over his belly. And he pounded the drum louder than necessary to provide two slender girls with march time. His mother, so they said, had died recently. Of fish poisoning. A beautiful woman. 56

The character of Harry Liebenau is first revealed to the reader in *Cat and Mouse* (although very briefly):

Tulla Pokriefke's cousin, a rather sickly little fellow, came out to the barge once or twice, but never dove. Either in my thoughts or in reality I try to strike up a conversation with him about Tulla; I was interested in her. But she had ensnared her cousin as she had me---what with, I wonder? With her threadbare wool, with her ineradicable smell of carpenter's glue? "It's none of your God-damn business!" That's what the cousin said to me—or might have. 57

And during Liebenau's "love letters"---somewhere during the chaos, Tulla disappears:

And where were you that summer? Off in Brøsen with the Thirds. If anyone went looking for you, he found you on the hulk of a Polish mine sweeper, which lay on the bottom not far from the harbor mouth. The thirds dived down into the mine sweeper and brought stuff up. I was a poor swimmer and never dared to open my eyes under water. Consequently I went looking for you in other places and never on the barge. Besides, I had Jenny; and you always wanted the same old thing: a baby. Did they make you one on the mine sweeper? 58

Through all the chaos, upheavals of wartime, the only people who knew anything about the "lost" Eddi Amsel were Dr. Brunies and Jenny, i.e., the only ones who had been in...
contact until Brunies is taken away to Stutthof.

To the characters in the three works of Grass, no one escapes being involved—it is just a matter of reaction to the entire procedure of which they are a part. Perhaps and, moreover, probably there are others who lived through it, just as Oskar, Amsel, Matern, Jenny, Tulla, and all the rest, and thus Langfuhr is no different than any other place in Germany at that time. The only difference is that Langfuhr is located by Danzig, is a suburb of Danzig, and that's Prussia, or what used to be Prussia, and so is it accounted for in the following: "Once upon a time." "There was once a city---... and the seaport suburb of Neufahrwasser, it had a suburb named Langfuhr. Langfuhr was so big and so little that whatever happens or could happen in this world, also happened or could have happened in Langfuhr."\(^{59}\)

Similarities of characters are not difficultly found, even if they are mentioned only slightly here, slightly there. They are all living at the same era; Dr. Hollatz, little Oskar's doctor, is also the doctor in*Dog Years* who carries Tulla part of the way through her futile pregnancy; Mr. Mallenbrandt, sometimes spelled Mallenbrandt, is a faculty member at school in both *Dog Years* and *Cat and Mouse*. In *Cat and Mouse*, Mr. Mallenbrandt is also the assistant principal, and it is he who interrogates the students after

\(^{59}\text{Ibid.},\) p. 309.
a robbery has taken place. A lieutenant commander comes to lecture to the students; a type of long-winded stuffed shirt, he enjoys returning to his former school to tell of his adventures in the line of duty of the bored students. He respects his school, its faculty, but that is only because he is respected there for his service to the "fatherland" in the line of battle. At any rate, his cherished medal disappears during gym class, and, after the lieutenant commander tries to cover up his great distress, Mallenbrandt proceeds his attempt to recover the lost medal. Although the treasure is not found, Mallenbrandt attacks a would-be thief who is not liked by the boys (he smiles entirely too much) and, satisfied, he marches his victim off. Mahlke has, of course, taken the medal.

A subject barely brought to light in Cat and Mouse is expounded upon more thoroughly in Dog Years, for Mr. Mallenbrandt was well known in sports circles because he had written a rulebook to end all rulebooks for the game of Schlagball, forbade Mahlke to wear the screwdriver around his necks in gym class. Mallenbrandt never found any fault with the medal on Mahlke's neck, because in addition to physical culture and geography, he taught religion, and up to the second year of the war guided the remnants of a Catholic workers' gymnastic society over and under the horizontal and parallel bars.60

In Dog Years his role could be interpreted as that of an anti-Semistit, and Amsel, the half Jew, must undergo his torture.

. . . after Amsel had enjoyed a gentle childhood to the right and left of the Vistula, Amsel's torments began far from the Vistula. They will go on for some time. For Dr. Mallenbrandt passed as an

expert and had written a book, or a chapter in a book, about German field games. In it he discussed the game of schlagball with succinct thoroughness. In the preface he expressed the opinion that the national character of schlagball was brought out most strikingly by a comparison with the international game of soccer. Then he went on to formulate the rules, point for point. A single blast of the whistle means: The ball is dead. A goal that counts is registered by the referee with two blasts of the whistle. A player is not allowed to run with the ball. There were many different kinds of ball: high-flying, known as flies, long balls, flat, corner, short balls, popflies, rollers, grounders, dribblers, goal balls, and triple-run balls. The ball was propelled by vertical blows, long blows, thrusts, or swings, by flat blows with underarm swing and by the two-hand blow, in which the ball must first be thrown to shoulder height. In catching a high-flying ball, a so-called fly---so spake Mallenbrand---the catcher's eye, his catching hand, and the falling ball must form a straight line. Moreover, and this was his title to fame, the field was lengthened from fifty to fifty-five yards at his suggestion. This feature which---as Amsel could testify---made the game more arduous was adopted by nearly every high school in eastern and western Germany. He was the declared enemy of soccer and many regarded him as a strict Catholic. From his neck and alongside his hairy chest hung his metal referee's whistle. One blast meant: The ball is dead. Two blasts meant: Score obtained by hitting Eduard Amsel with the ball. Often enough he blew for flies that Walter Matern had struck for his friend: Out of bounds!?1

If the reader will pardon a bit of interpretation on the writer's part, and even if he himself will re-examine the text, it sounds very similar to other "games" which were played in a very similar way. The "leader" set up the rules which were, of course, followed very strictly and which ended in torments far more cruel than those here described.

Nevertheless, it was the beginning, here, the beginning for Amsel's torments, but perhaps a much larger beginning to others' torments and deaths. The only difference is that Mallenbrand in Dog Years and Cat and Mouse is regarded as a Catholic.

The reader has already become acquainted with Störtebeker in The Tin Drum. His role and his character were, although chronologically earlier, developed to a higher degree in Dog Years. Oskar's description of Störtebeker echoes that in Cat and Mouse: "A character with eyes very close together."\(^{62}\) Oskar's first description of the leader of the Dusters, a gang of hoodlums, is the following: "'Nice-looking boy, this Störtebeker,' Oskar thought, 'The eyes are a bit too deep-set and close together, but there's life and imagination in the cut of his mouth."\(^{63}\)

Speaking chronologically, Störtebeker would first make his appearance in Cat and Mouse, for during one particular summer Pilenz notes him as the character "... whom the infants submissively addressed as Störtebeker,"\(^{64}\) and who dove continually, but he and Mahlke didn't cross paths that summer, for that was the particular one in which Mahlke had disappeared from the barge. The story is covered very briefly, with the exception of one event, in Cat and Mouse.

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Tulla didn't swim out to the barge; she stayed on the beach, but she had given up Hotten Sonntag. I took her to the movies twice, but even so I had no luck; she'd go to the movies with anybody. It was said that she had fallen for Størtebeker, but if so her love was unrequited, for Størtebeker had fallen for our barge and was looking for the entrance to Mahlke's hideout. As the vacation drew to an end there was a good deal of whispering to the effect that his diving had been successful. But there was never any proof: he produced neither a waterlogged phonograph record nor a decaying owl feather. Still, the rumors persisted; and when, two and a half years later, the so-called Dusters, a somewhat mysterious gang supposedly led by Størtebeker, were arrested, our barge and the hiding place under the bridge appear to have been mentioned. But by then I was in the Army; all I heard was a line or two in letters---for until the end, or rather as long as the mails were running, Father Gusewski wrote me letters ranging from pastoral to friendly. In one of the last, written in January '45---as the Russian armies were approaching Elbing---there was something about a scandalous assault of the Dusters on the Church of the Sacred Heart, where Father Wiehnke officiated. In this letter Størtebeker was referred to by his real name; and it also seems to me that I read something about a three-year-old child whom the gang had cherished as a kind of mascot. I am pretty certain, though sometimes I have my doubts, that in his last or next to last letter---I lost the whole packet and my diary as well near Cottbus---there was some mention of the barge which had its big day before the onset of the summer vacation of '42, but whose glory paled in the course of the summer; for to this day that summer has a flat taste in my mouth---what was summer without Mahlke? Somewhere between that summer of '42 and '45, when Størtebeker, accompanied by the three-year-old mascot, raided the Church of the Sacred Heart, Tulla becomes pregnant. Without direct and positive evidence, but then who can say anything

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positively ("nothing is pure" is Grass), there is every reason to believe that the scandalous leader of the Dusters was responsible for her pregnancy. Thus, from Cat and Mouse the reader must continue the story of Tulla and Störtebeker in Dog Years where Störtebeker plays the role of an avid lover of Martin Heidegger. At one time or another he probably plays the role of another lover, i.e., Tulla's. Nevertheless, in that year of 1943 Tulla had another lover: the grinding-teeth tech sergeant Walter Matern. And Störtebeker had become a disciple of Matern's who, in turn, was a devout disciple of Heidegger. Therefore, Störtebeker's words were products of his lessons from Matern. Harry Liebenau writes of Störtebeker in Dog Years:

Between rat death and rat death he whispered in his own tongue, which however had been infected with obscurity by the tech sergeant's language, rat propositions and ontological rat truths, which so we all believed, lured the prey within reach of his glove and made possible his overarching withdrawal. Imperturbably, while he harvested below and piled up above, his discourse ran its course: 'The rat withdraws itself by unconcealing itself into the ratty. So the rat errates the ratty, illuminating it with errancy. For the ratty has come-to-be in the errancy where the rat errs and so fosters error. That is the essential area of all history!' Sometimes he called not-yet-withdrawn rats 'latecomers.' He referred to the piled-up rats as 'foretimely' or as 'essents.' When, his work accomplished, Störtebeker surveyed his ordered prey, he spoke almost tenderly and with a mild didacticism: 'The rat can endure without the ratty, but never can there be rattiness without the rat.' In an hour he produced as many as twenty-five water rats and could have withdrawn more if he had wanted to.66

For one who hasn't read Heidegger this would be an indeed trying text! The philosopher has an intricately involved vocabulary, but it is easy enough to discern in the German text the words, the individual vocabulary words, of Martin Heidegger who, to many, stands as an advocate and devotee of the Nazi regime. That very well could be. The present writer only wishes to make it known that Martin Heidegger's philosophy is also the foundation of modern Existentialism. The following words and their meanings are essential to every reader of Heidegger; furthermore, since they are very difficult to render into English, they are here underlined from the German text of *Dog Years*.

Warum Wasserratten und nicht Ähnlich Seiende?
Warum überhaupt etwas und nicht nichts? . . .
'Das Wesen der Ratte ist die transzendentale entspringende dreifache Streuung der Ratte im Weltentwurf . . .'
'Wohlgemacht die Ratte ohne das Rattige, aber niemals kann Rattiges sein ohne die Ratte.'
Worte fallen Harry ein: Ortschaft---Inständigkeit---Nichtung.67

In succinct, precise, clear words echoed from Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Størtebeker gives the formula for an "authentic" existence: "Wir müssen das Zuhaufliegen in der Offenheit des Seins, das Austragen der Sorge und das Ausdauern zum Tode als das volle Wesen der Existenz denken."68 From the English


translation comes the following: "'We must conceive of piledupedness in the openness of Being, the divulgation of care, and endurance to death as the consummate essence of existence.'" 69

It is advisable, if acquainted with the German language, to read Heidegger only in German; it is also advisable here not to launch onto the ontological system of Heidegger in great detail in this work. Nevertheless, the key words involved here fall under the following list: **Sorge** (Care), **das Sein** (Being), **das volle Wesen** (consummate essence), and the differentiations through word endings or suffixes, e.g., **Ratte** (rat), **Rattige** (the ratty), and **Rattiges** (rattiness). Even more complicated is Heidegger's system of the verb "to be" and its various forms. **Das Sein des Seienden**, the Being of What-Is, is a recurring phrase in Heidegger's system.

Since Grass develops most of Störtebeker's role and certainly Walter Matern's around Heidegger's philosophy, the present writer will attempt a probably incomplete peroration of the main points in Heidegger's system.

As previously mentioned, suffixes play an important part in the entire philosophy. To Heidegger, for example, **Temporality** (Zeitlichkeit) is more important and is prior to **Time** (Zeit); **Historicity** is prior and more important than history. Our existence is historical; we cannot escape this fact, for we constantly project our future by transcending and returning to our past. The Present is a "making-present" and it is part of this fact when we say that man exists **in** the Present. Historically speaking, man's Present is always the Present of
his generation. Our historical Fate (Schicksal) which Heidegger speaks about is not something in the external world to which we submit ourselves willingly, rather this fate occurs from our very acts of self-definition and self-projection by which we choose it as our Fate.

Our Care (Sorge), the manifestation of our Resoluteness, concerns the future and that which is not present. Heidegger's system, however, is somewhat lacking until we turn our attention to his analysis of death.

To Heidegger if one is to attain an authentic existence he must face the possibility of death, for it is death which frees us from the extreme trivialities of our daily life. There are certain points which must be remembered in his theory on death.

1. The death of others is something which we cannot experience, no matter how much we may try. We may feel the loss of another person, we may telepathically feel the actual pains of death of another, but the fact must remain that it is, nevertheless, someone else's death. Death is the factor which puts a limiting effect on my entire existence. Death is thus the robber of my own Being. I cannot experience the death of others, for death, in turn, robs others on their Being within their own human existence. Just so, Death can only rob my own Being; moreover, it is something which actually does come to pass within my own human existence.

2. From the moment we are born it is possible that we will die. Therefore, Death is the end of Existence which is possible
at any moment. Death is, moreover, nothing more than the cessation of existing, for until death one exists and is still existing up to death.

3. To Heidegger Death must be viewed concretely and positively in order to achieve an authentic existence. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to face the possibility of death in our everyday existence. When an individual tries to flee from the consciousness of death, i.e., coming face-to-face with death, he will not achieve the authenticity of his existence. The authentic end of existence must be death, for it is the Nothingness of existence which is present in human existence from birth or from the beginning. Our everyday existence is revealed in relation to death: we exist so long as the end, i.e., the authentic end, of existence has not yet taken place.

Since death is a possibility at any moment, we must thus confront it as the possibility for an authentic existence. Authentic is thus the adjective describing the release from the chains of banal, trivial, and petty life; and when one sees death as a possibility for an authentic existence one confronts death as a freeing. As death frees the individual from his banal life, one is also restored to the Self which must face Death without escape, for no one else can face his own death but the Self itself. This has, of course, already been established, for death is something which takes place within one's own Being of Existence, and no one else can experience my death, for example, but myself. Heidegger holds primary
importance then for the Resoluteness (Entschlossenheit) with which we face death, for it is the means to authenticity. We must know that death is liberating us from the pettiness and trivialities of ordinary experience and is bringing us to the projects by which we make our own existence.

Since death is liberating, Heidegger calls Freedom-toward-death that human condition through which we are released by the authenticity of death, the perpetual possibility of Nothingness, to whatever project we set forth against the background of this void which, in turn, has nothing to rely upon but ourselves and, in this, we know ourselves to be free. Death then, which has been possible from the very beginning, is the completion, the realization of the freedom which lies at the origin or source of existence. Moreover, this freedom is present in Heidegger's system from the very beginning, for he defined man's existence as his Essence or the Creator of his Essence. The doctrine of human freedom plays a very large role here, just as it does in Sartre's Existentialism.

4. Heidegger's definitive role of the Conscience lies in the Self. We cry to ourselves (since there is no one else to cry to); the Self cries to the future Self, for the Self is constantly projected toward the future. The Self does not cry to the Self that already exists; the Self cries to that which is not yet, for it is on this basis that we seek to ground ourselves. Our whole being is projected toward that which doesn't yet exist, and in this Heidegger finds that Man's Being is permeated by the negative, by Nothingness. This is
not in a futilistic, nihilistic sense, for the void here is actually an affirmation of human life, because it is the only means by which one can achieve an authentically human life.

Heidegger is primarily concerned with the lack of unity between man and nature and feels that this is an historical phenomenon which finds its roots in Romanticism and continues down to the contemporary poet. It is manifested in Anxiety (Angst) which, in turn, is manifested in literature as a fear for the poet of today. This Anxiety is a unique phenomenon which emerges during Romanticism, for never before had the poet been worried about his place in the world as a poet, and he is frightened that with the establishment of this new "something" he will lose his place in the world. The poet has been severed from mankind and thus he has been severed from nature itself which, in turn, is the primordial nature of the poet, i.e., that he belongs to the earth. Heidegger's relationship with the Romantic poets is the following: Romanticism is the expression of the severance of Man from nature; Heidegger's theme is the severance of Man from Being. The opposite of Being, i.e., Nothingness, is the real philosophical and historical problem of this time, according to Heidegger. Heidegger, moreover, felt a strong tie to the poet Hölderlin, for this Romantic poet visioned the world as night which is the present stage that history has brought us; it is the night in which Man must find courage to stand before the Nothingness.

For Heidegger the primary concern is thus the problem of Being. He feels that Being must be prior to Doing; Being, in
turn, must be interpreted from the "Is." Therefore, the problem concerns the "Being of What-Is" (das Sein des Seienden), hence "the Is of What-Is." It is the "Is of What-Is" which, according to Heidegger, the poet "reveals" to us. It is the link between the poet and the thinker.

To Heidegger Man is fundamentally Being-in-the-World. He is much more than a consciousness aware of the objects; he is involved and enmeshed in this world with its many possibilities, and from the total context of these multiple possibilities Man forms ideas as projects for forming his own life.

Heidegger believed that thought and existence were never identical, for thought deals with universals and existence deals with actualities, and from this we see the link between philosopher and poet. Heidegger is quite unique, even revolutionary, in his theory that Possibility is higher than and prior to Actuality. It is the possibilities which make existence, and Man's Being is constituted by possibilities. The possibilities must be there before existence is created.

Like Kant's distinction between the "empirical" and "transcendental" inquiry, Heidegger makes a parallel distinction between an "ontic" and "ontological" inquiry. An ontic inquiry seeks the actual facts or events and seeks to establish the laws which govern these facts or events. An ontological inquiry is concerned with the general conditions or structures which, as possibilities, pervade human existence.

Heidegger further gives as such "Possibilities:" Being-in-the-world, Care, Anxiety, Death, Guilt, Moods (Stimmungen).
They are not actualities or facts. These possibilities, e.g., death, the possibility not-to-be, form the temporal context of one's finitude. It is only within such a context that one can make his own decisions about his own personal attitude. The personal attitude itself is the ontic, i.e., the fact. The context, i.e., the possibility, is the condition which must first be present before the fact takes place. Man is a creature of possibilities, ein Wesen der ferne, a creature of distance; ek-sistenz means literally "standing outside himself." Thus Man transcends himself, he stands out temporally since he is not fixed to the immediate moment in time. Man is transcendence, and transcendence is necessary to his nature, because he is a being whose actual existence is constituted by possibilities. Hence, possibility is higher than actuality. Since "Being" is a possibility, it is thus higher than "Doing." To understand Heidegger completely, it is necessary to understand him through his stille Kraft des Möglichen (the silent power of the possible). Let us compare this to a door which never closes upon man; thus Heidegger is not a nihilist nor a futilist because he never closes this door upon Man even in his most dismal pronouncements on the Western culture.

When familiar with Heidegger's vocabulary, the reader begins to see clearly what at first has appeared to be utter nonsensical words. It is in Dog Years that Grass makes his knowledge of Heidegger's Being and Time come to light, for throughout the novel paragraphs, sentences, pages, and words like the following
are not infrequent: "... the tech sergeant stood rigid and rectangular with dangling carbine, self-conscious as on the stage. Behind him held geometrically still: placedness, instandingness, nihilation, the essence-ground of history, the difference between Being and the essent—the ontological difference." 69

Störtebeker and Matern are very similar in not only their philosophical beliefs, but they are both "possibilities" as the father of Tulla's child. The child never lives and results in a miscarriage during the second month. There is only one word which could indicated that Störtebeker was the father, if that is truly important. What is more important is that the abortive birth is described à la Heidegger; his words, his thoughts are all twisted and contorted into the aftermath of a dead child, a neuter. The underlined words are to be noted as Heidegger's more important philosophical concepts.


Therefore: panties off. Ski pants up, no child, but. What a vision of essence! Lay there warm, then cold: Withdrawal provides the commitment of the enduring project with a hole at the edge of Oliva Forest: "Don't stand there! Do something. Dig a hole. Not there, that's a better place." Ah, are we ourselves ever, is mine ever, now under the leaves, in the ground, not deeply frozen; for higher than reality is potentiality: here manifested: what primarily and ordinarily does not show itself, what is hidden but at the same time is an essential part of what does primarily and ordinarily show itself, namely, its meaning and ground, which is not frozen but loosened with heels of shoes from the Air Force supply room, in order that the baby may come into its there. There into its there. But only project there. Shorn of its essence: there. A mere neuter, a mere impersonal pronoun—and the impersonal pronoun not there in the same sense as the there in general. And happening-to-be-present confronts being-there with the facticity of its there and without disgust sets it down with bare fingers, unprotected by gloves: Ah, the ecstatic-horizontal structure! There only toward death, which means: tossed in layers, with a few leaves and hollow beechnuts on top, lest the crows, or if foxes should come, the forester, diviners, vultures, treasure seekers, witches, if there are any, gather fetuses, make tallow candles out of them or powder to strew across thresholds, ointments for everything and nothing. And so: fieldstone on it. Grounding in the ground. Placedness and abortion. Matter and work. Mother and child. Being and Time. Tulla and Harry. Jumps off the streetcar into her there, without stumbling. Jumps shortly before Christmas, nimbly but too overarchingly: pushed in two moons ago, out through the same hole. Bankrupt! The nihilating Nothing. Lousy luck. Come-to-be in errancy. Spitting cunt. Not even transcendental but vulgar ontic unoncealed ungrinded unöstörtebekert. Washing up. Error fostered. Vaporized, evaporated, cleared out. "You shut your trap. Stinking luck. Why did it have to happen to me? Beans. I was going to call him Konrad or after him. After who? After him. Come on. Tulla. Let's go. Yes, come on, let's go."

70 Ibid., p. 319 f.
The text referred to in the above contains the English translation "a mere impersonal pronoun---and the impersonal pronoun . . ." The continuing English translation of this "impersonal pronoun" is das Man which can also literally be translated as the One. In Heidegger's system, the One, this Who (Wer) is the Neuter, das Man. This One is who is commonly referred to in daily public life, e.g., one mustn't do this, one mustn't do that. The One is the connecting point of the external behavior of everyday existence; therefore, the One (das Man) is Everybody and Nobody. The "ecstatic-horizontal structure" is in reference to Heidegger's system of time: the three "ecstasies" of time moves in a horizontal structure: future, present, and past. Furthermore, the ecstatic-unity of temporality is the necessity of the possibility that a Being can "be" which exists as his "there." Thus existence is "Being-there."

In order to see how clearly Heidegger's philosophy is reflected throughout the book, the present writer will employ the same paragraph to the reader from the German text.

Der Atem der Beiden am Waldrand ging und verwehte. Unentschlossen. "Soll ich?"
Zuerst liess Tulla ihren Mantel aus Marine-
tuch abgleiten. Harry legte ihn ordentlich zusammen. Den Bund der Hose knüpfte sie selber auf, den Rest besorgte Harry vorsichtig entsetzt neugierig: das fingergrosse Zweim-
monatskind lag da in den Schützpfenn. Offen-
In blutigen auch farblosen Säften: da. Durch
den Welteingang da. War ein Händchen voll:
unbehalten, vorhaft, teilweise da. Grämmlich
in scharfer Dezemberluft da. Das Gründen als
Stiften dampfte und kühlte rasch ab. Das
Gründen als Bodennehmen und Tullas Taschentuch
dazu. Entborgen in was? Von wem durchstimmt?
As difficult as Heidegger's philosophical system is, Grass has mastered it in a grandiose manner! Although interpretation, perhaps Tulla's dead child is what Grass is trying to express as an aftermath of a dead philosophy that really amounted to nothing but words, words, and more words. Perhaps what was said here amounts to the following: so what? Nothing, for Heidegger's second part of his philosophy on Being has not yet been seen.

Some time ago, the writer mentioned the one word which might reveal the dead child's father. The word was "unstörte-bekert." In the German word the prefix is ent- which could mean entry into a new state, and it also carries the connotation of a "freeing." It could thus refer to Heidegger's theory on death as freedom, or it could mean that Störtebeker's product had slipped out of being created or made by him.

Still proceeding in chronological order, Störtebeker disengages himself from his Heideggerian leader, and from Dog Years Störtebeker's future is revealed and is then carried back to The Tin Drum and ties him up with little Oskar.

There was once a police president whose son, generally known as Störtebeker, who intended to study philosophy later on, who might almost have become a father, and who, after projecting the world in sand, founded a teen-agers' gang, which later became famous under the name of the Dusters. He stopped drawing symbols in the sand; instead, he drew the rationing office, the Church of the Sacred Heart, the Post Office Administration Building: all angular buildings into which he later, and at night, led the self-grounded Dusters. The conductorette Tulla Pokriefke belonged halfway to the gang. Her cousin didn't belong at all. At the most he
stood lookout when the gang met in the storage sheds of the Baltic Chocolate Factory. A permanent possession of the gang appears to have been a three-year-old child, their mascot, who was addressed as Jesus and survived the gang.72

The Dusters were caught by the police during their raid on the Church of the Sacred Heart, and they were consequently brought to trial. That is about the last heard of Störtebeker except for some years later in Hindenburg-Allee when Oskar thinks he's recognized him hanging from a linden tree:

I looked into the convulsed faces of several of these hanging men and drew comparisons—with other hanged men as such and in general and with Greff the greengrocer in particular. There were also whole clusters of youngsters strung up in uniforms that were too big for them, and several times I thought I recognized Störtebeker—but youngsters at the end of a rope all look alike. Nevertheless, I said to myself: so now they've hanged Störtebeker, I wonder if they've strung up Lucy Rennwand.73

Except for one other occasion when Oskar sees a striking resemblance in a young Social Democrat, Störtebeker, a character who has been carried from Cat and Mouse, to Dog Years, and back to The Tin Drum disappears forever.

It appears, therefore, that Grass has used a few characters who served in a background to the heroes of his three novels; this has added continuity to what, on the surface, tends toward confusion, but what is, in reality, chronological order with profuse details.


There is another similarity which needs to be mentioned; it is Walter Matern who reveals a clue to himself as well as the other characters.

Everybody has at least two fathers. They aren't necessarily acquainted with each other. Some fathers don't even know. Sometimes fathers get lost. Speaking of uncertain fathers, Matern possesses one who is particular deserving of a monument, but doesn't know where he; or suspect what he; in whom he hopes. But he doesn't look for him.74

Just as Tulla's dead child had two possible fathers, so did Oskar Matzerath. Oskar, in turn, claimed that he was the father of Maria's child, not his father Mr. Matzerath who married Maria:

That's why I am the father and not this Matzerath who to the last supposed himself to be my father. But my father was Jan Bronski. Jan Bronski got there ahead of Matzerath and didn't go away; he stayed right where he was and deposited everything he had; from Jan Bronski I inherited this quality of getting there ahead of Matzerath and staying put; what emerged was my son, not his son. He never had any son at all. He was no real father. Even if he had married my poor mama ten times over, even if he did marry Maria because she was pregnant.75

Perhaps these situations have arisen because of the times, perhaps, just perhaps, they aren't to blame for a bit of immorality in times of stress. Even Pilenz seems to have had a mother who is a bit unsound morally:

Mahlke was a mild but firm chairman. When the questions became too personal—while my father


was sending APO letters from Greece, my mother was indulging in intimate relations, mostly with noncoms—well, Mahlke warded off questions in that direction: "Never mind about that, Auntie. Who can afford to judge in times like this when everything is topsy-turvy?"

It is the present writer's intention to take up Grass' style of writing. There are many who have compared Günter Grass with unboundedly talented writers as Thomas Mann. It is the writer's belief that there is truth in this statement. There are similarities to be found particularly with Mann's Faustus and Grass' Dog Years. Both of them parody the "heroic epic" as a characterization of an era. Both of them are melancholy, mournful epics. Thomas Mann employed irony, Grass employs satire.

It is, for example, in melancholy, mournful tones that Jenny does her toe dance in the snow; it is, in fact, a culminating point of melancholy. The only difference is that Doctor Faustus perishes with his era; Eddi Amsel, Jenny, and Walter Matern, the trio, survive theirs.

Grass' hero, Oskar, is the result of opposites: a gnome who tells fifty years of Germany's history without ever getting weary, a job which a giant couldn't have managed. Oskar is unethical, demonic, devilish, inhabited by Satan himself, yet at the same time he searches for protection under his grandmother's skirts against the cruel, spiteful, immoral world of adults. He is innocent, a simple three-year-old, who, by his own

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determination, wants to protect this wonderful independence of an evil spirit in order to search for that which stands behind things. And in that his will succeeds where a giant would have failed, for he would have tripped every which way over his arms, legs, and his brain. And in this, the foundation of The Tin Drum has been discovered: the dialectic of the tin drum. Grass and his fiend and hero, Oskar, had to identify themselves with the evil. They had to do it in order to deal with the guilt (a new and malicious, virulent guilt) and with the poison of self-righteousness. It is thus that Oskar Matzerath is accepted as belonging to the Germans just as Hitler belongs to the Germans and their history. The problem thus becomes the following: the Germans must deal with Oskar Matzerath just as they have dealt with Hitler. Consequently they will and must manage with themselves and the Oskar Matzerath-Hitler in themselves. For this to take place, Grass, as the author, must remain neutral. He does not push away the guilt, nor does he through a hypocritical defamation of his author-character answer for the guilt responsibility. Moreover, he does not answer the debt with any kind of an ethical, aesthetic value produced by the world. No, Grass, just as he has accomplished with his hero, awakens us, the readers, to a haunting, restlessness, and disquiet which is not, by any means, temporary. This does not apply only to the Germans, although it is written through and about Germany's history. If the reader is involved in the work, he cannot escape the responsibility brought to light by Grass.
It is true that Grass awakens his hero, Oskar, and that this, in itself, distinguishes him from other contemporary writers: he deals with the problem of the individual and society, but not on the level of the judgments which are in demand today. He goes underneath, deeply into the underground of human existence and develops the picture of the human being in the age of human pathos, in upsetting, disturbing years. He does not give us a tragic or a positively reassuring hero on whom we may safely rely.

Here begins the real relationship in all three of Grass' novels: even if the reader wishes to discount Oskar as an assinine fool, he must, nevertheless, admit and recognize that Oskar fulfills a function by going deeply to meet and accost, address and demand strongly of the human in his unconsciousness, even in his dreams. In The Tin Drum, Cat and Mouse, and in Dog Years there is a process at work. A process of the fantasy is at work here into which, willingly or unwillingly, the reader is drawn and attached. Once a figure of the writers, e.g., Oskar or Matern, gains power over us, the same figure awakens, with his demonic powers, powers in us, both negative and positive powers which enable us to form a contention of our own, and this takes place in a new realm of freedom. With such a figure, whether the reader determines him an utter fool or a negative hero, who possesses substance and strength and develops this same substance and strength, are the deeper levels of the human soul opened. What has once been is awakened and becomes alive through such a figure; myths, pictures, legends,
fairy tales, all forgotten, re-enter the consciousness. And these older, deeper, non-destructible supplies become the standard of value for the new judgment.

The settings have been mentioned again and again, and it is the writer's wish to solidify their worth in Grass' works. The reader cannot involve himself in Grass' works without thinking of Danzig and the lowlands of the Vistula, for in his novels and his novella the colors, individualities, and contours are reflected through the experiences of childhood and early youth.

Basically speaking, Grass employs only a few themes or motifs. Nevertheless, they are blended into a texture; they are even enmeshed to become a pattern. This pattern is one of a new mythology at the root of which, in spite of or perhaps because of a retrospective grasp upon the archaic, is found a new experience in reality. Günter Grass is not found in the end, he is found first of all in the beginning, perhaps also in the middle of a development, which leads the reader to expect much more. The basic elements of his work are at their clearest in his lyrical poetry, and from there they increase and become the complex forms of *The Tin Drum* and *Dog Years*. These two novels form with the novella *Cat and Mouse* a coherent, inter-relating, interdependent, yet capable of a farther, deeper building ground on which there are petty bourgeois, Philistine houses, air-raid shelters, half-standing ruins, underground factory establishments, human beings, and animals along with museum pieces of different sorts. Hell is
above ground, however, as Brauxel gives his ending speech: "What object worthy of his guardianship has the bright surface of the earth to offer a dog such as this? This is his place. Here where the mining shaft says amen and the ventilators breathe forth spring air from above. He shall be guardian here, yet he will not bear the name of Cerberus. Orcus is up above."??

In Dog Years a theme is found which had already been developed in Grass' earlier art and poetry: the human being in the form of birds and scarecrows. In all three works, the two novels and the novella, one theme is primary: Danzig-Langfuhr and the lowlands of the Vistula. More important, however, is the theme developed from this: the people of Danzig-Langfuhr and the Vistula's lowlands and their active and passive defense and resistance to the new era of technology evolving from the olden times as well as to the total war which is manifested in entirely new forms. From this new war comes a process, partly new, partly old. Grass belongs to that generation of children affected by this war; this generation was, however, not the first to be affected, for World War I branded that generation with its mark. This time, however, new questions are asked: Will man conquer again? Will the era of technology bring on a new type of human being? How strong is the foundation, the basic elements of Man? Will these elements, the animated rudiments of Man be strong enough to maintain themselves against

the giant automatons of technical reality? Or are they hopelessly sunk in disaster? This is the disturbing restlessness which Grass has awakened with his novel in 1959. The restlessness has become an incessant noise, and the noise did not create itself. It was provoked, provoked by the author Günter Grass through the art of narration by his figure Oskar Matzerath. The figure of Oskar has become a national figure of a gnome-like monster and blasphemy, of an evil, reviling, infantile creature who, at the beginning of the novel, is lying in a children's bed in an asylum and there with the help of a tin drum, a possession from which he has not been separated since childhood, it is that he writes the incredible, unbelievable, offensive, unpleasant, shocking, scandalous, indecent, obnoxious, decaying memoirs of a wasted, desolate, confused, wild, disorderly, dissolute thirty-year life in a no less wasted, desolate, confused, wild, disorderly, dissolute epoch. Evil has its place in everything, even in the system and construction of art, even in all metaphors, motifs, conditions, circumstances, ideas, and opinions; sometimes it appears under the guise of a certain naïveté, as in Oskar's case.

Is The Tin Drum a picaresque novel? Many believe yes. The present writer believes not, for although Oskar is a rogue, he is also innocent. More important, The Tin Drum is a realistic novel. The legends, parables, the satire, the rhymes, the fairy tales, the ghost stories, in short, everything is a tool serving and belonging to this reality. The chapter entitled
"In the Onion Cellar" is led by the primary tools, onions and satire, to reveal the elegiac tears of those who knew no longer how to release the cataclysm of emotions. More than any, the writer found the culmination of Grass' talents in this chapter: humour, satire, mournfulness, melancholy, grotesque reality. What could be any more realistic, sadly realistic, than the following paragraph from that chapter?

Why all these onions? For one thing, because of the name. The Onion Cellar had its specialty: onions. And moreover, the onion, the cut onion, when you look at it closely... but enough of that. Schmuh's guests had stopped looking, they could see nothing more, because their eyes were running over and not because their hearts were so full; for it is not true that when the heart is full the eyes necessarily overflow, some people can never manage it, especially in our century, which in spite of all the suffering and sorrow will surely be known to posterity as the tearless century. It was this drought, this tearlessness that brought those who could afford it to Schmuh's Onion Cellar, where the host handed them a little chopping board---pig or fish---a parting knife for eighty pfennigs, and for twelve marks an ordinary field-, garden-, and kitchen-variety onion, and induced them to cut their onions smaller and smaller until the juice---what did the onion juice do? It did what the world and the sorrows of the world could not do: it brought forth a round, human tear. It made them cry. At last they were able to cry again. To cry properly, without restraint, to cry like mad. The tears flowed and washed everything away. The rain came. The dew. Oskar has a vision of floodgates opening. Of dams bursting in the spring floods. What is the name of that river that overflows every spring and the government does nothing to stop it.

And what can be more of a blend of satire and truth than this:

Young people have a different way of crying. They have entirely different problems from their elders, but this doesn't mean that examinations are their only source of anguish. Oh, what conflicts between father and son, mother and daughter, were aired in the Onion Cellar! A good many of the young people felt that they were not understood, but most of them were used to it; nothing to cry about. Oskar was glad to see that love, and not just sexual frustration, could still wring tears from the young folks.79

Oskar's narration upon his tin drum is an epic, to be sure. It is based upon national traditions and runs in chronological order. Cat and Mouse and Dog Years are no different. They are all epics, to be sure, but the large novels, The Tin Drum and Dog Years, as well as the novella, Cat and Mouse, can only be understood as parts of a comprehensive whole. The world of pictures, rhymes, verse, and cadence of early childhood and youth spent in Danzig, the suburb Langfuhr, and the lowlands of the Vistula determines the inner circle, the nucleus of this unity, into which the courses of events are projected and from which they unfold and reveal themselves. To this the contents of the formation resists for so long until the right kind is found, and thus in the singular work begins anew the best ordered power in the major and minor figures, in metre and rhythm, and in the pulsation and intonation of the dialogue. Here, however, lies a difference: Oskar Matzerath is not and cannot be clarified or even known through

79Ibid., p. 527.
his dialogue. As he says at the beginning: "Granted; I am an inmate of a mental hospital; my keeper is watching me, he never lets me out of his sight; there's a peephole in the door, and my keeper's eye is the shade of brown that can never see through a blue-eyed type like me."\textsuperscript{80} Thus, with the first sentence, this confession of Oskar's is the basic tone for the entire novel. From this central figure, his singularities, and his perspectives consequences often arise which are surprising to the reader and to the total structure and construction of the work. Moreover, throughout the entire work, Oskar is the only one who stands fast and doesn't change or even budge. He does not change; it is the others who change. His mother dies, Meyn is gone, Matzerath is killed, Jan Bronski is gone, but he alone changes only in the few inches and in the hump which he acquires of his own free will, of course. Then, on his thirtieth birthday, the book ends.

It is a cliché to speak of our age as revolutionary. Many writers have also called it the age of absurdity. The ridiculously sublime is reflected repeatedly in the art of the twentieth century. The music of Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and Shostokovich behold the twist of the absurd. The atonal revolution of Schönberg has developed into an absurd-sounding twist of twelve tone series, a musical theory known as "seriality" which Stravinsky has invented. Grass' works are along the line of atonal music in a combination of agony, a

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid., p. 15.
depth of tragedy manifested in humorous comedy. Our contemporaries have spoken of our age as one in which the fantastic symbolizes reality, and that reality contains much more of the absurd fantasy than ever before. It is an age of extremes, the theater of the absurd and the grotesque. These are the tools of Grass the author: extremes, absurdities, grotesqueness, fantastic realities. His penchant for the grotesque is revealed in every scene, every page, nearly every line, in his major and minor characters, in the gnome drummer Oskar and his caretaker Bruno, in Mahlke's over-ripe Adam's apple, in the scarecrow-builder Amsel alias Goldmouth alias Brauxel. Never before in modern novels has emerged such a talent for detail-writing as Grass'. Never before have leading figures had the ability to see through, to permeate the petty bourgeois surroundings such as in Danzig-Langfuhr in order to describe, detail by detail, so much in so little.

Grass creates; he gives tragedy, comedy, and satire together. They have enough room to survive, but that does not prevent them from rubbing against each other. Nevertheless, little Oskar does not change. In our age of "revolution" the world is talking about the loss of the individual. Nietzsche talked about it nearly a hundred years ago. This much, however, Grass does not let his hero fall subject to: the masses. Oskar is, at the end just as in the beginning, an individual, an original, thinking, existing, living, breathing individual. The same is true for his creator, Herr Grass. For all of Grass' characters have self-will, individuality, singularity, and
determination. Free-will is nothing new to dramatists, but it is something sought for today by the individual person. It is hard to come by, but the present writer believes that Mr. Grass has not only found it, he is also saying that it isn't a foregone conclusion that we must lose our individuality. The present writer believes that his characters have the same grit and determination for the preservation of their originality as Herr Grass himself possesses. The characters in The Tin Drum and Cat and Mouse and Dog Years may be part of the petty bourgeoisie, but that does not remove the fact that they are original in themselves, in their identity, and in their singularities. Mahlke has a large Adam's apple, Pilenz has a guilt complex, Amsel has a grotesque talent for creating scarecrows, Matern has an unpleasant habit of grinding his teeth, Tulla has a desire to combat sociological norms in her will to bear a child, and Oskar has a hump. These, all of these characteristics, are not destroyed even by the chaotic upheavals of war, not even by the mass-production, not even by the economic miracles, not even by the numbers in our technological era. As Oskar himself says about himself and his caretaker Bruno: "But as far as I and Bruno my keeper are concerned, I beg leave to say that we are both heroes, very different heroes, he on his side of the peephole, and I on my side; and even when he opens the door, the two of us, with all our friendship and loneliness, are still far from being a nameless, heroless mass."81

81 Ibid., p. 17.
Finally, as techniques which are tools of Grass, the writer would grasp a slow motion camera, piles and piles of details, and principles of chronological ordering, and, finally, a boundless imagination and fantasy. The three works are three epics which form one long epic. In each epic, there is a narrator (Pilenz, Oskar, and the trio Brauxel, Liebenau, and Matern) who does not live the past as it were, he tells it, bit by bit, in the most precise and abundant detail. By associations, memories, and concepts, the past unwinds and grows closer and closer until it reaches the present. Only the future is left to the reader, and, furthermore, the reader doesn't really hold a primary importance throughout the three works. The narrator tells, he holds a spool of thread in his hand which will carry him up to the present; the present is the end, for, as the story progresses, the thread grows shorter and shorter. Oddly enough, the things to be told remain confidential, and yet they are told; the narrator tells and, nevertheless, recognizes a fellow who "invented" him. The reader reads and remains on the outside of thing, but is yet pulled into them.

Grass does not begin, does not end with an appeal to humanity and to morals and ethics. The old cliché "It takes one to know one" fits in very nicely here, for how would anyone read a novel filled with appeal to humanity which unraveled the very age filled with inhumanity, immorality, indecency, cruelty, and ugliness? No, Grass has "drummed up" a tyrant
himself, one who would and could himself conjure up situations which are unbelievable. A good example of this is when Oskar reduced some SA men to fools along with the foolish bourgeoisie in the chapter "The Rostrum:"

The drum was already in place. Supplely and tenderly I manipulated the sticks, imprinting an artful and joyous waltz rhythm upon it. Conjuring up Vienna and the Danube, I beat more and more loudly until the first and second bass drums of the troopers were drawn to my waltz and the kettledrums of the older boys took up my prelude with varying skill. Here and there, of course, there was a diehard, hard also of hearing no doubt, who went on playing boom-boom, whereas what I had in mind was the three-four time so beloved of the simple folk. Oskar was on the point of giving up when the trumpets saw the light and the fifes, oh, Danube, oh, how blue they blew! Only the leaders of the trumpeters' and the drummers' corps refused to bow to the waltz king and kept shouting their exasperating commands. But I had deposed them, the music was mine. The simple folk were full of gratitude. Laughter rang out close to the rostrum, here and there I heard singing, oh, Danube, and across the whole field so blue, as far as the Hindenburg-Allee so blue and the Steffens-Park so blue, my rhythm went hopping, amplified by the wide-open microphone above me. And when, still energetically drumming, I looked out into the open through my knothole, I saw that the people were enjoying my waltz, they were hopping about merrily, they had it in their legs: already nine couples and yet another couple were dancing, brought together by the waltz king. Only Löbsack, who appeared on the meadow followed by a long brown train of party dignitaries, Forster, Gresier, Rauschning, and others, whose passage to the rostrum was blocked by the crowd, stood there fuming and surprisingly disgruntled by my three-quarter time. He was used to being escorted to the rostrum by rectilinear march music. These frivolous sounds shook his faith in the people. Through the knothole I observed his sufferings. A draft was blowing through the hole. Though
threatened with an inflammation of the eye, I felt sorry for him and changed over to a Charleston: 'Jimmy the Tiger.'

The SA and SS men spent more than an hour looking for the monster, but "... they did not find Oskar, because they were no match for him."  

And, as if admitting his evil character and at the same time denying the existence of any God to take him under his wing and protect him, Oskar says:

There was no Lord to say: "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it." For me the Lord saw no need to make a gourd grow and send a worm to destroy it. I lamented neither for a biblical gourd nor for Nineveh, even if its name was Danzig. I tucked my very unbiblical drum under my sweater and concentrated on my own troubles. Carefully avoiding overhanging beams and protruding nails, I emerged by my own resources from the bowels of a rostrum intended for meetings and rallies of all sorts and which happened only by the merest accident to have the proportions of a prophet-swallowing whale.

Grass characteristically leads his drummer, Oskar, in a sort of indifferent neutrality who murders, who does evil himself, who brings on evil, and yet, who reveals the very characteristic of evil itself in the guise of innocence, faith, friendliness!

Evil remains in the world like the commonplace, everyday occurrences. Murder does not die with the murderer; tyranny

82Ibid., p. 120 f.
83Ibid., p. 122.
84Ibid., p. 122 f.
does not die with the tyrant Hitler; crime does not die with the criminal. The guilt remains. Sometimes it hides, sometimes it is concealed with fear, anxiety, with cries. The Anxiety of guilt, the fear of the guilt itself, as we all know, is more real than abstract. In *The Tin Drum* the fear, the anxiety of guilt, is rendered as the Black Witch. In the close of the novel Oskar says of himself:

I felt quite at home on that escalator; despite my terror, despite the Witch, I should have esteemed myself happy if only the people round me on the escalator had not been total stranger but my friends and relatives, living and dead: my poor mama between Matzerath and Jan Bronski; Mother Truczinski, the grey-haired mouse, with her children Herbert, Guste, Fritz, Maria; Greff the greengrocer and his slovenly Lina; and of course Bebra the master and Roswitha so lithe and graceful—all those who had framed my questionable existence, those who had come to grief on the shoal of my existence.85

Don't ask Grass or Oskar to reveal what is to be done with the fear, the anxiety, the terror, and the guilt. Don't ask Oskar, for he says that words fail him. The Black Witch must be dealt with by others---those who wish to deal with it and her.

As Oskar has his tool, his drum, so does Pilenz have his tool, his guilt (*mea culpa*), to contend with, and that is the reason for his writing. They both have their guilt. Mahlke's actions have come from three sources: the Virgin Mary, his mouse (Adam's apple), and a third: "And perhaps, in addition to Virgin and mouse, there was yet a third motive: Our school,

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that musty edifice that defied ventilation, and particularly the auditorium, meant a great deal to Joachim Mahlke; it was the school that drove you, later on, to your supreme effort."86 Although in the end Mahlke goes down and does not return, the guilt of the environment, of the adults, and the youth who grow into the adults' mistakes does not vanish: "Who will supply me with a good ending? For what began with cat and mouse torments me today in the form of crested terns on ponds bordered with rushes."87

In comparing Dog Years with Grass' earlier works, it represents a furthering development in his technique. Although the dog "stands central," he doesn't represent such a domina-tingly impressive character as Oskar. Rather, three narrators tell. The core of the story, the dog's story, recurs in more of a biblical tone: "There was once a dog . . ." The story of the dog is a fable, another tool of relating the period of German history from 1935 to 1955. Other tools which Grass uses represent a furthering development in his style: numerous episodes, anecdotes, picaresque stories, untrue fairy tales, grotesqueness and satire, parodies such as the discussion which takes place in the third part and which evokes ridicule upon the useless discussion of today. An even more dynamic furthering of his style is represented in his parody upon

87 Ibid., p. 188.
the philosophical concepts of Martin Heidegger, and with this, Grass has broken forth a new development in the novel today.

The nucleus of the story, the story of Prinz, is not told from the dog's perspective, for this would break the theme, fate, and guilt in the characters' earliest childhood. The reader will no doubt recall that at the very first of the novel Walter Matern throws the knife, a precious gift from his friend Eddi Amsel, into the Vistula. And the reader cannot forget the bloody scene in which nine SA men knock all of Amsel's teeth out. The guilt thrown upon Matern in these scenes have emerged from childhood. Had Grass told the story from the dog's perspective, he would have pushed the guilt onto other plateaus, perhaps onto instinct.

With the number of the thirtieth stall, Dog Years draws to a close. The thirty-first and thirty-second stalls are only used for packing, labeling, and exporting. In this ending chapter, Matern, Goldmouth (alias Eddi Amsel), and the dog visit Brauxel's (alias Goldmouth) underworld where scarecrows of all types are manufactured. The reader should not hastily judge this as a modern copy of Dante's underworld, for as Amsel has said: "Orcus is up above." Finally, the guilt that has driven Matern through the remainder of his childhood and the war years, as well as the same recurring fear which Oskar and Pilenz still hold on the closing pages, must be dealt with individually as the closing sentence in Dog Years is dropped into the reader's mind: "Each of us
bathes by himself."88

At a reception for Günter Grass and Uwe Johnson at the University of Cincinnati, Grass gave to me, the writer, a statement which I have interpreted for my personal sake. In relation to Mahlke, the hero of Cat and Mouse, Grass stated: "Mahlke hat sich selbst zur Maus gemacht." Mahlke made himself a mouse." It not only holds a clue to Grass' characters' free will, it means that each of us is a responsible, free, self-willed individual.
CONCLUSION

From the writer's research the most important similarities and relationships have been revealed throughout this work. Besides time and place, there are similarities in the characters of the three works which bind the characters and the entire works to the relationship of a whole. Grass' three works are not only a trilogy, they form a unity which is composed of legends, parables, rhymes, and myths. In all three works these elements bring to the surface a hard, fast reality. It is this reality which Grass hands over to the reader to deal with, to interpret, and to solve. For this task it is necessary that the reader be interested, be involved, and allow the reality to enter his consciousness. Grass has achieved his purpose with the writer and thousands of other readers who have acclaimed the literary genius that he is.
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