Chapter Three

ART AND IDEAS IN THE NOVEL A DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF TIME

The consideration of the ideas and art, as we find in his earlier novels, brings us to consider them in his novel sequence A Dance to the Music of Time. It consists of twelve volumes. In them Powell presents English life from the summer just before the First World War to the decade after the World War II -- the detailed portrayal of the life of upper class and literary life in London. The narrator of this novel, Nicholas Jenkins, thinks freely and acts freely. In doing so, he offers us many parallels with the life of the author, but it is not an autobiographical novel, because it is largely an imaginary creation. Besides it, the novel shows a classical, balanced and broadly tolerant view of life. He makes us see in the novel that life begins with laughter but it ends in seriousness. The life in it is full of amusement, but the shadow of death hovers over it. English gay life is shown along with the ruins of glory, no matter Powell has used arts and literature to organise the twelve books of the novel, and also to show his chief interest
in the character-portrayals. Thus, Powell uses art and literature as a device to put forth his viewpoint.

The first two paragraphs of the first book of this novel sequence describe a group of workmen and a painting. It is this that suggests not only the title of this novel but also Powell's subject matter and his method of presentation. The workmen make a kind of camp for themselves. It is connected to a subterranean drain pipe. One of the workmen in blue overalls, is taller than the rest. He suddenly steps forward and casts some substance on the bright coals of the fire. The flames of the fire die, and the men turn away from the fire as a harsh odour, bitter and gaseous, penetrates the air. The flame of the fire and the coming out of the harsh odour, are described by the author beautifully thus: "... The flame died down again; and the men, as if required observance, were for the moment at an end, all turned away from the fire... The grey undecided flakes continued to come down, though not heavily, while a harsh odour, bitter and gaseous, penetrated the air."¹ This turned out of the men from the fire, besides reminding us of the ancient world, suggests Poussin's Scene -- the winged and naked greybeard plays the lyre, and the seasons tread in rhythm to the note of the lyre. Besides, the image of time brings thought of mortality of human beings, stepping slowly, methodically, sometimes, a little awkwardly, to the evolution that takes a recognizable

shape. The scene has classical associations that remind the author of his school days and make clear many forces of that time. This description takes the author to his school, Eton. With Nicholas Jenkins, he thinks of the school life. The author's own memory takes Jenkins to the past. Jenkins watches two dances there. In one of them, people dance -- the author recalls those people. In the other, Nick, the narrator, indulges in his own reminiscences. He reviews and analyses these dances, and with their help tries to understand the dance of the present. It may be appreciated in the words of the author thus: "... classical associations made me think, too, of the days at school, where so many forces, hitherto unfamiliar, had been in due course uncompromisingly clear."²

Then, we come to the scene of the street. It is an abstract of the contemporary life. It offers a forbidding view of a demoralised civilization. In this description, the chief actor appears as a wise Shakespearean fool. The rites of the society recall the decayed state of the church. The men are required to observe certain traditions. It reminds Nick of the glowing offerings of the earlier world. The smell in the Church in the present time makes one sick. It is the sickening smell of the modern civilization. The approximate end of the day symbolises the approximate end of human life in Britain. This is how the reader is brought

to the action in the novel. Then, Nick's school mate, Widmarpool, appears. He is a ruthless egoist and thinks only of the present. Thus, the two visions of life -- of the street and of the classical past -- merge in Pausin's -- 'A Dance to the Music of Time'. So, Powell turns to arts in order to make his thinking clear. In this connection, we may refer to what Arthur Mizener has said. He says that Powell's images are specially drawn from fine arts. He further says that the controlling attitude of Powell's imagination asserts itself. It follows then that Powell has used the painting in order to present his view of life and to point out his approach that he may use in writing this novel. So, in this novel, a shape from the past reminds us of things both real and imaginary. Thus, this one shape, Pousin's Painting, provides the material for the whole book. In short, with the help of fine arts, Powell perceives life and its discipline. Robert Morris states its importance and points out that The Music of Time emerges from the synthesis of dance and dancer. He further states that it depends on the quality of the orchestration as on the mimetic character of the action itself. Also, the four seasons in this book are placed back to back as dancers do in a circle. They extend their arms and clasp their hands, but the winter shows


tortured expression on its face. It frees its hands from the spring. It shows an effort to break away. They dance clockwise. On the right Time sits. It watches the dance smilingly. On the left there is a pillar. It has been garlanded. On this pillar there is a two-headed representation of Janus, a God of the beginning and also of the end besides being the god of entrance and exist.

Another book entitled The Military Philosophers may be connected with this painting as it has a reference to the doors of the temple of Janus. These doors remain open during the period of war. Besides, in the clouds, above the dance of seasons, appears Arora. She scatters dew while flying before the chariot of Apollo. Hours surround Apollo. Below Time and the pillar of Janus two putti sit. They lean on his left arm and look at what he holds in his right hand. The boy who is beside Time looks at the hour-glass. The other nearer the seasons is blowing bubbles with the help of straw. These two figures suggest imagination and time-bound will. If we take into our consideration the first few books of this novel, we may find that Stringham and Widmerpool represent these two, and it is between these two, Imagination and Time-bound will that most of the characters in the novel fall. Thus, in the dance seasons look towards Time. The question arises whether these dancers and human dancers like them can control the melody and their steps or not. Powell does not
answer these questions at once, but we can discover that
the figures of the dancers in the painting are not inclined
to join one another like the people in the society. So,
seasons dance to the music of Time. Each season comes round
to the same place again and again in the dance, and so do
the characters in the novel by enacting the same pattern
of life as people did before them and will do after them.
Likewise, we too must conform to the events that we cannot
control. In the end, Powell observes that life has a cyclic
movement. So, in the novel, the events also follow this
circular plan. Nick, while talking to Chips Lovell, states
the same principle when he says that Chips is despondent
because his wife is having an affair with someone else. He
further states that Chips should not be so, as nothing ever
remains the same, not even marriage or anything. Of course,
everything changes in the course of time, but the fact is
that it remains the same in essence.

In this connection Bernard Bergonzi points out that
pressures of history and mortality that we come across in
the latter books of the novel do not follow the principle of
the cyclic motion. But we must not forget that dance in
the novel is a metaphor for order. The director of the dance
is Time. Time's direction cannot be escaped. It forces the
dancers to conform not only to the change but also to minor

incidents. That is to say, human being have to suffer at the hands of Time and have to act according to Time's direction. In the book The Kindly Ones the author has stated it beautifully thus: "... in that such an appalling volume of unavoidable experience had to be packed into the intervening period before that historical necessity could be enacted." Thus, in life events lead man to act. It is not within his free will to do this or not to do this. Further, Richard Voorhees points out that Powell tries to demonstrate, in this novel, that our preferences and needs at the moment are governed by our past actions and by those notions of the society that, we think, are proper for us. In the novel, when Nick is asked as to why he came to the part with Widmerpool, a creature of egoism to the point of becoming inhuman, Nick realises that he cannot answer it, because it is "a law which seems to lead inexorably to the conclusion that the often repeated saying that people can 'choose their friends' is true only in a most strictly limited degree." However, when Nick thinks of the night of his love affair with Jean Templer Duport, he finds that it was not because he willed but because it was pre-determined in the same way as in the dance every step is the result of the step before.

The author states it in his book *The Acceptance World* thus: "... In a sense, nothing because in the dance every step is ultimately the corollary of the step before; ..." 9

It follows then, that we cannot have a particular kind of personalities. In the novel, years later after the war, when Nick meets Jean, he realises that they do not have love for each other. That is to say, they have changed just as steps after steps the personality of the dancer changes. Undoubtedly the shape of the dance will be influenced by the melody that have been played before, yet, as the time passes, the melody changes as do the steps in the dance of the each individual and those of the group. 10

But, we find that the novel has not been written on determinstic lines. If it had been so, the dancers in the novel, trained to only one melody, would have been helpless before a new one. As we know from the novel that the characters grow and accept responsibilities, and thus they adapt themselves to the situations they find themselves in. In this connection it is worth-while to point out how Jenkins thinks in the novel. He thinks that in human life every situation, including the ordered and disordered ones, is dominated by an individual or individuals. We may appreciate it in the words of the author of his book *The*


Kindly Ones thus: "In human life the individual ultimately dominates every situation, however disordered, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse."¹¹ This is also true of his popular book Books do Furnish a Room. In this connection the author's observation made in this very book may be appreciated thus: "I grasped at once (says Trapnel) that's what life was like..."¹² Also, we may see this determinism, the sense of enforced, awkward, unchosen and uncontrollable motion in Casanova's Chinese Restaurant. Of this very book the composer Moreland enjoys the Ghost Railway thus: "... moving at last with dreadful, over increasing momentum towards a shape that lay across the line."¹³ So, the dancer makes his own choice of his steps. Thus, Nicholas Jenkins invests time to learn the pattern, rhythm and repetition in the melody that restricts the steps of the dancer. This learning makes one to see life not as a chaos but a something disciplined. In the novel At Lady Molly's the narrator tries to see some parallel in the lives of Widdmerpool and General Conyers. He wants to link their lives with that parallel and thereby tries to see those designs of human behaviour that make life tolerable. We may appreciate all this in the words of the author in his book thus: "... to

link widmerpool with General Conyers: thereby hoping to
construct one of those formal designs in human behaviour,
... making the more apparent inconsistencies of life easier
to bear." In the novel "A Question of Upbringing" Jenkins
finds such a design while he thinks of the unexpected
visit of a school master: "Labas's appearance was one of
those odd preludes that take place and give, as it were,
dramatic form to occurences that have more than ordinary
significance. It is as if the tempo altered gradually, so
that too violent a change of sensation should not take
place... It was a long time before I came to look upon such
transcendental manipulation almost as a master of routine."15
Besides, the closeness of this attentive thinking can be seen in
terms of the music used and the actors that have been coupled
together. This we find in the image of dance. The first of
the novel shows Nick's growth and his awareness of life. The
close study of the book reveals patterns of dance very
clearly. These patterns guide one in life. This we find at
the end of the book. His companion of the mess, Stringham,
cancels a date of supper thus: "This was the last I should
see of Stringham for a long time. The path had suddenly
forked. With regard I accepted the inevitability of cir-
cumstance... A new epoch was opening: in a sense this

night was the final remnant of life at school."\textsuperscript{16} Thus, Nick accepts the inevitability of circumstances to the whole dance. It helps him to be aware of the force of circumstances in the enjoyment of the freedom. He assesses the force of the circumstances and acts accordingly, so that he may enjoy his freedom.

Besides, the different books of the novel \textit{A Dance in the Music of Time} have such scenes as act, in the same way in which do the inscriptions in the other novels. In fact, these scenes are more effective than the inscriptions, because they are the part of the narrative. In this connection, it is proper to state how W.D. Quesenbery (Jr.) thinks of such scenes or reflective moments in the different books of this novel: "In each of these moments Jenkin's reflections project or apprehend visual images. Moreover, each provides a fresh metaphor for the novel's subject, thereby marking the stages of its analysis while recalling the original, comprehensive image."\textsuperscript{17} It is these scenes or reflective moments, as Quesenbery (Jr.) calls them, that connect the plots of the different books of this novel. Again, it is these that give individuality to each volume. For example, the book \textit{A Buyer's Market} opens with an auction, but it first introduces the paintings that connect it with the other books. It also

\textsuperscript{16} Anthony Powell, \textit{A question of Upbringing}, \textit{op.cit.}, p.229.
\textsuperscript{17} W.D. Quesenbery (Jr.), \textit{Anthony Powell: The Anatomy of Decay}, Critique VII (1964), pp. 15-16.
introduces Mr. Deacon, who also dies in the book, and so this book becomes an individual book dealing with Mr. Deacon.

Besides, the key scenes provide Nick with sources that enable him to make observations on the life he lives and sees. For example, he is seduced by Gypsy Jones. It leads him to observe that personal alienation will be the result of the sexual intimacy. But the fact remains that he does not analyse his own attitude. Rather, he makes observations on the external events that he experiences and sees. So the key scenes act as epigraphs and link people with facts. Naturally, these scenes become interesting as they throw light on plots and characters besides giving the reader an insight into Nick's psychology of interpreting the external events. Besides, epigraphs that are internalised by the novelist provide titles for the different books.

The street scene of A Question of Upbringing and the scene of bombed-out pub of Casanova's Chinese Restaurant may be taken as examples. Further, these internalised epigraphs are broad illuminations. They make bigger units of significance. For example, Myra Erdleigh's foretelling gives rise to the plot of The Acceptance World. In this unit we come across prophecies about business problems and Nick's love affair that he experiences. It is they that form the dramatic epigraphs. Besides, they are concerned not with plot but with the theme, mood, time and characters. They
relate the past with the present by dealing with usual
destructive sexual alliances and the restatement of the
dance metaphor in the form of human activity. For example,
in *At Lady Molly's* Nick's courtship and engagement with lady
Isobel Tolland is based on an epigraphic passage taken from
Peppy's *Diary*.

Naturally, if we review these key scenes, we find that
they indicate very clearly how the plot moves in the whole
novel besides giving a synopsis of its dominant images and
themes. They also point out the themes and images in the
different books. We may take *A Question of Upbringing* as an
illustration. It deals with Nicholas Jenkin's life right
from his schooling at Eton to his studentship in Oxford
University. This book tells us about his mess companions —
Peter Templer, Charles Stringham and Kenneth Widmerpool. Peter
Templer is highly materialistic. Charles Stringham is both
melancholic and imaginative in temperament. Kenneth Widmerpool
is awkward in behaviour but determined in his approach. Nick's
uncle, Giles, visits Nick and motivates him to draw more and
more money out of the Family Trust. Stringham, on the other
hand, plays foul with his own master LaBas. He identifies him
as a notorious criminal before the police and consequently
LaBas is arrested. It creates confusion in the school. It
also horrifies Widmerpool. Then, Nick goes to the Templer's
home for a visit. He stays there for a week. There he is
infatuated with Templar’s sister, Jean. Later, he goes to Mrs. Foxe’s London house, where he takes his lunch. Mrs. Foxe is Stringham’s mother. He finds that the upbringing in the two homes is quite different on their very surface. Also, while Nick is passing his holidays in France, he meets his companions of the mess at school. He has learnt to convince one through persuasion. He (Widmerpool) reconciles the conflict current in the mind of Nick about the entirely different upbringing of the two homes he has visited.

In the meantime, Stringham, who leaves Oxford early, works with Sir Magnus Donners, an industrial magnate. This gives a summary of Nick’s education, particularly the advantages and dangers of dividing people into different categories. It also deals with the complexity of love and the urge to power. The next book makes Nick appreciate the complicated adult world. He also understands his role as an observer. This book deals with the dance of life, the opening scene of the street workers who act as a guide to this book and a key to the other books. The book *A Buyer’s Market* introduces Nick when he is a child. This book comes to an end when Nick dies after a fall from a pub at his birthday party. ‘The Boyhood of Cyrus’ is one of Mr. Deacon’s paintings that he hangs in the hall of Walpole-Wilsons. It reminds Nick that he (Deacon) was infatuated with Barbara Goring, who is Walpole-Wilson’s niece. His passion for her comes to an end when she pours a
bowl of sugar over Widmerpool. Nick considers him only as a laughable creature. This happening gives the rude shock to Nick's conception of Widmerpool, who too loved Barbara Goring once. Then, Nick and Widmerpool meet Mr. Deacon with Gypsy Jones selling antiwar pamphlets. Further, they meet Stringham and he takes them to the Jean Templer's rented house. Jean Templer by then has married Bob Duport, an unattractive friend of Peter. In this house, a feast has been arranged by Milly Andriadis. The next chapter deals with painter Barnby, who is Nick's good friend. He also supplies a large number of aphorisms to him. Thus, Nick passes a week at Walpole-Wilson's' country home, where Barnby stays. They lunch at Stourwater, Sir Magnus Donner's' medieval Castle. Here Nick meets Widmerpool and Gypsy Jones. Widmerpool pays for her abortion but receives nothing from her as a compensation. At the lunch there she makes her observation on the Seven Deadly Sins concerning the Luxury of Govelin tapestry. The last chapter deals with Stringham's marriage. Further, it deals with Deacon's death on the very day Stringham marries. After his death, Nick enjoys sex with Gypsy Jones there. They also enjoy, later on, dinner with Widmerpool and his mother. There they learn that Stringham is engaged to Barbara Goring.

At the end of the book, we find that Nick has begun to see the pattern of life controlled by Time more than he ever did. The following words of the author of his book
"A Buyer's Market" dealing with the ritual of dance motif, may be appreciated: "For reasons not always at the time explicable, there are specific occasions when events begin suddenly to take on a significance previously unsuspected, so that, before we really know where we are, life seems to have begun in earnest at last, and we ourselves, scarcely aware that any change has taken place, are careering uncontrollably down the slippery avenues of eternity". 18

Further, the book The Acceptance World presents Nick playing billiards with Jean. In the year 1931 Nick met Myra Erdeleigh at his uncle Giles' residence, Seedy Hotel in Bayswater. She told him and his uncle the future problems in business and in Nick's love-affairs within a year. Her foretelling comes true. His love-affairs have just begun. Besides, his firm is publishing a book about an unpopular painter Ibister, but St. John Clarke, an old and once popular novelist, is not willing to write an introduction to the book. It is because Mark Members, Nick's own acquaintance and secretary to the novelist, converts him to the view that it will not be proper for him to recommend an old and obsolete artist to the public. In the mean time Templer arrives with his wife Mona and sister Jean, divorced wife of Duport. Nick goes to stay with them for a week at their invitation. One

day, on the ride outside London, they embrace each other unexpectedly. In this connection the author observes in the book *The Acceptance World*: "The exact spot must have been a few hundred yards beyond the point where the electrically illuminated young lady in a bathing dress dives eternally through the petrol-tainted air: night and day, winter and summer, never reaching the water of the pool to which she endlessly glides. Like some image of arrested development, she returns forever, voluntarily, to the spring board from which she started her leap. A few seconds after I had seen this bathing belle journeying, as usual, imperceptibly through the frozen air: I took Jean in my arms."19 It leads to the re-beginning of their affair at Templer's. For them life is reduced to mechanical repetitiveness, and so they kiss each other and carry on their life of sex. Meanwhile, Mona requests Nick to telephone Quiggin. With him Myra Erdleigh and Jimmy Stripling, former husband of Temper's elder sister Baba, also appear on the scene. In the mean time, Nick learns of St. John Clarke's illness and Mark Members' return to London. So he goes to London. There he meets Mark Members, who tells him that it was Quiggin who converted St. John Clarke to modernity. While conversing, they look at the procession crossing Hyde Park. In the procession he sees Clarke, Quiggin and Mona. The way Mona and Quiggin are walking

in the procession leads Nick to think that Mona has taken Oquiggin as her lover after divorcing her husband. Then, Nick goes to Jean's flat. He speaks insultingly to J. Stripling. It is then that she tells him that once she had a love-affair with Stripling, who is abhorrent in person and style. He thinks that the same girl has attracted him too, and in this sense he is similar to Stripling. However, they go to Poppa's Club, where Jean plays Billiards better. Then Nick meets Barnby with Lady Anne Stephney and Dicky Umfraville, friend of Stringham's father from South Africa. Dicky asks them to come to Milly Andriadis'. They drink there. In the meantime Stringham, separated from Peggy Stepney, comes drunk at La Bas's. Anne Stephney, then, marries umfraville. There Widmerpool speaks of economics. In the end Nick, with the help of Stringham, takes Widmerpool home. There Stringham struggles with Widmerpool and refuses to remain in bed. At last he throws himself on him (Stringham). In this Widmerpool becomes Victorious, and this suggests a positive cosmic change in the system of life. On his way to Jean's, Nick thinks of deception and destruction in love-affairs. He thinks of the painting showing two lovers sitting literally one on the top of the other in an arm chair. The lovers exchange ardent glances. It appears to him that they are on the best of terms. It reminds him of his affairs with Jean. It also reminds him of other such love-affairs known to him. He feels that there must be some confidence
trick in their performance of their love-affairs and so they are broken. All this may be appreciated in the words of the author of his book The Acceptance World: "The two exchange ardent glances. They were evidently on the best of terms, because the young man, fair, though at the same time rather semitic of features, was squeezing the girl's arm just above the elbow... one would not help thinking how extraordinarily unlike 'the real thing' was this particular representation of a pair of lovers... The matter was presented as all too easy.... Yet, after all, even the crude image of the postcard depicted with at least a degree of truth one wide of love's outward appearance.... Some of love was like the picture. I had enacted such scenes with Jean: Templer with Mona: Now Mona was enacting them with Quiggin: Barnby and Umfraville with Anne Stepney: ...: Jimmy Stripling with Jean: and Duport too... These two supposedly good-looking persons were, in effect, going through the motions of love in such a manner as to convince others, probably less well-equipped for the struggle than themselves, that they, too, the spectators, could be easily identified with some comparable tableau. They, too, could sit embracing on crimson chairs... this performance included an element of the confidence trick."20 Thus, love-making is nothing but a human dance in life. He thinks of the dishonesty in the performance of his love affair in Jean's case. He comes to know, after his

love affair with her, that she has deceived him. So, love is a commodity that some get it while others do not -- a part of the pattern that we find in the world of business. It may be appreciated in the words of the author of his book *The Acceptance World*: "If you have goods you want to sell to a firm in Bolivia, you probably do not touch your money in the ordinary way until the stuff arrives there. Certain houses, therefore, are prepared to 'accept' the debt. They will advance you the money on the strength of your reputation. It is all right when the going is good, but sooner or later you are tempted to plunge. Then there is an alteration in the value of the Bolivian exchange, or a revolution, or perhaps the firm goes bust and you find yourself stung."\(^{21}\) Besides, the phrase, *The Acceptance World*, seems to suggest what we are all doing, not only in business, but also in love, art, religion, philosophy, politics, and, in fact, all human activities.

Similar is the case with the book *At Lady Molly's*. It centres on a passage taken from Peppy's *Diary*. On the invitation of Peppy, Nick visits Sleaford's ancestral home at Dogdene. Lady Molly is Sleaford's widow. She meets her second husband in a military hospital during the World War I at Dogdene. It is here that Nick as a child met Mildred Blaides, Mrs. Conyer's younger sister. She, who later on becomes Haycock, worked as a nurse at the hospital at Dogdene.

In this book, later on, Ted Jeevons, Molly's second husband, tells us that Mildred had a love-affair with him also. So far as Nick is concerned, he meets and is engaged to Isobel Tolland. Naturally, he becomes much familiar with Tolland's family. Besides, the book deals with a large number of changing marital relationship: Chips Lovell, nephew of the present Lord Sleaford, marries Friscilla Tolland; Bridge, Lord Warminster, Isobel's brother, marries Templor's wife, who had been earlier taken away from Templor by Quiggin; and Widmerpool engages himself to Mildred Haycock, who discovers, later on, that he is impotent and so leaves him.

In the above books we come across the duplication of activities, but such repetitions are inherent in human life as well. This is nothing but dance in human life. However, we read a hard note of despair in the book 'Casanova's Chinese Restaurant'. On the other hand, in the novel A Dance in the Music of Time we hear of the abdication of throne by Edward VIII. It tells us very clearly of the conflict between love and duty. Besides, the title is the name of a restaurant where Nick meets the musician Moreland, who, like Barnby, is the source of aphorisms. Also, after a few years, Nick meets Moreland's wife. Then, a year afterwards, he meets Moreland in a nursing home. Here Isobel is taking rest after an

22 The restaurant is Maxim's Chinese Restaurant on Warden Street in Soho. "The New York Time Book Review" (September 13, 1962), pp. 5 & 30. This information is given in the account of an interview that Robert Gutfvilling takes of Powell.
abortion. At this place Matilda is also there. She expects the birth of a child. The child is born but dies very soon. They all meet the music critic Maclintick, an old friend of Moreland. Maclintick's wife is Audrey, who is a savage virago. The middle of this book is devoted to the first performance of Moreland's new symphony at Mrs. Foxe's party. In the meantime Nick comes to know from Matilda of an affair between Moreland and Priscilla, Isobel's sister. Also, Maclintick and his wife fight and it ends in violence. It is at this point that alcoholic Stringham arrives on the scene. He is dead drunk and comes uninvited. He was living at Molly Jeevon's and was being looked after by Tuffy, formerly his mother's secretary, who has kept him confined to her house. She takes Stringham away from his companions who were listening to the stories of Stringham's failed marriages and were deriving pleasure. After a few months, Moreland takes help of Nick to cheer up Maclintick, whose wife has run away with the owner of their boarding house. They find Maclintick drunk. He thinks of the past and in remorse he commits suicide. In the shadow of Maclintick's death, Moreland ends his relations with Priscilla. Then Priscilla and Chips Lovell come together. Besides, St. John Clarke wills all his property to Erridge, who is Isobel's brother.

This, then, is the story of musicians, actors and ruined marriages. It is based on a vision of the bombed remains of
Mortimer. He sees this vision in the evening. Nick meets Moreland along with his group at Casanova's. They went there to talk on the subject of seduction. Besides the war, a female street singer weakens the destructive atmosphere, because she becomes the cause of irresponsible sexual activities. In the words of Arthur Mizener, "If such a world ever possessed 'ladies', its promise of a retreat for them was surely false, and the vulgur elegance of the promise has, without losing its absurdity, become somehow pathetic, since brutal violence has so ludicrously exposed its copy refinement. This is the image of a whole civilization." This ends the first scene of the novel A Dance in the Music of Time. It points out the degradation England was suffering from. Besides, the choice of the title of this book has a close connection with the ruin of Mortimer. It reminds us of the dinner, the persons and their lives, and all this forms the main plot of the book. From all this Nick concludes that in the end the most of the things prove suitable. It indicates the dance motif and the Ghost Railway of the novel. What happens so far leads Moreland to break his relations with Priscilla. Between beauty and love he chooses the former after realising the hidden link in the activities of life. The following dialogues between Moreland and his companions of the book Casanova's Chinese Restaurant may be appreciated in this connection:

"'Do you remember when we used to talk about the Ghost Railway and say how every day life it was -- or at least one's own every day life?' 'You mean rushing down hill in total darkness and crashing through close door?' 'Yes -- and the body lying across the line...'."\(^{24}\) Maclintick's despair and death as described from a note of hope in the book *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant* leads him to prefer duty to love, but it proves of no avail. Besides, the title *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant* has been taken from the name of the restaurant. It is here that Nick takes his meal with his friends in the evening of his meeting with Moreland. We also find in his book that in the course of time Priscilla deserts Chips, and Matilda, Maclintick. Thus, the dance of life continues.

Another book *The Kindly Ones* includes the period of unknown, ominous, future and the period between Munich and the beginning of the World War II. These times appear different from the past and thus they increase the effect of the incidents that are found in the individual lives. It is a different point that Anthony Powell does not make use of these incidents for illustrating how different characters are nothing but copies of one another. Nick, however, observes in *The Acceptance World* that human beings in life dance because of the same motive, no matter with different speeds. Such human beings, if we look at them minutely, are similar.

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and appear extraordinary individuals. In fact, the fury of the circumstances makes each and every one act. It is a different matter that there may be individual responses to the forces of the circumstances. In the book The Kindly Ones the author observes in this connection: "At lesson that morning -- the subject: classical Mythology, Miss Orchard had spoken on the manner in which the Greeks feared the Furries, and named them the Fumenidies, the kindly ones. It intended to appease their terrible wrath... They inflicted the vengeence of gods by bringing in their train war, pestilence, dissension on the earth, torturing too by the strings of conscience."\(^{25}\) If follows that these Furries, creatures of myth yet real like the changes of weather or the forces of the circumstances, are the real cause of war, destruction and sex. That is why in every chapter of this book we find a war and the representative Fury.

We may appreciate the truth of the above statement if we take into consideration what happens in the book The Kindly Ones. Archduke Ferdinand is assassinated. General Converse and his wife come to Jenkin's home at Stonehurst. They find a lot of uproar there. Then, a female correspondent catches hold of Albert, the cook. He is made to announce that he is going to marry soon. Naturally, Billson, the

maid servant there, becomes hysterical when she listens to his announcement. It is because she loves him. She sees Stonehurst's ghost when other persons present there are in the drawing room and talking to one another. She enters naked there as she is under the control of the ghost. General Conyers covers her with a shawl and sends her to her room. Conyers then leaves. It is then that Trelawney, the crank of the neighbourhood, with his group arrives at that place. Uncle Giles appears and announces that they have assassinated Archduke. Thus, Giles acts as the messenger of Furio that are out to destroy the Civilization.

After some time, Nick and Isobel live together for a week at Noreland's country cottage. Sir Magnus Donners' Castle at Stourwater is at a short distance, and so in the evening they pay a visit there. Here also we find that the theme of war and hysteria reappears. Widmerpool arrives there in the military uniform, and Hetty Templer suffers from a fit of hysteria when she looks at her husband indulging in lust with Anne Stephey while enacting the scene of Seven Deadly Sins. Widmerpool's uniform makes us believe that the world is at war as was clear from Gile's announcement at Stonehurst quite a few years earlier, say 25 years. Besides, Giles dies just before the Germans and Soviets sign a pact of non-aggression. Before his funeral, on an evening Nick meets Bob Duport at his hotel in Brighton. He tells Nick
that his (Nick's) lady-love Jean has also another lover.
Nick thinks that sex is destructive. It is at this time
that he, along with Bob Duport, learns that Dr. Trelawney
follows occult practices and has become friendly to mysterious
Mrs. Erdleigh. It so happens that Dr. Trelawney locks
himself in the bath room. It is the result of some hysteric
effect. Nick makes him normal and he comes to his own room.
He then thinks that there is a close connection between
man's humiliation and the destruction of the society at the
time of war. Besides, while he is making a thorough search
of his uncle's belongings, he comes across the letter of
commission that Giles got from the Army. It leads him to
think what the letter of commission said and what his uncle
did, a difference between profession and practice. It also
makes him perceive his own situation. It may be appreciated
in the words of the author of his book *The Kindly Ones*, thus:
"There was every reason to think that before long now the
tenor of many persons lives, my own among them, would indeed
be regulated by these draconic ineluctable laws, so mildly,
so all embracingly, defined in the commission as 'the Rules
and Disciplines of War.'"26 Thus, he makes serious attempts
to take part in the war. For this, he tries hard that his
registration for the reserve may be changed into the active
commission. In this connection he tries to take help from
Captain Widmerpool, but he does not help him. Rather, he

asks him to accompany him to Molly Jeavon's house. His mother has gone there to meet Jeavon's sister-in-law. He is unwilling to go alone because he has broken his engagement with Mildred Haycock, who is beautiful but coquettish. She has made even men like Mars nervous. While going to Molly Jeavon's house, they meet Gypsy Jones whose conversation against war makes Widmerpool dumb. She tells him the weaknesses of the Munich arrangements due to which wars after wars were fought.

Then we come to another book The Valley of Bones. In this book Nick gets the commission in the Welch Regiment. It is here that he listens to the first sermon based on the verses from the Sacred Text, preached to this regiment. In the sermon, the Prophet's vision of the Valley, full of dry bones, is presented. Lord breathing life into these dry bones. The bones become soldiers constituting a big army. It motivates England to prepare for war. Besides, we also find that life in this book is also shown as disorderly because of irresponsible, dishonest sexual relations. This is the second epigraph — a letter attributed to Byron. It is thought that this letter was addressed to one Caroline Lamb, who was exciled, of course, on account of Byron, to the home of Hercules Mallock.

It may be appreciated in the words of the author in this book, The Valley of Bones, thus: "My dear Caro or at
least spare me an account of his protestation of affection and recollect that your host's namesake preferred Hylas to the Nymphs. Learn, too, that the theme of assignations in romantic groves palls on a man with a cold and quinsy and a digestion that lately suffered the torment of supper at Ld. Sleaford's."

In this connection, we may appreciate how Nick's superior, Rowland Gwatkin, declares that a married man has not to bother for women any more, but he himself bothers a lot when he meets a sluttish barmaid at Castle Mallock (in Ireland). He loses his old military enthusiasm and even loses his post because he always indulges in thinking of her. But even after losing his job, he feels consoled because he thinks that he is at the point of winning the girl. While walking through the park grounds, he tells Nick all this, but it is at this time that he happens to see a company playboy embracing her. Thus Gwatkin loses both duty and love. Besides, the book also deals with three views on the soldier's life, based on the three guides of the war sequence: Puck of Pook's Hill, the French Poet Alfred de Vigny's book Servitude at Grandeur Militaires, and French Marshal Lyautey's book. Gwatkin is unable to maintain the ideals as enshrined in these guides. He does show some style about him. Pennistone sums up de Vigny's book, Servitude at Grandeur Militaires, thus: "Vigny says a soldier's crown
is a crown of thorns, amongst its spikes none more painful than passive obedience... He sees the role of authority as essentially artificial, the army a way of life in which there is as little room for uncontrolled favour as for sullen indifference." Other soldiers taken to be more successful, take the middle course in maintaining the ideals of war.

In the book *The Soldier's Art* Nick is shown as working as an Assistant to Widmerpool in the army. Here he has opportunities to follow the ideals as enshrined in de Vigny's Guide Book. In this book, when Nick buys an army overcoat from a secondhand store, he is mistaken for an actor. The shopkeeper asks him as to why he wants to buy a military overcoat. He tells him that he wants to buy it for War. It surprises the shopkeeper. It may be appreciated in the words of the author thus: "'What's this one for?' he asked. 'Which one?' 'The overcoat -- if I may make bold to enquire?' 'Just the war.' 'Ah he said attentively! The war ..." 27 It also shows that the shopkeeper was unaffected by the commonplaces of life and was able to spare time for the theatre. He packs the coat and expects him to make the proper use in the theatre. Nick asks him if he wants him (Nick) to make its proper use in the theatre of war. It puzzles him but he wishes him all well in the war. In the second chapter Nick is on leave from the Army. He applies

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for a civil job, but he is rejected. In the evening of
that day, he meets Chips Lovell at the Ritz. Chips-Lovell
tells him that he wants to surprise his wife, Priscilla,
Isobel's sister, who is carrying on her affairs with somebody
else in a party at Madriad. He further tells him that his
purpose is to bring about some kind of improvement in his
relations with her. He leaves for Madriad. In the mean
time, his wife, Priscilla, arrived on the scene. She is
accompanied by her lover. But she hears an alarm of the
air-raid and so she leaves the place and goes to Lady Molly's.
Nick goes there for a drink. He is accompanied by Moreland
and Audrey Maclintick (who now lived together). He meets
Max Pilgrim there. Max Pilgrim tells Nick that Madriad
with "The place—the building—the tables and chairs—the
dance-floor—the walls—ceiling—all those gold pillers" is
nothing without a war. He wants some bombardment at the
place, so that there may be life. Nick then goes to Lady
Molly's, where he finds that the house has been hit by a
bomb and that as a result of it both Molly and Priscilla
have died. Just as time does not wait, a war is also
unpredictable and uncontrollable. The author describes it
in the book **Soldier Art**, thus: "'The Madriad is no more',
he said. /'Finished?'/Finished'./'The season or just your
act?'/... A bomb hit the Madriad full pitch this evening...
in the middle of my act', he said".  

28 Anthony Powell, **The Soldier's Art**, op.cit., p.155.
Further, in the same book Nick discovers that Stringham is serving in his own unit as a waiter in an officers' mess. Nick serves as an assistant to Widmerpool there. Nick proposes that they should spend a night outside the unit, but Stringham does not agree and says that, having been deceived by Tuffy he passes his time in reading, and tries to get things straight in his mind. Besides, one evening Stringham phones Nick and asks him to come to him as he needs his help in taking Widmerpool to the Division because the latter has drunk heavily. But Widmerpool, later on, gets Stringham transferred to some other unit, so that he may not reveal the matter to others below him. The unit to which Stringham is transferred is leaving for the Far East. Before leaving Stringham acquaints Nick with a passage from Robert Browning, wherein it is clear that old habits die hard.

Besides, the passage also emphasises that the soldier should first think and then fight, just as a drunkard first imagines and then asks for wine. All this may be appreciated in the words of Stringham in the book The Soldier Art thus: "... not that I feel in the least nostalgic about earlier, happier sights. I can't off hand recall many. The good bit is about thinking first and fighting after... (of the party his mother gave for Moreland) that was a strange night. Tuffy arrived to drive me home. It comes back to me fairly clearly, in spite of a great deal too much to drink. There's a taste of old times, if ever there was one. Makes one ready
to fight anybody." Also, the book refers to the lines from Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Cave. These lines are relevant not only to Stringham's present life but also to his past and his future death at the fall of Singapore. Chips Lovell also commits suicide because of his wife Prescilla's faithlessness. Barnby also dies in a plane-crash. But in the mean time Germany invades Russia. In this upheaval Widmerpool is transferred. Nick also faces a mysterious but fortunate set of new orders. In this book also there is a dance of time, but we cannot say whether it is optimistic or pessimistic.

Further, the book *The Military Philosophers* deals with the last four years of the war. It has taken its title from the different ways that have been described about soldering in the three guides of the war, particularly on the personal attitude of the commanders like Montgomery and a chanced remark about David Pennistone. While describing Nick's night at Carbourg, the author mentions Proust. Here Nick, who is the Original of Balbec, realises, like him, that he has missed the full favour of the experience. Besides, one of the sections of this book deals with a party. In this party a young man wearing an orchid is no body else but Prince Odoacer. He is related to Balkan Prince Theodoric. There is a lot of gossip about him. Theodoric loses his

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country, presumably Yugoslavia, when the Allies back the Partisans instead of resisting them. Also, Theodoric connects himself with Flitton, Stringham's niece and heir. She is beautiful but neorotic and vicious. She is married to Widmerpool and thus he is punished appropriately. Besides, in this book Nick as liaison officer, dealing with minor Allies, studies the conflicting national interests as suggested by the Ambassadors of the Poles, the Belgians and Czechs at the Proustian Party. His studies of their national interests remind him that human life cannot suggest hundred percent responses to the problems. Nick reacts to Victory Service at St. Paul's and in his reaction he recollects his friends, literary pieces, events of the past and even the scriptures. Besides, this service in the Church is nothing but thanksgiving. So, it is a ritual like the rite of the dance. Thus, after this the narrator feels free to perceive some sort of order in life.

Now we come to the X Book Books Do Furnish a Room. This book makes a critical examination of the themes of drunkenness and man's helplessness in the control of his own actions, attitudes towards sex and faithlessness. Nick reenters the publishing world when the war is over. Widmerpool marries Pamela Flitten whose association with death and delight in cruelty makes the book a serious one. Nick studies Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. It offers him an understanding of a