ASPECTS OF UWE JOHNSON'S

DAS DRITTE BUCH ÜBER ACHIM

A thesis presented for the degree of
Master of Arts in German to the
University of Canterbury, Christchurch,
## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>p. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary and Social Milieu</td>
<td>p. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and Unity</td>
<td>p. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Space</td>
<td>p.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
<td>p.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication, Alienation and Ambiguity</td>
<td>p.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson and Das dritte Buch Über Achim</td>
<td>p.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>p.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>p.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aspects of Uwe Johnson's Das dritte Buch über Achim, a thesis presented by Sonja Alack for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Canterbury, intends to examine and assess the success of techniques used by Johnson. The work is shown within its literary and historical context, bringing out the influences upon it and its relationship to contemporary norms, and it is analysed in this light. The elements contributing to its unity are investigated, with special reference to Johnson's handling of time and space. In this way an approach is made to the process of the creation of the novel's atmosphere which is seen in relation to the dilemmas of modern literature, centring on the search for ultimate truths and absolute communication. The alienation resulting from these dilemmas is fundamental to this work and is treated from different standpoints, presenting the reader with a multiperspective novel employing various techniques developed by the theorists of Cubism. Following a study of Johnson's use of language, the work is presented in conclusion as a literary exercise of considerable merit, firmly within the modern prose tradition.
INTRODUCTION

The novel presented in this thesis, *Das dritte Buch über Achim*, appeared in 1961 and is Uwe Johnson's second full length work. As in his other two novels, *Mutmassungen über Jacob* and *Zwei Ansichten*, the general theme treated is that of life in Germany, particularly in what West Germans tend to think of as "Mitteldeutschland", since the introduction of the border of which it is a direct result.

The choice of a novel by Uwe Johnson as the subject for this discussion was inspired by the interest aroused by his extensive treatment of a topic which is relatively untouched directly in German literature in spite of the great influence it exerts over the life in both Germanies. As Johnson himself has said: "Dieses Thema kriege ich täglich zum Frühstück, ohne dass ich die Zeitung lesen müßte. Dieser Zustand hat das Leben vieler Leute und auch mein Leben auf das erheblichste verändert, mitunter negativ." (1)

*Das dritte Buch über Achim* was chosen in preference to Johnson's other two early novels because its outlook covers all aspects of life in East Germany and is broader and more subtle than *Mutmassungen über Jacob* in its treatment of the problem, and it gives more opportunity to discuss the methods by which Johnson approaches the discovery of the truth underlying the visible reality of the DDR than the later *Zwei Ansichten*, which is divided between the two sectors.

This study intends to distil the principal elements of Johnson's style and the importance of this manner of writing within the context of modern German literature. It is a style which effectively reflects and combines with the content to produce an extremely powerful and fascinating evocation of the atmosphere reigning in the
East Germany of the late 1950s, and therefore provides important insights into German attitudes on both sides of the border. An attempt will be made to investigate the precise nature of the relationships between style, language, and content in this novel, by examining the literary background in which Johnson was writing, and by evaluating his handling of time, space, atmosphere, and other elements contributing to the aesthetic unity and quality of Das dritte Buch über Achim. The intention of this study is to codify and analyse the various techniques of writing used by Johnson in Das dritte Buch and an attempt will be made to determine the effect of these techniques in the evocation of the world of the novel.

The edition to which all page references apply is: Uwe Johnson: Das dritte Buch über Achim, Suhrkamp Frankfurt am Main, 1961.)

The following abbreviations have been used:

Das dritte Buch über Achim - DB.
Jahrestage - Jt.
Eine Reise wegwohin, 1960 - RW.
LITERARY AND SOCIAL MILIEU

As Claire Holt points out a writer does not exist in vacuo:

"works of art convey a special emotive mood which is undoubtedly closely linked with the moral order (or disorder, as the case may be) of a phase of history and of a cultural area." (2)

This Weltgefühl is more intuitive and deeper than the more consciously formulated Weltanschauung. This is as true of Johnson as of any other writer. Johnson was well educated in German and English literature and appears also to have been widely read in modern literature and to have been conversant with the major aesthetic movements of the twentieth century Europe. This supposition is justified when one remembers that at least two of his teachers, Ernst Bloch and Hans Mayer, were leading aesthetes and both exceedingly well read and astute men. Because of Johnson's background he was in the unusual position of being subject to influences from both sides of the border.

Of prime importance to German life is the existence of the border, yet curiously enough its presence, and later that of the Wall, is very rarely treated directly by German writers. Only Johnson, most especially in Das dritte Buch über Achim, treats the border as a living entity and investigates its sociological function in the societies on either side. In particular, the problems of the writer and of the identity of the individual as well as the latter's relationship to his society receive an added dimension from the freshness of his chosen backdrop. Johnson's intimate personal knowledge of the geographical heart of the German problem, where he has chosen to remain, enables him to treat these modern dilemmas within the border setting, making the alienation of the individual more poignant by juxtaposition with the alienation of entire societies. The focus of attention consequently shifts at least in part from man in isolation to man in society.
Although to some degree the attention Johnson devotes to the border in his work places him outside the main stream of German literature, he is, in the themes he treats, firmly within the modern literary tradition in which Musil with Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften (1933) figures so prominently. There is in this work the recurrent analysis of accepted values and of the problem of man's identity in the modern world which epitomises the probing characteristic of later literature: e.g. "Unsere Anschauung von unserer Umgebung, aber auch von uns selbst, ändert sich mit jedem Tag. Wir leben in einer Durchgangszeit." (2a) Both Johnson in Das dritte Buch (1961) and Walser in Halbzeit (1960) pose questions which cannot be answered, and both treat the problem of identity. The treatment of time is however somewhat different, since one of Walser's themes, the delusions of memory, runs counter to Johnson's treatment of time transfer. The problem of identity is a central issue in which Johnson and Walser recall the work of Frisch in Stiller. There is the same disparity between the public image of man and the reality of his past and present. The theme is worked out in the interrelationships of the characters rather than through the person of a hero. Johnson extends this in Das dritte Buch, in which there is no hero, to the alienation as existing not only between the characters but also entails that of the reader, by placing him in the same ambivalent position as the characters. The reader is not assisted by Johnson who resists the temptation to point the way out of this existential dilemma.

Although Johnson's treatment of existentialist probings lies in a different sphere from Nossack's metaphysical preoccupations, certain aspects of Nossack's style herald those used by Johnson:

"Hans Erich Nossack ... verbindet metaphysische Untersuchungen ... mit einer nüchternen Sprache, die sich, lange vor Uwe Johnson und seinen lakonischen Zeitgenossen, an "Berichten", "Protokollen" und "wissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen" orientiert". (2b)
However, Johnson, finding the traditional grammatical structures too systematized and restricted to isolate the actual thought patterns of his characters, enriches his style with a broadly based use of language. As Kolb observes:

"Ein derartiger Satzstil hat seine eigentliche Heimat in der gesprochenen Sprache, in den Mundarten ebenso wie in der Umgangssprache." (3).

Thus, style is closely linked with language and an author's attitude towards it. Style must therefore develop and change with the language. As Johnson himself has said:

"About contemporary authors one could say that on the whole they have adapted their style to the technical and psychological changes that have taken place in the outside world. This ought to constitute a kind of definition of "modern". Changes in style and language match changes in society." (4).

Problems endemic in a society tend to become the fulcra of these changes. The alienation of the individual from his society, and of the society from the State has become symbolised in Germany by the border, whose alienating effects give rise to a chaotic fragmentary style. Since the War there has been an increasing revolt from the confines of traditional grammar and syntax with a more sophisticated use of objects to create a web of superficial reality to penetrate to the more genuine reality which exists beyond the physical realm. Writers have used various techniques to achieve a transparent reality of this type. Rilke's "Dinge" are of relevance here, but of far greater importance to Johnson is the portrayal of reality seen in the works of Joyce, Woolf, and Faulkner. The last is the most significant as Johnson has admitted to his influence, (5) but the works of all three were available to Johnson in East Germany.

Much of the alienation in post-war German literature is directly attributable to the world of politics and social
environment. After the Second World War and the feeling of betrayal it engendered in the "Junge Generation" there was little more than a feeling of relief outside the official optimism of the Socialist world. Nothing seemed secure. A similar mood gave rise to Steger's comment about Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften:

"Leugnung des festen Standortes, der gesicherten Anschauung von Wirklichkeit, Auflösung von Ganzheiten, Verlust der Identität von Personen, die Zertrümmerung der Welt - , ... . Dazu kommt eine immer größere Abstraktion: Kontaktverlust zu der als Ganzheit erfahrenen Wirklichkeit im alten Sinne und eine steigende Undurchsichtigkeit aller Vorgänge." (5a)

In Germany, after 1949, the only really indisputable fact was the existence of a division which resulted from the war and the occupations. But even this is viewed subjectively and incomprehendingly. The border becomes, therefore, in literature, almost an existential problem. Though rarely treated directly except by Johnson it affects the relativity of all one sees and thinks, and precludes, because of its emotional connotations, any ascertainable truth or certainty. It is one of the unavoidables, one of the absolutes, but because it has a negative effect on both societies and because the reactions to which it gives rise are so subjective it does not induce a sense of security. Thus the writer's attempts to distil the essence of the individual and arrive at a private truth are in fact hindered by the presence of the border which acts as an inhibiting factor on both the quest and its object. One of the manifestations of this is seen in Das dritte Buch, where the characters tend to speak in two languages, one a stilted, guarded mode of expression which is defensively depersonalised, and the other an intensely personal form of expression used only in complete privacy. A characteristic instance of this is the difference between the coherent official language which Achim uses to present the official Achim and the fragmentary, colloquial and dialectical language he uses occasionally in an unguarded moment.
The preoccupation with existentialist problems is reflected in the style of this period. This style expresses the conception of the ambiguity and relativity of values formerly considered to be absolute (e.g. the traditional view of the super-hero), and the awareness of this relativity of existence conditions and explains the incertitude, insecurity, and alienation which characterise the nouveau roman. This is a portrayal of the confusion and chaos in which man finds himself due to the uncertainty and ambivalence of the modern world. Duquesne points out that:

"Le portrait de l'homme moderne, maître de lui comme de l'univers et sûr de sa victoire, paraît bien trompeur. L'homme, en réalité, constate qu'à la rationalité croissante correspond une absurdité croissante. Il a repris conscience du tragique de son existence. L'angoisse du vieillissement et de la mort est réapparue, accompagnée d'un vertige devant l'évolution trop rapide des choses et des sociétés, leur usure accélérée par un progrès qui va trop vite. L'humanité voudrait bien attendre un peu. Retrouver un point fixe et, par lui, un peu de sécurité." (7)

The character, in literature, becomes "an obscure figure moving around in an obscure world" (6), thus eliminating the traditionally positive and dynamic hero. Relativity and alienation are frequently achieved by a distortion or irregularity of style which not merely depicts the alienation of the characters and the ambiguities of the themes, but induces in the reader the same alienation, that is, the reader finds in literature a reflection of his own sense of alienation from the modern world.
STRUCTURE AND UNITY

The title of Johnson's novel Das dritte Buch über Achim indicates its scope; Karsch, a journalist from Hamburg, receives a telephone call from his former girlfriend, Karin, an actress living in East Germany. At the instigation of the authorities she invites him to visit her and he duly crosses the border. Through Karin he meets Achim, East Germany's most famous cyclist, and is apprised of the purpose of the invitation extended to him. Karsch is asked to write a book about Achim and contracts with the "staatliche Verlag für junge Literatur" (DB58) to do so. This book is to be the third about Achim and is to be restricted to the mundane concerns of the first two rather than to communicate to the reader the nature of the "real" Achim. Karsch's already difficult task of reconciling his picture of Achim with that which Achim has of himself is further hindered by his awareness of the situation as an alien in East German society. Johnson's novel is a book about a book - Johnson describes Karsch's Herculean task of gathering material, sifting facts from fictions and continually revising his work as it accumulates. Karsch's book is never written and Johnson's novel is a study of the growing awareness that the whole concept, as it forms in Karsch's mind, of the third book is beyond the limitations of words. Karsch returns to Hamburg, his book unwritten.

The structure of the novel is bounded by a frame similar in technique to that used in the Novelle by such writers as Storm or Meyer. This framework technique, because it is such a highly mechanical device, tends to be very difficult to use and is vulnerable. However, in a longer prose form, it can be less obtrusive. The great advantage of using this in a novel is that it can give the work an intense feeling of completeness and a sense of circularity by conveniently bounding the sub-plots.
The result is a practical concept of unity which also allows maximum freedom of movement within the frame. The result is what A.J. Arberry has called in another context "Pearls random strung" (8) and Johnson handles this randomness with the skill of a master. The frame also helps maintain unity throughout the novel despite the wide varieties of prose style.

This mosaic of styles and incidents is not unlike modern cinematic techniques. The perspectives and settings change with great rapidity and recall a series of slides flashing on and off a screen without a pause, so quickly that the lasting impression is that of a hazy blur.

The plot, woven through the story, is deceptively clear, for in trying to isolate the reality of the situation, its confusion and complexity is brought to light. Johnson uses Karsch's eyes, or, via Karsch, Achim's eyes. He resists the temptation to look on from a height and prefers to view his scene from within but through an outsider (Karsch). The result is a double perspective, the blending of two views. Through the presentation of East German life as seen by Karsch, the gradual discovery of its differences from his own part of Germany and of those existing between the principal characters is revealed. The mosaic of the work forms about the interweaving of various individually insignificant revelations. The style contributes actively to the plot, themes, and narrative, to produce a work which is in the final analysis ambiguous and intangible in its effect.

Of crucial importance structurally is the confrontation of the East with the West. This devolves into the mutual non-understanding of Karsch and Achim. As Karsch tries to portray East German reality through Achim, the whole of Karsch's West German background and preconceptions
are confronted by this new alien world which, paradoxically, is simultaneously familiar to him. Johnson portrays East Germany as far as possible by reporting Karsch's reactions to everything about him and analysing the resulting degrees of alienation in Karsch. The result of this is a finely maintained balance which lends great structural unity of tone to the work.

The unity of the novel is maintained with consistent skill. Johnson uses technical devices with great care and tact and these never force themselves on the reader or disrupt the unity of tone. The methods of maintaining unity are not unifunctional and in this perhaps lies the secret of Johnson's success.

The most obvious unifying feature is the extensive use of repetition. This is not restricted to words, but extends itself to the use of Leitmotifs, colours, and themes. For example, the description of Karin's neck and hair (DB12, DB220) recurs. Various objects (reminiscent of Rilke's "Dinge") are used as unifying "pegs". These all have strong overtones, for instance the typewriter and the bicycle have an emotive force beyond their immediate terms of reference in this novel, which endows them with a functional perspective making the unity all the more effective. The most remarkable use of this device is Johnson's use of the telephone. Not only does this provide a link between East and West Germany but also with reality. The security of this link is emphasised by the use of stock phrases and symmetrical conversations on the telephone. It is also a means of emphasising the relative personal insecurity of the East when the possibility of wire-tapping is pointed out. The telephone gives the novel a very real feeling of geographical unity, and symmetry is also apparent in the link between the respective corresponding locations of Hamburg and what is presumably Leipzig, on the other side of the border. This is
accentuated by the linking of Karin with West Germany by the use of imagery and of her gestures. This is most apparent in her relative lack of inhibition at the bicycle meet (DB13-17) and in her honest expression of emotion (DB294).

Colour is used effectively to supplement the use of objects for structural purposes. The dominant tones of grey, brown, and a rather uninspiring blue tend almost to symbolise the oppressiveness of Socialist Realism and the East German regime, just as the West is symbolised by gay colours. The greyness of the East is pervading and dominates the whole novel.

The continual attempts to find the fundamental truths pertaining to East and West Germany and Karsch's attempts to distil the essential truths of human nature as far as they relate to Achim are one of the main sources of the unity of tone in the novel. The dominant feeling resulting from this is the near-complete lack of comprehension and inability of the two views to reach any measure of reconciliation, leading to the overall uncertainty and ambiguity of the novel alongside a continual use of the simultaneous and objective reporting of facts.

This ambiguity manifests itself not only in the juxtaposition of the intangible with the tangible but also in the concept which the State has of the third book and that which Karsch has. The narrator's commentary on Karsch's attitude to his work and his difficulties in handling his material are always in the foreground and in this way the real action (in this case the potential contents of the third book) is kept behind the foreground of the third book itself and this effect of watching the action in this way maintains a very high level of unity. For instance, section openings are frequently comments on the writing of the book and can reflect the feelings of various characters to Karsch's work:
e.g.
1) Johnson's report of State requirements:

"Das Buch, in dem ein Durchreisender namens Karsch beschreiben wollte wie Achim zum Ruhm kam und lebte mit dem Ruhm, sollte enden mit der Wahl Achims in das Parlament des Landes, das war die Zusammenarbeit von Sport und Macht der Gesellschaft in einer Person, so scheint sie dem Durchreisenden abgeschlossen; auf dies Ende zu sollte der Anfang laufen und sein Ziel schon wissen. Er dachte anzufangen wie du und wie ihr es gebilligt hättest; darüber wusste er nicht Bescheid, durch diese Frage dachte er oft. Wo fing das an?" (DB48/9)

2) Karsch's feelings:

"Sie gaben ihm wenig zum Aufschreiben. Eine Arbeit für Geld hätte Karsch zurückgegeben: macht es euch allein. Er hatte sie aber freivillig angefangen. Und Achims Zusammenhang mit seinem Land (das Land und Achim selbst) war ihm unverständlich, das sollte er aufschreiben." (DB74/75)

3) Achim's point of view:

"Das ist nach Gedächtnis aufgeschrieben. Achims Sätze waren mehr in der Zeit der unvollendeten Vergangenheit gehalten, und einige Worte würde er nicht freivillig benutzen. Als er es durchsah, meinte er aber dass er es gern gesagt hätte wie es hier steht." (DB104)

This is supplemented by random references as to how Karsch can fit new items of information into his book.

e.g.

"Karsch war nicht sehr glücklich über diesen Zwischenraum und war nicht sicher wie er in einem Zugriff zu sagen war." (DB53)

e.g.

"Das hab ich da eingesehen für mein Leben, das müssen Sie beschreiben als hätten Sie es verstanden, und dies hier streichen Sie mal: sagte Achim, zog die beiden ersten Blätter aus der Klammer und gab sie Karsch zurück." (DB192)
e.g.

"Da war viel, das zu Achims beschriebenen Leben gehörte und vielleicht nicht gehörte." (DB211)

The difficulty of deciding the relevance of new data increases as Karsch becomes more and more aware of the impossibility of this task. For example, in the long section entitled "War Achim das so recht?" (DB184ff.) the narrator says "Ich habe versucht dir zu beantworten ob es Achim recht war." (DB203). This emphasises the growing awareness of the lack of absolute answers.

The answers to the listener's questions become themselves unanswerable questions, and Karsch is aware of his inability to comprehend and to express:

e.g.

"Das liess sich unter diesen Umständen schreiben. Die Umstände kürzten was länger nicht eindeutiger gewesen wäre. Und nun noch die Zwischenrufe. Und nun noch: Irgend wie." (DB234)

e.g.

"Wieviel Buchstaben hat das Alphabet?" (DB282)

This inability, underlined by repeated references to the process of composition and Karsch's frustration, intensifies the use of a circular structure.

Ringkomposition strengthens the novel's unity not only on the level of the total structure but contributes also to the unity of individual episodes. This method of composition traces Karsch's efforts of writing to the end (fruitless for Karsch but not for Johnson). He is no further forward as far as his book is concerned at the end than he was at the beginning. This is emphasised by the framework technique. Karsch is back in Hamburg in his room once again answering the telephone in the same distinctive manner as he did in the beginning of the novel. This throws greater emphasis on the impossibility of ever finding the final truth, so both Karsch and the reader are
left in many ways in the same state of ignorance in which they started out and although pursuit of the reality of East Germany has broadened one's knowledge of the DDR on the factual level, the closest one approaches the truth itself is in the evocation of the atmosphere.

Significantly, the final question is identical with the very first - "Wie war es denn?" (DB10 and 337). Johnson's tone conveys the hope that he has been able to give a satisfactory answer but in providing his own conclusion about his aim in the novel, he seems dubious about his ability as an author as he expresses his doubts about the finished product:


Although this is identical with a sentence in one of his introductory paragraphs, there is a subtle difference. On page 9 he speaks of "Genauigkeit" but at the end, rather than refer to his novel as "eine Beschreibung" of the situation, he modifies his definition to "der Versuch sie zu beschreiben" and leaves it to the reader to decide whether he has in fact achieved his goal.

The transcription of the photograph in great detail is also an exercise in Ringkomposition on a smaller scale. At first the photo is incomprehensible to both Karsch and the reader until Karin explains its emotional and political significance. This also provides a good illustration of the way in which Johnson or Karsch reaches a quick conclusion and then reconsiders. In this case the conclusion remains unchanged and is restated with far greater confidence and certitude at the end of the section:
"Ihm sagte es nichts. Was Karin ansah zwischen steif erhobenen Händen war eine scheckige Aluminiumplatte mit zwei frisch angeschnittenen Kanten, auf die war inmitten der Kontaktabzug eines gewöhnlichen Kleinbildes geklebt. ... Alle Kanten waren klar, alle Gesichter kenntlich; natürlich sah Karsch dass in der ersten Reihe Achim mitging, es sagte ihm nur nichts." (DB291)

The structural use of Ringkomposition in this small though important episode parallels and emphasises the more extensive use of the technique in the novel as a whole.

Ringkomposition is a stylistic device used to strengthen the effect of the narrative device of the framework and the fine unity of tone to produce a novel with an extremely high level of unified structural cohesion.
One of the more satisfactory theoretical analyses of time and space is expounded by Roman Ingarden in Das literarische Kunstwerk. In this work Ingarden distinguishes three basic types of time: 1: the physical mathematical concept of objective time, 2: the time in which we live and which may be intersubjective or subjective, and 3: true subjective time. Of these, concrete time is applicable to but not identified with literary time. In concrete time every time phase goes through a "now" phase defining both past and future. Also, real time is continuous, but literary time, which is to some extent an analogy of real time, can have longer or shorter phases and the events between the phases remain indefinite. It is therefore apparent that real time continuity cannot be represented in literature since literature has an intrinsic, extratemporal continuity which prevents our sensing time breaks. Literary time continuity depends on the existence of a centre of time orientation and of the time perspectives emanating from it. A literary character, in recounting a past event, can achieve a time transfer to a much higher degree than can a real character since a literary character can completely abandon his "now". Also, in literary time there may be more than one focus of time orientation from which an event is viewed. This gives either two "nows" or the illusion of the simultaneity of the past or the future with the present. This illusion is especially apparent in Achim's reminiscences of his childhood when Achim abandons his "now". Karsch, in relating Achim's reminiscences, must be continually on his guard not to transfer "Achim's Stirnrunzeln ... zu seiner Zeit, sonst läuft uns die in einander mit der von Achim's Kindheit" (DB88) since Karsch cannot achieve the same time transfer.

In life, time is treated "in ihrer Individualität", (9)
whereas in literature it is manipulated "in ihrer allgemeinen Struktur". (10) The sense of time running out "gives the real edge to the dramatic emotion" (11) but the end may be definite or indefinite. Thus, the pressure on Karsch to actually produce something helps maintain a remarkably high level of suspense and his ultimate failure, far from having a depressing effect, lends to the whole novel depths which could not have been revealed had the third book been written.

Bates' comment in The Modern Short Story (12) that "time is the pulse and nerve of the novel" is very close to being universally true. The handling of time determines the tempo of the novel and the effectiveness of the highlighted episodes. There are several more or less standard devices for manipulating time in Das dritte Buch über Achim. The use of acoustic devices is particularly well handled. The close description of a telephone ringing or the minute analysis of the ringing of a doorbell is so masterfully handled, with such delicateness and precision, that the reader is not aware that time is being tampered with. The visual counterpart of this is the description of objects which suspends the normal flow of time while the focus of attention lies on a single item, e.g. the description of Karin's neck, which recurs. The description of the photograph of Achim is a modified use of this device. In this case, time is not merely suspended, but is disrupted so that the reader, far from having the apparently tangible time fixes, is confused by the ambiguities inherent in the passage. In this Johnson has amalgamated the purely visual device with a device demanding a psychological response by the presentation of sets of simultaneous reactions.

Two techniques of retarding the flow of time are extensively used by Johnson - The use of flashbacks and the technique of stopping time. Flashbacks tend to stagnate or suspend time. In Achim's childhood reminiscences
there are two "nows" and each is kept to the fore by a subtle system of hints and correlations. For the reader the effect is to suspend the regular time progression and to treat, as far as time is concerned, the flashback as an interlude in time. The reader is however still very aware of the existence of time. Beyond the suspension of time is the complete removal of time, an effect of timelessness in which time is not perceived at all and the novel becomes a word pattern which evokes an aesthetic response similar to that of a painting or of a sculpture. Time becomes irrelevant. This device is most obviously used in straight descriptions of, e.g., landscapes, but it can also stand out in the most unexpected situations. For instance, there is an intense awareness of timelessness in the passage "Sie lebten alle noch. Sie waren nicht tot" (DB96) in which meaning coordinates perfectly with the balance of one sentence with the other, with the assonance and unobtrusive (here) negative throwing greater emphasis on the final word.

Intimately connected with the concept of time is the concept of space. In literature time and space are interdependant. In Das dritte Buch über Achim the relative unchangeability of characters produces a feeling of a living and moving space, but perhaps the roles of time and space here do not bear out Muir's contention (13) that a dramatic novel is limited in space and free in time, while the character novel is limited in time and free in space. Apart from the theoretical difficulties involved in the distinction between the two types of novels there is another important aspect not covered by Muir which is significant to Das dritte Buch über Achim. If the narrator is the hero the spatial orientation is on him. However, if the narrator is outside the world he presents, a number of centres result and the reader places himself in a fictitious centre which may change or exist in many characters at once. Each spatial centre of orientation possesses its own perspective, e.g. in
Achim's reminiscences the spatial foci are on Achim, Achim's father, and on Karin and Karsch. The reader's response to each focus is different and this creates a complex perspective both in time and in space by the interaction of the perspective of each focus. This passage illustrates accurately the extent to which this novel is recaptured time in a Proustian sense, whereas Mutmassungen über Jakob is past time. In Das dritte Buch über Achim the chronological time of Mutmassungen über Jakob is irrelevant. But time does not, as it does for Proust, lead to salvation in Johnson since neither the past nor the present is ultimately knowable.

The distinction between realism (a) and naturalism (b) is closely related to these spatial concepts. This is one of different conceptions of reality or differing modes of illusion. There is in this novel a world with much in common with the empirical world but which is self-coherent and intelligible in itself. This is what Desmond McCarthy describes as "great comprehensive iridescent bubbles, in which the human beings they describe ... only attain in that world their full reality" (14).

If one interprets "world" as a space term in the same sense as one could refer to "narrative" as a time term, setting can be an instrument of physical or social causation beyond the control of the individual. Thus, Karsch tries to supplement his scanty knowledge of Achim by having recourse to the past, not just in a factual historical way but more especially in his study of the effects of history on Achim's environment (" - Und selbst das Strassenbild gibt Aufschlüsse, wenn man nämlich an früher denkt! sagte Herr Fleisg. Das gestand Karsch ihm zu". (DB43)). He probes Achim's past by means of his father and grandmother and tries to

(a) & (b) - see Ritchie: Periods in German Literature, Chapter 8, "Realism" and Chapter 9 "Naturalism".
isolate the essentials of Achim's childhood. Achim is shown against a background of historical events in which he could or would have taken part, such as his membership of the Hitlerjugend, and against the effects of the war on his family. A truly personal approach through history is impossible and those, including Achim, whom Karsch questions about Achim's past are of no assistance. Achim most accurately sums up the position by indicating that he has broken with the past and Karsch is forced to search out a past truth by the use of very inadequate relics of the period in order to recapture the lost time. This brings out the point that time in this novel is closely dependent on the human element: any time recaptured must be a process of human communication, for the individual is an inseparable part of the history of his country—"Die ganze Person aber sei der Einmarsch der sowjetischen Armee und der Aufbau einer neuen Wirtschaft und die neue Zufriedenheit des Lebens und die fahnenschwenkenden Zuschauer am Rande der Rennstrecken alles in allem! Wie also der Meister sich wünsche (Sie werden ihn ja kennenlernen) dass Achim einmal so gründlich von aussen und ohne voreilige Gefühle erzählt werde wie da, kurz, gut, er denke da an ein rundes: ein ganzes Buch" (DB59/60).

Past and present come together in the city itself and Karsch follows Johnson's own belief that characters are a product of their environment so that any description of Achim's city is largely a description of Achim himself. Karsch tries to discover Achim and his country but without the help of another person he cannot get beyond the façades and his knowledge remains superficial. "Ich sehe ja immer nur das Strassenbild: antwortete Karsch" (DB43). For this reason Karsch perseveres more with his intention of portraying Achim through the Central Station which he regards as "die prall quirlende Versammlung von Achims Stadt und Achim in sie wie anwesend hineingezogen" (DB57). In this bustling whirlpool Karsch finds the
"zusammengefasste Bewegung des Lebens und mehr als zu sehen war.

Achim aber war nicht zu denken abseits der Stadt." (DB51)

In the Station past fuses into present and it can therefore also provide the background which gave rise to the Achim and the East Germany of the present. Karsch hopes to achieve the historical approach by placing his compartment of people in the past and he concentrates not only on actual historical events but also places heavy reliance on everyday details to build up the atmosphere of the intervening years -


To keep the reader's attention focussed on Achim even though he isn't actually present, and to emphasise the close bond between past and present, Karsch intends to mix the sports news of the time with the political events and seeing that the same thing happens now in East Germany, a parallel is drawn between what was and what is today.

Time and space are used by Johnson in Das dritte Buch Über Achim to link Achim's past with his present and to depict how the divergence between the two reflects the irreconcilability of what was with what is. Johnson shows the impossibility of arriving at any objective truth which can fully take account of both past and present. Not only is time seen as a series of exclusive "nows", but the worlds of the characters, though influenced by those of
others and partially knowable to others, are simultaneously exclusive. Thus time and space express the alienation that exists between past and present, East and West, and between the State in the East and the East German citizen. Karsch in his attempt to recapture time emphasises the rift between himself and Achim, and the degree to which the DDR has grown away from the Germany of the past: Achim is now ashamed of what he was because he realises that his State prefers the myth of his heroic façade. The past is therefore inconvenient to them both. Karsch upsets this attitude in his quest for truth. To Karsch truth is independent of time and space and can only be arrived at by a full understanding of the vicissitudes of the passage of time and of the true nature of the "worlds" involved. In this he is recognising the formative function of time and its environment in the development of the individual.
ATMOSPHERE

Everything in Das dritte Buch über Achim contributes so fully towards expressing the reality of life as a result of the political situation, that the border becomes synonymous with the reality of life both directly through Karsch's descriptions of East Germany, and indirectly in, for example, Achim's comparison of the two Germanies. The reality of the border is implicit in their outlook. The tensions set up by the border are made more poignant by the care with which Johnson has drawn his characters. Achim and Karsch, because of their respective professions, have a certain affinity for each other, and could, if this be extended to the symbolic level, be seen as an exploratory test-case for reunification.

Johnson, however, does not make it easy for his reader to draw a line between East and West. There is no outright condemnation of either side, and Johnson is careful to give at least the appearance of fairmindedness. In the sequel to this novel, Eine Reise wegwohin, 1960, this is even more explicitly stated. In this later work West German freedom of expression is also shown to be sadly limited. Karsch's newspaper refuses to publish his article in which he advocates reunification because it is not in line with West German government policy. When he later mentions it again on television together with the official Anerkennung of East Germany, the programme is interrupted and he becomes the object of secret police attention.

The introduction of the Grenze is the deciding factor in the lives of the people, particularly those of East Germany. The political situation of the split Germany gives the novel both its historical basis and its emotional overtones. This is shown to influence life, as a general
term, and within the context of that term the lives of individuals and their environment. The depressing effects of the Grenze are reflected in the appearance of the town and the lack of spontaneity of the people. This could have inspired Helmut Heissenbittel to entitle his article Politik oder Literatur, (15) although one can dismiss the alternative "Politik" since the novel is relatively uncommitted politically and at no point does it break down into a pure polemic. Johnson effectively, except perhaps in the latter sections after the change in the direction and feeling of the novel, does not attempt to manipulate his material but acts predominantly as an impartial reporter letting the atmosphere do implicitly what he cannot do explicitly. The reader is left with the unwritten "dritte Buch", which represents Johnson's and Karsch's conclusion, to reach his own conclusions.

The imposed reality of the border and the tangible evidence of it which has permeated the way of life is illustrated with great precision using, in his "perpetual quest for reality" (16) details to capture not the surface but the essence of his subjects. Karsch, because of his professional training in observation and also because of his alien status in East Germany, is able to see the East more objectively than Achim, who has accepted and been won over by the State's process of legitimization of itself. Karsch has not been so wholly a victim of the West's propaganda of legitimization though because he has been trained to think independently. Western propaganda has however had its effect on Karsch -

"da standen die dicken listigen Männer vor ihm auf, von denen Bücher Filme Zeitungen ihm abgeraten hatten zu Hause; so war er oft versucht den vertrauenswürdigen Strassengängern neben ihm sein Vertrauen auf Verlangen nicht zu geben, sie mussten nur einige auffällige Zeit den gleichen Weg haben wie er." (DB27)

The details which make the biggest impact on Karsch
tend to be rather subjective in nature: he notices the need for multifarious permits, the omnipresent police systems, nationalisation and collectivisation, and the piped-music of the Gods (i.e. Socialist exhortations) drumming home the concern that the DDR has for its prestige and reputation and its consequential desire to prove its worth and superiority both in the eyes of the world and in the eyes of its people. Karsch notices the belligerent and defiant attitude of the State towards all who do not believe in its self-proclaimed purity and infallibility, who do not believe in the State as the ultimate and supreme good, endowing the people with a sense of belonging and importance so that each citizen feels that he is an essential component in the structure and correct functioning of the whole. Karsch makes a continual effort to separate the will of the State from the will of the people, and through his probings and questionings Johnson is able to draw the East German atmosphere most evocatively. He succeeds in showing the inhibitions and fears of the people by Karsch's inability to penetrate beneath the façades for the underlying essence of the East Germans.

The presentation though, is by no means negative. But it reaches no definite conclusions. This is functional in the sense that it contributes directly to the general atmosphere of the novel. The atmosphere is carefully confined within fixed tangible boundaries which act as stabilising factors preventing the novel from becoming either amorphous or unintelligible. The most obvious, and the most vital, of these boundaries is the border itself. It defines East Germany as a geographical entity, but while there are mentions of border crossings and other similar incidental events connected with it and the border itself is seen as a political or geographical reality it is more especially treated as a lived reality within each of the two societies which have developed from it.
This unavoidable presence becomes typified by "atmospheric things". E.g. in Eine Reise wegwohin, 1960 the petrol smells different in each zone, and this difference permeates the whole atmosphere and the lives of the people in each of the sectors, both literally and figuratively.

Because Karsch is so sensitive to atmosphere and so vague and confused about concrete facts, the reader is forced to pay greater attention to the former as a way to an understanding. Through this is expressed the degree of real freedom of the people of East Germany to create by their own will their own government and own destiny. Rather than achieve this by direct statement, Johnson builds up the atmosphere through an accumulation of minute details and the notation of the smallest movements or actions.

The dominating impression of the infallibility and sanctity of the State is constantly and consistently analysed. The omnipresence and omniscience of the State is shown in the tiny details of everyday life which need to be carefully considered lest the State be offended or potentially subverted. Means of identification and the holding of current permits are prerequisites for the most mundane acts. These are more striking because they affect Karsch directly and baffle him. He cannot, for example, understand the restriction on having manuscripts typed or on buying a mimeograph machine. Western music, considered to be decadent (i.e. "heathen"), is allowed only in strictly controlled doses and individual creativity must always be subordinated to the will of the State and must have as its goal the good and greater glory of the State. The wages of neglecting such a duty are shown in the result of the resistance to the collectivisation of the land. Here too is seen the process of legitimisation by the inclusion of the word "Freiwilligkeit" (DB216) in agreements. This lack of true solidarity between the government and the people is also seen in the nationalisation of the typewriter industry:
"Die angrenzenden Brandmauern waren verputzt und trugen die Leuchtwerbung aller Schreibmaschinenwerke des Landes untereinander, sämtlich waren sie dem Staat eigen, keine Fabrik dachte der anderen Käufer wegzuwerben, sie waren da". (DBl110).

The final "sie waren da" expresses admirably the resigned acceptance of the measures because they know that a fragmented resistance against the omnipotence of the State would be futile. The people are left with no dynamic force and are reduced to mere subsistence level with no incentive to show initiative.

A factor contributing further to the atmosphere as provided by the concept of the divine mission of the State is reinforced by strategic use of Bibelsprache, though this is already much less extensively used than in Mutmassungen über Jakob. Such a technique is once again strongly reminiscent of Brechtian Verfremdungstechnik and the manner in which he parodies existing church dogmas by taking over the tone and vocabulary of their own "erhabene Sprache". Johnson achieves the same alienating effect, not through polemical exhortations, but by application of Biblical language to a secular power and by the exact rendition and repetition of the sublime tone the State accords to its political jargon, and even by referring to certain ideas as being incorporated into a political equivalent of the Scriptures, e.g. A parallel of Christian martyrdom emerges in recurrent phrases such as "die unvermutet freiwillige Bemühung um die Wohlfahrt aller und nicht nur der eigenen" (DBl29). The position of the writer in the State is not unlike that of the writers of the Scriptures -

"so sei eben dem Schriftsteller die Mitarbeit aufgegeben an Befestigung und Ausbau des in Aussicht genommenen Weges," (DBl28).
The malaise in the East German atmosphere is shot through with mistrust and suspicion. Karsch comes up against much of this both as a foreigner and as a reporter who asks too many questions. While the East Germans are not overtly hostile towards him, they are very reticent about answering his queries or even about talking to him at all. Consequently Karsch's task is made more difficult since any discussion of Achim, because of his governmental status, has intrinsic political overtones and implications. Achim's father says of Karsch -


Even the student on the run is vague and evasive about Achim: "Von Achim wollte er nichts erfahren haben als die Höhe des Einkommens" (DB286), and the anonymity of the sender of the photograph implies that Karsch cannot be trusted not to inform on his sources:


Contrasting reactions of East and West Germans in certain situations also contribute towards establishing the atmosphere of a country which is different from all others. The man who speaks at the top of his voice and makes broad gestures which draw attention to himself is automatically characterised as West German -

"Sehr westdeutsch zwischen ihnen sprach der andere sehr laut, zeigte mit dem Finger auf Unverständliches, fragte, lachte, schlug auf Schultern, fotografierte in einem." (DB212).
This manner of behaviour is totally out of place in the DDR where everyone seems to have a continual watch on himself. Only when an East German is so completely carried away as to forget himself could he act like this. When Karin gives vent to her anger after having seen the police prisons after the uprising on the 17 Juni the West German is used to emphasise how foreign such behaviour is in the East - (DB294). Karin is not basically happy in East Germany and at her lowest ebb even considers defection to the West:

"Da hatte sie viel Lust umzuziehen in das andere Land, in dem das Leben unparteiisch behandelt schien, in dem viele Leute ungehindert viel Verschiedenes anfingen einander mehr zu Nutzen als zu Schaden fürs erste: in dem es unverhofft kam und bunt und wohlhabend für einige doch. Dies hielt sie für verloren" (DB300).

This is one of the most explicit statements of dissatisfaction by an inhabitant of the DDR and shows Karin as being the nearest to the character of West German patterns of behaviour.

Even Achim himself, in spite of his privileged position, doesn't seem to be genuinely convinced of the good of his State and although his regurgitation of propaganda fulfils the State's demands, his belief in what he is saying is very uncertain - his official title is "Volksvertreter" but he can often hardly be said to represent the will of the people, e.g. his public thanks to the "Administrator" on behalf of the dispossessed farmers -

"als Vertreter des Volkes billigend die Hand hob für die Massnahmen des Sachwalters in der Landwirtschaft, sich erhob und von seinem Platz aus Worte des Dankes sprach im Namen der Bauern, die ihn kaum hatten kennenlernen können" (DB224).

In a later discussion with Karsch it becomes apparent that
he himself isn't really convinced of the good of such a measure -

"dass es bei der Umwandlung der landwirtschaftlichen Struktur ankomme auf die Zukunft des ostdeutschen Teilstaates und nicht auf private Missverständnisse.

- Natürlich sind sie bedauerlich: sagte Achim, nahm den Blick zurück, schwie als dächte er nach über die Kümernisse des Alltags, der ihn in lärminderndem Abstand umgab. ... Aber vergessen Sie nicht dass ich davor etwas anderes gesagt habe!" (DB246).

By such phrases he continues to live his present life as a denial of the incriminating photograph. The impression given throughout is that he has been manoeuvred, firstly into joining the Party, and then gradually into becoming one of its more efficient puppets. His team excludes him from their comradeship until he bends and conforms, and there is further clear evidence that he is being manipulated when he obeys other orders which do not coincide with his own personal will, e.g. the sudden reversal of his attitude towards Karsch once he has been directed to cooperate with him. This is highlighted by Karsch's willingness as a West German to trust and attribute Achim's motivations to a personal decision:


Die waren die Partei für Kommunismus" (DB107/108).

In the discussion which takes place after Achim learns about the photograph sent to Karsch, Achim at one point shows the insecurity of his position - "Die wollen mich reinlegen: sagte Achim. - Wenigstens mich wollen sie reinlegen: sagte er." (DB323). The photograph, Achim's
sword of Damocles, introduces a strong possibility that he has been blackmailed into accepting the ambitions intended for him by his government -

"Hatte er zugestimmt, als sie ihn fragten?  
- Ja: sagte Achim.  
- Na: sagte Karsch.  
- Also was denn! sagte Achim." (DB320).

His tone of resignation here and his later belligerent defense of the Sachwalter and the system make apparent his unwillingness to comply, even though it takes a passive form, and his lack of real confidence and trust in the system which claims to be governed by the people.

The present atmosphere reigning in East Germany could be compared to that which dominated life during the Hitlerzeit, which is also represented in Das dritte Buch über Achim, where the imposition of the same sorts of restrictions, the propaganda, the same mass rallies etc. were prevalent. Mistrust exists between all people, even between members of the same family, as is illustrated in Achim's family. Achim admits to being indoctrinated during this period and as a result of this he would have been quite prepared to report his own father had he discovered him engaged in nefarious activities:


The supreme position of the State is again comparable to the Hitler regime when Achim felt the "erste Information von der Ohnmacht gegen die staatliche Gewalt" (DB79).

Seen thus the State is ominous and formidable, whereas the
image it is trying to promote is designed to eliminate
the "gegen" of such a sentence by stressing the idea of
interdependence between the whole and the part.

The State demands are impossible to realise in the
atmosphere the State itself has engendered -

"Sie stehen nicht auf gegen die Panzer der
sowjetischen Armee, nachdem sie erfahren haben
was Sozialismus ist nach diesem Krieg: mit
dem Lohn die Dinge des Wohlstands nicht zu
kaufen, den Sachwalter zu loben, den Kriegs-
dienst zu leisten, die Justiz zu fürchten, dem
Nächsten nicht zu trauen, gegen den Kapitalismus
to handeln, die Wahrheit zu verleumden, und alles
in der Gefahr der strafweisen Einsperrung für
mehr als drei Jahre manchmal des Todes;" (DB321/322).

The only genuine expression of hopefulness and trust is
found when the mood of the uprising is described, both
symbolically and directly - "vergiss nicht das grosse
Licht des ersten Tages, vergiss nicht die Einigung aller
auf Vertrauen Erwartung Hilfe endlich." (DB326/327).
Because the revolters are carried away their genuine opinions
of the State can be seen in their actions. Because of the
apparent indestructibility of the system the uprising was
unplanned and therefore doomed. Their strong objection to
this overwhelming domination leads them to try to destroy
all manifestations of it -

"An der Marktecke zertrümmerten sie den Holzbau,
der mit Filmen und Lautsprechern und Schrifttafeln
ihnen die Rechtmissigkeit ihres Zustands hatte
einprägen wollen. Sie holten auf Leitern stehend
die Buchstaben von den staatlichen Kaufhäusern, sie
hatten offenbar niemals geglaubt dass die ihnen
gehörten. Das alles waren Zeichen für die Worte
Demokratie, Freie Wahlen, Wiedervereinigung." (DB327)

This last sentence epitomises the totality of their protest
for these are three key words in the Sachwalter's propaganda.
The severity of the reprisals belies the
truth of his words. The reaction of the demonstrators is one of incomprehension and dramatises the high degree of alienation between the individual and the State. To them the protest was only the exercising of their democratic right of freedom of speech -

"Noch Jahre danach fahndete die Geheime Polizei des Volkes nach den Führern des Streiks und holte sie aus den Wohnungen, wo sie sich finden liessen in dem Glauben nicht schuldig zu sein. Es hat ihnen nichts eingebracht". (DB328)

Such examples seem to bear out Johnson's own opinion expressed in his interview with Horst Bienek, that the DDR is so in name only - when Bienek finally refers to the DDR as the "sogenannte DDR" Johnson replies:

"Ich höre mit Befriedigung, dass Sie endlich "sogenannte DDR" gesagt haben, dass Sie, nachdem Sie schon ein paar mal die DDR erwähnten, auch einmal hinzufügen "sogenannt". Ich halte es für eine sehr korrekte Hinzufügung, denn tatsächlich haben die ostdeutschen Kommunisten es "so genannt". (17)

Generally speaking, the people have reconciled themselves to the inevitability of the situation. Karsch also meets a few, e.g. the typewriter salesman, Frau Ammann, and Herr Fleisg, who are content with their lots and believe in the State. Herr Fleisg seems really to mean his editorial concerning "die gaunerhaften Methoden westdeutscher Berichterstattung" (DB220) in which he declares with sincere indignation:

"wie ein Mensch (der in diesem Staat für Geld hatte arbeiten und leben dürfen) sich dieser Art abseits stellen könne zu den Menschen eines besseren Gewilltseins." (DB221)

The adage "God helps those who help themselves" has become "The State helps those who help the State" with the emphasis placed on at least a theoretical reciprocity
of the bond. This is put into effect in Karin's case after her "crise de conscience" in the section entitled "Und Achim?" (DB292-305) in which she objects to what she ironically and despairingly calls "unsere geheime und demokratische Wahl" (DB298), and she mentally testifies to the existence of things she would not herself wish to experience:

"Sie glaubte kaum zu lügen, wenn sie lobte was wohltätig war am Staat des Sachwalters und verschwieg was du nicht selbst erleben möchtest". (DB301)

This lying by omission takes a more concrete form when she refuses to shake hands with the Sachwalter because she felt she might have scruples and a guilty conscience about it later. As a result Achim avoided her until an official excuse was fabricated to cover up her recalcitrance. She also manages to escape official retribution for her refusal to sign the statement to the effect (as she says ironically) that "es sei glückhaft gewesen wie der Sachwalter die bäuerlichen Eigentumsformen hatte verändern lassen" (DB302).

The longer Karsch stays in East Germany the more he notices the discrepancies between "Sein" and "Schein" which form two worlds and give rise to two standards of behaviour - one public, the other private. This has already been shown in the differences between theory and practice within the administration of the State and can also be seen in the lives of the individuals. Karsch wonders about the truth of Frau Ammann's private life -

"und Karsch stellte sich vor das Aussehen ihres privaten Zimmers, in dem sie ihre öffentlichen Gedanken fasste,... ihr vergangenes Leben darin aufbewahrte, was für Leute möchten zu ihr kommen, was für Bilder hängte sie an die Wand, wie kam sie zu ihren Meinungen?" (DB142).
Karsch's self-appointed task is to try and grasp the elusive "Sein" of Achim and East Germany which is to form the essence of his book but he is bound to fail for he never gets beyond the state of: "mehr weiss er nicht als ihm schien" (DB136).

The atmosphere of the novel is one of distrust, incomprehension, and oppression. The State in its efforts to serve the collective will and win the trust and respect of the masses employs methods which achieve on the individual level quite the opposite effect, because the people cannot understand the Grand Design and distrust the way in which the State appears to invade private liberties. The immense power of the State against the individual almost invalidates it for the role of Father Confessor outside of which it cannot function in its self-appointed task. The policing arrangements of the State, designed to ensure personal loyalty, merely breed indifference. The contrast is given greater impact because the West is shown to be concerned at least superficially with private rights and seems to exhibit something akin to disinterest to the relationship of the individual to the masses. The result is an air of freedom in the West and a repressive inhibiting of the citizen in the East, symbolised by the multicoloured variety of the West and the tonal uniformity of colour in the East. Johnson gives information by mentioning wire-tapping, while showing that it might not or did not in fact occur. In this way he builds up atmosphere often by hints which register one after another on one's consciousness almost because of their very insignificance.
COMMUNICATION, ALIENATION AND AMBIGUITY

Because of the material with which he is working and because of his focus on the interrelationships of individual with individual, Johnson interfuses alienation and ambiguity with the difficulties inherent in absolute communication. For this reason it has been found convenient to treat the three together.

Günter Blöcker referred to Johnson as:

"nahezu der einzige, dem es in den Sinn gekommen ist, seine Aufmerksamkeit, seine Leidenschaft, die volle Kraft seiner Begabung dem Nächstliegenden zuzuwenden, nämlich dem Faktum des zweigeteilten Vaterlandes". (18)

The division of Germany is the basis of Johnson's work, but the interest lies in the effect of this division on the individual and the existence of the two Germanies is the cause for his confusion and alienation. Johnson's characters are ambivalent about both East and West; they cannot identify with either.

Details are shown with implied objectivity, but their effect is counteracted by Johnson's technique of recording subjective viewpoints without attempting an evaluation of them. This is the major source of uncertainty in Das dritte Buch über Achim. Considered subjectively, either of two views may be valid if the holder of the view believes in it. The views gain relativity from their subjectivity, thus no real certainty can be found in them. This leads to hesitation and confusion and a lack of self-confidence, as typified by Karsch's failure to rationalise his non-understanding. Since the subjectivity of all one sees and thinks extends also to existential problems, there are no ascertainable truths or certainties, therefore the characters make no definite statements except upon higher authority. In a similar vein, the Eastern and Western
authorities are also symbols of subjective interpretations of ideologies. Since metaphysical speculation has become irrelevant, reliance on old concepts of God and death has gone and the individual has become an isolated but unimportant phenomenon, the "unheldischer Held" who does not figure in the new technological society. For the individual the impossibility of finding a point of reference which will serve as a basis of security only confirms and accentuates his alienation from his world.

The ambiguities and uncertainties of modern existence in the contemporary Germanies are symbolised in the ambiguous alleged truths of each side of the border because the truths depend upon the biased, subjective views of one side or the other, each conflicting, each representing a different way of thinking. As Kurt Opitz remarks:

"Johnson holds ... a synthetic view that expresses itself in the attempt to preserve the web of ambiguities of which reality is made and yet discover in it a translucent pattern. In his hands the novel thus becomes a focusing mirror of questions, not answers; ... It quietly but firmly raises the relativist objection to our enchantment with ideal absolutes in social, political and moral thought." (19)

Karsch in his attempt to write the biography of Achim becomes intensely aware of the subjective nature of the concept of truth and the various valid interpretations possible, even though one interpretation may be absolute for one person. Consequently, truth and reality may become so subjectivised according to private world-views that they become completely distorted. Johnson, with reference to this point, said in Berliner Stadtbahn:
No satisfactory conclusion to this problem is offered and the frustration shows through the repeated doubting of the truth of Achim's statements, indicating that truth is not only ambiguous, but relative too.

e.g.
1: "Warum war das gelogen?" (DB45)
2: "Ist das genau wie Achim es gesagt hat?" (DB104)
3: "Also bitte. Wie wuchs Achim auf?" (DB165)

Karsch is victim of this uncertainty because his views are coloured by his environment and he cannot free himself of his biases. Neither the East nor the West can satisfy him and he is caught in an alienated ambiguous world of doubt.

Johnson is making the point that there are in fact two types of Germans: East and West. Those who, like Karsch, cannot find a sense of belonging in either group find themselves in a no-man's land with no ideological points of reference. The differences inherent in the ideologies of the two Germanies divide the country, but on a deeper level they also cause a split in the mind of many an individual, resulting in a more impartial, but nevertheless incoherent view of the situation. This view cannot be communicated by these individuals because they have been alienated from both sides and from themselves in the process. This is exemplified in Karsch by his difficulties with the incompatibility of the two varieties of the German language:
"Die Sprache, die er verstand und mit der er verständlich über den Tag gekommen war, redete ihn noch oft in die Täuschung von Zusammengehörigkeit hinein, wieder hielt er beide Staaten für vergleichbar, wollte in Gedanken sie reinweg zusammenlegen, da doch ein vergessenes Ladenschild oder die Sprache oder das vertraute Aussehen öffentlicher Gebäude in einem Land an das andere erinnerten; dann aber gingen die Ähnlichkeiten nicht auf in einander: die golden und schwarz aufgemalte Zigarettensorte hatte man dort vor fünfzehn Jahren zum letzten Mal kaufen können, die öffentlichen Gebäude regierte ein anderes Gesetz, dessen Sprache nämlich ordnete das Bild der Strasse und nicht das Gespräch der Leute, die da gingen oder hier aus den Häusern niederblickten in der kühlen ruhigen Luft des Abends auf Kissen gestützt und redend: die Sprache der staatlichen Zeitungen verstand Karsch nicht." (DB25/26)

The main difficulties are of a semantic variety, when the field of reference of a word is different in the East and the West, giving rise to a very real problem of communication, as stated by George Steiner:

"The linguistic and cultural separation between the two Germanies, their isolation from each other, bodes ill for any rational prospect of reunification. The process of insulation of consciousness - of the way in which totalitarian schooling can falsify the entire world image and reflex system of a nation or generation - is one which is grimly characteristic of our time and which we do not yet fully understand. But obviously it makes the resumption of dialogue immensely difficult. The words no longer refer to the same underlying experiences; they may continue to sound alike, but have contrary definitions. A young East German might come to be more at home, in the syntax of his politics and feelings, in Peking or Albania than in Cologne." (21)

The superficial linguistic difficulties point to a more fundamental problem as communication lies in the very nature of language itself. Language can be used to express the familiar, and by adaptation, to indicate the unfamiliar. But a prerequisite of expression is understanding. Achim is also caught in this failure of communication, both with Karsch and with East Germany. The failure on each count is to a large extent a failure of language. He cannot reach Karsch because of semantic
difficulties, but he also cannot feel as if he belongs with the authorities who impose upon him their doctrines and their slogans, e.g. "DER SPORT IST EIN MITTEL ZUR SOZIALISTISCHEN ERZIEHUNG" (DB47), nor with the people to whom he is a personification of the slogans. However, Achim's self-alienation follows the Party lines and is a concession to the needs of the present in a spontaneous opportunism, at the expense of the past. Karsch, on the other hand, is very aware of the past, retaining the Western sense of history, but does not have the stabilising points of orientation which enable Achim to create and maintain the myth of himself. Karsch's, and to a lesser extent Achim's, dilemma of conflicting truths permeates the whole novel and transfers itself to the reader. It is one which language cannot assist in solving, and which is in fact made even more obscure by the inadequacies of the language in dealing with the "direct quotation of the mind." (22)

Karsch tends to share the reader's difficulty of comprehension in his struggle to break through the facade of anonymity typical of the East German (and of any) individual. Achim in this respect becomes archetypal. He outwardly abandons his ideals and embodies those of the State, but at the same time he uses the State to bolster his own hero-image. His position is consequently very ambiguous, both as State symbol and as "Volksheld", and he has, consciously or not, become depersonalised. For this reason his past is distorted or rejected as is convenient in order to preserve the image. The process of communication between Achim and not only Karsch but also the whole world has been arrested by this barrier which Karsch attempts to penetrate. The isolation of Achim is one of the persistent central issues. For instance, at the bicycle meeting in the passage "Wer ist denn Achim?" (DB13ff.) Achim is divorced from the mass of people and this is further accentuated by the fusion of sounds of the crowd and the distorted sound
of the public address system. Alienation from society, because of the depersonalizing effect of Achim's Achim on Achim, becomes an intrinsic part of the man and one of the touchstones of the novel. "Wer ist denn Achim?" is the question which Karsch seeks to answer, and is perhaps that which he is, finally, farthest from answering.

Karsch's helplessness is profound. Even the media of communication serve to alienate him from his subject and himself: the way of life and the very language itself are foreign to him and present a greater barrier to intercourse because of their apparent familiarity. Karsch feels as though he were in a foreign country, completely isolated from his most tenable points of reference. The narrator expresses these same difficulties clearly once again in the sequel of Das dritte Buch über Achim, Eine Reise wegwohin, 1960:

"Er lernte den veränderten Sinn der Fremdworte, die in seinem Land nicht mehr benutzt wurden oder gar nicht, die zweiten Fälle von Struktur und Perspektive schrieb er auf mit anwachsendem Mitwissen, er lernte diese Sprache nie so gut, dass er sie zur Verständigung hätte benutzen können. Selbst im umgänglichen Reden der gewöhnlichen Leute fand er sich kaum unauffällig zurecht, da ihm zehn Jahre dieser Geschichte fehlten; sie erkannten ihn ohne Mühe. Sie sprachen von Streuung, Engpass, wo ihm nur die Worte Großhandel und Lieferschwierigkeiten zur Verfügung waren, seine Ratenzahlung nannten sie Sparkaufvertrag, und so deutlich er bald den Abstand bemerkte, den die Leute zu den Ausdrücken der Beamten hielten, er sass doch manchmal da und sprach sich im Kopf vor was er sagen wollte, wie eine fremde Sprache, und hakte an beim Aussprechen. Er war auch bis zum Ende verwundert, mit wie geringfügigen Fetzen Alltagssprache die Einwohner einander ihr Verhältnis zur Regierung abfragten und je nach dem zu Schweigen oder mürrischem Verständigen übergingen." (RW39/40)

The alienation of individual from individual has more profound implications on an existentialist level because the individual becomes increasingly alienated from himself.
Achim's alienation exists on three levels: hierarchically and socio-politically from the Party and from his admirers, personally from Karsch, and inwardly from himself. This last aspect could almost be referred to as expedient self-alienation, were this not implying a too conscious awareness of the process by Achim. Also, Achim's isolation is not total. He does not fail entirely to communicate directly and does find genuine friends. The old man who helped him build his first bicycle managed to get through to him and they became real companions. Karin, too, appears in the beginning stages to be so close to Achim that she almost seems to play the role of Achim's conscience and of his interpreter, not only for Karsch, but she also, since she is recognised as "die von Achim" (DB164), represents a link between the great Achim and the individual for the public. Karin's interpretation of Achim helps reformulate Karsch's preconceptions of him and contributes to forming the basis of his approach to Achim as he is beyond the shell.

Karsch's striving to know Achim and to communicate his knowledge to the world is indicative of the modern difficulties of communication. Karsch approaches his subject initially as a journalist, sifting facts, categorizing and codifying details, and translating his impressions into words. He divides Achim's life into periods and arranges a plan accordingly but he discovers very quickly that this is merely reporting, does not explain anything, and does not in fact mean anything.

Disorientation accompanies the failure of language and Karsch can only express his truth by the silence which constitutes his reply to the question "Wie war es denn?". Perhaps this transcendence of the word is the most satisfactory solution, aesthetically, to the problem of communication. Karsch cannot crystallise an intangible and changing Achim into an immutable and static verbal portrait. He could describe what Achim was, what he is,
and what may become of him. He could also suggest the elements of his development, but he wants to go beyond this type of superficiality characteristic of the first two books, though in doing so he finds he must go beyond the limits of the word into the realm of pure thought and finds he is quite incapable of evoking "die ganze Person" (DB59) on an existential level. Only occasionally does he come close to understanding Achim:

"Er entsinnt sich dass Achim inzwischen sehr beiläufig eine Hand gegen Karins aufgestützten Arm legte, manchmal glaubte er ihn zu verstehen." (DB106)

His fleeting, partial, understanding is however private and incommunicable to anybody else.

Frequently the word is supplemented by a gesture which not only reveals the inability of the speaker to give coherence to his thought but adds a semantic dimension which is inaccessible to the word. Karsch struggles to overcome the unalterable fact that one cannot totally know another person, either synchronically or diachronically, so as to be able to grasp the fundamentals of his essence, his anima (to use C.G. Jung's term). Words act as a barrier to communication because they cannot be spontaneous and unambiguous once they have been imprinted by the personality and emotions of the speaker. The anima is more clearly revealed in a person's gestures since they are uninhibited by reflection. Johnson's characters tend to rely on them, particularly on movements of the hands, to give fuller expression to their ideas. Gestures also give an indication of the character's degree of interest because they are chiefly used when the speaker becomes totally immersed in what he is trying to convey and, frustrated by the inadequacy of words, brings his body into play -
"da waren sie gerade beim Mittagessen, immer wieder legte Achim sein Besteck weg, um mit den Händen abkanten zu können was er sagte. ... - Verstehst du: sagte Achim dringend, aber ehe er es abwarten konnte, fuhr ihm die Rede hinein." (DB106)

Achim clarifies his technique of riding by means of gesticulation -

"...er legte den Arm locker gerundet auf den Tisch: Die kannst du von aussen anschneiden, wenn sie übersichtlich ist. Versuch das mal mit dieser: sagte er und hielt Karsch eine eng geknickte Hand entgegen, in die die andere ebenso eckig hinieführ und von der Wucht des Aufschlags am Ballen zur Faust gedrückt wurde." (DB93/94)

Small intimate gestures also show his affection for Karin and at the same time they are misleading for Karsch because he attaches more importance to the impressions gained from them than to what Achim actually says, and since they reveal more of the essence of a person they give him the illusion of believing he understands Achim. Herr Fleisg, completely involved in his work, is described as a man of "heftigen Bewegungen" (DB60). Intense gesturing is an indispensable part of him and Karsch registers a lasting impression of this side of Herr Fleisg while the rest of him remains a blank -

"Karsch dachte an Herrn Fleisg lange nur wie an eine unbekannte auffällige Gebärd in grosser Ferne, der der Wind die Worte unverständlich vom Munde reisst. " (DB61)

Karsch realises that the two essentials for his biography lie outside his capabilities:- he cannot grasp the real Achim, and he cannot write about the little that he has managed to understand of his subject because one cannot use words to give a true picture of oneself, let alone of another person -
"er (Achim) hätte denn ausgeliehene Worte zu eigen nehmen müssen. Ja wären sie ein Herz gewesen und eine Seele! So konnte der eine nicht vom andern reden und für ihn gemeint haben: ich". (DB187)

Karsch uses his own words in his description of Achim and though they are not words Achim himself would use naturally he agrees that Karsch's choice of words is more appropriate:-

"Ist das genau wie Achim es gesagt hat?
Das ist nach Gedächtnis aufgeschrieben. Achims Sätze waren mehr in der Zeit der unvollendeten Vergangenheit gehalten, und einige Worte würde er nicht freiwillig benutzen. Als er es durchsah, meinte er aber dass er es gern gesagt hätte wie es hier steht." (DB104)

However, one of the reasons for his later discomfort with Karsch's efforts is surmised as being an objection to the way in which Karsch is taking over his life -

"wollte er (wahrscheinlich) zugestehen dass er nicht gelebt haben wollte wie ein anderer das aufschrieb: dass einer nicht schreiben wird wie ein anderer lebt;" (DB185).

Even if Karsch were to know the real Achim he would not be able to capture and transfix him in writing. As with painting the copy can never equal the original and Karsch's work is merely "die sprachliche Aussenseite von Achims Leben", a "sprachliche Nachahmung von Achim" (DB187), however skilful and technically perfect it may be.

Karsch's alienation which results from his failure to communicate unambiguously with Achim has a more universal import. He cannot isolate Achim's anima, and this is his primary objective, but neither can he communicate what he has understood to his audience. The discovery of the photo and the resultant impact of the revelation that
there is a side of Achim's character of which Karsch had not suspected the existence brings to a climax the ever-increasing awareness of the impossibility of achieving his objective. Cut off from points of reference, unable to understand the stratifications of realities so fundamental to communist existence, with the constant restructuring of truth, Karsch feels completely at a loss and abandons his work, after finding that he cannot understand the East German mind. Even on a superficial level "er konnte nicht alle Sitten eines Landes beachten, in dem er fremd war." (DB332)

Karsch's dilemma is also the reader's, and Johnson's. The narrator selects his facts and thereby restricts the reader's knowledge of the world of the novel. The reader therefore cannot understand Karsch's difficulty on any level deeper than the knowledge of the narrator except by drawing on his own experience as a person and identifying his own alienation with the failure of comprehension and communication so far as it relates to Karsch personally. Consequently, the reader, as does the narrator, tends to add suppositions of his own (often too swift and erroneous) in an effort to explain the inexplicable, to reach, as Karsch tries to reach, beyond the limits of his knowledge and find the access to the deeper realms of truth.

Achim denies his own feelings and prostitutes himself to his State so much that his scruples become almost completely non-existent. But this ability of Achim's to divorce himself from the reality of his situation is not greatly different from the reader's (West German) natural reaction of accepting Achim's reactions as an exhibition of self-preservation in the face of a totally unsympathetic East German Government; that is to say, Achim prefers to ignore the "evils" of the Communist State system, whereas the West German citizen, subjected to Capitalist propaganda, tends to see nothing but the "evils" of such a system. Part of Johnson's point is that
biases and prejudices are deceptive and the sweeping away of these is essential in the quest for truth. These prejudices and preconceptions effectively conceal the ultimate truths which lie beyond the ambiguous realms of the temporal world and Johnson is trying to reveal the essential human realities behind the superficial political actualities. Das dritte Buch über Achim aims to show that the individual, within a depersonalised and imposed socio-political restructuring (the two Germanies), becomes alienated from both the rest of society and from his own belief in his individual worth. Achim is isolated within his public image and can extend beyond these confinements only through his friendship with Karin, excepting of course the residual friendship between Achim and the old bicycle-maker. He is, otherwise, content to be a symbol of Socialist Heroism and to enjoy the security, provided by the State, of not having to question his existence and role in life.

Karin comes closest to penetrating Achim's soul because she understands to some degree the East German mind and because she is not trapped emotionally and mentally in the "Socialist Destiny" syndrome, (except in so far as her sense of physical entrapment results in a certain amount of emotional distress). To a certain extent she is freer than any other character in the novel. But this in itself alienates her from the rest of the world in which she moves. The impersonal nature of the East German temperament reacts against the naturally warm-hearted and open Karin, and it has had a sufficient effect on her to make communication with Karsch, with whom she used to live, extremely difficult on more than a superficial basis and she can find no relief in him from her isolation in an unfriendly and incomprehensible (to her) world. Yet, paradoxically, it is Karsch who brings home to her the full degree of her alienation. Had it not been for him she would never have known about the photograph of
the demonstration, and thus of a whole section of Achim's life which had not previously existed for her. The realisation of how little she really knows Achim symbolises her alienation from the State because Achim has become, even for her at the end, the epitome of the State's rewriting of the past and prescribing of the present and future in its aspirations and its slogans. Achim lives in a false and lonely present arising from a reconstructed and equally false past. This results in a form of self-alienation akin to a schizophrenia, induced by the fact that "sie ihm, diktierend, die Verfügung über seine eigene Vergangenheit nahm", (23) and this culminates in his being deprived of his self-determination in the present. Achim, as much as Karsch, is thus a split German.

The reader, too, is alienated by the almost complete lack of emotion which seems to exist between Karin and two men with whom she has lived. The latent elements of the love story are ignored by Johnson as if irrelevant in the political situation and incapable of surmounting the problems of communication existing between any two individuals. This is emphasised by the use of initials (e.g. Joachim T., Karin S., and the inherent anonymity of the single name "Karsch", qualified virtually only by his profession) which not merely reduces them almost to cyphers for the reader, though not as blatantly as in Zwei Ansichten, but tends to distance one character from another.

Verfremdung is achieved by Johnson's refusal to attempt authorial omniscience as he involves the reader directly in the ambiguity of the novel e.g. by means of digressions, insertions, lack of clarity of passages, the narrator's own confessed confusion, by use of appropriate linguistic devices (parataxis), by the failure to enter the stream of consciousness of another. Johnson leaves the novel open by suggesting no conclusion and the reader is left to make of it as he will.
The question of the responsibility and the position of the writer is treated repeatedly from two fundamentally different standpoints in order to contrast the differences between the East and the West. In her official capacity Frau Ammann sees the writer's responsibility in the same terms as any other worker's. This approaches the hardline socialist realism supported by the State. The writer is included in "die Bruderschaft mit den Arbeitern" (DB130). The primary responsibility of the writer is to the collective good and the individual is expected to cooperate within the framework set up by the State and subordinate his individuality to the welfare of the community. She sees her duty as the conversion of Karsch to a Marxist idealism and describes the utopian glorification of the selfless artist in such a community:

"Sie beschrieb das Gefühl der Verantwortung beim Stellen der Schrift, die das Denken und Verhalten unvorhersehbarer Menschengrupp verändern könne zum Bösen aber solle zum Guten, wie es beschrieben war" (DB129).

Socialist realism can only be effective if the best writers obediently and docilely follow the Party line. But the influence of the writer is to be feared as an anarchic force if he cannot be guided into appropriate channels. This latter form of didacticism, is directed at rousing the people to face reality and change their social hierarchies. This, while also socio-political in purpose, is diametrically opposed to the view expressed by Frau Ammann, whose aim in the exploitation of art is to reinforce the existing system by inducing a more rigid conformity.

Achim, so close to being a popular hero, is the perfect subject through which the nation may be reached. The factual accuracy of the biography seems quite irrelevant. Importance is attached only to whether the facts are
"nützlich" (DB129). Karsch's place in this plan is to transform Achim into an allegory on the correct way of life for the DDR -


Delvings into Achim's past open large areas from which further lessons may be drawn, and not only for Achim -

"Ach so: sagte Karsch: Sie denken daran dass Achims Vater gelernt haben könnte und mit ihm ein vorstellbarer Leser" (DB140).

The opposite viewpoint regarding the writer's responsibility is that expressed through Karsch. His intention is not to change what Achim himself is, but to omit or change things which do not coincide with what he considers to be Achim's nature, which Karsch adopts as his guideline. His foreign status and his almost Formalist approach to literature, seen in his rejection of a State-controlled literature, make it difficult for him to understand the underlying motives prompting Frau Ammann's suggestions about his biography -

"Denn sie war bereitwillig, von ihr kamen die Vorschläge, sie hatte sich vorbereitet auf zwei Stunden wirksamen Gesprächs, Karsch hatte nicht mehr gesagt als Nein und Ich verstehe nicht. Was wollte sie eigentlich?" (DB139/140)

Though he listens obediently, even if somewhat ironically, to her analysis of the official conception of the writer he cannot adapt to the mould she has prepared for him - "Karsch erkannte sich nicht in ihm und hielt ihn nicht für lernbar. Das war aber gemeint". (DB130) He has a threefold feeling of responsibility which he cannot
reconcile with Socialist realism: personal integrity, responsibility to his subject, responsibility to his art. Ultimately he chooses to abandon his task rather than lose his self-respect by betraying his values. Any compromise in creating an Achim's Achim would constitute such a betrayal. The novel gains much of the feeling of unity from this continual battle between two irreconcilable concepts of literary integrity and is structurally sounder because of the consistent wish Achim has to be seen to be biased toward the State's version of art.

Karsch's search for truth occupies a position of paramount importance as a theme in Das dritte Buch über Achim. The groping reflected in Johnson's style can be terminated only by an all-encompassing flash of insight, whereas all one has is an occasional and incomplete insight which throws only a part of the whole problem into relief. The continual searching is made even more difficult because of one's own subjectivity which colours and distorts any views of the world. Each individual places a different interpretation on each experience, hence the appropriateness of the word "Mutmassungen" in the title of Johnson's first novel, for the whole book is a series of conjectures by different people designed to reach the essence of Jakob. They can only ever be conjectures for although one is tempted to put the various pieces together as in a jigsaw to form a coherent whole, the final picture cannot exist because the goal which it seeks to achieve, ultimate truth, is beyond the threshold of knowledge.

In Johnson's case the truth involved is not that of a transcendent concept but that concerning the "anima" of his principal characters and the reality behind the visible factual reality of their environments. The basic quality of the greater part of the information conveyed by Das dritte Buch über Achim is its uncertainty
and unreliability. This dominates to such an extent that the novel could almost be subtitled Mutmassungen über Achim. The search for truth finally gives rise to the only certainty possible - this is of a negative nature and is shown in Karsch's realisation of the impossibility of his task after he has exhausted all conceivable methods of attaining the truth: "Mir fällt nichts mehr ein: sagte Karsch. Ihm fiel das nicht ein". (DB331)

The intangibility of the object of his search confines the author to the same level as his characters and as the reader because all are equal in the face of this problem. To a certain extent Johnson accompanies his characters in their search, and the guide he provides for them is simultaneously a guide for himself. Karsch's final conclusion represents that of Johnson and because the author has no greater knowledge than his mouthpiece he cannot or will not assume a position of omniscience and manipulate the body of information available to Karsch in order to assist Karsch in writing his book. The traditional all-encompassing authorial perspective must therefore be abandoned in favour of the more restricted perceptions of the characters themselves. Johnson creates Karsch and then "disowns" him by neglecting to develop him into someone we can learn to know as a person and by speaking of him in the third person although the story could be quite easily transcribed into the first person, because the use of the "Er-Person" doesn't entail any broadening of perspective as one might expect. All factual information passed on to us through Karsch, Achim, or Karin is only what lies within their respective fields of experience and all suppositions are reached by the characters themselves through the limited knowledge available to them. Johnson himself would not draw any conclusion different from that of Karsch.
However, from another point of view the absence of authorial omniscience is not total - Johnson reigns over his characters by virtue of the fact that they are his creations and exist only because of his novel ("Die Personen sind erfunden." (DB337)), and that a large number of the events with which they are associated are also fictitious. Johnson establishes a double level of perspective because he knows everything since he is responsible for their invention, but he presents us with the illusion that his knowledge has the same limited scope as that of his characters. He is in possession of the same facts as they are but, by his own expressed inability as an author, more precisely, as an author refusing omniscience in a modern world, will not manage a better interpretation than theirs, beyond the interpretations of Karsch's attitudes and actions for the benefit of the person asking the question.

The outline of the novel is based loosely on the East German cyclist, Gustav Adolph Schur, (popularly known as Täve Schur) about whom two books have been written. Johnson is careful at the end of the novel to insist that "die Personen sind erfunden." (DB337), but the novel is in fact a mixture of fiction and reality. Achim therefore serves to represent one type of East German attitude and embodies "das Gesamtkolorit der DDR." (24) The parallels between Gustav Schur and Joachim T. are striking. They are both popular heroes known to the public by affectionate nicknames and both epitomize the State's attitudes to sport. The story of Achim (or Schur) is more or less incidental to the novel and at one remove from the narrator, with Karsch and his problems central.

Throughout the novel four basic techniques emerge and interlace.

) **Authorial Perspectives and the use of "Das Erzählen wird erzählt" as method and theme.**

Johnson further complicates the issue by continually
shifting his standpoints or giving the illusion of doing so, as, for instance, on the occasions when Karsch speaks in the third person, e.g. (DB 266-282). This is a cubistic use of perspective resembling that of the monologues in Mutmassungen über Jakob. There is also a considerable body of unsubstantiated material in the book, and this is freely admitted to be unreliable:

"Er soll nach dem Krieg mit einer Schauspielerin zusammenglebt haben, das war in Berlin, die war aus dem Osten; augenscheinlich hatten sie bei ihrer Trennung einander gesagt: Wenn etwas ist, will ich dich nicht vergessen haben, oder ähnlich." (DB9)

The admission that the narrator is not omniscient however does lend great verisimilitude to his account, we tend to trust the veracity of what the Ich-Erzähler tells us, and the reader can gain a feeling of security from this assumption, and the absence of the Ich in the passages written by Karsch does nothing to disturb this. The "Du" is ambiguous and the reader tends to identify with it; but it is by no means clear who "Du" is. For example, it could on occasions be one of the "ihr", (though it is not clear whether this refers to the friends of Karsch or even those of Johnson), or the reader:

"So habt ihr gesagt, nachdem er in der zweiten Woche nicht zurückgekommen war und die unvermutete Enttäuschung eurer Anrufe nur zu erinnern als vorausgewusste Bestätigung aller Warnungen, die ihr ihm gar nicht hattet aussprechen können." (DB10)

The role of narrator is taken by at least three figures: Karsch, the anonymous friend (presumably) of Karsch, and Johnson. Confusion of the narrator consequently plays a functional role in the search for a solution. While Karsch is in the best position to describe his difficulties he is in no position to detach himself and present an objective view of them. The anonymous narrator can
understand Karsch's problem and can give a more critical description of it, but it remains second-hand and external. We are however reassured that Karsch is trying to be objective in his view of Achim: E.g.:

"Sein Leben nach dem Krieg gefiel Achim nicht wie es bei Karsch vorkam." (DB184)

Johnson intrudes only occasionally to indicate that the narrator is not entirely reliable, e.g. "Ist das genau wie Achim es gesagt hat?" (DB104): this could be addressed to the narrator either by Du or by Johnson. Similarly, the Ich - Du relationship in the narrative situation is upset by the question "Und wenn es nun doch ganz anders war?" (DB86) by suggesting that the narrator is not telling the truth, thus encroaching upon the Ich-Erzähler's territory. The use of questions indicates a degree of hesitancy on the part of the narrator but in fact the narrative perspective is invented and controlled by the Ich-Erzähler. We have a narrative structure used as a means of persuading the reader that the key-note is objectivity by the distancing effect of separating the narrator from Karsch and his situation and presenting the novel in the third person via a first person narrator. When the narrator is by-passed, Karsch relates his material in the third person, putting himself in the same perspective as the narrator; that is, he distances himself from himself, while getting consequently closer to the reader. In fact, in the concluding section the statement "Er (i.e. Karsch) schrieb bis hier und" (DB336) leaves the whole novel open and suggests that it is Karsch who has written the whole novel and about himself in the third person throughout, adding further to the confusion of the narrator. This hint is reinforced by the ambiguity of the "Du" in "Deswegen bliebst du da? Blieb Karsch da?" (DB37). It is as if Karsch is about to begin retelling it over again from the question "Wie war es denn?" (DB337)

There is a direct development from the early novels of
the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the present day with an increasing emphasis on the process "des Erzählens" rather than on "das Erzählte". While discussion of narration problems was not absent (cf. Tristram Shandy), they did not become central until very recently. The development can be seen in the exploration of this technique in the novels of Huxley (Point Counter Point), Gide (Les Faux-Monnayeurs), etc. and the flowering of this into a fully developed art form with "das Erzählte" as the incidental. Consequently, the hero becomes not only largely irrelevant but even somewhat of a distraction and anachronism, therefore is dispensed with and the narration encompasses ordinary events and ordinary people ("die unheldischen Helden"). The loss of the hero with his implied omnipotence, together with the omnipotence and omniscience of the author, reduces the predictability of the life of the novel and opens the way for the ambiguity and uncertainty characteristic of extraliterary reality. This aspect of realism tends to dominate modern novels resulting in greater attention being paid to the process of extracting a truth rather than to the chimera of the truth itself and the reader's lack of fixed points of reference forces him to place full reliance on the reliability of the narrator as the sole tangible access to the novel. Johnson aids his readers with a blend of reportage and novel, supplementing the reader's trust in the narrator and almost giving the reader an opportunity to justify that trust. The novel is no longer a self-contained work and the reader is asked to bring to it his experience of other novels, of other genres of writing (e.g. journalism), and of his own world; he is asked to read critically and to understand the processes at work both in the novel and in his own mind. Thus the novel can be required to be a linguistic rationalisation of the uncertainty and discordance of our own era:

"Dieser Stil hat sich in sich selbst verfilzt, aber so ist halt die Lage. Sprache ist Lage, die Lage ist sprachlich geworden." (25)
The uncertainty of the modern world becomes one of the major themes of literature and this intrudes from within the framework of "das Erzählen wird erzählt" into its fabric so that ambiguity is inherent in the relative positions of the reader, narrator, etc. :

"Drei Personenkreise sind im Vortrag einer Erzählung vermischt und manchmal verborgen: die Figuren, gewöhnlich auftretend in der dritten Person, ein Autor, der als Ich erzählt, wenn auch oft unhörbar, schließlich das Du, der Leser, zu dem hin erzählt wird, auch wenn er nie genannt wird. Wo immer diese drei Gruppen auseinandertreten, bricht die Geschichte ihre hermetische Geschlossenheit auf und kann sich als Vorschlag und Exempel, als Fiktion verraten." (26)

The narrator is, in this work, a storyteller and as such he gives explicit and implicit implications to his audience that the tale will be told. From the outset the narrator takes the interlocuter into his confidence about his approach to the telling of Karsch's experiences:


The immediacy of the impact derives from the implication that we have suddenly burst in on a discussion already in process. But included in the opening are all the details required immediately for comprehension and to catch the reader's attention. The scene is set: border, telephone, period. Also we are warned that we should not take things at their face value: "(du) glaubst zu verstehen" (DB7) and thus misinterpret according to our preconceptions. The opening continues for 77 lines and then the prose changes radically and the narrative begins "schlicht und streng" (DB7) as if to illustrate the point of the opening paragraph: "Karsch wohnte am Rande von Hamburg; ..." (DB9).
The process of narration receives great attention since it is through the medium of written prose that Karsch aspires to describe Achim. And, as expected, the failure to extract the essence of Achim finds its image mirrored in Karsch's failure to find a satisfactory all-encompassing plan for his book which expresses what he intends. This is true even on the technical level of emphasis and balance of the size of the chapters:

"Wieviel Seiten werden es bis 1944? fragte er. - Dreissig, oder vierzig: hatte Karsch vor." (DB98)

The separation of the reader from Karsch by the narrator enables the reader to take a more objective view of Karsch and to look on the composition from a distance:

"Nach denen kam Achim die Stadt anfangs viel enger und wirrer vor als seine Erinnerung ihm vorausgesagt hatte." (DB98)

This continues throughout the structure from Achim to the reader, with Johnson as an independent observer who prefers to let the characters work out their own destinies. Karsch and Karin both interpret Achim, but Karsch also analyses both their interpretations for the narrator, who in turn analyses the analysis and interprets and coordinates his impressions, of what Karsch meant, for his audience. Johnson takes the motif of the novelist at work far beyond the often mundane levels of experimentation so that it becomes a living and functional part of his own novel. However, one does feel that at times it tends to develop into a mannerism and acquires some of the strained artificiality of Gide's novel within a novel within a novel ... (Les Faux-Monnayeurs), although the boundaries between the interpreters (Karsch, Reader/Listener, Narrator) are just as strong. Karsch separates the other characters from the narrator, and the narrator separates Karsch from the reader, but far from compartmentalising the various experiences it tends to bring the reader into close contact
with the characters' minds and evoke a universal search for a human truth free from the individual biases of the individual observer. This also works on the specific level as well as the general. For instance, one observes directly the effect of syntactic structures on emphasis and bias in the passage on p. 144 in which Karsch observes:

"- Das sollte nicht in einem Relativsatz gesagt werden,"

and again

"..., gehören nicht die in den Hauptsatz?"

The narrator is always careful to warn the reader of what he is trying to do. In this way the reader has his responses prescribed to a certain degree. For instance, when he says "Was sparsam ist an dem Gespräch ist nicht gemeint als angenehme Spannung; es liegt aber an der Erzählung." (DB133), the reader accepts this and adjusts his responses accordingly. He therefore does not treat this as "die Geschichte von der Dame mit den beiden Herren". (DB133). This is reinforced by the interlocutor's comment "Es ist so gar nicht spannend!" (DB157) and the narrator's two explicit comments "Es war nicht spannend" (DB 157) and "Spannend war es nicht, ist dir auch nicht versprochen worden." (DB165). The reader is thus kept strictly aware that the tale is in the process of being told and that the centre of attention should lie in this process rather than in the actual tale. Therefore Karsch's notes often appear raw, so that the reader can observe the selection of details in practice: e.g. DB177/178 give us a direct transcription of Karsch's notes from his interviews, and consequently there is an intensification of the reader's observation of Karsch rather than a disruption of the flow of the background story of Achim.

These descriptions reflect Karsch's own temperament: "Karsch mochte Zwischenrufe gern". (DB224). By attacking the problem of Achim from random vantage points he feels
he may be able to penetrate to the uninterrupted flow of thoughts passing through the mind of the character:

"Dem versuchte er aus den Notizen zu erzählen was einmal ein Buch zusammensetzen sollte und den Lauf eines Lebens, er hätte es gern verständlich gehabt, selten war es eindeutig." (DB224/5)

Karsch's attempts to put some order into his book are doomed to failure, and illustrate Johnson's belief that external interference in literature can do nothing to enhance its quality or its depth. The frustration of this type of interference is clearly seen in:

"die vorletzten Pläne zur Ordnung der Zettel, auf denen Karsch Stücke aus Achims Leben bereithielt." (DB265).

He is well aware of the problems involved (e.g. "vierzig Seiten zu einer gekürzt waren nicht wenigstens ein Wort von jeder sondern neue noch gar nicht geschrieben." (DB265)) and he tries several possible general approaches, including other media (e.g. as a film), but is forced to abandon the attempt because of the restriction put upon his work by his commissioners. Karsch's failure echoes Johnson's own failure to be a creative writer within the Communist State system. Karsch's attempt to analyse the East German mind is almost a test-case for reunification, and his failure is significant. The two States could almost fit Musil's description of individuals in Die Schwärmer: "so nahe ... wie die Seiten eines Kartenblattes." (27) The two sides cannot come together without annihilating the fabric of their existence. The realities of the two States preclude any compromise.

**Film technique**

Johnson deliberately reinforces Karsch's struggle in his style and in the narrator's technique of writing.
Stylistically and temperamentally Johnson, the narrator, and Karsch are very close. Each shares the search for total truths and each sees the key to these in the analysis of instinctive appreciation of tiny details of human behaviour against a panoramic backdrop of the Germanies. Depiction thus acquires a cinematic quality, with foci swiftly but smoothly shifting from a small area to a minute part of the scene similar to the effect of a zoom lens, either on an audible or visual level - e.g. "Bekannt war noch das kurze Schnappen der Wagentür" (DB11) - the clicking of a car door provides a point of orientation for Karsch in his transition from East to West but the use of "noch" implies that it will soon lose its efficacy; in a similar fashion he treats in an objective manner the act of one fingernail ringing Frau Liebenreuth's doorbell while comparing it with its possible emotional consequences:

"Sehr aufregend könnte an Frau Liebenreuths Klingelknopf eine sauber um den Nagel gerundete Fingerspitze erschienen sein, die mit Druck und Senkung den offenen Stromkreis schliesst" (DB157).

The consequence is an extreme verbosity, in which the majority of nouns are qualified, as he pinpoints and describes with extraordinary clarity numerous such occasions when the attention is focussed, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, on a minor part of the whole.

This technique tends however to remain superficial and intensely visual. The author must rely almost entirely on suggestion to evoke the required response from his reader. In the case of the finger on the doorbell, there are stronger suggestions of the sinister, but these derive largely from our preconceptions about secret police and such like and from the early passing references to practices such as wiretapping and limitations on Karsch's movements.

This cinematic technique is extended to take advantage
of several of the tricks used in film production. Time
is manipulated by use of flashbacks into Achim's past
and by presenting material out of order as a sort of
preview, e.g. the answer to the question:

"Wieso. Redete Achim darüber nun doch mit Karsch?
Nicht nun: später sagte er Karsch was er noch
wusste von der Rückkehr der Familie in diese
Stadt." (DB87/88)

Thus the flow of the novel is interrupted by digressions
and insertions. Each question and answer forms a new frame
or portrait which is added to or sometimes superimposed
(in the process of reconsideration or reinterpretation)
on the others in an effort to build a true picture using
a combination of a mosaic and a collage technique. But
the questions and answers come from the narrator for
the reader and, because the reader has no control over
the selection of either, the apparent impartiality is
illusory. The questions are carefully selected to guide
the novel. The early questions are about the characters
and the situation ("Wie war es denn?" (DB10); "Wer ist
denn Achim?" (DB13); "Was sollte Karsch denn da?" (DB20)),
but soon move into a blend of questions about the characters
and about the process of narration ("Wie dachte Karsch aber
anzufangen?" (DB48); "Und die vier Seiten für Herrn Fleig?
Die am Anfang, gleich weiss jeder" (DB57)). The pace of
the narration slows because each time the narration
digresses into the story of the novel it is really only
moving from one spot in time to another and the story
is allowed to unfold in the manner of a film strip with
a series of scenes building up an apparently continuous
narrative. Each of the scenes is however manipulated
by adjusting the focus (e.g. zooming in on some minute
detail or act) or changing the position of the camera
(e.g. the two views of Karsch getting out of his car (DB11)).

3) Symbolism

Symbolism plays an important part in presenting several
events, though usually, as in the use of the Filmtechnique, on the more superficial visual level. The main characters themselves exist not in their own right but primarily as representatives of the varying attitudes towards the system and towards other problems. Achim is the allegorical representation of the DDR while Karsch plays the role of his West German counterpart, though this is subordinate to his role as a writer in which Johnson feels a certain degree of sympathy for him as he encounters the problems of any seeker of truth and the difficulties in dealing with words and language in the actual transcribing of thoughts. The style itself is representative as it is a reflection of content. Specific examples show the use of symbolism pertaining to a variety of different subjects: Achim has virtually been pressurised into conforming to the required behaviour - he is ostracised by his coach and team members until his need to belong and be accepted conquers him. He gives in and symbolically apologises for his arrogant attitude by requesting an explanation of "Selbstlenkung". Johnson uses the same method later in the same training session to show the interrelation of the part and the whole when Achim is asked to draw a bicycle frame. The stages of the drawing illustrate Achim's relationship to his team and through the team to the State. The final correct drawing corresponds to his own perfect re-integration into the team. This is underlined by his glance seeking reassurance -

"Als er an die Vorderradgabel kam, liess er sich blickweise bestätigen dass die diesmal dazugehörte". (DB263)

The choice of Achim's profession is singularly appropriate to this type of symbolism for the State often appears as a machine devoid of any sign of humanity or capacity for understanding. The world of bicycle racing permits three levels of symbolism - the implicit comparison of the State to the machine and of the individual to the
components:

"(Kettenblatt und hinterer Zahnkranz stehen in berechenbarem Verhältnis:) Alles hängt zusammen, aber Zugross arbeitet nicht gut mit Zuklein, Zuhoch nicht mit Zuniedrig." (DB253); secondly, the State as the team and the individual as the team member -

"Sein Ruhm schien uneigennützig, denn seine Siege gehörten nicht ihm;" (DB19);

and thirdly, on a more general plane, it permits the equation of sports with politics, both of which are intended for the benefit of the State.

The new hope generated by the uprising is mirrored in a phrase suggestive of the dawning of an entirely new and bright era - "vergiss nicht das grosse Licht des ersten Tages". (DB326/7). But this bright era is merely a reflection and is not indicative in any way of the fabric behind the surface. In the same way the view of Achim's room in the section "Was sagte denn Achims Vater dazu?" (DB147ff) shows one's position with regard to Achim. Although one can see the contents of the room because there are no curtains, just as one can see Achim on display as a public figure, Achim himself is not present in his room and, likewise, Karsch cannot get at the real person hidden under Achim's shell.

This use of double levels of meaning serves to illustrate further the situation in East Germany by synthesising various aspects of it, and also shows up, but does not solve, the problems faced by the writer.
4) **Cubism**

Johnson's use of this situation in his novel approaches the tenets of Cubism. Though a photographic reproduction of material is often employed, Johnson prefers to convey the essentials of his material in bold and abstract lines. The extraneous details are stripped away and we are left with a powerful emotive, subjective interpretation of an objective base which expands the significances of the words far beyond their specific references and evokes universal truths underlying the specific truths of his material, although it must be admitted that the Cubist elements are not as dominant as the manipulation of the monologues in Mutmassungen über Jakob. In Das dritte Buch über Achim the photographic passages tend to render the Cubistic passages

---

* For the purpose of this study I have loosely followed the definitions of cubism:

a) "The subject is the result of the use of the means of creation one has acquired: it is the picture itself. Since the object comes in only as an element, it will be evident that what has to be done is not to reproduce its appearance but to extract from it - in the service of the picture - what is eternal and constant...and to exclude the rest."


b) Cubism is the parent of all abstract art forms. It grew out of the efforts of PICASSO and BRAQUE to replace the purely visual effects of Impressionist preoccupation with the surface of objects with a more intellectual conception of form and colour. Their starting point was Cézanne, who had striven to the same ends, but Cubism carried much further the ideas of the unity of the two-dimensional picture surface, and the analysis of forms and their interrelation, since they deliberately gave up the representation of things as they appear in order to give an account of the whole structure of any given object and its position in space. This meant, in practice, combining several views of the object all more or less superimposed, expressing the idea of the object rather than any one view of it.

more subtle, and together they develop the novel into a fully integrated work operating on several levels simultaneously. As Ingrid Riedel pointed out in relation to the Mutmassungen, each separate approach to the subject illuminates it from a different point of view in the hope that by presenting it in all its polyvalence its essence will be revealed either through an accumulation of information or through a flash of insight resulting from additional-and varying combinations of facts. To some extent the process is inverted, resulting in Johnson and Karsch trying to trace the factors contributing to the development of East Germany and to extract the essentially formative factors from the multiplicity of resultant ones.

One of the most obvious cubist presentations of Achim occurs when Karsch is investigating Achim's relationship with his first girlfriend. First we are given Achim's own intentions at the actual time of their parting, ("Ich besuch dich wirklich: sagte Achim" (DB177)), and then the various opinions Karsch collects during the course of his inquiries in the present:

"Achims Vater: "Er ist gleich mitgekommen und gern auch. Aber in der ersten Zeit war er recht still. Das kam unterwegs plötzlich als wär ihm was eingefallen." ... "Frau Liebenreuth: "All die jungen Leute heute, die achten ja gar nicht darauf, und nachher kommt es nicht wieder." ...

"Die Grossmutter: "Das war damals, da hat er manchmal die Kleine aus Ostpreussen zum Essen mitgebracht, die von Lehmanns. Die Mutter war krank. Nachher sind sie in den Westen gegangen, zu Verwandten." (DB177/178)

In a construction resembling that of a play, each person remembers a different aspect and shows the affair in several lights.

This passage also provides a good example of how a great number of digressions can arise from the barest skeleton of facts because we are also given a concise
summary of the events of their affair:

"Die Geschichte: das beschlagnahmte Fahrrad, abwechselndes Fahren, der Wachoffizier, drei heiter betrunkene Soldaten, das ist eine Hübsche." (DB177)

A similar example occurs when Karsch first arrives by car below the window of Karin's apartment. Johnson reports Karsch's actions and then introduces another perspective as Karin looks down on the same procedure and sees it from an entirely different angle. Our final impression of the scene is thus broader, and more complete as she mentions additional facts and notices his uneasiness at the new environment as he unconsciously feels his pockets to check that he has the required but obviously unfamiliar papers:

"Er hielt in der schweren Dämmerung zwischen fremden Autos wie alltäglich und stieg aus:
... Bekannt war noch das kurze Schnappen der Wagentür, dann kam das hohe Treppenhaus ganz aus Marmor über reinlich zerschlissenen Teppichbahnen.

Sie drückte das Fenster auf und sah ihm beim Aussteigen zu; von oben hatte sein Wagen ein langes herrschaftliches Aussehen, und als er vor der Tür gebückt sie abschloss, schien er Abschied zu nehmen. Enttäuscht bemerkte sie das Misstrauen, das ihn nach wenigen Schritten innehalt ließ und in der Tasche nach den Papieren fühlen, die seine Anwesenheit erlaubten. Er hatte sich aber nicht umgesehen, trat rasch und gleichmäßig auf die Haustür zu." (DB11)

This style is maintained throughout because of Karsch's everlasting search to find the correct beginning and his rejection of one form after another for the biography. The alphabetically enumerated outlines of his various plans all entail reconsideration from a slightly different viewpoint, as do the alternative possibilities for his life as a young mason which are introduced by "etwa" (DB239), an indeterminate term in itself, and "oder"
(DB240, 241, 242) in the chapter "Das lässt sich doch nicht ersetzen!" (DB239ff.) The overall effect is kaleidoscopic because since there is no one fixed point of reference a slight shift of emphasis causes the pieces to fall at hitherto undiscovered angles.

The same impression is achieved through Karsch's observations of everyday life in East Germany. He undergoes a series of surprises—much of what his Western prejudices have caused him to take for granted is proved to be different in reality. The interrogators and the reader, who are in the same position as is Karsch initially, go through an identical process of enlightenment as Karsch, who is forced to rethink his original notions. Johnson himself participates in this technique of continual reinterpretations for he interprets Karsch's awareness as Karsch is interpreting that of the other characters. For example, when Karsch hears about the two men who call on him at Frau Liebenreuth's house he works out his own version of their visit from the conclusions to which Frau Liebenreuth has jumped, while Johnson stands at a further remove and gives a telescopic impression as he works out the way in which Karsch has reached his conclusion. The questions themselves are concrete but they most frequently receive indirect answers which are built up by registering the characters' awarenesses, their surmises and rethinkings, in spite of which a final conclusion is so often lacking. The reconsideration of what has been taken for granted is initiated by the suggestion that something is wrong, but even after this has been cleared up the final impression is nevertheless the same. This results from the very fact of thinking in the beginning that something was wrong, though the persistent feeling of unease and mistrust seems indefinable as there is no specific statement given to explain its cause.

Johnson's approach to the situation in East Germany is devoid of moral bias. Any actual criticism of the DDR is not offered by Johnson himself but comes to light when
he recounts a character's feelings, e.g. Karin's outburst in the chapter "Und Achim?" (DB292ff.). The most that can be attributed to Johnson himself in the political field are occasional touches of irony, showing how preposterous it is for each State to malign the other, e.g.

(1) "...... ihn wissen liess dass die Westhalle an einem Mittag im Juli von amerikanischen Terrorbombern in Schutt gelegt worden und wieder aufgebaut sei mit Hilfe der siegreichen Sowjetunion, die damals offenbar noch nicht genug Terrorflugzeuge hatte bauen oder kaufen können für den Einsatz über Deutschland, sonst stände es anders zu lesen." (DB55).

(2) "Die städtisch regierende Zeitung berichtete nur von der kriegerischen Rüstung des westdeutschen Staates, sprach von ungerechten Gerichtsurteilen gegen Volksredner und von der zunehmenden Verrohung der Sitten; Karsch sah nach ob zu Hause gelebt wurde: es wurde gelebt, aber die westdeutschen Zeitungen sprachen unüberhörbar von der kriegerischen Aufrüstung des ostdeutschen Staates, von ungerechten Gerichtsurteilen gegen Volksredner und wachsender Verrohung der hiesigen Sitten." (DB212/213).

Otherwise he brings out the reality of life in the DDR not by direct statements, or favourable or unfavourable comparisons with other countries (Karsch has also judged these to be impossible), but in a more subtle and complex manner by portraying his characters' reactions and their consciousness of their milieu, with their implicit comparisons. Karsch is particularly suitable for this because the very fact that he feels alien and cannot understand certain things immediately indicates that these are different from his own country. Johnson's role is that of a neutral reporter of Karsch's progress and rather than giving the material at his disposal a personal interpretation he registers it impartially:
"Es waren ja Vorarbeiten, mit denen Karsch sich an Achims damaligem Wohnort überhaupt versuchte; da bestand alles nur aus kurzen Notizen meist mit Fragezeichen so ungefähr ich sie dir eben herausschreiben kann." (DB87)

Johnson himself says:

"Das ist die Beschreibung einer Beschreibung, die Umstände einer Biographie und was in dieser Biographie enthalten sein sollte." (28)

The cubistic multi-view, because of the implied necessity to look from different vantage points, suggests the uncertainty and ambiguity so characteristic of Das dritte Buch and is also implicit in the style. Contrasts and apparent contradictions are examined so that the reader distils the common features of each view and reinterprets them according to his own experience. This process is seen at work within the novel itself. Achim's childhood is shown as Achim sees it, but also as Karsch comes to understand it through a number of other witnesses, each with their own version of the story. We are, however, not given to believe that Karsch's version is more accurate or more objective; rather we are very aware that his is yet another equally fallible reconstruction attempting to defy the passage of time.

This is extended also to the broader, national, scale with the multiple perspectives portrayed of East and West Germany. Not only do we see East Germany through East German eyes, but we are also given the impressions of an "alien". Similarly, West Germany is seen through Karsch's eyes, and in contrast to East Germany, but we also see it through the eyes of an "alien" when Achim goes there on a trip.

However, the focal point for Karsch is Joachim T. as he is now, with special reference to the question of why he is as he is. Johnson has approached this in a cubistic manner, viewing Achim's world from several standpoints.
Achim is the most difficult, but also the most important person for Karsch, and the reader, to understand. The third book must centre upon, focus upon, and revolve round the figure of Achim. The careful analysis of the East German mind and of Achim's historical background and reality is only an approach to the real Achim of "now". The inconsistencies, inadequacies, and contradictions of each of the views are greatly multiplied in any attempt to reconcile them with each other. The deeper one probes, and the closer one approaches Achim, the more confusing and ambiguous the situation becomes. The elements which go to make up Achim's character are so multifarious and so ambiguous in themselves that it is a forlorn hope for any to get close to distilling or describing Achim, or anyone else. This finds expression in a number of cubist symbols, e.g. the implied anonymity of the wearing of sun-glasses, and the associated cubistic use of language which renders a normally tangible, concrete object uncertain and ambiguous: e.g. the contrast of "Dunkelbrille" (DB16) with "dunkle Brille". (DB17)

These probings are designed to renovate and even to upset the logical presentation of material in order to avoid the limitations of traditional psychoanalysis. The disparate elements which go to make up this novel and blend it into a masterpiece have aesthetic links with the Surrealists and Cubists, but also derive to some extent from the "nouveau roman", (e.g. the theoretical work of Robbe-Grillet, Gide, and Butor, etc.)

Das dritte Buch seems to have evolved for Johnson as a bifocal structure, with Achim as one focus and Karsch's dilemma as the other. This bifocal trick is similar to that used by Picasso in his oval paintings of 1909-1911. The oval always throws its emphasis on two points and creates an intense sense of space about them both independently, and as a functional unit which is self-enclosed. (29)
One feels that Johnson is more concerned, as is Karsch, with the characters around him than with the actual architecture of the novel. It is as if he wished his characters, especially Karsch, to be independent of him, to live and develop spontaneously. Karsch is clearly the character closest to Johnson since his dilemma is Johnson's dilemma. As with Johnson vis-à-vis Karsch, Karsch can listen to Achim and hear what he says, but he cannot penetrate his thoughts or his feelings and this in turn gives rise to "un malaise" similar to that of Edmonde Charles-Roux when she speaks of "la tristesse qui naît des pensées incommunicables." (30). It is significant, however, that none of the characters comes to an end with the novel and the general flow of life is fundamentally unruffled by the events of the novel. Karsch is a wiser man but he could become yet wiser: there is no finality, no significant formal pattern or resolution. The novel, like life, is incongruous, frustrating, but, above all, inconclusive.
Johnson uses language to reflect the incomprehensibility and disorder of his world and to explore Karsch's search to discover the absolute truth, by showing one a scene from several views and by forcing one to take notice by juxtaposing ideas or words not normally associated or expected. Thus the use of language in Das dritte Buch is in many ways Cubistic (e.g. the linguistic double-presentation of Achim through standard German and through the regional dialect) and supplements the Cubist elements in the narrative. This is by no means new to the novel and Johnson would have probably known Gertrude Stein's use of a third person narration through the eyes of another in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas and Faulkner's use of multiperspective views in The Sound and the Fury. Johnson goes beyond these though in Das dritte Buch, for in this novel his visions, through the word, are woven together into a new web of imagery which in turn creates a new concept of existence. But this new synthesis is for Johnson inconclusive and intangible. His language is therefore largely inconclusive, negative and disordered.

Normal German syntax is disrupted in Das dritte Buch and Johnson uses rhetorical devices freely to convey his message. One is struck immediately by the extreme variety of sentence length, but of greater interest is the structure of the sentences and the way they build up a pervading sense of alienation and incomprehension. Anacoluthic constructions abound and are related to paratactic constructions:

"Mitten im Satz nehmen die Gedanken eine andere Richtung, so dass die begonnene Konstruktion nicht konsequent fortgesetzt wird." (31)

For example, in Das dritte Buch:

"Die Kahlschläge aufforsten könnene hätte was Achim nannte Meine Entwicklung zu einem politischen Bewusstsein". (DB239)
This type of construction is very common in speech and is a part of the stream of consciousness technique and contributes to illustrating the inability of the characters to come to grips with the world and with themselves.

Hyperbaton is a specific type of anacoluthon. A syntactic unit is appended to a sentence which seemed to have been completed. The effect is one of surprise and tends to free the reader of the more ordered thought patterns of literary syntax. The reader is consequently subjected to a certain degree of linguistic disorientation, and hyperbaton is excellent for representing speech patterns by giving the reader the impression that he is following the vicissitudes of the character's actual thoughts:

(1) "Er entsinnt sich einer ganzen Woche, während der er auf Frau Liebenreuths Sofa liegend fünfhäft tägliche Stunden arbeitsam nachdachte über die vier verschiedenen Fassungen von Achims Leben vor dem Krieg; das lässt sich nicht vorweisen." (DB160).

(2) "So dass die Grossmutter Achim befohlen hatte für die erste schlimme Zeit das geschenkte Rad zu zerlegen und die Teile an verschiedenen Stellen zu verstecken, damit sie es behielten." (DB193)

Zeugma, also a specific type of anacoluthon, goes beyond hyperbaton in its effect by disrupting not only syntax, but frequently the semantics of the sentence too:

"Unter Zeugma versteht man eine Konstruktion, bei der ein Verb mehrere gleichgeordnete, aber nicht gleichartige Objekte bzw. Sätze beherrscht." (32)

This is functionally an extremely valuable and rich device in creating an atmosphere of confusion and ambiguity such as one finds in Das dritte Buch: "dass er da bald von diesen Ähnlichkeiten abgesehen hatte und zu anderen Vergleichen hin." (DB24)
A comment to be found in Helmut Heissenbüttel's Über Literatur, (33) pointing to Marinetti's Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futuristica (1912) as the first coherent demand for freedom from orthodox inflexible grammar ("parole in libertà"), brings to mind, though on a reduced scale by comparison, Johnson's own deviations from the hegemony of grammar and syntax. His own attitude to this was expressed in a discussion with Wilhelm Schwarz:

"Als fünfundzwanzigjähriger Autor stellte sich Uwe Johnson dem lesenden Publikum mit einem Buch vor, dessen Syntax, Zeichensetzung und semantische Eigenheiten stark von den herkömmlichen Gepflogenheiten der Sprache abwichen. Hatte er die Absicht, mit seinen Neuerungen den deutschen Sprachgebrauch zu beeinflussen?

"So radikal waren meine Neuerungen gar nicht. Es war vor allem in der Interpunktion, wo ich etwas eigenwillig vorging. Daneben habe ich in den ersten Büchern versucht, das Verb vorzuziehen; damals dachte ich die Beziehung zwischen Subjekt und Objekt durch das Verb herzustellen, was nicht zum allgemein akzeptierten Gebrauch gehörte. In Zwei Ansichten ging ich dann schon viel konventioneller vor, auch was die Kommaten angeht." (34)

A stylistic characteristic resulting from this aspect of Johnson's prose is his frequent use of parataxis. The paratactic construction is related to, and often resembles, anacoluthon. Kayser in discussing parataxis contrasts it with the hypotactic sentence: "Parataxe ist die Nebenordnung von Sätzen, Hypotaxe die Unterordnung." (35) He points out the tendency for oral languages to precipitate towards paratactic syntax: "In allen Sprachen ist volkstümliche Dichtung durch ein Vorvalten der Parataxe gekennzeichnet." (36) - this is also the point Herbert Kolb was making when he entitled his article "Rückfall in die Parataxe." However Kayser points out that "die Dinge liegen nicht so eindeutig, dass die Parataxe immer als ein Zeichen volkstümlichen Stils gelten könnte." (37) The syntactic form in Das dritte Buch is of a very sophisticated nature, and serves not just
as a representation of speech patterns, but also as an evocation of the alienation of the individual from his world, his language, and ultimately from himself. Parataxis seems to suggest that the character is losing his self-assurance and prefers to collect and edit his thoughts after, rather than before, attempting to rationalise them into verbal form. Thus, a contrast is struck between the hypotactic speech of Frau Ammann ("dürr und trocken" (DB127)), for instance, and the paratactic language describing Karsch's struggle to come to grips with his problem. This is also true within a single character. One can compare the difference in Achim's patterns of thought in his self-assured moments behind his façade, and the naked Achim forced to dispense with his State-image: "Sie können von meinem Leben nur wissen was ich Ihnen davon sage: sagte Achim." (DB203) is hypotactic (by construction, although the attitude to punctuation is not classical);

"Kann man das so nennen, wenn sie doch fünfzehn Jahre alt war, meinst du kann man sagen ich hab sie sitzen lassen. Meinst du?" (DB178)

is a slightly camouflaged parataxis. There is less distancing involved with paratactic syntax forms and the reader is able to come closer to directly experiencing the mood of the character. An extension of paratactic construction is the Cubist use of "oder" (DB241/242). In this case a phenomenon of the spoken language is exploited to extend the limitations of literary syntax into the realms of transcendentalism in a search for an absolute in expression and in truth.

Connected with this attempt to suggest the cerebral patterns of speech is the use of dialect to give a local flavour to the novel in order to enhance its credibility, while also having political overtones, as many leading party functionaries retain their local Saxon dialect, as does Achim:
This contributes to the geographical actuality and is also used as an indication of the real Achim for, if Karin is to be believed, Achim's lapses into dialect are more in keeping with his true character and suggest that at these moments he is less inhibited by his image. Similar to the transcription of dialect are Johnson's efforts to render the elisions of colloquial speech in print, e.g.; "Ich möcht meine ..." (DB190), and supplementing this is the use of abbreviated phrases in common use in everyday speech, involving the omission of certain words (e.g. "Kann schon sein." (DB155)), and the contraction of words (e.g. "Jetzt kannste sagen klar." (DB264)).

The ambiguity inherent in the situation of the novel gives rise to and arises from tensions set up within the language of the novel. This is exploited by the use of antitheses and the related tropes, oxymoron and irony. On a large scale in Das dritte Buch ambiguity arises from the antithetic relationship of passages of great precision and detail and passages of extreme vagueness. This is also true even within single sentences, e.g.


The paradox of the situation is clear: "die sagen würde dass sie frei ist wir unfrei: sagt ihnen sie sind nicht frei aber wir." (DB315) Oxymoron makes this vagueness even more intense: "Irgend wie (dachte Karsch) war sehr genau. Irgend wie war Irgend wie vielleicht auch zu beschreiben." (DB233) A more difficult device to isolate is irony because
it depends so much on the context and on the emotive response a word or a passage evokes in the reader. Johnson uses two predominant recurrent sources of irony:— a Biblical tone, and Communistic propaganda terminology (both treated elsewhere) which he turns against the East German State with superb effect.

Johnson's vocabulary is very wide and can be loosely categorised under three headings: (1) colloquial, (2) technical and literary, and (3) jargon. His use of dialect comes within the first category and shows an awareness of the richness of the German language on the level of the vernacular, but somehow his renditions of speech patterns tend to become a little stilted and stylised leaving a slight hint of uneasiness about the prose:


This passage has about it a lyricism which detracts from, rather than enhances, the atmosphere of spontaneity usually associated with these passages. It contrasts sharply with the paragraph:

which exhibits the spontaneity, pride and prejudices of German youth admirably.

The second level of vocabulary has a functional place beyond merely narration. The more intense passages need to be separated by passages of less intensity or the reader will find himself overpowered. The passages of pure description or of technical explanations therefore act almost as an emotional safety valve in order to retain the reader's attention. Beyond this rather mundane consideration of literary strategy is a definite aesthetic purpose. These points of precision tend to have the opposite effect to the creation of tangibility by highlighting the intangible nature of the scene against which they are set. A highly technical passage such as

"Und der Stahl für eine Strassenrennmaschine wird zu hohem Preis elektrisch erschmolzen, der Rahmen muss eine Zugfestigkeit von siebzig Pfund auf den Quadratmillimeter erweisen unter hydraulischer Zerrung und für alle Fälle, und wiegen darf sie nicht wie deine Mühle sechsunddreissig sondern höchstens einundzwanzig Pfund." (DB257)

is set immediately against a colloquial passage:

"Wie denn das sei? Du kommst vom Baden, du wollest was einkaufen, du hast Überstunden gemacht, da ist es später geworden. Davon reden die nicht. Sie reden von der Lampe, die die Vorschrift will, sie suchen nach Dynamo und nach Kabel, was soll dir das an einem Rennrad, was soll das ihnen mitten in der gesetzlichen Ordnung der Strasse gefährdend ihr Leben und deins und das vielleicht herankommender Leute, dass du das nicht weisst in deinem Alter!" (DB257/258)

and this whole section characteristically oscillates from one type to the other. The shifting is however fairly compatible even when great ranges of vocabulary are involved, and is reminiscent at times of Brecht's use of earthy terms and harsh or sarcastic tones: "Hitlerscheisse" (DB102);
"die Fickerei in der Scheune war dreiwortig über den Platz vor dem Rathaus gegangen" (DB186);

"das Zeichen der neuen staatlichen Jugendorganisation war eine steif ausstrahlende Halbsonne in blauem Schild unter den auch goldenen Anfangsbuchstaben von Frei und Deutsch und Jugend." (DB189)

This last quotation is also an example of the implicit use of a slogan, carrying with it the implication of the opposite of its intended meaning. Implicit and explicit use of slogans builds up the image of the pompous myth that has accrued about the destiny of the Socialist State. Not only is one confronted with the slogans raw (e.g. "SEID OFFEN FÜR DEN FRIEDEN" (DB297)) but one also finds oblique references to well known slogans and exhortation of the State used seriously by Achim, Frau Ammann and Frau Liebenreuth, and ironically by Karsch and the narrator. This differentiation is by no means so cut-and-dried, for Achim is at times almost sarcastic in his references to the relationship between himself and the State, e.g.

"Sie lernte an Achim kennen dass der ruhig ist der entschieden ist einen Sozialismus zu sehen wo sein Name gennant wird." (DB301)

Passages of reminiscence by Achim are frequently almost pastiches of slogans glorifying the Socialist future:


Against this background of State optimism is an aura of uncertainty, a sort of social malaise, in which freedom signifies to the East German a total subjugation to the DDR
regime. One of the main sources of this atmosphere is the irreconcilable discrepancy between the East German Government's self-promotion and confidence and the syntax. This is separate from Karsch's problems but of course closely interdependent with them - the one reinforces the other. One is struck by the extensive use of subjunctives throughout, lending the novel the uncertainty and indecision which characterises the mood e.g.

"vielleicht sollte ich blühende Brombeerranken darüberhängen lassen, so könntest du es dir am Ende vorstellen. Dann hätte ich dir beschrieben die Übergänge für den Verkehr..." (DB7).

The effects of subjunctive constructions are augmented by the rather unorthodox use of punctuation and related trick of omitting parts of sentences, for instance sentences are often left unfinished with no punctuation to indicate this, e.g. "Er schrieb bis hier und" (DB336); "Nahm das Blatt aus der Maschine" (DB337). A comma can also in this context serve as a fullstop:

"Das Zimmer war an den Wänden entlang mit Bücherregalen Schränken Couch Sessel Kochnische bewohnbar, in der Mitte unter dem langen Fenster zur abendlichen nassen Strasse hin stand der Tisch, Telefon neben Plattenspieler neben Tonbandgerät, die Schreibmaschine links vorn, der Stuhl konnte auf Rollen bewegt werden." (DB336)

Johnson's use of punctuation then is emotive rather than scientific. Pauses of varying intensity or significance are indicated by various punctuation marks, but not consistently and the usage varies throughout the novel, e.g.

"Wozu sollte ich dir jedes Mal von neuem bedeutsam abgezählte Zigaretten hinhalten und mutmasslichen Ausdruck in der Bewegung von Teetassen vor schweigendem Mund: was gewännest du vom Beschreiben atmenden Aufstülpens ihrer sehr bekannten langen Lippen (was soll das heissen. Und selbst Weinen wäre auszufragen: warum weinst du), wird dir die gläserne Versprüdung ihrer Stimme zum Zwecke von Spott nätzlicher, wenn ich sie mehrmals nachsage; es war stets die selbe bunte Fransendecke aus der Slowakei, über ihre Beine weisst du Bescheid, leise atmend lag sie gästlich in dem hellen sauberen Hohlraum, den niemand verlebte, den besitzen konnte wer ihn betrat." (DB130/131)
In this way punctuation serves the prose in much the same way as the strategic use of details serves the subject matter: by providing a network of tangible points to bound but not inhibit the free flow of words and ideas.

The prolific use of details to describe both objects and events in Johnson's work almost implies by the very fact that they are possible for some things that the world of his characters is not quite as uncertain as the overall effect leads one to believe. However, closer examination reveals that such description is limited only to objects visible to the character or to events or procedures with which anyone can be familiar. e.g. part of the section devoted to the purchase of a typewriter is given to a very concise, exact enumeration of the working of a typewriter, broken down into the basics:

"Von einer Maschine dieser Art dürfen einige Hauptleistungen erwartet werden: das ist das Anschlagen der Typen mit einem Farbband an den Papierträger vermittels eines Hebelgetriebes, sodann die Aneinanderreihung der Schriftzeichen durch den Querlauf der Walze zwecks Herstellung einer Zeile, darauf die Reihung der Zeilen untereinander durch Längslauf des Papiers; das weiss man ja". (DB115/6)

That this is common knowledge doesn't deter Johnson from including such passages and for the reader it is a thought-provoking experience as an everyday object usually taken for granted suddenly assumes a far greater importance and is registered upon one's consciousness, no longer being merely observed. As its intricacy is revealed it almost seems that its rightful place in the human world is recognised, each object having for this purpose a very representative function. The continuous use of this technique causes a Brechtian Verfremdung as the reader is surprised into a heightened awareness of his world.

Those objects or processes described in this detailed manner are the most frequently mentioned - those which have
become integral parts of the lives of the characters - for Karsch the telephone and the typewriter, and for Achim his succession of bicycles and even his coaching on the rudiments of cycle racing, otherwise, photographers' cameras, microphones etc. recur at frequent intervals.

Such details remain impressed on one's mind as their magnified importance attracts and holds the reader's attention, and, while appearing to give certitude, they serve much more strongly than would direct statements to emphasise the background of vagueness against which they are placed. This type of factual precision led Marcel Reich-Ranicki to entitle an article about Uwe Johnson "Registrar Johnson" (38) in which he concludes that the high density of detail makes

"dem Leser den Unterschied zwischen dem Durchschaubaren und dem Undurchdringlichen bewusst: zwischen dem Beschreibbaren und dem Nicht-Beschreibbaren." (39)

Photography is used as a literary device both as regards time structure and also for a cool exact representation of objects or tableaux so that one could almost imagine Johnson describing certain scenes directly from a photograph. Everything tangible can be registered in this manner from the smallest detail when attention is zeroed in and focussed on a fingernail pressing a doorbell

"Sehr aufregend könnte an Frau Liebenreuths Klingelknopf eine sauber um den Nagel gerundete Fingerrpitze erschienen sein, die mit Druck und Senkung den offenen Stromkreis schliesst." (DB157)

to the description of the building housing "das Amt für die Meldung auswärtiger Besucher" (DB122), and the way in which Karsch is processed. Yet photography can be misleading as it presents superficial detail but without knowledge of the real situation photos can be easily misinterpreted, e.g. a photo of Karsch and Karin implies a near-intimacy that used to be between them but which no longer applies now:
"Ohne Trennstrich daruntergesetzt zeigte eine Fotografie jubelnde Zuschauer an der Bahn. Der untere Rand war die Logenbrüstung, hinter der Karin zu sehen war in lebhaftem Gespräch mit einem Karsch, der zu ihr geneigt auf sie einredet. Sie hört ihm zu, ihr Mund ist schon zur Antwort geöffnet. Der Betrachter hält sie für ein geübtes und entschlossenes Paar." (DB39)

The verb in the last sentence - "fürhalten" - shakes the certainty of the visible facts, reminding us by its assumptive nature that a photo of this type could be interpreted from different aspects. One could apply the same reasoning to the photo of Achim among the demonstrators on the 17th June 1953. Johnson transcribes the photo in every exact detail but to Karsch, whose West German background prevents him from automatically thinking of the uprising, it is merely conjecture and remains incomprehensible until Karin explains it.

Precision in such unknowable situations reveals only half-truths which result in frustration and a tension present at varying degrees which furthers the alienation of the reader as, repeatedly, the promise of visible details is not carried over into the reality behind them.

The issue is even more confused by the large quantities of adjectives which are both compound and regular and appear also in adjectival clauses or incorporated into nouns. Perhaps their most outstanding function, apart from, of course, pure description and elucidation, seems to be their great value for accentuating contrast in which colour plays a fascinating and important role. Contrasts appear to be most obviously between East and West, old and new, black and white, including what could be termed "State colours".

East and West:

It follows from Karsch's extremely ambivalent position that he would be the best medium to illustrate the differences shown through the adjectives. His arrival in East Germany is one of the fruitful passages. His first awareness of East Germany
Immediately after the border crossing is a mixture of "etwas mürisch" (DBII), which seems to be a premonition of a great deal of his future temperament in East Germany, and the contrast between the oppressive dust (automatically having connotations of greyness) and the fresher smell of grass which seems to herald the difficulties in his own position later. By the time he gets to Karin's apartment it is almost dark as are his surroundings - "gewichtige rauchschwarze Stuck der Hausfronten" (DBII). The lighter oppressiveness of the preceding paragraph has developed with the progress of time as Karsch penetrated deeper into East Germany until it is now heavy and the attributes given to some aspects of nature itself increase this impression - "eine schwere Dämmerung", "regendunklen Fugen" (DBII). This first impression persists as Karsch seems to remain in a kind of "schwere Dämmerung" in his attempts to come to grips with the real East Germany and its people throughout the novel.

One of the more emotive adjectives "westdeutsch" is often coupled with others to which its mere presence stereotypes immediately, e.g. the contrast of Karsch walking between Karin and Achim - "Locker und neugierig und westdeutsch ging er zwischen ihnen." (DBI3). The visiting West German journalist stands out strikingly from his surroundings and companions;

"Sehr westdeutsch zwischen ihnen sprach der andere sehr laut, zeigte mit dem Finger auf Unverständliches, fragte, lachte, schlug auf Schultern, fotografierte in einem". (DB212).

He forms the basis of comparison later when Karin, very upset, forgets herself so completely as to draw attention to herself as someone out of place:

"Sie war auf eine zähe dauerhafte Art aufgebracht, das liess sie achtloser laut sprechen als selbst den Westdeutschen; auch beachtete sie nicht wer neben ihr ging oder hinter ihr. Viele sahen ihr ins Gesicht und waren befreundet wie von einer Weinenden" (DB294).
Immediately he is outside East Germany the atmosphere changes from mistrust to a much lighter one, comparable to that of West Germany. In Prague he notices

"die unbeschädigten Strassenfronten zu gefälliger Flucht aufgebaut als Bild", "Frauen in hellen Kleidern",

as opposed to the continual grey worn in East Germany,

"das besondere Licht","und nannte die westdeutschen Städte, an die ihn mancher Strassenzug und Brunnen erinnerten." (DB204).

Karsch finds the West colourful whereas the State controlled Eastern commerce doesn't need or use colour for advertising and promoting products:

"einmal in unzähligen Initiativen konkurrierend bunt als Angebot höherer Güte grösserer Nützlichkeit dickerer Bequemlichkeit auf Tafeln neben der Autobahn oder als betuliche Bedienung im reichlich bestückten Geschäft, hier wiederum wirkte es als einmalig zusammengefasster Plan und trat nicht bunt auf mit Verschiedenheiten und deren Anpreisung", (DB25).

The juxtaposition of the opposing views and the comparative adverbs imply not only competition between West German firms but also, perhaps more strongly, between West and East. "Unzählige Initiativen" and "einmalig zusammengefasster Plan" stand in direct opposition to each other as do their respective attributes "bunt" and "nicht bunt".

The only memorable occasion on which Karsch is able to excel in the DDR occurs while he is driving Karin and Achim. Achim's praise "Entschieden fährt er!" (DB34) sums up in one word Karsch's transformation - when doing something which hasn't changed with his shift to East Germany he has confidence in his ability and his mood becomes quite unlike the usual non-committal non-descript attitude he adopts towards something
he doesn't understand. Thus the adjective applied to Karsch, by the associative process sparked off in the reader's mind by all its implications, serves equally to illustrate the great difference between East and West.

**Old and New:**

The common history of the two Germanies before the political division is shown on the whole to be forgotten. The reminders come through a language which is basically common to both, and, more particularly for Karsch, through the architecture - he feels an affinity only with the older constructions which provide him with badly needed points of reference. The colours and building materials are what he records most often, e.g.

"ihm gefielen die beiden Häuser aus dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert, die verwittert und fremd allein standen inmitten der öden Leere, zu der ihre Nachbarschaft geglättet lag; auch versuchte er sich an dem Unterschied zwischen hölzernen Wurstbuden auf dem Markt und dem Rathausturm, der in der langen Front aus Galerien und Arkaden den Goldenen Schnitt vergangener Baukunst markierte im Verein mit dem Verzeichnis Kurfürstlicher Privilegien, das als echte altärmliche Schriftzeile das Gebäude umklammerte; aus dem Turm dröhnte grob verstärkt anmutiges Glockenspiel als Schmeichelei für die folgende Stimme, die den Besucher aufforderte die Ausstellung sozialistischen Wiederaufbaus zu besichtigen" (DB22/23).

The adjectives applied to these buildings which are part of the common heritage are those used to express Karsch's predicament as someone with a "foreign" West German heritage. Contrasts between actual words and ideas are rife - "hölzerne Wurstbuden" - "Goldener Schnitt"; "echte altärmliche Schriftzeile" contrasts with the artificial stark newness of the "sozialistischen Wiederaufbaus"; "grob verstärkt" - "anmutiges Glockenspiel". "Golden" is the main adjective used in the descriptions of the old buildings and has the same meaning of perfection as is found in the literature of the Romantic period. The two 16th century houses are out of place
in their modern surroundings and to the present they are remnants of a past age of unity and harmony.

Even cigarette advertisements only 15 years old are in colours belonging to the era of unity -

"die golden und schwarz aufgemalte Zigaretten sorte hatte man dort vor fünfzehn Jahren zum letzten Mal kaufen können, die öffentlichen Gebäude regierte ein anderes Gesetz" (DB26).

The steel and wood of certain structures characterise them automatically as modern, e.g. of the grandstand -

"In den gewaltigen Hohlraum hingen die breit geschwungenen Ränge an Stahlgeflecht";
also
"die ovale Schlinge aus gerundeter Holzbahn" (DB14);

of the central station, also containing an example of reality hidden beneath the surface -

"und von stämmigen Säulenpfosten unterstellt und zeigten nicht den Stahl, der sie eigentlich hieilt";
"die Holzbuden der Fahrrkarten ausgabe";
"die auf Stahlbögen in Höhe des Himmels schwere Überglasung trug" (DB50).

Smoke of various sorts pervades the atmosphere everywhere and has worn off onto the buildings, this giving rise to numerous compound adjectives e.g. "das rauchgeschwärzte Dachgewölbe" (DB50), or nouns - "der Schornsteinruss" (DB22) - this process gives age to buildings but they are also shown by this means to blend into and be actively used in the DDR of the present by their greyness.

The present imposes itself inexorably on the past in all aspects, even nature is once again a contributing factor,
as on Karsch's arrival in East Germany -

"das Schaufenster ist seitlich und oben umrahmt von schwarzen Glasplatten, die Schrift redet altmodisch in stumpfem Goldschwung, Sickerwasser macht sie mörbe-." (DB24).

The elegance and richness of the Golden Age is being relentlessly dulled to the drab colour of the present.

"State Colours":

In this context one of the most dominant uses of colour adjectives which springs to mind is the concept of block colours, often combined with a strong contrast effect. One reason for this would appear to be the omniscient, god-like position of the State. Its slogans displayed almost everywhere show almost symbolically the way a foreign political and ideological system was imposed from without upon the East German State and the manner in which the State always seeks to subordinate the individual to its will, e.g. -

"Wie erklärt von den hohen schwarzen Buchstaben auf Weiss .... DER SPORT IST EIN MITTEL ZUR SOZIALISTISCHEN ERZIEHUNG." (DB47).

-the violent contrast between black and white occurs in many senses, but is nearly always, as here, directly connected to the State. Not only is the black harshly and powerfully imposed on the white but it also stands out commandingly by the size of the letters which are increased in stature as is so much of the propaganda they convey ("hohe Buchstaben"). An almost identical example of black (magnified) versus white is the "weisser Trennwand, die in ihrer ganzen Höhe mit schwarzen Buchstaben bedeckt war". (DB14). The white contrasted with black in this way has the quality of a virgin background now despoiled. The same effect is apparent in the block contrasts of "schwarze Anzüge" - "weissblusige Kinder" - "schwarze Anzüge" (DB16), the white has an aura of innocence when worn by the children whereas the black represents the type of adult
who is the end product of the State system.

As already mentioned, grey and darker sombre colours are those typifying the State, even its buildings. The forbidding aspect of those in authority is emphasised by these colours with which they are associated by the clothes they have donned just as they have adopted State ideology. For example, Achim wears a grey suit so much that in the section "Wer ist denn Achim?" (DB13-17) he is referred to significantly on four separate occasions as "der Mann im grauen Strassenanzug". The loss of individuality and the merging of the person into the State is portrayed extremely evocatively in phrases of this type. Even more powerful is the method of referring to large groups of people as, for instance, "die schwarzen Anzüge (DB16), or "Es war ein grosses ehrendes Haus, in das der Staat noch nicht eindrang mit blauen Hemden" (DB299), or "Rote und blaue Stoffstreifen redeten Buchstaben auf die überzogenen Fahrbahnen hinunter" (DB227).

Both the last two major imposed regimes have their distinguishing colours - black and brown shirts from the Hitlerzeit, black, white, blue and grey for that of Ulbricht, all being colours which permit no individuality but designate the wearer as one of the mass. Grey is not used as a block colour as are the others but it is ever-present in small doses crucially qualifying nearly all things of importance so that in the overall impression it does in fact emerge as the colour, of which the background is overwhelmingly composed. This is more marked by the absence of colours when one would expect them, e.g. Johnson specifies no colour for the flowers Achim receives on his birthday although they are mentioned three times and are even shown to be carnations finally on the fourth occasion (DB16/17). In the same section there is a reference to "ein Rennfahrer in buntem Trikot" (DB16) and though in both cases the actual colour(s) is not stated the hint of their presence together with one's imagination evokes a lighter mood than that of the darker shades. For such a festive crowd event this passage is curiously devoid of true brightness
to a Western mind. The majority of things to which colour attributes could be given are usually either grey or of another colour of the same sort (clothes etc.); there are no colourful advertisements, and though it is sunny even the light is artificial, coming either from "der dicht flackernde Kugelblitz der Fotografen" or from "die Scheinwerfer" (DB14). Lacking outstanding distinguishing characteristics the objects and details almost tend to lose their identity as they are absorbed easily into the unnatural flat background greyness of the regime.

Comparisons and descriptions are also effected noticeably through the use of "wie" and "als (ob)", and through metaphors. The contrast between the writer's position in East and West, and in past and present, with the underlying identification of the West and the more lasting remnants of the common heritage is shown in Frau Ammann's dissertation -

"von also spürbarer Verbesserung der gemeinen Lebensumstände, an welcher Wirkung der Schreibende auch teilhabe und nicht mehr ausgeschlossen sei aus dem Ganzen des Volks wie im westlichen Ausland oder in früherer Zeit." (DB129).

The same result is achieved by using "als ob", or simply "als" with a verbal construction: "... als sei da eine Störung oder eine neue Überlegung aufgetreten." (DB156).

Occasionally the comparison is not made by any of these methods, where Johnson himself intrudes to draw the reader's attention to his accomplishment, which is sometimes coupled with a striking metaphor -

"Wenn Spitzengruppe und Hauptfeld in der Nordkurve entschwinden und der ehrenhafte Vorbeizug der Nachzügler gemischt wird mit Funkberichten über die erbitterten Kämpfe auf der Gegengeraden, senken sich die Wogenkämme des anfeuernden Geschreis, das ist ein Vergleich" (DB163).

This same final phrase appears earlier in the book where it is used to underline the rapprochement made by Frau Ammann
between the workers and the position of the writer in the East German State -


and also recurs on the following page with reference to the same situation.

The final aspect to be treated in detail in this section, the use of metaphors, is one of the indispensables which characterises Johnson's style and which bears a major part of the responsibility for its density and richness. This method is very closely linked to the previously mentioned Johnsonian "Dinge" and the technical descriptions thereof. The similes formed around "wie" and "als(ob)" are generally very striking and yet Johnson shows that further intensification is possible by replacing "wie" with a metaphoric genitive of which the governing nominative substantive transforms something usual and commonplace abruptly into an almost completely new creation by placing it in an unexpected context. The often astounding interrelations of "Dinge" or ideas serve, as do their analytical descriptions, to make the reader register something on his consciousness, and heighten his awareness of the world and of his own place in it. The everyday narrow perspective of the world, objects and occurrences which one takes for granted is suddenly broadened as a now more perceptive reader is surprised into reflection by this application of Brechtian Verfremdungstechnik, a process which is identifiable with the Russian Formalist Sklovskij's key terms for poetry, i.e. from "automatisation" through an awakening by surprise ("making it strange") to "perceptibility" (40), and which is also reflected in an excerpt from Jean Cocteau's Le Rappel à l'Ordre:
"L'espace d'un éclair, nous voyons un chien, un fiacre, une maison pour la première fois. Tout ce qu'ils présentent de spécial, de fou, de ridicule, de beau nous accable. Immédiatement après, l'habitude frotte cette image puissante avec sa gomme. Nous caressons le chien, nous arrêtons le fiacre, nous habitons la maison. Nous ne les voyons plus.

Voilà le rôle de la poésie. Elle dévoile, dans toute la force du terme. Elle montre nues, sous une lumière qui secoue la torpeur, les choses surprenantes qui nous environnent et que nos sens enregistraient machinalement.

.... Il s'agit de lui (le dormeur éveillé) montrer ce sur quoi son cœur, son œil glissent chaque jour, sous un angle et avec une vitesse tels qu'il lui paraît le voir et s'en émouvoir pour la première fois.

.... Mettez un lieu commun en place, nettoyez-le, frottez-le, éclairez-le de telle sorte qu'il frappe avec sa jeunesse et avec la même fraîcheur, le même jet qu'il avait à sa source, vous ferez œuvre de poète." (41).

Though one cannot say that Johnson is striving to create an "œuvre de poète" he has nevertheless achieved this "objectivising" of the reader through his often "metaphoric" portrayal of the search for the essence of East Germany and of its people. The juxtaposition of words which are not normally associated broadens and even alters the semantic field of each as they combine to create a new concept. This complicates further Johnson's already complex style but this rediscovery or revelation of the commonplace must be recognised as an integral part of his quest for that reality existing behind the apparent visible reality. Johnson's imagination and probing furnish many such jolting metaphors, e.g.:

1. "die fleckig aufsteigenden Bögen aus Gesichtern und unverdeckten Rückenlehnen" (DB14);
2. "und hob seine langen Beine vorsichtig aus der wirbelnden Akustik des durchdrängten Foyers." (DB185);
3. "die Wogenkämme des anfeuernden Geschrei... Windstille breitet sich aus, die See liegt ebenmässig plätschernd im kleinen Geräusch privater Gespräche" (DB163/164).
In view of all descriptive devices and those sharpening perception the reader is surprised at the end to realise that the ambiguity and uncertainty (an aspect of "undeutliche Dunkelheit" (DB33)) has in fact not been dispelled as would logically be awaited. Adjectives and adverbs (so often used as adjectival intensifiers) fall into the same category as objects and their descriptions in that the "reality" to which they pertain is confined to the tangibly visible or sensory impressions that they leave. The validity of such conclusions is irrevocably negated by the increasing realisation that they are bounded to a superficiality inadequate for penetrating beyond the immediate world.

The negation of these conclusions tends to be reinforced by the intensely negative character of the novel as a whole, both in atmosphere and in language. This extends beyond the more obviously negative words or phrases into the implied negativity of various other fields. For instance, the use of darker and block colour adjectives has a negative characteristic by its recurrent nature and by the reinforcement of this by, for example, the many variations on the words "fremd" and "misstraulich". The syntax, in its negative nature, thus contributes actively to the frustration of Karsch's dilemma and his non-understanding and the alienation existing in the various strata within the novel:

e.g.

"Nichts lud ihn ein. Rätselhaft lebten die begegnenden Passanten und arbeiteten in Fabriken Geschäft en Ämtern, die er nicht hätte vermuten können wie am zufälligen Nachbarn doch in seiner Heimatstadt, sie fuhren in ihren Wagen oder gingen mit unerklicklicher Geschäftigkeit an unvorstellbare Orte und bewegten ihre Gesichter zu Dingen und Verhältnissen, die er nicht einsah; sie waren alle da, er sah alles, er erriet nichts. Fremde sprachen über Fremdes in fremder Sprade, neben ihm her lebten sie im warmen Abend eines anderen Staates mit einander und waren sicher im Unbekannten, er war von ihnen entfernt wie das Gefühl des Sonntagmorgens ihn trennte vom Leben in der Woche; um ihn war Bewegung, die ihn stehen liess wie ein Sonntag anhält und hinstellt und allein lässt ohne Hilfe in einzeln bewohnten Räumen. In dieser sauberen Ferne dieser aufgeräumten Fremde wie sonntäglich allein und nicht sicher." (DB233)
This absolute uncertainty is given a different perspective, given a degree of depth, by the use of that area of the semantic spectrum which represents the shades between negative and positive: words such as "vielleicht" (e.g. "- Vielleicht: sagte er: Irgend wie." (DB233)), "oder" (DB240-242), "etwa" (DB231), etc.

Language does not merely intensify the atmosphere but also creates it by the persistent use of linguistic devices. Rather than relying entirely on the psychological impact of the meaning of his sentences, he supplements this by the use of negative and subjunctive constructions which add to this impact by their presence even when not apparently referring to the atmosphere. When seen in conjunction with the strategic use of punctuation and imagery, Johnson's language becomes a powerful and efficient vehicle for his literary expression and is in fact one of the most gripping and provocative features of this work.
CONCLUSION

Das dritte Buch Über Achim is a work which epitomises the concerns of modern literature but it is not one which has radically altered the direction of the novel. It is a product rather than a producer of the changes taking place in the novel. Its preoccupations are centred on the ultimate truths of reality and of existence in the modern world.

Throughout the novel the question of relativity is examined by viewing a series of situations from several viewpoints in the manner of the Cubists. The recognition of this relativity is seen as one of the main causes of the modern dilemma of the individual caught up in the uncertainty of the modern world. Viewing this from several perspectives intensifies the readers', and the characters', awareness of the depth and the extent of this phenomenon and makes the reader and the correlator/co-relator (Karsch) realise the significance of this dilemma, not just as it exists in the East-West situation, but as it affects all European society, and the whole fabric of modern existence. Johnson, as an author, is very much involved in this very problem, and the use of Karsch as a buffer between the author and his subject matter increases the sense of alienation pervading the work.

Das dritte Buch does, in this respect, effect a transitional period between Mutmassungen Über Jakob and Zwei Ansichten, both politically and literarily. In the Mutmassungen the amorphous nature of the novel reflects accurately the rather uncertain nature of the political relationship between East Germany and West Germany of the late 1950's. By 1960 the situation had become considerably clearer and the events leading up to the establishment of the Wall were already well advanced. The construction and syntax of Das dritte Buch reflects this in that the novel is clearer, the plot and structure much more explicit than in the Mutmassungen. The use of questions as headings and division tends to give also the impression of the contemporary efforts to understand
by tabulation. In Mutmassungen über Jakob the attempt is to understand the situation as a whole, intuitively rather than systematically. With Zwei Ansichten, Johnson seems to have reached the limits of his theme with the separation symbolised by the Wall. The Wall is central, the split has become concrete and in consequence, it seems, Zwei Ansichten is much weaker and much more blatant than either of the first two novels. In Jahrestage, however, the freshness of the theme of the alienation of the individual from his environment is restored with the move away from his near-obsession with the border situation, and he seems to have recovered his early vigour, in his handling of content, if not yet in language:

"Sie fing an, das Essen zu verweigern, weil das Brot, das Obst, das Fleisch anders schmeckten. ... Das Kind stand am Fenster und sah hinunter in die von hochstöckigen Fassaden verdunkelte Strasse, in der alles anders war: ..." (Jt20)

It is precisely in these two areas, content and language, that Johnson, in his early work, excels, and herein lies his originality. He has treated the border directly and intensively for the first time in German literature and has done so in a new medium. Few other German novelists come even close to the almost asyntactic use of language that is so characteristic of Mutmassungen über Jakob and Das dritte Buch. The nearest touchstones are to be found in the work of the avantgarde poets and dramatists. This experimentation does not however violate the primary needs for intelligibility (as Joyce's tended to) or plausibility (as Gide's). On the whole he has avoided the biggest dangers to new prose writers.

Johnson also avoids being too obviously a "romancier à thèse" by the depth and breadth of his inquiries into the human as well as the political situation. He has notable success in handling positive relationships between people. The love affair between Achim and Karin is treated convincingly and profoundly with the emphasis on the portraying of an
entire relationship through the accumulation of the small
details and gestures between the two lovers rather than
by resorting to direct statements concerning their emotions,
right up to the simple, uncomplicated understatement in the
paragraph:

"Sehr für sich allein erstaunt stand sie auf,
strich sich den Rock glatt wie zum Weggehen
und sagte so gesenkten Kopfes abwesend: Das
habe ich nicht gewusst. Das wusste ich nicht:
sagte sie stillgeworden. Es war offenbar dass
sie sich nicht helfen konnte. Das hatte sie sieben
Jahre nicht gewusst, denn so lange war es her."

(DB292)

The very starkness portrays, in a manner far more
telling and enduring than could any long dissertation, Karin's
state of utter shock as she reacts to the abrupt revelation
of the failure of total communication with her realisation,
not just that she can never fully know Achim, but that she is
even unaware of whole segments of his life. The attempt to
treat a "love"-relationship more directly is possibly one
of the reasons for the weakness of Zwei Ansichten. Success
in this is rendered more or less unobtrusive in Das dritte Buch
simply by avoiding any over-involved analytical discussion of
it.

There is in Das dritte Buch a series of anticipations
or "Vorausdämtungen" which indicate the eventual outcome of
Karsch's efforts, e.g. his continual misgivings, the failure
of each of his attempts to find the correct beginning, the
ever-present barriers encountered in his contacts with the
East German way of life, etc. By the time the end has been
attained it has long been a foregone conclusion and is only
a fulfilment of what one has already been led to suspect.
From this point of view it could be regarded as somewhat of
an anti-climax; but Das dritte Buch is on the whole anything
but a climactic work and is one which does not become obtrusive
in its predictability.
The "dritte Buch über Achim" is never written by its intended author, Karsch, though a "drittes Buch" once removed is written by Johnson as he observes Karsch collecting and working at his material and presents it second-hand while embellishing it with observations about the people and the life in this new country in which Karsch is moving. Our only guideline to the progress Karsch has made and in how far it can be deemed successful is Johnson's running commentary about his feelings and ideas, for at no stage does the little that Karsch does manage to write materialise before us in manuscript form.

The Ringkomposition technique seems, having traced Karsch's ultimately fruitless attempts from the outset to his final failure to achieve even a satisfactory opening, let alone an idea of the basic outline and form of the work, to be one of the more aesthetically satisfying forms. The concluding section "Und wie war die Reise?" (DB336f) brings us back to the geographical and physical situation of the beginning. The form shows from another aspect the impossibility of ever finding the truth so both Karsch and the reader are in fact left in the state of ignorance in which they started out. Pursuit of the reality of the DDR has broadened one's knowledge of East Germany on more than just the factual level by bringing out the atmosphere, but this is the closest one gets to an existential truth. Johnson himself poses the final question as he addresses the reader whose very first question was identical - "Wie war es denn?" (DB337). His tone conveys the hope that he has been able to give a satisfactory answer, but when he finally provides his own conclusion regarding the aim of his novel he seems still to feel dubious about his ability as an author. The ultimate decision must of course rest with the individual reader.

His use of "Genauigkeit" concerning the "Grenze" states precisely what his version of it is not going to be, i.e. a repetition of phrases from official propaganda, newspapers and films, and the clichés of everyday expression;
nor will it concentrate on portraying the innovations which have admittedly accompanied the new system - border crossings, etc. - though all these factors are not ignored, being continually mentioned as a part of life. His presentation of reality is accomplished in a novel way which provides a challenge both to himself and to the reader - having stated how he doesn't intend to portray the border, he devotes the rest of the novel to trying to reproduce his concept of it. He achieves this through an accumulation of awareness in Karsch and other characters and consequently in himself and in his audience by means of:

"une réproduction exacte et quasi photographique des pensées, telles qu'elles prennent forme dans la conscience du penseur, nuclei qui attirent par une sorte de capillarité d'autres associations, lesquelles donnent à première vue une impression d'incohérence." (42)

These "Ereignisse" (DB337) to which Johnson refers are not an end in themselves but are functional as they are intended as a means to describe the border. Karsch himself is the main instrument through which Johnson hopes to bring out the reality of East Germany as interpreted tentatively in terms of Karsch's personal experiences, impressions and intuition. Johnson starts off gropingly in his attempts to explain the erroneous popular beliefs accruing about the border, and then continues gropingly to suggest to the reader and to organise in his own mind a balanced coherent view of the situation as he conceives it.

The reader is kept very aware of the process of narration. Alienation is one of the fundamental features of Das dritte Buch and has been defined appropriately by Peter Brook:

"Today we are searching for a twentieth-century technique that could give us the same freedom. For strange reasons, verse alone no longer does the trick: yet there is a device, Brecht invented it, a new device of quite incredible power. That is what has been uncouthly labelled "alienation". Alienation is the art of placing an action at a distance so that it can be judged objectively and so that it can be seen in relation to the world - or rather, worlds -around it." (43)
Alienation as a concept has become so central to the modern literary world that it is in fact as if literature has in some cases been alienated from itself, and, consequently, the literary processes are in themselves of key importance in the pursuit of reality and truth, and a close analysis of them can suggest depths to the problem by deliberately confusing the issue with ambiguities, indicating the relativity of truth. The alienation existing between the characters, and between the reader and the author, thus, extends to an alienation between the author and his work. One cannot know another completely, but the attempt to do so is in itself informative and interesting when one moves beyond the facile explanations used to ensure the comfortable sense of security of an unthinking society. However, in doing so one moves beyond one's own mental web of security symbols and a rift develops between the creator and the created.

Consequently, in the light of Karsch's renunciation and Johnson's own doubts the impression which finally prevails is one of vagueness and suggestivity which, paradoxically, is not due to imprecision, but to an incredibly precise and detailed style intended to dispel the very uncertainty for which it is responsible. Karsch's attempt at objectivity is hindered by the milieu and its atmosphere as well as by the language. This raises the question, to which a negative reply is given, both directly, and also implicitly in the fact that his version of the "dritte Buch" is never written, of whether, and in how far, words are capable of capturing and giving expression to the essence of a country and a person. Though the detailed presentation of the surface contributes to a very dense reality, the final portrayal of what is important is still based on conjecture and rumour and remains confused and unreliable rather than gaining in clarity. In his capacity of inquisitor Karsch is unable to synthesise the results of his guesswork and intuition with the views and reactions he uncovers. He reaches no conclusive answer which could be defined as the truth and Johnson achieves success in showing that there is no single objective awareness and consequently no single truth.
Johnson provokes, in the reader, various reactions and each of his first three novels finds quite different responses. *Mutmassungen Über Jakob* is very much intuitive in its method and appeals to the intuitive reader who seeks beyond the mundane levels of the story. *Das dritte Buch Über Achim* attracts quite a different response, but from much the same type of reader. The appeal here is to the analytical mind which prefers to further an intuitive understanding with an analytical examination. With *Zwei Ansichten*, however, Johnson appears to be writing for a very different audience. The appeal is to the reader of adventure stories with easily accessible plots, and the style becomes inferior to that of either of the two earlier novels, excluding possibly minor elements in the latter stages of *Das dritte Buch*. There are still elements which contributed to the power of the *Mutmassungen* and of *Das dritte Buch*, but these are swamped by the sheer blatancy of the work. *Zwei Ansichten* represents a low-point in his long fiction which has to a large degree been overcome in *Jahrestage* from which one can derive more mental stimulus and satisfaction, although it would not seem likely that the complete three-volume work will have the same vigour of his first two novels. It would appear then that Johnson's reputation will rest basically on his first two novels. From this point of view *Mutmassungen Über Jakob* could lay claim to greater artistic cohesion, but *Das dritte Buch* could be said to give a broader, more accessible portrayal of attitudes, opinions and realities -

"Aber in diesen-meist in sich abgeschlosse nen-Situationen, Episoden und Zustandsschilderungen wird der Zeitgeist augenscheinlich. In ihnen vermag Johnson die Beziehungen zwischen dem totalitären Staat und dem Individuum in ihrer Vielschichtigkeit und Fragwürdigkeit konkreter und präziser zu vergegenwärtigen als in den Mutmassungen." (44);

while also being more explicitly informative as an approach to Johnson's view of himself as a writer, both per se and in relation to literature and to society.
NOTES

A. Introduction:

B. Literary and Social Milieu:
(2a) Musil, R: Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. (Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben, hrsg. von Adolf Frisé), Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1952. p.222

C. Structure and Unity:

D. Time and Space:
(10) ibid p.245.
E. Atmosphere:


(17) Horst Bienek: op.cit. p. 94.

F. Communication, Alienation and Ambiguity:


G. Johnson und Das dritte Buch über Achim.

(24) Horst Bienek: op.cit. p. 89.

(25) ibid. pp. 85-86, quoting Erhart Kästner's speech at the presentation of the Fontane Prize to Johnson.


(28) Horst Bienek: op.cit. p.91.


H. Language:


(32) ibid. p.117.


(36) ibid. p.143.

(37) ibid. p.143.


(39) ibid. p.164.


I. Conclusion:


A. Primary Sources:

- Johnson, Uwe
  "Berliner Stadtbahn"

- Johnson, Uwe
  "Das dritte Buch über Achim"
  Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1961.

- Johnson, Uwe
  "Jahrestage"
  Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1970.

- Johnson, Uwe
  "Karsch und andere Prosa"
  Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1964.

- Johnson, Uwe
  "Mutmassungen über Jakob"
  Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1959.

- Johnson, Uwe
  "Zwei Ansichten"
  Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1965.

B. Secondary Literature:

- Arberry, A.J.
  "Oriental Pearls at Random Strung".

- Bates, H.E.
  The Modern Short Story

- Baumgart, R.
  Aussichten des Romans oder Hat Literatur Zukunft?
  Neuwied, Luchterhand, 1968.

- Baumgart, R.
  Literatur für Zeitgenossen
  Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1966.

- Baumgart, R.
  (Hrsg.)
  Über Uwe Johnson
  Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1970.

- Bienek, H.
  Werkstattgespräche mit Schriftstellern

- Blöcker, G.
  Kritisches Lesebuch

- Blöcker, G.
  Literatur als Teilhabe

- Bowling, L.
  "What is the Stream of Consciousness Technique?"
  In: PMLA, LXV, No.4, June,(1950), pp.333-45.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher/Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burgess, A.</td>
<td>The Novel Now</td>
<td>London, Faber &amp; Faber, 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duquesne, J.</td>
<td>Dieu pour l'homme d'aujourd'hui</td>
<td>Paris, Grasset, 1970.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empson, W.</td>
<td>Seven Types of Ambiguity</td>
<td>London, Chatto &amp; Windus, 1930.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erlich, V.</td>
<td>Russian Formalism</td>
<td>The Hague, Mouton, 1965, (2nd ed.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(S)</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Publisher and Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Publisher/Editors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neff, K. (Hrsg.)</td>
<td>Plädoyer für eine neue Literatur</td>
<td>München, dtv, 1969.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opitz, K.</td>
<td>&quot;Uwe Johnson: Challenger of Absolutes&quot;</td>
<td>In: Books Abroad, No. 36, pp.141/2,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Norman, Oklahoma, Univ. of Oklahoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pestalozzi, K.</td>
<td>&quot;Achim alias Täve Schur. Uwe Johnsons zweiter Roman und seine Vorlage.&quot;</td>
<td>In: Sprache im technischen Zeitalter,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stuttgart, W.Kohlhammer 6/1963, pp.479/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>K. Nonnenmann, pp.182/188, Olten,Walter,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vormweg, H.                         Die Wörter und die Welt
Warren, R. (ed)                        Faulkner
Weiss, P.                                 Abschied von den Eltern
Weiss, P.                              Marat
Wellek, R. & Warren R.                   Theory of Literature
Wellek, R.                             Concepts of Criticism
Widmer, U.                              1945 oder die 'Neue Sprache'

Neuwied, Luchterhand, 1968.
Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1961, (5. Auflage).
Düsseldorf, Schwann, 196