding by retrospectively interpreting his own fate. Sinclair’s textual actual world is

¹³⁰ Nünning’s (2001:209) characterisation of (radical) constructivism as proceeding “from the radical and somewhat counterintuitive assumption that human beings do not have access to an objective reality and that they cannot know anything that lies outside their subjective cognitive domains” is significant with regard to Demian because of the theme of individualism and the resulting individualistic outlook.

¹³¹ The novel is a “historical overview” because the narrative is retrospective. According to Nünning (2001:218) the retrospective narrator displays a wider perspective than the narrated or experiencing I because he knows the story’s outcome.
characterised by spiritual failures and successes along with concomitant inner experiences such as shock, fear and confusion related to his experience of the domination of the bright world and the dark world; as well as by drive, ambition, delight, excitement and preoccupation following his accomplishment of becoming part of Frau Eva’s world.

4.1.2. **Demian as a possible world: Reader identification and Ryan’s “minimal point of departure”**

The fictional world presents depictions of fictional people and their interactions with and reactions to social contexts, events and experienced spaces that the reader may also project as possibilities onto his own context. This becomes possible in terms of Ryan’s (1991:51) “principle of minimal departure”:

> This law … states that we reconstrue the central world of a textual universe in the same way we reconstrue the alternate possible worlds of nonfactual statements: as conforming as far as possible to our representation of AW. We will project upon these worlds everything we know about reality, and we will make only the adjustments dictated by the text.132

It may therefore seem that a possible world like *Demian* is a mimetic construct. It relates to reality, however, not as a direct representation of specific circumstances in the actual world. The fictional world as created by the mental activity of Emil Sinclair exists as a non-specific set of circumstances, elements of which are possible in various forms in the actual world133 that may have personal meaning for an actual world reader. As Bachelard (1969:xxii) says, every reader who re-reads a work that he likes, “knows that its pages concern him.” Sládek and Fořt (2009:335) point out that Doležel “refrains from a mimetic reading of literature or rather from accentuating its mimetic nature and function between fiction and reality”134 without neglecting the relation between fiction and reality. Doležel “uses the term fictional world to denote the

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132 This is also comparable to Ryan’s (1991:111) notion that the “possible worlds of a character’s domain are built out of truth-functional propositions; they are collections of facts which can be compared to the facts of the actual world”.

133 Ryan (1991:4) points out that the narrative universe of a text includes a number of subworlds that are created by the mental activity of characters. Nünning (2001:214) defines “perspective structure” as the totality of all the character perspectives and narrator perspectives as well as the patterns of relationships between them. The “subworlds” of characters like Demian, Frau Eva, Pistorius, Beatrice, but also Sinclair’s father, mother and Kromer are not independent, but exist as part of Sinclair’s world. Nünning (2001:217) points out that one of Pfister’s (1988:63) criteria for distinguishing between different types of perspective structure is hierarchy. In Demian’s case one finds “a superordinate and all-encompassing narrator-perspective” (Nünning, 2001:217; Pfister, 1988:63), namely Sinclair’s.

134 “Fictional worlds and their constituents, fictional particulars, are granted a definite ontological status, the status of nonactualized possibles” (Doležel, 1998:16).
ontological nature of a world constructed by a world of fiction” (Sládek and Fořt, 2009:335). When a reader identifies with Sinclair’s focalisation characterised by his inner emotions projected onto characters, his social context, events and spaces, Sinclair’s representation takes the form of either a realised or unrealised possibility and is relevant for the person in the actual world. The “pseudoreality that characters have for the reader of fiction is demonstrated by the natural tendency to empathize with them” (Ryan, 1991:21). Nünning (2001:210) comments that this “pseudoreality” invites the reader to project upon a fictional world everything that he knows about real persons and the factors that influence their subjective worldviews. The reader reasons about the fictional world in the same way as about the actual world (unless the text dictates otherwise, as Ryan states). The reader may therefore react emotionally to the fate of characters in a fictional world or engage intellectually with concepts that to varying degrees he could regard as either invalid or insightful and relevant to his own actual world experiences.

4.2. Emil Sinclair’s frame of mind

4.2.1. God, the devil and Abraxas: The fallacious nature of “good and evil” as social conventions, “good and evil” in individualistic terms and acknowledging evil as part of human nature

The concepts “God”, the “devil” and “Abraxas”, a Gnostic god in whom both good and evil are united, are crucial with regard to Sinclair’s focalising frame of mind as they are connected to his moral and individualistic distinction between “right” and “wrong”. In social terms, the Biblical “God” is supposed to be associated with all that is unquestionably “right” and the devil or Satan with all that is unquestionably “wrong”. However, the bright world/Christian society in Demian ascribes its transient customs, norms and values to God and what it considers as crimes, misconduct or sins to the devil. God and the devil are therefore essentially social constructs. This is the reason why Sinclair comments during the Kromer episode that he has no right to pray anymore (D, 27). This is an indication that Sinclair focalises the social context of his textual actual world as different from himself in moral terms. The members of his social context do not consider prayer in terms of having or not having the right to pray, but as their obligation. Sinclair comes to the conclusion that he does not have the right to pray because behaviour is evaluated according to social moral guidelines and, as he recognises, he does not conform to these. What is considered as either “obeying God” or “bad/evil” behaviour in the bright world is a matter of either conforming to or rebelling against social customs, norms and values. What the social context considers to be “right”, namely worshipping this artificial and reduced “God”, is, according to Demian, “wrong” because one can only move closer to what is naturally and truly
good/right by persevering in thinking and acting “authentically”\(^\text{135}\), i.e. faithfully to oneself or in terms of what is right for oneself – not in a mercenary, selfish way, but in a just, reasonable way that is appropriate for the individual.

Sinclair’s focalisation, influenced by Demian, is critical of his social context. However, Sinclair does not wholly reject “the Christian God”: not God Himself, but the bright world’s (mis)conception of God. Sinclair has deep respect for “the reality of a pious life” such as that of his parents because he recognises that it is neither undignified nor hypocritical (D, 63), despite being misguided\(^\text{136}\). But he also focalises himself as different from his fellow pupils who find believing in God ridiculous and degrading and feel that concepts like the Holy Trinity and the immaculate conception are absurd and scandalous (D, 63). Sinclair does not identify with this lack of spirituality. Nonetheless, Sinclair’s frame of mind is also influenced by Demian who is critical of society’s praising God as the creator of all biological life, yet ironically hushing up human sexual life and associating it with the devil (D, 65).\(^\text{137}\) Even more ironic is the expectation that Sinclair should become “a good son” and “a useful citizen”; yet in the European history with which the textual actual world of Demian corresponds, the male individual did not have a choice, but was obliged to risk his life for a war entered into by political powers, unconcerned with the individual as such. The social context reduces the human being’s individuality to a single unit forced to participate in war. A relevant possible world implication could include the impossibility that a “moral” social context could be successful with regard to emulating the righteousness of God. Leading a perfectly virtuous life is impossible because it contrasts with true human nature. The results of such an ideal could include harmful thoughts, beliefs, acts and events like the War, that could be mistakenly ascribed to God’s will, but that are, in fact, consequences of human failings. This critical stance characterises Sinclair’s focalisation of his social context.

\(^{135}\) This is the central concept in Demian. Pistorius asserts that one may not fear anything and may not regard anything that the soul wishes within oneself as forbidden (D, 116) while Frau Eva says that everyone should become himself (D, 150)

\(^{136}\) It is misguided in the sense that it is not for the sake of his God, but for social reasons. This is reminiscent of Frankl’s (1964:102) argument that moral behaviour is a side-effect of the decision to behave morally for the sake of a cause to which one commits oneself, or for a person whom one loves, or for the sake of one’s God. Frankl (1964:102) explains that if one actually did behave morally for the purpose of “having a good conscience” – which one can notice in Demian, in terms of social expectations – one “would become a Pharisee and cease to be a truly moral person. I think that even the saints did not care for anything other than simply to serve God, and I doubt that they ever had it in mind to become saints.”

\(^{137}\) Demian’s argument implies that society does not distinguish between natural and irresponsible and/or criminal sexual behaviour. All forms of sex are indiscriminately “attributed to the devil” (D, 65).
Abraxas is neither a representation or an interpretation of who and what the true God/the real Supreme Being is. Rather, Abraxas is a replacement for the socially determined Christian God. Like the latter it is a deified philosophy, but it entails acknowledging that both “good” (represented by God) and “evil” (represented by the devil) are part of true/natural human nature. This is uniquely manifested in every individual so that recognising this is an important step on the “path to oneself”. Baumann (1989:63) describes Abraxas as “ein Gott der Selbsterkenntnis” [“a god of self-awareness”]. The nature of Abraxas and human nature consist not only of the most holy, but also the most abominable, deep guilt and most tender innocence (D, 99), “all gods and devils” (D, 110), etcetera.  

It is significant with regard to Sinclair’s frame of mind that Demian says:

“Ich habe nichts dagegen, daß man diesen Gott Jehova verehrt, nicht das mindeste. Aber ich meine, wir sollen alles verehren und heilig halten, die ganze Welt, nicht bloß diese künstlich abgetrennte, offizielle Hälfte! Also müssen wir dann neben dem Gottesdienst auch einen Teufelsdienst haben …” (D, 66). [“I have no objection to worshiping [sic] this God Jehova, far from it. But I mean we ought to consider everything sacred, the entire world, not merely this artificially separated half! Thus alongside the divine service we should also have a service for the devil” (DT, 52).]

For average conservative Christians, like Sinclair’s parents, the notion of God as a unification of good and evil would be bizarre, blasphemous and evil in itself. However, such a misconception would place Abraxas on the level of God Himself; yet the artificial social Christian God is also placed on the same level as God Himself. Here one can observe the concept of minimal departure. In the light of the biblical creation history, human beings resemble God, but the serious misconception that Christians can be as unblemished as God Himself when acting in God’s Name has repeatedly recurred during the past 2000 years. Demian therefore argues that

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139 It is ironic that worshipping a misconception of God, although motivated by an honest ambition to be truly virtuous, amounts to disobeying God’s commandment that no other god but Him should be worshipped (Exodus, 20:3).

140 Cf. Genesis 1:26-27.

141 Political and church histories have shown that either the inability or the reluctance to distinguish between what is truly right and wrong because of personal or/and collective ambitions has led to corrupt and violent actions justified by what is supposed to be noble. Apart from manifestations such as race and gender – or simply general personal oppression in Christian churches through fire and brimstone sermons and false sermonising based on ignorant or intentional incorrect or only partly correct interpretations of biblical content – one also thinks of historical atrocities committed in the name of Christianity. Notorious examples are the atrocities during the Inquisitions, Queen Mary's execution of Protestants, the violence between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants in Northern Ireland, etc. In the context of Demian, it is significant that
“God” as a self-projection of Christian social contexts is “nicht das, was er doch eigentlich vorstellen soll” (D, 65) [“not what he purports to represent” (DT, 52)]. The meaning of “worshipping Satan” is less theatrical and controversial than a likely misunderstanding that it would entail occult rituals and/or other practices that condone bizarre criminal activities. It implies, rather, that every human being should acknowledge evil as part of his spiritual composition. This implication is part of Sinclair’s process of his spiritual growth that determines his critical focalisation of his social context, which regards itself too often as self-righteous.

Demian asserts that everyone must establish for himself what is allowed and wrong or forbidden for himself (D, 68). Social judgements may support someone’s actions even though they may be truly evil. As Demian remarks: “’Man kann niemals etwas Verbotenes tun and kann ein großes Schuft dabei sein’” (D, 68). [“It’s possible for one never to transgress a single law and still be a bastard” (DT, 54).] Sinclair cannot distinguish between what is “permitted” and “forbidden” since he initially thinks in social terms, not in individualistic spiritual terms that do not necessarily match social judgements. Sinclair’s moral dilemma as regards Demian’s notion is that everything can be permissible. As an example (D, 116) Sinclair mentions murder with the motivation of hating someone and expresses his incomprehension regarding the contradiction that one could be a murderer and present oneself as God’s favourite (D, 35). Yet, respect for the “evil Cain” does not imply free licence to indulge in any and all kinds of antisocial behaviour. “Everything”, for instance crimes like killing or raping girls (D, 67), is certainly not permissible. Rather the spirit of Abraxas denotes the consent to do anything that is a true calling even if it would defy the norms and values of the individual’s social context.

The “inclusion of evil” is, in fact, important to the Christian principle of love.142 “Treating one’s impulses with respect and love” (D, 116) as Pistorius advises, for example, by reflecting on rather than acting on impulses, leads to self-knowledge that is beneficial to both the individual and his fellow human being. The desire to kill someone may arise because an aspect of the person in question may represent something that one detests within oneself (D, 117). The implication is that considering the impulse could lead to an understanding of one’s own inner life. If it is not contemplated, it could remain repressed and lead to erroneous conclusions and

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142 Matthew 22:37 & 39: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. … And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” In addition, 1 John 4:7-8 reflects acknowledging or worshipping God, as a fusion of loving one’s fellow human beings and the individual’s identity, as part of God: “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”
actions. For example, the cause of the impulse could be regarded as external to oneself and the impulse/reaction could be rationalised as righteous. Sinclair focalises his social context as obtuse, with regard to sensing and/or recognising that every individual should strive towards an understanding of his individual inner/spiritual life. He senses this imperceptiveness of his social context as a young child and develops a more sophisticated understanding. Sinclair’s understanding could be described in terms of Viktor Frankl’s (1964:110) view that an individual should have a unique or “specific vocation or mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment which demands fulfillment.” If this vocation or mission in life is truly appropriate for the individual, nobody may denounce those actions of the individual that serve this purpose.

4.2.2. Cain as the individualist and Abel as the conformist

The story of Cain and Abel also relates to the individual’s relationship with the social Christian God, namely the distinction between what is right and wrong in social and individualistic terms. The standard Christian interpretation of Cain is that of a sinful and wicked man, the first murderer, and of Abel as honourable and a victim.143 The nature of the Christian social context in *Demian* that identifies itself with Abel, juxtaposed with Sinclair who identifies himself with Cain, is that its adherents cannot grow spiritually because they do not recognise that Cain also belongs to their innate composition. In the Christian context of *Demian* it is a moral convention and obligation to denounce Cain and prefer Abel as a virtuous figure because it would otherwise imply that “God had made a mistake” so that the biblical God “is not the right and the only one, but a false one” (D, 50). In the context of Sinclair’s “spiritual awakening” it is, however, not the biblical God that is a false deity, but the Christian society’s misinterpretation of Him. Doubting the nature of this Christian God as understood in the traditional and conformist Christian tradition amounts to the offensive and dangerous “acknowledgment of the devil”. This is unimaginable to the average conservative middle-class Christian, like Sinclair’s father. However, if unacknowledged the devil poses a greater threat.144

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143 The story of Cain and Abel in the Old Testament (Genesis 4:1-17) does include enough clues for one to associate Cain with evil and Abel with honour, but as Horowitz (1980:174) points out, the meaning of the Cain and Abel story in *Demian* (and in Miguel de Unamuno’s *Abel Sánchez*) transcends “the tantalisingly brief biblical account”. In the context of Hesse’s book one must read Demian and Sinclair as Cain types in the sense that they rebel against the social Christian God, i.e. the reduced concept of God and Abel as representative of social obedience.

144 Babcock (1983:98) argues that repression of evil is a result of the attempt to be God, “the maximum expression of good” (à la Preston Harold) which “leads to the tragedy and violence of those suffering the Messianic complex to the extreme. Self-righteousness is a denial of our own Shadow, the ‘dark brother being’ …”. This is definitely the case in *Demian*, as a possible world too. However, this chapter argues that what good and evil are considered to be, is dependent on social and individualistic perspectives. Therefore, in the world of *Demian* evil cannot be regarded as “a necessary force in life” that one should try to control by attempting to reduce it to its “minimum expression” (à la Harold), which
Cain and the thieves crucified next to Jesus Christ, typical symbolic figures of evil, are nonetheless according to Hong (2009:31) “right” in the Nietzschean sense, specifically as symbolic figures of the good, of self-realisation\(^{145}\), who willingly and courageously go their own way. Emil’s realisation that he, too, bears the mark of Cain emerges from Demian’s re-reading the Cain and Abel story sceptically, undermining the premises of the story as they are traditionally conceived (Solbach, 2009:91). Demian represents Cain as different in the sense that he possesses courage and character: that his sign was spirit, boldness and fearlessness (D, 34).\(^{146}\) Demian therefore presents the Cain and Abel story to Sinclair as a possible world. Sinclair also compares his world to that of the world of the biblical story in sensing “the mark of Cain on his forehead” when he bravely (figuratively) “kills” Pistorius, i.e. ends his relationship with him. Pistorius is an Abel figure in the context of Sinclair’s spiritual growth. He is Sinclair’s “brother” in a spiritual sense. In theory he aspires to the same ideal of “arriving at oneself”, whether it is as a poet, a madman, a prophet or a criminal (D, 131). Yet, Pistorius does what Demian detests by talking too much and being too didactic and neglecting what is “lebenswichtig”\(^{147}\) (D, 128-129) [“of vital importance” (DT, 108)]. Romantically and regressively he idealises becoming a priest for the new religion: this is ultimately a “self-deceiving” social role, to the detriment of his true calling or duty (“Amt”) (D, 131) which Sinclair suspects to be leading people to themselves (D, 131).\(^{148}\)

4.2.3. The parable of the lost son and the thieves crucified next to Jesus Christ: Possible authentic and inauthentic selves

The lost son and the repentant thief crucified next to Jesus Christ are figures who acquiesce to the social prescription and pressure to conform. The unrepentant thief, on the other hand, changes evil into good: “Craftiness, expressed at the minimum, becomes ingenuity. Lust, in its minimum expression, becomes the warmth of tender passion”. The “self-control” that this implies is still too evocative of the social expectation for conformance.

\(^{145}\) Frankl (1964:112) points out that self-actualisation cannot be the aim, the end in itself, but one can only actualise oneself to the extent to which one commits oneself to the fulfilment of one’s life’s meaning. Self-actualisation is, according to Frankl (1964:113,132), a side-effect of self-transcendence, in order to rise above biological, psychological or sociological conditions. In Sinclair’s case it is the ability to choose and liberate himself from social prescriptions and his own psychological restrictions in order to be an “honest” human being, i.e. an individual who does not echo his social context’s sentiments merely because this is what is expected of him.

\(^{146}\) Demian’s re-reading is incidentally a form of focusing on (Doctorow’s) lingual power of freedom, i.e. the aspects of the story that can be transposed onto other actual world contexts, instead of centring his attention on the power of the regime, i.e. what historically really/factually happened. Demian uses the story basically as a metaphor for the relationship of Sinclair and others with their social context.

\(^{147}\) Demian disapproves of Sinclair’s precocious and pompous talk and feels that “clever talk” has no value whatsoever: “Man kommt nur von sich selber weg. Von sich selber weghkommen ist Sünde” (D, 69). [“All you do in the process is lose yourself. And to lose yourself is a sin” (DT, 55).]

\(^{148}\) To Frau Eva’s community every denomination and doctrine appeared in advance as dead and useless because of the requirement that it would require conformance and disregard the centre of the principle that everyone should become himself (D, 150).
displays the Cain-like courage to be himself. The traditional moral maxim of the parable of the lost son is that “coming to one’s senses” is praiseworthy. However, even as a young child Sinclair intuitively regarded it differently. He sometimes felt that it was a pity that the lost son had to do penance and was found again (D, 13). This instinct agrees with Sinclair’s retrospective narration. It might have been a pity because his social mistakes and hardships – as in Sinclair’s spiritual journey – were not part of a larger process of self-actualisation, since the lost son realised that life on his own was spiritually inauthentic or not the real path towards himself. An alternative sad possibility is that the lost son gave up an authentic life because the suffering of the path towards his true self was too much to bear and his conviction to attach himself to an authentic life too little. The implication is therefore that the son was destined for a “dishonest” life.

These possible meanings of the parable of the lost son are similar to Demian’s disapproval of the penitent thief and his admiration for the impenitent one crucified alongside Jesus Christ. Demian asserts that the second thief has character because he does not detach himself from the devil in his last moments (D, 64). The “devil” here is, however, a social construct. The unrepentant thief therefore honestly acknowledges who and what he is by refusing to repent. His “criminal” life might have been unacceptable in social terms, but by not repenting he declares, if only to himself, that his life and what he has done was necessary, had validity and was not evil. The other criminal commits himself to dishonest individuality inconsistent with his life. Alternatively, if his conversion was real, it would have been tragic that his whole life was not only wrong in social terms, but also spiritually misdirected.

To summarise: The concept “God” in Demian signifies the “Christian God” or the social misinterpretation of the actual God. Obeying the Christian God, i.e. adhering to socially determined moral codes, is spiritually restrictive in the sense that it encourages a human being to become a social being and discourages him from becoming an individual. Either inadvertently or intentionally, it could also lead to real evil masked as Christian decency. In terms of the concept of Abraxas, true evil is denying one’s true nature and calling – when it contradicts transient social codes too. Sinclair’s spiritual success is finally the skill to be receptive to doing what is appropriate for him as an individual. Focalisation of himself, other characters, his social context, events and spaces takes place against the background of the concepts “God”, “the devil” and “Abraxas” and the biblical stories of Cain and Abel, the lost son and the thieves crucified next to Jesus Christ: all these also represent the confusion between what is “good/right” and “evil/wrong”.

Chapter 4: Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jungend: A fictional world as created by and as an extension of the individual, Emil Sinclair
4.3. Metaphoric representations: Instances of Sinclair’s indirect and subjective focalisation

Animal metaphors, images, paintings and dreams have been selected as valuable examples of Sinclair’s focalisation through indirect means. They are, however, not the only ones. A more exclusive and inevitably extensive focus on this subject would also have to include symbols, visions, rituals, Frau Eva’s fairy tales, the concepts of life and death and shadows. For Singh (2006:120) dreams and visions wield a normative and constitutive power that changes the reality of the narrative space. Not only dreams and visions, but also all indirect means of representation in Demian certainly have this effect. For example, a significant symbol is the sparrow hawk. Sinclair dreams that Demian encourages him to eat it. Once swallowed, Sinclair realises that the bird is still alive and is starting to devour him from the inside. His eating the bird signifies unification, a pseudo-Holy Communion, while the bird’s eating Sinclair signifies renewal and how frightening it is to cast off one’s old self. Hsia (1981:201) compares this bird to “Pöng”, the symbol of the highest, Taostic human being who is independent of all that is external because he knows how to integrate his inner being with nature and to be moved by elemental forces. Sinclair finds rituals like evening devotions and accepting chocolate from his mother, as comforting acts, intolerable because they are inconsistent with his spiritual state. Frau Eva tells Sinclair a story to illustrate to him that he must believe in his wishes (for his idealised spiritual state), and not regret them. A boy who adored a star wanted to be united with it, but once he had jumped up to it he doubted the feasibility of his wish, which caused him to fall. If he had believed that his wish was possible, he would have flown to the star and been united with it (D, 152-153). The concepts “life” and “death” are also associated with spiritual transition. For example, Sinclair is required to “kill” the “Abel” within himself. He has to rid himself of the influence of a one-sided, illusory bright world. Baumann (1997a:335-336; cf. 1989:30-45) refers to the shadow as a Jungian concept that through Kromer becomes a general symbol of all that is morally questionable. Shadows mostly denote a negative spiritual reality in terms of what is wrong for the individual. When Sinclair becomes aware of the imminent war, he declares that a shadow has fallen over everyone (D, 159): this image presents not only the idea of a concrete universal catastrophe, but also the spiritual squalor that has brought it about.

4.3.1. Animal metaphors signifying individuality, the ignorant masses and human traits

The use of animal metaphors is a noteworthy manner in which Sinclair focalises people at times, denoting individuality and spiritual development. Pistorius helps Sinclair to gain courage and self-respect by acknowledging the value of his dreams, fantasies and thoughts (D, 113), i.e. the
manner in which he interprets the textual actual world and its people from his own subjective viewpoint. By employing an animal metaphor he encourages Sinclair to accept his own innate nature and not to moralistically compare himself to others, because doing so weakens the focus on his own spiritual development:

“Sie dürfen sich nicht mit andern vergleichen, und wenn die Natur Sie zur Fledermaus geschaffen hat, dürfen Sie sich nicht zum Vogel Strauß machen wollen. Sie halten sich manchmal für sonderbar, daß Sie andere Wege gehen als die meisten. Das müssen Sie verlernen” (D, 113). [“You can’t compare yourself with others: if Nature has made you a bat you shouldn’t try to be an ostrich. You consider yourself odd at times, you accuse yourself of taking a road different from most people. You have to unlearn that” (DT, 94-95).]

Both pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences, based on the fact that Sinclair is “a bat” conscious of the difference between him and other “creatures”, occur in social terms that do not advance his spiritual growth. Because of his complicated inner life, he feels detached from his peers who are, by implication, more superficial in their approach to life. When Sinclair is proud, he considers himself to be superior because he regards himself as a genius, but when he perceives himself as conceited, he becomes depressed and is humbled because it seems that he is crazy (D, 113). He is also an outsider because he cannot participate in the joys and life (D, 113) of his peers. He should therefore acquire the skill to accept that he is “a bat” and ignore socially aligned evaluations of the advantages and disadvantages of being “a bat” instead of being a different kind of “creature”, for example, “an ostrich”.

Most animal metaphors, however, imply that one is “not human” or perhaps “without a soul” if one is not spiritually developed. Pistorius makes an important point in observing that there is a major difference between whether people carry the world in them and whether they also know it (D, 110). The awareness of the world, i.e. the realisation that human nature is multi-faceted is, according to Pistorius, what makes one human:

“Sie werden doch wohl nicht alle die Zweibeiner, die da auf der Straße laufen, für Menschen halten, bloß weil sie aufrecht gehen und ihre Jungen neun Monate tragen? Sie sehen doch, wie viele von ihnen Fische oder Schafe, Würmer oder Egel sind, wie viele Ameisen, wie viele Bienen!” (D, 110). [“You wouldn’t consider all the bipeds you pass on the street as human beings simply because they walk upright and carry their young in their bellies for nine months! It is obvious how many of them are fish
or sheep, worms or angels [sic] 149, how many are ants, how many are bees!” (DT, 92).]

There are also recurring references to the social world as a “herd” in order to comment on people as lacking in individuality. For example, those who do not strive towards “spiritual awakening” search for happiness by aligning their opinions, ideals and duties, their life and happiness closer with the “herd” (D, 148). The implication is that they are as ignorant as, and group together like, cattle. Figurative adjectives with which human traits can be associated are (besides metaphoric animals like fish, sheep, ants and bees which connote “lacking individuality”) “slimy” like worms (being despicable/false), and “parasitic” like leeches (being dependent on or misusing people). According to Pistorius, people who resemble these creatures lack understanding of the nature located within themselves.

4.3.2. Images and paintings: The sparrow hawk, Demian and the bird emerging from the egg as representative of spiritual freedom

The symbolism of the sparrow hawk is significant with regard to Sinclair’s spiritual awakening. Demian brings it to Sinclair’s attention at the beginning of their acquaintance. It appears on a coat of arms above their house door. Sinclair was hardly conscious of this and was astonished that Demian seemed to know his family’s house better than he did (D, 32). On another occasion during Sinclair’s childhood, Demian again shows his interest in the bird long after the Kromer episode when he stands in front of the house, drawing it (D, 55). This action is not a coincidence detached from Sinclair. A meaningful image connected with the sparrow hawk is what Demian looked like while drawing the bird, which Sinclair describes in detail (D, 55). Sinclair is intensely aware of Demian’s sophisticated appearance: it is an external image and personification of Sinclair’s inner ambitions. 150 As with the other times when Demian appears in Sinclair’s life, his standing in front of the Sinclair residence, especially in association with the image of the sparrow hawk, is a response to Emil’s spiritual needs.

When Sinclair sends a picture of the bird to Demian, he receives an interpretation back from him in the form of a poetic code for his spiritual needs: “‘Der Vogel kämpft sich aus dem Ei. Das Ei

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149 “Egel” refer to “leeches”, not “angels”.

150 Demian seems to him like a researcher and an artist. He apparently possesses a strong will, is strangely bright and cool with knowing eyes. He is comfortable and elegant while his attention appears to be passionate. He also looks genderless and ageless, like animals, spirit, a picture, trees and stars: this accords him the quality of not being human, but a mixture of both earthly and divine elements (D, 55-56).
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4.3.3. Dreams signifying spiritual balance and imbalance

As a focalising technique dreams in Demian are significant because, owing to their individualistic and subjective nature, their meaningfulness is removed from Doctorow’s “power of the regime”, i.e. being factually unreliable. Through his dreams Sinclair focalises subject matter and ambiances that are part of the “deliberate” and “conscious” content represented by the retrospective narrator.

The first dream following Sinclair’s initial involvement with Kromer is a blissful one of his family and himself. His sisters are dressed in white and they are all on a boat enveloped by the peace and light of a holiday (D, 25). This dream is preceded and followed by thoughts of Kromer before he falls asleep and when he wakes up. His consciousness and subconsciousness are at odds with each other in that the unconscious produces an unrealistic ideal of ease – of being part of the bright world. This is opposed to the reality of the presence of Kromer and the dark world, which is a result of Sinclair’s instinctive and still unknowing urge to detach himself from the bright world and search for a spiritual balance.

Sinclair also dreams that he is required to perform tasks for Kromer that are a continuation of real tasks and forms of torture: an indication that his conscious overwhelms his unconscious
through his preoccupation with Kromer. This preoccupation literally leads to physical and mental illness. The intensity of the dreams increases to the extent that he dreams that he becomes totally enslaved, is humiliated and forced to kill his father (D, 38). The notion of murder here conveys a double meaning. When Kromer commands the murder in Sinclair’s dream, Sinclair becomes conscious of his reverence for the bright world; that is to say he reacts against the dark world. It is an indication that what the latter expects of him is not appropriate for him. It is also symbolic of a spiritual removal of what his father stands for. Despite his intuition that the bright world cannot save him, at this stage he opts for it as his spiritual solution. Sinclair finally does “remove” his father and his family, not literally and in compliance with the dark world, but figuratively in accord with his independent spiritual life.

A dream in which Demian replaces Kromer fills him with delight and fear (D, 38). Kromer has been Sinclair’s “daemon” up to this point. This dream is a sign of a transition which implies that Sinclair would also suffer once Demian becomes his daemon and that he would also suffer ill-treatment and violations, yet of a different kind from those of Kromer which cause agony and aversion (D, 38). He would be torn away from the superficial comfort of conforming to the bright world, to become spiritually empowered. These dreams are all expressions of his spiritual imbalance.

Related to his spiritual equilibrium is Sinclair’s dream that he can fly and is able to regulate his flight by breathing. Pistorius explains that this regulation through breath is a natural phenomenon, by comparing it to a kind of lung or balancing organ (D, 112). He points out that it is a feeling of being connected with the roots of every kind of power, but that one soon feels afraid and people avoid it because it is so dangerous (D, 111). The metaphor of flying associated with the idea of freedom is contrasted with people, the “herd”, preferring to stay on the sidewalk and living according to social rules (D, 111) or normative prescriptions.

Sinclair’s dreaming that the sparrow hawk in a storm disappears in the clouds, also furnishes a symbolic representation of the difference between his spirituality and that of his social context’s spiritual chaos:

Ich ging und lief von Haus und Stadt hinweg gegen die Berge, der schräge dünne Regen kam mir entgegen ... der Wind formte in wenigen Sekunden aus dem Gelben und dem Blauen ein Bild, einen riesengroßen Vogel, der sich aus blauem Wirrwarr losriß ... (D, 157). [I half walked, half ran from the house and the town, toward the mountains. The fine rain slanted into my face ... In a few seconds the
wind had fashioned a shape out of this yellow and blue-gray mass, a gigantic bird that tore itself free of the steel-blue chaos … (DT, 133-134).]

The storm refers to the looming War. Sinclair’s soul, represented by the sparrow hawk, however, manages to break away from the spiritual confusion of the War.

Metaphoric images like the animal metaphors, images, paintings and dreams are clarifying or explanatory in the retrospective narrator’s account. Sinclair’s aim is to understand himself as an example of human nature (cf. D, 9). The metaphors that are provided to him by Demian and Pistorius, and which emerge from his own consciousness as well as subconsciousness, are materialisations of his focalisation determined by his wish to understand and being able to distinguish between spiritual immaturity or oblivion and spiritual maturity or realisation and awareness. He therefore also focalises himself, other characters, his social context, events and spaces in terms of the meanings of the dreams that he includes in his account.

4.4. The fictional world: A composition of a world as a self-representation

This section will consider Demian, Frau Eva, Pistorius and Beatrice in order to argue that characters in the fictional world are not independent textual constructs, but reflections of Sinclair’s subjective disposition. However, all the characters, like Franz Kromer, Knauer, Sinclair’s parents, Beck (that have already been and are referred to in relation to the characters discussed here) exclusively function in relation to Sinclair’s spiritual disposition. In other words, they are results of Sinclair’s focalisation determined by his subjective perspective.

4.4.1. Characters: Sinclair and Demian, Frau Eva, Pistorius and Beatrice as manifestations of Sinclair’s focalisation because of his spiritual quest

4.4.1.1. Sinclair, his crossroads, turbulent emotional life and his spiritual self-fulfilment as his fate

Sinclair focalises himself in various roles that “classify” him as either part of the respectable Christian social context or as a “lost son”. He recurrently finds himself at a crossroads. Because he initially thinks in terms of what is “right” and “wrong” according to the Christian social context, his choices are characterised as either “for” or “against” the middle-class social context.
and its norms and values. In this sense he remains spiritually a social being. Once he allows Beatrice, Demian, Pistorius and Frau Eva to influence his life, he becomes spiritually individualistic instead of social.

The chronological succession of his roles begins with his being the son of a decent and pious middle-class family belonging to the bright world. Instead of remaining in their bright world, he refrains from confessing his behaviour and the resulting events to his parents and allows himself to become the victim of Kromer. Although he clearly suffers, this victimisation is not against his own will because it is an attempt to shake off a spiritually limiting social identity, albeit ineffectively. He “chooses” to remain victimised for quite some time because his intuition dictates to him that to return to the bright world would be dishonest with regard to his “dark tendencies”. When the dark world threatens to become totally overpowering, when Kromer requests Sinclair’s sister’s presence and Sinclair dreams that he is forced to kill his father, Sinclair becomes “liberated” by Demian.

However, this is not a genuine liberation. By choosing to become a conformist after Demian convinces Kromer to stay away from Sinclair, he remains a “social being” in a spiritual sense. He finds himself at another crossroads where he chooses to become a devotee of the bright world instead of becoming a follower of Demian who could then have assisted Sinclair towards a balanced spiritual condition. His spontaneous reaction once Demian has liberated him is one of indifference (D, 47-48). He stops to acknowledge Demian because the attraction of the bright world, after the traumatic suffering due to Kromer’s abuse of him, is overwhelming. Finally confessing to his parents creates the illusion that he has been saved, but although his return to the bright world is initially a more soothing experience, he merely moves from one spiritual imprisonment to another: “Von äußerem und innerem Druck befreit, flüchtet Sinclair zurück in die Geborgenheit und Harmonie seines Elternhauses. Dies ist jedoch keine Rückkehr in den Stand kindlicher Unschuld …” (Bansal, 1992:96). [“Liberated from external and internal pressure, Sinclair flees back to the security and harmony of his parental home. This is, however, not a return to the condition of childlike innocence.”] Only Demian is truly able to liberate Sinclair, provided that Sinclair acknowledges him. This is why Sinclair admits that he should not have confessed to his parents, but to Demian (D, 49). But, as Bansal (1992:96) observes, he

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151 For example, Sinclair’s parents wish him to meet their expectations by emulating their orderly lifestyle: “Die Frage war noch immer, ob mit der Zeit aus mir ein guter Sohn und brauchbarer Bürger werden könne, oder ob meine Natur auf andere Wege hindränge” (D, 73). [“The question remained: was I eventually to become a good son and useful citizen or did my nature point in an altogether different direction” (DT, 58).]
is not mature enough to gain practical value from his early insights into the duality of good and evil.

Because of the dishonesty or pretence of this social identity, Sinclair again takes an incorrect path by “regressing” into the dark world. He becomes a boastful drunkard. This naïve “antisocial” response appears to denote disloyalty as an attempt to become liberated from the spiritual limitation of his social identity. However, this is ironically just the acquisition of another kind of social identity.

At the subsequent crossroads Sinclair for the first time chooses a genuine course towards individualistic spirituality, i.e. adopting an attitude not determined by his social context, but by himself. He becomes self-possessed and impervious to mockery, contentedly excludes all that is dark and ugly and strives towards purity, nobility and dignity with regard to eating, drinking, language, clothing and walking. He becomes serious and self-disciplined (D, 85). However, his new life differs from the bright world in the sense that it is not someone else’s invention, but his own:

Immerhin war diese jetzige “lichte Welt” einigermaßen meine eigene Schöpfung; es war nicht ein Zurückfliehen und Unterkriechen zur Mutter und verantwortungslosen Geborgenheit, es war ein neuer, von mir selbst erfundener und geforderter Dienst, mit Verantwortlichkeit und Selbstzucht (D, 84-85). [And, furthermore, this present “world of light” was to some extent my own creation; it was no longer an escape, no crawling back to mother and the safety of irresponsibility; it was a new duty, one I had invented and desired on my own, with responsibility and self-control (DT, 69).]

Beatrice, Demian, Pistorius and Frau Eva and that for which they stand become vehicles for his spiritual quest after his drinking days: they replace his parents, central exponents of the bright world, and their principles. His experiences of the effects of the stages of his life lead Sinclair to

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152 Sinclair is naïve in the sense that he knows that he cannot remain in the bright world, but does not understand what else to do: “Ich tat, was ich mußte, weil ich sonst durchaus nicht wüste, was mit mir beginnen” (D, 80). “[I simply did what I had to do, because I had no idea what to do with myself otherwise” (DT, 65).] Furthermore, it is clear that the identity of a hardened “bon vivant” is not appropriate for him as an individual because whilst his companions acted on their boasting and paid visits to girls, he experienced the middle-class girls as wonderful and pure dreams, a thousand times too good and pure for him. He also bashfully avoids Mrs. Jaggelt’s shop because of her reputation as a promiscuous woman (D, 80; cf. Roney, 1999:16).

153 His regained self-control corresponds with the expectations of the bright world, and his relationship with the social world of his parents and school is normalised. His father starts to write to him again without reproaches and threats (D,94). It is, however, a coincidence that social prescriptions and what is appropriate for him at that stage are in agreement. After having become aware of Beatrice he is far more individualistic and less social than during the occasions when his father disapproved of his behaviour.
focalise himself as a soulmate of Novalis on the basis that he can identify himself with the aphorism: “‘Schicksal und Gemüt sind Namen eines Begriffs’” (D, 89) [“Fate and temperament are two words for one and the same concept” (DT, 72)]. Sinclair therefore focalises himself in terms of his disposition and how he focalises the bright world. Against this background the fictional world becomes everything that he includes in the recounting of his path towards his spiritual self-fulfilment.

4.4.1.2. Demian as Sinclair’s embodied daemon and Frau Eva as the personification of his fate

It is significant that the title of a book, mainly about the character Emil Sinclair, is the name of another character. As Singh (2006:118) explains, the title points, on the one hand, to the friendship motif and, on the other, to the fundamental dialectically opposing combinations of the narrative. The title indicates the importance of Demian’s performing a specific role in his life, namely that of a “daemon”, characterised by the harmony of the opposing forces of good and bad, that leads Sinclair towards his fate or spiritual self-fulfilment. Stelzig (1997:317) describes Demian as a mixture of a Socratic daimon, Christian consciousness, Jungian “shadow” and Nietzschean Übermensch. The term “daemon” functions well as an inclusive or umbrella term for the power and accountability of the individual in contributing to his own fate. Fletcher (1970:42-43) explains that the word “daemon” derives from the Greek verb daiomai, meaning “to distribute” or “to divide”. It is therefore Sinclair who determines his own fate through his choices, not the external (fictional) human being Demian. Demian’s presence and influence in Sinclair’s life as well as Sinclair’s acceptance and commitment to Demian’s principles contribute to “distributing” Sinclair’s destiny. Demian is, in this sense, “superhuman”, “supernatural” or “godlike” (cf. Fletcher, 1970:43).

The “distribution of fate” is dependent on whom or what one gives godlike status to, in one’s life. Fletcher (1970:40-41) explains that the allegorical character is a daemon if he is “obsessed with only one idea” and appears “to be controlled by some foreign force, something outside the sphere of his own ego”. Sinclair is at times “obsessed” with either the bright world or the dark world as “daemons” that lead to outcomes which do not match the requirements for a balanced inner life. Both the bright world (represented by Sinclair’s parents) and the dark world (represented by Kromer and Beck who seduce him into the world of pubs) could be regarded as destructive Satanic daemons, seeking power through diabolical agencies, whilst Beatrice, Pistorius, Knauer and Frau Eva (who are all related to Demian) are constructive or “messianic” daemonic forces who lead him to a psychological equilibrium (cf. Fletcher, 1970:337). Sinclair steadily absorbs Beatrice and Demian into himself so that their distinctiveness becomes
imperceptible because they turn into integral parts of Sinclair’s individuality. Looking at one of his own paintings, Sinclair focalises Demian and Beatrice as entities that have dissolved into himself:

Und allmählich kam mir ein Gefühl, daß das nicht Beatrice und nicht Demian sei, sondern – ich selbst. Das Bild glich mir nicht – das sollte es auch nicht, fühlte ich – aber es war das, was mein Leben ausmachte, es war mein Inneres, mein Schicksal oder mein Dämon (D, 88). [... I began to sense that this was neither Beatrice nor Demian but myself. Not that the picture resembled me – I did not feel that it should – but it was what determined my life, it was my inner self, my fate or my daemon (DT, 72).]

Only when Sinclair begins to allow Demian to influence him, through Beatrice and Pistorius as well, does he begin to actualise his “archetypal self”, “the Sinclair he wants to become, is supposed to become”, which is represented according to Tusken (1998:87) by Demian.

Like her son Demian, Frau Eva is also a physical manifestation of truth regarding Sinclair’s appropriate spiritual state or Sinclair’s fate. Sinclair dreams that Frau Eva and he are stars, mutually attracted to one another. They remain together and circle each other for all time (D, 155). When Sinclair tells her the dream, she responds that he should make it true: in other words, she encourages him to pursue truly becoming himself.

Through her name Frau Eva is also connected to the biblical mother of the human race who was the first person to be disobedient. She is in this sense Sinclair’s, as well as the human race’s, true spiritual mother, god, daemon and embodied “Abraxas principle” (good and bad united). Furthermore, as Demian’s mother she is also symbolic of the spiritual renewal that he associates with life whilst the bright world is associated with stagnation:


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154 According to Solbach (2009:104) Frau Eva is “introduced with rude directness as the real-life incarnation of the great ritual dream. In a chiaroscuro somewhere between reality and the narrator’s fantasy, she achieves an indecipherable double-existence as a widowed single mother with a rather eccentric son, a sorceress murmuring mysterious incantations, and, simultaneously, in a personal union, goddess of a mystical secret cult of which she is the chief priestess.”
creating and creative, regenerative and power of the female awakening towards new life (not coincidentally compared to nature and art) in the narration is the key point of the (re)birth of the individual and, in a transferred sense, of humanity as a whole.]

Frau Eva comprises a unity of various aspects, both physical and incorporeal, not only external to Sinclair but also, like Beatrice and Demian, a catalyst “dissolving into” Sinclair. Sinclair also sometimes believes that she is just a symbol of his psychological interior (D, 154). However, “allmählich schoben sich sinnliche und unsinnliche Liebe, Wirklichkeit und Symbol übereinander” (D, 154). [“And little by little, sensual and spiritual love, reality and symbol began to overlap” (DT, 131).] Her shape could adopt everything that was important and relevant with regard to his self-fulfilment (or his “fate”) to Sinclair and she was able to transform herself into every one of his thoughts and his thoughts into her (D, 154). Demian and Frau Eva stand in an all-encompassing relation to the whole fictional world, i.e. to its every feature and detail, because they are so central with regard to Sinclair’s spiritual development.

4.4.1.3. Pistorius as a spiritual brother of Sinclair: A case of “birds of a feather flock together”

Pistorius is part of the fictional world as a result of the selection effected by Sinclair’s focalisation, because both rebel against their social context. The reason for his presence in the fictional world is that Sinclair and Pistorius are drawn to each other. They are similar with regard to their interests and also their beliefs regarding spirituality. As a social being Pistorius is a non-conformist. Having become somewhat crazy and blundering, he has consequently terminated his theological studies that require him to live with his disapproving parents (D, 106). His identity is that of a “lost son” (D, 106) because his spiritual pursuit is also outside the accepted parameters of the bright world. Sinclair’s focalisation of Pistorius’s face as ugly and wild (D, 103) is an external confirmation of Pistorius’s inner experience, with which Sinclair identifies himself. Pistorius’s music lacks the social morality that Sinclair detests: “Alles andere ist moralisch, und ich suche etwas, was nicht so ist. Ich habe unter dem Moralischen immer bloß gelitten” (D, 104). [“Everything else is so moral that I’m looking for something that isn’t. Morality has always seemed to me insufferable” (DT, 86).] Pistorius’s music and appearance allow him to become an echo of Sinclair’s spiritual preoccupations.

Sinclair’s conversations with Pistorius that establish him as a soulmate, are similar to those which Sinclair conducts with Demian. These conversations influence Sinclair’s beliefs which define him: for example, that human behaviour should be regarded rather in natural, evolutionary, than in artificial, social terms. In this vein Pistorius advocates a contextual and
individualistic justification of actions. Actions that are immoral or evil in social, moral and legal terms, such as murder, are unacceptable and unjustifiable, according to Pistorius, if they are not the true calling of a person. Though he also regards actions that meet the criterion of being one’s true calling, even killing someone, as permissible, he adds that these are mostly mistakes (D, 116). In Pistorius’s view one ruins oneself if one first asks whether an action would also be right for the teacher, father or “some dear God” (D, 113-114). This leads to self-ruin because one then denies the truth of one’s own individuality for the sake of another social identity preferred by authority figures such as a father, a teacher or (a misconception of) God. What the narrow-minded Christian social context may experience as evil is, for Pistorius, a fallacy: “Man darf nichts fürchten und nichts für verboten halten, was die Seele in uns wünscht” (D, 116). [“You aren’t allowed to be afraid of anything, you can’t consider as prohibited anything that the soul desires” (DT, 97).] Pistorius therefore recommends that Sinclair looks at the fire or clouds “as soon as the notions come and the voices in your soul start to speak” (D, 113). These natural elements remind him that the individual must obey his natural inclinations in spite of social prescriptions.

Pistorius believes that a human’s optimal natural being consists of the whole existence of the world and that not only the parameters of the individual human determine the individual. Embedded in the soul is all that has been lived before – all gods and devils that have ever been, be they the Greek, the Chinese or Zulu deities which represent possibilities and wishes “as ways out” (D, 109-110). The individual who can liberate himself from social restrictions and live in step with himself gains self-empowerment. It is ironic that Pistorius nurtures ambitions of an ultimately social nature that are in opposition to the ideas which he communicates to Sinclair. Nonetheless, these ideas distinguish him as a spiritual brother figure of Sinclair.

4.4.1.4. Beatrice: the girl in the park and the blessing spiritual guide

Beatrice offers a striking example of a focalised construct because of the difference between the girl that he sees and “Sinclair’s Beatrice”. The end of his days as a barfly occurs when Sinclair projects his spiritual ideal onto a girl whom he names Beatrice and whom he paints. When he draws the picture of her, the features of Demian emerge from the image, but “he realizes gradually that his holy image evokes not only Beatrice and Demian, but himself as well, not in the sense of a portrait, but as a sign of the individuality of his person, of his predestined sovereignty as a goal and a path …” (Solbach, 2009:98). Beatrice is, for Solbach (2009:98), “… the incarnation of the sacred he has chosen … Emil transforms the image he has conceived into a
real object of ritual by painting a picture that is directly antithetical to his made-up stories of thievery …”

The actual (textual) girl’s real name is not even known to Sinclair. He projects his new psychological disposition onto the image of the real girl (in the textual actual world) and, in his mind, transforms her into a spiritual guide. It is consequently also significant that he names her “Beatrice”. The name is related to the Latin word “beatus” (blessed) and “beo” (to bless) and could therefore mean “the one who blesses”.155 Dante Alighieri’s Beatrice in The Divine Comedy (1307) “blesses” Dante by leading him to Paradise after having journeyed through Hell and Purgatory. Sinclair’s Beatrice similarly begins to lead him to his “Paradise”, namely being truly united with Demian, following his tribulations in being alternatingly dominated by the bright and the dark worlds.156 Beatrice represents “fromm vergeistigte Anbeterschaft” (D, 99) [“devout transfiguration” (DT, 82)], a neglected part of his equilibrium during his drinking days. His spiritual balance will later include a dark side including “horror”, “guilt” and “Satan” (D, 99), but Beatrice represents a first step towards an individualistic integration of opposites.

Sinclair’s attraction to Beatrice’s androgynous appearance serves as a basis for a fantasy (D, 83) that denotes his innate attraction to the principle of unified oppositions (cf. D, 87). As Bieliková (2007:75) points out, the androgynous appearance implies the Taoistic idea of Yin and Yang which, in Demian, is representative of the (rather chauvinistic) Christian duality of good and evil: in the Christian tradition sensuality is associated with evil female characteristics whilst the mind (“der Geist”) is related to the masculine nature.157 As an individual Sinclair cannot thrive exclusively in either the bright or the dark world. Sinclair’s attention on Beatrice indicates a third, i.e. an individualistic, direction that is suitable for him. The inner balance that he gains from this focus on Beatrice is in stark contrast to his instability during the previous phases in his life.


156 This is related to Sinclair’s statement to Knauer that as humans they (Sinclair and Knauer) create gods, wrestle with them – like Jacob with the “man”, angel or God – and the gods bless them (D, 125).

157 Richards (1988:289) similarly refers to the polarity of “nature” or the “feminine principle” (the motherly, the soul, the unconscious, the body, instincts, etc.) and the mind or intellect (the fatherly, the conscious, rationality, thinking, law, and so on as the basic theme in Hesse’s writings.)
4.4.2. Sinclair’s social context and his varied emotional responses to the bright world and the dark world

The whole spectrum of Sinclair’s represented social context is also focalised as a mental construct and as such belongs to the fictional world. Central to Sinclair’s focalisation of his immediate social context is that he is attracted to both its “bright” and “dark” sides. While he is “ensnared” in either of them, both cause and are associated with pleasant experiences as well as the anguish that characterises his focalisation.

Sinclair’s insight, that to deny one’s inner dualism or “bipolarity”¹⁵⁸ implies ignorance, self-deceit or dishonesty, determines the way he focalises his social world. For example, whilst the bright world would consider Sinclair’s father a respectable man, Sinclair regards his scolding about wet boots in the house as petty and feels superior to his father because the latter does not recognise that his son is involved in a matter “far more criminal” (D, 23). Unlike Demian, his father has nothing to offer him in terms of spiritual guidance. Their relationship therefore reaches a cul-de-sac.

Apart from his father as an important representative figure of his social context, Sinclair’s focalisation of people belonging to the bright world is likewise contemptuous at times. He despises the residents of his hometown because of their inertia, parochialism and lack of individuality. He once describes himself during his drinking days in his hometown as smug, wearing his usual “somewhat tired face”, while he recognises the middle-class people in their “old, unchanging, despised faces” (D, 89). The tone is harsh because Sinclair focalises them in terms of his experience of himself – at this time that of a roisterer who wants to make it plain that his norms and values differ from theirs.

Despite the illusive comfort and tranquillity of the bright world and Sinclair’s longing for it, the process of disconnecting himself from it is clear. He acknowledges that he does not fit into his community anymore, “for which an agonizing homesickness like for lost paradises often overwhelmed him” (D, 39). In the light of his physical and emotional suffering after his first bout of heavy drinking, he focalises his paternal home, his father, mother and family as perfect, but as “lost”, i.e. as a world that would reject him:

¹⁵⁸ Bieliková (2007:1) presents these terms as synonyms.
The focalisation of his social context therefore denotes his relationship with it, as founded in his childhood. As a child he was conditioned to regard the bright world as exclusively good and essential (D, 13) and therefore sometimes experienced the discrepancy between passionate rage and remorse, mingled in the same moment (D, 14). He experienced his social context as “exquisite” on “good days” when he played harmoniously with his sisters, had no struggle with his conscience, saw himself in a well-behaved, noble light (D, 14) and consciously knew that he was behaving “sinfully” when acting contrary to what was socially acceptable. One also recognises this experience in the excerpt above. Because he does not conform to the bright world, as his sisters do, through Sinclair’s focalisation the bright world, as part of the total fictional world becomes one in which his previous life and its components are foreign to him. Key words are “versunken” [“lost”], “gehörte mir nicht mehr” [“did not belong to me anymore”] and “verwüstet” [“destroyed”].

159 He includes Demian as part of the bright world here because he also associates Demian with his past, in which the bright world exerted a greater influence on him.

160 A comprehensive citation is warranted because it affords such a good example of Sinclair’s focalisation of his social context. Because of its length, the part following the citation above is here given as a footnote: “Alles Liebe und Innige, was ich je bis in fernste, goldenste Kindheitsgärten zurück von meinen Eltern erfahren hatte, jeder Kuß der Mutter, jede Weihnacht, jeder fromme, helle Sonntagsmorgen daheim, jede Blume im Garten – alles war verwüstet, alles hatte ich mit Füßen getreten” (D, 77-78). [“Everything dear and intimate, everything my parents had given me as far back as the distant gardens of my childhood, every kiss from my mother, every Christmas, each devout, light-filled Sunday morning at home, each and every flower in the garden – everything had been laid waste, everything had been trampled on by me!” (DT, 62-63).]
A dark world as a social context is embodied by the pub culture that consists of talking, listening and becoming drunk. He enjoys the “revolutionary” and adventurous elements and experiences them as delicious and like paradise (D, 77) because he does not want to associate with the bright world any longer. Before visiting a pub for the first time Sinclair comments: “O wie fad das Leben schmeckte! (D, 74) [“Oh, how bland tasted!”]161 Because he is spiritually immature, he lacks good judgement and therefore follows a destructive path.162 As with enjoying the role of an outsider in the boys’ hostel, he likes the socially controversial role of being a barfly. Yet, he finds listening to Beck and his stories about sex unpleasanct. He experiences pub life as simultaneously agonising and sweet because he enjoys its “very forbidden” nature and its elements of rebellion, orgy, life and spirit (D, 77). But in terms of his soul, he is again caught in a situation similar to his relationship with Kromer and states that he belongs completely to the dark world and the devil (D, 79).

This frame of mind affects the manner in which he subsequently focalises the children whom he sees when leaving a pub163 and whom he seems to confuse with the bright world. When he spends Christmas with his family, he uses adjectives like “unerquicklich” [“unpleasant”], “bitter” [“bitter”], “bedrückend” [“depressing”], “unerwünscht” [“unwanted”], “verlegenmachend” [“embarrassing”] and “peinlich” [“awkward”] (D, 82) to describe his experiences at home. The children and his family represent two different kinds of worlds. Each is characterised by Sinclair’s social position in relation to, and his interaction with, it. He does not interact with the children, but reacts emotionally to them and their innocence, from within his position in the dark world. This allows an interpretation of them as elevated beings, because their innocence is genuine. Yet, he experiences/focalises the bright world at home, one that ironically idealises exclusive “innocence” (in terms of moral virtue and social obedience/conformism), as hostile: this maintains the estrangement between himself and the bright world.

161 “Fad” could also mean “boring”. This exclamation indeed signifies Sinclair’s experiencing life as unpleasantly boring. (This sentence has been omitted in Roloff’s and Lebeck’s (DT, 59) translation.)

162 Just before the outbreak of the War Demian says: “Es wird den Leuten eine Wonne sein, schon jetzt freut sich jeder aufs Losschlagen. So fad ist ihnen das Leben geworden (D, 162). [“People will love it. Even now they can hardly wait for the killing to begin – their lives are that dull!” (DT, 139).] Sinclair’s earlier inner experience is therefore comparable to the experience of “everyone”. The War becomes an expression of a collective desire to disconnect from a social context by means of a large-scale destruction.

163 “Ich weiß noch, daß mir einmal die Tränen kamen, als ich beim Verlassen einer Kneipe am Sonntagsvormittag auf der Straße Kinder spielen sah ... hatte ich ... Ehrfurcht vor allem, was ich verhöhnte, und lag innerlich weinend auf den Knien vor meiner Seele, vor meiner Vergangenheit, vor meiner Mutter, vor Gott (D, 79). [“I can still remember tears springing to my eyes when I saw children playing in the street on Sunday morning as I emerged from a bar ... I was in awe of everything I belittled and lay weeping before my soul, my past, my mother, before God” (DT, 64).]
Ironically, a spiritually more mature Sinclair focalises “young Europe” and the townspeople belonging to the bright world in a manner comparable to his spiritually immature days as a drinker. The joyful paradise and “freedom” (D, 141) of their youth, nostalgically recalled by an older generation which includes the officials of Sinclair’s hometown, is a delusion. Similarly, before the War one finds everywhere that people “flee” to the “warm nearness of the herd” (D, 137), as Demian observes. There is a desire for togetherness, yet this insincere togetherness does not have much value because its motivation, namely fear, does not lend it any strength. As in the case of obeying any laws of life and observing religions and morals, “grouping together” is “untrue” or “dishonest” (D, 139) if it is not a sincere and genuine result of the inner lives of individuals, i.e. if it does not form part of the authenticity of people striving towards being true to their own selves.

4.4.3. Events: Sinclair’s immature attempts to develop spiritually, his failures and successes

Prominent events in *Demian* include Sinclair’s first spell in the dark world during which he is oppressed by Franz Kromer; Demian’s liberating him from Kromer’s domination and his return to the bright world, marked by his confession to his parents of what has happened; his subsequent return to the dark world “facilitated” by Beck; and his spiritual awakening, marked by a specific change signalled by Beatrice and continued by his interaction with Demian, Pistorius and Frau Eva in particular. In each instance it is evident that the events in *Demian* can be equated with Sinclair’s interaction with specific characters. Any event is therefore an interface where characters whom Sinclair allows into his life, *because* of his frame of mind and desires, further influence Sinclair’s way of thinking and his representations/creation of the fictional world.

Sinclair’s process away from ignorance about human nature begins instinctively and develops from an intuition into a clearer understanding. This distinguishes him from many other people who are obtuse about human nature and their relationships to their social contexts. Sinclair’s first clumsy step towards, or attempt at finding, a truly individualistic balance between good and evil (one not determined by his social context) occurs when he commits himself, as a victim, to

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164 This is also the case in *Narziss und Goldmund*. Chapter 7 focuses on events in this novel that are certainly also associated with various characters whom Goldmund meets on his travels and during his life’s journey.
the dark world. This step detaches himself from the imbalance of the bright world\textsuperscript{165}, but his identity as Kromer’s dupe is far removed from his ideal of spiritual balance/an authentic self. He must therefore disconnect himself from this world, an action which “magically” occurs through the event of Demian’s intervention: precisely at the moment when Kromer’s tyranny reaches a peak. One could even say that Sinclair either “activates” or “deactivates” Demian.\textsuperscript{166} On the level of the textual actual world Demian could be perceived as a real (textual) human being external to Sinclair.

However, in terms of the fictional world as a poetic construct one can interpret Demian as a spiritual feature of Sinclair’s inner/spiritual life. By informing Demian that Kromer has power over him, Sinclair indirectly takes power and control. Identifying Kromer for Demian, uttering the name of his tormenter, is a symbolic decision that results in the temporary end of the dark world’s dominant presence in Sinclair’s life. Demian is responsive to befriending Sinclair because Sinclair recognises what is right for himself when he says Kromer’s name. Demian avers that they will become friends (D, 44) because if he had not said the name, Sinclair would have “decided” to remain in the dark world.

However, Sinclair cannot bear the presence of any form of the dark world, including Demian’s dark side. After his liberation which is a reaction against the time with Kromer, Sinclair therefore returns completely to the bright world. Demian automatically withdraws from Sinclair during this time because the bright world is, just like the dark one, not right for the latter. Demian and Sinclair also do not conduct a fruitful relationship while Sinclair is frequenting

\textsuperscript{165} Harmonious interaction with his parents becomes impossible owing to the event of having “befriended the devil” (D, 21-22). Sinclair asks himself why he went along, why he had obeyed Kromer better than his father, why he fabricated a story which was a lie and why he boasted about crimes as if they were heroic actions (D, 22). The questions seem to be rhetorical, but the answer is that he posed them to acknowledge that his individuality was inconsistent with the bright world.

\textsuperscript{166} Solbach (2009:83) points out that Hesse’s rhetorical austerity and simplicity in order to create a sense of sincerity is calculated, “intended to confer a sense of authenticity to a story purporting to be fact, not fiction”. Roney (1999:3;10) steps into the “trap” by being vexed about the unlikelihood that Demian and Sinclair should end up in the same field hospital and because Sinclair is able to send him a pictorial message with no text, not knowing his address and giving no name and because in the middle of a history class a response appears on a slip of paper in his textbook. Following Hesse who described Demian as “not really a human being, but a principle, the incarnation of a truth or a doctrine”, Singh (2006:119) says that Demian as well as Frau Eva, Sinclair’s parents, Kromer and Pistorius embody principles. Serrano’s (1966:4) also calls Demian Sinclair’s “deepest self”. Freedman (1963:63) points out that Demian is a figure “both timeless and acting in time” whose function is “also an internal one”: “He appears and disappears, but even in his physical absences he is a typical symbol in Sinclair’s mind, ready to be called upon whenever he is needed.” The principle of minimal departure prescribes that one can regard Demian as an actual (textual) person, but in the cases above “the text indicates otherwise”. Demian is not an exclusively fictional counterpart of a possible physical human being, but a construct with both physical and spiritual features. In the cases above “possibility” in actual world terms shifts towards Demian’s spiritual side, i.e. an actual person could understand, for example, “sending the picture” as reaching out to God or a solution of a spiritual nature and receiving an answer (comparable to Demian “magically” making contact or appearing) by “coincidentally” receiving an answer through conversations with other people, media or own thinking that could be attributed to focus.

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Chapter 4: Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jungend: A fictional world as created by and as an extension of the individual, Emil Sinclair
pubs, not because he condemns these as “respectable society” does, but because this sphere too is wrong for Sinclair.167

The event of seeing Beatrice and all the subsequent events and occurrences are focalised as not simply “neutral”, but steps towards a realisation/fulfilment of Sinclair’s true self. Sinclair’s reconnection with Demian when the latter sends him a picture of a bird emerging from an egg, symbolising spiritual liberation168, is a spiritual reconnection that concurs with a friendship between Sinclair and the organist, Pistorius, followed by meeting Demian and his mother and becoming part of Frau Eva’s union. Finally, the event of Demian’s physical death is a further confirmation of Demian’s spiritual integration with Sinclair’s individuality:

“Kleiner Sinclair, paß auf! Ich werde fortgehen müssen. Du wirst mich vielleicht einmal wieder brauchen, gegen den Kromer oder sonst. Wenn du mich dann rufst, dann komme ich nicht mehr so grob auf einem Pferd geritten oder mit der Eisenbahn. Du mußt dann in dich hinein hören, dann merkst du, daß ich in dir drinnen bin” (D, 168). [“Little Sinclair, listen: I will have to go away. Perhaps you’ll need me again sometime, against Kromer or something. If you call me then I won’t come crudely, on horseback or by train. You’ll have to listen within yourself, then you will notice that I am within you” (DT, 144).]

Sinclair’s documenting the process of persevering to reach this point, i.e. of having acquired the skills to develop spiritually and of being able to use Demian’s principles against both the bright world and the dark world, should also be perceived as an event leading to the establishment of his true individuality. Throughout this complex event it is coloured by his motivation and his willingness to explore his own nature, also motivated by a desire for inner peace: “Wenige wissen heute, was der Mensch ist. Viele fühlen es und sterben darum leichter, wie ich leichter sterben werde, wenn ich diese Geschichte fertiggeschrieben habe” (D, 10). [“Few people nowadays know what man is. Many sense this ignorance and die the more easily because of it,
Documenting the events and occurrences is an expression of his subjectivity which is characterised by his steadfast commitment to his spiritual development.

4.4.4. Spaces, places and objects of the fictional world: The external textual world as either visibly or unclearly transformed and as part of the focalising individual

Sinclair often focalises the spaces and objects of the textual actual world through the use of his senses. The sense of smell reoccurs as a metaphor for a kind of sixth sense, but also as a device to express an emotive association with an experience projected onto a physical aspect of the external textual actual world. Sounds and tastes are also part of Sinclair’s subjective experience and focalisation. The sense of sight is similarly connected to Sinclair’s inner life. Visual perception of the textual actual world sometimes alters the “actual nature” of spaces and objects, by means of personification as well.

However, spaces sometimes appear to make no impression on Sinclair. The appearance of neutrality does not imply meaningless detachment, but rather denotes Sinclair’s preoccupations and characterises his experiences. Spaces of the fictional world may therefore seem to be “not focalised” and approximate the spaces which one could infer are part of the textual actual world. “Not focalised” when Sinclair refers to “neutral spaces” such as, for example, train stations is a contradiction in terms, owing to Sinclair’s inclusion of these spaces in his narration. When they form part of the narration their status cannot be exclusively part of the (always inferred) textual actual world. They should be considered as focalised and part of a content that is indeed marked by subjectivity.

169 The translated text presents the whole prologue, except the first line, in italics.

170 Places (such as cities, houses, parks, etc.) are considered synonymous with, and any physical objects are regarded as part of, spaces.

171 This should be distinguished from the sense of smell as a technique which focalises spaces. Rather, it metaphorically focalises the spiritual process towards one’s true self. Demian describes a certain species of moth of which the female is much scarcer than the male. Yet, scientists have often noticed that males, removed hours away from the female, always find a single female. Demian attributes this to a kind of sense of smell comparable to that in hounds which can find and follow an imperceptible trail (D, 59-60). He argues that an animal or human – like the moth – will succeed if he directs his whole attention and his whole will to a specific matter (D, 59). This sense of smell is therefore a skill: to distinguish what is permissible and what is not for oneself, and to know how and where to find what one truly needs spiritually.

172 This section focuses more closely on the senses of smell and sight since these feature more prominently. The sense of taste, as during the Kromer episode when he equates his fear of spiritual renewal to a “bitter taste of death” (D, 24) and experiences his once favourite hymns as “Galle und Gift” (D, 24) (“bile” – “a universal symbol of bitterness” (Esselborn-Krumbiegel (2005b:15) – “and poison”; “every note galled me” (DT, 14)] is also not projected onto spaces. Sinclair’s experience of Kromer calling him by whistling is projected on to space, but also onto his activities and thoughts (D, 28). Although not affecting his experience of space, hearing Pistorius’s music is important with regard to the focalisation of his spiritual disposition. He experiences hearing the ancient music of Italian composers preceding Bach as if “listening to his own soul” (D, 103) and also associates the music more closely with the authentic devotion of beggars and pilgrims than the doubtful or false commitment of churchgoers and pastors (D, 103).
The difference between apparently “neutral” spaces and other “more obviously” focalised spaces is that Sinclair often uses an agent – like the sense of smell – to “transform” the textual actual world into the fictional world. It is evident that there is a difference between, for example, how Sinclair experiences the smells of spaces in his focalised version and inferences about what spaces would actually smell like in the textual actual world or what they had smelled like previously. More than once Sinclair becomes aware that smells which have altered are connected with a change in circumstances and Sinclair’s experience of this change. For example, the hallway of his parental home, where Kromer blackmailed him for the first time, did not smell like peace and security anymore (D, 18). The literal smell is not described, but Sinclair experiences the space differently because he does not associate peace and security with it any longer. Similarly, in the light of Sinclair’s statements that the Christmas holidays at home were truly unhappy, one recognises that “sweet” and “scent” no longer have positive connotations: “Die Lebkuchen rochen süß und strömten dichte Wolken süßerer Erinnerungen aus. Der Tannenbaum duftete und erzählte von Ding, die nicht mehr waren” (D, 82). [“The gingerbead smelled sweet; it exuded a host of memories which were even sweeter. The fragrance of the Christmas tree told of a world that no longer existed” (DT, 67).] Sinclair associates the sweetness of the gingerbread and the scent of the Christmas tree with his feeling of dislocation from his family context.

Sinclair’s mental disposition is projected onto spaces and objects through his sense of smell as well as sight: these form part of his individualistic inner experiences, causing spaces and objects both figuratively and literally to smell, and to look, different from the way they would appear to other characters. Indeed, Pistorius directly mentions the two aspects of focalisation, i.e. focus and transformation as expressions of a person’s inner life, when he speaks about the misconception of people who think that they see things as they really are:

“Die Dinge, die wir sehen … sind dieselben Dinge, die in uns sind. Es gibt keine Wirklichkeit als die, die wir in uns haben. Darum leben die meisten Menschen so

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173 Another example of how a smell (or lack of it) reflects/focalises space is when Sinclair experiences the garden as scentless along with everything experienced as dull and unattractive (D, 72): this is caused by Sinclair’s liminal indecision to commit himself to Demian, concurring with his inability to commit to his family/the bright world. In addition, the smell of the hyacinths in Frau Eva’s house reflects his reaction to the outbreak of the War. Directly after Sinclair experiences the smell of hyacinths as intensely sweet in a stifling atmosphere, with a degree of pleasantness as well as a feeling of oppression (D, 155-156) owing to the atmosphere of anticipation of the War’s outbreak, Demian and Sinclair tell each other their dreams that presage the latter. Sinclair then experiences the smell of the hyacinths as “welk, fad und leichenhaft” (D, 159) [“withered, bland and cadaver-like”]. The translators do not connect the smell to the hyacinths, but to the space in general with “There’s a smell of death in the air” (DT, 136).
unwirklich, weil sie die Bilder außerhalb für das Wirkliche halten und ihre eigene Welt in sich gar nicht zu Worte kommen lassen …” (D, 117). [“The things we see … are the same things that are within us. There is no reality except the one contained within us. That is why so many people live such an unreal life. They take the images outside them for reality and never allow the world within to assert itself” (DT, 98).]

Not acknowledging what and how the individual sees as part of himself results in a false understanding of oneself. Therefore, it is an important step for Sinclair to acquire knowledge about himself and to place it in the comprehensive context of his spiritual process when he documents his experiences – like confessing that the world became colourful, in contrast to having seen it as faded and bland, when talking to Beck: “Die Welt brannte in neuen Farben …” (D, 76). [“The world glowed in new colors …” (DT, 61).]

Spaces that Sinclair sees are also altered, through personification, from their “independent nature” in the textual actual world into expressions of his disposition. Sinclair describes the river where he and other boys retrieve useful things for Kromer as “lazy” (DT, 6) or “lethargic”, which supports his experience of a burden and his concomitant apprehension (D, 15). This is an intimation of how he experiences his world differently, i.e. how his world would change from familiar to strange and threatening once Kromer starts to blackmail him (Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 1998:44). Similarly, the wall clock and table, Bible and mirror, the bookshelf and the pictures on the wall are personified when Sinclair feels that they “parted from him” following the first rent in the apparent holiness of his father (D, 23). Another example is evident when, on his way to Kromer for the first time after he had started to blackmail Sinclair, the latter is confronted with defamiliarised spaces. He experiences the city as changed, the clouds as unknown and the houses as if they were looking at him (D, 26). Furthermore, when excitedly anticipating meeting Frau Eva, he projects onto the world his inner feelings by associating the world174 with

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174 It is striking that here he repeatedly uses the word “Welt” [“world”]: “Zum erstenmal klang die äußere Welt mit meiner innern rein zusammen ... So hatte ich als kleiner Knabe die Welt am Morgen der großen Feiertage gesehen ... Ich hatte nicht gewußt, daß die Welt noch so schön sein könnte” (D142; my italics - PvdM), etcetera. [“For the first time the outer world was perfectly attuned to the world within ... That was how the world had appeared to me in the mornings when I was a small boy, on the great feast days ... I had forgotten that the world could still be so lovely” (DT, 120-121).] Although not an instance of personification, he uses metaphoric space to express his euphoria at having arrived at Frau Eva’s home: “... ich war an ein Ziel gekommen, an eine hohe Wegstelle, von wo aus der weitere Weg sich weit und herrlich zeigte, Ländern der Verheißung entgegenstrebend, überschattet von Baumwipfeln nahen Glückes, gekühlt von nahen Gärten jeder Lust” (D, 144). [“I had attained a goal, a high point on the road: from there the next stage of the journey appeared unhampered and marvelous, leading toward promised lands” (DT, 122-123) overshadowed by tree tops of the present happiness, cooled by nearby gardens of all delights.] (The translators have omitted “überschattet von Baumwipfeln … Gärten jeder Lust” in the translation.) The two references to height, namely “eine hohe Wegstelle” [“a high point on the road”] and “Baumwipfeln nahen Glückes” [“treetops of the happiness present”] are metaphorical of his (spiritual) success as well as his concomitant emotional “high”.

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exclusively positive distinctions and personifying it: “… ich sah und empfand the Welt um mich her verwandelt, wartend, beziehungsvoll und feierlich …” (D, 142). [“… I saw and experienced the changed world around me, expectant, meaningful, and solemn …” (DT, 120).]

Despite many obviously subjectively focalised spaces as discussed above, many spaces that represent the world in which Sinclair lives are easy to imagine separately from Sinclair because of the seeming neutrality of the representations. This is why Esselborn-Krumbiegel (1998:44) describes the settings in Demian as interchangeable, having only vague contours and as void of atmospheric meaning. She also writes that the external settings in Demian become virtually irrelevant due to the emphasis of the “inner setting”, i.e. external space becomes the frame of the mental processes (1998:44). For example, the external environment seems to be unimportant towards the end of the novel, owing to Sinclair’s preoccupation with finding Frau Eva, who had the “features of his fate” (D, 135):

Es gab Tage, da traf ich lauter Gestalten, die an sie erinnerten … die mich durch Gassen fremder Städte, durch Bahnhöfe, in Eisenbahnzüge lockten, wie in verwinkelten Träumen. Es gab andere Tage, da sah ich ein, wie unnütz mein Suchen sei; dann saß ich untätig irgendwo in einem Park, in einem Hotelgarten, in einem Wartesaal und schaute in mich hinein und versuchte das Bild in mir lebendig zu machen. … Einst auf einem Bahnhof, ich glaube, es war in Innsbruck, sah ich in einem eben wegfahrenden Zug am Fenster eine Gestalt, die mich an sie erinnerte, und war tagelang unglücklich (D, 135-136). [There were days when everyone I met reminded me of her, echoed her, seemed to resemble her, drew me through the streets of unfamiliar cities, through railroad stations and into trains, as in an intricate dream. There were other days when I realized the futility of my search. Then I would idly sit somewhere in a park or in some hotel garden, in a waiting room, trying to make the picture come alive within me. … Once in a railroad station, in Innsbruck I think, I caught sight of a woman who reminded me of her – in a train just pulling away. I was miserable for days (DT, 115).

In this excerpt the many spaces of the external world themselves, like the alleys of cities, train stations, the trains, the park, the hotel garden, the waiting room, and so on indeed seem to be
“empty” of emotional dimensions. Sinclair names, but does not describe, these spaces. He focalises the external world as apparently “unaffected” because the focus is on his passionate spiritual longing. This is, however, a deception. The represented textual actual world may appear to be inferior to Sinclair’s mental processes. However, his mental and emotional state of preoccupied longing for Frau Eva and his focalisation characterise the spaces. Although “unclearly transformed”, these represented spaces do belong to Sinclair’s subjective frame of mind. The “individualistic value” of the spaces is the absence of description that is reflective of Sinclair’s preoccupation with his intense desire to be in Frau Eva’s presence.

4.5. Demian as a possible world: Actual world experiences as the impetus of focalisation contributing to their creation of Sinclair’s world

Actual people share inner experiences comparable to Sinclair’s, whether a reader regards the psychological processes of a character like his as either legitimate, insightful, comforting and the like, or as naïve, embarrassing, ridiculous, etcetera. People in the actual world might find Sinclair’s “spiritual process” (of “realising his true self” by becoming more intuitive and considerate towards his own individuality) comparable to their own or other people’s aspirations. Related to this, such people, like Sinclair, might experience inner conflict with regard to what their social contexts (for example, in family, school and church contexts) regard as “moral” or “good” together with the expectation to act according to its explicit and implicit prescriptions.

This inner conflict arises when the moral guidelines of a social context oppose the individual’s natural inclinations with regard to, for example, sexual behaviour, fields of interest, religion and/or self-improvement (to which denomination one should belong and how or which religion should be practised), even partiality to certain entertainment (regarding the choice of specific preferred books, music, films, and so on). The inner conflict leads the actual world person to experience himself, other people, his social context, events and the external world and its spaces and objects in a subjective way coloured by his mental and emotional states.

Sinclair’s focalisation is a basis for identification when he, for example, feels either attracted to or repulsed by certain people and various spheres in his social context. The individualistic focus

175 Another clear example occurs during the War when Sinclair is injured and semi-conscious: “Ich lag in einem Keller … Ich lag in einem Wagen und holperte über leere Felder … ” (D, 167) (“I lay in a cellar … I lay in a wagon and jolted across the empty fields” (DT, 143).)

176 For Horowitz (1980:181-182) Sinclair realises that his own image of a world divided into light and dark, good and evil, disturbs all men: “It is necessary to come to terms with this concept in one’s way of living, and this understanding must lead to an acceptance of responsibility for one’s actions.” This assessment is clearly formulated in possible world terms.
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on events that are placed in a causative relation to Sinclair’s frame of mind and his consequent interaction with people, are comparable to actual people’s experiences of events. When Sinclair experiences the external world as different from other people’s perspectives of the external world because of his mindset, another actual world connection becomes visible. This may occur because of a matter of focus, like that when a person who has experienced some good fortune or success “blocks out” all unpleasant things and spontaneously focuses on beautiful things that are spontaneously “selected” as confirming his subjective reality, determined by his mood. It could also be the case that he transforms external spaces or objects to become more beautiful than they really are. He therefore projects his inner excitement onto the external world. Recognition of actual world human reactions is therefore a means to distinguish a fictional world as a possible world.

A recognisable, possible actual world circumstance is evident in Demian’s notion that someone may never commit any crime and still be a scoundrel (D, 68). Jolene in Doctorow’s short story “Jolene: A Life” (Doctorow, 2004a:55-86) would have been able to recognise her husband, Brad G. Benton, as a case in point. No concrete example of this notion exists in Demian, but coincidentally Jolene’s husband represents an instance of such a villain who parades as a respectable Christian within his social context. As far as Benton’s social context is aware, he is a decent man. But the truth is that instead of being a sympathetic and supportive husband, he assaults Jolene because her previous life does not meet the criteria of his and his family’s Christian outlook: “It was as if his wildness, his independent choice of life, was being driven from him, as if it was the Devil. It was those parents slowly absorbing him back into their righteousness” (Doctorow, 2004a:82-83). Jolene flees with her baby because of the abuse that she is obliged to endure from her husband. She is subsequently arrested for the “unlawful kidnapping of her own child” (Doctorow, 2004a: 84). A judge then ruled that she was an unfit mother “without giving it much thought” because of her “immoral past” and granted Brad G. Benton sole custody of her Mr. Nipplebee” (Doctorow, 2004a:85). The concurrence of Benton’s apparently respectable life, despite his sexual abuse and rape of Jolene and his calculating exploitation of her past to gain total custody of their child whom he would leave to be raised by the women and their servants in his family, shows how easily the social context may misinterpret

177 Before she met Benton she had been married to Mickey Holler when she was 15 and conducted an affair with his Uncle Phil. Her husband then committed suicide; a judge decided that she should be sent to a mental ward. There she engaged in an affair with one of the attendants, Cindy. She escaped from the ward to Cindy’s house. Cindy wanted Jolene to live with her, but Jolene escaped from Cindy’s house. Jolene then “hit the road” (Doctorow, 2004a:66); in Phoenix, Arizona, she married a tattoo artist named Coco Leger, unaware that he was a polygamist. At 19 she became involved with an older man whose means of income were suspect. They met when she was working as a stripper in Las Vegas (Doctorow, 2004a:55-77).
the true state of affairs: that the “respectable man” is, in fact, evil and the “sinful and irresponsible” woman is actually by far the more caring and virtuous person. An actual person who is able to identify himself with Sinclair or Jolene because he has experienced, is aware of, or could imagine circumstances in the actual world that are comparable to circumstances in the fictional world, is able to perceive a fictional world as as a possible world.

4.6. Conclusion

The reader situated in the actual world may recognise that he would have been able to identify with *Demian* in the past, and/or associate Sinclair’s experiences with actual people that he knows in the actual world – or may indeed identify himself with Sinclair to a greater or lesser degree when reading the text. The principles with regard to the distinction between good and evil in *Demian* may be relevant to the life of a reader, i.e. possible in the actual world as well as in other fictional worlds. One therefore also understands a fictional world as a possible one because of Ryan’s “principle of minimal departure”. Ryan (1991:52) states that if it were not for the principle, “a novel about a character named Napoleon could not convey the feeling that its hero is the Napoleon. … Under the principle, the Napoleon of TAW is regarded as a counterpart of the Napoleon of AW, linked to him through what David Lewis calls a line of transworld identity.” The principle consequently also applies to universal actual world experiences or to the mental and emotional responses such as motivation, fear, desire and depression that Sinclair experiences. Such actual world experiences influence his focus, his actions and decisions and the way in which he represents his textual actual world. The creative impetus of focalisation is therefore actual world experiences which contribute to creating a fictional world and establishing a fictional one as a possible world.

During the early, immature periods of Sinclair’s spiritual development, his frame of mind and focalisation are greatly influenced by the concepts of “right” and “wrong” as represented by the Christian conceptions of God and the devil, representative of all that is – in social terms – “right” and “wrong”. During the later, more mature periods of his spiritual development, the concept of Abraxas in whom good and evil are united describes “right” as what is appropriate for the individual and what his true calling(s) may be. What is “right” for the individual may be “wrong” (“evil” or “Satanic”) according to the social context. However, correspondences may also exist between what is “right” for the individual and what the Christian social context views as “right”, like during Sinclair’s “calm” period once Beatrice has started to influence him. What is “wrong” for an individual, according to Abraxas, may clash with what the social context considers to be “right”. When one observes social customs and conventions that are not right for
oneself, one cannot be one’s true self. For example, a hypothetical possible world situation could be that of choosing a profession because it is one’s true calling, as opposed to it being the wish of one’s parents.

The manner in which Demian understands biblical stories influences Sinclair to perceive the world independently from expectations in terms of the norms and values of the social context and in terms of his personal or individualistic spiritual development. Sinclair learns from Demian to interpret Biblical stories like those of Cain and Abel and the thieves crucified next to Jesus more freely, more personally, more playfully and with more fantasy (D, 63-64) than the rigid understanding of the social context that hinders individualistic spiritual growth.

This chapter has presented the notion that Sinclair’s shifting understandings of the concepts of “right” and “wrong” that are relevant as regards Sinclair’s ambition to truly understand human nature and realise his “true self” affect his focalisation of the components of the textual actual world. These are clearly focalised through metaphoric representations that are explanatory and serve as touchstones for Sinclair’s focalisation.

The focalised constructs, namely Sinclair himself, characters, Sinclair’s social context, events and spaces, all contribute to the creation of the fictional world. This could be considered as characteristic of “radical constructivism”, which Nünning (2001:209) defines as exploring the cognitive activity through which observers create subjective models of the world that they regard as actual. Whilst the following chapters focus in detail on “social context”, “events” and “spaces” as aspects of the fictional world, this chapter, in the shape of an introductory text analysis, explores characters as well as the other building blocks in order to present a broader view of such a world.

In the following chapters the focalising character should also be viewed as a focalised construct (in Demian’s case, that of the retrospective narrator). Not only is Sinclair as the narrator a focalised textual person, but the focalisation of the building blocks also functions as a kind of “self-focalisation”, i.e. the subjectively represented social context, events and spaces lead to the conclusion that the fictional world is “synonymous” with Sinclair as reflections of his disposition. The fictional world, as opposed to the implied textual actual world, is distinctly the result of Sinclair’s focus on specific characters, events, spaces and facets of his social context. His representation of them is always in relation to his individualistic spiritual process. In some cases a transformation of textual actual world components into fictional world components is obvious, as in his “adaptation” of the girl in the park and of various spaces. Yet, even if it seems
that there are no differences between the actual world components and the fictional world components, all the elements represented by the text are also “processed” results of Sinclair’s focalisation. According to Nünning (2001:210) each verbal utterance and each physical or mental act of a character provides insight into his perspective – which would therefore also apply to what components/features of the textual actual world he represents and how he represents them.

To summarise: Focalisation in Demian is characterised by the following features:

(1) It is of a “psychological” nature, i.e. it is a consciously personal account with regard to the mental and emotional disposition of the intradiegetic character. The narration may be “unreliable” in the superficial sense that it is subjective and may differ from a hypothetical “objective” account. For example, it is factually incorrect that the houses looked at Sinclair on his way to Kromer (D, 26). But Sinclair does not strive towards an objective account (cf. Singh, 2006:120). This unreliability of figurative language is part of a reliable and valid confession, marked by his psychological dispositions that comprise a quest to discover a balanced approach towards good and evil and an appropriate relationship with his social context.

(2) The fictional worlds determined by Sinclair as the focaliser and Sinclair as an individual are indistinguishable. Focalisation marked by the Genettian selection of content as well as the transformation of textual elements à la Mieke Bal, namely the individual himself, characters, his social context, events and spaces are also aspects of self-representation. Both these different conceptions of focalisation are indicative of the mental and emotional disposition of the focaliser. What is allowed to “pass through the bottleneck” is an indication of focus, determined by the focaliser’s disposition. All that is present in the fictional world shows what is important to the focaliser and may be related to his preoccupation(s). The transformation of the textual elements is likewise an indication of the focaliser’s mental and emotional disposition because he then projects his inner experiences onto the external textual world. One can regard the fictional world as reflective, or as an extension, of the focaliser because the way in which a narrator or character focalises and what he focalises are so closely related to the inner life of the focaliser.

(3) Although the retrospective, extradiegetic first-person narrator and the focalising intradiegetic I are distinct from each other, the cognitive domain of the narrator and the mental and emotional processes and knowledge of the intradiegetic experiencing character merge (cf. Nünning, 2001:218). In Demian the narrator does not become an intradiegetic character himself by presenting within the fictional world what he thinks and feels at the present time. In such a case
a narrator could differentiate between his thoughts and feelings in the present and the past. Sinclair, as the retrospective narrator, wholly identifies with his past self. The thoughts and feelings present at the time of the narration approximate the nature of Sinclair’s mental disposition at the end of the novel and comprise a testimony of his psychological development.

Demian as a possible world is characterised by the following features:

(1) Focalisation in Demian is akin to actual world focus, perception and perspective, which qualifies the fictional world a possible world. The way in which people regard the components of the actual world (their social contexts and people, themselves and their relationship to them, events and spaces) is comparable to the focalisation of the textual actual world, and therefore contributes to establishing a fictional world as a possible one.

(2) An actual world reader can decode the fictional world by identifying with it or observing the principle of minimal departure which also qualifies the textual world as a possible world. Demian is a possible world but not in the sense that the book specifically and mimetically copy an actual life, for example, Hermann Hesse’s which requires “little insight to find again the rebellious and guilt laden Hesse who from a Pietist home and intellectual background, sought the alley of Calw and their mysteries” and because the book, the outcome of Hesse’s therapy and contact with Dr Lang, is “a book of memory, reflection, confrontation and realisation” (Weaver, 1977:80; 72). The life of an actual person, including Hesse’s personal experiences of course, may be comparable to Demian without any necessity of being the same to a large extent, i.e. with regard to many details. In comparison to the actual world, Sinclair, characters, his social context, events and spaces are possible. “Sinclair as possible in the actual world” could be understood too literally, but his thoughts and feelings certainly would be comparable to one’s own or other people’s inner experiences. His social context, the events in the book and spaces do evoke the actual world, especially through the causes that prompt Sinclair’s focalisation (and utilisation of figurative representation) of them.

These characteristics of focalisation and the fictional world as a possible world could be used to a large extent as parameters to read the following texts and to compare them. When considering social contexts, events and spaces in other texts one must bear in mind that these constructs owe their presence and nature to the focaliser. Similarly to the manner in which actual people experience the actual world, the building blocks are permeated with the subjectivity of the focaliser and are, as such, reflections of his mental and emotional disposition and an extension of
him as an individual. Hence this is also the point of departure with regard to the narrator of Doctorow’s *Welcome to Hard Times*, Blue’s representation of his social context.
Chapter 5

*Welcome to Hard Times: The social context of a fictional world as the product of a concurring individual and collective mindset*

5. Introduction

The previous chapter argued that all the components focused upon in this study, namely “the (central focalising) individual(s)”, “the social context(s)”, “events” and “spaces” could be regarded as extensions of, or characteristic of, the focalising individual because (as textual actual world elements subjectively processed through the focalisation) they belong to the fictional world. In this chapter the focus shifts from the focalising individual as a “building block” – containing other fictional world components – to the social context of the town with the evocative name “Hard Times” as a central component of the fictional world. One might also regard the representation of the social context of a fictional world as a reflection or “extension” of the narrating and focalising individual, Blue.

This chapter contends that all the constituents of the textual actual world attain social meaning as subjectively awarded to the world by the focalising individual, Blue. This occurs because of the possible world interaction between himself and the social context that influences his focalisation. As such, the said context is a focalised component that contributes to the creation of the fictional world. The main questions of this chapter are, consequently, How does Blue’s relationship with this social context affect his focalisation? And: How does the focaliser represent the social context of his textual actual world? More specifically: What does Blue choose to represent, i.e. as a manner of emphasis, in his representation of his social context? The interaction between Blue and his context is especially characterised by a focus on its members, their fearful, self-centred, immoral and self-destructive mindset, their (social) roles and concomitant actions. On the textual actual world level they suffer the coincidental coming and return of the Bad Man from Bodie who – as an external menace – destroys their town each time. On a metaphoric level the arrivals of the Bad Man are not external and coincidental, but related to the spiritual weakness of the social context because of the mindset and actions of the community. This weakness is the cause of their self-destruction.\(^\text{178}\) The chapter aims to explore the social context

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\(^{178}\) According to Williams (1996:70) the novel is willing to ask difficult questions about both personal and collective responsibility for tragic events; on this basis, Bakker (1984:162) calls the novel great: "Doctorow’s novel presents a vision … that questions the very basis of the
in the novel in terms of Blue’s Genettian focalisation, i.e. selection of what is allowed to pass through the “information-conveying pipe” (Genette, 1988:74). Furthermore, the chapter will also consider the community of Hard Times in terms of the argument that persons, collectively forming a social context, constitute a central element that contributes to the creation of a fictional world which could be regarded as a specific and subjective portrayal or interpretation of Blue’s textual actual world (cf. Van Luxemburg, Bal & Weststeijn, 1981:181).

As in Demian, one also finds that selection functions as an emphasising technique. This selection and concurrent emphasis form Blue’s representation of the social context of the town: this allows one to deduce a “social system” consisting of various roles that all relate to the Bad Man from Bodie as a “spirit” of self-destruction which inhabits the residents of the town.

This chapter will present a threefold theoretical basis for the reading of Welcome to Hard Times. The social context of the novel is regarded in terms of elements of social systems as described by Talcott Parsons, Gerald M. Platt and Neil J. Smelser (1974); these shed light on its nature. In addition, elements of actual world prostitution provide insights into the relationship between the residents of the town and the Bad Man from Bodie. The novel is furthermore read against the background of possibilities for and characteristics of mindsets as described by Viktor Frankl’s Man’s search for meaning: an introduction to logotherapy (1964) [1946]. Blue’s frame of mind is characterised by a sense of powerlessness and a self-reflexive consciousness with regard to his writing process as well as his representation of the social context, and resonates with certain of these theoretical notions. The chapter will then turn its focus on Blue’s representation of his social context itself that “exposes” a spiritual relationship between the characters and the Bad Man. Here the discussion will focus on the nature of the figure of the Bad Man from Bodie and the roles of the characters in the social system of Hard Times. Blue’s representation of the social context also consists of his depiction of social actions and the external world. The aspects of the social context also reflect the spiritual relationship between the Bad Man from Bodie and the residents of the town. Finally, the chapter will pay attention to the impetus of focalisation, namely actual world experiences that also make of the fictional world a possible world.

The novel recounts the alternating terrible and hopeful episodes related to the emergence and demise of Hard Times following an attack by the “Bad Man from Bodie” at the beginning of the narrative. Blue’s documentation of the town’s history itself is an important aspect of his experience of the West, suggesting that it was doomed from the outset, because it was undertaken from the wrong set of values, values as upheld by men like Zar and his kind – the majority of Blue’s townspeople – who can only exploit: the people, the land, until they are exhausted.”
focalisation as it reveals aspects of his awareness and preoccupation. He meticulously describes the Bad Man’s first appearance in the town, his destruction and murders of Avery, the first saloon owner of the town; Hausenfield, a German resident; Jack Millay, “a limping man with one arm” (WHT, 4); Florence, a prostitute; and Fee, a carpenter and Florence’s boyfriend, whose son, Jimmy, becomes Blue’s foster child. Blue both depicts the characters’ reactions and he refers to the landscape and weather. His thorough approach represents a holistic picture of the first destruction of the town and the episodes that follow, namely the suffering of the residents, the reconstruction of the town, the short-lived boom and, finally, the Bad Man’s return. Whilst Ezra Maple, the shopkeeper, recognises that it is time to move away, Blue stays because he fatalistically believes that chances for success are not better elsewhere than in Hard Times. The reconstruction of the town, concurring with Blue’s cynical and obtusely ambitious mindset, coincides with the further (fictional) construction of the text that is determined by this inconsistent state of mind. Blue’s apparently contradictory mindset is vital to the composition of the fictional world. He is clearly pessimistic, yet seems to be committed to rebuilding the town.179

Blue’s descriptions following the Bad Man’s first attack are characterised by an incongruous combination of acquiescence with his ominous fate to live in Hard Times, an ambition to rebuild the town and an attempt to redeem himself in Molly’s eyes. Molly, previously a prostitute who sustained wounds during a fire that the Bad Man had started, resents him for not having protected the town against the Bad Man in his position as a pseudo-mayor. Motivated by the hope that more people would mean safety, Blue arranges that Zar, a barkeep and pimp, and his prostitutes become new residents of the town after the Bad Man has left the town in a ruined condition. Blue is basically himself a pimp in the sense that he “sells” Zar and his entourage to Hard Times.180 Their presence immediately becomes confrontational when Zar’s prostitutes want to take Molly away from the care of John Bear, the Native American. They literally and figuratively intend to make her part of their circle, and Zar attacks John Bear. The strife is characteristic of the nature of the new social context. In addition, when Blue and Zar collect wood from a neighbouring ghost town, Fountain Creek, Blue’s cynical view of Hard Times and

179 Alf Moffet, who transports goods to Hard Times, says at one point: “‘Well now Blue I always liked you, yessir. If you was hanging by your fingers from a cliff you’d call it ‘climbing a mountain’” (WHT, 77).

180 According to Cooper (1980:10) the descriptions of Blue talking Zar into setting up a bar in Hard Times, Alf Moffet into bringing the stage back to the town, and Isaac Maple into being the town’s storekeeper like “a true politician and businessman” imply a manipulative approach with a self-interested agenda.
Zar’s self-centred, exploitive capitalist motivations to settle in the town characterise the dismal beginning of the town. Blue’s and Zar’s expedition to Fountain Creek is followed by a harsh winter during which the relationships among the town’s residents turn conspicuously unsociable. The absence of social harmony during Christmas signifies what the community really “celebrates”, namely self-centredness, anger, discord and fear instead of spiritual rescue and renewal.

The town subsequently seems to enter a new, prosperous phase. More residents settle, business starts to boom, the spirits of the people lift, the visit of Hayden Gillis, a representative of the office of the Governor of the Territory, seems to be a promising sign and there is an expectation that a road would be built though the town during the following spring. However, these improved circumstances are superficial. There are signs that the future of the town is actually dubious. For example, Zar’s heartless capitalist severity continues. Hayden Gillis expresses his scepticism about small towns like Hard Times, a response which Blue ignores. Yet, Blue also has the same instinctive feeling at times. Molly likewise experiences the intuitive feeling that the steps forward do not prevent the town from being a “wilderness” (WHT, 144).

This “wilderness” refers to the nature of the social context, confirmed through the accounts of inconsiderate and distrustful interpersonal relationships. For example, Jimmy becomes mean, Molly becomes increasingly more antagonistic, Zar is indifferent to the lack of places to sleep when job seekers come to town, and so forth. Blue self-deceivingly remains hopeful that everything “will be alright” (WHT, 174). A central irony of Blue’s focalisation is that despite all that he witnesses and documents he seems to be ignorant about the true nature of the prospects of the town. Blue confesses that he knew in advance, without needing to open the letter that he kept for the mine boss, Archie D. Brogan, that it instructed the mine be closed.

Blue’s foolish manner in which he responds to this knowledge is indicative of a mindset which is a combination of resignation and irrational hopefulness. After the Bad Man’s second attack, Blue finally confesses that, despite everything, he hopes that someone would be able to use the wood of the town’s ruins, but he remains ignorant about the fact that a social context can only survive on the basis of mutual support and the overcoming of various fears.
5.1. The nature of a social context as characterised by mindsets and actions

5.1.1. Parsons, Platt and Smelser: The field of object relations, action and interaction, symbolic meaning and goal-attainment

Theories of social systems developed by Parsons, Platt and Smelser (1974) are insightful in discussing the social context of Hard Times. The field of object relations that refers to Freud’s “reality constituted by other persons interacting with the individual”, “the salient environment of the individual personality” (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:22) is relevant to Blue’s focalisation of the actions and interactions between the members of his social context and their mindsets. Blue represents the reality of his textual actual world as consisting of members of a social context who are incapable of aligning their own personal desires and ambitions to objectives that would be beneficial for the entire social context.

Lotman (1977:212) points out that the “beginning has a defining and modeling function; it is not only evidence of existence, but also a substitute for causality, a category of later origin.” The first page of the novel immediately introduces three distinct (social) categories: the victimiser (the Bad Man from Bodie), the “paralysed” victims (Florence and “we all”) and the town in the literal desert space, conveying symbolic significance. This “social system” is represented by Blue from his position within it. His focalised version of his textual actual world is a product of his individualistic interaction with the members of his social context. The meaning of the social environment is subordinate to Blue’s focalisation which is characterised by his experience of it, which reveals that it is “spiritually” corrupt, i.e. mentally and emotionally deficient.

In light of Parsons’s, Platt’s and Smelser’s (1974:9;18) description of a social system as approximating Freud’s “reality principle” one recognises a “social system” already contaminated by the abuse of power and victimisation at the beginning of the novel. The relationships determined by “social roles” form a prominent feature of the fictional world. Keeping in mind Lotman’s views on the text’s beginning, the chapter will aim at connecting them to preceding extra-textual causal elements as well as to intra-textual developments.

It is noteworthy that Parsons, Platt and Smelser (1974:9) regard the command of language as necessary for “truly human behavior”. Communication is a symbolic and cultural action (in contrast to non-symbolic behaviour like breathing) and expressive of the “psychological aspect of the individual organism, the personality” (cf. Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:9). Fowler (1992:13) recognises that the Bad Man from Bodie “hardly speaks a word, has no past, is explained by no psychological program. He simply is.” This strengthens the notion that the Bad Man from Bodie is “not human”, but a spirit (which is possessing Clay Turner). John Bear differentiates himself by not using language to communicate with the members of the social context. Not talking, a form of communication in itself, denotes resistance to connecting with other people or on their (in his case moral) level. His non-verbal actions, however, such as helping by treating Molly’s wounds and taking care of Jimmy when he falls ill, are symbolic forms of communication that set him apart from the other members of the social context.
The fictional world should not be read according to Doctorow’s lingual “power of the regime”, as mimetic of a specific nineteenth century American townlet. Rather, the book contains allegorical features that allow the reader to identify possible world elements in the novel. The experience of the nature of the “primitive” social context could approximate experiences of “sophisticated” modern actual world contexts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Inherently human experiences, as possible world dynamics, characterise Blue’s focalisation.

Of central importance is the concept of “action” belonging to any social system: “Action is a kind of behavior, and behavior necessarily implies the existence of a living organism as the behaving entity. It follows therefore that action systems contain a plurality of living human organisms” (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:8): these form a social system. Characteristic of Hard Times are the actions that take place in the social environment and their symbolic meaning: “When … behavior is oriented and given meaning in symbolic terms, there exists also a cultural system” that includes belief systems, sets of propositions of cognitive significance as well as expressive symbols, together with the codes giving them meaning (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:8). The town as a collective “artifact” on the textual actual world level, as well as one represented by a text and its metaphoric possibilities, is expressive of the town’s culture. It is therefore significant that the “infrastructure” of Hard Times is erected using the ruins of a ghost town with the promising name “Fountain Creek” that denotes a mixture of (unfounded) hopefulness and ill-omened future. This symbolic framework serves as a scaffold for the ensuing actions. Furthermore, the landscape is reflective of the spiritual barrenness of the culture of the town owing to the self-centred and fearful actions and interactions that take place within this context. The town itself is an “externalized symbol” because it includes the “social, psychological, and organic subsystems of action” (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:16). A prosperous firm in any city might also be an externalised symbol connoting values similar to those of Hard Times, but the struggle to survive here is metaphorically effective in suggesting the spiritual “poverty” of the social context.

The capacity of the inhabitants of Hard Times to act rationally is absent because of the town’s spiritual poverty. The social context is uncertain of how to adapt in an inhospitable nature and
“attain its goal(s)” – or rather “fulfil its hopes”. The townsfolk are powerless with regard to whether a road would be built through the town, which would “guarantee” economic viability and existential security. Parsons, Platt and Smelser (1974:14) describe “adaptation” as the capacity to cope with environmental conditions and to utilise environmentally available resources in the interest of the system’s functioning. This is appropriate for the day-to-day survival of the residents in Hard Times. “Goal-attainment”, a collective process (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:20), is more specific and can be related to the expectation or hope of becoming a sustainable town – of which a precondition is that a road must be built through the town. The more important objective that is absent is the aspiration to attain a “community feeling, a sense of man’s common destiny, of a common human goal” (Bakker, 1985:471). The “Moral Community” (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:19) is therefore absent. It is supposed to involve, on the cultural side, moral-evaluative symbolisation; and on the societal side the function of ordering social relationships by contributing to a sense of community (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:19). Cooperation and common orientations reflect the institutionalisation of systems of values common to the members of societal groupings (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:19). However, in Hard Times meaningful common orientations and the loyalty of the participants at the level of practical action are unfeasible because the self-centredness of the individuals sabotages human relationships in their social context.

What is feared, i.e. the negative meanings of the “expressive sphere”, involving desires of individual personalities and organisms and also of collectivities, completely overwhelms positive meanings, i.e. what is desired (cf. Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:20). According to Parsons, Platt and Smelser (1974:21) sociologists commonly think that a primary function of kinship, especially of the modern nuclear family, is to order the motivations of individuals in relation to their social roles: “For adults this means especially the management of emotional tensions that might otherwise jeopardise role performance. For children, in addition to this, there is the central function of socialisation in the social-psychological sense of learning the roles that are being taught to them” (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:21). The town as a “family” does not rationally reason and act in moral terms, but rather in terms of personal gain, which results in effects that are reminiscent of the consequences of the prostitution trade. Real kinship (mutual understanding, care and support) therefore does not exist; appearances of it are false or superficial and characters are subsequently powerless to participate in the “collective goal-oriented processes” (Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:21).
5.1.2. The dehumanising and imprisoning elements of prostitution as metaphor for the social relationships in Hard Times

Through Blue’s focalisation, i.e. his selection and filtering, *Welcome to Hard Times* as a whole is a portrayal of (fictional) human beings that do not achieve their spiritual potential, but become prostitute-like victims. The social context of Hard Times can be analysed in terms of gender relations in the prostitution trade. This reading suggests itself because it is already conspicuous that more than a third of the total population of Hard Times were, or are, prostitutes (with the exception of the psychologically unstable Helga) (cf. Porsche, 1991:68). However, the men in Hard Times may also be interpreted as “prostitute figures” because of the associations with “consenting” exploitation, abuse, degradation and suchlike actions. All the participants in the text are in a victimiser-victim relationship; however, since the real victimiser is not really the Bad Man from Bodie, but fear, insecurity, self-centredness, immorality, inter alia, as the underlying inner dynamics: all the characters are simultaneously victimisers and victims of themselves. This is, however, not different from victimisation by an external agent, in terms of their experience, as they do exhibit signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For example, Molly’s heightened consciousness of the past trauma and her angry outbursts, as well as Blue’s avoidance of thoughts about the past trauma and his emotional numbness (cf. Farley et al. 1998), are also symptoms experienced by prostitutes when suffering from PTSD. The mindsets and actions in the social context of Hard Times are therefore degrading or dehumanising. Both men and women lose their dignity, as prostitutes generally do, because of their states of mind that are affected by their interpersonal relationships with pimps and punters.

Fundamental concerns of feminism include equality and dignity for women with regard to their political and social rights as well as their physical and mental well-being: these should protect them against oppression, abuse, exploitation and the like, as part of women’s liberation. Activism against prostitution as a form of feminism reveals certain possible world experiences that the residents of Hard Times undergo in common with prostitutes, which clarify the represented social context. Various similarities exist between the experiences of the represented social context and the reality that prostitutes frequently face. Baldwin (1992:49) states that what “most needs hearing” on the subject of prostitution is “the carnage: the scale of it, the dailiness of it, the seeming inevitability of it; the torture, the rapes, the murders, the beatings, the despair,
the hollowing out of the personality, the near extinguishment of hope …”183 This synopsis of the plight of prostitutes addresses the experiences of both physical abuse and destruction, by means of rapes, battery and murders, and psychological abuse and destruction by means of degradation or dehumanisation and the damage caused to the self-esteem of the individuals; likewise experienced by the residents of Hard Times. They are defenceless in the presence of the overwhelming, overpowering, misogynistic and sadistic Bad Man.

Both the residents of Hard Times and prostitutes face the reality of becoming objectified and “irrelevant”. It is noteworthy that Blue’s focalisation includes Jenks’s casual surprise at Bert Albany’s affection for the Chinese prostitute; it is both racist and condescending when Jenks says: “‘Shit … Y’mean he’s cooin’ wif thet li’l yaller flopgal?’” Jenks finally also becomes as “worthless” as the “flopgal” when the Bad Man kills him. According to Baldwin (1992:56) “feminism’s consistent strategy has been to seek to explain ourselves; our primary goal to be understood as deserving of a respected human life …” An investigator into the “Green River” serial murders (of 48 prostitutes in the Seattle area) commented that not everyone relates to prostitution on the Pacific Highway (Baldwin, 1992:87). The victims of Ted Bundy, on the other hand, attracted more interest because they resembled everyone’s daughters (Baldwin, 1992:87). Baldwin (1992:87) responds to this by saying that even in death prostitutes are not “real” women: “Prostitutes, apparently, are nobody’s daughters; no longer even ‘victims’ when murdered, but rather part of the flotsam of ‘prostitution on the Pacific Highway’”. Similarly, the Bad Man does not think of the people of Hard Times in terms of his victims, but merely regards them – like a misogynist projecting his “eroticized violence and hatred” onto a prostitute – as “rapable, beatable, killable” (cf. Baldwin, 1992:87-88). The victimiser gains a sadistic sense of power by raping, beating and killing: actions which could be related to the abuse that he might have suffered himself. The result is that he chooses to align himself wholly with the identity of the victimiser instead of the victim. Baldwin (1992:110) argues that fundamental to the john’s sexual experience is “eroticized disregard of the women”.184 The residents of Hard Times and

183 Farley et al. (1998) observe that “sexual and other physical violence is the normative experience for women in prostitution”, substantiated by a wide range of research, for example, Sex work on the streets: prostitutes and their clients (1996) by McKeganey and Barnard, the article “Prostitution, violence, and post-traumatic stress disorder” by Farley and Barkan (1998), Baldwin’s (1992) article “Split at the root: prostitution and feminist discourses of law reform”, etcetera. The results of the research undertaken by Farley et al. (1998), based on interviews with 475 people from South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the USA and Zambia involved in prostitution, indicate that the majority had been physically assaulted and raped and suffer from PTSD. MacKinnon (1993:25) points out that it is common for prostitutes to be deprived of food and sleep and money, beaten, tortured, raped, and threatened with the lives: “Women in prostitution are subject to near total domination. Much of this is physical, but pimps also develop to a high art forms of nonphysical force to subjugate women’s will.”184 Baldwin (1992:110) refers to Barry who describes the experience of the prostitute’s client as essentially noninteractive and non-mutual and to Beneke who describes it as a process of anonymising the woman and failing to acknowledge her moral, spiritual or emotional being.
prostitutes face the reality of becoming dehumanised, through the absence of respect for their human rights and their objectification.

Despite this harsh reality both prostitutes and the residents of Hard Times seem ironically unable to remove themselves from the context of their victimisation. MacKinnon (1993:14) equates prostitution with the transgression of liberty as a primary civil right, basing this argument on research carried out in Toronto among street prostitutes and research performed by Barry\textsuperscript{185} which indicates that prostitutes often do want to escape from prostitution, but do not know how to do so. This could be regarded as part of their conditioning, namely that their defencelessness and their victimisation are “normal”. Prostitutes often dissociate, or mentally numb themselves, from the reality of their abuse. Blue’s “mechanical” or “automatised” way of living is a kind of emotional distancing, the result of regarding Bad Men as invincible. If the Bad Man wants to “put a match to everyone” (WHT, 199) there is nothing that can be done about it. Blue and the other inhabitants of Hard Times also do not know how to avoid the Bad Man.

This chapter argues that the town, the residents and the Bad Man are not independent of one another, but indistinguishable on a spiritual level. The relationship that the residents – and especially Blue – want to save is between themselves and the town. A “healthy relationship” between them and the latter is not possible because the threat is not an external one, but an internal/psychological one that is synonymous with the spiritual culture in the town and approximates that of being a Jew in a Nazi concentration camp. As difficult or impossible as it is for a prostitute physically and psychologically to leave the context that controls her, unless she makes a drastic change of (spiritual) direction\textsuperscript{186}, it is just as hard for the residents of Hard Times to alter their mental dispositions because they persevere in hoping for what is impossible. They “prostitute” themselves to a psychological disposition of negative self-interest and fear. They imprison themselves by allowing themselves a self-destructive frame of mind.

\textsuperscript{185} 92\% of the prostitutes interviewed in the research by Farley et al. (1998) stated that they wanted to leave prostitution.

\textsuperscript{186} MacKinnon (1993:28; cf. 27) points out, against the background of concrete examples, that the appearance of choosing to work as a prostitute is profoundly deceptive and asks: “If prostitution is a free choice, why are the women with the fewest choices the ones most often found doing it?” Farley et al. (1998) refer to an example in Vanwesenbeeck’s book Prostitutes’ well-being and risk (1994): that of a prostitute in Amsterdam who described prostitution as “volunteer slavery”, “clearly articulating both the appearance of choice and the overwhelming coercion behind that choice”. Being a prostitute and living in Hard Times are personal “suicidal” choices, but without a decisive moment where the individual is confronted with a choice such as jumping off the bridge or not. Rather, it is a gradual process preceded by many causative elements, for example, events and/or circumstances, like family members introducing a young girl to prostitution. Blue decides to remain in Hard Times because “it wasn’t the site but the settling of it that mattered”, “expectations wore away with the weather”, he “learned it was enough to stay alive” (WHT, 7) and was “tired out with looking, looking, moving always and wanting I don’t know what” (WHT, 100); remarks that represent Blue’s disillusionment with regard to his concept of the textual actual world.
5.1.3. “Hard Times” considered against the background of Frankl’s “hard times”: Spiritual deficiency, versus psychological strength

Viktor Frankl’s famous *Man’s search for meaning: an introduction to logotherapy*¹⁸⁷ yields notions on almost every page that are relevant and insightful with regard to the social context of *Welcome to Hard Times* and which could be used as points of departure in discussing the focalised and possible world of the text. The social community of Hard Times is comparable to the concentration camps in Germany during the Second World War, on the basis of the role divisions of “victimisers” and “victims” and the meaning that is given to the identity of being a victim. The victimisation in the camps was of course not only physical, but also psychological. However, whilst physical escape was impossible, spiritual escape was achievable, namely through logotheraphy which reorients a patient toward the meaning of life (Frankl, 1964:98). In Hard Times physical escape would have been feasible, but the resistance to escaping is reflective of neglecting to “escape spiritually”, for example, by compassionate mutual care for one another, which would be a socially constructive outlook.

In both Hard Times and in the concentration camps, spiritual apathy was a result of psychological imprisonment in particular. The residents of the town see the Bad Man as invincible and do not dare to “undermine his authority”. In a sense they “allow” him to literally destroy the town, attack, rape and murder people. These actions could also be interpreted as (self-) destruction in a spiritual sense. Likewise, the camp inmate “was frightened of making decisions and of taking any sort of initiative whatsoever. This was the result of a strong feeling that fate was one’s master, and that one dared not try to influence it any way, but instead let it take its own course” (Frankl, 1964:56). Blue similarly holds the attitude that one has to “wait out” a Bad Man like dust or hailstones (cf. WHT, 7).

Blue’s focalisation is characterised by a spiritual tendency which is also possible in the actual world. The division of “victimiser” and “victims” is not only feasible with regard to abnormal contexts (like the concentration camps), but also with regard to normal life in which a person’s own outlook on life can be his “victimiser”: for example, where the person/victim focuses on the fatalistic notion that life is pointless. Frankl (1964:115) explains that suffering ceases to be suffering in some way at the moment it obtains the meaning of a sacrifice. An alteration in the individual’s perspective is necessary. Frankl (1964:121-122; my emphasis – PvdM) refers to a

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¹⁸⁷ This book was first published in Germany in 1946, under the title *Ein Psycholog erlebt das Konzentrationslager* (Frankl, 1964).
rabbis who suffered from despair because he feared that he would not be assigned the same place in Heaven as his children, who would automatically attain the highest place in Heaven since they had died as innocent martyrs. When Frankl pointed out to him that his sufferings were not in vain because he had probably survived his children so that he could become purified through years of suffering, so that finally he, too, would become worthy of joining them in Heaven, the rabbi found relief from his suffering “through the new point of view”. The attitude of the social community in Hard Times is marked by a lack of belief in their lives which could also be formulated as “having no reason to live” or “finding their lives meaningless”. Frankl (1964:106) observes that those prisoners in Germany, Japan and Korea “who knew that there was a task waiting for them to fulfill were most apt to survive … mental health is based on … the tension between what one has already achieved and what one is and what one should become.”

Blue and his social context would only have been able to survive if they had believed in a positive reason or meaning for their lives – which is unclear or absent. Rather than, for example, material prosperity as an uncertain spiritually “empty” ideal in Hard Times, one that is supposed to counteract existential uncertainty, a genuinely constructive social action such as being in service of one another, which would foster “spiritual wealth”, would be such a reason or meaning. The residents suffer a lack of values because of the combination of their existential uncertainty and the hope of liberation through materialistic means. The “meaning orientation” (cf. Frankl, 1964:107) of Hard Times is based on a projection of wishful thinking and is therefore void of the demanding and challenging character that could “call man forth or summon him” (Frankl, 1964:100). The result is an “existential vacuum”: “the feeling of the total and ultimate meaningless of their lives. They lack the awareness of a

188 Frankl (1964:83) encouraged a group of prisoners by saying that there is always someone who looks down on one in hard times (my emphasis – PvdM), a friend, a wife, somebody alive or dead, or a God – who would expect one not to disappoint him/her: “He would hope to find us suffering proudly – not miserably – knowing how to die”. Suffering “hard times” therefore gains a positive meaning. In Blue’s narration hard times are given the meaning of the evil spirit of the Bad Man that entails inner weaknesses such as fear and selfishness. Frankl (1964:79) refers to two suicides which he was able to prevent through changing a focus on fear and the self towards somebody and something else. The two persons felt that life was pointless and that they had nothing more to expect from life. Frankl turned their focus away from this pessimistic outlook towards something that life was expecting from them. In one case it was in a relationship. The man adored his child who was waiting for him in a foreign country. In the other it was a series of books that the other man still needed to finish. In both these situations transcendence was possible through a focus on honouring somebody else and on service, i.e. through the contribution that one could make in others’ lives, like a relationship or through writing books.

189 Frankl (1964:49) writes about the existential uncertainty of the camp prisoner who suffers a loss of values if he sees himself exclusively as his victimiser does, namely as an exploitable “object to be exterminated”: “If the man in the concentration camp did not struggle against this in a last effort to save his self-respect, he lost the feeling of being an individual, a being with a mind, with inner freedom and personal value. He thought of himself then as only a part of an enormous mass of people; his existence descended to the level of animal life.” Like prostitutes who offer themselves as objects of exploitation by pimps and punters, camp prisoners and the residents of Hard Times also allow themselves to be abused by their spiritual poverty. Blue’s wish to see a prosperous town is noble per se, but he focuses too much on external/material means to realise this ideal, and in the process neglects to show that he cares for people like Jimmy and Molly and that they are more important than the ideal of a thriving town.
meaning worth living for. They are haunted by the experience of their inner emptiness, a void within themselves .” (Frankl, 1964:107). Frankl often refers to the apathy, “a kind of emotional death” (1964:18), “the blunting of the emotions and the feeling that one could not care any more” (1964:21) that characterised the reactions of the prisoners. Similarly, Blue’s reaction is marked by an individualistic expression of indifference. The Bad Man’s “frustrated will to meaning” is, dramatically, vicariously compensated for by a desperate “will to power” (cf. Frankl, 1964:109) which manifests itself as a “will to destruction”. His second attack – which destroys the town and also results in his own death – coincides with the climax of the social context’s despair and hopelessness.

In order to avoid this existential vacuum, logotherapy prescribes that meaning in life could be discovered in three ways, namely by doing a deed, by experiencing a value and by suffering. The “deeds” performed to create a town provide as little meaning for its residents as investing in a sinking ship. Blue’s existence seems to be made meaningful by the deed of writing the text. It seems that it was his “destiny to suffer” (cf. Frankl, 1964:78) so that others may learn from the mistakes that Hard Times has made. The book of course does have this value, but Blue’s confession at the end of the book that “with great shame, I keep thinking someone will come by sometime who will want to use the wood” (WHT, 212) reveals that he does not recognise the potential meaningfulness of his writings. Harter and Thompson (1990:23) comment that “Blue’s early use of the wood from a partially burned out town is a parallel act to his storytelling – both recreate Hard Times, one literally, the other figuratively”. Blue’s story, the textual actual towns, Fountain Creek and Hard Times, and their corresponding ends serve as “wood” to construct “Better Times” by means of learning from the mistakes that Blue and the townspeople of Hard Times and Fountain Creek did not seem to recognise. Along with greed and “a powerless, pathetic moralism”, Friedl (1988:21) mentions ignorance as part of the environment, which is comparable to Stephen Crane’s “psychic ingredient” of his “grim naturalism” (for example, in

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191 Zar’s “frustrated will to meaning” is compensated for by “the most primitive form of the will to power, the will to money” while the ineffective “will to meaning” of the miners’, Jenks’s and all the customers of the prostitutes may be interpreted as “the will to pleasure” (cf. Frankl, 1964:109).

192 “The will to power” or the metaphysical principle or will of all existence/life which includes the ambition to constantly gain more power (cf. Kaiser, 2011:24-25, 27) has its origin in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche influenced Alfred Adler: “… Adler sees the will to power as an essential form of human striving, though he at times has referred to it as striving for superiority, striving for perfection, striving for completion, and so forth” (Hartley, 1995:348).
the story “The Blue Hotel”). As involved in the representative act, ignorance seems to be a case of not being able to see the forest for the trees – or, rather, not seeing the spiritual desert for the lack of a healthy common mindset and genuinely constructive social actions.

“Experiencing a value” is explained as making one’s fellow man “aware of what he can be and of what he should become” and realising his potentialities (Frankl, 1964:113-114). The focus of the individuals in Hard Times is characterised by self-centredness and detachment from fellow residents. Frankl (1964:80) expresses the notion that leadership motivated by care for one’s followers has the power to direct focus: “A senior block warden who did not side with the authorities had, by his just and encouraging behavior, a thousand opportunities to exert a far-reaching moral influence on those under his jurisdiction” (Frankl, 1964:80). Neither Blue, Jenks as the deputy sheriff, nor Zar exhibits leadership that would positively influence the mindsets of the town’s residents.

The meaning of suffering that depends on the perspective of the individual exists in, and sometimes because of, the restrictions of circumstances. Blue, Jenks and Zar could have been good leaders if they had made better choices, i.e. if they had believed that the meaning of their lives was not a test concerning an animalistic survival of the fittest, but a human service benefiting the people of their social context. Although Frankl (1964:131) consents that the freedom of a human being is restricted, he disagrees with the notion that man is nothing but the results of biological, psychological and sociological conditions, or the product of heredity and environment: “It is not freedom from conditions but it is freedom to take a stand toward the conditions.” What the individual becomes he makes out of himself “within the limits of endowment and environment”: “In the concentration camps … we watched and witnessed some of our comrades behave like swine while others behaved like saints” (Frankl, 1964:136-137). In

193 Porsche (1991:65) observes that the whole history of the collapse of Hard Times reads like a bitter commentary on social Darwinism comparable to that of Zane Grey (1951:367) who wrote in Wanderer of the Wasteland (first published 1923): “The individual lived and fought and perished, but the species survived.” In Porsche’s (1991:60-66) discussion of the novel’s criticism of capitalism he notes that in the cases of Tateh in Ragtime and Joe in Loon lake the price to pay for material wealth is possible “im Verlust ihrer Existenz als sozialen Wesens” (Porsche, 1991:61) “[in the loss of their existence as social beings”]. The characters in Welcome to Hard Times also remain disconnected from one another and are in this sense never truly “social”.

194 The concluding image of a man who walks to his execution in those gas chambers still dignified and with the Shema Yisrael on his lips (Frankl, 1964:137) is a striking example of the choice to remain dignified in unimaginable circumstances. Such a man refuses to focus on the implied meaning that the victimiser gives to this extermination, namely that a person, based on his Jewish identity, is less than worthless, namely contemptible. Frankl (1964:22) refers to the “mental agony” that physical abuse caused. Once a guard playfully picked up a stone and threw it at Frankl: “That, to me, seemed the way to attract the attention of a beast, to call a domestic animal back to its job…” (Frankl, 1964:22). Physical retaliation (suicidal in a concentration camp, in any case) would not help the victim to transcend the meaning of the gesture. According to logotherapy only a spiritual reorientation, for example by focusing on one’s dignity, can help one to do so.
Hard Times actions are motivated by the will to survive which does not take the form of behaviour that the residents can be proud of, but is essentially shameful behaviour.

The basis of Blue’s focalisation is a symptom of this negative behaviour, itself a significant reaction to the harsh surroundings that Frankl (1964:124) calls “anticipatory anxiety”, i.e. the ironic effect that what a person fears is precisely what actually occurs. For example, when Blue writes: “What good anyone could come to on this ashen townsite I could not see” (WHT, 53) he focalises Hard Times as he experiences it, in terms of an anticipating fear. The ultimate ruin of the town takes place because of the fear and the spiritual deficiency that Blue and the inhabitants of the town share. His immediate mechanical and fatalistic continuation of life that indicates his neglect of doing anything about his hopelessness also expresses his fear and spiritual deficiency: “As the day came up I found enough to do: I mixed up more batter for our breakfast, I looked for a pot for Molly’s use …” (WHT, 53). This mechanical continuation is also part of another related irony, namely that of “hyper-intention”, i.e. “in the same way that fear brings to pass what one is afraid of, likewise a forced intention makes impossible what one forcibly wishes” (Frankl, 1964:124). Because Blue and the residents of Hard Times do not know how to achieve psychological strength through courageous and constructive (logotherapeutic) choices, they “hyper-intentionally” place their hope for better times on a combination of luck and the ethos that hard work and materialistic prosperity are causally related.

However, the belief\(^{195}\) in either hard work itself or material prosperity achieved through hard work or luck cannot liberate them in a spiritual sense. Blue and the other residents of Hard Times idealistically hope for “liberation” in the specific form of money-oriented progress for Hard Times, dependent on their efforts, but also the presence of gold in the ore. The artificial optimism (cf. Frankl, 1964:78) – that industry could liberate them and the wish for gold to be present – has dire consequences when followed by disappointment: “The prisoner who had lost faith in the future – his future – was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his

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\(^{195}\) Frankl (1964:74-75) relates the story of his senior block warden who told him that he had dreamed that the camp would be liberated on the 30th of March 1945. He became ill on the 29th and passed away on the 31st: “To all outward appearances, he had died of typhus. … The ultimate cause of my friend’s death was that the expected liberation did not come and he was severely disappointed. This suddenly lowered his body’s resistance against the latent typhus infection” (Frankl, 1964:75). The wish for liberation to occur on a specific date is a form of artificial optimism (cf. Frankl, 1964:78).
spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay” (Frankl, 1964:74). The focalised history of Hard Times is a result of a loss of valid faith in the future.

On the level of the textual actual world, the Bad Man’s reappearance is coincidental. Freese (1987:213) explains that the Bad Man “is not the evil other, but a force that exists within everybody” and that he is “not only bred by the land as a quasi natural force which one has to endure … but he is an embodiment, a projection of evil urges latent in every man. Thus, when he comes again, he is no intruder from outside but the logical result of the strife and the disintegration of the townspeople.” On a metaphoric or an allegorical level the townspeople’s belief in an artificial illusion and their ensuing disappointment is related to a “belief in the Bad Man” who is the personification of the loss of faith in the future, the absence or opposite of compassion – and consequently of spiritual death.

Frankl (1964:62) poses the question as to how many free men possess inner value anchored in “higher, more spiritual things”. If the individual relies on money and material possessions in order to experience a sense of “inner value”, he will inevitably suffer from an inferiority complex and feel utterly degraded (cf. Frankl, 1964:62) once his money and possessions are taken away. An evil cycle is recognisable: Because the residents feel degraded, a spiritual apathy sets in that keeps them from considering leaving Hard Times. It is as if they feel that they believe in, deserve and expect their fate. This is part of their anticipatory anxiety. Yet, Frankl (1964:65) argues that camp life shows that a human being is not merely a product of many conditional and environmental factors – be they of a biological, psychological or sociological nature – but that he does have a choice of action:

There were enough examples, often of a heroic nature, which proved that apathy could be overcome, irritability suppressed. Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress. We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. …

196 This is reminiscent of the condition termed “delusion of reprieve”, a kind of deus ex machina: “The condemned man, immediately before his execution, gets the illusion that he might be reprieved at the very last minute” (Frankl, 1964:8). After a life of hardship Blue and Molly hope for “reprieve”. However, the delusion is the expectation that they will be able to “manipulate” the external world by means of an inner wish. The only “manipulation” that is possible is a change in focus.

197 Frankl (1964:62-63) avers that the more “prominent” prisoners in the sociological structure of the camp, namely the Capos, the cooks, the store-keepers and the camp policemen who previously might have been, for example, bank directors ironically did not feel degraded, but even as if they had been promoted: “Some even developed miniature delusions of grandeur!” This is reminiscent of Zar, the saloon owner, and Jenkins, the sheriff, who are to an extent less conscious of their status as “spiritual prisoners” because of their focus on their social status.
they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way … in the final analysis it becomes clear that the sort of person the prisoner became was the result of an inner decision, and not the result of camp influences alone … the way they bore their suffering was a genuine inner achievement. It is this spiritual freedom – which cannot be taken away – that makes life meaningful and purposeful (Frankl, 1964:65-66).

The immorality in Hard Times is characterised by the apathetic acceptance by its inhabitants of their collective torment and destiny. The opposite of this immorality would be, as Frankl (1964:67 – my emphasis – PvdM) puts it, “the way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails”: “It may remain brave, dignified and unselfish” (Frankl, 1964:67). Acknowledging the reality of their moral flaws and redirecting their focus to brave, dignified and unselfish acts and values, instead of spiritually empty acts and values, i.e. of a materialistic and selfish nature, would have meant their spiritual liberation from Hard Times/hard times.

5.2. Blue: his mindset of powerlessness and his self-reflexive consciousness of his writing process

The nature of the depicted social context as part of the fictional world is the result of Blue’s retrospective first-person narration and focalisation. These are marked by two distinct aspects. Firstly, his inability to “rise above the situation” and force his thoughts away from his and the residents’ powerlessness and “to turn to another subject” (cf. Frankl, 1964:73). When he includes in his narration is therefore the result of his often spiritually apathetic focus which takes the form of a numb “mechanical” approach. His subjective emphasis on specific aspects of his textual actual world also creates the fatalistic ambience of the represented social context.

198 Porsche (1991:53) comments that the name “Blue” is an obvious indication that the character has the “blues” while for Morris (1991:27) it is a trope, “a grim understatement for the suffering the melancholic narrator constantly feels.” Porsche (1991:37) also presents an interesting connection between Blue’s “notes” and the “notes” of the music genre, blues. The three ledgers, that correspond with the three chords of blues, correspond with Doctorow’s concept of history as cyclical, which is found in Welcome to Hard Times, The book of Daniel, Ragtime and Drinks before dinner (Porsche, 1991:35-37; cf. Lee, 1997:14-18). Parks (1991:23) observes that “the recurring and apparently inevitable cycle of death and rebirth suggests the pessimism of the biblical book of Ecclesiastes, where there is ‘nothing new under the sun’”.

199 Blue’s responses reflect his spiritual assent or “surrender”. When the Bad Man takes Hausenfield’s horse Blue simply says: “Too bad for Hausenfield” (WHT, 10). When Molly tells Blue that she had left a life in New York as a maid for a life that she hoped would be better, but turned out worse, he says: “’We do what we can, Molly’” (WHT, 16). Contrary to Frankl’s concept that one at least has control over one’s attitude, Blue’s reaction implies that one cannot control one’s life. Instead of comforting her in suggesting a positive outlook (by means of gratitude and the possibility of change) his response suggests an apathetic acceptance of her fate.
Blue’s narration and focalisation are also characterised by his awareness of the representative nature of his documentation. Every communicative component of the text, owing to the context of the fictional world as a collective unit, is relevant to Blue’s psychological individuality. An important part of the fictional world is therefore the metanarrative nature of Blue’s story, affected by his beliefs, mindset, personal mental and emotional status or “spiritual disposition”.

Connections also exist between aspects of the mindsets of Blue and the residents of Hard Times. He functions as a paradigm for aspects of the mindsets of individuals, such as fearfulness. Reactions in order to counteract this fear are individualistic, but some correspondences do exist. Zar is the extreme capitalist in Hard Times. Isaac Maple came to Hard Times in search of his brother, Ezra, but is also a capitalist who is central in this context. Blue idealises a town which will stand up to the Bad Man, but he mistakenly thinks that hard work, a large population and material success will ensure this. He therefore capitulates to capitalism. Molly and Jimmy become “mean” and all of the inhabitants perfunctorily remain in Hard Times despite their existential fears.

There are various signs that Blue experiences himself and his social context as powerless against the harsh reality of the world. Symptomatic of PTSD, Blue feels as if trauma from the past were happening again, i.e. as if he were reliving it (cf. Farley et al. 1998) when he compares his decision to reach out for the glass of liquor that the Bad Man had poured for him, instead of going for his gun as similar to his experience of his wife’s death: “The Bad Man’s grinning face came back to me and I felt my shy hand choosing the glass he offered. Twenty years before I had put my young wife into the ground after the cholera took her and the same rage rose in my throat for something that was too strong for me, something I could not cope with” (WHT, 27).

His acceptance of the glass is symbolic of his acceptance of his powerlessness because of his subjective interpretation of the world as characterised by an exclusively and unavoidably inclement nature. Going for his gun, rather than accepting the glass, would have meant self-empowerment. Blue could also have empowered himself if he had prevented the situation of being the presence of the Bad Man. This situation could only have been avoided if his mindset had been constructive and had led him away from the town and landscape that symbolically denote a destructive frame of mind. On a spiritually allegorical level it would mean a belief in “divine mercy” – or that the nature of the world also allows clemency and that personal and collective prosperity is possible.
Blue remains in Hard Times, i.e. he continues in a destructive way of thinking. He does not believe that there could be a better place, which would represent a belief in divine mercy. Hard Times is a physical manifestation of Blue’s belief in the universal, inclement order of his textual actual world. He distinguishes himself from Ezra Maple in the sense that he stoically and fatalistically accepts investing his energies in the town because his scepticism about the world entails that he does not regard it as different from the town:

“Blue, I came West from Vermont. They have trees in that country.”

“Is that right?”

“Water flows from the rocks, game will nibble at your back door, and if you’re half a man you can make your life without too much trouble.”

“That’s what I once heard about this country” (WHT, 28).

A concomitantly representative act of his pessimism, or subservience to evil or the spirit of resignation, is his investment of energy in getting rid of the Bad Man’s dead roan. Ezra Maple remarks: “No sense to that … unless you’re fixin’ to stay” (WHT, 28) – which Blue does. Ezra Maple’s belief in better or healthier surroundings indirectly denotes faith in the biblical God as representative of love, mercy, a desire for a moral lifestyle and belief in social contexts which are, consequently, orderly. On the allegorical level of the text the idyllic nature that Ezra Maple describes is metaphoric of spiritual liberation.

Instances of fallacious or invalid optimism with regard to “prosperity” occur. These oppose a genuine and rational belief in all that is truly good: a valid optimism. Blue and the social context of Hard Times “hyper-intentionally” yearn for the material affluence that a road through the town to the lodes would bring about. Arnold (1983a:89) concludes that the initial “rebirth” of Hard Times after the first destruction is a sham and that despite prosperity, or because of it, the town again becomes a hellish place where decency in the forms of religious values of love and faith is undermined. When Molly asks Blue whether he really thinks that they are “going on the map”, he responds with: “I know it. It’s our turn” (WHT, 131). Reading the novel as an allegory200, the town’s spiritual poverty would prevent this. Neither Archie D. Brogan, the mine

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200 Core (1981:393) refers to the novel as an allegory of good and evil that displays the stark symmetry of a morality play. Morris (1991:29) remarks that the features of the Bad Man prompt consideration of the novel as an allegory in which the Bad Man serves as an example of embodiment or personification of fear and evil. Van der Merwe (2007) discusses the novel as an allegory.
boss, the Company directors nor the engineer in the town provide any confirmation to the residents of the town that a road would indeed be built. Believing that a road through the town would be their saving grace is a fallacy. Inner values such as the fruits of the spirit, namely love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23), are neglected. Blue’s outlook is therefore self-deceptive: not only because of the unlikely possibility of sustainable material wealth, but – more importantly – because Blue and his social context neglect the true means of (spiritual) liberation, namely inner values/wealth as forms and causes of prosperity. The lack of certainty as regards material prosperity could be read as a literary device to express the absence of “inner wealth” and the unlikely prospect that it could be attained.

Apart from the focus on material prosperity (that also implies a necessary causal relationship between hard work and success/liberation) Blue’s physical hard work is a side-effect of his spiritual emptiness and traumatisation: these comprise a (contradictory) combination of resignation and hyper-intention which includes, in this case, the irrational “belief” that any form of physical investment would contribute to prosperity. One of the most striking examples of this belief and of Blue’s concomitant lack of conviction and hope occurs when he suggests to Zar that they should retrieve wood from neighbouring ghost towns to rebuild the town. Whereas Zar is eager and wants to depart immediately so as to be able to start with his business ventures, Blue acknowledges that “glad as I was to be staking out in earnest I couldn’t believe in it altogether” (WHT, 58). When they return with the wood from Fountain Creek, Blue confesses that: “I couldn’t believe the horses had a destination, I kept thinking I was traveling to no purpose. What good was this to that woman and that boy? What could I hope to do for them? Only a fool would call anywhere in this land a place and everywhere else a journey to it” (WHT, 66). His neglecting to leave with Molly and Jimmy despite his dark thoughts could be related to his resigned belief that if they did leave, they would only have to face a Bad Man somewhere else.

Chapter 5: Welcome to Hard Times: The social context of a fictional world as the product of a concurring individual and collective mindset
Blue’s frame of mind is marked by resignation, leading to mechanical, compulsive and escapist actions towards the hopeless goal of a prospering town that he irrationally hopes would keep Bad Men away. The culmination of his dispirited acts takes place when he kills the Bad Man. Blue regards his own decision to kill the latter as an act in futility: “I had to do something and what was the most futile seemed to make the most sense” (WHT, 202). Really killing the Bad Man would require a different spiritual direction: away from fear, self-centredness and immorality towards courage, communal care and morality. Blue only manages to kill the person Clay Turner, but not the Bad Man as an inner spirit, i.e. not as an external presence, but as one existing within Blue’s own mind. Blue’s focalisation, falling on many actions that basically distract him from the “inescapability” of the Bad Man’s return, ironically only serves to keep the spirit of the Bad Man alive. He admits that during the winter he read an almanac to keep his thoughts away from “brooding or wondering where the Bad Man might be enjoying his winter” (WHT, 100). His disheartened, mechanical approach is reflected when Blue continues to build a dugout following Molly’s declaration of hate, ironically preceded by her request to take care of her: “What was the use? … The only hope we have is that we can pay off on our failures, and Molly’s grin had burned the hope right out of me” (WHT, 36).

A striking example of this transition from misery to mechanical continuation occurs later when Blue describes his emotional suffering from Molly’s anger towards him, suddenly followed by a reference to the result of his physical work:

I would look out to the graves in the flats or look up to the rocks or over at the scar of the old street and always I saw the face of the Man from Bodie. That was the trouble, I know now, that was my failing, that I couldn’t see past my own feelings, I had no thoughts beyond myself. The day came when I had a sturdy clapboard cabin affixed to the dugout so that altogether we had two rooms to live in (WHT, 72; my emphasis – PvdM).

This expression of insight and guilt – reflecting PTSD and a focus that is turned away from pointlessness towards a reason to live for the sake of others – suddenly alters from a highly

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203 Morris (1991:29) points out that because the novel begins with “The Man from Bodie …” (WHT, 3; my emphasis - PvdM) (in contrast to “the Bad Man from Bodie” or “Clay Turner”) this character, before raising issues of nature, of violence, of evil, etc. raises issues of representation because “the reader must speculate from the outset, ‘generically’. Is he representative of all men in Bodie? Representative of “Man” in general?”

204 “Repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts or images of past trauma … Feeling very upset when something reminds you of past trauma” (Farley et al., 1998).
personal and emotional confession to information about the cabin built next to the dugout, given in a numb matter-of-fact way. Blue’s awareness that he had “no thoughts beyond himself” reveals a potential to transform his spiritually poor frame of mind. However, his momentarily promising focus regresses towards his mechanical attitude.

A central mechanical action is his inclination of “keeping a write on things” (WHT, 139) that consists of serious as well as seemingly mundane content. No elements of the fictional world are independent from Blue’s experience of the nature and events in his social context – even if they merely communicate his mechanical frame of mind. He – as with all those who stay – does not possess the insight to recognise the strategy towards true liberation, namely a morally sound outlook and corresponding actions that are inevitably always interactive and that affect social relationships and either contribute to – or harm – a “sense of community” (cf. Parsons, Platt and Smelser, 1974:19). Blue is unable to gain the perspective to realise that a humane, i.e. caring and supportive, attitude could make the social context and the lives of the people there meaningful and alter “Hard Times” to “Better Times”. His “notes” represent truths that are applicable to all social contexts, for example, greed as a poison for social contexts (Tokarczyk, 2000:55), but Blue does not know how to interpret his own documented experiences.

Blue is therefore often doubtful about the trustworthiness of his writings when attempting to write “what happened” (WHT, 44):

I’m trying to put down what happened but the closer I’ve come in time the less clear I am in my mind. … I have the cold feeling everything I’ve written doesn’t tell how it was, no matter how careful I’ve been to get it all down it still escapes me: like what happened is far below my understanding beyond my sight (WHT, 199).

The “facts” of his documentation may be “verifiable” with regard to his textual actual world, but their true meanings are ironically unclear to him. Levine (1985:30) points out that the reflexive nature of the novel suggests “the insufficiency of language in the face of reality”. However, it seems that the real “insufficiency” lies not in the language itself, but in Blue’s inability to decode his own writings. Similarly to Blue’s mechanically performed chores because he does not know what else to do, Blue therefore does not try to answer his own implied question, i.e. “What really

205 Blue writes about his self-chosen administrative tasks that include, for example, keeping records of the ownership of property (WHT, 138-139). The reader does not see these, but both these records and the novel’s text are products of Blue’s compulsion to write.

happened?”, but just carries on his narration with: “I can’t remember her foul words, poor Molly, what she said to Jenks, but only that it kept Jimmy rooted where he stood …” (WHT, 200). Blue’s “jump” is reflective of his and the members of his social context’s neglect or inability to recognise that their vulnerability is due to a spiritual weakness related to the lack of constructive values.

5.3. **The social context: The relationship between the Bad Man and the characters**

With the help of the following diagram Section 5.4 describes the social context of Hard Times. The diagram depicts, and the section explains, the relationship between the Bad Man and the characters. 5.4.1 argues that the Bad Man is not only an external threat, but also representative of an inner danger that victimises Clay Turner, the Bad Man, and the community. The diagram indicates the roles of the characters as victims/“prostitute figures”, the apparently constructive roles, the destructive ones and potentially constructive ones. A discussion of these subsequently follows in 5.4.2. 5.4.3 thereafter continues to consider apparently constructive roles as inevitably destructive (within Hard Times) as well as potentially constructive roles (outside of Hard Times). 5.4.4 finally discusses destructive roles, i.e. victims as victimisers and literal and figurative pimps, punters and prostitutes.
The Bad Man from Bodie

apparently constructive roles

investors (Blue, Avery, Zar, Isaac Maple)

parent/authority figures/leaders (Blue, Molly, Jenks, Zar)

spouse and bride/groom figures (Blue, Molly, Clay Turner)

potentially constructive roles

bride/groom figures and parents (Bert Albany and the Chinese girl)

town leavers (Ezra Maple, Bert Albany and the Chinese girl, John Bear)

victimisers (Clay Turner, Avery, Zar Blue, Jimmy)

pimps (Avery, Zar, Blue)

punters and parasites (the miners, Jenks, job seekers, everybody in Hard Times)

“prostitutes”, “town supporters” (stayers), child figures, everybody alive in Hard Times, the dead (Free, Florence, Jack Millay, Hausenfield, etcetera)

Figure 1: A schematic representation of the social context of Hard Times that is defined by the relationship between the Bad Man from Bodie and the characters.
5.3.1. The Bad Man and the concurrence of the external and inner threats, the spirit of Bodie/Hard Times and victims and victimisers

On the surface level of the narration, the Bad Man from Bodie is primarily regarded as the victimiser, as he appears to the residents of the town. However, like the residents he is also a victim or “prostitute figure” in two ways. The culture of violence and fear in Hard Times, as a breeding ground for Jimmy’s development in “succeeding” Clay Turner as the new Bad Man, furnishes a sign that Turner has suffered psychological damage himself207: “… his skin was shot red under the stubble, there was a blaze on one cheek and he had the eyes of a crazy horse” (WHT, 18). As an individual, Clay Turner believes, “sells” or “prostitutes” himself to the notion that the world is essentially uncivilised and that the best defence mechanism against becoming the recipient of aggression is to become the aggressor, i.e. a Bad Man.

Blue’s scepticism about the trustworthiness of what he writes directly relates to his failure to understand the nature of the Bad Man. The actual world reader of course benefits from a wider perspective than Blue. Blue does not recognise that Clay Turner is also “a victim of the Bad Man from Bodie” which is the inner, corrupt frame of mind that he shares with the other residents in Hard Times.208 As Frankl (1964:32) notes, the “complete lack of sentiment” and total disregard of anything not serving the purpose of survival could be ascribed to the primitive prison life and the effort of being obliged to concentrate on survival. Blue and the town residents do not recognise that they share the victim/”prostitute” identity with the Bad Man and are in this way “related” to him. Shelton (1983:15) points out that “evil, violence, destructiveness are not forces ‘other’, which can be warded off by people coming together for protection; they lie within the individual and will express themselves in and through

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207 Turner’s identity as a psychologically “damaged” individual whose interaction with other people leads to an “infection” of psychological damage is reminiscent of Anna’s words in Josephine Hart’s Damage (1991): “I have been damaged. Damaged people are dangerous. They know they can survive” (Hart, 1991:42). A Bad Man’s reasoning is that he can at least survive longer as a victimiser than as “an ordinary person”: this is synonymous with being a (potential) victim. However, the “survival” of such “damaged people” continues only to a certain point, after which their dangerous actions or victimisation backfire and he becomes a “proxy victim” of his own attack. The miner Angus McEllhenny, who identifies the Bad Man from Bodie as Clay Turner, is surprised that Turner’s life has not already backfired on him when he and Blue discuss him: “Why he should be dead, he went bad years ago … I wish him in Hell, he’s been ridin’ too long” (WHT, 49). Molly, who has sustained severe burn wounds during the Bad Man’s first attack, is also “damaged”. Her physically “damaged” state also intimates a psychologically “damaged” condition.

208 The reader’s understanding of the truth in the novel is comparable to the audience knowing more than a character in a play/film or understanding that there is some truth in a lie/faulty representation.
civilization”.209 These inhabitants are not aware that the Bad Man is not only an external threat, but that he – or rather his spirit – is an inner threat.

Although the Bad Man/Clay Turner physically dies, the Bad Man’s spirit does not begin and end with Clay Turner.210 Blue realises that none of the “miners and towners trying to cripple and kill one another, hate riding their voices, gleaming on their knives, imprinted behind their running boots” had anything to do with Turner (WHT, 207): “He was just a man, my God! If I felt his weight, I felt the weight of him over my shoulder, I smelled the sweat of him and the whiskey, it was blood that ran from his head and matted his hair” (WHT, 207). Blue and his social context perceive the Bad Man as an inconquerable and unchangeable reality, likened to forces of nature or disasters that one simply has to endure. Blue says: “Bad Men from Bodie weren’t ordinary scoundrels, they came with the land, and you could no more cope with them than you could with dust or hailstones” (WHT, 7). However, on an allegorical level the Bad Man’s appearances are related to the the collective inner life of the social context. The Bad Man is the town’s daemon and therefore “distributor of destinies” (Fletcher, 1970:42-43). Gross (1983:137) juxtaposes “the arbitrary cruelty, the absolute amorality and cynicism represented by the Bad Man from Bodie” with what the town needs, namely “ties of love and obligation which could fuel some courageous, intelligent opposition.” Instead, the town is obsessed with fear and evil: this causes its self-destruction.

Through the Bad Man from Bodie a connection exists between the fictional Hard Times, set in the Dakota Territory, and Bodie, once an actual mining town in California, because Hard Times is spiritually a reflection of the criminal and debauched Californian mining town (cf. Van der Merwe, 2007:57-62). Morris (1991:29) refers to “Bodie” in asserting that the features of the Bad Man, i.e. his shadowy first appearance, his associations with “Bodie”, and the ambiguous “true name”, prompt consideration of the novel as an allegory in which the Bad Man serves as an example of embodiment or personification of fear and evil. An actual miner wrote about Bodie:
“There’s nothing to do but hang around the saloons, get drunk and fight, and lie out in the snow and die” (Wolle, 1955:133). The Bodie Free Press described the “colorful life of the raucous camp” as having been “punctuated with shootings, brawls, and stabbings” (Wolle, 1955:133). The mayhem in Hard Times, when the Bad Man returns, is basically a duplication of the Bodie “culture”.211 Freese (1987:213) also points out that when the Bad Man from Bodie returns, he is no intruder from outside, but the logical result of the strife between and the disintegration of the townspeople.

As victims and victimisers the residents of Hard Times represent “Bad Man from Bodie figures”. When Major Munn shakes his fist toward the town and curses the Bad Man, Blue says: “… for a moment I had the feeling it was me he was cursing” (WHT, 22). Likewise, when Molly invites Blue to her bed before calling Jimmy to “protect” her, Blue compares himself to the Bad Man: “How long had it been since she turned, little by little, so compliant, that I felt I was some duplicate Bad Man taking his pleasure?” Blue does not say that Jimmy becomes a “Bad Man from Hard Times”, but “another Bad Man from Bodie” (WHT, 211) which implies that Hard Times and Bodie are – at least spiritually – synonymous. Molly’s taking a bath when Brogan comes to fetch his letter is a kind of preparation for her “wedding day” with the Bad Man. Blue concludes that she has been waiting for him like a “proper faithful wife” (WHT, 197). They are therefore indeed unified in death by the blast from Blue’s shotgun that was intended to kill only Turner, but destroyed both of them because the Bad Man held her “as if in embrace” (WHT, 209) when Jimmy pulled the trigger.212

A key notion with regard to the inner life of the town occurs when Blue recognises that the Bad Man from Bodie “never left the town, it was waiting only for the proper light to see him where he’s been all the time” (WHT, 195). Blue, however, does not refer to Clay Turner, but to his spirit. When Blue and Zar considered a name for the town it might as well have been “Bodie” because the immoral and criminal spirit of Bodie and of Hard Times are the same. Molly recognises that it is necessary to depart from the spiritual context of Hard Times when she sees the banner “from the scaffold of the well … all the way across the false front of Zar’s saloon: WELCOME TO HARD TIMES” (WHT, 148). This sign and the title of the book implies that

211 The moans of a woman, probably one that the Bad Man rapes and/or kills who is stopped short in “one deathly scream”, looters beating down the door of Isaac Maple’s store, a mob destroying John Bear’s shack, and so on (WHT, 204) are “Bodie-like”.

212 The Bad Man grabbed Molly while she was busy torturing him. It seems that Jimmy then wanted to protect Molly: “And how else could he speak, finally, when he had to call her and claim her as a right? … It was the moment Turner’s arms had closed around Molly as if in embrace. My hand was over the muzzle of the gun but the blast killed them both” (WHT, 209).
the name “Hard Times” refers to more than just a geographical location: “It is an invitation not just to a place, but to a condition” (Parks, 1991:27). The Bad Man appears because the town residents share a spirit or a mental (including a moral) and emotional disposition with regard to their roles in the social context.

5.3.2. The characters and their roles: Victims/“prostitute figures”, apparently constructive roles, destructive roles and potentially constructive roles

From Blue’s focalisation of the social context one can derive a category system of roles which reflects the unity that exists in the relationship between the town residents and the Bad Man from Bodie. The link between the Bad Man and the residents is that they are all victims or “prostitute figures” in the sense that they are trapped in a self-determined, destructive and fear-driven psychological disposition comparable to the “imprisonment”\(^\text{213}\) of prostitutes. The prostitutes themselves, namely Molly and Florence, Avery’s prostitutes prior to the first attack, and later Adah, Mae, Jessie, the Chinese girl and Mrs. Clement, Zar’s prostitutes prior to the second attack, are literally as well as – like all those who stay – figuratively “prostitutes”. In other words, everybody that remains in the town is a “town supporter” and is as such a “follower” or “devotee” of a (self-) destructive “philosophy” (or \textit{Lebens-und Weltanschauung}). These characters may be interpreted as spiritual children of the Bad Man from Bodie. Jimmy is the only child figure in the book, but the adults are all the Bad Man’s “foster children”. Everybody living in Hard Times should therefore be regarded as a victim, but also as victimisers of one another and of themselves.

The theme of death also links the survivors of the first attack with the dead victims, such as Fee, Florence, Jack Millay, Hausenfield, and others. As dead victims they are figurative “brothers and sisters” of the living who are also dead, but spiritually so. This spiritual death is related to their status as victimisers, namely as “buzzards” attracted by “death”\(^\text{214}\), i.e. a (self-) victimisation/(self-) imprisonment by means of spiritual emptiness. The sameness of the dead and the living victims becomes clear after the first attack when Blue states: “… I thought for one second to get up and get out of there and ride away fast. But I could no more do that than Fee and Flo and the others could get up from their graves – the Bad Man had fixed us all in the spot

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\(^{213}\) Referring to the UK, Bindel (2007) states that prostitution has a terrible effect on a society, ironically one “congratulating itself for abolishing the slave trade”.

\(^{214}\) During the winter Molly observes: “All these fools have come like buzzards after the smell of meat” (WHT, 143). There is, in fact, no difference between the “buzzards” that arrive later and the earlier ones.
and he had fixed me by leaving me alive” (WHT, 30). Blue perceives himself as powerless, but not against an external force; rather, an inner frame of mind that he cannot give up. In this way he manifests his own demise because he believes in it. If he had believed in the opposite of this spiritual ruin – represented by physical ruin – namely in spiritual liberation (which Frankl explains is possible in terms of logotherapy), Blue would have manifested this. At the end of the novel Blue says to Isaac Maple and Zar that the road would be built when the flats are “an orchard of big, leafy trees with each leaf a five-dollar gold piece” (WHT, 188). In the allegorical context of the possible world of the text, the lodes would have contained gold, the road would have been built, the flats would have turned fertile – as long as the residents attached meaning to their existence and were kind and supportive to one another.215

The victims may be divided into three categories: firstly, those who play apparently constructive roles, but do not fulfil the potential of benefiting themselves and the social context through these; secondly, those who destructively exploit their social context and may be identified as victimisers, literal and figurative pimps, punters and parasites. The third category is less central, namely those who could become genuinely constructive. This is ultimately only possible because they physically depart from Hard Times and potentially from its spiritual condition (cf. Parks, 1991:27).

5.3.3. Within and outside of Hard Times: Apparently constructive roles as inevitably destructive and potentially constructive roles

Social roles like those of investors, parents, authority figures, leaders, spouses, brides and bridegrooms, and the promise, i.e. the potential regarding roles as spouses to contribute (also as parents) to a morally and economically healthy community, would appear to be constructive in the fictional world because they contribute to the “growth” of the community. However, the characters in these roles are generally destructive because of the overwhelming nature of their roles as victims/“prostitute figures” and (self-) victimisers.

Blue invests a great deal of energy to advance the town and increase the number of the town’s residents. The disadvantage of this approach is that most of the characters do not value neighbourliness, care and cooperation. Zar, like Avery, his predecessor, is obsessed with money and therefore furnishes a good example of a “buzzard” (WHT, 143), as Molly calls individuals

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215 This reasoning is possible in terms of Fletcher’s (1970:105) theory that in spite of the visual absurdity of much allegorical imagery, the relations between ideas are under strong logical control.
who are interested in transactions that would benefit themselves alone.\textsuperscript{216} The wealth that Blue describes after announcing “This was the time of our greatest prosperity” (WHT, 154) is in stark contrast to any spiritual prosperity in the form of friendly social support among the town residents. According to Tokarczyk (2000:50) individual economic opportunity and exploitation are the factors which are disturbing and ultimately fatal. Parks (1991:27), Morris (1991:27) and Tokarczyk (2000:49) recognise that Doctorow’s title alludes to Charles Dickens’s novel \textit{Hard Times} (1854) which condemns industrial capitalism and its disregard for how people are treated. Hard Times, like Coketown, is a microcosm that explains “the rise and fall of civilizations” (Arnold, 1983a:87) due to a disregard for the welfare and dignity of others. Before the town’s short-lived boom Isaac Maple’s self-centredness is evident in first charging the residents “double his price for flour and sardines” and finally refusing “to sell altogether, claiming he needed the food for himself” (WHT, 109). The absence of mutual social and economic consideration is a symptom of the subversion of basic religious values, which Arnold (1983a:88) blames for the town’s demise. This is “a result of individual corruption and the failure of faith, generosity, and charity to prevail against doubt, greed and hate” (Arnold, 1983a:88). The absence of constructive values represents the true wilderness in Hard Times.

Other apparently constructive roles are played by “authority figures” or “community leaders”, namely Blue as the “mayor” of the town, Zar as a prominent “businessman” and Jenks\textsuperscript{217} as the deputy sheriff. They fail to benefit their fellow human beings by not setting an example of “just and encouraging behavior” that could lead to “a thousand opportunities to exert a far-reaching moral influence” (cf. Frankl, 1964:80). This also applies to the authority figure roles of Blue and Molly as foster parents for the orphan of the carpenter Fee who is killed by the Bad Man. Blue says in his own defence that he had attempted to be a role model for Jimmy (WHT, 164), based on how he perceived Fee (with the exception of confronting the Bad Man, which Blue considers

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\textsuperscript{216} Material wealth is the desire which drives Zar in all respects. He is a rather aggressive person who attacks his prostitutes, prompted by the possibility that he could lose money. Blue manages to curb Zar’s anger about Bert Albany’s romantic interest in one of the prostitutes, the Chinese girl, by diverting Zar’s attention, referring to his impending wealth (WHT, 134). This calms Zar down to the extent that, true to his nature, he then wants to do business by negotiating the Chinese girl’s discharge. He therefore thinks of her in terms of slavery. When squatters arrive in the town, Zar does not care where everyone sleeps or that the living conditions are chaotic. He rejects Blue’s suggestions that he hire people and invest back into his clientele in order to establish a healthy economy. Zar is only interested in what he can gain for himself.

\textsuperscript{217} Jenks only becomes the town’s deputy sheriff because of his extraordinary shooting skills, but this does not equal being a leader, for example, by organising, providing guidance and setting an example. Least of all, his skill does not match the “inner skill” to kill the Bad Man, i.e. to counteract the weaknesses and immorality within himself. Jenks is also focalised as a “scavenger” (cf. WHT, 73,143). There are signs that he is lazy, unreliable and immoral: these could be regarded as suggestions that he would fail in executing the tasks of social roles like those of a policeman and leader, which are supposed to be constructive. Blue finds him sleeping just inside the door of the stable and has to shake him awake and drag him to Hayden Gillis (WHT, 141) who then appoints him as deputy sheriff. Jenks drops the papers that he had received from Gillis and is a customer of the prostitutes. Blue concludes that “Jenks’s being a lawman didn’t change things much” (WHT, 143) and he indeed does fail miserably when he is supposed to uphold law and order in the town – especially when the Bad Man returns.

Chapter 5: \textit{Welcome to Hard Times}: The social context of a fictional world as the product of a concurring individual and collective mindset

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to be foolish because it led to Fee’s death). However, Blue’s argument is doubtful: it may be regarded as an unreliable impartation because he has never previously referred to his intentions and actions as motivated by this factor. His “role modelling” consists simply of his mechanical actions that are only apparently constructive. Furthermore, his (mechanical) attempts to teach Jimmy to read and write, that are escapist actions for Blue himself, have little meaning, being followed by Jimmy’s loss of interest in the lessons after he has recovered from his illness. Before leaving for Fountain Creek Blue fails to demonstrate the affection that could have made Jimmy feel better: “I wish I had said something to make him feel better, or maybe tousled his head” (WHT, 63). Blue fails as a father in the sense that he does not pay Jimmy enough attention, which includes the confirmation of providing physical and psychological safety and security – an impossibility in Hard Times.

Nor does Blue provide explicit guidance in terms of a moral life and values for Jimmy at the right time. Only when Molly has already indoctrinated Jimmy with her perspective of the world as a place in which evil will always win, does Blue communicate to Jimmy his wishes for the latter to become a respectable citizen in opposition to becoming a Bad Man, but instead of being just and encouraging, he expresses these in a humiliating fashion:

I didn’t trust myself to say just what I wanted to say. … “What kind of a mama’s boy are you! How far do I have to take you to get you out of that woman’s spell! Listen to me I said the day is coming when no Man from Bodie will ride in but he’ll wither and dry up to dust. You hear me? I’m going to see you grown up with your own mind, I’m going to see you settled just like this town, you’re going to be a proper man and not some saddle fool wandering around with his grudge” (WHT, 166).

This is indicative of Blue’s anticipatory anxiety that Jimmy could become a Bad Man because Blue has “done it wrong” and it is “too late” (WHT, 166) to play a constructive role in Jimmy’s upbringing. Jimmy rebels against Blue’s abusive and discouraging tone, refusing to listen to him. Blue attempted to convince Jimmy that he should resist Molly’s influence as his spiritual guiding figure, settle down as a respectable citizen in the town and that it would be futile to try to kill a Bad Man. Blue’s erroneous notion that it is impossible to kill a Bad Man ironically merely encourages Jimmy to become a Bad Man because it creates the delusion that one’s chances for survival are better as a result.

Fear therefore unites Molly and Jimmy. Molly’s role as his mother is confirmed by the external impression that she is his biological mother following Blue’s declaration that Molly is his wife.
When leaving for Fountain Creek he says to Jimmy: “If someone asks you how your Ma is feeling, they’ll mean Molly” (WHT, 63). Yet, owing to her permanently terrified state of mind, she is detached from everyone and also from Jimmy. She feels awkward comforting Jimmy during his illness (WHT, 95) and is “unsettled” by his loyalty and submissiveness to her. This alters after a creature “scratching at the warmth” swiped with his claws from the roof of the dugout: “… Molly and Jimmy were hugging each other for all their lives, they were fastened in their terror. After that she got to be as doggish to him as he was to her” (WHT, 111). She starts to identify herself with the role of his mother, primarily because someday he could perhaps protect her against the Bad Man. Even though she behaves like a mother by caring for him through a dangerous illness, and lovingly singing him to sleep, she also teaches him to kill (Tokarczyk, 2000:55). Because the image of the Bad Man from Bodie results from fear while the decision to victimise is a radical avoidance of victimisation, Jimmy is – as the new Bad Man – not only Blue’s and Molly’s foster child, but also the Bad Man’s and Molly’s spiritual child.

Molly represents a wife/bride figure for both Blue and Clay Turner, which is heightened by the wedding dress that Adah gives to her (WHT, 61). While Zar’s prostitutes, Jessie and Adah, deride Molly, Blue tells them that she is his wife. Blue explains that that he was “just saying what I knew, that we had been wedded by the Bad Man from Bodie” (WHT, 61). This is an explicit indication of the unity of their psychological disposition. Whilst Blue yearns for Molly’s acceptance as a form of liberation from his guilt, she is cold, angry and accusing towards Blue because she regards him as responsible for the devastation that the Bad Man has brought about. Blue experiences friendliness from the injured Molly as acceptance and forgiveness. However, when he brings the cross to her and she asks him to take care of her, her behaviour and words are contradictory. Her smiles gladden Blue, but her subsequent statement, “… if I had that knife now I wouldn’t drop it. I would stick it in you and watch the yellow flow” (WHT, 35), and “the sweet smile full of hate” confuses him: “I could not reconcile the words with the smile on her face”; he feels as if he had been “swiped to the ground by the paw of a big cat” (WHT, 35). There is ultimately no mutual support between them – not even from Blue’s side, especially

218 Molly’s antipathy to or loathing of everyone and their spiritual barrenness is reminiscent of the disgust that concentration camp prisoners experienced “even in its mere external forms” (Frankl, 1964:19). When someone urinates against Molly’s door “… it drove her to distraction, she cried the whole day” (WHT, 169). The occurrence does not seem to warrant the reaction, but in the context of the chaotic conditions of the town and her opinion that the residents are pathetic, for her this incident is a confirmation of the town’s spiritual squalor. Because civilised external conditions can reflect inner civilised states, just as respectable lives can reflect inner strength, this incident reflects a spiritual weakness that would attract the Bad Man’s return.
when she asks him to leave. 219 By not leaving, the “marriage” not only between Molly and Blue, but between everybody who remains in Hard Times and the Bad Man, persists. A union that is supposed to denote a constructive relationship between two individuals becomes a metaphor for a destructive participation within a social context.

Only the individuals who leave, such as Ezra Maple, John Bear and Bert Albany together with his Chinese wife, have the potential to be constructive in another social context. Ezra Maple, in a sense evocative of the biblical Ezra who leads the Israelites out of captivity in Babylon, departs because he sees the town as uninhabitable because of the weather, drought and blizzards, and its vulnerability to “some devil with liquor in his soul and a gun in his claw” (WHT, 29). Because these external physical realities are metaphoric for the inner spiritual drought of the community, physical departure denotes psychological liberation. Although John Bear is also a victim of the Bad Man, by remaining in Hard Times, he and Bert Albany have more potential to be liberated through their caring social actions. John Bear’s calm and magnanimous presence in Hard Times serves as a contrast to that of the other residents. He is benevolent in the sense that he treats Molly’s burns and takes care of Jimmy when he falls ill. He was, in principle, also willing to treat the faro dealer whom the hunchback stabbed, but because Zar had once attacked him, John Bear refused to go to the faro dealer when he saw that Blue was leading him to Zar’s hotel where the faro dealer was. However, John Bear’s work in curing Molly and Jimmy not only physically, but also spiritually through his example of kindness, is met with a form of ingratitude or rejection because Molly and Jimmy develop into (spiritually) “injured” and “ill” persons by becoming followers of the Bad Man. Ezra Maple’s and John Bear’s sensible conduct is more likely to be accepted elsewhere.

Bert Albany and his wife are newly weds expecting a child. Blue finally assists Bert and his wife to leave: he does not want to see a baby born in the town because of the contrast between the spiritual promise of a new marriage and a new life, and the spiritual wasteland that Hard Times represents. Blue presents Bert Albany as an individual yearning for social interaction. He first appears in Blue’s narration as the boy who gave him letters to mail; Blue remembers that Albany always got drunk as a miner: “– not because he seemed to enjoy it but because it put him in company with the rest of the diggers” (WHT, 124). The reason for his dejection when he

219 “‘Where do you want to go Molly?’ ‘Christ, I don’t know. Let’s just leave, Blue. Right now. Today. The three of us, we’ll find somewhere – ’ ‘Molly, what you’re saying makes no sense. Here we’ve put all this work and life down, we’ve made a home from nothing, and you want to ride off?!”’ (WHT, 148). Blue’s focus is materialistic, to the detriment of Molly’s fragile spiritual hopes.
arrives at Hard Times is his love for the Chinese prostitute, a result of not receiving letters back, that channelled his longing for human contact into another direction. Although he initially appears to be yet another misfit, his longing for contact with another human being proves to be a rewarding instinct because his wish is not a foolish one as many of the others’ wishes for material prosperity are. It is fulfilled; he and his pregnant wife survive Hard Times/hard times.

The value that Bert Albany places on reaching out to a caring relationship is a sign of civilization. It is first manifested by his writing letters that he has brought for mailing and then by his love for the Chinese girl. Molly’s reaction when he tells her the news is meaningful: “I could just feel the smile when I told her there was a true lover come to town” (WHT, 127). Molly proposes that Bert Albany should look for a replacement prostitute for Zar. She recognises that marriage is a symptom of the civilization which Hard Times lacks. The prostitutes also regard marriage in this manner because their behaviour towards Molly becomes respectful when Blue informs them that she is his wife.

5.3.4. **Destructive roles:** Victims as victimisers and literal and figurative pimps, punters and prostitutes

Destructive roles such as those of victimisers, i.e. literal and figurative pimps, punters or parasites, may coincide with the apparently constructive ones. For example, through his role as an “investor” Zar is also a pimp who abuses his prostitutes. Blue is apparently constructive by encouraging the development of the town in his capacity as an authority figure, the “mayor”, of the town. Nevertheless, the Bad Man’s victims may also be associated with destructive roles.

Apart from obvious victimisers, like Clay Turner and Jimmy as Bad Men and Avery and Zar as pimps, all the victims, as figurative “prostitute figures”, are victimisers because they victimise themselves. Blue is a victimiser in the sense that he promotes Hard Times. He is therefore, like Avery and Zar, a pimp who “sells people” to be violated by the Bad Man/a destructive psychological disposition. The town residents are victims, but simultaneously victimisers (of themselves). They are both “pimp” and “punter” figures. The actual punters, like the miners and Jenks, literally stand in a relation to the actual prostitutes (Adah, Jessie, Mae, and others) that is comparable to the relationship between a parasite and its host. These actual relationships may therefore also be compared to the relationships that people in Hard Times have with themselves. Spiritually, individuals such as Blue, Molly and the other residents in Hard Times consist of both a victim/“host”/“prostitute” component and a victimiser/“parasite”/“punter” component that finally destroys the whole “organism”.

Chapter 5: *Welcome to Hard Times*: The social context of a fictional world as the product of a concurring individual and collective mindset
To summarise: The Bad Man from Bodie spiritually encompasses the social context of Hard Times. There is spiritually no difference between the residents and the Bad Man. It is especially in this sense that *Welcome to Hard Times* is a demythologising of the image of stereotypical American heroism, which was made popular by Frederick Jackson Turner. Turner claimed that the frontier experience helped produce the rugged self-made individualism in the American character (Shelton, 1983:7-8). Hard Times, with its connection to Bodie’s history, approximates many other mining towns, as well as other historical and present-day macro- and micro-social contexts, to a greater or lesser degree because of the defining presence of such destructive spiritual elements as fear, self-interest and immorality.

5.4. **Social actions: Work, meals and celebrations as defining the nature of the social context**

Work, meals and celebrations are examples of the social actions that Blue includes in his focalisation of Hard Times which contribute to the culture of Hard Times. The manner in which these actions take place serves to characterise the individuals of the social context, their social roles and the social community as self-destructive.

5.4.1. **Work as motivated by escapism and self-centred profit**

Work in Hard Times is not socially constructive and lacks moral value: it is therefore crucial in the depiction of the nature of the fictional world. Although diligent, Blue’s attention to everyday tasks is the result of trauma. Focusing on, for example, worrying about the wood and taking away the slops (WHT, 99-100) simply help him to forget worrying about the Bad Man. The work ethics of Avery, Zar, Isaac Maple, Jenks, and their ilk are, firstly dictated by personal comfort and the possibility of profit. This is also connected to the culture of exploitation that exists in the town. With the exception of Helga, all of the women were, or are, prostitutes. It is ironic that Blue presents the women’s roles in the town as a matter of course, without any hint that their functions could be considered a social ill (cf. Bindel, 2007) inappropriate for the basis of a healthy society.

5.4.2. **Meals and food as metaphoric for the spiritual state of the interpersonal relations in the town**

Meals and food, like Holy Communion, denote unification with spiritual standards. In Hard Times the symbolic meanings of food, including the lack of food and bad food, with whom food
is associated and in whose presence food is eaten, reflect the town’s state of spiritual barrenness which is always related to social interaction and actions.

The shortage of food is reflective of the meagreness of the residents’ “spiritual nourishment” while its poor quality implies the inferiority of the said “nourishment”. Blue’s focus includes apparently mundane details such as looking for food, finding dried apples and brewing coffee from peas roasted in the fire that the Bad Man had started: “With the apples it helped the hunger, but it tasted bad enough to make me remember all the good coffee I had drunk in my life and the beef and bacon and bread I had eaten” (WHT, 33). Spiritual food may be inferior, as in Blue’s “nourishing” himself instead with Molly’s fear and rebuke when eating her food that she “spices with her scorn” (WHT, 75). However, spiritual food may not only be inferior, but also spiritually “poisonous” and fatal.

Just as bread and wine spiritually symbolise Jesus Christ during Holy Communion, the Bad Man, as symbolic “food” lying on the dining table at the end of the novel, could be interpreted as a ritualistic and symbolic unification with evil. The key segment of this episode consists of Blue’s presentation of the Bad Man as a sacrifice to Molly. Blue’s motivation to do this is to gain Molly’s approval. However, this is a flawed decision because it brings Molly’s desire for hate and death to its climax, of which the Bad Man is symbolic. Killing the latter should only be for the purpose of self-defence. Stabbing the Bad Man is a retribution that copies his behaviour. Molly therefore becomes a “Bad (Wo)Man” by torturing him.

Not only what is consumed, but also the company in which meals are eaten is significant with regard to Blue’s focalisation of social interaction and spiritual unification. Blue eagerly accepts and intensely enjoys Zar’s coffee when Blue tells him what has happened to the town: this leads him to the conclusion that it would be lucrative for him to remain there. This consumption is therefore indicative of a capitalistic “spiritual” bond between them.220

The impoverished nature of the “family relationship”, namely that between Blue, Molly and Jimmy, is reflected by their meal times. There is a lack of mutual intimacy, i.e. interest and understanding. Blue, Molly and Jimmy do not eat together. Molly eats alone while Jimmy and Blue do not make eye contact while eating (WHT, 73). The lack of closeness in this microcosm is also characteristic of the small macrocosm occupied by the town members in general.

220 It is also symbolically noteworthy that Molly turns her head away when Blue offers her two flour cakes (cf. WHT, 51). This is a refusal of communal sharing. By not accepting his offerings she communicates the view that she finds Blue and his ideas unacceptable.
5.4.3. Grotesque, ruined and interrupted celebrations and the impermanence of optimism

Celebrations as expressions and confirmations of values, joy and gratitude are replaced by grotesque, ruined and interrupted “celebrations” that comment on the abnormal interpersonal or social circumstances in the town. For example, the first time Turner arrives there Blue calls the company that they keep with him, following the failed plan to kill him, “a celebration”. Avery and Blue exhibit Stockholm syndrome-like craven feelings of wanting to please the Bad Man (WHT, 18) and when the Bad Man throws Molly’s skirt back over her knees, Avery and Jack Millay laugh (WHT, 17-18). Avery’s laughter is cowardly and artificial because he would not judge as wrong anything that the Bad Man might do, while Jack Millay gains a similar enjoyment from this to that which the Bad Man himself does. Inadvertently and unavoidably this “merriment” is a “celebration” of evil, fear and cowardice.

The customary spirit of Christmas, supposed to be one of kindness and peace, becomes remarkably distorted. It seems that all of them except Isaac Maple are unaware that it is Christmas. Molly, the only resident who concretely indicates her Christian faith by means of her attachment to her cross, walks away when Isaac Maple tells Blue that it is Christmas. Blue organises a Christmas celebration in the saloon, and it briefly seems to be a congenial celebration: “… I thought why this is what Isaac had in mind, just to celebrate the fact that all of us are here. And I asked myself whether these weren’t already better times” (WHT, 104). This is an exceptional instance of Blue and Isaac making an effort to promote goodwill among the inhabitants of Hard Times. If there had been a general feeling of gratitude and benevolence among the people, as Isaac Maple and Adah initially hoped, it could have been a good sign. Zar ruins the positive Christmas celebration and atmosphere because of his anger towards Isaac

221 A person suffers from Stockholm syndrome if he is a hostage who hopes for kindness from his captor(s) (Graham et al., 1994:34-35). The relationship between Clay Turner and the residents does not seem to be typical of this syndrome in the sense that the Bad Man does not show them any kindness and an obvious bonding does not take place between the “captor” and his victims (cf. Graham et al., 1994:31, 145-146). However, certain inhabitants do seem to hope for some kindness. For example, Avery jovially calls Molly’s name “with a laugh in his voice” and “bellowing with good nature: ‘Molly where are you, gentleman here wants to see you!’” (WHT, 15). Blue hears him laughing “as if he was enjoying it” (WHT, 15). By just describing it “as it is” Blue allows Avery to characterise himself as a pathetically submissive character, a trait which reaches a climax when the Bad Man, while Avery drinks from a glass, whacks it with the heel of his hand: “Avery stumbled back, spitting out teeth and blood and trying to laugh at the same time” (WHT, 18).

222 Jack Millay probably would have been a Bad Man himself if he had not been handicapped. Blue’s assessment that Jack Millay “took his joys how he could” (WHT, 14) presents him as sadistic. When the Bad Man has left the town after the first time he has destroyed it, Blue looks at the ruins and thinks: “I almost expected one-armed Jack to come tugging at my sleeve to tell me what a fine sight that was” (WHT, 23). His face “pinned with excitement” and, approaching Blue after he had watched how the Bad Man sent the dead Hausenfield in his wagon into the flats, he says: “‘Did you ever see such work, Blue?’” (WHT, 14). This reaction is bizarre because his admiration implies his vicariously enjoying the Bad Man’s actions. His physical disfigurement is therefore also a metaphorical reflection of his inner “amputation”.

223 There is no indication that it is Blue’s motivation to include these “celebrations” in his focalisation in order to promote a “moral message”. He simply describes these “observable facts” as he would “dust or hailstones” (cf. WHT, 7). Nonetheless, Blue’s focalisation does not prevent the reader from recognising the moral implications of how pathetic and ghastly it is “to lick the boots” of someone/something who degrades one.
Maple who refuses to accept whiskey and women as currency. The “true nature of the town” is therefore inconsistent with the momentarily genial gathering. The climax of the inversion of the celebration into one of not only insult, anger and conflict, but also of fear, instead of hope, occurs when Isaac Maple predicts that everyone in the saloon would be dead before the stage returns – which is not only representative of Isaac’s feelings, but of everyone’s, which is also why Blue includes it: “Not a night had passed lately when I hadn’t thought the same thing; but I’d never said it out loud and neither had anyone else. Isaac took the fear in all our minds and put it in the air” (WHT, 107). “Christmas” in Hard Times becomes a celebration of hate and fear as a result of the people’s collective terrified mindset.

The atmosphere of one spring afternoon is particularly festive: “There was a feeling of celebration in everything that was going on” (WHT, 116). Yet, it is finally also replaced by fear. The effects of spring apparently serve as good signs for the town. Alf Moffet comes once every fortnight and the miners, who mean business for the town, return. Blue sells the well water at a dollar a day and receives a commission on the orders; hence Blue, Molly and Jimmy “commenced to eat good” and Blue could afford to buy from Isaac Maple a miner’s jacket and small-sized boots for Jimmy, laced shoes and a calico for Molly and a razor for himself (WHT, 114). John Bear was working in his garden, Jessie was trying to make one herself and Zar and Jenks were “running out their horses in big circles over the flats” (WHT, 116). This “celebration” even includes Molly laughing when Jimmy picks her up for a ride on the mule that Blue has bought him from Jenks. However, the celebration immediately dissipates once they notice Swede. When Blue asks Molly whether she has not spoken to Swede and his wife, she cynically retorts: “‘Oh sure! I’ll go around greetin’ every lowlife on the prairie!’” (WHT, 117) because after the Bad Man’s attack she associates all strangers with the possibility of danger. Like the Christmas celebration, this is marked first by peacefulness but is followed and destroyed by distrust, hate and fear.224

224 Another example of this kind of inversion is the celebration of Bert Albany’s and the Chinese girl’s wedding. Blue tells: “…I danced with Molly … that rigid back was soft in my hands and there was a flush of pleasure on Molly’s face as we stomped around … Sometime between that heady evening she relented and that day we danced – there must have been a moment when we reached what perfection was left to our lives” (WHT, 137-138). Arnold (1983b:216) describes the novel as “a testimony to human stories that keep repeating themselves, stories of greed, exploitation, hope, courage, cowardice, recklessness, love, need, revenge, death.” The momentary peacefulness of the wedding celebration is, in the presence of the spirit of the Bad Man, inevitably succeeded by destruction.
5.5. The symbolic external world: “Outside” features of the textual actual world as metaphor of the “inside”/spiritual reality of Hard Times

Owing to the theme of spiritual deficiency characterising the social context, Blue’s focalisation of the physical appearances of its members may be perceived as “outside” appearances that reflect the “inner ugliness” of the characters, just as the lack of light is reflective of the townspeople’s “inner darkness”. The focalisation of the physical desert space, the lack of water, shadows, seasons, weather and temperature are symbolic of the spiritual drought, “darkness” and spiritual hard times in the psychological space of the social context. Blue’s focalisation also often includes animals that are part of the physical space. Because the space is reflective of the “spiritual space”, the nature and behaviour of the animals also comment on the spiritual state of the characters.

5.5.1. Physical appearances: External manifestations of the inner realities of individuals

Blue focalises physical appearances that are metaphor for the internal, i.e. the spiritual and moral appearances that display a “genetic” resemblance with Clay Turner. Turner has a grotesque appearance which complements his inner reality, and that of his “children”. Arnold (1983a:94) observes that “after the town has begun to take shape, it is peopled with grotesques, outcasts, and the physically and spiritually deformed”. In fact, from the beginning of the novel many of the characters are physically and spiritually grotesque. For example, Molly’s posture and facial expression are the result of her physical injuries, but she is, like Clay Turner, also mentally “injured” and dangerous. Blue concludes that whenever he looked at her, he became aware of his guilt: “… she walked stiffly with her shoulders thrown back and her mouth grim against the pain. And when the pain was gone the set of it remained, the healed burns pulled her up tight …” (WHT, 71). Molly’s physical injury is therefore accompanied by psychological damage.

Like Molly’s “injuries”, the physical “illnesses”, “disfigurements”, “handicaps” and “weaknesses” represented by Blue’s descriptions of the “small stir of life” (WHT, 163) suggest moral or spiritual and psychological weaknesses. For example, Blue describes Jenks, being so pleased with his booty, namely Hausenfield’s wagon “that he hadn’t even smelled Hausenfield inside” (WHT, 73), as a man whose “head was not much thicker than a broom handle and he had no chin to speak of; the way his sly yellowed eyes looked at you made you think of a wolf’s cunning, but really he was a stupid man” (WHT, 73). Swede has a wen “the size of a cannonball” (WHT, 118) on the side of his neck, while the physical appearance of certain
individuals attracted to the boom in the town was particularly unsightly: “A few of the job hunters were men not easy to look at, there was one fellow who had running sores all over his face, another, an old man, who was humpbacked with hands twisted and swollen out of shape” (WHT, 169). These individuals are consequently also representative of the moral fibre of the town and indicate that despite its short-lived material prosperity the town is spiritually unhealthy, injured and disfigured.225

5.5.2. The treeless wilderness landscape and water: The textual actual world as representative of the inner world of its characters

Doctorow recounts that while working on the novel, he read a geography book by Walter Prescott Webb called *The Great Plains* in which “Webb said what I wanted to hear: no trees” (McCaffery, 1983:39). The town is located in the Dakota Territory, “and on three sides – east, south, west – there is nothing but miles of flats” (WHT, 3). When Isaac Maple reaches Hard Times, he says that he had not seen a tree in seven days (WHT, 80). When everybody is faced with the fear that Isaac Maple verbalises, namely that they would not survive until the stage returns, Blue’s focalisation turns to the landscape: “… we heard the wind outside blowing desolate across the earth. I saw a wilderness of snow-crusted flats between us and the rest of the world, and not a track on it” (WHT, 107). Fletcher (1970:92) explains that the imagery of trees and forests produces a type of natural banner or flag. Because the absence of trees in the novel also indicates a lack of water, it symbolically implies an absence of spiritual growth. Because of the lack of spiritual life or “fruitlessness” in Hard Times the literal and symbolic significance of water is – like the absence of trees – relevant for the fictional world.226

Resorting to a physical desert is indicative of resorting to spiritual barrenness. Bevilacqua (1989:89) points out that the hyper-realistic presentations of the desert landscape confer on it the significance of a symbolic “Wasteland” in which one also recognises social breakdown, individual powerlessness and entrapping feelings of doubt, loss and disorientation: “The

225 Other examples of physical unattractiveness denoting spiritual want include the following: Mae and Blue observe to each other that they do not look good: “‘Man looks like you do in the mornin’, either it’s his wife or his liver. Ain’t got no liver trouble so far as I know’” (WHT, 160). Blue says that Mae had no colour in her face and is not plump, which she ascribes to having to work every night (WHT, 160-161). The Bad Man swings a full bottle of whiskey at Jack Millay’s stump: “Jack went grey and sunk to the floor right where he was standing” (WHT, 18). That the Bad Man is attracted to Jack Millay’s physical weakness and inflicts more injury precisely at that point is also symbolically significant. It is the town’s spiritual weakness that attracts the Bad Man to these people, followed by a fatal physical, concrete injury.

226 It begins to rain when the Bad Man leaves for the first time. The rain, that gives life and that is supposed to extinguish fire causing death and destruction, reduces the wind, which saves the windmill and John Bear’s shanty, but is on the whole not sufficient for this purpose: “The rain didn’t hurt what fire there was…” (WHT, 22). This basically implies that the townspeople do not possess adequate inner reserves to counteract and limit the injuries inflicted upon them or that they inflict upon themselves.
material bareness of the landscape they inhabit thus becomes the objective correlative of their spiritual poverty” (Bevilacqua, 1989:89). Blue finally longs for “some green … in the coolness of a tree’s shadow” (WHT, 208) so that he can die, signifying that Blue longs for an alternative existence from the one he had chosen in Hard Times. This longing is also connected to yearning for another spiritual state. It is a desperate acknowledgement that his intuitive feeling (everywhere is the same) was erroneous. Blue regrets that he did not encourage Ezra Maple to take Jimmy away from Hard Times and admits that leaving, representative of unifying oneself with another (spiritual) ideal, would have been a better option.

Blue makes use of the well’s water to create the impression that there are possibilities for life to exist. The well in Hard Times is probably a significant reason why people started to assemble there; Blue also uses the well’s water to convince Isaac Maple to stay or “pimp” Hard Times to him: “‘I’d like you to taste this water,’ I said. ‘It’s as good as any and better than most. Dip into that pail and refresh yourself. Help you to think clear on what to do’” (WHT, 80). Blue consciously places the event where people tip the water tank over directly after Jimmy has killed the Bad Man and Molly. The possibilities for a spiritually productive life are finally “spilled”. While fainting Blue says that he listened to the “spread of water, an indecent gush” (WHT, 209). Parts of the concept of “tipping over life” include the manner in which Molly savours the moments of gaining power over the person of Clay Turner as well as her death. Killing her is a sacrifice of life: this is symbolically confirmed by the “indecent” gush outside that also unifies Blue with the rest of the town.

5.5.3. Shadows as external manifestations of the Bad Man or “inner darkness”

The character of the Bad Man is represented as a shadow when he comes out of the saloon for the showdown with Blue. Blue describes him as “a shadow with a hole of fire in its centre” and when he falls across the porch, after Blue and Swede made a “bed of barbs on the porch” of Zar’s Palace, Blue describes him as a “shadow becoming a man hideously stuck on those infernal barbs” (WHT, 206). When Fee’s body, placed by Hausenfield in a shallow grave,

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227 Trenner (1983:8) agrees that Doctorow uses physical details to symbolise moral conditions.

228 “When I think that Ezra Maple might have put him up on his mule and ridden him off to learn the storekeep’s trade; or that I might have taken him away myself, in those first hours, before Molly ever put her hooks into him, a carpenter’s son, just a hollow-eye orphan – a groan pushes through my lips like my ghost already in its Hell before I am dead” (WHT, 208).

229 Molly may exercise power over Clay Turner, but ironically not over (the spirit of) the Bad Man. In fact, the enjoyment of stabbing him is comparable to the Turner’s enjoyment of hurting people. Molly and Turner enjoy the illusion of power because they are essentially frightened characters.
attracts buzzards they form shadows that Blue says were like cobwebs in Jimmy’ hair because Jimmy tried to chase them away (WHT, 25). This description simultaneously captures inner and outer reality. Like a buzzard, the Bad Man preys on the (spiritually) dead. Chasing the buzzards away is metaphorical of an intuitive reaction against the invasion of the buzzards, but ultimately Jimmy also becomes a “buzzard” casting a “shadow”.

Similarly, Blue’s and Ezra Maple’s movements within the textual actual world towards shadows metaphorically signify their remaining in the context of spiritual deficiency. Although it seems that Blue and Ezra try to distance themselves from the Bad Man by retreating into the shadows (WHT, 13), they are actually entering just another part of the (Bad Man-related) domain or sphere of spiritual deficiency because the shadows actually stem from a psychological realm of fear. Ezra Maple moves towards the “light”, i.e. acknowledgement of the impossibility of progress in Hard Times, by leaving the town.

When Blue confesses that he had his doubts about rebuilding the town after suggesting to Zar that the wood from the ghost town, Fountain Creek, could be used for this purpose, he recalls that “almost against my will I found myself glancing up at the shadows of the rocks” (WHT, 58-59). He therefore returns to the psychological realm of fear, not only because he “couldn’t believe in it altogether” (WHT, 58), but also because he does not wish to leave Molly and Jimmy. This exposes his belief that the town is not a safe place for them. Moreover, he confirms this suspicion before leaving for Fountain Creek when he instructs Jimmy to flee with Molly should the Bad Man return while he and Zar are away (WHT, 62).

5.5.4. Seasons, weather and temperature: Textual actual world manifestations reflective of the spiritual hard times

Blue often describes seasons, weather and temperature as part of the textual actual world. These descriptions largely serve main two purposes. They contribute to the atmosphere of the textual
actual world and are symbolic and/or metaphoric confirmations of the consequences of the Bad Man’s destruction. Blue’s detailed descriptions of the harsh winter conditions (cf. WHT, 90; 107; 111) intensify the miserable ambience of the Bad Man’s destructive effect and the fear of his return that are also symptomatic of their existential “meagreness”.232

When Jimmy sits by his father’s grave at the place in the flats where Hausenfield had buried him, Blue observes: “Clouds were over half the sky now, the sun was covered and a little breeze was blowing” (WHT, 15). Focusing on Jimmy sitting in the flats, this description is a relayed focalisation of how Jimmy might have experienced the weather. It contributes to a realistic effect, but in combination with his presumed sadness of sitting by his father’s grave in the monotonous landscape of the flats, the description of the weather heightens an atmosphere of desolation.

Similarly, following the trauma of Isaac Maple’s verbalising that they would not survive the winter, Blue’s representation of the cold weather is not only an indication of external conditions, but also of an “internal winter”: “… if I thought about the spring it was as a lost possibility. … We huddled in that cabin, bent grey sticks with eyes in them, I couldn’t even worry that one day we might not have what to eat or make a fire with: it was a worse dread to feel so lost on the earth, a live creature in a lifeless land” (WHT, 107). It is not merely the land that is lifeless: Blue also projects the demoralisation of the people onto the weather conditions of the season that in their harshness are symbolic of the collective spiritual state of the town.

The “winter” leads to a kind of madness. Molly and Blue become morose and thereby upset Jimmy. Blue regards existence as “foolish”: “It was foolishness to eat just to stay alive inside that room; it was foolishness to lie down for the night since you would only wake up the same day again” (WHT, 108). Zar has “awful rows” with his girls that “sounded like murder” (WHT, 108). Jenks walks out into the storms and fires his gun, once claiming to have seen a pronghorn, but because he stayed out too long his fingers froze to his rifle (WHT, 108). Isaac Maple marks off “each day as a mistake” (WHT, 108) and avoids interaction and conversation with anybody except when he unsuccessfully tries to sell “a partner’s half of what he had on order with Alf Moffet” (WHT, 108-109). The emotions, interaction and actions of the residents are just as

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232 “Meagreness” is a concept that appears in Loon Lake and refers to spiritual poverty in a capitalist context; for example, when Joe describes his parents’ submission to the Patersonian Roman Catholicism: “They clung to their miserable lives, held their meagre rituals on Sundays going to Mass with the other suckers …” (Doctorow, 1980: 4; my emphasis – PvdM). Molly’s obsession with her cross might have helped her during her healing and she probably finds consolation in dropping it at Jimmy’s head when John Bear treats him (WHT, 95), but its meaning is similar to the Patersonians’ Mass attendance: ultimately empty.
“uncivilised” as the weather. As the weather lacks calmness, human reactions similarly lack a calm and self-possessed character.

The concept of weather in the context of Blue’s focalisation is synonymous with the inner state of the residents, whether it is the darkness preceding the rain when the Bad Man destroys the town with fire and a ladder or the coldness of winter, coinciding with destruction and suffering. When the Bad Man’s attacks on Flo, Fee, Avery, Jack Millay, Molly and his shooting at Blue have driven everyone out into the flats, the day was black “although it couldn’t have been much past noon: “Overhead the sky was heavy with clouds, a wind was blowing …” (WHT, 19). Here the blackness of the day is clearly suggestive of the evil, as well as the anguish due to the Bad Man’s destruction, that determine the fate of the residents’ lives.

Bad weather, a threat certain to return to the land, is metaphorical for the certainty of the Bad Man’s first arrival and return. In addition, the wish that something would be left in spring after the winter following the Bad Man’s first attack is reflective of the impotent hope that not too much would be destroyed after the Bad Man has left, as Blue’s anger at the faceless person who shot the Bad Man’s roan indicates.233 As the Bad Man ruins the people’s environment, Blue says “it was weather that wouldn’t let you settle” (WHT, 90). A great deal of work and effort are invested in preparing for the winter, for example, the building of a railing in preparation for the Dakota blizzards. Blue’s impression of the experience of the Bad Man’s return, when Blue is helping Bert Albany and his Chinese wife to leave and looking at the people depart from the town, is similar to one’s reaction when a natural disaster strikes: “… I couldn’t believe what was happening any more than they could” (WHT, 193). Except for the attempts to prepare for materialistic prosperity, no tactics are put in place to protect the town against the Bad Man’s return. The residents merely hope passively for good fortune or await the turn of the season.

Both the people and the land are described as suffering, and recovering. This is related to the concept that life is characterised by cycles. Comparing himself and the people during the spring to a frozen river thawing, Blue simultaneously describes the clement season in physical terms which parallel the atmosphere and the frame of mind of the people: “… the hurts were healing in the warm sun and the expectations were nourished into life. A greenness of hopes grew up like the scrub along the rocks coming up green … a bit of sun drew all the frost from our bones and

233 Blue’s anger at the person who had shot the roan indicates that he wants to minimise at least the inevitable destruction that the Bad Man would cause: “That was all we needed – I wanted the man to go away with no difficulty, no trouble to himself” (WHT, 8).
the blood ran swift in our veins” (WHT, 113). The beginning of spring and the beauty of nature affect the people’s moods. What Blue experiences as “the world turning” (WHT, 112) causes a cheerful outlook among the people. Their friendly behaviour is in stark contrast to the miserable, in some instances hostile behaviour, during winter. The change in seasons in the textual world could be related to an opportunity to prepare for the following winter (or hard times). However, because mutual support is absent – that could coincide with mutually organising physical protection also for one another such as effective shelter against the cold, sufficient food and clothing – they once again expose themselves to the dangers and destruction of a harsh spiritual winter.

5.5.5. Animals and the degradation of human beings

Animals are used metaphorically to comment on the unsophisticated, if not bestial, nature of human beings of which the Bad Man serves as an epitome. A connection between him and the residents exists because both he and the people are compared to animals at various times. For example, Blue observes that the man has “the eyes of a crazy horse” (WHT, 18). Blue also compares the Bad Man to a cat, i.e. a predator, attacking: “Faster than a cat the man was on top of Hausenfield, straddling him with his gun holstered now and swinging at his face with the flat of the skillet” (WHT, 13). During the miners’ first visit to the town after the Bad Man’s first attack Blue finds Jimmy and Molly chewing on strips of dried beef like a pair of dogs (WHT, 51). This unrefined consumption of food can also be related indirectly to the Bad Man’s effect on their lives. It is the Bad Man that reduces them to “dogs”. Bearing in mind that Clay Turner also victimises himself and everybody in Hard Times, one could reason that people there are degraded to the level of animals, like the guard who degrades Frankl (cf. Frankl, 1964:22) – based on the nature of their lack of respect for others as well as their self-regard.

After the first destruction the fact that people have been “reduced to animal life” can be seen clearly. Blue describes the town’s remains and focuses for a moment on “mice running in circles, dozens of squeaking little miseries twisting around in the dirt, flopping from their bellies to their backs. A jackrabbit was jumping into the air, trying to get off a jumble of glowing timbers, but he couldn’t jump clear” (WHT, 22). The town residents are also “miseries” that “run in circles”, in other words, end where they have started, especially in the larger context of the narration, and “jackrabbits” that fail to escape what is injurious.

Scavenging animals such as coyotes and buzzards also maintain a presence after the Bad Man’s first attack. The residents of Hard Times are likewise compared to scavengers and buzzards (cf.
For example, not only do both the businessmen and fauna, the animals, birds and insects, gain from the town, but the word “scavenge” after the first destruction also links the animals and the humans: “I put down the pot and the apples and went back outside to scavenge with the boy” (WHT, 34). When Blue and Zar proceed to the ghost town, Fountain Creek, they find that wolves, mice, burrowing owls, bugs and spiders and a human skeleton in the arroyo (WHT, 65) coexist on an equal level in this place. There is thus a levelling of the hierarchical differences between animals and humans.

Animals are moreover described in human terms once the town has been destroyed a second time by the Bad Man: The dead attract buzzards and the “street is busy with the work of jackals and vultures, flies, bugs, mice. Together they make a hum of enterprise” (WHT, 210). The “hum of enterprise” recalls business ventures. The life of animals is therefore metaphoric of the animalistic or uncivilised nature of human life in the town.

5.6. *Welcome to Hard Times* as a possible world: Blue’s mindset and comparable aspects between the fictional world and the actual world

The fictional world as a possible world in *Welcome to Hard Times* is dependent on the consciousness of the narrator, Blue, who “perceives” (cf. Genette, 1988:64). The content of Blue’s focalisation reflects his subjective perspective. As a result of Blue’s consciousness his representation of the textual actual world is individualistic, i.e. characteristic of his fearfully, pessimistically, materialistically focused and self-centred frame of mind – that also serves as a paradigm for the mindsets of the other members of his social context. Blue’s representation of the textual actual world is not as it necessarily “really is”. Blue’s perspective is marked by a seemingly contradictory combination of outright defeatism, “mechanical” continuation that does not reflect physical inactivity – as in Jenks’s case – but his definite psychological apathy and a “hyper-intentional” (misdirected) “optimism” for a flourishing town certainly differs from Ezra Maple’s and Bert Albany’s hopeful dispositions. The decision to stay and write about the physical place Hard Times and the sentiments that he expresses about his circumstances leads to a “filtered” (cf. Chatman, 1986:196) depiction of an external world that is reflective of and metaphoric of his inner world as well as the psychological disposition of his fellow residents.

The value of *Welcome to Hard Times* as a possible world in terms of the actual world is particularly to be found in the psychological credibility (cf. Ryan, 1991:45) with regard to Blue’s portrayal of his social context. The realistic physical environment of the textual actual world is not only mimetic of the actual world. Clayton (1983:115) describes Hard Times as “super-real,
as stark, and nearly as self-contained as a Beckett landscape.” However, the essence of Blue’s focalisation of his physical environment by means of a metaphoric character makes it a possible world. As such, he presents his documented history of Hard Times, as a possible world, to a hypothetical future reader as one that could repeat itself uniquely in other social contexts:

Do you think, mister, with all that settlement around you that you’re freer than me to make your fate? … Your father’s doing is in you, like his father’s was in him, and we can never start new, we take on all the burden: the only thing that grows is trouble, the disasters get bigger, that’s all (WHT, 184).

Blue’s question indicates a comparison between one fictional world and another world implied within the fictional world. He pessimistically argues that the fate of Hard Times is not limited to a town in the (fictional) historical Dakota Territory, but also possible in another social context. Blue’s “mister” is a fictional entity, but nothing prevents the actual world reader from reading the excerpt above as directly addressed to him and, as such, as an instance of trans-world communication. The “message” is that ruin is inescapable because human nature is essentially destructive. An actual world reader may indeed compare destructive aspects of Hard Times with aspects of social contexts in the actual world. The comparable nature of actions and interactions between people in a social community in the actual world and in Hard Times (i.e. the similarities between actual world prostitutes and the characters in Hard Times and the experience of hardship in Nazi concentration camps and in Hard Times) connects the fictional world as a possible world to the actual world.234

However, the actual world reader may also recognise an actual world possibility in Blue’s fictional world that Blue does not seem to recognise: the mindset of the town and Blue’s focalisation are marked by anticipatory anxiety and hyper-intention. This inner reality is what leads to the downfall of the social context. It is highly ironic that Blue represents his social context in a way that implies a strong spiritual connection between the Bad Man from Bodie and the members of his social context – and yet, the former seems to recognise and understand it, for the major part of the narrative, only occasionally and in part. One must differentiate between Clay Turner, the central Bad Man from Bodie in the novel, and “the Bad Man from Bodie” as a

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234 Other real and/or metaphoric variations of such victimiser-victim relationships – apart from the relationships between prostitutes, pimps and punters and Nazi concentration camp prisoners and guards – that are relevant to metaphorically portraying self-victimisation in the social context of Welcome to Hard Times are the relationships between the parasite and its host, between a scavenger/buzzard and carrion and a murderer and his victim.

Chapter 5: Welcome to Hard Times: The social context of a fictional world as the product of a concurring individual and collective mindset
spirit that “never left the town” (WHT, 195). Because he has been in the town “all the time” (WHT, 195; my emphasis – PvdM), his spirit is equal to Hard Times. And despite the recognition at the end of the novel Blue concludes his ledgers by remarking that “with great shame, I keep thinking someone will come by sometime who will want to use the wood” (WHT, 212; my emphasis – PvdM), instead of commenting that it is with great hope that he thinks people would be able to use his documented history of Hard Times to learn from the mistakes that he and the other members of his social context had made.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that components of the fictional world are essentially “social”. This was carried out against the background of (1) Talcott Parson’s descriptions (in conjunction with those of G.M. Platt and N.J. Smelser) of social communities and, especially, the defining value of social interaction and actions; (2) the relevance of the similarities between ideas of such feminist researchers as Margaret A. Baldwin, Melissa Farley, and Catharine MacKinnon about actual world prostitution and the interpersonal relations and experiences of the (fictional) individuals in Hard Times; and (3) the relevance of the similarities of Viktor Frankl’s ideas about the experience of suffering/hard times amongst Jewish prisoners, in the Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War, for the social context of Doctorow’s novel.

Significant components of the fictional world in Welcome to Hard Times consist of the focalising narrator, Blue, the representation of the collective social context, i.e. the (fictional) people and their (social) roles, events and spaces. Following the presentation of the threefold theoretical basis of the chapter, the discussion focused on Blue who is a central “building block” of the fictional world – as a character, but also because his mindset “filters” the textual actual world components to become, collectively, the fictional world. Because the central events of the Bad Man’s two attacks on Hard Times and related events and occurrences coincide with the fulfilment of social roles and social actions, this chapter examined social roles, specifically as they relate to the “spirit of the Bad Man” and social actions that include work, taking of meals and celebrations that also reflect the spiritual deficiency of the social context. The fictional world also consists of an external world that is also – through Blue’s focalisation – characterised by social meaning. The external appearance of the (fictional) people, the landscape, shadows as well as seasons, weather, temperature and animals are not features of the textual actual world independent of Blue’s subjectivity, but are awarded “social meaning”. All these textual actual world features reflect the spiritual deficiency of the social context.
The chapter indicated finally that Blue’s focalisation is characterised by circumstances which are comparable with actual world realities – including an ironic ignorance with regard to the causes of the dire conditions of the social context. The title of the novel is already ironic because of the contrasting aspects that may be associated with a “welcome”, namely hospitality, generosity and kindness replaced by “hard times” that are characterised by unfriendliness, miserliness, greed and lack of cooperation and support. Von Morgen (1993:416) points out that whilst civilization is glorified as synonymous with progress in the traditional Western, one finds that it is the other way around in Welcome to Hard Times. These destructive energies are all the result of an unhealthy capitalistic ethos that is “die eigentliche Ursache des Niedergangs der kleinen “frontier”-Stadt” (vgl. auch Shelton 1983, 7f) [the actual cause of the downfall of the small frontier town (also compare Shelton, 1983:7f).] It is furthermore ironic that Blue does not recognise that his representation of his external world (including his focalisation of physical appearance of the characters in Hard Times, the landscape, shadows, seasons, weather and temperature and animals, as well as social actions, for instance work, meals and celebrations) are symbolic of the spiritual deficiency of the social context. Yet, what is also possible in the actual world is precisely this lack of recognition or understanding because of the ignorance that may accompany the perspective of the experiencing narrator which characterises the fictional world of Welcome to Hard Times.

The fictional world, as a product of Blue’s consciousness, could be regarded as an “extension” of Blue’s individuality, just as the representation of the textual actual world of Demian is reflective of the central focalising narrator, Emil Sinclair. In this chapter the social context as a focalised component of a fictional world received attention. In the following one, focalised events will be presented as a further central “building block” of a fictional world, namely in Hermann Hesse’s Narziß und Goldmund.
Chapter 6

_Narziß und Goldmund:_ Focalised events as psychologically credible and contributing to the fictional world

6. Introduction

This chapter firstly argues that (fictional) events collectively contribute as focalised elements to the fictional world. Secondly, that events in _Narziß und Goldmund_ are characterised by the subjectivity of a focaliser such as Goldmund. This subjectivity is the result of his individuality and his unique mindset. As are Emil Sinclair’s and Blue’s mindsets, Goldmund’s state of mind is greatly influenced by the “psychological interaction” that takes place within his mind and emotions, between his individualistic tendencies and his social context. Furthermore, the fictional world as a possible world (in actual world terms) is what determines the nature of the focalisation that contributes to establishing the fictional world owing to the similarities between the ways in which actual people experience actual world events and focalised ones.

The truth value of fictional world events is related to the possibility (possible-ness or credibility) of events _because_ of the subjective perspective and focalisation of a fictional individual like Goldmund. The focalisation in _Narziß und Goldmund_ – but also in _Demian, Welcome to Hard Times_ and _Homer & Langley_ – could be described as “psychologically credible”. In this sense it is a facet of Marie-Laure Ryan’s possible worlds theory, an accessibility relation (Ryan, 1991:45) making a fictional world accessible or possible and true for an actual world reader through his recognition of “actual world mental and emotional responses” in the fictional world, or responses of characters that are evocative of and comparable to “typically human” responses in the actual world. It is therefore useful to consider representation, focalisation, mindsets, the actual world, psychological credibility, possible worlds, “possible-ness”, truth and fictional worlds as connected when considering how events are co-constitutive of a fictional world. In short: the fictional world is a possible one because of the psychological credibility of human reactions in terms of the personal meaning of events (as well as characters, the social context and spaces) for a focaliser. What makes the fictional world accessible from the actual world is the factor which characterises the focalisation in _Narziß und Goldmund_, namely the familiarity of

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235 The chapter does not argue that every word and sentence of the narration are focalised by only Goldmund. Nonetheless, the focus in this chapter falls on Goldmund as a focaliser.
distinctively (actual world) human and social traits. Even if an event or a character\textsuperscript{236} may be “unrealistic” to some degree, they are central elements of a fictional world that owe their existence to its inherently possible world-character via focalisation.

The main question of this chapter asks: What are the significant events in \textit{Narziß und Goldmund} that co-constitute the fictional world? A second question is: Why could one consider focalised fictional events as “possible” in actual world terms or in which ways are they psychologically credible? In response, this chapter aims to discuss significant events that are co-constitutive of the fictional world. Its intention is also to present the effects of this psychological credibility (as a possible world element) as characteristic of the focalisation of a character like Goldmund, in order to show that through focalisation the possible world nature of represented events serves as a force contributing to the creation of fictional worlds.

The previous chapter argued that because of the main character’s/narrator’s, i.e. Blue’s, focalisation, the textual world gains social meaning owing to the interaction between Blue and his social context. This interaction, and the nature of the social system that \textit{Welcome to Hard Times} represents, exhibit connections with the actual world that affect the nature of Blue’s psychologically credible focalisation. Chapter 6, also dealing with textual actual worlds and social worlds, specifically focuses more directly on the relationship between the focaliser and the actual world via considerations of the typically human, actual world-like and possible experiences related to the representation of fictional events that contribute to the creation of the fictional world.

Against the background of three theories (Dorrit Cohn’s theoretical notions with regard to rendering consciousness through narrated monologue, psycho-narration and quoted monologue, Marie-Laure Ryan’s concept of psychological credibility as an accessibility relation and (Goldmund as) Seymore Chatman’s filter as a means to focalise events truthfully or as also “possible” in the actual world, this chapter will consider the events in Goldmund’s life which are all related to his realisation that he is destined to discover the true nature of human life, as represented by the figure of “the Mother”, a figure evoking Eve\textsuperscript{237}, the ancestral mother of

\textsuperscript{236} Ziolkowski (1965:231) argues that the figures Narziß and Goldmund are “drawn more from the mind than from reality”: in other words, as mimetic versions of actual world types Goldmund and Narziß are rather exaggerated and unlikely. However, one may find aspects of them that correspond with actual world “variations” of the two characters, i.e. in certain respects either Narziß or Goldmund may remind one of either oneself or someone whom one knows in the actual world.

\textsuperscript{237} The name “Eva” originates from the Hebrew name “Heva” which means life (NG, 393; word and concept elucidations of the 2003 Suhrkamp edition). In this text the first mother and first sinner, Eve, Goldmund’s own biological mother and Goldmund’s childhood, a time during which
worldly life. Goldmund, a romantic *picaro*[^238] rejecting ascetic *Geist* or intellect (Freedman, 1963:95), focalises his life as meaningful when categorising it into three sections:

In dieser Stunde schien es Goldmund, als habe sein Leben einen Sinn gewonnen, als übersähe er es wie von oben, sähe deutlich seine drei großen Stufen: die Abhängigkeit von Narziß und ihre Lösung – die Zeit der Freiheit des Wanderers – und die Rückkehr, die Einkehr, den Beginn der Reife und Ernte (NG, 287). [It seemed to Goldmund that his life had been given a meaning. For a moment it was as though he were looking down on it from above, clearly seeing its three big steps: his dependence on Narcissus and his awakening; then the period of freedom and wandering; and now the return, the reflection, the beginning of maturity and harvest (NGT, 272).]

It should be noted that the events of Goldmund’s life are not examined according to these chronological categories. This chapter firstly addresses Goldmund’s acquaintances with characters in terms of categories that relate to the nature of the focalised events. In each case a meeting with a character should be considered an event characterised as a consequence of Goldmund’s mindset and representative of his spiritual growth, from being limited in his awareness to finally understanding and accepting all the aspects of the Mother, namely both kind and cruel. Because (through their gender) female figures emphasise the strong connection between Goldmund and his loyalty to worldly life as represented by the Mother, Goldmund’s life is mostly, although not exclusively, characterised by his experiences with women. A first category, namely kind manifestations of the life of the Mother/honest natural human life (worldly pleasure, joy, happiness, and the like) is represented by Lise, the farmer’s wife and many other nameless peasant women. This category is particularly representative of the beginning of the second phase of Goldmund’s life. The “physical” event of Lise entering his life denotes the event of a psychological awakening which confirms his realisation that he is not destined for an artificial or conventional social existence in the monastery, but for a worldly life. Through the farmer’s wife and the peasant women Goldmund realises his individualistic physical experiences and the relationship with one’s mother define the individual’s life, are representative of Goldmund’s physically and sensually-minded life. Lubich (2009:188) describes Goldmund as “… associated with the matrarchal myth of a gynocentric utopia, whose ideal state is characterized by female authority, based on social equality and sexual permissiveness, and centered in the material world, which finds its symbolic representation in the pagan Mother Goddess, living on earth.”

[^238]: Ziolkowski (1965:230) refers to the novel as a “picaresque story”, while Wenzel (1995:63) argues: “As the picaresque contains a hidden agenda of social critique which is articulated within an autobiographical frame, it is thus a form of subversion.” It is relevant to consider *Narziß und Goldmund* as exhibiting picaresque features because the text as a whole (often symbolically) criticises the overstressed prominence of “masculine values” and the absence of “female values” in social contexts. Käch (1988) identifies Goldmund as an outsider at odds with society for the same reason as a “Taugenichtsfigur” (a good-for-nothing figure; alluding to Joseph von Eichendorff’s late romantic *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826) – *Life of a Good-for-Nothing*) is a social outsider.
predilection for honesty or “real human life” as represented by the natural simplicity of the environment of the farmer’s wife. This is, from Goldmund’s perspective, superior to the non-natural conventions and the possible splendour of social life.

The second category – recognisable in all the stages of Goldmund’s life – is the tension between the artificiality of social life and natural human existence. It begins with Goldmund’s and Narziß’s friendship, which results in Goldmund’s initial (erroneous) dependence on Narziß. Goldmund’s psychological liberation precedes a traumatic disillusionment before the event of his “return to the Mother”. Goldmund recognises – through Narziß’s guidance – the discrepancy between his own and Narziß’s temperaments. This is followed by Goldmund’s physical liberation from the monastery and its social, or conventional and artificial, life, which is representative of a first step towards spiritual liberation.

The said tension is also recognisable during Goldmund’s time of roaming, marked by several encounters with women. A brief consideration of these encounters with women will be presented as an interlude in the discussion of the given tension because they overlap the first, the second and third categories. The discussion will continue by focusing on Lydia and Lisbeth as exponents of this tension. The conflict between natural and honest human existence and the “artificiality” of social life becomes clear during the event of Goldmund’s temporarily becoming part of the lives of the knight’s daughters, Lydia and Julie. The existence of these three is more closely related to the social life of the monastery.

The events of Lydia and Lisbeth entering his life do not exclude the kind manifestations of the Mother. However, the realities of social life do become much more pronounced through his acquaintances with them than during his relationships with Lise and the farmer’s wife. For Goldmund, Lisbeth presents him with the choice to either lead a conventional social life through marrying and practising art as a social occupation, or to leave her and Meister Niklaus for a life of “natural existence”, during which practising art remains exclusively a quasi worshipping of the Mother. These events represent the conflict between life characterised by social conventions and true or natural human life, which includes natural instincts and innate individualistic tendencies that are represented by Goldmund’s sensual desires.

A third category consists of the unkind manifestations of the life of the Mother/honest natural human life (worldly suffering) which become increasingly prominent during the second stage of Goldmund’s life. His companionship with Viktor and the latter’s death when Goldmund is obliged to kill him in self-defence furnish early signs of the Mother’s cruelty. Viktor is also a “Mother figure” because he brings about (worldly) suffering. Events related to Viktor are void
of the early recognition of the joys that the Mother brings. Settling down with Lene and Robert\textsuperscript{239}, removed from the dangers of the Black Death, does include some aspects of grace or kind manifestations of the Mother. However, especially in the light of Lene being finally infected by the Plague, her death and the accompanying contradictions and confusion, “Lene as an event” should be seen as part of one of the unkind manifestations of the Mother. Furthermore, the event of meeting the Jewish girl, Rebekka, during the Black Death and the accompanying madness of worldly life/the Mother is void of grace. Likewise, Goldmund’s acquaintance with Agnes, Count Heinrich’s mistress, is motivated by the desire for the kind manifestations of the Mother, but Agnes is ultimately a dangerous Mother figure linked to death, because he narrowly escapes execution on account of his liaison with her.

Against the background of specific characters and what they represent, the chapter subsequently focuses on events that are central to the second and third phases of his life, namely Goldmund’s discovery of Meister Niklaus’s Mother of God; the Black Death; his expecting his own execution; his return to Narzîß; his return to art (which Goldmund also attempts when returning to Master Niklaus’s house after the Black Death); his return to roaming, despite old age, and finally his death. Goldmund’s death which is as an event a return to another aspect of the Mother is preceded by understanding, insights and acceptance that he is part of the natural world.

“Physical events”, for example, Goldmund’s leaving the monastery, killing his fellow vagabond Viktor or witnessing the Black Death are invariably connected to the “mental events” of recognising, understanding and appreciating the Mother. These events evoke actual world-like realities of a personal and social nature. Although Goldmund’s focalisation contributes more prominently to the fictional world, the chapter finally also considers Narzîß’s perspective, namely his acknowledgement of the “Mother World” that serves as a confirmation of Goldmund’s life, as represented by the fictional world and Goldmund’s focalisation.

6.1. Rendering focalising consciousness and the nature of the focalising consciousness

6.1.1. Cohn: Mediating the focalising consciousness through psycho-narration, quoted monologue, narrated monologue/free indirect speech and vision avec

Hesse uses a third-person narrator who is an unidentified omniscient voice to represent the textual actual world through expressing Goldmund’s, but also Narzîß’s and at times also other

\textsuperscript{239} Robert is a pilgrim who accompanies Goldmund for a while.
characters’, thoughts and feelings.\textsuperscript{240} The focus in this chapter falls on the central consciousness whose focalisation contributes the most to the creation of the fictional world in which free indirect speech, \textit{style indirect libre, erlebte Rede} or, as Cohn (1978:13, 107) calls it, “narrated monologue” is particularly striking in the mediation of consciousness. Free indirect speech comprises one of three narrative techniques that are very closely related to each other. Like psycho-narration, narrated monologue “maintains the third-person reference and the tense of narration, but like the quoted monologue it reproduces verbatim the character’s own mental language” (Cohn, 1978:14). In \textit{Narziß und Goldmund} narration does not occur mainly through a retrospective first-person narrator as in \textit{Demian}, \textit{Welcome to Hard Times} and \textit{Homer & Langley}. First-person narration enables a representation of the textual actual reality to appear as a reflection or projection of the self (cf. Cohn, 1969:121). However, focalisation can also occur through a third-person narrator identifying with the state of mind (cf. Cohn, 1978:112) of a character like Goldmund.

Instances of quoted monologue, psycho-narration and narrated monologue in \textit{Narziß und Goldmund} are mixed in a manner that produces a third-person narrative flow. Narrated monologue mediates the character’s consciousness via the third-person stance, like “He was late” (narrated monologue), as opposed to quoted monologue in which the first-person pronoun “I” appears, like “(He thought:) I am late” and to psycho-narration that is characterised by “mental verbs”: “He knew he was late” (Cohn, 1978:104-105). For example: “Schön wäre es, Menschen anzutreffen, irgendwelche (narrated monologue). Aber er wußte freilich: vielleicht konnte er lang im Walde weitergehen, heut und morgen und noch manchen Tag, ohne jemand zu begegnen (psycho-narration)” (NG, 95; my italics – PvdM). “[It would be pleasant to meet somebody, anybody (narrated monologue). But he was well aware that he could walk in the forest for a long time, today, tomorrow, several days more, without meeting anyone (psycho-narration)” (NGT, 89; my italics – PvdM).] An example of quoted monologue follows: “Nun geht es bald zu Ende, dachte er, bald wird es genug sein, dann wandere \textit{ich} allein … (NG, 224; my italics – PvdM). “[“Now it will soon be over, he thought. Soon \textit{I’ll} have had enough and wander on alone” (NGT, 213; my italics – PvdM). Psycho-narration (through the mental verbs linked to the character) and quoted monologue (through the first-person pronoun) make it

\textsuperscript{240} For example: “… nie hatte er Goldmund bisher singen hören. Alles konnte er, dieser Goldmund. Da ging er nun und sang der wunderliche Mensch!” (NG, 219). “[“Never before had he heard Goldmund sing. He could do everything, this Goldmund. There he was singing, strange man!” (NGT, 208).] Robert’s thoughts are represented by free indirect speech followed by quoted monologue.
obvious whose thoughts, feelings and perspective are being represented.\footnote{Psycho-narration matches Cohn’s (1969:123) description of “internal analysis”: “Internal analysis is the most indirect method, in that a narrating voice may be heard recounting and explaining the inner life of the character”, while quoted monologue matches Cohn’s “interior monologue”: “In interior monologue, the figural consciousness is cited directly, with or without graphic marks, but invariably referring to the present moment in the present tense.”} Observations by the narrator, with or without references to Goldmund in the third-person, also represent the consciousness of the character: “Und die Erfahrung lehrte ihn, daß jede Frau schön sei und zu beglücken vermögen …” (NG, 178) [“Experience taught him that every woman was beautiful and able to bring joy …” (NGT, 169)]. This utterance renders Goldmund’s “mental language” or what Goldmund himself thinks rather than what his narrator reports about him, i.e. it is narration of silent thought coinciding with the narrator’s language (cf. Cohn, 1978:100, 109, 111). This is Goldmund’s awareness and not, despite the third-person narration, exclusively the narrator’s. Cohn (1969:122) explicitly defines free indirect speech as “the style that results when the narrator of a third-person novel gives way to a character’s thoughts without explicitly introducing or quoting them.”

The term “\textit{vision avec}”, originally proposed by Pouillon (cf. Cohn, 1978:110), describes the concept that free indirect speech is narration of silent thought even though it is on the one hand “reported speech that has the syntactic forms of indirect discourse, but that maintains certain characteristics of pragmatic speech” (Cohn, 1978:110). On the other hand, free indirect discourse is “a vision of reality that is not the narrator’s own, but that of a fictional character, the so-called ‘\textit{vision avec}’” (Cohn, 1978:110). Cohn (1978:111) points out that one should, however, be cognizant that the narrated monologue itself is not \textit{vision avec}, but \textit{pensée avec}, which concurs with the perspective of this thesis that focalisation is not limited to visual sight, but is extended to “inner sight”:

Here the coincidence of perspectives is compounded by a consonance of voices, with the language of the text momentarily resonating with the language of the figural mind. In this sense one can regard the narrated monologue as the quintessence of figural narration, if not of narration itself: as the moment when the thought-thread of a character is most tightly woven into the texture of third-person narration.

\textit{Vision avec} allows the character to focalise through his narrated perception, which contributes to changing the textual actual world into the fictional world. Cohn (1978:111) argues that the
fictional world is shaped as a vision avec “where the narrative presentation adheres most consistently to a figural perspective” that dominates the narration in *Narziß und Goldmund*.242

**6.1.2. Ryan and Chatman: The accessibility relation, “psychological credibility”, of the “filter” as characteristic of focalisation in *Narziß und Goldmund* 243**

*Narziß und Goldmund* serves as an ideal example of a fictional world constituted by events that affect the characters mentally and emotionally, especially the central figure, Goldmund. The events and all their social connotations convey personal meaning which the omniscient narrator characteristically relays by referring to the characters in the third person, but still through the minds of the characters. Wolf (2004:287) describes the narrator in *Narziß und Goldmund* as a reliable heterodiegetic narrator throughout, who enables an untroubled relationship of trust between himself and the reader. Furthermore, she also identifies the narrative techniques which enable the narrator to explicitly relay the thematised positions as dialogue, narrator-dominated report and indirect speech that identify with and advance the characters. This manner of narration/focalisation converges with Chatman’s (1986:196) description of a “filter”, i.e. the omniscient narrator narrates from the perspective of a character. Even though the narrator refers to the characters in the third person, observations are often of an inaccessible private nature, i.e. only the character himself would possess knowledge of a certain cognition; for example, when Narziß liberates Goldmund from imprisonment and execution, the narrator uses free indirect speech: “Narziß verzog keine Miene. Das bißchen Knaben- und Renommistententum in des Freundes Haltung machte ihm großen Spaß und rührte ihn zugleich” (NG, 276). [“Narcissus’s expression did not change. He was much amused by the boyish boasting streak in his friend’s attitude and at the same time touched” (NGT, 262).] Because Narziß does not relate his inner experiences to another party, the “narrator” is not a person, but a narrative device. This scene serves as an example of the “device” using a character as a filter.

242 Cohn (1978:112, 294) regards such phrases as “dual presence”, “duplicity”, “double perspective”, “twofold vision” and “dual voice” in referring to the character and the narrator as misleading: “for the effect of the narrated monologue is precisely to reduce to the greatest possible degree the hiatus between the narrator and the figure existing in all third-person narration”. In the case of *Narziß und Goldmund*, the narrator is indeed a “transparent” presence transmitting Goldmund’s consciousness without any interference in the form of opinions, evaluations or any subjectivity; this chimes with Cohn’s (1969:123) definition of free indirect speech: “In narrated monologues the narrating voice seemingly disappears behind the inner speech of the figural consciousness, while yet maintaining minimal indirection by the use of the past tense and the third person.” The only subjectivity rendered belongs to the characters.

243 The selection of events as represented by the narrator, i.e. that are allowed through the information-conveying pipe (Genette, 1988:74), occurs not because they are personally meaningful for the narrator, but because they are important for Goldmund and his life. A combination of the consideration that specific events are selected as part of focalisation is supported by the subjective manner of how they are represented. In this chapter the “how” will be emphasised, mainly by considering Goldmund as a “filter”.

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The difference between events in actual and those in fictional worlds is that events in the actual world can and do exist “independently” of consciousness, while fictional events are reliant on a mediating consciousness. In *Narziß und Goldmund* focalisation is an integral aspect of the fictional events. The events, represented by the narrator, are filtered through the consciousness of a character – like Goldmund.244 Palmer (2004:34) argues that the main semiotic channels by which the reader accesses fictional worlds, and the most important sets of instruction which allow the reader to reconstruct the fictional world, are those that govern the reader’s understanding of the workings of characters’ minds. Palmer does so in reaction to Doležel’s argument that “fictional worlds are accessed through semiotic channels and by means of information processing”, and that readers can do this “by crossing somehow the world boundary between the realms of the actual and the possible” (Palmer, 2004:34; Doležel, 1998:20). Doležel (1998:20) points out that possible world semantics uses the concept of accessibility, but “it tells us nothing about how contacts between actual persons and fictional worlds can be established”.

However, “psychological credibility” as an accessibility relation (Ryan, 1991:45) requires simultaneous reader interaction with the textual actual world (TAW) and a drawing on his knowledge and experience of the actual world (AW): “TAW is psychologically accessible from AW if we believe that the mental properties of the characters could be those of members of AW. This means that we regard the characters as complete human beings to whom we can relate as persons” (Ryan, 1991:45). Palmer’s proposition is therefore an accessibility relation that is based on reader appreciation and/or identification, which is not really different from recognising or understanding information about incidents that have occurred in the actual world, being imparted from one actual person to another in the actual world.

Doctorow describes the transworld contract between the reader and the text in his essay “False documents” (1977) as a “ritual transaction” to which belong complex, indirect, intuitive and nonverbal understandings through which “instructive emotion is generated in the reader from the illusion of suffering an experience not his own” (Doctorow, 1994c:151). The actual world reader’s own mental and emotional capacities enable him to identify with or “access” fictional experiences. This “contract” with fictional characters therefore occurs on an actual world level within the actual world reader’s mind. This experience could therefore inform him not only

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244 Because the filter’s focus “fills” the narrator’s voice-over, filters, for instance, Goldmund and Narziß, could also be regarded as “focalisers”.

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about a specific fictional world, but about a variety of actual world aspects. Insight increases if the receiver of the imparted story understands how the “protagonist’s” “mind works”.245

The “ring of truth” is also based on psychological credibility in Narziß und Goldmund. Kennedy (2002:80-81) explains that physical detail “comforts the reader, and bolsters the realistic illusion”, but also acknowledges that recording a fictional character’s private perceptions leads to psychological and spiritual verisimilitude (200:80-81).246 Although Hesse’s text conforms to many of the accessibility relations, i.e. the relations of the transworld domain linking the actual world and the textual actual world that determine the degree of resemblance between the textual system and our own system of reality (Ryan, 1991:32), the accessibility relations would be more or less interchangeable with any others. The coincidence of differences with regard to accessibility relations and the similarity between Narziß and Goldmund and such texts as Demian and Siddharta (1974b), with their focus on the individual and his search for balance or unity, shows that the accessibility relation of psychological credibility is not dependent on other specific accessibility relations.247

Despite Hesse’s realism248, this “variation” amongst accessibility relations implies the conditional importance of the textual actual world, in a fictional text, as representative of the actual world. Narziß und Goldmund (and most, if not all, of Hesse’s other works) should be regarded as the kind of “true fiction” that Ryan identifies, i.e. the representation of a fictional universe which is deliberately conceived and presented as an accurate image of reality (Ryan, 1991:33), to a limited degree. However, Narziß und Goldmund is true fiction not because of the

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245 This is also important for bibliotherapy that is based on a transworld “contract” between the patient/reader and the fictional world. Leininger et al. (2010:23) refer to Jack & Ronan (2008:164) who describe bibliotherapy as “the prescribed use of books to heal the human condition” and add that books are used for “self-actualization, self-analysis, self-help and education and problem-solving applications” (Jack & Ronan, 2008:172); Hames & Pedreira (2003:377-386) maintain that bibliotherapy aids self-understanding, as well as the realisation that one is not alone, and generates hope for undesirable situations; they consider that books or stories may help an individual or group gain insight into personal problems (Heath et al., 2005:564).

246 According to Kennedy (2002:77), verisimilitude is the “quality of a work of fiction by which a physical, psychological, and spiritual reality is rendered such that the reader is persuaded to suspend disbelief in order that the author’s creative discovery regarding existence may be explored and experienced by the reader.” This echoes the concept of Ryan’s accessibility relations.

247 There are vast differences between Narziß und Goldmund, Demian and Siddharta (1974b) with regard to such shared accessibility relations as identity of properties, compatibility of inventory, chronological compatibility, physical compatibility, taxonomic compatibility, logical compatibility, analytical compatibility, linguistic compatibility as well as historical coherence, socio-economic compatibility and categorial compatibility (Ryan, 1991:32-33; 45-46). However, there is a definite similarity between these texts with regard to thematic focus and psychological credibility.

248 Ryan (1991:44) refers to three kinds of uses of the term “realism”: (1) Referring to accessibility relations: “a text is realistic if it respects all relations from physical compatibility”, “and if the facts it describes are economically and psychologically possible in AW”; (2) the depiction of events in the realistic text must also fall within the statistically probable; (3) the realism of the text only pertains to the everyday life “among regions of TAW” and is not necessarily compatible with the actual world. This study, and specifically this chapter, agrees with the first notion. It is irrelevant whether Goldmund’s dramatic life is actually possible or impossible. His life is an extreme literary representation of collective universal worldly life. Yet, the textual reference world of Narziß and Goldmund is by no means as far removed from the actual world as the mixture of fantastic and realistic elements in the worlds of Kafka’s Die Verwandlung (1915) (The Metamorphosis) and Aymé’s “Le Passe Muraille” (1943) (“The man who could walk through walls”), to which Ryan (1991:44) refers.
mimetic connections between the fictional world and the actual world, but as a result of the credible psychological states that, in various unique forms, are also possible in the actual world.

6.2. **The kind manifestations of the Mother or natural human life in the form of joyful and pleasurable events**

6.2.1. **Lise: the first call by, and message from, the Mother**

As a youth Goldmund leaves the monastery when he meets Lise after his realisation that he should return to the Mother. Lise is the first woman with whom he sleeps and is representative of his discovery of natural and animalistic sensual pleasures (cf. NG, 80;89) in contrast to the intellectual world of Narziß (NG, 90). Baumann (1989:256-257) identifies Lise as a symbolic mother of Goldmund’s rebirth into his real life, lived under the sign of the anima, as he wakes up with his head in her lap (NG, 80) and is later called “’Goldmündlein, mein Kindlein’” (NG, 82)249 [“’my little Goldmund, my little child.’”] She is representative of aesthetic and gentle worldly experiences. In her presence Goldmund’s psychological state is a kind of childlike ignorance.

The event of Goldmund’s awakening is accompanied by a focalisation of an intense awareness of aesthetic forms, sensuality and nature. Shortly before his first encounter with Lise, he examines an empty snail house:

> Er hob ein leeres Schneckenhaus, es klirrte schwach zwischen den Steinen und war ganz warm von der Sonne. Versunken betrachtete er die Windungen des Gehäuses, die eingekerbte Spirale, die launige Verjüngung des Krönchens, den leeren Schlund, in dem es perlmuttern schimmerte. Er schloß die Augen, um die Formen nur mit den tastenden Fingern zu erfühlen … (NG, 79). [He picked up an empty snail house, it made a faint tinkling sound among the stones and was warm with sun. Absorbed, he examined the windings of the shell, the notched spiral, the capricious dwindling of its little crown, the empty gullet with its shimmer of mother-of-pearl. He closed his eyes and felt the shape with probing fingers … (NGT, 73).

249 Lubich (2009:190) points out that Goldmund’s “(pre-) oedipal yearnings imbue his sexual experiences with the innocence of a perennial child” and that throughout his life and his many erotic escapades he remains a big child, retaining his impetuous and insatiable childlike nature (NG, 314).
There is a consistent sensually- and aesthetically-minded emphasis when Goldmund focalises Lise – in terms of nature as well. For example: “Sicher ging sie in den nächtlichen Wald, … wie ein Fuchs oder Marder schien sie mit Nachtaugen zu sehen … Wunderbar sah er das weiße sanfte Licht über ihre Stirn und Wangen fließen, über den runden lichten Hals …” (NG, 89, 91). [“She walked with sure step in the dark forest … Like a fox or a marten, she seemed to see with night eyes … he watched the white gentle light miraculously inundate her forehead, her cheeks, slide over her round, limpid throat” (NGT, 84-85).

Goldmund’s focalisation during his acquaintance with Lise is also occasionally accompanied by sleepiness, for instance when he meets Lise for the first time: “Goldmund öffnete die Augen, aus Traumwäldern zurückkommend. … in seine verschlafenen verwunderten Augen blickten fremde nahe Augen warm und braun” (NG, 80) [“Goldmund opened his eyes, returning from a forest of dreams. … Strangely close, two warm brown eyes were looking into his, which were sleepy and astonished” (NGT, 74)] and “gemeinsam entschlummernd und schlafen, im Erwachen sich neu zueinander wendend … auf neue entschlafend” (NG, 92) [“dozing off together, turning toward each other anew upon awakening … falling asleep once more” (NGT, 86).] When he studies the snail house he is absorbed, dreamily thinking that a disadvantage of schools and learning is that they see and represent everything as if it were only two-dimensional, and lets the snail house fall while feeling tired and sleepy (NG, 79). Although Lise is part of his “spiritual awakening”, namely that he is destined to return to the Mother, the sleepiness also suggests a youthful innocence, barely aware that the Mother does not entail only pleasant worldly experiences, but also suffering. Baumann (1989:257) terms the image of Goldmund waking up with his head on Lise’s lap a symbolic rebirth. The sleepiness could therefore also suggest that he is a spiritual “baby”, unaware of the suffering that is part of worldly life. His first experiences with Lise are tender and aesthetic (cf. NG, 80), yet she must return to a violent husband and her “adult life”, i.e. to her social life.

Goldmund leaves the monastery following his experiences with Lise, not because of her as an individual, but seeking for the freedom of discovering the Mother World that she represents in part. Goldmund communicates to Narziß: “… ich fühlte sogleich, daß jetzt meine Mutter gekommen sei, um mich zu sich zu holen. Nicht, daß ich diese Frau für meine Mutter hielt ... Aber doch war sie es, war es ihr Ruf, war eine Botschaft von ihr” (NG, 84). [“… I immediately felt that my mother had come to take me home. I did not think that this woman was my mother. … And yet it was my mother, my mother’s call, a message from her” (NGT, 78).] All the other women and even a male character such as Viktor are “messages from his mother“ or “signs of the Mother”.
6.2.2. The farmer’s wife: The superiority of natural simplicity and the irrelevance of artificial splendour

Goldmund values a natural phenomenon like a flower more than Virgil’s verses (NG, 105) because of his innate inclinations to prefer a world marked by natural simplicity above artificial splendour. Through indirect speech Goldmund argues that nobody, regardless of his social stature, “kein Held und kein Kaiser, kein Papst und kein Heiliger” (NG, 105) [“no hero, no emperor, no pope or saint!” (NGT, 99)], is able to create a flower. Goldmund therefore also feels comfortable in the simple setting of a peasant house that is closer to nature than the monastery. His focalisation is here characterised not only by the woman herself, but also by her natural and simple surroundings:

Die Linde, der Brunnen, das flackernde Feuer unterm Kessel, das Schnauben und Mahlen der fressenden Kuh und ihre dumpfen Stöße gegen die Wand, der halbdunkle Raum mit Tisch und Bank, das Hantieren, der kleinen greisen Frau, das alles war schön und gut, roch nach Nahrung und Frieden, nach Menschen und Wärme, nach Heimat (NG, 101). [The lime tree, the well, the flickering fire under the kettle, the snuffing and munching of the feeding cow, the dull thuds she made against the wall, the half-dark room with table and bench, the small, ancient woman’s gestures – all this was beautiful and good, smelled of food and peace, of people and warmth, of home (NGT, 95).]

As with Lise, Goldmund also focalises this woman’s aesthetic quality. He appreciates the natural aesthetic and sensual splendour of the farmer’s wife: “Viel Schönes hatte sie ihm mitgebracht, starke durstige Lippen, starke funkelnde Zähne, starke Arme ...” (NG, 105-106). [“She had brought him a great many beautiful things: strong thirsty lips, strong gleaming teeth, strong arms …” (NGT, 99).] Her reticence with regard to verbal communication is an indication of the distance between her natural being and environment, and refined civilization. Through psycho-narration Goldmund focalises his purpose: “Er begann zu merken, …” (NG, 109) [“He started to notice …”] that the meaning of his travels was to become acquainted with female bodies – as part of other aesthetic natural phenomena also.
6.3. The tension between social life and natural human life

6.3.1. The beginning of a friendship: The recognition of contrasting temperaments

The idealisation of the Mother World and Goldmund’s experiences with Lise and the farmer’s wife are preceded by his commitment to the social life of the monastery. As a disciple of the Father World as well as of the Mother World, he experiences the tension between the worlds. Focalised events such as Goldmund’s and Narziß’s friendship, Goldmund’s disillusionment with regard to his belief that it would be right to spend his life in the Mariabronn monastery, together with the subsequent return to the Mother, contribute to constituting the fictional world.

Goldmund’s friendship with Narziß begins with his instant attraction to Narziß. He focalises Narziß as physically attractive and finds his deportment and intelligence admirable (cf. NG, 20; 23). A first, positive, almost amazed impression of Narziß presents Goldmund as a filter:

Er war erstaunt darüber, einen so jungen Lehrer zu finden, kaum einige Jahre älter als er selbst, und war erstaunt und tief erfreut darüber, diesen jungen Lehrer so schön, so vornehm, so ernst, dabei so gewinnend und liebenswert zu finden ... (NG, 19). [He was surprised to find the teacher so young, only a few years older than himself, surprised and deeply delighted to find this young teacher so handsome and refined, so stern, yet so charming and likable (NGT, 13).]

Goldmund’s reaction to his new surroundings and the people, and especially to Narziß, is an explicit expression of his feelings that denote his initial ambition to identify himself with the social life of the monastery. The narrator recounts that Goldmund’s heart was drawn to two people in the monastery, the abbot Daniel and Narziß, whom he liked, who were active in his thoughts and for whom he felt admiration, love and respect (NG, 22). This attraction seems acceptable, perhaps even commendable, in view of his father’s wish and ruling as well as “God’s intention and demand” for him to remain in the monastery and dedicate his life to God (NG, 22). Lubich (2009:187) observes that Narziß represents the “patriarchal world order of an androcentric culture, whose societal hierarchy is based on male authority, maintained by social and sexual repression, and focused on spiritual values that find their quintessential apotheosis in God the Father, residing in heaven.”250 However, it is neither the monastery, nor the socialised...

250 Singh (2006:194) similarly describes Narziß as a rational-analytical masculine/father figure in contrast to Goldmund as representative of the female/Mother principle because of the latter’s emotional and intuitive nature.
persona which Goldmund’s father misinterprets and misuses as “God”, that determines Goldmund’s response. He misinterprets Narziß and the abbot by assuming that their traditional values of self-discipline, morality, virtue etcetera stem from their faith, that make them as human beings deserving of appreciation, acknowledgement and emulation.\footnote{Reading 	extit{Narziß und Goldmund} as a literary autobiography, Stephenson (2009:174; my emphasis – PvdM) considers that the text is, apart from an attempt at harmonious reconciliation with his family and an exercise in self-justification, also “both a tribute to and a criticism of the piety of his family, especially his father.” He also later points out that Narziß evokes Hesse’s father, Johannes Hesse’s (serene, ascetic, compassionate and saintly mystic), temperament and that Goldmund’s statue of Narziß is “a manifestation of his love and admiration for Narcissus, just as Hesse’s book is the product of his own admiration for his father, and his desire for reconciliation” (Stephenson, 2009:177).}

However, for Goldmund to emulate Narziß’s life would be misguided because it would be fraudulent. Narziß is a thinker and analyst, Goldmund a dreamer and a childlike soul, but both are noble, distinguished by clear gifts and signs, while each had received an admonition from fate (NG, 23). However, Narziß recognises the differences between them. Prior to and at the beginning of Goldmund’s and Narziß’s friendship Goldmund does not possess this understanding. For Baumann (1989:251) Goldmund has completely assumed his father’s views of life and, by doing so, completely suppressed his own aptitude and needs. Goldmund senses that Narziß, whom he focalises as sapient, learned and highly intellectual, holds a “danger” for him as an ideal or example because he is in conflict with another ideal or example, namely the less intellectually-minded abbot and his good and humble temperament (NG, 23), whose example is more closely related to natural human life. Goldmund initially thinks erroneously that Narziß is an ideal model for his own life (cf. NG, 24). Rather, just as Narziß suspects that Goldmund is his “Gegenpol und seine Ergänzung” (NG, 25) [“his opposite pole and completion”], Narziß is also Goldmund’s. Zimmermann (1983:38) relates the conflict between love of life and asceticism, between body and soul, the opposites that constitute 	extit{Narziß und Goldmund}, to Hesse’s Pietist upbringing.

The text can therefore be interpreted as an expression of the necessity for balance.\footnote{Stephenson (2009:177) also describes the central theme of the novel as the relationship between art and religion, between the masculine and the feminine, between the intellect and the senses, between spirit and soul, between the dry, pure, ascetic heights to which the mind can rise and the sensual desires which stir and agitate matter. He adds that the text represents Hesse’s attempt to resolve these metaphysical polarities. Drewermann (1995:64-65) and Mecocci (2004b:77) present similar classifications.} Wolf (2004:295) indicates that it is an expression of Hesse’s own loss of the romanticised paradise of childhood, i.e. the loss of a puerile, holistic consciousness against the background of the memory of a safe and sound childhood world, in harmony with nature and his parents. In the novel this autobiographical element finds expression in the mutual acknowledgement of Narziß and
Goldmund, their different worlds and their discovery of the necessity of a balanced integration of each others’ natures into their own lives.

However, as a child Goldmund finds it difficult to regard Narziß as his “Widerspiel und Gegenpol” (NG, 35) [“contrary and polar opposite”]: “Ihm schien, es bedürfe ja nur der Liebe, nur der aufrichtigen Hingabe, um aus zweien eins zu machen, Unterschiede auszulöschen und Gegensätze zu überbrücken” (NG, 35). [“He thought that only love, only sincere devotion was needed to fuse two into one, to wipe out differences and bridge contrasts” (NGT, 29).] This also explains the psychological credibility of the possibility of a friendship between two divergent temperaments because one friend or both may feel that he/they would become a little bit more like the other. 253 Although Goldmund and Narziß feel drawn to each other, Goldmund resists the “Narziß” within himself and Narziß the “Goldmund” within himself: “Denn wenn Goldmund sich zum Mönch und Asketen und zu einem lebenslangen Streben nach Heiligkeit bestimmt fühlte – Narziß war wirklich zu einem solchen Leben bestimmt” (NG, 36). [“Because where Goldmund felt himself destined for monkish asceticism and a lifelong striving for saintliness, Narcissus was truly destined for that life” (NGT, 30).] Goldmund is destined for a life of experiencing the world as a disciple of the Mother. Narziß is a disciple of “Geist” or intellect: “Ihm war alles Geist, auch die Liebe …” (NG, 34). [“All was mind to him, even love …” (NGT, 28).] The possibility of this friendship lies in the necessity of reconciling diverging human tendencies, especially within oneself.

The beginning of Narziß’s and Goldmund’s friendship is psychologically credible because “opposites attract”: Lacking a natural inclination towards self-discipline, Goldmund is impressed by Narziß. Narziß finds Goldmund valuable because he recognises in him a human warmth that is associated with appreciating or literally taking delight in worldly life – which Narziß avoids because of his ascetic inclinations. It is psychologically plausible that two individuals with diverging temperaments could display mutual respect for each other because of a longing for a seemingly unattainable balance254 – and consequently form a friendship.

253 Stephenson (2009:175) interprets the meaning of the friendship in the light of Walter Benjamin’s idea that every true story contains “something useful” which may be moral, practical advice, a proverb or maxim: “In Narcissus and Goldmund, the moral and the meaning are conflated, for the work ends not with a maxim or a statement but a question: how will you die without a mother? Hesse’s question is meant as a teaching directed at a masculine, patriarchal, logical, rationalized society and culture that, in losing connection to the ‘mother’ has lost touch with the perennial human themes of how to love and how to die.” According to Stephenson (2009:178) the hope is held out that Goldmund’s question may transmute Narziß.

254 Drewermann (1995:72) writes that Narziß does not believe in a harmony between natural desires and the mind and that choosing one means abstaining from the other. In the light of Narziß’s recognition that it was “nicht bloß kindlicher menschlicher, ein Goldmundleben zu führen, es war am Ende wohl auch mutiger und größer …” (NG, 316) [“not perhaps more childlike and human to lead a Goldmund-life, more courageous,
6.3.2. Goldmund’s disillusionment and return to the Mother

The most seminal event in *Narziß und Goldmund* occurs when Goldmund recognises the Mother for the first time. Narziß changes Goldmund’s consciousness, which idealises Narziß’s radically ascetic and intellectual approach to life, to one orientated towards its direct opposite, namely a consciousness that embraces the physical and sensual experiences which the Mother represents.255 Narziß does so, as Lubich (2005:53) points out, in the best tradition of Freudian psychoanalysis and Jungian depth psychology by exposing Goldmund’s “versunkene Ursprungswelt” [“lost world of origin”] that involves his true temperament: “Narziß war nicht mehr im Zweifel über die Natur von Goldmunds Geheimnis. Es war Eva, es war die Urmutter die dahinterstand” (NG, 40). [“Narcissus no longer had any doubt about the nature of Goldmund’s secret. It was Eve who stood behind it …” (NGT, 34).] The fictional world preceding this revelation is marked by Narziß’s being utilised as a filter and focaliser through psycho-narration and quoted monologue that also refers to Goldmund’s biological mother as the basis for the concept of the Mother:

Narziß dachte viel über seinen Freund nach. … Warum war nun dieser Liebesmensch, dieser Mensch mit den feinen reichen Sinnen, der einen Blumenduft, eine Morgensonne, ein Pferd, einen Vogelflug, eine Musik so tief erleben und lieben konnte, warum nur war er darauf versessen, ein Geistemensch und Asket zu sein? (NG, 42-43). [Narcissus pondered a great deal about his friend. … Then why was this being with such rich and perceptive senses so set on leading the ascetic life of the mind? (NGT, 36)256.]

Narziß’s filtering therefore contributes to the fictional world’s meaning in the sense that even though he himself is an intellectual and an ascetic, i.e. the kind of person whom Goldmund’s father would idealise as his son, Narziß does not condemn Goldmund’s necessary journey towards the Mother. On the contrary, Narziß validates Goldmund’s temperament. Moreover, the fact that Narziß contemplates the value of the Mother World shows that although he does not have the same tendencies as Goldmund, and because the Mother World is mentally and morally more noble …” (NGT, 301), Drewermann (1995:73) comments that the wealthy Narziß is ultimately poor compared to the tramp because Narziß has spent a lifetime trying to avert the fullness of life by means of “forms of eternal duration”, i.e. a lifestyle on earth that focuses on eternal life after physical death.

255 As Narziß observes to Goldmund the purpose of their friendship is that he has to show Goldmund “wie volkommen ungleich du mir bist!” (NG, 40) [“how completely different you are from me!”]

256 The translators omitted “der einen Blumenduft, eine Morgensonne, ein Pferd, einen Vogelflug, eine Musik so tief erleben und lieben konnte” (NG, 43) [“who could so deeply experience and love the scent of a flower, the morning sun, a horse, the flight of a bird, a piece of music”].

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accessible or comprehensible to Narziß, it is not wholly absent from Narziß’s consciousness. The event of Narziß revealing Goldmund’s own “secret” (that he has forgotten his Mother) to Goldmund is significant. The rest of the novel is causally linked to Goldmund’s epiphany (that he should return to “his mother”/the Mother).

The most direct effect of this event is the distress which it causes. Goldmund (mis)understands himself as a burgeoning intellectual and ascetic. When Narziß finally spells out to him that they are contradictory temperaments\(^\text{257}\) this upsets Goldmund and he tells Narziß: “… du hast mir furchtbare Worte gesagt” (NG, 51). [“You’ve said terrible words to me” (NGT, 45).] The trauma affects Goldmund’s whole personal world, in spatial terms too. He flees towards the quietest places of the monastery and does not look for relief by rational means, but by means of sensual experiences, i.e. by breathing in the scent of the roses from the cool stony cellar air of the monastery (NG, 52), thereby confirming Narziß’s argument. Goldmund’s experience furthermore includes the experience of the three personalised stone wolf or dog heads which looked down on him and that he experiences as barking in his intestines (NG, 53). These descriptions reveal an involuntarily physical, bodily and emotional reaction (as opposed to a rational and intellectual reaction), true to Goldmund’s temperament.

Although the fictional world is here not represented exclusively from either Narziß’s and Goldmund’s perspectives, the central focus remains the thoughts and experiences of these two characters, especially Goldmund’s. The description of the abbot’s day preceding his finding Goldmund unconscious on the tiles begins with a portrayal of heterogeneous co-existence. One paragraph ends with a highly personal focus on Goldmund’s fainting that brings release like a pseudo-death (NG, 53). The next paragraph begins with an account of the abbot’s unpleasant day because of two older monks who were arguing about long-standing trivialities dealing with jealousy. This is followed by his discovering Goldmund and discussing Goldmund’s condition with Narziß. The narration then returns to Goldmund’s experiences (NG, 53-54). This objective perspective provides a realistic portrayal of the microcosmic social circumstances in the textual actual world when the process of Goldmund’s return to the Mother commences.

Free indirect discourse serves as the medium of focalising Goldmund’s initial return to the Mother as a continuous process that also continues while he is sleeping. The sensual experiences which he associates with the torture of the disillusionment echo while he is unconscious: “O wie

\(^{257}\) “Du bist Künstler, ich bin Denker. Du schläfst an der Brust der Mutter, ich wache in der Wüste” (NG, 51). [“You are an artist; I am a thinker. You sleep at the mother’s breast; I wake in the desert” (NGT, 45).]
weh war ihm gewesen! Er schloß die Augen. O wie furchtbar weh war ihm gewesen! Er schlief wieder ein” (NG, 59). [“The pain he had felt! He closed his eyes. The dreadful pain he had felt! Again he fell asleep” (NGT, 53).] This Goldmund-filtered representation of pain subsequently transforms itself into a recognition of the Mother: “Er sah, er war sehend geworden. Er sah Sie. Er sah die Große, Strahlende, mit dem voll blühenden Munde, mit den leuchtenden Haaren. Er sah seine Mutter” (NG, 59). [“His eyes had been opened: he saw Her. He saw the tall, radiant woman with the full mouth and glowing hair – his mother” (NGT, 53).] It could be that this dream figure coincides with a memory of his biological mother (“seine Mutter”). However, “Sie”, accorded a capital letter, indicates that his acknowledgement of her approximates a worship-like elevation of his mother, turning her into more than just the (fictional) person. She becomes God, or at least the part of God which Goldmund can access through his temperament.

Considering Fletcher’s explanation, mentioned earlier, that the word “daemon” is derived from the Greek verb *daiomai*, meaning to distribute or to divide, and that an allegorical character is a “daemonic character” if he is “obsessed with only one idea” and appears “to be controlled by some foreign force, something outside the sphere of his own ego” (Fletcher, 1970:40-43), Goldmund’s reaction is psychologically credible. Goldmund’s disillusionment is plausible in view of his intense reaction. He is traumatised not because he at first disbelieves Narziß’s views, but because Narziß confirms his earlier recognition of the effect exerted by a female presence on him as a sign that he is not the person that he had thought he was. Narziß destroys Goldmund’s “certainty” that he is intended for the life of a priest or a monk, which was indoctrinated by his father. Goldmund had already begun to fear his ideal might be false when he “inevitably sensed” at the first encounter with a female person that women are his enemy and his daemon (“sein Feind und Dämon”) and hold “danger” for him (NG, 34). His reaction is an expression – if not of the mental confusion that Narziß’s “news” brings about, then at least of emotional confusion because the Mother and not the Father is his natural “daemon” – yet he had believed that it was the other way around.

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258 Although not as explicitly represented as in *Demian*, Narziß’s conception of God is, to an extent, reminiscent of the all-inclusive god Abraxas when he asserts that God is not only in the commandments; that they are only a small part of Him; and that one can obey the commandments and still be far away from Him (NG, 39).
6.3.3. Goldmund’s encounters with women: The true nature of the Mother and the tension between social life and the natural life

Women represent two realities in Goldmund’s life, the first being the true nature of the Mother that consists of pleasurable experiences of worldly existence on the one hand and suffering on the other hand. The second aspect concerns the tension between Goldmund’s loyalty to natural worldly existence and artificial social life.

The “woman” as “daemon” in Goldmund’s life is a significant part of Goldmund’s experiences of the world and takes on different forms. Lubich (2005:54) explains that Goldmund’s lyrical infatuation with the world is, repeatedly, romantically embodied in seductive female figures who represent physical-metaphysical epiphanies of the maternal universe.259 The most central women are the gypsy Lise; Lydia260, the knight’s daughter; Lisbeth, Master Niklaus’s daughter; Lene; Rebekka and Agnes. There are in addition a host of anonymous women with whom he sleeps. Goldmund experiences all the women as resonances of the Mother. The image of the “weltlichen, der Eva-Mutter” (NG, 173) [“the worldly Eve-Mother”] had the features of Lise, Lydia and others, and these women also contributed to the Mother image (NG, 173). However, although love and desire are for Goldmund the only ways to ease life and fill it with meaning (NG, 178), the Mother does not include only the pleasant aspects of worldly life:

Die Mutter des Lebens konnte man Liebe oder Lust nennen, man konnte sie auch Grab und Verwesung nennen. Die Mutter war Eva, sie war die Quelle des Glücks und die Quelle des Todes, sie gebar ewig, tötete ewig, in ihr waren Liebe und Grausamkeit eins ... (NG, 179). [The mother of life could be called love or desire; she could also be called death, grave, or decay. Eve was the mother. She was the source of bliss as well as of death; eternally she gave birth and eternally she killed; her love was fused with cruelty … (NGT, 170).

Goldmund is not quite the standard womaniser261, but he is one in this sense: the feature which characterises all of his relationships is that he does not idealise the social norm of settling down

259 According to Ziolkowski (1965:244) the women in Goldmund’s life “lead him, through love, ever closer to the pole of nature exemplified in his mind by the image of his mother, which gradually is escalated into the symbol of the primal mother of mankind.”

260 Julie, Lydia’s sister, is representative of youth, like the young girls with whom he prefers to sleep. However, her more important function in the novel is as a catalyst to break up the relationship between Lydia and Goldmund.

261 Although Goldmund’s relationship with women is symbolic of his natural connection to the Mother, the eroticism present in the book – and especially through Goldmund’s focalisation which evokes understanding and appreciation for the individual – also mitigates the notion that
with a wife. The encounters with each of the women have different meanings. Goldmund’s and Lise’s meeting could, socially speaking, be regarded in social terms as immature, adolescent, immoral and irresponsible, but in natural human terms it is psychologically credible as a natural physical and adventurous attraction. This encounter is marked by a kind of natural affection and aesthetic sensuality. It is the social implication, i.e. Lise’s having to return to a violent husband, that blemishes the experience.

Goldmund’s encounter with the farmer’s wife is a continuation of his experience with Lise. Goldmund values her simple and natural surroundings: he prefers these to materialistic or sophisticated and artificial social contexts since they are related to the naturalness, and lack of pretension, of the physical experiences that they share and that he shares with many other women. Tusken (1998:132) points out that Goldmund sees no purpose “to differentiate among feminine adventures at this point in his life”. However, there are differences because the world is characterised by both a natural side and social side, as well as by both the pleasure and the suffering that become increasingly clearer in his future acquaintances with such women as Lydia, Lisbeth and Lene.

The tension between the social life and natural life becomes pronounced in Goldmund’s relationship with Lydia. The tension between social life and natural life, when Goldmund desires Lydia physically, becomes recognisable when Lydia resists to surrendering herself to Goldmund as Lise and the farmer’s wife had done. They fall in love with each other, but Goldmund’s lack of social standing prevents them from conducting a public relationship. Goldmund finds social dictates irrelevant but remains content to be with her alone and accepts the limited physical interaction that she allows. However, when Julie, her sister, joins them during an intimate moment, Lydia sacrifices the clandestine relationship by confessing it to her father and therefore does what is socially expected of her. It is as psychologically credible that Goldmund and Lydia fall in love with each other as Romeo and Juliet do, whose relationship is

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262 The first time that Goldmund experiences this tension occurs when he was still convinced that he would spend his life in the monastery. When he receives his first kiss from a girl, he focalises her in sensual terms (NG, 30), but the event of the kiss immediately causes mental disturbance that is comparable with his reaction after having killed Viktor: “… er … taumelte über die Beete … riß sich die Hand an einem Rosenstrauch wund …” (NG, 30-31) [“… he … toppled across the flower beds … A rosebush tore his hand” (NGT, 24)]. He becomes literally sick because of the tension between his disappointed wish to conform to his social context and the recognition that females are his “sein Feind und Dämon” (NG, 34) [“enemy and daemon”] and therefore hold a “danger” for him – or at least for his identity as a conforming “social being”.

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sexual impulses are evil, “von Satan stammend, verteufelt und verdammt” (Limberg, 2009:89) [“stemming from Satan, cursed and damned”] which also existed in the author’s own social context.
likewise socially complicated. Lydia finally decides against further involvement with Goldmund for the sake of protecting her social position.263

Lisbeth is similar to Lydia, but acts more strictly according to social expectations. Although Goldmund finds her attractive, and regards her, as with all the women in his life, as a reflection of the Mother, she remains unapproachable to him because she is firmly positioned in a socially regulated context.

Women represent not only the tension between the social world and the natural world, but also suffering and danger. Although it is unlikely that Lydia’s father would kill Goldmund, who agrees to leave his court, he does threaten to kill Goldmund if he were to return, which is also part of the danger and suffering that Goldmund would face again in the future. Goldmund’s relationship with Lene is exclusively the result of a dramatic public disaster, namely the Black Death. She agrees to settle down with him and subsequently also has hopes for a future with Goldmund. Goldmund, however, nurtures no such ideals. The actual world phenomenon of people appreciating each other’s presence, but remaining resistant to marriage, serves as a basis for regarding Goldmund’s appreciation of Lene, together with his resistance to settling down, as psychologically credible. Yet, he is heartbroken when she dies because of the Plague. Goldmund also truly cares for Rebekka whom he wants to protect. This protectiveness is psychologically credible as a focalising drive.264 The last woman in Goldmund’s life is Agnes, for whom Goldmund is willing to risk his life (NG, 252). His relationship with her, not least because she represents to Goldmund the epitome of female beauty, signifies adventure and the youth that is starting to pass for the ageing Goldmund. Yet, she is also the epitome of the tension between social life and natural life as well as of danger and suffering. Goldmund’s attraction to her is the direct cause of his death sentence and the night of psychological torture while awaiting his execution.

6.3.4. Lydia: Desire, true love in an “artificial” world

After Goldmund leaves the farmer’s wife, he encounters many other women. He realises that it is the purpose of his roaming to become acquainted with them. After some time, he arrives at the court of a knight who gives him new clothes. The knight invites Goldmund to stay in

263 This is comparable to Francesca Johnson’s decision to remain with her family instead of leaving them for Robert Kincaid, despite falling deeply in love with him, in The Bridges of Madison County (1992) by Robert James Waller.

264 The theme of a “kind” man taking care of a woman, followed by sex, appears in, for example, Jean Rhys’s Voyage in the Dark (1934).
exchange for revising a text that he has written in Latin about a pilgrimage that the former has undertaken. Goldmund is also motivated to accept the offer because the knight has two beautiful daughters, Lydia and Julie.

Although he finds Julie physically more attractive, Lydia becomes Goldmund’s only “true love”, but she remains unattainable because of the social restrictions that prevent a public relationship between them. As he says to Narziß, infatuation or “Verliebtsein” is for him the only way to life and meaning (NG, 86;178-179), evidently also because this is part of worldly life. However, Goldmund questions whether he should continue to suffer the concealment of their love (as a socially determined condition) because leaving, finding other women, would also suit his temperament: “‘Waren das nicht Erlebnisse, Gefühle und Gewissenszustände für Seßhafte, für Legitime, für Leute in geheizten Stuben?’” (NG, 127). [“These were experiences, emotions, and states of mind for the sedentary, the lawful, for people in heated rooms” (NGT, 121).] He desires Lydia sexually, but his recreating her through his art indicates a much stronger connection with her than with most of the women.265

However, Goldmund’s world, a natural and animalistic world which regulates his consciousness,266 stands in direct contrast to the cultured or normative, i.e. in Goldmund’s experience “artificial”, world, such as the monastery.267 This is evident in a conversation between Lydia and Goldmund: Lydia is astounded that Goldmund dares speak of love as he could never become her husband, whilst Goldmund declares: “‘Ich habe nichts geglaubt und gedacht, Lydia, ich denke überhaupt viel weniger, als du meinst. Ich wünsche nichts, als daß du mich einmal küssen möchtest’” (NG, 119). [“‘I thought and believed nothing, Lydia. I think much less than you imagine. I wish nothing except that you might wish to kiss me …’” (NGT, 113).] That she fears for Goldmund’s future and that he could be caught and executed are also evident of her “social thinking”.

265 Cf. NG, 128. This becomes clear at the end of the novel when he uses his memory of Lydia as the basis for a carving of the Madonna. Goldmund wanted to immortalise one of the unforgettable figures which is focalised as his first love (NG, 310; 312). Upon seeing the carving, Narziß senses that the figure of the girl has lived for a long time in his friend’s heart – reminiscent of Gabriel García Márquez’s Florestino Ariza who, in old age, still loves Fermina in El amor en los tiempos del cólera (1985) [Love in the time of cholera]. Narziß says: “In seiner Seele aber hatte er sie mitgenommen und bewahrt, treuer als der beste Gatte …” (NG, 318). [“But, truer than the most faithful husband, he had taken her along in his soul, preserving her image …” (NGT, 303).]

266 Goldmund is completely enveloped by a natural world preceding and following his time with Lydia. He also expresses his consciousness by making drawings of figures, flowers, leaves, trees, animals and human heads (cf. NG, 95-96).

267 In this regard it is also interesting that the forest reminds Goldmund of the monastery’s church (NG, 98). The experience of the church building’s being replaced by the forest indicates a movement away from civilisation towards the importance of the natural world in his experience of life.
Goldmund focalises her as well as her sister, Julie, as aesthetically beautiful and sensually desirable, like Lise and the farmer’s wife, and as social beings. But he also focalises Lydia’s physical beauty as “beseelt” (NG, 326) or possessing a soul. His natural desire of her is pronounced when he focalises Lydia’s presence, while they are on horseback, against the background of nature:

Wie einer Beute jagte er ihr nach, sein Herz lachte, … las mit frohen Augen im Hinfliegen die Kennzeichen der Landschaft ab, die hingeduckten Felder, das Erlengehölz, die Ahorngruppen, die lehmigen Ufer der Tümpel, ließ immer wieder den Blick zu seinem Ziel zurückkehren, der schönen Fliehenden (NG, 115). [He gave chase as though she were a fox; his heart laughed. … scanned the landscape with happy eyes as he flew past low-crouching fields, an alder forest, maples, the clay-covered banks of ponds. Again and again his eyes returned to his target, to the beautiful, fleeing women (NGT, 109).]

Lydia momentarily therefore literally becomes part of nature in Goldmund’s eyes, i.e. in terms of how he wants to see her. However, he not only sexually objectifies her as a “natural presence” through whom he idealises the kind manifestations of the Mother, but also falls in love with her. Because Goldmund’s love for Lydia evolves, his focalisation of her differs from the purely physical appreciation of Lise and the farmer’s wife. He focalises her physical being as an expression of her inner being:

Ihre Seele war ihm bekannt und lieb geworden, in ihrer Kindlichkeit, Zärtlichkeit und ihrer Hinneigung zur Traurigkeit schien sie seiner eigenen ähnllich; oft war er tief erstaunt und entzückt darüber, wie sehr diese Seele ihrem Leibe entsprach; sie konnte etwas tun, etwas sagen, einen Wunsch oder ein Urteil äußern, und ihr Wort und die Haltung ihrer Seele war vollkommen nach derselben Form geprägt wie der Schnitt ihrer Augen und die Bildung ihrer Finger! (NG, 126). [Her soul had become familiar and dear to him. In its childlike tenderness and inclination to sadness it seemed similar to his own. He was often deeply astonished and delighted to see how much her soul corresponded to her body; she’d do something, say something, express a wish or an opinion, and her words and the attitude of her soul were molded in the same shape as the slant of her eyes and the form of her fingers (NGT, 120).]
Lydia plays a significant role in his recognition that “Sinnlichkeit beseelt werden kann” (NG, 326) [“that sensuality can be given a soul” (NGT, 311)], but he essentially remains a guest of the knight because of his hope to share physical experiences with Lydia as well as Julie. Owing to the expectations of their social context this is not possible.268

Goldmund’s focalisation reveals his psychological state, marked by the tension between “natural life” and “social life”, when he personifies the winter landscape which denotes a yearning to return to the Mother, nature and physical love with women:

Der Gegensatz zwischen der Unruhe seines Herzens und der stillen, ergebenen Winterwelt machte ihn betroffen: wie ruhig, wie rührend und fromm gaben sich Acker und Wald, Hügel und Heide der Sonne, dem Wind, dem Regen, der Dürre, dem Schnee hin, wie schön und sanft leidend trugen Ahorn und Esche ihre Winterlast! Konnte man nicht werden wie sie, konnte man nichts von ihnen lernen?” (NG, 129). [He was struck by the contrast between his agitated heart and the quiet, resigned winter landscape: how quiet [sic], how gracefully and piously field and forest, hill and heath gave in to sun, wind, rain, draft and snow, how beautifully and gentle maple and ash bore the burden of winter! Could one not become as they, could one learn nothing from them? (NGT, 122-123).]

While he is staying with the knight, Goldmund’s awareness of Lydia’s, and especially Julie’s, physical beauty belongs to their social world and not (Goldmund’s) natural world. The impracticality and hopelessness of a relationship between Lydia and Goldmund therefore occupies a significant part of the account of the time that they spend together. Goldmund’s acquaintances with women have led him progressively away from nature towards more artificial social surroundings.

6.3.5. Lisbeth: A woman of the Father World

After Goldmund has killed Viktor, he spends years roaming, encountering many women. He stays one night in a monastery. There he sees a wooden Madonna which deeply touches him. He decides to become an apprentice of the sculptor who has made the figure, Meister Niklaus.

268 Goldmund dreams that he searches for Lydia in a large and dark desert, but she is not there (NG, 128). He therefore focalises Lydia’s social context and her parental home as a barren and unyielding environment, i.e. with regard to the possibility that they might enter a relationship that includes sex as an expression of natural human life.
Goldmund is also fascinated by Meister Niklaus’s daughter, Lisbeth, whose appearance and its effect on Goldmund the narrator relates in detail:

Lisbeths Schönheit, so anders als die der Landfahrerinnen und Bauernweiber, hatte Goldmunds Augen schon an jenem ersten Tage auf sich gezogen. Es war etwas in ihr, das ihm noch unbekannt geblieben war, etwas Sonderbares, das ihn heftig anzog und doch zugleich mißtrauisch machte, ja ärgerte: eine große Ruhe und Unschuld, eine Zucht und Reinheit, und dennoch keine Kindlichkeit, sonder hinter aller Artigkeit und Sitte eine versteckte Kälte, ein Hochmut, so daß ihre Unschuld ihn nicht rührte und wehrlos machte (er hätte niemals ein Kind verführen können), sondern ihn reizte und herausforderte (NG, 172). [Lisbeth’s beauty, so different from that of the gypsies and peasant women, had attracted Goldmund’s eyes that first day. There was something about her that he could not decipher, something strange that violently attracted him but also made him suspicious, irritated him even. Her great calm and innocence, her well-mannered purity were not childlike. Behind all her courtesy and ease lay a hidden coldness, a condescension, and for that reason her innocence did not move him, or make him defenseless (he could never seduce a child), but annoyed and provoked him (NGT, 164).]

Goldmund’s focalisation points to his desire to see an essentially “social human being” transformed into a “natural human being” when he records: “Oft ging sein Begehren danach, dieses ruhige, schöne und unbewegte Gesicht, sei es in Wollust oder in Schmerzen, einmal sich verzerren und aufblättern und sein Geheimnis preiszugeben zu sehen” (NG, 172). [“He often dreamed of seeing her calm, beautiful, immobile face distorted in ecstasy or pain, of seeing it unfold and yield its secrets” (NGT, 164).] It upsets Goldmund that she has such a seriousness about her, which is the result of her commitment to a pious conventional social life, despite her (natural) beauty, which he associates with the Mother. Goldmund senses that her human authenticity is overwhelmed by her social identity. The combination of the lack of reflection of the Mother in her being and his realisation that it would only be possible for him to see her “reveal her secret” (cf. NG, 172) or her true natural being by becoming “seßhaft”, i.e. settling down and marrying her, directly opposes Goldmund’s nature.
6.4. The unkind manifestations of the Mother as worldly suffering

6.4.1. Viktor: An early sign of the Mother’s cruelty

The psychological effects exerted on Goldmund by the events of his companionship with a fellow tramp, Viktor, and his death lead to striking instances of focalisation. Apart from Narziß and Meister Niklaus, Viktor is the only male figure who is important in Goldmund’s life. After having left the knight’s court, Goldmund travels for a while with this overbold, swanky roamer who possesses a grim sense of humour that at times frightens people and at others charms them (cf. NG, 139-140). Viktor is, in a sense, a revelation to Goldmund as an exemplar of someone who has lived for a long time as a tramp. The question represented by free indirect speech signifies Goldmund’s contemplation: “Würde auch er selbst einmal so werden?” (NG, 141) [“Would he also one day become like that?”], affording an indication that he finds Viktor’s existence depressing. He strongly senses Viktor’s forlorn existence and its implications. At night Goldmund feels homeless more strongly than ever before (NG, 144) and that he is obliged to go alone “naked and alone” through an incomprehensible and hostile world (NG, 144). It is psychologically credible that Goldmund compares himself to Viktor at this point, because both are tramps and because he experiences as distressing the latter’s actions, with which he cannot identify, but that seem necessary for an ageing, unattractive tramp as he one day might himself be. Viktor’s presence, and especially his death, have a traumatising effect on his emotional and psychological frame of mind. The word “Gefühl” (feeling) is central as regards the way in which Viktor and his fate affect Goldmund’s focalisation.

Once Goldmund has killed Viktor, the psychological effect is remarkable. Viktor attempts, while Goldmund is sleeping, to steal the ducat that Lydia gave him. When Goldmund attempts to prevent him from taking it, Viktor tries to strangle Goldmund. In self-defence, Goldmund then stabs Viktor with his hunting knife. The narrator directly points out that the cheerful Viktor’s death weighed heavily on Goldmund (NG, 146). According to Singh (2006:186), during his first years of roaming Goldmund experiences not only the freedom of being a tramp, the beauty of nature and pleasure of his sexual experiences, but also loneliness, hunger and cold. Not only the pleasant worldly experiences, but also Viktor’s death and Goldmund’s resultant psychological suffering, belong to the Mother/worldly life.

Shocked and frightened, Goldmund aimlessly strays, so distressed by the event that at one point he wishes for nothing else than to fall asleep and die in the snow (NG, 146). Because of his trauma, Goldmund’s focalisation represents his delusions and reveals a disconnection from his immediate physical space. Hallucinating, he also holds conversations with Viktor, Julie and...
Narziß in the form of apostrophes[^269] that contribute to an impression of insanity. The shift from scolding Viktor to trying to seduce (the absent) Julie, and talking not only to the person Julie, but also to her body and personifying it, offer an indication of his longing for a kinder manifestation of worldly life. He also sneeringly talks to Narziß to whom he conveys the view that death (which is part of the Mother) is inescapable, even in the monastery (NG, 148). The combination of free indirect speech, quoted monologues and the narrator’s “bird’s eye view”, representing his consciousness although indirectly, is highly effective in portraying Goldmund’s consciousness. For example: “Er fiel über Gesträuch, er rannte gegen Bäume, er griff stürzend in Schnee und Dornen” (NG, 148). [“He stumbled over bushes, ran into trees; falling, he groped for snow and thorns” (NGT, 141).] The portrayal of such wildly irrational actions impressively represents Goldmund’s troubled mind.

Goldmund’s “madness” after he has killed Viktor is entirely plausible. His reaction evokes compassion because he was forced by his attacker to take his life: “Die Tat bereut er bitter und flüchtet, von Fieberfantasien gepeinigt, von dem Ort des Verbrechens” (Herforth, 2001b:57). [“He bitterly regrets the deed and he flees from the crime scene tormented by anguished fantasies.”] It is understandable that Goldmund finds it so traumatic because, although the idea of becoming like Viktor depressed him, he did not dislike the latter. Moreover, Goldmund’s primary characteristic is that he values human life or the Mother and it is only at the end of his life that he is able to accept his own death. The basic human will to survive makes the “decision” to stab Viktor psychologically credible. What makes Goldmund’s shocked focalisation of the textual actual world psychologically credible is that killing is in direct contrast to his personal ethos of valuing worldly life.

6.4.2. **Lene: Female beauty and natural life versus suffering and the social expectation of a lasting relationship**

Because the Black Death forces Goldmund to find a safe location and remain there, Lene becomes the only woman with whom Goldmund settles down. Goldmund’s focalisation of his acquaintance with Lene is characterised not only by a description of her beauty, but also by an emphasis on suffering and death in the contradictions between youth and the transience of life, between life and death as well as between beauty and the horrific images associated with the Black Death that are all part of worldly existence:

[^269]: This figure of speech (cf. Van Gorp, 1991: 35) also appears later when Goldmund addresses the valleys, mountains, girls etc., while in the prison, after having been captured during his visit to Agnes, Count Heinrich’s mistress, in their residence.
Er roch an ihrem braunen Haar und schmiegte sich an sie und dachte zugleich an jene große flache Grube, in welche die vermummten Teufel all die Wagen voll Leichen geworfen hatten. Schön war das Leben, schön und flüchtig war das Glück, schön und rasch verwelkt die Jugend (NG, 220). [He smelled her brown hair, nestled close to her, all the while thinking of the vast flat pit into which the hooded devils had dumped their carts of corpses. Life was beautiful, beautiful and fleeting as happiness. Youth was beautiful and wilted fast (NGT, 210).]

Although Goldmund wishes to escape the horrors of the Black Death through and with Lene, his psychologically credible disposition, of being disturbed by any social expectations of a life that would mean settling down (NG, 224), persists. It is noticeable how often the following focalised quoted monologue includes the personal pronoun “ich” (I):

Nun geht es bald zu Ende, dachte er, bald wird es genug sein, dann wandere ich allein und lasse auch Robert zurück, ich will sehen, daß ich bis gegen den Winter wieder in die große Stadt zu Meister Niklaus komme, dann bleibe ich den Winter dort, und im nächsten Winter kaufe ich mir neue gute Schuhe ... (NG, 224; my emphases – PvdM). [Now it will soon be over, he thought. Soon I’ll have had enough and wander on alone. I’ll leave Robert, too. I’ll try to get back to the big city when the cold begins, to Master Niklaus. I’ll spend the winter there and next spring I’ll buy myself a new pair of shoes … (NGT, 213; my emphases – PvdM).

Goldmund’s focalisation is inconsistent because, when Lene is dying from the Black Death following the attempted rape by a drifter who had infected her, his heart cries out: “Liebe Lene, rief sein Herz, liebes gutes Kind, willst auch du mich schon verlassen? Hast du schon genug von mir?” (NG, 229). [“Dear Lene, called his heart, dear sweet child, you too already want to leave me? Have you already had enough of me?” (NGT, 218).] These quoted monologues illustrate that, although the narrator at times takes a more “objective” stance, Goldmund’s subjective focalisation is fundamental to this fictional world.

6.4.3. The here and now/Diesseits, the madness during the Black Death and Rebekka

The transition from Goldmund’s initial objective perspective during the Plague to a subjective perception occurs when Goldmund participates in the “Black Death celebrations”, macabre diesseitsgerichtet festivities of the living, i.e. a living in the here and now: “Denn natürlich war Goldmund auf seiner Todeswanderung ein klein wenig verrückt geworden, und viele waren es ganz und gar. Ein klein wenig verrückt war vielleicht auch die junge Jüdin Rebekka, das schöne
schwarze Mädchen mit den brennenden Augen ...” (NG, 235). [“Goldmund had naturally grown a trifle mad during his death journey: everyone within the plague region was a trifle mad, and many were completely insane. Perhaps young Rebekka was also a trifle insane – a beautiful dark girl with burning eyes …” (NGT, 223).] Although one could interpret this as the narrator’s perspective, a shift from his to Goldmund’s viewpoint does take place in the adjectives “schön” [“beautiful”] and “brennend” [“burning”] that denote Goldmund’s evaluation and experience of Rebekka.

Goldmund spends two days with Rebekka, the Jewish girl. He tries to convince her, as he had convinced Lene, to enjoy life by surrendering to immediate gratification because the future is uncertain (NG, 237). He focuses on sensually aesthetic images to steer her attention away from the omnipresent images of death. He is therefore the advocate of the “other possible world, the realm of nurturing life and cherishing love, associated with the archetype of the feminine divine” of whom Rebekka “stands as a solitary reminder” (Lubich, 2009:203). The narrator also uses indirect speech to describe Goldmund’s and Rebekka’s positions by means of an indirect quoted dialogue: “Er aber, er nehme sie mit sich und schütze sie gegen Wolf und Mensch … Sie wolle nichts tun … was Freude mache … Er solle nun gehen, es helfe nichts, es sei schon zuviel geredet” (NG, 236). [“If he took her along, however, and protected her against wolf and man … She didn’t want to do anything that brought joy … He should go now, there was nothing he could do, they had already talked too much” (NGT, 224-225).] Rebekka has lost her will to live because her family had been burnt to death during the Black Death.

Goldmund’s wish to enter into a physical relationship with her is expressive of his symbolic love for the Mother, and specifically for her “kinder side”. This kinder side or “mercy” would function to alleviate the dreadful reality that the Black Death brings about through focusing Rebekka’s and his attention on escapist sensual joys. However, he also hopes for the mercy that the Black Death would end and that Rebekka’s circumstances would change for the better.

6.4.4. Agnes: The dangerous Mother figure

Rebekka is, like Lene, representative of the dangerous side of life because both are associated with death in the form of the said Plague. Agnes is also a character who encapsulates Goldmund’s experiences of life, consisting of aesthetic sensual female beauty representative of the natural world, as well as of the danger linked with death. Both Agnes’s appearance and her actions are therefore reminiscent of the symbolic image of the Earth Mother (NG, 250). Goldmund focalises Agnes’s physical beauty as “soulfully sensual” (cf. NG 326; NGT, 311), a
phrase which denotes energy, virility, youth, curiosity, strength, power, sensuality, and so forth. Her beauty falsely promises a kinder manifestation of the Mother:

… ein großes hellblondes Weib mit neugierigen, etwas kühlen Blauaugen, mit festen, straffen Gliedern und einem blühenden Gesicht voll Lust zu Genuß und Macht, voll Selbstgefühl und witternder Sinneneugierde … er sah sie nach, zwischen krausem Blondhaar und blausamtemen Kragen sah er ihren festen Nacken ragen, stark und stolz und doch von der zartesten Kinderhaut umspannt (NG, 251). […] a tall, light-blonde woman with curious, cool blue eyes, and a firm, strong body, a blossoming face full of eagerness for pleasure, and power, self-esteem, and a certain sniffing curiosity of the senses. … Between curly blond hair and blue velvet collar, he saw her firm neck strong and proud, yet covered by the tenderest skin (NGT, 239).]

Agnes, as the most beautiful woman that Goldmund had ever seen, is herself, like the Earth Mother, a large majestic figure (NG, 251-252). Yet, “conquering” (NG, 251) this woman also leads to being caught, with the prospect that he would be executed the following morning. She is, according to Baumann (1989:273), a distinctive expression of the ambivalence of the anima archetype. Agnes is a figure who is transitional between sensual, youthful and attractive life, shifting towards approaching death. Goldmund’s focus falls, however, on her beautiful appearance. He is attracted to the deceptive appearance of human life as consisting only of beauty and pleasure. Until Goldmund’s death, he is in search of the Mother as exclusively kind. This longing also later motivates him to return to Agnes because he wants to identify her with Meister Niklaus’s Madonna that to him represents the Mother as merciful.

6.5. Discovering the Mother of God: The artist’s inner conflict

Discovering Meister Niklaus’s Madonna of God carved from wood is an event that leads Goldmund towards art, through which he expresses his appreciation of the kinder aspect of the Mother. Goldmund is in awe of the Madonna’s aesthetic and sensual beauty because of his intense appreciation and enjoyment of “merciful” worldly experiences (NG, 156). However, he also finds some comfort in the fact that art can be more enduring than physical life (NG, 165-166). This is an indication that he begins to make inner peace with worldly life as not only
pleasant, but also as including suffering and death. The variety of his worldly experiences and his experiencing his approaching death\textsuperscript{270} culminate in his own life as his final work of art.

His goal to become an artist and be trained by the artist who carved this Madonna\textsuperscript{271} is an event that modifies the way he sees the world. He immediately begins to transform the textual actual world through his focalisation in terms of his immediate spaces as well: “Diese schöne heitere Landstraße, auf der er ging, war nicht mehr, was sie gestern gewesen war, ein festlicher Tummelplatz und bequemer Aufenthalt, sie war nur noch eine Straße, war der Weg zur Stadt, der Weg zum Meister” (NG, 158). [“The gay, beautiful highway on which he was walking was no longer what it had been the day before, a festive playground, a cozy place to be. Now it was only a road that led to the city, to the master” (NGT, 149).] The road symbolically alters its meaning because of the possibility that through art his life could become meaningful and valuable (cf. NG, 157), but also because he has discovered a new medium through which he could experience the world. The destination of the road is not merely a physical destination for Goldmund, but a spiritual one. He therefore also explains to Meister Niklaus that he is fascinated by facial expressions and the physical relationships between limbs that express the inner being and mind of a person (cf. NG, 160).

However, the initial event of having discovered the wish in himself to be an artist is not the definitive decision of his life. His temperament interferes with the disciplined commitment to being an artist like Meister Niklaus. Goldmund questions his ability to emulate Meister Niklaus’s life whilst asking himself whether the years of roaming have made him unreliable or whether it is his mother’s “untamed” nature which he has inherited (NG, 169). Goldmund finds Meister Niklaus’s conventional lifestyle tedious and depressing (cf. NG, 171). The narrator thereafter also explicitly represents Goldmund’s realisation that it was not Goldmund who created an image, but the “Narziß within him” (NG, 175). The implication is that to be able to complete a project such as a work of art, one needs to function within a conventional social

\textsuperscript{270} “Auch jetzt, wenn diese Schmerzen wiederkommen, sind es nicht Schmerzen, es sind nicht Feinde; es sind die Finger der Mutter, die mir das Herz herausnehmen” (NG, 329). [“And now, when the pains come back, they are not pains, they are not enemies; they are my mother’s fingers taking my heart out” (NGT, 314).]

\textsuperscript{271} Lubich presents a relevant transworld comparison by relating Meister Niklaus’s holy Madonna to the American pop singer Madonna (Ciccone). He argues that through this persona Meister Niklaus’s Madonna finds a “counterpart” of flesh and blood, “ein tanzendes Kunstwerk aus Wohllaut und Wollust” [“a dancing work of art consisting of melodious sounds and lust”] (2005:64). Lubich discovers a similarity between his interpretation of the pop singer and Goldmund’s focalisation of the statue, based on correspondences between them with regard to their sensual physical appearances: the latter express their “soul” of innate human-ness through which aestheticism coincides with the natural/animalistic biological drive of procreation. Lubich also relates Edvard Munch’s sensuous Madonna, “if not decadent \textit{femme fatale}” (Lubich, 2009:200), to Meister Niklaus’s Madonna. Munch’s Madonna is indeed a relevant symbolic figure for Goldmund because the paintings of her reflect two aspects of natural human life by ambiguously including the possibilities of her being in a state of sensual passion/orgasmic ecstasy, or suffering or even dying.
context as a self-disciplined and “unadventurous individual”. Goldmund decides to abandon practising art for the sake of his natural and nonconformist freedom because he regards having to settle down, marry and identify with a bourgeois existence as a bleak prospect for his life.

Art forms practised sincerely (at any level), whether it is drawing, taking photographs, writing poetry, playing a musical instrument or singing, may allow the textual actual world reader to understand Goldmund’s personal fulfilment in artistically expressing his experiences of the Mother, through according them validity by means of documentation and interpretation. Being able to share one’s artistic interpretation of one’s inner life and one’s experiences of the world is an attractive aspect of being an artist. It is therefore comprehensible that Goldmund regards the idea of gaining a concrete means of giving meaning and value to his life (cf. NG, 157) attractive. Furthermore, it is also psychologically credible because manifestations of social behaviour such as politics, administrative tasks, prescriptions regarding norms, and the like do often frustrate artists (performing artists, writers, painters etcetera) who only want to practise their art. Goldmund would feel trapped if he were to spend his life in a workshop because it would prevent him from becoming acquainted with the Mother/worldly life – which is ultimately part of the “true work of art”.

6.6. The Black Death: Witnessing and experiencing a social disaster

The Black Death as a “collective event” consists of Goldmund’s experiences of various events. Goldmund becomes aware of the Black Death soon after he and Robert, a pilgrim to Rome and Goldmund’s first travelling companion since Viktor, are driven away from a town. They then reach a farm, where they discover that all the family members have died. The narrator uses vision avec to present the effects of the Black Death on a family:

Von einem Toten zum andern ging Goldmunds Blick. In dem Mädchegesicht, obwohl es schon sehr entstellt war, stand noch etwas von hilflosen Todesgrauen … Aufmerksam betrachtete Goldmund alles. … dennoch hatte für Goldmund das alles

272 As Singh (2006:190) points out, Narziß und Golmund evokes the Sturm und Drang “genius aesthetics” and postulates the requirement of social freedom and moral independence for artistically creative people.

273 At the end of Goldmund’s life he shares his realisation with Narziß that he and his life are the Mother’s “work of art” and not the other way around: “Es ist seit manchen Jahren mein liebster und geheimnissvollster Traum gewesen, eine Figur der Mutter zu machen … Vor kurzem noch wäre es mir ganz unerträglich gewesen zu denken, daß ich sterben könnte, ohne ihre Figur gemacht zu haben; mein Leben ware mir unnütz erschienen. Und nun sieh, wie wunderlich es mir mit ihr gegangen ist: statt daß meine Hände sie formen und gestalten, ist sie es, die mich formt und gestaltet” (NG, 330). “[F]or many years it has been my most cherished, my secret dream to make a statue of the mother. … Only a short while ago it would have been unbearable to me to think that I might die without having carved her statue; my life would have seemed useless to me. And now see how strangely things have turned out: it is not my hands that shape and form her; it is her hands that shape and form me” (NGT, 314-315).]
a tiefe Anziehungskraft, es war alles voll Größe und Schicksal, so wahr, so unverlogen ... (NG, 210-211). [Goldmund’s eyes travelled from corpse to corpse. The girl’s face was already terribly disfigured, but he could see something of her helpless horror of death. ... Goldmund examined everything attentively. ... still, it all held a deep attraction for him. Everything spoke of greatness, of fate. It was real, uncompromising (NGT, 200-201).]

Through free indirect speech the narrator relays Goldmund’s deeply impressed, yet curiously calm and analytical, observations and thoughts:

Wie still war es in dieser verzauberten Hütte! Wie roch es sonderbar und schrecklich! Wie war diese kleine Menschenheimat … gespenstisch und traurig, von Leichen bewohnt, ganz von Tod erfüllt und durchzogen! Bald würde diesen stillen Gestalten das Fleisch von den Wangen fallen, und die Ratten würden ihre Finger fressen (NG, 211). [How still it was in this spell-bound hut, and what a strange, terrible smell! How sad and ghostlike was this small home … inhabited by corpses, completely filled with death, penetrated by death. Soon the flesh would fall off these quiet faces; rats would eat the bodies [sic]274 (NGT, 201).

The repetition of the rhetorical questions and the exclamation marks represent Goldmund’s cognition of the effects of an unfathomable event reminiscent of an artist’s focus when creating a sculpture, for example. Simultaneously absorbed, but emotionally detached, he is fascinated by the aesthetic quality of the objects that he examines. Goldmund often remains calm when confronted with the effects of the Plague and he remains seemingly unafraid of being infected. His even temperament therefore indicates that he is in the process of approaching his life like a piece of art through his observations.

However, Goldmund loses his self-possession following Lene’s death and starts to experience the Black Death and the accompanying inhumanity with explicit disgust not only because of the illness, but also because of how callously people act (NG, 232). Whilst remaining inquisitive, he also becomes crazy. Apart from witnessing them, he now also participates in the dying

274 The translators replaced “Finger” [“fingers”] with “bodies”. The rats would certainly not limit themselves to only a corpse’s fingers, but the emphasis on the fingers evokes associations that Goldmund might have with his own, like the sense of touch when being with a woman, and sculpting which is, apart from a means to come to terms with earthly existence, also a way of “celebrating” the spirits of people through his sculptures.
community’s actions during which his focalisation (especially because of the verb “sah” or “saw”) reappears:

... er sang und zechte Wein bei den wahnsinnigen Gelagen, pflückte die schnell welkende Blume der Lust, *sah* in die starren trunkenen Augen der Weiber, *sah* in die starren blöden Augen der Betrunken, *sah* in die erlöschenenden Augen der Sterbenden, liebte die verzweifelten fiebrigen Frauen, half Tote hinaustragen für einen Teller Suppe ... (NG, 233; my emphases – PvdM). [He ... sang and drank at the insane feasts, plucked the fast-wilting flower of lust, *looked into* the fixed, drunken stares of the women, *into* the fixed, stupid eyes of the drunk, *into* the fading eyes of the dying. He loved the desperate, feverish women, helped carry corpses in exchange for a plate of soup ... (NGT, 222; my emphases – PvdM).

To an extent these indiscriminate actions are reminiscent of his distress or insanity after Narziß had disillusioned him and his delusions following Viktor’s death.275 His initial, almost illogical, composure and fascination, followed by a disordered, decadent approach to life, stemming from Lene’s death as well, are psychologically credible because one can regard them as a grim, desperate attempt to be merry and gain some pleasure, i.e. a desire for the kind manifestations of the Mother amidst the dreadfulness of the Black Death or Her cruel manifestations.

Drewermann (1995:63) describes the Mother as “die Lebensspendende, Gewährende, Liebevolle, zugleich aber auch die Lockende, Verschlingende und Tötende” [“the one who gives life, who bestows, the loving one, at the same time the luring, the devouring and killing one”] because the Mother as earthly life encompasses both joys and suffering.

### 6.7. Expecting his own execution: Fear and sadness

It is significant that Agnes, a figure whom Goldmund has also associated with the Mother, is the cause of his impending death because death is also one of the aspects of the last-mentioned. The event of awaiting his execution is marked by the narrator, representing Goldmund’s focalisation

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275 When Narziß names the demon that possesses Goldmund, namely that he has forgotten his childhood (NG, 52-53), Goldmund’s reaction is “eine gewaltige seelische Erschütterung” (Herforth (2003b:21) [“an immense psychological perturbation”] during which space, focalised as is reflective of his mood, an “insane trance”: “Mit Bewegungen wie ein Schwimmender stürzte er aus der Stube, floh unbewusst in die stillsten, menschenleersten Bezirke des Klosters, durch Gänge, über Treppen und ins Freie an die Luft” (NG, 52). [“With the movements of a swimmer he rushed from his room, fled unconsciously to the quietest, loneliest parts of the monastery, through passages, down stairways and out into the open” (NGT, 46).] The focalisation of space, coinciding with Goldmund being overwhelmed by his psychological disposition after he has killed Viktor, also reflect his trauma. For example: “Er lief und lief, und im Fieber der Erschöpfung und letzten Anstrengung nahmen merkwürdige Gedanken von ihm Besitz ...” (NG, 147). [“He ran on and on, in a fever of exhaustion and ultimate effort. Strange thoughts took hold of him” (NGT, 139).]
of his terrified consciousness. The narrator repeatedly then also focuses on the concepts of seeing and virtually being blind with fear at one point:

Goldmund bemerkte weder die Priester, noch sah er seine Wächter an. Er konnte nichts sehen als das leise flackernde Licht, das dicht vor sein Gesicht gehalten wurde und ihm in die Augen blendete. Und hinter dem Licht in einer Dämmerung voll Grauen sah er noch etwas, etwas Gestaltloses, Großes, Gespenstisches: den Abgrund, das Ende, den Tod (NG, 266; my emphases – PvdM). [Goldmund noticed neither the priests nor his guards. He could see nothing but the low, flickering light held close to his face. It was blinding his eyes. And behind the light, in a twilight full of horror, he saw something else, something formless, large, ghostlike: the abyss, the end, death (NGT, 253; my emphases – PvdM).]

In order to represent Goldmund’s intense experience of this looming danger the narrator varies techniques often used in the novel. The following excerpt shows that Goldmund’s consciousness is represented by means of alternating free indirect speech and quoted monologues:

Aufschluchzend gab er sich der Woge hin, heftig flossen seine Tränen, zusammenstürzend gab er sich dem undendlichen Weh anheim. Oh, ihr Täler und waldigen Berge, ihr Bäche im grünen Erlengehölz, ihr Mädchen, ihr Mondabende auf den Brücken, o du schöne strahlende Bilderwelt, wie soll ich dich lassen! Weinend lag er über den Tisch, ein trostloses Kind. Aus der Not seines Herzens stieg ein Seufzer und flehender Klageruf: “O Mutter, o Mutter!” (NG, 269). […] collapsing, he abandoned himself to the infinite pain. Oh, valleys and wooded mountains, brooks among green elms, oh girls, oh moonlit evenings on the bridges, oh beautiful radiant image world, how can I leave you! Weeping, he lay across the table, a disconsolate boy. From the misery of his heart, a sigh, an imploring complaint rose: “Oh mother, oh mother!” (NGT, 256).]

The narrator’s focus on Goldmund’s emotional and physical reaction, the apostrophes and the exclamation together form a “Goldmund-centred and filtered focalisation” which represents the textual actual world at this specific point in time before his execution as paradisiacal. The selection of exclusively beautiful natural aspects of the world, the collective description of the “whole” world as a “schöne strahlende Bilderwelt” [“beautiful radiant image world”] and the two lyrical adjectives present Goldmund’s individualistic re-creation of the textual actual world.
It is, naturally, credible psychologically that one would be terrified awaiting execution. The specific selection of images of nature such as “Erlengehölz” [“alder wood”] and “Mondabende” [“moonlit evenings”] that are reminiscent of Novalis’s and Joseph von Eichendorff’s romanticism are appropriate here because they represent the romantic idealisation of an ideal world (Jesing & Köhnen, 2007:57) that Goldmund always desires, but even more so now that the permanent loss of it seems to be inevitable to him at this point. In referring to Goldmund’s Augenlust [“visual delight”] Lubich (2009:199-200) proposes an important aspect of his experience of an (observing) nature:

According to Narziss, Genesis means: in the beginning was the Word (Logos) and the Word was in God. As Goldmund begins to refocus his view of the world, he finally arrives at the opposite end of such cosmogonic mythology: in the beginning was Eros, and Eros was one with the Goddess whose boundless love for life created the universe. In this reversal of perspective, Narziss’s blind faith in God the Father in heaven turns into Goldmund’s blind love for the Mother Goddess on Earth, who after all reveals herself visually in all of her material abundance – and seeing is believing.

The despair associated with life’s being interrupted too soon by death indicates that Goldmund’s trepidation relates to the probability of being compelled to depart from the material abundance of the natural world.

6.8. The last phase of Goldmund’s life: a series of “returns”

6.8.1. Return, contemplation, beginning of ripening and harvest

The last events, namely “die Rückkehr, die Einkehr, den Beginn der Reife und Ernte” (NG, 287) [“the return, the contemplation, the beginning of ripening and harvest”] are a series of “returns” all leading to a key concept of the novel (and Goldmund’s last words), namely that “Ohne Mutter kann man nicht lieben. Ohne Mutter kann man nicht sterben” (NG, 331). [“Without a mother, one cannot love. Without a mother one cannot die” (NGT, 315).] The use of the word “lieben” [“to love”] is poetic in effect because it is used in a sentence that is repeated; however, “lieben” is not replaced by the antonym of “lieben”, but with that of “leben” [“to live”], namely “sterben” [“to die”]. Because of this, as well as the similarity between the words “lieben” und “leben”, one spontaneously associates the semantic meaning of both “lieben” and “leben” with “lieben”. The direct object(s) connected to the verb “lieben” would consequently also be everything that is part of (worldly) life. This supports the viewpoint of the novel, namely that one is not fully human if
one divorces oneself from worldly existence. Like Demian, this book acknowledges a broader spectrum of the world, as part of the human experience, than the “bright world” or the “Father World” does.

6.8.2. Returning to Narziß and contemplation: Cynicism about and loyalty to the world

Goldmund’s being pardoned from execution marks the event of the first return – thanks to Narziß, the abbot of the Mariabronn monastery, who negotiated his release. This event is characterised by reflection, especially in the form of dialogues between Narziß und Goldmund. It includes reflections about art, namely that it could be spiritual, and Narziß’s Demian-like views that Goldmund should not attempt to imitate thinkers or ascetics, “sondern sei du selbst, suche dich selbst zu verwirklichen” (NG, 295) [“but be yourself, try to realize yourself” (NGT, 280)]. It also addresses fulfilment as “true being” and as becoming slightly closer to completion and divinity by turning capability into action and realising possibilities (NG, 296). This section focuses on Goldmund’s contradictory disillusionment and disappointment in the world together with his love for and loyalty to the world as a central aspect of the event of his return to Narziß.

Narziß’s and Goldmund’s conversations include references to the latest events with regard to Goldmund’s life and the exchange of news about these developments, but they soon turn to issues that trouble Goldmund. He expresses his anger and disillusionment with regard to the absence of justice in the world whilst Narziß explains to Goldmund that he regards the Creator as perfect although he admits that the creation is imperfect (cf. NG, 283). Narziß also addresses Goldmund’s temperament as characterised by focusing on feelings rather than rational thought. By doing this, Narziß explicitly points out that Goldmund’s subjective re-creation of the textual actual world is determined by his focus and experiences:

Wenn du dich auf dem Roß wohlfühlst und durch eine schöne Gegend reitest oder wenn du, leichtsinnig genug, dich am Abend ins Schloß einschleicht, um der Geliebten des Grafen den Hof zu machen, dann sieht die Welt für dich ganz anders aus, und alle Pesthäuser und alle verbrannten Juden können dich durchaus nicht hindern, deine Lust zu suchen. (NG, 284; my emphasis – PvdM). [When you feel happy on a horse, riding through a pretty landscape, or when you sneak somewhat recklessly into a castle at night to court a count’s mistress, then the world looks altogether different to you, and no plague-stricken house or burned Jew can prevent you from fulfilling your desire (NGT, 270; my emphasis – PvdM).]
However, Goldmund suggests that his consciousness of the horrors of the world is unavoidable even though he manages to forget them for a while by means of the escapist techniques to which Narziß refers (cf. NG, 284). Narziß responds to this by pointing out a universal and psychologically credible experience when he says: “Es geht den meisten Menschen so, nur empfinden es wenige mit solcher Stärke und Heftigkeit wie du, und wenige haben das Bedürfnis, dieser Empfindungen bewußt zu werden” (NG, 285). [“Most people feel that way, but only a few feel it with such sharpness and violence as you do; few feel the need to become aware of these feelings” (NGT, 270).] Goldmund’s bitterness and his conclusion that it is not necessary to praise the world because God has created a bad world276 (NG, 327) is a cynical refusal to “forget” or “select” the content of his consciousness in the Nietzschean sense that this is necessary to make life bearable.

Nietzsche (1989:15) argues that a human being who would want to experience life through and through “historically” (“historisch”), i.e. never forgetting anything, would be similar to someone who would be forced to abstain from sleep or an animal that must live on perpetual rumination. Nietzsche (1989:15) furthermore maintains that remembering and forgetting are part of all actions and that both light and darkness belong to life. Although children can be inconsolably unhappy, according to Nietzsche animals and children live “unhistorically” – or forget easily. It is therefore relevant that Goldmund is a “big child” (NG, 314), as Narziß refers to him. Goldmund is often compared to a child, not only symbolically in his everlasting relationship with his absent biological mother, but also with the universal Mother. In addition, Narziß refers to Goldmund as “dieser blonde Knabe” (“this blond boy”) and “dieses trotzige Kind” (“this defiant child”) (NG, 314-315). One could therefore understand Goldmund’s anger as comparable to the intense grief of a child.

If an occurrence is not traumatising or permanently psychologically harmful to a child, he sooner or later forgets the upsetting incident. It seems that the dying Goldmund’s selective memory, shortly after rejecting God, is indeed to some extent like a child’s (paradoxical) memory. The balance of a life that is bearable is thus restored when he pronounces that the Mother, whom he reveres, is everywhere and that she represents Lise, Meister Niklaus’s Madonna, life, love,

276 Tusken (1998:136-137) also suggests that Goldmund’s reaction is psychologically credible because of reader identification: “… how often has it been asked in the twentieth-century Holocaust and other ongoing horrors: ‘Why does God allow this to happen?’ We cannot easily distance ourselves from the present. … in typical human fashion, he asks God why he has created humankind in such a way and led him along such paths …” Stolte (1971:221) similarly brings Goldmund’s cynicism into relation with the Holocaust and the Second World War and states that the question, whether one should heed Schopenhauer’s teaching that inexistence should be preferred to existence, is still topical. Both Tusken and Stolte therefore use their knowledge and/or experiences of the actual world to access the fictional world.
Chapter 6: Narziß und Goldmund: Focalised events as psychologically credible and contributing to the fictional world

6.8.3. Returning to art: Looking forward to creating and Goldmund’s love for the world

When Goldmund exclaims that many figures await his carving (NG, 289) his excited anticipation of devoting himself to sculpture once again confirms that he does not want to become a friar, a pious or a learned individual. He desires to be an artist and create works of art (NG, 289). The figures which he creates are a confirmation of his conviction that art can have a “soul” and be “spiritual”, i.e. suggest the emotional and mental experiences of human beings. He gave one figure the features of Abbot Daniel which express innocence and benevolence whilst the Meister Niklaus figure reveals antagonism and sadness (NG, 305). Goldmund’s art is therefore an acknowledgement, if not a celebration, of worldly existence through the people that have been part of his life.

Worldly existence and its accompanying spirituality, however, are not only what Goldmund (re-) creates, but also the means by which he creates his figures. When Narziß praises Goldmund’s Lydia-Madonna, Goldmund says to him: “Aber nun höre mich, Narziß! Daß diese Figur gut geworden ist, dazu war meine ganze Jugend nötig, meine Wanderschaft, meine Verliebtheit, mein Werben um viele Frauen. Das ist der Brunnen, aus dem ich geschöpft habe” (NG, 312). [“But now listen to me, Narcissus. In order to make this a good statue, I needed my entire youth, my wandering, my love affairs, my courtship of many women. That is the source at which I have drunk” (NGT, 297).] This view asserts the validity of a worldly life. Announcing in the same breath that the fountain of his inspiration is almost empty, which would necessitate leaving the monastery again, also implies his fondness for the world despite its cruelty and death and a ceaseless hope for kind manifestations of the Mother.

Goldmund wishes to accord concrete form to his experiences because he has endured much since he had worked with Meister Niklaus, and has not carved sculptures for a long time. He therefore experiences a need that the actual world reader finds believable in terms of being acquainted with the experience of “cravings”, whether these be to meditate, attend church, pray, hold a conversation with a friend, write a loved one a letter, and so forth. Goldmund’s need is indeed a kind of “hunger” for spiritual “nourishment” in the form of revisiting his experiences of the desire, but also fear, hunger and his own death (at its appropriate time) (NG, 329). This represents the total experience as positive, which stands in contrast to Goldmund’s cynical opinion that the world does not deserve praise.
natural world. It is also reasonable that this desire is an expression of his passion for the world, which includes his fascination for “worldly spirituality” that includes the ability of facial features and expressions to reflect inner states not only of gentleness, but also as part of a range of worldly experiences.

6.8.4. Returning to old ways: The attraction of the Mother’s familiarity

Goldmund’s whole life had been a return to and living in the presence of the Mother. His final departure from the monastery for a longer period of time, after having completed the Lydia-Madonna, is the result of his longing for the Mother as manifested through his love for nature and sensual/aesthetic experiences. Having returned to Narziß and the monastery after Narziß had saved him from certain death, Goldmund gradually starts returning to his old ways. He gives tasks to his assistant and student, Erich, leaves the monastery for a day or two, “atmete im Wald den mahnenden Duft der Freiheit und des Vagantenlebens, suchte da oder dort eine Bauerntochter auf, ging auch auf die Jagd und lag Stunden im Grünen, in die Gewölbehallen der Waldwipfel starrend und in die wuchernden Wildnisse von Farnkraut und Ginster” (NG, 307) [“to breathe in the memory-filled perfume of the free and wandering life of the forest, or visit a peasant’s daughter, or hunt, or lie for hours in the green staring into the vaulted halls of treetops, into the sprouting wilderness of ferns and juniper” (NGT, 292).] The references to “Unrast oder Überdrüß” [“restlessness and weariness”] before his brief escapes from the monastery, and the new passion with which he returns to his art, imply that Goldmund experiences inner harmony on account of self-identification with the outside world when he is there.

An important factor which causes unrest and dissatisfaction is the fear that he would alter into the kind of person that he does not want to be and which he is not, i.e. diligent, respectable and skillful, but forfeiting freedom and youth, becoming “unfrei und unjung” (NG, 310) [“unfree and unyoung” (NGT, 298)]. Goldmund realises on account of his ageing that he has become settled and that he is neither an eagle nor a hare, but a domestic animal (NG, 311). He is torn between two worlds because he has sensed that he ought to return to his workshop and feels responsible for the newly begun altar, the wood that was prepared for his carvings and for his apprentice,
Erich (NG, 311). This consequently also leads to his leaving the monastery for a second time. He wants to return to the Mother of his youth, which includes finding Agnes again, and enjoy the natural world and freedom.

6.8.5. The Mother as Death: Harvest

Goldmund’s “harvest” yields a “valid product” or gift in terms of a (spiritual) worldly life rather than the afterlife in Narziß’s spirituality. Goldmund loves Narziß because of his spirituality, but intensely dislikes the practical necessity of imitating Narziß’s self-discipline. Goldmund recognises that it does not require the life of a Narziß to attain spirituality: “Und ich habe auch das Glück gehabt zu erleben, daß die Sinnlichkeit beseelt werden kann” (NG, 326). [“And I was also fortunate enough in my experiences to learn that sensuality can be given a soul” (NGT, 311).]

However, the presence of “Narziß within Goldmund”279, is also a crucial element of Goldmund’s spirituality because it enables him to create the carvings. Not only does Goldmund allow some access to the Mother for Narziß, but Narziß also helps Goldmund to grow closer to the Mother, first by revealing his true temperament to him and subsequently also by existing as the conscientious and self-denying part of Goldmund’s consciousness, enabling him to be an artist. Narziß therefore also contributes to Goldmund’s fulfilling (worldly) life up until his death.

Goldmund’s death is the departure of one aspect of the Mother (worldly life) and the return to another aspect of the Mother (worldly death). Goldmund believes that his death would be a return to the Mother, that death itself will be “… meine Mutter … die mich wieder zu sich nimmt und in das Nichtsein und in die Unschuld zurückführt” (NG, 327) [“… my mother who will come to take me back to her, who will lead me back to nonbeing and innocence” (NGT, 312)]. This is inevitably a recognition that is sad or “traurig” because it is associated with loss.280 However, Goldmund’s disposition is also characterised by an acceptance that his death is necessary for the fulfilment of his life-long quest towards the Mother, i.e. the realisation of accepting worldly life as transient.

279 In Meister Niklaus’s workshop he experiences that it was a great deal more: “... der andere, es war Narziß, der sich seiner Künstlerhände bediente ...” (NG, 174). [“It was the other man rather; it was Narcissus who was making use of the artists’s hands ...” (NGT, 166).]

280 Freud (1949:428-429) described “Trauer” (sorrow/grief) as the reaction to having lost a loved person.
The symbolic coincidence of Goldmund’s final return to the monastery and the end of summer (NG, 320) implies that Goldmund, evoking Persephone, is a “natural phenomenon” like the seasons; everything that is part of nature has a beginning or birth, a duration or life and a death. Goldmund’s nonbelief in an afterlife is therefore strongly connected with the cycles of the natural world: “Es gibt kein Jenseits. Der verdorrte Baum ist tot für immer, der erfrorrene Vogel kommt nie wieder zum Leben und ebensowenig der Mensch, wenn er gestorben ist” (NG, 327). [“There is no beyond. The dried-up tree is dead forever; the frozen bird does not come back to life, nor does a man after he has died” (NGT, 311).] It is therefore meaningful that once Agnes, the epitome of the splendour of worldly life (cf. NG, 328), rejects him, he falls from his horse and is irreversibly “broken” (NG, 328). Subsequently, Goldmund has a dream or a vision in which he recognises that the pain in his breast (also) originates from his mother, representative of (the other aspect of) the Mother:

Es war die Stimme meiner Mutter, eine tiefe Frauenstimme, voll von Wollust und Liebe. Und da sah ich denn, daß sie es war, daß die Mutter bei mir war und mich auf dem Schoß hatte und daß sie mir die Brust geöffnet und ihre Finger tief in der Brust zwischen meinen Rippen hatte, um mir das Herz herauszulösen. Als ich das gesehen und verstanden hatte, tat es nicht mehr weh. Auch jetzt, wenn diese Schmerzen wiederkommen, sind es nicht Schmerzen, es sind nicht Feinde; es sind die Finger der Mutter, die mir das Herz herausnehmen (NG, 329). [It was my mother’s voice, a deep womanly voice, full of ecstasy and love. And then I saw that it was she, that she was with me, holding me in her lap, and that she had opened my breast and put her fingers between my ribs to pluck out my heart. When I saw and understood that, it no longer hurt. And now, when the pains come back, they are not pains, they are not enemies; they are my mother’s fingers taking my heart out (NGT, 314).]

Lubich (2005:54) explains that the archetype of the terrible and destructive Mother completes Goldmund’s psychic imago of the fruitful and nurturing Mother through his life experiences. The reader understands Goldmund’s acceptance of his own death as the natural end of a fulfilled life that took a natural course. Goldmund comprehends his death as part of nature’s cycles and “translates” it as the Mother who takes his heart for herself. The organ which is symbolically associated with love will return to the Mother. It is logical that art, as the most central “artificial aspect” of Goldmund’s life, has contributed to his appreciation of nature and the Mother and therefore also tempers his anticipation of death.
6.9. Narziß’s admission: Acknowledging the Mother World and the need for balance

The last two chapters of the book concentrate more on Narziß after the first 18 chapters have focused on Goldmund (Singh, 2006:195). An aspect of Goldmund’s return to Narziß that is interesting with regard to focalisation is Narziß’s admission that Goldmund’s life is valid. The fictional world also includes Narziß as a focaliser and filter through free indirect speech. For example:

Narziß war in seinen Gedanken viel mit dem Freund beschäftigt, er sorgte um ihn und hatte Sehnsucht nach ihm. … Die Welt, in der er lebte und Heimat hatte, seine Welt, sein Klosterleben … waren ihm durch den Freund oft stark erschüttert und zweifelhaft geworden. Kein Zweifel: vom Kloster aus, von der Vernunft und Moral aus gesehen war sein eigenes Leben besser … Aber von oben gesehen, von Gott aus gesehen – war da wirklich die Ordnung und Zucht eines exemplarischen Lebens, der Verzicht auf Welt und Sinnenglück, das Fernbleiben von Schmutz und Blut, die Zurückgezogenheit in Philosophie und Andacht besser als das Leben Goldmunds? (NG, 315-316). [Everyday the Abbot’s thoughts returned at one time or another to his friend, with love and longing, gratitude and worry … The world in which he lived and made his home, his world, his cloister life … all this had often been shaken to its foundations by his friend and was now filled with doubt. Certainly, seen from the point of view of the cloister, from the point of view of reason and morality, his own life was better … But seen from above, with God’s eyes – was this exemplary life of order and discipline, of renunciation of the world and of the joys of the senses, of remoteness from dirt and blood, of withdrawal into philosophy and meditation any better than Goldmund’s life? (NGT, 300).]

This focalisation is striking because Narziß is representative of the opposite of Goldmund’s “Mother world”. In other words, despite his loyalty to his world and traditional values, and despite the polarity between intellect and life, logos and eros and the absence of synthesis between the contradictions (Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 2000:17), Narziß does acknowledge the validity of such Mother World values as love and freedom. Narziß consequently also declares his love to Goldmund by saying that in a life lacking love, the latter had enriched his (NG, 325): “Es bedeutet den Quell in einer Wüste, den blühenden Baum in einer Wildnis. Dir allein danke ich es, daß mein Herz nicht verdorrt ist, daß eine Stelle in mir blieb, die von der Gnade erreicht werden kann” (NG, 325). [“It means a well in a desert, a blossoming tree in the wilderness. It is thanks to you alone that my heart has not dried up, that a place within me has remained open to
The psychological credibility of Narziß’s appreciation of Goldmund’s Mother World lies in the desire for and gaining of balance, perhaps also vicariously281, through Goldmund. Narziß is left without his only contact to worldly love/the Mother once Goldmund dies – which explains why Goldmund’s last words “burn like fire in his heart” (cf. NG, 331).

6.10. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed selected central events that all have personal meaning for Goldmund and that, as such, collectively serve as a “building block” of the fictional world. Goldmund’s focalisation, coinciding with his responses to the events and how he experiences “aspects” related to the events, for example, characters themselves, their physical appearances and their “souls” and the nature of the social contexts and spaces, characterises them as “typically human” or psychologically credible – in the actual world too. At times the fictional world may be evocative of the actual one or mimetically realistic with regard to its external appearances and people, but one should bear in mind that what one accesses is not merely a textual actual world, but a textual actual one that is psychologically “processed” by the perceptions and subjective experiences of characters like, for example, Goldmund, Narziß and Robert. The “re-production” of the textual actual world is the fictional one. The latter is therefore a possible world in the sense that it conveys the similarity of psychological possibilities between the actual world and the fictional one. Characterised by actual world-like representative dynamics (such as subjective selection/focus and subjective interpretation), focalisation not only makes of a fictional world a possible one with regard to psychological possibilities, but is also the constitutive force of the fictional world.

The vehicle which relays Goldmund’s consciousness is a third-person narrator who uses psycho-narration, quoted monologue and free indirect speech that does not represent the representation at a remove from Goldmund’s consciousness, but especially through vision avec: literally with it. The nature of Goldmund’s consciousness could be described as psychologically credible, owing to being an accessibility relation between the actual and the fictional world. His consciousness serves not only as an accessibility relation, but as a “filter” that transforms the “ground coffee beans and water” or the textual actual world into the “filtered coffee” or the fictional world: this is a personal fictional world and, in actual world terms, humanly accessible and psychologically possible world.

Goldmund’s life is marked by events that lead him to different aspects of the “Mother” or natural worldly life. After his liberation from the social life of the monastery (“artificial” because it rejects natural human desires like one’s freedom of movement, sexual interaction with women and self-realisation through conventions and/or rules), he experiences the call of the Mother through a kind manifestation of worldly life, namely via his acquaintance with Lise. His focalisation of Lise is characterised by the inclusion of a focus on nature, an awareness of aesthetic forms, sensual pleasures as well as a dream-like state that denotes his limited understanding of the Mother. Following his first encounter with a “pleasant manifestation” of the Mother, he meets another woman, a farmer’s wife, whom he focalises in terms of her sensual and aesthetic beauty, but also her surroundings that are still very natural, but slightly more “social” owing to her family and the farm.

The chapter thereafter focused on the theme of the tension between the social and conventional or artificial life and natural human life, the latter being a reality that “returns” to him after he has felt the tension following his first kiss, when he still idealised life in the monastery of Mariabronn. Goldmund also experiences this tension through his friendship with his polar opposite, Narziß. (The chapter therefore subsequently discussed the events of the beginning of Narziß’s and Goldmund’s friendship, their recognition of contrasting temperaments as well as Goldmund’s disillusionment and return to the Mother.) The experience of this tension is also reflected by means of Goldmund’s encounters with women – even with Lise, who finally has to return to her abusive husband, and the farmer’s wife, who belongs to an uncomplicated social context. Goldmund’s relationship with Lydia is even further removed from the Mother’s kind manifestations and is characterised by the tension between natural life and artificial social existence and its restrictions in the form of routine, conventions, social customs and expectations. Although, through her desire for Goldmund, Lydia is attracted to his “natural life”, she limits the effect of the Mother in her life. Goldmund consequently focalises her more specifically in terms of her soul and the pervasive impossibility of an unrestricted relationship between them. Lisbeth is even more fully committed to the “Father World” or a social life determined by conventions, principles, rules and corresponding behaviour than Lydia. His focalisation of her represents a tension between natural life in the form of her beauty and her secret – and her social identity that causes her prudish expressionlessness together with her formal and proper comportment.

A third category of encounters with fictional people consists of events that represent unkind manifestations of the Mother as worldly suffering. Goldmund focalises the experiences related to his acquaintance with Viktor, varying between melancholic apprehension and outright anguish.
and “madness”. The name “Viktor” or “conqueror” suggests that a possible, future, less attractive self will “conquer” Goldmund’s youth. Because they are both tramps Goldmund feels melancholically apprehensive when identifying his possible future self with Viktor because the latter’s survival necessitates cunning, malice and theft. As a youth Goldmund’s physical survival was made possible by his physical attractiveness. Another disposition and concurrent focalisation are activated once he has killed Viktor, whereafter Goldmund focalises his experiences of the world in terms of mental torment and disorientation. Suffering the Mother’s cruelty is reminiscent of Rebekka’s madness. Goldmund focalises Rebekka in terms of the possibility of realising the Mother’s kinder manifestations because of her beauty. However, Rebekka concentrates on the cruelty of the here and now of worldly life during the Black Death, after her father has been burnt to death along with other Jews. Prior to Goldmund’s acquaintance with Rebekka, he allowed Lene into his life whom he focalises also in terms of the chance to realise kinder manifestations of the Mother; however, with Lene Goldmund also experiences the tension between a natural life and a social life as well as the cruel manifestations of the Mother because Lene is finally also infected by the Black Death and dies. Goldmund focalises Agnes in terms of her vibrant physical beauty, but she is eventually by no means a Lise-figure who represents the Mother only in part. She is, rather, a culmination of what the Mother represents, namely beauty, sensual pleasure, but also suffering, because Goldmund’s association with her causes him to be caught and sentenced to be executed. This results in a night of anguish for him while awaiting his execution. This suffering therefore constitutes part of the event of meeting Agnes.

The chapter subsequently focused on events related to Goldmund’s acquaintances with various characters, namely his discovery of Meister Niklaus’s Mother of God and his inner conflict with regard to the necessity of becoming a social being, in order to be an artist, that enables him to express his psychological connection with the Mother. Hereafter the emphasis falls on the Black Death as an event that Goldmund first experiences and witnesses in a detached and exploratory manner, like an artist. But later he also becomes anguished and “mad” in a fashion reminiscent of his focalisation after having killed Viktor. The following event that the chapter discusses occurs when he expects his own execution, and his inner experiences lead him to focalising the external world as more desirable than ever before.

The last events represent a series of “returns”. Goldmund returns to Narziß and contemplates his life experiences. His focalisation is here characterised by a contradictory cynicism and loyalty to the world because at this point he was still struggling to accept all the aspects of the Mother. When he returns to his art, Goldmund’s mind-set is marked by his love for the world, and he
finally returns to his old ways and starts to roam again. The last event, namely Goldmund’s death, is accompanied by his attitude as regards acceptance of all the aspects of the Mother, namely the joys of his life as well as the suffering. The chapter concludes with another focus, namely Narziß’s acknowledgement of the Mother World that confirms Goldmund’s life as valid.

It has been argued that an event and its effects are “psychologically credible” if the reader allows himself to empathetically share in the mental and emotional experiences of a character/characters through identification with the character(s)/narrator’s perspective. This is specifically made possible by the recognisably human reactions of the characters that are imparted by focalisation. The focalisation in Narziß and Goldmund is characterised especially by Goldmund’s subjective personal perspectives that differentiate his fictional world from the textual actual world and other fictional worlds, but exhibit a connection with experiences of the actual world.

The events discussed in this chapter do not encompass the total fictional world of the novel. There are numerous others: for example, when Goldmund is living with Meister Niklaus, at one point he looks at the people at the marketplace and the fish that are being sold there. He experiences an inner conflict: he must choose between settling down and becoming an artist, on the one hand, or leaving and continuing his life as a tramp. He identifies himself with the fish and projects his inner pain onto them. He feels sympathy with the fish, that he describes as mysterious and beautiful, and is intensely aware of their helplessness and the certainty of their approaching death (NG, 187). He is angry at the people because of their ignorance (NG, 187). Tusken (1998:135) addresses this episode thus: Goldmund’s “heightened consciousness of the suffering and tragedy of death makes him doubly aware of the beauty of life and, consequently, the need to make life, itself, a contribution …” Goldmund’s reaction to the fish and the people is psychologically credible since it is accessible to the reader because of the character’s focalisation. The reader recognises that the reaction is an emotional projection which alters Goldmund’s reality, that differs from the textual actual reality and others’ experience(s) of that reality. Goldmund’s experience which drives his focalisation is “actual world-like” in the sense that actual people also have personal experiences of the actual world that differ from the actual world “as it is” or as other people experience it.


283 Lubich (2009:199) offers another interesting transworld connection that suggests psychological credibility: “Goldmund’s heartfelt commiseration with the suffering and dying creatures is very much characteristic of the modern mind, whose ecological concerns have spawned a wide variety of organizations oriented toward concern for non-human beings, ranging from the prevention of cruelty to animals to the preservation of endangered species.”
One knows of Goldmund that he intensely appreciates the transient experience of worldly life. He finds a socially normal life distressing because it works against “natural existence”, as in the animal kingdom, by curbing the freedom of the individual and, owing to its artificial nature, is often unaware of or disapproving of natural aesthetic beauty and experiences. The purpose and meaning of his life is that his life itself becomes a work of art. For years he had desired to make a sculpture of the Mother, but finally recognises that she is not supposed to be his work of art: instead, he is her work of art (NG, 330). He cannot attain a meaningful life by settling down and becoming an artist like Meister Niklaus. Goldmund recognises that living in a manner akin to that of the people at the marketplace and of Meister Niklaus would be a waste of time. The accessibility relation of “psychological accessibility” enables one to understand Goldmund’s anger at the people and sadness about the fish because he identifies with both. He does not want to become as ignorant as the people whose lives are limited to a small artificial context. They do not for one moment consider an alternative purpose that the fish might have, except as food. He identifies with the fish because just as they crave for freedom in water, Goldmund yearns for the wide natural world, his natural habitat.

This chapter has focused on events constituting the collective “building block” of a fictional world, as a focalised element. The fictional world does not merely “coincidentally” bear resemblances with the actual world, but is based on the psychological connection that exists between focalisation and actual world experiences. One can therefore argue that actual world dynamics contribute to the creation of a fictional world. In the following chapter, and last text analysis, the focus will shift to fictional spaces in E.L. Doctorow’s Homer & Langley. As represented, the physical spaces experienced by the consciousness of the focaliser and narrator, Homer Collyer, are also psychologically credible because the actual world reader finds the represented spaces “accessible” or understandable, since a correspondence exists between how he experiences his physical environment and how actual people experience their physical spaces.
Chapter 7

**Homer & Langley: The social spaces of Homer and Langley Collyer’s fictional world**

7. **Introduction**

This chapter advances the argument that represented social space(s) and focalised events which are dependent on the consciousness of a focaliser are characterised by the modes of the focaliser’s psychological mindset and his social consciousness. This disposition contributes to the fictional world. The concepts “focalisation”, “events” and “social context” contribute to constituting fictional space, which functions as a constitutive element of a fictional world. The chapter furthermore argues that “psychological realism” or psychological credibility in Doctorow’s work is an important aspect in establishing “fictional world spaces” as “possible world spaces” because of its connections to the actual world as well as the similarities between how characters view the textual actual world and actual people view the actual one. With regard to space a fictional world is not a possible one simply because of artistic-mimetic, re-imagined factual and/or historical relations between the represented world and the actual world, but rather as a result of the accessibility relation of psychological credibility. The fictional world is psychologically credible in actual world terms because the focalisation of characters, the social context, events – and certainly spaces as well – are marked by inner experiences that are recognisably human.

284 Ronen (1986:421) defines “space” as a semantic construct that constitutes a fictional universe through “the domain of settings and surroundings of events, characters and objects in literary narrative, along with other domains (story, character, time and ideology).” Belonging to the structure of “space” are the “frame” and “setting” which refer to the actual surroundings of fictional characters and objects (Ronen, 1986:421,423). Frames include places while settings include events (Ronen, 1986:421,423). Against this background the emphasis in this chapter is on physical surroundings of the characters, events and objects belonging to the setting that, as focalised, bear psychological resemblances with experiences of actual world spaces.

285 Modes of Homer’s focalisation include his metaphorical representation of the spaces: for instance, the spaces of the house as a microcosm are metaphoric for the spaces of the macrocosms of larger social contexts (such as towns, cities and countries). Like Welcome to Hard Times, this novel could also be seen as allegorical and therefore includes the selection or subjective representation of extraordinary circumstances which are exaggerated as a focalising mode that, to varying degrees, depicts the possible experience of estrangement from one’s social context. Another mode of focalisation may therefore be implied: social criticism through the marginal and liminal position of the focalised house. In this sense the focalisation comprises identity forming narration as in Demian. Langley is the “official” collector of objects in the story, but Homer’s focalisation is also characterised by a “collector’s fascination” for his possessions that may signify an attempt to compensate for lack of interpersonal “wealth” in the form of parental love, friendships within his social context and a deeper relationship with another person. When describing the “pack-rat” condition of the house, Homer refers to “… empty bureau drawers, beer kegs, flowerpots …” (HL, 206). Blue similarly lists the remnants after the first fire which could be related to Blue’s concerns about his and his fellow townspeople’s survival: “two charred tins of milk from Ezra’s store, a tomato can, a box of .45 shells, the head of a hammer, a handful of horseshoe nails and a hunk of lye soap …” (WHT, 34). These modes form part of Homer’s focalisation, characterised by the modes of his psychological disposition and his according spaces a social character through his personal experiences with his social context.
This chapter enquires: How does the interaction between characters, events and social contexts affect the focalisation of space? And, secondly: How does space contribute to making a fictional world a possible world? It aims to answer these questions by discussing focalised space as characterised by fictional individual characters and their emotional and psychological investment – especially by the character and narrator, Homer Collyer. Furthermore, by exploring space as characterised by events and their social contexts, this chapter will consider the mimetic realism of the represented textual actual world as a superficial connection to the actual world. Finally, it will investigate whether fictional spaces in *Homer & Langley* meet the criterion that would enable one to consider the fictional world a possible world, namely that the fictional world is a possible one with regard to the actual one.

This chapter is based on theoretical designs by Jakob Lothe (2000), Jurij Lotman (1977), Henri Lefebvre (1991), Nicholas Wolterstorff (1980) and Didier Coste (1989) that helpfully bring the concept of fictional space(s) into relation with the study’s considerations of fictional worlds and possible worlds. Following a brief contextualisation of the fictional world, one marked by “urban eremitism” and the ironic impossibility of leading lives that are independent from social contexts, the chapter will present theoretical points of departure by, firstly, considering Lothe’s concept that space characterises fictional figures and, secondly, discussing Lotman’s theory with regard to story space: the characterising value of space and world models in terms of spatial oppositions. Thirdly, Lefebvre’s notion that space possesses a social character and, fourthly, Wolterstorff’s with regard to historical events as anchors will be briefly introduced. Fifthly, Coste’s concept that coherence, contextual meaning and the “deeper meaning” of a world rely on the enunciator of the narrative also forms a basis for the chapter’s argument.

The chapter will thereafter consider space as characterised by the characters and their emotional and psychological investment, Homer’s indifference and indistinct hope for normality together with the meaning of the “inside and the outside” of the Collyer house, as related to Langley’s theory that he calls “God’s inescapable world” (HL, 81). Subsequently, the focus will fall on the brothers’ mental shutters and society’s reaction; space as characterised by events and the brothers’ social contexts; the beginning of Homer’s blindness due to losing a childhood girlfriend, Eleanor, and historical events and space contributing to making the fictional world a possible world. Lastly, the house will be considered as a metaphorical microcosm of the world and human experience as an element of focalisation that causes a fictional world to be a possible one.
This chapter continues from the previous text analyses, offering an analysis of the connection between the actual world and the fictional world, but it does so by focusing on another crucial “building block” of a fictional world, namely space. This study considers fictional space to be primarily represented as one of the focalised components (i.e. along with characters, social contexts and events) that make up a fictional world. Space is also a “consequence” of the mindsets and emotional states of the central focalising character, Homer Collyer. Although Langley’s views, that Homer includes in his narration, are often at odds with his own, Homer also uses Langley’s views to confirm his own perspective. For example, Langley says to his blind brother, Homer:

You know, Homer, … among the philosophers there is endless debate as to whether we see the real world or only the world as it appears in our minds, which is not necessarily the same thing. So if that’s the case, if the real world is A, and what we see projected on our minds is B, and that’s the best we can hope for, then it’s not just your problem (HL, 47).

Langley explicitly addresses the matter of focalising a (textual) actual world that is compatible with actual people’s perceptions of the actual one. In both the actual and the fictional world an individual’s understanding and representation of the actual world, like that during a conversation, is of a quasi textual nature that does not necessarily correspond to the world “as it really is”. Langley’s view, implying that all people are in a non-literal sense “blind”, i.e. to what the world is “really” like, describes an accessibility relation or compatibility between the fictional world and the actual world of the reader.286

7.1.1. The world of Homer & Langley/Homer and Langley Collyer: Urban eremitism and the ironic impossibility of leading lives that are independent from social contexts

Although Langley’s subjectivity belongs to a fictional context, the reader who is attentive to various manifestations of subjectivity is able to transfer Langley’s sentiment onto the actual world. Declarations about the actual world influenced by either auspicious or unfortunate experiences may serve as concrete examples of conscious (mis)interpretations or unconscious (mis)understandings of the actual world. Focalisation as a “regulation of narrative information”

286 Here one thinks of Ryan’s (1991:33) accessibility relations of “logical compatibility”, i.e. “if both worlds respect the principles of noncontradiction, and of excluded middle” and “analytical compatibility”, i.e. “if the textual actual world is accessible from the actual world if they share analytical truths, i.e., if objects designated by the same world have the same essential properties”. The “phenomenon” which Langley identifies is, logically and analytically, also applicable to the actual world.
Chapter 7: Homer & Langley: The social spaces of Homer and Langley Collyer’s fictional world

(1) Homer & Langley is the fictional re-invention of two actual historical recluses, Homer and Langley Collyer (cf. Schillinger, 2009), whose house was filled with 130 tons of junk and who became “posthumously ordained as America’s most notorious pack-rats” (Crown, 2010). They were recluses who “opted out”, as Doctorow says (Smallwood, 2009:31). This is not Doctorow’s first narrative about “emigration” from society. In the interview with Smallwood (2010:31) he refers to his short story “The Leather Man”, the story of a wandering hermit whose “essential act” is to make “the world foreign. He distances it. He is estranged” (Doctorow, 1985c:74). This figure is representative of various kinds of recluses, such as peaceniks, mimes, street people, forest-fire wardens, road tramps, the sensorily deprived, missing persons including Morris Wakefield288 and even philanderers (Doctorow, 1985c:70; Doctorow, 2008). The variety of people from both rural and urban areas who are represented as “hermits” creates the impression that a significant part of the demography is, like Homer and Langley, disconnected from the social context.

Homer and Langley are not hermits like the “classical version”, i.e. they are “in touch with the way things are. You remember your Thoreau. There’s a definite political component to avoiding all other human beings” (Doctorow, 1985c:69). Langley seems to create his own world modelled after the world of the city, in a sense a “neighbouring country”. The fictional world defamiliarises the understanding of the use of (actual) space and the “inescapability” of social interaction. Homer & Langley therefore addresses the ironic concept of “urban eremitism”.

287 Prince (2001:43) points out that Genette (1980, 1988) “limits the domain” of focalisation “to questions of mood (or ‘vision’) as opposed to questions of voice, who sees (or perceives) and not who speaks”. This study considers the objects of ‘vision’, the selected content, as inseparable from the consciousness of a narrator and a character or characters. Ronen (1994:180) combines these two aspects by describing focalisation as “one aspect determining what gets narrated, the factor filtering world-components”.

288 “Wakefield” is a 2008 short story available on the website of The New Yorker. It narrates the story of a man who left his wife and then continues to hide himself in his own home’s neighbourhood. The description of his house’s attic is evocative of the Collyer house: “The attic was jammed with rolled-up rugs and bric-a-brac and boxes of college papers, my wife’s inherited hope chest, old stereo equipment, a broken-down bureau … etcetera. (Doctorow, 2008). His contest, against two other “scavenger men” and a woman for shoes that he finds in “an unusually large pile of curbed junk”, is reminiscent of people competing to acquire material goods: “Mine! I had said like a child. Mine, mine! These were the first words I have spoken in all the months of my dereliction” (Doctorow, 2008). Wakefield remains materialistic despite his dissatisfaction with the materialistic family life that he has abandoned.
That “the book’s brothers do, in fact, turn out to be versions of those infamous New York pack-rats, whose overstuffed Harlem brownstone ... made their name synonymous with obsessive-compulsive collecting” (Kakutani, 2009:1) seems at first glance to be a confirmation that what the fictional world (re)presents is indeed “possible” because it has happened, and what has occurred in the past may happen again. However, Doctorow’s novel certainly is not “nonfiction”, i.e. claiming to represent reality itself (Ryan, 1991:33). As a literary expression or “true fiction” representing a textual reference world “distinct but very similar to AW”, a fictional world is created which is part of a story “about true facts289 that uses the techniques of narrative fiction” (Ryan, 1991:34).

The “possibility value” of the novel for the actual world occupies larger psychological and metaphoric dimensions than the connection between the actual and the fictional Collyers. For example, the space of the house in Homer & Langley could be read as a metaphor for the polluting effects on the environment in an age of immense consumerism and the information revolution during the past century, roughly since the birth of the fictional Collyer brothers. In addition, Homer’s narrative encapsulates what Langley aimed to do with the concept of his “eternally current dateless newspaper”: “For five cents, Langley said, the reader will have a portrait in newsprint of our life on earth. ... The reader will aways be up to date, and au courant with what is going on” (HL, 49). Moreover, the Collyer residence is suggestive of the ironic association with Western culture in which people value “privacy”, but whose lives are ultimately “public” or dependent on social infrastructure and relationships. Homer’s narration (with the Collyer brothers’ Fifth Avenue home as the central space serving as the basis of the narrative) is addressed to Jacqueline Roux, a French reporter.290 His focalisation is therefore also influenced by her presence as the fictional hypothetical reader because he writes his text as a way to help her to understand America or “get this country” (HL, 184) by means of his autobiographical story. Homer’s text may be a vague attempt at wooing Jacqueline under the disguise of offering a “revelation” of American life through the experience of an individual. Detached from his social context, even his brother, because of his blindness and deafness, his narration becomes a way to connect with someone – if only in his own consciousness. Addressing her by her name after his brother’s death is a way not to be alone in the short time preceding his own death.

289 One could replace “about” with “employing” for the purposes of considering Doctorow’s oeuvre.

290 Jacqueline Roux says: “If I am a reporter ... it is to report on my own self, my own feelings for what I discover. ... I have leave for a very impressionist Jacqueline Roux commentary for Le Monde – yes a newspaper, but my commentary is not to be where I’ve been or who I’ve talked to, but what I have learned of your secrets” (HL, 184-185).
Homer’s isolation serves as a metaphor for his disconnection from society. This affects his focalisation and consequently transfigures space. Homer says:

But for a while now, I have lived in total silence, and so when he approaches and taps me on the arm I sometimes start, for I think of him always at a distance, someone small and far away, when suddenly he is standing here, loomed up like an apparition. It is almost as if the reality is his distance from me and the illusion is his presence (HL, 204).

Homer’s sensory isolation causes this misconception that his brother is present. Similarly, social reality throughout the brothers’ lives is characterised by their isolated existence, even though they lodge various people at intervals. Their status as recluse is therefore ironic, especially in their urban context, and supports the idea that it is ultimately impossible to live socially independent lives. Their metaphoric blindness creates the illusion that people are far away while they are, in fact, close by.

Various people board in the house from the beginning of the (mostly chronologically presented) story. The residents of the house, after both the Langleys’ parents died during the influenza pandemic at the end of the First World War (the Spanish Flu), as well as Langley’s return from the First World War, are the “new” Langley who has suffered a mustard gas attack during the War, Homer and the servants of the Collyer parents. However, the character of the house immediately alters because the relationship between the brothers and the servants differs from the nature of that between the Collyer parents and the servants. Homer fires the German butler/chauffeur/handyman, Wolf, and begins an affair with the young Hungarian maid, Julia. Homer and Langley would eventually use Siobhan, “a pious Irishwoman of a certain age” (HL, 18) and the cook, Mrs. Robileaux, to help manage the tea dances in the house. The cook, Mrs. Robileaux, has a son, Harold, a cornet player who dies during the Second World War. The brothers accept him as a part of the household, which is reflected by their displaying the blue-star pennant “that people hung from their windows to indicate that we had a family member in the service” (HL, 94; my emphasis – PvdM) and later “gold-star pennants for the front windows of all four storeys following his death” (HL, 98).

Other “residents” of the house are Mary Elizabeth Riordan, Homer’s music student, with whom both the brothers are secretly in love. The unfeasibility of making her permanently part of the household, Langley’s dead end relationship with Anna, “some kind of Socialist-anarchist-anarcho-syndicalist-Communist” (HL, 54) and his failed marriage with Lila van Dijk, function as expressions of the brothers’ inability to lead “normal” middle-class lives. Having met a
gangster, Vincent, in a night club, Homer and Langley receive from him the “gift” of a visit from two prostitutes to their house. Many years later a wounded Vincent, his son, Massimo, and fellow gangsters use the Collyers’ house as a refuge. The house also functions as a refuge for a Japanese couple, born in the United States (Nisei), Mr. and Mrs. Hoshiyama, who lodge in the house as cleaners. However, the FBI finally does find and remove them. For a while a group of hippies with whom the brothers share a scepticism of their social context also stay in the house.

The last part of the book describes Langley’s (legal) battles with the bank and service delivery companies as regards outstanding payments. Langley idealises a completely independent existence, yet Homer’s narration reflects and admits the austere conditions of living in a social context without the services of a social infrastructure, for instance access to water in one’s home: “… after a couple of weeks of turning ourselves into water carriers, the sense of triumph, of having put one over on the city, had given way to the hard realities of our situation” (HL, 196-197). Throughout the novel Homer refers to Langley’s habitual collection and storing of possibly useful objects. Langley also collects vast amounts of newspapers as research materials for his project to construct a single “eternal” newspaper, i.e. one that is always up to date. The house finally becomes a prison. Langley becomes sceptical about the “outside world” and begins to set traps in the house, of which he becomes a “casualty” (of the war as it appears in his own mind\(^{291}\)). Homer consequently starves to death, which is also indicative of their life-long social fall and ultimate social death.

### 7.2. Characters and their social and historical contexts and the narrator’s focalised space(s)

#### 7.2.1. Lothe: The mutual characterisation of characters and space(s)

The description of the fictional space of the frozen lake in Central Park, as on the first page of the novel, evokes actual space so realistically that the reader’s suspension of disbelief is automatic. When Homer begins his narration of how he experienced becoming blind, the reader registers an individual’s experience of an “independent space”, i.e. of a space in the actual world existing independently from human consciousness: “The houses over to Central Park West went first, they got darker as if dissolving into the dark sky until I couldn’t make them out, and then the trees began to lose their shape … and all I could see were these phantom shapes of the ice

\(^{291}\) At the end of the novel Homer recalls that Langley said to him that “everything alive was at war” (HL, 200).
skaters floating past me on a field of ice … “ (HL, 3) However, this approximates what Lothe (2000:50; my emphasis – PvdM) calls “story space”: “the space containing events, characters, and the place or places of the action as it is presented and developed in the discourse (i.e. as plot)”. The difference between the space on the first page of the novel and an actual space on the frozen Central Park lake (apart from its setting in a fictional time) is that the fictional one owes its existence to narration and focalisation.

The reader is not presented with a fictional independent space, but an implied space of this kind transformed by focalisation, i.e. it becomes “discourse space” or the narrator’s – and in this instance also the focaliser’s – space: “This can assume different forms and need not be indicated in the text at all …” (Lothe, 2000:50). The house as a framing space is constantly implied and evokes the characters of Homer and Langley even if parts of the novel do not (constantly) directly refer to the space. Lothe (2000:50) explains that “specific parts or characteristics of the narrative space influence and shape the characters, who normally appear in space and are thus also spatial elements of a kind”. One could add to this that the relationship between the characters and space is a mutually interactive characterisation. Space characterises Homer and Langley, as Lothe indicates, but Homer and Langley also characterise space.

7.2.2. Lotman: Story space, the characterising value of space and world models in terms of spatial oppositions

Homer and Langley’s eccentric behaviour is completely reflected by the strange organisation of their house. They are very much the products of their interaction with their social context, which is characterised by their failure to function according to the norms or prescriptions of acceptable social behaviour. They create a bizarre residence which, in turn, characterises them as bizarre. Lotman (1977:218) observes that the “most general social, religious, political, and ethical models of the world … are invariably invested with spatial characteristics … sometimes in the form of a socio-political hierarchy with the marked opposition of ‘the height’ to ‘the depths’”, which the house reflects as a space belonging to a “fallen” family, i.e. a family that has regressed from a high social standing to one which has lost the respect of its social context.

When Homer deliberates on the course of his and his brother’s lives, of which the house is an expression, he articulates his inner conflict using words denoting spatial oppositions, like “end-of-the-line” versus “commencement”. One could relate this opposition to that of “ascent” versus “descent” within the context of Homer’s consideration of his family as well as to “supreming of a line” (reaching the “top”) versus “falling” or “being at the bottom” and “flowering” (“rising”) versus “drooping” or “declining”:
I admit to feeling at secret times, usually just before falling asleep, that if one held to conventional bourgeois values he could read the Collyer brothers as *end-of-the-line*. Then I would get angry with myself. After all, we were living original self-directed lives unimimidated by convention – could we not be a *supreming of the line*, a *flowering* of the family tree? (HL, 177; my emphases – PvdM)

Lotman (1977:218), referring to “historical and ethical linguistic models of space” that “become the bases of organisation for the construction of a ‘picture of the world’”, points out that a model of a “vertically oriented universal system is created”. In a lyric by Tjutčev one finds that the “top” is interpreted as the sphere of life, and the “bottom” as the sphere of death (Lotman, 1977:219-220). Lotman (1977:222) argues that “height” in Zabolockij’s “The Cranes” could be associated with the expanse becoming “more limitless”, denoting freedom – opposed to “the lower one goes, the more cramped it is”, denoting imprisonment. Here one thinks of the imprisoning quality of the house as Homer focalises it.

“Top versus bottom” is (apart from corresponding with “freedom versus imprisonment”) also a structural variant of the oppositions “good versus evil”, “movement versus immobility” as well as “life versus death”: “Death, the cessation of movement, is movement downwards” (Lotman, 1977:222). Quite literally, the huge house’s open spaces where life once “flowed through the rooms unencumbered by fear” (HL, 207) have become reduced to narrow passageways and enclaves (HL, 205) or as Crown (2010) describes it: “Airy and open at first, it slowly silts up with the detritus of US consumerism … and, in the form of the newspapers which Langley collects daily, the nation’s stories”. The interior, but also the poor condition of the exterior, signify social death, reinforced by the brothers’ concomitant physical deaths.

7.2.3. **Lefebvre: The social character of space**

This book quite effectively illustrates Lefebvre’s (1991:82-83) theory that any space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationships. Lefebvre (1991:83) furthermore remarks that “[t]he more a space partakes of nature, the less it enters into the social relations of production”. Yet, Homer never refers to considering living in a more natural or rural environment, which

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292 Despite the artistic discrepancies between the actual circumstances of the Collyers and Doctorow’s novel, a sentence in an article that appeared around two weeks after Homer Collyer’s death approximates the fictional narrator’s description of the house: “The building was packed almost solid from top to bottom with incredible masses of junk, pierced by winding tunnels” (*Time*, 1947). The fictional Homer describes the house in a similar way as a “labyrinth of hazardous pathways, full of obstructions and many dead ends” (HL, 158) and finally comments: “Langley’s defensive strategy has made it unwise if not impossible for me to try to get around the house. For all practical purposes I am imprisoned” (HL, 205).
would be perhaps a “less ironic” way of life as hermits than being hermits surrounded by a city of people. Ironically, the more the Collyer brothers retreat, the more they involve themselves in the social context.

The novel emphasises Homer and Langley’s house as an alternative social space because of the results of Langley’s (asocial) attempts to counteract his and his brother’s residence as a “normal” social place, i.e. in terms of standard and idealised social norms and customs. An example of this occurs when Langley pulls the shutters together and locks them (HL, 167-168).

7.2.4. Wolterstorff: Historical events as anchors

As a social context is associated with the events that occur within it, spaces are representative of the social contexts characterised by events. A space where an event has occurred evokes its nature with which the space is thereafter spontaneously associated. Doležel (1998:20-21; my emphases – PvdM) points out that:

[i]The author creating a literary fictional world draws on the actual world in many ways: adopting its elements, categories, and macro-structural models; borrowing “brute facts, cultural realemes” (Even-Zohar 1980; see McHale 1987, 86), or “discursive features” (Moser 1984); “anchoring” the fictional story to a historical event (Wolterstorff 1980, 189); sharing “frames of reference” (Hrushovski 1984, 294); combining actual places to create a fictional location (Coste 1989, 100); “corroborating” the thematic design (Foley 1986); and so on.

Doctorow “anchors” the actual world “event”293 of the Collyers’ existence, as well as actual historical events, to the fictional ones. Wolterstorff (1980:189) explains that the world as a whole is often tied down to actual history by, firstly, being anchored to certain events of history (like the First World War, the Second World War and the Vietnam War in the novel); and, secondly, being set within a certain stretch of history. As a commentary on the twentieth century

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Chapter 7: Homer & Langley: The social spaces of Homer and Langley Collyer’s fictional world

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it is significant that the novel also centres itself around historical events because of their determining effect on people’s and characters’ mindsets and perceptions of the world.  

7.2.5. Coste: The supremacy of the coherence, contextual meaning and the “deeper meaning” of the enunciator’s world

Comparing the novel to accounts of the actual Collyers’ lives, one finds many similarities – but also numerous differences:

Much of the clutter that filled their brownstone mansion finds its place in Doctorow’s book: the Model T, of course, plus guns, 14 pianos, human organs pickled in jars, the frame of a baby carriage, and many many newspapers, piled so that the rooms were reduced to cubby-holes with narrow passages between them. Other facts are adjusted. Doctorow keeps the brothers’ names but redistributes their accomplishments: it becomes Homer, not Langley, who is the brilliant pianist, and he is made to lose his sight in his teens rather than middle age (Reynolds, 2010:22).

One can marvel at actual photographs of the Collyers’ residence on the Internet and “recognise” some of Homer’s descriptions as “verifiable”. This is much closer than the similarity between the two villages called Verrières in Franche-Comté in Stendhal’s Le Rouge et le noir: Coste (1989: 98-100) alludes to these in order to indicate that “although no town by this name is a necessary part of the reader’s encyclopedia, we cannot see why there should not exist at least one town by this name in Franche-Comté” (Coste, 1989:99). Although two villages (not towns) do exist in Franche-Comté, Coste concludes that:

On the plane of reference to certifying Discourses, we end up with an erroneous utterance. In the supreme interest of coherence, contextual meaning, and the “deeper truth” expected from the text as rewards for our investment in its reading, we must seek another type of reference for the signified “Verrières”: we shall say that according to its imaginary reference, Verrières has no other existence than that lent to it by the enunciator of the text; this enunciator offers to share such reference with the reader as a felicity of the act of communication in which we have engaged on beginning to read (Coste, 1989:100; my emphases – PvdM).

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294 In Hans-Ulrich Treichel’s Menschenflug (2007) the narrator says that he only understood later on that his father’s arm prothesis did not have the specific purpose of frightening children and animals, which his father seemed to enjoy doing (Treichel, 2007:13). The implication is that his parent’s strange behaviour can be related to his traumatisation because of his experiences and the loss of his arm during the Second World War.
Despite correspondences between the actual and fictional Collyers and their Fifth Avenue residence Doctorow’s *Homer & Langley* is also an “erroneous utterance”. As Coste points out, the deeper truth of the novel lies in the reader’s interaction with the coherence and contextual meaning of the imaginary reference to the fictional space which owes its existence to the focalisation of the narrator. The fictional Verrières is not a possible world because of an actual place or places with that name, but because the reader utilises his knowledge and experiences of the actual world in order to decode the fictional version. A fictional world is furthermore a possible one not because of a “coincidental” similarity between events, but because of the similarities between how characters view and experience the textual actual world, and actual people view and experience the actual world.

7.3. **Space characterised by characters and their emotional and psychological investment**

7.3.1. **Homer’s indifference and indistinct hope for normality**

The personal nature of Homer’s focalisation of space and narration in general *appears* to be more or less “neutral” throughout the narration. He admits towards the end of the novel that he “will not pretend to a precision of remembrance” while he tries to tell of his and his brother’s lives in the house (HL, 175), but the illusion of “objectivity” is strengthened by his remark that he has “developed a taste for an exact rendering” of their lives (HL, 175). However, through Homer’s focalisation space is coloured by Homer’s and Langley’s emotional and psychological states. In both *Homer & Langley* and *Demian*, somewhat different novels, space is characterised by the characters and their psychological investment. It is formed by psychological import – but not like Sinclair’s occasional, overtly emotional personification of space in *Demian*. The technique which Doctorow employs is instead reminiscent of Wordsworth’s poetic approach in “A spirit did my slumber seal” to which the author refers in his essay “E.A. Poe”. He does not “claim an emotion”, but gives the readers the means to create it themselves (Doctorow, 2007:13) in contrast to Edgar Allan Poe whom Doctorow (2007:13) describes as “usually a claimer”, i.e. too comprehensively describing emotions, leaving little room for the reader’s deductions.

Homer is apparently indifferent because he has always gone along with Langley and his actions since Homer maintains that he does not have a world view of his own (HL, 37). He never criticises Langley’s decisions and actions, nor expresses dissatisfaction with their living conditions. For Reynolds (2010:23) Homer is “forbearing towards his well-meaning, irritating elder brother, with his unstoppable acquisitiveness and transient schemes … And he has a persistent reluctance to judge anyone, including himself.”
Appreciation characterises Homer’s memories of the house of his parents’ era when the “inside world” and the “outside world” were in harmony: “My brother and I could run out the front door and down the steps and across to the park as if it was ours, as if home and park, both lit by the sun, were one and the same” (HL, 207). In contrast to that time, reflecting on “one more passing event in our lives” when Vincent and his fellow gangsters temporarily annex the house, he experiences the house as comprising part of his and his brother’s progress, but alien: “… as if our house were not our house but a road on which Langley and I were traveling like pilgrims” (HL, 112). Although cognizant and appreciative of Langley’s care, he does not identify with the space that Langley changes over the years, but is nonetheless doomed to be one with it.

Homer does not express being upset about the changes in the house; yet his reflecting on memories of it when his parents still lived, in comparison to the house’s later decay, suggests a sense of loss. As more “socially orientated”, unlike Langley, Homer identifies himself with the upper middle-class house and household of his childhood as a positive presence in his life. Bachelard (1969:16) explains with reference to the childhood houses of people that “we are in the unity of image and memory, in the functional composite of imagination and memory. The positivity of psychological history and geography cannot serve as a touchstone for determining the real being of our childhood, for childhood is certainly greater than reality.” The house is part of Homer’s childhood that is a subjective construction. 295 The memory of having seen, as a child, one of his mother’s maids in the dining room “standing on a ladder under the chandelier and removing each crystal, cleaning it with a cloth” (HL, 179) and appreciating the sophistication and care are part of Homer’s psyche and focalisation. This is followed by his matter-of-fact relation of the buckling ceiling in the dining room. According to Langley, the ceiling looked like “the bottom of the moon” (HL, 179). The chandelier thereafter came crashing down because of a massive accumulation of rat droppings. The preceding memory, focalised in terms of care and sophistication in combination with the “uncivilised” destruction of the chandelier, suggests regret and sadness.

This “neutrally” related development (of a rather shocking occurrence) is therefore not at all void of emotional and psychological value since the house of his childhood does have sentimental

295 Bachelard (1969:17) formulates the concept that a house constitutes a body of images which provide proofs or illusions of stability. This is exactly how Homer focalises the house of his childhood, but Bachelard (1969:17) also observes: “We are constantly re-imagining its reality: to distinguish all these images would be to describe the soul of the house; it would mean developing a veritable psychology of the house.” In *Homer & Langley*, “the psychology of the house” reflects Homer’s and Langley’s mental states because – as Bachelard (1969:xxxii) argues – the house image is a “veritable principle of psychological integration” or “one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind” (1969:6).
value for Homer. This is because the house of his youth is representative of a middle-class existence in harmony with the values and norms of its social context. Homer expresses a desire for a conventional relationship when he deliberates: “Or could I, after all, find some woman who would take up with me from some genius of her own loving spirit” (HL, 136). Referring to Jacqueline Roux, Homer recalls: “Perhaps I had been so grateful to be treated like a normal person that I had been overly enthralled with her. How pathetic – that I would think there was any possibility in my disabled life for a normal relationship outside of the Collyer house” (HL, 193; my emphasis - PvdM). It is more than plausible in the light of his (unrequited) love for Mary Elizabeth Riordan that if it had been achievable and advantageous for her, he would have welcomed conservative matrimony with her. Yet, the absence of such a normal existence coincides with a dramatic image like that of the chandelier falling, which is metaphoric for Homer and Langley’s decline through its movement from the top to the bottom and from “splendid” to “ruined” – which fits in well with Lotman’s “top versus bottom” opposition. Idealising the norms and values of a middle-class existence, Homer longs for the “elevation” of his parents’ lifestyle; however because of his failure to find a wife (HL, 76), he remains stoically tolerant, to the extent of expressing identification with the house: “You know it is who we are” (HL, 37).

Although Homer does possess a different mindset from his brother and does not always agree with Langley, he does present his sibling’s perspectives and narrates from Langley’s perspective, i.e. he uses him as a filter (Chatman, 1986:196). Unlike Langley who abandons any ambition for a relationship with a woman after his brief marriage to Lila van Dijk, Homer hopes for love – for a relationship in which the house is not a central feature of his life (HL, 136, 193). Homer’s experience of the house as an expression of his “reputable family” (HL, 5), “a monumental tribute to late Victorian design … our manse … which I always found comfortable, solid, dependable …” (HL, 6) may be understood as a projection of this longing onto the house.

Another reason for Homer’s tolerance is not only his fraternal loyalty, but simply that he becomes used to his and his brother’s consumerist lifestyle. The novel could be regarded as

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296 Langley, also in love with her, would probably also have attempted a middle-class life if marriage between them were a possibility, but Homer says: “We didn’t talk about it but we both knew we suffered a passion that would destroy this girl if we ever acted upon it” (HL, 41). This “disappointment” of unfulfilled love in combination with Langley’s extant disillusionment (towards social contexts following his experiences of the War) might also have encouraged Langley’s eccentricity.

297 Ronen (1986:431) explains that “frames” may either be “personal” or “impersonal”, adding that a “personal frame carries a mark or imprint of a character; it carries the concrete physical indication (usually in the form of an object or a more general quality or atmosphere) of a private domain”. Homer dislikes the chaotic state that is “a mark or imprint” of Langley and himself, even though Homer does not complain to his brother about the house’s transformations.
“environmentally conscious” because Homer and Langley, living in a “kingdom of rubble” (HL, 158), as Homer calls it, evoke the actual (Western) materialistic world filled with material goods, junk and garbage. In this novel Central Park serves as a remnant of nature overwhelmed by civilisation or artificial culture, which is also the reason why Jacqueline experiences Central Park as “sunken at the bottom of the city” (HL, 187). It is significant that Homer is surprised at her experience of the park: “Good Lord – to look for the meaning of Central Park? It was always across the street when I opened my door – something there, something fixed and unchanging and requiring no interpretation” (HL, 187). The ever-increasing numbers of artefacts symbolically strengthen the strong connection between the outside world and the house’s inside. However, whilst the inside of the house with its artefacts reflects the outside world, the borders between “outside” and “inside” ironically also become stronger because the outside/the social context becomes inaccessible to the siblings.

7.3.2. Langley and the inside and the outside of the house as “God’s inescapable world”

Langley’s focalisation of the house is not an unproblematic division between the “inside world” and the “outside world”. He is determined to keep the “outside world” at a distance: this can be seen, for example, when FBI agents come into the house and collect Mr. and Mrs. Hoshiyama. Langley’s response to this is: “This house is our inviolate realm, … I don’t care what kind of damn badge they flash. You kick them out and slam the door in their faces, is what you do” (HL, 90). This also recalls Langley’s chasing away the police officer who informs the brothers that their tea dances are against the law because they “operate a commercial enterprise out of a residence” (HL, 68), but obliquely suggests that he could “overlook the matter” (HL, 68) for a “kindly donation” to the Police Beneficiary Fund (of which Langley has never heard) (HL, 68). Langley finally says to him: “Now you will get off our property, sir – out, out!” (HL, 70). Following the police raid because of the “illegal” dances that signify their unacceptability in the “outer world”, the brothers’ “abandonment of the outer world” (HL, 76) commenced. They “retreat” into the house following the neighbourhood’s negative view of the dances, and the consequent police raid, but also because both of them had failed in their relationships with women (HL, 76). Langley therefore associates the “inside world” of the house with privacy and a (futile) means to evade the outside (social) world.

Homer explains to Jacqueline that, although it would not be his “consistent state of mind”, his sense of himself “as damaged suggested the wiser course of seclusion as a means to avoiding pain, insight sorrow, and humiliation” (HL, 76). The brothers’ isolation is therefore not so much an act of rejecting society as one of protecting themselves from it. This can also be observed in
Langley’s symbolic act of closing and locking the shutters when it seems that Mary Elizabeth Riordan has been killed by soldiers in Central America (HL, 167-168). Closing the shutters here signifies Langley’s fear of human nature as represented by the outside world. Considering the events of the twentieth century and Langley’s experiences, one could say that he goes into reclusiveness not because he is necessarily misanthropic, but because he is fearful. Crown (2010) also reminds one of the brothers’ social associations: “One waltzes them through the American century, where they meet representatives of its tribes (immigrants and refugees; veterans, jazz musicians and mafia hoods; hippies and bureaucrats) …” etcetera. Langley does not dislike all of them and he does not seem to be afraid of them. But he is afraid of the realities of the twentieth century which are marked by terrors that become the tentative entries of his “eternal newspaper”: “bull-headed American power”; American authority; corrupt cops; FBI agents; a government that passively observes the Holocaust and that drops atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; all the wars; contras in El Salvador, “illegally supported by a corrupt American regime”; “[p]residential malfeasance is one of the tentative entries in Langley’s newspaper file”, etcetera. (Benfey, 2009:36). The house consequently becomes an expression of Langley’s fear as well as a satirical expression of American and human acts because of his experiences and knowledge.298

Irony exists in Homer’s focalisation of their house’s dual roles, as a reflection of the outside world and a sanctuary from the society that Langley fears. Langley expresses the relativity of a difference between “inside” and “outside” when the cook, Mrs. Robileaux, questions the sense of placing an automobile in the dining room: “Why something made for the outside is inside” (HL, 80). Langley responds:

> How can you make an ontological distinction between outside and inside? On the basis of staying dry when it rains? Warm when it’s cold? … The inside is the outside and the outside is the inside. Call it God’s inescapable world. … You wouldn’t think this car was hideous to behold on the street. But here in our elegant dining room its true nature as a monstrosity is apparent (HL, 80-81).

Because Langley paradoxically focalises the house not only as a refuge from the outside world, but also as another form of the outside world, the presence of a Model T Ford in his dining room

298 “Langley” is coincidentally a metonym for the CIA because its headquarters are in Langley, Virginia. The name of the character also evokes the notion that an unavoidable connection exists between Langley Collyer and his national context. It is impossible for him to “withdraw” from his social context. He is inescapably part of his social and political context despite his disillusionment, fears and objections to it.
is a symbolic occurrence of his world view that fits in with Lotman’s binary oppositions. Langley’s eccentric “social norms” which allow a car in a dining room (inside), opposed to the exclusive appropriateness of a car on a road (outside), defamiliarises the car and draws attention to its “true nature as a monstrosity”. This is a comment on consumerism of which the Collyer house itself as represented by the novel is a strange epitome. The car symbolises the large and integral role that material possessions play in people’s lives. What Langley does by reconstructing a Model T Ford in the dining room, of all places, is to manifest his perspective of the social world, concretely, as forcing people to live with realities that are monstrous. Langley himself diminishes the difference between the “inside world” and the “outside world”.  

This relayed/filtered focalisation contributes to a reciprocal characterisation between both the brothers and the house. Addressing Jacqueline, and referring to the house, Homer says: “You know it is who we are” (HL, 37). Homer and Langley are, incongruously, hospitable, welcoming into their house people like Mary Elizabeth Riordan, Harold Robileaux and his audience, the tea dancers, the Hoshiyamas, the prostitutes whom the gangster Vincent sends to the brothers, and the hippies. Not only Langley’s amassing of miscellaneous manufactured articles, of which the Model T Ford is one, but also his collection of newspapers and the intermittent boarders transform the house into an “indoors” microcosm of the outside world.

7.3.3. The brothers’ mental shutters and the reaction of their social context

After Mary Elizabeth’s murder in Central America, the house becomes a desperate escape from civilisation because Langley believes that the threat is not remote, in Central America, but where they live. When Homer remarks that it is the nuns’ religious beliefs that put them in harm’s way because they knew that there was a civil war and that “armed savages” “roamed the land”,

299 Joyce Carol Oates (2009) points out a transworld relationship: “… we all know how newspapers and magazines can stack up, how ‘collectibles’ can accumulate. It’s not much of a stretch to imagine ourselves the hapless victims of our possessions – paralyzed by things we’re unable to sort out and discard, annihilated by our affluence, crushed by our consumerism”. Kurutz (2009) also implies that the Collyer house is a symbolic microcosm when he regards the novel as a cautionary tale because the Collyers’ literal demise was a result of unchecked materialism, “given Americans’ tendency toward over-consumption and the spread of storage units to contain all that stuff”.

300 Langley’s Model T Ford is a work of art, like Marcel Duchamp’s “readymades”. The automobile defamiliarises the object by drawing attention to its symbolic value as representing mass production and consumerism.

301 The house is a correct expression of Langley’s being. It is also who Homer is, but not by choice, one could argue. Although he hopes for another world, he cannot envision one. His physical blindness could be understood as metaphoric of this inability.

302 Although Langley’s reclusiveness increases towards the end of his life, the following description represents Langley as quite convivial: “Then one day Langley opened the front door and let passersby come up who had stopped at the foot of the front stoop to listen, and despite the music and the crowd gathered in the drawing room and the music room – for Langley had opened the sliding doors between them …” (HL, 59). Later in their lives, Homer also observes Langley’s sociability when meeting the hippies on the Great Lawn: “I was stunned to hear my brother exchanging pleasantries with strangers. An oddly convivial feeling came over me. The Collyers – principled separatists, recluses – and here we were, just two more of the crowd” (HL, 141).
Langley responds: “You idiot! … Who do you think armed them! They’re our savages!” (HL, 169). Homer recounts that their “shutters were never again to be opened” (HL, 169). The shutters as psychologically significant, emphasised by Homer’s physical blindness and eventually deafness, are evident in Homer’s disappointment when Jacqueline does not return: “There were mental shutters too and mine were closed tight as I turned back to what I could rely on, the filial bond” (HL, 193). The “filial bond”, the house and withdrawal are synonymous.

This abandonment subsequently also triggers antagonism not only in the form of the brothers’ struggles with city bureaucracies, “the city agencies, the creditors, the neighbors, the press” (HL, 177), but also with children who started to throw stones at the house. Homer states that he “was not inclined to fret over these stone throwers” and that “[w]e settled back and endured these sorties as one would wait out summer showers” (HL, 199). However, this proves to be a case of unreliable narration because it does indeed have an emotional effect on the brothers. Langley was angry and “made the mistake of going out on the stoop and shaking his fist. The children scattered with screams of delight” (HL, 198) and Homer asks: “For what could be more terrible than being turned into a mythic joke?” (HL, 200). The “private space” of the house is identified with disrespect because of the seeming social disapproval of the brothers’ outlook on the world. Langley’s focalisation of the world or “everything alive” as “at war” (HL, 200) confirms the recluse’s fear and the children’s active communication of society’s contempt for the brother’s way of life.

Homer focalises the house as being supposed to be a sanctuary, but it ironically becomes a target. He concludes: “Our every act of opposition and assertion of our self-reliance, every instance of our creativity and resolute expression of our principles was in service of our ruination” (HL, 200). In the same train of thought he also says: “My brother and I were going down …” (HL, 201). The house is therefore representative of their downfall which once again calls to mind Lotman’s “top versus bottom” polarisation, which is also confirmed by Homer’s reference to W.H. Auden’s poem “The Wanderer” that begins with “Doom is dark and deeper than any sea-dingle …” (HL, 38, 183): one could consider this as the novel’s leitmotiv. Describing the conversation between Homer and Jacqueline on “a bench in the sun”, Homer says: “I am in the darkness and silence deeper than the poet’s sea-dingle but I see that morning in the park and hear her voice and remember her words as if I was back outside of myself and the

303 The real Homer Collyer did become blind, but much later in his life during the mid 1930’s (Lidz, 2003b; cf. Reynolds, 2010:22). By making Homer deaf and blind Doctorow cuts the character off from sensing external space. Homer is ultimately confined to the “space” of his skull, i.e. his consciousness.
world was before me" (HL, 183). Depth, darkness, the inside of the house as well as the “inside” of his sensory disconnection from the world are juxtaposed with his elevated spirits, sunlight, the freedom of being outside and his connection to the (social) world, at least through his sense of hearing. Jacqueline represents a last form of social connection that he associates with freedom.

Ultimately Homer focalises the house as a prison. It seems that the only living space which Homer has left is a mattress next to a typing table (HL, 206). Homer juxtaposes the house of his childhood with the house that Langley has filled with things which he also uses to devise traps for possible burglars: “… a glorious elegance prevailed, calming and festive at the same time. Life flowed through the rooms unencumbered by fear. We boys chased each other up and down the stairs and in and out of the rooms” (HL, 207). This recalls Lotman’s antithesis of “congestion versus freedom”

In Langley’s search for independence, the brothers have paradoxically lost the freedom of their childhood. Furthermore, before the house was packed full, Homer focalises the house as “cavernous” (HL, 75, 87), juxtaposing the vast atmosphere of the house with an antithetical metaphoric space, namely “images of a sun-filled meadow” when hearing Mrs. Hoshiyama’s lovely laughter, “the melodic trill of a young girl” (HL, 87). In addition, the cavern to which the house is compared contains prison-like elements, especially with regard to being away from sunlight, while still being part of the social context in a spatially marginal place exposed to the discontent and contempt of the community. The moral of the tale surfaces as one also to be found in The book of Daniel. Despite the threats within one’s social context one is obliged to be part of one’s society in order to survive.

In brief: Although Homer’s focalisation appears to be detached, his memories of the house of his youth do indicate a longing for a time when he could “see”, i.e. when he did not feel that social life was incomprehensible. Although seemingly indifferent towards Langley’s reorganisation of the house, he does long for a middle-class existence as expressed by his infatuation with Jacqueline Roux. The house is finally part of his identity because of his

304 “Upstairs, he has so piled things up in pyramidal fashion that the least nudge of any one thing – rubber tires, an iron pressure cooker, dressmaker’s dummies …. and the whole assemblage will fall on the interloper, the mythical trespasser, the object of Langley’s stratagems. Each room has its own punishing design of our things. Washboards greased with soap are laid on the floor for the unwary to step on” (HL, 206).

305 Daniel’s sister, Susan, withdraws and eventually dies because she was never able to accept a world that killed her parents. Parks (1991:38) comments: “As enraged survivor, as adversary, as alien within his own society, Daniel struggles to transmute the legacy of defeat and death into a new basis of life”, but unlike his sister he wants to “see” or “get the picture” (Doctorow, 1971:153) (not as a basis for resignation, but for understanding) and finally he does manage to “return to society”: “I will walk out to the Sundial and see what’s going down” (Doctorow, 1971:302).
inability to create a life outside of the Collyer house and because he is used to the strange materialistic lifestyle he and his brother lead. Langley, on the other hand, approaches the house in a contradictory manner. He idealises the house as an “inviolate realm”, a place of privacy and safety, yet also recognises that it cannot be an autonomous space independent from its social context, and that it is, in fact, an “inside microcosm” of the outside world. However, that does not stop him from being angry, rebellious or trying to sever himself and Homer from the outside world. In a way he attempts to “make himself blind” by closing the house’s psychological shutters – and his. Ultimately the anomalous desire for privacy and safety manifests itself ironically as a greater danger than society’s attacks. As social beings Homer and Langley finally become victims not only of social disregard, through public ridicule and revulsion, but also through the nature of their own physical deaths which are characterised by a disconnection from their social context.

7.4. Space characterised by events and Homer and Langley Collyer’s social contexts

7.4.1. Losing Eleanor as a causative event: The beginning of Homer’s blindness

A striking focalisation of space(s) occurs in Homer’s account of his friendship with a girl, Eleanor, whom he met at a summer camp at a time when he “could see the world with all the unconscious happiness of a fourteen-year-old” (HL, 8; my emphasis – PvdM). Eleanor was “his first declared affection” (HL, 9). When he describes his friendship with her before it ends, his focalisation of the space reflects the innocence of the pure love that they share (cf. HL, 9) as well as sharp sight:

And the sun shone on our heads, and behind us at the foot of the cliff were the black and silver rocks patiently taking and breaking apart the waves, and, beyond that, the glittering sea radiant with shards of sun, and all of it in my clear eyes as I turned in triumph to this one girl with whom I had bonded, Eleanor was her name, and stretched my arms wide and bowed as the magician who had made it for her (HL, 9; my emphasis – PvdM).

Eleanor is also the first female with whom a relationship fails because of an event that is in stark contrast with the innocent nature of the relationship between the two adolescents. One night Homer and Eleanor left their adjoining camps “to wander about under the stars and talk philosophically about life” (HL, 10). They walked down a road and came across a lodge. Peeking through a window they saw “what in later time would be called a blue movie” (HL, 10). Dazed by the images, Homer did not notice that she had left. Realising that Eleanor had left, he
describes the paradise-like space\textsuperscript{306} that makes of him an Adam-like figure, thrown into the incomprehensible “real world”. It is significant that the space becomes, as if it were, an extension of the black and white film. Homer’s world changes from one in which a bright, decent relationship with a girl has become colourless. It is a Blakean transition from “innocence” to “experience”.\textsuperscript{307} He becomes “blind” to the unconscious happiness of a child: “I ran back the way we had come, and on this moonlit night, a night as black and white as the film, \textit{I could see no one} on the road ahead of me” (HL, 11; my emphasis – PvdM).

The absence of Eleanor is also linked to his sight. Instead of saying “I could not find her” or “She was nowhere” he chooses to say “I could see no one …”. This could be understood as the beginning of his blindness and concomitantly his inability to form a lasting relationship. His uncanny ability to know “where air is filled in with something solid”\textsuperscript{308} (HL, 5) indicates a fine-tuned sense for the material world, but a figurative blindness for relationships. It is also noteworthy that the novel is set in a space away from nature following this description. Homer says: “The more our country lay under blankets of factory smoke … and black cars filled the streets … the more the American people worshipped nature” (HL, 8). Faced with a world of Blakean (non-natural and often unsightly) “experience” Homer yearns for a world of (natural and aesthetic) “innocence” within his social context. Alsup (2009:58) understands the novel in symbolic terms, as human society’s steady departure from all that is natural as an apocalypse: “Most of us don’t fear the world’s end; we fear rather that it will suck beyond recognition – that nature will exist only as park, music only as soundtrack, art only as fashion”. This is reminiscent of the prophecy in T.S. Eliot’s poem “The Hollow Men”: “… \textit{This is the way the world ends} / \textit{Not with a bang but a whimper}” (Eliot, 1948:78; italics in original). It is evident that (artificial) city life, in tune with modern industrialisation, and “experience” – the antithesis of the natural innocence which Homer experienced with Eleanor – is a living context that befits Homer and Langley’s mindsets.

\textsuperscript{306} “Our camp was in Maine on a coastal plateau of woods and fields, a good place to appreciate Nature” (HL, 8).

\textsuperscript{307} Ferber (1991:1) describes innocence as “a child’s world”. In \textit{Homer & Langley} the “adult film” “steals in or pounces upon unwary innocence” (Ferber, 1991:20). It is also interesting that Ferber (1991:19; my emphasis – PvdM) describes experience in the same spatial terms used in this chapter for the Collyers’ movement from social to asocial: “For Blake … experience is a fallen state”.

\textsuperscript{308} In the context of the novel Homer’s blindness may also be related to his and his brother’s identities as “ghosts”. Homer comments: “Children are the carriers of unholy superstition, and in the minds of the juvenile delinquents who’d begun to pelt our house Langley and I were not the eccentric recluses of a once well-to-do family as described in the press: we had metamorphosed, we were the ghosts who haunted the house we had once lived in. Not able to see myself or hear my own footsteps, I was coming around to the same idea” (HL, 198). Homer, feeling like a ghost because of his inability to experience space through sight and hearing, confirms the validity of using blindness and deafness as a literary device to express an inability to integrate with his social context.
Relationships with Julia and Mary Elizabeth Riordan are not viable. Julia stole the ring of the deceased Collyers’ mother. A relationship between Mary Elizabeth and either of the brothers would have been harmful for her. Homer writes: “I should say that as a man who never married I have been particularly sensitive to women, very appreciative in fact, and let me admit right off that I had a sexual experience or two in this time I am describing, this time of my blind city life” (HL, 6). This revelation seems akin to a desperate validation or attempt to sell himself to the fictional reader of the text, Jacqueline Roux.

7.4.2. Historical events: Times blowing through the Collyer house

Referring to the “G.I. stuff” that Homer brought home after the end of the Second World War, Homer remarks: “It was as if the times blew through our house like a wind, and these were the things deposited here by the winds of war” (HL, 102). Events like the wars of the twentieth century and their “social quality” affect the focalisation of space, mostly the house as the central space in the novel.

Historical events related to the First World War, the Second World War and the Vietnam War affect the manner in which Homer and Langley focalise space, but not in isolation from other events. Once the hippies enter the house after Homer and Langley had met them at the antiwar rally in Central Park on the Great Lawn, Homer considers the possibility that he and Langley had been qualified by the eccentric nature of the house as “willy-nilly and ipso factor, prophets of a new age” (HL, 142): when the group of hippies stood “in awe in the dim light of the dining room looking upon our Model T” and Lissy, one of the girls said “Oh, wow!” (HL, 142). The hippies can identify with the “organisation” and appearance of the house. They understand the neglect as an expression of asocial norms and values. Considering Langley’s disillusionment, scepticism and denunciation of social conventions he is indeed a kind of “hippie” from another age.309 Here one thinks of his disgust at having had to participate in the First World War.

Homer also refers to an earlier event that influenced Langley’s state of mind. The parents took Homer and Langley, as children to a religious resort. Langley did not buy into the heaven-like façade of the world as a “hideously unproblematic existence, this life of continuous and unrelenting happiness” (HL, 125), but no reason is given for his recognition of, and strong

309 Reynolds (2010:22) observes: “The lives of both brothers are prolonged into the 1980s (the real Collyers died in 1947), but the circumstances of their death are honoured: Langley crushed by the collapse of one of the house’s tunnels and the dependent Homer then dying of starvation.” Beney (2009:36) points out that one can see why Doctorow extended the Collyers’ lives beyond the Sixties, “so that they can temporarily adopt … a group of hippies whose exile from American life is as radical as their own.”
reaction to, this “falseness”. In retrospect it is likely that his war experiences might have strengthened his cynical world view that had already existed before he went to war. The house at the resort in which they stayed was a Victorian manse with wraparound porches on the first and second floor (HL, 124). This picture-perfect type of house serves Langley well, as reflective of what he considers to be his parents’ delusion. The death of the Collyer parents subsequently enables Langley to change the character of the Collyer house to fit his pessimism.

In contrast to the house at the religious resort, it is the house he and his brother have inherited that becomes reflective of “the hard real life of awful circumstances, to know there is only life and death and such varieties of human torment as to confound any such personage as God” (HL, 125). This conclusion follows the event of Vincent’s departure from the house. Langley exclaims to Homer:

And so that is affirmed here, isn’t it? To find the Collyer brothers tied up, helpless and humiliated by a vulgar brute? This is one of life’s own speechless sermons, isn’t it? And if God is there after all, we should thank Him for reminding us of His hideous creation and dispelling any residual hope we might have had for an afterlife of fatuitous happiness in His presence (HL, 125-126).

The uncomfortable living environment of the Collyer residence is, for Langley, psychologically in agreement with a cynical view of the true state of the world which Langley also expresses when he describes the house as “Home to the world. Thieving servants, government agents, crime families, wives…” (HL, 127). Oates (2009) explains that the presence of the newspapers is “an intellectual, if quixotic, project reminiscent of the maniacal efforts of Bouvard and Pécuchet, Flaubert’s deluded seekers after truth”. In fact, Langley has subjectively already made

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310 A number of reviewers of Homer & Langley ascribe Langley’s eccentricity to the trauma of his experiences during the First World War. For example, Oates (2009) writes that his soul was “gutted by the ‘monstrousness’ of the world” and that his “postwar bitterness is transformed into an iconoclastic life of the mind”. Kakutani (2009) notes that when he returned home, he was “damaged and possibly mad”. Seaman (2009:8) calls Langley “off-kilter after a gas attack in the Great War” and “beyond strange”. For Hoffert (2009:67), Langley returns from home “a different person, reckless, yet reclusive after being gassed”. Schneider (2010:45) describes Langley as a lunatic and “scarred physically and mentally by mustard gas in the Great War” while Beck (2009:30) states that “[t]he origins of his madness lie in the trenches of World War I”. Langley’s First World War experiences certainly contributed to his cynicism about the “social context” of the human race that often lacks compassion and trustworthiness: this leads to Langley’s “asocial madness”.

311 One also sees this in The book of Daniel when Daniel “rectifies” the nature of spaces by violently reacting to peaceful spaces. Daniel “instinctively” refuses to lie to himself in that he does not miss the discrepancy between the peacefulness of certain spaces and his violent past. Whilst in a car Daniel observes: “I like the rain … The rain has the effect of a cocoon, it encapsulates us” (Doctorow, 1971:67-68). This is followed by a fit of recklessness when he burns his wife, Phyllis, with the car’s cigarette lighter. Another similar incident occurs during a peaceful walk in a park. Daniel suddenly terrifies both his wife and son with a game that spirals out of control. Daniel starts to throw his son too high up into the air and catches him too close to the ground. Doctorow connects this scene to the car episode: “I see the scene where he abuses his wife, for instance, as the same kind as the scene in which he throws his son up in the air. The act has existential dimensions. Daniel is overtuned to the world. He doesn’t miss a thing. He’s a hero – or a criminal – of perception” (McCaffery, 1983:46). Daniel is “over-tuned” to the dissonance of the illusive images of safety and peacefulness in spaces like the car and the park. Allowing himself to take pleasure in such spaces would imply disregarding social reality and misleading himself.
up his mind about the true state of the world. Concentrating on newspapers that report on shocking national and international events, his research serves as an “ideal” confirmation of his worldview.

Langley consequently focalises the house as appropriate to serve as the true “centre of the world” and an appropriate place for his newspaper: “I look at all these papers, he said, and they may come at you from the right or the left or the muddled middle but they are inevitably of a place, they are set like stone in a location that they insist is the center of the universe” (HL, 98-99). Perceiving the house as the (true) centre of the universe also justifies the collection of objects. Everything reflects the outside world. For example, items like the pennants for Harold Robileaux, the gas masks, rifles and beer kegs – related to the second atom bomb that was used on Japan (HL, 103-104) – unite the house with the Second World War. As the collection of things relativises boundaries with regard to the “inside versus outside” opposition, the concept of Langley’s newspaper also, paradoxically, places the eccentrics in the centre.

The effects of events on the focalisation of space have been discussed in this section. A seminal event which changes the way Homer perceives the space around him occurs when he loses his girlfriend, Eleanor, following their chance encounter with a pornographic film at a vulnerable age. A similarity exists between the twentieth century technology which enables a natural act to be artificially recreated and the steady progress of human civilisation, replacing natural living environments with artificial environments or cities. This movement from natural to artificial conditions is accompanied by a loss of innocence. The experience that replaces it is accompanied by disillusionment and confusion, which are metaphorically manifested in Homer’s blindness. Langley’s scepticism about human society following his experiences during the First World War leads to a total neglect of the Collyer house in the form of maintenance, but also in keeping the house tidy. By storing masses of newspapers and random artefacts, he creates an asocial space of which the hippies, who temporarily stay with them, approve. Like Langley, they also distrust social norms and customs. The hippies fit in well with what Homer calls “the collection of artifacts from our American life” (HL, 24). The dreadful conditions of the house match Langley’s understanding of the world as a space characterised by dreadful events. In Langley’s view the house is appropriate to be considered (a metaphoric) “centre of the universe” for his eternal newspaper, replacing Western locations – like London as the (colonialist) “centre of the universe” with the new one: “Collyer’s One Edition for All Time will not be for Berlin, or Tokyo, or even London. I will see the universe from right here … ” (HL, 99).
7.5. Space contributing to making the fictional world a possible world

7.5.1. The house as a metaphor: A microcosm of the world

As an “archive” of artefacts and people the house is a microcosm of American or/and Western civilisation. Homer considers that “when Langley brings something into the house that has caught his fancy – a piano, a toaster, a Chinese bronze horse, a set of encyclopedias – that is just the beginning. Whatever it is, it will be acquired in several versions because until he loses his interest and goes on to something else he’ll be looking for its ultimate expression” (HL, 37). Humanity is also “addicted” to developing and consuming what it considers to be the best products, of which only a few remain that are really valuable. Most of humanity’s productions – cars being typical instances – ultimately become junk.  

Doctorow calls Homer and Langley “aggregators. Sort of like Google” (Crown, 2010). Langley’s newspapers and the brothers’ interest in television game shows correspond with today’s information explosion and pollution consisting of Internet information, trivial entertainment, junk mail, and so forth.

The newspapers serve as Langley’s sources for his research to “fix American life finally in one edition”, what he calls “Collyer’s eternally current dateless newspaper, the only newspaper anyone would ever need” (HL, 49). The house filled with newspapers is consequently also associated with all possible social phenomena, itself becoming a “portrait in newsprint of our life on earth” (HL, 49), a symbolic space of the universal conditions during the century following the First World War: “Langley’s project consisted of counting and filing news stories according to category: invasions, wars, mass murders, auto, train, and plane wrecks, love scandals, church scandals, robberies, murders ...” (HL, 48). All these newspaper happenings that are, as it were, part of Homer’s and Langley’s consciousness also constitute part of the microcosm of the house which is reflective of the macrocosm in which these occurrences really take place.

It is therefore also meaningful that the house is associated with people who reflect twentieth century history so markedly. According to Benfey (2009:34) the brothers are also “collectors of people, many of whom seem themselves to have sprung from newspaper headlines.” The gangster, Vincent, Harold Robileaux, the cook’s son and a cornet player from New Orleans who dies during the Second World War, Mr. and Mrs. Hoshiyama who are collected by the FBI to be interrogated and placed in a concentration camp, as well as the hippies who stay in the Collyer

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312 If Homer and Langley function as defamiliarised consumers, it makes sense for Langley to declare that the Model T Ford is their family totem (HL, 81).
house for some time, are all people who become part of the house’s “collection”. The “inside world” of the Collyer house therefore serves as a metaphoric spatial representation of lives crossing in the “outside world”.

Salient with regard to this intersection of two disparate worlds is Homer’s remark that the temporary co-habitation of the Collyers and the gangsters was a “bizarre situation” that “took on a semblance of normality”: “It was as if two separate households were sharing the same space” (HL, 119). One also finds a similar description when the hippies stay in the house: “But for one stretch some astrological influence held sway, for they all went off to work in the morning … and came home in the evening, just as if we were a typically square bourgeois household” (HL, 146). What Doctorow does in Homer & Langley is to place an emphasis on (often ironic) “heterogenous co-existence”, the reality in the macro-space of any country, by representing “portraits of the people who enter and exit” the lives of the brothers “like a passing parade” (Kakutani, 2009).

The intersection of the lives of Homer and Eleanor (that causes Homer’s “blindness”) and the intersection of the lives of the Collyers and the gangsters (who tie up the brothers in their own house) deepen Langley’s misery with regard to the “hideous” nature of God’s creation (cf. HL, 125-126) and greatly affect Homer and Langley on a psychological level. Morris (1991:11) comments of the intersections of independent plot lines in Ragtime that they “seem portentous, but in the end they reveal nothing”; however, when the lives intersect the possibility exists that this could result in affecting lives and mindsets. The fictional world is compatible with the actual world because the principle of intersecting lives represents human experiences with which the reader can empathise or at least sympathise, i.e. by allowing the novel to become “a printed circuit through which flows the force of a reader’s own life” (Doctorow, 1994c:151).

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313 In Ragtime one also finds the theme of “heterogeneous coexistence” or an ironic coexistence of various people, i.e. the concept of civilisation consisting of lives crossing each other. The narrator, presumably the Little Boy in Doctorow’s 1974 novel, provides images that are metaphorical for the lives of people that “cross” each other like railway lines (Doctorow, 1985a:74, 76, 77) and “the tracks made by the skaters, traces quickly erased of moments past, journeys taken” (Doctorow, 1985a:92). These images are also similar to the Little Girl’s awareness of patterns made by the people moving through the station which are erased by a porter’s broom (Doctorow, 1985a:100).

314 The world of gangsters also crosses a past world, namely that of Mrs. Collyer. When the gangsters used the house as a temporary hideaway they put a mattress and two pillows on the big, thick-planked, turned-leg kitchen table to make a bed for their boss, Vincent, who had been injured. The table is a remnant of the era of the Collyer parents. Homer’s focalisation brings the two worlds together when he casually remarks that he remembers that his mother had wanted a country look in the kitchen (HL, 115).

315 Daniel’s perspective focalising Susan’s suicide attempt in The book of Daniel in the bathroom of the Howard Johnson’s dining room (Doctorow, 1971:28) also evokes Joe’s “bird’s eye view” in Loon lake: “It was a matter of the distance you took, if you went to the top of the Empire State Building as I liked to do seeing it all was thrilling you had to admire the human race making its encampment like this I could hear the sound of traffic rising like some song to God and love His Genius for shining the sun on it” (Doctorow, 1980:9).
7.5.2. Human experience and focalisation as elements of a fictional world as a possible world

The spaces in the novel are realistic in the sense that they share recognisable properties with spaces in the actual world. However, it is (fictional) human experience that dictates the focalisation of space. The human experience with which the reader can identify is the key ingredient that enables a fictional world to be a possible world as well. For example, there are references to the lake in Central Park; the truck farm at the corner of Madison Avenue and Ninety-fourth Street; the nightclubs that the brothers frequented and the speakeasy in which they met Vincent the gangster; the Great Lawn in Central Park where an anti-war demonstration was held; the Central Park bench where Homer and Jacqueline Roux held a conversation and the hotel lounge where he and Jacqueline met for dinner.\(^\text{316}\) One recognises accessibility relations like the identity of properties (the textual actual world is accessible from the actual world if the objects common to the two worlds possess the same properties), identity of inventory (both worlds and their spaces are furnished by the same objects) (Ryan, 1991:32) and historical coherence, i.e. with regard to the actual world’s population and the fictional world containing no anachronisms with respect to the actual world (Ryan, 1991:45). Doctorow mostly avoids anachronisms in *Homer & Langley* (Beck, 2009:3). However, the novel is anachronistic in the sense that the fictional Homer and Langley still live to see the moon landing on television whilst, as mentioned, the actual world persons Homer and Langley Collyer only lived until 1947 (Benfey, 2009:34; cf. Reynolds, 2010:22). Doctorow “has made small adjustments, reversing the birth order of the brothers, reducing the gap between their ages, getting rid of an unnecessary sister, and extending their lives into the 1970s” (Benfey, 2009:34). The text is, in this sense, a “historical fabulation” which allows “the meeting of characters, objects, and preoccupations from different periods” (Ryan, 1991:45). Nevertheless, despite discrepancies with regard to the lives of the actual and fictional characters called “Homer and Langley Collyer” many spaces in the novel – like the house – are historically confirmable\(^\text{317}\) and the events that took place in them, at the very least, credible.

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\(^{316}\) Other spaces are the setting of the brothers’ childhood summer camp in Maine; the religious resort on a lake “somewhere upstate” (HL, 124); the Twentieth Street pier; the Tombs where the police kept them after having raided their house because of the “illegal” tea dances that they offered; an Italian restaurant on Second Avenue and the city streets like Fifth Avenue, where Langley walked down in house slippers to the bank to pay off the mortgage on the house, etcetera.

\(^{317}\) Reynolds (2010:22) points out that the address of the fictional Collyers “remains on Fifth Avenue but is moved south from 128th Street to somewhere that has a view of Central Park.” The Collyer Brothers Park is today to be found on the lot where the actual Collyer house once stood (Crown, 2010).
However, although referring to properties/objects like a frozen lake in Central Park, the vegetables at the truck farm\textsuperscript{318} or the noise and cigarette smoke in a nightclub during Prohibition may contribute to the fictional world’s accessibility, alone these are not enough to qualify the fictional world as a meaningful possible world. Focalised space associated with experience characterises the fictional world. For example, Homer’s experience of the “scoot scut of the blades on the ice” as “a very satisfying sound” and his laughing “for the joy of that ability of the skater to come to a dead stop all at once, going along scoot scut and then scurratch” (HL, 4) not only represents a space, but also a spatial experience that accords personal meaning to the space.\textsuperscript{319} Space is not a neutral textual actual world construct here, but through Homer’s focalisation is associated with a cheerful disposition (as communicated by the references to experiencing the sound as “very satisfying”, his laughter and his enjoyment of the moments). These represented reactions of Homer’s spatial experience of the lake portray Homer’s mindset which also imparts to the space a personal atmosphere. Likewise, his reaction to the truck farm “personalises” space: “… I was made giddy by the profusion of vivid colors and the humid smell of leaf and root and moist soil on a sunny day” (HL, 31). Both reactions denote (youthful) excitement about new experiences and are confirmed with references to age and inexperience.\textsuperscript{320} Physical resemblances to space alone are insufficient to make a fictional world a possible world. Inaccessibility may also ensue because the author might, for example, undermine an accessibility relation like “historical coherence” (cf. Ryan, 1991:45). Psychological credibility\textsuperscript{321} is therefore crucial in establishing a fictional world as a possible one because this is the basis on which the reader is able to identify with characters and understand the meaning of literary space. Homer’s focalisation allows the reader to transfer the former’s representation of spaces in combination with Homer’s experiences onto the reader’s own concepts of similar (actual world) spaces in combination with any experiences comparable to the character’s. The effect of this is that fictional world spaces are not only mimetic versions of the actual word, but that the fictional world also becomes a possible world through the psychological connection between the actual world reader and the fictional character’s consciousness.

\textsuperscript{318} “I’d pull the carrot bunches out of the soft ground, pluck the tomatoes from their vines, uncover the yellow summer squash hiding beneath their leaves, scoop up the heads of lettuce with both hands” (HL, 31).

\textsuperscript{319} Etlin (1998:1) argues that “[s]pace is an integral constituent of the self. Our psychological sense of selfhood has a spatial dimension which we recognise in our feelings of comfort or unease in response to the places that we visit and inhabit.” There is a “dialogue” that takes place between an individual and a space; through the individual’s response to the space, the latter acquires a certain meaning in the consciousness of the experiencing individual.

\textsuperscript{320} Reflecting back on measuring his growing blindness at the lake, Homer says: “… I was in my late teens then, keen on everything” (HL, 4).

\textsuperscript{321} The reader may regard Homer as a “complete human being” to whom one can relate as a person (Ryan, 1991:45).
7.5.3. The house as a possible world

The Collyer house in the fictional world of *Homer and Langley* is a possible world not because of readily available newspaper accounts, books and photographs that correspond with Doctorow’s descriptions, but because of descriptions signifying experience-branded focalisation. For example:

In the aftermath of the police raid, the house seemed *cavernous*. The rooms having been emptied for the dance, we had somehow not gotten around to unrolling the rugs, bring up the furniture, and putting everything back where it belonged. *Our footsteps echoed*, as if we were in *a cave* or an *underground vault*. Though the library still had books on the shelves and the music room still had its pianos, *I felt as if we were no longer in the home we had lived in since our childhood, but in a new place, as yet unlived in, with its imprint on our souls still to be determined* (HL, 76; my emphases – PvdM).

Homer’s focalisation of his experience of the house suggests an atmosphere of loneliness and existential uncertainty caused by the police raid. The experience of loneliness and the raid also connote social disconnection. The ominous end of the novel, marked by a “Beckett-like bleakness” (Oates, 2009), similarly suggests fear, catastrophe and grief within the setting of the house: “Jacqueline, for how many days have I been without food. There was a crash, the whole house shook. Where is Langley? Where is my brother?” (HL, 208). The rhetorical question, instead of a statement, expresses that Homer experiences the time without food as extremely protracted. The hyperbole, namely that “the whole house” shook, suggests fear because of the gravity of the crash’s implication. It links Homer’s anxiety and sadness to the space. The subsequent questions link Langley to the crash. The repetition of the question, but replacing the name “Langley” with “my brother”, suggests his concern and love for his brother as well as sadness and grief for what Homer knows what has happened, especially in the light of his admission at the end of his text: “Withal, my sense is of an end to this life” (HL, 207). In these descriptions, the elements like loneliness, uncertainty, fear and grief that are uniquely realised in a specific fictional world are, as universal experiences, indisputably *possible* in both the fictional world and any sub-world of the actual world.

As indicated, the house with its collection of artefacts, newspapers and people functions as a dystopian microcosm of American, but also Western civilisation. It could be considered as a possible world based on corresponding experiences shared between the “citizens” of the microcosm, those of the macrocosm and those in the actual world. Experiences, rather than
“empty” realistic (re)presentations of the house (and its spaces that appear in the novel which may correspond to space(s) in the actual world) contribute to qualifying a fictional world as a possible world.

7.6. Conclusion

Space, functioning as one of a fictional world’s “building blocks”, is the “creation” of the focalisation that the narrator presents to the reader. Doctorow points out the importance of finding a distinctive voice for the creation of a fictional world when he says: “I found myself writing this line: ‘I’m Homer, the blind brother’ – I had the voice; I was off” (Crown, 2010). Focalisation is certainly an integral part of Homer’s voice which is influenced by his and his brother’s relationship to their social context: this involves personal experiences and either direct or indirect exposure to historical/social events in specific spaces. Although there may be, at times, less focus on space in the fictional world, neither the implied spaces nor the directly represented spaces merely serve as neutral backgrounds in which the events take place. Rather, the focaliser projects himself and other characters, in different forms, onto the spaces, i.e. in terms of the harmony, or lack of harmony, of their beings with space(s). For example, when Homer says, “We couldn’t have gotten past the front door” (HL, 108), while telling of his and Langley’s army greens and boots as their preferred dress and his long thinned out hair, he refers to the social nature of outside space, i.e. the probable unfavourable reactions of people. It is therefore apparent that space in a novel like Homer & Langley cannot be disengaged from social connections.

Considering Lothe’s (2000:50) theory that space characterises fictional figures as elements of space, this supports the argument that Homer and Langley’s relationship to their house characterises their relationship with their social context, which in turn characterises them. However, this is not only a one-way process, since characters also characterise space. As a result this also causes fictional spaces to fit into Lotman’s metorphic world models: these take the forms of binary oppositions such as “top versus bottom” as well as “inside and outside” which are applicable to the meaning of focalised elements like spaces in Homer & Langley. These world models are of a specifically social nature. It is therefore important to regard spaces in the novel as attached to social relationships, as Lefebvre explains. The social context in Homer & Langley is anchored to the meaning which Homer attaches to historical events based on his subjective experiences. This affects his focalisation, of course. This relationship to the actual world that Wolterstorff points out is, however, not sufficient to identify a fictional world as a possible one. Coste argues that a fictional world owes its existence to the enunciator of the text –
and therefore also to the focaliser, like Homer – who presents his own coherent, contextual meaning and “deeper truth”. This study argues that these are more important (with regard to the “possibility value”, i.e. that the psychological realities in the novel are also probable in the actual world), than superficial correspondences with regard to spatial features between the actual world and a fictional world.

The book’s social connections as focalised by a psychologically credible consciousness make the fictional world truly possible. Homer’s focalisation is characterised by various human emotional dispositions. For example, when he refers to the gold-star pennants for the front windows, his explanation is grimly humorous. He comments that the gold star is “for soldiers who had made what the politicians called ‘the ultimate sacrifice,’ there being presumably a sequence of sacrifices a soldier could make – arms, legs? – before the ultimate one” (HL, 98). The atmosphere of the narration – and space – when he recounts his experiences with Eleanor is sad. The house’s condition contributes to his Homer’s mood. For example, he deliriously imagines himself and Jacqueline having dinner in a hotel: “ Sitting in the chill of this house, I feel the warmth of a hotel lounge. Jacqueline and I have had dinner”; shortly afterwards he confesses his misery (HL, 201-202). However, Homer’s focalisation is characteristically reminiscent and phlegmatically informative. The atmosphere of the narration and focalisation is that Homer is interested in and enjoys the details of his memoir, like a historian writing about his subject or a grandfather recounting his experiences about the past. Basically, Homer’s focalisation is very personal and “typically human”.

The portrayal of spaces is indeed highly realistic in the sense that they match descriptions of the actual Collyers’ house and photographs. However, this realism is insufficient to establish the fictional world as a possible one. The fact that the actual Collyers, like their fictional counterparts, really had a Model T Ford in their residence that Langley used for attempting to “make my own electricity” with an automobile generator (Anon, 1947) is, as a “fact”, less interesting than the novelist’s artistic employment of such a circumstance. The fictional Model T Ford becomes much more than the result of an “unthinking impulse” and Langley’s decision that he must have it “while trusting that the reason he found it so valuable would eventually become clear to him” (HL, 81). It becomes representative of the relative distinction between “inside” and “outside”. This is specifically the result of Langley’s focalisation of the textual actual world. Viewing the elegant dining room as an ideal place for his Model T Ford is an instance of space contributing to establishing the fictional world as a possible world, not because the actual Collyers really had a car in their house, but because Langley’s mindset is possible in the actual world. An actual world person may identify with Langley’s sentiment that the
external/social world is invading his domestic/private as well as psychological spheres, of which the car is metaphorical.

Langley’s cynical world view and mindset or psychological state of being disillusioned and finally fearful of an “interloper, the mythical trespasser” (HL, 206) are, most likely, strengthened by his traumatic experiences in the First War trenches and having been the victim of a mustard gas attack (HL, 23-24). The experience of events therefore has an effect on the individual’s/character’s psychological state and world view that influences the way in which he regards and focalises his world and its spaces.

The question remains, however: why the compulsive hoarding? The answer might be found in the explanation that Franz Lidz’s Uncle Arthur, himself a hoarder, offers: “Maybe it’s something I missed in my childhood … Like something big” (Lidz, 2003b). The thrill of acquiring objects might be a compensation for not having received love and attention from his parents. Homer describes his and Langley’s parents as “fixed in their own time, which has rolled down behind the planetary horizon” and adds that he is not able to remember “one word that either of them ever said” (HL, 12). If Homer & Langley could be seen as a microcosm of the greater external world, the implication is that the Western world’s culture of consumerism, the obsession with material things and information, indicates an extensive deficiency. People are motivated to acquire physical possessions in an attempt to compensate for more valuable and unrealised spiritual wealth in the form of, for example, religious faith and/or rewarding interpersonal relationships, self-esteem and personal ambitions which also reflect a concern for others. The novel may also suggest that people living in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries suffer from a kind of “blindness”, like Homer. They have become so overwhelmed with material things and information that they are unable to discern what is really valuable in both materialistic and spiritual/psychological terms. Perceived in this way, the Collyer brothers’ “eccentricity” shifts towards the “centre” of human behaviour.

The “human behaviour” of the Collyer brothers’ characterises spaces as a significant “building block” of the fictional world in Doctorow’s latest novel. However, credible human behaviour or psychological credibility also characterises fictional figures like Sinclair, Blue, Goldmund, their social contexts and events that take place within their textual actual worlds as “building blocks” of their fictional worlds. The following chapter presents comparisons between these “building blocks” in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s works that advance this argument.
Chapter 8

Comparisons between works by Hermann Hesse and E.L. Doctorow

8. Introduction

This chapter and this study as a whole argue that “co-operating” or synergistic relationships exist between characters, social contexts, events and spaces as textual actual world components, which contribute as focalised “building blocks” to “fictional worlds constituted by focalisation” (cf. Bal, 1981:181-182). This study also argues that Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictional worlds are characterised as having connections with the actual world and hold significant truth value for the actual world because actual world elements, with regard to the psychological aspect of focalisation (cf. Ryan, 1991:45), are an important component of the construction of the fictional world. The actual world’s relationship to a fictional world serves as a “bridge” between the fictional world and the reader’s (actual) world. This explains why an actual world reader could have the experience that a work of fiction “concerns” him (Bachelard, 1969:xxii). Hesse devotees all over the world may feel that, for example, the fictional worlds of *Demian, Narziß und Goldmund, Siddharta, Der Steppenwolf* and other texts may be relevant for their own lives even though these works are ontologically, culturally and historically removed from their own existences. This connection is possible because those features they recognise and experience while reading are psychologically credible human experiences which serve as focalising dimensions that contribute to the constitution of the fictional world.

The main question of this chapter is, therefore: What similarities exist between the novels when comparing the novels with each other in terms of the “building blocks” focused upon in the text analyses? The second question asks: How does the relationship between a fictional world, focalisation and the experience of the actual world contribute to the creation of a fictional world? The first aim of this chapter is to explain the similarities with regard to the representations of the central (focalising) characters, social contexts, events and space(s) as a result of focalisation through which textual actual components become part of a fictional world. The second is to show that the actual world nature or possible world nature of focalisation transforms the textual actual world into a fictional world. The fact that actual world perspectives resemble narrative perspectives and focalisation plays a constitutive role with regard to the fictional world.

The first set of comparisons will focus on the focaliser in *Demian* compared to the focalisers in *Welcome to Hard Times, Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley*. The nature of the relationship between a central focaliser such as Emil Sinclair and his fictional world is that the
fictional world becomes a “private portrait” of the subjectively experienced and focalised textual actual world and, as such, also a kind of self-portrait. This kind of relationship between the focaliser and his fictional world also applies to the relationships between Blue, the focalisers in *Narziß und Goldmund* – with specific reference to Goldmund – as well as to Homer and Langley Collyer and their focalised textual actual worlds. The chapter will consider the relationship between the focaliser and his fictional world as a “self-portrait” by comparing *Welcome to Hard Times*, *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley* to *Demian*. While comparing the focalisers in *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Demian*, Blue’s and Emil Sinclair’s psychological mindsets will be considered as constitutive elements. During a comparison of the focalisers of *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Demian*, the focus will fall on the narrative modes through which unconventional individual worlds are represented, namely those of third person narration, free indirect discourse and first person narration. The social worlds will be considered when the focalisers in *Demian* and *Homer & Langley* are compared.

This chapter will secondly compare the focalised social contexts in *Demian*, *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley* to the focalised social context in *Welcome to Hard Times*, especially with regard to the focaliser’s experience(s) of his social context. Upon comparing the social contexts of *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Demian* one finds that in these texts the social context reduces the value of the individual. In *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Welcome to Hard Times* one discovers that the nature of the relationships between the fictional individuals Goldmund and Blue and their social contexts determines their focalisation and consequently the nature of the fictional world. Considering Doctorow’s first and latest novels, *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Homer & Langley* comparatively, the psychologically credible focalising modes of fear and passivity are striking.

Thirdly, events in *Demian*, *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Homer & Langley* will be compared to events in *Narziß und Goldmund* as possible personal and social components of the fictional world. The represented intersections of lives as events and social events in *Demian* and *Narziß und Goldmund* will be considered in terms of the epiphanies of the central focalisers and how these enlightenments or revelations affect the focalisation of events. Subsequently, “personal” and “social” focalised events will be examined in *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Narziß und Goldmund*. In both novels such events as Goldmund’s extramarital relationship with Lydia and Langley’s rebuilding a Model T Ford in the dining room take the form of “social transgressions”, i.e. events that are not in harmony with the norms and values of the relevant social context. The experiences of these occurrences inevitably affect the way the events and textual actual worlds are focalised by Homer and Langley Collyer and Goldmund.
Fourthly, (fictional/artistic) spaces in *Demian*, *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Narziß und Goldmund* will be compared to spaces in *Homer & Langley* as dependent on a focalising consciousness. Spaces in both *Demian* and *Homer & Langley* are reflections of the focalisers’ inner lives. This is also the case in *Welcome to Hard Times*, but while comparing the spaces in *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Homer & Langley* one also observes that spaces (as reflections of the inner lives of the focalisers) symbolically reflect the relationships between the focalisers and their social contexts. A comparative examination of *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley* reveals that focalising characters in both these novels identify themselves with spaces, which affects their focalisation of space as such.

The dimensions of focalisation in the novels analysed in this study always relate to the inner or mental lives of the characters. Because the inner/mental states of humans always contain “an alternative side” (for example, happy *and* sad, kind *and* unkind) one notices that dimensions of focalisation often belong to one side of recognisable “binary pairs” that are uniquely manifested in every text. An opposition between the Father World and the Mother World that is related to the individualistic natures of characters determines the focalisation in *Demian* and *Narziß und Goldmund*. In *Narziß und Goldmund* one also comes across the tension between nature, i.e. natural spaces as representative of Goldmund’s individualistic nature, in opposition to the social world – or a tension between his personal world and the social one. The prostitutes as “female” presences in *Welcome to Hard Times* are more closely related to a Father World-like social context that is, as in Hesse’s texts, associated with reason and logic. However, because of the “Father World’s” distorted capitalist nature in *Welcome to Hard Times* it is utterly immoral. One could also associate the male characters in *Welcome to Hard Times* with the female prostitutes because of the abuse to which they expose themselves. The binary pair “personal world” and “social world” can be related to “pessimistic” versus “optimistic” and “barren” versus “fertile” in *Welcome to Hard Times* and to “high” and “low” in *Homer & Langley*. The “barren personal world” and the lack of “spiritual fertility” and genuine optimism contribute in *Welcome to Hard Times* to a “barren” social context, i.e. a social context that disintegrates because of the absence of mutual support among its members. In *Homer & Langley* the Collyer brothers also exhibit an ill-adjusted or unhealthy asocial inclination in favour of an unbalanced private life. This mindset

322 This chapter has structured the comparisons in terms of the four “building blocks”, namely focalising and focalised characters, focalised social contexts, events and spaces, rather than in terms of these “binary pairs” because the focus in this chapter is not on specific inner/mental states that characterise focalisation. Instead, it focuses on the fact that focalisation which is characterised by psychologically credible states in general contributes to the creation of fictional worlds. However, these “binary pairs” are worth mentioning because they do belong to inner/mental states that determine how a narrator/character focalises.
leads to a “fallen state” in terms of the brothers’ standing in their social context, which directs the focalisation in the textual world of the Collyers. These dimensions effectuate focalised textual actual worlds/focalisations that are constructed on the basis of “typically human” subjective viewpoints.

This study recognises a similarity between how actual people view the actual world and how characters view their textual actual world. Concurring with Doctorow’s essay “False Documents”, this study argues that it is ultimately impossible to “accurately”, “realistically”, “objectively” or “honestly” represent the actual world because representation is dependent on a consciousness. Reporting one’s actual world experiences may vary from subjective, exaggerated and “unreliable” reports to representations with an “objective”, rational and “reliable” atmosphere. In each case the truthfulness of the report does not depend on how well or badly the report can be measured against the criterion “as things really are in the actual world”. The validity of the result would in any case be doubtful because such an attempt at “measuring” would have to be undertaken against someone else’s – also inevitably personal – take on the actual world.

The truthfulness or relevance of a representation can therefore only be based on a personal interpretation of a representation that includes an understanding of the implications, i.e. what meanings may be deduced from the nature of the subjectivity of the representations that may or may not possess personal value for the actual world reader. An actual world reader who does not have an appreciation for a specific fictional world will most probably regard a focaliser’s experiences as improbable and invalid because he measures them against his own frame of mind. A fictional world would have a different and more personal meaning for an actual world reader who is more open and sympathetic towards a character’s/focaliser’s experiences with regard to his, i.e the (focalising) character’s relationship with his social context and how he experiences events and spaces. Although cognizant of differences between the unique fictional world and his own world, the sympathetic reader decodes the fictional world employing a mindset that may be comparable to the focaliser’s. It is therefore subjective actual world-like perspectives that drive focalisation.

What focalisation in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictional worlds ultimately reveals is that they belong to an overarching subjective focalising dimension through which the textual actual worlds are represented in “imaginative” ways. These “fictional” versions are in opposition to the

323 A shared take on the actual world is, of course, also possible. Two or more people may agree with a (subjective) point of view. Such an agreement occurs when readers believe and/or identify with a text and its figures.
(textual) actual worlds “as they really are”. A textual actual world is a hypothetical concept and cannot be represented as such because the fictional world owes its existence to the consciousness of a narrator and/or focaliser that focalises through “typically human” inner/mental states.

8.1. The represented textual actual world as a “self-portrait”: The focaliser and his fictional world in *Welcome to Hard Times*, *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley* in comparison to *Demian*

The chapter on *Demian* asks: What does Sinclair present, i.e. what does he include or allow through the “neck of the bottle”? The chapter also enquires: How does Sinclair represent and/or transform the selected content of his textual actual world to become the fictional world? This question is posed in the light of *Demian*’s being a remarkable example of a fictional world as a “self-portrait” of the focaliser who is also an intradiegetic character and retrospective narrator. The subjective nature of Sinclair explicitly affects his representation of the textual actual world. The fictional world therefore represents a textual actual world “transformed” by Sinclair’s focalisation. The basis for a comparison between *Demian* and the other three texts in this study (*Welcome to Hard Times*, *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley*) is the answer to the question of how a focaliser presents “his” textual actual world and what is contained in it. Firstly, one needs to consider the focaliser as “an individual” in order to understand the relationship between himself and the textual actual world. In the three texts to be compared to *Demian* one also finds that the total compositions of the texts could indeed be considered “synonymous” with the focalisers. Blue, Goldmund and Homer Collyer are “synonymous” with their respective fictional worlds in the sense that what, and how, they focalise, forms part of their identities and becomes projections of their own states of mind. This section will therefore compare *Demian* to the other three texts with regard to the central focalising consciousness, the total composition, the structure and the ambience of the fictional world, the social context (including specific characters), events, spaces (including objects) and interpretative focalising methods such as Sinclair’s use of his senses – especially the employment of the sense of smell and metaphoric images, paintings, visions and the like.

The basic point of departure when considering *Demian* and the other three novels in comparison to *Demian* is Bal’s notion that all elements which together form the fictional world – for example, characters, their social contexts, events and spaces including landscapes and objects – are focalised and contribute to constituting the fictional world. The reader obtains, through focalisation, a representation of a specific, subjective interpretation of the textual actual world (Bal, 1981:181-182). The focalisers’ perspectives, i.e. Emil Sinclair’s, Blue’s, Goldmund’s and
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Homer Collyer’s representations and their textual actual worlds are each unique because of their individualistic psychological mindsets (cf. Bal, 1990:114).

8.1.1. The focaliser in Welcome to Hard Times in comparison to the focaliser in Demian: Blue’s and Emil Sinclair’s psychological mindsets as constitutive elements

The main focaliser in Welcome to Hard Times, Blue, is quite different from Sinclair – as is to be expected when one is comparing two very different authors like Hesse and Doctorow. There are differences between them with regard to Blue’s and Sinclair’s ages during the narrated events as well as to their national-historical, social, cultural and language contexts. However, the similarity between Blue and Sinclair is their “human perspective” or “psychological credibility” (Ryan, 1991:45). In Sinclair this adopts the form of extreme emotions and subjectivity that influence the manner in which he focalises. In Blue it takes the semblance of a deceptively “neutral” stance by his attempt at thoroughness in presenting an “all-encompassing” picture of the events in Hard Times and their consequences. However, the whole record is proof of Blue’s intellectual and emotional involvement. What he writes is personally important to him, which is reminiscent of Sinclair’s point of departure.324 Also, like Sinclair’s, Blue’s explicit references to his emotional state in combination with his focus on and descriptions of experiences finally allows one to describe him as subjective and dejected. For example, when Blue sees Angus Mcelhenny “slumped and snoring” in Hausenfield’s bathtub, he says: “... I felt a great melancholy looking on him in the gloom of the grey morning. What good anyone could come to on this ashen townsit I could not see … ” (WHT, 53).325 While Sinclair’s moods are affected by and vary according to the stages of his psychological or spiritual development, Blue’s moods are determined by the progress and decline of the town, which ultimately could be considered a barometer of his own.

324 “Meine Geschichte aber ist mir wichtiger als irgendeinem Dichter die seinige; denn sie ist meine eigene …” (D, 9) [“… my story is more important to me than any novelist’s is to him – for this is my story …”] (DT, 1; The whole translated prologue except for the first line is in italics.)

325 The colour “blue” is often associated with fear, discomfort, anxiety, being dismayed, perturbed, discomfited, depressed, miserable and low-spirited (OED). Freud (1949:428-429) distinguishes “Trauer” (sorrow/grief) as the reaction to having lost a loved person, a compensating abstraction like one’s fatherland, freedom, an ideal etcetera., whilst “Melancholie” (melancholy/dejection) is associated with an excruciating depressive mood, a lack of interest in the outside world, inaction and low self-esteem that leads to self-reproach and a delusional expectation of punishment. It seems that Blue’s name could be associated with “Trauer” (sorrow/grief) in the light of having lost his wife and having been disappointed in his narration with regard to his dreams of establishing a town: “Like the West, like my life: The color dazzles us, but when it’s too late we see what a fraud it is, what a poor pinched-out claim” (WHT, 183). Yet, although Blue and the other residents are not inactive with regard to daily chores, they are extremely passive with regard to counteracting the Bad Man, i.e. counteracting their fears and uncertainties. Blue also does not consider leaving the town at the end of the story because his willpower is exhausted (WHT, 194). This resignation is, however, also noticeable in the beginning of the text. He believes that nothing can be done about Bad Men: “Bad Men from Bodie weren’t ordinary scoundrels, they came with the land, and you could no more cope with them than you could with dust or hailstones” (WHT, 7). Blue thus lives with the expectation that they are fate to suffer the effects of the Bad Man’s attack(s). “Blue” as representative of a mixture of grief and melancholy is therefore an apt name.
The structures of Blue’s and Sinclair’s narrations are fairly chronological, developing towards the destruction of the town in *Welcome to Hard Times* and the destruction of the (European) world in *Demian*. Both these disasters are climactic indices of the characters’ views of their textual actual worlds. The disasters in the form of the Bad Man’s return and the First World War are not only chance happenings. In the artistic context of the fictional worlds they also meaningfully coincide with the focalisers’ understandings of the respective natures of their worlds. Sinclair continues his spiritual quest despite the world’s attempts to enslave him. From his humanist and pacifist standpoint the conventional distinction between the “dark and bright realms” collapses. The expectation of the social context, associated with “the bright realm”, for one to conform with the principle and expectation that people should sacrifice their lives for wars is morally wrong. In this regard the “bright realm” is, in fact, evil. In *Welcome to Hard Times* the inevitable outcome of the downfall of the town and Blue’s “impossible hope” coexist. This is revealed by his “wild thought” of running up the trail and pushing boulders across it to force the miners to turn back (WHT, 187) and also by the incident when he attacks the Bad Man.

The ambience of the fictional world is the result of a combination of the focaliser’s focalisation of himself and his relationship with his textual actual world. The external world and the events in *Hard Times* are a reflection of Blue’s as well as the other characters’ inner spiritual ruin. Blue’s focalisation of himself reveals an active, but mechanistic, approach, i.e. although he is at times *apparently* hopeful, he is concomitantly downcast. Sinclair often experiences his world as antagonistic – like Blue does his. The ambience of Blue’s world is characterised by the community’s facing either inevitable catastrophe or superficial materialistic pleasures during a period of respite. Sinclair focuses much more on an individualistic search for truth. The result is that there is a concurrent rift between the individual and his social world with which he cannot identify. Despite Sinclair’s suffering, which is a side-effect of his quest, the ambience of his world is characterised by anticipating enlightenment. As in Blue’s case the ambience of the world is a product of his own emotional and psychological state. In Sinclair’s focalised world a spontaneous distancing reaction re-creates the textual actual world to become the fictional world which is part of his psyche, emotional state and individuality.

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326 Some actions that the “bright realm” (or the middle-class social context of Sinclair’s parents) would find immoral could be justified. For example, Sinclair’s pacifist thinking differs from the patriotic and conforming thinking of the bright world. However, most of Sinclair’s actions – like his drinking – are not only wrong according to the bright world, but also truly wrong for him as an individual. The principle of what is truly right for the individual as more important and valid than the expectations of one’s social context is prominent.
Hard Times and Blue as well as Sinclair and his world(s) are in an interactive mutual process of “creating each other”. The character’s self-perception and his concomitant psychological/spiritual state(s) are determined not only by innate individualistic inclinations\(^{327}\), but also by their interactions with others/their social contexts. Sinclair’s and Blue’s (inter)actions are related to their social roles and the norms and values of their collective social contexts and events are expressions of the natures of their contexts that affect the individual’s self-perception. In *Demian* Sinclair distinguishes himself from the members of his social context. *Demian* is, in this sense, a “self-portrait” of Sinclair and his quest to discover a balance between authentic “light” and “darkness” within himself against the background of the conventions of his social context, i.e. of what should be regarded as “good and evil” within the latter. The coexistence of the “bright and the dark realms” in Sinclair’s social context leads him to recognise and acknowledge his own authentic self. An event like Demian’s liberating Sinclair from Kromer’s enslavement is a rejection of the “dark realm”. However, although Kromer’s world opposes the bourgeois Pietist world or that of Sinclair’s parents, the ultimate goal of Sinclair’s spiritual growth is not the acceptance of the “bright world” – which is the comfortable social façade of morality to which he temporarily returns after the extreme nature of the Kromer episode. Rather, the ultimate goal is his reasonable, individualistic and authentic morality which could, and does, coincidentally chime with “bright world conventions”, but his personal morality could also justify unconventional behaviour if it is genuinely right for Sinclair.

Coincidentally the Bad Man and Demian are both “supernatural” characters in the sense that they “appear” as responses to the characters’ mental states. Sinclair, in fact, desired his enslavement to Kromer as part of the process of finding himself, but his violater’s request that Sinclair should bring his sister along to their next meeting the reafter served as a sign that balance should be restored. Demian, the liberator, consequently magically appears and drives Kromer away. Similarly, the Bad Man magically appears, also as an expression or embodiment of Blue’s and the townspeople’s collective inner life.\(^{328}\) However, whilst Sinclair’s inner life desires liberation, the collective inner life of the town residents in *Welcome to Hard Times* is

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\(^{327}\) Sinclair is discerning and searching for his true self/identity whereas Blue is less resilient than he pretends to be, but is contradictorily persistent in his ideal of a civilisation.

\(^{328}\) This manifestation also occurs in Michael Crichton’s science fiction novel *Sphere* (1987) in which fears are tranformed into such corporeal threats as a giant squid, jellyfish and snakes. Both novels entail a worldly wisdom that contributes to their status as possible worlds: the idiomatic expression “Male nicht den Teufel an die Wand” [*“Don’t meet trouble halfway” (LEO)*] warns that one should avoid expressing looming evil, misfortune and fears because by doing so one gives them substance. This kind of “summoning” is also reminiscent of Mother Theresa’s principle that she would not participate in anti-war demonstrations, but would in a pro-peace rally (Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, 2011). Expression is a step towards realisation – hence the use of the word “war” already anticipates its presence.
characterised by fear. Blue is on the whole influenced by the seminal event of the Bad Man’s first attack on the town, but his fears also contribute to manifesting the Bad Man (also a second time) by believing that adversity is unavoidable. It is therefore Sinclair’s and Blue’s (mis)understanding – on the basis of the combination of their innate characters and their (social) experiences – that determines their focalisation of their social contexts which in turn contributes to distinguishing the nature and ambience of these.

Part of the focalised textual actual worlds and their social contexts as wholes is the focalisation of space(s) (and objects). In a fictional world spaces and objects do not exist independently of the consciousness of the focaliser(s). Sinclair literally transforms spaces due to the nature of his association with the social context of the spaces in which he finds himself. In Welcome to Hard Times it seems that the harsh desert-like space is detached from consciousness. This illusion exists because the fictional Dakota Flats evoke the actual world Dakota Flats that can exist independently from human consciousness. However, the combination of the harshness of the Dakota Flats and its (symbolic) function as expressive of the Hard Times residents’ spiritual/psychological “drought” makes of space a literary device with which the focaliser is “synonymous” just as, for example, personified spaces in Demian are “synonymous” with Sinclair.

The most prominent interpretative focalising method that Blue uses to represent elements such as himself, his social context, events and space is his autobiographical or diary-like “documentation”. This seems to be an offshoot of his love for “official record keeping” as regards the beginnings of the town that slightly influences his often matter-of-fact and “factual” tone. His official documentation and detailed descriptions – often including marginal information – of the town and its characters, himself, the setting and space of the town and the surrounding area, objects, the social context and interrelationships, events, and other items in the ledgers constitute the most optimistic aspect of his text. The end of the novel suggests that the text might function like a parable as an education and warning to others who wish to establish a civilisation. Harter and Thompson (1990:21) observe that Blue, like T.S. Eliot and Baudelaire, “summons up his own ‘hypocrite lecteur’, one who, by the force of this narrative, will be touched and share what is otherwise the wrenchingly lonely and isolated experience of Blue’s life”. Whilst in Demian senses (and especially the sense of smell) function as prominent focalising methods, Blue prefers the sense of sight which emphasises the historiographic witnessing function. But although Sinclair often uses re-presentative or indirect focalising methods, i.e. (metaphoric) descriptions focalised through the senses as well as metaphoric visual representations (images, paintings, dreams, and suchlike) and Blue presents his information in a
matter-of-fact tone, both Sinclair’s and Blue’s writings are reflective of the social and unsympathetic natures of their worlds and their “individualistic positions” in them that are in conflict with these contexts. In Sinclair’s case, his behaviour counteracts the expectations of the bright world whilst Blue’s problematic relationship with his context stems from his, and everybody else’s, inability to construct a prosperous society, mainly because of their uncooperative and self-centred mindsets.

The similarity between two divergent characters is their human “genuineness” in the sense that both are psychologically credible. Both are emotionally and intellectually engaged in a process of recognition which involves their relationships with their social contexts. Their mindsets and emotional states are affected by the natures of these contexts and the natures of the interaction(s) with such contexts – but these emotional states and mindsets also determine their individual developments. The focalising characters and their social contexts are in a constant process of “interactive creation” in which social roles, norms and values are either accepted or rejected. The structure or progress of events is also reflective of these personal developments. The interaction between the individual, focalising himself and his social context, determines the ambience of the fictional world. In *Demian* the ambience is characterised by an expectation of liberation because of an ever-growing distance between the nature of a certain social context of which the book is critical. In *Welcome to Hard Times* one encounters an ambience of disaster and illusive optimism because of Blue’s and the residents’ (ignorant) identification with the nature of a society marked by individual self-centredness. In these two novels two “supernatural” characters, manifestations of the characters’ inner lives or Lebens- und Weltanschauungen, i.e. their “philosophies” with regard to their perspectives on life and the (social) world, namely the Bad Man and Demian, play central roles in the formation of the fictional worlds. The mental processes within the characters affect their focalisation of space(s) that become “synonymous” with the focalisers. Whilst Sinclair often uses indirect and metaphoric focalising methods to represent his fictional worlds, Blue’s main focalising method is his autobiographic/diary mode which is influenced by his historiographic aspirations.

329 As the titles of certain texts link the characters directly to the fictional worlds of the characters, in Saul Bellow’s *Herzog* or James Joyce’s *A portrait of the artist as a young man*, “titles” like “Blue’s world” or “*A portrait of Emil Sinclair*” (which the novel’s sub-title actually expresses) would have suited the fictional worlds. These hypothetical “titles” are, however, certainly not as artistic as the “richly suggestive and ambiguous” title “Welcome to Hard Times” (Parks, 1991:27) or as meaningful as “Demian” with regard to Sinclair’s spiritual identity. These alternative/hypothetical “titles” serve only to comment on the prominence of the relationship between the focaliser and the fictional world.
8.1.2. The focaliser in *Narziß und Goldmund* in comparison to the focaliser in *Demian*:

Unconventional individual worlds represented through third person narration, free indirect discourse and first person narration

Hesse employs an omniscient narrator in *Narziß und Goldmund* to narrate the characters Goldmund and Narziß, employing third person narration and often free indirect speech, psycho-narration and quoted monologue – as opposed to the retrospective first person narrator, Sinclair, in *Demian*. Sinclair focalises from his own personal perspective, marked by his pursuit to understand the world through Demian and Frau Eva. In a sense he endeavours to use them as his focalising filters. The omniscient narrator in *Narziß und Goldmund* makes use of characters like Golmund and Narziß as focalisers for his narration. Having no identity, the narrator functions only as a transparent voice to represent Goldmund’s story. The narrator therefore does not invest himself in the ambience of the structure and total composition, but does invest Goldmund’s and Narziß’s psychological and spiritual states through their focalisation.

Yet, because of the personal nature of this particular book’s narrated experiences, the focalisation does not seem to be less personal than in *Demian*. Reading “he” instead of “I” does not diminish the reader’s ability to sympathise and empathise with the character. Through the omniscient narrator the reader has access to a bird’s eye view of Goldmund’s subjective experiences whilst Sinclair’s perspective is located on the “ground level”. In both cases the sum of all the focalised elements is the fictional world.

The focalised elements are, in Goldmund’s case, also related to inner conflicts of which his relationship with his social context forms part. The fictional world is characterised by Goldmund’s outlook on the (textual actual) world and his life as coloured by the quest for his authentic self. This also echoes Sinclair’s process. An alternative existence, namely that of a tramp longing to be united with the Mother, follows Goldmund’s awareness that he is not

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330 Cohn (1978:112) considers that the effect of the narrated monologue (as Cohn terms free indirect speech) is to reduce “to the greatest possible degree the hiatus between the narrator and the figure existing in all third-person narration”. Although Goldmund is certainly never the narrator of the text, free indirect discourse resembles focalisation of first person narration with regard to represented experiences and mindsets (Cohn, 1978:112; cf. Banfield, 1982:68-70).

331 A reason contributing to this could also be that the reader acquainted with some of the criticism on *Narziß und Goldmund* does not disregard Hesse himself, who indirectly expresses emotions that could be his own through the book. However, *Narziß und Goldmund* would not be a possible world based on this actual world relation, but would be one because, for example, the character’s focalisation as a social outsider allows any reader – as it allowed Hesse – to appreciate Goldmund’s emotional or psychological experiences on some level: whether in the form of emotionally detached intellectual understanding, emotionally involved self-identification with the character, sympathy or empathy.

332 Hsia (1981:258-259) understands the Mother to be the “Urmutter” (“Primal Mother”): “Sie ist Anima, das Yin-Prinzip und zugleich das Tao … Sie ist die Mutter des Lebens, die auch den Tod in sich birgt”. [“She is anima, the yin principle and at the same time Tao … She is the Mother of life who also contains life within herself.”] Whilst there is more of an emphasis on and a yearning for the “kinder manifestations” of the Mother (approximating yin), Goldmund’s earthly path is also a yearning for authenticity or truth (approximating Tao).
destined to spend his life in a monastery. He also becomes an artist, but spiritually his artist’s identity is only possible because of his existence as a tramp.333 This chosen path determines the structure and total composition of the book. The focalisation à la Genette (1988:74) constitutes the fictional world in the sense that it allows a comprehensive picture of Goldmund’s life “through the neck of a bottle”, yet it also distinguishes or “colours” the social contexts by means of his subjective experience.

Sinclair’s subjective experiences lead him to conclude that his social context disregards the value of the individual. Acknowledging and appreciating the individualistic nature of a human being results in his focalisation of the middle-class social context as dismissive of the uniqueness of the individual. The social context, from Sinclair’s perspective, restricts the individual’s freedom and victimises him in doing so. Demian and Narziß und Goldmund are thematically similar in the sense that they deal with individuals yearning to have the freedom to be themselves spiritually.334 Sinclair’s and Goldmund’s relationships to their social contexts therefore affect their focalisation, especially with regard to the textual actual world content selected for their fictional worlds and the personal nature of the represented content.

The events that recur in Goldmund’s life are his encounters with women. The social implication of his many affairs, measured against the norms and values of his middle-class society that idealises marriage as the ideal (or only) framework for a sexual relationship, is that he is promiscuous, immoral, irresponsible and so forth. Any reader in a Western middle-class society at the time of the book’s publication, thereafter or even today would understand Goldmund’s lifestyle to be unconventional and his sexual behaviour flippantly Casanova-like. Yet, reading Goldmund’s story against middle-class values places a mistaken emphasis on his “promiscuous sexual habits”. One might also find it strange that Narziß, a monk and later an abbot, is so uncritical of Goldmund. The reason for Goldmund’s morally “liberal” way of life and Narziß’s acceptance of it lies in the perspectives that they adopt. Goldmund views the intersections of his life with the lives of the women differently from a conservative (fictional or actual) Western middle-class society. The reader’s focus should rather be placed on understanding Goldmund’s

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333 Goldmund explains to Narziß, who admires his Madonna statue in whom Goldmund immortalised Lydia (NG, 310; NGT, 295), that in order to have been able to create the statue he required his whole youth, all his wanderings, his infatuations, his courtship of many women: “Das ist der Brunnen, aus dem ich geschöpft habe” (NG, 312). [“That is the source at which I have drunk” (NGT, 297).]

334 Although Goldmund finds it possible “to be himself” through art, the necessity of depending on middle-class structures to be able to function as an artist causes inner conflict for him.
encounters with women as a literary mechanism in order to portray his identification with earthly life. Each encounter with a woman is symbolic of his desire to be united with the Mother.

Events in Demian often take the form of the commencements of associations with various characters, loyalty to these characters and the endings of Sinclair’s associations with them. For example, being enslaved by Kromer is a transition away from the “bright realm” of his parental home whilst turning his back on Demian and returning to the “bright realm” is a transition away from his quest. The end of his friendship with Pistorius is a movement away from his friend’s limitations (and contentment with aspects of the Father world) towards acknowledging a personal balance. In both Hesse’s texts, events therefore serve as focalised narrative elements that contribute to constituting the fictional world.

Spaces, objects and events are intrinsically connected to the social world that reflect on the individual’s relationship to his social context. Spaces in Goldmund’s world can be divided into those which he focalises as “natural”, i.e. pertaining to earthly existence or belonging to the Mother world, and spaces and objects that are “artificial” and belong to the Father world. In both Demian and Narziß und Goldmund focalisation of space and objects is characterised by personal associations. For example, in Narziß und Goldmund one encounters images (the fish that is being sold in the market place), works of art (Meister Niklaus’s Madonna and Goldmund’s own carvings) as well as representative figures (all the women and the spaces associated with them and his biological mother as representative of the Mother) that are reminiscent of (focalising methods like) images, paintings, visions, dreams, metaphors and others in Demian.

However, the most striking focalising method in Narziß und Goldmund is the representation of inner thoughts and (emotional) experiences of characters by means of a “subjective” third person narration and free indirect discourse. In Demian the representation of thoughts and experiences

335 If one were to interpret Goldmund’s many sexual encounters mimetically one would reduce him to simply a promiscuous figure. The “possibility value” of his sexual encounters lies rather in seeing these as a leitmotif for his attachment to the natural world. Because sex is part of the natural world a person in the actual world could indeed attach a meaning like “loyalty to, belief in, preference for the natural world” to sexual behaviour in order to justify promiscuity as well as adultery, sexual abuse, etc., but that would be an insult to, and a degradation of, the concept of appreciating and valuing earthly life in the novel. Within Goldmund’s own conservative social context his affairs are indeed morally unacceptable as in any other (actual world) conservative context. However, by paying more attention to Goldmund’s inner experiences as the basis for a possible world than just the external appearance of his sexual conduct, one does understand that the fictional world presents the notion that a human being may have an individualistic tendency to live a more fulfilled life by focusing more on feelings and/or being diesseitsgerichtet, i.e. by focusing more on the earthly life than by being intellectual, and/or jenseitsgerichtet, i.e. by focusing on the afterlife (as a more socially determined focus).

336 One should also, of course, not view his relationships with women as “incestuous” because they represent the Mother in various forms. That would be a (mis)reading with a focus on social relationships as an underpinning. Goldmund’s quest is a spiritual desire to acknowledge natural life, represented by the Mother, in a world that, as in Demian, values artificial social life (of whom his biological father is representative) as exclusively desirable.
is relayed directly through Sinclair’s retrospective first person narration, but despite the “indirectness” of the third person narration in *Narzib und Goldmund*, focalisation through Goldmund is nonetheless present. When the latter sees Meister Niklaus’s Madonna for the first time the narrator remarks: “*Ihm schien, er sehe da etwas stehen, was er in Träumen und Ahnungen oft und oft schon gesehen, wonach er oft sich geschnheit habe*” (NG, 156; my emphasis – PvdM) [“*It seemed to him that he saw something standing there that he had often seen in dreams and inklings, something he had often wished for*” (NGT, 148; my emphasis – PvdM).]

The preservation of exclamation and question marks in free indirect speech indicates that this communication relays the character’s thoughts. Since the moment that Goldmund saw the Madonna, the narrator says: “… Goldmund [besaß] etwas, was er an anderen so oft belächelt oder beneidet hatte:  *ein Ziel!*” (NG, 157) [“… Goldmund possessed something he had not possessed before, something he had so often mocked or envied in others: a goal!” (NGT, 149).]

The indirect relation is fairly neutral, but “*ein Ziel!*” with an exclamation mark (following the colon) relays emotional value comparable to the directness of first person narration. Awaiting his execution, Goldmund longs for the natural world. The “first person value” of free indirect speech is strengthened by the switch to real first person narration:

… *er zog sich in ausbrechendem Weh zusammen und fühlte Träne um Träne aus seinen Augen rinnen … o du strahlende Bilderwelt … wie soll *ich* dich lassen! Weinend lag *er* über dem Tisch, *ein trostloses Kind* … Aus der Not *seines* Herzens stieg ein Seufzer und flehender Klageruf:  “*O Mutter, o Mutter!*” (NG, 269; my emphases – PvdM) [ … grief welled up in *him* and he felt tear upon tear drop from *his* eyes. … oh beautiful radiant image world, how can *I* leave you! Weeping, *he* lay across the table, *a disconsolate boy* … From the misery of *his* heart, a sigh, an imploring complaint rose:  “*Oh mother, oh mother!*” (NGT, 255-256; my emphases – PvdM).]

Not only direct representations, but also indirect ones convey the psychological experiences of the character. A degree of distance in the narratorial stance is necessary to create sympathy and empathy. If the whole text were narrated from the first person stance many sentences could appear to be overstated self-pity. Third person narration and free indirect speech still present Goldmund’s focalisation authentically instead of awkwardly.

Despite the difference with regard to the narrative stance, all the elements of the textual actual worlds are focalised through the central characters and contribute to forming the fictional worlds. Focalisation occurs through selection and “transformation”, simultaneously affected by the
individual quests of the characters and their relationships with their social contexts. These quests in both texts are in conflict with the social norms and values that affect how the characters perceive their social contexts. Social contexts, but also events and spaces, are “symptoms” of the focalising characters’ inner lives. Both texts represent the “building blocks” of the fictional world by the focalising method of representing “inner thoughts” which occur in *Demian* through first person narration (often including metaphoric images and sensory experiences) and in *Narziß und Goldmund* through third person narration and free indirect discourse. Such narration and discourse are better suited to *Narziß und Goldmund* as with these modes the narration can relay just as much information about inner experiences as first-person focalisation, yet without the embarrassment that confessional narration could bring about. For example, when awaiting his execution Goldmund is described as “ein trostloses Kind” (NG, 269) or “a disconsolate boy” (NGT, 256). Whilst a first person declaration of this state would have been awkward, a mixture of indirect narration and the more direct free indirect speech succeeds in “honestly” representing Goldmund’s emotional experiences.

8.1.3. The focalisers in *Homer & Langley* in comparison to the focaliser in *Demian*: Homer and Langley Collyer, Emil Sinclair and their challenging social worlds

There are obvious differences between Sinclair and Homer and Langley Collyer with regard to their ages during the narrated events as well as to their national-historical, social, cultural and language contexts. However, Sinclair and the Collyers find their relationships with their social contexts problematic. The way they perceive themselves, everyone and everything around them is affected by these relationships. Sinclair has the explicit desire “to be himself”. He regards himself as different from people whose individuality becomes “deformed” by living according to the prescriptions of their social contexts, in opposition to the psychologically balanced condition of a person who could truly be himself, unaffected by these “distorting” effects of his social context. In Sinclair’s understanding the Collyer parents would have been a case in point. One especially thinks of the scene when they hold a dinner for Langley before he leaves to take part in the First World War (HL, 16). This situation evokes the “bright realm” in *Demian* in which homely situations ironically co-exist with the blameworthy, and therefore ironic, acceptance that people are shot dead en masse (D, 9; DT, 1).  

337 The Sinclair and the Collyer parents share in the collective guilt of their social context that supports the First World War by contributing to the irony of “heterogeneous coexistence”. One also finds a case of ironic “heterogenous coexistence” in Kerkeling’s *Ich bin dann mal weg: Meine Reise auf dem Jakobsweg* (2009) [2006]. Kerkeling (2009:156) recounts overhearing in a hotel in Calzadilla de la Cueza (during his pilgrimage...
Like Sinclair, Homer and Langley appear to be socially warped or eccentric because they do not meet the requirements for social normality. Homer would have wanted to conform to his society, but he thinks of himself as inept and unfit for human society. His failed relationship with Eleanor probably sparked this during his teenage years. Against the background of this relationship, his parents’ bourgeois household and (later) Langley’s asocial tendencies, Homer’s blindness could be interpreted as indicative of his inability to understand his social context. Sinclair’s views are also different from those who conform because he becomes convinced that the values of his social context are wrong. Homer’s perspective, on the other hand, is conforming to and accepting of his brother’s asocial views because he had “failed” socially when he was Eleanor’s friend.

Sinclair early on recognised that his social world could be divided into two realms. Homer realised quickly that he had veered away from the “bright realm” by inadvertently having transgressed a social taboo that had definite causal repercussions. The total compositions of the texts, i.e. the lives of Sinclair and Homer, are determined by the effects that early understanding and/or conviction (in Sinclair’s case) and misunderstanding and/or incomprehension (in Homer’s case) have on them. The structures of the two fictional “autobiographies” consist of chronologically related events that are literally the effects of their early experiences.

The atmosphere of Demian is an intense narration of Sinclair’s inner struggle interspersed with functional intervals of false “relief”. His tone is determined by his retrospective focus on himself actively denouncing the dictates of his social context. Homer does not actively challenge his social context as Langley does. His tone is on the whole fairly “relaxed”. He often narrates in an apparently unperturbed and matter of fact manner which he combines with

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on the Camino Francés in Spain) of a collision between a truck and a car on the road to Burgos in which an entire family died. He suspects that it is a family whom he had seen a half an hour before, discards the idea of inquiring about the accident and then reports how he enjoyed the cool room of the hotel bar and ordering a cocoa and a bocadillo while paging through the newspaper El País. Kerkeling is morally blameless because unlike the Sinclair and Collyer parents he is not an exponent of a class which supports the irony of “heterogeneous co-existence” by means of accepting the death and/or suffering of others (the people in the car) like the soldiers that are obliged to participate in the First World War.

338 While in prison after the police had broken up their tea dance Langley considers the implication of being totally alone when the brothers discuss the song “Me and My Shadow”: “Can you imagine a universe like that, with only your own shadow to talk to? That is a song right out of German metaphysics” (HL, 74). Homer then asks: “Langley … Am I your shadow?” to which Langley responds: “You’re my brother” (HL, 74). Homer is indeed Langley’s shadow in the sense that he follows him with regard to all his decisions and since he maintains that he does not have a world view on his own: he has always gone along with what Langley does (HL, 37).

339 “I was rapt – horrified, but also thrilled to a level of unnatural feeling that was akin to nausea … Did my friend gasp, did she tug at my hand to pull me away? If she did I would not have noticed” (HL, 10-11). One could also understand Homer’s blindness, apart from signifying incomprehension with regard to relationships and matters of a social nature, as a “reflex” to avoid interaction with either consciously or inadvertently experiencing or acknowledging social taboos like the pornographic film. He seems to become “socially “safe” by becoming blind: “So a handsome young blind man of reputable family was particularly attractive insofar as he could not, even in secret, do anything untoward. His helplessness was very alluring to a woman trained since birth, herself, to be helpless” (HL, 5).
communication about matters that he does feel strongly about. For example: “Did I mention how vast the dining room had become? … I had never really liked the dining room … Apparently Langley had similar feelings because the dining room was where he elected to install the Model T Ford automobile” (HL, 77). Such information should not be mistaken as being casual and insignificant. His tone suggests that he himself finds the details of his and his brother’s lives remarkable. For the most part an accepting tone “colours” his focalisation. What also affects Homer’s tone is that he furtively idealises being treated as a normal person. Referring to Jacqueline Roux, Homer says: “Perhaps I had been so grateful being treated like a normal person that I had been overly enthralled with her” (HL, 193; my emphasis – PvdM). It is, therefore, not strange that he does suffer when he considers the implications of the children pelting their house with stones. He exhibits an overall (helpless) acceptance or submission to the animosity of his social context. Homer says that he was “not inclined to fret over these stone throwers” (HL, 199), but upon realising the implication, it seems that he does find it disturbing because he realises that he and his brother are in a “circle of animosity”, representative of the future, which is “the most devastating blow of all”: “For what could be more terrible than being turned into a mythic joke? How could we cope, once dead and gone, with no one available to reclaim our history?” (HL, 200). Homer is concerned about being “erroneously” remembered, as well as that their “social death” in being despised and ridiculed would outlast their physical deaths. Admitting that he and his brother “were going down” (HL, 200) is not just a reference to their approaching physical death. This conclusion and the composition of his total personality serve as a record of a decline with regard to their position within their social context because of the differences between their lifestyle and their evolution as recluses, versus “socially acceptable behaviour” and “normal” interaction with people within their social context.340

As in Demian, events in Homer & Langley problematise the relationship between the individuals and their social context because of conflicting norms and values. The relationship between the social contexts and the focaliser therefore affects the focalisation. The focalisers emphasise the nature of the disagreement/agreement between the corresponding or differing values of the characters and the social context, for example, cleaning and arranging one’s house in a manner which people in general would consider to be respectable in Homer & Langley, and Sinclair’s personal value of individualism. Focalisers also emphasise norms, for example, being

340 Their unconventional lifestyle is also reflected, for example, by their wearing army greens and boots (HL, 108); ignoring their neighbours’ dissatisfaction with their actions, for instance, the dances in their house (HL, 76) and the unhygienic nature of their living conditions (HL, 170-171); Langley’s confrontational relationship with their bank (HL, 181) and neglecting to pay for municipal services (HL, 196), etcetera.
considerate towards one’s neighbours, paying one’s debts and the like in *Homer & Langley*, and social conformity in *Demian*.

Sinclair actively distances himself from the ignorance of what a “real living human being” is – also by actively “studying” himself through his self-representation: “… das weiß man heute allerdings weniger als jemals, und man schießt denn auch die Menschen, deren jeder ein kostbarer, einmaliger Versuch der Natur ist, zu Mengen tot” (D, 9) [“… seems to be less understood today than at any time before, and men – each one of whom represents a unique and valuable experiment on the part of nature – are therefore shot wholesale nowadays” (DT, 1; italics in translation).] Langley is physically and psychologically damaged by the “same” war, the First World War, that also features at the end of *Demian*. The said war as a macro-event\(^{341}\) – and in *Homer & Langley* also the Second World War, the Vietnam War and the civil war of a Central American country whose soldiers kill Mary Riordan – serve as direct and indirect causes for “micro-events”, or events on a private/personal level, in the characters’ lives. For example, the social norm of countries engaging in war disturbs both Langley and Sinclair, while supplying weapons to countries in war (cf. HL, 169) upsets Langley. There is an obvious causal relationship between the event of which Mary is a victim, Langley’s fear of the outside world and the brothers’ subsequent increased isolation:

One day my brother came in with his morning papers and without saying a word he went to the windows and began pulling the shutters together and locking them. I heard\(^{342}\) the banging of the shutters slamming in place like heavy doors and watched the patina of lighter darkness receding from my eyes. … A strange strangled sound came from my brother’s throat that I only slowly realized was his effort not to break down (HL, 167).

The micro-events, the results of general circumstances and macro-events, can therefore be related to an event like Sinclair’s willing enslavement to the “dark realm” as a way of counteracting the “bright realm”. Events, as focalised, influence the mindsets of the characters, result in private/personal consequences and are, as such, characteristic of the focaliser’s psyche.

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\(^{341}\) A “macro-event” here denotes a “collective event” like a war which consists of various events that affect many social contexts of a state or various nations. The political motivations and “ethos” of wars are at odds with Sinclair’s and Langley’s valuing and appreciation of human life.

\(^{342}\) Homer’s focalisation is certainly also acoustic since he is blind. For example, during the police raid in order to stop the dances in their house Homer says: “The shrieks I heard could have been merriment. … I heard a resounding gong, the sound made by a silver salver coming down on a skull” (HL, 71). His blindness, like his deafness, later represents his disconnection from his social context. Along with this (acoustic) focalising mode, Langley’s focalising mode of his antagonistic and fearful mindset and Homer’s mode of acceptance (cf. HL, 172) create the ambience of the house as the Collyers’ doomed fortress.
Because the experiences of events affect a character’s focalisation they also determine the fictional world.

The mindset of the focaliser is therefore also visibly reflected by the focalisation of space in both these novels. In *Demian* and *Homer & Langley* associations between spaces and events do affect space(s) in the minds of the focalisers even though spaces sometimes seem to constitute merely a neutral frame and are void of “atmosphärische Bedeutung” or “atmospheric meaning” (Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 1998:44). For example, when Sinclair realises the implications of Kromer’s threat, namely that his identity as a “product” of the “bright world” would alter to that of a criminal, the house’s smell changes: “Unser Hausflur roch nicht mehr nach Frieden und Sicherheit, die Welt brach um mich zusammen” (D, 18) [“The passageway no longer smelled of peace and safety, the world around me began to crumble” (DT, 9-10).] Having lost the functions of peace and security, the house and other spaces are filled with an atmosphere of exposure, danger and hostility. Neither does Homer focalise the house as a “neutral” spatial frame, but as microcosmically representative of American society which he presents to Jacqueline Roux as a “gift” because she wants to “get” the country (HL, 184). It is also represented as a refuge from society, while its deterioration from its once stately condition toward ruination is expressive of the Collyers self-imprisonment and the corrosion of their social identity which they attempt to abandon – to no avail. A house is supposed to be private and not public, but because Langley closes himself and his brother off from the outside world and lives in chaos the social/public character of their house becomes ironically unavoidable. Homer subsequently also equates the house with himself and his brother (cf. HL, 37).

In his representation of the house and its functions, one notices that the blind Homer painstakingly uses sight as a focalising method to describe the house and their lives. Homer “translates” his awareness of circumstances and events which he distinguishes through his remaining senses and which are especially described to him by his brother into a “textual vision”. If blindness is understood as symbolic of incomprehension, Langley’s functioning as Homer’s sight does not advance a balanced discernment. Just as blindness has a figurative connotation in *Homer & Langley*, the sense of smell is also figurative in *Demian*. This sense is used to express emotive associations with the textual actual world, but also as a metaphor for a kind of sixth sense.
In both *Demian* and *Homer & Langley* Sinclair and Homer respectively experience problematic relationships with the social context.\(^{343}\) Sinclair is proactive in his quest towards an individualism which is in conflict with the norms and values of his social context. Homer merely accepts and conforms passively with his brother’s nonconformist, rebellious and disordered life. This is, ironically, the result of a recognition that the world is divided into socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The “adult film” that Homer inadvertently stumbled upon with Eleanor stuns him and causes a transition from “innocence” to “experience”. The “rectifying” outcome is consequently a psychosomatically induced blindness.

However, “seeing no evil” does not solve Homer’s social difficulties because Langley is socially even more inept than his blind brother. Although Sinclair and Homer approach the recognition of the realms of “brightness” and “darkness” differently, this differentiation, observable in both books, exerts a definite causal effect on their individual developments and parallel emotions and tone: this establishes the ambience of their fictional worlds. Sinclair refers to this mood; his tone affects the fictional world as a whole: “Mir war nicht beschieden, in Fülle und Behagen zu atmen, ich brauchte Qual und Hetze” (D, 160). \[“It was not my lot to breathe fullness and comfort, I need the spur of tormented haste” (DT, 135).\] His emotions fluctuate, but are always related to his spiritual quest towards self-realisation. Only at the end of the novel do Homer’s mood and tone become depressing and ominous when the coinciding social and physical deaths of Homer and Langley approach. The overall tone and the atmosphere of the Collyers’ fictional world are reflective of a narrator engrossed in representing the interesting and curious circumstances and elements of his and his brother’s lives. However, it seems that the world is always approached with the purpose of encouraging understanding of how a life of opposing social norms and values came about.

In both the novels, the norms and values of the social contexts alienate Sinclair and the Collyers and affect their mindsets to such a degree that they not only affect the focalisation of the social contexts themselves, but also create the specific microcosms or personal events and spaces and determine their experiences of these events and spaces. The mindsets of Sinclair and the Collyers are “asocial” or nonconformist. A textual actual world space like the rat-infested house

\(^{343}\) Sinclair’s family, particularly his father, is evidently dissatisfied with Sinclair’s lack of conformity: “Er war zuletzt sehr aufgebracht und sagte, wenn ich nicht anders werde, lasse er mich mit Schimpf und Schande von der Schule jagen und stecke mich in eine Besserungsanstalt. Mochte er!” (D, 82). \[“Finally toward the end of the meeting he became quite angry and said if I didn’t change he would have me expelled from the school in disgrace and placed in a reformatory. Well, let him!” (DT, 66).\] The arrangement of the Collyers’ house is a testimony to the brothers’ eccentricity as well as to Langley’s “contrarianism” that involves their “battle” with city agencies, the creditors, the neighbours and the press (HL, 177).
does not exist “neutrally” in the textual actual world, but is connected to Homer’s sense of “an end to this life” (HL, 207). The sweetness of the gingerbread and the scent of the Christmas tree convey personal/individualistic meaning for Sinclair because of his experiences with his social context. Sinclair’s family and anyone in the actual world might simply associate these scents with a pleasant Christmas atmosphere. However, for Sinclair the Christmas scents emphasise his social alienation.

Whilst the sense of smell is a prominent sensory focalising method in Demian, the blind Homer, apart from the predictable sense of hearing, does also use the sense of sight to portray his fictional world. His “visual focalisation” derives mainly from three sources. It is based on memory, for example the memory of the maid standing under the chandelier and cleaning each crystal individually. Further sources are, secondly, information that Langley provides for him – such as Langley telling him that the ceiling looked like “the bottom of the moon” (HL, 179) and, thirdly, logical deduction – as in the visual image of the chandelier coming crashing down. Homer’s focalisation through the senses of hearing and touch and his narration of his awareness of what happened around him emphasise his blindness. However, his visual focalisation also effects this because the reader understands a representation of the collapsing ceiling as an imagined and not a literal vision. This vision furthermore focuses the reader’s attention on Homer’s blindness which is accompanied by his disposition. Examples of Homer’s disposition that are determined by his blindness are his impassive acceptance, when maintaining that he does not have a world view of his own (HL, 37); longing for another life when he identifies himself with Quasimodo (HL, 136); and sadness and fear when he futilely concludes his text with “Where is Langley? Where is my brother?” (HL, 208). These psychological modes characterise the nature of his physical surroundings as alienated from the social context.

8.2. The focaliser’s experience of his social context: Social contexts in Demian, Narziß und Goldmund and Homer & Langley in comparison to those in Welcome to Hard Times

The focus in the chapter on Welcome to Hard Times is placed on the interaction between the social context and Blue’s inner life which consequently affects his focalisation. This is evident when one considers the modalities of his focalisation such as his often ironic and seemingly contradictory traits, like pessimism and resignation as opposed to (false) optimism and (false)
objectivity.\textsuperscript{344} These modalities influence how the focaliser represents his social context in terms of relationships/interactions and what he emphasises within the textual actual world. This section compares \textit{Demian}, \textit{Narziß und Goldmund} and \textit{Homer & Langley} to \textit{Welcome to Hard Times} with regard to the effect(s) of a social context on the focaliser, the modalities of focalisation and how the focaliser represents the social context with regard to relationships as well as what he emphasises in his textual actual world. Focalisation in this section will also be considered in terms of subjective or coloured/involved focalisation (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:80; Bal, 1990:113) corresponding to Bal’s (1990:120) question “What is the focaliser’s mindset?”

**8.2.1. Social contexts in \textit{Demian} in comparison to \textit{Welcome to Hard Times}: The reduction of the value of the individual**

Both Blue and Sinclair react to their social contexts which relativise the importance of individuals.\textsuperscript{345} The social context of \textit{Welcome to Hard Times} is characterised by individuals who are primarily self-interested. Because they do not think in terms of gain for their (new) community that would benefit all, but firstly and almost exclusively in terms of gain for themselves, the implication is that the importance of other individuals is reduced. The effect is that everyone feels isolated and vulnerable. This fear consequently leads to the “coincidental” reappearance of the Bad Man who is both an external threat, but also representative of a “threat from within”. There are virtually no norms in the largely immoral Hard Times. The respectable world of Sinclair’s parental home, the “bright realm”, is supposed to be the antithesis of the “dark realm”, everything that is immoral and criminal. Yet, in \textit{Demian} Sinclair also feels isolated and marginalised, paradoxically because of his social context’s “civilised” community-focused norms which repress the true individualism of a human being.

The ways in which the focalisers experience their social contexts and their subsequent emotional reactions lead to certain focalising modalities. Blue regards a stable town as a desirable set of

\textsuperscript{344} Blue’s narration is “reliable” with regard to basic “factual” information. For example, one does not need to doubt his report about how things developed. However, it is “unreliable” with regard how he views the nature of his textual actual world. For example, he views the Bad Man as an indestructible presence and unavoidable fact of human life regardless of where one lives. Like Ezra Maple, the actual world reader could doubt or disagree with this perspective. But Blue’s subjective narration is also “reliable” in the sense that he reveals a psychologically convincing human perspective.

\textsuperscript{345} In both \textit{Demian} and \textit{Welcome to Hard Times} one encounters an indifference within the social contexts with regard to the welfare and the fate of other human beings, denoting a lack of power, but also a lack of care. Sinclair’s social context relativises the importance of the individual by accepting the reality that people, though unique and valuable experiments on the part of nature, are shot dead en masse (D, 9, DT, 1) in such conflicts as the First World War. Blue is, for example, infuriated that the residents of the town were never informed that a road would not be built through the town: “Those white-faced, black-derbied Eastern sons of Hell! How long had they known – maybe since the afternoon they waited for Alf, fanning themselves and keeping their mouths shut?” (WHT, 189). The tendency to egocentricity and the neglect of others is thus part of a wider social context which seems to validate Blue’s view that everything is the same everywhere (cf. WHT, 29). In the context of the town’s uncertainty and hollowness/immorality this lack of care as an external evaluation of their worth could contribute to enforcing the magical reappearance of the Bad Man, as a self-determined occurrence following a collectively low self-esteem.
circumstances that would assure safety and strength. The fact of his fluctuation between hope and uncertainty that this would materialise leads to contradictory mental states, for example, (doubtful) hopefulness/optimism versus resignation/pessimism, which serve as modalities for his focalisation. In *Demian* Sinclair’s desire to distinguish himself from the “herd” and to follow the path of developing into his own true self results in an aversion to his bourgeois social context when recognising the “deformity” of its members because of the “social shaping” to which people are exposed. Sinclair’s inability to conform to the “bright world” prior to his drinking days makes him aware of “die verbotenen und dunklen Strömen” (D, 73) [“the forbidden and dark streams” (DT, 58)] within himself that cause him to “recognise” the external world as dark and ominous: for example, the air has a damp and bitter smell, the trees are shadowy and ghostly and the black foliage exudes the “nassen Duft von Verwitterung und Absterben, den etwas in mir erwiderte und begrüßte” [“humid fragrance of decay and dying to which something within me responded with greeting” (DT, 59).] The changing attraction and aversion to the “bright” and the “dark realms” serve as modalities for Sinclair’s focalisation (while he is striving towards attaining a balanced and not necessarily accurate, but meaningful and truthful perspective).

The focalising modalities also affect the manner in which the focaliser represents the personal relationships in his social context as well as what the focaliser concentrates on, i.e. what he allows to pass through the “neck of the bottle”. For example, at one point Sinclair finds symbolic rituals like the evening devotions with his family intolerable because they do not reflect his current spiritual state. He does not pray along and feels that God’s grace was “nicht mehr mit mir” (D, 24) [“no longer with me” (DT, 15).] The religious ritual symbolically ought to signify “being with God”, but as a social ritual it signifies “being with his family” which takes on an ironic and dishonest symbolic significance in Sinclair’s current state. This is also why Sinclair does not want to accept chocolate from his mother. Previously, his being given chocolate symbolised a reward for socially commendable behaviour. The discrepancy between the meanings of the chocolate, i.e. the coexisting attempt to comfort the young, troubled Sinclair, his mother’s concern and its previous meaning juxtaposed with his trespasses, is too great for him. When she strokes his hair he exclaims: “'Nicht! Nicht! Ich will nichts haben’” (D, 30) [“'No, no! I don’t want anything!’” (DT, 20)] because of the irony of receiving a reward for being disobedient. Regarding himself as having become part of the “dark realm” affects the way in which he sees his relationship to his family context: that a devastating chasm between himself and the “bright realm” has opened.

Sinclair’s conversations with Pistorius, reminiscent of his conversations with Demian, also influence the former’s way of perceiving the world, namely that human behaviour should be
regarded in natural evolutionary terms rather than in artificial social ones. They form a friendship, but because Pistorius has a “weakness” in the form of a compulsive attachment to the social world, their friendship ends which is, for Sinclair, necessary to advance spiritually.

A relationship which reveals Blue’s absence of care is that with Jimmy. This is typical of the interpersonal relationships in the social context of Hard Times. Blue admits the mistake of his mindset when he says: “… I’ve done it wrong, I’m too late” (WHT, 166) when Jimmy refuses to listen to him after Blue had attempted to convince Jimmy that he should not allow Molly to influence him, that he should settle as a respectable citizen in the town and that trying to kill a Bad Man is futile. Providing physical shelter by making a dugout shows that Blue is not uncaring, but rather than real concern and compassion, it is a mechanical industriousness that leads him to make the dugout. Blue’s action of making the dugout itself serves as no investment in Jimmy’s psychological development. Blue neither provides for Jimmy the confirmation of psychological safety and security nor does he ever provide explicit guidance for the latter. Before leaving for Fountain Creek Blue fails to say something to Jimmy to make him feel better or to show affection (WHT, 63). Only when it is already too late to influence Jimmy constructively does Blue communicate to Jimmy his wishes for him to become a “respectable citizen” in opposition to his becoming a Bad Man:

I didn’t trust myself to say just what I wanted to say. … “What kind of a mama’s boy are you! How far do I have to take you to get you out of that woman’s spell! Listen to me I said the day is coming when no Man from Bodie will ride in but he’ll wither and dry up to dust. You hear me? I’m going to see you grown up with your own mind, I’m going to see you settled just like this town, you’re going to be a proper man and not some saddle fool wandering around with his grudge” (WHT, 166).

Blue precedes this combination of an uncertain and an authoritarian tone with an attempt to convince Jimmy that he has to learn the “skill” of valuing the town because Fee would have appreciated the town: “’It’s not something a person could learn in one day or one week. It’s something you have to learn into, like carpentry’” (WHT, 164). The problem is that Blue – as he

346 The end of this friendship is comparable to Sinclair’s separation from his family which is necessary for his developing individualistically and spiritually.

347 Blue admits that he continues to build the dugout for “no other reason than the pain shooting up in my arms” (WHT, 36).

348 Psychological safety and security are in any case impossible in Hard Times because the town is not only a physical place/space, but also represents a doomed spiritual location/state of mind.
himself admits – has not been involved enough in Jimmy’s life as a father figure. He argues in his own defence that he tried to be a role model for him (WHT, 164) based on how he perceived Fee (with the exception of confronting the Bad Man). However, this reasoning is doubtful, a form of unreliable narration, because Blue has never previously referred to his intentions and actions as motivated by his respect for Fee. His “role modelling” consists simply of mechanical actions that are psychologically barren. Molly has taught Jimmy, in the meantime, the opposite “skill”, namely hatred for the town.

The similarity between the social contexts in Welcome to Hard Times and Demian lies in the fact that the social contexts reduce the value of the individual. In Welcome to Hard Times this follows the effects of a lack of mutual communal care in favour of egocentric inclinations which ironically cause an inner threat. As chaos ensues, the Bad Man from Bodie, whose name is Clay Turner, “returns to complete the cycle and to suggest a connection between a community built solely on economic self-interest and its moral collapse” (Parks, 1991:26). The Bad Man from Bodie is therefore also, apart from being a “real” textual person, a principle by means of which the residents of the town corporeally manifest the egocentricity within themselves. Siegel (2000:3) observes that one “truth” which Blue’s writings question is “the formula Western’s comfortable division of good and evil, of ‘good guys’ and ‘bad guys’. Human evil is not to be isolated in a few individuals, Doctorow suggests. It is to be accepted as endemic …”. In Demian the individual is diminished due to the narrow-minded prescriptions and unreasonable expectations of the social context. In both novels the communities lack a focus on communal support and on interactively accommodating the individual to advance himself for the purpose of strengthening both him and society. The individual’s/focaliser’s experiences of social circumstances affect how the focalisers represent their social contexts and their relationships with these. In Sinclair’s case one comes across a fluctuation between an aversion and an attraction to the “bright and dark realms”, based on the (genuine and mistaken) harmony or conflict of Sinclair’s spiritual state in relation to the realms.

In Blue’s case one also notices a fluctuation of focalising modalities which affects what Blue represents and how he presents the fictional world. Carelessness (as opposed to communal concern and support) is a product of Blue’s self-critical and pessimistic representation of his relationship with Jimmy. Jimmy affords the example of an individual who does not receive unselfish care, love and support that serves as an “education” and consequently evolves into an opposite image of constructive values and norms.
8.2.2. Social contexts in *Narziß und Goldmund* in comparison to *Welcome to Hard Times*: Goldmund’s and Blue’s focalisation as determined by the nature of their relationships with their social contexts

Whilst the fear of the Bad Man, the hope that he would not return and the ambition to develop a town that would “drive Bad Men away” influence Blue’s focalisation, the fear of social imprisonment and the desire for a reconnection with the Mother impel Goldmund’s focalisation. Both the monastery and the social context outside of it in *Narziß und Goldmund* are forms of the “Father world”. The social context in Doctorow’s *Welcome to Hard Times* could also be considered a kind of “father world” in the sense that it is characterised by conventional customs, communal prescriptions, institutions and a (depraved capitalistic) “rationality” with regard to the requirements for survival – these include literal but also figurative prostitution. Goldmund’s focalising modality includes his rejection of any form of social “captivity” which would counteract his reunification with the Mother. His focalisation of social contexts entails regarding them as unnatural and artificial forms of worldly life. This is evident when he is angry at the ignorance of the people at the marketplace who are indifferent to the beauty and meaningfulness of the fish as natural phenomena that they carelessly sell, cook and devour. At times Goldmund finds it necessary to associate himself with the Father world as a practical means to carry out his artistic ambitions. However, he does not aspire to the social role of an artist like Meister Niklaus in order to achieve a comfortable lifestyle and communal respect. Art is, to Goldmund, a means of expressing his inner experiences that are always related to the Mother.349

Because the narrator presents the textual actual world in *Narziß und Goldmund* mostly from Goldmund’s perspective and frame of mind, social contexts are focalised as human organisations that counteract natural inclinations. For example, Lydia is reluctant to enter into an extramarital physical relationship with Goldmund because it would disobey the prescriptions or norms and values of her social context. These values and norms are in direct opposition to Goldmund’s mindset. He admits that he thinks far less (about the social implications of their relationship) than Lydia would expect and wishes for nothing more than to be kissed by her (NG, 119). His wish is for a kinder manifestation of the Mother – in contrast to cruel manifestations like suffering and death.

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349 One observes the connection between art and nature, for example, when Goldmund’s fascination for a snail’s house clearly conveys aesthetic and sensual overtones (NG, 79; NGT, 73). Furthermore, the artistic manner in which Goldmund represents a trout in his conversations, describes a butterfly, imitates a bird’s call or describes a friend, a dog or a beggar is inspired: “… dann entstanden Bilder, dann sah man etwas” (NG, 43). He then “created vivid pictures”, i.e. images that oppose the hollowness when speaking about his father (NGT, 37).
Whilst Goldmund regards all forms of social contexts as imprisoning, Blue hopes that a large social context would be liberating.\textsuperscript{350} Blue acknowledges at the end of the novel, when he addresses his hypothetical city reader, that this is a misconception following his realisation that the psychological force of the Bad Man is just as present in an urban environment as in an emerging town like Hard Times.\textsuperscript{351} To Goldmund the Bad Man would be akin to the people who throw still living victims of the Black Death onto the wagons together with corpses. Their behaviour – like that of the residents of Hard Times – is motivated by fear and a lack of care for others. Blue’s focalisation is coloured by his identity as a (fellow) victim/self-victimised individual. What Blue consequently focuses on are the “realities” of social life following the victimisation inflicted upon his context by the Bad Man, the (inauthentic) gradual liberation from the effects of the first attack when conditions improve and thereafter the final return to victimisation in the form of the Bad Man’s return.

These characters are similar in that both Goldmund’s and Blue’s focalisation is driven by the nature of their relationships with their social contexts. Their stories are very different with regard to their ideals regarding such relationships and their mindsets. Blue idealises a social context that could offer materialistic comforts and physical safety (as opposed to “psychological/spiritual safety”) whilst Goldmund idealises freedom from the rigidity of “normal” social life and yearns for psychological “comfort”, which he does attain at the end of the novel. The difference with regard to their mindsets is that Blue is characterised by uncertainty and Goldmund by conviction. Blue vacuously, without much sense, hopes that his ideal might materialise whilst Goldmund is certain of his quest. Even when he is in the Father world (for instance, remaining in the knight’s castle, becoming Meister Niklaus’s student and returning to the monastery) his presence there only serves as a practical means toward goals related to his steadfast focus on the Mother and yearning for “benevolent” manifestations of her. Yet, because these contexts counteract his natural inclinations he leaves them. Blue’s

\textsuperscript{350} Demian and Narziß und Goldmund actually “comment” on Blue’s misconception when read intertextually. Established social contexts in Hesse’s texts are also spiritually immature.

\textsuperscript{351} Homer & Langley is a portrayal of how fear, the same causative emotion as in Doctorow’s first novel, creates a psychological and spatial “wilderness” reflective of the mindset of the characters. Mary Riordan serves as an admirable opposite to the brothers – as well as her “surnamesake”, Molly Riordan, in Welcome to Hard Times. Despite concrete dangers that result in her death, Mary remained loyal to her quest of serving her fellow human beings. Mary’s story is highly ironic with regard to Molly’s life. Mary’s choices would have been unimaginable to Molly because of her dissatisfaction as a servant: “… I left New York ten years ago because I couldn’t bear being a maid, I was too proud to say ‘Yes Mum’” (WHT, 16). Whilst Mary decided to improve others’ lives, Molly decided to better her own life, which resulted in her becoming a prostitute. The difference between Molly and Mary is that Molly is characterised by being victimised by the Bad Man that she hates to a pathological extent. She becomes “addicted” to her hate for him. Consequently she becomes “synonymous” with hate itself. Mary, on the other hand, is a Jesus-like figure. Providing what solace she can characters her as a compassionate person. The possibility that she “would have forgiven her abuser and touched his face with two fingers as he brought his gun up to her temple” (HL, 167) would turn her death into a spiritual victory over the “bad man” who kills her. Her death would then not be associated with fear, panic or sadness, but rather with her concern for a fellow human being, self-sacrifice and forgiveness.
focalisation is determined by his fear of the Bad Man and imprudent attempts to expand the town in a futile attempt to keep Bad Men away. His mistake in idealising a stable society is his foolish hope, poor judgement and misconception that the size of a town, and not the spiritual strength of the individuals that add up to a community, would safeguard them.

8.2.3. Social contexts in Homer & Langley in comparison to Welcome to Hard Times: Fear and passivity as possibilities in social contexts

The social context that Langley opposes is comparable to Sinclair’s herd, Siddharta’s child-adults, Haller’s philistines, Goldmund’s sedentary burghers, and H.H.’s blind many (cf. Mileck, 2003:159). The struggle of Blue’s community to establish itself in the natural wilderness of the Dakota Flats creates the impression that Hard Times is a social context very different from the contexts of established communities. However, Blue draws attention to the capacity of Hard Times to serve as a metaphor for communities whose populations and infrastructures surpass that of Hard Times when he asks the fictional city reader whether he thinks that “with all that settlement around you that you’re freer than me to make your fate?” (WHT, 184). Blue therefore suggests that interpersonal social relationships and interaction, characterised by self-interest, the lack of communal concern and cruelty, of which the Bad Man is representative, are possible in any social context.

The reason why the Collyer brothers do not conform as their parents did, should be related specifically to Langley’s understanding of their social context as treacherous and antagonistic. There are the “disappointments” because of their experiences with “thieving servants, government agents, crime families, wives” that finally peak with Langley’s fear of trespassers. The nature of the fictional world is representative of the Bad Man-like spirit that Langley senses: “He said everything alive was at war” (HL, 200). The most prominent effect that the social context outside of the house has is that of inducing fear – in Langley.

Homer is more deeply affected by the “social context” of his life with his brother in the house. However, he does not try to position himself somehow outside of the house to be part of the social context. His reclusiveness could be attributed to his doubt about his “social intelligence”. His referring to Langley’s snares and traps meant for a mythical trespasser (HL, 206) indicates that he does not believe in the actual possibility of a burglary. Whilst his brother’s focalising

352 Langley’s references to “thieving servants”, “crime families” and “wives” are exaggerated because there was only one of each, but he makes them heatedly. Homer’s composed focalisation surfaces when he corrects Langley by saying: “Only one wife” to which Langley brusquely responds: “One’s enough” (HL, 127).
modality is fear for his physical safety, Homer’s narration – addressed to Jacqueline Roux – is expressive of troubled despondency. Homer is not unconcerned about how the siblings’ social context perceives them although he rebels together with his brother against it. His narration is an attempt to present himself as socially less odd than his brother by representing a broader perspective on their strange world and to connect with someone who treats him, i.e. Homer like a normal person: in order to counteract his fear of being turned into a mythic joke and so as to “reclaim our history” while he still lives – because he does not know who would, once they are “dead and gone” (HL, 200). Homer’s disconnection from society is finally enforced brutally by his physical blindness and deafness:

… Langley and I were not the eccentric recluses of a once well-to-do family as described in the press: we had metamorphosed, we were the ghosts \(^{353}\) who haunted the house we had once lived in. Not able to see myself or hear my own footsteps, I was coming around to the same idea (HL, 198).

Another aspect of Homer’s focalisation is that he writes about the “images of things” (HL, 207). Although they are not “the things in themselves” they serve as a compensation for a physical and social world of which he would want to be part. However, his “social interaction” is finally reduced to touching his typewriters, his table, his chair: with “only the touch of my brother’s hand to know that I am not alone” (HL, 208) as the only “assurance of a solid world, where things take up space, where there is not the endless emptiness of insubstantial thought that leads to nowhere but itself” (HL, 207). The intellectual activity of writing functions therefore as a compensatory means in which he could be part of the social world by counteracting a “blank endless mind to live in” (HL, 207), a danger that occurs as a result of having to “prevail” on his “pale” memories “again and again” (HL, 207). For Homer writing is therefore a social act in the sense that it is an attempt to remain a social entity and not a “ghost”. Everything that he therefore writes is an attempt to retain his connection to his social context.

By a long chalk Homer’s interpretation of the social context is not as cynical as Langley’s, but he does not rebel against his brother’s cynicism. Homer explains that since he does not have a world view he has “always gone along” with what Langley does (HL, 37), which is comparable to the passivity of the characters in *Welcome to Hard Times*. Blue and Molly distinguish

\[^{353}\text{Sinclair also experiences himself as a “ghost” because of his withdrawal from the life of his middle-class family: “Mitten im geordneten Frieden unseres Hauses lebte ich schweifend und gepeinigt wie ein Gespenst, hatte nicht teil am Leben der andern, vergaß mich selten für eine Stunde” (D, 30) (“Amid the ordered peace of our house I lived shyly, in agony, like a ghost; I took no part in the life of the others, rarely forgot myself for an hour at a time” (DT, 20).}]

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themselves from Ezra Maple, for example, who has the insight that the town is uninhabitable because of the weather, drought and blizzards, and its vulnerability to “some devil with liquor in his soul and a gun in his claw” (WHT, 29). Adah, a minister’s widow who has become a prostitute and is a good-natured, motherly individual, “always of a generous turn of mind” 354, may be uncharacteristic of the town’s ethos. When Jimmy falls ill during the first winter, she wants to know what the symptoms are and donates turpentine and rum, gives instructions on how to administer the medication and also visits the dugout to ask how he is doing (WHT, 92; 95). She also keeps the faro dealer company after the hunchback stabs him and is remorseful that she does not stay with him even when the Bad Man returns: “I’ve no call to leave that dyin’ man alone” (WHT, 186). However, these actions are not decisive enough. The only way to successfully rebel against the ruling ethos of spiritual poverty would be to reject it altogether, which Adah does not do as she remains a prostitute and an inhabitant of Hard Times. Homer, Blue, Molly and Adah are similar in that they identify themselves with and become submissive to the nature of their circumstances by remaining passive.

On the surface the social context in Welcome to Hard Times seems very different compared to the other three novels examined in this study. Yet, Blue’s address to the city reader – who could have hypothetically been Homer or Langley – points to the possible presence of the Bad Man in any social context, whether it is an emerging town or a large city (or entire countries as well). In both Homer & Langley and Welcome to Hard Times cynicism and fear affect the focalised content. Homer’s focalisation is characterised by passivity and the acceptance of cynicism and fear: these are comparable to passivity in such characters as Molly, Adah and Blue – whose focalisation is characterised by both passivity and fear.

8.3. Events as possible personal and social components of the fictional world: Occurrences in Demian, Welcome to Hard Times and Homer & Langley in comparison to Narzib und Goldmund

In Narzib und Goldmund all events become relevant to Goldmund’s quest to find the Mother, which dominates his consciousness. Represented events are therefore invested with personal meaning. Because they are reflective of the individual’s experience with his social context, focalised occurrences convey both personal and social meaning. Hence in this way events (as “building blocks” of a fictional world) also become components of a possible world. They are

354 She lends Molly a pair of scissors to cut Jimmy’s hair (WHT, 115) which could be viewed as an act of kindness.
“possible” in terms of the actual world and not because of external realism, which is ultimately superficial. An event like the Black Death is certainly “credible” because of the pandemic during the mid-fourteenth century (Herforth, 2003b:68). However, its “possible world value” cannot be ascribed to “factual” connections, but rather to the accessibility relation “psychological credibility” that connects the fictional world and the actual world. Ryan (1991:45) identifies psychological credibility as an accessibility relation. It could serve as a basis for reading events as meaningful happenings when one is comparing Hesse’s and Doctorow’s novels: “TAW is psychologically accessible from AW if we believe that the mental properties of the characters could be those of members of AW. This means that we regard the characters as complete human beings to whom we can relate as persons” (Ryan, 1991:45). The events, as experienced and focalised by characters, contribute as a “building block” along with the focalising character(s), social contexts and their characters and space(s) to the creation of the fictional worlds. The fictional worlds are consequently “expressions” of such characters as Sinclair, Blue, Goldmund and the Collyers.

8.3.1. Events in Demian in comparison to Narziß und Goldmund: Intersections of lives and social events affected by the focalisers’ epiphanies

The events in both books are exemplary of Sinclair’s and Goldmund’s personal and social experiences. Their plot structure corresponds roughly because both books begin with an epiphany, followed by (social) interactions, a (social) disaster and contemplation. Demian begins with Sinclair’s recognition that it is his destiny to develop his own true self. Narziß und Goldmund commences with Goldmund’s epiphany that it is his destiny to find the Mother. Demian includes “social events” of interactions with various figures. Sinclair recurrently interacts with Demian. He also interacts with his family, Franz Kromer, Alfons Beck, Beatrice, Pistorius, Knauer and Frau Eva. Goldmund’s story ensues with the “social events” of meeting various figures that are also part of his quest, such as Narziß, Lise, a farmer’s wife, Lydia, Viktor, Meister Niklaus’s Madonna, Meister Niklaus himself, his daughter Lisbeth, Robert, Lene, Rebekka and Agnes, finally returning to Narziß. In Narziß und Goldmund the cumulative disaster of the Black Death includes Goldmund’s associations with Robert, Lene and Rebekka. Some other events still follow after the Black Death in Narziß und Goldmund (like Goldmund’s relationship with Agnes, being caught and awaiting his execution, being rescued by Narziß, returning to the monastery and sculpting, a return to the world, his final return to the monastery and his death) whilst Demian ends with the First World War. Both books conclude with contemplative considerations that are directly related to how Sinclair and Goldmund have been
affected by the events of their lives, of which the interactions with the people who have formed their lives are a significant part.

Both Goldmund’s and Sinclair’s seminal epiphanies change their relationships with their social contexts. Their epiphanies not only determine how they experience the events of their lives because of their mindsets, but also causatively determine that they experience certain events which they would not have experienced had Goldmund remained in the monastery and had Sinclair remained loyal to the “bright world”. Goldmund leaves the monastery, but also turns his back on the respectable lifestyle of his father in favour of a social position more akin to his “wild” (biological) mother’s. Sinclair’s progression is likewise a rejection of the norms and values of his middle-class family.

The social nature of Sinclair’s and Goldmund’s lives is characterised by the events of their lives intersecting with those of other figures. For example, a fairly marginal character such as Alfons Beck serves as a catalyst to draw Sinclair away from the “imbalance” of his association with the “bright realm” towards another “imbalance”, namely Sinclair’s return to the dark world: this is, in fact, a preparation for his first step towards a balanced spirituality in the form of his association with Beatrice. Goldmund’s time with Viktor and Viktor’s death are personal events which become touchstones for Goldmund’s own detachment from social contexts. He recognises the similarity between their social positions as tramps and the realities of such a life. Yet, the implication of Goldmund’s depression while measuring himself against Viktor is that he yearns for a more fulfilling existence than Viktor’s which consists of charm, trickery and theft. When he kills Viktor, a psychological effect, namely that of trauma, takes place: it leads to a subjective representation/focalisation of the personal and social event that adds to the fictional world. The fictional world is not the uncomplicated world of freedom that Goldmund has experienced with Lise and the farmer’s wife. The fictional world becomes progressively more complicated through his experiences with the knight’s daughters and even more so when he kills Viktor. The fictional world becomes the Mother World which is characterised not only by joys, but also by suffering.

The focalisation of major social disasters such as the First World War and the Black Death conveys private or individualistic and social meaning through Sinclair’s and Goldmund’s personal experiences, associations and focalisation of these disasters. Sinclair regards the First World War as a climax of human society’s tendency to reduce the importance of the individual – whom he regards as valuable and unique (D, 9; DT, 1). This also serves as the seminal impetus of the (retrospective) narration. Every sentence of the brief representation of Sinclair’s war
experiences counters conformity to a society that is principally supportive of wars. Langley’s war experiences promote his “spiritual desire” firstly to live an individualistic life free from the expectations and prescriptions of his social context and secondly also to disconnect from society. Sinclair’s war experiences gain personal value through his spiritual desire, namely to be reunited with Demian.355

Goldmund’s experiences during the Black Death are – like Sinclair’s experiences of the war – marked by his spiritual desire which is, in Goldmund’s case, to be united with the Mother. Only when Goldmund becomes insane for a while does he participate in the “social practices” during the Black Death. He becomes insane not because of the dreadful natural effects of the disease itself, but because of the (social) cruelty that he witnesses. His first acquaintance with the effects of the Black Death is a fearlessly fascinated, inquisitive and aesthetically-minded examination of a whole family in a house that fell victim to the Plague.356 To Goldmund this is also a manifestation of natural earthly life, of the Mother, albeit a catastrophic and tragic one.

The truth value of fictional world events should be understood not in terms of the events themselves, but as rooted in the nature of the events that lead to “typically human” reactions. Both the intelligible and revolting concept of killing a fellow human being, even if in self-defence as Goldmund does, and his madness after witnessing the human cruelty during the Black Death make the events plausible in possible world terms, through Goldmund’s psychologically credible reactions. In Demian one also reads of fictional events that are possible with regard to the actual world, not because of the factual relations between actual world and fictional world events, but because of credible human feelings that characterise the events. For example, the fact that Beck leads Sinclair into the world of drinkers against the background of Sinclair’s susceptibility to being drawn into the “dark realm”, is psychologically credible in the light of Sinclair’s inner conflict with regard to the “bright realm”. Sinclair is motivated during, and despite, the War to remain loyal to his spiritual quest: this results in psychological liberation. Such connections between these fictional experiences and possible actual world experiences qualify the fictional world as a possible one.

355 Sinclair’s obsession with his spiritual quest merges with the war experiences: “Die Göttin kauerte sich am Boden nieder, hell schimmerte das Mal auf ihrer Stirn. … aus ihrer Stirn sprangen Sterne, viele tausend leuchtende Sterne, die schwangen sich in herrlichen Bogen und Halbkreisen über den schwarzen Himmel” (D, 166-167) (“The goddess cowered on the ground, the mark luminous on her forehead. … from her forehead sprang stars, many thousands of shining stars that leaped in marvelous arches and semicircles across the black sky” (DT, 143). One of these “stars” then subsequently also hit Sinclair.

356 Goldmund’s fascination, curiosity and aesthetically-minded examination are signs of a (developing) acceptance of the Mother’s cruelty/the suffering of earthly life and an appreciation of the natural worldly order. The “factual”, mimetic or reality effect of the real world event of the Black Death that occurred around 1350 in Europe is less interesting than the “possibility value” of Goldmund’s psychological experiences.
Events in these two novels are relayed by different narrative voices, namely first person narration in *Demian* and third person narration (this includes free indirect speech, psycho-narration and quoted monologue) in *Narziß und Goldmund*. The focalisation of the events relays events as containing both personal and social meaning for the characters in both books. This double meaning indicates that events (such as interactions between characters and events) are, within a fictional world, not “a neutral happening”, but “psychologically processed” through the consciousness of a focaliser.

The personal experience of interactions between characters or a social event, such as a war or a pandemic, not the “historical verifiability” of an event, qualifies it as “possible”. For example, Goldmund’s numbed and trancelike behaviour in disregard of his own safety during the Black Death could be interpreted as symptomatic of (an individualistic literary form of) shock and disillusionment, but also an increasing understanding and acceptance of the nature of worldly life; likewise, Sinclair’s return to the “dark realm” when Beck “seduces” him into the world of alcohol abuse could echo the story of any person who turns to drinking when feeling depressed, as Sinclair does. The epiphanies that the focalisers experience affect the focalisation of events like interactions with characters and the experience of the social contexts and spaces of, for example, disastrous social events like the First World War and the Black Death.

8.3.2. Events in *Welcome to Hard Times* in comparison to *Narziß und Goldmund*: Personal and social focalised events as possible world components

A similarity between the events of these two very different fictional worlds (with regard to historical and spatial setting) is that both also present seminal events that are related to all the subsequent developments. The arrival of the Bad Man accompanied by his destruction of the town does not entail an epiphany like the revelation that Goldmund has forgotten his mother/the Mother. However, the arrival of the Bad Man as a seminal event, as well as the

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357 One also has to bear in mind that the nature of the relationship between the focaliser and his social context influences the character’s focalisation of events. Because Sinclair questions the norms and values of social contexts, he focalises the First World War differently from a member of the “bright world”, like his father, who would regard war service as a patriotic duty and not as a disregarding of the life of an individual – unlike Sinclair. The corpses of the family who died from and are representative of the Black Death connote a spiritual dimension for Goldmund. Through them he becomes acquainted with the cruel side of the Mother.

358 “Ich hatte mir angewönt, bei jedem Wetter kleine, denkerische Spaziergänge zu machen, auf denen ich oft eine Art von Wonne genoß, eine Wonne voll Melancholie, Weltverachtung und Selbstverachtung” (D, 74) [“I had become used to taking short meditative walks during all kinds of weather, walks on which I often enjoyed a kind of rapture tinged with melancholy, scorn of the world and self-hatred” (DT, 59)]. There is a recognisable distance between his scorn for the world, on the one hand, and his self-hatred, on the other hand. He finds himself in a liminal condition in which he cannot identify with the “bright world”, but has not yet found his own individualistic (spiritual) balance.
effects/subsequent occurrences, as focalised components are essentially part of the fictional world through the consciousness of the focalising character. In *Welcome to Hard Times* the seminal event as well as the rest of the book’s content, as an accumulative causative effect, together with the constantly unperceptive or obtuse reactions of the residents of Hard Times and the general atmosphere of the fictonal world, constitute part of Blue’s psyche and the collective spiritual state of his social context of which Blue acts as a representative. These reactions are comparable to experiences of, or reactions to, actual world events like instances of individual and collective self-victimisation. In *Narziß und Goldmund* the emphasis remains on Goldmund as a more individualistic figure. Events that are of a social nature – like the Black Death – are ultimately of special interest with regard to him.

The correspondence between the events of these fictional worlds is thus that they all form part of the fictional world as “filtered” through the focalising consciousness. For example, in *Welcome to Hard Times* the event of Blue and Zar setting off with a wagon to collect wood in order to rebuild a town appears to be optimistic. Fountain Creek is a ghost town half a day’s travel away from Hard Times. The demise of this town makes Blue and Zar superstitiously careful not to give their town a “hopeful name” because they believe that by doing that they could arrange an inverse future for their own town. Zar says to Blue: “‘Frand, you see the peril. Always the ghost city is one with name full of promise. Is that not so? We must have care in our naming not to make this mistake …’” (WHT, 65). In avoiding this irony, Blue consequently aims at the realisation of an opposite fate, namely prosperity, by giving the town a pessimistic name. He concludes at the end of the chapter after Jenks’s arrival and Molly’s giving him “a queer, bitter smile”: “... I thought why I have a safe name for this town, we’ll call it Hard Times. Same as we always called it” (WHT, 67). This is a confirmation of the state of affairs as he sees them. This outlook is strengthened by his focalisation when he returns with Zar and the wood from Fountain Creek, which colours the event:

I couldn’t believe the horses had a destination, I kept thinking I was travelling to no purpose. What good was this to that woman and that boy? What could I hope to do for them? Only a fool would call anywhere in this land a *place* and everywhere else a journey to it (WHT, 66).

The event is, in the light of the focalisation, therefore, not as proactively positive as it would seem. Instead, it is shaded by an atmosphere of fear, futility and scepticism that alienates Blue from his own dream, or ideal, to see Hard Times develop into a prosperous town.
Various events coloured by focalisation create a specific atmosphere of a personal and social nature in *Narziß und Goldmund*. Prior to Goldmund’s discovery that he ought to be a disciple of the Mother, the kiss of a girl when he and his fellow students leave the monastery during a particular night causes distress for Goldmund because of his expectation that he is destined for the abstinent life of a monk. Goldmund is in awe of the Madonna when he sees her for the first time – which is in contrast to the horror that he experienced as a result of Viktor’s death. Goldmund feels compassion for Rebekka, whose suffering he longs to alleviate by guiding her to kinder manifestations of the Mother. Events are focalised not as “neutral occurrences”, but have social implications and are dependent on a character’s experiences. Focalised events in *Narziß und Goldmund* too are filled with personal meanings that are for Goldmund related to his journey to the Mother, or a fulfilled worldly life that consists of both joys and suffering.

The events in these two novels are more unproblematically “fictional” than in, for example, *Homer & Langley*. Although there are general factual/historical events that bear resemblances to the fictional ones, like the mining of gold in the USA in the nineteenth century and the Black Death in the fourteenth century in Europa, the personal histories and their events are recognisably “fictional”. Events in *Homer & Langley* confuse the relationship between the fictional and actual worlds and require a more careful reading in order not to mistakenly accept the fictional world as a factual one merely because of similarities between the content of the novel and the contents of “factual” sources that represent the history of the actual Collyers. A reader might ask the erroneous question as to which events are “factual” and which are “fictional” in the novel, but the events that are “verifiable” are also part of a fictional world because they are ontologically on a different level from their “(f)actual counterparts”. Although the examples from *Welcome to Hard Time* and *Narziß und Goldmund* answer to the requirements of other accessibility relations, psychological credibility is particularly relevant with regard to both the actual world and focalisation. The unappealing features of superstition, doubt, cynicism, pessimism and fearful submissiveness that characterise the events in *Welcome to Hard Times* are recognisable as psychologically credible human characteristics which make the fictional world events credible in actual world terms. Actual world experiences, as manifested through focalisation, are the creative force of a fictional world. Events that are psychologically credibly represented/focalised in the fictional world abound in the actual one, in various forms. Goldmund’s confusion and guilt after having received his first kiss; his relief, wonder and

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ambition when admiring Meister Niklaus’s Madonna; and Goldmund’s empathy and desire to help Rebekka – are “actual world emotions” that tint the fictional events. These emotions connect fictional events – in the actual reader’s mind – with (possible) actual world events that are characterised by the same emotions which make the fictional world plausible or possible.

The fundamental similarity between Hesse and Doctorow is that events do not exist neutrally, but are dependent on a focaliser’s consciousness and characters’ experiences which take the form of such “real human reactions” as cynicism, fear, confusion and awe. These reactions qualify the events of fictional worlds as constitutive of possible worlds. Events in a fictional world are characteristic of the focalising character because they are mediated through his consciousness. A specific difference between Hesse and Doctorow is that represented events in Hesse’s novels are more character-focused than in Doctorow’s texts. Events as individually and uniquely focalised are part of Goldmund’s psyche. Although events also characterise social contexts in Narziß und Goldmund and uniquely focalised events are certainly part of Blue’s psyche, Doctorow’s texts emphasise events as characteristic/part of the social context. The representation of an event such as Goldmund’s first encounter with Lise characterises only Goldmund in the fictional world of Narziß und Goldmund because his childlike consciousness focuses at that stage on his attraction to a paradise-like natural world. The representation of an event such as fetching wood from Fountain Creek is characterised by Blue’s doubts and fears, but it is an individual’s association with an event which is reflective of the collective angst that exists in Hard Times. Yet, in terms of focalisation in both Hesse’s and Doctorow’s texts events do not exist independently from such personal experiences.

8.3.3. Events in Homer & Langley in comparison to Narziß und Goldmund: The importance of social transgressions as part of Homer Collyer’s and Goldmund’s stories

The events that Homer chronicles are reminiscent of Sinclair’s statement that his story is more important to him than any novelist’s is to such a writer because it is his own story (D, 9; DT, 1). Although Hesse uses an omniscient third person narrator in Narziß und Goldmund (and not first person narration as in Homer & Langley) the focalised events do have the highly personal quality that an autobiography can possess because they are relayed through such narrative techniques as free indirect speech, psycho-narration and quoted monologue. For example, the narrator
communicates through indirect speech that Goldmund’s heart contracted with pain when he reflected on an anticipated departure from the knight’s court and his daughters – and it hurt Goldmund bitterly when the departure did take place (NG, 133; NGT, 126). Goldmund intensely experiences the event of his departure not because of the social shame, but because of his attraction to Lydia and her sister, Julie. When suffering the traumatisation of Viktor’s death, his thoughts turn to Julie. In his delusions he yearns to seduce her, “daß sie mit ihm in den Himmel fahre, eine Stunde vor dem Tode noch, ein Augenblickchen vor dem elenden Verrecken” (NG, 148) [“to ride up to heaven with him during this last hour before death, for a short moment before his miserable end” (NGT, 140).] Having to depart from Lydia and Julie causes agony for Goldmund because the sisters represent a combination of worldly experiences and social interaction that he finds desirable. The event of being driven away by the knight, the consequence of Goldmund’s (and Lydia’s) breach of mores, represents an event that denotes the inhibiting effect of (artificial) social life on private/personal ideals which, in Goldmund’s and Lydia’s case – as in Romeo and Juliet – inhibits their natural mutual attraction.

Homer does not always provide an elaborated evaluation of or explicitly reveal how he feels. Yet, a represented event like Langley allowing passersby to come into the drawing room to let them hear Harold and other fellow musicians rehearse does have the personal value of a gregarious (social) gesture that is simultaneously unconventional. It leads to the end of Langley’s marriage. In the context of the novel and juxtaposed with the anticipated end – based on the fate of the actual Collyers – this event seems rather cheerful and Langley’s complaints about Lila van Dijk appear to be (chauvinistically) humorous: “… If she’d cried just once, if she had showed any vulnerability whatsoever, I would have tried to see things from her point of view if only out of respect for her womanhood. But she was intractable. Stubborn. Willful” (HL, 59). Homer’s tone when narrating this event is casual and humorous. However, the representation of this event is important to him because it forms part of the total picture of their eccentricity and reluctance to integrate with a social class resembling their parents’ one. The brothers associate with individuals whose social profiles differ from those of their parents. They also fail to integrate into “normal” society by means of marriage – of which Lila van Dijk is representative. Consequently this event is selected and allowed to pass through “the neck of the bottle”. “The neck of the bottle” (Homer and Langley) and “the content of the bottle” (unconventional social behaviour) reflect or characterise each other and are responsible for the nature of the fictional world, which is “coloured” by the individualistic asocial meaning that Homer and Langley impart to their world.
All the fictional details in *Narziß und Goldmund* that are allowed into/selected for the fictional world and have personal meaning for Goldmund, such as details in *Homer & Langley* that are personally meaningful for Homer, are also possible in actual world terms. The two events referred to above, Lila van Dijk’s disapproval of her husband’s household “transgression” and Goldmund’s being driven off by the father whose daughters he wishes to seduce, would lend themselves to caricatures because of the universality of similar occurrences in the actual world. However, the focus of the “truthfulness” of these events is not placed so much on the ubiquitous nature of disharmonious marriages and fathers’ worries about their daughters’ extramarital relations. The real possibilities are Goldmund’s regret and Langley’s anger that shape their reality (or contribute to the fictional worlds), just as experiences like regret and anger also shape actual people’s realities.

Both these “possible” events coincidentally deal with the characters’ “improper” social behaviour and have personal importance to them. Goldmund’s experience differs from Lydia’s in the sense that while he is focused on the natural attraction of Julie, Lydia is socially and religiously minded (cf. NG, 131-132; NGT, 125-126). Also in *Homer & Langley* one does observe a disparity with regard to social attitudes. The opposition of Homer’s assessment that “We were all very happy about this except for Lila van Dijk …” (HL, 59) and her sentiment that the music is “vulgar” suggests a racist and class conscious slant. But the brothers prefer to interact rather with the “disreputable” marginal social segments of society (for instance, these musicians as well as gangsters and hippies) than with the respectable middle-class because of their reservations about middle-class society. Lila van Dijk’s “screeches” (HL, 59) indicate her assessment of the whole situation as socially “ludicrous”: that “Langley would actually permit the Harold Robileaux Five to come play their vulgar music in the house without consulting her” and thereafter also allow the public entrance to the house in order to listen to the music (HL, 59). Characteristics of “the necks of the bottles” that affect the nature of the information and consequently characterise the fictional worlds are, for example, Goldmund’s *passionate* plea “Laßt uns tun, was unser Blut verlangt!” (NG, 131) [“Let us do what our blood demands!” (NGT, 125)] and his *sadness* accompanied by the departure, the brothers’ *enjoyment* of the situation that Langley orchestrates and Lila van Dijk’s subsequent distress, and their *dissatisfaction* with Lila van Dijk’s reaction. These are fictional world manifestations that are “possible” in any other fictional world and the actual one.
8.4. Space in *Demian, Welcome to Hard Times* and *Narziß und Goldmund* in comparison to *Homer & Langley*: Fictional/artistic space as dependent on a focalising consciousness

Fictional spaces – like characters, social contexts and events – as components of a fictional world have the ability to evoke the actual one. Yet, signified fictional space does not represent actual space as does a “factual one”, but relies on a similarity between human experiences in the actual world and represented fictional human-like experiences. The Collyer house in E.L. Doctorow’s *Homer & Langley* therefore does not represent the actual historical house. Ontologically different worlds, i.e. the fictional world and the actual one, may bear resemblances and coincide with regard to many points, but the author of a novel may and does also introduce differences between the actual world and the textual actual world.

The function of a fictional world/artistic space is therefore not the same as, for example, space represented by a newspaper article which purports to represent topical events and conditions in the actual world “as they really are”. The function of the fictional world is artistic and not journalistic or historiographic expression. Space is an important component of a fictional world because the focalising mind(s) present(s) spaces as either a transformed or neutral construct, but in either case as dependent on the focalising consciousness.

Furthermore, the representation of space contributes to making a fictional world a possible one. Although all the spaces in all four of the novels in this study are “anchored” to (a) historical event(s) (Wolterstorff, 1980:189) and combine “actual places” to create a fictional location (Coste, 1989:100) this study argues that the most reliable connection between the actual world and a fictional world is the reader’s recognition of a “human” personal consciousness, i.e. that the reader regards the representation of spaces as the products of characters who are “complete

361 The worlds share accessibility relations like, for example, physical compatibility and historical coherence (cf. Ryan, 1991:33; 45).

362 In his essay “False documents” Doctorow (1994c:149-178) finds the ability of any text to report “factually” and “reliably” questionable. The author’s view is reasonable, as all textual worlds can easily be manipulated.

363 Hans-Ulrich Treichel’s novel *Der Verlorene* (1999) [Lost (2000)] represents the story of the son of East European parents who fled from the invasion of the Russians towards the end of the Second World War. During the flight the mother was forced to hand her baby, Arnold, the narrator’s brother, to a woman whom she did not know. The narration begins with a description of a photograph of Arnold on a woolen blanket. The narrator experiences the space and social context (on a photograph) surrounding his brother on the blanket differently from the way in which Arnold apparently does: “Ich weiß nicht, worüber Arnold sich freute, schließlich war Krieg …” (Treichel, 1999:7) [“I don’t know what Arnold was happy about. It was a time of war after all …”]

human beings to whom we can relate as persons” (Ryan, 1991:45) and not because a fictional landscape or place evokes an actual place or landscape.

Space is therefore characterised by a focaliser who is affected by factors such as his own temperament in combination with his interaction with his social context and his personal experiences of events. The comparisons will therefore bear in mind that focalised spaces are expressive of social relationships, as Lefebvre (1991:82-83) maintains, namely that any space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationships. Space therefore also contributes to constructing a fictional world through focalisation. The combination of the selection of specific spaces like the Collyers’ house and the personal consciousness/mindset of the focaliser contributes to constructing the fictional world which includes the ambience of the fictional space(s).

8.4.1. Space in Demian in comparison to Homer & Langley: Spaces as indirect and direct reflections of the focaliser’s inner life

Spaces in Homer & Langley form a textual sub-component of Homer’s consciousness that reflects the nature of his experiences with characters, his social context and events. The meaning of space in the novel is determined through his focalisation of social relationships and events. Homer often represents spaces in an unemotional tone. This could create the impression that spaces are merely coincidental. For example, Homer, Langley and Grandmamma Robileaux sit on a park bench to avoid the smell of fuel in the house when Langley attempted to use the Model T Ford as a generator. The space of a park bench itself does not seem to be highly relevant. The bench appears to be merely a “neutral spatial entity”. However, it should also be considered in the sense that it is associated with the asocial meaning of Langley’s failed attempt at becoming more independent of the city’s electricity supplier. Furthermore, Homer, Langley and Grandmamma Robileaux could not keep from laughing (HL, 82). This also points to Homer’s acceptance of his brother’s asocial perspective on the world and life.

Homer’s acquiescence with his brother’s eccentric views is also reflected in Homer’s transformed understanding of his experience of the space of a bank:

*I liked the nice sharp sound of my stick on the granite steps of the bank.* And inside I sensed the architecture of high ceilings and marble walls and pillars from the hollowed-out murmur of voices and the chill on my ears. These were the days I thought I was acting responsibly, carrying on as a replacement of the previous Collyers as if I was hoping for their posthumous approval. *And then Langley came*
home from the World War and I realized how foolish I had been (HL, 21; my emphases – PvdM).

Homer’s sensual enjoyment of the space relates to the nature of his social role as a responsible citizen in the tradition of his parents. However, this personal meaning (of enjoyment) gains another meaning, namely that of foolishness. Langley’s antipathy towards the institution of the bank, because it is part of a social context to which he has an aversion, leads Homer to reevaluate both his “responsible action” and his being “a replacement” of his parents as foolish. The meaning of the space (as experienced through sensual pleasure) evolves from a feeling of responsibility to one of foolishness.

In addition, the less prominent spaces in the book such as the park bench and the bank contribute – like the central space, namely the house – to the fictional world as a possible one. The spaces take on specific meanings based on associations with the characters’ relationship and experience with their social context and their personal experiences. Homer associates the clinical atmosphere of the bank with responsibility and the bank bench with a benevolent acceptance of Langley’s experiment. Homer does not associate the bench with his being dissatisfied with Langley and rejecting him. If Homer had been angry at Langley for leaving the space of the house for that of the bench, departing from the house could have been interpreted as a form of angry rejection. However, the bench serves merely as a functional retreat to escape the fumes. It is, in fact, associated with acceptance. One could relate these (emotional) experiences of physical spaces to the actual world. Homer’s initial experience of the bank could be compared to, for example, one’s anticipation when entering a sports stadium or a concert hall. The bench experience could be compared to, for instance, people fleeing from smoke because of someone’s poor cooking skills – which they might also find amusing.

In the light of the association, it makes sense that towards the end of the book, following a description of Langley’s snares and traps in the rat-infested chaos, Homer commences a new section with the words: “Withal, my sense is of an end to this life” (HL, 207). This sentence also serves as a bridge between the chaotic state of the house and a juxtaposed description of the house when he and Langley were children (cf. HL, 206-207). The chaotic conditions in the house create the feeling of being overwhelmed. Anticipating “the end to this life” makes the fictional world possible because Homer poignantly recognises the space as becoming a life-threatening danger (furthermore because physical survival becomes increasingly difficult when one is cut off from one’s social context). This feeling could be likened to recognising
approaching death when faced with life-threatening situations or conditions such as accidents or illnesses.

The entire physical world in *Demian* also stands in relation to Sinclair’s states of mind, but as in *Homer & Langley*, this does not always seem to be the case. Esselborn-Krumbiegel (1998:44) describes the settings in *Demian* as interchangeable, having only vague contours and as void of “atmosphärische Bedeutung” or the meaning of the ambience of spaces. She adds that the external settings in *Demian* become virtually irrelevant due to the emphasis of the “inner setting” because external space becomes the frame of mental processes (1998:44). However, there are indications that space is relevant with regard to Sinclair’s state of mind – even if it is functioning as “a mere frame”. For example, on Sinclair’s route through the city from a pub to his hostel room where he also becomes aware of organ music emerging from a church, he describes how he moves in a specific space: “Ich ging zum Tor, das ich geschlossen fand und da die Gasse fast ohne Menschen war, setzte ich mich neben der Kirche auf einen Prellstein, schlug den Mantelkragen und hörte zu” (D, 102) [“I went to the door, found it locked, and because the street was almost deserted I sat down on a curbstone next to the church, turned up my coat collar, and listened” (DT, 84).] References to the space seem coincidental and insignificant, a mere frame for Sinclair’s actions, but one could also understand the concrete spaces as metaphors. The locked gate suggests Sinclair’s imminent movement out of his current situation as a barfly, but nonetheless being “prevented” from carrying on. The empty alley could be read as his (social) isolation, and sitting down on the curb and listening as indicative of his temporary sojourn in a “cold” and uncomfortable environment while he is already becoming receptive to new experiences.

One finds other “neutral spaces” when Sinclair looks for Frau Eva:

Es gab Tage, da traf ich lauter Gestalten, die an sie erinnerten ... die mich durch Gassen fremder Städte, durch Bahnhöfe, in Eisenbahnzüge lockten, wie in verwickelten Träumen. Es gab andere Tage, da sah ich ein, wie unnütz mein Suchen sei; dann saß ich untätig irgendwo in einem Park, in einem Hotelgarten, in einem Wartesaal und schaute in mich hinein und versuchte das Bild in mir lebendig zu machen ... (D, 135-136). [There were days when everyone I met reminded me of her ... drew me through the streets of unfamiliar cities, through railroad stations and into trains, as in an intricate dream. There were other days when I realized the futility of my search. Then I would idly sit somewhere in a park or in some hotel garden, in a waiting room, trying to make the picture come alive within me (DT, 114-115).]
Spaces like the alleys of cities, train stations, the trains, the park, the hotel garden, the waiting room, and others seem “empty” of emotional dimensions because Sinclair experiences them as coincidental. It is, however, significant that all of these spaces are locales where people gather and socialise. They are therefore social areas. The spaces also signify Sinclair’s focus on his spiritual quest that marginalises the whole (social) world. Sinclair’s focalisation of spaces as possessing a neutral frame-like character is not pointless, but meaningful with regard to his spiritual state. The “meaninglessness” does consist of an atmosphere of futility and encompasses people who remind Sinclair of Frau Eva – and is therefore meaningful after all. The “meaninglessness” of the spaces can be understood as Sinclair’s experiencing the social life of his context and its expectations as insignificant, as opposed to experiencing his focus on Frau Eva as meaningful and important.

However, spaces in *Demian* are also not always as (misleadingly) “neutral” as in the examples above, but are indeed directly reflective of Sinclair’s state of mind. On his way to Kromer after he had begun to bribe Sinclair, Sinclair is confronted with defamiliarised space, a personified city and projections of himself onto spaces and people who are, of course, inherently part of these spaces. These alter because Sinclair is preoccupied with the social unacceptability of his actions: “Es war noch viel Zeit, ich drückte mich auf Umwegen durch die Gassen einer veränderten Stadt, unter niegesehenen Wolken hin, an Häuser vorbei, die mich ansahen, und an Menschen, die Verdacht auf mich hatten” (D, 26) [“There was still a lot of time left. By a very devious route, I sneaked through the little alleys of a changed town, under a cloudy sky such as I had never seen before, past staring houses and people who eyed me with suspicion” (DT, 17).] As components of the textual actual world, the houses and the people are not suspicious, but as components of Sinclair’s fictional world they are products of his changed inner state. Like the changed “air” or the atmosphere in his parents’ living room (D, 23; DT, 14), the city is a reflection of his feelings of guilt and fear. Sinclair projects the strangeness of the situation onto the clouds and houses because he experiences the situation of being blackmailed by Kromer as strange and disturbing. These fictional spaces are possible because the reader can access Sinclair’s different “spatial experiences”. Familiar (actual world) experiences that one finds in Sinclair’s narration are, for example, those of not noticing spaces or details of spaces because of another preoccupation, or associating spaces with a certain atmosphere because of one’s

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365 The subject-object relationship between Sinclair and his social context seems to have turned around. He had been marginalised previously; now he marginalises his external world. This could be understood as a sign of spiritual confidence and independence.
memories and/or experiences and/or circumstances; i.e. the individual’s circumstances determine the experience of a space in a specific way.  

Spaces are always personally meaningful for Sinclair and Homer – even if they appear not to be so, but act as mere “frames” for the developments of the stories. Sinclair and Homer associate spaces with personal experiences which are related to their relationships with their social contexts. Because their beliefs and attitudes are in disharmony with their social context, their presence in and interactions with space and their focalisation of spaces are concrete causal effects. Sinclair’s spaces are evidently indications of his mental disposition when he projects his inner state onto spaces such as his town, its alleys, the houses and the cloudy sky on his way to Kromer, causing these to “change” or to become unique because of his personal inner experience. Another person would, in all likelihood, not experience the town as “changed, the clouds as “unfamiliar” and the houses as “distrustful”. Sinclair also marginalises spaces in his focalisation as a result of his spiritual focus which characterises spaces as mere “frames”. Space is not experienced as insignificant, but as “marginal”, expressive and personally meaningful with regard to his spirituality. The actual world reader – like the fictional characters – attaches emotional experiences to (or detaches emotional experiences from) spaces, a reaction which qualifies character experiences as “possible”.

8.4.2. Space in *Welcome to Hard Times* in comparison to *Homer & Langley*: The symbolic use of space to reflect characters’ relationships to their social contexts

When comparing Doctorow’s first novel and his latest, it is striking that space in both novels plays an important role with regard to the characters’ relationship to their social contexts. Fletcher (1970:92) explains that the imagery of trees and forests produces a type of natural banner or flag. As a flag is representative of a country, the lack of trees, which implies a lack of water, is symbolically representative of an absence of (spiritual) growth. Resorting to a

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366 The specific actual world spaces of the town where an actual world reader grew up, for example, a street, church, school, river banks, bridges and so forth also evoke emotional responses within the actual world reader because of (emotional) associations following personal experiences within these spaces. (Real) people may share the same or similar associations with specific spaces, but not necessarily. A specific space, for example, a tree may have a unique meaning for one individual because of a personal experience with it whilst another person may attach another unique meaning to the tree because his experiences differ from the first individual’s experience(s). This is the case in Wendelin van Draanen’s novel *Flipped* (2001) in which the girl Juli adores the space of the sycamore tree and the view it provides, which she discovered when she retrieved a kite from its branches. Neither the other central character, Bryce, the owner of the tree nor the workers who cut the tree down have an attachment to it that is similar to Juli’s.

367 Doctorow’s novel could be interpreted as a variation of the temptation of Jesus Christ during His forty days in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11). The temptations of the biblical story exemplify the wrong choices and the moral failure of the community of Hard Times. Both the stories are set in a desert landscape in which a longing for relief or liberation exists. Christ and the town’s inhabitants have to choose, on the one hand, between “bread” (material prosperity and physical liberation) and power against the price of selling their souls to the devil, and on the other hand, “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (spiritual integrity, a higher, more selfless goal) and exclusively serving only God in order to
physical desert is indicative of resorting to spiritual barrenness. Bevilacqua (1989:89) points out that the hyper-realistic presentations of the desert landscape confer on it the significance of a symbolic “Wasteland” in which one recognises social breakdown, individual powerlessness and enslaving feelings of doubt, loss and disorientation: “The material barrenness of the landscape they inhabit thus becomes the objective correlative of their spiritual poverty” (Bevilacqua, 1989:89). 

Blue finally longs for “some green … in the coolness of a tree’s shadow” (WHT, 208) to die. This signifies that he longs for an alternative existence to the one he had chosen in Hard Times. This longing is also connected to considering an alternative world, namely the one which Ezra Maple has chosen and which could have been Jimmy’s. Blue thus also acknowledges that his intuitive feeling that everywhere is the same was erroneous:

> When I think that Ezra Maple might have put him up on his mule and ridden him off to learn the storekeep’s trade; or that I might have taken him away myself, in those first hours, before Molly ever put her hooks into him, a carpenter’s son, just a hollow-eye orphan – a groan pushes through my lips like my ghost already in its Hell before I am dead (WHT, 208).

Here Blue admits that departing would have been a better option. The unrealised act of leaving is representative of unification with another ideal. Within the allegorical context of the novel, leaving does not signify (only) a physical spatial reallocation, but also symbolises a mindshift – a spiritual movement.

As the desert landscape is symbolic of individualistic and collective social disintegration, the house in *Homer & Langley* is also representative of (the brothers’) “social collapse”. Whilst the space of a natural landscape can be characterised by either fertility or barrenness as well as freedom (or choice) of movement that lends itself to being symbolically representative, the microcosmic space of the house is symbolic of the macrocosmic “house” of (a) national context(s) to which the principle of inner lives characterised by fear applies. The manner of Langley’s withdrawal and his “securing” himself and his brother in their house indicates an

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“live” (or survive) (Matthew, 4:4, 8-10). In the biblical story the desert becomes symbolic of spiritual strength, but in *Welcome to Hard Times* the deficiency of the physical desert spaces becomes reflective of an “inner deficiency” or an “inner wilderness” because the community miserably failed the test for spiritual strength.

368 Trenner (1983:8) agrees that Doctorow uses physical details to symbolise moral conditions, for example: “In *The book of Daniel*, the narrator’s parents end up in the electric chair at Sing Sing while the man who denounced them ends up in Disneyland at Christmastime. On the face of it, these are utterly different fates, but in a novel whose epigraph might well be ‘The failure to make connections is complicity’, they are not so different: Doctorow locates Disneyland in ‘a town somewhere between Buchenwald and Belsen’ and subjects it to a long and fierce mock-sociological analysis.” In *Welcome to Hard Times* the physical details of the desert landscape symbolically signify an absence of morality.
exaggerated fear of their social context. Because Langley consciously chooses to withdraw from society, the result is alienation, of which the house with its shutters is representative.

The spaces of the desert landscape and the house do not contribute to the possible world status of fictional worlds merely because of similarities between the physical features of, respectively, the physical landscape of the actual Dakota Flats and the fictional setting, or between the connection between Hard Times and the actual historical town called Bodie as well as the photographs of the actual historical house of the actual Collyer brothers and the fictional Collyers’ house. Rather, the characters’ experiences of their relationships with their social contexts of which the spaces are representative convey the possibility value that also creates the fictional worlds. For example, Langley is motivated by fear, as are the residents of Hard Times. It is Langley’s loss of faith in his social context, as well as his belief that everything alive is at war (HL, 200), that determine his arrangement of space in the house. The shuttered house in *Homer & Langley* concretely and metaphorically reflects fear. *Welcome to Hard Times* symbolises fear by means of the desert (barren of such “fruits” as hope, kindness in the form of social support, optimism, determinism, etc.) as well as the town ruined by the Bad Man. The residents’ fearfulness condenses into Bad Men who opt to victimise others instead of being victimised. Neither Clay Turner nor Jimmy (the new Bad Man emerging at the end of the novel) are courageous and brave, but both present a mad and deadly form of cowardice. As with the threatening waterless landscape and the ruined town, the residents’ lives are, like Turner’s life, “infertile” and only yield death and destruction of which they all finally also become victims.

Spaces in Doctorow’s first and latest novels are symbolically representative of characters’ relationships with their social contexts. The ruined town and the wilderness in *Welcome to Hard Times* connote spiritual sterility, danger and ruin. The house in *Homer & Langley* is indicative of the brothers’ isolation because of Langley’s fears and Homer’s poor self-esteem. These psychological aspects, resulting from the characters’ experiences with their social contexts, are the features which qualify these two stories as possible worlds. The possibility value of focalisation therefore contributes to the creation of fictional worlds.

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369 Both Langley’s “macro-house” and the (physical) “micro-house” fail to reassure him because he distrusts both of them. However, he decides to trust the “micro-house” slightly more.

370 The house itself no longer exists. The site is “now a small park, named after the Collyers despite the objections of some local residents” (Kurutz, 2009). However, one can still gain an impression of what the actual Collyer residence looked like by searching “Homer and Langley Collyer” on Google Images.
8.4.3. Space in *Narziß und Goldmund* in comparison to *Homer & Langley*: Character identification with space

Despite the language, cultural, historical and (social) contextual differences between the modernist *Narziß und Goldmund* (1930), set during the Middle Ages in Southern Germany, and the postmodernist *Homer & Langley* (2009), a twentieth century New York tale, the novels resemble each other with regard to the literary employment of space. Both novels coincidentally address their characters’ resistance to integrating in conventional fashion with their social contexts. Space is consequently associated with their relationships to the social contexts while space, as focalised, reflects their social roles. Owing to the personal meaning of space that is characterised by an avoidance of conforming to their social contexts, focalised space could therefore be considered an “extension” of such characters as Homer and Goldmund.

The house in *Homer & Langley* signifies the Collyer brothers’ eccentric social life, characterised by Homer’s inability to conform to his social context and Langley’s disinclination to conform because he fears the nature and power of “normal” society and its political leadership. Although the reasons for Langley’s scepticism about his parents’ middle-class lifestyle and/or how it started are unclear, many possible causes and combinations exist. They could include an associative dislike of his parents and everything associated with them. The Collyer parents were seemingly indifferent toward their sons. Langley also experienced the religious resort to which the parents took the boys when they were children as false. Reasons could include an empathetic effect following Homer’s unsettling experience with Eleanor that caused his “social insecurity”. They might also be the effects of the First World War and Langley’s inherent distrust of his social context in combination with all of the above reasons, as well as the repeated confirmation of the world as cruel following his study of the newspapers. The fact remains, Langley develops a cynical world view which is why he withdraws into the house.

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371 Hesse’s fiction is commonly regarded as “modernist” and Doctorow’s fiction as “postmodernist”. These terms refer not only to the time periods in which the writers wrote their fiction, but also to the “dominants” of their fiction. The dominant of modernist fiction is, according to McHale (1993:9-10), epistemological whilst the dominant of postmodernist fiction is ontological. One cannot argue that Hesse’s fiction is exclusively epistemological and Doctorow’s exclusively ontological. However, this differentiation does apply in a broad sense to these writers. It is a “typical” or main focus of Hesse to represent the consciousness of a central character (which includes the pursuit of understanding the relationship between the “I” of the consciousness and his world) while Doctorow is “typically” interested in social worlds (which includes the roles/activities of figures in his fictional worlds).

372 If an individual does not meet the standards or expectations set by his/her social context due to a physical handicap, physical or mental illness, mental instability or the lack of self-esteem and/or life skills, a spontaneous reaction may be to withdraw from interaction within this context because of the fear of not being accepted, of being ridiculed and so on. For example, like Homer, a person who is self-conscious about stuttering, introversion, physical appearance, or even race and sexual orientation, etcetera. may wish to participate in his social context, but paradoxically may feel at the same time compelled to withdraw from interaction with it.
However, after Langley’s return from the War, Langley and Homer initially do conduct a social life inside the house as well as outside of it, albeit an unconventional one that already signifies Langley’s distaste for the middle-class society of New York. They socialise with their servants, gangsters, hippies, and others who are allowed/invited into the house and who alter the house’s character when compared to the house of the Collyer parents’ era. An exception is Langley’s WASP wife, Lila van Dijk, whom he soon divorces. The divorce follows a symptom of his eccentric lifestyle, namely allowing the public into the Collyer residence to listen to Harold Robileaux and his fellow musicians. There is, therefore, a causal relation between Lila van Dijk’s norms and the values (like privacy and respectable behaviour) of her social sphere, and Langley’s disinclination to adhere to such norms and values, leading to the end of the marriage that denotes a break with “normal” society. Finally, the shuttered house becomes an expression of Langley’s and his brother’s roles as recluses. Furthermore, Langley uses the amassed objects and newspapers that comprise his and his brother’s microcosmic world as snares and traps for intruders, but he becomes himself a victim of them, leaving his brother to starve to death. Their lives, fate and identities are therefore associated with the space of the house which is also representative of their social demise.

Space in Narziß und Goldmund also functions according to the social roles that the characters play. Narziß, and also initially Goldmund, are associated with the “world” and space of the monastery: “In den Zellen und Sälen des Klosters, zwischen den runden schweren Fensterbogen und den strammen Doppelsäulen aus rotem Stein wurde gelebt, gelehrt, studiert, verwaltet, regiert; vielerlei Kunst und Wissenschaft wurde hier getrieben …” (NG, 10). [“The cells and halls of the cloister, between the thick round window vaults and the trim double columns of red stone, were filled with life, with teaching, learning, administration, ruling; many kinds of arts and sciences … were pursued here” (NGT, 4).] Referring to Narziß the narrator says: “Die Welt, in der er lebte und Heimat hatte, seine Welt, sein Klosterleben, sein Amt, seine Gelehrsamkeit, sein schön gegliedertes Gedankengebäude waren ihm durch den Freund oft stark erschüttert und zweifelhaft geworden” (NG, 315; my emphasis – PvdM). [“The world in which he lived and made his scholarly being, his well-constructed thought edifice – all this had often been shaken to its foundations by his friend and was now filled with doubt” (NGT, 300; my emphasis – PvdM).] The monastery is equated with another “construction”, namely his “Gedankengebäude” which Molinaro (NGT) translated as a “thought edifice”: this retains the spatial element of his thinking that is in harmony with the spaces and the existence or the culture of the monastery, i.e. includes the way of thinking there.
Goldmund, on the other hand, is wholly associated with spaces of nature and simple life, such as when (i) falling asleep before his first encounter with Lise and (ii) crossing the stream to Lise; (iii) walking with Lise through a forest:

(i) Über seine Schuhe liefen die Eidechsen … (NG, 79);  (ii) Er zog das Gewand aus und warf es ans andere Ufer, dann ging er nackt durch den tiefen, stark strömenden Bach, bis und die Brust im kalten Wasser (NG, 88);  (iii) Stumm liefen sie eine finstere Waldstrecke, zuweilen auf weichem, polstrigem Moos, zuweilen auf harten Wurzelrippen, zuweilen war zwischen spärlichen hohen Baumkronen lichter Himmel über ihnen, zuweilen war es völlig finter; Sträucher schlugen ihm ins Gesicht, Brombeerranken hielten ihn am Gewand fest (NG, 89). [(i) Lizards ran over his shoes … (NGT, 73); (ii) He pulled off his clothes and tossed them across to the opposite bank, then he waded naked through the deep, swirling stream, up to his chest in the cold water (NGT, 81); (iii) Like two mutes they moved through the dark forest, sometimes on soft moss upholstery, sometimes on hard root ribs. Sometimes the sky shone light through sparse high treetops; at other times the darkness was complete. Branches slapped his face; brambles held him back (NGT, 83).]  

These experiences cheerfully “unify” Goldmund with the natural world, which is indicative of his mindset and spiritual condition. These emotions are characterised by a new attachment to the natural world and opposed to the artificial social world of the monastery. Nature is a significant space belonging to the idea of the Mother as representative of earthly life in contrast to social spaces (in the form of the monastery life), and the monastery’s “Schulsaal, Klosterhof, Bibliothek, Schlafsaal und Kapelle” (NG, 67) [“classroom, courtyard, library, dormitory, and chapel” (NGT, 61).] Goldmund’s denunciation of all that is “social” and “artificial” can already be seen when, during the sober life of his education, he transforms “the real world” into the “images of his soul” which are abstract, dream-like spaces and suggestions of nature:

… solche kleine Anreize genügten schon, um die Haut der Wirklichkeit zu durchstoßen und hinter der friedlich dürren Wirklichkeit die tosenden Abgründe, Ströme und Milchstraßen jener Seelenbilder zu entfesseln. Ein lateinisches Initial

373 There are various other examples such as when pursuing Lydia (NG, 115; NGT, 109) and the night when he met Franziska (NG, 155; NGT, 147). It is also noteworthy that these experiences of natural spaces are connected to women who function in this novel as representative of earthly life.
wurde zum duftendem Gesicht der Mutter, ein langgezogener Ton im Ave zum Paradiestor, ein griechischer Buchstabe zum rennenden Pferd, zur bäumenden Schlange, still wälzte sie sich unter Blumen davon … (NG, 67-68). […] these small stimulants were enough to puncture the skin of reality, to unleash the raging abysses, streams, and milky ways of an image world of the soul that lay beneath peacefully barren reality. A Latin initial changed to his mother’s perfumed face, a long note in the Ave became the gate to Paradise, a Greek letter a galloping horse, a rearing serpent … that quickly slithered off through the flowers … (NGT, 61-62).

This frame of mind leads to his spiritually-driven resistance to conforming to any forms of social life on a permanent basis. Even though he finds the simple (social) life in the peasant’s house (NG, 109) agreeable, it is because it is less artificial and more natural than his father’s world and the monastery. Yet, social spaces ultimately remain only temporary stopovers before Goldmund returns to the spaces that are associated with natural earthly life.

Nonetheless, despite his loyalty to the “world of the Mother”, Goldmund is not wholly asocial (as Narziß is also not a wholly “social” person) when considering a space void of people: “Aber immer und immer allein zu bleiben und zwischen den stillen schlafenden Baumstämmen zu hausen und zwischen den Tieren zu leben, die vor einem davonliefen und mit denen man nicht sprechen konnte, das würde unerträglich traurig sein” (NG, 97). [“But living alone forever and ever, among the quietly sleeping tree trunks, with animals that ran away, with whom one could not speak – that would be unbearably sad” (NGT, 91).] Goldmund is a Thoreau-like figure who wants to learn from nature, but does not cut himself off from all social contact374; yet he neither binds himself to social life like Narziß nor to the people at the marketplace selling and buying fish.375

Goldmund focalises nature as a principle for earthly life with admirable “character traits” that represents his spiritual state and longings. When looking at the winter landscape while living

374 Cf. “Visitors” (Thoreau, 1937:127-139): “I think that I love society as much as most … I am naturally no hermit …” (Thoreau, 1937:127). The women in Goldmund’s life also play a social function: “Keine Menschen sehen, niemandem guten Tag und gute Nacht sagen, in keine Gesichter und Augen mehr blicken, keine Mädchen und Frauen mehr ansehen, keinen Kuß mehr spüren …” (NG, 97). [“Not to see people, not to say good morning and good night to anyone; no more faces and eyes to look into; no more girls and women to look at, no more kisses …” (NGT, 91).]

375 These people at the marketplace are reminiscent of the middle-class section of society, the “Furchtsamen”, “die Frommen und Gott Wohlgfälligen” (D, 36) [“the timid”, “the pious, the chosen ones of the Lord” (DT, 26)] in Demian because they ignorantly live their (social) lives that are determined by conformity, an absence of deeper understanding of themselves and their environments, questioning and a lack of individualism in general.
with the knight and his daughters, he personifies nature as an ideal with which he longs to be united:

… wie ruhig, wie rührend und fromm gaben sich Acker und Wald, Hügel und Heide der Sonne, dem Wind, dem Regen, der Dürre, dem Schnee hin, wie schön und sanft leidend trugen Ahorn und Esche ihre Winterlast! Konnte man nicht werden wie sie, konnte man nichts von ihnen lernen? (NG, 129). […] how quiet, how gracefully and piously field and forest, hill and heath gave in to sun, wind, rain, draft and snow, how beautifully and gently maple and ash bore the burden of winter! Could one not become as they, could one learn nothing from them? (NGT, 122-123).]

The personification of nature through “gaben sich … hin” [“gave in to”] and “Winterlast” [“burden of winter”] reveals Goldmund’s personal experience of nature that is marked by his (spiritual) longing to be able to endure suffering. This is reminiscent of D.H. Lawrence’s short poem “Self-Pity” in which a bird is personified and presented as admirable: “I never saw a wild thing / sorry for itself. / A small bird will drop frozen dead from a bough / without ever having felt sorry for itself” (Lawrence, 1957:198). Both the poem and Goldmund’s ideal point to a natural stoic acceptance of all manifestations of earthly life, which he only manages at the end of his life. Resisting hardship (not to be confused with a natural survival instinct such as when he is in prison awaiting his execution) is in Goldmund’s mindset a form of social behaviour, whilst the acceptance of hardship, for instance enduring the Mother’s fingers in his chest when dying (NG, 329) is a natural form of earthly life.

Goldmund’s “social thinking”, which differs from that of a stoical nature, is also associated with his experiences of Viktor’s companionship and Viktor’s death that affect his experiences of space. Because Goldmund fears becoming a duplicate of Viktor, the former experiences the space of a vagrant’s world as incomprehensible and hostile and the stars as derisive (NG, 144; NGT, 136). When he kills Viktor the social taboo of killing a fellow human being – although in self-defence – causes extreme angst and agony which transforms his immediate space into a cruel environment. He becomes lost in the deserted, snow-covered landscape and moves in a disorientated manner through the barren snow-covered heath (NG, 146-148; NGT, 139-140): “Er fiel über Gesträuch, er rannte gegen Bäume, er griff stürzend in Schnee und Dornen” (NG, 148). [“He stumbled over bushes, ran into trees; falling, he groped for snow and thorns” (NGT, 141).] These experiences of the natural world reveal Goldmund’s disharmony with the cruel manifestations of the Mother at that stage.
However, his space also reflects a recovered harmony with “gentle” manifestations of the Mother after having left Christine, a farmer’s wife, who sheltered him following the ordeal of having killed Viktor: “Wieder trieb das Eis die Flüsse hinab, wieder duftete es unterm faulen Laub nach Veilchen, wieder lief Goldmund durch die bunten Jahreszeiten, trank mit unersättlichen Augen die Wälder, Berge und Wolken in sich ein …” (NG, 152). [“Again ice was floating down the rivers, and a scent of violets rose from under the rotten leaves. Goldmund walked through the colorful seasons: his insatiable eyes drank in the forests, the mountains, the clouds …” (NGT, 144).] Goldmund’s focalisation of nature therefore evolves, based on his interactions with individuals. Nature was kind and soothing when he was with Lise, cruel and wounding after he killed Viktor and beautiful after having left Christine. The sum of all experiences of space is finally equal to Goldmund as a character and indicative of his inner conflict with regard to resisting social behaviour versus stoic natural acceptance.

Various spaces are part of Goldmund’s identity/self because of the personal meaning that spaces signify for him. For example, towards the end of the novel memories of spaces associated with personal experiences are prevalent when he is awaiting his execution and also when returning to the monastery (cf. NG, 269; 289; 291; 292). There are no striking indications that Goldmund remembers spaces differently from how he has experienced them. The spaces he recalls include not only those which he associates with his pleasant and “uncomplicated” days, but also those with which he associates difficult experiences. The various spaces carry the personal meaning of evoking his days as a carefree tramp, being an artist as well as undergoing suffering, that collectively “create” Goldmund:376

Alle diese vielen, weit zerstreuten Orte, diese Heiden und Wälder, diese Städte und Dörfer, Burgen und Klöster, alle diese Menschen, sie mochten leben oder tot sein, wußte er in sich innen vorhanden und miteinander verbunden, in seiner Erinnerung, in seiner Liebe, seiner Reue, seiner Sehnsucht (NG, 260). [“So many widely scattered places, heaths and forests, towns and villages, castles and cloisters, and people alive

376 The descriptions preceding the following quote reflect the integration of experiences with other characters and spaces: “… alle diese Gegenden … waren einmal Nähe und Gegenwart gewesen. In diesen Wäldern hatte er hundertmal geschlafen, hatte Beeren gegessen, hatte gehungert und gefroren, über diese Bergkämme und Heidestriche war er gewandert, war froh und traurig, war frisch und war müde gewesen. Irgendwo in dieser Ferne, jenseits des Sichtbaren, lagen die verbrannten Knochen der guten Lene, … da draußen lag der tote Viktor, und irgendwo auch, weit und verzaubert, lag das Kloster seiner Jugendjahre … lief arm und gehetzt die arme Rebekka oder war umgekommen” (NG, 260). [“All these regions … had once been close and present. A hundred times he had slept in those forests, eaten berries, been hungry and cold, crossed those mountain ridges, and stretches of heath, been happy or sad, fresh or fatigued. Somewhere in that distance, far out of the range of vision, lay the charred bones of good Lene … somewhere out there lay dead Viktor, and somewhere too, far off in the enchanted distance, was the cloister of his youth … and poor, destitute, hounded Rebekka was still roaming there if she had not perished” (NGT, 247).] The references to these experiences contribute to the overall picture of Goldmund’s life.
and dead existed inside him in his memory, his love, his repentance, his longing (NGT, 247).

These actual world human emotions (love, regret and longing) that human beings associate with spaces on the basis of their social interactions and experiences are the factors which make the fictional world in *Narziß und Goldmund* “possible”. Focalised space is a connection between the fictional world and the actual world through personal and social experiences that actual people and fictional characters may share to a greater or lesser degree. Because of Homer’s and Langley’s social experiences they withdraw from society. The house is a space associated with a bizarre form of withdrawal, but whenever people in the actual world withdraw into their houses, movie cinemas, holiday resorts and so forth they do so in order to avoid social interaction. Like Knulp, Goldmund maintains an escapist focus by resisting becoming a “conventional citizen”, but without becoming completely asocial. The Collyers identify themselves with the house just as Goldmund identifies himself with nature. The similarity between these acts of identification is that the characters associate themselves and their “(a)social” identities with these spaces because of the distance that exists between such spaces and the social contexts.

The fictional spaces in these novels reflect Homer’s, Langley’s and Goldmund’s resistance to integrating, in a “normal” fashion, with their social contexts. The Collyers consequently identify themselves with the space of their house because of their positions within their social contexts or their “social roles”. Because of these experiences, spaces in *Homer & Langley*, as in *Narziß und Goldmund*, are indicative of the characters’ spiritual states. Goldmund’s enjoyment and admiration of natural spaces occur because he yearns to identify himself with the natural world instead of with the artificial social world. Self-identification with spaces is intelligible because people do identify themselves with spaces with regard to their social roles and histories. For example, (actual world) people “recognise themselves” in the town or city from which they originate and/or live and work while they identify themselves to a greater or lesser degree with the social conventions of these contexts and with how the social contexts are regarded by their residents. They also identify themselves with their places of residence or spaces where they endure or enjoy personal or spiritual experiences that become part of their identities – although not always in such a peculiar fashion as the Collyers do.

### 8.5. Conclusion

Comparing the novels of Hermann Hesse and E.L. Doctorow may seem an unusual approach because of the obvious historical, national and cultural differences that exist between the authors, the differences between the works of fiction and the absence of direct influences between the
Nevertheless, the similarities which emerge from the comparisons of Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictional worlds indicate that focalisation plays a significant role in the creation of such worlds. A reader spontaneously makes connections between (sometimes quite different) fictional worlds as well as between the fictional world(s) and his actual world, which may also differ greatly from the fictional world of a novel that he is reading. However, despite enormous dissimilarities between such worlds, the reader is still able to access and believe in fictional worlds on the basis of his knowledge and experiences of the actual world. Human experiences related to the actual world therefore enable a comparison between dissimilar fictional worlds like those of Hesse and Doctorow.

The actual world relations, for example, Ryan’s “psychological credibility” with regard to the focalisation of characters including the focaliser, his social context, events and space(s), makes synergistic relationships between these “building blocks” – in order to create a fictional world – possible. Further interrelationships exist between the “building blocks” themselves. Both the relationships between the “building blocks” and the fictional world, and the interrelationships between the “building blocks” themselves, are a result of the unifying effect of focalisation. The synergistic relationship between the focaliser, his social context, events and space(s) constitutes a fictional world because the text itself is a product of the consciousness of the focaliser that is a “possible world ingredient”. The fictional world therefore comes about because of the possible (actual) world value of focalisation.

When considering a focaliser like Emil Sinclair in comparison to Blue, Goldmund and Homer Collyer one notices that the other “building blocks” not only constitute the fictional world, but are also reflective of the focaliser. The individualistic mindset of the focaliser, affected by the nature of his interaction with his social context, manipulates the “building blocks” in such a way that the fictional world characterises him. The focalised textual actual worlds – or fictional worlds – are uniquely associated with such focalisers as Sinclair, Blue, Goldmund, Homer and Langley Collyer. Demian functions well as an introductory example of a fictional world in

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377 Doctorow, who published his first novel, Welcome to Hard Times, in 1960 could not have influenced Hesse’s oeuvre which was by and large concluded in 1943 with The Glass Bead Game or Das Glasperlenspiel: Versuch einer Lebensbeschreibung des Magister Ludi Josef Knecht samt Knechts hinterlassenen Schriften herausgegeben von Hermann Hesse – with the exception of writings like Krieg und Frieden (1946), Späte Prosa and Briefe (1951) and Beschworungen (1955) before Hesse’s death in 1962. There are also no indications, as far as could have been ascertained, that Hesse’s works played an influential role in Doctorow’s oeuvre.

378 The fictional worlds of Demian and Welcome to Hard Times are respectively “synonymous” with Sinclair and Blue. Although the fictional world of Narziß und Goldmund also includes focalisation of by other characters, for example, Narziß and Robert, and Homer & Langley Collyer, the fictional world of Narziß und Goldmund is first and foremost Goldmund’s world while the fictional world of Homer & Langley is “Homer’s world” because of the predominance of, respectively, Goldmund’s and Homer Collyer’s focalisation.
which the social context, events and spaces are firmly associated with the identity of the focaliser, Emil Sinclair.

It is evident, in *Welcome to Hard Times* as well as in the other novels, that the central figure’s experiences of his social context affect his focalisation. In *Demian* an inner conflict with regard to the collective beliefs and way of life of the social context that differ from Sinclair’s personal beliefs and behaviour, arises in Sinclair as the focaliser. Whilst comparing *Demian* to *Welcome to Hard Times* one encounters the difference between Blue’s oblivious fatal identification with the social context – due to his mistaken concentration on only wanting to see the town grow and making the same mistake of being careless towards his fellow residents – and Sinclair’s refusal to identify with the social context of his parents. Doctorow’s first and last novels both represent the similarity that fear and passivity are results of the figures interacting with their social contexts.

In the comparison between *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Welcome to Hard Times* one also observes that social contexts are, in a fictional world, inseparable from the focalising consciousness. Goldmund’s focalisation of his textual actual world that is characterised by his longing for (kind manifestations of) the Mother opposes conformity as a prerequisite for functioning within the “artificial” social world. Blue conflictingly focalises his textual actual world as both potentially liberating and doomed. The relationship between the individual and the social contexts therefore determines both Goldmund’s and Blue’s thinking – and focalisation. The supposition of a social context existing independently from the focaliser is modified (from this hypothetical version, not part of the fictional world itself) into a focalised social context (which is part of the fictional world).

As the following chapter will point out, one can conclude that not only social contexts, but events and space(s) are, as part of the fictional worlds, inseparable from the focalising consciousness. Because of social experiences regarding events and spaces both take on personal and social meaning (that is recognisable when one considers events in *Demian* and *Narziß und Goldmund* in terms of the central figures’ epiphanies). Furthermore, the events and spaces in these novels are “possible” in terms of the actual world because of character experiences that approximate actual world experiences, i.e. experiences of actual human beings that characterise focalisation.
Chapter 9

9. Conclusion

A hypothetical actual world reader may often notice that works of fiction which appear to be very different “echo” each other. Other people’s experiences remind one of one’s own experiences as well as vice versa. Social contexts, events and spaces remind one of other social contexts, events and spaces. Such human reactions are not restricted to the borders of the actual world. Fictional experiences, social contexts, events and spaces can and do comment on the actual world. Fictional worlds inform, educate, comfort, encourage and inspire actual people. Hence Cornils (2009:2) maintains that Hesse’s writings “offer moments of sublime beauty and important clues for the understanding of the human psyche”. This assessment might apply to Doctorow’s fiction as well. This implies that a natural interest in certain aspects of human life precedes the acts of reading and writing. Hesse’s and Doctorow’s sensibility towards human life and their ability to convert it artistically into fiction is a preparation for the experience that a “novel is a printed circuit through which flows the force of a reader’s own life” (Doctorow, 1994c:151). The transworld identification with fictional experiences and perspectives defines the “human nature” of a fictional world. Moreover, it is also the element of fiction that enables the creation of such worlds.

This study enquired into the relationship between focalisation and the construction of fictional worlds and how this relationship can be explained in works by these authors. The reason for these questions is that critics and scholars have not previously specifically considered the actual world value of fictional world in the form of the psychological credibility that focalisation imparts. This study also investigated what the relationship between the focalising character(s), focalised social contexts, events and space(s) in the texts by Hesse and Doctorow in terms of fictional worlds, possible worlds and the actual world entails. Actual people can identify with characters in terms of these fictional world “building blocks”. This study considered these fictional constructs as “likenesses” of actual people, social contexts, events and spaces, not as mimetic reproductions of specific actual world manifestations, but as possibilities.379

379 Doležel (1999:257) cites the interesting example of Doctorow’s *Ragtime* to argue that the possible world of historical fiction is not a historical world. In *Ragtime* Emma Goldman, Teddy Roosevelt, Harry Houdini, Sigmund Freud, etc. interact with characters like Father, the Little Boy, Younger Brother, Mameh, Tateh, the Little Girl, etcetera. Doležel (1999:257) is of course correct in arguing that *Ragtime* is invalid “as a history of the American society at the beginning of the twentieth century”. However, this assertion focuses on the factual credibility of the fictional world. Nonetheless, the psychological credibility of *Ragtime* as well as other fiction by Doctorow as well as Hesse in which “fictional persons coexist and interact with counterparts of historical persons” (Doležel, 1999:257) and, one might add, with counterparts of actual world spaces, does comment on the actual historical world. The fictional world is not a factual historical representation of the actual historical world, but is not
fictional constructs are not “photographs” of people, social contexts, events and spaces in the actual world. They are themselves unique, but not independent from this world. What links them with it, i.e. their possibility value, is their “human nature” in the form of psychological credibility. A reader may recognise a “fictional unit” like the perspective and experience of a focalising character as familiar, moving and applicable to his own life or that of another person. Such an experience may lead to an enhanced understanding of oneself or another person. The practical or educational value of a fictional text (whether a novel, a film or a play) is unique for every individual and is also an aspect of fiction which contributes to the creation of a fictional world that an author effects via his focaliser(s).

Chapter 9 will review the path that has been followed by presenting an overview of the chapters and their conclusions. Subsequently, this chapter will offer the final conclusions. It will specify the contribution which this study offers to the existing research on focalisation, fictional worlds and possible worlds against the background of the overview. This concluding chapter will finally point to some possible further areas of research that pertain to the topic of this study, namely the relationship between focalisation and fictional worlds.

Chapter 2 furnished the theoretical framework for the argument that focalisation contributes to the creation of fictional worlds as possible ones. This creation occurs primarily through the act of narration, in which the narrator represents his and the characters’ perceptions of their social contexts, events and spaces. The chapter argued that in order to understand how focalisation contributes to the creation of fictional worlds, one must be aware of the interrelations between possible worlds, fictional worlds and focalisation. The concepts of M. Ryan, L. Doležel, R. Ronen and T.G. Pavel formed the theoretical basis of the thesis with regard to possible worlds and fictional worlds. G. Genette’s and M. Bal’s theories provide the foundation of this study with regard to the concept of focalisation as contributing to the creation of fictional worlds as regards focalisation.

The central question of Chapter 2 was therefore: What are the interconnections between possible worlds, fictional worlds and focalisation as part of narration? The chapter concluded that a possible world may be possible in terms of either a fictional world or the actual one. In both cases the possible world is created through the processes of a mind that mediates the possible world through language or other semiotic means like images, sounds, music, and so forth. In a
fictional world the narrator relays a story from his and/or another character’s perspective, this being influenced by his experiences within his textual actual world.

The focalising consciousness subsequently transforms the textual actual world into a unique, individualistic and unavoidably subjective representation of the textual actual world: this is the fictional world. The “human nature” of the textual focalising consciousness (or the “actual world value” of focalisation) lends the fictional world its truth value. The “possible world nature” of focalisation is also, in fact, the impetus for the creation of the fictional world.

A fictional world as a possible world is truthful in terms of the actual one because of the basis on which a fictional world comes about, namely its imaginability, plausibility and causality with regard to “psychological credibility”. Factuality alone cannot either create a fictional world or authentically/truthfully represent the actual world because a focaliser/focalisers will inevitably “manipulate” “facts” to become part of an “inner sight”. A fictional world may therefore be factually unreliable, but truthful and possible, i.e. be a possible world because it has been created through a credible psychological perspective that is also possible in the actual world.

Chapter 3 contextualised focalisation and fictional worlds as possible worlds in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction and as such constitutes part of a twofold basis for the following analyses and comparisons. This chapter argued that the authors’ works are – despite obvious differences – comparable with regard to how fictional worlds come to pass through focalisation that is characterised by the mindsets of individual focalisers. This chapter presented independent descriptions of Hesse and Doctorow’s work, emphasising literary concerns in each writer’s fiction. The main questions of this chapter were: What could be considered comparable “characteristic” features of each writer? and: How would a comparison between these writers contribute to the argument that focalisation is a significant aspect in the creation of fictional worlds? This chapter aimed to describe each writer’s fiction individually and comparatively. Its purpose was also to discuss Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction as characteristically “realistic” in the light of actual world connections/accessibility relations – and most importantly “psychological credibility”. It aimed to show that considering both writers’ fictional worlds to be possible ones would support the argument that focalisation contributes to the creation of fictional worlds.

Chapter 3 concluded that “superficial” resemblances indeed exist between the actual world and Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fictional worlds. These similarities are, coincidentally, part of artistic expressions that are truthful. However, factual similarities between the actual world and fictional worlds neither form the fictional worlds nor determine the truth value of the texts. The more authentic and valuable connection between the actual world and Hesse’s and Doctorow’s
fictional worlds is the “realism” of Ryan’s (1991:31-47) accessibility relations. The most important actual world connection or accessibility relation between their fictional worlds and the actual world is “psychological credibility”, in the light of the concept that mindset-determined focalisation essentially contributes to the creation of a fictional world.

Chapters 4 to 7 furnished four textual analyses that were intended to provide concrete examples of the creative role of focalisation with regard to fictional worlds. These analyses concentrated on four core focalised objects of a fictional world that match Van Luxemburg’s, Bal’s and Weststeijn’s (1981:181-182) three objects of focalisation, namely characters, space(s) and events that have been divided into: (1) the central focalising subject or individual; (2) the social context (characters); (3) events (as part of a fictional world’s relation to the actual world via the concept of a literary text as a possible world) and (4) space(s) (and/or landscapes including objects belonging to specific spaces).

Chapter 4 investigated the character and retrospective narrator, Emil Sinclair, in the novel *Demian*, whose subjective frame of mind determines the structure and ambience – the total composition – of his fictional world. The focus in this chapter is placed on the individual’s recreation of the textual actual world as his personal creation of the fictional version. This fictional world is ultimately a retrospective “self-representation”. This introductory textual analysis focused on all the “building blocks” of the fictional world considered in this study. The basic point of departure of this chapter was Bal’s notion that all elements which together form the fictional world – the characters, landscapes or spaces (and their objects) and events – are focalised.

In the textual analysis of *Demian* the notions of M. Bal, M. Ryan and A. Nünning provide a theoretical basis that is specifically relevant for the argument that, through his consciousness, the individual Sinclair creates the fictional world, i.e. by “transforming” textual actual world components into individualised fictional world ones.

Through this focalisation the reader obtains a representation of a specific, subjective interpretation (Bal, 1981:181-182). The focaliser’s perspective, i.e. Sinclair’s representation of his textual actual world, is unique or individualistic because of his psychological mindset (“instelling”) (Bal, 1990:114). The chapter also considered the fictional world/possible world as reflective of Sinclair’s mental and emotional disposition against the background of Nünning’s (2001:209) notions regarding “radical constructivism”, for example, that Sinclair’s textual world is a “subject-dependent construct”. Ryan echoes Nünning’s theories by maintaining that narrative semantics is “rooted in an exploration of the world-making activity through which we
interact and try to shape the world we regard as actual.” The chapter also kept in mind that the fictional world is accessible from the actual one because of Ryan’s (1991:51) “minimal point of departure” which entails that readers will project everything that they know about reality onto the textual world and will make only the adjustments dictated by the text.

In order to perceive the fictional world in this light the question arises: How does Sinclair represent his textual actual world? The aim of Chapter 4 was therefore to categorise Frau Eva, Demian, God, the devil and Abraxas as exemplary interpretative indications of Sinclair’s state of mind. These were considered in connection with the characters, the social context(s), events and space(s) that define the “sum” of both the fictional world and of the individual, Emil Sinclair, himself.

Sinclair’s personal journey towards a spiritual or mental and emotional balance, with regard to differentiating between what is truly right and wrong, is central with regard to the creation of the fictional world in *Demian*. The events of his spiritual “journey” or “education” comprise a development with regard to self-understanding and individual integrity that is not prescribed by the norms and values of his social context, but by spiritual/psychological self-discovery or simply “getting to know himself”. In Sinclair’s social context God and His (biblical) guidelines for human life do not entirely correspond with the real deity and his wishes for humankind, but have become social constructs, i.e. the word “God” within Sinclair’s social context does not signify the deity, but a social concept of God. A social understanding of God, often within the context of church life, can become a subjective view of God and His nature based on biblical content that justifies this subjective interpretation, arguing that it is objective, rather than one subjectively determining the point of view. Such points of view are not necessarily always manipulated and wrong or wholly erroneous, but are at least false in the sense that they are one-sided and incomplete. Sinclair’s view of God could be part of the “multiplicity of witnesses” (cf. Friedl and Schulz, 1988c:113) that broadens instead of fixes and curbs an understanding of God.

Sinclair’s search for “what is right for him” or quest to avoid “true sin” suggests a personal relationship between himself and God. What is truly right for a person as an individual may be a “social sin”, while “acceptable social behaviour” like supporting a war could be truly wrong for an individual. On the first page of the book Sinclair argues that wars deny the very concept of

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380 This is similar to the mistake of “the power of the regime” (cf. Doctorow, 1994c:152) which pretends to be objective, but, in actual fact, subjectively and rigidly binds a specific signification to a reading of something. For example, “the power of the regime” in a newspaper report about an event dictates that the “textual world” is incontestible and that the communication of the event is correct, true and complete.
self-realisation (cf. D, 9; DT, 1). Self-realisation in *Demian* is therefore “socially undesirable” because the (social) expectation is one of conformity. The imbalances and injustice of Sinclair’s social context influence the way he views himself, as well as the people around him who belong to his social context, events and spaces.

As a child Sinclair recognises that the world of his parents is, in a certain sense, “false”. He recognises that they appear to deny the nature of the (textual) actual world as it really is – at least in their own lives. Sinclair is attracted to the “dark world”, i.e. he realises that his true being does not only consist of “goodness” – or rather what his social context considers to be decent, respectable and civilised. This recognition leads him to “experiment” with his spiritual identity and his relationship with his social context. His first ignorant and clumsy attempt at spiritual and social self-discovery is to become part of the company of a socially deviant and spiritually warped boy named Kromer who oppresses him. This relationship with Kromer influences his mindset, which leads to interesting forms of focalisation clearly illustrating that a focaliser’s consciousness transforms components of the textual actual world. The hypothetical actual world reader recognises these “transformed components” as “human”. When one is in high or low spirits one’s perspective leads one to focus on specific “actual world components” and “colour” the actual world as more beautiful or ugly than it really is. In Sinclair’s case, for example, the focalisation of his parental home reveals a subjective “transformation” of a physical space and its objects and his social context into a unique, subjective and individualistic space and social context:

Der Hut und Sonnenschirm, der gute alte Sandsteinboden, das große Bild überm Flurschrank, und drinnen aus dem Wohnzimmer her die Stimme meiner älteren Schwester, das alles war lieber, zarter und köstlicher als je, aber es war nicht Trost mehr und sicheres Gut, es war lauter Vorwurf” (D, 21). [The hat and parasol, the old standstone [sic] floor I was so fond of, the broad picture above the hall cupboard, the voice of my elder sister coming to me from the living room were all more moving, more precious, more delicious than ever before, but they had ceased to be a refuge and something I could rely on; they had become an unmistakable reproach (DT, 12).]

Earlier Sinclair had associated his parental home, its objects and its people with security, comfort and enjoyment. These subjective and conforming experiences consequently change their character into “unmistakable reproach”. His parents and sisters do not share this subjective interpretation. Their experiences of the Sinclair residence and their social context are likely to be similar to Sinclair’s earlier ones. The presence of Kromer in Sinclair’s life, which is a result...
of Sinclair’s desire for a spiritual balance, therefore influences Sinclair’s individualistic focalisation that contributes to the fictional world.

Sinclair, an example of a faceless human, “transforms” himself into a striking individual by means of his unique story in which he represents and focalises his social context, events and spaces in such a way that they acquire personal meaning (cf. D, 9-10; DT, 1-2). The focalising and focalised individual, Sinclair, and the “building blocks” of the fictional world are interrelated. For example, after the Kromer episode he became temporarily a loyal or compliant member of the “bright world”. However, recognising that his individualistic integrity does not allow him to continue as an unquestioning individual, he focalises the sweet smell of the gingerbead, which represents the “bright world”, as familiar with regard to the memories of his childhood, but foreign with regard to his role in his family and social context (cf. D, 82; DT, 67). The focalised events are not just merely coincidental occurrences as they might seem to someone with a different perspective from Sinclair’s, but are signs of his spiritual journey. Such events as Demian liberating Sinclair from Kromer’s control; Sinclair returning to the “bright world”; returning to the “dark world” as a barfly; the appearance of Beatrice in Sinclair’s life; befriending Pistorius; becoming more involved in Demian’s and Frau Eva’s personal lives, as well as the First World War, are all markers of Sinclair’s journey as “ein Suchender” (D, 10) or “a “seeker” (DT, 2) and uniquely cause an individualistic portrayal of his social context, spaces and himself.

Chapter 4 concluded that the entire textual (re)presentation is “synonymous” with the individual because of his self-reflexive focalisation. Demian is an ideal example to demonstrate how the (retrospective) narration of and about the individual and his textual actual world, including characters and his social context(s), events and space(s), forms a fictional world that is transformed into self-reflection through focalisation.

Chapter 5 proceeded from the initial focus on the focaliser towards the determining influence that a social context exerts on the individual and consequently the focalisation of the individual, in this instance Blue in the novel Welcome to Hard Times. The main questions of this chapter are: How does the focaliser represent the social context of his textual actual world and what does he emphasise? And: How does Blue’s relationship with this social context affect his focalisation? The chapter aimed to explore the social context in the novel by means of a social model derived from Blue’s narration. Lotman (1977:212) points out that “[t]he beginning has a defining and modeling function; it is not only evidence of existence, but also a substitute for causality, a category of later origin.” The first page of the novel immediately introduces three
distinct categories – the beginning of a “social model”: the victimiser (the Bad Man from Bodie), the paralysed victims (Florence and “we all”) and the literal desert space with symbolic significance that determine, through social interrelationships, the course of the fictional developments. This social model, allowing one to understand the characters according to their “social roles”, constitutes a prominent feature of the fictional world – and bears similarities to actual world social contexts. Keeping Lotman’s views on the text’s beginning in mind, the chapter aimed at connecting them to preceding extra-textual causal elements\textsuperscript{381} as well as to intra-textual developments.

The views of Viktor Frankl (1964) [1946], feminist activists against prostitution such as M. Farley (1998), M.A. Baldwin (1992) and C.A. MacKinnon (1993) as well as the views of Talcott Parsons in conjunction with those of G.M. Platt and N.J. Smelser (1974) offer a theoretical underpinning for the analysis of the social context as the product of the mindset of the community in Doctorow’s \textit{Welcome to Hard Times} and the mindset of the focaliser, Blue, which concurs with that of the community.

The chapter considered Blue’s narration in terms of subjective or coloured/involved focalisation (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:80; Bal, 1990:113), corresponding with Bal’s (1990:120) question “What is the focaliser’s mindset?” It also discussed the social context of the novel as a “building block” of the fictional world against the background of Parsons’s, Platt’s and Smelser’s (1974:1-29) Freudian notion that reality is constituted by interacting individuals (1974:22), that “externalized symbols” (like the social community of Hard Times) are “social, psychological, and organic subsystems of action” (1974:16) and that “goal-attainment” is only possible as a collective process (1974:20). The chapter also considered Doctorow’s novel against the background of the dehumanising and imprisoning elements of prostitution as metaphoric for the social relationships in Hard Times because the inhabitants “sell themselves” to an abusive and self-destructive mental disposition. The chapter furthermore also read \textit{Welcome to Hard Times} against Viktor Frankl’s \textit{Man’s search for meaning: an introduction to logotherapy} which describes situations of psychological imprisonment in particular that evoke and comment on mental states of imprisonment in the novel.

The fictional world of \textit{Welcome to Hard Times} is also the product of a focaliser’s mindset. The analysis of focalisation, in terms of the fictional world as a possible world and how the fictional

world comes to exist, reveals that the social context as a central focalised “building block” of the fictional world consists of everything that Blue focalises. The reason is that the mindset of the focaliser, Blue, is representative of the mindset of his community. There are indeed differences between him and the other characters. For example, he is not such a rigorous capitalist as Zar. He is not as consistently negative as Molly. Blue is not as dissatisfied with the choice of the place where he had decided to settle down as Isaac Maple is, who came to Hard Times in search for his brother, Ezra Maple. But Blue’s thinking is essentially “social” especially in the sense that he, like the other residents, is completely ignorant with regard to the requirements of establishing a healthy community. They all capitulate to the erroneous concept that a capitalistic approach and materialistic wealth would lead to the improvement of their town and their happiness. A lack of spiritual values and principles such as mutual care, support and courage characterises Blue’s focalisation and the perspective(s) of the residents of Hard Times. The fear of the residents results in a self-centredness, pessimistic and fatalistically stoical mindset. Blue and the characters of this novel “prostitute” themselves to a destructive frame of mind, i.e. in a sense they “sell themselves” and permit themselves to be abused in the hope of materialistic rewards. Consequently, everything that Blue allows to “pass through the neck of the bottle” to become part of the fictional world, and the way in which he views and “colours” or “filters” it, conveys an ominous social meaning.

Blue focalises his social context, consisting of the residents of Hard Times and himself, as victimised because of the attacks of the Bad Man from Bodie. However, the negative “mindset of Hard Times” allows one also to interpret the social context as self-victimising. The Bad Man whose actions lead to his death is also a resident of “the spiritual Hard Times”. He chooses to be a victimiser instead of a victim, but in the process also victimises himself. This self-centred approach is similar to Zar’s preoccupation in becoming wealthy or Isaac Maple’s decision not to share his food when a shortage arises. The events of the Bad Man’s appearances and attacks are representative of the self-victimisation of the residents of Hard Times.

Consequently, the setting of Hard Times, i.e. the treeless external space, gains a specific symbolic and social meaning through Blue’s focalisation. For example, the lack of trees and water signifies the spiritual drought of the town’s residents. This condition of the inner lives of the characters is also represented by social actions like work, meals and celebrations that reflect this “wilderness”. Care, concern and a desire to protect characters like Molly and Jimmy are not the motivations of Blue’s diligence. His hard work is therefore not spiritually constructive. Moreover, the appearances of the characters also reveal more than a coincidence of unsightliness. The presence of the humpbacked man with hands twisted and swollen out of
Chapter 9: Conclusion

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shape (WHT, 169), who comes, like the Bad Man, from “outside” of Hard Times, is rather an indication of the “inside reality” of Hard Times, i.e. with regard to the inner lives of the characters. Collectively, everything, namely Blue himself, his social context, events, actions and spaces, does not consist of merely external components of a place on the Dakota Flats, but gains spiritual/psychological meaning marked by a social lack of values through Blue’s focalisation.

Chapter 5 concluded that all the components of the textual actual world attain social meaning because of the interaction between Blue and the social context that influences his focalisation. It is conspicuous that all the women in Hard Times are subordinate to the men, and that of all the women to whom Blue refers (with the exception of Helga who is in any case not a model of spiritual and psychological stability) – more than a third of the town’s total population were or are prostitutes. The figure of the prostitute is representational in this text because of the associations of consenting exploitation, abuse, degradation and the like. All the participants in the text are in a victimiser-victim relationship, but because the real victimiser is not only the external Bad Man from Bodie, but also fear and materialism/capitalism as underlying factors, all the characters are simultaneously victimisers and victims of themselves. Against this background, it was necessary to remain aware that everything which Blue allows to pass through the bottleneck, to use Genette’s concept, has social meaning that contributes to the creation of the fictional world.

Chapter 6 explored the nature of events as another essential “building block” of a fictional world, also invested with personal and social meaning. The main question of this chapter was: What are the significant events in Narziß und Goldmund that reflect the connections between the fictional world and the actual world that become visible through focalisation? A second question then followed: How do they become visible? This chapter aimed to identify significant events that constitute the fictional world and to present Ryan’s (1991:45) “psychological credibility” (which becomes visible through focalisation) as central in the contexts of the fictional world and comparable to the actual world.

The main semiotic channels by which the reader accesses fictional worlds, and the most important sets of instructions that allow him to reconstruct the fictional world, are those that govern his understanding of the workings of characters’ minds (Palmer, 2004:34). Palmer argues thus in reaction to Doležel’s argument that “fictional worlds are accessed through semiotic channels and by means of information processing”, and that readers can do so “by crossing somehow the world boundary between the realms of the actual and the possible” (Palmer, 2004:34; Doležel, 1998:20). Doležel (1998:20: Doležel’s italics) points out that
possible worlds semantics uses the concept of accessibility, but “it tells us nothing about how contacts between actual persons and fictional worlds can be established”. However, Ryan (1991:45) does identify “psychological credibility” as an accessibility relation: “TAW is psychologically accessible from AW if we believe that the mental properties of the characters could be those of members of AW. This means that we regard the characters as complete human beings to whom we can relate as persons.” Palmer’s proposition is therefore an accessibility relation which is based on reader appreciation and/or identification that approximates (re)cognising or understanding “a story” imparted from one person to another in the actual world. Insight increases if the receiver of the imparted story understands how the “protagonist’s” “mind works”. Focalised events are considered as psychologically credible and as contributing to the fictional world in Hesse’s Narziss und Goldmund.

In this textual analysis the theoretical points of departure were based on theories proposed by D. Cohn, S. Chatman and M. Ryan. The chapter considered events in Narziss and Goldmund against the background of Ryan’s “psychological credibility”. In direct connection with the concept of “psychological credibility” it considered Chatman’s “filter” as characteristic of focalisation in Hesse’s novel. Chapter 6 was also constantly aware of the narrative mediation of focalisation that occurs through techniques like psycho-narration and quoted monologue, but especially those of narrated monologue or free indirect speech and vision avec which Cohn (1978; 1969) describes. This was necessary because Goldmund is often used as a filter by an omniscient narrator: although Goldmund is not a first-person narrator like Sinclair, Blue or Homer Collyer, the fictional world still retains the ambience of first-person narration because the narration in this text identifies with the focalising state of mind (cf. Cohn, 1978:112).

Goldmund’s relationship with the Mother determines the meaning of the events in Narziss und Goldmund as they contribute to the creation of the fictional world. If a hypothetical reader did not consider such events as Goldmund’s numerous encounters with women against the background of Goldmund’s personal experiences and relationship with the Mother that influences his mindset, he could misunderstand the book. A misunderstanding would ensue if one were to read the events against another background of, for example, respectable moral values and principles, with regard to a responsible lifestyle, which prescribe that sexual activity should take place within the framework of a marriage. Goldmund would then merely be a promiscuous character. In truth, Goldmund focalises his encounters with the women to whom he is physically attracted and other events in terms of the various aspects of the Mother.
An early event in Goldmund’s life takes place when he receives a kiss from a girl during a forbidden outing to the town during a night. His head/rational side that has decided to lead a life of asceticism in the monastery of Mariabronn and his heart/instinctive and emotional side are in conflict because of this occurrence. This is a conflict within Goldmund’s consciousness, between the “Father world” (an intellectual, abstinent, rational and artificial world focusing on the hereafter) and the “Mother world” (an emotional, sensual, natural world concentrating on worldly life). Narziß then reveals to Goldmund that he does not truly belong to the “Father world”, but rather to the “Mother world”. Goldmund’s reaction to this revelation is not a composed and contemplative, but a severe, emotionally disturbed reaction – which confirms Narziß’s belief that the Mother world is better suited to Goldmund’s temperament.

The events in Goldmund’s life then continue to be a discovery of the true nature of the Mother, himself and the life that he is destined to live. He focalises the first events that are characteristic of the Mother World after he left the monastery, namely his relationship with Lise, a farmer’s wife and other women, as blissful and carefree. The focalisation of the following episode includes not only delight, but also entails sadness and possibly danger when the father of two beautiful daughters, Lydia and Julie, drives him away and threatens to kill Goldmund should he return after it became known to the father that Goldmund and Lydia were involved in a relationship. The artificial social life, a variation of the Father World, interferes in his desire for a natural “Mother world relationship” with Lydia. This is also the case when he desires signs of natural being in Lisbeth, Meister Niklaus’s daughter, whom Goldmund focalises as unmoveably loyal to the Father World. Lydia’s loyalty to the Father World/her father’s world, i.e. the social world of the knight and the social taboo of also being attracted to her sister, Julie, complicates his experience of the Mother World. The sadness and danger of this experience also form part of the Mother World. Therefore it not only consists of uncomplicated idyllic circumstances, but also of suffering. Goldmund focalises the physical world in an individualistic manner when he personifies the winter landscape and desires to become as calm and graceful as the forest, hill and heath that beautifully and gently bear their “burden of winter” (NG, 129; NGT, 122-123). It is appropriate that most of the events of Narziß und Goldmund are associated with female figures because they are part of the fictional world that is “Goldmund’s Mother world”.

However, an ensuing event that involves a male character, namely the tramp Viktor, is highly traumatic. Goldmund first focalises himself in comparison with Viktor and finds the concept depressing that he, now also a tramp, might one day be like Viktor. When Goldmund tries to prevent Viktor from stealing a ducat from him, the latter attempts to strangle him. Killing Viktor in self-defence is an event that is also part of the Mother. The Mother is now undeniably
dangerous and causes inner torment. He loses touch with his reality, a result which is reminiscent of the madness of Rebekka after she lost her family, who were burned to death, during the Black Death. Goldmund then focalises Rebekka in terms of the kinder side of the Mother by focusing on her beauty and the possibility of escaping from the despair of the cruel side of the Mother.

Goldmund focalises Lene, a girl whom he meets at the beginning of the Black Death, in terms of the three elements of the Mother world, namely a natural physical relationship, the interference of artificial social life with which Goldmund cannot identify himself and Lene’s death once she also contracts the Black Death and dies. His focalisation of her therefore includes an awareness of her physical beauty, regarding her as a “social being” when it becomes clear that she wants to settle down with him, and his awareness of her as an endearing and valuable person since he is grief-stricken when she dies.

A central “collective” event consisting of various aspects of the fictional world is the Black Death. Goldmund’s first reaction when he sees victims of the Black Death is, as a trained artist, curiously calm and analytical. During the Plague, he does become “mad” at one point, but through having been temporarily part of the Father world (as an apprentice of the sculptor, Meister Niklaus), Goldmund learned to examine and express, using art, his experiences of different aspects of the Mother, both enjoyable and cruel. Goldmund’s art functions as a means of accepting and appreciating the Mother.

Another woman whom Goldmund focalises as physically beautiful, “social” and dangerous, like Lene, is Agnes. His experiences with Agnes, Count Heinrich’s mistress, result in interesting focalisation when he expects his own execution as a result of being captured near her. In romantic vein he remembers valleys and wooded mountains, brooks, green elms, girls, moonlit evenings on bridges (NG, 269; NGT, 256). When Narziß saves him from certain execution he starts to practise his art once again. A sculpture like the Lydia-Madonna represents confirmation that Goldmund has led a valid life when he concludes that his entire youth, his wandering, his love affairs, his courtship of many women (NG, 312; NGT, 297) were necessary for him to be able to create the statue. At the end of his life Goldmund is able to accept the Mother as she is, i.e. both her kind and cruel sides, and concludes that one cannot love without a mother, and one cannot die without her (NG, 311; NGT, 315). The fictional world of Narziß und Goldmund is therefore a collection of focalised content, in which events are crucial, that reflects Goldmund’s relationship with the Mother.
This chapter concluded that the truth value of fictional world events is related to the “possibility/possible-ness” of events through the focalisation of the individual and those social implications of which the character is aware. For example, one event, central to the plot, is Narziß’s communicating to Goldmund that he has forgotten his childhood because his father has begun to play a too prominent role (NG, 49-50; NGT, 44-45). This is causally linked to Goldmund leaving the monastery and becoming loyal to the, or “his”, “Mother”, a figure representative of worldly life. The accessibility relation that exists between this fictional event and its implications and the actual world is that the reader can identify with Goldmund’s acknowledgement and appreciation of the diesseitsgerichtet focus, an emphasis on the here and now (represented by the Mother figure). One could regard this kind of view as an alternative to a jenseitsgerichtet focus, a concentration on the afterlife as encouraged by most conservative Christian world-views, represented in the text by the Father world of the monastery and the respectable social life of Goldmund’s biological father.

Chapter 7 continued the emphasis on the connections between the actual world and the fictional world, but it did so by examining the meaning of space or spaces in the novel Homer & Langley. This chapter considered fictional space to be primarily represented as an extension of focalisation, therefore as a consequence of the Collyer brothers’ mindsets stemming from their reactions to being subjected to events in their social context. The chapter enquired: How does the interaction between characters, social contexts and events in these contexts determine the meaning of space? And, secondly: How does space contribute to making a fictional world a possible one?

As theoretical points of departure this chapter employed Lothe’s terms “story space” (the space as it is presented in and developed by the story) and “discourse space” (the space of the narrator/focaliser which also influences and shapes the characters). The conclusion that not only space characterises the characters, but that the characters also characterise space, emerged. This chapter also made use of Lotman’s notions of world models in terms of spatial oppositions in The structure of the artistic text and Lefebvre’s (1991:82-83) theory that any space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationships. It furthermore employed Nicholas Wolterstorff’s

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382 The universality and psychological credibility of these approaches to life are well-presented by an opposition that one finds in Baroque poetry. On the one hand, there is an afterlife embracing, earthly world denying approach as expressed in, for example, Andreas Gryphius’s (1616-1664) poem “Tränen in schwerer Krankheit” [Tears during severe illness]. On the other, there is an endorsement of the pleasure of love and sensual, worldly delight as found in Christian Hoffmann von Hoffmannswaldau’s work (Jefing & Köhnen, 2007:26), i.e. a world and earthly life embracing approach, also expressed in the poem “Ach Liebste laß uns eilen” [Oh Sweetheart, let’s hurry] by Martin Opitz’s (1597-1639) (Van Rinsum & Van Rinsum, 1972:63-67; cf. Jefing & Köhnen, 2007:21;25-26;149).
concepts with respect to historical events as anchors in *Works and worlds of art* (1980) and Didier Coste’s discussion, in *Narrative as communication* (1989), of the technique of combining actual places to create a fictional location, mentioned by Doležel (1998:20-21) in his reference to authors drawing on the actual world when creating fictional ones.

The fictional world spaces in *Homer & Langley* exist as a result of the focalisation of the main characters, Homer and Langley Collyer, subjectively determined textual constructs that would differ from the textual actual spaces “as they really are” and from how other characters would experience them. Homer literally went blind, in order not to see the (textual actual) world, as a result of a lack of self-confidence in understanding his social world and being able to interact acceptably with other characters. Yet he does long to be part of his social context. Homer’s motivation not to be part of this context therefore arises from self-doubt. Langley refrains from being part of the said context because he is angry at the injustices of social contexts and fears any kind of physical threat that this context holds for him. The relationship between the Collyers and their context influences their mindsets and focalisation. Consequently, through their focalisation spaces become “social”, i.e. they inevitably reflect the nature of the relationship between the brothers and their social context.

The central space in the novel is, of course, the space(s) of the Collyer house. The “inside space” of the house bears a peculiar relation to the referential “outside” world of the textual actual world and the social context. It develops from a social space, as it was when the parents of the brothers were still alive, to an alternative social space after their death. Towards the end of the siblings’ lives the house develops into an “anti-social space”. During all three of these phases the house is inescapably part of the “outside world”, i.e. the social context, through, for example, historical events, the brothers’ interaction with fictional people within the house as well as outside of the house (like their neighbours), administrative offices and the children who throw stones at the house. The emotional and mental dispositions of both brothers influence their mindsets which are consequently preoccupied with their relation to their social context. A private residence is certainly always “social” in the sense that it forms part of a social context, but the spaces of private residences are “private” and not “public”. Through the abnormal relationship between the Collyers and their social context, as a result of Homer’s and Langley’s focalisation, their house becomes ironically more “public” than other private residences.

This chapter concluded that space as a crucial “building block” of a fictional world is interdependent with the focaliser and his experience of his social context. These three concepts contribute to constituting fictional space. It furthermore reached the conclusion that space which
is as “realistic” as in Doctorow’s work is an important aspect in establishing a fictional world as a possible world, because of its connections to the actual world. However, this is not because fictional space often evokes the realistic appearance of the actual world or seems to (and does often) “mirror” the actual world, but primarily because of the realistic psychological investment in it.

The main question of Chapter 8 was: In order to establish the importance of focalisation with regard to creating fictional worlds, what are the similarities and differences between these four interrelated “building blocks”, the individual, social context, events and space(s), each focused upon in one text analysis, if compared to the other three? The aim of this chapter was to discuss similarities and differences between features of focalisation in *Welcome to Hard Times*, *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley* in comparison to *Demian*; social contexts in *Demian*, *Narziß und Goldmund* and *Homer & Langley* in comparison to *Welcome to Hard Times*; events in terms of possible worlds, the actual world and truth value in *Demian*, *Welcome to Hard Times*, *Homer & Langley* in comparison to *Narziß und Goldmund*; and to consider space in *Demian*, *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Narziß und Goldmund* in comparison to *Homer & Langley*. Chapter 8 concluded that a synergistic relationship exists between the focaliser/focalisation, social context, events (that are related to the concepts possible world, actual world, truth value) and space(s) which contribute to focalisation constituting fictional worlds.

To recapitulate, the main focus of this study concerns the contribution of focalisation to the creation of fictional worlds through the combination of the “building blocks” of a fictional world, namely the central focalising and focalised character(s), focalised social contexts, events and spaces, in Hermann Hesse’s *Demian* (1919), *Narziß und Goldmund* (1930), E.L. Doctorow’s *Welcome to Hard Times* (1960) and *Homer & Langley* (2009). The relationships between the focalisers and their social contexts influence their human, subjective perspective and represented perceptions of their textual actual worlds. Focalisation constructs the synergistic relationship between the “building blocks” that leads to the creation of fictional worlds.

The analyses and comparisons argue that focalising characters “filter” their actual worlds and “transform” them through their individualistic and subjective representations, as actual people do. Even if characters are “non-actual individuals” their mindsets or physical, social and mental properties (Margolin, 1989:4) are like those of actual people, i.e. “psychologically credible”. Ryan (1991:45) identifies “psychological credibility” or “a plausible portrayal of human psychology” as an “accessibility relation”, i.e. one that allows the mental properties of a fictional character to be accessible from, and possible for, the actual world. The interaction between a
focalising character and his social context, which affects his consciousness and focalisation, is comparable to the interaction between a hypothetical actual person and his social world, that would also influence his mindset and how he communicates about the actual world. Perspectives of characters such as Sinclair, Blue, Goldmund and Homer Collyer are recognisable to hypothetical actual world readers as psychologically credible. In the light of Bal’s (1979:9) argument that the entire content of a text is related to the (focalising) character(s), one could say that the elements of a textual actual world become, as it were, focalised “building blocks” of the fictional world.

The central finding is that focalisation contributes to the creation of fictional worlds. The relationship between a fictional world and the actual one becomes apparent in literary texts during focalisation that transforms the textual actual world and its elements, i.e. the central (self-focalising) character, the social context, events and space(s), through a focaliser’s consciousness. The said consciousness in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s fiction is marked by psychological credibility. A fictional world is comparable to the actual world with regard to other accessibility relations which Ryan (cf. 1991:31-47) identifies, but focalisation specifically allows a fictional world to become possible in actual world terms by creating credibility of this kind. A fictional world is plausible not in mimetic terms, as a factual text claims itself to be, but in possible terms, i.e. through the comparability of human psychology in fictional worlds and the actual world. Focalisation significantly contributes to the creation of a fictional world through the interaction between psychologically credible subjectivity and the imaginary level of the text on which the textual actual world acquires human value through focalisation. A fictional world is, in this sense, a possible world and, in fact, emerges by being a possible world.

Critics of both Hesse and Doctorow have ignored the relationship between focalisation and the mindset or psychological state and the values of the individual, which are often in conflict with social realities. Van Luxemburg, Bal and Weststeijn (1981:181) argue that persons, spaces and events are the most important elements of a fictional world. This study explicitly draws attention to social contexts as an important element that cannot be regarded as independent from the focalisers or their experiences of the social context of events and spaces. As far as can be established, no extensive studies about either the central individual/character of a fictional world, his social context, events or space(s) in terms of focalisation and/or fictional worlds/possible worlds in either Hesse’s or Doctorow’s fiction have ever been undertaken. Neither have any comparative studies on Hesse and Doctorow ever been carried out.
Critics and theorists have largely neglected explicitly to identify and explore the relationship between fictional worlds and focalisation. An exception is Ruth Ronen’s section “Focalization on the fictional world” (1994:179-184) in the chapter “Focalization and fictional perspective” in Possible Worlds in Literary Theory (1994). This study, unlike Ronen’s primarily theoretical focus, has presented focalisation as a fictional world-constituting function with an emphasis on the possibilities of fictional worlds, in terms of the actual world, applying possible worlds theory within the framework of an analytical and comparative study.

Against the background of the “building blocks” that contribute to the creation of the fictional world through the connections between focalisation and the actual world/actual human behaviour, a consideration of (focalised) fictional time as another “building block” would add to the research presented in this study. A focaliser’s experience not only of himself, his social context, events and spaces, but also of his subjective experience and focalisation of time would contribute to the creation of a fictional world.

Approaching such a world and all its components – including time as a “building block” for a possible world – is worthwhile because the circumstances surrounding completely different situations in the actual world and a fictional world may still exhibit similarities with regard to inner human experiences and perspectives. The hypothetical actual world reader of a fictional text may recognise that aspects of a character’s focalisation are relevant to his experiences and perspectives. Therefore, a further interesting focus for future interdisciplinary research in literary studies and psychology would be to enquire how narrative therapy, and specifically bibliotherapy, would benefit from consciously examining fictional worlds as possible ones.

This study establishes that focalisation is a key factor in the construction of fictional worlds in Hesse’s and Doctorow’s writings. The subjective consciousness, perspective and focus of the focalising character as represented through narration “transform” or “filter” the textual actual world elements by means of focalisation. Perspective/point of view is necessarily part of, and characterises, every human story. Every character in the works by Hesse and Doctorow selected for this study has a unique story just as every actual human being does. Connections between transworld stories, in the form of similarities between experiences and perspectives, make a

Ronen’s (1994:197-228) chapter “Fictional time” in Possible worlds in literary theory would certainly be relevant for such a study in which she argues that the time of narrative fiction “constitutes an autonomous temporal system, and that this autonomy is manifested in the modal structure of the time of fictional worlds …” (1994:228). Ronen (1994:204) also remarks that “in exploring the nature of the analogy between fictional and extra-fictional time, it can be claimed that, unlike objective physical time, fictional time only exists through points of view relating information about the world of fiction”. Fictional time can in this sense be regarded as another “building block” of a fictional world that requires further investigation.
fictional world accessible to a reader in the actual one. They also constitute the actual world “ingredient” of a fictional world which characterises focalisation. Focalisation thus qualifies fictional worlds as possible worlds in actual world terms and contributes to the creation of fictional worlds.


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