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Rice University, 1988
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REMINISCENT SCRUTINIES: INDIVIDUAL MEMORY AND SOCIAL LIFE IN ANTHONY POWELL'S A DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF TIME

by

LAURIE ANNE ADAMS FROST

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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A Note on the Texts

All citations from Anthony Powell’s *A Dance to the Music of Time* refer to the Little, Brown edition of the work, published as four trilogies. Following is a list of abbreviations used to refer to the twelve volumes of *The Music of Time*:

A Question of Upbringing (QU)  
A Buyer’s Market (BM)  
The Acceptance World (AW)  
At Lady Molly’s (LM)  
Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant (CCR)  
The Kindly Ones (KO)  
The Valley of Bones (VB)  
The Soldier’s Art (SA)  
The Military Philosophers (MP)  
Books Do Furnish a Room (BDFR)  
Temporary Kings (TK)  
Hearing Secret Harmonies (HSR)

Abbreviations for Powell’s memoirs, published in four volumes by Holt, Rinehart, Winston and in one abridged volume by Penguin are as follows:

Infants of the Spring (IS)  
Messengers of Day (MD)  
Faces in My Time (FMT)  
The Strangers All Are Gone (SAAG)  
To Keep the Ball Rolling (TKBR)

References to Marcel Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* are to the Terence Kilmartin revision of the C. K. Scott Moncrieff translation published in three volumes by Random House. The titles of the seven volumes are abbreviated in this paper as follows:

Swann’s Way (SW)  
Within a Budding Grove (BG)  
The Guermantes Way (GW)  
Cities of the Plain (CP)  
The Captive (C)  
The Fugitive (F)  
Time Regained (TR)
ABSTRACT

REMINISCENT SCRUTINIES: INDIVIDUAL MEMORY AND SOCIAL LIFE IN ANTHONY POWELL'S A DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF TIME

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LAURIE ANNE ADAMS FROST

In The Music of Time, Anthony Powell examines the tension between the internal reality of memory and the external social world in which the self is defined. The twelve volumes are presented as the fictional memoirs of Nicholas Jenkins; Powell's interest is in depicting voluntary memory and the stories we tell to explain who we are.

Since Nick is both character and narrator, two philosophies of time are developed. On the one hand, internalized time is depicted; the memories Nick the narrator records are present simultaneously in his mind, and thus Nick remembers the past in terms of the future. But Nick the character functions in external, sequential time. Representing both internal and external concepts of time demands stylistic innovations; the effect is that the work's style is distinguished by its maintenance of chronology and accommodation of interruptions.

Furthermore, since he functions as both narrator and protagonist, Nick must be defined socially. The voices of other characters are heard, and a bridge is thus formed between Nick's internal world, his memories, and an external, objective world; and the pleasure of shared experience, the
basic impulse for narration, is reaffirmed.

Finally, what makes narrative possible is order, seeing patterns in experience, and it is through the agency of memory that we detect patterns in external reality. Patterns are found to be at once imposed by the mind to order information and revealed in experience. These patterns are found on three levels: in language, plot, and characterization. But that patterns are discernible in experience does not mean that Powell is depicting a deterministic world; his characters seem to act as free agents, and the final cause of any episode in a pattern is indeterminable. Those causes that are discerned are those which fit the future effect.

There is thus throughout *The Music of Time* a dynamic quality to Nick's narration: a stress between the power of the past to determine the future and the power of the future to determine the past; and it is through the depiction of individual memory and the patterns of social life that this tension is realized.
Introduction

Although Anthony Powell's twelve volume novel *A Dance to the Music of Time* has been well received by reviewers and his peers among contemporary novelists, it has not attracted the critical inquiry that it warrants. Twelve years have passed since the sequence was completed with the publication of *Hearing Secret Harmonies* in 1975, but only two full length studies of the work have appeared since 1976. The first, James Tucker's *The Novels of Anthony Powell*, is an unsatisfying book; like most of the studies published while Powell's work was in progress, it rarely moves beyond plot summary and character sketches. The last third of the book is an incomplete index of the characters in the novel, but in 1977 Hilary Spurling's *Handbook to Anthony Powell's "Music of Time"* provided a much more thorough and graceful guide not only to the characters in the work but to places, paintings, and books mentioned in *The Music of Time*; however, except for a brief introduction, Spurling offers no critical commentary. The other full length study of the whole of *The Music of Time*, Rudolf Bader's *Anthony Powell's "Music of Time" as a Cyclic Novel of Generations* was published in Bern, Switzerland in 1980. Its English is awkward, but Bader does depart from other studies in largely treating *The Music of Time* as one long novel in twelve volumes. Bader examines the patterns that are established in *The Music of Time*, finding that the dance depicted in Nicolas Poussin's *A Dance to the Music of Time*, a description of which Nicholas Jenkins uses to preface
his memoirs, is the leitmotif of the work. However, it seems that what interests Bader most is finding a label or a category for The Music of Time; his analysis of patterning in the book ends with his conclusion that the novel is about change, particularly changes within the three generations Powell chronicles from 1921 to 1971.

Bader’s point seems a refinement of Robert Morris’s; in his chapter on The Music of Time in his 1972 study, Continuance and Change: The Contemporary British Novel Sequence, Morris concludes that

Powell has not only shown awareness of the ways in which the individual changes against the sameness of time, but how (in Nick’s words) ‘the sequence of inevitable sameness that follows a person through life’ plays against time’s flux. (155)

But Morris spends twenty pages of a thirty-two page chapter once again summarizing plots, perhaps because he believes that "Powell is not interested in what sorts of patterns time and history make, only that it makes them" (126).

The indulgence in trying to summarize what happens in The Music of Time, exemplified not only in Morris’s and Tucker’s studies, but in the earlier critiques as well, (Bernard Bergonzi’s Anthony Powell (1962, revised 1971), John Russell’s Anthony Powell: A Quintet, Sextet, and War (1970), and the Twayne series’ Anthony Powell by Neil Brennan (1974)), is ironic because The Music of Time departs from traditional notions of plot. Powell acknowledges this in his memoirs:

[a friend] used to insist that every picture tells a story. Equally perverse reasoning might urge that
every novel has a plot. What individual artists (in the general sense) make of either principle is another matter, but the abyss between abstract and realist in painting is scarcely wider and deeper than in writing. (FMT 212)

This, coupled with a lack of "ease" about the restrictions of the "eighty-thousand [word] framework" of a traditional novel as "an end in itself" and his recognition that "certain specific types [of characters] and happenings haunt every novelist's imagination," prompted Powell to undertake "a novel composed of a fairly large number of volumes," one which would require "that undeveloped characters, potential situations, must be introduced, whose purpose might be unresolved throughout several volumes of the sequence" (FMT 212-213).

Powell's *Music of Time* is original in its concept and execution, and thus in its structure. The novel ends after it was begun. This seems a self-evident statement, until one considers that in most cases a novelist knows how his book will end before he begins. The first volume of *The Music of Time, A Question of Upbringing*, on which Powell began work following the 1948 publication of his study, *John Aubrey and His Friends*, appeared in 1951, the last, *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, in 1975. The eleventh and twelfth volumes of *The Music of Time* cover the years between 1958 and 1971; Powell, of course, could not have foreseen what English society would have been like in those thirteen years, but, interestingly, there is no awkwardness or interruption in tone or style when those days are reached. Thus, *The Music of Time* defies criti-
cal assumptions about how novels work. It must be approached differently because it is not so obvious that "the telling is always in terms of the impending end," as Peter Brooks generalizes in his study Reading for the Plot, a response to Frank Kermode's The Sense of an Ending. Brooks theorizes that

the very possibility of meaning plotted through sequence and through time depends on the anticipated structuring force of the ending . . . across the bulk of unread middle pages, the end calls to the beginning . . . we read only those incidents and signs that can be construed as promise and annunciation . . . those markers that . . . appear to be clues to the underlying intentionality of the event. (93)

But in the case of The Music of Time, this simply does not work. There is a sense that the ending does not matter, and finally the ending of the novel seems arbitrary, although still satisfying. What matters are "the bulk of unread middle pages," the anecdotes that Nicholas Jenkins tells us about himself, his family, his friends, and his acquaintances. We trust that Nick is telling us meaningful stories because it is his life he is describing, and we accept his authority.

The stylistic appeal of Nick's descriptions, the pictorial quality of Powell's prose, has been highly praised, most recently by John Bayley in "The Ikon and the Music," the introduction to The Album of Anthony Powell's "Dance to the Music of Time", a picture book compiled by Violet Powell of drawings, paintings, and photographs that illustrate the times and places of The Music of Time. Bayley criticizes as "rather bleak" the tendency of "academic critics [who] urge
us to remember at all times that what we are reading is a fiction, a construct made of words which signify only themselves and refer only to other fictions." He begins instead with the assumption that "To most people it is more natural to look at [a novel] as life or at least as a story about life," and emphasizes Powell's gift at rendering "'felt life'" in verbal pictures (9, 15). Although his position may not be fashionable, Bayley is not critically naive. His sensitivity to The Music of Time's design is indicated by passages such as the following in which he captures particularly well another of the special features of Powell's project:

Nothing shows the complete originality of Powell's technique more than the way his fiction imitates memoir, and almost in a double sense, like a trompe l'oeil painting. The reader, that is to say, quickly grasps that the work is invented, like all novels, and the pictorial element helps him to understand the nature of invention that is going on. Yet there is deception in this because the work in its own inimitable way is a memoir, a memoir masquerading as a novel, an anecdote arranging itself in the elaborate composition of a picture. (11)

The "unique blend of fact and fiction" Bayley discusses is appropriate for the introduction to an album of this sort, and his conclusion that "the pictorial method is strikingly successful in giving us the image or ikon of a new character, which will then expand, change, and transform itself as we get to know the person better" (17) is a fine analysis of how style and characterization are related in The Music of Time. But of most interest to this study is the insight that The Music of Time seems at once memoir and novel; it is a premise
of this essay as well.

In very general terms, we assume that the faculty a novelist uses to create his fiction is imagination; that which the memoirist uses in his composition is memory. In the case of *The Music of Time*, Powell creates a fictional memoirist, Nick Jenkins. Thus, it is through Powell's imaginative creation and depiction of Jenkins' memory that *The Music of Time* is delivered. How Nick Jenkins' memory works determines what stories are told and how he tells them; on one level, what we come to know best in *The Music of Time* is how Nick's mind works. On the one hand, we know of his mind, not just his memories, because in his creation of verbal pictures and in his modulations in diction as he depicts the dialogue of his friends, Nick is employing not only his memory but his imagination as well; he is creating a past, and it is his creation of the past that seems to Powell's readers so convincing. But on the other hand, the materials on which his imagination works are his memories; they are fundamental. How Nick's memories are shared, how they are ordered into narrative, and how the narrative is directed beyond Nick's mind to the world in which the self (which to some extent is mind or memory) is defined are the problems this essay studies.

Bayley notes too that Powell does not deliver dissertations on abstractions which he then illustrates with a few examples, but instead begins always with the picture (13). In other words, Powell's approach is empirical, but the faculty of memory has always posed problems for empiricists, as
explained by R. F. Holland in "The Empiricist Theory of Memory":

the sense of disconnexion between our experiences of recollecting and the alleged objects of our recollections is like the sense of a hiatus between the 'internal' world of our sensations and the 'external' world of perception. It is, indeed, an exacerbated variant of the same complaint; for while the experience of recollecting is a directly accessible part of my or your private mental life, its alleged object in the public, material universe is not directly accessible; and furthermore, while the experience belongs to the present, the object has been engulfed by the past. (473)

In The Music of Time this tension between the internal world of Nick's memories and the external world to which these memories refer is underscored by the dual organizing principles and philosophies of time which determine the novel's structure. That Powell is depicting Nick's memory explains the mutable chronology and consequently the reader's uncertainty of the present moment in the text. The simultaneous presence in Nick's mind of all his memories of the past means that there is no beginning, middle, or end to the collection of his anecdotes; hence, a plot which is directed toward an ending is not consistent with the mechanics of memory, and so the internal principle of organization inhibits the development of a plot. But Nick cannot think of all memories simultaneously; his mind must order and approach them sequentially. And Powell is writing a novel, and so he must order Nick's memories. Thus chronology is imposed on the memories, and so the external world to which Nick's memories refer is depicted as ordered, and what replaces plot is
patterning. But the mind's activity of ordering may be cued by its perception of experience; that patterns are at once formed by the mind to order information and revealed in experience seems to be Powell's premise. What causes the patterns Nick records in his narrative involves questions of causation and determinism, but what is shown is that Nick is limited by his memory and by time: he can only remember and relate a limited and selected number of impressions.

Placing Powell within a philosophical tradition is not the purpose of this essay; its purpose is to examine how The Music of Time works. But occasionally a point about memory, perception or time can be clarified by a reference to the tradition of British empiricism, especially as illustrated in David Hume's Treatise of Human Nature, William James's The Principles of Psychology, and Bertrand Russell's Our Knowledge of the External World. Furthermore, Powell's quintessentially British approach to memory and narrative art is shown in the ways in which he departs from Marcel Proust's illustrations of the mechanics of memory.

The first chapter of this essay contrasts Proust's handling of Marcel's memory in Remembrance of Things Past with Powell's construction of The Music of Time as a fictional memoir. But the purpose of this chapter is only to introduce Powell's techniques, not to explain Proust's work; it discusses what Powell does not do, but not what Proust accomplishes. Other writers have addressed the issue of Proust's influence on Powell, but in their more generally descriptive
studies, they have not focused on the depiction of memory. The chapter on Proust and Powell serves as a second introduction to this essay; each of its main points is illustrated at greater length in the next five chapters.

These five chapters can be classified into three categories. Chapters two and three explore the internal principle of organization in The Music of Time, i.e. how the mechanics of Nick's memory influence Powell's rendering of point-of-view and chronology, and his style and theme. Chapters five and six, in contrast, study the external principle of organization in the work, i.e. the significance of the patterns that make Nick's memories a narrative. The fourth chapter bridges these two sections by focusing on Powell's handling of characterization in Nick's memoirs. Although on one level what we come to know best is Nick's mind, social life is the focus of The Music of Time because of Powell's interest in the tension between the internal reality of memory and the external world in which the self is defined. The pictorial element, Nick's or Powell's skill at descriptive passages that Bayley and others have noted, is one way in which the internal reality of Nick is made external, but another is his creation of distinct voices for the characters other than Nick; the quality and significance of the voices of Nick's partners in the dance is the subject of the fourth chapter.

Finally, this study treats The Music of Time as one novel in twelve volumes, not as twelve novels collected under the heading A Dance to the Music of Time. The integrity of
each of the twelve volumes has been established in earlier studies of Powell's career. The perspective of the reader who read the volumes as they appeared, nearly biannually, in the years between 1951 and 1975 is surely different from the one who first read all twelve consecutively in a month or two; it is interesting that in a book very much concerned with how our minds function in time, the amount of time that passes between beginning and ending the sequence may affect a reader's experience.
Chapter 1: Proust and Powell

In any first person narrative, memory is an implicit concern. We assume that the narrator knows the consequences of the events he describes; we assume there is some outcome toward which he is directing us, that there is information that he knows that we initially do not, but we trust that as the narrative proceeds, we will learn what he is willing to tell us. The narrative, then, is located in two places: the pages we read and the memory of the narrator (presuming the self-evident existence of an author). Time requires that we learn of events sequentially, but the place in which memory itself exists seems outside time.

These are givens in the case of most first person narratives, but in Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time* and Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, memory is a subject which is inextricably linked with the works' themes, among them the difficulty of having any certain knowledge of Truth, especially in our understanding of other people, and in the case of Proust's work, the failure of love to compensate for the problem of other minds.¹ Both works deal with what is lost and gained in Time, but the observations on Time are inseparable from those on memory; again, memory is more than a narrative "device."²

*Remembrance of Things Past* is recognized as a novel about memory, but the degree to which Powell probes the same subject in *The Music of Time* has not been acknowledged. Among the ideas developed implicitly in *The Music of Time* are some
for which Powell may be indebted to Proust: that the senses of smell and taste particularly evoke memories, that what one remembers are particular things rather than abstract ideas, that what one remembers in effect defines one's self (different people remember the same situation differently), that one can appropriate another's memories, that in memory connections are formed and patterns are detected, and finally that the issue of memory requires a philosophy of Time. But more instructive than the similarities are the differences. Powell does not imitate Proust; rather, he goes beyond the acknowledged master in executing a work in which the relationship of memory to narration is examined in a consistent manner.

Powell's touch is lighter, and tone is different in the two works. But the main difference between Remembrance of Things Past and The Music of Time is that Powell knew and admired Proust's work, and so was able to take advantage of Proust's achievement. Much of what Proust conveys explicitly about time and memory in his work is implicit in Powell's. One consequence of this is that the sophistication of the epistemology implied in The Music of Time is overlooked, but Powell's choice to let his work's structure suggest these problems rather than burden his novelist narrator with the task of explaining memory allows him, ironically, to place greater creative emphasis on the restrictions of memory than Proust himself. For example, although the germ of artistic creation in the involuntary memory is recognized as an essen-
tial and innovative theme in *Remembrance of Things Past*, Marcel the narrator does not limit himself to memory; he assumes omniscience. Granted, his point is that all one knows of others is known through one's own self, and what one imagines is the product of what one can recombine from memory, and by his own definition the revelations of involuntary memory are quickly over, but what Powell does is to show that memory and imagination do not require such presumption; Nick's associates possess a sense of distinctness, of separateness. Although we "know" less of any of them than we do of Swann, for example, Nick as a limited observer seems to have more respect for the autonomy of others than does Marcel who tells us much, much more. And yet it is both novelists' skill at characterization which is generally acknowledged. Powell, however, de-emphasizes his imaginary Nick's imagination, and yet Nick's recollections are undeniably a novel, not memoirs, just as *Remembrance of Things Past* is not confused with non-fiction.

What makes Nick's memoirs a novel is the semblance of order in the connections among the events in the story -- its plot. And memory again is essential to understanding how the recollections become a plot because as Proust too shows, using a much smaller set of characters and events, memory means seeing connections among things or the ideas embodied in particulars. In addition, Powell explores another dimension of connectedness not evident in Proust: the idea that there are "secret harmonies," patterns that are within life
itself, not dependent for their existence on our perception of them. This idea perhaps provided Powell the faith to begin his novel not knowing exactly how it would end; he began work on the sequence in the late 1940's, and the setting of the last scene of the work is fall 1971. And yet as Nick relates his tale, we always, from the first volume published in 1951, have the impression that the narrator is looking back from a vantage point that informs him of exactly what has become of his companions.

Proust's novel is more typical of first person narratives; it begins from its ending, or, as Rene Girard notes, the conclusion of the sequence, *Time Regained*, is at once the work's ending and beginning and thus we are presented with two perspectives: that of the author and that of the narrator. The madeleine scene in "Combray" is then an attempt to overcome chronology by suggesting part of the conclusion in the beginning: "It provides an image of reality that is in the past from the viewpoint of the author, a promise that is yet to come from the viewpoint of the narrator" (11). What is odd then is that Proust's Marcel pretends not to know what happens when he does in fact know, the usual fictional strategy, while Nick seems to know what happens when, in terms of chronology, he cannot. Of course, the implication that Nick can know in 1951 what will happen in 1971 is not troublesome since as a fictional character he is not bound by time. But, in contrast, it is ironic that the character Marcel, who at the end of his work speaks of memory and hence art as being
outside time (extra-temporal time), presents himself as so bound by chronological time. Powell's treatment of time in this strange omniscience of Nick is not readily apparent, but it seems that he is more consistent in applying Proust's or Marcel's notions than Proust himself.

Another difference is that Powell does not reject the intellect's role, unlike Proust who deems its efforts "futile" because "the past is hidden somewhere... beyond the reach of the intellect, in some material object... of which we have no inkling. And it depends on chance whether or not we come upon this object" (SW 47-8). Furthermore, unlike Powell's narrator, Proust emphasizes the role of "inspiration" in the creation of art: "It is our passions which draw the outline of our books, the ensuing intervals of repose which write them" (TR 945). Involuntary memory is a category of passion or inspiration; following the long and complex associations in memory is an act of repose. Proust's romantic glorification of memory has no equivalent in Powell. Nick does not become a writer to recapture his past; writing is his profession, not his vocation. Unlike Marcel, Nick is not a potential writer looking for a subject; rather, he is cast as a professional writer who has written successful novels, biographies, and reviews. Imagination is not emphasized in The Music of Time. We assume that Nick uses that faculty when he writes novels, but in The Music of Time Nick's goal is not to recapture or recreate the past, but to describe and recall previous times.
But the devices Nick and Marcel use and the conclusions they draw remain similar. The appropriation of others' memories, which seems difficult to square with involuntary memory, is an idea common to the two works but expressed differently. At the end of "Combray," Marcel notes that his memories of his childhood, the products of his own experiences, observations, and reading, are at once accompanied by and a part of his memories of the story told him of Swann's affairs:

All these memories, superimposed upon one another, now formed a single mass, but had not so far coalesced that I could not discern between them -- between my oldest, my instinctive memories, and those others, inspired more recently by a taste or 'perfume,' and finally those which were actually the memories of another person from whom I had acquired them at second hand. (SW 203)

He then proceeds with an omniscient narration of Charles Swann's love affair with Odette Crecy, which was over before Marcel's birth. It is the middle-aged Marcel who writes this tale, after his own disastrous affair with Albertine: is he then combining the memories of Albertine's betrayal with the reports of Odette's unfaithfulness to Swann? Is this his authority to tell this tale? Or did his memories of Swann's troubles cause his own affair with Albertine to fail? A comment in Cities of the Plain suggests this: "Doubtless I had long been conditioned, by the powerful impression made on my imagination and my faculty for emotion by the example of Swann, to believe in the truth of what I feared rather than of what I should have wished" (862); he had speculated earlier that his suspicions of Albertine came from his know-
ledge of Odette's treatment of Swann (832). What is suggested is the problem of representing repetition and chronology in memory, problems that Powell confronts as well. But what is also entailed here is the difficulty of figuring where Marcel ends and Swann begins; Marcel's imagination seems to usurp Swann's identity. In contrast, when Powell includes others' stories in *The Music of Time*, they are identified as such: stories. Furthermore, each storyteller has his own characteristic diction, and thus the individual identity of each, his separateness from Nick, is affirmed. Bob Duport's, Chips Lovell's, Hugh Moreland's, Odo Stevens' -- their stories are at once Nick's memories (after all, that is all to which we have direct access) and distinct from Nick. Thus, there is the impression of a reality outside the mind of Nick. And it would seem that Marcel dropping out of his own narrative for over two hundred pages would have the same effect -- except that what Marcel reports is beyond what he can know; we feel always confined in his musings.

The other narrators' stories in *The Music of Time* seem distinct not only because each storyteller's voice is unique but because each person's memory of the same situation differs at least slightly; this is another aspect of memory that Proust considers. He notes in *Time Regained* that "two people with an equal endowment of memory do not remember the same things" (1018); examples of this include the differences in M. Norpois's and Marcel's memories of the night they met (BG 515), Cottard's mistake about when Vinteuil's sonata was
introduced to the Verdurin faithful (he places it after the rejection of Swann) (CP 924), or Mme. Guermantes' claim to remember only what she was wearing at a party she hosted which Marcel describes in meticulous detail ("It seems that among men and women of action . . . the mind, overtaxed by the need to attend to what is going to happen in an hour's time, commits very little to memory" (C 31)). How these observations are consistent with Marcel's decision to report Swann's affair from a third person omniscient point of view is unclear.

But Powell and Proust are concerned with more than selected memories; they are intrigued by the personal narratives, the life stories, created by the paths of memory. The transitions from one episode to the next in *The Music of Time* are explained by the associative process, one that Marcel alludes to midway through *Remembrance of Things Past*, when as a young man he discovers that

> the empty spaces of [his] memory were covered by degrees with names which in arranging, composing themselves in relation to one another, in linking themselves to one another by increasingly numerous connexions, resembled those finished works of art in which there is not one touch that is isolated, in which every part in turn receives from the rest a justification which it confers on them in turn. (GW 558)

This passage, relating in context to Marcel's interest in genealogy, could serve as an introduction to Nick's musings on the similarities of paintings and narratives, the dual perspective provided by looking at first one part and then that part's relation to the whole. The relation of memory to
the creation of narrative is reconfirmed at the end of *Time Regained:* 

life is perpetually weaving fresh threads which link one individual and one event to another, and . . . . these threads are crossed and recrossed, doubled and redoubled to thicken the web, so that between any slightest point of our past and all the others a rich network of memories gives us an almost infinite variety of communicating paths to choose from. (1086)

If this is the way memory works, it seems to be imitating the patterns of social life expressed in the image that opens *The Music of Time:*

The image of Time brought thoughts of mortality: of human beings, facing outward like the Seasons, moving hand in hand in intricate measure: stepping slowly, methodically, sometimes a trifle awkwardly, in evolutions that take recognisable shape: or breaking into seemingly meaningless gyrations, while partners disappear only to reappear again, once more giving pattern to the spectacle: unable to control the melody, unable, perhaps, to control the steps of the dance. (QU 2)

The patterns in social life that are slowly detected by the faculty of associative memory are illustrated in the social relationships which are seemingly the subjects of the novels; this is a fundamental similarity between *The Music of Time* and *Remembrance of Things Past.*

Interestingly, although Marcel writes of the "almost infinite variety of communicating paths," he explores relatively few, finding that all the important episodes of his life can be traced back to his family’s relationship with Charles Swann. In one long paragraph at the end of *Time Regained,* Marcel summarizes the plot of his narrative, showing the connections linking Robert de Saint-Loup, Gil-
berte, Odette, Swann, the Guermantes, de Charlus, Morel, and Albertine, the main set, with references too to the Verdurins and LeGrandins, and the settings Combray and Balbec. As a younger man he thought that the two ways, the Guermantes Way and Swann’s Way, could not meet, but in the internal associations of his memory and in the external patterns of social life, the ways of life are joined. The young Nick too assumed that it was possible to compartmentalize different types of people, until he learned that "nearly all the inhabitants of these outwardly disconnected empires turn out at last to be tenaciously inter-related" (BM 159). The difference, though, is that in one paragraph Marcel can explain how Odette and Morel, for example, are tenaciously connected, but for Nick to explain the connections among the dozens of people he describes would take the length of his book. Again, Proust and Powell seem to share a similar premise, but Powell is developing the idea differently. Proust emphasizes Marcel’s mind as the place where the dozen or so main characters meet; the purpose, then, of his great attention in lengthy passages to social life is not clear. In contrast, Nick’s mind is only implicitly the place where patterns develop; he observes his friends, associates, and himself as they "take up new positions in the formal dance with which human life is concerned" (AW 63). "Human life" is social for Nick; for Marcel, what matters is not friendship or even love (unless from suffering in love artistic material is found) but thought.

Consequently, the patterns that Nick and Marcel discern
in their experience differ. Nick records such repetitions as having to help drunken friends to bed, re-enacting the same procedure in widely differing circumstances, or the humiliations that seem at once the same and different which plague Widmerpool at various stages in his life. Marcel, in contrast, examines repetitions of emotional states, especially in the analysis of the similarities between his relationship with Albertine and with Gilberte, and both these with Swann and Odette’s. For example, Marcel notes,

But, after all, I had not managed to keep Albertine as [Swann] had kept Odette. She had fled from me, she was dead. For nothing ever repeats itself exactly, and the most analogous lives which, thanks to kinship of character and similarity of circumstances, we may select in order to represent them as symmetrical, remain in many respects contrasting. (F 509)

As we shall see in the chapter on patterns and plot in The Music of Time, what defines a pattern is difference. It is time that forbids something from "ever [repeating] itself exactly"; still, the mind can detect similarities, allowing it to yoke discrete episodes into a seemingly coherent order, a pattern.

Furthermore, the patterns we perceive are thus not inevitable, just as the course of our life is not predetermined. Although Marcel traces the path his life took back to his fascination with Swann, he notes that had he not met Swann, he would have met someone else and he would have found other material (TR 953-55). Similarly, in general terms

every event is like a mould of a particular shape, and, whatever it may be, it imposes, upon the
series of incidents which it has interrupted and seems to conclude, a pattern which we believe to be the only possible one, because we do not know the other which might have been substituted. (F 519)

In this way, Proust allows for contingencies, and it is a lesson Powell learns; Powell's use of coincidence at once allows him to manipulate his huge cast of characters into varied arrangements, while allowing that if one thing had been different, so would have everything that followed. Proust requires fewer coincidental meetings, but when one does occur, Marcel notes that a "coincidence seems to us providential, although no doubt some other coincidence would have occurred in its stead had we been not in that place but in some other" (GW 178); the connections we see, the patterns we impose, can shift in Time, as what is associated with what in memory can change.

Our understanding of causality is also restricted by the patterns we impose upon the past: "we picture the future as a reflexion of the present projected into an empty space, whereas it is the result, often almost immediate, of causes which for the most part escape our notice" (C 325). But had we a memory of the future, as narrators do, we could see the extensions of our pasts and presents into the future. When the repetition of a situation is less arbitrary, there is an explanation: what is constant is character. Marcel believes that everything distinctive about a first love is repeated "by virtue of recollection, suggestion, habit" in subsequent affairs (BG 890), not because of providence, but due "to the fixity of our own temperament" (BG 955). Furthermore, we do
not learn from our experiences; what happens is "merely the revelation to our own eyes of a trait in our character which naturally reappears" (F 443). What is constant in character being that which allows patterns to be discerned is reaffirmed in *The Music of Time*: "But, in a sense, nothing in life is planned -- or everything is -- because in the dance every step is ultimately the corollary of the step before; the consequence of being the kind of person one chances to be" (AW 63).

For Marcel repetitions allow him momentarily to escape time. Even before he has formulated his theory of involuntary memory, which is itself a variety of repetition, he defines pleasure as "when one becomes for an instant one's former self" (CP 1069), a feeling he experienced when finding himself unconsciously humming a tune he associated with distant moments in his life, and one that foreshadows his experience of involuntary memory when "the past was made to encroach upon the present and I was made to doubt whether I was in the one or the other" (TR 904). And yet it is only in Time that repetition or pattern, the essence of art, can be perceived. Listening to Vinteuil's septet, Marcel reports that "again and again one phrase or another from the sonata recurred, but altered each time, its rhythm and harmony different, the same and yet something else, as things recur in life" (C 261), once more appreciating the differences that constitute a pattern; and music is, of course, an example of patterns that exist outside our singular minds. Our minds recognize
the patterns, but for each the pattern is the same. Our enjoyment of one phrase of a piece is dependent on our memory of what has come before, and similarly what both Nick and Marcel include about their pasts in their narratives is determined by their memories of the future, a future already determined, in the same way that the next phrase of the septet existed even as Marcel was hearing the immediate one in terms of the one that had gone before:

It seems that events are larger than the moment in which they occur and cannot be entirely contained in it. Certainly they overflow into the future through the memory we retain of them, but they demand a place also in the time that precedes them. One may say that we do not then see them as they are to be, but in memory are they not modified too?

(C 408)

In narrative it is foreshadowing that appears to allow events to exist in some manner in "the time that precedes them," but the choice of foreshadowing, like the choice of an episode, depends on what happens in a time future to the actual occurrence; in this way they "overflow into the future through the memory," and memory, again, is the source of narrative order.

Thus the past in life is never settled; subsequent events force Marcel and Nick continually to reassess the past. Truth is elusive because it is particular to a moment and a mind; the two problems of the personal quality of memory and the paradoxical nature of time undermine our certainty in our knowledge of the world. Proust’s multi-volume work allows him to show the reassessments that must be made over time; the twelve volumes of The Music of Time allow
Powell to do the same. On the one hand, the passing of time explains the changes charted in both works: age, sickness, war, and accidents are agents of death. But the more interesting changes are those that work in the opposite direction, revelations that change the past. Marcel's account of how he felt when he discovered de Charlus's homosexuality captures one attitude toward the experience:

> everything that hitherto had seemed to my mind incoherent, became intelligible, appeared self-evident, just as a sentence which presents no meaning so long as it remains broken up in letters arranged at random expresses, if these letters be rearranged in the proper order, a thought which one can never afterwards forget. (CP 637)

Usually, however, such revelations are not so quick and are far more painful, as in the cases of Swann's gradual understanding of the deceitfulness of Odette, Marcel's re-evaluation of his love for Albertine, Saint-Loup's recognition of Rachel as a whore, and so on. Marcel's comments on his suspicions of Albertine's infidelity could serve as the premise for the most developed case of reassessment in *The Music of Time*, Nick's discovery that Jean had been deceitful during their affair:

> And so we ought not to fear in love, as in everyday life, the future alone, but even the past, which often comes to life for us only when the future has come and gone -- and not only the past which we discover after the event but the past which we have long kept stored within ourselves and suddenly learn how to interpret. (C 82)

In fact, in Proust's view love is doomed because it is impossible to know another person completely: "for while our original impression of [another person] undergoes correction,
the person himself, not being an inanimate object, changes for his part too" (BG 934). In Powell's work this sort of psychological isolationism is mitigated by the assumption that human nature in general remains constant, and is shown, for example, in the individual consistency in diction of the characters followed throughout *The Music of Time*.

The chief difference between Marcel and Nick may not be their philosophical beliefs about what it means to know another person, but the attitudes that they exhibit toward others. Although Nick does experience some disappointments in love, notably his disenchantment with Jean Duport, it is implied that healthy relationships, for example Nick's thirty-seven year marriage to Isobel Tolland, are possible. Friendships are important to Nick for reasons other than the provision of material for his book. Marcel, however, is candid about his disregard for others' feelings; for example, he is not interested in Saint-Loup's offer of friendship until it occurs to him that Saint-Loup could be used to gain an introduction to Madame de Guermantes, whom he wishes would lose everything and suffer greatly so he could gain her attention (GW 67). Marcel treats his grandmother in a similarly hateful fashion. And his cruelty is evident not only in his conduct but in his style, as well; Proust's narrative strategies inhibit the reader from responding sympathetically to his text. His account of his grandmother's dying moments is interrupted by a digression on Renoir and Bergotte; moreover, his description of his mother awakening
him to report that her mother has died is delayed by speculations on sleep (GW 347). And yet when he finally realizes the permanence and depth of the loss of his grandmother, the prose is almost excessively emotional; however, it is hard to have compassion for Marcel when he shows so little toward others. In contrast, Nick does not interrupt his description in The Soldier's Art of the deaths of Chips and Priscilla Lovell and Molly Jeavons; from the time he learns from Max Pilgrim of the bombing at the Madrid to his comforting of Eleanor Walpole-Wilson at Lady Molly's, the emphasis is on the horror of his friends' deaths (144-66). Similarly, when seventeen years after the war Nick finally learns of the circumstances of Stringham's death, it is Stringham who matters, not Nick's reactions. Nick conveys his emotions by manipulating ours.

Finally, although Proust and Powell explore the same general subjects, memory and time, what chiefly differentiates them is what their narrators value. Nick does not speculate about the power of art to overcome the limitations of time, as does Marcel, because art is not an end in itself for Nick, but rather it is a means, the vehicle whereby he can order his memories and preserve in at least a small way a record of the lives of his friends. Powell's work is social; it refers to a shared world of particular people, places, things, and times. In contrast, in some respects Proust's work is self-referential; the subject of his work is his work. It is abstract and theoretical, although Marcel
denigrates such art: "A work in which there are theories is like an object which still has its price tag on it" (TR 916). The same is not true of Powell's _The Music of Time_. Its surface shimmers; it is not obviously a deep book (but "obvious depth" is of questionable desirability). But read and reread, it allows greater appreciation. Studying the _Music of Time_ is like Marcel's experience of listening to Vinteuil's sonata:

Since I was able to enjoy everything that this sonata had to give me only in a succession of hearings, I never possessed it in its entirety: it was like life itself. But, less disappointing than life, great works of art do not begin by giving us the best of themselves. (BG 571)

Powell learned well the lessons Proust provides.
Chapter 2: Memory and Time

*A Dance to the Music of Time* develops two philosophies of time, one internal, a function of the simultaneous presence of memories in the mind, and the other external, the time of history, sequence, and change. Furthermore, both internal time, that in which memories exist, and external time, the span between 1921 and 1971, for example, are examined on two levels because of Nick Jenkins' dual role as narrator and character. Nick the narrator has a memory of the future; Nick the character, like the rest of the novel's characters, in the present of the novel does not. When Nick the narrator makes his choices of what to include in his book, he is choosing in terms of a future he knows; consequently, he is not attempting to regain Time, but is instead trying to construct a past that would explain its own future. His knowledge of the future determines the past he narrates; for this reason time exists only in an internal, mind-determined manner. In his mind time is not functioning in what we think of as its regular fashion; it has stopped because all is past. Nick the character, in contrast, functions in external, sequential time, a time imposed by Nick the narrator that imitates the time in which Powell and his readers live, read, age, and die. On this level, memories are subjugated by time, since what is learned in the future can change memories of the past; for the characters in the course of the narrative, the significance of their past, a past which now exists only in memory, individual or social, is
revealed as unstable and uncertain.

Nick the narrator's relationship to time, the effects of his internalization of time in memory, reveals Powell's careful consideration of voluntary memory. Again, an important difference between Powell's and Proust's approaches to memory is sharply defined; the emphasis Proust gives to involuntary memory is given by Powell to voluntary memory. A model for Powell's treatment of the mechanics of memory is found in Bertrand Russell's examination of the concept of free will. His argument is worth quoting at length:

The apparent indeterminateness of the future, upon which some advocates of free will rely, is merely a result of our ignorance... Free will in any valuable sense must be compatible with the fullest knowledge. Now, quite apart from any assumption as to causality, it is obvious that complete knowledge would embrace the future as well as the past. Our knowledge of the past is not wholly based upon causal inferences, but is partly derived from memory. It is a mere accident that we have no memory of the future. We might -- as in the pretended visions of seers -- see future events immediately, in the way in which we see past events. They certainly will be what they will be, and are in this sense just as determined as the past. If we saw future events in the same immediate way in which we see past events, what kind of free will would still be possible? Such a kind would be wholly independent of determinism; it could not be contrary to even the most entirely universal reign of causality. (238)

Powell's narrator Nick is in the curious position of having what Russell theoretically proposes: memory of the future. In some ways he is the inversion of the "pretended seer"; he knows always what will happen, but he limits himself to a generally chronological presentation. Yet what he chooses to include in his descriptions of the past is determined by his
knowledge of the future. It is not so much that the past causes the future in The Music of Time, but that the past is remembered, reshaped, remade, -- its shape determined by reference to the future. It follows, as it follows in Russell, that the world Powell invents in The Music of Time is not a deterministic one; in The Music of Time, to say that the past is determined by the future is just as valid as to say that the future is determined by the past. The present of the novel is what Nick remembers of a past event in terms of its future ramifications. Hence, there is no equivalent in The Music of Time of episodes of Proustian involuntary memory during which Nick is "outside time" (TR 904). We generally think of the present as that point between past and future, where the past is a known and the future an unknown. But in The Music of Time we must consider the present to come after the past and the future, or to be that space in which a known past and a known future truly meet. Again, it is not a case of "the past [encroaching] upon the present" (TR 904) as it is in Remembrance; instead, the future encroaches upon the past.

There are a number of examples of the ramifications of what we are calling internalized time in the novel. For instance, on meeting Jean for the second time, Nick the narrator remembers that a consciousness of future connexion was thrown forward like a deep shadow in the manner in which such perceptions are sometimes projected out of Time: a process that may well be the explanation, for which no other seems adequate, of what is
called 'love at first sight': that knowledge that someone who has just entered the room is going to play a part in our life. (BM 215)

Interestingly, these words are echoed when Nick first meets the woman he will marry, Lady Isobel Tolland:

Would it be too explicit, too exaggerated, to say that when I set eyes on Isobel Tolland, I knew at once that I should marry her?... It was as if I had known her for many years already; enjoyed happiness with her and suffered sadness. I was conscious of that, as of another life, nostalgically remembered. (LM 136)

Normally such feelings as Nick experiences here would be regarded as premonitions, an inexplicable knowledge of the future. But in The Music of Time, Nick is in fact remembering the future, and so his "premonitions" are far more accurate than Mrs. Erdleigh's, for instance. He does not mistake his feeling for Jean to be foreknowledge of an eventual marriage, for Nick the narrator knows that he will marry Isobel, just as he knows that Jean will stay on his mind for years, playing a part in his mental, if not social, life. We accept Nick the character's claim because the example of Mrs. Erdleigh and others who dabble in fortune-telling and the relatively common experience of falling in love at first sight insure that the reader will not think there is anything peculiar, outlandish, or unrealistic about Nick's moments of recognition. However, when the reader steps back to consider what Nick, the character and narrator, knows in the present in which he is writing these memoirs, his "premonitions" are seen to be self-evident.

Knowing that Nick can remember the future means that
anecdotes, digressions, interruptions, and detail all count. It also means that the past that Nick is recollecting may not necessarily be a true past, but the past that should have, or could have, been; he is not aiming to recapture the past as much as he is aiming to construct one that will fit with future events. The descriptions and explanations Nick uses in his history of the night he began his affair with Jean exemplify his method of constructing a past. Nick meets Jean for the third time in the lobby of the Ritz, where he has chanced upon her brother. He prefaces his account of that meeting by noting how dull his life had recently been, and concludes that "imminent change of direction is for some reason often foreshadowed by such colourless patches of time" (AW 31). This metaphor, which also provides an example of the way in which Nick views time as having a spatial aspect, is ironic because we think of foreshadowing as a technique in which the future is suggested. But in this case, Nick is saying that before meeting Jean his life was relatively boring, and so the foreshadowing is inverted; the "colourless patches of time" can be seen as foreshadowing change only after the change, the future, comes to pass. As his opening remarks to this chapter, the second of The Acceptance World, continue, Nick describes a party of South Americans who are celebrating their holiday at the Ritz. They are seated around a statue of a bronze nymph who to Nick seemed at once a member of this Latin family party, and yet at the same time morally separate from them: an English girl, perhaps, staying with
relations possessing business interests in South America. . . . Although stark naked, the nymph looked immensely respectable. (AW 31-2)

What immediately follows are Nick’s observations on how much more difficult it is to write of English people, their habits and social life, than he imagines it would be to write of the South Americans. It seems to the reader that these observations justify the description of the South American party, and from what follows in the chapter, it is easy to see why Nick should be grappling with the problems of portraying English social life. But what is not clear for a number of volumes is that Jean herself will become like that nymph when she marries a South American dictator; ironically, as Nick the narrator knows, she will be no easier to understand then. This is perfectly clear on a second reading, as is the fact that it is not surprising that Nick should note that the nymph is "stark naked," since one of the things that impressed him about Jean was her once answering her door completely undressed. The times that Nick reassesses his own assumptions are paralleled by ones when the reader must reassess her initial assumptions about the relevance of a passage.

One more example will show that what matters in the past is determined by what happened in the future. Nick introduces us to his musician friends, chiefly Maclintick and Moreland, in Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant one evening when Deacon and Barnby are also present and the conversation turns to "'seducers and Don Juan and that sort of thing’" (CR 210). Nick is
not the only one to remember the night's events; Maclintick recalls the evening to Moreland and Nick on their last visit to him before he commits suicide (CCR 205-15). When we first read Nick's account of that night at the restaurant, it serves as a good introduction to the characters and themes of the book (CCR 29-39). But it is when we find that it mattered to Maclintick enough for it to be one of the last things he talks about that we have to reassess its importance: does Nick begin the book with that conversation because Maclintick too remembered it? It would have worked as a good introduction regardless of Maclintick, but in context it cannot be considered regardless of Maclintick because again knowing the future helps one to choose what matters in the past. Furthermore, to think of Maclintick in terms of a specific conversation is typical in Powell. Nick's memories are triggered by particularities, confirming what William James has noted about memory: "Remoter dates are conceived, not perceived. . . if we wish to think of a particular past epoch, we must think of a name or other symbol, or else of certain concrete events, associated therewithal" (650). When Nick thinks of the problem that is Maclintick, he thinks of places: Soho, the Mortimer, Casanova's Chinese Restaurant; the specific environment of Maclintick must come to Nick's mind for him to reconstruct the events of a few evenings in 1928 or 29, when he had first met the doomed music theorist.

Another indication of Nick's aim to construct a possible past rather than to recapture a single one is his willingness
to use other people's memories or stories to enhance his own. Moreland is one of his chief collaborators. Both were fascinated as children by Dr. Trelawney, and their conversations come in handy to Nick when he is trying to help Trelawney out of a locked bathroom during one of the doctor's asthma attacks. He answers Trelawney's formula "The Essence of the All is the Godhead of the True" with the correct response: "The Vision of Visions heals the Blindness of Sight," and when the good doctor asks who answered him, Nick responds, "I told him I remembered the formula from Stonehurst. That was not strictly speaking true, because I should never have carried the words in my head all those years, if I had not heard Moreland and others talk of the Doctor in later life" (KO 189). Similarly, Nick relies on Moreland to provide reminiscences of Louis Glober in Temporary Kings: "... the facts just offered having come from Moreland a comparatively short time before. Otherwise, I should never have remembered (nor indeed known about) most of what I had just related" (80). In this same scene Nick provides the enigmatic comment on Glober, "The strange thing was how much he remembered" (81) which seems strange to us because Nick himself seems to have such an exceptional memory. But what Nick's reliance on Moreland shows is that what we remember is what we can use, and that imagination can allow us to appropriate others' memories as our own. The past Nick records is as much reconstructed as it is recollected.

Furthermore, Nick deliberately pursues opportunities to
refresh memories and to update the stories of his friends and associates; as both a character and narrator Nick attempts to connect his past and his present. He supports Old Boy dinners, is attracted to those like Alfred Tolland who seem to be a repository for family history, and with mixed feelings attends military reunion dinners:

when something momentous like a war has taken place, all existence turned upside down, personal life discarded, every relationship reorganized, there is a temptation, after all is over, to return to what remains of the machine, examine such paraphernalia as came one's way, pick about among the bent and rusting composite parts, assess merits and defects. Reunion dinners, to the point of morbidity, gave the chance of indulging in such reminiscent scrutinies. (TK 201)

That statement, which provides a good example of two stylistic features of Powell's prose -- qualifications that expand rather than limit and sustained metaphors -- reveals one of Nick's strongest drives: his desire to make sense of, to analyse, both a historical, social past and his own personal past, which can never be disassociated.

When Nick the character seeks in community verification of a shared past or clarification of a fading memory, Powell is treating Time as an external force. The attention Powell pays to social life and historically realistic settings has prompted some critics to declare that Time is exclusively external in The Music of Time. One example is Robert Morris who writes in The Novels of Anthony Powell that compared to Faulkner's, Proust's, or Joyce's works, time in Powell's is "viewed neither philosophically, psychologically, nor scientifically... Time is actual" and since it "functions
critically, not mystically," it "enables him to focus on the essential aim of the novel sequence: to play changing sensibilities against the continuum of human history" (107-08). Although Powell's notion of Time is not philosophically -- or more accurately, aesthetically -- the same as Proust's, and clearly should not be the same as Faulkner's and Joyce's, since they sometimes use omniscient narrators, it is no less complex. Nor is it clear why the statement "'Time is actual'" is not a philosophical one. But Morris's view is even more generally limited and inaccurate because he mistakes the surface action of the novel -- Nick's adventures among men -- as the novel's subject, when, in fact, the stories of social life are first memories: how Nick's mind works is the subject of *The Music of Time*. And since Nick is not only a narrator, making choices determined by his knowledge of the future outcome of the events he relates, but also a character, the creation of Nick the narrator, Powell has to limit the character Nick's mind as a person's would be. His memories are subject to changes wrought by the passing of Time. It is in this way that Time as an external force is related to the mechanics of memory, the internal organizing principle of *The Music of Time*.

Although memories are necessarily of past occurrences, feelings, or thoughts, they are unstable because new developments in time can force a memory to be revised. A third person omniscient narrator could provide the illusion that in the past certain things were certain ways. A first
person protagonist-narrator, however, can change his mind; changing his mind means simply that new information has modified a memory. The first memory is not erased or replaced; it does not even have to be modified. It can co-exist along with the new information. Even contradictory memories can exist simultaneously, for as William James notes, "the mind is at every stage a theatre of simultaneous possibilities. Consciousness consists in the comparison of these with each other, the selection of some, and the suppression of the rest by the reinforcing and inhibiting agency of attention" (288). In *The Music of Time*, as in any narrative, the "simultaneous possibilities" have to be presented sequentially and in the context of a causal relationship; the question why now one impression, now another, has to be addressed. What is shown through the comparison or contrast of memories is that Time distorts memories and on occasion deceives Nick the character into a self-satisfied complacency.

In *The Music of Time* the subjugation of memories to Time is clearly exemplified in two cases. One involves a building, Stourwater. Although one would assume that a medieval castle is stable and so should be remembered uniformly, that is not the case. The other example is Nick’s need to rethink his relationship with Jean Templer Duport. That contradictory memories of what happened in a relationship can exist in one person’s memory is a problem more universally acknowledged, for one soon learns that trusting a relationship to remain
stable is naive. Nick’s need to revise his understanding of what happened with Jean is similar to Marcel’s exhaustive search for the true Albertine. Nick, however, does not conduct an investigation; the information is, ironically, provided by Jean’s husband, who is unaware of Nick’s and Jean’s affair. As Nick learns as he listens to Duport, it is in memory that we define ourselves. However, it is when the future, or time, revokes our certainty about the past that we see how frail our sense of self is.  

If the description of a castle is never fixed in our memories, it is not surprising that knowledge or experience gained in the future, in this case through the intrusion of another’s story, someone else’s memories, can change a past love affair.

Time allied with memory and imagination deceives Nick into a false memory and hence a false expectation on his return visit to Sir Magnus Donners’ castle, Stourwater:

Memory, imagination, time, all building up on that brief visit [ten years previously, with the Walpole-Wilson house party], had left a magician’s castle . . . weird and prodigious, peopled by beings impossible to relate to everyday life. Now, Stourwater seemed nearer to being an architectural abortion, a piece of monumental vulgarity, a house where something had gone very seriously wrong.

(KO 107)

We only know from this passage that Nick had ever over-romanticized Stourwater; the earlier description given on the first visit alluded to in this passage combines impressions of the fantastic with criticisms of the gaudy:

Here was the Middle Age, from the pages of Tennyson, or Scott, at its most elegant: all sordid and painful elements subtly removed. . . .
There was, in fact, no one about at all; neither knights nor hinds, this absence of human life increasing a sense of unreality, as if we were travelling in a dream. . . . The impression was of sensations that might precede one of those episodes in a fairy story, when, at a given moment, the appropriate spell is pronounced to cause domes and minarets, fountains and pleasure-gardens, to disappear into thin air.

Passages like these are interrupted by notes of uneasiness:

a sunken lawn had been laid out, with a fountain at the centre, [with] carved stone flower-pots, shaped like urns, at each of the four corners. The whole effect was not, perhaps, altogether in keeping with the rest of the place. . . . Mounted effigies in Gothic armour . . . struck a new and somewhat disturbing note; though one at which the sunken garden had already hinted. Such implications of an over-elaborate solicitude were followed up everywhere. . . . Something was decidedly amiss.

(BM 185-86)

From the allusion in the passage in The Kindly Ones to Nick's first visit, we might expect for his impressions on that outing to have been of unmitigated fascination. But in fact the difference is one of tone, not content; on revisiting the castle he is moved to call it "an architectural abortion, a piece of monumental vulgarity" (KO 107). However, we cannot know how Nick on his first visit really felt about Stourwater because the Nick who writes his memoirs writes of that first visit with the knowledge of his reaction on his second visit. A third visit is recorded in Hearing Secret Harmonies, this last visit taking place approximately six months before Nick begins his memoirs. Of his last visit, his harshest comment on Stourwater is "All seemed built out of cardboard" (195); his interest is not in evaluating the architecture of the castle, but in revisiting those rooms in which he had first
become reacquainted with Jean and in which he and his friends posed as the Seven Deadly Sins. In the light of the sentimental pleasure Nick experiences in *Hearing Secret Harmonies* upon return to Stourwater, the description in *The Kindly Ones* seems severe.

There are a few conclusions that can be drawn from these comparisons. First, it seems that contradictory memories of something as seemingly objective as a castle can co-exist with one another; new memories do not take the place of, i.e. do not eliminate, old memories. But secondly, and this observation seems to contradict the first, subsequent experiences, impressions, or memories modify pre-existing ones. Thirdly, the truth about Nick’s impression of Stourwater changes with time; there are some fundamental similarities in content about his reactions on each of his three visits, but there are notable differences in tone. Fourthly, although Nick cannot help but write with knowledge of the second and third visit when he writes of the first, and of the third when he writes of the second, he can choose to modify his tone to fit the tone of the individual volume; maintaining consistency in tone takes precedence over accuracy. In *A Buyer’s Market* it is appropriate for the young Nick to react with a degree of innocence to the grandeur of Magnus’s castle, but not with unmitigated innocence, since his aesthetic sensibilities are fine enough for him to detect architectural incoherence, a hodge-podge, when he sees it. Ten years later, the circumstances of his second visit are chilling: the threat of war
is on everyone’s mind, and private turmoil is in evidence in the disintegration of the Templers’ and Morelands’ marriages. Thus it is appropriate that Nick sees the castle in rawer, less playful terms. But thirty years following that visit, Nick can approach the castle, now a girl’s school, with insouciance; he sees it now as the setting for memories that through time have lost their emotional intensity. The extremes of magical and vulgar have been replaced by a detached acceptance; we have then in the three descriptions of Stourwater an example of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis/commencemnt-opposition-equilibrium pattern that Mrs. Erdleigh proposes as a way of understanding life’s conflicts or struggles.  

The case of Nick’s changing impressions of Stourwater is not complicated by new information that forces adjustments; the castle remains essentially the same castle from 1928 when Nick first sees it to his last tour in 1971. Nick’s changing memories of his affair with Jean Duport pose different problems; in this case he must accommodate new facts or perspectives. When he meets Bob Duport in 1938 for the first time since 1924, Nick finds he must both revise his opinion of Duport and remake portions of his memory of his affair with Duport’s wife, Jean Templer. First of all, Nick finds that Duport has a memory to match his own, or at least for some reason Duport remembers well the evening he, Stringham, Nick, and Jimmy Brent were driven into a ditch by Peter Templer. Perhaps Nick remembers that night because he later had an
affair with Duport's wife. Perhaps Duport remembers that night because he later learned that Jean had an affair with Brent (ironically, he remains unaware that he should remember Nick from that night because Nick, too, was Jean's lover).

And this is what Nick learns on remeeting Duport: that during her affair with him, Jean was also having an affair with Brent, and so Nick has to adjust to the idea that he belongs in a category including not only Jimmy Stripling, but another "fat swab," Brent, and that Jean was untrue to them both as well as to Duport.

In effect, Duport changes Nick's past, which Nick realizes when he comments that

This was yet another example of the tricks that Time can play within its own folds, tricks that emphasise the insecurity of those who trust themselves over much to that treacherous concept. I suddenly found what I had regarded as immutable -- the not entirely unsoluble past -- roughly reshaped by the rude hands of Duport. That was justice, I thought. (KO 181)

Duport cannot undo the past, but by showing Nick that her lover was just as duped by Jean as her husband, he changes the past, tarnishes Nick's memories, and "justice" of a sort follows from Nick's deflation since he is now likely to have difficulty in recalling his days with Jean as "not entirely unsoluble." In fact, in The Acceptance World his memories of Jean do seem far from sublime; her telling about her affair with Stripling seems a shoddy thing to do, and when we last hear of her we are told that she has sent Nick a cheap, vulgar postcard. Duport's tale has, perhaps, changed the tone
of Nick's memories, refocused what he remembers of his days with Jean, although the first-time reader of *The Acceptance World* cannot be aware of the cause of Nick's measured tone.

In fact, the effects of either Duport's tale or Nick's feelings of rejection when Jean leaves for South America reach even further back into the past. When Nick recalls the first night he met Jean while visiting her brother during a school holiday, he notes

> a whole series of emotions and apprehensions, the earliest of numberless similar ones in due course to be undergone. . . . As it happens, I cannot even remember the specific incident that clarified, in some quite uncompromising manner, the positive recognition that Jean might prefer someone else's company to my own. (QU 93-94)

There is nothing here to indicate that ten years later Nick will win Jean's attention. In the rest of *A Question of Upbringing* Jean is used as a standard for measuring the effects other girls have on Nick; Nick decides that he is not in love with Jean after all, but with Suzette. But in *A Buyer's Market*, it becomes evident that Jean will continue to play a part in Nick's life. The image of life as like a billiards game which ends *A Buyer's Market* suggests what is to come in *The Acceptance World*:

> Certain stages of experience might be compared with the game of Russian billiards, played (as I used to play with Jean, when the time came) on those small green tables, within the secret recesses of which, at the termination of a given passage of time -- a quarter of an hour, I think -- the hidden gate goes down; after the descent of which, the coloured balls return no longer to the slot to be replayed; and all scoring is doubled. (BM 274)

What Nick seems to remember chiefly about Jean is not the six
or seven months they were lovers, but the many years he loved her when she did not love him; he refers to "the years I had loved Jean" (KO 164) when he sees Duport. And yet few of his friends (only Barnby, perhaps) knew of his affair with Jean; his closest friend, Moreland, did not know of the affair, nor did Jean's brother. When Nick speaks of the years he loved Jean, he is not defining a time in his social life, but is rather revealing the extent to which his affair with Jean was conducted internally, in his imagination and memory.

Twice after their affair is over Nick accidentally encounters Jean. His meeting with Duport occurs at the end of the second trilogy (Nick and Jean's affair culminates the first trilogy); at that time he comments that "the remembered moaning in pleasure of someone once loved always haunts the memory, even when love itself is over" (KO 180). But by the time he sees Jean again, six years later, he reports that the days they were lovers seemed

now wholly unbelievable. . . . Jean, I remembered, had become history. Perhaps not so much history as legend, the story true only in a symbolical sense; because, although its outlines might have general application to ourselves, or even to other people, Jean and I were no longer the persons we then had been. (MP 235-6)

When Nick meets Jean with her daughter Polly ("It was as if the mother was someone different; the daughter, the remembered Jean" (MP 233)), readers familiar with Proust may recall Marcel's reintroduction to Gilberte and Mlle. Saint de Loup. Marcel reacts by claiming that "memory by itself, when it introduces the past, unmodified, into the present -- the
past just as it was at the moment when it was itself the
present -- suppresses the mighty dimension of Time which is
the dimension in which life is lived" (TR 1087), but Nick
acknowledges that at once knowing he had loved Jean and
feeling nothing for her now, even when her youth is evoked by
Polly's similarity to the young Jean, means that history is
real, that time has changed their position toward one another
to such an extent that whether their past was real or imagi-
nary is debatable. It may be because Nick sees their affair
as legendary, "true only in a symbolical sense," that he
develops it in his memoirs, while leaving the particularities
of his more evidently real, on-going love for his wife ob-
scure; he creates rather than chronicles a past in The Music
of Time.

However, the last encounter of Nick and Jean shows that
although in time both parties have changed in the sense that
they no longer feel as strongly about one another as they
once did, something of their affair endures: their memories.
In the closing pages of Hearing Secret Harmonies, Duport
recalls to Jean, Polly, and Nick that Peter Templer used to
keep the Duports' paintings in his home. This reference to
those paintings brings to Jean's mind memories of her affair
with Nick:

'Do you remember the pictures in the dining-
room, Nick? Peter's Maidenhead house was where we
met.'
'And played planchette.'
'Yes -- we played planchette.' (256)

What the reader knows they are both remembering is the week-
end when they began their affair, memories evoked by shared images that have no meaning for Jean's husband during those days, or to her daughter, a toddler at the time, although Duport and Polly are part of the conversation in which these lines occur. As both Jean and Nick know, Peter's house was not where they met and playing planchette was not the highlight of their weekend, but in this conversation they have delicately recreated an at once private and shared, and definite and malleable past. There is a sweetness to Nick and Jean's final meeting; although there is no way that that weekend at Peter's can be regained, Nick seems to find solace in the idea that Jean remembers what he remembers. Although we do not come to any exciting conclusion or startling revelation at the end of The Music of Time, we do know that we know something about the lives of these characters. The impact of this last conversation between Jean and Nick is a result of their enduring memories of one another in spite of the passing of thirty-eight years and the new information and experiences gained in that time. Furthermore, we, the readers, now share their memories; in conversation and in narrative memories can be shared, internal worlds briefly and partially externalized.

In the narrative of his relationship with Jean, Nick at once examines how memories can be distorted by time and perspective changed by newly acquired information, and how original memories endure beside new or modified ones. One other aspect of the relationship between time and memory is
suggested in *The Music of Time*. Not only can time distort memories, but memories can distort time. Much of the first volume of the sequence, *A Question of Upbringing*, is devoted to Nick’s relationships with Stringham and Templer, which seems structurally questionable since both of them will die in the war, nearly thirty years before the memoirs end. But psychologically Nick justifies his prolonged examinations of his teen years (although some episodes, like the drawn out description of the fight between the Swede and Norwegian at the home where Nick studied French, seem mistakes on Powell’s part), noting that "... even now [1951 in fact / 1971 in fiction?] it seems to me that I spent a large proportion of my life in their close company, although the time we were all three together was less than eighteen months" (QU 36) and, referring to his youthful love for Barbara Goring (also given disproportionately prolonged attention), that

nothing establishes the timeless of *Time* like those episodes of early experiences seen, on reexamination at a later period, to have been crowded together with such unbelievable closeness in the course of a few years; yet equally giving the illusion of being so infinitely extended during the months when actually taking place. (BM 23)

Remembering distorts the sense of time; memory also places the rememberer in an essentially egotistical position. When Nick sees Stringham again after their last meeting that concludes *A Question of Upbringing*, his friend is in evening clothes, just as he was when last they parted. Nick comments that Stringham’s attire "... conveyed the illusion that he had been in a tail-coat for all the years since we had last
met" (BM 92). Nick intellectually knows that cannot be so, but the memory untempered by considering the reality of other people sees other people in its own terms, and remembering must be accompanied by imagining if one is to act with sympathy toward others. During later encounters with Stringham, Nick tries to imagine what his friend must have experienced, and although Nick's understanding of Stringham's behavior can only be partial and tentative, Nick's recognition that Stringham functions in Time, the external time of change, growth or decay, is essential. Stringham suspended in the internal non-time of Nick's memory is without depth or identity; Stringham as a free agent moving in time is a memorable character. The liveliness of the story Nick the narrator tells, a story found in his mind, depends on placing his characters in real time.

Perhaps the inherent self-centeredness of memory is why it is so difficult to learn from experience, although in innocence one may believe such a thing is possible. For instance, when the young romanticist Gwatkin is dismissed from his post in the army because he made too many mistakes when distracted by a longing for a barmaid, he tells Nick that he has learned from his experiences. Nick responds "'One never takes lessons to heart. It's just a thing people talk about'" (VB 233). Perhaps this is because the distortions of time coupled with the distortions of memory make certainty about the "lesson" taught by any experience all but impossible absolutely and permanently to discern. We cannot return
to moments past to undo damage done, and however similar a future situation (from the perspective of an even more distant future, when the newer situation is also past) may seem to a past one, when we arrive at that situation, we will be different because our understanding of the past will have changed. At this point Powell's philosophy echoes Eliot's in "Burnt Norton" and Hilary Burde's recognition in Iris Murdoch's A Word Child: "If all time is eternally present all time is unredeemable. What might have been is an abstraction, remaining a perpetual possibility only in a world of speculation" (384).

It is external, historical time itself, then, -- not memories -- that is irretrievable; once a historical moment is past, it can be remembered or forgotten, but not revisited and changed, although our memory of that same moment can be modified. This is seen in the moments in which things change in Nick the character's life. An early example is Nick's decision to hold hands with Suzette at his first opportunity; he comments "I knew this to be a moment that would commit us one way or the other" (QU 151). It is also seen in broader changes in the course of Nick's life. Reflecting on the last time he saw Maclintick alive, Nick implies that perhaps he and Moreland could not help the suicidal composer because they had moved on to another stage of life:

I . . . lay there thinking how grim the visit to Maclintick had been; not only grim, but curiously out of focus; a pocket in time; an evening that pertained in character to life some years before. Marriage reduced in number interludes of that kind. They belonged by their nature to an earlier period:
the days of the Mortimer and Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant. Maclintick’s situation was infinitely depressing; yet people found their way out of depressing situations. ... Before one could look round, Maclintick would be in a better job, married to a more tolerable wife. (CCR 216)

But we learn this does not happen; Maclintick kills himself, and thus does not allow himself to reach the next stage, the time when things would have gotten better. To see no future, to be unable to see one’s self as moving through time is fatal to Maclintick; he lacked the ability to see life as like a narrative with different chapters, different stages. In other words, he lacked the patience that allowed Nick the character to get -- in time -- past his love for Jean without losing faith in love in general, and he lacked the type of vision that gives Nick the narrator the ability to find meaning in his life in his malleable yet permanent memories that endure in spite of the finality of the passing, irretrievable moments of time.
Chapter 3: Chronology and Stylistic Accommodations of Time and Memory

The *Music of Time*'s depiction of the mechanics of Nick Jenkins' memory within a traditional narrative form demands stylistic innovations. On the one hand, all of Nick's memories are at once accessible in his mind. The imposition of order on these memories is thus deliberate and artificial. On the other hand, since Nick is trying to tell us the story of his life, truth requires a sense of progression or development: a chronology. Powell tries to accommodate both these conditions by imposing a natural chronology on the whole sequence, beginning with youth and ending with retirement, while frequently interrupting this self-imposed order within the sequence as a whole, within the twelve volumes that comprise the sequence, and within chapters or episodes in each of the volumes. The effect is that the style of the sequence is distinguished by its maintenance of chronology and accommodation of innumerable interruptions. Thus, an effect of this mutable chronology is the reader's uncertainty of the present moment. The technical devices, namely foreshadowing, flashbacks and transitions, usually used to set the present off against the background of its past or to insure that there is a future, are used in extraordinary ways which heighten the illusiveness of the present.

Determining what is digression and what is narration is difficult, then, since our sense of the present of the novel is ironically undermined by the omnipresence of memories.
within Nick's mind. However, examples of interruptions in chronology on three levels illustrate that when Nick defies the chronology he himself establishes, his choices are determined by his artistic sensibilities. In each of these three cases, interruptions within a central episode of *A Buyer's Market*, digressions throughout *Temporary Kings*, and departure from chronology in the second trilogy, two points are clear. First, it is implicitly established that Nick's memory is not chronologically arranged, and secondly, Nick is an artist: his structural choices are determined by the thematic significance gained by breaking with chronology. Both the imposition and disregard for chronology are deliberate responses to the problem of rendering memory faithfully and externalizing memories in narrative.

The first two chapters of *A Buyer's Market* cover one long evening during which Nick attended dinner at the Walpole-Wilsons', a formal dance at the Huntercombes', and, following a chance encounter with Charles Stringham, a "low party" at Milly Andriadi's. The first chapter covers the dinner and the dance, the second the party. But the transition from the first to the second chapter interrupts the chronology of the episode. Rather than continuing with his journey to and reception at Milly's, Nick tells us instead what Uncle Giles would have thought of the party. After five pages we find that these suppositions of what Giles would have said do not come to Nick after the evening has ended; he is reminded of Giles when he sees an African and an ambassa-
dor conversing during the party. So Nick is now in the midst of the party; we feel that the narration of the night’s events has been resumed, and we are back in the present of the novel when Nick begins to converse with Stringham. In this case Powell’s use of dialogue provides the illusion of immediacy.

As the second chapter does not begin in the present of the episode that the first chapter covered, the first chapter does not begin with the beginning of the first episode of the novel. Instead, it begins with reflections on Mr. Deacon and his work, ending with a description of his painting The Boyhood of Cyrus, which makes the discussion of Deacon seem explicable because Nick always associates this work with the Walpole-Wilsons, and it seems that his evening with the Walpole-Wilsons is the subject of the chapter. But Nick is not, in fact, through with Deacon; the memories of him were not just a way to begin to talk about the Walpole-Wilsons. Deacon enters the present of the novel at the end of the chapter that began by introducing him and his works. Similarly, Giles’s disappointments, prejudices, and pronouncements remembered at the beginning of chapter two seem simply a way to preface the description of Milly’s party, but Giles too resurfaces, entering the present of the novel at the end of chapter two.

The delay in beginning the chronological narrative of the evening’s events and the interruption between chapters one and two frame the story to be told because A Buyer’s
Market is about Nick's experimentation with two ways of life. Just as Giles and Deacon, members of the same generation, live in separate worlds, Nick could choose to dwell in one or the other: the bohemian world of Deacon or the Tory conformist world of Giles. But Nick does not choose; he can visit in both, which is metaphorically demonstrated in that he has no difficulty prefacing his memories of the conservative Walpole-Wilsons with memories of the radical Deacon, or prefacing memories of the notorious Milly Andriadis with those of the seemingly staid Giles. The interruption in chronology allows the narrative of a seemingly ordinary evening to take on thematic significance.

In this first case, a pattern in the delays and interruptions can be seen. In contrast, the eleventh novel, Temporary Kings, generally follows a chronological sequence; we begin in the summer of 1958 and end with reflections on November 1959. But as the narrative progresses, recollections of the past enter sporadically; a pattern is missing in their comparatively random insertions. In some cases the interruptions update situations of obvious interest, for instance, the circumstances of Stringham's death in the Japanese prison camp. But Nick also includes relatively inconsequential notes, for instance, the discussion of the failure of Bill Truscott to live up to his teachers' and peers' expectations. Although the chronology of Temporary Kings is interrupted by these reflections, the novel benefits by their inclusion because once again the interruptions have thematic signifi-
cance. The story of Stringham’s death gives a sense of closure to his story, which is one that has been followed since the first pages of the novel. *Temporary Kings* is about death; it provides more of a sense of an ending to the sequence than does *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, the last volume of *The Music of Time*, which is about renewal, reincarnation, and marriage. Similarly, the story of Bill Truscott’s disappointments is another example of the fates of temporary kings, of which there are many examples in the novel. The plot of the novel may not be furthered by these interruptions, but the tone of the novel is sustained and enhanced.

Finally, the chronology of the sequence is occasionally interrupted. The first time that this occurs is at the beginning of *Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant*. This novel, the fifth in the sequence, begins with recollections of the days when Nick loved Jean Duport (described in *The Acceptance World*) and had just met Barnby (BM), and Mr. Dèacon was still alive (his death comes at the end of *A Buyer’s Market*). The first chapter of *Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant* ends with Nick reflecting on the marriage of Moreland, noting that within a year he, too, would be married; in fact, Nick’s engagement party is the last episode of the fourth volume, *At Lady Molly’s*. Chronology is resumed in the second chapter of *Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant*; it begins where *At Lady Molly’s* ended. If Powell had maintained strict chronology, the two musicians Moreland and MacIntick, who are introduced in the first chapter of *Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant*, would
have been included in *A Buyer's Market*. But as we have noted, in *A Buyer's Market* we see the relatively inexperienced Nick moving between two worlds; unlike Nick, Moreland and Maclin-tick are so firmly a part of one world, the world of struggling artists, that they do not belong in the tentative world of *A Buyer's Market*. Furthermore, they are introduced in a different book because their stories are about difficulties in marriage, the general subject of *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant*. Like the interruptions within an episode in *A Buyer's Market* and the interruptions scattered throughout *Temporary Kings*, the interruption in the chronology of the whole sequence has thematic significance. Once again it is clear Powell is not writing memoirs -- he is writing novels.

Three devices a novelist uses to suggest chronology, foreshadowing, flashbacks and transitions, are used in an unconventional manner in *The Music of Time* because of its mutable chronology. Foreshadowing is usually defined as material that looks forward to future events, the opposite of flashbacks which refer back to past events. But in the case of *The Music of Time*, the distinction blurs because chronology is artificial, and although successiveness is usually a feature of narrative patterns, in this work the episodes and anecdotes seem to exist in a single plane in which both backward and forward movement is equally possible. For instance, in the beginning of *Temporary Kings*, there are long flashbacks to the present of *Books Do Furnish a Room*; pages eleven through seventeen cover Widmerpool's involvement
with Ferrand-Seneschal during Widmerpool's association with
Fission, the demise of which was explained in the last chap-
ter of Books Do Furnish a Room. A few pages later, the narra-
tive chronologically resumes as Nick discusses X. Trapnel
with Russell Gwinnett, but progress is delayed when Nick
describes the death of Trapnel. Only later do we learn that
what seems to be a digressive flashback on Ferrand-Seneschal
and a tidy update on Trapnel are not flashbacks, but previews
of what is to come: Widmerpool's exposure as voyeur and spy
and Gwinnett's necrophiliac obsession with the life and death
of Trapnel. It is as if Powell doubly uses material; scenes
at once look forward and backward, which again reveals
Powell's concept of memories as being unconstrained by exter-
nal, sequential time and his understanding that plots
function through the agency of external (past-present-future)
time.

Smaller examples involve the choice of detail. The
evening Nick begins his affair with Jean, he sees a party of
South Americans at the Ritz. Years later Jean will marry a
South American dictator, and when Nick meets him, he tells
Nick that he and his family stayed at the Ritz fifteen years
ago. Although there is no reason to believe that the family
Nick saw was Flores', the Latin family is included in Nick's
descriptions of that night. The tableau they presented to
Nick may truly be a part of his memories of that night, or
such a description -- plausible but not true -- may have been
included because Nick, a novelist by profession, is fore-
shadowing one aspect of Jean's future. Or both may be true. But the reader will never know whether one explanation is true and the other false. Similarly, a few pages later, Nick meets Peter Templer, who tells Nick that his wife is at a movie purported to be about lesbians: "'Jimmy Brent told me about it. He usually knows what's what in matters of that kind. My sister Jean is with Mona'" (AW 42). Only years later will Nick discover the disturbing nature of Jean's relationship with Brent during those times, but either Peter here has innocently established him as part of their circle, the threat Brent offers ironically dismissed by the young Nick, or Nick is fictionalizing a conversation to foreshadow the revelation of Jean's involvement with Brent. In other words, we can never fully trust Nick's report of what was said or done in the past since his memory of the past has been shaped by his knowledge of the future.

Similar incidents are found in A Buyer's Market. At the end of the first chapter, Nick runs into Stringham. For his character to be recognizable to the new reader or the reader who has not looked at A Question of Upbringing in a few years, it is necessary for Stringham to be mentioned before he appears; this problem is solved by the presence of Anne Stepney, the sister of Stringham's fiance, at the Walpole-Wilsons' dinner table. Also, when Barbara Goring pours sugar over Widmerpool's head, Nick will recall the time Widmerpool was hit in the face with a banana, but he won't have to stop to develop that anecdote because he has already
done so by taking advantage of the attendance of the perpe-
trator's sister, Margaret Budd, at the dinner as a means for re-
calling Widmerpool's earlier mishap.

In these cases, as in others that could be cited, flashbacks to incidents first recorded in the previous volume are instances of foreshadowing in the second volume. While we remember an image already presented, Widmerpool with the banana on his face, Nick is preparing us for another, Widmer-
pool with sugar cascading over his head, and Powell is reminding us that both images are at once present in Nick's mind, as they soon will be in ours. When material can at once be used in a flashback and an episode of foreshadowing, the extraordinary relationship between time and memory is illus-
trated. In memory all events are past events, but none is more past than the other, and during the act of remembering, the specific memory in the mind of the rememberer, in his present, is arbitrary and fleeting. On the one hand, Nick cannot tell us all he knows at once, but on the other hand, once he has told us something, he wants to evoke our memories rather than tell the same story again. Furthermore, the cohesiveness of the twelve volumes is largely the result of Powell's conservation of reference, which could be documented by many other similar examples.

Transitions within and between chapters also affect cohesiveness. When the transitions within chapters are handled effectively, they are not apparent. In a thin transi-
tion in *The Military Philosophers*, Nick briefly discusses an
American attache, Colonel Cobb, in order to recall mentioning him to Milton Wisebite, who in the course of their conversation told his story of Pamela Flitton. From there, Nick continues with a catalogue of Flitton's escapades (71-72). Cobb resurfaces once as a member of the Allied inspection trip to France and Belgium, but Milton Wisebite is never heard of again. The anecdotes concerning them seem to have as their sole purpose a means to introduce Pamela; alone they are disconnected from any other episode in the book. Accounts of Pamela are suspended while Nick describes a recent visit to Ted Jeavons', where he had gone to find Peter Templer, since departed, having taken on a dangerous secret service mission following a failed romance (later Nick learns that it was Pam he failed to please). Pam and Norah Tolland arrive at Jeavons', and so the focus turns to a first-hand account of Pam's behavior. In this case, the transition from stories of Pam to the appearance of Pam is much smoother; it is not obvious that the visit with Jeavons is being used as a means to comment on Pam, as it was obvious that Cobb and Wisebite were mere conveniences. In this second case, the update on Jeavons' condition following the loss of his wife could be the main story, with further material on Pam a lesser concern -- or vice versa. When Powell is working well, what is serving as a transition is difficult to discern because it is hard to tell where the frame ends and the picture begins.

In contrast, there are occasions where there are no transitions at all, but the arrangement of material is struc-
urally and thematically sound. For example, the final chapter of *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant* begins with reports of St. John Clarke's death (190-93). Nick's reflections on the novelist's death are abruptly dropped, and Nick turns to his relationship with Hugh Moreland. The central episode of the chapter is Moreland and Nick's last visit with Maclintick before the composer commits suicide. But the chapter returns to Clarke when in its final episode Clarke's surprising will is reviewed at a Tolland family luncheon. Maclintick and Clarke are never linked except by the circular structure of the book and the implicit contrasts between the deaths of the prolific, popular, but fading Edwardian novelist and the young, unknown, unappreciated Maclintick, who could never finish his work on music theory.

This pattern of contrasting deaths is continued through the four trilogies. In the second volume of the first trilogy, Deacon, a painter contemporary with Clarke, dies; in the middle volume of the third trilogy the painter Barnby is killed in the war; and in the second volume of the final trilogy the death of the novelist X. Trapnel is described. These alternating deaths of painters and novelists are interesting because the unfulfilled talent of Maclintick, Trapnel, and Barnby is contrasted with the artistic indolence of Clarke, Deacon, and Isbister (who dies during the course of *The Acceptance World*): the artists of Nick's generation were limited by early death; the artists of his parents' generation survived longer than their talent.
Even seemingly obvious transitions between chapters can be deceiving. For instance, *The Acceptance World*'s first chapter ends with Nick's account of his difficulties in securing St. John Clarke's introduction for the book his firm is publishing on Horace Isbister, and the second chapter begins with the announcement of Isbister's death and more agonizing over St. John Clarke's procrastination. But the troubles Nick encounters with Clarke and Isbister, like the troubles he has with their younger counterparts, Members and Quiggin, are not the subject of the novel, which seems to be his romance with Jean Templer. Even when transitions are obvious and chronology is maintained, one cannot assume that he is in the midst of the story. The accumulation of anecdotes does not result in the establishment of a hierarchy of material; it rarely seems as if one anecdote is more important than another in developing the plot of the story. Finishing the book, seeing the whole picture, is no help in outlining the main events of *The Music of Time* because the final point seems to be that any one episode or anecdote cannot be extracted or magnified; the cohesiveness of the whole is the subject itself.

Always it must be remembered that all that Nick reports is at once present in his mind. This clarifies the problem of the elusiveness of the present and hence our uncertainty of the main point of an episode. The fact that the true present of the novel is the present of remembering provides some insight into Powell's use of transitions within a single
episode, for example, that which closes The Acceptance World. Nick meets his friend Peter Templer at an Old Boy dinner. He explains to us that since their last meeting, Templer's wife Mona has eloped with one of Nick's associates, Quiggin. After two pages of dialogue between Templer and Nick and a few updates from Nick on Mona's departure, Templer asks Nick, "'What will they live on?'." Nick then suspends the conversation with Peter to flashback to a chance encounter with Quiggin, which does not directly address the question of money or work, but does mention Quiggin's various projects. Three pages later the recollection ends with the paragraph, "Like Templer, I wondered how Quiggin and Mona would make two ends meet, but these details could hardly be gone into then and there in the Ritz." The first half of this sentence seems to belong to the conversation with Quiggin; it seems to be Nick's reaction to his first encounter with Quiggin following his taking on Mona. But it could also belong to the present of the conversation with Peter at the Ritz, a direct reply to Peter's question that preceded the flashback. The last half of the sentence-long transition paragraph clearly returns us to the Ritz, and the conversation with Peter resumes. But in fact we may have never -- in time -- left the Ritz. What comes between pages 172 and 175 could be what came to Nick's mind before he answered Peter while taking a sip of a drink or a bite of food. The gist of a conversation can return to memory in a few seconds; relaying that information to another mind, transcribing it, is what takes time. The impression of
a delay is then at once real and artificial. It takes a few minutes for us to return to the conversation at the Ritz, but we can assume that it took Nick considerably less time, even if he thought about Quiggin's declarations before speaking. The difference between the way Powell tries to tell us at once what a character knows and what he says, and the way another author might handle the same problem is that he chooses to show the conversation between Nick and Quiggin rather than tell us about it. It is the use of dialogue that gives this interruption the appearance of usurping the present. This should give no problem since both conversations are long past when recorded; it does not make sense when thinking of the past to think of one of its events as being more or less present than another.

On the surface, the narrative of The Music of Time may appear casual, constructed of bits of conversation, observations, anecdotes, an occasional reflection or evaluation. But the way these parts are structured is a feat of sensitive craftsmanship, a skillful response to the problems of representing memory in narrative.
Chapter 4: Nick's Partners in the Dance

The content of Nick Jenkins' fictional memoirs is, of course, his memories. Powell's treatment of time and some stylistic features of his work depend on this fact. But to discuss the twelve novels of *A Dance to the Music of Time* and the characters Powell develops is to show the relationship between what is memorable and how novels work. Memory itself is a potential state; what is remembered, in contrast, is limited and limiting. On the one hand, there are the at once amorphous and vast memories that we possess which allow us to presume continuity in our sense of self and in our lives, the type of memory that Proust refers to when Marcel notes that it is memory which allows him to resume his waking life each morning (GW 86). But in addition to this type of memory, which is perhaps what is meant by consciousness, is the memory of specific situations in the past.

Much is not remembered. Those episodes that are remembered, then, are likely to be ones which are recognizable as such, as episodes, as sequences of events which are in some way different from the larger sequence in which they occur. In other words, only one who realized that something extraordinary was afoot could answer an investigator's question of where he was or what he was doing on a specific date a month, a year, two years ago. Most of the time, nothing happens: nothing worth remembering because what is happening is so much like what preceded and will follow it. Memories, then, are based on contrast, although memory itself is simply an
objective faculty.

Similarly, narratives, even if they be naturalistic or realistic, are not like life: all is never recorded. What is recorded is selected, just as the episodic memory retains both isolated scenes of some interest or series of related scenes. What is more, a different sense of completeness informs narratives than history. Robert Champigny's observations on the ontological difference between novels and memoirs are of interest. He explains that "unlike a historical report, a novelistic narrative is axiomatic and complete." If a biographer tells what happened to his subject during March and May but not April, April is still in the "knowable category." But if a novelist does the same, April, although it "contributes to ordering the events which take place in March and May . . . remains irreducibly implicit, it cannot be granted the status of a moment, of a temporal interval, which could, in theory, be furnished with events" (Ontology 78). If in memory there are gaps that cannot be filled; if there are no things to prompt a recollection; if days, weeks, months remain inaccessible; then it would seem that the story of our lives structured by our episodic memories has more in common with novel-making than with recording history. Writing memoirs is writing a history; they always are incomplete because of all that is in the "knowable category" which is omitted. Hence, memoirs are not art, because in art there must be the sense of completeness. On the one hand, the fictional narrator Nick may be seen as a memoirist, but the
fact that he is a fictional entity, a character in a novel, means he can only write novels. Powell allows for contingencies to give the illusion that Nick is a person, but nothing of Nick's life beside what we are told exists in the "knowable category."

The degree to which the fiction is deceiving in its sense of completeness is evident when we consider that in general terms we accept that The Music of Time covers a fifty year period, from 1921 to 1971, while in fact only twenty-five years and five months of time are accounted for through even the most general references. More specifically, only approximately 134 days out of the 18,250 which add up to fifty years are described in the twelve volumes. In other words, the events of less than 1 percent of Nick's days are known to us.

Furthermore, consider what we do not know about Nick. The day-to-day life of his marriage to Isobel is a mystery. We know he has two sons, but they are never named. When his parents died is unknown. His finances, health, and appearance are never discussed. But what these things have in common is that they cannot be forgotten, not for a moment. There is no point in Nick recording his height, weight, or hair color; the equivalent would be mentioning that he has ten toes and ten fingers and walks upright. When Nick recognizes himself in the mirror each time he looks, memory is responsible. But again, involuntary memory is not Powell's subject. Proust would have us believe in an involuntary memory that is rare,
time-revoking, and revelatory as the source of artistic inspiration, but Powell knows there is nothing more commonplace, dull, and constant than literal involuntary memory. What is of interest instead are voluntary, episodic memories, those stories we tell ourselves, that we embellish through imagination, and tell to others to explain who we are.

In The Kindly Ones, Nick prefaces his account of the weekend spent with the Morelands and their visit to Stourwater with the comment:

Life was humdrum enough at that moment, even though we were living in so unstable, so harassing a period [1938, 'not long after "Munich"']. I mean the events that took place while we were staying with the Morelands formed not only something of a landmark when looked back upon, but were also rather different from the material of which daily life was in general composed. (88–89)

There are a number of important ideas on Nick's selections for his narrative implied in this passage. First, even the most tense historical eras are not memorable in the same way that a particular personal experience is memorable; Powell's novel is not about Britain from 1921–1971, but rather a small number of one man's experiences. Secondly, it is on the one hand the perspective offered by the future that gives an episode its significance; on the other hand, it is an episode that is a departure from everyday life which is memorable in the first place. In other words, Nick acknowledges that his book is not about fifty years of everyday life; it is about a few extraordinary days which gain their status because of their quality of being different.
These three points help to explain the omission of much information about Nick's life with Isobel in contrast with the amount of material on his affair with Jean Duport. His marriage with Isobel has been on-going for thirty-seven years when he begins his memoirs; it is not over, and so we presume it is changing, but so subtly, like one's body is constantly changing, that there is nothing to report. In contrast, the affair with Jean lasted only a few months and was over forty years before Nick began his memoirs. Its status is, as Nick himself acknowledges, like a fictional or mythical episode; its reality is of another species. It is because it is over that Nick's mistakes about its quality or the sincerity of Jean's feelings can be explored. It seems as if what we are most closely involved with is, ironically, inexplicable; in any case, explicability, the idea that if we just had enough facts or testimonies we would know the truth, may itself be a fiction.

Furthermore, Nick's focus on social rather than private life is consistent with Powell's interest in the tension between the internal reality of memory and the external world in which the self is defined. Powell does not use the image of the dance in the same way as, for example, Yeats does; it is not for him an image of self-absorption. Rather, his dance is a social dance; the movements of the dancers are limited by their involvement with one another. Nick is in control of the dance because within his narrative, if not his life, he is the one who chooses his partners. But once that choice is
made, he himself is restrained and must define himself in terms of these other dancers.

      Similarly, Nick is both observer and actor. When he enters Milly Andriadis's party in A Buyer's Market, he reflects: "the shifting groups of the party created, as a spectacle, [the] illusion of moving within the actual confines of a picture or tapestry, into the depths of which the personality of each new arrival had to be automatically amalgamated" (BM 101). The problem presented here is how he can at once observe the picture, be outside it, and take his place within it, an analogy of his situation of being at once narrator and character. Or consider Nick's reaction when Myra Erdleigh enters the room in which he and Giles are visiting: "It was evident that he and I were placed violently in contrast together in her mind" (AW 7). A moment before, Giles and Nick were discussing the terms of Giles's inheritance. But the addition of a third person changes the relationship between Nick and Giles. Myra too is changed; instead of discussing whatever she usually discusses with Giles when they are alone, something we can never know, she must now think of Giles as like or unlike his nephew. It is not only the behavior of a person which is changed by the presence of others; it is his thoughts as well. Nick's thoughts of Myra and Giles distract him from himself; he becomes a part of an external world, a social design, yet ironically it is only because of his sense of himself as different from these two that he can be subsumed in the trio.
Finally, it is at once the external world that defines what is exclusively ours in our internal worlds and our internal world which shapes its own external reality; consider Nick’s general statement on the experience of being in love:

When you are in love with someone, their life, past, present and future, becomes in a curious way part of your life; and yet, at the same time, since two separate human entities in fact remain, you merely carry your own prejudices into another person’s imagined existence; not even into their ‘real’ existence, because only they themselves can estimate what their ‘real’ existence has been. (AW 143)

or his complaints about his difficulties in describing women:

Their nature can be caught only in a refractive beam, as with light passing through water: the rays of character focused through the person with whom they are intimately associated. Perhaps, therefore, I alone was responsible for what [Jean] seemed to me. To another man -- Duport, for example -- she no doubt appeared -- indeed, actually was -- a different woman. (AW 134)

These are the problems Nick has in describing faithfully a woman known forty years previously; it seems that a description of his wife would be impossible.

What is revealed here is the risk inherent in a first person life story: the reduction of the narrative to an illustration of solipsism. Powell’s response is to move Nick beyond the description of his own activities and emotions by having Nick include others’ stories. Now, obviously, what Nick reports that others report is finally his own memories, but the variety and extensiveness of other voices in his story shift our attention from this fact.

Others’ stories are included in several ways. First,
Nick distances himself from his narrative by allowing others to report interesting episodes about their mutual friends and acquaintances. Secondly, characters speak for themselves; there are life stories reported within Nick's own life story. These two devices are used to broaden our perspective both beyond Nick's own life and beyond the 134 days or so of action directly reported. In this way a bridge is formed between Nick's internal world, his mind and memories, and a more or less objective external world. In the case of his narrative, we are allowed access to both his mind and the minds of others; the dance he describes is public and communal. As a writer, Nick's mind or episodic memory functions as a depository, a place where what is fleeting, human relations, can be remade by narrative into something that can endure.

The inclusion of other narrators ironically heightens our sense of Nick as a person, not as a disembodied voice. Sharing the stage with other voices does not deplete Nick; he is more clearly defined as a writer with an abiding interest in stories. He sees life as like a narrative; as a writer he knows that the narrative depends on the narrator. Other narratives do not undermine his, but as they are absorbed by Nick, our sense of veracity or of receiving a complete picture is increased, provided of course that we trust Nick to value whatever type of fairness is required in these circumstances. That others are compelled to tell their stories to Nick shows the pleasures of observed experience; as such, the
stories within the sequence are born of the same pleasure that defines the whole work. Finally, others' stories allow Nick to expand, refine, validate, correct, and embellish his own memories; others' stories seem to have the same ontological status as Nick's memories, and so they can be blended at will.

Nick receives the gossip of his friend Chips Lovell with the same spirit one reads a novel. He is interested in the particular details that define each person, the social role each person plays, and the action that derives from character:

I always enjoy hearing the details of other people's lives, whether imaginary or not, so that I found this side of Lovell agreeable.

When someone repeatedly tells you stories about their relations, pictures begin at last to form in the mind, tinged always in colours used by the narrator; so that after listening day after day to Lovell's recitals, I had become not only well versed in the role of each performer, but also involuntarily preoccupied with their individual behaviour. (LM 212)

Chips' tales transform his relations into characters for Nick, just as Nick will transform Chips into a character for the reader, or as Powell will transform himself into Nick, and his associates into the characters of The Music of Time.

And although our impressions of these people/characters will be influenced by Powell's voice, "tinged always in the colours used by the narrator," the reader too will appropriate the characters, a process Powell alludes to when he states, "It is an aspect of novels that has always fascinated me; the prerogative of the reader to make an individual
judgment, not necessarily the author's, on characters and
events" (Preface vii). Clearly, in The Music of Time, charac-
ters are meant to be approached as people; after all,
people can be approached as characters. Again, Powell is a
traditionalist in his approach to character; his view of how
readers react to characters presumes that they are more than
"any linguistic location in a book toward which a great part
of the rest of the text stands as modifier," as they are for
William Gass, for example (LeClair and McCaffery 28). In-
stead, he writes from the perspective of the novel-reader,
who, it is probably safe to generalize, pretends that
characters are very much like people.

Even Bob Duport, whom Nick regards as boorish, shares an
interest in story-telling. Like Nick, he has an exceptional
memory. This is seen not only in his revelations of his
wife's infidelities, but in his interest in stories that do
not directly involve him. When Nick and Bob meet in Brussels
toward the end of the war, Bob tells him a version of how
Peter Templer was killed on a secret mission. Nick already
knows many of the parts of the story, but not how they fit
together, and not how the various elements contributed to the
death of his friend (MP 186-189). Nick's knowledge of the
characters in Duport's tale -- Peter, Prince Theodoric,
Pamela Flitton, Odo Stevens, Szymanski, and Widmerpool -- is
virtually useless because he lacks the knowledge of the
connections among them; he is missing the plot, the general
outlines of which are clearer to Duport because he figures
out that they are together involved in Peter’s death. However, even he has no idea to what extent Widmerpool was responsible. The conversation between Duport and Nick is not unlike gossip — telling stories about other people — and just as in many cases, the story relayed by gossip comes closer to the truth than the official report of Templer’s death; since he died on a covert mission, only rumor publicly elaborates the particulars of his death. That gossip can come closer to truth than the reported facts is another reason for Nick to include others’ stories; similarly, Powell’s fictions reveal more about England mid-century than do historical documents.

However, the story that seems most plausible is not the one that is necessarily true; Nick learns this when in his sixties he talks to the young Barnabas Henderson. Barnabas thinks he knows more from hearsay than Nick knows from experience. He believes that the painter Deacon’s name is Bosworth; Nick and we know that that was Edgar Deacon’s middle name. Likewise he will not believe that the Boyhood of Cyrus was owned by the Walpole-Wilsons. Finally, he insists that Nick could not have possibly known Jean Duport (HSH 248-52). It does not seem as if Nick’s path would ever have crossed with that of the widow of a South American dictator; Barnabas’s eagerness to jump to conclusions reminds us of the young Nick’s complacent compartmentalizing. The contrast between the certainty of youth and the diffidence of age, the difference between innocence and experience, is another theme
that is enhanced by the inclusion of other points of view.

One of the best examples of the content of a story depending on the teller is found in *Temporary Kings*. Nick had already left the Manasch-Stevens party when Widmerpool and Louis Glober came to blows, following Pamela Flitton’s accusations. But Odo Stevens and Hugh Moreland were present, providing Nick with enough material to reconstruct the scene; hence, the reader receives a third, hybrid version of the story. Nick has to choose which bits of each man’s story to include:

One hears about life, all the time, from different people, with very different narrative gifts. Accordingly, not only are many episodes, in which you may even have played a part yourself, hard enough to assess; a lot more must be judged from haphazard accounts given by others. Even if reported in good faith, some choose one aspect on which to concentrate, some another. (TK 252)

This comment on the inevitability of having to make choices regarding what to include and what to give priority bears much in common with the observations on naturalism in the novel presented in the conversations of Bagshaw, Trapnel, and Nick and in Nick’s own notes on his problems in writing: "An important aspect of writing unmentioned by Burton was 'priority'; what to tell first" (BDFR 207). Powell grappled with the same problem in a review of a new edition of *Tender is the Night* in which the opening chapters had been rearranged to follow chronological order, noting Fitzgerald’s dilemma of deciding "to attract the reader’s attention with a vivid and dramatic introduction, then go back and explain how it all
happened; or make the reader interested in the main characters, then show how they developed" (Punch 8-19-53). If life is seen as having those elements that comprise a narrative, then content is universally available. What elevates a narrative from a "haphazard account" is form and structure. And what makes one account more believable than another is not intelligence, but imagination. Nick says that although Stevens' and Moreland's stories did not radically differ, he deems Moreland "the more reliable, being, if the more imaginative, the one who also best appreciated the graphic power of fact" (TK 252).

Telling the story gave Moreland delight during his last illness: "there can be no doubt it cheered his last months, added, as he himself said, to the richness of his own experience. His powerful gift of creative imagery led him, over and over again, to reconstruct the incidents, whenever anyone came to visit him" (TK 252). A few things are noteworthy in this report. First, the story that so delighted Moreland, a gentle soul, was not about pleasant things. The evening's events led indirectly to the suicide of Pam Flitton and the madness of Widmerpool. Blows were exchanged; people were humiliated. But as a narrative, an account of the fight is entertaining; interesting characters confess outrageous behavior, conflicts ensue, grotesque retribution follows. Although the episode itself is at best morally reprehensible, the episode as story is morally neutral; once a story becomes a story, there is nothing wrong with delighting in the
misfortunes of others. Deriving a moral lesson from experience is not the same as turning experience into narrative; in Powell's work the two seem to have nothing in common. A second point of interest is the idea that observing a situation can enrich one's experience. Observing in Powell is a form of activity; observing is not divorced from experience. It is possible, perhaps likely, that Moreland's appreciation of the scene he witnessed was richer than that of those involved in the fight. The activity of observation is an obvious theme of The Music of Time; Nick is nothing if not a watcher. The process of creation implicit in The Music of Time is observation coupled with imagination, an imagination enriched from memories and others' stories; once again a commencement-opposition-synthesis pattern is implied: observation of the external world - mediation through memory and imagination, the essence of an internal world - the creation of art, where mind and matter mingle.

In addition to including other narrators, those like Moreland and Duport who report on their friends' or acquaintances' activities, there are those who speak for themselves, those whose identities depend on a composite of gossip, and those who are rendered both ways. The four characters who appear in each of the twelve books, Dicky Umfraville, Charles Stringham, Sir Magnus Donners, and Kenneth Widmerpool, provide examples of each of these ways Powell expands the scope of The Music of Time. Furthermore, it is not only the stories told that distinguish characters in The Music of
Time; the language characters use and the style of their speech vary the texture of Nick's narrative.¹

Dicky Umfraville is a shadowy character who, although he is at least mentioned in each volume, is named or appears on only 97 of The Music of Time's 2,937 pages. He is, however, the only of the four twelve-volume characters who is alive in 1971, which is surprising in itself since his life is an illustration of dissipation. In seven of the twelve novels, he is simply the subject of gossip; in fact, the first mention of Umfraville occurs in Sillery's rooms, where gossip is the only type of communication allowed. (Interestingly, Powell departs from one traditional stereotype in The Music of Time; men, especially Sillery, are much more eager gossips than women, for example Magnus's girls who admit to accepting presents and nothing more.)

There is one mention only of Umfraville in each of the first two books of The Music of Time; all we know is that he is a disreputable friend of Stringham's father and a gentleman rider. When he is first sighted in Foppa's bar in volume three, The Acceptance World, Nick notes, even before Dicky identifies himself, that "he was no ordinary person" and is fascinated by his mode of speaking, the "suggestion of madness in the way he shot out his sentences . . . a warning that no proper mechanism existed for operating normal controls" (155):

'. . . I was at Le Bas's too. Not for very long. I started at Corderay's. Then Corderay's house was taken over by Le Bas. I was asked to leave quite soon after that -- not actually sacked, as is some-
times maliciously stated by my friends. I get invited to Old Boy dinners, for example. Not that I ever go. Usually out of England.' (154–55)

In contrast to Nick's measured, reserved manner even among his friends, who tease him about regarding himself as "'tremendously intelligent'" (Templer, AW 78), Dicky rapidly outlines the stages of his young life to an audience of strangers.

Much later Nick realizes that Umfraville possesses "an almost perfect narcissism, joined . . . to a great acuteness of observation and relish for life" (VB 149). In some ways those phrases would be applicable to Nick himself; to write a twelve volume account of one's life is on some level a narcissistic act. But Nick does not compare what he does in his careful narrative to Dicky's penchant for telling his life story in conversation, although we can infer that Nick is interested in Dicky because they share a similar and basic impulse for self-revelation.

What differs is their style. Nick's reaction to Dicky's announcement that he plans to marry Nick's sister-in-law, Lady Frederica Budd, always accused by Molly Jeavons of "'dreadful correctness'" (VB 137), is typical of Nick's serious consideration of facts and their implications:

The first thought, that the engagement was grotesque, bizarre, changed shape after a time, developing until one saw their association as one of those emotional hook-ups of the very near and the very far, which make human relationships easier to accept than to rationalize or disentangle. (VB 145)

Dicky himself makes light of the situation:

'You know I must be insane to embrace matrimony
again. Stark, staring mad. But not half as mad as Frederica to take me on. Do you realize she'll be my fifth? Something wrong with a man who keeps marrying like that. Must be. But I really couldn't resist Frederica. That prim look of hers. . . .' (VB 149)

The same type of staccato irreverent tone and style persists in Dicky's story of his life as a "professional cad" in his performance that follows his announcement of his engagement. Although Nick and Dicky do not really converse, the facts are not presented as a monologue since Nick does interject a question now and then, but the questions are predictable since Nick is Dicky's confessor, not his partner in conversation. The only requirement for Nick is figuring out how best to react:

The exaggerated dramatic force employed by Umfraville in presenting his narrative made it hard to know what demeanour best to adopt in listening to the story. Tragedy might at any moment give way to farce, so that the listener had always to keep his wits about him. (VB 153)

Again, ironically Nick does not acknowledge the similarities in the precarious balance between tragedy and comedy or the use of understatement and overstatement in Dicky's narrative and his own of which Dicky's is a part; instead, Dicky seems to offer a glance at a way of life and an attitude toward life foreign to Nick's own.

Nick claims to have no histrionic talent; his storytelling abilities are limited to the written word. In contrast, Dicky is a storyteller in the oral tradition; he embellishes his tales with subtle imitations, first of his subjects, but finally of himself as well: "Latterly, Umfraville's
character-acting had become largely an impersonation of himself" (BDFR 91), ending his career with "a rather good new impersonation of himself as an old-fashioned drug fiend" (HSH 61). The impersonations punctuate his "running fire of comment," the "routine banter" through which he provides a constant commentary on his condition, for example, at the wedding near the end of Hearing Secret Harmonies, complaining of a hangover: "'Rare for me these days. One of those hangovers like sheet lightning. Sudden flashes round the head at irregular intervals. Not at all unpleasant'" (189). He is one of those who enjoys talking about himself, but listening to others is not as appealing. When the deeply distressed Flavia Wisebite, (Stringham's sister, Pam's mother, an ex-mistress of Dicky's) cornered him at the wedding, Dicky's reaction is to try to escape, which he manages by drawing Nick into the conversation, again typically as the listener whom Flavia needs. On the one hand, then, Nick and Dicky are similar since they both want to tell their stories. But Nick also tells others'; one reason his story is interesting is because it is not simply his. He can accommodate Dicky's confessions, but whether Dicky could use Nick as material is not so clear. Perhaps when Dicky impersonates or imitates others he is doing essentially what Nick does when the writer breaks with his own style to capture the flavor of Dicky's monologues. On the other hand, Nick's obvious advantage is that his portrait of Dicky will endure far longer.

Comparable in many ways to Dicky Umfraville is Charles
Stringham. Dicky is in fact associated with the Stringham family; he is a friend of Charles's father and a former lover of Stringham's sister Flavia; at one point Dicky claims paternity of Flavia's daughter Pamela Flitton, although Nick notes that "Umfraville's habit of taking liberties with dates, if a story could thereby be improved, was notorious" (BDFR 92). Not only is Dicky then a mock father or older brother to Charles; they also share, in Nick's eyes, a "moral" similarity: "The same dissatisfaction with life and basic melancholy gave a resemblance, though Umfraville's features and expressions were more formalised and, in some manner, coarser -- perhaps they could even be called more brutal -- than Stringham's" (AW 152-3); their physical differences are consistent with their relative styles of speech, Dicky's low diction and fragmented sentences, Charles's high diction and stylized speech. But the main difference between the two men is that Dicky survives and is in relative health into his eighties -- he is last seen singing with a champagne flute in hand -- but by his mid-thirties Stringham is in very poor health. Stringham dies in a Japanese prisoner of war camp, but even so he never seemed to possess the physical strength to survive his own melancholy temperament. Both Stringham and Umfraville are among those mentioned in all twelve volumes, but Stringham is last seen in the seventh, The Soldier's Art. His death is reported in The Military Philosophers.

However, from the beginning of The Music of Time it
seems as if Stringham will be a major character. He appears or is mentioned on 101 of A Question of Upbringing’s 230 pages (more than Umfraville’s total in the whole of The Music of Time). But in the next eleven books, only 250 pages include any reference to Stringham. After the first trilogy, he makes only two other significant appearances: at his mother’s musical party in Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant and as a mess waiter in The Soldier’s Art. Yet Stringham is remembered because of the impression he makes on Nick not only as an eccentric personality, but as a keen observer and storyteller himself.

Nick’s memoirs begin with a description of Widmerpool, but the first anecdotes are told by Stringham; his report that "'There is a jam crisis'" as he prepares tea are the first words directly recorded in the book (QU 8). Nick remarks that he had watched Widmerpool run through the mist that afternoon, and Stringham responds with the story of Widmerpool’s being hit in the face with a banana, a story he had heard from Peter Templer. Nick notes the "proficiency with which Stringham told his stories. My own renewed awareness of Widmerpool’s personality seemed to me closer and more real" (QU 12); immediately, Nick implies that a well-told story, even a second-hand one, can have more impact than a first-hand observation. Also, just as Nick incorporates others’ voices into his narrative, Stringham punctuates his anecdotes with imitations and dialogue differing in style from his own manner of speech:
Peter made an absolutely typical Templer remark when I asked him [whether Widmerpool had made any homosexual overtures]. He said: "No, thank God, but he moved about the room breathing heavily like my sister's white pekinese. ... He's so wet you could shoot snipe off him." Can you imagine a more exquisitely Templer phrase?" (QU 13-14)

Templer has not yet appeared in Nick and Charles's rooms, but we already have a sense of his voice, not from Nick directly, but through another storyteller's impressions. Much of the first few chapters of A Question of Upbringing is enlivened by Stringham's tales and impersonations; like Dicky Umfraville, he too is a fine mimic, and his tales and performances are vivid enough to be remembered long after he ceases to play any important role in Nick's life or consequently in the directly reported action of Nick's narrative.

In fact, after their schooldays Nick feels strongly Stringham's eccentricity and his remoteness. By The Acceptance World Charles is drinking heavily, and when Nick encounters him at the Old Boy dinner, what has replaced conversation for Stringham are ironic monologues, not unlike Umfraville's in their self centeredness; in A Soldier's Art, Stringham proclaims that he has discovered that he is "narcissistic, mad about [himself]" (82), again quite like Umfraville. But although Stringham's stories are delivered in a grander style, they are nonetheless deliberately self-conscious and ironic: consider his comments on the advantages of his ex-wife marrying a relation of hers and his ex-in-laws:

'Coronets on the table napkins, but no kind hearts between the sheets. He will be able to discuss
important historical events with my ex-father-in-law, such as the fact that Red Eyes and Cypria dead-heated for the Cesarewitch in 1893 -- or was it 1894? I shall forget my own name next." (AW 199)

He proceeds in this manner, fashioning a tale about his relations, replying to Nick's enquiries about his own affairs in vague and general terms, refusing to reveal anything about his own feelings.

Stringham's tone toward his own affairs seems the same when Nick again encounters him during Casanova's Chinese Restaurant. Stringham is supposed to be abstaining from drink, but when he arrives at his mother's, it is obvious to Nick that he is drunk, but with "that controlled exhilaration of spirit more akin to madness than carousal" (163). Stringham attracts an audience including Priscilla Lovell, Audrey Maclintick, and Hugh Moreland whom Nick has never before seen "conversationally so completely mastered" (177). Stringham delivers a series of comic anecdotes and pithy observations about marriage; he was the first of Nick's friends to marry and the first to divorce, and so his appearance in Casanova's Chinese Restaurant's examination of troubled marriages is appropriate. But even though Stringham can for a little while enthrall an audience of strangers with his tales, he is out of control of his own life, and is led away by his keeper. There is nothing that Nick can do to help Stringham; in most ways of conventionally judging such a state, they are no longer friends, and Nick has by now learned "that to people like Stringham there is really no answer" (172). Still there is a magnetism to Stringham; although he lives the life of an
invalid, from his small cache of memories, he finds things amusing to say in an amusing way.

When Nick last encounters Stringham five years later, Charles is a mess waiter in Nick's company. In spite of his change in circumstances, his style of communication remains the same. Rather than conversing in any way resembling a direct manner, he delivers lengthy comical anecdotes, illustrates his points with snatches of hymns and poems, generally refuses to take his own situation seriously, behaves instead like a stand-up comic, and maintains his elegance and grand style in the most lowly circumstances. For example, answering Nick's question of how he became a mess waiter, Stringham replies:

'AAfter enlisting in my first gallant and glorious corps, and serving at their depot, I managed to exchange into the infantry, and got posted to this melancholy spot. . . . When the Royal Army Ordnance Corps took me to its stalwart bosom, I was not medically graded A.I. -- which explains why in the past one's so often woken up feeling like the wrath of God. . . . Hearing there was a job going as waiter in F Mess, I applied in triplicate. My candidature was graciously confirmed by Captain Soper.' (SA 75-6)

For each line-length question of Nick's, Stringham supplies a half to full page reply, although he refuses Nick's invitations to dinner or his other efforts at re-establishing their friendship. Stringham is at once loquacious and withdrawn. His behavior is inexplicable, for example, why he did not try to get out of going overseas on the grounds of poor health. Although he seems to give "the impression of having severed his moorings pretty completely with anything that could be
called everyday life, army or otherwise" (SA 223), he seems to remain sane since his speech, for all its oddness and eccentricity, is finally tonally consistent; he seems to have chosen irony over intimacy.

From his philosophy of life, not of course systematically presented, but revealed rather in the stories he told and the way he told them, Stringham must have derived some strength. When Nick meets his friend’s commander at a reunion dinner, Cheesman reports that not only did Stringham work hard and behave well in the Japanese POW camp in spite of his poor health, he also made jokes; in other words, his ability to detach himself from his immediate situation finally was useful, and he retained enough social interest to try to alleviate others’ misery. Certainly there is a sense that Stringham’s talents were wasted, that if he had not been burdened with melancholy and alcoholism, he could have had a happier life. But such speculations are useless. Nick treats Stringham with compassion rather than criticism, and by giving Stringham his voice again in his memoirs, Nick succeeds as both an artist and a friend.

In contrast to those whose voices are memorable in The Music of Time, for example Umfraville and Stringham, are those who are memorable as the objects of others’ speculations. Chief among these is the great industrialist Sir Magnus Donners, the third of those four characters at least mentioned in all twelve books. Although he is discussed on more pages than Umfraville, he makes even fewer appearances;
he only speaks in two books, *A Buyer's Market* and *The Kindly Ones*, and his death is reported in *Books Do Furnish a Room*.

Like Umfraville, Donners is first mentioned at one of Sillery's gossip parties, not as an example of decadence, but in connection with the Donners-Brebner Corporation's search for a new man, a job eventually won by Stringham. Nick's association with Donners is always casual and accidental; the only times the two converse are when Nick is brought to Stourwater by first the Walpole-Wilsons and later the Morelands. Hence, unlike Stringham, who perhaps in spite of himself reveals much about his interior life, Donners is known only superficially. Physical descriptions of both Magnus's person and his castle serve to characterize him; "that colourless, respectable, dominating exterior of 'the Chief'" (BM 138) is at first the only description Nick can provide.

When Nick finally dines with him at Stourwater, he reports that

Sir Magnus himself did not talk much, save intermittently to express some general opinion, which . . . on the lips of a lesser man would have suggested processes of thoughts of a banality so painful -- of such profound and arid depths, in which neither humour, nor imagination, nor, indeed, any form of human understanding could be thought to play the smallest part -- that I almost supposed him to be speaking ironically, or teasing his guests by acting the part of a bore in a drawing-room comedy. I was far from understanding that the capacity of men interested in power is not necessarily expressed in the brilliance of their conversation. (AW 196)

Sir Magnus is of interest to Nick because of the power he exerts in two realms: the public world of finance and the
private world of suspicious sexual exploits, the focus of much speculation and gossip. He is also of interest to Nick because he is so unlike those with whom Nick associates, particularly during Nick's youth, those who value social graces, especially conversation. Magnus's comments seem those of a man of limited intelligence ("'I heard him say once that it took all sorts to make a world,' said Stringham. 'He ought to write some of his aphorisms down so that they are not forgotten'" (BM 199)); his success proves otherwise. His countenance is "'tremendously bland'" (Jean, AW 58), yet "very highly coloured stories . . . circulated about the elaboration of his idiosyncrasies" (CCR 159). Magnus, then, introduces the problem of a man who is incapable or uninterested in telling his own story, although to others his story would be at least as interesting as Umfraville's or Stringham's. The only solution is to rely on gossip.

There is a difference between Magnus as person and Magnus as subject. When Magnus is the subject of gossip, he seems a mysterious if not notorious figure; Moreland, for instance, compares him to the infamous Dr. Trelawney: "'There was talk of nameless rites, drugs, disagreeable forms of discipline -- the sort of thing that might rather appeal to Sir Magnus Donners'" (KO 84). But in person he creates a different impression:

When he spoke, it was as if he had forced himself by sheer effort of will into manufacturing a few stereotyped sentences to tide over the trackless wilderness of social life. . . . A vast capacity for imposing boredom, a sense of immensely powerful stuffiness, emanated from him, sapping every drop
of vitality from weaker spirits.
'So you were at school together,' he said slowly. (KO 111)

Magnus's comments themselves do not seem so appalling; rather, it is from Nick's hyperbolic complaints that we get the vaguest sense of Magnus's verbal deficiencies. Just as none of Magnus's business transactions or "unconventional tastes in making love" is observed directly, our sense of the quality of his speech has to be imagined; if Umfraville and Stringham serve as co-narrators, are known to us as other storytellers in The Music of Time, Donners' opacity characterizes him equally well. The three seem more like friends or acquaintances of Nick's rather than characters of Powell's, which is to say that Powell's narrative strategies succeed.

Sir Magnus Donners does share one trait with storytellers; he is interested in observing others and manipulating personalities. In spite of the boredom Nick initially experiences on his second visit to Stourwater in 1938, the evening's events prove to be among the most memorable in The Music of Time. Sir Magnus has developed an interest in photography, and his seven guests take turns posing as the Seven Deadly Sins in front of his camera. It is Magnus who assigns the actors their sins, showing an insight into his acquaintances', friends', employees' and lovers' characters, as well as his own "administrative capacity" (KO 127). Thirty-three years pass before Nick narrates his friends' creation of the different tableaux, but his memories have been revived by
finally getting a chance to view the pictures in 1968. At that time he was impressed by the way in which the photos seemed 'dated'. . . their peculiarity partly due to the individual technique of Sir Magnus as photographer, efficient at everything he did, but altogether unversed in any approach to the camera prompted by art. . . . the character of the models was scarcely at all transmitted. . . . One speculated whether -- the Seven Deadly Sins pointing the way -- he had later developed this hobby in a manner to include his own tastes as a voyeur. (HSH 61)

The tastes of a voyeur contrast with the indulgences in narcissism claimed by Umfraville and Stringham; in narcissism pleasure in others is inhibited, in voyeurism self-expression is denied. Ironically, when Magnus photographs in a voyeuristic fashion, his subjects are not revealed. In contrast, it is implied that a better picture of the tableaux is rendered by Nick's verbal description of them which takes into account the dynamics of the personalities of the actors and their attitude toward the camera and toward each other. Whether any photographer could capture those subtleties in seven still, silent frames or whether they must be depicted in narrative, in time, is a question Nick does not pursue.

Nick's attitude toward Sir Magnus remains ambivalent. Although he moves from seeing him as "colourless" (BM 138) to one about whom "one would now guess at once . . . was an unusual person, who, even within his own terms of reference, had lived an unusual life" (MP 206), Magnus remains for Nick essentially unknowable. That he is mentioned in each book proves Magnus is in Nick's thoughts, but in The Music of Time
the difference between Nick's thoughts, his internal world, and other people, the inhabitants of an external world, is distinct.

Finally there is the case of Kenneth Widmerpool. He is the only character who is not only referred to but actually present in each of the twelve books. He is the first character described, and the report of his death is the last of The Music of Time's anecdotes. However, his importance should not be exaggerated; in some of the volumes he plays only the smallest of parts. For example, he appears or is referred to on only 10 of The Valley of Bones' 243 pages, 21 of Casanova's Chinese Restaurant's 229, and 29 of The Acceptance World's 214. At the other extreme are A Soldier's Art where mention is made of Widmerpool on 106 out of 228 pages, A Buyer's Market (114/273) and Hearing Secret Harmonies (122/272). More revealing, though, are the tallys of the four trilogies. In the first trilogy, Widmerpool is a subject on 204 out of 717 pages; second, 138/712; third 161/715; and fourth 311/793.

The last figure shows why it may seem as if The Music of Time is largely Widmerpool's story, but the number of references to him or scenes in which he plays a part are more readily understood if one considers that Nick's other long-term acquaintances, for example, Stringham, Templer, Barnby, Giles, Molly Jeavons, and Chips Lovell, are all dead by the end of the war. The only friend of Nick who survives is Hugh Moreland, and he dies in Temporary Kings. New characters like
Bagshaw, Trapnel, and Gwinnett are introduced in the fourth trilogy, but obviously Nick cannot use them as subtly as he has Stringham and Umfraville since the time is not available to watch them change. Furthermore, Nick believes that in middle age the type of friendships he can expect to make will be different:

friends, if required at all in the manner of the past, must largely be reassembled at about this milestone. The changeover might improve consistency, even quality, but certainly lost in intimacy; anyway that peculiar kind of intimacy that is consoling when you are young, though probably too vulnerable to withstand the ever increasing self-regard of later years. (BDFR 3)

In the fourth trilogy, emphasis shifts from intimate friendships to business relationships or observations of public figures.

Widmerpool, as a contributor to Fission, a member of parliament embroiled in espionage scandals, and finally a self-proclaimed prophet of counter-culture revolutionary movements, serves two purposes. Because Nick has known him since their teens, Nick can see Widmerpool through his memories of him: Widmerpool is a character he has internalized. On the other hand, since Widmerpool is a public figure, he functions as a leading actor in the external, social life Nick observes, and Nick can expand his own experience by observing Widmerpool's struggles with his adversaries, for instance Trapnel, Gwinnett, and Murtlock. As the sequence concludes, what we know of Nick's own life is what he is thinking. In the third trilogy, Nick's day-to-day actions and responsibilities in the army anchor his narrative; in the
last trilogy, Nick's reading focuses his thoughts. For example, *Books Do Furnish a Room* begins with Nick's observations on Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and throughout that volume and the whole trilogy he classifies his acquaintances as various types of melancholics; what Nick is doing during the twenty-five years covered in the fourth trilogy (the other three trilogies together cover the same span of time) is thinking about Burton, as well as earning a living and raising two young sons, adventures not suitable as subjects for his narrative.

The subject of his *Books Do Furnish a Room* is, instead, literary life in general and the Widmerpool-Flitton-Trapnel triangle, which provides insight into the strange marriage of two eccentric characters and introduces a third. A gap in the chronology is explained thus: "These events within the family, . . . not to mention the ever-pervading Burton, distracted attention from exterior events. . . . the whole Widmerpool affair" (BDFR 182). Widmerpool belongs to a world observed, an exterior world, and a world of events and actions, rather than the internalized world of aphorisms, imitations, anecdotes, or tall tales, exemplified by the voices of Stringham and Umfraville. Furthermore, Widmerpool is not a subject of gossip to the same extent or in the same way as Donners. Characters speculate on his involvement with Communist agents or the quality of his married life with Pam, but in most of the passages relating to Widmerpool, Widmerpool is directly observed; he speaks for himself. What makes him
tick, however, is no less of a mystery than is what drives Donners, Umfraville, or Stringham.

Whether to deem Widmerpool a friend or an acquaintance of Nick’s is a puzzling question. Stringham and Templer are usually referred to as friends of Nick’s, but, in fact, after *A Question of Upbringing* all Nick’s encounters with them are accidental. In contrast, Nick formally arranges at least three meetings with Widmerpool before the war. On the other hand, there is something in Nick’s and Widmerpool’s characters which prohibits one feeling sympathy for the other. Widmerpool is ceaselessly ambitious; Nick’s sin is sloth: a list of antonyms defining the two could easily be constructed. Nick and Widmerpool, in spite of their numerous meetings, arranged and otherwise, are not friends because Nick cannot penetrate Widmerpool’s solitude. He can respect the way Widmerpool maintains his integrity during Pam’s attacks, but he does not take his side. Finally, when Widmerpool is begging for release from Scorpio’s tribe, Nick offers no help. Nick’s relationship with Widmerpool shows that even fifty years is in some cases not long enough to establish an intimate friendship, that with some, probably many, perhaps most, people all even a sensitive man can expect is a superficial relationship -- not insignificant or insubstantial -- but superficial in the sense of limited to external, public, social, verbal, literal communication.

Hence, Nick reports Widmerpool’s speech as being relentlessly literal. Widmerpool has no understanding of irony or
figurative language; in other words, Widmerpool and Nick finally do not speak the same language. For example, Widmerpool cannot understand the type of off-hand remarks that punctuate the conversation of Nick and Moreland. In his typically pompous voice, Widmerpool informs the two:

'It is one of my principles in life to surround myself with persons whose conduct has satisfied me. Usually the people themselves are quite unaware that they have benefited by the fact that, at one time or another, they made a good impression on me.'
'The opposite process to entertaining angels unawares?'
'I don't quite know what you mean.' (CCR 125)

When Widmerpool does try to express himself figuratively, his comments are absurd: "'You know [my mother] literally grows younger'" (LM 50). Instead of irony, Widmerpool employs sarcasm. When he and Nick encounter Gypsy Jones, Nick does not understand Widmerpool's extreme reaction, but Widmerpool explains: "'She is a Communist. Did you not understand what the words meant? Your denseness is unbelievable'" (KO 229). Widmerpool is also characterized as a non-reader; in fact he never wavers from his youthful position of seeing writing as "'hardly a profession'" (QU 134). He does, of course, write articles on economic theory for Fission, but he does so to promote his politics; writing for him is exclusively a means to an ends. Not all can be writers or professional readers, like Nick, but that literature can in itself be valuable is assumed even by Sir Magnus Donners, who when he learns he has just one year to live, devotes it to reading the best of world literature and listening to the best in music, rather
than increasing his fortune. Widmerpool's impatience with the arts is indicative of the lack of reflection with which he approaches his campaign to excel.

When Widmerpool's diction changes from book to book, it is because he has slipped into the jargon of whichever world he is seeking to conquer, and, of course, his jargon renders him incomprehensible to most and an object of ridicule to many, just what he least desires. Consider the speech he delivers at the Old Boy dinner which precipitates La Bas's stroke:

>'Now if we have a curve drawn on a piece of paper representing an average ratio of persistence, you will agree that authentic development must be demonstrated by a register alternately ascending and descending the level of our original curve of homogeneous development.' (AW 193)

or his luncheon conversation with Nick:

>'I worked out, for example, that since the Slump, stock prices have risen between 217 3/8 per cent and 218 1/2 per cent. So far as I could ascertain, dividends have not exceeded 62 3/4 per cent to 64 5/8 per cent. Those are my own figures. I do not put them forward as conclusive. You follow me?' 'Perfectly.' (CCR 126)

His talk changes once the war begins: "'Come and see me by all means, my boy . . . but bring your own beer . . . I'm up to my arse in bumph and don't expect I shall be able to spare a minute or two for waffling'," he says to Nick, "using a coarsely military boisterousness of tone to which his civilian personality could make no claim" (KO 219). When Nick next encounters Widmerpool, the first words he hears are his new officer composing a letter:
'It is at the same time emphasised that this formation is in no way responsible for the breakdown in administration -- no, no, better not say that -- for certain irregularities of routine that appear to have taken place during the course of conducting the investigation of the case, vide page 23, para 17 of the findings of the Court of Inquiry, and para VII of the above quoted ACI, section (e). . . .',

this time in a voice that "had assumed the timbre and inflections of the Churchill broadcast, slurred consonants, rhythmical stresses and prolations" (VB 239). Widmerpool is a man searching for a voice. After the war, he reverts back to his economic lectures in his articles in Fission. By the time he speaks at the Magnus Donners Prize dinner, his diction has become clearer, but his content is no more lucid:

'I take pride in ridiculing what is -- or rather was -- absurdly called honour, respectability, law, order, obedience, custom, rule, hierarchy, precept, regulation, all that is insidiously imposed by the morally, ideologically, and spiritually naked, and politically bankrupt' (HSH 111),

although in their last conversation, it is revealed that

Widmerpool is again talking another man's language:

'Extraordinary I should not only have forgotten about Donners, but used that erroneous formula [he had asked if Donners had "died"], there being no death, only transition, blending, synthesis, mutation -- just as there are no marriages, except mystic marriages. Marriages that transcend the boundaries of awareness, the unmanifest solutions of Harmony, galvanized by meditation and appropriate rites, the source of all Power . . . . ' (HSH 215)

The inconstancy of Widmerpool's diction reveals his insecurities or his lack of a sense of self.

In this way Widmerpool differs from Stringham and Umfraville; less successful, even perhaps for the most part less stable, men by most standards, their diction remains con-
stant: Umfraville's crude, Stringham's elevated, but once they had adopted a style, they each maintained it; their speech became a way of identifying them. Even Magnus's cliches and banalities became, ironically, distinctively his own. And Nick's voice, that which narrates *The Music of Time*, is stable. The fifty years' experiences recorded all belong to one man; it is the sound of Nick's mind that we hear, one mind, one set of memories. It is not surprising that Widmerpool becomes clearly insane and senile at the end of his life. His problem was always the same: he always wanted to be something other than what he was. His last words are "'I'm leading. I'm leading now'" (HSH 269). His ambition was always so externally directed -- he always wanted to be better than the rest -- that there was no corresponding balance, no inwardly directed ambition to become Widmerpool, in the way that in spite of their failures, Umfraville and Stringham were distinctly themselves.

It is appropriate that it is through these characters' use of language that they chiefly seem distinct from Nick since it is language that is used to externalize thoughts, to transform memories into narratives. The recognition of a pattern depends on the concept of similarity and difference, and in juxtaposing others' stories with the continuity of Nick's own story, Powell again establishes the two complementary patterns of organization in *The Music of Time*.
Chapter 5: Patterns and Plot

*A Dance to the Music of Time* is about Nicholas Jenkins' memories of his experiences. Both how Nick's memory functions and what he perceived and experienced determine the substance of his narrative. As a narrator, Nick exemplifies a quality defined by Daniel Dennett in his study of determinism, *Elbow Room: Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting*: "There is surely a powerful rationale... in support of designing a rational agent to be in general disposed to prize variety, to be bored by repetition -- but, in counterbalance, to be charmed by pattern" (71). This general observation serves as a concise introduction to the appeal of Powell's novel.

On the one hand there is variety, particularly in the diverse characters portrayed. But to manage these characters Powell also devises patterns. Patterns and repetitions are not quite the same because repetition involves identity, the same repeated, which on one level is not possible because things happen in time, but which we understand informally to be possible, for instance, in daily routines. But the repetitions of daily life are not interesting, and hence are not the subject of novels. Novels are about departures from the norm which are still coherent; they are about difference, which is, ironically, the essence of a pattern.

Considering patterns is difficult because on the one hand, some similarity among elements A, B, and C must exist to connect them, to form a pattern, but on the other hand, A, B, and C must be different to be designated as three distinct
items. What Nick remembers is what is different from routine and yet of interest because of its connections with something else; his mind and memory work by comparing and contrasting, which is the process by which patterns are detected or erected, or broken or never brought into being. Nick definitely establishes patterns on the verbal level; he is in total control of the metaphors, conceits, allusions, or imagery he uses in his narrative. On two other levels Powell establishes and Nick records, or both establish, patterns: one, in the plot of the narrative in which certain events form patterns, and two, in the depiction of the consistency or fluctuations in characters’ behavior.

Always, of course, the stress between Nick’s internal organizing mechanism, his memory, and the external world he can deliver in no way but through memory persists. We cannot know if it is solely Nick’s memory that imposes patterns or if another mind would recognize the same patterns, given the same experience, i.e. whether external secret harmonies exist. That the second option possibly remains eternally unverifiable could be argued from the premise that no two people ever experience exactly the same sequence of events. But in the fictional world of a first person novel, things are a bit different because there is no hypothetical remembrer; Nick’s observations on the repetitions in Widmerpool’s life, for example, cannot be disputed or proven by consulting anyone else, not another character in The Music of Time, not even Powell.
And yet as readers we can detect the same patterns as Nick because that is what we do as we read. Reading, then, is itself an odd form of simultaneous repetition and pattern-detection: as we read The Music of Time, repeated again -- exactly, for each reader, each time -- is the story Nick told (using the present tense to discuss what narrators do obscures this), while at the same time, on the first reading, with each new (to us) incident our minds connect new and old, and we detect a pattern; on rereading the book both things happen: a pattern is repeated.

It is in the detection of patterns that the historian's and literary critic's work seems most similar; Powell, interestingly, studied history rather than literature at Balliol College, Oxford.¹ Even a brief summation of the theories on repetition and history of Vico, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche suggests ways in which his insight as a historian may have affected Powell's handling of a novel covering a fifty year span. For example, according to Edward Said's interpretation of Vico in Said's study of filiation and literary influence, The World, the Text, and the Critic,

The vacillation in Vico's thought about filiation between repetition or recurrence and difference was really an expression of the vacillation between an interest in the unchanging, the universal, the constant, the repeatable, on the one hand, and on the other an interest in the original, the revolutionary, the unique and contingent. (116)

Taken out of context, Said could be writing about The Music of Time and Powell rather than Vico, or Nick's reading of Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy as a fitting conclusion
to his memoirs, or about the differences between history and the novel. Said also notes that

repetition for Vico is something that takes place inside actuality, as much inside the realm of facts as inside the mind while surveying the realm of action. Indeed repetition connects reason with raw experience. . . . experience accumulates meaning as the weight of past and similar experiences returns. (113)

That patterns are at once formed inside the mind and revealed in experience is the premise which Powell seems to be exploring in the structure of The Music of Time. It is in this sense that Powell’s historical interests inform his narrative; his interest in change and continuity is not that of a social historian; rather, it is abstract and philosophical.

Two other thinkers who may have influenced Powell’s thinking on repetition are Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. David Pennistone and Hugh Moreland informally allude to Nietzsche’s writings on the eternal recurrence and good and evil. Powell’s model for Pennistone was Captain Alexander Dru, the Kierkegaard scholar who first translated the philosopher’s journals, with whom Powell worked in the War Office. That Powell’s interest in Nietzsche extends beyond using him as a means to characterize Moreland and Pennistone is shown in one peculiar repetition. When Nick encounters Moreland after the war, Moreland is despondent, but jokes "‘I’m beginning to suspect there aren’t really any questions . . . of any consequence, even the old perennial, whether or not to stay alive,’” and Nick responds, "‘Beyond Good and Evil, in fact’" to which Moreland retorts, "‘Exactly -- one touch of Niet-
zesche makes the whole world kin'" (BDPR 120). The last phrase is repeated in the memoirs when Powell writes that Apolli-
naire's works "demonstrate the Nietzschean dictum that the comic is artistic delivery from the nausea of the absurd; as usual one touch of Nietzsche making the whole world kin" (SAAG 86). In the memoirs when Powell mentions Nietzsche it is in discussing aesthetic problems, for example, defending his novel Agents and Patients from the critical charge that it is not serious enough by noting that that "objection always [poses] complex questions; notably Nietzsche's conjecture that the individual when closely examined is always comic, the reason why the Greeks kept the individual out of their tragedies" (FMT 2). But in The Music of Time Niet-
zesche's aesthetics are not at issue; rather, Powell plays with the idea of eternal recurrence.

When Nick and Pennistone part after their first meeting, Nick wonders if they will meet again. Pennistone replies, "'Let's decide to anyway. . . . As we've agreed, these things are largely a matter of will'" (VB 109). But when they do meet again, chance is the cause; Pennistone had forgotten his salutation of farewell, and asks if their meeting again is not "'just one of those eternal recurrences of Nietzsche, which one gets so used to'" (SA 98). This time as they part, they agree "that Nietzschean Eternal Recurrences must bring [them] together soon again" (SA 106). But both know better than to confuse eternal recurrence with coincidence; eternal recurrence posits that "whatever in fact happens, has hap-
pened infinitely many times and will re-happen an infinity of times, exactly in the same way in which it happens now" (Danto 316). Of course, the problem is that for a recurrence to be identical, "it cannot contain any memory of or reference to the earlier one" (Soll 334). Clearly each meeting of Nick and Pennistone is distinct and not an identical recurrence, just as each "prophecy" of Myra Erdleigh is not a prediction based on occult knowledge of the future since the future of the narrative is past. But on another level, Pennistone and Nick’s meetings will recur exactly for a countless if not infinite number of times since the men are characters in a novel; in other words, the theory of eternal recurrence cannot be validated by life experiences, but it can be illustrated by the experience of rereading a novel.

Furthermore, what Nietzsche suggests in The Will to Power, "'... each of these combinations conditions the entire sequence of combinations in the same series'" (qtd. in Soll 328), i.e. "each total state of the world at a particular moment determines the next one and thus indirectly the entire series or cycle" (Soll 328) also holds true for narratives. There is no alternative narrative order or substance; if A Question of Upbringing, for instance, were changed, The Music of Time would be a different work.

Another relevant corollary of eternal recurrence is that "'whoever wants to have a single experience again, must wish to have them all again'" (Nietzsche, qtd. in Soll 334). "Must wish" is here a matter of necessity, not of will, and
again there is an application to the premises of The Music of
Time. Nick can choose to remember and narrate certain events,
but entailed in what choices he makes is remembering the
painful as well as the pleasurable. He cannot, for instance,
remember as jolly the evening he spent with Moreland, Audrey,
and Odo during his leave because he cannot isolate Odo’s
songs and the pleasure of Moreland’s company from his memory
that that same night Chips and Priscilla Lovell and Molly
Jeavons were killed, or, more broadly, his memories of
Stringham are always colored by the knowledge of his friend’s
eventual death at the hands of the Japanese. It would seem
then that amnesia or senility would insure more happiness than
voluntary memory embellished by careful attention to detail
in narration, and similarly Nietzsche acknowledged that the
repeating of pain makes eternal recurrence "the most diffi-
cult of thoughts" (qtd. in Soll 339). But if it is all of
one piece, i.e. Stringham’s humor cannot be remembered except
if his dissipation and suffering are remembered, then Nick
has to choose between silence, thoughtlessness, and bitter-
ness, or a bittersweet recollection of loss which is ulti-
mately, in Nietzschean terms, an affirmation of life: "My
formula for the greatness of a human being is amor fati: that
one wants nothing to be different -- not forward, not back-
ward, not in all eternity’" (Nietzsche, qtd. in Kaufmann
307). Again, the wanting is not a matter of desire, but a
matter of not rejecting, of not desponding. Nick is not like
Proust’s Marcel who welcomes suffering as a source for artis-
tic inspiration, but neither is he like Iris Murdoch's Hilary Burde in *A Word Child* who goes beyond the speculative calm detachment of the voice of T. S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton" to live obsessed and compelled by the knowledge that "what might have been is an abstraction, remaining a perpetual possibility only in a world of speculation" (384) for "All time is unredeemable." Redemption and salvation are not terms Nick would use; what might have been is not his subject, for he is in a sense beyond good and evil. What Nick records are changing patterns; again, theoretically he is close to Nietzsche who saw that "the world at any moment is an arrangement, a pattern of power quanta, of doings," rejecting any notion of "real, objective entities . . . -- that there is anything beyond doings and patterns" (Zuboff 348). Nietzsche is not here describing what reality characters have in fiction or images have in memory, but reading Nietzsche from an aesthetic point of view with Nick in mind is clearly intriguing.  

Similarly, Kierkegaard's short work *Repetition* is equally provocative; since Powell's friend Dru was most interested in Kierkegaard's aesthetics, the similarities in the Dane's metaphysics and Powell's post-war novel are probably not purely coincidental. Kierkegaard's basic premise is that

repetition is a decisive expression for what 'recollection' was for the Greeks. Just as they taught that all knowledge is a recollection, so will modern philosophy teach that the whole of life is a repetition. . . . Repetition and recollection are the same movement, only in opposite directions; for what is recollected has been, is re-
peated backwards, whereas repetition properly so called is recollected forwards. (38)

Furthermore, Kierkegaard notes that "Recollection has the great advantage that it begins with the loss, hence it is secure, for it has nothing to lose" (39), and explains his parody of the narrator returning to Berlin with the hope of repeating former experiences there by showing that

the confusion consists in the fact that the most inward problem is here expressed in an outward way, as though repetition, if it were possible, might be found outside the individual, since it is within the individual it must be found. (14)

Powell, interestingly, is struggling with a number of the same philosophical problems. The co-existence of repetition and recollection as external and internal organizational systems; the problems entailed because of time, reminiscent of Russell's speculation on having a memory of the future; the paradox of the security of speaking from the perspective of one who has lost what he implicitly values; and the stress of repetition as being exclusively internal although what we perceive repeated is external to ourselves: all of these questions, problems, and paradoxes are implicit in The Music of Time, but none has been addressed in criticism of Powell.

Repetition as a strategy in fiction is presently a topic of interest, beginning, perhaps, with Frank Kermode's The Sense of an Ending, which is one source for Peter Brooks' Reading for the Plot; the most thorough study so far is J. Hillis Miller's Fiction and Repetition. The influence of Vico, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard is clear in these works; Brooks, for instance, notes that "an event gains meaning by
its repetition, which is both the recall of an earlier moment and a variation of it: the concept of repetition hovers ambiguously between the idea of reproduction and that of change, forward and backward movement" (99). Kermode and Brooks are most interested in the application of this idea to traditional and non-traditional readings of plots; Miller’s premise is that repetitions create meaning.

Miller outlines two ways of defining repetition based on his reading of Gilles Deleuze’s differentiation in his Logique du Sens between Plato’s and Nietzsche’s understanding of the term. Plato, according to Deleuze, thought of difference by using a notion of "'pre-established similitude or identity,'" positing the world as an "icon," but Nietzsche thought of "'similitude and even identity as the product of a fundamental disparity,'" positing the world as a "phantasm" (5-6). Again reiterated is the fundamental problem in discussing patterns: is an element of a pattern distinguished by the quality of difference or similarity to the member of the sequence which precedes or follows it? Miller concludes that finally "it seems to be impossible to have one form of repetition without the other, even though one form or the other may no doubt be dominant in a given writer" (16); discussing repetition then, given the seemingly exclusive definitions of Nietzsche and Plato, requires that the law of noncontradiction (A or ¬A, never A and ¬A) be suspended.

Miller examines seven English novels in his study, but does not mention The Music of Time which alone could have
served as an illustration of the types of repetitions he catalogues:

words, figures of speech, shapes or gestures, . . .
repetitions that act like metaphors, [and] . . .
events or scenes . . . duplicated within the text.
[Furthermore] motifs from one plot or charac-
ter may recur in another within the same text; . . .
a character may repeat previous generations, or
historical or mythological characters; . . . [and]
finally, an author may repeat in one novel motifs,
themes, characters, or events from his other
novels. (1-2)

Umfraville repeatedly tagged as "horsey," repeated assaults
on Widmerpool's face, the carrying of drunken friends to bed,
the rivalry of St. John Clarke and Horace Isbister repeated
in that of J. G. Quiggin and Mark Members, the similarity of
Scorpio Murdock to the deceased Dr. Trelawney, and the
repetition required in trilogies (provided by the motif of
war as a theatrical production in the third) and sequence
novels (the analogy of social life as a dance): it takes
little effort to think of dozens and dozens of repetitions in
The Music of Time.

The way in which these patterns of repetitions differ
from plots is that a pattern is not bounded; it does not
necessarily have a beginning or an end. Peter Brooks in
Reading for the Plot analyses four different meanings of the
word plot -- area of land, graph, narrative, and a secret
plan -- and finds that what all four have in common is a
sense of boundaries: "Plots are not simply organizing struc-
tures, they are also intentional structures, goal-oriented
and forward moving" (12). Repetitions, in contrast, can defy
the search for finality; Miller notes, for instance, that in *Lord Jim* repetitive situations involving tests of courage do not establish Marlow's reliability or the lack of the same, nor do they help in evaluating Jim's true character; instead, they simply offer alternate ways of interpreting what has gone before while providing no guidance among the choices. The multiple repetitive patterns in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* similarly frustrate the reader who is looking for an explanation for Tess's suffering. Or repetitions can undermine a narrator's meaning, as Miller notes in his study of *Henry Esmond*. In this case a first person narrator relates the story of his life in the third person and tries to establish meaning in his life by drawing connections among incidents, which, ironically, Thackeray guides the reader to reject as insignificant.

In each of the novels Miller studies, the subject is fairly easy to define, and hence the plot can be summarized. But in *The Music of Time* the plot and subject are far more abstract: to say that the novel is about Nick Jenkins' life does not seem quite right since he is not an active participant in many of its longest anecdotes; unlike Henry Esmond, he is not trying to explain, justify, or eulogize himself. To say that the novel is about Nick's mind also does not quite work since the narrative reaches outward beyond Nick. Without a single subject a plot is difficult to define, and without a plot, judging the relationship of the patterns to the plot is impossible. The patterns seem to take the place of plot. It
is not, however, the case that a lack of singular meaning to the repetitions means there is no meaning, which is the position Miller reaches regarding a similar problem in Wuthering Heights; rather, the repetitive patterns mean that that is the way information is organized in the memory. As the patterns provide continuity in Nick's mind, so too they provide continuity among the twelve volumes.

It is surprising that Miller did not examine any multi-volume novels in his study since repetitions are used with a varying degree of success to identify individual novels as elements in a series. The least satisfying type is that which is most literally a repetition: retelling the same story in a subsequent volume which has already been told. This is found in C. P. Snow's Strangers and Brothers series, a set of novels loosely connected by the use of the same first person narrator, Lewis Eliot, who seems to think that his life can be compartmentalized, different sets of friends and activities kept always distinct, an idea Nick gave up as possible in his life in his early twenties and one that is obviously contrary to how memory operates. An example of the type of literal repetition that is dull reading is found in chapters 47 and 48 of Snow's Time of Hope in which George Passant's trial in Strangers and Brothers is summarized. The reader of the first novel in the series gains nothing by reading these two chapters in the second. These chapters do not contribute to the making of a pattern because elements in patterns possess differences as well as similarities with one another.
Patterns, then, move the reader forward, not necessarily in a purposive fashion, as do plots, but in the sense that new information which changes what has gone before is provided.

Repetition is more skillfully used in Paul Scott's Raj Quartet to create a pattern that unifies his four-volume novel. There are more interesting similarities between the Raj Quartet and The Music of Time than between The Music of Time and Strangers and Brothers; still, the differences are more instructive. One of the main repetitions in Scott's work is the retelling again and again of the story of Daphne Manners' rape in the Bibighar Gardens, which is identified on the first page of the work as both the particular subject of the novel and as a metaphor for the quartet's theme. The Music of Time, in contrast, begins with an image of an allegory, Poussin's painting, which represents nothing concrete or historical; the painting itself is not the novel's subject but is used as a metaphor for human society and mortality. The dance will become one of a number of repeated metaphors, perhaps primary in just its position, perhaps primary in significance as well. Nick's purpose is not as clear as Scott's unnamed narrator's. Nick recollects fifty years of highly idiosyncratic memories; the third person Raj narrator investigates and reports the events of five years using historical documents to ground his omniscient narrative.

The Raj narrator begins with the Bibighar incident, but it is placed in a historical context; it is not the beginning of the Raj he explores but a metaphor for the
beginning of its end. When the story of Daphne Manners' rape is retold, the purpose is not to remind the reader of the facts but rather to try to find the facts; in other words, with each new version or retelling, we feel as if we might be getting nearer to the truth or at least discovering how difficult it will be to find the truth of what happened and where the implications of the events will finally end. We feel that we are in a world where there is a truth that can be known, that needs to be known, but this truth is obscured by the same forces which brought the stories collected by the narrator into being. The Raj narrator is trying to find his way in a world of truth and lies, guilt and innocence. What happened in the Bibighar Gardens on August 9, 1942 will not be changed by whatever follows from it. But "the situation," as Merrick, the sadistic English police captain, and Kumar, the wrongfully accused Indian, call it, the psychological truth of the significance of the rape and Kumar's persecution in Merrick's hands, that itself is divorced from the facts and is malleable and indefinite.

Since in The Music of Time the significant events are not public and historical, since only Nick's version is known, the sense that there is a truth about Jean's feelings for Nick, for instance, in the same way that there is a truth about the events of August 9, 1942, is missing. Furthermore, the story of Nick and Jean's relationship is not central to the "plot" of The Music of Time; it is simply one of many strands which woven together provide the novel's texture.
Even to call it a subplot is problematic since there is no main plot, but the problems it introduces regarding certainty and continuity are thematically strong. We repeatedly recall the events of *The Acceptance World* as Nick talks to Duport and Brent or whenever he sees Jean again, and we accumulate various impressions of Nick’s, but finally there seems to be nothing verifiable or definite, neither what is given at the moment nor the sum of the references. In contrast, the Raj narrator lets it be understood that during their secret romance Hari and Daphne knew where they stood with one another, even if their feelings were hidden from the world. But in *The Music of Time*, even private truths are illusive. For the characters in *The Raj Quartet* and initially for the reader, the truth of what happened at the Bibighar Gardens on August 9, 1942 is elusive; it exists, but it is hard to find. In contrast, it is not that the truth of Nick and Jean’s relationship, their feelings for one another -- the cause of their attraction and the failure of their love -- is hard to grasp or find; it simply is not there. For example, when Nick learns from Jimmy Brent of the night Jimmy and Jean met at Peter’s during Nick’s affair with Jean, Nick realizes that Jean deliberately left Jimmy out of her descriptions of the dinner she attended at her brother’s:

> In short, this utterly unnecessary, irrational lie was a kind of veiled attack on our own relationship, a deliberate deceiving of me for no logical reason, except that, by telling a lie of that kind, truth was suddenly undermined between us; thus even though I was unaware of it, moving us inexorably apart. (VB 130)
The first person narrator is limited not only by being unable to know what Jean was thinking but also by being unable to know simple facts against which he could judge his lover's conversation.

Each time Nick's affair with Jean is unknowingly attacked by new informers, his memory, an internal repetition of what he thought he knew, is changed, and there is no end to modifications of feelings, which have no clear beginnings or endings. In *The Music of Time*, repetition, as exemplified in allusions within the text to phantasmal, fleeting feelings about Jean, is of the Nietzschean variety; there is no absolute or even first occurrence. In contrast, the repetition of the Bibighar Gardens scene in Scott's work presumes a first and unalterable instance; Platonic repetition is exemplified. *The Raj Quartet* ends on August 9, 1947, with Guy Perron leaving India after spending his last days still searching for Kumar. The lives of the characters of the novel go on, but the main plot of *The Raj Quartet* is over. Beginning and ending on the same day in this case does not provide a sense of circularity. It is the five years that are important; time in Scott's novel functions linearly, even if, as Patrick Swinden has noted in *Paul Scott: Images of India*, "events do not succeed one another in a straightforward linear way. . . . Instead they curve around from the future into the past and back into the present -- which is always Bibighar" (98). Scott's narrator wants to provide simultaneous portraits of different sets of characters in different circumstances doing
different things at the same time; since this is impossible, he orients the separate sequential scenes around the center of the reverberating Bibighar rape to provide the illusion of simultaneity. In contrast, it is the patterns themselves that provide the illusion of sequence in The Music of Time; in Powell's work there is only one locale and one actual time: Nick's mind and the remembered past.

There is a natural ending to The Raj Quartet; it is bounded by the historical end of British rule in India. Granted, some of the English community remain behind, for instance, the Smalleys whose story is told in a sequel to the quartet, Staying On, but Scott's main interest is with those who are in conflict with the people they rule. His strongest creation is Ronald Merrick, the superintendent of police. Merrick neither leaves with the rest of the raj nor stays on; he is murdered in the closing days of British rule. The death of Merrick provides a sense of an ending to the novel, although the quartet is flawed by questions left unanswered: Why does Kasim resurface only to be butchered? Why is Mrs. Layton dropped out of Book IV? Why isn't Colonel Layton developed as a foil to Merrick? What becomes of Lady Manners? are a few examples. An omniscient narrator could tidy up these loose ends; in the case of The Music of Time, in contrast, Nick can only provide what Nick knows. We may remain curious about the later behavior of certain characters, but in a first person narrative which defies traditional notions of plot, that is not a weakness.
What Powell does have trouble with is ending the sequence. Since there is no central mystery, plot, or problem, there is no solution. The only natural boundary to Nick's memory is his death, and a first person narrator cannot die. However, since Nick's subject in his memoirs has been his social life rather than his marital, familial, fantasy, or intellectual life, his gradual withdrawal from society entails an end to his project. At several points in *Hearing Secret Harmonies* Nick, who has left London for the countryside and retired from journalism, complains of the time social gatherings take from his writing; as he ages, time to work seems of more importance. Social life continues without Nick; however, its actors are younger. Although it is the last novel in the sequence, *Hearing Secret Harmonies* focuses on a number of new young characters, for example, Scorpio Murtlock, Fiona Cutts, Gibson Delavaquerie, and Barnabas Henderson, but with none of these does Nick approach the intimacy he shared with Moreland or the insight he had of others like Trapnel.

The main character in the twelfth novel is Widmerpool; what is followed in its plot is his strange revolt against conformity and his involvement in black magic. Widmerpool's role becomes increasing important in the last trilogy; mention is made of him on 311 of its 793 pages (compare 204/717, 138/712, and 161/715 for the other three). The last trilogy also covers a period of twenty-five years, as long as the other three trilogies combined. When Widmerpool's death is
reported in the closing pages, it seems as if we have finished his life story, and in the image Nick provides of Widmerpool running through the mist, we are reminded of the opening pages of the sequence.

In nearly closing the twelve volumes with an image that recalls their beginning, Powell provides the illusion of circularity; however, the introductory and concluding comments that precede and follow the first and last memories or episodes of the story belie this same illusion. The effect is that the sequence's structural principle seems both circular and not circular; we have returned to the start and we have not. It is clear from the first two paragraphs of A Question of Upbringing that Nick begins by thinking back on school-days, days that are past and never again to be repeated, and in Hearing Secret Harmonies' last three paragraphs, it is clear that Nick's bonfire is distinct from the fire he saw the workmen build as he left Henderson's gallery, the one he mentions in the first paragraph of his book; time has passed between the beginning and end of his act of writing as well as within the plot of his narrative. Powell structures the sequence both circularly and linearly, just as he illustrates both Nietzschean (circular) and Platonic (linear) types of repetiton.3

The very last line of Hearing Secret Harmonies, "Even the formal measure of the Seasons seemed suspended in the wintry silence," is another illustration of this tension. The narrative, on the one hand, is caught, suspended, static, and
unchanging, but on the other hand, it is experienced word by word, line by line, book by book; it seems to move. "The Seasons" Nick refers to here may be Nicolas Poussin's subject in the painting A Dance to the Music of Time. The four figures that Nick deems the Seasons personified appear to be still, but stasis is antithetical to dance; for them to be identifiable as dancers, they must be moving. Their stillness is impossible and illusory but also apparent.

Perhaps the most quoted passage from The Music of Time is the lines in the introductory paragraphs describing Nick's response to his memory of Poussin's painting. These lines suggest Nick's interest in patterns that emerge in social life and are the first instance of the use of a metaphor that recurs throughout the sequence:

The image of Time brought thoughts of mortality: of human beings, facing outward like the Seasons, moving hand in hand in intricate measure: stepping slowly, methodically, sometimes a trifle awkwardly, in evolutions that take recognisable shape: or breaking into seemingly meaningless gyrations, while partners disappear only to reappear again, once more giving pattern to the spectacle: unable to control the melody, unable, perhaps, to control the steps of the dance. (QU 2)

Nick is not describing Poussin's painting; he is trying to capture an image that came to mind while watching workmen build a fire. In other words, he has internalized Poussin's painting; what we know about the painting, like what we know of anything in The Music of Time, is how Nick remembers it.

Nick's memory of the painting seems shaped by his need for a metaphor to introduce his memoirs. Nick notes that Poussin's dancers face "outward." What this means is that
they cannot see one another; since Nick interprets the figures as the Seasons, he implies that the future and the past are unknowable. Although they are linked hand in hand, the dancers cannot see across to the one who is now where they have been or where they are going. Juxtaposed are the "evolutions that take recognisable shape" and those that are judged "seemingly meaningless gyrations"; the first alludes to the patterns that are distinguishable in the course of the novel, while the second suggests disconnection, but importantly qualifies this with "seemingly," thereby suggesting that incidents that are seemingly meaningless are, in fact, meaningful. This juxtaposition is repeated with a difference in the closing phrases of the sentence. On the one hand, the dancers cannot "control the melody," i.e. what is given, some of the circumstances of their lives, but on the other hand, "perhaps" they can "control the steps of the dance," perhaps they can make some free choices. But perhaps not: just as Powell reserves the possibility that all incidents fall into meaningful patterns, he reserves the possibility that all choices are determined. In the fictional world, in Nick's world, all incidents and choices of characters should seem connected and coherent, i.e. determined by Powell deliberately and purposely. And in Nick's memory, and perhaps in our memory too, what exists or persists is what is meaningful. Beyond that, in whatever real terms our actions in social life can be judged, the patterns are harder to distinguish, as is our degree of freedom: we want both freedom and coher-
ence, and the two may be incompatible.

Preceding Nick's meditation on his memory of the paint-
ing is a brief description of its subject:

the men themselves as they turned from the fire, suddenly suggested Poussin's scene in which the Seasons, hand in hand, and facing outward, tread in rhythm to the notes of the lyre the winged and naked greybeard plays. (QU 2)

But this is not literally what Nick can see. In a painting, treading and playing cannot truly be represented because both activities are defined by movement. It is Nick's imagination that initially supplies the illusion of treading and playing; his catalogue of the contrasting types of movements of the dancers and the force of the melody itself are internal responses to the external experience of viewing Poussin's painting. Again, memory and imagination combine to create something new out of something constant, an unchanging painting.

In painting one moment is captured; the viewer can see the whole of the work at once. The viewer can examine details and parts of the painting in any order for any duration, but always he has access to the whole; his understanding is gained in time, but not through time. The "painter's time," Nick reports, is thus "unhurried"; "the mood is genial, composed." The case is different in narratives because the whole must be approached through time, through the accumulation of episodes, inevitably delivered in sequence; a writer's time is thus "far less relaxed, indeed appallingly restless" (HSH 33). Through beginning at the beginning,
anticipating an end, and using his memory to contain the meaning of what he reads, word by word, chapter by chapter, book by book, the reader is able to understand what he has read, not what he is reading. In time, some passages or episodes fade from memory; what is remembered from the first chapter is usually what is shown to matter through its connections with later events, its place in a pattern. Because the reader must read in time, i.e. displace in his mind the last sentence read to accomodate the next, much is temporarily inaccessible; the reader’s memory has to reconstruct the plot.

Paintings, in contrast, do not have beginnings and ends, and apprehension of their completeness, their meaning, is possible (but not likely) immediately. Memories of our lives, like Nick’s memories, seem like they could, theoretically, be accessed immediately; it seems like all memories should be simultaneously present in one’s mind. But we speak of the stories of our lives, rather than the pictures of our lives, because memories, like the episodes of a plot, are remembered sequentially, even though they are all equally past and spatially occupy the same place, our minds.

Nick seems frustrated by the inherent limitations of narrative, those limitations imposed by time. Thinking over his stay as a middle-age man in the same hotel he visited as a boy, Nick wonders "what constitutes experience. A close examination of what happened at any given period in itself provokes an unnatural element, like looking at a large oil
painting under a magnifying glass, the over-all effect lost" (TK 52). This is a good metaphor for the experience of reading *The Music of Time*. Surely appreciation is enhanced by looking at the details of paintings, but to gain the "over-all effect," the whole of the painting must be viewed at once. Similarly, the reader of *The Music of Time* can be delighted with the craftsmanship of a single episode, but that episode is best understood in the context of its chapter, that chapter in the context of its book, that book in the context of the entire work. It is when an episode or an anecdote is later found to form part of a pattern that it is invested with its full meaning. Until she finishes *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, the reader's position is similar to that of the young Nick, who notes near the end of the lessons of *A Buyer's Market* that "matters could be considered with justice only in relation to a much larger configuration, the vast composition of which was at present -- that at least was clear -- by no means even nearly completed" (260).

In contrast to the metaphor comparing the discernment of patterns to seeing the whole picture are metaphors that emphasize the dynamic quality of patterns emerging in time. Chief among these, is, of course, the image of the dance, but the image of movement that leads nowhere, as exemplified in Widmerpool's jogging, is also recurrent. The image of the dance opens and closes the framing paragraphs of the sequence; the image of Widmerpool running in the mist begins and ends the sequence of episodes in the work. This image is
recalled when Widmerpool surfaces unexpectedly:

His reappearance, especially in that place, helped to prove somehow rather consolingly, that life continued its mysterious, patterned way. Widmerpool was a recurring milestone on the road; perhaps it would be more apt to say that his course, as one jogged round the track, was run from time to time, however different the pace, in common with my own. (LM 44)

Both the dance depicted in Poussin's painting and Widmerpool's jogging routes are circular. The primary difference in the images is that the dance referred to is a social activity; people are linked in an affirmation of community, although the fact that they cannot see one another makes their dance seem somewhat bittersweet. In contrast, Widmerpool jogs alone. Even in his fatal run, he had separated from Murtlock's other followers; typically he is solitary, a man apart. Nick is at once solitary and social; he sees himself, like Widmerpool, to be travelling down his own road, but he also sees himself as having a position in the dance:

Afterwards, that dinner in the Grill [Mona and Templer's anniversary dinner, the night Nick begins his affair with Jean] seemed to partake of the nature of a ritual feast, a rite from which the four of us emerged to take up new positions in the formal dance with which human life is concerned. At the time, its charm seemed to reside in a difference from the usual run of things. Certainly the chief attraction of the projected visit would be absence of all previous plan. But, in a sense, nothing in life is planned -- or everything is -- because in the dance every step is ultimately the corollary of the step before; the consequence of being the kind of person one chances to be. (AW 63)

A "ritual feast" is an occasion of repetition; interestingly, the attraction of rituals -- organized, deliberate repeti-
tions -- rests in their quality of difference from "the usual run of things." But again Powell reserves the possibility that even in ordinary life patterns of behavior can be found. Always of interest in Powell's work is the focus on the movement of individuals, the way character is distinguished in the patterns in which a person finds himself a part.

Like the image of the dance which Nick uses repeatedly to describe in broad terms the movements of his friends are the conceits or widely separated but recurrent metaphors used to describe characters. Especially in the case of minor characters, these repetitive descriptions are useful because they prompt the reader's memory of their previous appearances. But beyond the utility of repetition are the thematic implications. That when he first sees Sir Magnus Donners in 1928 Nick notices "something odd, even a trifle disturbing, about the set of his [Donners'] mouth" (BM 136) and when Nick last sees the great industrialist in 1945 "the set of Sir Magnus's mouth, always a trifle uncomfortable to contemplate, had become very slightly less under control" (MP 207) shows constancy of character while allowing for small modifications. "The kind of person one chances to be" remains essentially the same; when differences appear, they are noticeable because of the assumption of constancy. Or perhaps what remains constant are Nick's impressions; when he sees Magnus in 1945, his memory refers him back to his first sighting of Donners, just as the words he chooses in The Military Philosophers recall those of A Buyer's Market.
Nick controls the verbal repetitions of the novel which serve to establish continuity among the twelve volumes. To allow for effective instances of repetition, Powell must provide a first instance; in a linear text, there has to be a first element of a pattern. The movement of the narration is slowed when Nick provides a sustained description that later will be found to be the first element in a series; the four page description of Barbara Goring pouring sugar over Widmerpool’s head is a good example of this. Subsequent similar episodes are never described at such length; the first humiliation of Widmerpool that Nick witnesses is so graphically described that it becomes something to which Nick only has to allude for the reader to see a pattern emerging.

At other times the purpose of sustained metaphors or descriptions is to categorize a minor character who nevertheless remains unforgettable. For instance, on first sighting Magnus Donners’ castle, Nick describes it as being like a fairy tale castle that could vanish, leaving Donners in rags (BM 186). This same comparison is recalled as Nick tours the castle where "the cumulative magnificence seemed only to enhance the earlier fancy that, at some wave of the wand ... furniture and armour, pictures and hangings, gold and silver, crystal and china, could turn easily and instantaneously into a heap of withered leaves blown about by the wind" (BM 201-2). Such musings are in keeping with Donners’ first name, Magnus, which suggests greatness and the mystery of a magus, although Nick seems to find him banal, an unen-
taining conversationalist (BM 196). But what clearly comes through is that Nick is not sympathetic to Donners' way of life. Commerce and politics are worlds foreign enough to him to seem magical, and, in fact, Magnus is an alchemist of sorts; he turns base metals into gold. Still, Nick seems sure that such power is fickle and transitory.

Another function of sustained metaphors is to provide continuity to a book that studies a number of disparate characters who must be introduced, matched, and reconciled in the course of a single volume. The title of *Temporary Kings*, explained at the beginning of the volume, provides a metaphorical foundation for comparing and contrasting both familiar and newly introduced characters. The figures on the ceiling of the Venetian palace Nick visits at the literary conference, Candaules and Gyges, provide one example of temporary kings, but discussions of the drive for power of Nick's friends suggest other, less obvious examples. For instance, Prof. Emily Brightman says that Ferrand-Seneshal, involved in voyeuristic-exhibitionist behavior rivaling Candaules and Gyges', possessed "a court of toadies. Certain persons require a court. Others prefer a harem. That is not quite the same thing" (19). Nick remembers this judgment while observing Louis Glober, aging American film magnate: "As before in the Palazzo, he seemed to hope for no more than to collect round him as many persons as available. That was simply because collecting people round him (creating one of those rudimentary courts adumbrated by Dr. Brightman) brought
a sense of confidence in himself" (132); the metaphor is recalled midway through this episode when the party is on the verge of ending: "Glober, fearing dispersal of his court, or that its courtiers were plotting against him, turned back to make sure we were included" (140). Odo Stevens, who is capitalizing on his rather shady war experiences in a series of fictionalized memoirs, is later compared to Glober: "Like Glober, he had a taste for forming courts" (159). A character that appeared to hold great promise in his youth, but never lived up to his or others' expectations, Bill Truscott, is recalled in the same fashion as the grabbers previously described: "It was true he had been one of the staunchest vassals of Sillery's court" (216), but unlike the others, to some extent because of Widmerpool's treachery, his chance to reign as a "temporary king" was not to extend past his schooldays, and so he remained forever a vassal, never a king. The fate of such kings is captured in paintings by Daniel Tokenhouse, an artist introduced in this volume, who depicts "kings and bishops, easily recognizable by their crowns and mitres . . . toppling into the abyss" (124), a description that sums up the fates of Widmerpool and Ferrand-Seneschal, the two who fall most violently in this volume that examines power, defeat, and death.

Like the metaphors that unify Temporary Kings, repetitive imagery is used to provide continuity and sustain tone both within and between the volumes of The Music of Time. One obvious example is the fire imagery that begins and ends the
whole of *The Music of Time*, but on a smaller scale, the imagery of fire and smoke connect the first episode of the work with the introductory paragraphs. The mist through which Nick sees Widmerpool running is "tinted like cigar-smoke" (QU 2) and smells of "coke fire" (3); later in the chapter the lingering stench of Nick's Uncle Giles' turkish cigarette will cause trouble for Nick and Stringham, and when Le Bas finds Templer's tobacco pouch he gains an excuse to expel him. Other equally unpleasant olfactory images suggest the staleness of Nick's school environment: "Still pondering on this vision of Widmerpool, I entered the house, encountering in the hall its familiar exhalation of carbolic soap, airing blankets, and cold Irish stew" (7), a list that is repeated when Widmerpool is encountered after the Braddock Alias Thorne incident:

He stood there in the shadowy space by the slab . . . his appearance suggesting rather some unusual creature actually bred in those depths by the slab, amphibious perhaps, though largely belonging to this land-world of blankets and carbolic: scents which attained their maximum density at this point, where they met and mingled with the Irish stew, which, coming from the territories of laundry baskets and coke, reached its most potent force on the first step of the stairs. (46-7)

Embedded within this image is a recurrent metaphor: Widmerpool as "like some uncommon specimen of marine life" (50-1). The effect of this simile is enhanced by his name that suggests water ("mer" and "pool"). We learn later that Widmerpool's father dealt in liquid manure (BM 58) (should it be "merde" pool?), a fact that is ironically recalled in the last episode of *The Music of Time* by Duport labeling his
enemy, "'that chateau-bottled shit, Widmerpool'" (HSH 254).

With Widmerpool, a complex character whose name is associated with fluidity and who in the course of the work assumes many different roles, each new image ironically suggests greater solidity, but in the case of minor characters, repeated images provide a sense of superficial constancy. When Tuffy Weedon (Stringham's mother's secretary, later his guardian of sorts, still later General Conyers' wife) is first introduced, she is described as only "less glacial" than Buster Foxe, and her palm is "cool and brittle" (QU 58). When Nick meets her again, she has taken charge of keeping Stringham from drink; her manner is described as one of "chilly amiability" (LM 163) and "her glacial smile" (LM 236) is recalled. The coolness of her temper and self-control is seen when she removes Stringham from his mother's party in Casanova's Chinese Restaurant; although only the phrase "Miss Weedon smiled coldly" (CCR 180) explicitly recalls the previous descriptions, her manner throughout the scene is icy. When Nick last sees her, she is General Conyers' fiance, and even in their pleasant meeting, her "icy, malicious smiles" are in evidence (KO 214).

Allusions within the sequence to events from other volumes are also a mark of Powell's prose. The most frequent allusion is to the time Barbara Goring poured sugar over Widmerpool's head, an event that is metaphorically repeated throughout the book and forms one of the sequence's unifying patterns. Within a single episode in Temporary Kings, the
major events in the pattern are recalled closely together.
We learn that while Glober was learning cricket he accidently
hit Widmerpool in the face with a peach. This story recalls
the time at school when Widmerpool was hit with a banana,
also in the face (152). A little while later a waltz is
played which Widmerpool had claimed to be his favorite, "just
before Barbara Goring poured sugar over his head" (158).
These memories seem to be connected to Ada’s conclusion,
readily accepted by Nick, that Widmerpool enjoys being embara-
rassed by his wife Pamela’s outrageous behavior, but one
hundred pages later we find that Nick has been reminding us
of these events to prepare us for Widmerpool’s attempting to
control Pamela (as he tried to subdue Barabara Goring), only
to be grossly humiliated by her accusations, and this time
punched in the face (TK 263). In the progress of Widmerpool’s
humiliation and assaults to his face, we find how one event
triggers the memory of a similar one, and the accumulation of
such events provides a meaningful pattern: the internal
organizational principle of memory and the external principle
of patterning meetc.

The most obvious repetitions involve Widmerpool, whose
humiliations resound through all twelve volumes. The incident
most frequently recalled as a touchstone for the degree of
humiliation endured by Widmerpool, the time Barbara Goring
poured sugar over his head at a debutante ball, is, in fact,
ot the first event in the series, although it is the first
Nick witnesses. The first occurred when the captain of the
school cricket team accidentally hit Widmerpool in the face with a banana. Templer witnessed this disgrace, but it is Stringham who tells Nick the tale. According to Stringham, instead of becoming infuriated, Widmerpool was ingratiated. The sugar bowl incident is remembered in context of the tales of the banana incident. In the sugar bowl scene, Nick was initially surprised by Widmerpool's act of will as Widmerpool attempted to prevent Barbara from leaving. Barbara responded by holding the sugar castor over Widmerpool's head "like the sword of Damocles above the tyrant." The castor dropped from its base, and all its sugar poured onto Widmerpool's head "in a dense and overwhelming cascade," leaving him appearing "beyond words grotesque." But Nick, knowing of the banana incident, saw more than was readily apparent:

I remembered Stringham's exact phrase: 'Do you know, an absolutely slavish look came into Widmerpool's face.' There could have been no better description of his countenance as he shook off the sugar on to the carpet beneath him. Once again the same situation had arisen; parallel acceptance of public humiliation; almost the identically explicit satisfaction derived from grovelling before someone he admired; for this last element seemed to show itself unmistakably -- though only for a flash -- when he glanced reproachfully towards Barbara: and then looked away. This self-immolation, if indeed to be recorded as such, was displayed for so curtailed a second that any substance possessed by that almost immediately shifting mood was to be appreciated only by someone, like myself, cognisant already of the banana incident. (BM 72)

A number of assumptions are implicit in this passage. First, Nick was not present during the banana incident, but Stringham's narrative has created in Nick's mind a picture of Widmerpool so explicit that it can be recalled without ever
first having been seen. The reader, of course, will be in the same position henceforth. Whenever the sugar bowl scene is referred to, the detail of Nick's description of the cascading sugar will be rich enough for that image to be recalled. Furthermore, the passage shows that memory affects perception; each viewer sees a different scene. Because of the banana incident, Nick sees a look on Widmerpool's face that another might have missed, a look, that for all we know, is simply not on Widmerpool's face, but is to be found only in Nick's memory of Stringham's (or Templer's) tale. Finally, the extensiveness of Nick's detail and reflections prolong the scene; time is distorted because what happens in an instant requires five minutes of attention.

Nick himself makes the connections between this scene and subsequent ones. For instance, when Colonel Hogbourne-Wilson curses Widmerpool for problems in traffic control, Nick reflects: "it was an occasion as painful to watch as the time when Budd had hit him between the eyes full-pitch with an overripe banana; or that moment, even more portentous, when Barbara Goring poured sugar over his head at a ball" (SA 56). To read this passage one would think that Nick had seen Budd's banana hit Widmerpool, but he had not, he had only heard Stringham's story. But here he has appropriated the story as a memory. In this case, Nick is more interested in the differences in the situations. In the first two situations, "Widmerpool's bearing had indicated, under its mortification, masochistic acceptance of the assault -- 'that
slavish look' Peter Templer had noted on the day of the banana. Under Colonel Hogbourne-Johnson's tirade, Widmerpool's demeanour proclaimed no such thing" (SA 56). The phrase "that slavish look" is Stringham's; at least before it had been attributed to Stringham, and seems more in line with his observations. Perhaps Powell has made a mistake, but perhaps he wishes to show that once one appropriates another's memory, the source of that memory is unimportant.

Although there may be a change in Widmerpool's reaction when he is attacked by his colonel, the assaults do not end. He is hit with a peach in the face by Louis Glober. When he tries to restrain Pam, as he tried to restrain Barbara, he is humiliated. The Quiggin twins throw red paint over him when he is a university chancellor, prompting another recollection of the sugar bowl scene, ending with the comment, "the fact remained that, while he had endured the earlier onslaught with unconcealed wretchedness, he had now learnt to convert such occasions -- possibly always sexually gratifying -- to good purpose where other ends were concerned," the good purpose here referred to being Widmerpool's use of the incident as a forum for aligning himself with student activists. Nick wonders if things would have been different if Widmerpool had been as self-possessed as a young man, but concludes that "the paint-throwing incident, like the cascade of sugar, was merely part of the pattern of Widmerpool's life" (HSH 47).

The sugar bowl incident is obviously to Nick exemplary
of Widmerpool’s character, and as the type of story that circulates in gossip, bizarre enough to be remembered, others’ impressions of Widmerpool are limited by it. At the end of the war, seeing Widmerpool’s wedding announcement, Archie Gilbert, the perennial dancing man, remembers Widmerpool’s name only because of the fiasco at the Huntercombes; Nick’s in-laws, George Tolland and Roddy Cutts, remember him for the same reasons (MP 244, CCR 84). The repetitions in The Music of Time leave the reader in a similar position; expectations of future humiliations for Widmerpool remain constant throughout the sequence and end only with the announcement of his death. The reader’s position, in fact, is closer to Nick’s than to Gilbert’s, Tolland’s, or Cutts’; we presume that they only remember the one incident, and so cannot perceive the pattern of which their own comments become a part. Only Nick’s position is constant. The action reported is Widmerpool’s, but whether he perceives the pattern of his own life at all or as Nick sees it is unknowable. Cutts, who served with Widmerpool in the House of Commons, could have witnessed other episodes that would fit the pattern Nick designs, or in Cutts’ memory what remains constant about Widmerpool could be entirely different. Both possibilities remain unknowable. In other words, Widmerpool’s story is Nick’s story as much as Nick’s story is Widmerpool’s. Although the episodic repetitions involving Widmerpool occur in a world external to Nick’s mind, finally their significant location is Nick’s internal world, his memory.
The same holds true for repetitions that do not involve Widmerpool; of course, the subjective quality of episodic repetitions is even more evident when only Nick remains constant. Episodes featuring similar circumstances and different characters serve several purposes. First, Nick commonly thinks in terms of comparison and contrast; obviously, situations that are at once similar and different to ones remembered stimulate his thinking about how he and his friends have or have not changed. Secondly, these repetitions are useful in establishing continuity among the volumes of the novel, providing a sense of a unified scheme. Finally, in a work in which even the present is illusive and chronology distended, episodes that recall the past reinstate time and ironically promote the sense of progress or change through focus on what remains the same.

In each case the stress between the external, what is observed, and the internal, the significance of what is observed, is evident; even a simple detail of positioning, a matter of form, can at once recall a previous episode and illustrate changes in Nick, thereby advancing the plot. In a sense Nick's and Jean's affair begins in the backseat of Peter Templer's car on New Year's Eve, 1932, a scene that recalls the return from the 1923 summer dinner party when, sharing a motoring rug with Templer and Lady McReith, Nick intuitively became aware of their relationship. Ten years later, when he took Jean into his arms for the first time, Nick felt that "All at once everything was changed. Her body
felt at the same time hard and yielding, giving a kind of
glow as if live current issued from it" (AW 65), a feeling
not unlike the one he experienced before: "We rolled along
under the brilliant stars, even Peter and Lady McReith at
last silent, perhaps dozing: though like electric shocks I
could feel the almost ceaseless vibration of her arm next to
mine, quivering as if her body, in spite of sleep, knew no
calm" (QU 94-5). The differences are, of course, of more
importance than the similarities; with Jean, Nick is not an
on-looker, their affair will be a central episode in the
novel (unlike the Templer-McReith coupling), and ten years
have passed. Most importantly, Nick has grown in confidence
and experience since his first visit to the Templers'. Nick
ends his description of the beginning of his affair with Jean
by remarking, "I used to wonder afterwards whether, in the
last resort, of all the time we spent together, however
ecstatic, those first moments on the Great West Road were not
the best" (AW 65), a portentous statement which is confirmed
by the tense, unsatisfied tone of Nick's recollections of
Jean.

Forty years pass between the ecstatic moments in Peter's
car and Nick's evaluation of the same. In one sense the Nick
who makes that judgment is not the same as the one in the
backseat of Peter's car; time has changed him because in time
knowledge of the outcome of his affair with Jean has changed
his memory of its beginning. Yet the sense in which Nick the
writer is the same as Nick the schoolboy is of more conse-
quence; he has to remain the same to see the similarities. Nick in 1923 could not tell that his feelings when riding home from the ball would be the first element in a series, even a series of just two instances. Whether Nick connected what he was feeling in 1932 as he held Jean in his arms with how he felt in 1923 is unknowable. It could be that at that point he created the pattern, but all that is certain is that a third Nick, Nick the writer, discerned the pattern; the significant similarity between the two instances rests in language, the words Nick chooses. In fact, Nick the narrator does not make the connection; after *A Question of Upbringing*, Lady McReith is not mentioned again until *The Kindly Ones*. The connection between the two car trips depends on the reader’s memory. Again, what is repeated, both the actions and the words describing them, is external, but the recognition of a pattern occurs internally within Nick’s and the reader’s minds.

Not only do similarities and differences in Nick’s actions and responses form patterns which provide coherence in the twelve volume sequence; the repetitive behavior of members of different generations also provides a sense of constancy in change. For example, Nick is first invited to Milly Andriadis’s by Charles Stringham. Later he is invited there by Dicky Umfraville. Here the older man, a friend of Stringham’s father, repeats what the younger man has done, a reversal of typical sequence. In another case, the friendship between Nick and the young Russell Gwinnett is established in
the same way that Nick became acquainted with Chips Lovell. Nick and Gwinnett begin to get to know one another by talking about a Veronese at Dogdene, a picture that "had always been a great preoccupation of Chips Lovell" (TK 22); Chips and Nick had become friends talking about Dogdene, a subject that led to Chips' tales of his aunt, Lady Molly Jeavons, to whom he introduces Nick, an introduction that leads to uncountable consequences. The content of a first conversation seems trivial, but the similarities seem comforting to Nick.

Less subtle is the repetition of Nick having to help a drugged or drunken associate to bed with the aid of an unlikely helper. In the first episode in the pattern, Nick and Widmerpool have to put a drunken Stringham to bed; what is shown is the deterioration of Stringham and the ascendency of Widmerpool (AW 198-210). In the second case, Nick and Duport have to put the drugged Dr. Trelawney to bed; they are as unlikey a pair of Samaritans as Widmerpool and Nick (KO 183-195). The cast of the first episode reassembles in the third, only this time it is Stringham who coordinates the efforts of Widmerpool and Nick to lead the drunken Lieutenant Bithel to bed. Stringham comments to Widmerpool that the last time they met "'It was you and Mr. Jenkins who so kindly put me to bed. It shows that improvement is possible, that roles can be reversed'" (SA 180). But the consequence of their meeting in such a situation is Widmerpool's decision to disassociate himself from Stringham by assigning him to the Mobile Laundry, which he knows is soon to leave for the Far East, where
Stringham will eventually die in a prison camp. Ironically, in a sense, it is Stringham's reversal to sobriety from dissipation, which everyone feared would lead him to an early death, that kills him; the drunkard Bithel, however, is ejected from the Mobile Laundry and lives into his seventies. The final link in the chain occurs when Bagshaw calls Nick to help him get Trapnel home, and Nick comments,

Although in most respects quite different, the situation seemed to present certain points in common with conducting Bithel, collapsed on the pavement, back to G Mess; restoring Stringham to his flat after the Old Boy dinner. In some sense history was repeating itself. (BDPR 213-214)

On their way home, they will find that Pam Widmerpool has dumped the only manuscript of Trapnel's novel into the canal, a devastating blow for Trapnel. With the exception of the Trelawney situation, which Nick excludes from his tally of similar situations, each of these episodes forebodes personal disaster. In this case, when history repeats itself, things do not improve; Nick is not nostalgically comforted. History seems malevolent, consuming his friends again and again, as he stands helplessly by.

Closely related to these instances of episodic repetition is a second species of patterns in *The Music of Time* which involves the association of characters. The example discussed above of Dicky Umfraville taking Nick to Milly Andriadi's just as Charles Stringham did shows that an episodic repetition can serve to associate characters whom Nick never observes together; however, in many other cases
the association of characters does not involve repetitious behavior. One type of association is the grouping of friends; another is the creation of small family groups. Occasionally a place will serve as a center around which characters will collect. Chains of lovers unify the volumes, and some characters are consistently paired. Others are opposed, serving as poles between which Nick moves. The connections Nick makes between characters determine the plot of Powell's novel.

One of the simplest ways Powell brings characters together is through parties; the internal-external stress of the novel is clear when we consider that most of the private, personal reminiscences of Nick are of public, social gatherings. Almost every long scene is a social scene, ranging from suppers at Foppas to balls to weddings to exhibitions to conferences. But within the large social picture Nick presents are smaller groupings of characters, who always, of course, are found to fit into the whole; Nick's metaphor of looking at parts of a painting through a magnifying glass comes to mind again.

Small family groups are among those that fit into the larger picture. Alone, Charles Stringham is one of the principal characters of The Music of Time, and although he is last seen in the eighth volume, before shipping out for the Far East, his family members continue to surface and resurface through the course of the volumes. One character associated with the Stringham family is Dicky Umfraville, who is first connected only as a family friend, but later claims to
be Pamela Flitton's father (Pam is the daughter of Charles's sister). Umfraville is first introduced through Sillery's gossip in *A Question of Upbringing*. He surfaces in *The Acceptance World*, where, like Stringham before him, he organizes an expedition to Milly Andriadis's. Nick compares him to Buster Foxe, Stringham's mother's third husband and the man who ruined Umfraville's army career, again underscoring his relation to the family. Later he will marry Anne Stepney, sister of Charles's wife Peggy, and still later Nick's wife's sister, Lady Frederica Budd, making a small link between the Stringham family and Nick's own. Umfraville is last seen at the wedding at Stourwater in *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, where after a fifty years separation, he meets Flavia Wisebite, sister of Charles, mother of Pam, lover of Umfraville. The two have been verbally linked throughout *The Music of Time*; now they are physically united. Upon seeing them together, Nick reflects on Stringham's life; a recollection of the whole span of *The Music of Time* is prompted by the meeting of these two minor characters. Conversation leads to Flavia's mourning for Pam, her detestation of Widmerpool, and an update on Widmerpool's misadventures, which leads back into the present of the book with his unlikely appearance at the wedding. Powell's manipulation of a minor character like Umfraville is impressive. Many characters who are developed in more depth, like Charles Stringham, die midway through the sequence, but his family and friends' endurance provides opportunities for him to be remembered, or more importantly,
to continue to play a part in the story.

Charles Stringham is the first character directly introduced (Widmerpool is the first character we hear of). Together with Peter Templer, he forms a pair of characters who represent different personality types and values to Nick. Although they are last seen in one another's company at the end of *A Question of Upbringing*, they continue to be associated by Nick. For instance, in the eleventh novel, Stringham is remembered as Pam Widmerpool's uncle in the same paragraph that lists Peter Templer as one of her dead lovers. Perhaps one of the reasons for Nick's fascination with Pam is the way she provides a link between the past and the present. Brennan notes that

> In a sense the four schoolboys of *A Question of Upbringing* cross paths again, exchanging partners, for, although Peter Templer and Charles Stringham have died during the war, Polly is Templer's niece, Pamela is Stringham's niece, and Widmerpool arrives in pursuit of Pamela. (199)

Polly is the daughter of Jean Templer, lover of Louis Glober, and the star of Glober's new picture, a role Pam wanted; Pam's ugliness to Polly is one of the factors that precipitate Pam's final fight with her husband. Widmerpool, the fourth of the schoolboys, rises from being a grotesque figure on the schoolyard to having the power to cause, at least indirectly, the deaths of both Stringham and Templer during the war. The comparative social worth of these three characters is shown in the source of their families' riches: Stringham/gold — Templer/cement — Widmerpool/manure. Nick discerns patterns; as the son of a professional military man,
he does not have a part in this pattern. His role is to be
the one who sees a pattern, which in this case means that he
cannot be a part of it.

When Stringham is last seen before being shipped off to
his death as a prisoner of war in the Far East, he quotes
Browning on the soldier's wish for "'one draught of earlier,
happier sights'/ . . . One taste of the old time sets all to
rights'" (SA 221). One thing that Nick and Stringham share is
a taste for nostalgia, along with both an appreciation for
comedy and a melancholic disposition. Hugh Moreland is very
similar to Nick and Stringham in all three of these respects,
and although they only meet once, Stringham seems to recog-
nize their similarities. During their last conversation, Nick
has difficulty giving Stringham the "draught of earlier,
happier sights" he wishes; during his last leave, Lady Molly,
Chips Lovell, and Priscilla Tolland Lovell had been killed
during a single raid. When he tells Stringham about their
deaths, Stringham is reminded of the time he met Priscilla in
the company of Moreland, noting: "'I associate that night
with an odd little woman covered in frills like Little Bo-
Peep'" (SA 222). This "odd little woman" we know to be Audrey
Maclintick because when Nick describes the party in More-
land's honor, he will record Stringham's reaction to her "Bo-
Peep" dress (CCR 156). This is one of those instances where
it is hard to say whether Nick in describing Audrey at the
party describes what he remembers, or what he remembers
Stringham remembering. Also, here Stringham had linked More-
land and Audrey in his memory, without knowing that eventually they will form a pair.

Chips Lovell and Hugh Moreland are two characters who are largely associated with places, Chips with Lady Molly's home and Dogdene, and Hugh with Soho, the region of Casanova's Chinese Restaurant and the Mortimer. These first two places provide the titles for the fourth and fifth books of the sequence; both sites are damaged during air raids. Damage to places parallels the physical and psychological destruction of the war; the feeling that the war changed everything is enhanced by the fact that there are so many places to which Nick cannot return. A walk through a bombed-out region of Soho and memories of those places that he and Moreland frequented begin Casanova's Chinese Restaurant:

Then, all at once, as if such luxurious fantasy were not already enough, there came from this unexplored country the song, strong and marvellously sweet, of the blonde woman on crutches, that itinerant prima donna of the highways whose voice I had not heard since the day, years before, when Moreland and I had listened in Gerrard Street. (CCR 1)

This is the first we hear of Moreland in the sequence. When he resurfaces in the third trilogy, he is introduced in a similar fashion, remarking "'One of the worst features of the war is the dearth of itinerant musicians, indeed of vagrants generally. For example, I haven't seen the cantatrice on crutches for years'" (SA 114). These two passages form a good example of future knowledge determining memories of the past. The first passage chronologically occurs in the present; it is an introduction to Nick's memoirs of his reminis-
cences of 1933 or so, but the source for this image coming to mind is clearly Moreland's conversation in the Cafe Royal in 1941, which is recorded three volumes later.

Preceding the sentences quoted above, Moreland had announced, "'I seem to have neutralised the death-wish for the moment. Raids are a great help in that'" (SA 114), an off-hand remark that will prove grim that evening. Present during this conversation is Chips Lovell, who is linked with Moreland because Moreland nearly had an affair with his fiance, Priscilla Tolland, during the thirties (CCR), and who, along with Priscilla, from whom he is estranged, will die in an air raid at the end of this evening. The meeting of Chips, Nick and Moreland is potentially awkward because of their pasts, but Moreland tells a story about Foppa's restaurant, another place that unites characters. Nick comments, "Foppa's restaurant, even if closed, [provided] a kind of frame to unite the three of us" (SA 114). But it is Priscilla and Chips who need reuniting this evening; instead, both are killed. Priscilla and Chips first met at Lady Molly's. There Priscilla had recently encountered Bijou Ardglass, who invited her to a party at the Madrid, where she and Chips were engaged. Chips learned that she will be at the party, and decides to try to find Priscilla there: "'The Madrid was the place we celebrated our engagement. The Madrid might also be the place where we straightened things out.'" Nick comments that "That was just like Lovell. Everything had to be staged. Perhaps he was right, and everything does have
to be staged. That is a system that can at least be argued as the best” (SA 111-12). But Chips’ plans fail because Priscilla has gone instead to Lady Molly’s.

Many significant encounters of the book are coincidental, but in this case Lovell’s attempt at staging a coincidence failed, perhaps because coincidences cannot be staged; if actions fall into patterns of content (as contrasted with patterns that are primarily verbal, possibly only of Nick’s own creation) they seem to do so of their own accord. Nick became acquainted with Chips through their common interest in another place, Dogdene, and the passing of Lady Molly and her house is marked by Nick’s comment,

it did not seem all that long time ago that Lovell, driving back from the film studios in that extraordinary car of his, had suggested we should look in on the Jeavonases’, because ‘the chief reason I want to visit Aunt Molly is to take another look at Priscilla Tolland, who is quite often there.’ (SA 166)

What Nick does not have to remind us is that that chance excursion had resulted in Nick’s becoming a frequent guest at Lady Molly’s and so a friend of the Tolland family; his own engagement party to Isobel Tolland was held at Lady Molly’s. Here again is another example of the actions of characters who were lost in the war continuing to have ramifications for their survivors, a manifestation of Powell’s theme of the reconciliation of constancy and mutability, of endurance.

The uneasy association of Chips, Priscilla, and Moreland is not an unusual problem in The Music of Time; pairs, triangles, and chains of characters also form patterns in the
novel. The Acceptance World ends with a list of people connected by either love or family relationships; by the end of the sequence, the eleven pairs listed there (AW 213) could be at least quadrupled. One characteristic of Nick’s friends and associates is their ability to continue on friendly terms with ex-lovers or with their lovers’ ex-lovers: Nick and Jean, Nick and Gypsy, Nick and Duport, Jean and Stripling, Matilda and Moreland, Moreland and Chips, Moreland and Stevens, Magnus and Moreland are just a few examples that come to mind. When two men share the same woman, they are not always found to be in opposition; sometimes a harmony is revealed. While in Venice, Nick sees Baby Wentworth and recalls her relationship with the painter Barnby and Sir Magnus Donners, both long dead (TK 121). Later, when looking at David Tokenhouse’s paintings, Nick contrasts them with the murals Barnby painted in the entrance to the Donners-Brebner Building, establishing a link between the men (TK 104). These recollections combined seem to suggest that Nick sees the three’s relationship not as Barnby-Baby Wentworth-Donners, with the woman coming between the man, but as

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Wentworth
  \
Barnby --- Donners,
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with the link between the "rivals" being as mutually amiable and more beneficial, as the link between the lovers.

Although Powell seems to appreciate the utility of an artist-patron relationship, Barnby and Donners still seem as if they are of two widely separated worlds: the worlds of art
and high finance. Other paired characters in the book are of the same worlds; for instance, St. John Clarke and Horace Isbister, and their younger counterparts Mark Members and J. G. Quiggin, who in Nick's terms have from the university on embarked on a "long pilgrimage together" (BM 237) as writers who are usually in opposition to one another (competition for the position of secretary to St. John Clarke is one example), but are finally reconciled in late middle age. The progress of their relationship and minor skirmishes forms a pattern that begins with their meeting at Sillery's in A Question of Upbringing and continues through the production of the television tribute to St. John Clarke in Hearing Secret Harmonies.

But of more interest than pairs of characters who seem like they have much in common but are often in opposition, are those that seem to be in opposition but whom Nick finds to have much in common. A Buyer's Market's structure is determined by the poles of Milly Andriadis's party and the Walpole-Wilsons' dinner, or by the poles of Barbara Goring and Gypsy Jones: the first the girl Nick thinks he loves, the second the girl Nick first makes love to (to the best of our knowledge). But the poles meet, the worlds blend:

I certainly did not expect that scattered elements of Mrs. Andriadis's party would recur so comparatively soon in my life; least of all supposing that their new appearance would take place through the medium of the Walpole-Wilsons, who were involved, it is true, only in a somewhat roundabout manner. All the same, their commitment was sufficient to draw attention once again to that extraordinary process that causes certain figures to appear and
reappear in the performance of one or another sequence of what I have already compared with a ritual dance. (BM 175)

The blending is shown on the small scale by verbal similarities between Barbara and Gypsy:

'How brown my leg is,' [Gypsy] said. 'Fancy sunburn lasting that long.'

Were Barbara and Gypsy really the same girl, I asked myself. There was something to be said for the theory; for I had been abruptly reminded of Barbara's remark uttered . . . earlier in the year: 'How blue my hand is in the moonlight.' . . . I could not help being struck . . . by a sense almost of solemnity at this latest illustration of the pattern that life forms. (BM 258)

This is a good example of the blending of memory and experience. The two remarks form a repetition that would be objectively observable, but only Nick is aware of these two statements; the pattern depends on his memory for detail. In this case, the pattern is one of foolish behavior regarding love, and is a pattern sustained by Widmerpool who, like Nick, is involved with Barbara and Gypsy in A Buyer's Market.

A Buyer's Market is the second volume of the first trilogy; the second volume of the second trilogy is also about the harmony of opposites. Commenting on the name of the restaurant from which the fifth volume takes its title, Nick observes, "The name Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant offered one of those unequivocal blendings of disparate elements of the imagination which suggest a whole new state of mind or way of life" (CCR 29). Of interest here is the progression of ideas: imagination to state of mind to way of life; memory coupled with imagination links external disparate elements into patterns of order and meaning. Again we come around to a
basic premise of Powell's work.

The nature of a pattern is change within stability, differences defined by similarities: paradox. Plots are about changes, developments, problems, or conflicts. The blending of plots and patterns in *The Music of Time* is, therefore, an interesting achievement. Nick's assumptions are revealed in a conversation with Chips, who, unlike Nick, believes that "every change which [takes] place in life -- personal -- political -- social was both momentous and for ever" (SA 91). So when his wife commits adultery, Chips concludes that his marriage will never be the same. Nick counters that "'nothing ever remains the same,'" but Chips complains, "'I thought your theory was that everything did always remain the same?'" to which Nick responds with the paradox, "'Everything alters, yet does remain the same,'" (SA 110), a paradox that defies the law of non-contradiction and yet makes sense within *The Music of Time*'s examination of constancy and mutability. In using repetition both to structure the novel and to develop its plot and theme, Powell illustrates the implications of a philosophical problem that Nietzsche and Kierkegaard identified as one of the most complex and enduring. But just as Powell's exploration of the mechanics of memory does not weigh down his narrative with the theoretical heaviness that mars Proust's examination of the same in *Remembrance of Things Past*, the philosophical dilemmas that inform *The Music of Time*'s structure, plot, and theme are not divorced from "'all the odds and ends milling about round one . . . the
process of living"
(CCR 212).
Chapter 6: Coincidence, Determinism, Causation and the Patterns of The Music of Time

The external principle of organization in The Music of Time is seen in Powell's use of patterns to advance his plots, develop his characters, and suggest his themes. Verbal patterns -- the use of intratextual allusions, conceits, or repetitive imagery -- seem clearly within Nick's control. But the patterns recorded in Nick's words -- the ways in which the numerous characters of the story are connected and the repetitive situations Nick observes -- seem as if they are found outside Nick and so are not of his making. What, then, causes the patterns Nick perceives? Coincidence may initially appear to be a device Powell uses to effect meetings between characters, but ironically his first person narrative seems less determined than may be expected. Causation is a subtle and complex force in The Music of Time, and always it must be remembered that the causes Nick distinguishes are chosen from his odd perspective of one who has a memory of the future. Finally, Nick's memory itself both enables him to discern patterns in his world and limits the possibilities he can perceive.

Many of the meetings of The Music of Time's characters seem accidental, the product of, for Nick, advantageous coincidence. That Widmerpool plays a part in the lives of so many of Nick's friends, that Nick occasionally runs into Templer and Stringham (who never encounter one another after 1924), that Nick meets the notorious Dicky Umfraville, that
Stringham is the mess waiter in Nick's division, even that the house Dogdene plays a part in Nick's making friends: all five of these examples of instances that matter in the development of patterns previously discussed could be labeled coincidences. There are, of course, dozens of other possible examples; because so much of the action takes place in public settings, the accidental, coincidental meetings of characters are frequent and plausible.

Nick's predilection for drawing attention to coincidences is shared by Powell. In his memoirs, Powell cites the manner in which he became reacquainted with Evelyn Waugh as an example of "those coincidental juxtapositions that are such a feature of human experience"; a few pages later he cites another example: "by chance" he ran into an acquaintance met during an army course who immediately began talking of the madame, Rosa Lewis. Powell comments:

I can't imagine why this middle-aged lieutenant unburdened himself in this way . . . nor why he had instantly assumed I should know who 'Rosa' was . . . but, by an extraordinary chance (never to be accepted in a novel), passing the Dorchester [where Rosa arranged meetings] . . . I saw him entering its doors. (TKBR 188, 190-191)

Later, in Faces in My Time, he explains that Chips and Priscilla Lovell both dying in London on the same night as the result of separate bombings was based on an incident involving acquaintances of his. In The Music of Time, however, that episode may seem to some implausible and contrived, one that would fit the category specified in Powell's parenthetical comment "never to be accepted in a novel."
But to show that coincidences occur in life as well as in novels begs the question of whether coincidences provide any insight into secret harmonies, i.e. whether accidents are, in fact, planned or whether the patterns Nick records objectively exist. Some, like Richard Jones, are disappointed that despite The Music of Time's "sure and strong design" the narrator does not "make his insights into the inexplicable changes and coincidences that govern human life both significant and concrete" (368-9).² But criticism like this presupposes that coincidences can be shown to be significant. Powell deflates this assumption, explaining in an interview that the

'point is that you are telling the story of a limited number of people. Therefore, if you begin with Smith and Jones and, three volumes on, you say Smith met Jones in Piccadilly, that is just another incident in their relations. That is not quite the same as making them meet in Piccadilly. People always behave as if you are making them meet in Piccadilly.' (Gaston 640)

The point Powell makes here is explained in Daniel Dennett's exploration of notions of free will and determinism for the layman, Elbow Room: Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting.

Discussing coincidence, Dennett paraphrases an example from M. Slote's "Selective Necessity and Free Will":

Jules happens to meet his friend Jim at the bank; he thinks it is a happy accident, as indeed it is. But Jules' being at the bank is not an accident, since he always goes there on Wednesday morning as part of his job; and Jim's being there is also no accident, since he has been sent there by his superior. That Jules is at L at time t is no accident; that Jim is at L at time t is no accident. But that Jules is at L at time t and Jim is at L at time t -- that is an accident. (149)
What makes an accident or coincidence is limited point of view. There are causes for Jules' and Jim's separate appearances, but these causes themselves do not intentionally conspire to bring Jules and Jims together. Jules and Jim are independent agents who happen to meet.

Furthermore, there must be personal significance for an accident of this sort to be perceived by the agents involved or interested observers. For example, it is just as much an accident that a fellow called Robbins was a mess waiter at the divisional headquarters where Nick served as it is that Stringham was a mess waiter there after Robbins' departure. That Robbins' path should cross with Nick's does not seem coincidental, nor does it seem to matter. Neither does Powell make Stringham appear in a different way than he makes Robbins come and go. To conclude differently is to assume that Stringham has no will and no past. But Stringham is distinct from Nick; his manner of speaking is not Nick's, and, as we have seen in Chapter 4, in Powell's novel language is used to move from Nick's internal world to the external one of other people and other voices. As a person distinctly not-Nick, Stringham's behavior is determined independently of Nick's. Although Nick and Stringham accidentally meet on several occasions, the world Powell creates in The Music of Time is not a model of a deterministic universe because there is no other, higher perspective from which Stringham's and Nick's meetings can be seen to be predetermined. This is an odd situation because it would seem as if Powell's position would
be the same as the God or first cause in a determined, pre-
destined scheme. But Powell's characters are so well created
that it seems as if they are free agents. In other words,
although Powell created Nick and Stringham, it does not seem
as if all the factors that work together to make people or
characters act could ever be accounted for in their cases.

Another reason why the coincidences in *The Music of Time*
suggest freedom or indeterminacy is that none of them alone
changes everything. That Stringham is a mess waiter at
Widmerpool's headquarters does have unfortunate consequences,
but that general accident is not in itself enough to explain
what happens. If Nick had not also been in the division, if
Nick had not been working with Widmerpool, if Bithel had not
been sent to the division, if Bithel had not gotten drunk, if
Stringham had not run across Bithel, if Nick had not been in
when Stringham had phoned, if Nick and Stringham had not run
across Widmerpool as they tried to take care of Bithel, if
Stringham's transfer to the Mobile Laundry had not been
approved, if Stringham had asked for a medical exemption, if
the Mobile Laundry had not been posted to Singapore, if that
division had not been taken prisoner by the Japanese, if in
any case things had been different, then in all cases things
would have been changed. There may be a chronological rela-
tionship between the events in the sequence that lead to
Stringham's death, but not necessarily a causal one. In other
words, the coincidence of Widmerpool's meeting Stringham and
Nick as they carried Bithel home precedes the dispatch of the
Mobile Laundry to the East, but the first does not cause the second. Encountering Stringham and Nick with Bithel may have caused Widmerpool to decide to transfer Stringham out, but causality is not transitive; the first element in the chain does not directly, or for that matter indirectly, cause the last. In fact, in this example the first cause is missing: why was Stringham -- or Widmerpool -- or Nick assigned to that particular division? Even answering that question would not lead to the first instance because for each explanation uncountable other accidents would have to be examined. That the causes of the coincidences in The Music of Time are finally inexplicable, an illustration of infinite regress, insures that its world seems indeterminant.

In contrast, in other sequence novels an accident can be primary.³ Robertson Davies’ Deptford Trilogy examines questions of causality and coincidence. What links its three books and narrators (Fifth Business -- Dunstan Ramsay, The Manticore -- David Staunton, and World of Wonders -- Magnus Eisingrim’s story as told to Ramsay) is one accident, the episode with which the trilogy opens: the night a snowball aimed by Boy Staunton (David’s father) misses Ramsay and hits instead Magnus’s mother, who delivers her only son prematurely and goes mad after that night. The significant episodes in the plot of the entire trilogy can be linked to the consequences of that one accident. What is of interest is how those involved are affected. For Boy Staunton, the one who threw the snowball, the event is inconsequential; he, in
fact, forgets it. Ramsay, however, is obsessed with it, although he is not responsible. Ramsay's guilt and consequent actions leave Boy's son David at the mercy of a past of which he has no knowledge, while the child born that night, Paul Dempster, reinvents himself as Magnus Eisengrim and invents a past to suit his new circumstances. Davies acknowledges the importance of coincidence in his novel:

I think of coincidence as a powerful element in life, as is also the operation of destiny... which is unquestionably powerful. This does not make me a thorough-going determinist, but certainly I mean to suggest that the forces that shape a man's fate are not wholly under his control because some of them reside in... the Unconscious... we attract what we are. Whosoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. The lifelong task is to learn what we are, and what we are sowing because of it. ("Deptford" 11)

A few comparisons between The Music of Time and The Deptford Trilogy are of interest. In Davies' work, a first cause in a pattern, the plot of his novel, is obvious; in Powell's work, there is no first accident. These differences are reminiscent of the contrasts between Plato's and Nietzsche's notions of repetition, i.e. Plato's belief in a first element in a series to which all others refer and Nietzsche's rejection of the same. Secondly, Davies mentions destiny and coincidence in the same breath, suggesting then that there is a necessity to coincidence. Powell rejects such notions, claiming that even as the author he alone does not "make" happen the coincidences that appear in his work. But on a third point Davies and Powell seem closer. Davies mentions that "each man's personality determines the way in
which he accepts what comes to him" (11), an idea that is not unlike Nick's claim that "nothing in life is planned -- or everything is -- because in the dance every step is ultimately the corollary of the step before; the consequence of being the kind of person one chances to be" (AW 63).

Personality and will are inseparable; both Davies and Nick/Powell as novelists value what makes one man different than another and so consistent with himself. The difference, though, is that Davies is particularly interested in the struggle of individuals to understand their unconscious minds (The Manticore is practically a primer on Jungian analysis), but in Powell's first person novel the unconscious is left unexplored. General Conyers informally studies psychoanalysis and discusses it with Nick, but Conyers' categories do not provide nearly the insight into behavior yielded by Nick's anecdotes. Nick's insight into his own personality is not reductive; on the one hand, it is not the subject of The Music of Time, but on the other, the cumulative effect of the sequence is a very fine portrait of Nick. Still, Powell's contribution to contemporary literature, in which the unconscious is a very popular and perhaps overly worked subject, is to remind us that in social life, in external reality, is where much of our identity rests, and consequently what we do, in broad terms, or even in the narrower terms of how we tell others about ourselves, matters. If unconscious desires compel us, it is in memory that our past actions and feelings, the consequences of these desires, reside. A first
cause may remain forever indeterminate, but that does not mean an ordering, the recognition of a pattern, is impos-
sible.

Still, recognizing external coincidences is, like recogn-
izing patterns, a subjective experience. The subjectivity of
distinguishing some incidents as coincidences is more clearly
illustrated in internal-external coincidences which occur
when there is an accidental correspondence between what Nick
is thinking and what happens to him.

One variety occurs when what Nick reads is linked with
others' actions or comments. Before he is teamed up with
Chips Lovell to write a script set at a country house, Nick
had been reading Pepy's account of his visit to Dogdene. His
recollection of this browsing, which links his flashback to
his childhood introduction to the Conyerses and Mildred
Blaides that begins At Lady Molly's with the present of the
book, his life during 1934, ends with the comment:

Everyone knows the manner in which some specific
name will recur several times in quick succession
from different quarters; part of that inexplicable
magic throughout life that makes us suddenly think
of someone before turning a street corner and
meeting him, or her, face to face. In the same way,
you may be struck, reading a book, by some obscure
passage or lines of verse, quoted again, quite
unexpectedly, twenty-four hours later. (LM 11-12)

From here, Nick begins his history of his friendship with
Chips and the crowd he meets at Lady Molly's.

A similar example of a reading coincidence is found in
the last volume, Hearing Secret Harmonies. After crayfishing,
Scorpio Murtlock and Nick watch birds in flight, both
wondering about what force determines their patterned flight. Later, Nick comes across a passage in Orlando Furioso that neatly describes what he has seen. But the correspondence is even closer. A passage describing the technique of cranes and hawks stalking prey may be common enough, but in this case Ariosto had introduced another element: "So by degrees this Mage begins to flye." ... It was the word Mage. Mage carried matters a stage further" (HSH 34). It is the similarity of associations that Nick finds interesting; both he and Ariosto have detected a parallel between birds of prey and a power-hungry magician. In this case, interestingly, timeliness is not an issue; Nick comes across the passage several months after Scorpio's visit. Nick's attempts to "rationalize to [himself] this coincidental passage" are abandoned in favor of reminiscences about Dr. Trelawney who believed "that coincidence was no more than 'magic in action'" (HSH 35) and his fellow-mage Mrs. Erdleigh. Later we will learn that Scorpio believes himself to be a reincarnation of Trelawney and stabs Widmerpool in an attempt to raise the spirit of Trelawney from the dead.

A second variety of internal coincidence, which also could be categorized as a type of occult experience, is telepathic communication. Nick notes a number of instances. For example, at an Old Boy dinner Templer unconsciously links Nick and his sister Jean Templer Duport in conversation, and even Widmerpool seems to know about Nick's feelings for Jean:
port and myself; but people are aware of things like this within themselves without knowing of their own awareness. . . . His next question seemed to show the extraordinary telepathic connection of ideas that so often takes place in the mind when anything in the nature of being in love is concerned. 'You are not married yourself, are you, Nicholas?' (LM 53-4)

These conversational coincidences could be examples of telepathy; Templer and Widmerpool have somehow tuned into what Nick is thinking. But if that is the case, then they are surprisingly magnanimous conversationalists during these episodes, especially since each is usually most interested in telling his own story; it does not seem plausible that they would be sensitive enough to their audience to guess, let alone know, what Nick was thinking. What seems to be the case is that Nick is self-absorbed; Nick figures that the turns in conversation are dictated by his interests and needs alone. Similarly, when Gypsy Jones approaches him at Deacon's birthday party, Nick suggests that the cause of her approach is his thoughts about her: "Perhaps some processes of thought-transference afforded at that moment an unexpected dispensation from Gypsy herself of further enlightenment to my curiosity" (BM 247). Nick assumes that his will influences Gypsy's moves; he does not provide for her free will. An explanation that exonerates Nick from the charge of monomania is that Powell is toying with similarities between thought transference and narrative development. Nick's memories of Gypsy do bring her into the narrative, just as Nick's reflections during his conversations with Templer and Widmerpool
broaden the context of their discussions. Furthermore, although neither we nor Nick can know what caused Widmerpool or Templer to speak of Jean, or what caused Gypsy to walk toward him, this lack of knowledge does not mean that the causes do not exist; rather, the limitations of the position of a first person narrator, limitations under which we all operate outside novels, are shown.

These two reading coincidences and examples of telepathy introduce another dimension into the discussion of coincidence in the novel. Had all the coincidences been merely external ones -- characters turning up unexpectedly in unlikely places -- then Powell would be more subject to the charge of using coincidences merely to surmount difficulties inherent in managing the movement of hundreds of characters. But these coincidences are personal, private, mental coincidences that imply a universal experience of "inexplicable magic." Powell seeks his audience's agreement that such strange experiences are familiar. If it is possible that an individual can "suddenly think of someone before turning a street corner and meeting him," then the plausibility of different people, driven by different unknowable wills and circumstances, inexplicably coming together is easier to accept. Furthermore, what the public coincidences do for the advancement of the plot and the development of patterns, the private coincidences do for the progress of Nick's memories; in some respects these private coincidences are examples of remembering the future and so allow for easy movement through
time.

Coincidences, as we have seen, are not breaks with causality, nor are they proof of determinism. But the difficulties coincidences pose, for example, the critical temptation to demand that Powell attribute extraordinary significance to accidental occurrences, underscore the limitations under which first person narrators and all people outside novels operate. In fiction, including coincidences is a risky, rather than a convenient, strategy because we assume that in fiction, if not in life, characters do not behave erratically; we assume that if we work hard enough, we will be able to determine causes, both remote and immediate, primary and secondary, for a character's decision or the development of a situation. If the chain of events is too obvious, then the plot is weak; if the outcome is implausible, then the plot is also weak. Suspense and inevitability blend in a well-wrought plot. To track what causes what throughout The Music of Time would be arduous, but one small example will suffice to show the types of issues raised and explanations offered.

In A Buyer's Market, Nick finds himself making love to Gypsy Jones, a woman for whom he has never before professed any attraction, marking her instead as a caustic, shrill, and otherwise unappealing waif. Explaining this surprising development, Nick comments:

Nothing in life can ever be entirely divorced from myriad other incidents; and it is remarkable, though no doubt logical, that action, built up from innumerable causes, each in itself allusive and
unnoticed more often than not, is almost always provided with an apparently ideal moment for its final expression. So true is this that what has gone before is often, to all intents and purposes, swallowed up by the aptness of the climax; opportunity appearing, at least on the surface, to be the sole cause of fulfilment. (254)

John Russell lists some of the possible causes of Nick’s action: pressures resulting from thinking that Quiggin and Members are progressing as writers, leaving him behind; Barnby’s departure for a date with Donners’ mistress, Baby Wentworth; the news that Jean is expecting and so out of reach; and finally Stringham’s recent marriage. Together these causes, which are culminations of various plot lines of the novel, explain Nick’s unusual move (128). Interestingly, Nick’s very brief friendship with Gypsy has no ramifications, just as the early success of Quiggin and Members bodes nothing for their futures, Barnby loses Baby, the birth of Polly does not solve the Duports’ problems, and Stringham is soon divorced. That Nick was not compelled to make love with Gypsy, that Powell’s fiction is not deterministic, is a point that Russell stresses. He notes the significance of the number of causes that combine and the way that they affect “different people in different ways because the people are different: and in the end the casual cannot be separated from the causal. . . . The latest and least likely inputs to an action will have been just as important as long pending ones” (24-25); his concluding comments echo Nick’s own reflections.

Causality is subtle in The Music of Time, as it usually is in experience, although when we consider causality as an
idea, our understanding is sometimes obscured by our analogies. As Dennett notes, we tend to think of simplistic examples when we consider causality, for example, Hume’s billiard balls, "one big salient thing bumping into another big salient thing . . . . Thus when we think of someone caused to believe this or that, we tend to imagine them [sic] being shoved willy-nilly into that state," ignoring the differences between things and people (33). Or because we can distinguish occasionally "'good, clear cases' of causation [, we] tend to forget the equally good cases of causation that are virtually indescribable and utterly uncontrollable by us" (60), just as we choose to call the appearance of Stringham in Nick’s division a coincidence but have no name to describe the appearance of Robbins, Soper, Biggs, or any other person in the same place.

To take matters a step further, the analysis of causation of episodes in The Music of Time has nothing to do with determinism because of Nick’s special position in regards to time and his faculty of a memory of the future. As he chooses his content, Nick does not begin with causes from which issue an effect; instead, he begins with the effect and determines causes. The novel reads in the former way, causes preceding effects, but it was planned in the opposite way, the future determining the past. Bertrand Russell’s discussion of causation covers this problem:

When the geologist infers the past state of the earth from its present state, we should not say that the present state compels the past state to have been what it was; yet it renders it necessary
as a consequence of the data, in the only sense in which effects are rendered necessary by their causes. The difference which we feel, in this respect, between causes and effects is a mere confusion due to the fact that we remember past events but do not happen to have memory of the future. (237-8)

But as we have noted in Chapter 2, the first person narrator does remember the future as well as the past; past events in fiction compel future events only because the past events are chosen to suit the future. Fiction is analytic, not predictive. It is the inverse of fortune-telling. The causal relations it depicts are necessary only because the rememberer has imagined them to be so. What Hume says about necessary connection is also relevant here. Hume shows that when one first sees two events occur, he believes them only to be "conjoined", but later decides that they are "connected":

What alteration has happened to give rise to this new idea of connexion? Nothing but that he now feels these events to be connected in his imagination, and can readily foretell the existence of one from the appearance of the other. When we say, therefore, that one object is connected with another, we mean only that they have acquired a connexion in our thought. (156)

From the interaction of Nick's memory and his imagination, he has been able to create causal sequences, and so construct patterns or plots.6

Kermode comments that Casanova's Chinese Restaurant "is planned -- however untheoretical its author -- after the manner attributed by the schoolmen to God: absolutely, but allowing for contingency" (Puzzles 129), but Powell is no more god-like than any author. Nick, like all first person narrators, is omniscient to the extent that he knows the
future as well as the past. Again, for biographers and novelists, the future determines the past, although what past is determined is one that has been tentatively constructed, and so may be faulty or incomplete, as the necessity of Nick revising his memories in view of a changed past has shown. Already we have seen exemplified in *The Music of Time* a problem that is well summarized by Robert Campigny's conclusion in *The Ontology of the Narrative*: "Any cognitive statement, even if it is directly derived from memory, is subject to revision." Campigny also observes that "knowledge of the past is incomplete [and] not always more precise than knowledge of the future" (86). As an example he cites the contrast between our ability to predict eclipses and to say anything certain about the life of Jesus Christ. But here Campigny has moved beyond narrative to experience; in *The Music of Time* the future, up to the present during which Nick writes, and the past are both known to the author or the first person narrator.

What limits Nick's ability to explain the past is the lack of a future. He cannot have knowledge of what has not yet happened, and he cannot have knowledge of what can never happen. The characters who make their first appearance in the last volume, Gibson Delavacquerie, Fiona Cutts, Scorpio Murtlock, and Barnaby Henderson, for example, are not introduced with the same sense of certainty as are Stringham, Templer, Widmerpool, and so on because these young people's futures are undetermined. Nick does not comment on his limitations in
Hearing Secret Harmonies, but the same issue is raised in The Valley of Bones when Nick discusses first the suicide of a Sergeant Pendry and secondly his difficulty understanding the life of his brother-in-law who, killed in action, died "an unsolved problem" (196).

Nick's sentences become oddly abrupt as he reflects on Pendry's death:

I felt guilty about having allowed Pendry's situation to slip from my mind. He might be on the verge of a breakdown. Disregard for sleep certainly suggested something of the sort. Trouble could be avoided by looking into matters. However, such precautions, even if they had proved effective, were planned too late in the day. The rest of the story came out at the Court of Inquiry. Its main outlines were fairly clear. (VB 100)

Nick's sentences are extraordinarily short because these comments are a record of actions not taken that can never be taken, speculations on a future that can never be attained. At one point, Nick seems to forget that the future has already been determined ("Trouble could be avoided by looking into matters"), but a shift occurs and he has to realize that it is simply, finally, and forever too late to help Pendry. The choices had been made.

Later, when he hears of his brother-in-law's death, Nick suggests possible futures that Robert Tolland may have had; from those he moves to speculating on possible factors that had influenced Tolland to join the Field Security Section rather than to take a relatively safe commission. The gist is that Tolland's past is unknowable because of his lack of a future: "The potential biographies of those who die young
possess the mystic dignity of a headless statue, the poetry of enigmatic passages in an unfinished or mutilated manuscript, unburdened with contrived or banal ending" (VB 197). It is not surprising that Robert’s future will remain a mystery, for he has none, but that his past remains obscure because he lacks a future is more puzzling. He has a past, but not a story, since what matters, the events that form a pattern in Robert’s life, are not clear because they have not yet been -- and never can be -- revealed in time.

Another dimension of the question of causation and determinism is raised by the speculations on Robert Tolland’s death. Nick, as a novelist, is sensitive to the need to understand character in order to make sense of actions. That desires and volitions determine the future is another aspect of Bertrand Russell’s argument against determinism. He imagines what type of free will beings who knew the future could be said to have:

The beings we are imagining would easily come to know the causal connections of volitions, and therefore their volitions would be better calculated to satisfy their desires than ours are. Since volitions are the outcome of desires, a prevision of volitions contrary to desires could not be a true one. It must be remembered that the supposed prevision would not create the future any more than memory creates the past. We do not think we were necessarily not free in the past, merely because we can now see what our future volitions were going to be. Freedom, in short, in any valuable sense demands only that our volitions shall be, as they are, the result of our desires, not of an outside force compelling us to will what we would rather not will. Everything else is confusion of thought, due to the feeling that knowledge compels the happening of what it knows when this is future, though it is at once obvious that knowledge has no such
power in the past. (239)
In other words, our destiny may be determined by our wills, but as long as our wills are determined by us alone, then we are free. 7

What Powell must do is create characters whose wills and volitions are strong and convincing so that their destinies appear inevitable but not contrived. Although the fortune-teller looks forwards and the novelist looks backwards, the success of both depends on sensitivity to character. Russell's explanation also shows why occultism, especially fortune-telling, is not a deterministic philosophy.

Several times in the course of The Music of Time, Nick quotes Eliphas Levi's injunction "To know, to will, to dare, to be silent," a precept that Powell refers to in the conclusion of his memoirs (SAAG 195). What Levi writes about his beliefs could serve as a preface for The Music of Time:

Nothing entirely new happens under the Sun; causes lead to new causes and effects precede these. Prophetic intuitions are but the result of a consideration of the analogies between the past and the future. . . . Each man bears his earthly future in his natural character, and he has his character imprinted on his face and in his hands, in his natural movements, in his glances, and in his voice. (95-6)

It is the occult's interest in character, especially as character is revealed in public, in actions and appearances, that intrigues the novelist Nick. Ironically, Levi's observations suggest that the key to a person's personality does not lie hidden from view, is not itself occult. Similarly, perhaps knowledge of the unconscious self need not be sought in
arcane exercises but rather can be had by those who observe carefully, and Nicholas Jenkins is nothing if not a superb watcher.

The occult activites in the novel, for example, telepathy, presentiments (a case of memory of the future), and fortune-telling, may initially suggest that the coincidences have a cosmic significance, but always it is Nick's foreknowledge of the future which informs his story. The counterpart to Nick, whose speculations on fiction are always tentative, is Mrs. Erdleigh, who speaks with authority on the subjects of characterization and plot. Mrs. Erdleigh's appearances are always accompanied by a comment that could serve the novelist as well as the seer. For instance, when she first discusses Nick's character, she tells him that "'People can only be themselves. . . . If they possessed the qualities you desire in them, they would be different people'" (AW 15), a comment that can be compared to Gibson Delavacquerie's theories on art and life:

'. . . if things had been different, they would have been totally different. That is something that perhaps only those -- like ourselves -- engaged in the arrangement of words fully understand. The smallest alteration in a poem, or a novel, can change its whole emphasis, whole meaning. The same is true of any given situation in life too, though few are aware of that.' (HSH 177)

During her appearance in The Military Philosophers, Mrs. Erdleigh notes that "'No human life is uninteresting,'" but most people do not know much about others: "'Only those know, who are aware what is to be revealed'" (MP 134, 133). Nick is in the position of knowing what is to be revealed about the
people whose stories he tells, and it seems fairly obvious that he, too, finds interest in a variety of people.

Mrs. Erdleigh tells stories of the future; Nick tells stories of his past. She is useful as a means of discussing narrative concerns; Thomas Wilcox in "Anthony Powell and the Illusion of Possibility" sums up well her structural function in the novel:

When a novelist plants a prediction early in his fiction and then effects its fulfillment, he first arouses expectation in the mind of his reader and then fulfills it; thus he persuades the reader that the events of the novel are fated, inexorable, and 'right.' . . . If the event which fulfills appears to be one of many possibilities or contingencies, as it always does in Powell's work, the illusion is all but absolute. (237)

And yet there is a sense in which "illusion" is a misleading term. The events of The Music of Time are fated if we assume that the world depicted in it is like ours. Nick cannot choose multiple futures; Mrs. Erdleigh can be right, or she can be wrong, but in any given case she cannot be both right and wrong. Some of her predictions are ambiguous and so cannot be judged right or wrong, but in any case her predictions do not cause events to occur.

If we assume Nick is like a person and Nick's life is like our own, then he cannot choose multiple futures for himself or the others in the novel. The patterns which he establishes can each continue or end, but any one that continues will be discernable because one and only one noteworthy event will occur at any moment in time future. In other words, if a pattern A - B - C is discernable, it is
because B is always and only B, never ~B. When multiple and mutually exclusive endings are provided in a novel, then the previous behavior of characters is in some sense invalidated for the same reason that if a character dies young his past remains mysterious. It is not that experimental novels shatter the illusions of fictions, but rather it is that fictions which provide multiple endings are not true to life because the integrity of the future is not respected. Selecting a future is not possible; there is only the future. 8

And yet selecting a past is in some sense possible because there will always remain occult forces, occult in the sense of hidden from view (but not by a malevolent hider), or causes too complex and numerous for one mind to understand in one lifetime. Furthermore, what we can think or remember is limited by time. In "Rationality and the Structure of Human Memory," C. Cherniak shows that "the (entirely unconscious) organization of memory guarantees that only some approximately appropriate subset of relevant points will occur to one in the time available" (Dennett's paraphrase 164). In other words, the patterns Nick sees are limited internally if not externally. They seem limited externally because he is only one viewer with limited knowledge of the causes and effects of what he sees, and they are limited internally because the number of thoughts he can think, the number of connections he can make, is limited. Nick seems to know an extraordinary amount about other people, and he has had fifty years to think about some he discusses, for example Widmer-
pool, but he is not omniscient and consequently there remain things he misses. However, if he were omniscient, still he could not explain to us all the reasons why what happened to him and those he observes happened; our lives are not long enough to read as much as he would have to write, even if he could live long enough to write it. Twelve volumes is enough to provide just the patterns, but not the causes of these same patterns.

In *The Valley of Bones*, when Nick leaves the first company to which he is assigned during a crisis about stolen butter, he says goodbye to his bumbling, romantic captain, Rowland Gwatkin, who "smiled in an odd sort of way, as if he dimly perceived it was no good battling against Fate, which, seen in right perspective, almost always provides a certain beauty of design, sometimes even an occasional good laugh" (234). Harmony and congruity seem the same; humor is the product of incongruity: how then can Fate provide at once "a certain beauty of design" and a "good laugh"? If a pattern can be interrupted, i.e. an incongruity can be sensed and expressed as humor, then that pattern must in fact exist. Whether the same pattern can resume itself after an interruption is a moot question because before the next humorous incident can be perceived, another, if not the same (maybe necessarily not the same), pattern must be assumed. Consequently, we can feel certain that patterns exist, although we cannot explain their causes, and although it seems paradoxical, because we can have a good laugh, we must be, whether we
are aware of it or not, hearing secret harmonies.
Conclusion

Determining Anthony Powell's position in the history of the twentieth century novel presents some difficulties. Powell has written seven novels in addition to the twelve volumes of The Music of Time, five published before the war and two published in the 1980s. None of these novels would insure that Powell would be remembered; his achievement is The Music of Time, not his complete works. Judging The Music of Time alone is a problem since there simply are no works nearly like it. There are other contemporary sequence novels, but Powell's novel is perhaps not usefully categorized with sequence novels since it is best studied as one long novel. But that may in fact be the main reason why Powell is not better known in the United States. He is not easily represented in courses in the contemporary novel; to read one or two volumes of The Music of Time would not give a fair impression of Powell's achievement, but to read all twelve volumes would take a few weeks, and that in turn would limit the inclusion of other contemporary novelists, among whom are those who have written significant single volume novels as well as sequence novels, for example, Anthony Burgess, Doris Lessing, and Robertson Davies, whose themes or style can be introduced with one work. Even if there comes to be critical agreement that Powell's The Music of Time is a masterpiece on its own terms or that it offers special, challenging problems in defining what a novel is and how one works, unless Powell is granted a place on the syllabus, his reputation in aca-
ademic circles remains in jeopardy, since too often the under-
lying assumption is that what is not studied in a class is
not literature but is popular fiction, and that popular
fiction is not worthy of study: circular reasoning, cer-
tainly, but unfortunately the problem remains.

Presently Powell has more fans than critics; the new
photo album accompanied by excerpts from the novel is not for
the scholar but is for the reader who wishes that the dance
never had to end. New readers are probably more often intro-
duced to The Music of Time by friends than instructors; in
its own way this seems appropriate, since gossip is the
standard mode of communication in The Music of Time. But the
subjects of gossip change, and yesterday's gossip is quickly
forgotten. Perhaps Nick's interest in Hearing Secret Harmo-
nies in the television documentary on the Edwardian novelist
St. John Clarke, produced by J. G. Quiggin and Ada Leintwar-
dine to promote interest in making movies of the works of
"the all-but-forgotten novelist," is prophetic; in fifty
years' time such an effort might be required to rescue The
Music of Time "from the Valley of Lost Things" (38-9), not
because it deserves dismissal, but because an effort was not
made to defy the properties of Time Nick draws our attention
to in his analysis of Ariosto's Orlando Furioso:

Ariosto's Time (a writer's Time) is far less
relaxed, indeed appallingly restless. . . . The
naked ancient, in an eternally breathless scramble
with himself, collected from the Fates small metal
tablets . . . , then moved off at the double to
dump these identity discs in the waters of
Oblivion. A few of them . . . were only momentarily
submerged, being fished out, and borne away to the Temple of Fame. . . . The rest sank to the bottom, where they were likely to remain. (HSH 33)

It would be especially ironic if in time The Music of Time required rescue from oblivion, since perhaps its most endearing quality is Nick Jenkins' desire to preserve a record of the lives of his friends and family, and his times.

Once The Music of Time and other novels from the fifties, sixties, and seventies cease to be "contemporary" novels, other labels will have to be used, assuming "contemporary" does not go the way of "modern." One suitable category for The Music of Time would be post-World Wars I and II fiction. In other words, the fact that Powell's experiences in both wars are reflected in The Music of Time is significant. The impact of World War II is obvious; one trilogy is devoted to it, and yet it does not seem that it is disproportionately emphasized since the effects of the war were so far reaching. More subtle, but no less important, are the effects that the first war had on Nick/Powell and his generation, effects seen in the tone of the work and in the way its characters approach life. The Music of Time is about memory and order, two forces that oppose the feelings of loss and hopelessness that accompany war.

Powell was born in 1905; his father was a company commander who left for open fighting in World War I eight days after its beginning. Powell writes in his memoirs:

I have come across persons of my own age . . . who say that as children they were scarcely aware of World War I taking place. . . . Such is not my
experience. For me the impact of war was menacing from the beginning. . . . The killed were often fathers of children who came to tea, or subalterns remembered as chatting in the hall while they changed into their tennis-shoes. Life seemed all at once geared to forces implacable and capricious, their peril not to be foretold. (IS 19)

When the war began, his childhood, Powell reports, "was brought categorically to a close" (IS 19); he was five months shy of his ninth birthday. Powell began work on The Music of Time some thirty years later after six years of war, years which "drew a hard line across the story of one's days after which nothing was ever quite the same again" (SAAG 3). Although Powell's (and Nick's) personal life seems to have been relatively easy -- no battles with poverty, disabilities, illnesses, addictions, injuries, madness, imprisonment, scandal -- the emotional or philosophical stress of losing family and friends to death, the agent of "forces implacable and capricious," determines not only the oftentimes nostalgic tone of his work but is perhaps the problem he wants to lay to rest.

Nick has no illusions about his work providing a means of recapturing the past; his impetus seems to be to provide some sort of shape to the events of his and his friends' lives. But he is not going to provide an answer; there is no answer to why so many died young and so unfulfilled this century.

And Nick is not going to succumb to guilt or depression because he survived when others did not. His model is General Conyers, who "patently maintained a good-humoured, well-
mannered awareness of the inherent failings of human nature: the ultimate futility of all human effort" (LM 71). The construction of that sentence points to a related question that cannot be answered: when we fail, and dying young is a form of failure, is it our fault as individuals? Is that a question that matters? If, on the other hand, "all human effort" is futile, does reaching an old age mean simply more years of wasted effort? Nick rejects the second option, as shown by his admiration of Conyers who in spite of his gloomy evaluation of human nature and achievements never ceases to be interested in new things, the cello and psychoanalysis, for instance; he even takes a new wife at age eighty-five or so. Knowledge of the futility of human efforts and living well do not seem mutually exclusive in his case. He has suffered losses, like Nick. But he has the strength of character needed not only to survive but to be happy.

The extent of Nick's concern with loss is shown by a statistical analysis of the characters in The Music of Time. Of the 458 people named in the work, only 12 are at least mentioned in each volume subsequent to their first appearance. Of these twelve, only four are remembered in all twelve volumes: Kenneth Widmerpool, Charles Stringham, Sir Magnus Donners, and Dicky Umfraville. The other eight who make a great impression on Nick are Ralph Barnby (eleven books), Lieutenant Bithel (six), Edgar Deacon (eleven), Molly Jeavons (nine), Ted Jeavons (nine), Hugh Moreland (eight), Isobel Tolland Jenkins (nine), and Matilda Wilson Moreland Donners
(ten). Three who seem like they ought to appear in this list but do not are Giles Jenkins, Jean Templer, and Peter Templer. They each appear in eleven books, but not without interruption. No mention is made of Giles in *Books Do Furnish a Room*, of Jean in *The Soldier’s Art*, or of Peter in *Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant*.

Of these fifteen characters, only four are alive when Nick ends his memoirs in 1971: Jean, Isobel, Umfraville, and Bithel, who is seriously ill, an alcoholic, and clearly insane. Five of these were of Nick’s parents’ generation, and so their deaths are not surprising. But that Nick should lose six close friends by his sixty-fifth birthday (Barnby, Moreland, Stringham, Peter, and Matilda) or acquaintances (Widmerpool) underscores the theme of loss in the novel. Barnby, Molly, Stringham, and Templer are lost in the war (as are Chips and Priscilla Lovell, George Tolland, Robert Tolland, and a number of soldiers Nick names), and although such a loss would be by no means extraordinary, it diminishes Nick’s world. With the loss of Matilda, Moreland, and Widmerpool, virtually all the friends of Nick’s youth are gone.

Interestingly, of the main characters in *The Music of Time*, only Jean and Isobel have children. Even among Nick’s acquaintances, only Quiggin and Ada have offspring, rowdy twin girls. (And including Nick and Isobel’s two sons, the ten Tolland siblings produce only seven children.) It is obvious, then, that Nick’s friends are not likely to be remembered within their families; they generally died alone.
Only in Nick's memoirs are they assured some small measure of posterity.

Finally and obviously, Nick survives. Is it that he has given himself the task of imposing order through narrative on his experience of life that keeps him going, or does his strength come from a belief that there is an order for him to record? As we have seen, the patterns Nick records appear to be external to himself, yet it is also possible that Nick alone discerns the particular ones he records; the patterns he sees in social life and what we can surmise about the way his mind or memory orders information are finally for all purposes the same. Walking to work several weeks after the Normandy Invasion, Nick thinks of "the lines about Stetson and the ships at Mylae, how death had undone so many" (MP 113). In the space between when Nick leaves Henderson's Deacon exhibit and sees the workmen gathered around their fire-bucket, and his bonfire later that winter (the first intra-chapter typographical break since A Question of Upbringing), what one can imagine coming to Nick's mind is another line about loss: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins." To some extent Nick's work is a memorial to his friends' contribution to his social identity; the book is at once generous in giving life again to the dead -- at least for a moment, at least for as long as the reader or Nick is engaged with the work -- and selfish in its intent.
Notes

Chapter 1

1 Memory is also a significant topic, if not the subject, of a number of major twentieth century third person narratives, among them Joyce's Ulysses, in which memory and consciousness are closely related, and Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha sequence, in which memory is equated with history ("Memory believes before knowing remembers." Light in August).

2 Such is the evaluation of Brennan who, writing before the completion of The Music of Time, speculated that "it seems unlikely that Powell is aiming at the erection of a thesis of permanence-in-art upon 'piles' of memory. He has not emphasized, after all, the memory as a factor beyond the ordinary in the elucidation of life, and he has dwelt on other theses of his own. He merely uses a device brought to perfection by Proust... and it seems likely that this link... will slowly cease to be thought important." Brennan's citing memory as a device rather than a subject in both The Music of Time and Remembrance of Things Past seems simplistic. However, he does list several interesting general contrasts between the writers, for example Proust's tense tone and Powell's relaxed one, Proust's romantic attitude toward childhood and nature and the lack of the same in Powell, Proust's view of the decline of the aristocracy as "irreversible" and Powell's stance that such ups and downs are cyclical, and finally Proust's emphasis on the "recoverability" of time in contrast to Powell's interest in charting the "revelations of its flow." Russell sees the contrast in the authors' notions of time as important also, noting that Marcel claims Time exists within himself while Nick's description of Poussin's painting clearly places Time outside the dancers. Furthermore, Russell notes, Marcel's "self-preoccupation" is understandable "because transports alone, rather than 'notable adventures' like Nick's continue to mark the secret quest of the narrator" (27-9). Finally, a 1968 dissertation compares Nick and Marcel as "after the fact detectives" (Bjornson).

Powell wrote a piece on Proust for the TLS. He acknowledged that Proust's ideas on love, friendship, art, and history are romantic, but still the essential nature of Remembrance of Things Past is classical: "the novel is founded on the essentially classic concept that, while the individual may change, the situations of human life remain the same. . . . It is in his intense realisation of the individual that Proust excels, and his examination of the human heart must constitute a formidable confutation of any collectivist view of mankind." Powell also noted that although the novel might be overwritten, "the question of over-
elaboration — and of the comic effects too — is closely associated with Proust’s theory of Time: a theory which demands, for technical reasons, the existence of material that has comparatively little to do with the narrative — if it can be so called — but which is indispensable for producing the illusion of tricks of memory," comments that would work equally well for justifying the difficulty of determining where digressions end and narratives begin in The Music of Time, the difference being that in Proust’s work there is great over-elaboration of relatively few situations, while in Powell’s there are perhaps too many characters and situations briefly described. Finally, Powell is not surprisingly most critical of Proust’s handling of homosexuality and love. The values of Nick and Marcel and the quality of their relationships are quite different.

3

Proust posits an internal spiritual order. Memory is even associated with the soul in Proust’s fiction; such an exalted position is not granted it by Powell, however. When we awaken from sleep, notes Marcel, things in the room activate our memory and so we return from the death of the self which is sleep. By analogy, Marcel suggests that "perhaps the resurrection of the soul after death is to be conceived as a phenomenon of memory" (GW 86). Or noting Bergson’s claim, "we possess all our memories. . . . But not the faculty of recalling them," Marcel muses on the problem of the "immortality of the soul": "The being that I shall be after death has no more reason to remember the man I have been since my birth than the latter to remember what I was before it" (CP 1017-18).

4

Robert Champigny suggests, in contrast, the "trinity of author, narrator and character," noting that in memory the dichotomy between subject and object is overcome. The relationship of the past and the present is analogous to that between the character and the narrator; that of the subject and object is analogous to the author and the character-narrator ("Proust" 126).

Chapter 2

1

Consider too Piper’s thesis: "There is no ‘given moment,’ as Powell continuously implies, at which the mind can confidently rest. His stylistic absorption of the preeminence, the completeness, of any and every moment, his reduction of the very substance of his discourse to a shifting and indeterminate expression, provides the most comprehensive and profound index to this implication." The thematic significance of Powell’s treatment of time is the sense that "a limited and shifting understanding of social
life is or ought to be the primary object of human intelligence" (185-86).

2 John Russell makes a similar point: Mrs. Erdleigh's theory of "commencement - opposition - equilibrium" "summarizes the pattern of each of the first two triologies" (106). Russell, writing in 1970, could not know that that pattern would persist throughout all four triologies.

Chapter 4

1 For the numerical analyses in this chapter and throughout the essay, I am indebted to Hilary Spurling's page-by-page listing in Invitation to the Dance of each reference to each character in The Music of Time.

Chapter 5

1 Many critics have emphasized the historical context of Powell's novel and his parody of certain historical events, for example, the Marxist leanings of Quiggin, St. John Clarke, and Erridge, Earl of Warminster. There are those that find Powell's view of history morally compelling, for example, Robert Morris who argues that the theme of The Kindly Ones is that history does repeat itself and its repetition can be instructive (Novels). But so far no one has traced the intellectual historical context of the work.

2 Morris also appears to be working on similarities in Nietzsche and Powell. In an entry on Powell in the 1986 edition of St. Martin Press's Contemporary Novelists (edited by D. L. Kirkpatrick), Morris ends by noting that in Hearing Secret Harmonies it becomes "crystal-clear that the force behind Powell's mythic vision has all the while been Nietzsche. . . . What Nietzsche ultimately does for The Music of Time is to give it a novelistic, as well as philosophical order. For Poussin/Powell's dancers . . . are none other than Nietzsche's timeless actors, caught up in the myth of recurrence and eternal return" (684). I imagine if Morris is revising his 1968 book on Powell, he will expand on Nietzsche at much greater length. I, of course, am not approaching Powell as a myth-maker, so I suppose that Morris's use of Nietzsche would be different from mine. Maybe not.

3 The structure of the work has been variously described; the problem is accounting for both its linear and circular qualities. Russell refers to Myra Erdleigh's occult formula, which itself tries to account for similarities and
differences, recurrence and change, when he argues that "Commencement – Opposition – Equilibrium . . . summarizes the pattern of each of the first two trilogies," while maintaining that Powell "appreciates the actual successiveness of Time in a way that is quite un-Proustian" (175). Others see the successiveness of time denied, finding that "On one level, events and characters do not so much succeed each other . . . as co-exist, as if on a space of canvas rather than in a period of time" (Birns 81). Morris's new article again appears to me to underscore best the dual problems of organization and the significance of time in Powell's work: "The world of The Music of Time, then, is generated through continuing change. . . . By seeing all possible, shifting interchangeable patterns, but by placing the burden of interpreting them squarely on his narrator, he makes the present the center of the novel, enlarges the most underplayed actions or contracts overblown ones without focusing on their immediate significance, integrates individual steps of the dance into the greater flux, and charts necessarily changing sensibilities against the continuum of human history. Such is the linear movement in time, but there is also the vertical movement of time: its qualitative rather than quantitative function, the thing-in-itself that makes one "unable . . . to control the steps of the dance"" (683).

4 Bader explores the dance metaphor extensively, noting that its three qualities are that it is cyclic and ritualistic, and under the sway of a dominant force (Time). Episodes in The Music of Time recall its opening image, according to Bader; these include the passing from character to character at the many parties described in the work, the Stringham-Priscilla-Moreland-Audrey circle at Mrs. Foxe's musical party in Casanova's Chinese Restaurant, the Seven Deadly Sins tableaux, Bithel's dance the night he joins Nick's unit, and the ritual dance of Scorpio-Fiona-Widmerpool-Rusty in Hearing Secret Harmonies.

Bader also discusses a number of the repetitious occurrences in The Music of Time that this chapter studies, but I find that Bader finally does not explain why or technically how the patterns are established; his purpose is to support his assertion that The Music of Time is a "cyclic novel of generations." See pages 120-139.

5 Bader, in contrast, emphasizes the clashes between generations, noting that although individual members of the same generations change, there "cannot be any changes in the relative positions of the generations" (112). He also stresses the deaths of members of the Victorian and Edwardian generations, but dismisses the deaths of Nick's peers as what can be expected when there is war (117-118).
Chapter 6

1 In 1968 H. D. Herring also concluded that The Music of Time rejects a deterministic world view. Herring suggests that "by allowing his characters to weave aimlessly in and out of the texture of his work, to appear unexpectedly in a frequently nebulous connection to whatever is happening at the moment, or to drift into temporary or permanent oblivion, Powell denies the basis of scientific determinism -- controlled cause and effect" (18). In contrast, I maintain that the notion of cause and effect does not have to be rejected to disprove determinism; Powell's characters wander no more or no less "aimlessly" than any author's. Herring also presents a reading of Poussin's allegory, finding that the dancers face outward because it is the future that is emphasized, and that the steps change as the music changes because "one lives within the circumstances he finds in life, doing what he can to adjust them to his needs" (19). Individual freedom and choice are stressed by Herring: "the one inexorable law to which Powell does adhere stems from the responsibility that each man faces as a result of his life's not being planned or controlled for him" (20), a statement with which I agree.

2 In contrast, other critics have found thematic justification for the coincidences. Russell concludes that "the paradoxes (or unpredictabilities) of coincidence serve as [Powell's] gauge for the repeatedness (verifiable by history) of human situations, regardless of change" (37). Tucker finds that Powell has provided for making the coincidences believable in several ways, including the use of a character who consistently reappears like Widmerpool, the comparisons Nick draws among characters (it is "as if the fiction had only itself to draw on for allusion and this sets up an immensely powerful impression of interdependence between characters"), the development of characters who act as "unifying agents" (Giles, Stevens, Umfraville, Pam, Jean, Erdleigh, Trelawney), and finally Nick's own assertions that patterns are to be found in life (84–85). Finally, Powell's notion of the music of time has been compared to Carl Jung's theory of synchronicity; both are derived from "the fact of coincidence" (Birns 80).

3 The circumstances of the rape of Daphne Manners in The Raj Quartet might also qualify as a life-changing coincidence. It simply seems like bad luck that vandals should have come upon the sleeping lovers in the Bibighar Gardens, but from that accident her life, Kumar's, and to a lesser extent Merrick's and the Laytons' are changed forever.
Classifying coincidences as internal and external may be unnecessary. Since perceiving a situation as a coincidence is a subjective judgment, then perhaps all coincidences are internal, whether they involve others or not. However, in those cases when two people are involved (in contrast with reading coincidences), if both perceive the event as coincidental, then the judgment seems not quite so subjective.

Cf. Peter Brooks on Freud's annotations to the Wolf Man case: "The logic of his interpretive work moves Freud to an understanding that causation can work backward as well as forward since the effect of an event, or of phantasy, often comes only when it takes on meaning, usually when it takes on sexual significance, which may occur with considerable delay. Chronological sequence may not settle the issue of cause; events may gain traumatic significance by deferred action (Nachtraglichkeit) or retroaction, action working in reverse sequence to create a meaning that did not previously exist. Thus the way a story is ordered does not necessarily correspond to the way it works" (280).

Hume's insight into our common language understanding of causality also exposes problems in the idea of coincidences. The subjectivity of such a judgment is clearly seen in deeming one set of circumstances connected, a coincidence, while ignoring other equally non-accidental conjunctions.

Cf. Dennett: an "open future" is one "in which our deliberation is effective: a future in which if I decide to do A then I will do A, and if I decide to do B then I will do B; a future in which -- since only one future is possible -- the only possible thing that can happen is the thing I decide in the end to do" (139).

Cf. Dennett: "Only one actual thing can happen whether or not what happens is determined to happen, so the part of our image we label 'future' consists of the events that actually happen -- happen to happen -- in the fullness of time" (124).
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