TIME AS AN ELEMENT OF STRUCTURE IN THE NOVELS OF ANTHONY POWELL

Peter Cant

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PREFACE

Time, inescapable in the writing and reading of all novels, becomes the very subject matter of the novel series. In most - Romains and du Gard in France, Dos Passos and Sinclair in the United States, Snow in England - the emphasis has been on a naturalistic representation of the authors' times: their novels are not histories, but history; their prototypes, nineteenth century. Against the historians stands the single monument of Proust: his obsession with personal, individual past time, sui generis. Thirdly, when individual and history are juxtaposed, the individual, it appears, endures just long enough to wind a rope around his neck. Life is short, time a prison, and, eternity failing, galgenhumor imperative. In the tradition of the English novel, Sterne is the originator of the gallow's humour of time, and Powell, so far, his only successor.

It has not been the purpose of this paper to compare Powell to Sterne: Powell's manipulation of novelistic time, for example, is far less violent. My concern has been to find a conceptual framework applicable to the problems of time in any novelist. In that, I have not

succeeded, nor could I expect to, although one or two peaks have been sighted while clambering the foothills. Most significant and bewildering has been the realization that the more one thinks about time, the less one knows about it. Secondly, after the neat Victorian chessboard of visual co-ordinates of time and space, it has been difficult to deal with a non-visual manifold of movement, persistence and will. Yet, despite the difficulties of grasping time in a philosophical sense, the activity of dealing with those problems has provided a context within which Powell, the novelist and his novels, may be, I hope, the better grasped.

I should like to thank Prof. David McKeen for his patient and encouraging help, especially for his thoroughness in reading the manuscript in a form unduly fragmentary. For whatever errors or inconsistencies remain, I am to blame.

ABBREVIATIONS

AM	*Afternoon Men*	1963
QU	*A Question of Upbringing*	1962
BM	*A Buyer's Market*	1962
AW	*The Acceptance World*	1962
ALM	*At Lady Molly's*	1963
CCR	*Casanova's Chinese Restaurant*	1964
KO	*The Kindly Ones*	1965
VB	*The Valley of Bones*	1964
SA	*The Soldier's Art*	1966
MP	*The Military Philosophers*	1968

Dates refer to editions used which are, with the exception of the last three, Penguin paperbacks.

INTRODUCTION

TEMPORAL INTERPENETRATION

If you melt salt in water, after a time salt would be found in every particle of the water, and you might think then that here you had interpenetration. But no: your mind cannot support an idea of that kind. It sets to work and imagines that the molecules of salt fit in between the molecules of water. It so gets rid of the idea interpenetration and reduces everything to an extensive manifold.

T.E. Hulme

Snow from yesterday's fall still lay in patches and the morning air was glacial. No one was about in the streets at this hour. On either side of me in the half-light Kedward and the Company Sergeant-Major stepped out briskly as if on parade. Some time in the past - long, long ago in another existence, an earlier, less demanding incarnation - I had stayed a night in this town, idly come here to cast an eye over a countryside where my own family had lived a century or more before. One of them (rather a hard case by the look of it, from whom Uncle Giles's failings perhaps stemmed) had come west from the Marches to marry the heiress of a small property overlooking a bay on this lost, lonely shore. The cliffs below the site of the house, where all but foundations had been obliterated by the seasons, enclosed untidy banks of piled-up rock against which spent Atlantic waters ceaselessly dissolved, ceaselessly renewed steaming greenish spray: la mer, la mer, toujours recommencée, as Moreland was fond of quoting, an everyday landscape of heaving billows too consciously dramatic for my own taste. Afterwards, in the same country, they moved to a grassy peninsula of the estuary, where the narrowing sea penetrated deep inland. There moss and ivy spread over ruined, roofless walls on which broad sheets of rain were descending. In the church nearby, a white marble tablet had been raised in memoriam. Those were the visible remains. I did not remember much of the town itself. The streets, built at constantly changing levels, were not without a bleak charm, an illusion of tramping through Greco's Toledo in winter, or one of those castellated upland townships of Tuscany, represented without great regard for perspective in the background of quattrocento portraits. For some reason one was always aware, without knowing why the fact should be so inescapable, that the sea was not far away. The poem's emphasis on ocean's aqueous reiterations provoked in the mind a thousand fleeting images, scraps of verse, fragments of painting, forgotten tunes, disordered souvenirs of every kind: anything, in fact, but the practical matters required of one. When I tried to pull myself together, fresh daydreams overwhelmed me.

In this, the opening paragraph of The Valley of Bones, the

seventh volume of the dodecalogy, Powell's narrator, Nick Jenkins, has newly arrived at his army unit, somewhere on the Welsh coast, in the winter of 1939-40. Here, through Jenkins's observations and memories, the reader is presented with a bewildering plethora of "clocks", direct and implied. To facilitate a rather detailed analysis of these various "clocks", and of the time-shifts between them, I have preferred a sentence by sentence analysis. Jenkins begins:

> Snow from yesterday's fall still lay in patches and the morning air was glacial.

Times of nature predominate in the opening sentence. There is a movement from <u>seasonal</u> (one may be reminded of Villon's snow), through <u>calendric</u> ("yesterday") and <u>diurnal</u> ("morning"), to <u>geological</u> ("glacial") time. It may be possible to add meteorological time, that unpredictable cycle of English weather.

> No one was about in the streets at this hour.

The second sentence presents what may in general be called <u>social</u> time, the routine of human life, work and rest, keyed to the cycle of day and night and to <u>clock</u>

time ("at this hour").

> On either side of me in the half-light
> Kedward and the Company Sergeant-Major
> stepped out briskly as if on parade.

Extreme in contrast of differing persistence, there is the implication of sidereal time (half-light) opposed to what may be called corporeal time (stepped out briskly). The act of walking is itself a clock which may be used to measure both quantitative and qualitative time. It is quantitative in terms of the speed with which it occurs and qualitative in terms of the value it has to the individual or to society. By extension, corporeal time relates to work, is closely linked to social time, can be seen as one aspect thereof, and here correlates with that aspect of social time which may be called military. The more strongly social time beats, the more weakly individual time ticks, and the strongest of social times is the military, as one who has marched to The British Grenadiers can testify. Hence, the movement of walking here described is mechanical in its reduction of men to clockwork extensions of the drill-ground.

> Some time in the past - long, long ago in another existence, an earlier, less demanding incarnation - I had stayed a night in this town...

The time shift is pronounced. Memorial time suddenly obtrudes. The parenthetical aside creates an ironic contrast between the act of individual memory, its tenuous relationship to persistence, and the inclusiveness of eternality suggested by a sort of spiritual or trans-migratory time, and its tenuous relationship to facticity. Memorial time is one aspect of the intensity of psychological time and the eventfulness of autobiographical time: the first rendered in the value judgement of "less demanding"; the second in the report, "I had stayed a night in this town..."

Paralleling the time shift, there is a change in style from simple direct sentences, descriptive of that present actuality, to longer sentences, evocative of the reaches of the memory.

> ... idly come here to cast an eye over a countryside where my own family had lived a century or more before.

In addition to memorial, psychological and auto-

biographical, it is also possible to detect a generalized personal time: the time a man has to himself - his behavioural pattern - as opposed to the time demanded of him by society - the social behavioural pattern. In this case, the word "idly" conjures up playtime, leisure time, and vacation time, as differing, for example, from military time. A second pronounced time shift takes place at this point, within memorial time, to historical time (a century or more before). An aspect of historical time, which links the historic to the individual through natural or biological or generational time, is familial time. In this context, it is possible to speak of an individual time - the time of Nick Jenkins - which gathers together his awareness of the complex of time scales into his own singular identity. (Beyond Nick Jenkins, of course, is Anthony Powell, and his singular identity.)

> One of them (rather a hard case by the look of it, from whom Uncle Giles's failings perhaps stemmed)...

Besides continuing the anecdote, a linear series occupying present reading time, the reference to Uncle Giles presumes a familiarity on the part of the reader

with that skeleton in Jenkins's family cupboard, and thus moves him backward into remembered reading time. In this case, the reader returns to a complex of occasions in novelistic time, composed of his own memories of meetings between Jenkins and his uncle described in previous volumes, at school, at the Trouville, at the Ufford, at Aldershot, in Shepherd Market and, finally, at the Bellevue. The recurrence of Jenkins's uncle diffuses also a complicated fictive-historical time which informs the events of the novels: those occasions which, though fictive, are intermingled with actuality, sometimes to an inextricable degree. The problem of Powell's own relationship to his narrator, and the mixture of fictive and historical characterization, cannot be solved until the sequence is completed and the details of Powell's life may decently be disinterred.

> ... had come west from the Marches to marry the heiress of a small property overlooking a bay on this lost, lonely shore.

Clearly, one may detect biographical time, a specific aspect of historical time.

> The cliffs below the site of the house, where all but foundations had been obliterated by the seasons, enclosed untidy banks of piled-up rock against which Atlantic waters ceaselessly dissolved, ceaselessly renewed steaming greenish spray:...

Again, there is a striking contrast between extremes of temporal persistence, the human artefact on the one hand and the primeval oceans on the other. The sentence begins with implications of the ephemeral duration of human objects, a sort of archaeological time, and moves through geological time, the erosion of the land itself, to sidereal time, in this case specifically lunar, implied in the movements of the oceans, rather than solar.

> ...la mer, la mer, toujours recommencée, as Morelard was fond of quoting, an everyday landscape of heaving billows too consciously dramatic for my own taste.

The motion and persistence and force of the sea has long had the quality of symbol for the motion and persistence and force of life itself. Such a metaphor partakes of poetic time, but the broadly generalized base of such a notion may here allow recognition of a conceptual

time, in order that one may talk of the persistence of concepts, in this case, the sort of rough and ready rubric which, intoned, provides serviceable shelter from the threat of facticity and its innumerable insistent and specific temporalities. The reader of previous volumes latches immediately onto Moreland's particular brand of sententiousness, so that his memories mingle with Jenkins's own.

Although hardly a startling example, Jenkins's judgement of Moreland's comment introduces an aspect of time, of the quality an individual may give to time through the operation of his _will_.

> Afterwards, in the same country, they moved to a grassy peninsula of the estuary, where the narrowing sea penetrated deep inland. There moss and ivy spread over ruined, roofless walls on which broad sheets of rain were descending. In the church nearby, a white marble tablet had been raised _in memoriam_. Those were the visible remains.

Time shifts from the intermediately remembered to the more distantly remembered past with the move from the last sentence to this one. It is emphatic of muta-

bility, especially of human life. Individual mortality, the limited extension of human time, is balanced against the greater persistence of nature, a biological time in which live moss and ivy, and of human organizations, and institutional time (church).

> I did not remember much of the town itself.

Memorial time is unreliable, a human privilege subject to its own mutability. The tense of the verb, raising a problem of grammatical time, suggests a certain ambiguity between remembering now, that is, during a fictive writing time (the narrator's supposed writing time), and remembering then, that is, during novelistic time. Of course, the reader readily remembers that the narrator's time (when the narrator remembers what he remembered) is not to be jumbled with the novelist's time (that is, Anthony Powell's time), nor with his own, the reader's time, as he remembers that Jenkins is remembering what he remembered. The conventional time of the novel, typified here, creates by such temporalizing a subconscious distance. As one reads, the events of the novel happen NOW. They also, however, happened THEN, because the narrator

says so, and because the novelist has the narrator say so. The qualities of now-ness and then-ness in the reader's mind, as he reads, are difficult to separate. Still, it may be true to say that the more conscious the reading, the more objective will be the reader's attitude, and the more dominant will be his awareness of the narrator's and author's then-ness.

> The streets, built at constantly changing levels, were not without a bleak charm, an illusion of tramping through Greco's Toledo in winter, or one of those castellated upland townships of Tuscany, represented without great regard for perspective in the background of quattrocento portraits.

Powell is fond of the idea that events are often at the same time similar yet different. That idea is enhanced by the analogy with art, with the distant and yet immediate connection between this Welsh town and Greco's pictured Toledo. Geographically, they are distant; in the works of art, or rather in Jenkins's memory of those works, they are close. In this closeness of disparate objects in memorial time, there are created spatial incongruities - often farcical - upon which Powell plays.

> For some reason one was always aware, without knowing why the fact should be so inescapable, that the sea was not far away.

The reader is returned to the watery imagery which dominates the paragraph. Here, there is the suggestion of an archetypal time, of the sea as an unavoidable aspect of the psyche of the race, perhaps a paradigm of human consciousness. There is the sense of something half-understood in such archetypal time, as if one had put one's ear to a conch-shell and heard the pulsating - and mournful - reverberations of a very distant past. The parallel of the sea to the mind awash, of the affinities of that external to this internal motion, is developed in the next sentence by:

> The poem's emphasis on ocean's aqueous reiterations provoked in the mind a thousand fleeting images, scraps of verse, fragments of painting, forgotten tunes, disordered souvenirs of every kind: anything, in fact, but the practical matters required of me.

The development here points up the randomness, the disorder, of temporal motion when the will fails to provide either direction or organization. A conscious

effort has to be made, otherwise the mind will drift, surrendered to (apparently) random remembrances. By the operation of the memory, the present, in particular the present of social time, is swamped by the past. The result is a sinking into the maelstrom of time in the mind, which is, except by dim association, unrelated to present facticity. To extricate oneself from the maelstrom, in which the prospect of abandonment is pleasing and yet, because so pleasing, dangerously like the Freudian pleasure principle, demands a conscious effort of the will. Powell ends the paragraph with:

> When I tried to pull myself together,
> fresh daydreams overwhelmed me.

In general, apart from the multiplicity of varying "clocks", the paragraph contains a sequence of cyclical images interspersed with linear images. Certain time scales may have properties of both: for example, familial time, which may be simultaneously linear in the sense of succeeding generations and cyclical in the sense of genetic repetition. That Jenkins marches between Kedward and the CSM is cyclical in that he is surrounded by military time

(and by an interwoven cocoon of other times) and yet linear in that their motion is "briskly" forward. The drill ground further suggests, in its echoes of marching and counter-marching, a sense of cyclical, or repetitive, time. Cycles of time occur in snow and rain and sea images. Linear time occurs in the progression of time from to-day to yesterday to the historical past. However, both cyclical and linear are intermingled, especially in the memory. Even an object of apparently obvious linearity - El Greco's painting - becomes cyclical in its similarity to a Welsh coastal town. Most interesting is the construction of that town, "built at constantly changing levels", a construction which spatially - and thus inadequately - reflects the "constantly changing levels" of time in the narrator's mind. As a whole, the paragraph itself is cyclical, moving from outer world into the narrator's daydreams, and back again.

However, the passage resists reduction to a conceptual framework, in that any single time-scheme cannot comprehend all the processes involved. The sort of difficulty which an analysis involves is perhaps best put by Hulme in his discussion of Bergson's theory of duration:

> It seems that the intellect distorts reality (if it does distort it) because it persists in unfolding things out in space. It is not satisfied unless it can see every part. It wants to form a picture. It is possible then that there may be a method of knowledge which refrains from forming pictures. Put in Bergson's words in the preface to his first book, which really contains in embryo the whole of everything he has ever done, "we think in terms of space - the insurmountable difficulties presented by certain philosophic problems arise from the fact that we separate out in space, phenomena which do not occupy space.[1]

In short, temporal processes, because qualitative, are always distorted in quantitative diagrams. Powell's paragraph deals with the quality of life, the existence possible in a moment - or series of moments - for his narrator, Jenkins. Time interpenetrates it as the salt does the sea, to borrow one of Hulme's analogies.

Hulme is discussing what he means by the phrase "intensive manifold", which may be defined as a complex awareness of which "no picture or description can be given". Powell, however, by dealing in extension, in the plurality

[1]T.E.Hulme, Speculations (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924), p. 178.

of time-scales, manages to contrive an intensive manifold which does not state that life is a complex and melancholy motion, but which still communicates an intuition of that "sad mortality" which neither "brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea" may overcome. Time interpenetrates, and although aspects of it may be analyzed out of the matrix, only its synthesis will give the sense of life's intensity:

> If you think of mental life as a flowing stream, then ordinary intellectual knowledge is like looking at that stream from the outside: you get a clear and perfectly describable picture. Imagine now that you are turned into a cross section of this flowing stream, that you have no sense of sight, that in fact your only sense is a sense of pressure. Then although you will have no clear picture or representation of the stream at all, you will in spite of that have a complete knowledge of it as a complex sense of the varying directions of the forces pressing on you.[2]

However, although it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to separate out the temporal forces which act in all their variety upon the individual, it is possible to chart time by reducing it to two generalized aspects:

[2]Ibid., p. 186.

motion and persistence. Such a reduction avoids the confusing number of specific time scales which have been here outlined. In addition to the two processes of motion and persistence, it is necessary also to postulate that process by which man lives in time. That is, within time's river, whether it races or stagnates, man has to swim, and just how he swims will depend, not only upon the force and direction of the currents, but also upon the force and direction of his own will.

PART I

THEORY

Meanwhile, Norman Chandler had been finishing his chapter without taking any notice of what was going on around him. Now, he put a marker in his book (which I saw to be Time and Western Man), and, drawing the billowing robes of his rather too large dressing-gown more tightly round him, he rose to his feet.

'"A lot of awful men"?' he said, speaking in a voice of old-time melodrama. 'What do you mean, Matilda? I offered you a bite with Max and me, if your boy friend did not arrive. That was only because you said he was so forgetful, and might easily think he had made a date for the day after tomorrow....'

Casanova's Chinese Restaurant

CHAPTER 1

TIME AS MOTION

> "... people always talk about love affairs as if you spent the whole of your time in bed. I find most of my own emotional energy - not to say physical energy - is exhausted in making efforts to get there. Problems of Time and Space as usual."
>
> The relation of Time and Space, then rather fashionable, was, I found, a favourite subject of Moreland's.
>
> "Surely we have long agreed the two elements are identical?" said Maclintick. "This is going over old ground - perhaps I should say old hours."
>
> "You must differentiate for everyday purposes, don't you?" urged Barnby. "I don't wonder seduction seems a problem, if you get Time and Space confused."[3]

Immediately after the First World War, from the attitudes of post-Newtonian mechanics, with its emphasis on the physical and concrete, the limiting and deterministic, the natural world once more was thrust upon the

[3] CCR, pp. 35-6

Heraclitean wave. Both Alexander and Whitehead carried their theories to a conclusion which denied to space or time individual or separate existence or extension. They reinstated nature as a process. They unified space and time by stipulating a plurality of movements, an ongoingness, a metaphysical rather than a physical reality. Their view of a temporal nature evokes a very human humility, tinged with melancholy, as when one reads:

> The past and the future meet and mingle in the ill-defined present. The passage of nature which is only another name for the creative force of existence has no narrow ledge of definite instantaneous present within which to operate. Its operative presence which is now urging nature forward must be sought for throughout the whole, in the remotest past as well as in the narrowest breadth of any present duration. Perhaps also in the unrealized future. Perhaps also in the future which might be as well as the actual future which will be. It is impossible to meditate on time and the mystery of the creative passage of nature without an overwhelming emotion at the limitations of human intelligence.[4]

[4]Concept of Nature (pb ed.; Cambridge: University Press, 1964), p. 73.

As early as 1927, Wyndham Lewis perceived that the philosophy of which he chose Alexander and Whitehead as representative was reflected by literature, and especially by the novel. Objecting to such "'time'-notions which have now, in one form or another, gained an undisputed ascendancy in the intellectual world",[5] he lashed out at such varied figures as Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, Einstein and Spengler. His main blows were reserved, however, for the speculations of Alexander and Whitehead, to whose concepts of temporality he most clearly objected, and whose ideas he most often misrepresented.

Of the two, Alexander's conclusions are the more direct and approachable. "Space and Time," he says, "have no reality apart from each other, but are aspects or attributes of one reality, Space-Time or Motion."[6] When he concludes that there is a single reality, Motion, he rearranges our perception of the external world. The image of motion itself, placed at the centre of our assumptions,

[5]Time and Western Man (London: Chatto and Windus, 1927), p. 3.

[6]Samuel Alexander, Space, Time, and Diety (New York, 1966), II, 428.

shifts emphasis from a permanent physical universe encasing mortal man, to the complex motion of all things, not just of the flower, but also of the crannied wall. Such motion is, however, as far as Alexander describes it, optimistic. It partakes of the mystique of emergent mentalism: "The emergence of a new quality from any level of existence means that at that level there comes into being a certain constellation or collocation of the motions belonging to that level, and possessing the quality appropriate to it, and this collocation possesses a new quality distinctive of the higher complex."[7] One hears, in staid terms, the Tennysonian clarion - "Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change." Thus, motion appears to be hopefully progressive. Our experience in the history of the last fifty years, however, does not lend itself to such qualitative progressiveness. Alexander did not hear the rag-time that would crack the walls.

At the other extreme from the macrocosmic notion of constant flux exists the concept of the microcosmic stasis of the immediate present. Such a concept is clearly

[7]Alexander, II, 45 (my italics).

theoretical. Subjectively, for the practical matter of human living, it contains little relevance. However, when Alexander coins the term "point-instant", and Whitehead, "event-particle", to describe instantaneity, such terms may be usefully transferred to discuss the objective structure of works of serial art such as the novel and film. That is, a series ought to be divisible into parts, as long as one is operating within the context of that series.

When Gertrude Stein wrote that a rose is a rose is a rose, then, apart from other implications, she emphasized that there are irreducible and intractable components, even when that component is a rose, with its complex of emotive associations. In nature, the object "rose" may grow and bloom and decay, and in so doing partake of the universal motion. However, for practical purposes, within nature, there is the series, "flower", or "growing things", of which the individual rose is an irreducible component. Similarly, the sign "rose", written by Burns, forms an irreducible component of a poem. In other series, this "rose" may clearly be reduced. A series which may be called "photosynthesis" or "nitrogen cycle" will clearly interfere with the object

"rose". A series which alters the sign "rose" to the past tense of "rise", or to a proper noun, likewise interferes with that sign's irreducibility. However, although these objections exist, it remains true that any given series is composed of parts which are irreducible, and which have meaning only in so far as they are parts of the series. It may thus be said that, in the temporal series, the macrocosm in motion contains microcosms in stasis.

Of the two terms referring to the static microcosm - "point-instant" and "event-particle" - Whitehead's is the more available because it relates more clearly to the events which may be conceived as the larger components of the series. He writes:

> In the first place we must avoid the abstractions of space and time in the formulation of our fundamental ideas and must recur to the ultimate facts of nature, namely to events. Also in order to find the ideal simplicity of expressions of the relations between events, we restrict ourselves to event-particles. Thus the life of a material particle is its adventure amid a track of event-particles strung out as a continuous series...[8]

[8]Whitehead, p. 180.

If that series is the film, then the event-particles may be represented by the separate frames which go to make up the film-track. If it is the novel, then they may be represented by the separate words of which the narrative is constructed. By the characters of the two event-particles, frame and word, the film and novel may be differentiated from each other. In common, as far as each series is concerned, frame and word have the property of timelessness or instantaneity. Separated from the context of the movement of the series, they become unreal and meaningless. (Although, subjectively, they may become incorporated by an observer into a mental series, as when a still photograph or a single word evokes - as does synecdoche or asyndeton - a continuing response.)

Onto the quality, to the perceptor, of the timelessness and unreality of the detached event-particle, Wyndham Lewis latches in his refutation of "the Professors" and their conception of temporal interpenetration. He attempts to substitute for the idea of the temporal basis of reality a countering idea which he terms the "spatializing instinct". In so doing, by refurbishing the eighteenth century ut pictura poesis controversy, he discri-

minates too nicely between the predominantly temporal art of the novel and the predominantly spatial art of painting.

Film helps to make this necessary distinction. Each frame, each separate picture, exists in the sense in which Lessing defines painting: it uses "forms and colours in space", is composed of "signs arranged side by side" which "can represent only objects existing side by side". (Of course, modern art gives the lie to the last, purely mimetic, function of signs.) On the other hand, each frame exists as a sign in itself and, when one succeeds another, they become event-particles which "succeed each other, in time."[9] Thus, the film illustrates Lessing's conception of the difference between "spatial" painting and "temporal" poetry.

The composition of each frame, its very existence, like that of a painting, would therefore seem to be in "pure" space. It is this sort of composition which Lewis conjures up when he wants to degrade the importance of time, temporal flow, or motion, and elevate in its stead the significance of spatial relationships.

[9] Laocoon XVI

> On a still day consider the trees in a forest or in a park, or an immobile castle reflected in a glassy river: they are perfect illustrations of our static dream; and what in a sense could be more 'unreal' than they? That is the external, objective, material world (made by our 'spatializing' sense) to which we are referring...
>
> That is our world of 'matter', which we place against the einsteinian, bergsonian, or alexandrian world of Time and 'restless' interpenetration.[10]

Lewis would appear to have given the Johnsonian, and very material, boot to the effete conceptions of the philosophers. It is not, however, as simple as that. His examples are unavoidably time-ridden. Like Lessing, he omits discussion of the temporal qualities of a painting, of the apparently static "instantaneous" scene.

The temporal nature of a painting is discussed by Mendilow in his Time and the Novel.[11] Essentially, he points out that a painting requires time properly to be perceived. The eye moves from part to part, and takes time to do so. The painter may even compose his painting with

[10]Lewis, p. 453.

[11]A.A. Mendilow, Time and the Novel (London: Peter Nevill, 1952), pp. 23-25.

such temporal movement in mind. Such an argument is based upon the difference in emphasis between reaction to a work of art and the work's objective existence.

But other temporal factors disturb the "pure" space of the picture or still photograph, apart from the contemplative life of the observer. The object exists in time and is itself subject to change and decay. It has taken time to construct and to order. It bears a temporal relationship, as sign, to that which it portrays. It is linked by technique and by its content to the historical period in which it was created. It partakes of the "world of Time and 'restless' interpenetration". This is not to deny spatiality, and the special techniques inherent therein, to the artist or photographer, but to question the validity of arguments which assume "the moment of supreme concentration in which time is annihilated, and in that annihilation is made unconditional."[12]

Lewis's own examples are clearly interpenetrated by time. All natural objects - Lewis's trees - grow and fall away. His river - no matter how glassy - must flow.

[12]Edwin Muir, The Structure of the Novel (New York: Hillary House, 1967), p. 91.

His castle - no matter that it be reflected - must have been built, and at some time. No dream is static. The mind, as any neophyte of yoga knows, is hard to make stand still, and consider. Lastly, and most bewildering, the more "timeless" an object attempts to be, the more it partakes of time. The monument which endures, the painting which persists, the photograph which captures a five-hundredth of a second, all of these may outlast the human lifespan. But, in lasting, they serve to remind us, not only of our own ephemerality, but of the ephemerality of ages past, and the uncertainty of those to come. They are the artefacts of civilization, and persist only as long as civilization does. They are not islands which break the river's motion, but simply the more valuable particles of its suspended silt.

Theoretical objections may be raised, for example, to the instantaneity of portmanteau words, or of prefixed or suffixed words, but, for practical purposes, the word forms the basic event-particle of literature. Just as one may object to the "pure" spatiality of painting, so one may object to the "pure" temporality of poetry. Clearly, however, within the context of the film, the

frame is an event-particle which, when the film is being run, cannot in practice be separately discerned. Similarly, when reading, the individual word is not discerned, unless, like the cinephotographer, the reader stops the narrative in its tracks. Each word is dependent upon its context in the series, upon what comes before and after it, immediately, not only in a representational, but also in a grammatical sense. The present tense, as Gonseth points out,[13] is the grammatical time we use to represent the actualization of a process. However, as he warns, within a given context, even the grammatical present becomes synthesized to senses of the past or of futurity. Again, time interpenetrates, and instantaneity, perfect "presentness", becomes a theoretical rather than a practical possibility.

In practice, what matters is the event. The frame, the word, may be "independently workable", to use Eisenstein's phrase. But, within the motion of the world, and of art, the perceptible duration of the event predominates. Obviously, the differentiation between event-

[13]Ferdinand Gonseth, Le Problème du Temps (Neuchatel, 1964), pp. 113-114. For a full discussion of grammar as organizer of structured temporality, see Chapter III, 'Le temps au niveau de l'adverbe et du verbe'.

particle and event, in view of what has already been written, remains one of convenience, dependent upon the sort of series being considered. Approximating thus, the event which dominates the film is the shot. It is, in Eisenstein's terms, "the minimum 'distortable' fragment of nature."[14] Similarly, in prose literature, it is the simple sentence, although, as in the following sequence, it need not be grammatically so. In life, an event may be a seminar at Sir George Williams University. Or it may be a drink in the Faculty Lounge. Or the arrival of a bill from the Accounts Office. Or the concrete structure of the building itself. And so on. All are events, of greater or lesser duration, of which the continuous flow of nature is composed, and which, for purposes of analytical convenience, are abstracted from their context of other, impeding and modifying, events. The process of abstraction depends upon description in terms of space and time, upon the convenient criteria of where and when, in the traditional four-dimensional space-time manifold.[15]

[14]S.M. Eisenstein, Film Form (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1949), p. 5.

[15]Whitehead, pp. 172-173.

CHAPTER II

TIME AND PERSISTENCE

> Later that evening, I found myself kicking my heels in one of those interminable cinema queues of which I have already spoken, paired off and stationary, as if life's co-educational school, out in a 'crocodile', had come to a sudden standstill...
>
> At Lady Molly's

Man's relation to the process of nature is two-fold in that he both participates in and abstracts from the natural world. He both experiences it and measures it. Existentially, he acts and is acted upon. Essentially, he abstracts. On the one hand, he is concerned with the quality of his own life; on the other, he is obsessed with the quantities into which perforce he analyses it, especially by the years which tick away. On the one hand, human life has extension, its allotted time span; on the other, it has intensity, eventfulness, meaning, or significance. Thus, events have a dual temporality: they are

measured and they are experienced. The two, measurement and experience, create a tension in which a man's waking life is led, the one a looming, bleak and empty abstraction, a vacuity of three score years and ten, and the other a bewildering plethora of awarenesses, as to value, courses of action, memories and expectations, hope and despair. Man may opt for the first - and mechanize himself; or for the second - and engage in the eventful flow.

> Genuine time, if it exists as anything else except the measure of motions in space, is all one with the existence of individuals as individuals, with the creative, with the occurrence of unpredictable novelties. Everything that can be said contrary to this conclusion is but a reminder that an individual may lose his individuality, for individuals become imprisoned in routine and fall to the level of mechanisms.[16]

It is a platitudinous complaint that so much of our lives is determined by rigorous time-tables. Like oxen, we are bound to the mills of the Philistines, blinded to potentiality. The social structure, in its external appearance, depends for its functioning upon the clock.

[16]John Dewey, 'Time and Individuality' in Time and Its Mysteries (New York: 1962), p. 157.

The individual's life, from a disengaged viewpoint, is dissipated in the meeting of dead-lines, in exits and entrances. Just so dies the Leopard in Lampedusa's novel. Just so Macbeth cries, "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow." Living in time, measured by clock or coffee-spoon, is indeed gloomy. In that existence, one might just as well not have been. Life's motion, if not slaughtered, is emasculated, because, simply, a time-table repeats, and events cannot be repeated.

Events are unique. Man, the thinker and abstractor and manufacturer, creates non-events, among which his life is organized. His time no longer a river, rather a canal, he surrounds himself with the unnatural, the repetitive, and the temporally stagnant. Events have quality; non-events quantity. A prisoner sews one mailbag, then another. The State may now have two mailbags, but the prisoner, in effect, has one, no matter how many he may make. The quality of his experience of the event is limited to one mailbag. In this sense, chronological time may have doubled, but experiential time has remained single: with the exception that it is to be hoped the prisoner learns to make better mailbags, more swiftly.

Experiential time is human or qualitative time. Within that time, events have significance and duration only as man confers. As Bergson points out, "pure duration might well be nothing but a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, without precise outlines, without any tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another, without any affiliation with number...."[17] However, from that "pure duration" or process, man selects. He selects (1) in order to perform any verbal act, and (2) in order to establish a significant order. The two are closely related in literary craftsmanship, to which, perhaps, it is time to turn.

The verbal event, being dematerialized and detached,[18] must be differentiated from the actual event. But, because language is based on representation, the difference will be one of degree. In exposition, for example, the connection of the verbal event to actuality may be

[17]Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will, trans. by F.L. Pogson (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 104.

[18]Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 3: The Phenomenology of Knowledge (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 332-333.

tenuous, and time stands still. In this sense, Western thought becomes a series of footnotes to Plato. Similarly, a proverb is ageless. Although such generalization results in an ordering of existence, a security amid flux, it results also in a reduction of individuality, in a comic response to the potentiality of life. By deliberate use of generalized "philosophical" responses, based on Lockean precepts, Sterne creates the comic figure of Walter Shandy. Fortunately, the good Walter, like language itself, "is impelled over and over again to efface the boundary between essence and existence, conceptual being and intuitive reality."[19]

> When I reflect, brother Toby, upon MAN; and take a view of that dark side of him which represents his life as open to so many causes of trouble - when I consider, brother Toby, how oft we eat the bread of affliction, and that we are born to it, as to the portion of our inheritance - I was born to nothing, quoth my uncle Toby, interrupting my father - but my commission. Zooks! said my father, did not my uncle leave you a hundred and twenty pounds a year?[20]

[19] Ibid., p.333

[20] Tristram Shandy, IV, VII.

Thus the real world, with its unique event, interrupts the conceptual world of non-events. Thus the universal bows to the particular. It is the greatest virtue of narrative fiction that it deals in the particular, that it is by definition novel. In narration, the verbal events correspond more closely than in any other verbal art form to existential or actual events. Indeed, because the novelist is concerned to portray events in their individuality, he may bring us closer to the flux of actual process, to the uniqueness of the individual life, than we ourselves are capable of. He forces us to break the confines of stereotyped and convenient attitudes, and to experience <u>difference</u>, to live the adventure of events, to experience natural process. He represents by verbal event. The philosopher or critic, concerned with extension, reifies verbal non-events. It is as well that we have both, but the flesh of life is preferable to its bones, natural process preferable to necrophilia. Powell, in <u>Afternoon Men</u>, has his protagonist work in a museum, living the essential life. In depicting that life, he makes clear the difference between the verbal event of narrative, and the non-event of expository prose:

> The morning passed slowly. Atwater tore up the letter to his landlord. He went over to the window and, opening it, leaned out and watched the people below. Unexpectedly there was a faint breath of air that made the trees sway slightly. Hindu students in light grey flannel trousers were pattering across the grass. Their voices were carried up to the window:
>
> 'That's all right, old boy, though it's awfully decent of you.'
>
> Atwater, thinking of friendship, remembered that he was having tea with Barlow that afternoon. He went back to his desk and took up his book again and began to read:
>
> '...instinctively drawn to the constant renewal of the data of his imagination, he is careful not to take certain products of the use of those data as the basis for new works. The form which he lends to a particular metaphor, or to certain specific relations of closely or distantly connected volumes, is never given to the elements of a picture a priori, but purely and simply in consequence of the developments required by the composition of a picture...'[21]

The novelist's consciousness comprises far more of natural process than could be incorporated in the bulkiest novel. Upon the intensity of an event, he may choose to impress any number of inter-related experiences drawn

[21]AM, pp. 49-50.

from the past, and any number of intuitions felt for the future. Thus, from the disorder of historical and individual eventfulness, the novelist must select those events which are germane to some ordering and structuring purpose. His events are not only representational, but significant, "for just as the world of representation disengaged itself from that of mere expression..: so ultimately a world of pure meaning grows out of the world of representation."[22] And, one might add, as far as literature is concerned, a world of such intensive meaning that expository tools, no matter how sharply honed, are inadequate to dissect it.

> The author may multiply the traits of his hero's character, may make him speak and act as much as he pleases, but all this can never be equivalent to the simple and indivisible feeling which I should experience if I were for an instant to identify myself with the person of the hero himself. Out of that indivisible feeling, as from a spring, all the words, gestures, and actions of the man would appear to me to flow naturally.[23]

[22]Cassirer, p. 448.

[23]Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. by T.E. Hulme (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), p. 22.

The novelistic event is therefore not only representational because it is unique, but meaningful because it is intense. In the selection of that which is representational, and out of which meaning may grow, the function of the novelist is similar to that of the historian. Both are limited by the permanent discrepancy between the multitudinous eventfulness of the flow of nature, on the one hand, and the slow linearity of the flow of words, on the other. Neither the novelist nor the historian can grasp the web of human things in its entirety, and both, in attempting to do so, create distortion, break threads here and there: "For humanity studies its history somewhat as Tristram Shandy wrote his life: it takes two years to write the history of a day; but humanity can do what the individual writer cannot, and - subject to the maintenance of life on the planet - pursue the process ad infinitum."[24]

However, although the historian must select that which in his judgement is representational and significant, he is dependent upon actuality. The novelist is not. A historian, as did Macaulay in his critical annihilation of

[24]R.G. Collingwood, Essays in the Philosophy of History, ed. William Debbins (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 86.

Croker's edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson, may write, "Mr. Croker tells us that the great Marquis of Montrose was beheaded at Edinburgh in 1650. There is not a forward boy at any school in England who does not know that the marquis was hanged."[25] To such historical accuracy the novelist is not dedicated, nor should he be. For example, Edwin Muir deplores the sacrifice of imaginative intensity to historical preciseness:

> The bondage of the novel to period has degraded it. But it also insensibly falsified for a time the standards of criticism, and they still show its influence. Exactitude of contemporary detail becomes more important than exactitude of imagination. Novelists prided themselves particularly on the labour they spent in documenting their subjects, as if the ardours of the imagination were in comparison frivolous and easy, exacting no energy.[26]

Moreover, the historian deals in chronological time. There should be no gaps in the story, no loose in-

[25]Lord Macaulay, "Boswell's Life of Johnson", Literary Essays (London: Nelson's Classics), p. 109.

[26]Edwin Muir, The Structure of the Novel (New York: Hillary House, 1928), pp. 118-119.

tervals, no Dark Ages. But the historian himself cannot rise above the interpenetration of time: Collingwood in fact sees history as "the presentation by thought to itself of a world of half-ascertained fact: a world in which truth and error are at any given moment inextricably confused together. Thus the actual object of actual historical thinking is an object which is not 'given' but perpetually in process of being given."[27] At this point, the novel and history move very close together, but the novelist is free of the dictatorship of fact, can tell a pack of lies, and, in so doing, suppress chronology. Thus Fielding, in one of his chapter headings, notes, "Master Wild sets out on his travels, and returns home again. A very short chapter, containing infinitely more time and less matter than any other in the whole story."[28] In this case, Fielding attenuates eight years "of whoring, drinking, and removing from one place to another" to a mere five, short, verbose paragraphs. Earlier, in the same novel, he mounts an attack upon those biographers, dedi-

[27]Collingwood, p. 44.

[28]Jonathan Wild, I, vii.

cated to the assembling of obtuse historical fact, who "trace up their hero, as the ancients did the Rive Nile, till an incapacity of proceeding higher puts an end to their search."[29] But, although the novelist may free himself from the "rubbish of antiquity" in the external manipulation of his narrative, he himself and the structure which he uses will be influenced by the historical process, the times in which he lives and the times which have gone before. In this sense, the novelist cannot free himself from chronological time, or from the literary historian.

The emphasis upon representation, upon imitation of actuality, brings the novel close to Johnson's definition of history as "a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion." That sense of "chronological succession" permeates the novels of the eighteenth century, even when it is decried by Fielding, or manipulated by Sterne. The "series of actions" of which a novel may be composed is demonstrated by Defoe, whose heroines, surrounded as they

[29] Ibid., I, ii.

are by incessant action, assume an historical rather than an individual force. The events which typify these novels, whether the stealing of a bolt of cloth or the falling of a window sash, are random: many events could indeed be excised without affecting the conclusion. And, in being random, they represent the unique events of which natural process or history is composed.

But, without labouring the obvious, even the novelist who gives the greatest impression of randomness, such as Defoe, must control his events. Unavoidably, the novelist must begin and must end, even if he is James Joyce and writing Finnegan's Wake. From the beginning, he must impose finitude upon the infinite randomness of natural process. The randomness of actuality, its perpetual flux, the intermingling of past and present and future, change and growth and decay, become transfixed, not by hypothesis or idea, but by the limited and absolute structure of the work of art. Life becomes monumentalized.

All works of art have the capacity to endure. They defeat, if not motion itself, at least the cyclical process of birth and death. But it is not the capacity to endure which alone matters. The aluminium beer can,

among hundreds of other artefacts, has an indestructibility beyond that of mere paper or canvas. It is something other than defence against mortality which gives to the work of art its power of enduring over and above the flow of natural event.

Yeats, in "Sailing to Byzantium", stresses the form which removes a work of art from the natural world, and places it at a distance above the stream of natural events. Expressly, it is the structure of art which is timeless, not the object itself, and not the content, the events which it purports to represent. The object of representation will always be interpenetrated by a plurality of time-patterns; the means of representation, the pattern of structure, will always be absolute. What matters, what means, is "such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make", and it is this form which, if anything is, is timeless.

Mendilow, writing of "Timelessness in Fiction",[30] describes a number of writers who have attempted to excise time, essentially by moving into the operation of psycho-

[30]Mendilow, pp. 135-143.

logical time and of universal time, the intensity of the moment and the persistence of myth, exemplified by Proust and Wolfe on the one hand, by Mann and Kafka on the other. He bases his argument for such timelessness upon a paradox noted by Wyndham Lewis that "an intense preoccupation with time or 'duration' (the psychological aspect of time that is) is wedded to the theory of 'timelessness'". Mendilow goes on to comment:

> Such a paradox is easily to be explained. Intensely to treat a quality and intensely to mark its absence derive equally from a more than customary awareness of its prominence or significance. As Saint-Beuve says: "Nothing resembles a hollow so much as a swelling."[31]

It is perhaps necessary to define the difference between the quality of the "absence of time" and the quality of "timelessness". In the first, one notes its absence because it should be present. Time should be there, at the seminar of life, but is not. In the second, time is not and cannot be present. He has not registered for the course. Timelessness, in fact, will be an extreme of per-

[31] Ibid., p. 135.

sistence. The "absence of time" will be an extreme of psychological intensity. As far as an extreme of persistence is concerned, Plato states it well in the Philebus (51B):

> I do not now intend by beauty of shapes what most people would expect, such as that of living creatures or pictures, but, for the purpose of my argument, I mean straight lines and curves and the surfaces or solid forms produced out of these by lathes and rulers and squares, if you understand me. For I mean that these things are not beautiful relatively, like other things, but always and naturally and absolutely;...[32]

As far as an extreme of intensity is concerned, "the all-embracing moment" which "draws into itself the whole of past time and becomes an ever-present, inclusive Now",[33] such would seem to be a simple event, intense to be sure, but an event nevertheless, and all events take place in a continuum, as long as they are perceived in relationship either to the natural world or to the work of art, both of which partake of the sense of before and after, of the

[32]Quoted and discussed by Herbert Read, Art Now (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), pp. 72-74.

[33]Mendilow, p. 137.

motion which is time.

Of course, the writer manipulates psychological time, the feeling of duration, of intensity of experience. But, because he ignores clock or historical time, or uses them simply as standards of measurement by which the intensity of experience may be gauged, this is not to assume that psychological time is "timeless":

> Fundamentally time is a psychological concept, based upon the feeling of duration and the intuitive distinction between past and future. To this sense of the passage of time the physical time as measured by a clock is only a rough analogue.[34]

Within the motion of dream, persistence of form (or process) does occur. Such persistence is allied to myth, the sense of eternal repetition, to describe which Mendilow adopts Mann's phrase, "time-coulisse".[35] In that one man is like another, one does have persistence, just as one cycle of the moon is like another. The cycle of birth and death, of the ages of man, is clearly "timeless"

[34]Arthur H. Compton, "Time and the Growth of Physics", Time and Its Mysteries (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 166.

[35]Mendilow, p. 140.

as long as one ignores the forward direction of nature and as long as one deals in generalization. Thus, at this point, one is in danger of returning to the expository, conceptualizing process, and to that aspect of thought which is concerned with the non-event. In general, man has always hungered, but what matters is how in particular he satisfies his hunger. However, repetition elevated to timelessness by dedication to form does become meaningful as, for example, in sacred time.[36] Of that quality of timelessness imposed by form, Edwin Muir writes:

> The plastic artist, concentrated on his spatial image and on that alone, attains a state which we justifiably call timeless; the processes of time have stopped for him, or have become irrelevant. The same with the musician, building up a movement in time, until the barriers of space disappear and he exists in infinity.[37]

Muir is concerned to differentiate between spatial and temporal arts, but what he says emphasizes that the artist, as efficient cause, creates something which

[36]Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 106.

[37]Muir, p. 90.

no longer partakes of accidental and irrational motion: "...art and nature differ, therefore, in the status of the form or reason which enters into their operation: in art it pre-exists in the mind of the artisan, in nature it is in the constitution alike of that which generates and that which is generated."[38] Natural process is irrational; artistic process rational. Muir discusses the relationship of the painter to his work and concludes that unless he has a specific subject he will be didactic. Muir's argument is similar to Aristotle's, in the Poetics, in which Homer and Empedocles are compared, and the conclusion drawn that they "have nothing in common but the metre, so that it would be right to call the one poet, the other physicist rather than poet."[39] Muir says of the painter:

> If he had made the universal his subject-matter, and essayed it directly, he would only have been able to achieve a parable concerning it; for it cannot be stated concretely; it can only be there when a particular is evoked. The background of

[38]Richard McKeon, "Rhetoric and Poetic in the Philosophy of Aristotle", Aristotle's Poetics and English Literature, ed. Elder Olson (University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 215.

[39]Poetics, I, 8.

> eternity or of infinity, then, or of something suggesting one of these, is necessary to give the particular form, whether plastic or musical, its universality, and make it absolute.[40]

What Muir says of painting, music and the plastic arts, is equally true of the novel, and of the events of which the novel is composed, especially of the significance of an event related to others. In this respect, the novelistic event is immutable, caught forever between other events, as natural events never can be. As object, the novel presents any reader with the same unchanging sequence, and what the reader "sees" in it is up to him, because the reader is the creature of his own times, involved, as the work of art once created is not, in natural process. The reader, in fact, has his responsibility in relationship to the persisting work: the responsibility of re-interpretation:

> The true intuition of time cannot be gained in mere recollective memory, but is at the same time knowledge and act: the process in which life itself takes on form, life in the spiritual not merely the biological sense, and that

[40]Muir, p. 91.

> process in which life comes to conceive and know itself - these two must eventually constitute a unity, and hence this conceiving is not the merely external apprehension of a finished and ready form into which life has been squeezed but is the very way life gives itself form in order that in this act of form giving, this formative activity, it may understand itself.[41]

[41]Cassirer, p. 190.

CHAPTER III

TIME AND WILL

> There was a place for action, a display of will. General Conyers took in the situation at a glance. He saw this to be no time to dilate further upon Turkish subjection to German intrigue. He rose - so the story went - quite slowly from his chair, made two steps across the room, picked up the Kashmir shawl from where it lay across the surface of the piano. Then, suddenly changing his tempo and turning quickly towards Billson, he wrapped the shawl protectively round her.
>
> 'Where is her room?' he quietly asked.
>
> No one afterwards was ever very well able to describe how he transported her along the passage, partly leading, partly carrying, the shawl always decently draped round Billson like a robe. The point, I repeat, was that action had been taken, will-power brought into play.

The Kindly Ones

So far, two aspects of "time" have been discussed: firstly, the time of nature, of the random world, of events in motion; secondly, the time of art, of the rational world, of events persisting. Man moves in both

worlds. In his psychology, motion and persistence interpenetrate. He responds to actual event, and he acts to order actual event. In the first instance, he is dependent on sense and on experience; in the second, he is dependent on the will. The will is possibly susceptible to a division between that which operates as the power to exist and that which operates as the power to create. I shall call the first, the phenomenal or existential will, and the second, the noumenal or creative will.

The will, in general, is difficult satisfactorily to define. It becomes, when extended in philosophical terms, equivalent to "spirit", élan vital, or Eros. In everyday circumstances, it becomes confused with choice and volition, with which Gilbert Ryle is very short when he says: "Novelists describe the actions, remarks, gestures, and grimaces, the daydreams, deliberations, qualms, and embarrassments of their characters; but they never mention their volitions. They would not know what to say about them."[42] The reification of the will as such is thus to be avoided. Possibly, the most convenient and

[42]Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (London: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 63.

sensible definition is to be found in the colloquial terms "weak-willed" and "strong-willed", in the sort of personality trait which military personnel officers call "moral fibre". Equivalent terms might then be seen as determination, perseverance, get-up-and-go. Ultimately, the will to live, the primeval urge to self-preservation, the foundation of life on biological necessity, become the assumptions upon which such a discussion of the will rests. The force or power of this, the phenomenal will, would appear a property of the unconscious. In its human manifestation, it has a singleness of aim, a direction towards an uncomplicated and actual goal. The conflicts it creates are found in the struggle of man against nature, and of man against man. Its prototypes are Captain Ahab and Heathcliffe.

If the phenomenal will may be defined as the power to exist, and seen as a quality varying between the pole of domination and the pole of self-abnegation - "Barkis is willing" - then the noumenal will, defined as the power to create, may be seen as a quality varying in degree between rational completeness and irrational disorder. The phenomenal will creates order by understanding

of variety. Although both facilitate action, the first is roughly equivalent to the active life amid actual events, while the second approximates the contemplative life amid relationships. Both have the property of allowing movement from the perpetual motion of the natural world towards the persistence of a formal world, although the phenomenal will, by definition, enables persistence by restriction, the noumenal will enables persistence by extension. The first completes by reduction; the second, by comprehension.

> Thus time appears as the very fate and necessity which spirit has when it is not in itself complete: the necessity of its giving self-consciousness a richer share in consciousness, of its setting in motion the immediacy of the "in-itself" (the form in which substance is in consciousness), or, conversely, of its realizing and making manifest the "in-itself" taken as the inward (and this is what first is inward) - that is, of vindicating it for its certainty of itself.[43]

Hegel here describes what I hope to mean when I use the term "noumenal will". I cannot feel happy with

[43]Hegel, Phaenomenologie des Geistes, p. 605. Quoted by Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 486.

some of his terms, especially what he means by "inward", nor am I sure that there is a "necessity" to give "self-consciousness a richer share in consciousness". However, the concept that time is a motion towards completeness of the spirit, and that thereby self-certainty may be discovered, does permit recognition of a third aspect of time: the purposive and independent direction of the individual, who is thus able to move from the motion of random event to the persistence of formal relationship. Heidegger, although starting from different premises, and although less susceptible to the criticism of having created a "ghost in the machine", reaches much the same conclusion in relationship to a third quality of time: that which makes order - either reductive or comprehensive - possible. He is comparing his own system to Hegel's:

> Our existential analytic of Dasein, on the contrary, starts with the "concretion" of factically thrown existence itself in order to unveil temporality as that which primordially makes such existence possible. "Spirit" does not first fall into time, but it <u>exists</u> as the primordial <u>temporalizing</u> of temporality.[44]

[44] <u>Ibid</u>.

It is now possible to descry a three-dimensional time manifold, of which one axis is motion; the second, persistence; and the third, will. Within such a manifold, the will may tentatively be seen as human ability to mediate between motion and persistence. To use Heidegger's terms, the will exists as the "temporalizer of temporality". In a phenomenal sense, it has direction in acting towards an overcoming of a fictive obstacle. As long as that fictive obstacle persists, so does direction. In this sense, Stevenson was certainly right in deciding that to travel is better than to arrive because, as soon as the obstacle is overcome, the individual is thrown back into the randomness of events, for the organization of which he is completely unprepared. When a Communist no longer believes, he is often likely to become a Catholic in order to find an equivalent dogmatic totality. Likewise, many are the stories of unfrocked priest descended to Skid Row. The mighty, when they fall, fall very low. It is appropriate that Ahab should die in his final struggle with the Whale, and that Heathcliffe, his will worn out, should wish for death. The phenomenal will is the stuff of tragedy, and Macbeth, directed through time by his ambition,

becomes awfully aware of "petty pace" once that ambition is satiated. Certainly, the phenomenal will, because focused, has an intensity lacking in the diffused, comprehensive, noumenal will.

The noumenal will is engaged in a perpetual coming to terms with changing actuality. The individual driven by the phenomenal will may be allowed paddles to guide his direction in the Heraclitean stream, but the individual possessed of a noumenal will attempts to chart the flood. The actuality which he attempts to chart is both external and internal, the motion of the world and the motion of his own mind. The finite charts which result have already been discussed in relationship to persistence, and will be exemplified in relationship to Powell's protagonists. However, in conclusion to this general discussion, it may be postulated in Adlerian terms that the whole of human life depends upon the insecurity which change and temporal flow create, not simply because of childhood dependence, but because of the transience of all things, the dissociation of the past and the imponderability of the future. The phenomenal and noumenal wills,

as here described, are simply two processes by which the individual attempts to survive the flood.

PART II

ASPECTS OF TIME IN THE NOVELS OF ANTHONY POWELL

"That's the effect of living backwards," the Queen said kindly: "it always makes one a little giddy at first - "

"Living backwards!" Alice repeated in great astonishment. "I never heard of such a thing!"

" - but there's one great advantage in it, that one's memory works both ways."

"I'm sure mine only works one way," Alice remarked. "I can't remember things before they happen."

"It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards," the Queen remarked.

Lewis Carroll

CHAPTER IV

AFTERNOON MEN: TEMPORAL CHART

> "Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse," said the Hatter, "when the Queen bawled out 'He's murdering the time! Off with his head!'"
>
> "How dreadfully savage!" exclaimed Alice.
>
> "And ever since that," the Hatter went on in a mournful tone, "he won't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now."
>
> A bright idea came into Alice's head. "Is that the reason so many tea-things are put out here?" she asked.
>
> "Yes, that's it," said the Hatter with a sigh: "it's always tea-time..."
>
> Lewis Carroll

Similarities of technique between film and novel have often been noted.[45] Both are kinetic rather than static arts, temporal rather than spatial, serial rather than co-existent. The emphasis upon seriality, upon the movement from one event to another, is an essential cri-

[45]Paul Goodman, The Structure of Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 242-245. Wimsatt and Brooks, Literary Criticism (New York: Random House, 1957), p. 270. Mendilow, pp. 53-54.

terion of both. Upon the nature of that movement, its continuity and discontinuity, the cut in the film and the time-shift in the novel, a deal of their creative technique depends.

It may be true to say that we live in an age of which the film is the representative symbol. Words, constructed into units, as paragraphs or chapters, cohere. The traditional emphasis has invariably been upon coherence, unity, fluency: "true ease". In the film, on the other hand, in which the basic unit is the shot, the emphasis is upon discontinuity or "collision", as Eisenstein calls it.[46] Such collision Eisenstein himself discusses in relationship to the portmanteau word. Here, the close juxtaposition in a single word of two disparate "event-particles" dramatically illustrates the technique for which modern literary criticism has developed such terms as "tensive unity" and "ironic juxtaposition". Extended in time, that portmanteau technique involves the swift cut from shot to shot, from event to event, from sentence to sentence, in the narrative movement. The concept of

[46]The Film Sense, pp. 5-7.

"collision", the technique of juxtaposition of disparate events, reflects that discontinuity of our perceptions which Ortega y Gasset sees as typical of "cinematographic man":

> ... the discontinuities in the real are emphasized, as opposed to the passion for the continuous which dominates the thought of the last few centuries. This discontinuism is equally triumphant in biology and in history. The other point, perhaps the most weighty of all, would be the tendency to suppress causality, which operates in a latent form in the theory of Einstein. Physics, which began by being mechanics and then became dynamics, tends in Einstein to be converted into mere cinematics.[47]

The technical terms of the cinema, in particular those connected with the methods of shot, cut, and montage, are appropriate also to some novels, especially those which self-consciously manipulate time processes. In such a transfer of terms, the novel is under no circumstances to be confused with the scenario, although in some works, such as some of Hemingway's short stories, the spareness of the writing, the absence of expository transitions, the

[47]The Modern Theme, trans. James Cleugh (New York: Harper, 1961), p. 152n.

restriction to the barest description, and the emphasis upon naturalistic dialogue, all tend towards the "literary scenario". The effect of understatement which a "literary scenario" may achieve rests in its emphasis upon the mechanics of its structure, the simplesse of its juxtapositions. Nilsen, writing from the point of view of a cameraman, uses "the term 'literary' or 'author's scenario' for the exposition of the film content in its literary distribution into shots."[48] Each shot is an event in itself. Thus, novelistic events, as if by cinematographic techniques, can be deliberately fragmented by division into a sequence of shots, juxtaposed or edited for the creation of specific effect.

In the following quotation, the montage - Eisenstein would call it "ideological" - records the idle chatter of dinner conversation and, by the distinct temporal, almost metronomic, rhythm of the cuts, satirizes its monotonous fatuity.

> 'Don't you dote on girl's schools?' said Brisket, looking at Wauchop. Wauchop pretended

[48]The Cinema as a Graphic Art, trans. S. Garry (New York: Hill and Wang, 1959), p. 121.

not to hear. Harriet said:

'My deal Walter, don't be absurd.'

Jennifer talked to Wauchop about his pictures. Harriet talked to Mrs. Race about shoes.

Mrs. Race said: 'This is the liqueur. It comes from the Balkans. You must try it. Some people think it delicious. You'll have some, won't you, Wauchop?'

Atwater talked to Brisket about Pringle's last love affair.

'You know I never refuse a drink, Naomi,' said Wauchop.

Harriet said she never drank any liqueur but brandy, and Brisket said his doctor had forbidden him to drink any liqueurs at all. The others had some.

'Salute,' said Mrs. Race.

'Sweethearts and wives,' said Wauchop.[49]

This passage, trivial though it may appear, deserves some analysis because it typified not only Powell's techniques in Afternoon Men, but also many of the longer social situations in the Music of Time, and some aspects of temporal editing in the novel generally. In essence, if one may be allowed to use the term "shot" in a literary sense, the technique involved is that of rapid cut from one close-up to another, as the reader's eye is taken from one person or couple to the next. The use of names, repeatedly, focuses the attention upon an indivi-

[49]AM, p. 70.

dual. The reiteration of "said" signals and emphasizes discontinuity: a discontinuity both rhetorical and psychological. The protagonists are isolated, entwined in their petty verbiage. Again, the bleak reiteration of names emphasizes a bleak, unappetizing egotism, and the emptiness of emotion in the repeated "said", vacuity of response. These shots, and the people we glimpse acting in them, "collide".

Because of authorial editing, the passage moves quickly. Each event flickers by. The simple sentences are so readily assimilated that the reader condenses even the time needed properly to appreciate the author's intent. It may perhaps be true to say that the more sparely narrative prose is written, the more understated it is, the more slowly it should be read, or the more ofter re-read. Be that as it may, the author has condensed actual time, by reporting dialogue in general terms, and by omitting visual, adverbial and adjectival information. He provides a sound track, with little picturing. The result is a sense of limbo, of words disembodied, falling on empty air. The words themselves may be taut with a sort of personality, but the people from whom they issue, because

Powell chooses to prefer verbal to physical collision, tend to lack such firm material presence as that which one associates with Dickens. The names themselves - chops and brisket with rice and water - are suggestive, but, as examples of comic reduction, reveal little of their owners' specific appearances.

The intervals between each separate event of the representation of the postprandial conversation may thus be quite lengthy, occupied by actions, dialogue, of which the reader is told nothing. Chronologically, he cannot judge just how long all this goes on. Furthermore, the absence of adverbial links, the rhetorical devices necessary to formal coherence, by their omission lend a sense of timelessness to the events. Their juxtaposition, without an imposed flow of dialogue, question and answer, comment and response, interruption and apology and explanation, extended or discursive anecdote, or whatever, creates a situation of purposelessness, in which a number of voices pursue their monologues, without any meaningful relationship to each other. The effect is to kill time, in so far as time has quality rather than simple linear progression, and substitute a stasis in which it is always,

perhaps, afternoon. In nature, every event may be theoretically unique; in human affairs, in practice, many events may be suffocatingly similar. And this happens when work, when shoes, when last year's fashions, somebody's last love affair, are rehashed, repeated, reiterated, and the flow of human life gloomily stagnates. In a later novel, Powell writes of that "period in my life when, in recollection, I seem often to have been standing in a cinema queue with a different girl."[50] Thus the movie is re-run.

The total effect of the passage is, in brief, to portray the temporal vacuity of this fragment of some people's lives by (1) emphasis on the mundane composition of each shot, (2) lengthy time intervals between each shot, (3) focus upon repetitions, (4) speed of presentation of each shot, (5) rapid variation in the composition of each close-up, (6) and consequent discontinuity between each shot. The pattern resulting from such selective editing directly contracts with the pattern of the paragraph which immediately follows:

[50]ALM, p. 78.

> 'Salute,' said Mrs. Race.
> 'Sweethearts and wives,' said Wauchop.
> Everybody drank. Atwater did not spit it out because he was used to drinking nasty drinks, and because he had only sipped it, and also he would have tried not to do so, even if he had taken more than a sip, out of consideration for Mrs. Race's feelings. Wauchop drank his glass off at a gulp and pushed his chair back and put his hand over his mouth. Atwater, from the end of the table, watched Wauchop's neck change colour.[51]

In this paragraph, because of the interpolation of the long expository sentence, reading time is chronologically longer than actual time. The reader is held in suspense, in expectation. Between the sentence, "Everybody drank," and the sentence beginning, "Wauchop drank...", there is no actual time interval. As all the others drank, so, presumably simultaneously, did Wauchop. In visual, cinematographic terms, the long sentence may be portrayed by a close-up of Atwater's face as he sips, and as his eyes travel slowly upward from his glass, his expression changing from controlled distaste to supercilious wonderment, as he watches Wauchop's antics. The shot is lengthy,

[51]AM, p. 70.

a change from the onward rush of those preceding. What the novel allows, and what would be difficult in the movement of film, is an actual backtrack in time. (Slow motion might achieve the equivalent.) After the long sentence, Powell, if he were to be temporally correct in tense representation, should have written, "Wauchop had drunk... had pushed... and, now, had put..." The backtrack in time creates a temporal lacuna, for the reader rather than for the protagonists, and serves to imprint this incident of Wauchop and the Balkan liqueur upon his memory, and thus to give it significance.

The significance which may be given to trivial happenings rests not only in their extension in novelistic time, but also in their temporal contraction. Whichever technique Powell uses, the result is a communicated perception of the temporal dissipation in the lives of the afternoon men. A dinner party may be described in ten or twenty or more pages; a few hours or days expressed in a reading time of ten or twenty minutes. For example, at the beginning of Afternoon Men, the happenings of a Saturday night occupy thirty-eight pages, or four chapters. Later, several days are condensed into a brief chapter, a

single paragraph long:

> The car was hopelessly out of order. Pringle kept on saying that he must get someone to come and have a look at it. One day he actually wrote a letter to a garage in the neighbourhood. They went for walks and bathed and Barlow did a good deal of painting. Pringle's nerves were better than they had been for a long time. Harriet was amusing but restless. She still looked more blowsy than she had ever been in London.[52]

The effect of the paragraph is panoramic. Its viewpoint is external, distant, as if a cameraman were shooting from a jet aeroplane. The sense of distance, however, is temporal rather than spatial. The few days have the sort of perspective imposed by memory. They are wedged together, one like another, except for the most insignificant of events, as when Pringle one day writes a letter. In spatial terms, the landscape is flat.

In this example, as throughout the novel, Powell uses swift and jarring transitions, cuts, from one sentence to the next. He also uses emphatic timeshifts, leaving gaps in the story which likewise suggest to the reader an

[52] Ibid., p. 159.

absence of significant event. The gaps, as in the following example, may be bridged by exposition, but the result is still an ironic degradation of the significance time can - and probably should - be given:

> 'Don't,' she said. 'You're not allowed to do that.'
> 'Why not?'
> 'Because you're not.'
> 'I shall.'
> She said: 'I'm glad we met. But you must behave.'
> Slowly, but very deliberately, the brooding edifice of seduction, creaking and incongruous, came into being, a vast Heath Robinson mechanism, dually controlled by them and lumbering gloomily down vistas of triteness. With a sort of heavy-fisted dexterity the mutually adapted emotions of each of them became synchronized, until the unavoidable anti-climax was at hand. Later they dined at a restaurant quite near the flat.[53]

The concluding time-shift punctuates the shallow dissipation of time. To live meaningfully is to give time significance. In other words, it must be controlled by the will. This encounter between Lola and Atwater, like his later chance copulation with the promiscuous Harriet, because not willed, has no significance, except that it is

[53] Ibid., p. 83.

so insignificant. Time has only an extensive quantity, and no intensive quality, except in the protagonists' - certainly the reader's - awareness of the tedium of life's extension:

> Fotheringham said, 'Every minute the precious seconds flit by. The hour strikes. Every moment we get a little nearer to our appointed doom.'
> 'Which is?'
> 'Can you bear to hear it?'
> 'Yes.'
> 'I cannot tell you. It is too horrible.'
> 'I insist.'
> 'For some, the corner seats in clubs under the meagre covering of a sheet of newspaper. For others, the voices of little children, often and deafeningly shrill.'
> 'We have the present.'
> 'Tonight,' said Fotheringham, 'I am a man handicapped by his future. For me the present and the past do not exist.'
> 'Try not to think about it.'[54]

The collision of shots in a montage may also, in the "literary scenario", result in a collision between description and dialogue, between - in movie terms - the audio and the visual. For example:

> 'I still think I should be wiser not to come.'

[54] Ibid., pp. 61-62.

> They waited for Harriet. Barlow's brother said:
> 'I say, will it be all right our not being changed?'
> Harriet came out.[55]

Such techniques of montage are appropriate both to the film and to the novel. They are used to create a specific effect upon the watcher or reader by distortion of the natural, not in themselves - "The shot's tendency toward complete factual immutability is rooted in its nature"[56] - but by the omission of connecting links, by abrupt cutting. The effect throughout Afternoon Men is one of disconnection and dissociation. Such cutting takes place not only between sentences but, as it were, between long shots and close-ups. In chapter nineteen, there is a typically disconnected dialogue between Atwater and Susan Nunnery which itself is ironically punctuated by description of the boxing-matches they are watching. Such alternation between long- and medium-shot and close-up is typical of the cinema. Upon the resulting distortion of the natural sequence, Robbe-Grillet, having worked with

[55]Ibid., p. 21.

[56]Eisenstein, Film Form, p. 5.

both crafts, writes:

> Everyone knows the linear plots of the old fashioned cinema, which never spare us a link in the chain of all-too-expected events: the telephone rings, a man picks up the receiver, then we see the man on the other end of the line.... In reality, our mind goes faster - or sometimes slower. Its style is more varied, richer and less reassuring: it skips certain passages, it preserves an exact record of certain "unimportant" details, it repeats and doubles back on itself. And this mental time, with its peculiarities, its gaps, its obsessions, its obscure areas, is the one that interests us since it is the tempo of our emotions, of our life.[57]

When Powell fragments the temporal development of his narrative, in detail and in large, he selects in order to create the texture of the life of his characters. Each shot, or event, relates significantly to that texture, of which the fragmentation and dissociation discussed is the largest part. That is, Powell's style mirrors precisely the discontinuity in the lives, in the actions, in the dialogue of people who enjoy no progressive temporal

[57]Alain Robbe-Grillet, Last Year at Marienbad, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1962), p. 9.

motion. Any motion in time, any act of the will, is invariably frustrated. Scheigan is always demanding a party. It never materializes. Barnby cannot decide which of his women to marry. Sexual involvement is dissipated in a giggle. Assignations are changed or not kept. Mr. Nunnery never completes his crossword. Dr. Crutch hovers interminably as Atwater has will neither to rebuff him nor to assist him. Conversations are trivial, still-born. If Atwater takes Lola back to his flat, it is not because he wills it, but rather that she is just hard to get rid of. In brief, the afternoon men live in a world where it is always afternoon, in which the will stagnates, and the hours are killed stone dead. The clock beats on, but life stands still; the failed will has murdered time. In such a life one measures out one's time with swizzle sticks.

CHAPTER V

"MUSIC OF TIME": MOTION

> Alice looked round her in great surprise. "Why, I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time! Everything's just as it was!"
>
> "Of course it is," said the Queen. "What would you have it?"
>
> "Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else - if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing."
>
> "A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that."
>
> Lewis Carroll

It is certainly not easy to impose any ready-made conceptual framework upon the Music of Time, nor would one wish to do so. However, even though one may accept the novels simply as a substantial tranche de vie, in which structure rather than sign may be appropriate to detection of a more universal significance, there are allusions and images which suggest a significant pattern.

Because Powell is dedicated to the semblance of reportage, and because the world upon which he reports is so pregnant with possibilities, the danger of falling into the error of selective perception remains. Still, in the extended movement of his narrator over the years from 1914 to 1945, Powell uses certain images which provide, although this is a premature judgement, an implicit authorial comment upon the world he has created, and upon the sort of time with which his protagonists must contend. Those images are, in the most general terms, of motion and impermanence.

Powell is deliberately self-conscious. At the beginning of the first volume of the series, he introduces an ironic reference to Heraclitus, the philosopher of the irretrievability of time, whose well-acknowledged symbol is the river:

> 'I looked up Heraclitus in the classical distionary, sir,' said Stringham, ' and was rather surprised to find that he fed mostly on grass and made his house on a dung-hill. I can quite understand his wanting to be a guest if that is how he lived at home, but I shouldn't have thought that he would have been a very welcome one. Though it is true that one would probably remember him afterwards.'
>
> Le Bas was absolutely delighted at this

> remark. He laughed aloud, a rare thing with him. 'Splendid, Stringham, splendid,' he said. 'You have confused the friend of Callimachus with a philosopher who lived probably a couple of centuries earlier...."58

The characters, unaware of the implications of the reference to Heraclitus, do not discuss his philosophy. The reader, however, is clearly aware: immediately prior to Stringham's confused reference, Le Bas quotes some lines of Andrew Lang, which end:

> 'And then we turn unwilling feet
> And seek the world - so must it be -
> We may not linger in the heat
> Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea!'59

The combination of the passing allusion to Heraclitus of Ephesus (certainly not to be confused with him of Helicarnassus) and the quotation of Lang's lines provides a distinct, although complex, introduction of the sense of unavoidable motion which life imposes, and upon which it depends. The "blue Sicilian sea" suggests the permanence of the classical tradition, the security of aesthetic

58QU, pp. 41-42.

59Ibid., p. 40.

pleasure. It may have, as Le Bas points out, a "note of nineteenth-century nostalgia for a classical past largely of their own imagining",[60] but it does promise a sort of baptismal immersion in the waters of the past, which would release the self from the maelstrom of the present.

Between the idealized sea of the poet and the actual sea of life there is a melancholic, sometimes farcical, discrepancy. The plenitude of facticity, the randomness of event, disturb the romance. Just as Le Bas cannot continue to recline like a "sea lion" in the summer heat,[61] is caught in the practical joke instigated by Stringham, so the poetry which sings of idealized waves upon an idealized Sicilian shore is reduced to songs which chant of actualized currents:

> 'Everything is buzz-buzz now,
> Everything is buzz, somehow:
> You ring up on your buzzer,
> And buzz with one anozzer,
> Or, in other words, pow-wow.'[62]

[60] Ibid., p. 41.

[61] Ibid., p. 39.

[62] Ibid., p. 43.

A little later, one finds the philistine Templer reading Sanders of the River,[63] a juxtaposition worthy of Eliot.

The ideals of the past, the persistence of myth or dream, are reduced by Le Bas himself. Addressing a house reunion dinner, he makes appeal not to the potentiality of persistent ideals, but solely to the mundane and futile memories of a degraded and puerile actuality, as when he quotes:

> 'There were several duffers and several bores,
> Whose faces I've half forgot,
> Whom I lived among, when the world was young
> And who talked no end of rot...'[64]

To Jenkins, who is preparing for the actual sea, he offers advice ludicrously inappropriate for charting those uneasy waters:

> 'You know, Jenkins, do always try to remember one thing: it takes all sorts to make a world.'
> I said I would try to remember that.

[63] Ibid., p. 45.

[64] AW, p. 180.

'Good,' said Le Bas. 'You will find it a help.'[65]

The "blue Sicilian sea" recurs in the fifth volume of the series, transformed into the Shalimar, a river of uncertain geography, remote from the actual Heraclitean race, just as the Kashmiri Love Song in which it occurs lies distant from the actual lovelife of Moreland and other of Jenkins's friends.

'Pale hands, pink-tipped, like lotus buds
that float
On those cool waters where we used to
dwell...'[66]

But such waters of time, idealized and persistent, are not for the likes of Moreland. A few pages later one finds him, at his first meeting with Jenkins, slipping a coin into a pianola:

He leaned forward and deftly thrust a penny into the slot of the mechanical piano, which took a second or two to digest the coin, then began to play raucously.

[65]QU, p. 198.

[66]CCR, p. 10.

'Oh, good,' said Moreland. 'The Missouri Waltz.'[67]

In the same volume, Stringham demonstrates his awareness that the ideal ocean is far away, and that the calm there provided is not to be enjoyed in this life:

'Not for ever by still waters
Would we idly rest and stay...'[68]

So he sings as Miss Weedon carts him off to sobriety, to drown in life rather than in wine. Indeed, the restful liquidity the mind may achieve by detachment from the actual flux and by contemplation of an idealized landscape is vitiated by the demands of actuality, by the events, random and uninvited, whose presence pollutes the mythical past:

'I'm Tess of Le Touquet,
My morals are flukey,
Tossed on the foam, I couldn't be busier;
Permanent waves
Splash me into the caves;
Everyone loves me as much as Delysia,

[67] Ibid., p. 27.

[68] Ibid., p. 160.

When it's wet on the Links, I know
where to have a beau
Down in the club-house - next door
to the lavabo.'[69]

In a later novel, we find Jenkins himself philosophizing upon another popular song:

'... The Mission bell told me
That I mustn't stay
South of the border,
Down Mexico way...'

The message of the bell, the singer's tragic tone announcing it, underlined life's inflexible call to order, reaffirming the illusory nature of love and pleasure. Even as the words trailed away, heavy steps sounded from the other end of the chapel, as if forces of authority were already on the move...[70]

One is reminded of the policeman who came to remove Le Bas, concrete indeed, interfering with the possibility of dream, of freedom from "life's inflexible call to order". There are those in the novels who do attempt to move freely in their illusions, of whom Uncle Giles is a principal exemplar. He appears and vanishes,

[69]BM, p. 105.

[70]VB, p. 7.

but, despite his obdurate resistance to the exigencies of present time, his Shalimar, idealized location of romance, flows through The Perfumed Garden,[71] a place of most practical horticulture. Thus, even Uncle Giles is a creature of his times, caught in the web of the Trust, or controlled "according to the Rules and Discipline of War".[72] The decrepit hotels he inhabits are themselves besieged by time, provide limited shelter for his lonely voyage:

> Even within, at least on the ground floor, the Ufford conveyed some reminder of life at sea, though certainly of no luxuriously equipped liner; at best one of those superannuated schooners of Conrad's novels, perhaps decorated years before as a rich man's yacht, now tarnished by the years and reduced to ignoble uses like traffic in tourists, pilgrims, or even illegal immigrants; pervaded - to borrow an appropriately Conradian mannerism - with uneasy memories of the strife of men. That was the feeling the Ufford gave, riding at anchor on the sluggish Bayswater tides.[73]

[71] KO, p. 152.

[72] Ibid., p. 150.

[73] AW, p. 9.

In one of these "battered caravanserais", the Bellevue, suitably beside the sea, Uncle Giles dies.[74] Living in the same hotel, Dr. Trelawney dodders on, avoiding the threat of actuality by retreat into mystic deviousness and by incantation of gnomic touchstones. The 'blue Sicilian sea' becomes at once more exotic and more remote, linked not with a potentiality of life but with a rationalization of death:

> 'Those who no longer walk beside us on the void expanses of this fleeting empire of created light have no more reached the absolute end of their journey than birth was for them the absolute beginning. They have merely performed their fugitive pilgrimage from embryo to ashes. They are in the world no longer. That is all we can say.'[75]

To sustain him on his "fugitive pilgrimage", Dr. Trelawney requires the assistance of drugs. Reality, real time, has to be kept at bay by real potions. Sad and unavoidable mortality, the conditions of this time and this place, are farcically demonstrated by Trelawney's imprisonment in the

[74]KO, p. 135.

[75]Ibid., p. 184.

hotel bathroom. Indeed, the attempt "to build a New Heaven and a New Earth" according to a preconceived notion was doomed to failure, as ineffective as the Shalimar. Trelawney, unable now to walk unaided, is as ineffectual as Le Bas in charting the waters of life. "Out with his disciples, running through the heather in a short white robe or tunic, his long silky beard and equally long hair caught by the breeze",[76] he may have lived momentarily his illusions, danced for some time to music of his own making. But, in the end, he is as inadequate as Canute.

Of all the characters Powell has so far presented, Mrs. Erdleigh is the one who appears to rise above the tides of time, whether in Bayswater or elsewhere. Reminiscent of Madame Sosostris (a parallel of which Powell shows himself aware: "I wondered if Mrs. Erdleigh used Tarot cards. If so, three-handed bridge might not look very convincing to an intruder: for example, should one of us try to trump 'the drowned Phoenician Sailor' with 'the Hanged Man'"),[77] she links herself with outsiders,

[76] Ibid., p. 32.

[77] AW, p. 18.

such as Uncle Giles and Dr. Trelawney, and has so far remained a somewhat inexplicable creation. However, in her role as ministering angel, she demonstrates considerable practical powers, and although, "From the way she spoke, it was to be assumed that she was so far above material contacts that the impetus of our reunion must necessarily come from myself",[78] she takes careful precautions in the event of an air-raid, wearing a tin helmet over her blue rinse, and confesses, "I thoughtlessly allowed myself to run out of a little remedy I have long used against sleeplessness."[79] Despite her apparent ability to forecast the future, she cannot summon control over the motions of actuality, external or internal.

Moreover, Mrs. Erdleigh, as her name suggests, typifies not ideals, but practical advice. She may burn incense, be involved in ritual, but her concerns are ultimately with a limited actuality. She tells what is, perhaps foretells what will be, but offers no assistance in evoking what may be. Her concern is with the charting of future waters, rather than with the creating of that

[78] MP, p. 130.

[79] Ibid., p. 137.

which could persist. In fact, nowhere in the volumes so far written does Powell provide the reader with a character who can be called idealistic, who has a persistent vision of life, who sees a star by which to steer his ship. In consideration of the novels, which cast so wide a net and fish up such variagations of humanity, one is struck by the omission. At the same time, reading the poetry of the twenties and thirties, where one would expect to find ideals, one has to admit that they are singularly lacking. One editor of an anthology has remarked, "What gives the best of the period's poetry its unmistakable quality seems to be the way in which feelings of private and of communal insecurity are fused together, so that the personal lyrical anguish informs the political statement."[80] The way in which tradition was abruptly sundered, with the result that people became the insecure creatures of the fluctuating present, no longer possessed of guiding lights, uncertain of any continuation of the past into the future, is indicated by Powell as his narrator assigns an end to childhood:

[80]Poetry of the Thirties, ed. Robin Skelton, (London: Penguin, 1964), p. 36.

> However, like my father, Uncle Giles and General Conyers, Albert survived the war.... Others were less fortunate. Bracey's 'funny days' came to an end when he was killed in the retreat - or, as we should now say, the withdrawal - from Mons. The Fenwicks' father was killed; Mary Barber's father was killed; Richard Vaughan's father was killed; the Wesmacott twins' father was killed. Was the Military Policeman who used to jog across the heather killed?... Childhood was brought suddenly, even rather brutally, to a close. Albert's shutters may have kept out the suffragettes: they did not effectively exclude the Furies.[81]

In such a world, the pleasures and securities of a classical heritage are unlikely to have much appeal. The politics of the present, or, as Louis MacNeice wrote, "a bank-balance and a bit of skirt in a taxi", are far more likely to achieve significance. Mr. Deacon, of whom it is recorded that "the sight of the sea disturbed him at his work",[82] attempts portrayal of that past but, for Jenkins, his "pictures recalled something given away with a Christmas Number, rather than the glories of Sunium's marbled steep, or that blue Sicilian sea..."[83]

[81] KO, p. 73.

[82] BM, p. 14.

[83] Ibid., p. 16.

Sweetness and light are rare commodities in Powell's world. The sea of facticity he creates seems one in which the Yahoo nature best swims. The memories of a personal or an historic past, the mystic blood of the Lamb, the fermentation of the grape, the free movement of the self in imagination, faith or pleasure, all are vitiated by the need to move forward in a polluted present, a present real and unavoidable. Nothing better illustrates that imperfect present than when Jenkins, escorting a group of Allied military officers through France, suddenly finds he has spent the night at Proust's Cabourg. It may have been possible for Proust to retire from the world and to devote himself to the past. For Powell's narrator, the demands of the present, his schedule of duties, prohibit such retreat:

> 'Just spell out the name of that place we stopped over last night, Major Jenkins,' said Cobb.
>
> 'C-A-B-O-U-R-G, sir.'
>
> As I uttered the last letter, scales fell from my eyes. Everything was transformed. It all came back - like the tea-soaked madeleine itself - in a torrent of memory... Cabourg... We had just driven out of Cabourg... out of Proust's Balbec. Only a few minutes before, I had been standing on the esplanade along

> which, wearing her polo cap and accompanied by the little band of girls he had supposed the mistresses of professional bicyclists, Albertine had strolled into Marcel's life.... Where was the little railway line that had carried them all to the Verdurins' villa? Perhaps it ran in another direction to that we were taking; more probably it was no more.
>
> 'And the name of the brigadier at the Battle Clearance Group?' asked Cobb. 'The tall one who took us round those captured guns?'
>
> He wrote down the name and closed the notebook.[84]

In fact, Powell's world is one of perpetual motion in a remembered present, a world that could not be further from the Proustian world of a remembered past. This is not to say that Powell is unaware of the past. His persona, Jenkins, makes perpetual comparisons between the present and the past. Those comparisons, however, are frequently remarkable in their inappropriateness or in their ironic whimsy: the workmen who gather round a brazier "suddenly suggested Poussin's scene in which the Seasons, hand in hand and facing outward, tread in rhythm to the notes of the lyre...";[85] Stringham, who looks to

[84]MP, pp. 167-168.

[85]QU, p. 8.

him like a "version of Veronese's Alexander receiving the children of Darius after the Battle of Issus...";[86] Mark Members who sits in a "position shown in a picture... called The Boyhood of Raleigh...";[87] "high rolls of linoleum" in a junk shop remind him of "a Minoan colonnade";[88] contemplating a risqué postcard, in which the man wears a tartan tie and the girl a pink frock, "For some reason - perhaps a confused memory of Le Baiser - the style of Rodin came to mind."[89] These allusions could be multiplied, but only one more will suffice, in that it exemplifies, not only the whimsy, the sort of self-conscious distance which Powell puts between Jenkins and the past, but also, if not actual distaste, at least a sense of ridiculous irrelevance which he causes it to evoke for him:

> No doubt this bar had been designed by someone who had also brooded long and fruitlessly on classical themes, determined to express in whatever medium available some boyhood memory of Quo

[86] Ibid., p. 13.

[87] Ibid., p. 159.

[88] BM, p. 10.

[89] AW, p. 203.

> Vadis? or The Last Days of Pompeii. The place was deserted except for the barman, and a person in a mackintosh who sat dejectedly before an empty pint tankard in the far corner of the room. In these oppressively Late Roman surroundings, after climbing on to a high stool at the counter, I ordered food.[90]

School at Eton, right at the beginning of the series, evokes a past as depressing as the bar he later visits. The adventure of life for Proust may have been the exploration of his own involuted remembrances: the process of change regretted, the standards and forms of the present rejected, the charms of novelty derided. His narrator, at the end of Swann's Way, shows himself aware that "remembrance of a particular form is but regret for a particular moment; and houses, roads, avenues are as fugitive, alas, as the years."[91] But, unlike Powell's, Proust's novels are dominated by a sense of the past, by time remembered, by stasis. He throws up his hands in despair at the prospect of the new people, cannot avoid parading his nostalgia:

[90]ALM, p. 148.

[91]Swann's Way, Part II, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), p. 288.

> 'Oh, horrible!' I exclaimed to myself. 'Does anyone really imagine that these motor-cars are as smart as the old carriage-and-pair? I dare say, I am too old now - but I was not intended for a world in which women shackle themselves in garments that are not even made of cloth. To what purpose shall I walk among these trees if there is nothing left now of the assembly that used to meet beneath the delicate tracery of reddening leaves, if vulgarity and fatuity have supplanted the exquisite thing that once their branches framed. Oh, horrible! My consolation is to think of the women whom I have known, in the past, now that there is no standard left of elegance.'[92]

Proust clearly has his own version of "the blue Sicilian sea", beside whose breakers, in the heat, he may find refuge. Powell, equally clearly, finds for his narrator no refuge, but rather a constricting imprisonment, when the past begins to loom too large. Tradition, embodied in the process of learning, is quickly rejected and young men cannot wait to plunge into the world. The old school is readily discarded, as irrelevant as Le Bas, when Stringham, Templer, and Widmerpool take their ways. Jenkins remains at Oxford, futilely to read history, able to hold up Stubbs's

[92] Ibid., pp. 285-286.

Charters for the visiting Le Bas' inspection,[93] but unable to detect the quotations mysteriously inscribed by a planchette:

> 'Force is the midwife.'
> 'I hope he isn't going to get too obstetric,' said Templer.
> Quiggin turned once more towards me. He was definitely on edge.
> 'You must know where these phrases come from,' he said. 'You can't be as ignorant as that.'
> 'Search me.'
> 'You are trying to be funny.'
> 'Never less.'
> 'Marx, of course, Marx,' said Quiggin testily, but perhaps wavering in his belief that I was responsible for faking the writing. 'Das Kapital... The Communist Manifesto.'[94]

Cast thus upon the choppy waters of present time, without the Unburnt Boats upon which Quiggin makes his expedient passage, Jenkins drifts, inspecting and commenting upon the specimens chance waves throw his way. Early on, he comments, "Personally, I was aware of no particular drift to my life at that time. The days passed, and only later could their inexorable comment be recorded..."[95]

[93] QU, p. 198.

[94] AW, p. 95.

[95] QU, p. 37.

He adapts to life on the open seas by accepting, with perhaps too great a largesse of moral relativity, the inevitability of those tides and currents and forces which are at work. In Powell's opening metaphor, he admits he is "unable to control the melody, unable, perhaps, to control the steps of the dance."[96] Later, he detaches himself from any moral viewpoint upon the world, any persistent values by which a personal course may be mapped, when he concludes:

> It is not easy - perhaps not even desirable - to judge other people by any consistent standard. Conduct obnoxious, even unbearable, in one person may be readily tolerated in another; apparently indispensable principles of behaviour are in practice relaxed - not always with impunity - in the interests of those whose nature seems to demand an exceptional measure.[97]

The moral relativety of such a statement is handy for a narrator who has to paddle alongside such variegated specimens as the awful Widmerpool, the decadent Deacon, and the boorish Quiggin. However,it is also a moral relativity

[96] Ibid., p. 8.

[97] Ibid., p. 51.

which blames the stars rather than ourselves, which sets the Furies loose, and which comes momentarily to rest, not upon any tranquil sea, but upon

> ... a kind of inland sea, or rather two huge lagoons, the further enclosed by moles and piers that seemed exterior and afloat; the inner and near, with fixed breakwaters formed of concrete blocks.... What, one wondered, could this great maritime undertaking be? Was it planned to build a new Venice here on the waters?... There was something unreal, ghostly, even a little horrifying, about these marine shapes that seemed to have no present purpose, yet, like battlements of a now ruined castle, implied a violent, bloody history.
>
> 'Tiens,' said General Philidor. 'C'est bien le Mulberry.'
>
> The Mulberry it was, vast floating harbour designed for invasion, soon to be dismantled and forgotten, like the Colossus of Rhodes or Hanging Gardens of Babylon.[98]

In the transience of objects themselves, of human artefacts, of concrete itself, Powell affirms the Alexandrian concept of motion. Nothing lasts. To live is to suffer change. Time, like the composition with which Moreland dallies, may be entitled, "Music for a Maison de Passe: A Suite".[99] No view is permanent:

[98]MP, pp. 168-169.

[99]CCR, p. 43.

> Crossing the road by the bombed-out public house on the corner and pondering the mystery which dominates vistas framed by a ruined door, I felt for some reason glad the place had not yet been rebuilt. A direct hit had excised even the ground floor, so that the basement was revealed as a sunken garden, or site of archaeological excavation long abandoned, where great sprays of willow herb and ragwort flowered through cracked paving stones...[100]

The mystery of the view "framed by a ruined door" depresses by its emphasis on the irrevocable passage of perceptible reality. The public house, once rebuilt, will again disguise the ephemerality of objects extending in space. Then, it will appear to outlast the individual life, just as the melody outlasts the individual note.

The full pattern of this "kind of inland sea" upon which Jenkins drifts is not all clear - the dodecalogy will have to be completed before that can be decided. But, when the merchant adventurer goes to Holland to learn Dutch, when the empire builder travels to Kenya to dissipate himself in the "happy valley", when the social revolutionary lives off the estate of a scion of the landed

[100] Ibid., p. 9.

nobility, when the writer sits on committees to compose movie scripts, when the mystic regurgitates the verbiage of Madame Blavatsky, and when the scholar seeks to manipulate rather than to meditate, then times are indeed perverse, and the likeliest to succeed will be he who swims most readily in murky waters. Such an one is Widmerpool, that "uncommon species of marine life",[1] "a fish recently hauled from the water",[2] who has a "curiously piscine cast of countenance, projecting the impression that he swam, rather than walked, through the rooms he haunted":[3] a figure, both primeval and farcical, created as it were out of his father's liquid manure.

Apart from a discontinuity with the past and a lack of any steady ideals, other factors - perhaps more significant - enhance the series's unceasing motion. For example, the sheer number of characters and the complexity of their exits and entrances into Jenkins's life creates a matrix of movement, both backwards and forwards in novel-

[1] QU, p. 49.

[2] Ibid., p. 47.

[3] BM, p. 33.

istic time.

To some extent, such motion, as it affects the reader's memory of novelistic time, has been discussed in the analysis with which this paper opens. However, the complexity of the references to characters, immediate and distant, related and disparate, on-stage and off-, in the past and in the future, dead and alive, needs emphasis here because it forms such a large part of the incessant circumambulations of the narrator's remembered times, and thus of the books. Powell is able to multiply such movement as the series progresses and as he has more characters to manipulate. In that manipulation he is able to exploit the reader's memory and expectancy. For example, certain characters are more entertaining, more likeable than others. One may readily identify with Stringham, consigned by Widmerpool to the Mobile Bath Unit, perhaps there to perish in waters all too real. Stringham charms. The reader of previous volumes anticipated his entrances, looked forward with relish to his wit. Now, as he awaits the next volume to be published, he hopes - probably in vain - that Stringham has survived the Japanese occupation of Singapore. In this way, on a biennial scale, Powell's series emulates the

nineteenth century serialization of Dickens or Surtees, creates a similar participation of the reader.

Muir, writing of what he calls the chronicle, to which category The Music of Time certainly belongs, considers such manipulation of the exits and entrances of characters an essential part of the novel which sees "life over a long stretch of time".[4] He says: "... the progress of time itself is so certain that only by episodic treatment can chance, uncertainty, freedom come in, holding the balance, and making the picture true."[5] In the first six volumes, Powell does use a pronounced episodic structure, providing in each novel three or four major events which form the action around which his chapters may cohere. Those events are usually in themselves trivial, in substance like after-dinner anecdotes. In A Question of Upbringing, there is the Braddock alias Thorne incident, Stripling's misadventure with a chamber-pot, the Orn-Lundquist tennis match, and Templer's car accident. However, as the series progresses, there is less emphasis upon the centralizing incident and

[4]Muir, p. 105.

[5]Ibid., p. 107.

an increasing dependence on the unexpected recurrence of character, either directly met by Jenkins, or reported upon by one of the other characters, or remembered by Jenkins in association with the person to whom he is talking. The reader finds himself entangled in the web of his own memories of Powell's novelistic time. Indeed, to read each novel as it appears is to re-live one's experience of all those which came before.

A good example of this sort of movement occurs in chapter three of The Valley of Bones. Jenkins, as usual, is under way: a remarkable amount of his time within the novel sequence is spent travelling somehow or another, obviously necessary if he is to meet, by chance or arrangement, a variety of people, and in itself adding to the sequence's motion. On his way from Wales to Aldershot, he falls in with Pennistone, ostensibly a new character whose name has clear representational significance, and whom, afterwards, Jenkins remembers as an orchid-decorated young man at Mrs. Andriadis's party, in volume two of the series.[6] In the first few pages of the chapter,

[6]BM, pp. 126-128.

allusion is made to Ted Jeavons and to Moreland, both principal characters in the three preceding volumes. The remembrance of Mrs. Andriadis's party allows a complex of references to Stringham, Bob Duport, Peter and Jean Templer, Prince Theodoric. Planning ahead, Jenkins thinks of Frederica Budd, which evokes the reader's memories of General Conyers and Widmerpool's farcical involvement with Mr. Haycock.[7] On the moment, who should appear walking down Piccadilly but Barnby to whom, in conversation, Jenkins gives news of the Tolland family: George, Robert, Hugo, Roddy and Susan Cutts, Chips and Priscilla Lovell, all progressively known to the reader since the first meeting with Alfred Tolland at the school reunion dinner[8] and with Chips Lovell at the film studio.[9] After two brief allusions, one to Dr. Trelawney and again to Moreland, Jenkins meets up with an entirely new figure, Odo Stevens.

With regard to Stevens, a new sort of cross-reference comes into play, a foreshadowing or forward re-

[7]ALM, pp. 69-87.

[8]AW, p. 177.

[9]ALM, p. 16.

ference. In A Question of Upbringing, Jenkins notes that Sunny Farebrother "passed out of my life for some twenty years."[10] This is the most obvious form of forward reference. In the same volume, Stringham comments upon Widmerpool, "That boy will be the death of me."[11] It now seems probable, eight volumes later, that Stringham was all too right. Thus, the sense of premonition, of some sort of fate, operating perhaps coincidentally, can be subtly communicated in forward references, and a temporal texture created which works not only in terms of memory but also in terms of expectation.

Of Stevens, Jenkins remarks, "The journalistic streak was perhaps what recalled Chips Lovell, whom he did not resemble physically."[12] In the next volume of the series, the careful reader is prepared to find Stevens involved with Lovell's wife. However, it is only in retrospect that such references become clear, the pattern - if indeed there is a pattern - more available. Earlier in the

[10]QU, p. 96.

[11]Ibid., p. 47.

[12]VB, p. 117.

same chapter, taking leave of Pennistone, Jenkins says:

> 'Perhaps we'll meet again.'
> 'Let's decide to anyway,' he said. 'As we've agreed, these things are largely a matter of the will.'[13]

Pennistone's generalization becomes concrete when, at the end of the volume, Jenkins is summoned into the power of Widmerpool, that creature of the phenomenal will.

A more interesting and complex forward reference occurs at the beginning of this book:

> ... the sergeant, a tall, broad-shouldered, beefy young man, with fair hair and very blue eyes - another Brythonic type, no doubt - that reminded me of Peter Templer's.[14]

> Sergeant Pendry grinned with great friendliness, his blue eyes flashing in high-lights caught by the gas-jets, making them more than ever like Peter Templer's in the old days.[15]

The two references linking Pendry with Templer are meaningless when first read, apparently a chance connection in Jenkins's mind. When, later, because of trouble with his

[13] Ibid., p. 109.

[14] Ibid., p. 8.

[15] Ibid., p. 15.

wife, Pendry apparently shoots himself[16] - there is some official doubt of the matter - the reader is unlikely to remember how Pendry and Templer have been linked. He may not make the connection until later that Templer, like Pendry, has had his marital problems:

> 'I used to think I was rather a success with the ladies,' he said. 'Now one wife's run away and the other is where I indicated, I'm not so sure. At least I can't be regarded as a great hand at marriage. It's lately been made clear to me I'm not so hot extra-matrimonially either. That's why I was beefing about age.'
>
> He made a dismissive gesture.[17]

Apart from Templer's own severe depression, paralleling Pendry's, the reader is prepared for a future which will include Templer's death. Events in this "kind of inland sea" may not be as unpredictable as they at first appear. However, the constant flow of people in and out of the pages of the novels, the multiplicity of backward and forward references, contribute considerably to their sense of incessant motion.

That motion involves not only the movement of

[16] Ibid., pp. 99-100.

[17] MP, p. 23.

people, but also variety and change in their perception of the objective world. The following quotation demonstrates that such shifts in perception may result from discrepancies between the personal viewpoint and the object perceived, between an idealized past and a realistic present, between memory and actuality. The object perceived, in this example, is the castle of Stourwater, the property of Sir Magnus Donners. Jenkins, Isobel, Moreland and his wife, Matilda, a former mistress of Sir Magnus, are being driven there by Templer:

> 'Look, the castle,' said Isobel. 'Nobody warned me it was made of cardboard.'
>
> Cardboard was certainly the material of which walls and keep seemed to be built, as we rounded the final sweep of the drive, coming within sight of a large castellated pile, standing with absurd unreality against a background of oaks, tortured by their ambiguity into elephantine and grotesque shapes. From the higher ground at the back, grass, close-cropped by sheep, rolled down towards the greenish pools of the moat. All was veiled in the faint haze of autumn.
>
> 'I told you it was Wagnerian,' said Moreland.
>
> 'When we wind the horn at the gate, will a sullen dwarf usher us in,' said Isobel, 'like Beckford's at Fonthill or the Castle of Joyous Gard in the Morte d'Arthur?'
>
> 'A female dwarf, perhaps,' said Moreland, rather maliciously....

> In my memory, the place had been larger, more forbidding, not so elaborately restored. In fact, I was far less impressed than formerly, even experiencing a certain feeling of disappointment. Memory, imagination, time, all building up on that brief visit, had left a magician's castle (brought into being by some loftier Dr. Trelawney), 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.[18]

Seeing the very solid castle as if it were built of cardboard, two-dimensional instead of three-, depends on the time of perception as well as upon the personality of the perceiver. The suddenness with which, in the car, they arrive upon the view, and the autumnal haze which shrouds it, assist in reducing the solid masonry to a sort of film set. Isobel sees it in literary terms, as befits the wife of an author; Moreland in terms either musical, as befits a composer, or malicious, as befits a husband aware of his wife's former liaison. The comparison of this castle to literary castles, described in such two-dimensional terms in medieval romances, ironically points the change from those idealized turrets to this very real "castellated

[18]KO, p. 102-103.

pile". Such ironic discrepancies between the past and the present Powell continues to point later in the chapter when the guests at the castle perform charades based upon the seven deadly sins. Thirdly, Jenkins's own perception changes; impressed by his former visit, deluded by the fancies of his memory, now perhaps more objective, he is disappointed.

These changing perceptions are a continuing current throughout the novels. A large part of Jenkins's observation of his acquaintances concerns their elevation and reduction, their movement up and down the social ladder and in Jenkins's (and the reader's) evaluation. An example of such change occurs in Jenkins's affair with Jean Templer, a relationship he idealized. It is initially faulted by Jean herself:

> A moment later, for no apparent reason, she told me she had had a love affair with Jimmy Stripling.
>
> 'When?'
>
> 'After Babs left him,' she said.
>
> She went white, as if she might be about to faint. I was myself overcome with a horrible feeling of nausea, as if one had suddenly woken from sleep and found oneself chained to

a corpse.[19]

The theme of love's impermanence, of its subordination to more violent and irrational currents, is not allowed to rest there. In a subsequent volume, Jenkins meets Duport, Jean's former husband. Duport reveals that Jean had been carrying on with Jimmy Brent at the time of Jenkins's affair with her:

> 'Brent?'
> At first the name conveyed nothing to me.
> 'The fat slob who was in the Vauxhall when Peter drove us all into the hedge. You must remember him.'
> 'I do remember him now.'
> Even in retrospect, this was a frightful piece of information.
> 'Jimmy Brent - always being ditched by tarts in nightclubs.'
> I felt as if someone had suddenly kicked my legs from under me...[20]

In due course, in the next volume, Brent tells Jenkins of the nature of his relationship with Jean:

> So it appeared, the love affair had been brought to an end by Brent's apathy, rather than Jean's fickleness. Even Duport had not known that. He

[19] AW, p. 137.

[20] KO, pp. 168-169.

> had supposed Brent to have been, in his own words, 'ditched'. It had certainly never occurred to Duport, as a husband, that Brent, his own despised hanger-on, had actually been pursued by Jean, had himself done the 'ditching'. I, too, had little cause for self-congratulation, if it came to that.[21]

At this point, Jean has sunk very low in the reader's estimation. His perception of her is manipulated by changing viewpoints, as she is seen through the eyes of the enamoured Jenkins, and subsequently from the point of view of Duport and Brent. At the end of the last volume so far written, Jean recurs, this time apparently a most respectable woman, married to a South American diplomat. Jenkins thinks:

> How could this chic South American lady have shared with me embraces, passionate and polymorphous as those depicted on the tapestry of Luxuria that we had discussed together when we had met at Stourwater? Had she really used those words, those very unexpected expressions, she was accustomed to cry out aloud at the moment of achievement? Once I had thought life unthinkable without her. How could that have been, when she was now only just short of a perfect stranger?[22]

[21] VB, p. 132.

[22] MP. p. 235.

Lastly, with reference to the complex motion of the series, there are the historical times themselves, 1914 to 1945, and the influences, great and small, the currents of those times have upon the protagonists. Specific historical references, to dates, to occasions, are not infrequent. However, the pattern of the books depends more upon Jenkins's personal time than upon a generalized historical time. For example, his interests lie not in the historical forces and social injustices represented by marchers protesting the Means Test, but rather in the figures of the marchers themselves, especially in the presence of Mona Templer who, having deserted her husband, strides out beside Quiggin:

> Then all at once the thing came to me in a flash, as such things do, requiring no further explanation. Mona had left Templer. She was now living with Quiggin....
>
> 'Where are they going?' I asked.
>
> 'To meet some Hunger-Marchers arriving from the Midlands,' said Members, as if it were a foolish, irrelevant question. 'They are camping in the park, aren't they?'
>
> 'This crowd?'
>
> 'No, the Hunger-Marchers, of course.'
>
> 'Why is Mona there?'[23]

[23]AW, p. 127.

Besides Mona, history is there, but it is irrelevant to Jenkins. What matters are the people he knows, although perhaps they tell us more about the times than the melodramatic demonstration in which they are participating. Indeed, in large and small, the times are unavoidable, must have influence, as when Jenkins examines the foundations of his friendship with Moreland:

> With only a month or two between our ages, some accumulation of shared experience was natural enough: the dog following Edward VII's coffin, the Earls Court Exhibition, tents in Hyde Park for George V's coronation...[24]

Historical facticity obtrudes with greater insistence in the later works, dealing with the years of the Second World War, in the last of which the figure of Montgomery is described in considerable detail, and the Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's narrated at some length. When the series is completed, it will be a considerable labour accurately to sort out the threads of invention and actuality which Powell knits into the fabric of his work, and thus to descry the full pattern of Jenkins's life and

[24]KO, p. 80.

times. Specifically, only then will one be able to decide whether the novels are governed by a sort of historical determinism, or whether the pattern takes its shape from a superior fate, perhaps a cycle of illusion and disenchantment, perhaps some desperate fault, that Powell envisages in the nature of man.

Be that as it may, the tides and swells and currents of Powell's inland sea are such that perhaps no pattern is to be found in events, that the motion itself, impeturbable and indeterminate, is all. With that view of life, perhaps we had better all hurry along before, as Ted Jeavons ominously remarks, "we all get blown up". Or, we can at least seek something of Jenkins's stoic affirmation.

CHAPTER VI

"MUSIC OF TIME": PERSISTENCE

> "... we had _such_ a thunder-storm last Tuesday - I mean one of the last set of Tuesdays, you know."
>
> Alice was puzzled. "In _our_ country," she remarked, "there's only one day at a time."
>
> The Red Queen said, "That's a poor thin way of doing things. Now _here_, we mostly have days and nights two or three at a time, and sometimes in the winter we take as many as five nights together - for warmth, you know."
>
> _Lewis Carroll_

The problem of persistence in its various manifestations in _The Music of Time_ presents such difficulties of analysis that one is inclined to dismiss it by assuming that only motions persist, as when, in molecular physics, one detects the tracks of bodies, but not the bodies themselves. Furthermore, persistence, in itself, is a relative term, and changes variously according to the circumstances of its application. Apart from varieties of persistence, say, between sidereal and human time, four fairly specific

aspects of persistence may be isolated.

1. Persistence involves the continuance of an object in time, but must also take account of the changes wrought in time upon that object. Thus, although the essential identity of the object remains the same, many modifications may occur. I am, for example, the same person I was yesterday, and yet not the same.

2. The more particular or specific one's definition of an object is, the less capable it is of persistence; the more generalized or conceptual one's definition, the more it persists. Nature is careless of the individual, careful of the race, although perhaps even a pessimistic Tennyson is too optimistic for us now. Assuming the persistence of the race, one may also assume the persistence of concepts, of universal needs, and of cultural artefacts.

3. Of cultural artefacts, the novel, one hopes, will endure. The words of the novel will persist in their finite relationship to each other, although complicated by changing reader attitudes and by the representational and ambiguous qualities of language.

4. As long as the earth continues its solar

cycle, then the passage of days will endure. The objective certainty of the departure of to-day and the arrival of tomorrow is perhaps the nearest we can get to knowledge of time as an experiential absolute.

Persistence, to be meaningful, must perforce be given context. Amid so many cycles in the affairs of man and nature, one completed cycle overlaps with a multitude of others. Any duration, as Whitehead says, "is discriminated as a complex of partial events, and the natural entities which are components of this complex are thereby said to be 'simultaneous with this duration'."[25] As far as the novel is concerned, the most meaningful duration is probably the life-span of the individual, his persistence for his allotted time. Further, when that novel is written in the first person, the most meaningful individual will be the narrator, his persistence through the life of the book. Not only will that persistence be a question of his essential endurance, but it will also embrace the continuance of a single point of view, and the coherence and unity of

[25]Whitehead, p. 53.

his attitudes in relationship to the world upon which he reports. In this case, the persistence of the individual will be simultaneous with the duration of the fiction. The narrator, although not necessarily reliable, subject as he is to the author's control, and although not necessarily unchanging, subject as he is to the passage of events, persists for the reader from beginning to end of the work. In The Music of Time, Jenkins, as narrator, is co-extensive with the work. So much is axiomatic. But, in addition to his co-extension, his persistence is emphasized by the truncated exits and entrances of every other character; by the nature of his temporal removal from the events which he, by the convention of a fictive total recall, recounts; by the detachment he summons to his observations, enhanced by his deliberative commentary upon events and people; by the perseverance of his attitudes, especially of his ironic awareness of the past.

In the continuance of any person's life, people come and go. They are sometimes incidental, the people we meet as we walk down the street; sometimes, like old friends or bad pennies, they recur. Such, manifestly, is in the nature of things. In Jenkins's case, however, the obvious

becomes exaggerated; for him, mimesis magnifies. The people who persist most noticeably in any person's life are relations; however, for Jenkins, such people are suppressed. Unavoidably, we hear of his parents. They occupy some place, but insignificant beside that of the itinerant Uncle Giles. In terms of emphasis, they occur most significantly in the first section of The Kindly Ones, and are there obscured by structure, event and theme. The passage describes events taking place in a relatively brief timespan so that the reader gathers no clear picture of an extended period of the narrator's life being co-terminous with that of his parents. The time is 1914, and the chapter, a flashback, draws a thematic parallel - the cycle of war and peace - with the year between the Munich accommodation and the Polish invasion. Servants, Albert and Bracey and Billson, occupy more of the reader's attention than do Jenkins's parents. The melodramatic onsets of Billson and Trelawney, the dominating personality of General Conyers, the imminent arrival of Uncle Giles, all militate against the reader's seeing Jenkins in any continued or influential relationship with his parents.

A more obvious suppression is that of his wife,

Isobel. Again, although references to her are frequent, and, just as with Jenkins's parents, the reader is given a clear picture of her character, she never occupies stage centre. Married life persists, but well in the background, while characters other than Isobel, characters whose relationship to the narrator must be far less enduring, take the reader's attention. First mentioned by Chips Lovell,[26] she is one among many Tollands. Later in the same novel, when Jenkins meets her for the first time, her appearance is presented as being similar to "the Tolland physical type", and more description expended upon her sister, Susan, about to marry. In comparison with the extended lucubrations he gives to his affair with Jean Duport, his falling in love with Isobel receives exceeding short shrift indeed:

> 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? Something like that is the truth; certainly nearer the truth than merely to record those vague, inchoate sentiments of interest of which I was so immediately conscious. It was as if I had known her for many years already.... But what... about... Jean Duport...? What about

[26]ALM, p. 22.

> the girls with whom I seemed to stand nightly in cinema queues? What, indeed?[27]

Her immanent persistence is dissipated by adoption into Jenkins's own temporal pattern and by the evocation of mutability: Jenkins only, not his personal relations, remains fixed. Others are subordinate, rotating upon the complex cogs of the carousel to which he is attendant. Some riders of the carousel recur, but, as far as the novelistic world has developed, only Kenneth Widmerpool crops up with persistent regularity, a creature, unlike Moreland, of both peace and war. Many pass on, dead or disappeared:

> ... the dark waters of the Thames below, the beauty of the day, brought to mind the lines about Stetson and the ships at Mylae, how death had undone so many.... Barnby was no longer available to repaint his frescoes. Death had undone him. It looked as if death might have undone Stringham too.[28]

Templer, too, is undone. Chips and Priscilla Lovell. Pendry and Biggs. Stebbings and Borrit. General Conyers.

[27] Ibid., p. 120.

[28] MP, p. 113.

Molly Jeavons. Before the war, Deacon and Maclintick and Uncle Giles. The mortality rate is heavy. Others disappear into time's oubliette, sometimes to be resurrected, like Sunny Farebrother or Archie Gilbert, sometimes irrevocably, like Templer's second wife. Only Widmerpool survives the ebb and flow, as befits someone who dances to real music as though "ploughing his way round the room, as if rowing a dinghy in rough water".[29] Although Widmerpool is subject to the rotation of the carousel of Powell's fictive world, disappearing and reappearing, he becomes in its complex motion, an epicentrum. In the circumstances, with the work unfinished, it is dangerous to prophecy, but, if not vanquished, Widmerpool may indeed turn out by the end of the sequence as the real centre of Powell's world, and Jenkins, the narrator, the epicentrum, or even, perhaps more appropriately, its seismographer.

Jenkins is temporally distant - at least, in essential time - from the world he describes. Powell avoids a specific present writing time: Jenkins does "brood on the complexity of writing a novel about English

[29]BM, p. 58.

life, a subject difficult enough to handle with authenticity even of a crudely naturalistic sort, even more to convey the inner truth of the things observed."[30] But this is, I think, the exception which proves the rule. More significantly, Powell avoids the suggestion of extreme distance which results from the tendency of memory towards generalization: the repetition of, "I used to do..." and, "we were accustomed to doing..." Jenkins certainly operates in memorial time, but the reader more often than not forgets that events in the novels are remembered. Nothing more establishes Powell's emphasis on the uniqueness of remembered event than comparison with Proust's emphasis on the memorial processes themselves. Jenkins summons the past with a concrete insistency, a sharp immediacy, is interested in the external as it happens, while Marcel filters the past through the mists of the mind, emphasizes repetition, habit and stasis. A comparison of opening sentences establishes this essential difference, as great as that between the traditions of romance and classicism. Proust writes:

[30]AW, p. 37.

> For a long time I used to go to bed early. Sometimes, when I had put out my candle, my eyes would close so quickly that I had not even time to say "I'm going to sleep." And half an hour later the thought that it was time to go to sleep would awaken me; I would try to put away the book which, I imagined, was still in my hands, and to blow out the light; I had been thinking all the time, while I was asleep, of what I had just been reading, but my thoughts had run into a channel of their own....

It is perhaps sufficient to draw attention to the frequency of the first person pronoun, to the internalization of the narrative, its emphasis upon habitual action and distantly memorial time.

> The men at work at the corner of the street had made a kind of camp for themselves, where, marked out by tripods hung with red hurricane-lamps, an abyss in the road led down to a network of subterranean drain-pipes. Gathered round the bucket of coke that burned in front of the shelter, several figures were swinging arms against bodies and rubbing hands together with large, pantomimic gestures: like comedians giving formal expression to the concept of extreme cold.

Few images could be more neatly chosen to express externality as that of a man observing others at work and rest

upon a construction site. As the beginning of a dodecalogy, it startles by its apparent irrelevance. As an image of transience, it gives one pause to consider Powell's capacity for understatement. The suggestion of primitive patterns, of men scratching the earth, building shelter and fire, susceptible to natural forces they may ameliorate but not control, all of these establish a distance which depends not only on the gap between the narrator's present time and the time remembered, but also, and more effectively, upon the deliberate - and deliberative - detachment of the narrator's attitudinal set.

One aspect of this approach resides in his repeated view of the world as a stage. Throughout the books, again and again, Jenkins regards the world as a vast theatre upon which poor players strut. A workman has a "long, pointed nose like that of a Shakespearian clown";[31] people "act their parts without consideration either for suitability of scene or for the words spoken by the rest of the cast: the result is a general tendency for things to be brought to the level of farce even when the theme is serious

[31] QU, p. 7.

enough";[32] a house looks like "a residence torn by some occult power from more appropriate suburban setting";[33] Archie Gilbert plays a "role of absolute normality";[34] to play their parts people dress up, and it is suggested Tompsitt "would go to pieces in the Tropics as a result of not changing for dinner";[35] people may be puppets, as when Margaret Budd "looked like one of those golden-haired, blue-eyed dolls which say, 'Ma-Ma' and Pa-Pa', closing their eyes when tilted backwards";[36] war becomes a theatrical performance for which one has to be suitably dressed,[37] and peace similarly demands a change of attire;[38] characters may be specifically compared to dramatic personages, as when Deacon and Gypsy Jones remind Jenkins of Lear and the Fool.[39]

[32] Ibid., p. 51.

[33] Ibid., p. 69.

[34] BM, p. 30.

[35] Ibid., p. 49.

[36] AW, p. 39.

[37] SA, p. 3.

[38] MP, p. 242.

[39] BM, p. 79.

The persistent ironic viewpoint occurs also in analogies with pictures. For example, the postcard, sent by Jean Duport, depicting "an eternal girl sitting on an eternal young man's knee", reminds him that,

> I had enacted such scenes with Jean: Templer with Mona: now Mona was enacting them with Quiggin: Barnby and Umfraville with Anne Stepney: Stringham with her sister Peggy: Peggy now in the arms of her cousin: Uncle Giles, very probably, with Mrs. Erdleigh: Mrs. Erdleigh with Jimmy Stripling: Jimmy Stripling, if it came to that, with Jean: and Duport, too.[40]

Similarly, life may be compared to a game, such as musical chairs or, as in the following example, Russian billiards:

> Certain stages of experience might be compared with the game of Russian billiards, played... on those small green tables, within the secret recesses of which, at the termination of a given passage of time... 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.[41]

[40] AW, pp. 202-203.

[41] BM, p. 239.

However, the most persistent attitude which distances Jenkins from the scenes played out before him is his ironic sense of history, of the life span, not of the individual, but of the race. From the very beginning of the narrative - the workmen camped out around the brazier - he implies or states innumerable historical analogies, drawn from the arts, literature, events of other periods. In The Military Philosophers:

> Finn "working late the night before - past eleven when last seen heavily descending the stairs with the tread of Regulus returning to Carthage..."
>
> A diminutive lieutenant steps out of "the third drama of The Ring - Mime at his forge..."
>
> Finn's "nose was preposterous, grotesque, slapstick, a mask from a Goldoni comedy."
>
> Horaczko "had begun the Eastern campaign on horseback, cantering about at the head of a troop of lancers, pennons flying, like one of the sequences of War and Peace..."
>
> Jenkins leaves the basement of the War Office "Like Orpheus or Herakles returning from the silent shades of Tartarus..."
>
> Blackhead becomes "a fetish, the Voodoo deity of the whole Civil Service..." with whom "the rest of us, like Jacob and the Angel, had to wrestle... until the coming of day..."

> The Ufford hotel becomes "in reality the Temple of Janus, the doors between the lounge and the writing-room closed in peace, open in war."[42]

For Aristotle, irony was a gentlemanly device,[43] in its softer forms invoking the distance of good manners. More heavily used, he considered it to show contempt, the effect similarly to remove the speaker from the object of his irony.[44] Consistently, Jenkins disdains the latter course, although he comes close to it, eventually, in his relationship with Widmerpool:

> 'So you were lucky enough to be invited to the Service?'
> It was Widmerpool.
> 'I've been superintending the military attaches.'
> 'Ah, I wondered how you got here - though of course I knew they selected at all levels.'
> 'Including yours.'
> Widmerpool laughed heartily.[45]

Throughout the series, Jenkins remains cool,

[42]MP, pp. 2, 2, 8, 28, 37, 40, 62.

[43]Rhetoric, iii. 18. 7.

[44]Ibid., ii. 2. 24.

[45]MP, p. 230.

illuminating the narrative with his ironic analogies, poised by his sense of the past, which itself perhaps bequeaths a sense of Fate, a mediator between that, the receding Past, and this, the onrushing Present.

The Music of Time, although making extensive use of time-shifts, avoids the sharp cuts and shifts, the dissonance, typical of Afternoon Men. The word "montage" was appropriated to typify the style of that first novel; in the case of The Music of Time, perhaps the term "apposition" lends itself to describe the flow of Powell's narrative. I am indebted for this concept to Time and Style, by Harry and Agathe Thornton, specifically to their reference to Schwyzer, who defines apposition in a wider sense than is current:

> Extending the meaning of the term "apposition" considerably beyond its common usage, one may define it as a picking up in thought of part of a sentence in a different form with the purpose of giving more detail, of explaining, of rectifying.[46]

[46]E. Schwyzer, 'Zur Apposition', Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaft zu Berlin Nr. 3 (Berlin, 1947), p. 16, in Time and Style (London: 1962), p. 76.

Perhaps the best way of defining this appositional style, which the Thorntons link to classical sentence forms, both in an historical and stylistic sense, lies through its exemplification in Powell. First, a short, easily handled, example:

> All this enterprise made her appear to possess ideal, even miraculous, qualifications for becoming his wife. They were, indeed, married some months later. The ceremony took place in a registry office, almost secretly, because Moreland hated fuss. Not long after, perhaps a year, almost equally unexpectedly, I found myself married too; married to Isobel Tolland. Life - the sort of life Moreland and I used to live in those days - all became rather changed.[47]

Each sentence contains an appositional device, underlined in the quotation. These devices tend, on the whole, to modify or amplify a simple statement. Their result is to create a fluidity, obvious if the passage is read omitting the underlined words. The interruption of the simple sentence slows down reading time, creates a wave effect, each sentence rising, cresting on the material in apposition, and then falling away. Such cresting is emphasized

[47]CCR, p. 54.

by the appositional words needed to link - as do "indeed" and "too" - one statement to another. The material in apposition may itself be emphatic, as "even miraculous" and "almost secretly" are. In such circumstances, the traditionally significant opening and close of a sentence become modified, muted, and a sea-sense of motion to and fro replaces the linear onrush, the puffing-billy of narrative prose. Retaining the appositional material necessary to coherence, but omitting what simply amplifies and modifies, the passage reads as follows:

> All this enterprise made her appear to possess ideal qualifications for becoming his wife. They were married some months later. The ceremony took place in a registry office because Moreland hated fuss. Not long after, I found myself married too. Life all became rather changed.

Although it would be fairer, perhaps, to retain all the original information, what does result from the omission is a far stronger sense of time. The past heavily obtrudes. The verbs, their past tense, control the reader's reactions. He is carried apace through past time. A better example, one sentence, which even for Powell sus-

tains an exceptional amount of appositional modification, occurs immediately following, at the start of a new chapter. Here, the pastness of the basic sentence is thoroughly disguised:

> Sunday luncheon at Katherine, Lady Warminster's, never, as it were, specially dedicated to meetings of the family, had in the course of time grown into an occasion when, at fairly regular intervals, several - sometimes too many - of the Tollands were collected together.[48]

The basic sentence reads:

> Sunday luncheon at Lady Warminster's had grown into an occasion when several of the Tollands were collected together.

Perhaps the effect may be described as one of diffusion, by which the event, incontrovertibly happening in the past, becomes wrapped in the interpolations of the narrator. Those interpolations are frequently of two varieties: temporal and expository. The first, temporal, interposes time scales which interfere with the precise

[48] Ibid., p. 55.

location of the event in past time; the second, expository, introduces observations by the narrator which, being generalized and existing memorially, are true now, as then, and have no specific time locus. Indeed, the reader loses any sense of the past when, on occasion, the expository amplifications are extended over several sentences. It might, for him, be yesterday.

Within the fullness of The Music of Time, however, Powell does manipulate a number of devices, of which apposition is perhaps only the most persistent, contributing to the creation of his matrix. The appositive technique, for example, can be seen as a sort of "extended middle", a change of pace adaptable to more obviously narrative situations. In the following passage, the long sentence, continuing in an appositive sense the two preceding, acts as a curtain-raiser, a builder of expectation:

> 'If Liman von Sanders - ' began my father.
>
> He never finished the sentence. The name of that militarily celebrated, endlessly discussed, internationally disputed, Britannically unacceptable, German General-Inspector of the Turkish Army was caught, held, crystallized in mid-air. Just as the words left my father's lips, the door of the drawing-room opened quietly. Billson stood

> on the threshold for a split second. Then she entered the room. She was naked.[49]

One of the memorable incidents in the sequence occurs when Barbara Goring pours sugar over Widmerpool's head. Perhaps in not many other novels in the language has such fine writing been expended on an event so apparently trivial. It is worth fairly full quotation - the incident and its repercussions occupy six longish paragraphs - because it exemplifies the use of apposition as a creator of expectation, and the ironic exaggeration of the trivial which Powell achieves. Quotation, in fact, does not do justice to Powell's skill, because the careful preparation of character and of situation, the conflict between Barbara and Widmerpool, cannot thereby be shown. Most of the expansion of the incident is brought about by the interposed analogy with the sword of Damocles:

> She turned to the sideboard that stood by our table, upon which plates, dishes, decanters, and bottles had been placed out of the way before removal. Among this residue stood an enormous sugar castor topped with a heavy silver nozzle. Barbara must suddenly have conceived the idea of sprink-

[49]KO, pp. 57-58.

> ling a few grains of this sugar over Widmerpool, as if in literal application of her theory that he 'needed sweetening', because she picked up this receptacle and shook it over him. For some reason, perhaps because it was so full, no sugar at first sprayed out. Barbara now tipped the castor so that it was poised vertically over Widmerpool's head, holding it there like the sword of Damocles above the tyrant. However, unlike the merely minatory quiescence of that normally inactive weapon, a state of dispensation was not in this case maintained, and suddenly, without the slightest warning, the massive silver apex of the castor dropped from its base, as if severed by the slash of some invisible machinery, and crashed heavily to the floor, the sugar pouring out on to Widmerpool's head in a dense and overwhelming cascade.[50]

The interpolations extending the duration of the narrative are, in the main, analogies. They contribute to a vivid perception of the event and its aftermath in present reading time. On other occasions, however, Powell apposes, as in the following sequence of six sentences, in order to create an obfuscated atmosphere, a sense of muted perceptions, of a generalized, and thus timeless, sensitivity:

> This accommodation in the house of several younger members of the family had not resulted in much outward gaiety of atmosphere. On the

[50] BM, p. 67.

> contrary, the note struck as one entered the hall and ascended the staircase was quiet, almost despondent. The lack of exhilaration confirmed a favourite proposition of Moreland's as to the sadness of youth.
>
> 'I myself look forward ceaselessly to the irresponsibility of middle age,' he was fond of stating.
>
> It may, indeed, have been true that 'the children', rather than Lady Warminster herself, were to blame for this distinct air of melancholy. Certainly the environment was different from the informality, the almost calculated disorder, surrounding the Jeavonses in South Kensington, a household I had scarcely visited since my marriage.[51]

The four sentences between the first and last extend without adding much that is meaningful. They constitute a deliberate change of tempo; a tempo which, although it still contains much movement, becomes more stately, appropriate to Jenkins's new life with the Tolland family, contrasting with the previous fast-paced life with the Moreland and other, rather disreputable, acquaintances.

The movement which distinguishes Powell's style stems to a large degree from the interpolation of temporal references, creating thus a matrix of time. Other factors, the dramatization of incident through dialogue, the al-

[51] CCR, p. 55.

ternation of dialogue with narrator's comment, the infrequent occurence of the relatice pronoun, all contribute; but most remarkable is his ability to create, through adverbial phrasing, a matrix of temporal motion surrounding any given event.

> A year or more later Isbister died. He had been in bad health for some little time, and caught pneumonia during a period of convalescence. The question of the introduction, pigeon-holed indefinitely, since St. John Clarke utterly refused to answer letters on the subject, was now brought into the light again by the obituaries. Little or no general news was about at the time, so these notices were fuller than might have been expected. One of them called Isbister 'the British Franz Hals'. There were photographs of him, with his Van Dyck beard and Inverness cape, walking with Mrs. Isbister, a former model, the 'Morwenna' of many of his figure subjects. This was clearly the occasion to make another effort to complete and publish The Art of Horace Isbister. Artists, especially academic artists, can pass quickly into the shadows: forgotten as if they had never been.[52]

Isbister's death is surrounded, in the fashion of a temporal

[52] AW, p. 35.

manifold, by a number of other durations, often not well defined, operating between the "now" and indeterminate past times: "a year or more later" appears to be fairly specific, but if its back reference is "dinner at Foppa's", a conversation with Barnby, then the emphasis is upon novelistic time, not upon any external co-ordinate; by some scouring in previous pages, the reader can discover that "some little time", a phrase of great temporal elasticity, is rather more than a year; apart from the biographical "a former model", and the specifically vague "indefinitely", other adverbs emphasize nowness - "now... again... at the time..." - a nowness vague in objective temporal reference, but indubitably specific to present reading time. Finally, and typically, Powell ends on a generalized, almost pontifical, pronouncement, redolent of conceptual timelessness. Typical, too, and equally disguising of time in an essential sense, is his provision of gratuitous information. Similar patterns abound, varying considerably in their precise structures, but having similar effects. The following passage contains nineteen temporal references, painful to analyze, but serving again to demonstrate Powell's ability to orchestrate temporal

movement. In short, the passage speaks for itself:

> It is odd to think that only fourteen or fifteen years after leaving Stonehurst, essentially a haunt of childhood, I should have been sitting with Moreland in the Hay Loft, essentially a haunt of maturity: odd, in that such an appalling volume of unavoidable experience had to be packed into the intervening period before that historical necessity could be enacted. Perhaps maturity is not quite the word; anyway, childhood had been left behind. It was early one Sunday morning in the days when Moreland and I first knew each other. We were discussing the roots and aims of action. The Hay Loft - now no more - was an establishment off the Tottenham Court Road, where those kept up late by business or pleasure could enjoy rather especially good bacon-and-eggs at any hour of the night. Rarely full at night-time, the place remained closed, I think during the day. Certainly I never heard of anyone's eating except in the small hours. The waiter, white-haired and magisterial, a stage butler more convincing than any to be found in private service, would serve the bacon-and-eggs with a flourish to sulky prostitutes, who, nocturnal liabilities at an end, infiltrated the supper-room towards dawn. Moreland and I had come from some party in the neighbourhood, displeasing, yet for some reason hard to vacate earlier. Moreland had been talking incessantly - by then a trifle incoherently - on the theme that action stemming from sluggish, invisible sources, moves towards destinations no less definable.[53]

[53]KO, p. 74.

William Golding has observed that

> ... time is not to be laid out endlessly like a row of bricks. That straight line from the first hiccup to the last gasp is a dead thing. Time is two modes. The one is an effortless perception to us as water to the mackerel. The other is a memory, a sense of shuffle fold and coil, of that day nearer than that because more important, of that event mirroring this, or those three set apart, exceptional and out of the straight line altogether.[54]

Linear progression, however, although perhaps a "dead thing", cannot be denied. The inexorable passage of days, no matter how disguised, governs human life. Powell creates the "shuffle fold and coil" of time: indeed, Jenkins does shuffle. But, however much Powell, through his narrator, coils his cycles, shuffles the cards in his temporal game, the passage of days remains unavoidable.

In general, the linear progression of Jenkins's autobiography is clear. There are interruptions, specifically at the beginning of A Buyer's Market, in which he recounts events recurring in 1913 and in 1919, and of The Kindly Ones, in which he describes events immediately

[54]Free Fall (London: Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 5-6.

prior to the outbreak of war in 1914. Shorter flashbacks to early family life occur in A Question of Upbringing, with the introduction of Uncle Giles,[55] and in conversation with Sunny Farebrother.[56] However, linear progression, although never allowed to dominate, provides a framework to the development of the sequence. Because specific dates rarely obtrude, and because historical allusions are often arcane - requiring a knowledge, for example, of when Lord Haig's statue was erected, or when Maisky was Russian ambassador to London - the framework is not always easy to detect.

The principal structural reasons for the understatement of absolute time lie in Powell's extensive use of the time shift and in his extended narration of a specific event. Both of these may be exemplified by reference to the opening chapter of A Buyer's Market. There, he begins with a reference to intermediate past time (9), a visit to an auction room. He sees some of Deacon's paintings, is reminded of Deacon's visits to his parents (11),

[55] QU, pp. 20-21.

[56] Ibid., p. 79.

and of meeting Deacon in Paris (16). One of Deacon's paintings, Boyhood of Cyrus, owned by the Walpole-Wilsons', reminds him of Barbara Goring, their niece, with whom he thinks himself in love. He recalls an incident involving her (22-23), then shifts back in time to recount the relationship between his parents and the Walpole-Wilsons' (24). In the first twenty pages, then, there is a deal of shuffling to and fro in past time, until, finally, the event itself, a dinner party at the Walpole-Wilsons', is narrated in detail, twenty-five pages, followed by a dance, seventeen pages, a walk with Widmerpool, a meeting with Stringham, and a party, sixty-three pages. Thus the events of a single night occupy approximately half the volume. Involved in such extended episodes, and in the motion of Powell's temporal coils, the reader's perception of the "line from first hiccup to last gasp", of the persistent passage of days, becomes uncertain. He lives in a tension between matrix and progression. Muir considers, if not the tension, at least the existence of such polarities, necessary conditions of the roman fleuve:

> A strict framework, an arbitrary and careless progression; both of these,

> we shall find, are necessary to the chronicle as an aesthetic form. Without the first it would be shapeless; without the second it would be lifeless. The one gives it its universal, the other its particular reality. As Time, however, is the main ground of the chronicle, so each of those two planes of the plot is a separate aspect of time. They may be called Time as absolute process, and Time as accidental manifestation.[57]

Ultimately, persistence cannot be opposed to motion. They co-exist. In any situation, there are elements of both. However, in the consistency of the narrator's attitudes, in the coherence throughout the work of Powell's techniques, and in the unavoidable framework of linear time, persistence may be delineated. Perhaps the paradox of time, between perseverance and change, is best summarized by Jenkins himself in the following interchange:

> 'At best, it's never going to be the same.'
> 'Nothing ever remains the same. Marriage or anything else.
> 'I thought your theory was that everything did always remain the same?'
> 'Everything alters, yet does remain the same. It might even improve matters.'

[57]Muir, pp. 97-98.

'Do you really think so?'
'Not really.'[58]

[58]SA, p. 110.

CHAPTER VII

"MUSIC OF TIME": WILL

"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting
to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's
treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles
all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle - will you
come and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you,
will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you,
won't you join the dance?

Lewis Carroll

The will, defined as the individual's capacity to deal with motion and persistence in the objective, external world, controls his potentiality for growing into life. As a force or energy, it possesses its own temporality, and may, indeed, be comparatively unrelated to external co-ordinates of motion and persistence. In everyday terms, we speak of such persons as self-willed, or, perhaps, wilful. In certain circumstances, their actions

may be termed spontaneous; in others, autocratic. Such judgements depend on whether the will, turned upon itself, seeks motion or stasis, change or persistence. Thus, the will, although in itself tending to motion or persistence, may be unrelated to external temporal co-ordinates, especially to the times of gregarious life. For examples of the will in a relatively pure state, one may cite two divergent characters: Stringham and Blackhead.

> 'Are you coming to the Russian Ballet tonight?'
>
> 'I didn't know I was asked,' Stringham said. 'I'd like to.'
>
> 'Do.'
>
> 'Anyone for lunch?'
>
> 'Only Tuffy. She will be glad to see you.'
>
> 'Then we will wish you good luck with your deal.'
>
> I was conscious that some sort of a duel had been taking place, and that Stringham had somehow gained an advantage by, as it were, ordering Buster from the room. Buster himself began to smile, perhaps recognizing momentary defeat, to be disregarded from assurance of ultimate victory.[59]

The pure will, unrelated to the external world, exists in the immediate present. It has no context in

[59]QU, pp. 54-55.

the past, makes no provision for the future. One is aware that Buster - a sailor, although having abandoned the sea for the polo-ground, well adapted to the seas of life - will have greater endurance than Stringham in the long swim.

Stringham shows determination in engineering his departure from university to Donners-Brebner, and in pursuing Lady Peggy Stepney. He exercises his will, while engaged in the latter activity, by breaking an appointment with Jenkins.[60] He makes decisions. But they are invariably spur-of-the-moment decisions. He manages the Braddock-alias-Thorne incident, and he invites the motley collection of Jenkins, Widmerpool, Deacon and Gypsy Jones to Mrs. Andriadis's party. He is determined to leave that party, despite Mrs. Andriadis's blandishments:

> 'But, sweetie,' Mrs. Andriadis was saying, 'you can't possibly want to go to the Embassy <u>now</u>.'
>
> 'But the odd thing is,' said Stringham, speaking slowly and deliberately, 'the odd thing is that is just what I want to do. I want to go to the Embassy at once. Without further delay.'
>
> 'But it will be closed.'

[60] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 200.

> 'I am rather glad to hear that. I never really liked the Embassy. I shall go somewhere else.'[61]

Stringham here emphasizes the wayward will of the child, unrelated to the past or to the future, demonstrates, in the most egotistical fashion, action now. The lack of external co-ordinates, indeed the hatred of externals which interpose any restriction upon the will, is to be expected. For example, Stringham's reaction to Tuffy:

> Miss Weedon said with emphasis: 'But you will be back soon.'
>
> Stringham did not answer; but he shot her a look almost of hatred.[62]

The will, seeking freedom, rejects the future. The material, external world offers little that is not to be treated with contempt. Seen from a viewpoint which focuses upon the experiential present, it may provide amusement, as when Stringham comments on University, "Undergraduates all look so wizened, and suède shoes appear to be compulsory."[63] Operating without consideration of the future,

[61] BM, p. 129.

[62] QU, p. 59.

[63] Ibid., p. 60.

concerned with the immediate satisfaction of the will, he embarks upon a marriage foredoomed to failure.[64] Essential time, the linear passage of the days, their cycles of activity, repetitive patterns of social movement, Stringham rejects:

> 'At first I couldn't make up my mind whether I was in the vein for a party, and thought a short walk would help me decide. To tell the truth, I have only just risen from my couch. There had, for one reason and another, been a number of rather late nights last week... I went straight home to bed this afternoon...'[65]

In order for the will to persist in itself, without the crutch of external temporal co-ordinates, an immersion in liquid other than the flood of human affairs is required. Stringham becomes a drunk. He washes himself in the Grape.[66] Even more, because thought itself, tracking over the past, dwelling on the morrow, has to be obviated, Stringham takes to sleeping tablets.[67] In the

[64] BM, p. 175.

[65] Ibid., p. 88.

[66] AW, p. 195.

[67] Ibid., p. 199.

end, however, the spontaneous will is defeated by the material world, to which some adaptation is essential. In Stringham's case, it is forcibly imposed under the guardianship of the appropriately named Tuffy Weedon, by the removal of his money,[68] indeed, by his imprisonment in Lady Molly's attic. Structurally, from first being pinioned on his bed by Widmerpool, through his incarceration under Miss Weedon's cold eye, to his servitude in F Mess, to Singapore, and thus presumably to death in a Japanese prison camp, the spontaneity of Stringham's will is vitiated. The ham - that capacity for spontaneous dramatization of self-life - mostly dimmed, now simply "Stringy", he stands beside a pillar-box, suitably prepared for posting, and declaims his obituary: "Think first, fight afterwards - the soldier's art..."[69] But, to Stringham, the fight alone, the will in itself, not thought, either memorial or futuritial, has mattered.

Blackhead embodies the pure will, not in flux, but in stasis. Like Stringham, he is "a lone wolf, a one-

[68]CCR, pp. 160-161.

[69]SA, p. 221.

man band."[70] Like Stringham, he is consigned to an attic. Unlike Stringham, however, he seeks not change, but fixity. He attempts to hold the world at bay, not by frenetic action, but by determined inaction. His appearance emphasizes the persistent, static nature of his will, in that "His hair, which formed an irregular wiry fringe over a furrowed leathery brow, was of a metallic shade."[71] He has no clear place in the social hierarchy of either Civil Service or Army. Indeed, Jenkins notes:

> Not only was Blackhead, so to speak, beyond rank, he was also beyond age; beyond or outside Time. He might have been a worn - terribly worn - thirty-five; on the other hand (had not superannuation regulations, no doubt as sacred to Blackhead as any other official ordinances, precluded any such thing), he could easily have achieved threescore years and ten, with a safe prospect for his century.[72]

In order to achieve stasis, the will must focus. That, Blackhead achieves by his worship of "official ordinances". With a neat pun, Powell epitomizes Blackhead's will to

[70] MP, p. 40.

[71] Ibid., p. 42.

[72] Ibid.

stasis outside normal times: he writes, we are told, "a real Marathon of a minute."[73] In the end, Blackhead is as roughly dealt with as Stringham when powers dedicated to purposeful action in this world decide that something must be done:

> ... once in a way Operations would cut the Gordian knot, brutally disregarding Blackhead himself, overriding his objections, as it were snapping asunder the skinny arm he had slipped through the bolt-sockets of whatever administrative door he was attempting to hold against all comers.[74]

Of all characters, perhaps General Conyers best typifies the will in successful operation. He overcomes the persistent passage of time by his capacity for action; he meliorates the constant variety of those days by his pursuit of understanding. Assuming a duality of the will, General Conyers adapts both its phenomenal and noumenal aspects, resolves their tension into a balanced life. However, far more important to the significance of Powell's work is the central conflict in character between Widmerpool,

[73] Ibid., p. 45.

[74] Ibid., p. 40.

that incredible phenomenon, and Jenkins, the Stoic noumenon.

One is wary of applying a simplistic dichotomy to any created work, but especially so to Powell's, aware as he is of such reductions. However, at this stage, after nine novels, a pattern does appear to have taken shape which opposes Jenkins to Widmerpool, if only for the good reason that, of the other starters, only Widmerpool remains to run the race.

A manatee or, perhaps more appropriately, a coelacanth, Widmerpool is a creature of the waters of time, perpetually struggling to heave himself out of the flood, to seek a persistent perch. The Heraclitean river, linear time, conveyed by aqueous images, surrounds Widmerpool. He rises up, out of the drizzle and mist, "hobbling unevenly, though with determination, on the flat heels of spiked running-shoes".[75] Those running-shoes, like the boots he wears with "thick rubber reinforcements on soles and heels",[76] provide a strong grip on the material world.

[75] QU, p. 9.

[76] Ibid., p. 10.

Unlike Stringham's, Widmerpool's will is directed to the control, the mastery, of the phenomenal world. While Stringham collapses to "a sitting position on the edge of the stone coping from which the railings rose",[77] Widmerpool clings "to the moulding of the wall, his feet completely off the ground".[78] In this position, perhaps symbolizing primeval life heaving itself from the ocean, Widmerpool demonstrates his tenacity. Like a landed fish, attempting to make its tenacious way in an alien environment, Widmerpool, although strong, has difficulty with his internal organs. He prefers water to any other liquid: inviting Jenkins to lunch, he orders "cold tongue and a glass of water".[79] On another occasion, he eats rather more, but "for drink he still restricted himself to a glass of water."[80] He suffers boils,[81] symptoms of an ill-functioning digestive tract. Worse, as Stringham remarks, he

[77] AW, p. 193.

[78] QU, p. 15.

[79] ALM, p. 49.

[80] CCR, p. 110.

[81] QU, p. 12.

"suffers - or suffered - from contortions of the bottom."[82] Later, he is attacked by jaundice.[83] He breathes "like an elderly lap-dog."[84]

His infirmities serve to emphasize his dedication to the phenomenal world. Immersed therein, he emits a discordant, but powerful, music, consisting of "shrill, rhythmic bursts of sound, limited in compass like the notes of a barbaric orchestra."[85] Such music is suitable to a primitive concern with the domination of environment. In such a struggle, one isolates oneself, and Widmerpool's isolation, swimming strongly in time's current, is typified by his "wearing the wrong kind of overcoat."[86] Time, under such circumstances, moves quickly. Widmerpool is forever looking at his watch, making and keeping appointments. But to swim is one thing; to swim successfully, another. One cannot dog-paddle; one must get ahead of the

[82] Ibid., p. 14.

[83] ALM, p. 160.

[84] QU, p. 46.

[85] Ibid., p. 10.

[86] Ibid.

others, indeed control their movement, if one is to have a gauge of one's passage. To swim implies effective forward motion; in social terms, it requires upward movement through society. Then can one survey those left behind, perhaps still splashing, perhaps drowned.

> A full colonel, wearing the red tabs with which Widmerpool himself hoped soon to be equipped, came out of a door under the arch and turned into Whitehall. Widmerpool pointed after him and laughed.
>
> 'Did you see who that was?' he asked. 'I really strolled with you across here, out of my way, in case we might catch sight of him.'
>
> 'Was it Hogbourne-Johnson?'
>
> 'Relegated to the Training branch, where, if he's not kicked out from there too, he will remain until the end of the war....'[87]

Widmerpool's quest for power over the waters of time begins early, for "it was Widmerpool who got Akworth sacked."[88] He exercises it further in the reconciliation of Orn and Lundquist; his excitement at his success causes his phenomenal nature to heat up so that he makes a "gobbling sound, not unlike an engine getting up steam."[89]

[87] MP, pp. 111-112.

[88] QU, p. 17.

[89] Ibid., p. 137.

It would not be too much to agree with Templer and Stringham that it is Widmerpool who brings on Le Bas's heart attack.[90] He controls Stringham, pinioning him to his bed;[91] even more,

> ... he strolled to the kerb. A cab seemed to rise out of the earth at that moment. Perhaps all action, even summoning a taxi when none is there, is basically a matter of the will. Certainly there had been no sign of a conveyance a second before. Widmerpool made a curious, pumping movement, using the whole of his arm, as if dragging down the taxi by a rope.[92]

Ropes, one thinks, are used for dragging and mooring boats to the shore. Will Widmerpool, a corrupt Fisher King, walk on water in one of the volumes to come?

Widmerpool's spiked running shoes, his reinforced boots, take their toll: Truscott[93] and Duport.[94] With

[90] AW, pp. 188-191.

[91] Ibid., p. 198.

[92] Ibid., p. 194.

[93] ALM, p. 68.

[94] KO, pp. 163-165.

the arrival of war, a harsh phenomenon offering opportunities unbounded for the exercise of power, Widmerpool is truly "embodied".[95] He draws Jenkins into his orbit:

> I saw that I was now in Widmerpool's power. This, for some reason, gave me a disagreeable, sinking feeling within.[96]

On manoeuvres, he is suitably in charge of traffic control but, although "possessing apparently the movement-tables of the entire Division", he fails to be omnipotent.[97] Further, he finds a worthy competitor in Sunny Farebrother,[98] is eluded by Diplock.[99] He does, however, contrive Bithel's discharge,[100] Stringham's consignment to the Far East,[1] and his own departure to the Cabinet offices. His movement control, if not omnipotent, is effective.

[95] Ibid., p. 205.

[96] VB, p. 243.

[97] SA, pp. 53-56.

[98] Ibid., pp. 202-204.

[99] Ibid., p. 213.

[100] Ibid., pp. 186-187.

[1] Ibid., p. 189.

The Cabinet offices are equated with cabinet d'aisance. Certainly, the reader cannot be unaware of the parallel, and Powell himself is quite explicit about "the caricature of Widmerpool in the cabinet at La Grenadiere."[2] Although not specifically the purpose of this paper, it is perhaps worth pointing out the Swiftian aspects of Widmerpool's Yahoo nature, and the imagery of the water-closet which combines anality and cleanliness. Adler bases the quest for power upon feelings of inferiority, as stemming, for example, from failure of control over excretory and sexual functions. Certainly, Widmerpool suffers such failures.

The "cabinet" office, as Farebrother notes, "is certainly Kenneth's bower, a very cosy one."[3] In it, you have "What you need, if you're going to get any work done. Can't tell whether it's three o'clock in the morning, or three o'clock in the afternoon. No disturbance from time."[4] It seems, at this stage, that Widmerpool has

[2]MP, p. 122.

[3]Ibid., p. 14.

[4]Ibid.

successfully hauled himself out of linear time, indeed is in a situation of control over the flood itself, ensconced in an environment symbolic of the anal origins of power. He manages to do the dirty on Farebrother[5] and, more seriously, on Templer.[6] He plans the disposal of his mother,[7] and envisages his own immortality, rather like the persistence of his name on the house-list:[8]

> 'What a splendid ceremony. I was carried away. I should like to be buried in St. Paul's - would prefer it really to the Abbey.'[9]

A lot of the comic downfall of Widmerpool rests in his relations with women. Suitably, his sex-life, that particular expression of the will, seems largely to depend on "Plenty of pretty little bits in the black-out."[10] Both Barbara Goring and Mrs. Wentworth prove too much for

[5] Ibid., p. 111.

[6] Ibid., pp. 211-215.

[7] Ibid., pp. 201-202.

[8] QU, p. 50.

[9] MP, p. 230.

[10] Ibid., p. 109.

him, both indigestible, an excess of sweetness on the one hand external, on the other, internal. With Gypsy Jones he endures an abortive relationship. What will happen, married now to Pamela Flitton, remains to be seen. Perhaps she, as a reincarnation of Charles Stringham, will be the Avenging Angel.

Dealing with the external world in its manifestations of motion and persistence, Jenkins attempts to balance himself above the river. His, the noumenal, will operates by faith in fate. He bows to the inevitable. He seeks persistence in his historical analogies. Everything, he believes, must have a pattern. The pattern may not be understood, not grasped in its entirety, but the struggle to order is made. He alone, rather than, say, Donners or Le Bas, realizes that it takes all sorts to make a world. His approach to matters is mental, internal, removed, wandering away from the external, constantly recalled from his reveries, as others are, by awareness of life's unavoidable straitjacket: "life's inflexible call to order";[11]

[11] VB, p. 87.

"the V.2 had implied a call to order";[12] "a disciplined, if deserved, call to order."[13]

His cogitations, their total impact, are summarized in the following passage, concerned with life and death and fate:

> As in musical chairs, the piano stops suddenly, someone is left without a seat, petrified for all time in their attitude of that particular moment. The balance-sheet is struck there and then, a matter of luck whether its calculations have much bearing, one way or the other, on the commerce conducted. Some die in an apparently suitable manner, others like Robert on the field of battle with a certain incongruity. Yet Fate had ordained this end for him. Or had Robert decided for himself? Had he set aside the chance of a commission to fulfil a destiny that required him to fall in France; or was Flavia's luck so irredeemably bad that her association with him was sufficient - as Dr. Trelawney might have said - to summon the Slayer of Osiris...[14]

In the world of the mind, the doubt is prized.

[12] MP, p. 152.

[13] Ibid., p. 180.

[14] VB, p. 196.

There are no firm answers. The cycles of lucubration turn on the past and the present, observing, collecting, collating. A pattern forms, only to dissolve. In the activity itself, power over the external world is achieved, if not by the construction of a clear framework, a chessboard of cause and effect, then in a sense of context, of a perception which provides a broad, conceptual and timeless, Stromgestalt:

> ... this seemed one of several hints of change that had become noticeable lately, suggesting those times when the ice-flows of life's river are breaking up - as in that scene in Resurrection - to float down-stream, before the torrent freezes again in due course into new and deceptively durable shape.[15]

Jenkins stands apart from the river, charting its whirls and eddies. He cannot, however, completely avoid the waters. Before falling into Widmerpool's power, he is cast literally upon the flood:

> I went off to look for the rope bridge over the canal.... I started to make the transit, falling in after about three or four yards. The water might

[15]ALM, p. 64.

> have been colder for the time of year. I swam the rest of the way, reaching the far bank not greatly wetter than the rain had left me. There I wandered about for a time, making notes of matters to be regarded as important in the circumstances. After that, I came back to the canal, and, disillusioned as to the potentialities of the rope bridge, swam across again.[16]

"Making notes of matters to be regarded as important in the circumstances", is what Jenkins does all the time. He does wander about - unlike the linear Widmerpool. However, his ultimate capacity for endurance rests in his faith in some larger time scale than the purely phenomenal: in something which renews and reaffirms the self, enabling it to endure in the midst of the phenomenal river - where "the water might have been colder"; perhaps, when Powell's pattern is finally completed, in something akin to the "ocean's aqueous reiterations". However, it is unlikely one will ever really know very much about that destiny: why, indeed, "For some reason one was always aware, without knowing why the fact should be so inescapable, that the sea was not far away." But,

[16]VB, pp. 83-84.

certainly, a something, a destiny, a flow, not to be reduced to canal or sewage pipe.

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