CHAPTER - III

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A Buyer's Market, the second book of the first trilogy Spring, is in continuation of the first book of the twelve volume novel A Dance To The Music Of Time. Every book of the novel covers one phase or other in the life of the narrator and marks a completion of some kind. This book describes the world of the fashionable and bohemian London society late in 1920s, when the traditional social and moral patterns of English life had been badly shaken by the First World War and outrageous behaviour was cultivated for its own sake. It is a world where members of the aristocracy, often eccentric or seedy and never of the first brilliance, associate with writers, artists, painters, businessmen and industrialists and others, less clearly talented, inhabitants of bohemia.

Jenkins, the narrator and central figure of the novel, after completing his upbringing at the Eton public school and Oxford University in the first book, moves into the fashionable, bohemian, artistic and aristocratic London society late in 1920s, to a variety of parties, steadily widening his circle of acquaintances. He is invited to wander into different social levels to make his way with people. Parties are the places of offering. The conscious choices begin in A Buyer's Market. All is for sale, the

buyer waits and buys according to one's upbringing, inclination, attitudes to life and what sort of life the society to offer. A tremendous mixture of possibilities baffle young men. Should he plunge or hold off, that is the buyer's problem.

After coming down from Oxford, Jenkins has started working for a publisher of art books. In early summer in 1928 or 29, Jenkins is invited for dinner party with Walpole-wilsons at Eaton square, by Barbara Goring, with whom Jenkins is in love. James Tucker thinks that 'Jenkins is not at parties, he is at a 'dance' in this book.'[1] Socialising has him in thrall. Powell curtails the activities of his characters to what is feasible during evening pleasure-mongering at various levels of English society. Life seems to have been reduced to lubricated chit-chat and unepic crises of manners. Although work can be fascinating in this book, parties are inclined to be even more fascinating and so get precedence. Nowhere else in the novel events of a single night-party at Walpole-Wilsons, debutante dance given by Huntercombs and party at Mrs. Andriadis - are permitted to occupy half of the volume, as it has been in this book.

The painting called 'Boyhood of Cyrus' by an elderly painter Mr. Deacon; hung in Walpole-Wilson's hall, assumed great significance for Jenkins not because of its artistic

merits, but being as a symbol of the probable physical proximity of Barbara Goring, the niece of Lady Walpole-Wilson. Arthur Mizener thinks "Mr. Deacon's carefully described painting, 'The Boyhood of Cyrus,' is the key psychological particular of Jenkins's passion for Barbara Goring."[2] Cyrus enters the narrator Jenkins's world by a sort of metonymy : it is an adjunct of Barbara.

At the sight of 'Boyhood Of Cyrus' Jenkins recalls the memories of childhood. During the First World War, when Jenkins were in the Louvre in Paris, Mr. Deacon visited them many times. We often find Jenkins as narrator looking back on Jenkins the protagonist. Both A Question Of Upbringing and A Buyer's Market open like that, as if Powell wished from the start to give the 'present' of the book fluidity and a time context. Period movements are especially complex at the opening of A Buyer's Market. Deacon will be already dead when we first hear of him. Yet we will move not simply to days when the adult Nicholas associated with Deacon but to an encounter with him at the Louvre during the First World War, when Nicholas was a child. Thus Powell makes such subtle, effective and continual use of time-shift technique to support a theme. The description of events as they occur tends to be less important than the placing of them in the overall scheme, a scheme we are constantly reminded about. It is only one of Powell's objectives to convey the flavour and freshness of a moment; and possibly

not the chief objective. As a result, he needed a specially devised style; a style which rarely strives for narrative pace, and which blurs the impact, edge and immediacy of events as they happen.

Such subtle, effective and continual use of time-shift technique and reliance on narrator's memories evokes obvious, although superficial, comparison with Marcel Proust. Like A Dance to the Music Of Time, Marcel Proust's A la recherche du temps perdu is a sequence novel narrated in the first person by a narrator Marcel who moves in the high society and among artistic people, full of thoughts about memory and Time. Reading A Dance To The Music Of Time, however, is a very different experience. Proust's Marcel is far more introspective than Jenkins, always exploring the inner world of self while Jenkins guards much of his private experience, even his childhood memories being mostly of other people. Jenkins's gaze is alway directed outward. Time and memory are not philosophical problems to Jenkins as they are to Marcel. A Dance To The Music Of Time has no proustian equivalence: distinction between deliberate remembering and involuntary memory. Powell's reading of Proust at Oxford must have contributed to his discovery that novels could be free from the cumbersome Victorian plots, and as free from chronicling, in chronological order, as our memories are. Powell is not methodically and technically modernist in

matters of plot construction and characterization, though we find some characteristic modernist devices like time-shift and use of memories. But he is more intricate and complex in these matters than naive and simple traditional eighteenth and nineteenth century novelists.

During 1940s Powell produced Life of John Aubrey and edited a selection from Aubrey's Brief Lives. Powell's interest in Aubrey is extremely relevant to his later fiction, where the anecdotal method and the fascination with the oddities of human behaviour and character reveal a cast of mind very much akin to Aubrey. Arthur Mizener has remarked r·ghtly that 'the heart of Powell's work is his "Brief Lives".[3] In this novel Powell has very finely shown the eccentricities and oddities of human behaviour by creating some eccentric characters. In the present book Powell has produced the eccentric character of painter called Mr. Deacon. When Jenkins sees a painting called 'Boyhood of Cyrus' in Walpole-Wilsons' house he recalls its creator Mr. Deacon. Jenkins knows Deacon since his childhood; young Jenkins encounters him with his companian Gypsy Jones at Mrs. Andriadis' party, and Jenkins attends his birthday party; and through his colleagues like Barnby, a young pa·nter, Jenkins collects his character. Jenkins's parents enjoyed Mr. Deacon's company because of his eccentricit·es. He was in favour of abolishing, or ignoring

the existing world entirely, with a view to experimenting with one of the entirely different orders. When Jenkins met him in later life, he discovered that he disliked the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists almost equally and opposed to later trends like cubism, or the works of the surrealists and regarded minor painter Simeon Solomon as his master. Mr. Deacon is found advocating cause of disarmament in his old age as if war had never occured. At Mrs. Andriadis' party, he picks up quarrel with Max Pilgrim, the public singer, and is ordered to go out. After his birth day party, he moves on to a night-club, and receives injury. Even in that undignified mishap there had been the touch of martyrdom inseparable from the conduct of his life. He goes to lodge a complaint with the management regarding the club's existing insanitary conditions. Mr.Deacon is far more than a satirical butt rather a character remembered with affection as well as amusement. Powell is a humanist, though he satirizes, and exposes the human follies and foibles, and eccentricities and oddities of human nature and behaviour without passing any judgement. He does not criticise them bitterly.

Archie Gilbert, whose life seemed irrevocably concentrated on 'debutante dances', was the first to arrive at Walpole-Wilsons' party. He conducted such a tirelessly social existence that he was 'unthinkable in everyday

cloths'. He attended every dance in London. It is an affectionate and a satirical portrait, and the final observation by Nicholas makes sure we see it in the way Powell wants. Archie Gilbert has his female counterpart in Margaret Budd. Every one used to say the dances bored them; especially those youngmen - with the exception of Archie Gilbert - who never failed to respond to an invitation, and stayed out night after night to the bitter end. The endless dining out and parties signify decadence, as parties do in Powell's first novel Afternoon Men (1931). A Buyer's Market says clearly enough that the society is shaky and that the agents of disuption are already well placed. For the most part social standards drift downwards in A Buyer's Market. A party at the house of Mrs.Andriadis is devastated by Mr.Deacon and his subversive newspaper, 'War Never Pays'! He and his companion, Gypsy Jones, bring with them the powerful smell of social unrest. Mrs.Andriadis's gathering represents a comedown. Gypsy and Deacon speed the slide. About to leave in a huff after row with Max Pilgrim, Mr.Deacon drops his bundle of newspaper, which are carried and spread by a draught through the hall of Mrs.Andriadis's house, even upto the threshold of the room beyond. A Buyer's Market describes the events, taken place, at four parties. Powell descibes objectively the English society through some selective events and typical characters. There

is almost no subjective treatment like that of modernists. Powell portrays some characters in the context of society and does not cut them off from the society and the world like the modernists.

Powell makes use of chance and coincidence to give a coherent form and unity to the long novel. Widmerpool's advent in Eaton Square at Wolpole Wilsons' party did not strike Jenkins at the time as anything more than a matter of chance. Jenkins said, "He had cropped up in my life before, and, if I considered him at all as a recurrent factor, I should have been prepared to admit that he might crop up again I did not, however, as yet see him as one of those symbolic figures... round whom the past and the future have a way of assembling."[4]

Lady Anne Stepney, Rosie Manasche, Padroe, Barbara Goring, Margaret Budd, Archie Gilbert, Tompsitt : all inhabitants of bohemia attend Walpole Wilson's party and then go to debutante dance given by Huntercombs at Belgrave square. Here Widmerpool undergoes a spectacular humiliation at the hands of a pretty but irresponsible girl Barbara Goring with whom both Widmerpool and Jenkins were, at the time, in love. Remarking 'Why are you so sour to night? You need some sweetening',[5] she suddenly conceived the idea of sprinkling a few grains of sugar over Widmerpool as if he literaly 'needed sweetening'. She picked up the sugar castor

and shook it over him. For some reason no sugar was at first sprayed out. Barbara then tipped that castor so that it was poised vertically over Widmerpool's head. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, the top fell off and Widmerpool was covered in a cascade of sugar. More from surprise than because she wished additionally to torment him, Barbara did not remove her hand before the whole contents of the vessel had descended upon his head and shoulders covering him with sugar completely. Widmerpool's sparse hair had been greased, the grains of sugar adhered thickly to his skull. He writhed sideways to avoid the downpour, and a cataract of sugar had entered the space between neck and collar; yet another jet streaming between eyes and spectacles. Barbara was dismayed by the consequences of what she had done. Among those sitting near were sent to laughter and some of them felt sorry for Wicmerpool in his predicament. Wicmerpool looked more grotesque. His reaction to circumstances was peculiarly characteristic of his nature. He stood up shook himself like an animal, sending out specks of sugar over many persons in the immediate vicinity, and smiling slightly, almost apologetically, to himself, took off his spectacles and began to rub their lenses with his handkerchief;[6] reminding Jenkins the story of 'Budd and the banana';[7] slavish look came into Widmerpool's face.

Intelligent people have recognised the potential qualities in Widmerpool to which Jenkins is still blind, considering him 'rather the kind of man people pour sugar on', of whom still he thinks as an 'embodiment of thankless labour and unsatisfied ambition,'[8] even though Widmerpool has already started getting on in the city. The sugar incident's aftermath is more crucial, for it provides Jenkins with his first unsettling indication ' of how inadequate, as a rule is one's own grasp of anothers' assessment of his particular role in life.'[9] As Jenkins leaves the party, Widmerpool appears at his side and tells him that the incident has been particularly painful because Barbara:

> "... krows well what my feelings are for her, even though I may not have expressed them in so many words ..."

This disclosure was more than a little embarrassing... (because)

> " I used to think that people who looked and behaved like Widmepool had really no right to fall in love at all, for less to have any success with girls - least of all a girl like Barbara - a point of view that in due course had, generally speaking, to be revised, sometimes in mortifying circumstances. This failure to recognise Widerpool's passion had, of course,

> restricted any understanding of his conduct, when, at the supper table he had appeared so irritable ... I would now guess that, while we sat there, he had been burning in the fires of hell".[10]

Truth is unveiled by time, even if the amount of time that unveiling takes is negligible. The secure assumptions with which Jenkins has started adult life are inadequate, and the rest of the evening only confirms the lesson Widmerpool has begun to teach him. The two men move on to another party at Mrs.Andriadis which Jenkins finds far less proper and - to his surprise - far more interesting than the dance at which the evening began. The marriage market of a debutante ball has become a sexual bazaar, nobody bothering to thank their hostess, geusts of all ages and social classes mingle indiscriminately, and the party ends with a fight between two homosexuals after one accusing the other. When at dawn Jenkins returns to his Shepherd Market flat, the subversive power of the evening's waves have begun to dissolve his conventional expectations about social life, and about himself as well; have begun to teach him that ' the kind of person he chances to be' is not at all what Eton has made him believe he ought to be. Or to use Woolf's metaphor rather than Orwell's, the evening has begun to make the tower of his 'middle-class birth and expensive education' lean. At the very end of the volume, as Jenkins walks home

from another unsettling evening with Widmerpool, it seems to him as if all of London's 'buildings ... might swing slowly forward from their bases and down into complete prostration'[11]. The first two books of the novel describe the process through which the young Jenkins's own beliefs dissolve.

If everyone can be treated as if nothing can be expected from them the very idea of conventional behaviour breaks down. After the war, and as a result of its horros, England entered a period in which ... " so far as the younger generation was concerned, as Orewll argued, official beliefs were dissolving like sandcastles."[12] For this reason the mature Jenkins - the narrator and not the schoolboy whose life the volume describes - thinks in A Question of Upbringing that 'It is not easy perhaps not even desirable - to judge other people by consistent standards[13]. That realization enables him to see other people's actions not as right or wrong, but from ' the point of view of development'. And in doing so it provides him with his first awareness of the 'life in time',-Truth is unveiled by Time, by the world and not by soul as it did to modernists - from wnich his understanding of the 'mysterious, patterned way of life's dance itself will grow'. Powell's style allows Jenkins to revise his first impressions of an incident to fit the 'Truth Unveiled by Time', so that his own opinions

undergo the some process of development as do the steps of the dance itself. And Powell uses Jenkins's ability - or willingness - to change his mind to distinguish him from Widmerpool, in a way that makes his aesthetics his ethics as well. But James Tucker complains that Jenkins judges Widmerpool by consistent standard[14]. Powell has faith in the classical notion - nature remains constant only outward traits may change.

When Jenkins and Widmerpool were returning from dance at Huntercombs to their destinations, late in the evening, they stumbled upon Mr.Deacon and his young companion Gypsy Jones, with the bundles of copies of War Never Pays, canavasing the cause of disarmament at Hyde Park Corner, there they met Stringham, tired, rather irritated and drunk. He invited all of them to Milly Andriadis's party in Hill Street. Mrs.Andriadis, elderly sexual bohemia, once mistress to Royalty, and now to Stringham, has rented the house of Bob Duport of which she has made hell. Her guests belonged to older generation - Colonel Budd, Mr.Deacon, Sillery, Donners; and the younger generation - Gypsy Jones, Widmerpool, Stringham, Jenkins, Prince Theodoric, Truscott, Mrs.Wentworth, Lady Ardglass and others. They mingled despite the class and age distinctions. Since her arrival at tne party, Gypsy Jones had taken to drink. Her behaviour began to become hysterical. And in the mood of excitement

she left the party before hand; alone, for the Merry Thought night club, after Jenkins's refusal to accompany her; leaving behind the copies of 'War Never Pays' in Andriadis's house. Drunken Stringham also proved to be a trouble and anncyance for Andriadis and being bored at the party wanted to go to the Forty-Three night club; and, despite of Andriadis's persuasion, left the place in restlessness sending her into coma. Widmerpool under the intoxicated excitement rebounded into Gypsy's arms after the sugar pouring incident at the Huntercombs. They liked each other's company. Widmerpool for the first time thought that 'there really are moments when one should forget about business'. At the party Prince Theodoric took more interest in Mrs.Wentworth's and Lady Ardglass's company than in discussing business matters. Mrs.Wentworth was trying to charm Theodoric. Two homosexuals - Mr.Deacon and Max Pilgrim, public singer, created commossion by fighting, accusing each others.Infuriated by the commossion and the mess Mrs. Andriadis orders Deacon out.

Jenkins attempted to sort out and classify the events of the night and imagined how Uncle Giles would have regarded and responded the parties, had he been present to these parties. Thus Powell has ~~got~~ brought in varied narrative points of view. Jenkins imagines the point of view of the painter Barnby, whom he has not yet met, about the party at

Mrs.Andriadis's and Walpole-Wilson's. Thus Powell tides over the inherent limitations of first person narrative. In Powell's hand it becomes an extremely elastic and varied device. Narrative method is the form of story telling which has, in principle, certain obvious limitations. We are largely confined to judgements and experiences of one person. This can be both tiresome and baffling; tiresome because the single tone of voice grows monotonous, baffling because we may not be altogether sure how we should 'take' the narrator, whether an entirely credible and estimable or faulty. The narrative point of view is varied in a number of ways. One is the narrator's habit of imagining how other characters might have told the story. One of Powell's chief method is to imagine . Jenkins is a man of imagination and has artistic skill and like his creator Powell, can imaginatively view events from various points of view. Jenkins views events through the eyes and mind of some one else, and particulary through those of Uncle Giles who becomes at times a kind of second-string narrator. This is a remarkable technique. It is not simply a matter of augmenting the chief narrator's information by getting reports from temporarily better placed characters, which goes on all the time in first person novels. Nicholas will actually surrender his point of view, his judgement to Giles for a while. That, in itself, brings a notable complexity.

It is more than this, Jenkins reflects at the beginning of the second chapter of this book ' to look at things through Uncle Giles's eyes would never have occured to me'.[15] The book then, goes on to do exactly that; look at things as Giles might have assessed them, had he been present at the time; it would be difficult to get more motional. It is the mature - indeed, elderly - Jenkins who gives us what he takes to be Giles's way of judging matters, while pointing out that younger Jenkins would never have considered such a stratagem. What we are getting here is a narrative view point from fifty or so years on, based on hypothetical version of what someone other than the story-teller might have felt about people and events he did not even see. "This concept of regarding one's own affairs through the medium of a friend or relative is not, of course, a specially profound one; but in the case of my Uncle, the field of vision surveyed was always likely to be so individual to himself that almost any scene contemplated from this point of vantage required, on the part of another observer, than ordinarily drastic refocusing".[16]

This is fiction, so one should not speak of hypothesis as a departure from the rule. The whole world is make-believe and there is a sense in which the another can just as validly see matters as Uncles Giles as he can see them as Jenkins. Within the limitations which he set himself is a

fascinating means for an author to secure himself more elbow-room. At the opening of the second chapter of A Buyer's Market he provides us with a triple view of the events of the moment: Jenkins's contemporary reactions; Jenkins's hindsight; Giles's notional contemporary opinions as imagined by the mature Jenkins in retrospect. Giles 'would, for example, have dismissed the Huntercombs' dance as one of those formal occasions that he himself... found wholly unsympthetic'.[17] James Tucker thinks that it is a technique which takes us even further than Proust's prescription of reality as a relation between present and past, and further than the great narrational subtleties developed by Conrad.[18].

What we get from Giles, as interpreted for us by Jenkins is generally a point of view touched by considerable malice, suspicion and disguised envy. Giles used to grumble at anomalies of social behavour to be found especially since the war, on all sides. This is an aggressiveness, a bloody-mindedness about him which is quite alien to Nicholas's own placid outlook on life. We discount most of what he says as springing from prejudice. Powell tells us as much about Giles as about what Giles is describing. Yet, however, partial his views, they do add to what we are shown; do free us from Jenkins's single-tone tolerance and blandness, and from the limitations which comparative youthfulness imposes

on Nicholas. This does not dispel the kind of uncertainties natural to a first person narrative. We have Nicholas's point of view which, by and large, we accept; and Uncle Giles's which, by and large, we reject. Uncle Giles's disapproval of living in Belgrave Square, is an observation which does not suggest a particularly balanced outlook. Giles's judgement, biased, crabby and extreme as they may be, do provide a view which demands attention, and which extends the narrative; ensure a life like complexity and ambiguity which might not be possible in a more narrowly conceived first-person narrative.

Uncle Giles, the structuring device, mythical figure and yet a character whose actions, as Jenkins thinks, were unpredictable, meets Jenkins near his flat as Jenkins was returning from Mrs. Andriadis's party. Jenkins thought 'Was it possible to take Uncle Giles seriously? And yet he was, no doubt, serious enough to himself. If a clue to that problem could be found, other mysteries of life might be revealed.'[19] In Faces In My Time Powell quotes with approval Nietzsche's observation that 'the individual when closely examined is always comic, a principle, this portrait of Jenkins's uncle illustrates. He finds his actions random and unpredictable. But he also has no faith that those actions will ever take unambiguously positive turn. In consequence he sees Giles's life as a comedy, a 'series of practical

jokes' which his family has agreed to consider from 'the point of view of development'. Powell's conception of Uncle Giles provides a model for Jenkins's consideration of the novel's other characters as a whole. To regard all characters as if they were Giles is to turn life's dance into a comedy, but Jenkins couples that comic awareness to a sense of its limitations.

Jenkins, often and again, admits his inability to understand fully the lives of the men and women around him. Should he take Uncle Giles seriously? And yet he is, no doubt, serious enough to himself. Should he take Widmerpool as grotesque and dull as he appears to him at school and would plod in his future life, but Widmerpool makes headway and gets on in the city. Should he think that Stringham, gifted and man of imagination as he really is; would win every prize in future the society has to offer. But he takes to drink ing and dissipates his life and opportunities and his decline begins and he cannot get on with Donner-Brebnor firm and is thinking to leave it. Mrs.Andraidis's party did not emerge as he had expected. He encounters life as 'series of small shocks to be met with slightly raised eye brows.' Jenkins's every statement remains tentative, qualified by his awareness that his point of view is only, an individual perspective that cannot in the age of the leaning tower be considered a definitive reading of the events he describes.

Jenkins's sensibility and career are based on Powell's own. Powell works by exploring Jenkins's memory. But he differs with Proust in matters of use of memory. Powell's interest lies in 'Truth Unveiled by Time'; Proust's in 'The Past Recaptured'. To Proust, memory makes the past live in the Bergsonian flux of one's present experience, so that, as in Virginia Woolf, the world exists in so far as it lives in the soul. Powell lacks that modernist confidence in the soul's ability to reshape the world. He wants only to comprehend an objective world whose operations seem incomprehensible, and so requires not memory's attempt to bend the world to the soul, so much as the sheer passage of time, of which that memory is an indication. 'Truth' is unveiled by Time - by the world and not the soul. Powell used memory because he needs it to suggest the pattern to Jenkins's experience, but that pattern lies not in Jenkins's subjective ordering of events, but in the objective world itself.

Nicholas moves easily out of actuality into retrospect. At the beginning of the third chapter of this book, Jenkins is reflecting on a party he has attended recently at Mrs.Andriadis's. It marks a stage in his development from youth to adulthood; life is opening up. He is conscious of 'having travelled a long way' during one evening out. He has learned, among other things, that the demarcations which he

was accustomed to make in life (treating love and enmity, work and play as opposites, for instance) lacked flexibility. People do not belong to different worlds but are 'tenaciously inter-related', these worlds lie closer to each other than he had thought, or atleast 'to some pattern common to all'. Truth is unveiled for him by Time, by the world. These notions are very much part of Powell's dance theme. He wishes to sound this note for us; but it would be unnatural for Jenkins to understand all this, whole and clear, in his early twenties. What Nicholas does get is the unspecific feeling that changes have taken place, plus partial glimpses of new complexities, new depths: he has learned a lesson, knows it, but has not yet got it formulated. Experience is in three stages: the immediate impact of the party; the grouping theories upon it, a short time afterwards; the more distant retrospect, which includes placing of these events in their context. ' I did not, of course, come to this conclusion immediately', Jenkins tells us. He suggests, in fact, that to have known in advance all the 'infinite complications' of personal links at Mrs.Andriadis's party might have spoiled his enjoyment of the occasion. Powell has allowed him to speak here the whole narrative strategy of the novel.

Late in the summer, Jenkins spends weak__end in the country with Walpole Wilsons at Hinton, before that he calls

on Mr.Deacon's 'place', where he meets, for the first time, the younger painter, Barnby. During this meet Jenkins comes to know his character and approach to life, and his dislike for Gypsy Jones for having failed to make himself acceptable to her. In some curious manner Barnby's pictures seemed to Jenkins to personify wayward and the self-consciously disillusioned art of the epoch. These general aspects of the period and its moods not only serve to illustrate Barnby as a symbolic figure of the contemporary background but also the nature of the region of painting and writing.

Sir Magnus Donner, great industrialist, political figure and a man of will invited Walpole-Wilsons for dinner party at Stourwater castle. Jenkins, Jean Duport, Huntercombs, Rosie Manasch, Padroe, Donner's secretaries - Truscott and Stringham attended the party. The dinning room was hung with sixteenth century tapestries. One of a set illustrated the Seven Deadly Sins, which are symbolic and allegorical. Jenkins share their meanings with other characters but it is he who scruitinizes them most exhaustively and he alone fully grasps their significance. Jenkins sits next to Luxuria, Lust. A figure composed of wings, horns, roses, and naked breasts, attended by a cupid and a goat. She is drawn in her car by a seven-headed Apocalyptic beast. There are bedroom scenes in the

background. Jenkins was deeply absorbed in the tapestry. He, then, discovers that the girl sitting next to him, is Jean Duport, the sister of a school friend Peter Templer. Some time they had a love affair. Jenkins found that the tapestry has a symbolic significance for his love affair with Jean. Jean surprises and excites him by the liveliness with which she is able to discuss the details and imagery of this spectacle. Luxuria romanticises their meeting and the affair which follows in the next volume.

Stringham, then, disclosed to Jenkins his engagement with Lady Peggy Stephney. Jenkins found it impossible to guess whether Stringham was getting married because he was in love, because he hoped by taking this step to find a more settled life or because he was curious to experience with a new set of circumstances. After dinner, party took round of the dungeon. Pardoe fastened Rosie Manasch to staple, slipping the chain round her waist, producing an imitation of a capitve maiden. Rosie herself, her bosom heaving slightly seemed half cross, half flattered by this attention on Pardoe's part. Sir Magnus, stood by, smilling very genially 'was in ecstasies'.

In the beginning of the last chaper, Stringham's marriage and Deacon's death, late in the summer of 1928 or 29, are reported. Mark Members and Quiggin, contemporaries of Jenkins at university, have begun to make literary

careers for themselves, pay each other guarded compliments at Mr. Deacon's birthday party. Jenkins's uneasy, almost grudging respect for their literary talents comes forward. Even in this field he is slow starter. Powell seems to be building for Nicholas that unexciting but estimable quality of steadiness. Against this flashy competion Nicholas offers durability. Plod, as applied to Nicholas is a different commodity from that shown by Widmerpool in these opening books, though Widmerpool is certainly a believer in efforts. To a degree he and Nicholas are comparable, in that neither is quite at home in the social group he inhabits; it is the differing reasons which are crucial. In Widmerpool's case it is awkwardness, ugliness and not too brilliant lineage. Widmerpool compensates for handicaps by hard work and gravity. Nicholas, on the other hand, is set apart by his intelligence, wit and insight. Nicholas has charm and casualness where Widmerpool is painstaking, is, in Nicholas's words an 'embodiment of thankless labour and unsatisfied ambition.' In early books this is Widmerpool's fault; not simply to work hard but to be spotted working hard. Although we see the corrections to Nicholas's estimate of Widmerpool, Powell allows considerable weight to Nicholas's instinctive social grace. Snobbery colours the contrast between Nicholas and Widmerpool at this stage. In this book career is not underway and Jenkins reflects on how

he took it for granted that pleasure should assume precedence over work. Explicitly these early books censure him for this attitude. Implicitly, and emphatically, they will endorse his casualness by portraying Widmerpool's ostentatious and aggressive devotion to advancement as comically vulgar. In the later books his poor manners become evil morals.

Widmerpool is egoist and has no interest in people. He has only will to power and recognition. When he heard of Barbara's engagement with whom he was in love, he got cross, and answered to Jenkins's querry, what he thought about Barbara and Pardoe - 'I really do not devote my mind to such matters'[20] He used to invisage others only in relation to himself; so that when in love with Barbara, it had been apparently of no interest to him to consider what other men might stand in the way. Barbar was either in his company, or far from him. There is a small group of characters in A Buyer's Market and else where in the novel who do represent part of that larger, rougher and poor world outside, and metonymically suggest the whole. They are certainly not the men or women in the street. Quiggin came from a proletarian home, but is soon a formidable literary figure; Gypsy lives deep in politics and will go deeper and grow more important as the series develops. Individually they may be freakish characters, represent, at the same time, some force, some

movement, some historical process. Exactly which aspects of Leftism are portrayed might be hard to define, but we can say that these people are anti-upper-class and populist, at least in theory. In other words, the outside world has a foot in the door and has begun shoving, we may not be able to see its face too clearly but we can feel the pressure. We can see Quiggin and Gypsy as ideas, rather than as people. It is the distinction of Powell's novels that they engagingly look at surface and, at the same time, suggest that this is by no means enough. They will continually disturb the surface to show us much more.

A Dance To The Music Of Time as a whole and mostly A Buyer's Market describe the sexual life and liberated middle-class behaviour. Sexual passion is treated mainly from the point of view of an observer, not a participant as in D.H.Lawrence's novels. The narrative method ensures this and with its limitation: these include a distanced, ironic treatment of most of characters sexual behaviour, interest in the social effects of liaisons taking a higher priority with Powell than their emotional content. Promiscuousness, infidelity and impermanence are as prevalent in A Buyer's Market as in Afternoon Men. Many youth like Jenkins, Tompsitt, Widmerpool are in love with Barbara Goring at times. She shows recklessness in pouring sugar on Widmerpool. She liked ragging only and warns Jenkins not to

get sentimental, and gets engaged with Padroe. Another inhibitant of Bohemia is Gypsy Jones. Her duty at press is to 'slip with craggs'. 'Indiscretion is her creed', she gets hysterical and in restlessness leaves Mrs.Andriadis's party for night club. She makes fool of Widmerpool and takes Jenkins's virginity by sleeping with him. Barbara and Gypsy can be compared and contrasted. They were alike in club going. Powell brings in the point of view of Barnby. He remarks, "Jones is an excellent specimen of middle class female education brought to its logical conclusions. She could be more perfect even if she had gone to the university. Her head is stuffed of pretentious nonsense and she is incapable of thought. The upper and lower classes can some times keep their daughters in order - the middle classes rarely".[21] Barnby may not be credible in criticising so, because he had failed to make himself acceptable for her. Mrs.Andraidis is elderly bohemia , once mistress to royalty, and, in A Buyer's Market, to Stringham. Barnby and Padroe are womanisers. Mrs.Wentworth and Lady Araglass are rivals in winning the favour of Sir Magnus Donners. Barnby wins over Mrs.Wentworth. Jenkins is veinly seeking for true emotion in increasingly depersonalized post war world. There is social comedown. Both Jenkins, the embodiment of the imagination, and the industrialist Donners, embodiment of will, are frozen into inaction by a situation that calls for both qualifies. Their impotence in confronting a situation

that they cannot order it to fit their own desires make them morally indistinguishable. They represent the true spirit of the post-modernist art.

Powell's style operates best in describing a society in which one can depend upon a certain basic level of comfort and freedom, in describing the lives of the English upper-middle classes. A style to which the 'life by values' is irrelevant.

Powell has shown great skill in writing the novel. He has blended comedy - in Lewian sense, satire, poetic fantacy and melancholy in A Buyer's Market. Arther Mizener thinks that Powell's imagination is essentially pictorial.[22] He has vividly described some scenes like sugar incident, Seven Deadly Sins trapestry, Stourwater castle. Though Powell is sensitive to general changes in the 1920s, he is also concerned with private life and affairs. He follows a complicated evolution of personality, relationships and manners in a wide range of upper middle-class characters. Jenkins's affair with Barbara and the change in his mind after sugar incident, his feelings for Jean Duport when she meets after long gap at Stourwater, Widmerpool's emotions, 'not much expressed in words', for Barbara, his rebounding into the arms of Gypsy Jones, after being covered with sugar by Barbara, Deacon's eccentricities and Donners enigmatic

personality reveal Powell's ability as novelist.

In A Buyer's Market conventional Victorian upper-class life represented by Jenkins's parents, Walpole-Wilsons, Gorings, Huntercombs is skillfully conterpointed by scenes among bohemian artists, painters, musicians, writers - Mrs Andriadis and her party, Barnby, Gypsy Jones, Barbara Goring, Deacon and Padroe. Imagination and sensibility represented by Nicholas is counterpointed by will of power represented by Widmerpool. Idealized love, fine emotions - of Jenkins for Barbara and Jean Duport are counterpointed by sexual starkness and plainness represented by Barnby, Gypsy Jones and others. Hard work, devotion and success represented by Widmerpool and Truscott are counterpointed by dissipation and failure represented by Stringham. Flashes of success in the field of letters represented by Mark Members and Quiggin are counterpointed by slow and steady starting represented by Jenkins. Sometimes same things comingle in some characters like Barnby, Jenkins and others. Sexual vigour, shown in winning Mrs. Wentworth, represented by Barnby is counterpointed by sexual predicament of Widmerpool and Donners.

In matters of characterization, relationships, sex, love, emotions, presentation of social life, plot construction, technique of story telling, and narrative method

A Buyer's Market grows complex and intricate as great work of art. It is clearly an advancement over A Question Of Upbringing.