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JOHN HORNE BURNS: TOWARD A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
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JOHN HORNE BURNS: TOWARD A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

presented by Mark Travis Bassett,

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JOHN HORNE BURNS: TOWARD A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

John Horne Burns (1916-1953) was an American novelist, author of The Gallery (1947), Lucifer with a Book (1949), and A Cry of Children (1952). An Irish Catholic born in Andover, Massachusetts, Burns attended St. Augustine's School and Phillips Andover Academy before graduating from Harvard University with a degree in English. He was precocious, having interests and talent in several foreign languages, classical music, literature, and English composition. After graduation, he taught English at the Loomis School, in Windsor, Connecticut.

Then came the attack on Pearl Harbor. In 1942, Jack went through the Army's basic training at Camp Croft, near Spartanburg, South Carolina. For a time he served as a chaplain's assistant. In 1943, he attended Officers' Candidate School at Fort Washington in Maryland, and he graduated as a second lieutenant, trained in military intelligence to be a postal censor. At Brooklyn Army Base, awaiting orders for disembarkment, he met two other officers, Holger Hagen and Robert MacLennan, with whom he struck up a friendship. During the next three weeks, Holger and

his wife Beulah frequently spent enjoyable evenings with Burns in their apartment in Manhattan, eating and making music together. Jack would play the Bechstein grand piano, and Beulah would sing art songs. Suddenly, Jack was sent overseas, his destination a state secret.

During his war years, Jack kept up a correspondence with these three friends, and with David MacMackin, a Loomis student (class of 1943). The letters reveal the various experiences Burns encountered in North Africa and Italy, as he followed the path of destruction left behind the Allied front. After the war ended, Burns began to write The Gallery, the acclaimed 1947 bestseller that he dedicated to his three friends, Holger Hagen, Beulah Hagen, and Robert B. MacLennan.

The dissertation traces Burns's life and career as a novelist and English teacher, from his origins in Andover through his success with The Gallery, which is analyzed in detail. An Epilogue summarizes the years from 1947 to 1953, when Burns died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

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Introduction

"Why write about John Horne Burns?" I am often asked. To some, the project must be as puzzling as novelist Geoffrey Wolff's decision to write a biography of the little-known Boston patrician, the publisher, romancer, gambler, and suicide, Harry Crosby. Like Wolff, I am tempted to respond that I do so because Burns is "interesting--things that are interesting interest me" (Wolff 57). This answer may be evasive, but it is honest. Like Wolff, I favor the Romantic convention in biography, which "celebrates the member rather than the species, investigates the particular case" (Wolff 64).

Burns's The Gallery (1947) and Lucifer with a Book (1949) moved me, appalled me, entertained me enough to make me curious. I wanted to understand the author of these two noteworthy books, so different from one another. I was perplexed by Burns's obscurity, given the acclaim he had once known. As I explored his life, the process of biography began, as if without my conscious efforts, to teach me something about myself.

Students of literary history will be interested to learn that John Horne Burns (1916-1953) was a promising American author who began his literary career just after World War II, a contemporary to writers such as Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, Gore Vidal, Paul Bowles, and Tennessee Williams. In his New Yorker review of Burns's The Gallery (1947), noted critic Edmund Wilson felt that this "remarkable" first book displayed "unmistakable talent," although leaning perhaps too heavily upon the works of John Dos Passos, author of the trilogy U.S.A. (62, 60). Dos

Passos, too, admired the book: "It is written with a reality of detail and a human breadth and passion of understanding that is tonic, health-giving" (letter to Harper and Brothers Editorial Department, 13 June 1947, HBC). And Harry Brown, author of the best-selling war novel A Walk in the Sun (1944), was effusive, praising The Gallery as "an honest, revealing portrait of what an intelligent American saw, and foresees, not only in Italy, not only in Europe, not only in the Western World, but everywhere for you, and me, and 'plain folks' around the globe" (letter to FSM, 18 May 1947, HBC).

Readers were prompted to offer unsolicited praise, as did G.I. Hubert Skidmore, who felt that The Gallery's First Portrait, "The Trenchfoot of Michael Patrick," expressed "god-awful loneliness. I wonder how many of us are still haunted by it . . . Last night I dreamed of it again; the army will always seem like a vast and nebulous prison with a purpose" (Skidmore's words accompany a letter from Mary Squire Abbot, McIntosh and Otis, Inc., to Evan Thomas, Editor of Harper's Magazine, 24 June 1948, HBC). Everyone seemed to favor a different one of the short stories Burns had called "Portraits." Edmund Wilson preferred "Hal"; Harry Brown, "Father Donovan and Chaplain Bascom." Then, on 14 February 1948, Saturday Review agreed with the general opinion, offering Burns a valentine cover story proclaiming The Gallery the best war novel of 1947 (Smith, "Thirteen Adventurers"). It all seemed an auspicious beginning to what everyone believed would be a long career for a major new American novelist.

Yet 1949 would see the first sully of Burns's reputation. His next book confounded most critics' expectations, since few readers of

The Gallery had been as perceptive as Harry Brown. Most of Burns's admirers had believed him to be a realistic, although sometimes sentimental, writer of feeling--with a powerful talent for vivid, accurate description; a turn for both contemporary, hard-edged slang and colorful, inventive figures of speech; and an ability to create believable characters and situations. In The Gallery, Burns's criticisms of American society were usually implicit and understated, often (mis)understood as directed solely against the inhumanity of war. Few readers could predict that Burns's next two books would be far from sentimental, and hardly optimistic. The next two novels offered scarifying and bitter satires condemning the distortion of values in the American school and home.

The message Burns had intended his readers to find in that first book was, in part, a demand for reform, in the name of humanity. Yet his readers had admired The Gallery for all the wrong reasons. In outrage over the complacent back-to-business attitude Burns saw in postwar America, he wrote his next book as a Juvenalian satire. Strongly influenced by, but even more scathing than, Evelyn Waugh's Decline and Fall (1928) and Aldous Huxley's Antic Hay (1923), Lucifer with a Book (1949) excoriates American private education. Yet, like most successful satires, Lucifer with a Book has wider implications; the fictional Academy acts as a microcosm for the larger world of life in postwar America.

Burns created, this time, a zany, Dickensian cast of characters, many of whose traits seemed, noticeably, to have originated in people he had actually known as a student at Andover Academy or as a teacher at the Loomis School. Upon publication, Lucifer with a Book (1949)--a more

conventional novel than The Gallery--received mixed or outright hostile reviews. In the end, Burns had predicted correctly that readers would not mistake the message of Lucifer. They were not, however, willing to listen to it. As a result, among the reviewers, only Maxwell Geismar had some understanding of Burns's achievement. Geismar said, rightly, that Lucifer was full of an "inverted Puritanism" and displayed "a remarkably sophisticated sense of evil and malice" ("Puritanism, Evil, and Malice"). As I shall explain, the book has more value than even Geismar's evaluation admits.

In August 1948, while finishing Lucifer with a Book, John Horne Burns had begun to live independently of family, school, and barracks for the first time. For the next year, a comfortable income would enable him, in his apartment in Boston's West End, to lead a "Bohemian" lifestyle that contrasted sharply with both the values of his upbringing and the poverty around him. That fall, he spent too much time on lobster, liquor, late-night parties, and sleeping in. He began in November to collect material for a new book, which would, in part, criticize this short period in his own life. Then, the outrage greeting the publication of Lucifer with a Book, proof that Burns's satire had hit its mark, shocked this sensitive, thinking man back to reality. He decided to winter in Milan.

Soon he was at work again, in love with Italy and writing another novel, the premise of which he had begun to develop in November 1948. Agreeing that some of the critics' complaints about Lucifer were valid, Burns worked long and hard on A Cry of Children. He developed a style as different from that used in Lucifer with a Book as Lucifer's is from

that of The Gallery. Burns had always experimented with language, characters, themes--like a talented painter employing new palettes. Yet he did not alter his basic message to America. The new book, eventually advertised by Bantam as "a merciless novel of America's 'beat generation,'" portrays a handful of unlikable characters living sordid lives in Boston's West End, replacing conventional morals with ill-founded ideas about art and love, life and death, parents and children.

The style chosen for A Cry of Children (1952) did not placate the critics. Burns's "monstrous objective lucidity" in that novel, which divorces us from these characters and situations, was sometimes condemned in even harsher terms than those the critics used to denounce Lucifer with a Book. To be sure, one group of critics felt that A Cry of Children redeemed the "failure" of Burns's second novel. Meanwhile, Brendan Gill dealt the book a violent blow, saying, in a New Yorker review of Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea, that Burns's "should win a place for itself among the worst written" novels of the year: "In publishing this book, Harper & Brothers show distressingly little respect for the author, for writing, or for themselves" (115, 116).

Once again, Burns's message seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. Living in Florence now, Burns continued to write--this time the story of an American domestic science teacher, Miss Helen Morton, on a "sentimental journey" to Italy and back, and her relationship with an "exquisite" Florentine priest, Mario Messosoma. According to David Farrer, an editor at Secker and Warburg, one early version of The Stranger's Guise contained both Burns's best and his worst writing. Farrer detailed for Burns the changes necessary before the novel could be considered pub-

lishable (see copy of letter from BDF to JHB, 15 July 1953, accompanying a letter from BDF to SMB, 15 July 1953, HBC).

Agreeing with "98%" of Farrer's recommendations, Burns set to work at revision, a task requiring considerable editing and rewriting. Within the next three weeks, a new version of The Stranger's Guise was two-thirds complete. Then, on 10 August 1953, he suffered a sun stroke, dying of a cerebral hemorrhage just before dawn the next morning. The new novel, which Burns had hoped would "please and move--not irritate" (letter to FJW, 23 February 1953, SWA) and which was said to have described accurately and amusingly the tensions between the Old and New Worlds, has been in the private collection of the Burns family ever since.

Partly because of his early death and because of the confusing and contradictory reactions to his published works, John Horne Burns has been all but forgotten. Only a few biographical essays have been published since Burns's death. Indro Montanelli's portrait is, without a doubt, the best of these. We have had no reliable book-length biography of Burns. Likewise, critical assessments of Burns's work are scarce, despite landmark essays by Brigid Brophy and Laura Coltelli. The excellent discussion of Burns's The Gallery in Frederick R. Karl's recent volume, American Fiction, 1940-1980 (1983) indicates that the time has come to re-evaluate Burns's career.

It seems appropriate to acknowledge here the wisdom of Marc Patcher --that the biographer persists "not because he believes that one must know a life to appreciate the meaning of its artistic work. Biographers do not aspire to literary criticism. Their approach is exactly the re-

verse, searching the work for clues to the life" (6). Neither biography nor criticism is required for a reader to understand and appreciate Burns's published works. Yet I believe that examining Burns's other life and his literary career can reward the diligent student. The accidents, misunderstandings, rumors, and false reports that accompany many currently available discussions of Burns's life and works do justice neither to him nor to American letters.

Burns's controversial speech, given at Bread Loaf's summer 1948 Writing conference, and elsewhere, and entitled "The Creative Writer in the 20th Century," makes a convincing point in favor of remembering and rereading the works of those perceived as being "one-book" authors:

The only unity in the continuum of the really great American writing--Ben Franklin, Emerson, Lincoln, Whitman, the early Hemingway, Dos Passos--is a certain vastness and wit, a brooding and a loneliness which may have something to do with the contour of the country. American masterpieces are something like towering mountains, none of which has much to say to other peaks in the same range (38).

John Horne Burns's work can certainly be represented well by means of this figure, for each book he published is different in tone, purpose, style, structure--even genre--from the others. The Gallery is indisputably the best of them, and its strengths are dazzling enough that he ought to be remembered for them alone.

There is also the difficulty that faced American writers, during the years immediately surrounding World War II, if they were able to see that America was not purely the world savior that Allied propaganda made her out to be. To express such truths took a harsh toll--during the late 1940's and early 1950's particularly, when the boys came home vic-

torious and Americans began to lead a generally affluent lifestyle of gadgets and golf courses, governed always by conformity to a "party line" emanating from the General's White House--precisely the mindless dogmatism from which Americans had wanted their freedom. Furthermore, in this biography can be seen the effects of war, of sudden fame, of the darts of fickle yet influential book reviewers, of naive, would-be sociologists, turned literary critics, of having too sharp a critical eye, too sensitive a heart, and--perhaps most importantly--of an ambiguous and rich American heritage, on one particular American author of note.

In a number of ways, this volume cries out for rewriting. As a dissertation, the biography seemed to call for some measure of comprehensiveness. I felt it important when I began the project to preserve the materials I was able to unearth, simply because their discovery was difficult and time-consuming. Although I feel that most of this material will be retained in my rewriting of it, the present version seems to be, in some ways, what Anthony Burgess has described as

the huge professional job, crammed with footnotes, many-paged and very expensive. We need such biographies, and I have many, which are often too heavy to lift, on my shelves. They are necessary works in that they represent final factual authority, but they do not have to be readable. You consult them, but you do not take them to bed (quoted in Holroyd, 14).

It also seems important to delineate the last few years of Burns's life in detail that is not currently available to me.

Whether the planned, yet unwritten, version will be something Mr. Burgess would want to take to bed, there is no way to predict. I do feel, though, that the biography I publish about Burns ought to be more

than an archival assemblage. I now see that it is not necessary to begin the biography with a tedious account of Burns's ancestry, birth, and childhood. And I think that I am ready to begin again, now that I understand my subject and my method better. I am dissatisfied enough with the present volume that I have elected not to make a microfilm copy of this dissertation available through University Microfilms of Ann Arbor, Michigan. The curious reader of Burns's fiction will need to be patient a while longer.

When I begin anew, I will certainly reconsider the problems of selecting and ordering details, and testing authenticity of anecdotes, both of which are intelligently discussed in James L. Clifford's From Puzzles to Portraits. Leon Edel's principles for writers of biographies, enunciated most recently in his Writing Lives, an invaluable book on this subject, ought to receive close attention. In addition, I can consult the collection of thirteen biographers' "case studies" that editor Jeffrey Meyers calls The Craft of Literary Biography. Perhaps I will learn something useful from Richard D. Altick's literary history, Lives and Letters, or from Ira Bruce Nadel's omnibus volume on Biography: Fiction, Fact and Form. Any number of books might be helpful.

In conducting research, I have not had the cooperation of John Horne Burns's literary executor, the oldest of his five surviving siblings. Since first reading her famous brother's fiction in 1980, I have come to understand her reticence. The Burns family has not always been treated with the respect that they deserve. Occasionally, as I have indicated, the course of literary history has caused the truth to be misrepresented. In other instances, eager followers of Burns's fiction

have done his reputation a disservice. The family has had reason to be cautious with their memories and archives.

Unfortunately, their fears sustain the very partial (and partisan) view of their brother's career that they deplore. For they have never shared the John Horne Burns they knew and loved with a writer who could re-create him. It is no surprise that the published biographical accounts they are now able to read, including this one, should seem incomplete, distorted, false! Perhaps the new beginning will allow me an opportunity to show the Burns family, in a clearer light, the talent and dedication I might be able to devote to a biography of their late brother.

Chapter I

ANDOVER

A. A Hometown and a Heritage

At 32 John Horne Burns wrote an essay about Andover, Massachusetts, for Holiday Magazine, and thereby preserved a portrait of his home town's pride, decency, and homogeneity. In contrast to what one might expect from the satirical pen of the author of Lucifer with a Book, "Andover" merely hints at Burns's typical precarious stance, partly within and partly outside of tradition. Indeed, the essay does Burns's home town justice. For, more than thirty years later, Andover remains a town of teachers and students, selectmen and matriarchs, still a stern pocket of Calvinist Republicans, since (like their Southern counterparts) New England towns are resistant to change.

Today one can still see the home of the late Miss Bertha Bailey, first headmistress of Abbot Academy, the "Fem Sem"; one can still hear stories of the beloved Vandyked Jimmy Graham, who had been a chemistry master at Phillips Academy. At Danny Hartigan's Drug Store the walls seem still to breathe of bobby-soxers' jive, while respect for Fathers Nugent and Riordan still lingers in the air of St. Augustine's. And most carefully preserved are those "hushed clapboard houses on School and Central streets." But Burns warns that "since the citizens of a town exercise a vigilance over their neighbors, sinning is as obvious as

good deeds in Andover's clear air" ("Andover" 59).¹

Andover is certainly an old New England town, and no visitor or resident can escape the ever-present traces of her past. Former Phillips headmaster Claude Moore Fuess explains:

Here Anne Bradstreet composed her quaint volume of verse, The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America (1650), the earliest contribution of Puritanism to belles-lettres; here were founded three famous educational institutions, Phillips Academy (1778), Andover Theological Seminary (1808), and Abbot Academy (1829); . . . here were trained some of our country's foremost leaders, including Samuel F. B. Morse, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Bishop William Lawrence, and Henry L. Stimson; here Samuel F. Smith wrote our national hymn, "America" (Andover 4).

The litany of names recited by natives of Andover includes even George Washington (who sent several young relatives to Phillips) and Paul Revere (who designed that school's seal).

But Andover has a darker side as well. Modern memory has collapsed the well-known witchcraft delusion into a series of episodes in Salem Village--now Danvers, Massachusetts. Perhaps Arthur Miller's The Crucible taught us to forget that most of this hysteria whipped through the citizenry of Andover; little more than the actual courtroom proceedings and the executions took place in Salem Village. According to Fuess, "conditions were much like those under the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution. . . . During those fateful weeks the town went wild, and the most absurd tales passed unchallenged from one home to another" (87-88).

Many years later, during the 1820s and '30s, a bizarre Friday night meeting series would be conducted in the home of Professor Porter of Andover Theological Seminary, the so-called "Jews' Meeting," held to pray for the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Although the appearance

of the house can be explained by Prof. Porter's chronic invalidism, the almost hermetical sealing of the building--its outside shutters closed, window shades drawn, and doors shut tight--symbolized the close-minded and tight-lipped attitudes of those participating in what seems to have been a program of activities no more sinister than Bible readings, hymn singing, and the occasional sharing of a related newspaper clipping (Al-lis 133).

Living in Andover certainly exposed the young John Horne Burns to both the light and dark aspects of her history. A respect for excellence in learning and in the arts must always be weighed in the balance along with her Puritanical condemnation of the eccentric, her ability to judge without misgivings all deviations from Andover's own standard. To the young Burns, Andover must have represented all that was American, spanning the centuries from the colonial days to the modern technological state produced by the 1950s. It was inevitable that he should be a product of his origins and his time.

Yet, living at the crossroads between the Lost Generation and the so-called Age of Conformity, Burns would always be part heir to and part rebel against his heritage. For one thing, he could never feel that his family had been fully absorbed into the homogeneity of Andover: "We came of immigrant stock different from the Yanks, and we dwelt in Andover partly in her tradition, partly aloof from it. We belonged to those intellectual sharecroppers who chose the town for the sake of the schools" ("Andover" 57). When he came to Phillips Andover Academy as a day student in 1929, this ambivalence was no doubt reinforced during the short daily walk across Main Street that he made as a day student from

his parents' home to the academy grounds.

Andover had always had a large share of admirers. For most of her citizens, she seemed the ideal town in which to have been born. In the 1850s and '60s they were proud to boast of their most famous citizen, Harriet Beecher Stowe, who loved Andover enough to request a burial in the Seminary grounds (by Burns's time, the site of Phillips Academy). And on 30 May 1873--not many years after the Burns family first came to Andover--Episcopalian bishop Phillips Brooks spoke the words that ever after have graced the banner of the local Andover Townsmen: "Everywhere and always, first and last, she has been the manly, straight-forward, sober, patriotic New England town" (Fuess, Andover 340).

The occasion for this speech was the dedication of the Memorial Hall, Library, and Reading Room to Andover men who had died in the War Between the States. Moving to a close in his stirring address, Bishop Brooks--whose statue before Trinity Church in Boston now marks a neutral ground for street people--declared

It is truth that we want in every department of our life. In State and Church we need it, at home and on the street; in the smallest fashions and in the most sacred mysteries; that men should say what they think, should act out what they believe, should be themselves continually, without concealment and without pretense (340-341).

Although Burns was always adept at saying what he thought and felt, he could never wholly believe in these values, where his personal life was concerned, never wholly follow the bishop's advice. Besides, Bishop Brooks, the Burns family, Holy Mother Church, and Andover as a whole would have wanted it that way.

At the time of this Memorial Day speech, Burns's paternal grandfather, William J. Burns, was a laborer on the Boston and Maine Railroad.² To help him support the family, grandfather William's children dropped out of school, one by one, to work in the mills with their peers. When he died in 1880 and his wife began work as a maid, the youngest child--Joseph Lawrence Burns, born the year before--seemed destined never to graduate either. But Joseph became valedictorian of his eighth-grade class and then obtained a job as telegrapher on the same railroad that had enabled his own father to secure the Burns family's roots in the New World.

By the time the boy was fourteen, he had become Head Telegrapher in the Boston office of the B & M and had saved enough wages to finance a year at Phillips. The next spring, with the student's fine record as evidence, Principal Cecil F. P. Bancroft endorsed him for a scholarship to the Academy. Afterwards, he went on to Harvard, where he bristled under the attacks of philosopher George Santayana on his cherished faith. Always a devout Irish Catholic, Joseph considered taking vows in the priesthood. Instead, he decided upon the Harvard School of Law (class of 1909). All of this was in a time when "even a high school education was exceptional, and the idea of going to Harvard seemed preposterous" to middle-class New Englanders (Langer 44).

In Boston Joseph met Catherine Horne, a Smith College graduate and the daughter of Matilda and John W. Horne, president of a clothing manufacturer called Leopold Morse. Earlier in his career, John Horne had worked as bookkeeper for Anaconda Copper, for whom he eventually invented a looseleaf, double-entry bookkeeping system that earned him a

promotion to company treasurer. Joseph and Catherine were married and, partly because of the town's fine educational institutions, settled in Andover, where Joseph started a private law practice. And then the "gentle lawyer" and the "sprightly and realistic heiress of the Boston FIF's (First Irish Families)," having broken through the barriers of class and prejudice, began to raise a family of their own (JHB to RH, 1 November 1946, HBC).³

Nine children would be born to this household, two of whom died in infancy. The proud hopes of the young couple during Catherine's first pregnancy were dashed when little William J. Burns II, named after Joseph's father, died before the end of his first week of life. So when the next son was born at midnight on the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary, 7 October 1916, nearly a year after her tragic loss, Catherine treasured him even more dearly, and named him John Horne after her own father. Jack describes his parents and childhood in a letter to Ramona Herdman, Publicity Director for Harper and Brothers: "I came first into a family where wisdom, poetry, and realism were inextricably blended. My father gave me his manners and my mother gave me the mercilessness that she used against herself and on all of her children. Since I was first, she whetted her ambitions and her tenderness on me" (1 November 1946, HBC).

Catherine's ambitions were that her children should excel, a trait that novelist John Horne Burns gave the character of Mrs. Murray, mother to the pianist, David Murray, in A Cry of Children (1952)---although the rest of the portrait does not resemble Jack's mother. Catherine, for example, exerted little direct influence on her children's choice of vocation; she merely insisted on their striving to be the best in their

fields. To that end, she saw that they were all well educated. After leaving Andover, in succession, the five oldest would attend Harvard, Smith, Yale, Brown, and Amherst. According to one of her sons, Catherine was "a forceful, domineering, hard-nosed gal who stirred up intense competition between the kids. . . . Nothing was ever expected except perfection" (Thomas D. Burns, interview).

One cannot wholly believe the resigned entry Jack wrote for Twentieth Century Authors, just months before his untimely death in Livorno: "[I] did not talk or walk until past two years old, a fact which gave rise to a suspicion of backwardness and uselessness which has later been confirmed" (Kunitz 151). A more optimistic period in his life had called forth the memory that, as a child who was usually a loner, Jack loved to wander among the shrubbery at The Sunnyside House with his sister Cathleen and a handbag filled with melted chocolates, carrying on conversations which would ever after defy repetition (JHB to RH, 1 November 1946, HBC). These two were the first. And then came Joe, Jr., born in 1919, who was (like Cathleen) named after one of Jack's parents; next was Tom, in 1921, and then Robert, who died little more than a month before his first birthday in 1923. The second tragedy created a natural rift between the four elder children and the three still to come: Donald and the twins, Anne and Constance.

From 1921 to 1929 Jack attended the convent school of St. Augustine's, run by the sisters of Nôtre Dame de Namur. Despite occasional satiric outbursts against the sisters as hard taskmistresses, Jack profited from his early years there. As he wrote in a letter to Ramona Herdman, "They taught me to read and write and do sums accurately (which

is more than can be said of most modern American schools) . . ." (1 November 1946, HBC). Retired Phillips master Emory Basford recalls once hearing Jack praise the quality of education at St. Augustine's, and one nun in particular, to whom Jack paid special tribute (interview with MTB, 27 July 1981).⁴ But the nuns' parochial training left another mark on Jack: "they also inculcated into me a sense of mysticism, strife, and terror, which has never left me" (JHB to RH, 1 November 1946, HBC).

There are many superficial similarities between Burns and his character David Murray, and a certain degree of psychological affinity between them does not seem unlikely. Yet we must always beware of confusing fiction with autobiography. The novelist creates an imaginary world by drawing upon real-life experiences; the two are never synonymous. We learn more when, as in later chapters, we can illuminate the differences between the person Burns and his various male protagonists: John, the GI narrator of The Gallery; Guy Hudson, the war-scarred history teacher of Lucifer with a Book; and David Murray, of A Cry of Children, the Irish Catholic concert pianist and unhappy lover of the shameless Isobel Joy.

With this disclaimer in mind, we might note, in passing, David Murray's reaction in A Cry of Children when, after having moved into an apartment with Isobel, he is pressed by Father Rushton to make confession. David explains, in one of his narrative passages, "I was invaded by that same terror as when I first saw the habits of nuns in the first-grade schoolroom; or when at six I made my first confession and sat all afternoon in our attic, brooding on mortal sins I might have stumbled upon unknowing, though the Baltimore catechism said you always knew when

you were in mortal sin" (Cry 11). The similarities between these sentiments and those expressed to Ramona Herdman are striking, and cannot go without notice.

In those pre-Vatican-II years, under Canon 1374, the Church was able to require that the Burnses educate their children in Catholic schools, from kindergarten through the university. However, with the approval of the Ordinary, they might attend a "mixed" school (those admitting both Christian [sic] and non-Christian students), but only

if there [was] either no Catholic school at all available, or only one which [was] inadequate for the suitable education of the children according to their condition. In that case, in order that the public school [might] be attended with a safe conscience, the danger of perversion which is always more or less connected with its very nature must, by appropriate remedies and safeguards, be rendered remote (Bouscaren and Ellis 744-746).

Cathleen's ambitions for her children surely led her to judge St. Augustine's as "inadequate" for their preparation to attend the universities she had in mind. She petitioned that Jack's eight years of parochial education had fulfilled their obligation to Holy Mother Church. Jack was no doubt relieved to hear the Ordinary's decision. For that fall, of 1929, only a few weeks before the great stock market crash, Jack was to be permitted to attend his father's alma mater and enroll at the Academy across Main Street.

B. Phillips Andover: A Private Education

According to Claude Moore Fuess, Phillips Academy, Andover, was not an exclusive school except in its having stringent scholastic requirements for admission. A good number of Andover sons attended, as encouraged by the Academy's founder, and almost a third of the boys were on scholarship or worked their way through (as did Jack) without ill treatment on that account. Regarding discrimination, Fuess points out that

in a school established by rather bigoted Calvinistic Congregationalists, we had nearly 10 per cent of Jews and about the same proportion of Roman Catholics, who attended assembly and sang the Protestant hymns without protest. We usually had two or three Negroes and would have accepted more if they could have met the stiff entrance requirements (Independent Schoolmaster 188).

Catholic boys were, indeed, allowed to attend one of the two Sunday services in a local church instead of at the Academy. The fact remains, however, that after Jack's graduation from Harvard, Andover (as Phillips Academy is familiarly known) refused to hire him because of a clause in the Phillips Constitution which reads, "Protestants only shall ever be concerned in the TRUST or Instruction" of this Academy (Allis 689).

In Youth from Every Quarter, a bicentennial volume published by the Academy, Frederick S. Allis, Jr., provides the following telling anecdote as proof that any discrimination experienced at Andover was "almost entirely social":

When a lady in Cambridge wrote [headmaster] Al [Stearns] asking him to list the members of the Andover delegation going to Harvard who would make good ushers for her Brattle Hall Dances, he reported to her on the Wasp types and simply wrote "Hebrew" by the names of the Jewish boys (344).

It may have been the sanctimonious disavowal of prejudice by schools such as Andover that led Burns to introduce the characters of Ben Gordon and Tad McKinley in his second novel, Lucifer with a Book (1949). We should, however, remind ourselves that American societal attitudes toward both Jewish and black Americans have changed considerably over the past forty years.

While Jack attended the Academy, Alfred E. Stearns was still serving as headmaster, having begun his tenure as headmaster there in 1903. Here is the colorful description that one alumnus provided to Allis when that historian was preparing his history, characterizing Stearns as "the Jupiter of this largely Latin pantheon":

Tall and erect, he walked like a god among us, head back with high beaked nose and eagle's eyes, and full white hair with wind in its curl. . . . It was his school. He made all the decisions, hired and fired the faculty, and handled all student discipline. . . . (Allis 396-397).

This was the figure who presided over morning chapel daily at 7:45, while Jack was a student in the Academy. Once more, Allis gives us a splendid, dramatic account of Stearns in prayer:

Eyes tight shut, that rich sonorous voice filling the building, he asked that undergraduates be kept from the things that were base and sordid in life and be led to the things that were pure and good and true. He reinforced his points by kicking the bottom of the pulpit (Allis 335).

During Jack's years at Andover, Latin was compulsory, while history, and art and music appreciation, were electives. Changes in

curriculum were made only after Fuess, following Dr. Stearns' death, became headmaster in May 1933--at the time of Jack's graduation. Instead, improvements to Andover during Jack's years were restricted to the completion of building projects--external affairs of grandeur and style--mostly financed by Andover's prime benefactor, Thomas Cochran, a member of the banking firm of J. P. Morgan & Co. and a trustee of the school. Because of Cochran's generosity, buildings were relocated, new cellar holes dug, and "strange gigantic machines" continually driven "noisily and imperiously through gravel and rock" (Fuess, Andover 425).⁵

During those years of Jack's somewhat pudgy and pimply adolescence, he had little poise, flushing and stammering when called upon to speak in class, but he was an excellent student and loved literature and music (Basford, interview with MTB, 27 July 1981). At St. Augustine's School, he had gradually learned the need to "hit other little boys with my fists to protect my own dreamy interests." That new knowledge would be useful at Andover: "I suffered a little from the hazing, enough to loath [sic] the American male gregarious spirit, and I spat impotently to myself over the Fraternities" (JHB to RH, 1 November 1946, HBC).

Jack's psychological reactions to puberty are unclear; he seldom wrote about them to anyone. During the second World War, however, he did once remark to a close friend, with excessive nonchalance, that he had always "politely declined" to participate in adolescent horseplay at Andover (JHB to HH, 28 March 1945). David Murray's adolescence, as he recalls it in A Cry of Children, is the only currently available approximation of Jack's youthful experience. Once again, however, we must remind ourselves of the gulf that lies between fiction and reality.

Here is another segment of David Murray's "autobiography":

I was aware of sexuality long before my body felt it, and the negativism of American Catholicism had indoctrinated me with the idea that love was the mortalest of all mortal sins. Especially sinister was the doctrine that I might have committed an impurity in thought alone . . . (Cry 66).

Based upon David's history--and only if there were outside evidence to support this theory--we might believe of Jack that somewhere between St. Augustine's and Phillips Andover,

I'd dynamited a chasm between my loins and my brain. For somehow I'd resolved early in life that any true intimacy between man and woman must be essentially repulsive. O, surely, the pleasure was fierce (for the moment) but the subsequent involvement of two people after the union of their bodies would be psychically too onerous to bear. I was always sensual; but until I was seventeen I was content to be ravished by my music, to taste sherbets on my tongue, to feel silk. These joys didn't defile. I was even delighted--then--by the singing at the Mass, by the movements of a priest in his glazed chasuble (65-66).

Jack claims in one letter to his Army friend Holger Hagen that he "came out at blissful seventeen" (JHB to HH, 31 March 1944)--that is, somewhere between Andover and Harvard. If we could believe that Jack himself, like David Murray, experienced anonymous encounters originating from a park bench along the Charles River, then we could be sure that Jack too would have felt the disgust that David expresses in the following passage from A Cry of Children:

the spasm never left any perfume behind it; in fact I couldn't bear to sleep with the companions of my pleasure: either I slept on the farthest fringe of the bed, or I got up immediately and went home. But at seventeen everyone is certain that the next time will be it (67).

We can be sure that Jack's teenage years included those desires, common to us all, which develop as our youthful bodies develop--the desire to be loved, to be mature, to experience life more fully. No doubt he also experienced the fear, common to many teenagers, that no one else in the world could feel such feelings or think such thoughts as his.

"When we were at Andover and sixteen," he later wrote to David MacMackin, "we gave dissertations on [the Satiricon] in our Turkish alcoves at 4:30 in the afternoon over our Dresden china shepherdess pots of bohea" (JHB to DAM, 28 October 1942). In reality, we know that the younger Jack Burns did not hold court in his "Studio" at the family home. We know that, instead, he tended to be shy among the other boys, partly because he was more interested in playing piano concerti in his room over the family garage than in football.

Yet he probably did read the Satiricon at Andover, no doubt finding a copy of the 1929 Modern Library edition. There he would have read, in the introduction to this volume, C. K. Scott-Moncrieff's encouragement, coy yet paternal, of the young man first discovering Petronius:

You are fortunate in having been born in a generation which is not afraid to say frankly what it likes, and you will, I imagine, say frankly that you have read Petronius, and intend to read him again because he tells a rattling good story, and, unlike certain contemporary novelists whom you are counselled to admire, tells it about people whose characters and motives you have no difficulty in understanding (x).

Scott-Moncrieff's self-confident advice and example may have helped Jack develop the effete sophistication that is demonstrated in his letters to David MacMackin. And C. K. Scott-Moncrieff's introduction to the 1929 Modern Library edition of Petronius is also likely to have been Jack's

introduction to the works of Proust.

Jack's love for literature, indeed, was at that time rivaled only by his love for music. He had "taken" piano from an early age, always surpassing his teachers. His musical talent was astonishing, and more so because in its variety it seemed to depend more on inborn ability than on his training. Probably at Andover Jack began to amass his unusually large collection of recorded classical music, much of which consisted of recordings he made of his own piano performances.⁶ On Sunday mornings he sang in the choir at St. Augustine's. For both the Academy Glee Club and the Double Quartet, Jack sang first tenor during his senior year. He bought a violin and taught himself to play. For the opera he developed a passion that never waned. And Jack devoted his attention to classical music in spite of the threat that the other boys might thereby find reason to suspect him of being weak in character, too "sensitive" (see Allis 430).

Jack's difficulties in social settings with his peers may partly explain the fact that when he graduated from Andover it was not "cum laude," that he did not win a perfect attendance record, and that he did not attend the prom. Instead of attracting a following among the campus boys, Jack had grown close to the one master who encouraged most warmly his "dreamy interests" in music and literature: English teacher Emory S. Basford. Years later, in a dedication copy of The Gallery, Jack would say that Mr. Basford "more than anyone else taught me to read and write, and to think with feeling for manners, style, and values" (inscription dated 25 October 1948). According to Frederick S. Allis, Jr., Phillips Academy historian, Mr. Basford "took his housemastering

very seriously. He was concerned that boys become gentlemen as well as pass their courses, and he labored long and hard to achieve this aim" (569).

In addition to attending the Sunday afternoon teas Mr. Basford held to promote the discussion of writing and art--a tradition Burns himself would institute as a master at the Loomis School--Jack liked to seek out Mr. Basford's "sympathetic and gentle guidance," which was always available to those who sought it. Late afternoons, during the week, would find Jack performing at the master's grand piano, following the mandatory sports. If Jack needed to talk or confer with Mr. Basford late at night, he could come to the master's rooms at 10, when the doors opened to the boys once more--for advice or encouragement or merely a willing and kindly ear (Emory S. Basford, interview with MTB, 27 July 1981). When Jack, at his graduation in 1933, won honorable mention in the Dirk Hugo van der Stucken Prizes for Proficiency in Piano Playing, Mr. Basford must have felt a special pride.

During this time, too, Jack had been writing outstanding short stories.⁷ Basford, in his English classes, recognized Jack's literary abilities: Burns's stories had far surpassed those of the other students. The master urged the pupil to consider making a career of writing. But for a boy of many talents, it is not easy to make such a decision. There were also the avenues of vocal and instrumental music. And ahead of him lay the experiences of the University.

Notes to Chapter I

¹ In citing sources I generally follow the recommendations of Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achert, MLA Handbook, 2nd ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association, 1984). Abbreviated parenthetical references are keyed to a full bibliography that follows the text. Occasionally, for the sake of brevity, I have used certain abbreviations, all of which are explained at the beginning of the bibliography.

² Burns's ancestry and family history are discussed in two tape-recorded interviews, with Thomas D. Burns and Donald Burns, conducted by Steve Abbot and John Mitzel, to whom I am grateful for providing me transcripts of these tapes. The Horne family plot in Brookline, Massachusetts, at the Holyhood Cemetery, provides a number of birth and death dates.

³ When citing letters, I follow this format throughout, using the abbreviations provided in the notes. Initials that appear after the date of a letter indicate that it is to be found in the indicated collection, instead of in the private collection of the recipient.

⁴ Basford may be recalling remarks Burns made as part of an address to the New England Association of Teachers of English convention, where Burns delivered the speech entitled "Bee in My Bonnet . . ."

⁵ The years from 1926 to 1932 saw the completion of eight important buildings, an architectural tribute in Charles Platt's Georgian colonial style, including George Washington Hall (the administrative center, whose lobby features the famous Gilbert Stuart portrait of the first U.S. President), Samuel F. B. Morse Hall (for laboratory work in science), Paul Revere Hall (a senior dormitory), the Oliver Wendell Holmes Library, the Addison Gallery of American Art (with Winslow Homer's West Wind as its nucleus), and the Cochran Church.

⁶ These several hundred recordings are now in the private collection of David MacMackin, performances of works written by most of the noteworthy composers of the time--even those only beginning to establish a following in the United States.

⁷ It is not clear whether any of these stories is extant. In Cathleen Burns Elmer's collection are five undated short stories: "Bel Canto," "Non-Violence," "Red and White Night," "Sing for Your Supper," and "The Test Tube." These unpublished stories are bound in William Morris Agency folders, indicating that they were submitted by Mrs. Elmer after 1953 to her late brother's agent, Helen Strauss. But their dates of composition are not known to me.

Chapter II

THE HARVARD YEARS

A. 1933-1936: Learn Valour, Child

Then I went to Harvard for four years. This nearly finished me. There I sopped up learning so rich and so thick as to make me precious and more than a little snide. I came within an inch of going arty. I dwelt in a delightful super-human elegance--delightful for me. I laughed at everything because I was above everything. It was merely unfortunate that most of the world couldn't breathe the rarefied atmosphere that I daily inhaled. My friends, more in touch with the times, smiled and pronounced me delightful. I suppose I was, in my micrometer way. I played squash. I sang in the Harvard Glee Club and couldn't tolerate anything later than the music of the seventeenth century. I looked down on everything in the university as cliquish because in my own way I was the biggest minority clique of all. Yet Harvard gave me a background of fact and discrimination second only to the Good Nuns' training. It could be of use if it ever got mellowed and thrashed (JHB to RH, 1 November 1946, HBC).

The precious attitude an elder John Horne Burns detects on looking back at his Harvard years may also have been symptomatic of the times:

"The hope and supposition of young people in the 1930s was that men and women would meet and mate in gallant, graceful, stylish love, as expressed in the dancing of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire." Thus Finis Farr, in his biography of John O'Hara. Dinner at eight, two gardenias by your plate, cocktails for two, two cigarettes in the dark . . . The Twenties had wanted to be "sophisticated": the Thirties were. The Twenties had said wildly "Let's do it." The Thirties seemed to be saying "We've done it, and we're bored--it needs refining and decorating" (Jenkins, The Thirties 214).

Until the United States entered World War II, Jack had been sheltered by age and circumstance from the hardest facts of life. Born in the midst of World War I, he could scarcely remember the agony of America's reluctant intervention there. He escaped the excesses of the 1920s as a youth under the protective agencies of St. Augustine. The calamity of 1929 and the Great Depression had little impact on him either, since his situation allowed him to continue an ivy-league "preparation" without impediment, even though he was required to take an occasional summer job. Years later he would realize that he had not encountered reality until entering the Army in 1942.

At Harvard, during his freshman year of 1933-1934, Jack was primarily occupied with settling upon a course of study, a decision that would also delimit his potential career options. It was probably during that first year that Harvard Glee Club conductor Archibald T. "Doc" Davison told Jack that his voice was good, but that he would never be a great singer (Donald Burns, interview with John Mitzel, 1 March 1974). However, Jack continued to sing with the Glee Club all four years, despite this opinion, simply because of his love for music. The Glee Club would perform for national and international broadcasts. They would sing in a concert in Philadelphia, the selections being introduced by music critic Olin Downes. There would be three local concerts for the Tercentenary of Harvard in 1936. But most exciting, with the famed Russian-born American director, Sergei Koussevitsky, directing both the Glee Club and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, they would sing for an RCA-Victor recording of the St. Matthew Passion of Bach. This last was a historic event, the recording being the longest to date and requiring ten 12-inch discs

(Harvard Class Album 1937 214).

Jack's other musical option for a course of study was to pursue piano playing. Yet again, when Harvard's piano teachers heard him play, Jack was disheartened to receive the same verdict granted his singing ability: he would be good, but never great (Donald Burns, interview with John Mitzel, 1 March 1974).¹ So he decided, happily, that writing would be his career and English literature his major. The decision had to be formally recorded, along with a general plan of study, by 11 April 1934 (Harvard University Catalog).

Jack's studies in English began with a survey of English literature, a class with guest lectures by the various excellent scholars of the department, under a number of whom he would later study some of these works more closely. The three other courses of that first Harvard year were Elementary German, Popular Government, and European History.² The course in German would fulfill one language requirement; his Latin studies at Andover represented the other, classical, requirement. Physical Training, including lectures in Hygiene, was also required, although no credit was granted and it does not appear on his transcript.³ Perhaps it was by this route that Jack began to play squash.

During his sophomore year of 1934-1935, Jack continued in the path of a typical Harvard English major. He studied Spenser, the Old Testament, Economic Geography, the History of Philosophy, and 18th- and 19th-century German literature.⁴ But he had been accepted into Dunster House and would live in Dunster A25 for his last three years at Harvard, under the influence of others dedicating themselves to the humanities and liberal arts. Each House incorporated a library, dining hall, common

rooms, and squash courts--all of which had been welcomed to the Harvard Yard in 1930-1931. Dunster House, which lies on the Charles River immediately below McKinlock Hall and the Cambridge end of the Weeks bridge, had been built to accommodate 231 students in 107 single suites and 62 doubles. Jack continued to live alone, as he had during his freshman year in 42 Weld Hall, preferring the privacy of his own thoughts and habits to the sometimes annoying intimacy a roommate affords.

In the summer of 1935, following his sophomore year, Burns made his first attempt at writing a novel--entitled Of Modern Grievance.⁵ During the next ten years, before his masterpiece of World War II, The Gallery, Burns would work on no fewer than five different novels, writing at least three full-length, yet unpublished (and perhaps unpublishable) manuscripts.⁶

Working at last on his chosen vocation must have offered a welcome change of pace from the summer job Jack habitually held at the Wood Mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts (the largest wool mill of William M. Wood's American Woolen Company). Unfortunately, nothing is known about Of Modern Grievance, since no one outside the immediate family seems to have read it. The title leads one to suspect that Burns, even at age 17, sensed a contradiction between his modern age and the past from which it had emerged.

The completion of his first "book" gave Jack new enthusiasm for his studies the next year, when he fell under the influence of several professors of note. During the fall of 1935, for example, he studied composition under poet Robert Silliman Hillyer (1895-1961), whose volume of Collected Verse (1934) had won the Pulitzer Prize. Hillyer's influence

on Burns can soon be seen in the young writer's apprentice works. First, while still at Harvard, Jack's senior thesis on Robert Southwell and his 1937 novel, The Cynic Faun, would be dedicated to Hillyer. The novel's title, in fact, is drawn from a line of Hillyer's "Ballade" (Complete Poems 52-53).

In later years, Hillyer's opinions are sometimes echoed in those of an elder Burns. The poet's First Principles of Verse (1938), for example, illustrates poor diction by citing this stanza from one of Wordsworth's "Lucy" poems: "What fond and wayward thoughts will slide / Into a lover's head! / 'O mercy!' to myself I cried, / 'If Lucy should be dead!'" (10). Likewise Burns, in all of his remarks, shared Hillyer's low opinion of much of Wordsworth. Similarly, he shared Hillyer's admiration for Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Richard Cory" (which Burns set to music in December 1943), for the poetry of Emily Dickinson, and perhaps for Ernest Dowson's "Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae" (see First Principles 5-6, 10-11, 67).⁷

Another of Jack's teachers during his junior year was George Lyman Kittredge (1860-1941), no doubt America's best-known Shakespeare professor. In 1935 it happened that Jack was a student in Kittredge's last Harvard class in Shakspeare--to use "Kitty's" preferred spelling, one Burns too liked sometimes to affect. Long the terror and delight of generations of Harvard men, Kittredge's manner in the classroom--dramatic and overbearing--is described in detail by Rollo Walter Brown and Clyde Kenneth Hyder. Faced with stupidity or laziness, which he abhorred with all his being, Kitty would roar, or storm out of the room, or slam books upon his desk, cursing the miscreant who had managed to

pronounce Desdemona's lines without an ounce of passion.

Kittredge's operatic defiance of ignorance would influence Burns's teaching style at the Loomis School--much as Emory Basford would shape Burns's manner with students outside the classroom--and so Burns's students will testify. Even Kittredge's final examination seems to have had a lasting impact. In that undergraduate class in Shakspeare, the students were taught six plays in close detail. The three-hour examination required them to identify, interpret, and discuss fifty or more quotations from the plays and to quote a few of the five or six hundred lines memorized that year (Hyder 60-61).⁸ About twenty-five years later, one of Burns's students--actor and writer Taylor Mead--recalls that it was Burns's requirement of memorizing five hundred lines of poetry that put him off the study of literature (Taylor Mead, interview with MTB, 14 June 1982).

During this junior year of 1935-1936, Jack also studied the 19th-century English poets under John Livingston Lowes (1867-1945), best remembered as the author of an astonishing work of scholarly reconstruction, The Road to Xanadu (1927). Jack studied Milton under Philip Webster Souers (1897-), whose name alone may have been preserved in the name of the perverted French teacher in Burns's Lucifer with a Book (1949). And he studied Italian under Louis Francis Solano (1904-), a subject that grew into a lifelong love. In Solano's course, Jack read modern stories and plays in their original tongue, and by February 1936 he had written a verse translation of Gabriele D'Annunzio's verse play Francesco da Rimini (1902).⁹ The speed in which he acquired such ease with a new language further startled those who already admired the young

man for his wit and for his ability in other fields.

That summer he wrote his second novel--Learn Valour, Child (1936)¹⁰--of which, more than his other juvenalia, Burns would always be especially fond. After publishing The Gallery (1947), he would return to the manuscript, hoping in vain to sell a revision of it. Again, no one but the Burns family seems to have read the entire novel. However, we are lucky in this case to have, published in 1937 in the Loomis School literary magazine (The Loom), a scene from the ninth chapter of Learn Valour, Child.

In this scene, Leonard Xavier Boyle finds himself first locked out of and then locked into a Catholic church at Hampton Beach, Virginia. The scene at the church is surrealistic and sentimental, an odd mixture of the pathetic and the grotesque. The passage--scattered with Latin phrases from the mass, echoes of verse for Holy Feasts, and other references to daily Catholic life in those earlier times--embodies the style, in embryo, which Burns would use to such advantage in The Gallery.

When Leonard arrives at the church, wild winds and rain are blowing about the seaside sanctuary:

In a flash of lightning from the sky he began kissing the threshold, weeping and saying: Expectans expectavi. The latches he pummeled till his fists were pulpy and bleeding, yet the doors would not swing open for him; so like a mad thing he began to batter himself against the pillars of the inner porch (5).

After he has "screeched and cracked" his nails on the unplanned wooden doors and is "on his knees, bleeding at the finger-tips," Leonard is confronted by an oxymoronic vision of a shadow that speaks in a voice of

fire, somehow comforting, although abstract and equivocal. The shadow leaves a bright inscribed key, whose handle bears a burning heart and a mitre and crozier, and then passes into the darkness.

In despair when the key does not open the door for him, Leonard hurls it over the porch and laments, "O devil, devil. I'll not get in till lilies divulge [sic] from wooden pillars." But like Wagner's Tannhauser, Leonard is to be redeemed (after a fashion), and finally gains entrance, seeing "how lilies were growing from the entablatures of the pillars, growing like sanctified and listening ears." The great doors swing open, "untouched by any hand."

Inside, a priest delivers a sermonette:

Make others happy and forget your own troubles in doing so. Get out and row on rivers; play baseball with the kid next door; subscribe to The Pilot; join the Church Debt Society. Heaven's your destination, my son. Never forget that. And if perchance you start to sorrow over some petty worry, say over to yourself some of those lovely searching memory gems you learned from the good sisters in school (6).

But Leonard cannot be helped until he learns not to fear change--until he learns the meaning of "valour." Of Holy Mother Church he finally confesses,

Now I can't hear her personal voice as I used in times past. Perhaps some subtle sin has clogged my ears.

. . . I have loved her always, for her ties have been my own self and again my very paradoxical means of lifting myself outside myself. Her doctrine, framed first in the anapests of the catechism, was on my lips before I knew National League scores or movie actresses; her doctrine will, I hope, be an ejaculation of mine when I die. . . . My undoing has been the subtlety and appeal that nothingness has had for me. This is the fear of change, against which we must learn valour or perish (7).

As he stumbles toward the door, the church grows dark and loses its odor of sanctity; he is assailed by a devilish voice at his ear, taunting him as he prays. He blesses himself with sacramental water and leaves a few coins for the poor. When the door again refuses to yield, the voice answers: "Tut. Aren't you awful? Being in the church and wanting to get out. For shame. Think of the people who'd love to be in" (8). The door opens only when Leonard cries "Ephpheta," emulating Christ's cry in healing the deaf man (Mark 7:31-36).

The fog rushed in with swords and clubs; they kissed him, saying: "Hail, acolyte." Leonard Boyle crept on his knees out into the foul damp night where the rain was stopping. And behind him the church door slammed, but not before there was a voice snickering, "Fie, fie. My anathema to you, Tootsie Snoots. By this gesture of yours, consider yourself excommunicate [sic] . . ." (8).

Leaving the church, Leonard drives, madly, home to the great grey house at Rye, where we learn that his little daughter's love is being contested by "a woman with grey hair bending over her" and "a tall sunburnt fellow." From the dock behind the house, Leonard boats across the water to Appledoor, an isle of the Isles of Shoals. And there is nothing more. The published passage ends in mid-sentence.

Despite the amateurish qualities in this early attempt, the imagination of Burns at twenty years of age is intriguing to one who admires his later work. One would like to read more of Learn Valour, Child, for it reflects an early effort to fictionalize his experiences with the Church of his childhood. And, as anyone who has read Burns's fiction knows, Irish Catholic characters and doctrines are important in all three published books.

B. Senior Year: On the Road to Success

During his senior year at Harvard (1936-1937), Jack Burns's coursework in Chaucer, Old English, and Dante was pleasant enough that he seemed to have more time than usual for writing. In Dunster House he became friends with a classmate named Irving Gifford Fine, then one of Harvard's most talented students of musical composition, studying with composers Edward Burlingame Hill and Walter Piston. By Christmas 1936, the two young men had finished collaboration on a play, with music, a project combining Burns's satire with Fine's musical compositions in what Aaron Copland would later call the American "Stravinsky school."

Written for performance in Dunster House, The Christmas Sparrow hinted at the talents that both Fine, who in 1939 would begin teaching composition at Harvard himself, and Burns would one day share with their publics. The Burns-Fine play was lauded in the Harvard Class Album as "this year's immortal brainchild" (66). The full name of this farce being The Christmas Sparrow; or Double or Nothing, its plot was based on an ongoing controversy over parietal regulations at Harvard.

As explained in the Harvard Crimson, "until 1931 the rule governing reception of women guests in college buildings . . . stated that the ladies could not be entertained in students' rooms even with a chaperon unless specific permission had been secured from either the Regent or Proctor" (2 October 1936: 3). This rule, which applied to dormitories and rooming houses where the College maintained Proctors, had been questioned upon the opening of the new Houses in 1931. Since the approximately 250 students in each House were presided over by a Master

and Senior Tutor, generally feeling was that such visits should be made more informal.

In due course, an unwritten rule evolved that students might entertain "ladies in their rooms without a chaperon, provided that the party always consisted of three or more," with a general understanding that such permission would be granted only on weekends and during "Open House" (when a dance was given). Gradually, the rule of "three or more" was relaxed in some Houses. Then in February 1936, at a meeting of the House Masters, the demand came for a uniform interpretation and enforcement of the rule: ". . . it was finally decided that of the three or more persons necessary to be in the room, two should be ladies." It would be "double or nothing," in Burns's eyes. In May the House Masters ruled that this change would be enforced beginning with the fall semester.

On 28 November, the Crimson quietly announced auditions for The Christmas Sparrow,

which is based on Dickens' immortal Christmas play; while Irving G. Fine '37, accompanist for the Glee Club, is composing music somewhat more complicated than the Gilbert and Sullivan variety. The score is said to contain not only tricky rhythmic figures, but also more than a few dissonances in the modern manner (1).

The whole evening of 16 December 1936, it turns out, had been dedicated, at Dunster House, to satirizing the parietal regulations. The Dunster Funsters were to offer a "Chorus of Biddies," performed by Harvard men got up in "biddy" drag. And the annual Christmas dance would follow the evening's entertainment.

Pressure on the administration mounted with the staging of this evening of satire, so on 7 December the Dean announced that the new parietal rule would be abolished, effective 4 January 1937, because "the students felt that such a rule was very inconvenient, and that it did not accomplish the purpose intended" (Harvard Crimson 8 December 1936: 1). The new, student-endorsed regulation kept the rule of "three or more," but did not specify the sex of the third party. In all this controversy and fun, Jack was in the limelight. And he had worked out a collaboration with the talented young Gifford Fine. By the end of the academic year, Jack's gift for satire and verse, and his popularity among the men, would earn him a nomination as class poet, a prize that eventually went to the irretrievably obscure Maurice Sapienza.

Sometime during the fall of 1936, Jack had taken an examination in English literature, for which he was required to know well ten books of the Bible, twelve plays of Shakespeare, and the important works of two classical writers.¹¹ With his mind thereby focused upon scholarly pursuits as well as on the fun of The Christmas Sparrow, he had begun a prose translation of Dante's Commedia. By the end of the academic year, he had completed the Inferno and all but one canto of the Purgatorio.¹² Dante's world fascinated Jack, and he followed the logic of hell and purgatory carefully, as is indicated by his occasional insertion of exclamation marks into the translation.

Jack's contemplation of Catholic doctrine that fall led him to choose the poetry of Robert Southwell as the subject of his senior honors thesis, A Tree of Comfort, which was completed by March 1937.¹³ As criticism, the thesis bears unmistakable marks of being undergraduate

work: its arguments are sometimes based on flimsy evidence, elements of Burns's autobiography intrude from time to time, and the precious style sometimes obscures major points. Yet Jack notes the influence of the spiritual exercises on Southwell's poetry, and in this and certain other judgments, he anticipates the work of later, more seasoned, scholars. The specific discussion of Southwell need not be summarized here, for we are interested primarily in what the thesis can tell us about Burns's life and career as a novelist.

First, then, we notice in it the development of his style, which the following passage seems almost to comment upon:

whoever agnizes "art for art's sake" as an undesirable and unattainable Utopia must agree that every writer is at the mercy of his age in so far as it veneers most of its foibles and conventions over his own work (2)

Throughout the thesis on Southwell, Burns expresses his opinions in a highly rhetorical manner, stylizing his descriptions. Here, for example, he writes about Mary Magdalene's tears at Christ's death:

Again, unstemmed and Jewish as her grief is, perhaps she cannot be censured for an unfortunate apostrophe to the empty syndon: "O Whale that hast swallowed my onely Jonas, swallow also me" (8).

Elsewhere, Burns's sly pen produces this satiric observation:

One line [of The Burning Babe] is humorously colored because certain words have lost dignity in the tongue: "Alas, (quoth he) but newly borne, in fierie heates I frie" (23).

When Jack's personal feelings lead him to comment about Catholicism in the midst of his thesis, we learn a little more about the young man, as in this passage:

But when [Mary Magdalene] finally accuses Jesus as a thief, the irony of the situation is something too protracted, save for two racy passages which illustrate the difference between the old Roman Catholicism and American Irish Catholicism, essentially Puritanical in the worst sense of that adjective, because of an unwarranted scorn for natural or earthy imagery. Such grotesque medieval self-abjection, however, is ill-advised, even in a healthy mind: "And how willingly wouldst thou lick his scared feet" or, "departed from him like an hungry infant pulled from a full teat" (11).

The last paragraph of the thesis affirms the courage required of Southwell's martyrdom (he was hanged, boweled, and quartered), and once again combines autobiographical details with a stylized description:

In such unmixed orisons the Jesuit martyr must have been vouchsafed the deep comfort that nerved him for his own bloody sweat and passion upon Tyburn Hill. Knowing that he made so good an end, we wonder, despite St. Augustine, at the glory of glorious martyrdom, for we have seen such sentimental chapel-mistresses as Teresa of the Little Flower railroaded to canonization, while three hundred years after his immolation Father Robert Southwell is only "venerable." Perhaps we should be grateful enough that he left us his sweet works to be our tree of comfort against the assaults of bitter tongues (48-49).

From Burns's thesis, we learn that he had already begun to develop the mocking and sensual tone that would prove his downfall in Lucifer with a Book--at least among the critics and at Loomis. Here we see a strong-minded young man, learned and self-assured, already much the man remembered by his antagonists in Connecticut--but before his important encounter with wartorn Italy and before achieving international fame as a novelist.

After Burns's death, these early references to martyrdom, to the writer's being at the mercy of his age, seem ironic, since Burns too would eventually become a kind of martyr--at least in the eyes of cer-

tain admirers. These readers, in particular, would be interested to know that one day he would write the following passage to a fan of Lucifer with a Book-- after scathing negative reviews had appeared in the New York press:

I was prepared for the screams of outraged virtue which accompanied the release of Lucifer. It was all very well for me to write about Italy, but when my target was closer to home, I knew that I'd be holding the mirror up to many--than which there is, as you say, no more unforgivable crime. Perhaps eventually I shall be stoned like Saint Stephen. I haven't a martyr complex, but I will write what I see and feel (JHB to Rose Orente, 21 April 1949).

Ten years would pass before Burns's works would begin to find a public audience. In this March of 1937, he was still under consideration by Nathaniel Horton Batchelder of the Loomis School to fill a vacancy in his English department. The student came with high recommendations. Robert Hillyer had written of him, "Mr. John Horne Burns is one of the most brilliant students I have ever had and I have no doubt that his teaching career will be unusually successful." And the praise of Milton professor Phillip Webster Souers was equally impressive: "Mr. J. H. Burns is deserving of the highest recommendation. During the three years that we were closely associated, I came to have great respect for his mind. He is first rate in everything he attempts. He writes well, has a creative power, and at the same time is capable of applying himself to a severe, scholarly discipline."¹⁴

Batchelder's general practice was "to take on youngsters, generally perfectly green youngsters, and promote men already on the staff to fill the places of important men who occasionally leave" (Nathaniel Horton Batchelder to Frank L. Boyden, Deerfield Academy, 27 April 1937, KBL).

Burns's qualifications, age, and recommendations spoke highly of him. When Batchelder heard that Phillips Academy had rejected Burns for his Catholicism, he was outraged, and hired the young man on the spot.

But the headmaster did not realize that he would be getting a man not so easily shaped by the Batchelder hand. And Burns was sure that he would have plenty of time to continue his career as a writer, for he explained to a concerned Emory Basford:

If a school position numbs and enervates my goose-quill, why, they the world need never shed a tear on my grave . . . Mr Batchelder, the headmaster, and all the younger masters there agree that it is one of the best schools in the east to go to because Mr B. not only encourages, but insists, on their having some outside interest. Writing he especially favors. . . . You know me well, and you know that I am stubborn enough to find time for anything I want to do. Not sixteen hundred little boys can joggle my pen off the page, even if they peep and pule over my shoulder, and laugh at what I write all the while. . . . All we may pray for now is that this aggressive young man may not fatten in tranquility, and produce fat smug works in old Caslon type, but will maintain his perspective and his nice sense for the warm and cool values of living, like a certain Maryland man who five years ago was, and is now still more "sownyng in moral vertu" because "gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche" (JHB to Emory Basford, 19 May 1937).

Little did Burns know how few the moments of tranquility would be!

Notes to Chapter II

¹ The interview that John Mitzel conducted with Donald Burns must be verified with additional research, for the two men were eating and drinking and making merry during its course.

² The survey of English literature was supervised by John Tucker Murray (1877-). The other classes were taught by George Maxwell Howe (1873-), Arthur Norman Holcombe (1884-1977), and Roger Bigelow Merriman (1876-1945), respectively.

³ Sex education was often incorporated under the heading Hygiene. Donald Vining, also born in 1916, describes in the first volume of his diary the lectures at West Chester (Pennsylvania) State Teachers College. On 23 March 1938, Vining's Hygiene instructor "talked about the biological and physiological factors of sex and discussed menstruation and homosexuality. I resented and yet was amused by his repeated references to homosexuality as 'disgusting'" (66).

⁴ Jack's professors for these courses were, respectively, Arthur Colby Sprague (1895-); Kirsopp Lake (1872-1946); Derwent Stainthorpe Whittlesey (1890-1956); Ralph Barton Perry (1876-1957); and Frederick William Charles Lieder (1881-1953).

⁵ A manuscript of this novel, Of Modern Grievance, is in the private collection of Cathleen Burns Elmer. Jack often showed his works to Cathleen, his oldest younger sister, for feedback and encouragement.

⁶ After Of Modern Grievance (1935), the other novels and partial novels of Burns's juvenalia include Learn Valour, Child (1936), The Cynic Faun (1937), What Wondrous Life! (1939), and View the Corpse (1941).

⁷ Dowson's is the favorite poem of Lieutenant Mayberry, a character in the Sixth Portrait ("The Leaf") of The Gallery: "He told the whole GI office force that than this poem there was nothing more magic or golden in all literature; it was better than Joyce Kilmer or Henry Wadsworth Longfellow" (193). Burns's ironic tone--underscored by Mayberry's later christening his jeep "CYNARA in letters of Caslon style six inches high" (194)--indicates that he may not have shared Hillyer's opinion of Dowson. However, another unattractive character in The Gallery, Louella, has a similar fascination for Emily Dickinson's "Success is counted sweetest . . ." (The Gallery 25). We assume that Burns was sincere, in his 1948 address The Creative Writer in the 20th Century, in which he called Dickinson "a great poet" (41). Therefore, Burns's true feelings about Dowson remain obscure.

⁸ Despite Shakespearean allusions in Burns's fiction and letters, we cannot be certain which of the plays he studied under Kittredge. As preparation for the comprehensive examination of his senior year, however, he had to know twelve of Shakespeare's plays, not merely the

six discussed in Kittredge's classroom.

9 The manuscript of Burns's Francesco da Rimini, in the private collection of Cathleen Burns Elmer, is dated February 1936. Information in Solano's course description leads me to believe that Burns's "poetic drama" is actually a translation.

10 A complete manuscript of Learn Valour, Child is in the private collection of Cathleen Burns Elmer.

11 Jack was allowed to choose among the following classical writers: Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Horace, and Virgil. Again, there is no means of determining which authors he selected for this examination. We know that he was familiar with the concept of an "army of lovers" (expressed in Plato's Phaedo) because of a letter to David MacMackin, dated 28 June 1945. Likewise, Burns quotes a line from Euripides' The Trojan Women as the epigraph to The Gallery. His love of Dante may have been enhanced by a knowledge of Virgil. One cannot be certain.

12 The manuscript of this translation is in the private collection of David MacMackin. Burns would later use a verse from the fifteenth canto of the Inferno as the epigraph to Lucifer with a Book.

13 A carbon copy of the typescript of A Tree of Comfort is in the private collection of Mark T. Bassett. I am indebted to Professor Lorraine Roberts for sharing her opinions about this thesis, some of which I have adopted in the following discussion.

14 Excerpts from the letters of recommendation were provided to Batchelder by Harvard on a single sheet accompanying his resume. The excerpts were preserved as part of the Loomis-Chaffee archives. My thanks to current Loomis headmaster, Dr. John Ratté, for calling these documents to my attention, and for his courtesies while I was visiting his school in 1981.

Chapter III

THE CYNIC FAUN: AN EARLY NOVEL

A. Formal and Stylistic Experimentation

Graduation Day at Harvard, 1937, came along at last. Joseph and Catherine Burns were proud to see their oldest son graduate Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude. Jack attended the spring dance with his sister Cathleen, who had accompanied him to other Harvard social functions. That summer John Horne Burns felt more confident than ever. He knew now who he was and where he was headed in life. He was to be a writer.

Having established a pattern of writing novels during his summers, Burns began to plan new one, to be entitled The Cynic Faun after a phrase from Hillyer's "Ballade."¹ In contrast to the leisure allowed the young man through having gained a teaching job before the end of his last Harvard term, Burns began on July 5 a strict regimen of daily writing--3,000 words a day. By July 13 he had penned 21,000. Jack's calculations showed that this figure amounted to one and two-fifths chapters, for the book would be divided into seven chapters of 15,000 days each, according to the "daies of the weeke" (JHB to Charles I. Weir, Jr., 13 July 1937, CU).²

A highly formal structure such as this was perhaps more typical of 1930s novels than not. During that decade, readers first puzzled over

the formal and stylistic experiments of Joyce's Ulysses, Faulkner's Go Down, Moses, West's Miss Lonelyhearts, Dos Passos' U.S.A., Barnes's Nightwood, Hillyer's Riverhead, and Samuel M. Steward's Angels on the Bough--the last of these being a book that "quite definitely did something to" Gertrude Stein.³ However, apart from the superficial similarity of employing a formal structure, The Cynic Faun does not compare well with the least of these, despite Burns's enthusiasm when the work was in progress.

Instead, this early novel is a wretched display of unbridled imagination and scatological audacity. Its characters are garish cartoons of reality and its tone uneven, ranging from the bombastic to the grotesque and pathetic, with only rare instances of wit or poetry. Admirers of The Gallery are bound to be disappointed by The Cynic Faun, finding therein little or no foretaste of the creative powers displayed in Burns's moving chronicle of WWII. The early book does, however, warrant some attention, since the characters and style of The Cynic Faun are similar to those, particularly, in Lucifer with a Book, the novel that altered the course of his career.

At the end of those first 21,000 words, Jack wrote of The Cynic Faun to his friend Charles I. Weir, Jr.: "I think I have attained to [*sic*] a new and monstrously objective lucidity, unparalleled in former outputs of Burnsism. . . . In my mind the new novel has become a symbol of the grandeur of wickedness" (13 July 1937, CU). Wicked though The Cynic Faun may be, the novel is certainly not well described as objective, lucid, or grand. Not knowing the nature of Jack's relationship with Weir, we find it difficult to interpret this apparent paradox. Our

hope is that Burns here affects the urbane worldliness he would later adopt while discussing Art with friends who shared his sometimes eccentric views.

One relevant example of such a use of language--a style of speech and outlook that Susan Sontag has identified as camp⁴--may be seen in another of Burns's letters. The following excerpt, written seven years after the letter to Weir, might be taken as praise for his early manuscripts, including The Cynic Faun:

We still think they showed a most peculiar genius, more poignant than Djuna Barnes, Carson McCullers, and Ronald Firbank. Perhaps sometime your gracious hands--when unstained with Golden Rose Tea--will take them to the Asylum of Trailsend [Trailsend was the Canton, New York, home of David's aunt, Olive Templeton Flannery] and enshrine them along with our records (JHB to David Alison MacMackin, 17 April 1944).

The camp of this passage, which deflates the self-flattery it contains, depends upon the use of hyperbole; puns on the words peculiar, Asylum, and Trailsend; the near-blasphemous use of the term enshrine; and the "royal" first-person plural pronouns. There are also the portrait of David as leading an easy, hedonistic lifestyle and the mock fear that Burns's manuscripts might inadvertently be damaged by tea-stained fingers.

Yet despite its camp, this passage reminds us that The Cynic Faun contains a capricious plot resembling those of Ronald Firbank, sexual depravity as dark as that in Nightwood, and characters more stunted than those of Carson McCullers. It may be, then, that whatever we make of Burns's (lack of) sincerity in the earlier letter to Weir, he may have intended to make a serious point about his novel. The "grandeur of

wickedness" in the letter to Weir probably refers both to the sexually deviant and cruel characters and to the sly double-entendres of Burns's descriptions and dialogue. Both would one day be put to more skillful use in Lucifer with a Book. The Cynic Faun's "objective lucidity" no doubt relies on the narrator's refusal to judge any of the characters, or at least to share those judgments with the reader. Burns's third published novel, A Cry of Children (1952), would eventually be narrated by another such nonjudgmental voice, forcing readers to determine for themselves whether David Murray and Isobel Joy, in particular, are to be admired or despised.

The deviance of the characters in The Cynic Faun is clear in the novel's first chapter. There we encounter the narrator's lascivious depiction of Benita's and Dolores' breasts; Tippie's mother-fixation and his homosexual devotion to Sard; Sard's sadistic throttling of the clinging and effeminate Tippie, who responds with masochistic delight over being choked until blue in the face; Addie's necrophiliac description of her puppy's death⁵; and Augustine's incestuous love for his adopted daughter Dolores, who toys with him in order to get her way. The wickedness of later chapters will also include transvestism, transsexuality, prostitution, and fornication--all told, a banquet of forbidden acts and attitudes that Burns's beloved Petronius might have recorded. That Burns was working in such tabooed territory, of course, and without the influence of writers like Vladimir Nabokov, William Burroughs, J. P. Donleavy, and Joe Orton, is perhaps some small tribute.

Only a few examples of the lascivious narrative voice are needed to make the point:

And lo, the father was sitting erect, all smiles (27).

Earlier in the novel, as Augustine is brandishing his pistol, preparing to fire at Sard, Dolores exclaims,

- Goo-Goo! What are you doing with a smoking rod out?
(17).

The puns here are obvious and crass, making us want to say, with Addie, "O how cringingly adolescent!" (19). Certain passages, such as this picnic scene (which occurs while Sard is recuperating from Augustine's pistol shot), defy even the most jaded reader's ability to tolerate them:

Dolores came over to squat beside them. Beside Tippie.

- Draw back my lips, Sard begged coldly. - Look at my teeth. Guess my age.

- Well really! Benita said, setting a place on his chest with knife and fork and paper plate. A cup full of strawberry-ripped lemonade she put down over his left nipple. As she laid out the things, her hand touched the warm flesh of his breast; her knuckles sent a piercing frost through him.

- Perhaps you'll chew the food for me, Sard said. - Then kiss me with spread lips.⁶

- Don't think of such things! she replied, retiring a little off to squat and eat her things.

Said Tippie gorging:

- Gee, I'm gonna eat till it comes out my eyes!

- Now I wouldn't do that, if I were you, Dolores smiled.

- Nature has provided a better way (32).

It may be, of course, that we were not meant to listen to this narrative voice. Perhaps Burns never intended to publish The Cynic Faun. There is no evidence of such an intention in his correspondence with his agent and publishers. If we are, then, reading a novel meant only for the most private of eyes, we may not have the right to protest

its excesses. Instead, we might hope to understand better the young mind of the man whom a Loomis faculty wife would one day brand "the most dangerous man on the faculty" (JHB to BWH, 27 January 1947). With The Cynic Faun at her disposal, this faculty wife might have believed herself to have incontrovertible proof.

Originally subtitled "A Pastoral on a Gypsy Theme" (then, "Pastoral Comedy on Gypsy Themes," and finally "A Modern Pastoral"),⁷ The Cynic Faun depicts the fantasies and behavior of the Mouseville family and those attached to their estate in Dedham, Massachusetts, during the week of 29 May 1937.⁸ The portly Augustine Mouseville owns a rubber heel factory there, in addition to Casa Mouseville (or Mousevilla, as he prefers to call the estate). Since the death of his wife ten years earlier, Augustine has been raising two daughters with the help of his sister, Addie Mouseville, M.D.

Benita Mouseville is a teenaged sexpot, like her flirtatious 21-year-old sister, Dolores Bean, adopted years ago. Lily is the peg-legged maid; Josephine, the St. Bernard; and Pierre Curie, the Angora cat. (Both pets, like various birds and other animals in Lucifer with a Book, occasionally display human emotions and attitudes.) And thus the unwholesome household, which is disturbed by visits from the parish priest, a gypsy camp, Augustine's factory workers, a dandy in a green roadster, two unlikely criminals, and the neighboring farmers.

In several ways, The Cynic Faun appears to have been influenced by Burns's reading of George Borrow, author of several books about gypsies.⁹ Borrow's The Romany Rye (1857) is likely to be the principal source, since Burns's "hero," Sard, is sometimes described as a "romany

rye" (or "gypsy gentleman," in Romany, the gypsy language). Like Borrow's protagonist (Lavengro), Sard and the other characters of The Cynic Faun meet a variety of people at unexpected moments, having with them a multitude of adventures. Both Lavengro and Sard exhibit the following traits: some degree of misogyny, a love of male camaraderie, a traditional masculinity, and an enjoyment of the outdoors. Both books employ a picaresque plot structure.

Like Borrow, Burns scatters a gypsy vocabulary throughout his narrative, a practice similar to Burns's later use of Italian and French in The Gallery. In The Cynic Faun, Burns's gypsy vocabulary echoes that of both The Romany Rye and Romany Lavo-Lil (1874), Borrow's "word-book" and folklore compendium. And like Borrow, Burns often allows his characters, particularly Sard, to digress into narrative or philosophy. The following passage from The Cynic Faun, in which Sard debates Father Butler, is typical:

- Priest, so far as it hits me, you and your church may go over the hills and far away with your governing principle of unity. To me the percept stinks of a single rotten log: a million termites are chewing the underside. Unity is too simple to exist. Why, our great poet the Florentine scribbled his piece [Dante's Divina Commedia] not by thrusting oneness on everything. Rather, priest, by living through all the chaos of his suffering, his mind, a warped yet wonderful prism, made many lights one color. I also doubt that your theologian from Aquino [St. Thomas Aquinas] was such a fool as to proclaim a world governed by the principle of unity. That is your stylization; for you're all unable to follow his little boat as it skirts the waters of chaos. You're disarmed by his logic in the face of maddening variety. His theology, perhaps, is one window, but past it fell many a snowflake. If he chose to call a million particles snow, was he unifying or merely naming? Naming's all your church can do, priest. Have a peep at nature, if you dare, which to youth and immaturity seems the raving of a tortured god. A god created by youth, as Zoroaster said. But not unity. Anything but unity, priest: an orchestra of things sometimes in harmony . . . (29).¹⁰

Sard is "the cynic faun" of the novel's title, a phrase that acts as a key to Burns's intentions, not merely as his homage to Hillyer. In fact, the meaning of the phrase, which first appears in a conversation between Sard and the dandy Francis, may indicate Burns's general attitudes toward writing satirical fiction. Francis had said to Sard, "You're a sort of cynic faun, old man. A body built for intensive copulation, stifled by a brain built for intensive criticism" (141).

This observation is entirely intuitive, for Francis could not have known about Sard's soliloquy earlier in the novel, concerning the act of love. Sard had felt amused:

definitely, hysterically moved by our sprawling human way of expressing lust, desire, and, sometimes even, deep devotion. The act seemed to me the very laugh on the face of satire and cynicism. And I'll never understand why poets have chosen to cast a veil of awe about its knotted and nude limbs. . . . it's too hot and sweaty and close! (99).

His feeling of being "an outsider" to the act of love, Sard's "inhumanity," appalls Sard himself, yet he cannot escape this "laughter." He observes that "in society the critic is forced to stifle his laughter, and it becomes of the soul. The shaking of it ruptures all the blood vessels of his thought and power to act" (101). Sard's conclusion seems to be this: "Critic, my standards are always clouded; artist that I am, I try to place my body first. But critic and artist combined make a monster. It's all to[o] painful; I must kill one or the other" (100).

During the conversation with Francis, Sard expounds upon these concepts in several monologues, exploring, for example, the ramifications of accepting this logic, particularly as it affects the artist's

relationship to society. The following excerpt is taken from a representative monologue of Sard's:

. . . What genius really is, if the word must be reclaimed, is a sixteen-cylinder intelligence, capable of imposing some pattern on the chaos of any given age. . . . The artist, you see, must decoy the other nine hundred and ninety-nine bright people into looking into what he has to say. To-day more than ever art seems essentially satiric: satire by creative intelligences directed against the bright. . . . Every great artist of the middle twentieth century is, to borrow your brutal phrase, a cynic faun, a faun cynically dismayed at his own inability to copulate and enjoy himself with the rest of the bright people. . . . And sadly enough, most of the art of to-day is based directly on sex. This is not only unnecessary but silly. High sublimation is a postulate of the greatest art. But the raw quick of your cynical faunal artist's critical sense is probed by the ridiculousness of things sexual. . . . May art soon pass from the testicles to the brain! Then cynic fauns will have learned how fatal it is to misuse their gift of cynicism. They will beat their hooves into crowns and their horns into a phallus for moderate use, and to begetting a race of intelligent kings and queens (142-143).

What other reading, we might ask, could have influenced this unusual novel? Burns's grotesque characters and his preoccupation with sexuality and cruelty do not come from Borrow. Whether Burns received his inspiration from another novel we can not be certain, although similarly harsh descriptions in the passage from Learn Valour, Child indicate that some of these interests had begun to develop at Harvard. Furthermore, The Cynic Faun contains specific allusions to a variety of works he encountered at Harvard, including Shakespeare, Dante, and Baudelaire.¹¹

Burns's reference to Barnes, McCullers, and Firbank, quoted above, makes us wonder whether he had read Djuna Barnes's Nightwood upon its American publication in March 1937: perhaps this novel gave him the inspiration to cast Addie as a depraved medical doctor.¹² However, Lily's

overt lack of wholeness--her having a wooden leg--does not originate in Carson McCullers' fiction: The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, McCullers' first published novel, did not appear until 1940, three years after Burns wrote the first draft of The Cynic Faun. Looking back, the older Burns of 1944 must have felt a kinship between his and McCullers' use of physical infirmity as a metaphor for spiritual or psychological defects. Could it be, we wonder, that the exotic settings and characters of Firbank encouraged Burns to choose a subject like gypsies? After all, there is the allusion in The Cynic Faun to Firbank's best-known work, when a state trooper describes Stan as a "prancin' nigger" (84).¹³

B. Plot and Character

The Cynic Faun opens on a Saturday evening, with the lovesick Benita and Dolores bathing nude in a fountain at Casa Mouseville. The wind carries Benita's slip to the campsite where hirsute, manly Sard and his overweight, effeminate friend Tippie are dining on bacon, bread, and coffee. The men soon discover the young girls, who feign modesty and are allowed to dress. Benita finds herself attracted to Sard; Dolores, to Tippie. After the girls permit the men to bathe there in privacy, the couples flirt and discuss love until Augustine suddenly appears with Addie and her picnic hamper. Furious, Augustine accuses Sard of having made love to Benita and shoots him in the elbow with his pistol just as Sard is about to make away with some sandwiches. Mercifully, the bullet bounces off bone and Sard will soon recover.

Through the bushes, noisily, come Lily, Father Butler, and Josephine. Father Butler, hovering over the supine Sard, refers to him as a Saracen, "an uncircumcised dog of whom Bernard de Cluny writes in choice Latin that they cook Christian children" (26). On hearing these "big words . . . somethin' dirty," Tippie chokes the priest, who swoons and dreams of seeing St. Peter at the gates of heaven. Sard, awake now, discusses Catholicism and pantheism with the recovered priest; then everyone enjoys the picnic. At Dolores' insistence, Augustine invites Tippie and Sard to stay as weekend guests. After a bath with salts, the two men enjoy clean sheets instead of the open road of their habit.

As is obvious from this summary of Chapter 1, the action of The Cynic Faun is episodic and haphazard, relying more upon the young writ-

er's whims than upon any apparent organizing principle. To call the novel "picaresque," as I have done, is misleading: although Sard is in some ways a typical "picaro," he does not remain the center of attention. Burns's style, too, is needlessly eccentric, ranging from the mock-Shakespearean language Sard sometimes employs to the gutter talk of Dolores and Benita in imitation of 1930s confession and fan magazines. Our tedious submission to Burns's fancy is relieved only occasionally by a witty remark or by the eventually predictable turns of the plot.

Yet reading this early work does reveal some of the makings of the mature novelist. Lucifer with a Book (1949), for example, is partially peopled with new, more controlled versions of certain characters we meet in The Cynic Faun. In particular, Augustine is an early version of Lucifer's headmaster, Mr. Pilkey: both men are portly, authoritarian ego-maniacs who misuse those in their service. The picnic of potato chips Augustine serves to his factory workers and his smug satisfaction in surveying the crowded lawn seem an early version of the annual Reunion Frolic on the lawn of the Pilkeys' house, where Mr. Pilkey greets and inspects his faculty and staff each fall. Augustine's potato-chip frugality reminds us that macaroni and cheese is the main course for most meals in Mr. Pilkey's Academy dining hall.

Both novels, as noted earlier, are suffused with sexuality, in both narrative undertones and in the action. Both end by uniting the protagonist with the woman of his desire, the lovers in each work preparing to face a new, unknown fate in what seems to them a bizarre world. And just as Lucifer with a Book satirizes American private education, and the Loomis School in particular, The Cynic Faun may be intended as a

satire on the haute monde of over-proper Dedham, as well as on the Tyer Rubber Company of Burns's hometown of Andover, a company founded there by Henry George Tyer in 1856. An Andover historian explains:

Alert and imaginative, [Tyer] experimented with rubber compounds, eventually patenting the "Compo," a gaiter in which the upper and lower sole were fastened together by a rubber cement. . . . By [1907] the original plant on Main Street had been expanded until it had five hundred employees and sales amounting to nearly a million dollars a year (Fuess, Andover 337).

The most intriguing character in The Cynic Faun, one with no real parallel in Burns's later work, is Tippie, the boy whose "muvver" has let her shadow fall heavily across her son's life. Only David Murray, of A Cry of Children (1952), has been born to so domineering a mother. In portraying Tippie, Burns anticipated the psychological theory--since discredited¹⁴--that Tippie is a "passive" homosexual because of his domineering mother (and perhaps also because of an absent father).¹⁵ The specific source of Burns's theory is not yet possible to pinpoint.

Surely a curious young Jack had discovered Krafft-Ebing's Psycho-pathia Sexualis, in large part a collection of case studies on "Antipathic Sexuality" (282-461), with subsections such as "Homo-sexual Feeling as an Acquired Manifestation in Both Sexes," "Effemination," "Androgyny," etc. We should note that in another letter to his young friend David MacMackin (Loomis class of 1943) Burns mentions "Krafft-Ebing" casually, as if he expected all young men of similar interests and intellect to have pondered this "medico-forensic study" (JHB to DAM, 11 September 1942).

One of the longest case studies presented there, involving the son

of an "absent father" (No. 129, pp. 304-324), may form the basis for Tippie's metamorphosis. Here is part of this patient's autobiography, as presented by Krafft-Ebing:

A lady elaborately dressed was like a goddess to me; and if even her hand touched me coldly I was happy and envious, and only too gladly would have put myself in her place in the beautiful garments and lovely form. . . . [Two years of married life, including the birth of our child, had passed when] All at once I saw myself a woman from my toes to my breast; . . . a feeling of unspeakable delight came over me. . . . But who could describe my fright when, on the next morning, I awoke and found myself feeling as if completely changed into a woman; and when, on standing and walking, I felt vulva and mammae! (308, 312).

Krafft-Ebing received a letter, three years later, in which this man reported that he was still experiencing the physical and psychical feelings of a woman (324).

Tippie's sexuality is clearly deviant, as is obvious from his first appearance in The Cynic Faun. When Benita's slip lands at the campsite, Tippie smells it, remarking that he wishes he could have it "for a nightie." Sard's reply indicates the nature of their relationship:

- God, Tippie, how you talk! Like a male dressmaker from Paris. Well, I don't want such about me, do you see? I'd know where to go if I wanted such, see? What are you doing around me, anyway? The night I picked you up on the [Boston] Common I was fried down to my heels (4-5).

Sard, then, is what was known in gay slang as "trade"¹⁶--a basically heterosexual man who occasionally allows himself to be taken in os.

Tippie's personality is further complicated by the unconvincing metamorphosis he undergoes on Sunday morning at the Mouseville estate. Benita and Addie, having no proper Sunday clothes in his size, dress him

instead as a woman. In donning the feminine garb, Tippie--in a manner somewhat similar to the transformation reported by Krafft-Ebing's patient--assumes a new, separate personality, now calling himself Harriet. The two personalities do not, we are intended to believe, acknowledge one another's existence, although Burns is inconsistent here, being more interested in the turns of his episodic plot than in characterization. Nor are we to believe that Tippie is a transsexual or a transvestite, despite the obvious implications of his love for female clothing.

Let us consider one example of Burns's inconsistency. We cannot fail to notice, for instance, that allusions to homosexuality are occasionally made in Tippie/Harriet's presence--even by Harriet herself, who claims to be a typical, healthy woman. Witness the following scene, in which Harriet, having just attended her first communion, seems to have made a favorable impression on Father Parnell Butler, the parish priest whom she (as Tippie) had knocked unconscious on the previous evening:

- O madam, madam! Father Butler cried. - Are you giving me the bliss of supposing that these hands gave you your First Communion?

- You can think that if you like. I don't care.

- And so you're a newcomer to the arms of Holy Mother Church? A convert?

- Some guys have called me that. They weren't as nice as you. So I suppose you can call me that too (67).

Shortly afterward, Harriet confides in Sard over her feelings about the priest. Although--as Harriet--she apparently does not recognize Sard, somehow she knows his name, and she feels "hilariously intimate" with him:

- Gee, the swellest man was just here.... He treated me just like a queen. Called me madam, too. . . .¹⁷

- And do you like that title? . . . Some queens do (69).

In The Cynic Faun, Tippie encounters several potential lovers. He reacts differently with each of them, treating Dolores as a mother figure, Sard as a macho "daddy," and finally the halfwit farmboy Luke Rye as a brother, as a friend. Thus summarized, this progression appears logical, even healthy. Yet Burns's inconsistencies prevent us from believing that Tippie has undergone any real growth. Our doubts persist, despite the narrator's claim, at the end of Chapter 6, that Tippie now realizes the incompleteness of his love for Sard. We doubt that Tippie can actually have learned that the ideal mate is a combination of mother, lover, and critic, whereas Sard had only criticized him.

At the end of the novel, Tippie is alone, disgraced for having interfered--although inadvertently--with the happiness of the fickle Dolores and her newfound love, Francis, the young man in the roadster. This unhappy ending is only slightly atypical for a homosexual character in a 1930s novel: many of them die, often by suicide or other violent means.¹⁸ We suppose that Luke and Sard are to be excused for their short dalliances with Tippie. After all, Sard had been drunk when he and Tippie met, and Luke first encountered him as Harriet. The behavior of these two men was, therefore, only "natural." Likewise, despite some lurid overtones in the relationship between Francis and Sard, and the whole business of blood brothers, we are apparently to believe only Tippie deserving of poetically just punishment.

Another character in The Cynic Faun, although a minor one, is also worthy of some attention. Particularly since priests and Protestant ministers figure in all three of Burns's published books, readers may

wish some further description of the unsavory Father Butler. We have seen him on Saturday, the first chapter of The Cynic Faun. In Chapter 2, at Sunday mass in Dedham, the Father encourages his churchwomen in fundraising: "Our organ is getting old. It's been raised a great many years now in the honor and glory of God. But now we feel what with our bigger parish we need a bigger and better organ" (52-53). The priest is unable to bar the entrance, immediately after Communion, of the entire gypsy camp, who stream into the sanctuary peddling their wares, and then leave, kidnapping Benita along the way.

On Monday, after Dolores confesses to having committed a "single sin," the Father reads Ulysses (then under papal ban); he remembers reading, "from Buddha perhaps" (another heretical act) that it is better to marry than to burn (see 1 Cor. 7:9). Later in the week, the priest is still pursuing the tempting Harriet, but to no avail. Finally, while on an errand to convert Protestants to Roman Catholicism, he visits Luke's farm, where he faints upon finding Harriet in bed upstairs: he doesn't realize that she is sick from eating green apples in the orchard. When last we see the priest, his temperature is 106 degrees and he is no longer in control of his faculties.

A summary of the plot of The Cynic Faun may satisfy the curious; further analysis seems pointless. Beginning with Chapter 2, the novel picks up a furious pace that is maintained until the concluding surrealist confrontation between Augustine's factory workers and the gypsy camp. Before then, Benita experiences a series of adventures: she is kidnapped by Mama Inez, queen of the gypsies; attacked by the gypsy prince Stan, an event which causes her amnesia; seduced by escaped mur-

derer Larry Legs, who whisks her off to Boston, where he is eventually shot and killed by state police; nearly collared into the brothel of Mother Carrie, a benign-appearing Boston madam; and arrested, while disguised as a sailor to avoid being accused of Larry's crimes, for kissing another man!--Sard--in the Boston Public Garden. Finally, after the debacle, she finds herself on the "threshold of something or other" (90),¹⁹ anticipating married life with Sard.

Dolores' adventures are similar, in some respects, to Benita's. Kissing Tippie arouses her lust, so Dolores confesses to Augustine her urge to seduce the man she loves. Augustine mistakes her guilt-ridden confession for an admission of desire for him, her father, and forces himself upon her. Stunned, Dolores steals the gardener's motorcycle and heads for Boston, where she is indeed engaged as a prostitute by Mother Carrie, although she manages to earn a little money without losing her virginity. In an Italian restaurant she meets Sard's new friend Francis. When the confusion over her (non-) relationship with Tippie is at last resolved, Dolores and Francis also decide to marry.

As for the other characters, their various fates are really not important. Like minor characters in an opera, they are only foils to or diversions for the main characters, the two pairs of lovers. Stan is eventually poisoned by his mother, Mama Inez, but only after he bids his blood-brother Sard a ceremonial farewell. There is a birth in the gypsy camp. Mother Carrie is imprisoned. And Benita bursts into an aria ("E Lucevan le Stelle," from Act III of Puccini's Tosca) after the thunderstorm in the last pages of the novel. It has, after all, turned out to be a kind of comedy, complete with united lovers and lonely villains.

Notes to Chapter III

¹ Columbia University's Butler Library houses the first-draft manuscript of Burns's The Cynic Faun. Burns dedicates the novel to Robert Hillyer and quotes the following lines from Robert Hillyer's "Ballade": "The cynic faun whom I have known betrays / A dangerous mood at night" (from Robert Hillyer's Pulitzer-Prize-winning volume, The Collected Verse of Robert Hillyer, 52-53). An undated, revised typescript of The Cynic Faun, in the private collection of Mark T. Bassett, bears an identical epigraph, but omits the dedication. Quotations from The Cynic Faun--unless otherwise indicated--are taken from the revised typescript.

² The letter to Weir accompanies the manuscript version of The Cynic Faun at Columbia University. Burns's calculations can be seen throughout. The chapter lengths are added on the last page of the manuscript, in Burns's hand, and there a notation also indicates that this draft was begun on July 3 and completed on August 19, 1937, just before the fall term began at Loomis.

³ Stein's comments in a letter to Steward, dated 16 June 1936 and published in Steward's Dear Sammy (129-130), were that the book's effect "has something to do with the way you met the problem of time . . . you have succeeded in reaching a unity without connecting, I often think that the American contribution is making anything dead . . . but you do do something else it is a certain level that is there" (129).

⁴ This sense of the word "camp," according to Sontag, was first discussed in print in Christopher Isherwood's The World in the Evening (New York: Random House, 1954): 110-111.

⁵ Addie's pet, Tippy, supposedly caught his intestines on a radiator after she had operated on him, dying tragically as a result of this accident. Here Burns displays poor taste and judgment in the process of satirizing Dale Carnegie's sentimental description, in How to Make Friends and Influence People (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), of losing his childhood pet, Tippy, a yellow-haired mongrel with a stubby tail. Carnegie refers to Tippy again in a very brief condensation of his book that was published in Readers Digest, January 1937: 113-124.

⁶ In a similar passage in A Cry of Children, Isobel Joy, as narrator, recalls when "David [Murray] spread some butter on a slab of toast, chewed it, and transferred it from his mouth to mine. At the moment it seemed the sweetest and most natural thing in the world" (28). As the reader can guess, the character Isobel is unlikable on several counts.

⁷ Burns's struggle with the subtitle is reflected in notations on the title page of the earlier manuscript.

⁸ The time scheme of The Cynic Faun is clarified by Sard's comment that Tuesday is 1 June (122) and by Augustine's comment that the year is 1937 (75).

⁹ I am indebted to Robert R. Meyers, of Wichita State University, for his analysis, George Borrow, to which I owe several observations that are invaluable to this discussion.

¹⁰ Sard's sentiments here surely owe something to Burns's having read an essay in Aldous Huxley's Do What You Will (1929), entitled "One and Many" (3-52). Huxley, like Sard, admires some of the virtues of pantheism. Both question the supremacy accorded ordinary human senses for determining the real and the true. At the end of Huxley's essay, he hopes for a "new religion of life" that

will have to have many gods. Many; but since the individual man is a unity in his various multiplicity, also one. It will have to be Dionysian and Panick as well as Apollonian; Orphic as well as rational; not only Christian, but Martial and Venernean too; Phallic as well as Minervan or Jehovahistic. It will have to be all, in a word that human life actually is, not merely the symbolical expression of one of its aspects (52).

¹¹ Father Butler, when he can't remember the mass, babbles phrases from Petronius (54); a state trooper describes Stan to Benita as a "kissin' prancin' nigger" (84); the madam of a Boston brothel turns out to be named Mother Carrie (114 ff); Sard complains, "everything that my pen touches turns to flowers of evil" (124); Francis refers to "surrealists and dadaists" in a conversation with Sard (129); when Francis admits "that too often I do summon up remembrance of things past," Sard's reply is that Francis "must learn to let the dying bury the dead" (135); and finally, Francis, angry with Dolores, walks "through the little wood of obscurity, chased by the lion, the wolf, and the leopard" (249). The allusions are, of course, to Petronius, Satyricon; Ronald Firbank, Prancing Nigger; Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie; Charles Baudelaire, Flowers of Evil; Marcel Proust, Remembrance of Things Past; Irwin Shaw, Bury the Dead; and Dante Alighieri, Inferno. The Cynic Faun also contains obscure allusions to Shakespeare's plays, as when Sard's behavior and dialogue in the forest echoes that of Jacques (As You Like It) or Puck (A Midsummer Night's Dream), or when Father Butler's white gown and lunatic chants remind us of Ophelia (Hamlet). Burns's allusions to the Bible and to popular music are too numerous to list here.

¹² Addie's personality does not, however, resemble that of Dr. Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor except in their common occupation.

¹³ There is also a tradition in the British novel, from Emily

Brontë to Augustus John, in which an outsider is symbolically represented in the form of a gypsy.

¹⁴ See Alan P. Bell, Martin S. Weinberg, and Sue Kiefer Hammer-smith, Sexual Preference (1981), an official study by the Kinsey Institute, who found, for example, that

respondents who had an unusually close attachment to their mothers while they were growing up were somewhat more likely to describe themselves as having been "feminine" children . . . Beyond this point, the effects of closeness to Mother become so small as to virtually disappear. Thus, contrary to certain theoretical models, unusually close mother-son relationships in general do not appear to be important in accounting for the development of homosexuality . . . (45).

Likewise, the Kinsey group's findings were in

accord with theoretical speculations insofar as they suggest that a father perceived as relatively cold by his son is less likely to get along well with him and offers a less-appealing figure for identification. The influence of paternal traits, however, seems limited to familial relationships; their ultimate effect on a son's adult sexual preference is at best tenuous (58).

¹⁵ See Peter and Barbara Wyden, Growing Up Straight (1968), which illustrates that this theory had become widely accepted by the mid-1960s. Most advice to parents, like that of the Wydens, for raising heterosexual children is based upon Irving Bieber's homophobic study, Homosexuality (1962).

¹⁶ The word trade is defined in Bruce Rodgers' The Queens' Vernacular: "a nonreciprocal sex partner, usually straight" (199)--that is, heterosexual.

¹⁷ This phrase also occurs in A Cry of Children (1952), where it no doubt refers to Irving Berlin's popular musical Call Me Madam (1950). In the relevant passage, David Murray suggests to Isobel that they return to bed after changing the sheets. Her reply: "Well now, really. Why don't you just call me madam and be done with it?" (29).

¹⁸ The women in Djuna Barnes's Nightwood (1937) are destroyed psychologically; Mark Thornton, the main character in Blair Niles's Strange Brother (1931), shoots himself in the head; Armand, of André Tellier's Twilight Men (1931), eventually murders his father and then takes a lethal dose of morphine; Harry, in Myron Brinig's This Man Is My

Brother (1931), drowns himself; Paul Kameron ("Goldie"), of Kennilworth Bruce's Goldie (1933), is executed by hanging for the strangling murder of his son, who has also turned out to be a "pansy"; and Ken Gracey, of Lew Levenson's Butterfly Man (1934), becomes an alcoholic, catches pneumonia and a venereal disease, spends time in jail, and finally drowns by accidentally falling into the East River. Such a summary, however, is perhaps an oversimplification--as Roger Austen points out in Playing the Game--to which I am indebted for information about the last three novels mentioned here.

19 The last three paragraphs of The Cynic Faun are missing from the revised typescript. I quote here from the manuscript version at Columbia University, which contains Burns's error of numbering the last two pages of this manuscript both "89."

Chapter IV

THE LOOMIS SCHOOL, 1937-1941

A. The School and Its Headmaster

On August 19, 1937, just before his first term at the Loomis School, Jack Burns finished the first draft of The Cynic Faun --107,951 words by his count.¹ Looking back in 1946, matured and changed by his war experiences, Burns could accurately describe this earlier self:

After Harvard I found myself such a perfection of attitudes and prefabricated architectures that there wasn't much I could do in life except mould young men in my own pattern. So I went to teach English in a prep school and found myself confronted with a minor and watery despair because all the boys of the privileged families weren't so eager to Get Culture as I had been. Here I remained for five years, sipping tea and gossip and nibbling secretly at my own foundations. I suspected that eventually I'd turn into something tweedy and bluff (JHB to RH, 1 November 1946, HBC).

If headmaster Nathaniel Horton Batchelder, Sr., had had his way with Burns, "something tweedy and bluff" is no doubt what he would have become. Mr. Batchelder, who would eventually figure as one of Burns's chief bêtes noires, had initially been interested in Jack Burns precisely because he was a "perfectly green" youngster who could be molded to fit the school. In the spring of 1937, Mr. "B," as the headmaster was affectionately known to his staff, had received the resignations of English department chairman David Newton (who left to found his own

academy) and of another English teacher, Richard Ballou. In keeping with his usual procedure in such situations, Mr. B had promoted Sidney Lovett Eaton to chairman, eventually hiring Burns and another 1937 (Yale) graduate, William Rowley, to fill the vacancies.

Jack Burns was interviewed by the newly promoted Sid Eaton (SLE to MTB, 23 January 1981), who wholeheartedly recommended his being hired. In those days, Jack certainly did appear "green," as a photograph of him and Rowley in the school newspaper reveals, showing him dressed in a dark jacket with white slacks and saddle oxfords (Loomis Log, 22 September 1937: 1).² According to one of his students, Jack sported a mottled, reddish face, a somewhat bulbous nose, full lips, and bright eyes. He spoke rapidly, his ordinary discourse as elegant as if he had crafted his everyday conversation (Paul Barstow, interview with MTB, 18 July 1981).

Of course, hiring decisions were ultimately left to Mr. B, the benevolent despot, who sometimes ignored his staff's recommendations. French teacher Francis ("Frank") Olmstead Grubbs, later a well-respected Loomis headmaster himself, had, for example, been hired by Mr. B for his "personal qualities," against the advice of French department head René Chérury, who thought Grubbs's command of spoken French deficient (Frank Grubbs, interview with MTB, 13 July 1981).

With Jack Burns, Batchelder did not hesitate. Not only was Jack, in Mr. B's eyes, "probably the brightest young man he'd ever hired" (Jane Fowles Finley, interview with MTB, 13 July 1981), but Mr. B "was incensed that the Phillips Academy, of which [Burns] had been a graduate, had rejected him as an instructor solely because of his being a

Roman Catholic" (TSB to MTB, 18 January 1981). Loomis was committed to complete religious freedom: its founders, in an 1874 Act of Incorporation, had stipulated that "No officer, instructor, employee or student shall be made eligible or ineligible for or by reason of his or her religious or political opinions . . ." (Fowles 19).

In 1937, and today, the Loomis family homestead stood near the headmaster's home at the entrance to the campus. It was a clear reminder of the school's short history, which began when the five children of Colonel James Loomis--attorney and statesman James Chaffee Loomis, businessman Hezekiah Loomis, painter Osbert Burr Loomis, businessman Colonel John Mason Loomis, and Abigail Loomis Hayden--were unexpectedly reunited in 1867 by the death of James Chaffee's son, then a senior at Yale (Fowles 16-19). Together the family mourned the mutual loss of all their children and began to ponder the matter of wills.

Their decision to found a school was probably made during an 1871 family meeting in Chicago. The family reasoned that such a school could offer to other young people "the harvest" of the lives of the founders, who otherwise would leave no benefactors of the several family estates. Then, in 1874, through the influence of James Chaffee Loomis, the Connecticut legislature passed an Act of Incorporation officially establishing the Loomis Institute.

In 1900, John Mason Loomis, the last of the original founders to die, left in his will a description of the Institute as "a shrine from which boys and girls shall take the highest inspirations for better and grander lives from the best of their race who have gone before, and like them, ever keeping the banner of human progress, honor and manhood to

the front" (Fowles 21). A provision in the charter allowed Connecticut Governor George P. McLean and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Errors, Charles B. Andrews, to reconstitute the Board of Trustees. It was thus that Dwight Loomis was named the first President of the Board in 1900, to be succeeded, after a short term, by John Metcalf Taylor in 1904 (Fowles 24-25).³ James Chaffee's widow, Mary Hunt Loomis, died in 1910, after which the first buildings began to be erected.

The slow, careful process of selecting the school's first headmaster began in 1911, involving the applications of candidates from colleges, universities, teachers' agencies, boards of education, and prominent independent Eastern schools, all of which were received and sifted through by Board Secretary Emerson Taylor (Fowles 26). The hiring of Nathaniel Horton Batchelder as the school's first headmaster was therefore a decision reached after considerable deliberation, not unlike the eventual hiring of Mr. Pilkey that Burns describes in Lucifer with a Book. In Lucifer, however, Mr. Pilkey is hired primarily because Judge Hopkins III finds him to be "the personification of Flying Will," a man "as juicy with red blood as a thick steak," a man with "push, a sense of dedication and organization" who "hurled himself at life" (Lucifer 20, 21). These qualities, as much as they might describe aspects of Mr. Batchelder's real-life personality, were certainly not the foremost grounds for his hiring.

As the official Loomis historian records, "Nathaniel Batchelder was versatile, creative, a lover of the outdoors, apostle of physical fitness and tireless in the performance of daily duties. Having complete confidence in his ability to find the right solution to any problem, he

tolerated little objection to his ideas and even less to his programs" (Fowles 30). Batchelder set about at once to organize a faculty and a curriculum that might meet the founders' goals of offering education in all departments of learning, supplying students with what is necessary "for their comfort and advancement in useful knowledge" (Fowles 34). Classes began in 1914 with a faculty of seven--which was enlarged to eleven the following year (Fowles 39). And Mr. B was always quick and eager to meet the challenges presented by the new school.

The young school no doubt needed such a strong hand at its helm, despite the resentment that faculty sometimes harbored. The young Loomis definitely drew benefits from Mr. B's versatility, since "he was at the beginning the admissions officer, the guidance officer, the permissions officer, the director of studies, the principal speaker at chapel and assemblies, the coach of football, teacher of English, and the official host at school affairs" (Fowles 39). With a small faculty, a slightly larger student body, new facilities, and the approach of WWI, Loomis could not afford the expense involved in distributing such duties among a larger staff. Mr. Batchelder's enthusiasms and energy must surely have compensated for his sometimes domineering approach.

Mr. B found the time, too, in those early years, to begin a number of traditions that the young school passed down to succeeding generations at Loomis. In the beginning, social activities, especially for boarding students, centered around the headmaster's house, where the Batchelders frequently served them picnic suppers, breakfasts, and parties "with personal warmth and individual interest" (Fowles 41), a touch about which the Batchelders always hoped to boast. On Sunday

evenings, Mr. B's oral readings in his library, from Old Siwash and The Prisoner of Zenda, from Wodehouse and Kipling, soon became a long-honored Loomis tradition (Fowles 41).

Because the small size of the school's Sunday congregation prohibited the expense of a visiting pastor, Mr. B usually took the Sunday morning chapel services, all of which were nonsectarian; other masters would take turns with morning chapel during the week. As Fowles explains, "Mr. Batchelder's talks were timely, often devoted to the celebration of national holidays, and personal, as they covered moral questions such as courage in commonplace things, dependence on each other, the true spirit of athletics, Christian skepticism, the qualities for success and the need for faith, among other subjects" (Fowles 42-43). By 1915 the school had grown large enough to warrant bringing in an occasional visiting pastor. Thus began the school's long association with the Reverend Gordon Gilkey (Fowles 43), whose name may have inspired Burns to name Lucifer's headmaster "Pilkey."

In his first year as headmaster, Mr. B had also taken the initiative to establish two customs for the school's observance of the holiday season. "Thanksgiving Day became a festive occasion as Mr. Batchelder, carrying out his ideas of an 'old fashioned family day,' had games and a run to Newgate prison in the morning, and a parade of waiters, holding the turkeys, at the start of the feast. And in that first year, the Christmas service of the reading of The Christmas Carol started a tradition that Mr. Batchelder always preserved" (Fowles 41).

The Loomis Log of 10 December 1937 describes the festivities that Burns would witness during his first Christmas on campus. As usual, a

great fire in the fireplace of Mr. B's library, which was decorated by the faculty wives with streamers, little Christmas trees, and other decorations, would warm the guests. Then,

After the school has marched in and finally quieted down the court jester will burst into the library followed by two stalwarts carrying the yule log who in turn will be followed by a solemn procession of the council clad in the red badges of their office. When the yule log is lighted in the fireplace some carols will be sung and Mr. B. will start reading the Christmas Carol (Loomis Log 10 December 1937: 1).

Mr. B's performance that year would be aided by his "judicious cutting" of the text so that only the best scenes remained. Interspersed with the readings would be carol singing, "not at random but at the suggestion of the headmaster. The jester occasionally will jingle the bell that he carries, adding a touch of *je ne sais quoi* to the evening" (Loomis Log 10 December 1937: 1). At the end of the reading, another carol was to be sung, and then refreshments--ice cream and cake.

What Burns would come to think of these Loomis traditions is evident from Lucifer with a Book's Christmas scene:

Mr. Pilkey was [one of] the last surviving American[s] to plump for an Old Fashioned Christmas. . . . He decreed at term end time that Christmas should be kept at his Academy, and keep it his five hundred students and faculties did. His idea of Christmas was founded on the poem Ring Out, Wild Bells, and Dickens's Christmas Carol, which he read aloud on the twenty-fourth of every December by the hearth to his wife and to his old mother.

The Sunday before the Fall Term ended, both Schools were put through an orgy of feasting, carol singing, and sanctity as would have prostrated the hardiest Santa Claus. Mr. Pilkey staged everything but The Birth. . . .

The liturgy of this yearly festival, probably the last great noncommercial splurge in the United States, had been drawn up in the first year that Mr. Pilkey was Principal. It had been repeated every December for twenty-five years.⁴ And since nothing is to be gained by the improvement or alteration

of traditional ceremonies nothing had been added or subtracted to the rites since that first Pilgrim Christmas at the new Academy (Lucifer with a Book 142).

Playing and coaching football on fall afternoons helped Mr. B to relax from the taxing demands of his position, and his eagerness and skill were stimulating to both coaches and players (Fowles 45). In Lucifer with a Book, Burns (who loathed most sports) would eventually portray, with lurid overtones, Mr. Pilkey's love of football, as in this description of Judge Hopkins III's first encounter with him, in the presence of Mr. Pilkey's wife and mother:

The Judge was still smiling almost tenderly at the two ladies when Mr. Pilkey slammed into the drawing room, tearing off his shoulderpads and football helmet. Some of his meaty white chest under the jersey was exposed to the delicate ladies, but Mr. Pilkey didn't seem to care. . . .

Mr. Pilkey, practically undressing before the ladies, had a rich zealous voice that just went on and on. . . .

Mr. Pilkey kicked off his football shoes. He stood up and unabashedly opened his football pants, unlacing them to ventilate his crotch. Then he tossed the luxurious bangs of graying hair out of his eyes and attacked his wife and his mother. He gave smacking unsexual busses, though Judge Hopkins was positive that so masculine and lordly a man was capable of other caresses, far less genteelly connubial than these. He could be stud for a score of mistresses. And perhaps he was, for all the Judge knew (21-22).

In Lucifer with a Book, Mr. Pilkey's enthusiasm for sports is contrasted with protagonist Guy Hudson's disdain for them. The following passage, which reflects Guy's incompetence and uneasiness as a soccer coach, seems based upon Burns's own feelings and experiences:

Now it was the duty of every able-bodied male on the faculty, except Mr. Grimes, to do some coaching. Coaching meant that a man taught sportsmanship and the Will to Win every afternoon to a team of boys. . . . Mr. Pilkey had announced in the catalog how rare a thing it was to see virile

young men playing with their students. It encouraged male camaraderie and proved to boys that their teachers weren't just a bunch of bookworms. . . .

So every afternoon [Guy] got into a spotted jersey, old baseball trousers, woolen socks, and cleated shoes. And hanging a whistle round his neck and taking a Spaulding Manual under his arm, he sallied forth to discipline his soccer team --twenty or so boys not good enough for first and second squads. . . . (92).

According to Loomis alumnus Thomas S. Brush (class of 1943), now chairman of the Loomis-Chaffee Board of Trustees, Jack served Loomis as a soccer coach, only because soccer was the only team sport he was even marginally capable of coaching. Even so, he looked ridiculous on the field, and was well aware of that fact. Gradually, as a remark in this passage indicates, being repeatedly forced into an unpleasant duty made him resentful that fellow English teacher Norris Ely Orchard had been excused from coaching because of "other duties" (Thomas S. Brush, interview with MTB, 1 July 1981).

Obviously, Mr. B's ideas were sometimes not received by an enthusiastic staff. Sidney Eaton, who became an early friend to Burns, was probably one who merely tolerated Mr. B's ideas about entertainment; a letter from Burns to the lovely Jessie Adkins Eaton, then Mrs. Sidney Eaton, refers to Jack's plans to "give a few sultry house parties before the Reform Bill goes through for the fall" (JHB to JAE, 4 August 1941). As we have seen, Burns's own feelings on this subject became so strong that he caricatures in Lucifer every tradition Mr. B had worked so carefully and lovingly to institute.

Like school historian Lou Fowles, Brush believes that Mr. B was a fine headmaster: "he had been an excellent athlete in his youth, was a fine teacher, a first-rate administrator, and a splendid raconteur" (TSB

to MTB, 18 January 1981). However, even Mr. B's defenders will admit to his occasionally overbearing temperament. Brush has said, for example, that "Mr B was an imposing person, with a commanding personality and in one of his rages--which fortunately were infrequent--he was awesome. . . . Certainly he had his faults, the most notable being a self-confidence so massive that it never occurred to him that he might be mistaken" (TSB to MTB, 18 January 1981).

In a similar vein, former headmaster Frank Grubbs has explained that Mr. B always believed his own opinions to be right; but Grubbs adds that, in the long run, many of the staff often came to agree with him (Francis Olmstead Grubbs, interview with MTB, 13 July 1981). Doug McKee, another member of the English department when Burns arrived, states his feelings about Mr. Batchelder's occasional manner and temper more bluntly: "Mr. B was like God Almighty on Mt. Sinai" (Douglas Dixon McKee, interview with MTB, 11 July 1981). Howard "Squirrel" Norris, a science teacher, explains that because the continual changes in his rapidly advancing field required him to attend summer school, he had to do so, for fifteen years, at his own expense, receiving from Mr. B for this purpose perhaps a single payment of \$15 (Howard Norris, interview with MTB, 15 July 1981). Such expenses were apparently not on Mr. B's list of priorities.

Norris still recalls the environment of faculty meetings during Mr. B's administration. These meetings were always held on Monday nights in Mr. B's crowded office, where he would discourse at length on various problems, important and petty--about the cost of peas going up, about another piece of Mrs. Batchelder's sculpture being cast. For

Evelyn Longman Batchelder, in contrast to the china-painting Mrs. Pilkey of Lucifer, was a world-famous sculptor whose work graced the top of the New York AT&T building and the doors of the Annapolis Naval Academy.⁵

During these meetings, all the faculty sat facing Mr. B's desk, anxious to escape this unpleasant environment. Finally, Mr. B would ask, predictably, for their opinions: "any comments on this side?" (he would ask, looking to the left), "on this side?" (looking to the right). Of course, everyone was silent, except perhaps Norrie Orchard, no one daring to prolong the uncomfortable session any longer than Mr. B himself had seen fit (Howard Norris, interview with MTB, 15 July 1981).

B. Life on the Faculty

In August 1937 Mr. Burns, as his students knew him, moved into Stermer House, one of the outlying farmhouses that, during a campus housing shortage, Loomis had requisitioned into serving as a dormitory. As dorm master, Jack would be responsible for the activities of the boys in Stermer House and would provide counseling, supervision, and occasional admonition. Each faculty member was assigned duties as a dorm master in addition to his teaching responsibilities--unless Mr. B deemed that a particular (typically married) teacher could serve Loomis better otherwise.

During much of Burns's tenure at Loomis, the housing shortage was severe enough to disrupt daily activities. The school's historian explains:

The facilities were overcrowded and often makeshift. Most any space that could possibly house a student was pressed into use:--those famous outlying "tenant farmhouses," Maher and Stermer, rooms in master's houses in Windsor [the town in which Loomis is located], inadequate rooms on the third floor of Founders' Hall, with five students in a room . . . (Fowles 71).

One former student (class of 1943) recalls that in Founders Third, a freshman dormitory, sometimes as many as 6 to 8 students shared one large room (Paul Barstow, interview with MTB, 18 July 1981). And a fictionalized account of life as a Loomis student during the 1940s, in Alfred Duhrrssen's novel, Memoir of an Aged Child, describes the narrator's dorm room as

a wooden cubicle, containing an iron bed and commode, a table and chair. If I stay here long enough, I am told, I shall have a room with walls going up to the ceiling. . . . (Duhrssen 114).

The gradual addition of new facilities helped ease the housing crunch; Palmer Hall, for example, was a new dormitory whose construction was completed in 1938 (Fowles 74).

The crowding in Founders' Hall was intensified because of its multiple uses. Until 1940, when the Counting House was built east of Warham Hall, Founders housed the Loomis business offices (Fowles 74). But worse than that, until 1941, that building also housed the school's biology lab, which filled the entire building with various odors from its second-floor location. As Fowles explains, "the whole school suffered as the smells from poorly ventilated laboratories seeped through classrooms and offices in Founders Hall and wafted over the quadrangle" (Fowles 110). One wonders what attending daily chapel in Founders, or using its study hall, must have been like.

To some, these continuing difficulties indicated that Mr. B was unable to keep up with a rapidly changing society. It seemed the school was run by a small, close-knit family, composed primarily of the headmaster, his wife, and the inner circle of the original (or at least long-time) faculty. New faculty members soon learned they had entered a school that, for the most part, operated socially and administratively in the 1930s and 1940s as it had when the first classes were offered in 1914.

In 1937, when Burns came to Loomis, the faculty and staff of over 20 years' tenure included René Chérut (French), Howard Morse (business

manager), Ulric Brower Mather (mathematics), Joseph Goodrich (agriculture), Miss Eva Edwards (manager of the infirmary), and Miss Josephine Belding (Mr. B's secretary). In addition, J. Edmund Barss (classics), Knowler Mills (Latin), William Cogswell Card (music), Ernest William Evenson (business), Robert Walter Hoskins (history), and Arthur Norman Sharp (French and German) had worked there almost as long as these.

Fellow English teacher Norris Ely Orchard--the "model" for Philbrick Grimes,⁶ Lucifer's other arch-villain--volunteered to show Jack around campus, hoping to make the new teacher comfortable with the school and welcome him to the staff. Despite being only four years Jack's senior, "Norrie" (Loomis class of '29; Yale class of '33) was very much the "old hand" at Loomis; like Burns, he had been hired "fresh" out of college. However, Norrie had required little additional grooming by Mr. B, since he had long been accustomed to the school's protocol and politics.

For some reason, Jack took an immediate dislike to Norrie, although he seldom displayed these feelings openly until publishing Lucifer with a Book. Sidney Eaton, who then served as the English department chairman and who became an early friend of Jack's, has this explanation of Burns's manner with his fellow teachers at Loomis: "He did form decisive opinions of colleagues whom he honored or scorned and could be outspokenly caustic in speaking about (or to) those of whom he disapproved. In the main, though, he avoided confrontations with the disliked and associated with those he felt at ease with" (SLE to MTB, 20 December 1980).

Burns's prewar tact, of course, was partly to blame for the shocked

reaction at Loomis when Lucifer with a Book was published in 1949, after Burns's second tenure as an English teacher there. Even today, those who remember him from his prewar years speculate about the "change" in Jack Burns, not knowing that he probably held some low opinions about Loomis and private education in general--even before WWII. Then, when Lucifer was published, they began at once to see themselves in Burns's characters, even when to do so was ridiculous and painful. A portion of the shock must lie at the feet of those who insisted on doubting themselves or who, by accident of their position at Loomis-Chaffee, felt that a character--utterly unlike them--was an unfair portrait. For despite the obvious similarities between, for example, Norrie Orchard and Philbrick Grimes, the fact remains that Lucifer with a Book was a work of fiction.

In some ways Jack and Norrie had too much in common; their personalities grated against one another. Both had an active interest in the arts--music, drama, and literature, particularly. At Loomis, both were able to acquire a coterie of admiring boys who enlivened their classes and flattered their tender egos. At one point during Jack and Norrie's prewar "friendship," they even co-authored an article, which is said to have been published in a leading ladies' magazine.⁷ Yet Burns was a rebel, whereas Orchard was a conformist. Burns needed to lead, Orchard to follow. Burns was learning to accept himself and his sexuality more fully, whereas he felt that Orchard's bachelorhood (and apparent "male virginity") represented a repressed sexuality. Eventually, too, jealousy would scar their professional relationship.

A much closer friend to Burns, from the start of that first fall

term, was Douglas Dixon McKee, another bachelor member of the English Department. Doug's temperament complemented Jack's: Doug enjoyed Jack's witty conversation, while Jack admired Doug's good-natured charm. As Jessie Adkins Eaton explains, "They were very good friends. They were both very keen mentally, [and] concerned people--very witty--& people of feeling" (JAE to MTB, 16 March 1981). Yet Doug and Jack were different enough to enjoy each other without kindling anxieties and frustrations into outright hostility, unlike Jack and Norrie.

Doug got along well with both his colleagues, although he was closer to Jack, partly because both men loved to play the piano and could do so exceptionally well. Burns and McKee liked to entertain faculty and students at chapel and other school gatherings with pieces they had worked out together, or that Jack had arranged especially for four hands. Everyone enjoyed their rendition of Ravel's "Mother Goose Suite" so well that the two men were invited to perform it publically the following spring--for the annual alumni dinner at the Hotel Woodstock in New York City (Loomis Log 8 March 1938: 1, 3). By November 1937, their friendship was well known, even at other New England preparatory schools, as is demonstrated by a reference in the Pawling Record (see Loomis Log 3 December 1937: 3).

According to Thomas Brush, "Norrie liked to read aloud to his students and he did so very well. He was a natural actor and mimic and had not been at Loomis long before he was in charge of virtually all the dramatic productions mounted at the school" (TSB to MTB, 10 May 1981).⁸ Doug McKee, as head of the Stagehands' Union (the student group he founded in 1939 to work on set design and production), often collabo-

rated with Norrie Orchard on the school's dramatic offerings. And when Jack Burns's musical talents began to be displayed and received enthusiastically at Loomis, Jack, too, began to collaborate with Norrie, who generally served as director. Jack's role would typically consist of assisting musical director and school organist William Cogswell Card with music. Gradually he began to write and arrange incidental music for various productions.

The first of these musical collaborations saw the curtain rise in November 1937, during Burns's first semester at Loomis: it was Under the Gaslight, which was produced as a faculty play, the Loomis-Chaffee faculties taking most of the major roles (Loomis Log 25 November 1937: 3). Orchard, Burns, and Card worked together so often that they began sometimes to refer to themselves as the D'Oyly Carte Players. This nickname was appropriate, for their range indeed included a number of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas--Trial by Jury (May 1939), The Sorcerer (April 1940), Cox and Box (May 1941), and H.M.S. Pinafore (December 1941)--in addition to Bury the Dead (March 1938), Uncle Tom's Cabin (November 1940), and Green Pastures (March and April 1941). Doug McKee, because his work with the Stagehands' Union was neutral to the acting and music, was simply overlooked. Meanwhile, Burns's role in the productions slowly grew. After an initial period of serving primarily as Dr. Card's assistant, for example in the musical direction of Trial by Jury, he took on more and more responsibilities. Eventually, the Loomis-Chaffee production of Pinafore turned out to be almost entirely Burns's creation.

Mr. B was no doubt pleased to learn of Burns's musical talents,

since he occasionally employed his teachers in the teaching of subjects in which they had little or no formal training, but for which he detected some aptitude. For example, Robert Hoskins, hired immediately after earning his bachelor's degree in economics, had taught history instead, eventually retiring as chairman of the History Department. Likewise, Thomas Finley, who had studied history in college, spent his years at Loomis teaching mathematics, including chairing that department (Robert Hoskins, interview with MTB, 16 July 1981).

Even in his first year at Loomis, Mr. B began to put Jack's other talents in music and Latin to use for the school. When Mr. Card was ill or away from the campus, for example, Jack would teach music appreciation at Chaffee, the girls' school (Barbara Erickson, interview with MTB, 15 July 1981). Fortunately, since Jack appears to have been unsure of his abilities in Latin, Mr. B did not require him to teach that subject beyond the 1937-38 school year.

Living in Stermer House isolated Burns somewhat, since the old farmhouse was a good distance from the quadrangle. Jack entertained himself during those first years--and got to know some of the faculty better--by joining the Hartford Madrigal Society; Squirrel Norris, Sid Eaton, and Walter Schwinn also participated in the weekly trips into Hartford to sing madrigals (Howard Norris, interview with MTB, 15 July 1981). Occasionally, Jack would take off alone for a trip into Hartford or Boston--to attend the symphony, visit his family, or socialize with friends. These opportunities were sometimes rare, since Mr. B had a tendency to create "action" whenever there was "a pause in the day's occupation" (Fowles 85), but the excursions away from campus were there--

fore even better appreciated.

Because Jack was one of the few bachelors on the faculty (the others being, at that time, Doug, Norrie, and Squirrel), the married faculty sometimes worried about his being lonely. The occasional faculty parties he attended, none of which resembled those described in Lucifer with a Book (see, for example, the party given by the Launcelot Millers in Lucifer, 249-267), were offered partly for the benefit of the unmarried faculty. The Eatons, who held cocktail parties now and then, also enjoyed having Jack Burns and Doug McKee entertain with impromptu four-hand recitals on their small grand piano (Sidney Eaton, interview with MTB, 18 July 1981).

Both Jack and Doug had pianos too, and Howard Norris recalls several occasions, at term's end, when the three bachelors would gather in one of their apartments for a few beers. Since both Jack and Doug could read music perfectly, this trio would often sing and play their way through an entire opera score, staying up until 2 or 3 in the morning. Unless a given aria was too high, it was taken by the appropriate voice, for Jack was a tenor, Doug a baritone, and Squirrel a bass (Howard Norris, interview with MTB, 15 July 1981).

Jessie Adkins Eaton recalls, from this period, a trip to the circus with Jack and Doug that brings back "hilarious memories": "Jack had never been to a circus before & his remarks made the evening" (JAE to MTB, 23 January 1981). Jack considered Jessie to be a "sympathetic confidante," according to Sidney Eaton (SLE to MTB, 2 January 1981). Mrs. Eaton agrees, explaining that she "knew Jack as a warm, caring, sensitive person and friend, an idealist, [with a] marvelous sense of humour,

witty, brilliant and like Jane Austen, amused by people's foibles" (JAE to MTB, 23 January 1981). "We went in," she writes, "for 'picturesque speech' which makes things more fun" (JAE to MTB, 16 March 1981).

Another former Loomis master recalls that Burns preferred intimate groups, where his wit would sparkle, to larger crowds: "John would come out of his shell in the presence of one or two admiring young faculty wives who appreciated his wit or in the company of Norrie Orchard, a similarly brilliant bachelor English teacher with whom John could enjoy a rapid exchange of cracks" (John Dorman to MTB, 27 May 1981). There were times, of course, when the barbed repartée in which Burns liked to engage would sting. Sidney Eaton, as department chairperson, remembers several occasions when the exchanges between Norrie Orchard and Jack Burns during departmental faculty meetings were sharp enough to be embarrassing (SLE to MTB, 20 December 1980).

In the fall of 1937, Burns was asked to be the accompanist for the Glee Club, in which capacity he served the school until being drafted into WWII.⁹ In December (as discussed in Chapter II) an excerpt from one of Burns's unpublished novels, Learn Valour, Child, was printed in the Loomis literary magazine, the Loom. Such a demonstrated interest in creative writing may have occasioned Burns's being selected (by Mr. B) to act as judge, along with Frank and Frances Grubbs and the Ralph Brittons, for the 1938 Loom-Faculty Prize Contest for Short Stories and Poems (Loomis Log 27 May 1938: 1).

Because Frank Grubbs taught French and Spanish, and Ralph Delaplaine Britton taught science, in addition to serving as Loomis' admissions and testing officer, Jack must have puzzled over this group of

judges: What had faculty wives to do with awarding prizes for literary merit? Why was such a decision not made by members of the English department? In any event, his apparent disdain for such a process of awarding prizes and judging contests at Loomis is reflected in the manner in which honors are awarded in Lucifer with a Book--capriciously, illogically, unfairly (see Lucifer 240-243, 334-335).¹⁰

The hurricane that struck New England in the fall of 1938 interrupted classes during Burns's second year at Loomis and vacated the campus; those connected with the school that year remember the difficulties involved in restoring order after the floods subsided (see Fowles 77-79). That spring (1939) the barn theater was finally completed, allowing Loomis' dramatic productions a stage of their own. They were finally able to abandon the temporary stage in the Founders Hall study hall that had been used for this purpose for 21 years. The last production in the old theater, staged that spring, was Androcles and the Lion, directed by Orchard and McKee (Fowles 74).

Also during the 1938-39 school year, Mr. Burns seems to have begun sharing more of his unpublished novels with his students, as the following veiled note from "Little Known Facts," the Log's gossip column, indicates: "Mr. Burns has just written a new book entitled: 'Prep School Boys Do Amuse Me So Much.' Mr. Burns certainly enjoys the life from what we can see. We hope he got as big a laugh out of writing it as we do from reading it" (Loomis Log 28 April 1939: 2). Available evidence does not indicate, of course, that Burns had at that time written a novel dealing with prep-school life.

Alfred Duhrssen's novel, again, contains a passage that further mystifies the facts:

Mr. Burney is writing a novel about this school which, he claims, will cause him to be fired. Sometimes he invites me into his room and shows me other novels he's written, one every summer, he says, during his vacation. He has given me the key to his apartment and I go there when he is away on weekends, read the books on the shelves, and listen to his phonograph (121 -122).

The verifiable truth is this: Duhrssen (Loomis class of 1943) was a first-year student during the 1939-40 school year, so he was not at Loomis in 1947, when Burns actually began to write Lucifer with a Book. However, Burns was already forming, in those early years, some of the opinions that would eventually be recorded in Lucifer with a Book. Burns indeed encouraged students to enjoy his vast record collection and his books, as Paul Barstow has testified (Paul Barstow to MTB, 9 December 1980). A mystery, therefore, remains: Could it be that--despite the absence of other evidence--Burns had begun to toy with the idea of writing Lucifer as early as 1939?

C. What Wondrous Life! A Fragment

Instead of pursuing the notion of writing something based on his experiences at Loomis--if indeed Burns had such a notion in those days--Burns began, during the summer of 1939, a novel entitled "What Wondrous Life!"--dedicated to David ("Dave") MacMackin, who had just completed his first year as a Loomis student.¹¹ A quotation in the typescript of two stanzas (the fifth and sixth) of Andrew Marvell's "The Garden" indicates that the unfinished novel's title refers to this poem. The relevance of Marvell's poem to "What Wondrous Life!" is unclear, however, since only the first 20 pages of the novel appear to be extant, those ending in mid-sentence; perhaps they are all that Burns wrote of this novel. Under such conditions, interpreting Burns's purposes must remain difficult and speculative, although a few observations are possible.

"What Wondrous Life!" concerns a Catholic family named McKitchen, who live in Boston. The fragmentary first chapter introduces Mother McKitchen, an alcoholic, self-pitying invalid; pig-tailed Jobiska ("Pobble"), the youngest child and apparently the main character, who seems to be the only normal (and selfless) member of the family; Cathie, the oldest daughter, who smokes and nurses a hangover acquired during the previous evening's date with a Yale graduate named Roy, "a bull on an idyll"; son Leland, who is discovered nearly naked in the garden, passed out from his evening's alcoholic activities; and middle daughter Geneva, who--since her family won't allow her to join a convent--"had taken a vow never again to wear lay clothes, and had rigged herself up vestments of heavy-duty bath towels, executing a wide pleated skirt, a snug

bodice, a prim veil and wimple about the temples" (18).

On what appears to be early Saturday morning, seventeen-year-old Jobiska is busily preparing and serving coffee and toast for her mother and sister Cathie when a stocky sailor appears at the screen door. Asking for Leland, the red-haired sailor wishes to return a five-dollar bill and gabardine reversible that he had stolen from him the night before. The sailor claims to have had a change of heart, enough to cause him to take the coat for a cleaning before returning it. He asks Jobiska to "tell [her] brother I hope to see him real soon..." (7).

The reader gradually realizes that Leland must be homosexual, and that his family doesn't know. When the sailor leaves "in a puff of apologies," Jobiska feels--along with certain readers--"the cheated, yearning emotion of one who has seen a play the conventions of which he is unfamiliar with" (7). While her mother calls to inquire about the man at the door, Jobiska dashes upstairs to find "the frigid correctness of these rooms of Leland's . . . the creamy wall paper and the wide perfect Velasquez and El Greco cardinals and monks ordered about his walls . . . the wide bed and the unpressured damask of the bedspread" (8). Leland has obviously been out the entire night.

On "a little delicate hunch," Jobiska whips out the door and down the garden path, where she find Leland "dead drunk," inert amidst the rhododendrons and "wearing nothing but a pair of purple shorts." Asleep, her brother looks every bit of his twenty-five years, "but although his mask theoretically was down, Leland McKitchen was still withholding something of himself as he lay there, lolling, snoring, sweating, drunk" (9). She wakes him up, and as he is confessing to having

"spent a great deal of money last night and lost an expensive coat," she tells him about the sailor's visit.

He seems "to wink instantly," and then he conjures up a lie to explain the awkward situation: "Little sister, the navy, the dear tender fickle navy, is constantly trying to recruit me. The navy needs men, you know. And ain't I honestly got a beautiful body?" (11). Jobiska feels "a wild desire to tear down this whole stage of things, and show it up for the farce it was -- just a three-walled illusion anyhow" (11). Brother and sister return into the house, separately, and without further discussion of the peculiar situation.

Cathie is introduced next, as Jobiska serves her breakfast. After Jobiska leaves, Geneva comes in to complain about Cathie's overindulgence of the night before, reminding her that she has committed a mortal sin. The two older sisters are arguing as the typescript comes to an abrupt halt. Mother McKitchen is sipping her cognac upstairs, still impatiently inquiring about the person at the door. Jobiska has disappeared to return downstairs, we suppose, and Leland into his immaculate bedroom. Who could say where the plot would lead?

Burns, in this novel, has returned to conventional characters--after the gaudy excesses of The Cynic Faun. The McKitchen family is singularly eccentric, to be sure. But their psychology is more realistic here than in The Cynic Faun; they seem more believable, more fully imagined as characters, despite the brevity of the text.

Burns's language, too, is more controlled in "What Wondrous Life!" than in the earlier novel. The familiar baroque imagery of Burns's fiction is present, along with slang and affected dialogue. A few of his

metaphors are worth recording, for the sake of indicating his gradual growth as a writer:

And she [Jobiska] poured the viscous coffee from its globular retort into a slim coffee pot, overbred and slender; for its silver had been beaten from an inscrutably extensive ancestry (1).

Jobiska planted the breakfast on the night table. Sitting on the sweltering sheets she went dutifully through the ancient ritual of prying Cathie's eyes apart. Soon they were looking up at her through the severed lids, doll-like agates, void and silly when you couldn't see the rest of Cathie's face, which was under Jobiska's hands like a walnut in a nutcracker (14).

Jobiska had a sordid suspicion that a well-bred girl with a hangover wasn't any more prepossessing than a Steig housewife standing at a window in her corset. Cathie was certainly a chromo right now (14).

Geneva's mouth tightened into a hyphen of incoherence (19).

D. A Hypnotic Coterie: Making Friends and Influencing People

Sometime during the 1939-40 school year, Burns was "hypnotized" by a magician who entertained the students, faculty, and staff. A photograph in the yearbook (the Loomisscellany) of 1940 shows Mr. Burns being levitated during the magic act. The boys enjoyed this willing victimization immensely, and Jack seems to have borne it all in good humor. Before long, he was featured in one of the Log's "Little Known Facts" columns:

Perhaps the most versatile fellow on the Island [Loomis is located on an "island" formed by the junctures of the Connecticut and Farmington Rivers] is that gay nut from Barcelona, Jahn [sic] Faulkner . . . Ever since that Indian jumped on Mr. Burns's rigid stomach cousin John [Burns] has been toying with the idea of 1) becoming a great lover, 2) becoming the great lover. Since neither of these has met with any success, John bought a book on hypnotism and went to town. Having successfully put the whole Political Club to sleep in three easy lessons, he turned his attention to [Paul] Barstow who has not been quite the same since. . . . (Loomis Log, 11 May 1940: 7).

Paul Barstow himself (class of 1943) further explains the significance of hypnotism to the boys of Loomis with whom he was friends, describing the activities in the room of a Loomis student who had "effeminate mannerisms of speech and gesture and a self-conscious 'aesthetic' bent": "At school, in his room, some of us would practice 'hypnotism' on each other with marvelous effect (You had to be simpatico.), including the dangerous but inevitably successful 'post-hypnotic suggestion'" (Barstow, "Tardy Valentines" 5). Again, in Alfred Duhrrssen's fictionalized account of Loomis life, we find more suggestions of hypnotism and

its importance to Mr. Burns and his "simpatico" students:

After supper a few of us go to Mr. Burney's room, and after drinking black tea, we turn tables in the dark. We have hypnotized Mr. Burney and no one knows what to do with him. We swung a gold watch on the end of a chain in front of his eyes and told him to go to sleep. He threw his arms around himself in a self-embrace and began to sweat and tremble; then his body became rigid and his movements more and more violent and jerky. He subsided into a trance and everyone looked at him, half amazed, half embarrassed.

Suddenly I say, "We have to ask him a question."

"Ask him if he's a virgin," someone suggests.

Hess walks up to him and looks into his eyes.

"Are you a fag?" he asks and Mr. Burney answers Yes.

"Stop this! Wake him up!"

A boy runs up to him and begins shaking him. He rolls onto the floor, his rubicund face turns white, and he begins to froth at the mouth.

"He's an epileptic!" Hess cries triumphantly.

"Where am I?" Mr. Burney mutters. "What have I said?"

"You haven't said anything, Mr. Burney" (Dührssen 125).

The references to homosexuality in these accounts of hypnotism are not surprising. Krafft-Ebing had remarked in Psychopathia Sexualis that, in cases of "antipathic sexuality," "a method of mental treatment --hypnotic suggestion--is all that can really benefit the patient" (450). The doctor had even reported several cases where hypnotic suggestion seems to have turned a man away from homosexual tendencies, such as the case of "Mr. von X" (455-459). It may even be true that one of the books Burns consulted (assuming that the Log account is factual) was Krafft-Ebing's An Experimental Study in the Domain of Hypnotism (1893), mentioned in Psychopathia Sexualis and containing detailed descriptions of the doctor's experiments with a particularly susceptible patient. Needless to say, whether any incident similar to that in Dührssen's novel actually occurred, we can not be certain.

It is clear, however, that Burns was beginning to establish a following among the boys, as were his colleagues in the English Department, Doug McKee and Norrie Orchard. Perhaps the boys were attracted to them because they were, like the students, bachelors. Perhaps their relative youth was an attraction. Perhaps it was their wit, their fun-loving spirit. There was the time when, for example, Burns and McKee had teamed up, daring Mr. B to call them onto the carpet, in a prank on the headmaster's secretary, Miss Josephine Belding. An absent-minded and disorganized woman (Thomas Brush, interview with MTB, 1 July 1981), Miss Belding went into the women's restroom one day, only to find that the lid of the seat was up! (Douglas McKee, interview with MTB, 11 July 1981). This incident, engineered as an experiment attempting to propel her into an epileptic fit, was no doubt Jack Burns's inspiration.

And there was the time when all three men encouraged, during those innocent prewar years, the formation of an underground student group, the Oliver Trisiddien Society, the school intellectuals' way of expressing their disdain for the athletes. The group let out rumors that they were starting a ballet company, and then one day danced to Daphnis and Chloe, holding grapes between their teeth and dressed in togas (Henry Brøul, interview with MTB, 27 July 1981).

In any event, the evidence so much belies the truth of the following passage from Lucifer with a Book, which claims that Guy Hudson held great disdain for such "salons," that--even apart from its sexual overtones--it seems downright malicious:

Boys had favorite teachers whom they sought to know more intimately than was possible in class. . . . Mrs. Launcelot Miller [a faculty wife in Lucifer] copped most of the athletic lions. . . .

Guy Hudson had heard most of the blazing coterie of Doctor Sour,¹² a closed corporation with entree by invitation only. Here came boys not sure of their sex, athletes desirous of raising their grades, and those young bullies who rejoiced to have a motherly and fussy ear bent to their experimental thuggeries. . . .

And Mr. Philbrick Grimes had a small but choice salon. Because he was himself a wit, he could tolerate only those students whom he considered Amusing. Mr. Grimes's idea of a gifted eighteen-year-old was one who talked like the prose of Katharine Brush.¹³ His boys were expected to be brittle and disillusioned. . . .

Guy Hudson saw that the professional coaches had salons too, though perhaps they should be called gymnasias. The burly cigar-smoking coaches¹⁴ were frequented by those boys who would never dream of being seen in the company of most teachers. . . .

Guy Hudson alone kept no salon. It seemed to him a little unfair and more than a little incestuous for a man to surround himself with a circle of doting boys half his own age. These salons were an unconscious cry of protest against the social ostracism and the false security of the American teacher. . . . To Guy Hudson's eye all these faculty cliques with students had an air of repressed vampirism. They were a phenomenon not to be seen in the outside world, where men must keep company with their equals and contemporaries (131-132).

It seems that most students during those years began gradually to drift toward one or another of two popular English teachers: Norrie Orchard or Jack Burns. Perhaps the two men were unaware that their students' attraction to them might eventually result in rivalry. Some students--as students will--remained antagonistic to one teacher, and on good terms with the other. The nature of human relationships makes such a situation predictable, particularly since the two teachers were equally brilliant and equally energetic.

Today these students tend to recall their two favorite English teachers from Loomis in similar terms. Thomas Brush says, for example, about Norrie Orchard:

Orchard taught English and also a course on the Bible as literature, and I think I learned more from him than from any other one teacher in all my years in school and college (including graduate school). He was a meticulous grammarian and a master of punctuation (TSB to MTB, 10 May 1981).

In a similar passage, a former Loomis student, the novelist David L. Goodrich, has praised Jack Burns as a teacher:

John Horne Burns taught me English at Loomis, and was the best teacher I ever had in any subject, there, before, or later (at Yale) -- an inspiration, a stimulus, a friend . . . I happen to be a writer, and thank him for what he taught me, in the classroom and "by example" (David L. Goodrich to MTB, 26 November 1980).

In the classroom, Burns was an inspiring and challenging teacher. As Paul Barstow has explained, "We aspired to his immense sophistication. His classes were exciting, and his literary enthusiasms were infectious. . . . He skillfully encouraged my understanding of music and my love of literature" (Paul Barstow to MTB, 9 December 1980). Likewise, former Loomis headmaster Frank Grubbs felt that Burns knew how to teach the boys to write and to appreciate literature (Frank Grubbs, interview with MTB, 13 July 1981). And former Chaffee headmistress Barbara Erickson has recalled that Burns was always prompt in returning corrected papers to his students (Barbara Erickson, interview with MTB, 15 July 1981). Former Loomis student Taylor Mead has said that Burns's

class was brilliant and I could hardly wait to get to it. He taught us that Napoleon was a woman and Queen Elizabeth was a man and made such bold and sassy statements about everybody it was a tonic. Of course I never know when someone is putting me on so I swallowed hook line and sinker. I believe the one time he didn't like something I wrote was a portrait of a Burns-like teacher who taught that elephants wrote the bible, and god was a transvestite or some such thing (probably had never heard of transvestite then) [Taylor Mead to MTB, 7 March 1982].¹⁵

As a teacher, though, Burns was also "paradoxically caustic and encouraging. He ruthlessly mocked ineptitude and inelegance" (Paul Barstow to MTB, 9 December 1980). "Squirrel" Norris also has described Burns's impatience with the stupid, dull, or hesitant, recalling that on the yellow reports to advisors, Burns could completely characterize each student, good or bad, in a single sentence, often comparing them to famous poets or novelists (Howard Norris, interview with MTB, 15 July 1981).¹⁶ Thomas Brush recalls an incident in which Burns ridiculed one boy during class; the boy controlled his reactions until class was dismissed, and then, unaware that he was not alone in the hallway, he burst into tears (Thomas S. Brush, interview with MTB, 1 July 1981). Taylor Mead claims that Mr. Burns had a cruel streak:

I remember a midyear junior examination in English. It was "write 500 lines of poetry from memory," and even though Jack told us that would be the exam and I wrote lines of some poems on my sleeves it turned me off poetry for 30 years or more (Taylor Mead to MTB, 7 March 1982).

Once again, Thomas Brush's memory of specific incidents and details provides further information about Burns's relationship with his students. Brush recalls, for example, an incident involving a somewhat "slow" boy, fat and unlikeable because of his severe acne, who--before turning in to Mr. Burns a story he had written--asked for Brush's criticisms of it. (Brush was editor of the Loomis Log at that time.)

The story concerned an English teacher who couldn't bear the literature before the Victorian period. In the course of the plot, a student independently discovers and falls in love with Whitman's Leaves of

Grass, eventually persuading the teacher to read it. As a result, and despite the debate about whether Whitman ought to be classified as Romantic or Victorian, the teacher finds he enjoys Whitman, and apparently modifies his previous opinions.

Brush had criticized the student's story harshly, making him re-write it three times before he declared it suitable for submission in Burns's class. A day or two later, Burns saw Brush in the hallway, and told him, "I gave your story a D." Even though Brush explained the situation, Burns never believed him (Thomas Brush, interview with MTB, 1 July 1981).

Another incident that stands out in Brush's memory involves his later role as editor of the Loom. Sometime in 1940 Mr. Burns had stopped him in the hallway, saying he had something to show him.

He handed me a sonnet (Shakespearean) written by one of his students, this having been an assignment to the entire class. It was, I do believe, the worst poem I have ever seen. (All that remains of it in my memory is that, to rhyme with the word "be" the poor fellow had written, "If thou thinkest so, my dear, wrong art thee.") It was laughable. What was not laughable, however, was that Burns actually wanted me, as editor, to publish this wretched composition in the Loom [the school literary magazine]. I of course refused and continued to refuse in spite of his insistence. "Mr. Burns," I expostulated, "you can't do this to a boy. It would make him the laughing-stock of the whole school. It's cruel."

"But it's so funny," he said (Thomas S. Brush to MTB, 10 May 1981).

During this period, some people at Loomis wondered whether Burns was an appropriate role model for the students. Brush recalls, for example, that Mr. Burns seemed to enjoy shocking his students, both in and out of class. He claims that in the dining room Burns once made a disclosure of the sort that "kids that age find . . . extremely unset-

tling[.] Stories about him would circulate rapidly" (TSB to MTB, 10 May 1981). At that time, Burns was generally careful to keep his personal life separate from his professional life. However, several Loomis people recall that Burns sometimes taught "racy" books in his classrooms, and that Mr. B received a parental complaint about one assigned text--perhaps a novel by James T. Farrell (Thomas Finley, interview with MTB, 13 July 1981).

Frank Grubbs wonders whether what he called Burns's habitually snide outlook and speech offered the boys an appropriate role model, further commenting that Burns "must have thought the boys should not be prudish at all" (Frank Grubbs, interview with MTB, 13 July 1981). On this subject, Grubbs has been more frank with Thomas Brush, as the following quotation from one of his letters demonstrates:

I find that I have not said anything about Burns except to call him a bastard. Maybe that's enough. He was a repulsive person and all I can say is that Mr. B sometimes made a mistake in his selection of teachers--but Jack made a good impression in a superficial interview with MTB (Frank Grubbs, quoted in a letter from TSB to MTB, 18 January 1981).

On the other hand, some students, as has previously been demonstrated, found Mr. Burns to be a refreshing and challenging teacher, worthy of their emulation. Former Loomis student Paul Barstow, mentioned in the Log's account of Burns's hypnotic interests, has been willing to speak on behalf of one such segment of Burns's "salon":

He was one of only two good teachers I recall from what was for me a vulgar approximation of Dante's Inferno, where not Pride or Avarice but Latin and geometry made me feel stupid as well as wicked. When I pored over the Doré engravings, covertly marveling at the sinuous forms so curiously desexualized, I thought of Mr. Burns as an angel from across the great gulf fixed.

At least a few of us "knew" Mr. Burns was homosexual, like us, if we, indeed, were. And that was immensely significant, at least to me, because he was a fine and greatly gifted man whom I liked and deeply respected--the only "positive role model" during an appropriately appalling adolescence. Perhaps, he could have been my Virgil, after all (Paul Barstow to MTB, 9 December 1980; see also "Tardy Valentines").

Little is known about Burns's writing during this period. Jessie Adkins Eaton recalls reading only one of Burns's unpublished novels--"one he dedicated to us [to her and Sidney Eaton]" (JAE to MTB, 16 March 1981)--but no such novel has yet come to light. A letter to Mrs. Eaton from Burns, dated 4 August 1941, remarks that he spent some of his summer doing "a good deal of work on View the Corpse, which is half-finished." Perhaps this novel, which even Burns's family knows nothing about, is the one Mrs. Eaton remembers. There have also been hints about an early novel that Burns entitled Your Quaint Honor, the title of which would no doubt have originated in a line from Andrew Marvell's famous poem, "To His Coy Mistress." It may turn out to be the case, as I suspect, that these two works are in reality one and the same.

During his last prewar semester at Loomis, one of Burns's methods for encouraging bright students to appreciate literature involved his advisorship of the school literary magazine, the Loom, in which capacity he began to serve in the fall of 1941, by sponsoring literary "teas" in his room at five o'clock every Wednesday afternoon ("Club Notes," Loomis Log 10 October 1941: 4). The December 1941 issue of the Loom includes a "fictionalized" description of one of these afternoons, this apparently being a day during which there was no business to conduct:

I went up the three flights and turned left down the corridor. As I approached the door at the end of the hall, I

heard strains of a Strauss waltz; it was familiar, but I couldn't remember its name.

. . . inside were several other boys comfortably relaxing, accepting the master's hospitality. I had barely glanced around when our host greeted me with: "Why, how do you do! Won't you sit down and have a cup of tea?" . . .

The tea was hot; it was good. . . . He changed the phonograph record. Two boys were stretched out on the floor, leaning on their elbows and sipping tea. Another sat on a wooden chair looking over a magazine, and another one was slumped down on the divan, his back against the wall, with his hands folded, his legs crossed, and his eyes half closed. . . .

We all listened to Verdi's Otello as our host corrected papers. . . .

I finished my tea. We were listening to the beautiful death song of Desdemona. . . . (Sebastian Di Mauro, "Wednesday Afternoon," The Loom, December 1941: 3).

The tranquility of this scene, which one could only assume describes a typical afternoon in Mr. Burns's apartment, provides an instructive contrast to the frenzied "tea" in Lucifer with a Book in the room of the Abbot and the Abbess, and culminating in the boys' frenzy (see Lucifer 188-197).

Under Burns's advisorship, the Loom published a variety of excellent poetry and fiction, much of which was homoerotic in tone, if not plot. There was, for example, in the first issue of 1941 (November) a poem entitled "Life," by Robert Griggs, containing the sentiment that one's standing determines "if you're happy, or just gay" (4). There was a homoerotic vignette by Alfred Duhrssen, entitled "A Little From Everywhere," which celebrates an afternoon on the beach with a friend (5).

And there was a scandalous portrayal of "two delightfuls," Georgianna Grigowicz and Christine Schwartz, shopgirls in the lingerie section of a ten-cent store, who discuss the customers as they go about their work (8). This story, entitled "The Real Stuff" and written by Taylor Mead, was censored by the administration because it portrayed a

rich woman inquiring, "My deah gels, can you show me where the toilet seats are?" The final version was eventually sanitized to read, "where the bird cages are" (Taylor Mead, telephone conversation with MTB, 25 January 1982), although the camp of the narrative could not be so easily eliminated.

Taylor Mead turns up again in the next (December) issue of the Loom with a short piece entitled "Intermezzo" (9), a veiled portrait of two homosexuals "talking" in a redwood forest. In this December issue is also Robert Lewis Purinton's homoerotic poem, "Poor Wand'ring One" (7), addressed to a nonspecific "you" and making the offer that

when you have learned your lesson
from other, later loves,
you may come and rest your head on
my brother's breast and weep.

And so the years continued to pass--until the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Only six weeks before that fateful day, which plunged the United States into a war that some historians believe it had tried long to avoid, Burns had been asked by a Log reporter to give his opinion about the country's neutrality. In answer to the question "Should we go to war?" Mr. Burns had said, "Absolutely no. Because: (a) If we go to war we will come out bankrupt. (b) We are defeating a unification of Europe which will come sooner or later anyhow. (c) I am a pacifist. (d) I don't want to be shot" ("Inquiring Reporter," Loomis Log 25 October 1941: 5). Of course, Burns--like almost all able-bodied American men--would soon be serving the military forces of his country, eventually to be flown overseas into the embattled lands about which, previously, he had only been able to theorize.

Knowing that he was being drafted and scheduled to begin basic training in early 1942, Burns threw his energies into the upcoming Loomis-Chaffee production of Gilbert and Sullivan's H.M.S. Pinafore. Norrie Orchard handled the staging of the show, but Burns, as musical director, assembled the 75-member cast and a 22-piece orchestra from the finest vocalists and musicians in the area (Loomis Log 5 December 1941: 1). Some of Burns's favorite students gave convincing performances, with Robert Lewis Purinton playing "The First Lord of the Admiralty," Henry Breul as "The Captain of the Pinafore," and Thomas Attridge as Ralph Rackstraw.

The production was presented to an estimated 500 people on the evenings on December 16 and 17. The audience was delighted and the show considered a smash (Loomis Log 16 January 1942: 1, 3-4). But before this estimation was made public by the Log's appreciative review, Burns was gone. He had left Loomis the day after the last performance, on December 18, to pursue his fate with the Armed Forces.

Notes to Chapter IV

¹ Throughout the manuscript at Columbia University can be seen Burns's tallies of the word count, including a summing up on the last page of the manuscript.

² Actor, writer, director Taylor Mead, a Loomis student at that time, has commented upon Jack's manner of dress:

Coming from the haute monde I looked on Jack as probably a bumptious brilliant lower class boy, because he dressed abominably -- no sense of color, or bad combos of clothes and cheap suits -- I don't remember . . . whether he wore white socks, but where I was coming from faux pas like this were drop dead time. I guess that was another benefit he gave me -- clothes weren't necessarily the man (Taylor Mead to MTB, 7 March 1982).

The Loomis yearbook of 1940 (the Loomiscellany, not paginated) likewise contains this remark: "Pretty Boy Burns looks charming around the campus in a play-suit of Lincoln green muslin."

³ In Lucifer with a Book, Burns makes fun of the Loomis Institute's succession of Board Presidents--which includes a number of Taylors, Loomises, and Chaffees--by making Judge Hopkins and his heirs the executors of Miss Sophia's will (9). In Lucifer Judge Hopkins III is President of the Board of Trustees when the time comes to hire a headmaster for the Academy (12-13), and Judge Hopkins V is President when Guy Hudson is hired to teach English (28). At the Loomis Institute, after twenty years as the School's 4th Board President, Robert W. Huntington--President during Burns's prewar years as an English master--retired in 1946, to be succeeded by James Lee Loomis, President during Burns's second tenure at the School.

⁴ In 1928, the year before Burns had enrolled at Phillips Andover Academy, Alfred E. Stearns celebrated his twenty-fifth anniversary as that school's headmaster. The year 1937, when Burns began teaching English at Loomis, would then mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Nathaniel Horton Batchelder, Sr., as Loomis's first headmaster.

⁵ Mr. Batchelder's first wife, Gwendolyn Sedgwick Batchelder, had died in February 1917, shortly after giving birth to her only child (Fowles 48). The sculptor Evelyn Beatrice Longman was commissioned in 1918 to design and execute a bronze commemorative sculpture for the Gwendolyn Sedgwick Batchelder Memorial Infirmary--and in this way met Mr. B. In 1920, Miss Longman married Mr. Batchelder and continued her work in a studio at Loomis until the couple retired in 1949 (Fowles 55). A number of her sculptures adorn the campus and the city of Windsor today, including circular bronze medallions bearing relief portraits of Loomis faculty members. Although these medallions were

probably Burns's inspiration for Mrs. Pilkey's "dinner dishes," very little of Mrs. Pilkey's personality resembles that of the real-life Mrs. Batchelder.

6 The name "Philbrick Grimes," which Burns gives to Mr. Pilkey's "favorite teacher, his confidant and henchman" (42), is an amalgam of the names Captain Grimes and "Sir Solomon" Philbrick, both of whom are characters associated with a private school in Evelyn Waugh's Decline and Fall.

7 It is Thomas S. Brush who remembers this article, claiming that it concerned "some aspect of secondary education" and was published in a ladies' magazine, perhaps Good Housekeeping or Ladies Home Journal, for which his mother, the short story writer Katherine Brush, served as a "contact" since she had published there. The essay, Brush says, was sent to his mother first, who "was able to get it published" (TSB to MTB, 10 May 1981; TSB to MTB, 23 May 1981). I have been unable to locate a copy of the article.

It is also possible that, if it indeed exists, such an article might have inspired Orchard to expand his ideas into the pamphlet on study habits that attracted attention to Loomis in the early 1950s. It, too, I have been so far unable to locate. But it is interesting to note a discrepancy here. Whereas Brush and Fowles (103) remember the name of Orchard's pamphlet as How to Study, Orchard's obituary gives the name as Study Successfully (see Hartford Times 3 April 1957:43).

8 The Loomis barn theater was, after his tragic death in 1957, renamed the Norris Ely Orchard Memorial Barn Theater.

9 During the 1939-40 school year, the Glee Club presented among their offerings William Cogswell Card's setting of Julia Ward Howe's "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

10 Burns does not seem to have written a new novel during the summer of 1938. Perhaps he was then at work on his revision of The Cynic Faun.

11 The typescript of "What Wondrous Life!" has had an interesting provenance: Burns apparently gave it to MacMackin, perhaps along with the other items left with him when Burns entered the military service. Sometime later, MacMackin mailed it to his Harvard classmate the songwriter and entertainer Tom Lehrer, with a note to Lehrer on the title page: "Try this for size -- it's the one Burns started for me." In response to an announcement I placed in the New York Times Book Review in 1980, requesting information for this project, Lehrer mailed me the typescript with his letter of 17 November 1980. In turn, as a gesture of good will to the Burns family, I mailed it to Jack's sister and literary executor, Cathleen Burns Elmer, as "a Christmas present" in December 1980.

12 Dr. Sour is the French teacher in Lucifer's Academy and is loosely based upon a Loomis teacher Jack knew before the War. Here is

Sidney Eaton's opinion of the relationship between the character and the real-life teacher:

Another of Jack's bêtes noires was N___ S___ -- teacher of French, who appears (thinly disguised but exaggeratedly homosexual) as Dr. Sour. S___ was a gifted and successful instructor, generally popular, though he did have a coterie of favorites. Whatever homosexual inclinations he had, he was far less overt about than Sour is portrayed (SLE to MTB, 20 December 1980; I have suppressed the instructor's name).

Thomas S. Brush has also reported on the similarities and differences between Dr. Sour and Mr. S___, from his vantage point as a student during that period:

. . . "Pop" S___ [was] a French teacher (not a Ph.D.), who had a reputation that I believe to have been deserved, although he was by no means so effeminate as Dr Sour is portrayed as being. He had a small brown poodle by the name of Smiler . . . (TSB to MTB, 10 May 1981).

According to Brush, "Pop" had the only bathtub in any of the bachelors' quarters on campus, the rest being, by necessity, content with their showers. Pop would occasionally allow favorite students to use his bathtub.

An obscene joke about Smiler's love of bones must not have been circulated among the faculty and administration, despite popularity among the boys. The official Loomis historian notes that a hoax about Smiler's disappearance was printed in a parody issue of the Loomis Log (Fowles 83). Certainly, Mr. B would have forbidden the printing of that particular hoax--and Fowles would have neglected to mention it in his history--had its hidden significance to the boys been known to the rest of the school.

13 Thomas S. Brush has explained this reference, as follows:

Orchard thought I was bright . . . Katharine Brush (1900-1952) was my mother and a successful and well-known novelist and short-story writer in her day . . . Burns was very impressed with her, thinking her an important contact (TSB to MTB, 10 May 1981).

14 Barbara Erickson explains that this reference is to her husband, Ralph W. Erickson, a Loomis coach beginning in fall 1946--primarily

because of Erickson's love of cigars (Barbara Erickson, interview with MTB, 15 July 1981). Yet this conclusion is based upon the slightest of evidence. The willingness to see oneself in Burns's characters seems to have been a popular pastime among Loomis personnel after the appearance of this novel.

15 This account of Taylor Mead's should be compared with the following episode in Duhrssen's Memoir:

In the classroom most of the students are pushing their desks back and forth, making a scraping noise, and the rest are raising their arms. Some can't understand why they behead so many kings and every time one loses his head, a student raises his hand and asks why.

"Charles I was a saint and a martyr," Mr. Burney says, "and Cromwell was a black puritanical villain."

"So why did they chop off his head?"

"It was a scandal!" (119).

16 Another episode in Duhrssen's novel is relevant here:

". . . Mr. Burney has made a note on your English grade. He says, 'This student is schizophrenic!'"

Chapter V

THE WAR YEARS

A. The Zone of the Interior

For over twenty years the United States had held to an isolationist foreign policy, supported by pacifist sentiments in the nation's leading journals. During the Depression of the early 1930s, many Americans began to see some good in socialism. Then, one European government after another was toppled by German troops, at the command of that popular leader of the National Socialists, Adolf Hitler: first Czechoslovakia, then Poland and Finland, Norway and Denmark, Holland and Luxembourg. Then, in June 1940, before the U.S. entered the European war, France, too, fell to the Nazis. The new "Vichy" government was controlled by Hitler, but nominally under the French Marshall Petain's command. What had gone wrong?

Soon Great Britain, surrounded by the enemy, was left alone to fight the Nazi forces. In August 1940 the first German bombs began to drop on London, destroying major parts of the city. The air raids would continue to threaten England until Hitler moved his bombers to the Russian front in June 1941. Meanwhile, the battles would rage in Greece, in Egypt, in Crete. Britain sorely needed steel, rubber, and other raw materials. At last, on 12 August 1941, the Atlantic Charter, drawn up and signed by President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston

Churchill, pledged the U.S. and Great Britain to common ideals of peace and justice.

Certain Americans, however, refused to help England, even under such dire circumstances. The radio priest from Chicago, Father Charles E. Coughlin--preaching notoriously anti-British and pro-Hitler sermons--voiced the feelings of many Irish-American Catholics, including Catherine Burns. Jack's mother could not forgive the British for the potato famine that had forced her family out of their native Ireland. So, when a young girl stopped by the Burns house in 1940, asking for donations for "Bundles for Britain," Mrs. Burns sent her away empty-handed (Douglas Dixon McKee, interview with MTB, 11 July 1981).¹

Finally, in December 1941, with Japan's unexpected attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States forgot any misgivings about its previous relationship with the British, the Soviets, or any other of the countries opposing the Axis powers. The doctrine of isolationism had lost its attraction. Without further delay, the U.S. entered WWII on the side of the Allies--against Hitler and Mussolini and Hirohito and their frighteningly massive forces. Every able-bodied American man was drafted into the service of the War effort, including "pacifist" Burns, who had so recently declared that the U.S. ought not to enter this war.² The new year began with a Declaration pledging twenty-six countries to remain United Nations, fighting the Axis to the end.

After being inducted at Fort Devens on January 16, 1942 (JHB to DAM, 16 January 1943), Private Burns received basic training at Camp Croft, near Spartanburg, South Carolina. There, most recruits spent 13 weeks in learning to use the Springfield and Garand rifles, the machine

gun, and trench mortar before their first overseas assignments.³ Burns soon learned that he had been selected to spend his last 7 weeks of basic in a specialists' battalion for training in intelligence (JHB to SLE and JAE, 2 February 1942, JAE). But until that reassignment, he would be treated like any other G.I. And the war in the Pacific would continue to rage.

At Camp Croft, Jack's day began at 5:30 "by lights turned into faces." His mornings were devoted to a rapid succession of roll call, sweeping and mopping the barracks, cleaning the latrine, breakfast, calisthenics, and then several hours of drill on "School of the Soldier" or the "Manual of Arms," all of which had "to be memorized, a good point for English teaching" (JHB to Mr. and Mrs. Batchelder, quoted in Loomis Log 13 February 1942: 1). There was a "current events junket" at 11:45 and then an equally stringent afternoon, followed by supper at 5:30.

Those of us who can still stand up go to Spartanburg, drink beer, read, or write letters. But if we have been naughty: a shoe out of line, a wrinkle in a bed, or failure to salute an officer, why, then we get no free time after supper. We repair to the drill fields by moonlight, or we clean furnaces, or we stand with our noses in a circle on the wall (1,4).

Private Burns managed to stay on good behavior, as what Mr. B would have called "a Group I boy," except for one incident: after slipping on the muddy drill field while doing an about-face, the private accidentally knocked down a second lieutenant.

"The washing machine of the Army," according to Jack, required that he exchange his personality for "a wan smile and an erect posture." He had "accepted all of Mister B's thorny principles of self-sacrifice." He knew that, only because the enlisted men all received the same treat-

ment, they could get along peaceably, even though sixty-two men shared the close quarters of a barracks: "By mutual consent (tacit) all horns are drawn in so that only a millimeter protrudes (like the vestige of a tail which suggests that we were once devils)" (JHB to SLE and JAE, 2 February 1942, JAE).

Nevertheless, a few personalities still managed to "obtrude." Sergeant Henkiel was the drill sergeant, who rewarded mistakes with after-dinner duty. Sergeant Carlton read Books of the Month "and occasionally [swore] in exquisite Grotonese."

And there is Lieutenant Harding, of exquisite corps, who freezes when you salute and speak to him, fixes you with two Alciabiadish blue eyes and says "Ah'll think it over, but Ah doubts it."

One of his favorite personalities was a new E.M. (enlisted man) from upstate New York, nicknamed Alvin, or "Sergeant York," who had trouble accepting the wartime training as a reality. Jack found it humorous that Alvin would attach "himself like a poodle to one after another [of the officers], lovingly, and [be] tortured by them." And there was the newsboy, "a fat cretinous Spartanburg brat of five or six," whom the cooks were "debauching with slow malevolent glee."⁴

On Sunday mornings, at Camp Croft, Jack soon began volunteering to assist the chaplain at the organ. Weeknights, Jack and some musically inclined friends began to frequent the loft of Chapel #3, gathering around the Hammond organ that Burns played on Sunday. Before long, a joke began to circulate about Burns's being the "corporal of the organ," as he put it, "hinting that we are going to get our promotion in chapel lofts" (JHB to DAM, 13 February 1942).

Then the prediction came true. During the week of March 8, Burns was made a corporal and appointed chaplain's assistant to Father Feeherry, a duty that could mean "a safe job and a whole skin for the duration," Jack wrote home (JHB to SLE and JAE, 1 March 1942, SLE). On March 18, Corporal Burns held his first choir rehearsal, "conducting from the Hammond Organ," with the assistance of a sergeant "who," he wrote to David, "has a beautiful voice, but shows rather dreadful feelings for incense, tapestries, & Romish liturgy. H'm'm" (JHB to DAM, 19 March 1942).

Confidential, witty, scandalous--nearly every letter Jack wrote to David MacMackin (Loomis class of 1943) confesses to, brags about, or philosophizes over the personal aspects of the life Burns led as a G.I. David encouraged this kind of reply, his zany, irreverent imagination complementing Jack's. In early February, for instance, David sent Jack a new short story he had written for the Loom, entitled "The Abbess of Weiley."⁵ The story, which takes place in a convent, was an enjoyable diversion at Camp Croft. Eventually, it would provide a mythology and a vocabulary to brighten Jack's wartime correspondence with David.

In David's short story, Sister Theresa visits the Abbess of Weiley late one night to tell her that

"Sister Aloysius has just collapsed at ye altare during ye first parte of ye vigil. No one can revive her; and she seems swollen aboute ye face and neck. Oh Mother, do you suppose . . . could it be -- the plague?" (6).

In the chapel, the Abbess admonishes the other nuns: "Sisters, Sisters, do not press so arounde our prostrate Sister" (6). Sister Theresa, upon noticing "hell-like sores" on Sister Aloysius' face and neck, exclaims

"Brwaugh!" Only the Abbess is willing to "loosen her habilaments that she maye breathe ye air more easily." Yet the Reverend Mother has, in so doing, been exposed to the malady.

After Father Hugh administers Last Rites to Aloysius, the Abbess all but admits her desire for him. She insists on moving the corpse of Sister Aloysius, and has the other nuns help her roll the altar rug away so that she can dance: "I feel verie warm and I wante to dance -- always I have wanted to dance and never could" (7). Afterwards, she collapses and is dead too. Father Hugh asks for prayers for her, who "lived a fulle life in ye consecrated service of Mary, ye Blessed Virgin."

According to David, the "plague" of the story was inspired by a practical joke played among the boys at Loomis. Some upperclassman or other had convinced a number of younger students that they were ill. As a result, so many of the boys had visited the infirmary in such a short period that the whole episode became known as the "epidemic" (David MacMackin, interview with MTB, July 1981). As indicated by the Abbess's secret desire for Father Hugh, the entire episode at Loomis had an undertone of sexuality whose source is now unaccountable.

The exclamation of Sister Theresa's, in Burns's letters to David, gains a broader significance. As Jack uses the term, its tenor seems to vary in intensity, representing the sound that can accompany a strong feeling of revulsion, pleasure, surprise. Unlike the term "dreadful"--which Burns gradually began to employ in these letters to David as a code word for "homosexual"--the term "brwaugh" is unambiguous in origin, if not meaning.

Other elements of David's story also gained new significance with the passage of time, particularly the Abbess of Weiley herself. In Burns's letters, a mention of "the Abbess" sometimes refers to David, as the story's author. Occasionally David's home is referred to as the Abbey, since he was saving some of Jack's personal belongings (manuscripts, letters, sheet music, etc.) for him. In these cases, "the Abbess" is a protector, one who is willing to expose herself to danger for the sake of a Sister. Sometimes, instead, the fallibility of David's Abbess predominates. Particularly, her attraction to Father Hugh and her inability to control her more primitive urges was interesting to Jack, and reminded him of his young friend.

Occasionally, instead of referring to David, the Abbess of Burns's letters is a near-mythic "mother" to the homosexual men ("sisters") in her Abbey--and, simultaneously, she is their avatar. The metaphor of denoting gay men as novices and nuns offered Burns a vocabulary with which to describe specific experiences overseas, and without risking a court-martial. Using this new vocabulary, Burns could easily compose letters that David understood, but which were written "in high-heeled language that the V-censors somehow miss" (JHB to DAM, 16 January 1943).

Always honest with David on the rare occasions when his letters adopted a serious tone, Jack usually chose to be campy instead. For here was his release from the captivity of the Army, his opportunity to reveal minor successes and failures to a friend who would not be judgmental, his freedom to express the need to love and be loved. Eventually, David's idea of the Abbess would be transformed again, almost beyond recognition, reappearing in altered form as the two most contro-

versial characters of Burns's Lucifer with a Book, the Abbot and the Abbess.

Optimistic that an uneventful military career might await him, Jack celebrated his first Army payday--on February 28--more leisurely than did most of the men. While the others headed at once into town, ready to spend the \$31 each had received for the initial six weeks of training, Private Burns "and a few chaste or timid souls . . . drank beer and discussed the golden age of operatic song. At ten o'clock we retired into our popped sheets . . ." only to be awakened repeatedly, through the night, as the various drunken G.I.'s made their way back to the barracks (JHB to SLE and JAE, 1 March 1942, SLE).

Their raucous celebration provided no escape from the realization that active combat awaited many of the men. In January, Manila had fallen, forcing the American and Philippine troops to retreat to the Bataan peninsula. On February 15, Singapore fell. And just yesterday, a small flotilla of American, Australian, and Dutch ships had begun to attack the Japanese in the disastrous three-day Battle of the Java Sea. The situation was grim in the Far East. Within the next ten days, nearly 100,000 Allied soldiers would be marched off to Japanese concentration camps.

Only a few days ago, at the end of basic training, Burns had participated in some staged maneuvers, an exercise the men tried, unsuccessfully, to make light of. Jack described the exercise at length in his next letter to the Eatons. This first "night problem" had begun at about 8:00 p.m., after the men were divided into scouting patrols. Their assignment: to steal carefully and quietly through the South Carolina woods, locating the "enemy" without being discovered.

Every so often a flare went up, surprising us with our pants down, moving upright like an art gallery right there in the middle of No-man's land (JHB to SLE and JAE, 15 March 1942, JAE).

As this passage shows, Burns had begun to notice incongruities, surprising connections, ironies both humorous and horrible --while still at Camp Croft, still in the States. He had not yet seen North Africa, had not witnessed the path of destruction that the Axis and Allied forces would leave in the Mediterranean, when his imagination began to work on the War and its meaning. Eventually, his simile of an art gallery, jutting incomprehensibly into an uncivil and inhospitable skyline, would become the central metaphor of The Gallery. That book, upon which Burns's ultimate reputation must rest, he would not begin to write until after V-E Day. By then he would have seen the Nazis' monstrous concentration camps liberated by the Allies, and the former rulers of fascist Italy and Germany brought to inglorious deaths.

In March of 1942, Jack's life was still relatively easy. By the end of that month, he was moved into the "aristocracy of the 39th battalion, the 13 members of headquarters detachment" (JHB to DAM, 27 March 1942). There, working conditions were plush, in comparison to basic training. Even more delightful, Burns's superiors in the HQ turned out to be congenial too. The 7th Regimental Medical Corps, Jack wrote to David, was "the most riotous & dreadful group of young men" that he had yet met (JHB to DAM, 27 March 1942).

Japan had taken possession of much of Burma, including the great port of Rangoon, and the Dutch East Indies was theirs too. The awful

and bloody winter in Russia had finally ended, with the German troops finally held at Leningrad. Jack noted, with more seriousness than humor, that some of his friends were "told to make their wills . . . [They] had their money changed to pounds sterling" (JHB to SLE and JAE, 24 April 1942, SLE). The Allies were about to fight Japan, during the first week of May, in the Battle of the Coral Sea, which would mark the end of Japanese expansion, the beginning of the end.

Except for rising each morning at the habitual 5:30, Jack's life was still easy--even enjoyable. There were, for example, the continuing lunacies of life at Camp Croft: the sentinel on guard who did Present Arms each time the bugle blew a new call; the "dizzy truck driver" who drove his truck, at noon, "right in front of the firing line."⁶ But the realities of war were starting to take an early toll on him. He was at the beginning of a long period during which he would find most of his long-held assumptions about life being challenged.

Before a brief visit home in July, Burns told David he was fast forgetting a number of people they had both known socially, particularly those who had remained civilians:

I think that those who live through this war -- not too sweeping a generality now -- will all go off in troops and echelons and live together in a remote fastness. . . . The army ties you in with some strange strong skein of comradeship (JHB to DAM, 9 May 1942).

The soft life of headquarters was compellingly attractive, yet Burns was also repulsed by the system whereby certain talented or otherwise well-favored men were singled out for easy assignments:

You can spot them in the various offices by the sheer symmetry of their uniforms and their finely kept hands, which nearly always toy with a pencil, coldly and autocratically (JHB to DAM, 9 May 1942).

Jack's growing cynicism was also apparent to Father Feeherry, who liked to invite Burns to accompany him in his new car for dinner in a neighboring city. Jack liked to see Father Feeherry react against his straight-faced, humorous but nearly heretical, remarks that contemporary theologians were finding Thomas Aquinas to be decadent and favoring, instead, the writings of St. Ambrose (JHB to DAM, 9 May 1942).

The somber undertow of Jack's sense of humor during this period is reflected in his thank-you letter to David for the February 1942 issue of the Loom, containing the printed version of "The Abbess of Weiley." Burns's compliment to David, like his remarks to the Father, verges on blasphemy: "Among the Catholic cult here The Abbess of Weiley is held in the same esteem as the writings of the Church Fathers. There's a movement on foot to set sections for chorus and string orchestra with a speaking narrator" (JHB to DAM, 29 May 1942). Yet in that same letter, Burns claimed to have entered a "very strong Catholic revival," and much of the remaining paragraphs are devoted to a lengthy discourse on Catholic dogma.

There was an occasion to this whiplash. Jack was upset with another chaplain's assistant, Jerry--a former interior decorator whose "cerulean" altar cloth had just been hung for a triduum to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Chapel #1. Too enthusiastic about his tasteful addition to the chapel, Jerry had disturbed Corporal Burns's meditation at the elevation of the host by jumping up in his pew and snapping a photo-

graph when he ought to have been kneeling. The incident prompted Jack to observe that

There are three sorts of Catholics in camp -- the slackers, who are usually boxers and conscientious objectors; the duller Irish sort, who go about their devotions with a grim prosiness; and the elite, who are either as dreadful as they know how when out of the priests' hearing or are just plain brilliant and spend a great deal of time drinking usque ad hilitatem and disputing that St. Thomas is rather decadent, and not to be preferred against Ss. Ambrose and Jerome (JHB to DAM, 29 May 1942).

Some of this passage is obviously intended to be humorous, placing himself among the "brilliant" set, in contrast to the "duller Irish" side of him that resented having his meditations disturbed.

Yet Jack argues, in all sincerity, that Catholicism is "the only creed that could possibly satisfy [David] doctrinally and esthetically." Then follows the admonition, quoted earlier, that--should David decide to convert--he ought to prepare himself "to live up to the strict Catholic conception" of the commandment forbidding adultery. Jack recommends a series of methods by which David might explore the Church--the excellent pamphlets of the Paulist Press, the Divine Office, the symbolism of the Mass, or the movie The Eternal Gift. Because of his work as a chaplain's assistant, Jack claims to have overcome his earlier tendency not to see "through the trappings to the Truth. I don't hesitate in saying that the Church is the only perfect thing I know in the world" (JHB to DAM, 29 May 1942).

Although Jack's feelings about Holy Mother Church were sometimes ambivalent, the Church did make sense of a chaotic world. The imperfections Jack saw in the 1950s homosexual underground certainly contrasted

sharply with the perfections of the Church. While at Camp Croft, Jack began to evaluate, in his letters to David, the sometimes negative effects of "camp" and of the kind of behavior that results in artificial relationships:

There are always times when the mask of dreadfulness drops off, with its grin still fixed, and the face looks corpse-like in the dust. Of course, the mask is speedily raised, but there's always perspective at moments when you little expect it. And not very comforting, either (JHB to DAM, 10 July 1942).

That fall, in another letter to David, Burns would refine and restate this observation:

It seems to be a lamentable truism that however dizzy and schemed the masquerade, the lights do come up too bright and the powder flakes off. . . . It is worse than the dark night of the soul because there is nothing spiritual about it -- only nakedness and despair (JHB to DAM, 20 November 1942).

These sentiments stayed with Jack, in his subconscious mind. Two and one-half years later, he would discuss them at greater length, in a long and utterly serious letter written to David only ten days after Burns had begun writing The Gallery:

The 20th century homosexual is rarely completely honest with himself. Even if he ever arrives at the point of accepting his bias as merely an incident in his personality, he sets up all sorts of pitiful little compensations. Camping is after all the essence of the tragic spirit contorted into a leer no Greek mask ever knew. He sets up for himself a tinselled world that has nothing to do with any reality, believes himself a golden and divine spirit, gifted beyond other men . . . (JHB to DAM, 28 June 1945).

The new understanding was important enough to him that he would preserve it in "Mamma," the fifth and central Portrait of The Gallery. In that

story, Esther and Magda, two British sergeants known only by these nicknames ("drag" names), carry on a habitual "dishing" about love, youth, happiness, death. It is Magda who discovers, from talking with Esther, several ideas similar to those Burns had expressed to David:

- . . . You and I both know that's what camping is. It's a Greek mask to hide the fact that our souls are being castrated and drawn and quartered with each fresh affair. What started as a seduction at twelve goes on till we're senile old aunties, doing it just as a reflex action....

- . . . We've spent our youth looking for something that doesn't really exist. Therefore none of us is ever at peace with herself. All bitchery adds up to an attempt to get away from yourself by playing a variety of poses, each one more gruesome and leering than the last (The Gallery 141).

In the course of the story, Esther and Magda pronounce a series of new truths, corollaries to the logic of this passage, and which they seem to have discovered quite accidentally. Yet Burns questions whether the world, or even Esther's and Magda's private lives, can be favorably altered through these new insights. Before the chaotic climax of the story, the two sergeants pass out during a drunken embrace and are ignored by the other patrons, who "just pushed and wedged in closer" (150).

While Jack was still playing the organ and assisting Father Feeherry, safe in the Z.I. ("Zone of the Interior") of the United States, the bloody war continued. The Battle of Midway, fought against the "Japs," began on Wednesday, 3 June, five days after Jack posted his letter on the virtues of Catholicism. It ended on 6 June, finally eliminating the immediacy of the threat posed to Hawaii and the western coast of the U.S. The Americans had taken at least 5,000 Japanese lives and had destroyed 322 planes, four aircraft carriers, and a heavy

cruiser, causing damage to another heavy cruiser, three destroyers, an oiler, and a battleship. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz commented, "Pearl Harbor has been partially avenged" (quoted in Snyder 266).

Now something had to be done about the Axis forces in North Africa, where Hitler had altered the balance between British and Italian forces so as to threaten British-held Cairo and the Suez River. In April 1941, Hitler had sent General Erwin Rommel (the "Desert Fox") to relieve Mussolini's incompetent African command. After a ten-day thrust, under Rommel's leadership, the Axis had beaten back the British "Desert Rats." Rommel had regained most of North Africa, which he was continuing to hold, while Hitler waged war with Russia.

More recently, in late June of 1942, Rommel had taken Tobruk again. He was now poised outside El Alamein. On 25 June, Roosevelt and Churchill met for a conference in Washington, D.C., to decide upon tactics for reversing the situation in North Africa. They agreed, pending Stalin's approval, upon Operation Torch, a coordinated Anglo-American invasion of Jaffi, Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers. Operation Overlord, the proposed amphibious mass invasion of Europe from across the English Channel, was to be postponed until the summer of 1943 or later.

On his way to meeting Stalin in Moscow, in early August, Churchill stopped in Cairo to examine his tactical problem firsthand. He appointed Lieutenant General Bernard L. ("Monty") Montgomery commander of the British Eighth Army, replacing General W. H. E. ("Strafer") Gott, who had died in a plane crash. Under Monty's command, the Desert Rats would wear Rommel's nickname for them with pride, stealing for their own the favorite song of Rommel's Afrika Korps, "Lili Marlene." At the

meeting with Churchill, Stalin accepted the decision made in Casablanca. A formal directive was sent, on 13 August 1942, to the unknown Lieutenant General of Operation Torch, Dwight D. Eisenhower, informing him that the invasion would take place that fall.

Meanwhile, Burns had suffered an injury at Camp Croft "while taking our dolce far niente at 4 A. M. in Spartanburg (and oddly up to no dreadfulness)." He was mugged, receiving a severe blow on the head from an unknown assailant. The blow was enough to put Burns into a coma that lasted for three days and kept him in the station hospital for three weeks:

When we were brought in they thought we weren't going to survive, in other words krepiren⁷ like a pig . . . But . . . 'twas a mere concussion of the brain. Our face is almost back to normal -- no tusk is missing. (JHB to DAM, 21 August 1942).

Looking back from our present perspective, we cannot help but be curious. Could it be, we wonder? Was this severe injury partly to blame for the cerebral hemorrhage that caused Burns's death? Or was it simply exposure and sunstroke, on that fateful August day in Livorno in 1953?

By the time Jack was able again to answer his correspondence, sketchy "latrine rumors" had reached Camp Croft that the Allies were planning a major deployment of troops. The American Marines had begun fighting in Guadalcanal on 7 August; they would be engaged in combat there until February 1943. Everyone knew of the strength Rommel had been showing in North Africa. But what was Washington up to? No one knew exactly. Jack expected "all people in this camp with delightful jobs . . . to be shipped to combat soon" (JHB to DAM, 21 August 1942).

Sure enough, within the next week, men who had previously been viewed as permanent personnel were being marched daily to a troop train, to begin active combat duty. Then, on 29 August, an order came, from the Secretary of War, for the immediate reassignment of trained chaplain's assistants. Camp Croft could offer sixteen men. Corporal Burns naturally expected the worst:

We are all feeling rather autumnal here. . . . Some give me a week more here, some till the 15th November. . . . Remember me at the oratory of SS. Joseph Calzasancti (JHB to DAM, 1 September 1942).

Yet he had forgotten about "the mercies of military intelligence," which had already singled him out because of his knowledge of several languages. He had forgotten that his job as chaplain's assistant was merely stop-gap work before his training would be completed. Jack escaped combat duty this time, and the worries subsided for another month. He lapsed into the giddy, careless lifestyle that he had criticized in letters to David.

There was no objective way for the average person to gauge the sudden activity in Egypt. Monty and the Desert Fox were playing a deadly game with one another. On the one hand, Rommel was planning an offensive movement to surprise the British, allowing his own men to take both El Alamein and the Suez Canal quickly and forcefully, on a supply of 1,000 gallons of gasoline. His defense consisted of a "ladder" of "Devil's Gardens," barbed-wire entanglements and mined fields in a series of rungs behind the front lines.

At the same time, Monty had decided to scrap all of Strafer Gott's plans. He devised, in their place, a means of outwitting the Fox into

thinking he was planning a massive attack from the south. Hundreds of British Sherman tanks in the north were camouflaged and their tracks concealed, while in the south, huge dummy fuel depots were set up. Monty set thousands of men to work at unloading (nonexistent) supplies, covering tank tracks, and generally rushing about. The theatrical plan worked.

On 31 August--the day before Jack's fearful letter--having been assured that Italy would send 6,000 tons of fuel as reinforcement (which never came), Rommel attacked. After a few weak feints at the northern region, he threw his force into the south, where counterfeit maps had led him to believe the terrain good for tank use. For three days, he struggled there, his tanks continually getting ensnared by the soft sand, before returning to his original position, tricked and furious.

Hitler responded to this disaster by removing the Desert Fox from his command of the Afrika Korps. Rommel was asked to return to Germany to enter a sanatorium in the Semmering Mountains, for long over-due medical treatment. In his place, General Georg von Stumme would act as commander. Monty bided his time, holding his position for the next seven weeks.

As September passed into October, Washington once more began moving troops about, and Jack began to worry again:

If the lid is off in [Windsor, Connecticut, the location of Loomis], the cooking's spilling all over the gas jets here. We are all so close to Armageddon, what with the 1-B and 4-F replacements that daily come in for us that we do behave like Lucifer and his cohorts in their nine days' drop, when, the Angelic Doctor [Aquinas] saith, enormities occurred (JHB to DAM, 10 October 1942).

Soon, Jack was cheerful once more. He even invited David down for the holidays, to stay at the Guest House and meet his friend, a Corporal Motes from Mississippi, along with "other non-commissioned officers of the zany 7th Regiment" (JHB to DAM, 28 October 1942).⁸ David, still in school at Loomis, was unable to visit Burns in South Carolina, although the invitation seems to have been sincere.

Having grown accustomed, like his "simpatico" classmates, to seeking guidance from the "angel" of Mr. Burns, David missed Jack terribly. However, in Mr. Burns's absence, he and his roommate, Darius Bullock Smith, had found a diversion that entertained everyone and that Mr. B thought "creative." Not having Mr. Burns's "Studio" in which to hold cultural teas for the staff of the Loom, David and Darius redecorated their own dorm room, a task made somewhat easier because Smith's father was an interior decorator.

Next year, the 1943 Loomis yearbook, the Loomiscellany, would carry a photograph of the room. In print, the boys would also choose to commemorate both the new "salon" and David's friendship with the English master:

We visit the Goode Abbess of Weiley's cell on Warham II. It is a delightfully chaste jumble of decorous and somewhat démodé froufrou which Giaour [David's Loomis nickname--after Byron] plucked with loving hands from a Bon Ton in Canton. Perhaps the Abbess has gone to pieces in absence of the Studio, but she still has Hippolyte. Good Afternoon! [Mr. Burns's greeting at the opening of a typical class meeting] Braaugh.... (1943 Loomiscellany, unpaginated, from the section on October 1942).

In the photograph, one can see clearly the velvet swag curtains, the bust of Beethoven and its pedestal, and other Vicorian furnishings.

The boys were able to disguise everything but the regulation cast-iron dormitory beds, bolted to the floors of Warham Hall. This satirical decorative frou-frou, which David attributes to his roommate's imagination, would provide the inspiration for the Abbess's and the Abbot's dorm room in Lucifer with a Book. As any reader of the novel can tell by looking at the photograph, the fictional dorm room bears little or no resemblance to the tasteful creation of the Loomis boys. In writing the most controversial chapter of Lucifer with a Book, Burns simply let his imagination run wild.

Burns's life that fall was not seeing any new developments. Betty Grable had performed in the Service Club in September, although Jack had not been one of the "5000 panting soldiers" anxious to see her (JHB to DAM, 1 September 1942). More interesting to Jack, and more fun, was Private Bryan O'Mara, a tenor for whose recital at the Service Club on 18 October, he had played accompaniment. He had had a Kodachrome portrait of himself made. He was making friends in South Carolina.

Suddenly, on 23 October 1942, Monty announced to his troops that the time had come to take El Alamein. And the siege began. Late that evening, under a moonlit sky, Montgomery's barrage began to strike the city. It continued, without ceasing, for the next four hours. From the beginning, the battle favored the Allies. General von Stumme fell dead on the battlefield, from a heart attack.

When Rommel finally returned to combat, on the evening of 25 October, he was too late. He launched a counter-offensive on 31 October, but it was easily squelched. On 4 November 1942, the Axis troops were forced to retreat westward into friendly Libya. Only a fortunate rain-

fall--or temerity on the part of the Allies--saved Rommel and his detachment from annihilation. By the end of Monty's campaign, the Axis had lost 60,000 men, 1,000 guns, and 500 tanks.

Germany had not recovered from this crushing defeat when, only four days later, Operation Torch was carried out. At 3 A.M. on 7 November 1942, a giant armada of 500 Allied warships and 350 transports and cargo ships, with air support from Gibraltar, began to disembark troops at three crucial North African ports--Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers. Only along Casablanca's Atlantic coastline, where the landings were the most difficult, was there any real resistance from the French Africans. Two battleships, the Jean Bart and the Richelieu, fired on the Allies for four days. But then Hitler violated the armistice, to invade unoccupied territories in mainland France. All resistance ceased.

Hitler reacted quickly, pouring men into Tunisia on 9 November 1942. The air-lifted Axis forces stopped the British First Army in the mountains. Yet the Germans gave up Tobruk to the British, who won possession of this port city on 13 November. Ten days later, General Eisenhower moved his headquarters to Algiers, the first city to surrender to the Allies. Much had changed in the war against the Germans--and quickly. After a fruitless struggle to take Tunis, in late November, Eisenhower went into a holding pattern, waiting for the next directive to arrive from his superiors.

Just before Christmas of 1942, Jack was told that, after a possible January furlough, he was to complete his "basic" training. Soon he could expect to experience

the horrors of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, where after 75 days of having our cheeks whittled down, we will be a second lieutenant in the infantry. 'Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis 'tis true (JHB to DAM, 19 December 1942).⁸

A month later, Jack was still wishing for another furlough. But he had been home in July. The Colonel opposed furloughs more often than once every ten months.

It turned out, Jack learned, that he might be left there, stationed at Camp Croft, for six more months, before his transfer to Fort Benning. Finally bored out of inertia, in early January, he decided to alter his dismal future and "screw our courage up to apply for the censorship classes of the adjutant general's office, after 12 weeks of which we shall emerge in the dreadful splendor of a 2d Lt" (JHB to DAM, 16 January 1943). Instead of remaining in the infantry, then, he would attend Officer Candidate School at the Adjutant General's School at Fort Washington, Maryland.

In mid-January 1943 Roosevelt and Churchill met in French Morocco, at the Hotel Anfa, just outside Casablanca. A luxurious meeting site, the hotel is situated on a magnificent prospect of red ground overlooking the blue Atlantic and dotted with green palms, where the ghostly white buildings of the city are clearly visible in the distance. Stalin refused to attend the conference, angry that the Allies were continuing to leave his men unsupported, in Russia, against the menacing Nazis. Roosevelt and Churchill, without Stalin, worked out plans to invade Sicily in the summer, after taking Tunisia from Rommel.

In Washington, D.C., at the Adjutant General's School, Burns became familiar with the "dreadful" officers who frequented certain Washington

hotel bars, a fact of interest to readers of The Gallery. For we learn, in The Gallery's third Portrait, that

Hal had been popular at OCS. He'd agreed with everyone and understood them all. On week ends, like the rest of them, he'd tear into Washington, take a room at the Statler, and get drunk with all the cliques. There was the Brilliant Crowd, the Swishy Crowd, the Empire Builders, and the Drugstore Cow-boys. Hal knew them all, even those fringers who didn't belong to cliques (55).

Like Hal, Burns enjoyed the hotel bars in Washington. The Mayflower Hotel bar, Jack felt, his friend David would like particularly well. "You will be wearing diamonds ere two days. The tempo of your high blood pressure would be attuned to the Marine 2nd Lts who've just emerged from commando training," he wrote (JHB to DAM, 9 May 1943).

The "dreadfulness" that Jack seemed to find everywhere, and the astonishing reports about gay possibilities overseas, kept his spirits up. Soon, as he would say in The Gallery, it would be "the Washington of June, 1943." Burns's OCS class would be graduating. "There was a hysteria here that ran underground from the Pentagon to the Statler, Mayflower, and Willard hotels" (56).

There are several similarities between Burns and his character Hal. Both, for example, are the same age; they both graduate from OCS in June 1943. Both Jack and Hal are transferred through the North African campaign at approximately the same periods. Both experience an isolation from others that, for Burns, would lead to the brink of madness, and that leaves Hal believing he is Jesus Christ. Obviously, Jack would draw heavily from his own experiences for this Portrait.

The "hysteria" of the Washington of June 1943 can be fairly easily

explained. Montgomery's Eighth Army had captured Tripoli in late January. But Eisenhower's American troops had had more trouble with the Kasserine Pass. Finally, on 7 May 1943, the Anglo-American armies had caught the Axis forces in a vise to take both Tunis and Bizerte. By 13 May, the Allies had control of all of North Africa. One week later, a tremendous victory parade had marched through the streets of Tunis. The next stop would be Sicily, as planned at Casablanca. By 11 June, Operation Husky was in readiness, with about 11,000 Italian prisoners taken on the tiny island of Pantelleria that day.

Where and when Jack Burns would be put to the Army's service, he did not know. "The whole business," he wrote to David, was "a military secret of the deepest dye" (JHB to DAM, 9 May 1943). Jack was being trained in censorship there, at the Adjutant General's School (known as "T.A.G.S."). In June, at the end of his training, he served on the Editorial Board of his class's Yearbook Committee, where--characteristically--they could reveal no specific information about their training at Fort Washington.

Although it is impossible to identify precisely Jack's contributions to the content and style of "The Informal Log of Class Nineteen" (T.A.G.S., 16 June 1943, unpaginated), the following passages seem to bear his influence:

The upstairs of 119 held seminars on Schopenhauer in the latrine. And 118 did the last act of Iosca between an upper and lower bunk. [Burns bunked in Lower 118.] And the English tongue was abandoned altogether, except in the mess hall. There was French, German, Italian--a Portugese count who was in the bootblack business, a Magyar, and an Edomite. And there arrived two days late a Persian hookah-vendor, who shortly got rid of his surplus stock by peddling it in the untranslatable patois of Omar Khayyam.

On the first day of classes our battalion commander coined his fabulous mot of the psychological nursing bottle, and of the zombie who became a lieutenant, without any chrysalis stage.

The latrine orderlies went about their sacerdotal duties far into Friday night, chanting Keats's Ode on a Grecian Urn. Anyway, the auto da fe always came, surprising us sometimes a trifle décolleté. Beside it, the Spanish Inquisition was a picnic.

In these passages are scattered some of the startling, baroque figures of speech, the fey snatches of French, and the satiric viewpoint that Burns loved to employ. Even though we can not know exactly where his hand operated here, it is easy to suspect that he played a major role in this minor production of class 19.

On 16 June 1943, Corporal Burns was made a second lieutenant. Basic training was now officially over. A few weeks later, in July, he received reassignment orders for Brooklyn Army Base. At B.A.B., while the War Department decided what to do with him, he would hear lectures about and gain unwanted experience in the practice of censoring correspondence with an exacto knife.

In Brooklyn, Jack worked at a table with two other second lieutenants from his OCS class, Holger Hagen and Robert B. MacLennan, neither of whom he had met at Fort Washington. MacLennan was a belligerent man, of Scottish descent. Day after day, he complained about the waste of his services, longing to be sent to the front lines, where he could break records killing Krauts. Holger Hagen had been born in Germany, and emigrated to the U.S. at age five. He considered the Nazis traitors to his ancestral homeland. Well-read and intelligent, Holger was also bilingual, another fascination to Jack, who had studied German at Har-

vard.

As Holger Hagen explains, the three men fast began an intense and close friendship, which would bind them together during the War. At Brooklyn, they formed "an unholy trio":

forever in trouble with our superiors, -- complete enigma to our fellow officers, deeply suspicious of and totally irreverent in respect of accepted procedures (HH to MTB, 6 November 1981).

Holger was then married to Beulah Wescott Hagen, whose rich mezzo-soprano voice Burns once complimented as having a "stateliness" in its phrasing (JHB to BWH, 9 August 1945). According to Beulah, Burns's and Holger's friendship developed quickly, for they had more in common with one another than with the others:

They were just good friends who enjoyed looking at life together, and they were both very sensitive, very musical. And they sort of "tipped each other off" . . . [Each man would] send up sparks of the intellect and [have] fun [with] whatever they were engaged in (BWH, interview with MTB, 17 June 1981).

On one of those first days in Brooklyn, Holger recalled for Jack a fictional character who used the same nickname in addressing everyone he encountered (HH, interview with MTB, June 1982). At the start, then, Jack and Holger adopted a similar habit, and called each other "Moe"--short for "Moses"--a Hebrew nickname so common that it shows up in Burns's OCS Class Log. Eventually, Burns would write his ninth and last Portrait in The Gallery about a Jewish taxi-cab driver named "Moe."⁹ Beulah knew Jack better as "Moe Burns," for he would continue to sign letters to all three friends by that one-word nickname.

Burns, a bachelor, lived in the barracks then, whereas Holger commuted each morning from his and Beulah's apartment at 38 Sutton Place. Soon, Holger began inviting Jack home for dinner. It was a way to escape Army life momentarily, enjoy fine food and drink, fine company, and the music that they could make together. All three of them sang: Moe Burns's tenor could complement Moe Hagen's baritone and Frau Moe's mezzo-soprano. Beulah owned a Bechstein grand piano that Jack could play. MacLennan, not much interested in music, continued to decline Hagen's invitations.

Beulah was working then, as a secretary at Harper and Brothers. After her long, full day at the hectic Manhattan publishing firm, she would arrive home with groceries that had to be carried up three flights of stairs. There she would "find John and Holger in the living room, waiting for me" (BWH, interview with MTB, 17 June 1981).

First there would be dinner together, with Jack and Holger discursing about the world and the War, Beulah waiting on them both and remaining aloof, in her Nordic manner, from the judgments they passed. Then manhattans, which warmed Moe Hagen's temper and sharpened Burns's wit. And the three of them would retire to the piano for an evening's entertainment.

Here is Beulah's vivid description of a memorable visit:

My husband was inclined to brag about my singing, and I sang German lieder a good deal in those days, which was a passion of John's. So frequently we'd spend a good part of the evening with him at the piano and I singing German lieder.

One of his loves was Schumann, and among the Schumann songs was a cycle--Frauenlieben und Leben, which of course is a woman's song. But the first time, I think, we sang that cycle through, when I got through singing, there were tears rolling down John's face. He was a very emotional and sensitive person.

So he was really a great pleasure, for both of us . . .
Every time he came, we'd sing-- I'd sing, he'd play (BWH,
interview with MTB, 17 June 1981).

"Moe" Burns and "Moe" Hagen and "Mrs. Moe" were able to cling to those precious evenings together for only three weeks. Their treasured friendship had only just begun when Jack received his orders. Although he did not know it then, he was to be sent to the Mediterranean, where the invasion of Italy was about to take place. MacLennan could do nothing but silently grit his teeth that he must remain behind; Holger might bitch and bark. But, almost one full year after Operation TORCH, Burns was nevertheless sent to Fedallah, in French Morocco, the location where American troops had first disembarked--under the command of General George S. Patton--for the Allied invasion of North Africa.

B. French Morocco: "A Kind of Cocained Dream"

Second Lieutenant Burns had not prepared himself for Fedallah. When he walked down the gangplank of the Liberty ship and onto the beach, in August 1943, he knew that Morocco was a country unlike anything he had imagined. Those weeks he'd spent in crossing the Atlantic fell away in the still density of the open desert air. Jack knew that his real war experiences were about to begin.

In the staging area, that initial excitement soon faded. One hot August day slipped, always too slowly, into another, and for Jack the unfulfilled yearning for purposeful activity was nearly intolerable. He tried to occupy himself with food, sleep, reading, writing letters. But there was no liquor stronger than 3.2 beer. He disdained the idea of cards or craps with other bored officers. He hated the politics being played among the men in control.

After several weeks, he decided to spend two days lobbying first one chaplain, then another, and various chaplain's assistants too, "all of whom," he wrote, "are grim, constipated, and Limited Service." His purpose: to obtain keys to the chapel's Everett Orgatron, which was "going into a nineteenth century 'decline'" (JHB to BWH and HH, 21 August 1943, BWH). Perhaps he could play it, despite its faults as an instrument, and help boost morale, including his own.

There was a series of objections to rebut. Then, at last, Jack felt an "odd starved pleasure" from playing and hearing again Franck's Chorale in E Major. The next day he received his first wartime letter, a wandering orphan now directed to the correct APO. His two musical and

intelligent friends, the Hagens, had written months ago. To celebrate the proof that he could receive mail from home and that he had not been forgotten, he purchased a new "founting" pen from the WAC PX.

Life in Fedallah depressed Moe, as John had nicknamed himself to the Hagens. It seemed as if the Allies had offered a lawn party just outside the War Zone and forced him to attend. The cliques that the two Moes, John and Holger, had hated during censorship training at Brooklyn Army Base were now more evident than ever. Certain unfortunate sensitive men, he complained, were teetering near the brink of insanity. Burns managed to cope, and was assigned to serve as an infantry platoon leader. For several weeks his future seemed again in limbo, but at least his talents were being put to use. There was a reason to get up in the morning.

Soon the rainy season began in French Morocco. The pink soil and perfume of the land seemed to seep upward into Jack's skin, as the constant activity outside, with his forty boys, helped him gradually to acquire a tan, a rare event in the life of one with red hair. And then they were gone. The War Department shipped his platoon off to combat and death in Salerno, leaving Burns alone again in Fedallah, "perhaps to expire on a piano bench during a Schumann Lied," he joked, feebly (JHB to BWH and HH, September 1943, BWH). His experience with the infantry was over, and there was still no censorship work to be done. Jack felt saddened, "like Rachel, weeping for her children" (*Ibid.*).

It was September, by which time the restrictions on life in Fedallah had eased. Now Jack could visit the officers' club, to drink Moroccan Grenache and think about Somerset Maugham. Occasionally, as MP, he

was ordered to keep GIs out of the forbidden, Arab zones. He mourned the loss of his men, and he missed his combat-hungry friend, still at Brooklyn Army Base, Robert B. MacLennan, who had not yet written.

The war continued in the Mediterranean, moving north across already devastated Italy, now that Burns was safe in North Africa. First, Sicily had been invaded, while Moe was entertaining himself at the Hagens'. He hadn't been in Morocco a full week when the Allied campaign in Sicily ended victoriously, on 17 August 1943, and the Nazis had successfully transported only two-thirds of their remaining strength across the Strait of Messina.

The campaign in southern Italy had begun with a force stunning even to those outside the combat area. Benito Mussolini, "Il Duce," was no longer premier, having been removed by King Victor Emmanuel III on 25 July. The American invasion of Italy began on the day that the king's Marshall, Pietro Badoglio, had offered Italy's unconditional surrender to General Eisenhower--on 3 September 1943. The British had landed at Reggio Calabria the day before.

Then, on 9 September 1943, the Americans had initiated Operation Avalanche at Salerno, beginning the amphibious push to take Naples. The next day, on 10 September, the Germans took Rome. For four days, American and German forces had fought at Salerno, and as far east as Foggia, where there were German airfields. Meanwhile, Monty's troops pushed northward over a slow 150 miles of rough terrain.

When General Mark Clark and the Fifth Army finally entered Naples, on 1 October 1943, they would find the city a smoldering wreck, the Neapolitans starving and riddled with typhus. The Nazis had wreaked an aw-

ful vengeance on Naples, after months of Allied air raids--causing destruction on a large scale and affecting the water supply, transportation and communication systems, hotels, nearby tunnels, prisons, flour mills, the University of Naples, hospitals. And, all during this important, frantic month of September, John Horne Burns remained far behind the line of combat, bored, lonely, useless.

Then, suddenly, the orders came. He was transferred, but not to Italy. Instead, he was sent to Casablanca, the new Allied Forces Headquarters of North Africa, to what was "certainly the most sybarite setup overseas--white hotels, good food, hot showers, sea bathing" (JHB to BWH and HH, 30 September 1943, BWH). The contrasts were appalling. Jack decided to remain in his tent.

While others went "softly mad" in the linen decadence of the two Medinas, theoretically off limits, Jack rationalized that the city was too far away from AFHQ, the means of transportation too scarce, to feel tempted by the grim entertainment that Casablanca might offer. The prospect of love, he told himself, was "bacillic and uninviting, between Arab cretins and French doxies" (Ibid.). He continued to drink, gradually finding himself willing to visit the bar of Casablanca's "long cool Hôtel de Ville in the Place Lyautey, near palm trees, fountains, and an MP motor pool" (The Gallery 19).

One day in October he received a letter from the Hagens, dated 25 August and written during Jack's passage across the Atlantic, before anyone had known where he was to be stationed. The irony Jack saw in the letter was exquisite and horrifying. That Friday night in Casablanca, during the middle of the War, Jack got really drunk.

He sat there, at this usual post in the hotel bar, trying to formulate a response. His thoughts wandered. He found himself unable to concentrate. Powerful emotions, the conversation of the GIs, and liquor kept interfering. The short letter he finally mailed, unlike most of those Jack wrote, was difficult--nearly impossible--to complete. His handwriting slowly deteriorated. He began to repeat himself, using sentimental phrases that said little, or nothing at all. Before he stopped he got so drunk that he would be able to remember clearly, the next day, "neither the finishing of the epistle nor the posting of it" (JHB to BWH and HH, 16 October 1943, BWH).

On Saturday, sobering up, he remembered. He knew, at least, that the letter written Friday evening had indeed been mailed. He would compensate for the lapse, by composing another, coherent one today. But the first letter had been sent, and the Hagens would have to worry themselves over those closing lines: "I am in a Goethesque nostalgia to hear from you. Moe's letters are a marvelous thing; but still I am in a sort of agony" (JHB to BWH and HH, 15 October 1943, BWH).

Having discarded his familiar camouflage, the mask having been lowered for a moment, and with all wit grown dull, Burns--after this moment of honesty--had also scrawled across the bottom of the page two telling words. He had signed himself by a nickname that the Hagens had never heard--the name his family and friends had known him by when he was a child--simply Jack. And this was followed, in parentheses, by something else: the word plastered.

In the next day's letter, Moe explained the extreme emotions he was feeling. Often, in North Africa, he felt helplessly under the control

of a neurotic and "feminine" bureaucratic clique involved in partisan politicking. He thought that the trivial, too often, was needlessly bloated into the elephantine. "I seethe, because I'm not microscopic in my viewpoint," he complained (JHB to BWH and HH, 16 October 1943, BWH).

On the other hand, being a sometimes willing participant in these cliques had allowed him to get the piano tuned. And occasionally someone committed an act of kindness and taste. Even though he longed to hear Beulah's rich voice singing Er, der Herrlichste von Allen, Moe was grateful, for example, that he had received, from a "suave and gentle guy," a piano arrangement of Ravel's La Valse.

Jack's mixed emotions about the military bureaucracy would come to provide the basis for The Gallery's Sixth Portrait, "The Leaf." That story's main character, a Roanoke petroleum engineer named Motes, plays favorites and loves his minor paper empire. This short story, the longest Portrait in The Gallery, is certainly based, in spirit at least, upon real life. Moe complained to the Hagens about Casablanca's Censorship Base Detachment, for instance, saying that

The place is run by a small silky group of "operators" who subjugate the majority to their ornery wills by spider tactics. They do not treat the enlisted men as EM, and all of us suffer from the casual and (I think) messy un-GI-ness. The politics are as dense as mercury. Marcel Proust would have loved the wheels within wheels (JHB to BWH and HH, 16 October 1943, BWH).

In "The Leaf," the many G.I.'s who find Motes's systematic favoritism and insistence upon non-essentials intolerable, detail their grievances to the Inspector General, who makes an unannounced visit while Motes and his sexually ambiguous second lieutenant, Stuki, are in Algiers.

Eventually, Motes is replaced by his own "operators."

Not until 9 November 1943 did Jack receive the Hagens' reply to his first letter from North Africa. The delay had continued for nearly three months. In his absence, Jack learned, another pianist had accompanied Beulah through Schumann's Frauenliebe und Leben cycle. At first hurt by this revelation, Moe soon realized that he should, instead, look forward to returning home for the opportunity of playing the piano at 38 Sutton Place once more.

By that time, still feeling somewhat "mal a l'aise away from troops," Jack was finally censoring mail, as he had been trained to do in Brooklyn. Now liquor was more readily available, although it was of an inferior grade. Moe was beginning to acquire a reputation as "the most quiet, efficient, habitual drunkard of CPI" (JHB to BWH and HH, 9 November 1943, BWH).

At the same time, on alternate Thursday evenings, he was offering concerts: voice, piano, violin, motet. Even here, the bureaucracy of Command Post, Intelligence, had managed to torture an evening intended as a pleasurable relief from ennui and depression into a "rather pretentious social function" (JHB to BWH and HH, 18 November 1943, BWH).

The reality was beginning to be clear: Thanksgiving was drawing near. Jack knew that he would have to spend it--and Christmas too--alone and far from those he loved. When he received, from the Hagens, a Christmas package containing a new book and an entire carton of his favorite, Tareyton, cigarettes, Moe was proud to offer a smoke to a special officer friend (JHB to BWH and HH, 12 December 1943, BWH).

Before Christmas of 1943, Jack at last received his first wartime

letter from David Alison MacMackin, whose roller-coaster friendship had, for a time, been overshadowed by the Hagens and by David's graduation from Loomis. In his Christmas letter to David he tried to sound cheerful, beginning by ragging the radio performances he had heard recently, of Toscanini and Horowitz. Next he praised the priceless new recordings, from the Teatro Reale, of Verdi's Requiem, Tosca, La Bohème, and Madame Butterfly.

Yet he could not long sustain this mood. Before the letter's end, he wanted to say something meaningful about himself. But, unable to get specific information past the censors, Jack could only lament, in the end, that "All Africa needs is you and [Loomis student Robert Lewis] Purinton. Then possibly the war would end" (JHB to DAM, 19 December 1943). With a heavy heart, he signed the letter to match his mood, penning at the bottom of the page, "Pour les Funérailles d'un Soldat."

The temperatures continued to drop, but Jack refused to move into the hotel with the other men, preferring to stay in his huge pyramidal tent, "sleeping with stars and Ay-rabs," he said, trying to inject a bit of humor into the situation. Rolling himself into a cocoon of blankets after the artificial warmth of "the grape of Omar Khayyam," he sometimes awoke near dawn, shivering, to find himself exposed to the Moroccan winter. "But I'm getting the bloom in my cheeks of an Irish girl and the constitution of an Eskimo," he wrote to Beulah (JHB to BWH, 3 January 1944).

Hungry for music, and unable to find what he wanted in Casablanca, Jack set Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem Richard Cory for mezzo-soprano, imagining Beulah's voice as he wrote. The poem tells the story, based

upon the father of a friend of Jack's (JHB to BWH, 3 January 1944), of a wealthy and apparently happy man who ends his life by blowing his brains out. He would have the song sent to Beulah, when it passed the technical censor in Washington. As Moe Burns explained,

Music always carries with it the stigma of containing codes and military secrets, and the first thing you'd know, an MS will end up in Washington with the Chief of Staff analyzing it for details of the invasion (JHB to BWH, 17 April 1944).

Meanwhile, although he was planning to write music for poems by Edgar Lee Masters and John Donne, what Moe really wanted was a volume of Schumann and one of Hugo Wolf songs for middle voice. He asked Beulah to send them to him (JHB to BWH, 3 January 1944).

The Allies had a long winter awaiting them in Italy. Burns could follow the news reports of the battles there and wish, in vain, that the War would end. The thought of seeing Italy in a peacetime spring, of the opportunity to live and love for a time in Naples, made him wish for a transfer, which AFHQ would not, however, consider.

For on 22 January the Allied Forces made their desperate jump to the beach resort of Anzio, just 33 miles south of Rome. The plan had been to catch the Germans unaware and break through the Gustav Line to take the Eternal City. But these plans backfired, and the American forces were trapped there for four long months, with the Germans firing repeatedly at the exposed and immobilized Allied soldiers.

The Germans held the high ground surrounding Anzio, and could therefore keep the Allies blocked on the shore of the Tyrrhenian Sea. About fifty miles southeast, the Germans also held the town of Cassino, the ancient site of Casinum. There Marc Anthony had once held orgies,

and there the revered monastery built by St. Benedict in 529 A.D., Monte Cassino, was situated.

The Allies assumed, mistakenly, that the Germans controlled the monastery. The building was located in a remote and high region, accessible only by a narrow and twisted, rocky roadway. Thinking only about military tactics, the Allies felt that it had to be taken from the Germans.

On 14 February 1944, then, American airplanes dropped leaflets warning "Italian friends" to vacate the monastery. The next day, more than 500 tons of bombs were dropped, turning everything but St. Benedict's cell and tomb into rubble. The Germans, undisturbed, held onto their high ground. In mid-March the Allies would try again, leveling nearly three times as much explosive at both the town of Cassino and the monastery, but the Germans would continue to fight, in the midst of the ruins.

During the last week of February, after some white wine and "abortive fumblings on a hasty bed," Jack turned out a setting for baritone on François Villon's "Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis." Written in despair, the art song was said to have "an almost intolerable ache, plus a certain musky quality of smegma and such, possibly superinduced by smelling the Ay-rabs as they swish past in their veils to and from the Basbah," Moe wrote to Holger, failing, despite the vulgar joke, to mask his depression (JHB to HH, 4 March 1944). He would not be able to cover up his true feelings for long.

At last, the songs arrived from Beulah, more than two months after his request. On a Tuesday evening, 14 March 1944, soon after receiving

the treasured music, Jack sang through most of the two Schumann volumes, "exhausting two strong accompanists; and was put to bed in the middle of the Frauenliebe" (JHB to BWH, 15 March 1944). It was an extreme reaction to an extreme kindness.

As a tribute to Beulah's thoughtfulness, he set another poem to music. "You may find it dissonant and hollow at first," he wrote to her, "if you haven't tackled 20th century lieder. I hope you'll get to like it. It's for you, anyway. The poem is one of Walt Whitman's last and loveliest; as I wrote I kept hearing the texture of your voice in the phrases" (JHB to BWH, 28 March 1944).¹⁰

Most of the time, Jack was fairly content in his job of censoring mail. As he explained in a letter to Holger, "I happen not to mind this work; I accepted my commission in it; I entered it without a bandage on my eyes . . ." (JHB to HH, 17 January 1944). But sometimes the work was numbing, since most of the men wrote home in clichéd expressions of loneliness, fear, and love. The expression "be sweet" had a nauseating, cloying taste for Burns.

He particularly disliked having to read the mail of an officer, stationed in Sicily, whom he and Holger had both disliked at Brooklyn, in part the inspiration for the bureaucrats in The Gallery's sixth Portrait, "The Leaf." Calling the soldier "Mother," Jack told Holger that "through the typewritten lines I see her tabby-cat eyes, smell her morning-after breath, hear her Brooklyn bar-lawyer voice, feel her operating like a fat slug under the table at the Congress of Vienna" (JHB to HH, 31 March 1944).

After a long day, reading the stale prose of Time Magazine, in a

pony issue especially prepared for the G.I.'s, Jack sometimes felt ready to give out "a raw but controlled scream à la Rainer Maria Rilke." Then, suddenly, he would meet a refined and literate serviceman who helped him retain a hold on reality. As he told Holger, such "sudden surceases" to his "torments" were delightful (JHB to HH, 31 March 1944).

All those months in North Africa, Jack had managed, for the most part, to avoid discussing his actual emotions. In his letters home to the Hagens and to David, he had been a witty entertainer, performing in a series of roles that they had known: music critic, rebellious soldier, admirer, teacher. Finally, in a letter to David, Jack's carefully laid veneer began to crack.

After a silly, pompous opening, congratulating David for beginning a serious study of conducting, Jack's letter of 9 March 1944 ends with this sobering revelation:

The war has got us down. We pass about in a fervid dream, with frequent excursions into drunkenness and dreadfulness. The world seems a greater shambles than the Loomis orchestra. In general we derive a ghoulish sport from it all, but also our high-impedance ear detects the surface noise of death and mayhem. We're doing a fair job of holding ourself aloof, so that with the Abbess and Purinton we may banquet on the world's end.

Gama

Of course, David would have remembered that King Gama, in the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta Princess Ida, was an unhappy misanthrope.

Jack's feelings, once out in the open, were easier for him to express. On that same day, Moe wrote to Holger about them, wondering out loud about their origin and significance:

I've suffered no hardship whatever--physically. But constantly I feel a heartbreaking malaise, a decomposition of all that I've known. Can't tell you, Moe, whether it's an added heightening of my sense of reality (or the reverse), or closer contact with the bacteria of war, or a sudden paralysis of my brain from some kind of paresis. But we do all live in a kind of cocained dream . . . (JHB to HH, 9 March 1944).

With Frau Moe, for six more weeks, Moe Burns would maintain his emphasis upon music criticism, concealing from her his nearness to mental and emotional collapse. Perhaps keeping his anguish a secret from her would help preserve his sanity and protect her from feeling such awful pain.

In the middle of January, Burns had begun a practice he would maintain until after V-E Day: he restricted himself to writing only one-page letters. There was a practical reason for adopting such a habit. The United States Post Office, in cooperation with the War Department, was now microfilming correspondence to and from G.I.'s. When a roll of microfilm was full, it was shipped by airmail to a censorship detachment overseas, and printed there. Thus, the letters could be sent, censored as usual (before filming); but, with the small and light microfilm reels instead of the original paper, the planes could carry more cargo.

The governmental form adopted for these "V-mails" required the sender to write within a framed border in lettering clear enough to photograph accurately and large enough to be visible when printed in the standard size of about 4 x 5 inches. The form could be folded and sealed before mailing to the nearest censorship detachment. No regulation prohibited people from writing longer than one-page letters.

There was, however, ample opportunity for the second page to arrive separately from the first, even before the first: the pages of a letter could be separated on desks, in mailbags, during censorship, filming,

printing, delivery. The V-mails were such precious little things. Their infrequent arrival demanded especially reverent scrutiny. Most people simply wrote a second if the first V-mail seemed insufficient.

Burns's letter-writing habits, then, were modified to suit the mechanics of the Post Office. But, as the war progressed, his thoughts and feelings became more complicated, his need to express them more insistent. So he continued to develop, in the process of answering his correspondence, the compact, allusive style that would be a central feature of The Gallery.¹¹

Both Holger and David were good outlets for Jack. Holger's letters were thought-provoking, contemplative, witty. The letters between him and Moe were a kind of literary doubles, each man attempting to outdo the other in understanding and expressing the truths he found in analyzing the War. David's letters were gossipy, whimsical, allusive. They challenged Jack to read for meanings that were not literally present on the page, and his replies were expected to demand the same sort of feat.

Finally allowing himself to be honest to his close friends, Jack gradually pulled himself away from the abyss of madness and despair. The arrival of the volumes of Schumann's and Wolf's art songs helped lift his spirits. And the long winter in Italy was at last coming to an end, in April 1944, as the Allies made almost 21,000 sorties from Anzio to attack German supply lines. In Morocco, the air, light and warm, reminded Jack of Florida; he looked forward to summer.

Burns was now beginning to feel his torments ease, as he explained to Holger:

Goethe prayed that his misanthrope, after having his balm turned to poison, might have his eyes opened to the thousand fountains gushing even in the desert. They have been (JHB to HH, 31 March 1944).

The crisis was over. Now he could finally tell Beulah the truth:

I've been a tormented goon of late, having wakened from my miasmas to a cognizance of what the war is all about, and what it's going to do to all our lives. And my only buffer-spring against the cold white wall of madness has been batting out letters, writing music, getting drunk, and throwing a kiss or two onto Cynara's vampire mouth (JHB to BWH, 21 April 1944).

For the next two years, Burns would attempt to explain what it was that he had learned from World War II.

At the beginning of May, he was able to articulate some of his thoughts for Holger, writing the following sentimental passages that remind us of the spirit of much of The Gallery:

Once I had quaint insular ideas that gentleness, delicacy of perception, magnanimity . . . were to be found only among the haves. . . . Now I'm soothed . . . I've found a loveliness in little Ayrab girls who beg for chewing gum and giggle when you ask them for American souvenirs, in the French aspirant who recites Wordsworth in an out-of-this world Algerian accent, in our own truckdrivers from Chicago, who say "I'm no fuckin' good, sir; but I'll drive you from here to hell." Am I getting like Aldous Huxley's St Francis of Assisi, "a nasty little pervert who went around licking leper's sores"? (JHB to HH, 3 May 1944).¹²

David MacMackin responded sympathetically to Jack's emotional state of mind in North Africa. However, knowing that his young friend had not yet experienced anything similar to what he had recently seen, Jack could not explain himself to David as easily as he had begun to find it with Holger. Instead, he sent David an elliptical, moving letter--one of his most striking--inviting him to dinner.

This V-mail helps us to understand Burns's mood in those days, and it expresses sentiments that would later be included in the Second Promenade of The Gallery. In the letter, quoted in its entirety below, a melancholy acknowledgment of the heartaches of youth is contrasted with the lifestyle that David's mentor and model had come, unexpectedly, to lead:

We are touched sans mesure at the Abbess's motherly solicitude over our 'sublimation'.¹³ We assure her that since our prep school days we've never been without our moments of brwaugh; in fact, our heart was even once broken when we stumbled into dreadful doings. C'est une histoire! But in the army our dreadfulness has occasionally reached such levels as Sir Henry Krotzer couldn't mime in aquarelle; it would send up the Abbess's precarious blood-pressure several precarious points, and all the other nuns in the abbey screaming to Father Hugh, Robert Lewis Purinton, and John Bradford Tillson. However, at the motherly knee of the Elsa Maxwell of the cloister, let us say that, with a few exceptions, the life strikes us as centrifugal, horrifying, and death-making. But perhaps the same thing might be said of Life itself: Et qu'est-ce que c'est que la vie, sauf qu'un prélude à la Mort?

We invite you to join us at the Brasserie for dinner this evening.¹⁴ Since our letters reach the Portress of the Abbey in about five days, it is quite possible that Your Saintliness could arrive here in the next hour -- on a besom. There will be a gay potage, hors d'oeuvres variés à la camp, rונים (from the loins of St Cuthbert) and the most rawlly petits pois anglaises. The Ay-rab Fatima who prepares them looks not unlike Laverta; many of the French people dining out like Aunt Olive and Miss Hayden on a Helen Hokinson spree. There will be a bottle of sacramental grappe d'or. The guests are even more spirituel than the fare: officers from the air corps just landed and seeking Lethe (which doesn't flow through North Africa), ladies of the evening with Cyprian mink wraps about their frail transparent shoulders, Spanish refugees who look at you hard. Komm' bald.

Brunetto Latin¹⁵

C. Algeria: "Heavenly Lice on the Body of God"

In late May 1944, the Allied forces in Anzio finally broke out of the locked beachhead. The Germans were forced to abandon their long-held strongholds in Cisterna and Rome. Less than two weeks later, during the first days of June, Allied soldiers marched in victory through Rome's Piazza Venezia, where they enjoyed the cheers, kisses, and gifts of the liberated Italians. The Eternal City would not be destroyed.

That happy day found John Horne Burns in Algiers, now past the worst of his harrowing in North Africa. He had left Casablanca and Fedallah behind him, for another, more brilliant and seductive, Allied Forces Headquarters. Content to be living again "in a certain sort of discomfort," under a colonel whose men slept on stiff cots in tents, rather than in the decadence of a hotel, Jack felt that he was in a small way "expiating a former smugness and inhumanity" (JHB to HH, 2 June 1944).

In Algiers, a more European city than Casablanca, a kind of "old Paris" (The Gallery 117), Jack detached himself from the crowd of Allies walking the streets, saluting one another and exchanging pleasantries, sporting a variety of national colors and uniforms. To Jack, an "overlay and needlepoint of the anguish and idling energy of the war" was superimposed over the gusto and bravaugh of a now friendly French navy (JHB to DAM, 23 May 1944). "O ignota ricchezza! O ben ferace!" he could exclaim, melodramatically.

Many of the men, however--handsome zombies--went rushing about the city, "puzzled, hurt, nostalgic; they've a feeling that they've lost

their pattern of life and their raison d'être" (JHB to DAM, 2 June 1944). They might look for escape, with Charles Boyer's Pepe le Moko, in the famous bar of the Hôtel Aletti, or in its terraced restaurant. They might loiter about, with Frenchmen dressed in American GI uniforms, in the hotel lobby. Much of the time, no one seemed, really, to be trying to communicate with anyone else. For Jack, who wept often in those days, a solitary walk along the sea wall sometimes held more appeal.

Now "beyond the pale of madness, despair, and demoralization," he began to examine his prewar values and lifestyle, and thereby he made a crucial discovery:

After a whirlwind one becomes detached from the whirl and realizes that after the war is over he must live with himself. To be sure I'm rooted in my own time, but I fear I cannot betray even my own perhaps tribal values and heritage. And how I used to smile at the word integrity and conscience! Then cleverness seemed a virtue (JHB to HH, 29 May 1944).

Finding the contemplative life a form of escapism, a "gilded" cowardice, Moe Burns wrote to Moe Hagen that he was not, after all, in danger of becoming a Franciscan. It was not simply that he had given up his religious practices when he left the infantry. More important, he was feeling "an increasing distaste for mystical union with God when the world is such a helluva place through our own fault" (JHB to HH, 29 May 1944).

Jack's perceptions were growing always clearer, his epigrams "more trenchant." Like his character Hal, Jack's ability to empathize with the lost, the wounded, and the lonely was beginning to be noticed

by the many dreadfuls who for some reason or other look to us as to an obelisk. They believe that we've happened upon some

secret of life lost since the Ptolemies (JHB to DAM, 2 June 1944).

Similarly, in The Gallery, "everyone discovered that Hal understood him and was elated, the way a man is when he buys a perfect mirror at an auction" (63). Hal's narcissism prevents him from sharing true feeling and belief with others and eventually leads to madness. Happily, it is here that fiction and life diverge. For, in Algiers--suddenly, unpredictably--Jack fell in love.

Jack first told his friend David about this brief affair in the middle of June 1944. So taken with his new "Love" was he that he seems hardly to have noticed the Allied invasion of Normandy on 6 June 1944. Jack's romance led him to spend more time drinking rum and coke at the Officers' Club, where he and his friend witnessed an incident whose high-pitched recklessness makes the spectacle at the end of "Mamma," the fifth Portrait in The Gallery, seem realistic:

While we reflected on the Abbess and eyed our Love with calf's eyes that tried to be sly and hard, we noticed an episode occurred that deserves an illumination in the registry of the Abbey. . . . During a spell when the jigaboo band was doing something solid, the street door burst open and in zoomed a character . . . He took one look around the salon -- the ANC's and Red Cross workers and French cocottes, shook his head, grabbed Enzo [a North Italian P/W serving as waiter] by the waist, whisked him across the floor in the hottest gyration since Nijinsky's last leap in the Spectre de la Rose. He was promptly ejected by the MP's. The nuns and novices gave trilling little screams and rattled their rosaries. The jernt was a shambles after that; Our Love and we exchanged tragic looks and went out into the evening. At present we don't feel that we can be saved (JHB to DAM, 11 June 1944).

As far as his letters to David show, Jack's romance lasted only until the end of July, when he was sent to Naples.

On 12 June 1944, suddenly insecure, he felt afraid that his friends back home might forget him. Because he so desperately needed to receive their letters, Jack sent to America six copies of a sinister photograph of himself. It showed Jack looking like a dour Bill Mauldin soldier, puffy eyes gazing mournfully, just left of the cameraman, into the Mediterranean, cigarette drooping across a full bottom lip. Along with the copy he sent to David went the following note:

The abbes is prîee to put this on the Mary altar, light a vigil lamp, and decree a day of fasting and abstinence. This is a graphic representation of the Requiem of Gabriel Urbain Fauré.

St. Theobald

The photograph had its intended effect: "six screaming V-mails dated 20 june" from the six recipients (JHB to DAM, 27 June 1944). He wrote everyone a letter of apology. To Beulah he confessed that listening to recordings of music by Mozart and Walton had helped pull him out of his depression. It reminded him "for the nth time that the odious little race of vermin,¹⁶ to which we all belong, can also be heavenly lice on the body of God" (JHB to BWH, 28 June 1944).

Usually, though, Jack tried to sound self-confident these days. His letters home during the month of July remain typically witty and anecdotal, pleasant but trivial. Robert B. MacLennan wrote to Holger at that time that "Moe sends up a stray card now and again, is now practicing having 'a cold orgasm in front of the Buddha's navel while a sexless voice reads Laa Ti Po'" (RBM to HH, 3 July 1944).

Moe Burns was saving his true feelings for expression in a group of narrative poems that, he told David, "are like nothing since John Donne

and Mother Marvell" (JHB to DAM, 3 July 1944). He began to write poetry sometime during the month of June. The project would continue to occupy him through October. The still unpublished collection of twenty-eight poems--which Burns would call Anatomy--represents his first literary effort on the subject matter of World War II.¹⁷

Five undated poems, written in abab-rhymed iambic quatrains, appear to have been the first poetry Jack wrote for the series. Each of these poems is metrically different from the others. Two are quite regular, one being three quatrains of three-foot lines, and another, four quatrains of four-foot lines. A third consists of four quatrains, each line, throughout, alternating between four and three feet in length. None of these three early poems is exceptional, although they reveal the gradual progression toward Burns's writing The Gallery.

"I watched her lose her mind," as one might guess, is a confessional poem that laments the speaker's extreme, icy detachment from an unidentified woman's fragmentation. Like many of the poems of Anatomy, this one fails. Burns's poetry too often makes the apprentice's mistake of being needlessly obscure. Here, and in many of these poems, he unreasonably expects the reader to recreate an obscure situation that is not adequately explained and to interpret a highly personal and time-bound allusion to some wartime event.

In this poem, the victim's mind is affected, as if bombed by an enemy. Because he failed to recognize her plight, the speaker is not now accorded (by her?) the kind of warmth that the Italians showed the Allied soldiers in Rome. But this is not poetry. The reader feels cheated by such versified guilt. For the speaker's lamented predicament

is just what we would expect to reward his shameful behavior.

The premise of "It isn't such a mutilation" is even more obscure. Some unnamed event has caused the speaker to feel diseased, changed. He can now no longer caress--only mangle. This condition of finding one's senses altered does remind us of expressions in Burns's letters, but, again, the verses do not reward careful study. Yet one sentiment in the poem may help us date it: the speaker's claim that "St Francis['] kisses / would not sponge my leprosy." This mention of St. Francis seems to indicate that the poem was composed in early June, shortly after Jack's reassurance to Moe that he would not enter a monastery.

The third of these early poems, "Until Salerno we had loved," relates, more successfully, the experience of the Italian campaign. Here the narrator speaks as representative of the G.I.'s who had left Salerno in the air-lift to Anzio. Before that campaign, love had been "effortless," moved by the kind of necessity that, in classical music, causes one note to follow another. Then, in the fruitless attempt to liberate Rome, the soldiers committed "murder," as they had been taught to do in basic training. Afterward, the remembered violence prevented "sweet impulses" from being a "release." "A camouflaged decease," instead, "is shacking" in the breasts and hair of the girls they love.

The elegiac "Hugo Wolf (1860-1898)" can explain both Burns's love for the art song and his poetic technique in Anatomy. He praises Wolf's recognition that poets imprison in words and metaphors "the dangerous things they've heard." As a kind of sheriff, Wolf had set the verses free, "unconvicted," by interpreting them musically, thereby allowing them expression in another medium. The brain syphilis from which Wolf

suffered must have had a "prison smell," Burns reasons, so that his ideas "bled" into the freedom of "melody," in "true gestapo spell."

Finally, "Sea Change," the most metrically complicated and the longest of the poems Burns seems to have written in June 1944, preserves in verse Burns's feeling that his North African experiences had separated him from other men. The poem, whose first and last stanzas owe a debt to e. e. cummings, repeats sentiments that we have already heard in Burns's correspondence, although sometimes more artfully.

The speaker explains what happened on "the day my oh became a why." No observable physical change occurred, but he became "a drop" separate from the "mass," or a "splinter gouged out of a glass." After the change in him, the speaker is a shell, as lonely as God, who could see "the scheming of the play, cut of the hive," but who has no promise of perfection or immortality.

It is a kind of Limbo, despite Christ's sacrifice, in which angels might pass by, beyond reach, and apart, too, from the rest of humanity. The speaker feels punished, like Prometheus, with a new wisdom that he has not sought, but that came to him while he pursued life and death. Now, fossilized like a fly caught in amber, the speaker cries out to Neverdeath, who offers "new wounds" with each one that is bound.

By the beginning of July, after his love affair in Algiers had begun, Burns adopted the habit of dating his poems. Most of them would remain untitled; there was then no carefully articulated plan for a sequence. He tried a Shakespearean sonnet on 5 July 1944, "By prickling fall of water on the tin," portraying love as if it could last four thousand years--which would then, of course, require one's ministrations

to a mummy. Next, on 17 July, he returned to his beloved quatrains, altering the rhyme-scheme to abba, for "O bee that stung me out of life," a heavily figured and obscure paeon to the apiary of life.

Much more successful than any of his earlier poems was one that he wrote on the following day, 18 July 1944. The last poem written in Algiers, it was based upon a group of men Burns had first encountered in Camp Croft. He had chuckled to David about their behavior at the time--in early November 1942:

twenty New York dreadfuls entered the 32d Battalion . . . were transferred to clerks' school, and do everything "for the laughs". They call themselves the "Mad Queens" and delight in being seen with their field jackets on their shoulders, but the arms not thrust into the sleeves. They say it makes the field jacket seem like a mink bolero. And the word "Brwaugh" is used as the password by most sentinels (JHB to DAM, 5 January 1943).

Here is the poem Burns wrote about these "Mad Queens":

Dear Girls, your coronets
are helmetliners now;
your opera cloaks of mink
fieldjackets in a row.

Flounce of your rhinestone heels
leggin laces hide,
and the dogtag chain
a drag necklace pride.

The season's just as gay
at Caen or Anzio;
the difference is the way
one's slip begins to show.

So come out all the same
in a three-quarter ton;
for belles it's all a tame
gallantry, camp, or gun.

At last, Burns's diction is not disturbingly incongruous, but suited to his subject. The meter does not jar, the rhyme scheme does not seem forced. All in all, this bit of fluff artfully preserves the joy that Allan Berubé has documented among the gay G.I.'s of World War II, as they began to discover the possibility of a new, more open lifestyle. In Burns's first satisfactory poetic expression of what he learned overseas, he had also reconciled the two extremes of militarism and theatrical femininity--the types of the male and the female in America's imagination during the 1940s--by presenting, without apology, the figure of the gay G.I. Ironically, partly because its sentiments seemed unrealistic, Jack thought this poem inferior to others he would write that summer.¹⁸

D. Italy: "A Topflight Mistress"

When Burns saw Naples for the first time, spring was far behind. Now the Allies were pushing their way through Tuscany. By the time they were to arrive in Florence, it too, like so much of Italy, would be a heart-rending pile of rubble, peopled with crying children and broken men. The Germans would not retreat before destroying every bridge crossing the Arno except one, the Ponte Vecchio.

By the time Burns reached Naples, the city had been returned to some degree of normality, as he describes her in The Gallery:

In August, 1944, the port of Naples was a flytrap of bustle and efficiency and robbery in the midst of ruin and panic. Images of disaster lay about the harbor: ships sunk at their berths, shattered unloading machinery, pumiced tenements along the docks. And back of this lunette the island of Capri sheered out of the bay, a sunny yellow bulkhead. Vesuvius smoked softly and solemnly, the way a philosophic plumber does at a wake. The Bay of Naples was crammed with Liberty ships and boats with red crosses on their sides and decks. Out Bagnoli way among the laurels and myrtles landing craft infantry thumped up and down in the water (206).

Jack was living on the fourth floor of a huge palazzo, where the lofty ceilings meant that his room was a considerable distance above ground. The apartment was close enough to the Galleria Umberto that he could easily stumble home from the San Carlo Opera House. From just outside his window, across the narrow street, could be heard the toll of the bell tower, down the Via dei Mille, of the local church, Santa Maria Egiziaca.

On 3 August 1944, Jack went to hear John Barbirolli conduct the Opera House Orchestra, Jack's first concert in months. The San Carlo's

"corridors," he reported, "echoed to the click of infantry boots" that night. The concert, a tasteful collection of "staples" and a "lovely sibilant giving of Delius's On Hearing" (JHB to DAM, 4 August 1944) was the first of many musical evenings that Naples would yield. The music, although of a different standard than that available at the Met or at Hartford's Bushnell Memorial, was balm to Jack's soul.

After that first concert, Burns chanced, unceremoniously, to encounter one shadowy aspect of gay G.I. life in Naples. He described the incident, in a letter to David, using the metaphors of the Abbess and the convent:

We wandered out, our evening a trifle deranged because the bars close at 2130 and the dreadfuls let up on their concentrations, like lifting phosgene. We felt our way into a blacked-out giardino by the port [of Santa Lucia], flickered over only by a bombing moon. We sat down and told our beads, meditating on the piety and chastity of the Abbess. As soon as we'd lit a cigaret, we were aware that the place was flea-thick with nuns and prioresses on other benches, or whisking around the santieri fioriti with their wimples twittering. Many were in pairs (as virtuous religious walk, eyes downcast, giggling over their maiden jests). But quite a few mystics were alone in contemplation. Several plumped down with us to share their apperceptions of the ultimate. We maintained a pious distance between ourselves and their holy habits, though a couple of over-zealous pushed us right off the bench. At last, in holy ecstasy, we went to the cell of a novice who had a bottle of Lacrima Christi, and passed the night waiting to sing Matins together. Brwaugh!

Blessèd Iohn of the Clyster

The heat of an Italian August made "palpable and obvious" the fact that Dante had had a "first-hand experience with the Inferno" (JHB to BWH, 7 August 1944). It also provided the starting point for the first poem Burns wrote in Italy. Appropriately, a Petrarchan sonnet, it be-

gins with the line "So hot the evenings and so pressed the life."

This sonnet is interesting only because it contains several images that Burns would later incorporate into The Gallery: the click of British hobnails upon the street, the homesickness that drinking vino could inspire, the American efforts to speak Italian successfully, the gossip and noise filling the streets, the startling juxtaposition of activity and death, the drunken soldiers who fornicated and urinated in the alleys near the Galleria Umberto I. The iambic pentameter lines of the poem jerk haltingly along, and the sonnet falters. In the end, it is the images that one remembers.

In Naples, Jack was closer to the front line, now near Florence, than ever. In Naples he observed, first-hand and at his leisure, the results of combat upon the soldiers on leave. There, even though Allied Forces Headquarters had been moved to neighboring Caserta, everything seemed off limits to Americans. Jack thought the American soldiers, particularly, "evinced an almost stifling bitterness, homesickness, and disillusionment" (JHB to BWH, 7 August 1944). The soldiers who had seen combat seemed to Burns to fit one of three types:

a) those who have been made purified and integrated personalities by the experience; b) the dazed; c) the disgruntled, who feel that the experience of battle has put them in a class by themselves, rather like the deification of American athletes. To know the first class is ennobling and touching (JHB to BWH, 7 August 1944).

He was learning to understand the Italians too. The next day, he wrote another poem, entitled "For Maria Rocco in Naples." These five iambic quatrains, each in alternating three- and five-foot lines, are of special interest to readers of The Gallery. For the beautiful Neapolitan-

tan, Maria Rocco, reappears in that book. There she is the intelligent PX worker, unhappy hooker, the girl whom kind-hearted Second Lieutenant Moe Schulman takes for a romantic drive down Via Caracciolo and to whom he makes love--just before his death at German hands. Who was Maria Rocco in real life? The poem, maddeningly, does not answer the question. All that we learn, in the long run, is contained in this elusive final stanza:

The lesson that you taught
from after-wounding of your medicine:
no bird is ever caught
and fox of grief must cringe beneath the vine.

In addition, Jack was starting to re-examine America and Americans. The war was helping him to understand better America's good intentions in fighting the Axis, the psychological effect of leaving isolationism behind, her youth as a nation, the pain of that awful destruction--all grew more and more clear. So he wrote another untitled poem on Wednesday, 9 August 1944--ten rhymed stanzas, each containing three trimetric lines, and concluding with a quatrain built on a single rhyme. "At last I understood" addresses the United States, "lavish heartbreak nation," detailing and finally accepting the various moods and sorrows Americans had felt because of the War, accepting everything:

if women gave you birth,
if sacrifice is worth,
if crops grow after dearth, -
you are the earth.

Then, a few days later, a sentimental poem, written in two long and irregular iambic stanzas, and entitled "In the Galleria Umberto" marked

the end of this intense period of new insights. Written on 11 August, this was Burns's first attempt to explain what that cross-shaped collection of shops, galleries, and bars meant to him and everyone in Naples in August 1944. The poem describes an orphaned, hungry, and lice-infested Neapolitan girl of two, who plays alone in the Galleria, wearing only a dirty burlap sack.

As she plays, on the steps leading up into that arcade, where people in Naples always seem to collect, a drunken soldier staggers by, clinging to one wall. He gives the child a roll of Lifesavers, and she thinks him a friend, enjoying the sweetness that "flavors and anneals / a dryness in her mouth." But then, he is gone, and the girl is alone, her tears forming a puddle of wretchedness and fear that no one else will notice. We are reminded, inevitably, of the gum-chewing urchin at the end of The Gallery's fourth Portrait, "Father Donovan and Chaplain Bascom."

At the end of this busy period of poetry-writing, Jack sent copies of the poems of Anatomy to David. Burns had not read anything else like them from World War II, and he thought them to use a diction and style appropriate to their subject matter (JHB to DAM, 15 August 1944). His friends in Italy admired them, but Jack wanted the criticism of someone who cared as much for poetry as for him.

At a calmer rate, he continued to write poems. There was the one he wrote on Saturday, 19 August 1944, beginning with the line "A hooded judas in your eye" and comprising nine five-line stanzas following the rhyme-scheme of a limerick, although serious in subject and, again, iambic in meter. As was Burns's usual strategy in Anatomy, the poem con-

cerns an obscure personal relationship between the speaker and the person to whom the poem is addressed. The speaker feels that his lover's betrayal with another man is self-defeating, but, now dead to whoring, he cannot stop the suicide he thinks he sees taking place. The speaker's suffering can be summed up as "frustration's ideology."¹⁹

During this time, Jack was busy causing trouble at the Censorship Base Detachment of Naples, located in the Royal Palace in Caserta. Robert B. MacLennan, having enjoyed bucking the system in Brooklyn, naturally found satisfaction in sharing this information with Holger Hagen:

Burns is a moral ruin--not to say a cancer--down in Italy. This last on the authority of a colleague of my Fort Meyer days who was transferred up here after demanding an I.G. [Inspector General] inspection of the base there. He--the colleague--formerly a complicated and sophisticated man, had had his sense of values marvellously simplified by being in censorship, so that his only rule in judging a man became, "Does he try to make life miserable for the C.O., or does he brown nose?" Burns was on the side of the angels (RBM to HH, 7 September 1944).

A near-catastrophic demand, by a friend of Burns's, for an inspection of the censorship base where they were stationed in Italy? MacLennan's comment is intriguing; we are reminded that, while Major Motes is out of Casablanca, in "The Leaf"--the sixth Portrait in The Gallery--his base is inspected on a surprise visit from the Inspector General, to whom some of Motes's men had complained.

However, at this time, unknown to his friends, Burns was unhappy to be receiving a series of injections of the experimental drug penicillin, for a malady that--until very recently--had been a slow and deadly killer, poisoning the central nervous system and savaging one's skeleton. Afterwards, Jack chose to write a poem about his experience, and he

would eventually select it to begin the entire sequence of Anatomy. Written on 11 September 1944, the first line, "A scarified and tunneled song," reveals that the poem is based on his having contracted syphilis and then having endured the new treatment for it.

The 37-line poem--constructed of eleven four-foot iambic couplets and a final triplet, divided into two unequal stanzas--contains the phrase that would give the collection its title:

This what's left at scalpel-time,
no anesthesia in my rime;
but anatomy's mere frame.

The speaker, a poet, writes poems that provide no adequate release from the pain he feels. Instead, they constitute merely the remains that result from operations upon the psyche. These bones are what would be left if syphilis were allowed to eat through the muscles, were left untreated by a physician. At last, the speaker knows how close death and life are to one another:

And as often as I wept,
losing chrism that others kept,
then my skin put forth a scar -
olive branches carried far -
takes therapies for what they are.

Readers of The Gallery will think of its eighth Portrait, "Queen Penicillin," in which an unnamed American G.I. is humiliated and given the painful but effective new treatment for syphilis while isolated in a barbed-wire enclosure that the Army called a hospital. That Portrait, like the poem in Burns's Anatomy, is based upon first-hand experience. On Tuesday, 12 September, the day after he wrote the poem about a poet

with syphilis, Jack explained to David that he had just been released
 "from nine days of durance vile in the 23rd Gen Hosp":

We see no reason why we shouldn't give [you] the reasons for our sequestration, which have been hushed as effectively as the pregnancy of a nun. It seems that . . . in the course of our Italian brwaugh some of the sisterhood infected us with a spirochete or two. In due time these produced their fruit on our so far immaculate body and we went screaming to the dispensary to show various medical officers our now maculate skin. After a round of Kahns and Wassermans we were immured in a venereal ward along with other burnt Ay-rabs, French, Italians, and Americans. . . . The new treatment for syphilis is drastic, but it takes only eight days, having just been proved in the land of the free. Sixty hypodermics of penicillin were forced into us subcutaneously, once every three hours day and night.²⁰ The results are more miraculous than anything Bernadette Soubirous saw at Lourdes . . . Now we find ourselves chastened and minus nine days of the government's pay as punishment for our vagaries; and we daren't have any adventures for the next ninety days till our blood goes negative again. But we do feel better than we have in months (JHB to DAM, 12 September 1944).

As this frank letter seems to indicate, Jack rebounded--with little sign of remorse--from the unhappy episode. But there are the layers of resentment and betrayal that show up both in The Gallery's "Queen Penicillin" and in "A scarified and tunneled song." We cannot help knowing Jack's heartache, sorrow, and disgust, despite the fact that Naples then had the highest incidence of V.D. of any city in Europe.

He was soon back at the San Carlo, where he had seen Puccini's Tosca five times that first month in Naples, and where the unfinished Turandot would be staged in October. It was such joy to be able to escape, even temporarily, with a friend and a bottle of brandy, to one of the potpourried programs the Italians loved to offer: anything with a "broad lush melody sung by a tenor and soprano, with all the strings of the orchestra in unison" (JHB to BWH, 12 September 1944).

Even the ballet, as attempted by the too-heavy Italian ballet dancers, was fun to attend on Wednesday and Saturday evenings. "Tonight," Madame LaFarge Burns wrote David on a Thursday, "the Mediterranean Symphony Orchestra is doing the Brahms Violin Concerto. We'll be knitting in the fifth row" (JHB to DAM, 14 September 1944).

The next day, in an even darker mood, Jack wrote a bitter poem that details the many treasons that the world commits. The first line, "The way the world will do for you," announces the poem's catalogue of abuses that make up life's "gumshoe Mafia act." Finally, when the sensitive person dies, after he has attempted vainly to make his agony known--all these efforts being seen as a "feint," and his friends having begun to make allowances for his eccentricities--the epitaph will call him "a poet and a saint."

Jack stopped writing to his friends for several weeks. He had begun, again, to write painful and obscure poems about the new insights the War had granted him. The next of these sorrowful poems was written on 19 September 1944. "When children look at me" expresses the awful guilt the speaker feels when the youngest victims of the War seem to see into his heart, "as though they should be mine." Two days later, Jack wrote "Post-Pyre," an acceptance of the ashes and the smelting caused by the speaker's having been "fire-cased." This process had hurt him--until he grew receptive to the plan that "adheres like lover to the past / and future of a man."

"I have had everything but you," an irregular rhymed verse in 25 lines written on 2 October, begins with the speaker's confessing his selfish urge to possess another. This selfishness soon gives way to a

recognition that the speaker and his beloved have expressed "a dual pride . . . like an arch of air." Although each admits, tacitly, that the two of them could share a perfect and loving relationship, both settle for the lesser possibility, each seeming to prefer a soul "not Siamese to hers":

Or maybe in the end
both of us fear the final plane of friend:
and for a lesser, greater can't unbend.

On that same day, apparently much affected by the incident that inspired this poem, Jack wrote another one on this subject. "I never thought that I could kill," unlike what might be expected from the poem's opening line, is a lamentation about jealousy and misunderstanding between potential lovers and one of the more successful poems in Anatomy. The speaker admits having assumed that his companion, finally "fired" to his will, would come home with him after one evening's flirtations. Yet the couple had not been able to communicate well. In the bitter last of the poem's four quatrains, he remembers that the unfaithful partner had climaxed with another man, while the speaker went out "to walk the streets," thinking "it doesn't matter whom one eats."

This shocking final line predicts the manner in which A Cry of Children, Burns's last published book, would end. After undergoing a long-sought abortion, Isobel Joy, in that novel, returns to the bar where she had met her unfaithful lover, David Murray. Realizing that another handsome young man is looking at her and asking the bartender who she is, she thinks to herself that "after a while they all get to look alike" (276).

A few days later, on 4 October 1944, Jack was still dealing with these unhappy feelings, writing an obscure set of broken quatrains, "In a beginning of trust," apparently about the heartbreaks that come with a mature understanding of love. More convincing poetry is the one he wrote on 6 October, "The not-so-rare American," describing the hungry desperation for love that a combat-ready G.I. experiences before returning to the front lines. Like The Gallery's first Portrait, "The Trench-foot of Michael Patrick," although less skillful, this poem recreates those powerful emotions. The most successful is this, the third of four quatrains:

His thirsting after everything
becomes a search for one,
yet nothing has a hollow ring
because it weighs a ton.

Gay and witty again in his letters to David, Jack was still maintaining "tenuous and strong" contact by mail with his friend Holger Hagen. At least, Moe Burns was sending Moe Hagen letters. Recently, there had been an unexplained lull in response. Jack suspected that Holger had gone through a spiritual crisis similar to his own. Jack returned to the theme of his last letters from North Africa:

I'm used now to being overseas, and so much calmer than I was. The sorrow and the loneliness that I thought would eat my life away did a beautiful job of erosion on me; as a matter of fact I guess I came face to face with myself and life and death. Now the chemistry is being extroverted: I see so much that I didn't see and love before. I was living in a beautiful world, but it was selfish; there was no one to share it with. I was a beautiful and finished gentleman, but my manners were only a shell to hide something that actually wasn't there. It's coming now, gradually; but the hand of God almost annihilated me with ungenügende Selbstsucht till I saw what a beautiful comedy I was playing. Now in my hand is a key that

I never used before - or used for others' undoing (JHB to HH,
11 October 1944).

In the middle of October, he entered another highly intense and creative period of writing poetry, and completed the sequence called Anatomy. Jack wrote six new poems in five days, beginning with a Shakespearean sonnet on 16 October--"I know your feelings by a gentleness." This poem is traditional in structure and content, asking and then answering a romantic dilemma: How does one acknowledge another's unspoken love? The poem uses a single military term, "Maxim," the name of an automatic repeating weapon, and the Americanisms "sharecropper" and "out" (for "solution"). Otherwise, despite its modern tone, the sonnet's general diction is appropriately timeless:

I know your feelings by a gentleness
that overgrows you each time I go by;
it's not by anything that you profess,
but inner ears can catch your Maximed sigh.
Your diminution is your sacrifice
as though you planned to make more room for me,
forcing yourself too harshly from the splice
like sharecroppers to aristocracy.
How shall I deal with you? to lift you up
implies a condescension never felt;
and even to speak to deer will make them skip
faster away than when a hunter's smelt.
My only out is silence: I shall send
such thoughts to you as tacitly you tend.

The next day saw a reversal in Jack's opinions on this subject, or so the contents of his next poem seem to indicate. "When what I felt trailed into pity," another series of four quatrains, treats an obscure incident in which the speaker realizes, too late, that he himself is the pitiful one. The speaker finally knows himself to have been a coward to his own vows. When he said goodbye, casting the betrayed friend "back

to cold and storm," he had allowed his friend the "triumph over fate"-- that is, to see at last the speaker's pettiness.

Another poem written on 17 October 1944--"When shall I go home again?"--although not obscure, is not exceptional either. Too prosaic to be memorable, the five quatrains merely record the traditional lament of the soldier away from home, with only one or two noteworthy images. "Longing," according to this poem, "like Italian rain, / streaks to earth without a bend."

More interesting is an irregular sonnet that Burns chose to end Anatomy, written the next day:

You've been a topflight mistress, Italy:
taught me to take love easy with my life,
the way a columnist would take a wife.
Even though I took you for the war, your eye
glanced off me like the sun in heraldry.
In you a keenness of vendetta knife,
in you limpidity madonna-hid
behind a lattice and her mother's key.
For tempering a spry American
(not an expatriate, a legionaire)
you brought the tact of a great courtesan
to elevate and level with your stare;
nor did I cherish less your bodies than
your antidote of art to my despair.

Despite some imprecise diction, this sonnet brings together a series of varied images that, together, seem to recreate Italy as the speaker had experienced it over time. The effect is aggregate, symbiotic, gaining new meanings because of the wide selection of details and their juxtaposition with one another.

The sonnet convinces us to see Italy as the great courtesan who entertains and educates an American Air Force soldier. At the same time, she is a journalist's understanding wife, the self-protector wielding a

vengeful and Sicilian stiletto, and the virgin who--like The Gallery's Guilia--remains loyal to her values. The soldier-narrator's honesty, especially in the last two lines, wins our confidence that he has sincerely wished Italy well. By means of a similar technique, the G.I. narrator of The Gallery's Promenades would win his readers' confidence.

Several other images in this sonnet would also come to be repeated, in new language, in The Gallery. For example, the metaphor of Italy as courtesan is transformed into this sordid description of Naples:

Even in her half-death Naples is alive and furious with herself and with life. The hillside on which she lies, legs open like a drunken trollop, trembles when she turns on her fan bed (The Gallery 207).

The idea that art, in Italy, had provided an antidote for the speaker's despair is repeated, too, by the narrator of the eighth Promenade of The Gallery, a section that is devoted largely to a discussion of tears, art, and love--the three realities that Italy helped him relearn. Finally, overall, just as a series of disparate images in this sonnet make an abstract concept precise, so the nine Portraits of The Gallery tell a fuller story than a traditional novel might have been able to do.

Then, on 20 October 1944, Jack completed his Anatomy.²¹ "We were married in a slit-trench under fire" is unambiguous, and bitter. In these four quatrains, two men each become, for the other, first combat-buddy, then husband, wife, aunt. The relationship slowly deteriorates, since it had been built merely upon the "exigency" of the moment. The final two lines conclude that "war mixes up the bestial and divine, / and sodomy is just another name." Jack no doubt thought this poem sounded too negative a note for the end of his sequence. Instead of

leaving it there, he moved the more optimistic, and more artful, sonnet of tribute to Italy into the final position. It follows this sad-hearted portrait of a jaded soldier.

That summer Jack had been thoroughly engrossed in recording his sensations and opinions, in recreating on paper the rebirth of his soul in North Africa. Meanwhile, his friend from Brooklyn Army Base, Robert B. MacLennan, still wished in vain to serve on the front lines, in combat. MacLennan had just spent more than three months in England. Now that Paris was liberated from German tyranny, free since 25 August, he found himself there, doing nothing that he thought worthwhile. He complained to Holger:

Inactivity is unbecoming to the human animal, and if we should never have entered the war in the first place, that fact is today of no more relevance than the price of onions in the XIX dynasty. We're in it, and it seems mostly over, and one would like a little first hand experience at it. The deeds of heroism and valour performed during the drowsy afternoon as the exacto knife is balanced on the index finger would fill a new Illiad [sic]. And the decorations, Hagen! The decorations! A V.C. [Victory Cross] every half hour, and a whole drawer full of congressionals (RBM to HH, 22 October 1944).

Jack was still writing an occasional V-mail to Beulah, in his ongoing lecture series about music and opera, composers and conductors. Finally, he had decided "to think my way through and out of much of the rot I picked up in the course of my so-called education" (JHB to BWH, 31 October 1944). As a child, he had loved Puccini. Now he was willing to go against current critical appraisals and exclaim the virtues of Tosca, in which "you find music of such power and sweetness and variety that you can't help but be seduced by it." Perhaps seeing Italian opera performed by an Italian cast had swayed him away from the nonsense, the

"snobbery and preciosity" he had picked up from "the Wagner school of thought" (JHB to BWH, 31 October 1944).

To Holger, at the same time, he continued to rehearse his explanations of the crisis that he had successfully overcome, and which would lead, inevitably, to writing The Gallery. In November Jack sent him a copy of the first part of Anatomy, because of Moe Hagen's "sense of reality and discrimination," admitting that writing had kept him from "going off [his] trolley for good." In that letter, Jack also told Moe Hagen about the fate of a less fortunate friend of theirs, a "Paul S," whom Moe Burns described as

the latest censorship casualty. They sent him home for an anxiety neurosis. Just before he cracked he got a complete obsession on me, deciding that I was the quintessence of all the evil in the world. I well remember the sessions before they put him under sedatives at the 45th General. He'd insist I get down on my knees in his room and pray that God would give me love for the human race instead of a vast Satanic hate that destroyed everyone who ever got to know me. Now I have my doubts. Was he simply projecting into me the things that drove him off his squash? Or am I really a walking Satan, instead of the lovin' little man I always thought myself to be? Don't answer these questions (JHB to HH, 8 November 1944).

Thus, once again, the inspiration for characters in The Gallery would come from Burns's real-life experience. Here, the situation mirrors the relationship between Hal and the sinister parachute captain of the third Portrait. Even the ambivalence Burns felt about his friend Paul is carried over into the story, where the reader cannot determine whether the parachute captain Hal meets in the Galleria Umberto is seen or imagined, whether his words are truth or lies.

On 17 November 1944, Jack saw a performance of La Bohème, with Pina Esca as Mimì, a heavy Italian recently signed on with the Metropolitan

Opera of New York, "exactly the sort of idiocy I'd expect that installation to perpetrate," he railed to Beulah:

She weighs about 240--as a little seamstress dying of pthisis she's as convincing as Melchior as Peter Pan. Her high voice is rich and thrilling, the middle register white, like a boy soprano's who hasn't yet known the secrets of the organ loft. . . . She's incapable of either pianissimo or tragic coloring (JHB to BWH, 18 November 1944).

Later, in a letter to David, Burns would describe Pina Esca, then pregnant, as singing nothing but Mimi:

She has no conception of musical style whatever, and resembles a bright fat schoolgirl who suddenly after coming in her jeans over Frankie Sinatra finds herself the possessor of a beautiful voice (JHB to DAM, 11 February 1945).

Such are the criticisms Jack would offer, in a sentence or two, the various prima donnas he encountered in Naples.

Yet Jack lived for these operas, available twice a day for a minor fee of 100 lire. The Italians performed them as plays with music, as they had been intended. Very little hint of any "star system" intruded to disturb this effect. The excellence seemed partly due to dedicated rehearsals by everyone involved, including the principals, all of whom wished to act, as well as sing. The sets were fresh and lovely.

And Jack especially treasured the performances of Puccini: "I find Tosca with good singers who are actors the most successful modern opera; Boheme is just plain lovely" (JHB to DAM, 11 February 1945). Like Michael Patrick, the protagonist of The Gallery's first Portrait, Burns had been moved by seeing La Bohème at the San Carlo. Michael, and Jack, had felt "his heart begin to ache with a wild wistfulness" upon encoun-

tering "that sweet world on the stage" and hearing "the tenor and the violins in unison lift and drop in long tender melodies that were both sad and gay" (The Gallery 15).

It was to be another cold and lonely Christmas for Jack in 1944. As he explained to Holger, there was little escape from the chill at night except two: "a permanent shack-job or quarts of white wine and Benevento gin. Most prefer to combine the two to taste and flavor, though I'm still either too fickle, too snobbish, or too promiscuous to settle down to a long winter's nap with the first" (JHB to HH, 28 December 1944).

Every attempt had been made--a turkey, tree, and Tiny Tim--but, in the end, the men were still alone at Christmas that year. Jack worked on New Year's Eve, the base section "gesture" to remind them they were still at war. Before long, Holger would be sent to Europe too, leaving Mrs. Moe behind as "one of the Great Wives of the 20th century" (JHB to BWH, 24 January 1945).

Spring came slowly. Soon, all the bars in Naples were put off limits to G.I.'s, the "brwaugh" having reached unmanageable proportions (JHB to DAM, 11 February 1945). No word came from Holger for several months. Then, finally, at the end of March, he wrote to Jack from Germany, where he was to work in front-line interrogation (JHB to HH, 28 March 1945). By that point, all seven Allied armies had successfully crossed the Rhine.

MacLennan, too, had at last seen combat up close. He wrote Holger a letter, on 1 April 1945, explaining everything and describing his recent hair-raising experiences:

Dear Hagen,

All Holy Week I have raced across Lorraine and Western Germany trying to catch up with my company. And last night, about eleven thirty, I made it. With small arms fire rattling in the hills on three sides of our villiage and artillery roaring overhead, I found our C.P. [Command Post] in an abandoned hotel and spent the night, idiot with terror, under a bed in my platoon headquarters. This morning after a delicious steak breakfast I visited the platoon and giggled and introduced myself. Also visited the third platoon, guided by their runner, which until an hour before I arrived had been receiving rifle and bazooka fire from snipers in the edge of a forest three hundred yards further on. It's all very gay and novel and I've come back to the Company C.P. to revive myself with a glass of schnapps and drop a line for your glittering green eyes.

Back in France I somehow got put in charge of twenty men also coming up as reinforcements and we've been delayed by the very fact of being so many and of having to stay together as a group. We crossed the Rhine Monday on a bridge thrown over by the engineers just the day before. It was dark, about nine o'clock, but the smoke screen [on] the eastern bank was illuminated by the artificial moonlight, and after a time the real moon came out, so that we could admire this magnificent countryside by the light of the moon as well as in the sunshine. It is spring, and any country is at its best then, but even discounting the spring I think that this, your ancestral land, is lovelier by far than any I have ever seen. The noted English terrain can't hold a candle to the majestic pine forests and neat, tilled valleys of this country. We slept in several towns along the way and passed the days drinking the good Rhine wine and roaming the streets hefting our rifles and debating the \$65.00 question, "Is it worth it (the fine) to fraternize with the German girls?" After four days I was ready to scream the next time a soldier came up and leered, "There goes another \$65.00 question" as a pigtailed fraulein frisked past.

Some of the towns on the border were as completely ruined as the Norman villiages I passed through last fall, but recently the enemy retreat has been so rapid that except for the white flags hung from every window and the frightened faces of the women and children the towns might have been living in peace time. The towns are cleaner and neater and better built than the French, and the people seem heartier and more likeable too, although the P/W's we see going to the rear are a poor lot, skinny and dirty and dispirited.

Well, so far my personal Baedeker. Have you left Camp Ritchie? Somehow, I suspect you may still be there, and in my minds [sic] eye see Hagen, crouched in the corner of a dark

closet, chewing his knuckles, a mad light in his red rimmed eyes. Verily the War Dept. is the Scourge of God of our generation.

Robert

One week later, on 7 April 1945, unbeknownst to his friends and family, Robert B. MacLennan was shot and killed, in combat, by one of the German soldiers he had wanted so desperately to fight.

Jack was, at about the same time, happy to join soprano Maria Pedrini for supper after performing as Santuzza in Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana. Maria, Jack had written to David several months earlier, moved with dignity and nobility on stage, striking a presence he imagined would resemble that of the legendary soprano Claudia Muzio (JHB to DAM, 11 February 1945). She was his favorite soprano in those days. By the time they dined together, he had seen her Tosca twenty times. Her Leonora, he felt, made Verdi's silly Il Trovatore seem credible. As Desdemona, in Verdi's Otello, she was solid (JHB to BWH, 5 April 1945). "In Aida she looks as though she'd make a good mahogany statue in front of a cigar store" (JHB to DAM, 11 February 1945).

When Jack met Maria, he found she knew 34 operas. She had not performed more often at the San Carlo because of the British taste for more dramatic singers. Pedrini's rich and controlled high C's, her ability with long baroque phrasing, was lost on them, although she had been taken up in Naples by a coterie of Allied soldiers. "In person she's quiet, dignified, and humorous . . . You are simply in the presence of a charming human being, unaffected and warm, who also happens to be a fine singer" (JHB to BWH, 5 April 1945).

During the month of April 1945, the Allies made tremendous gains on Hitler's troops, taking one German town after another, decimating his defenses and liberating concentration camps and besieged European towns in neighboring countries. The pincers continued to close until 25 April, when U.S. and Russian forces met each other at Torgau, on the Elbe River, just 75 miles from Berlin. Their celebration was echoed in Times Square in New York. By the end of April, Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun had committed suicide. Mussolini and his mistress had been executed. On 7 May 1945, Germany signed a document pledging an unconditional surrender to the U.S. and Russia. The war in Europe was over.

Jack soon learned that his friend Holger had survived the debacle. Yet Moe Hagen, too, had suffered a kind of breakdown. Now he understood Moe Burns's letters from North Africa. Now he wanted to retract some of his remarks about Burns's mild neurosis there.

The War was over. Jack felt that he was healthier than most American G.I.'s. Too many of them either felt sorry for themselves or were still busily "enjoying their mistresses and their villas which a catastrophe outside themselves has hurled into their paunchy laps" (JHB to HH, 2 June 1945). Jack's closest friends understood how the Italian people had attracted him, making the troubles of Americans "seem like a child crying over a sawdust doll." Nevertheless, he felt the need to return home:

For all our crassness, immaturity, and bad manners, we still live under the best government (or scheme of it) in the world. And from tricky little symptoms I have seen over here, our war is just beginning when we go home: now that we have made a shambles of the world's yard, our own stands to blow up in our faces if we return with a thankgodthat'soverwith attitude -- and nothing else (JHB to HH, 2 June 1945).

He briefly considered putting in for a transfer to Washington.

Instead, he began to write The Gallery on 18 June 1945. He stayed in Italy, working at Caserta's Royal Palace during the day, but spending his nights in Naples. In his book he was going to write about his harrowing experiences, his observations, his renewal in North Africa. He had to share the simplicity and warmth of the Italians with the folks back home. It was important to try to help everyone understand the War, so that perhaps its causes in America could be tended to.

At last, ten days into the writing of his masterpiece, he could explain more easily what it was that he was learning because of his experiences overseas. In an unusually long letter to David, Burns discussed a great many topics he would treat in depth in The Gallery. A few excerpts from that lengthy letter indicate how far ahead Burns must have planned the structure and contents of that book:

Thank God I'm out of America at present. Nearly everything I hear or read from the Land of the Free depresses me or excites me to the frenzy of a ghost watching the living make fools of themselves. We're missing the point of the world as it is with a naïve childish beauty of people with the greatest riches in the world, the best system of government, the noblest concept of personal liberty. The greatest event of our time is the war, and I rejoice that I can watch it from another perspective than Greenwich Village's. The war is an explosion caused by faulty distribution of the world's goods, and I'm at last in a position to understand the world of my own time by observing it in pieces. In the city of Naples I have learned what human despair is, human sorrow, and human love. It's not so simple as that the Nazis succeeded in reducing human life to a cipher, or that the Japs are nasty little men. And I don't mean to sound like Miss Millay making a priestly utterance. These are symbols that you have to feed to the people -- and I'm not talking condescendingly of the masses, either.

In my first year overseas, for no explicable reason other than that I am sensitive and intelligent, I went through a

mental experience more terrifying than death. I seemed to be cut off from everything, and I doubted my own existence. Nothing whatever made any sense to me, and nothing that I had heretofore known gave me any pleasure. Without any help from a psychiatrist or a Father Confessor I pulled myself out of the horror which I couldn't explain or understand. I realized that what was working was that cool empathy you speak of, that actually I was experiencing the feelings of the people around me, that I too might have been one of these. It's difficult for me to describe how I felt because I know of no one else who has ever had the experience. Perhaps I was paying subtly for a lack of pity. I have it now, though not in the sense of Greer Garson weeping in Technicolor over the lot of illegitimate children. But it scared the shit out of me. Peu s'en fallait that my magnificent and gifted entity dissolve into the privacy of madness.

I have all sorts of touchstones to reality now -- the songs of Hugo Wolf and Gabriel Urbain Fauré, the last Intermezzo of Brahms. I have my own warmth and the warmth of the Italians around me. . . . (JHB to DAM, 28 June 1945).

Notes to Chapter V

¹ Doug McKee, visiting Jack at the time, witnessed this incident taking place and thinks that it represents Catherine Burns's sentiments accurately.

² Some readers may not realize that the issue of America's neutrality was widely debated, the discussion itself sometimes termed "the Great Debate," until the attack upon Pearl Harbor settled the matter. A brief and readable account of U.S. Neutrality Acts and of the Great Debate over the European war is provided by C. L. Sulzberger, The American Heritage Picture History of World War II (129-142).

³ This information was included in a letter from JHB to Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Horton Batchelder, Sr., excerpts from which were quoted in the Loomis Log, 13 February 1942: 1. The original letter has not yet been located and may not be extant.

⁴ Note that this interesting letter illuminates the tension between conformity and individuality which comes to be a major thread in Burns's published works.

⁵ In a letter of 13 February 1942, from Burns to MacMackin, Burns edited the neologism "braugh"--which appears in David's story--in favor of David's spelling, "brwaugh." A postscript to this letter reads, "Send along the Abbess when her niche is carved in print," indicating that Burns had not yet seen the February 1942 issue of the Loom.

⁶ This letter to the Eatons concludes optimistically, as do most of Burns's letters from Camp Croft, with a promise to visit them around 1 June. Since he was to be made a corporal on 16 May (JHB to DAM, 27 March 1942), Jack expected a leave to visit Andover and Loomis then, although the leave was not granted until late July. When that time came, Jack no doubt enjoyed visiting the Eatons as much as the party he had asked David to plan for "a group of dreadfuls and delightfuls" in Windsor on 25 July (JHB to DAM, 20 July 1942). But, after he returned to Camp Croft, the chatty and cheerful letters to the Eatons ceased.

⁷ The word krepieren is the infinitive form of a German verb meaning "to die." It is considered vulgar and is said of animals.

⁸ The last sentence here alludes to Shakespeare's Hamlet (II.2.97).

⁹ Burns's fictional "Moe" has no relationship to Holger Hagen. If anyone inspired this character, it was MacLennan, but he and Burns's character have in common only their sudden deaths in combat with Germans.

¹⁰ This manuscript has not been located yet, but it may be in the private collection of Mrs. Beulah Wescott Hagen. The particular Whitman poem that Burns set to music for her has not yet been identified.

11 Likewise, the yearning for meaningful communication and the poverty of both, which Burns first experienced because of his isolation in North Africa, would eventually provide themes important for most of the Portraits and Promenades in The Gallery.

12 Burns refers to an essay of Huxley's, entitled "Francis and Gregory, or The Two Humilities," which is found in Do What You Will (159-186), the same volume that contains the essay "One and Many," which seems to have influenced Burns's thinking as early as 1937. See my earlier discussion of Sard's philosophizing (pp. 42-44).

13 See pages 104-107 for a discussion of David's short story, "The Abbess of Weiley," which Loomis student Henry Krotzer had illustrated. In the story, the Abbess nearly admits to her desire for Father Hugh, soon afterward passing into a mysterious coma and death. Other references in this letter need some explanation. Tillson was another Loomis student. David had been raised by his aunt, Olive Flannery Templeton--a Broadway actress--who had a black maid named Laverta and a good friend whom she always called "Miss Hayden."

14 The Brasserie du Parc is described in The Gallery (51-52). However, in The Gallery, it is Madame Jean, hostess at the Hôtel de France, who offers the Americans a black-market meal (47-48).

15 Brunetto Latini, the damned homosexual teacher of Dante's, in the Inferno, is also the one who speaks the lines Burns would quote as an epigraph in Lucifer with a Book (1949).

16 This phrase echoes the following sentiment from the seventh chapter of Part II of Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels: "I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

17 A carbon copy of a typescript of Anatomy, including two emendations in Burns's hand, is in the private collection of Mark T. Bassett. This typescript bears notations in the margin that seem to indicate another ordering of the poems for what was apparently the longer sequence, Nocturne, in the private collection of Mrs. Cathleen Burns Elmer, who also has a typescript of Anatomy. Except that Burns left several schemes for ordering these poems, nothing else about the relationship between these two poetry sequences is known outside of the immediate family.

18 Later he would commend David MacMackin's "preferring the [poem, "In the Galleria Umberto," written 11 August 1944 and discussed in Part IV of this chapter, about the] fanciulla at play in the Galleria to the piece on the Mad Queens, (which is also our own opinion)" (JHB to DAM, 11 February 1945).

19 After the weekend, on Wednesday, 23 August 1944, Jack wrote another Petrarchan sonnet, "Enzo," which has neither the content nor the poetic merit to warrant summary or description.

20 According to Oscar W. Bethea, the routine treatment, in 1945, for early syphilis was "40,000 units every 3 hours for 60 doses, a total of 2,400,000 units in 7 1/2 days" (155). The treatments for latent and central nervous system syphilis were more severe.

21 Burns wrote another obscure poem on this date, too--"Since you chose to sin so serpentily"--perhaps inspired by the same incident(s) that inspired the other recent poems about betrayal and jealousy.

Chapter VI

THE GALLERY

A. Structure, Genre, Sources, and Analogues

John Horne Burns gave The Gallery a subtitle that never made its way onto a printed title page. It clarifies his own ideas about this literary nonpareil. He called The Gallery "A Mediterranean Sketchbook" in his original typescript, a two-volume, bound carbon copy of which he presented to his friend Beulah Wescott Hagen in 1946.¹ Harper and Brothers, who eventually published Burns's book in 1947, rejected the subtitle, referring to The Gallery by the commercially more favorable term of "novel."

Yet Burns knew that The Gallery is not a novel in any traditional sense of that term. When Random House, earlier, had rejected the manuscript, Jack explained to Beulah, "They want it turned into a novel, which is an impossibility . . ." (JHB to BWH, 15 July 1946). He agreed with his more sagacious readers that The Gallery was difficult to characterize:

It's not arty, clever, or even recondite. But I fear (and in how many senses this may be taken!) that there's nothing like it in literature. It has a form all its own, a unity all its own . . . (JHB to HH, 2 August 1946).

The New York Times reviewer, for example, Richard Sullivan, could see

that The Gallery's "unusual design" was not "capriciously imposed, but always the shape--strange yet inevitable--which the material itself has demanded" (7).

Burns's subtitle echoes backwards in American history to Washington Irving's Sketchbook. Irving had been one of the first to chart a new literary territory and invent a language for prose that would be truly and uniquely American. Burns's subtitle indicates that The Gallery belongs in this tradition. Like Irving's Sketchbook, The Gallery is half a collection of character sketches, half travelogue, an innovative attempt--at times humorous or melancholy, satirical or sentimental, but always sincere--to portray a land and its people at one moment in history. Like Irving's Sketchbook, The Gallery is a kind of a "salmagundi" of pieces written in different moods and genres. Like Irving, Burns treats, in part, the difficult relationship between America and a single European country: Irving had chosen England; Burns, Italy. In The Gallery Burns strives to be the kind of poet Irving describes in "The Mutability of Literature":

There arise authors now and then, who seem proof against the mutability of language, because they have rooted themselves in the unchanging principles of human nature. . . . With the true poet every thing is terse, touching, or brilliant. . . . He enriches them by pictures of human life, such as it is passing before him. His writings, therefore, contain the spirit, the aroma, if I may use the phrase, of the age in which he lives (Irving, Sketchbook 106, 107).

Burns's The Gallery, certainly, is a sometimes harshly naturalistic volume--a startling negative to Irving's cordial, well-mannered tones.

Instead of a table of contents, The Gallery begins with a "Floor-plan" that locates two short pieces entitled the "Entrance" and the

"Exit." As the "Floorplan" makes clear, this book, in several ways, is intended to represent an art gallery, through which the reader wanders with his G.I. tour guide. The metaphor is made plain, if not already realized by the reader, at the end of the "Entrance": "In the Galleria Umberto you could walk from portrait to portrait, thinking to yourself during your promenade...." (1). At the end of the book, Burns will return to this figure:

There's an arcade in Naples that they call the Galleria Umberto. . . . The Americans came there to get drunk or to pick up something or to wrestle with the riddle. . . . It was the riddle of war, of human dignity, of love, of life itself. Some came closer than others to solving it. But all the people in the Galleria were human beings in the middle of a war. They struck attitudes. Some loved. Some tried to love. . . . And these people who became living portraits in this Gallery were synecdoches for most of the people anywhere in the world. . . . For they were all dots in a circle that never stops (342).

The book's title alludes to Andrew Marvell's metaphysical poem, "The Gallery," a knowledge of which broadens the significance of Burns's metaphor of the art gallery. Here is Marvell's opening stanza:

Clora, come view my soul, and tell
Whether I have contrived it well.
Now all its several lodgings lie
Composed into one gallery;
And the great arras-hangings, made
Of various faces, by are laid;
That, for all furniture, you'll find
Only your picture in my mind.

In this poem, Marvell's protagonist hangs, within the gallery of his mind, portraits of Clora as his "inhuman murderess," his "enchantress," his "tender shepherdess." Marvell's "arras-hanging" is an apt emblem for Burns's book, since, both structurally and thematically, The Gallery

echoes Marvell's poem.

Just as Marvell's speaker contrives his soul to be made "of various faces," Burns allows us a fuller view of his vision and experience by delineating a variety of character types, and living each one. We have already seen that, in his Anatomy (in the untitled poem written 18 October 1944, "You've been a topflight mistress, Italy"), Burns had called Italy his "wife," his "madonna," his "courtesan," indicating the depth of his emotional experience with her. In this poem, and again, in The Gallery, the variety of the Portraits, the apparently arbitrary and private scheme of ordering this imagery, mirrors Marvell's stringing together of various images of Clora. Meanwhile, there is the fact that Burns had previously entitled his fragmentary novel of 1940--"What Wondrous Life!"--after a line from Marvell's "The Garden."

Among the critics, only Brigid Brophy has been perceptive enough to recognize Burns's baroque tendencies. Brophy notes that, as "a baroque designer," Burns composes on two planes at once, often employing a contrast between some universal, symbolic perspective and an intimate, naturalistic one, the perspectives acting "as great conduits of poetic illumination down which his two planes comment on and contrast with each other" (198). Likewise, Brophy points out, Burns plunges "his imagination into being his characters. . . . He is not afraid to bid to be universal; and he can justify his bid because the depth of his penetration into alien minds lets him use colossal perspectives" (197). A silly remark Burns made in a letter to Holger thus turns out to have been partly serious: "My novel, which is like Dostoevsky, Andrew Marvell, and Voltaire, is called The Gallery" (JHB to HH, 31 July 1945).

The Gallery's structure also has a musical model in Modest Petrovich Moussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition, a recording of which Burns owned as part of his vast personal record collection.² In Pictures at an Exhibition, whose title reminds us of both Burns and Marvell, a melodic theme called the "Promenade" theme alternates, modulating through a sequence of variations, with musical portraits of ten Russian subjects. Inspired by an exhibition of sketches and drawings by Victor Alexandrovich Hartmann, Moussorgsky portrays such subjects as a hunchbacked dwarf (a common shape for nutcrackers like the one of Tchaikovsky's ballet), a marketplace, newly hatched chicks, a castle in ruins--concluding the whole with a majestic and ceremonial rendering of Hartmann's unrealized designs for a "Great Gate of Kiev," comparable in grandeur to Naples's Galleria. Burns does not seem to have selected the words "Portrait" and "Promenade" idly. The similarities between the two works, in structure alone, are too strong to be mere coincidence.

Literally, the Gallery is, of course, the Galleria Umberto Primo in Naples, described in the book's first pages. Occupying a full city block, this neo-baroque concrete structure is topped by a domed fretwork of glass panes and adorned with cupids and ornaments of various kinds. Even though it had been bombed during World War II, this building was, as it is today, a centrally located meeting place, a partially enclosed arcade of shops, bars, restaurants, and art galleries. Reviewer Richard Sullivan, of the New York Times, was probably the first to observe that as one means of attaining some unity in his material, Burns has the protagonists of his Portraits pass through the Galleria Umberto at some point, although their paths never cross.

Here is one of the sources of Burns's realism, as several reviewers of The Gallery have observed, citing their first-hand experiences in Naples during the War. Frederick Yeiser, for example, of the Cincinnati Enquirer, verifies from personal experience that the Galleria remained Naples' principal gathering place for both Americans and Italians. Yeiser affirms, too, that "by August 1944, that raucous vermouth-stained civilization [of Allied Forces Headquarters in Naples] had attained its zenith." Likewise, Anna C. Hunter, of the Savannah Morning News, remembers having witnessed "that maelstrom of humanity which surged through this picturesque spot [the Galleria], a stone's throw from the Opera House once frequented by royalty and adjacent to the filthy streets where old little children lived in squalor and poverty." More recently, we have the countless confirmations of Burns's vision that are provided in Norman Lewis's diary, Naples '44, which describes Neapolitan life from the perspective of a British intelligence officer. The two books, in fact, make excellent companion-pieces.

As the "Floorplan" of The Gallery indicates, the book is composed of nine Portraits that alternate with eight Promenades. One can see from the settings of the Promenades, listed there, that the book will move eastward across North Africa toward Naples, where it comes to a close.³ Between Portraits, the reader will yield to the G.I. narrator whose changing mental state and conflicting memories form the basis of the Promenades. Each Promenade begins with the words "I remember," a phrase that succinctly expresses the soldier's insistent need to record his feelings, observations, and opinions--for the good of all humanity. These two words, "I remember," are repeated until they become a kind of

refrain, even a toll, sounding from the beginning of the book to its end.

Turning the page beyond The Gallery's slight but vivid "Entrance," the reader at once encounters a limping and paranoid Michael Patrick, hurrying through Naples on a forged hospital pass, slowed by the ache of the trenchfoot he will not allow to heal--and is suddenly immersed in the first of The Gallery's "Portraits." By the end of the book, there will have been, in the form of these Portraits, nine character sketches, each representing a different "type," along with a multitude of minor characters. The variety creates the illusion of being a random sampling of all peoples everywhere, not merely of the various people whom Burns encountered in Naples.⁴

Comments in Burns's correspondence at the time reveal that he continually found a need to scale down his plans for the book. After the first ten days, having finished, perhaps, "The Trenchfoot of Michael Patrick," he could report to Holger ("Moe") Hagen that he was writing a novel "on all that I have seen and heard in two years" (JHB to HH, 29 June 1945). Within another month, certainly after completing "Louella," Burns had refined his plans so that The Gallery would reduce "the whole war to the goings-on last August in the Galleria Umberto here in Naples" (JHB to HH, 31 July 1945). But this idea too would need further development.

Jack's compulsion to include everything in The Gallery would result in the grand scale of the finished book. Yet Burns was not interested in creating "something many volumed and Proustian." Therefore, at this point in the writing, he devoted some time to "much brooding and

UnThomaswolfeian pruning and planning" (JHB to HH, 18 September 1945). As a result, he now evolved what would remain the book's overall structure.

The setting would be "laid theoretically in the Galleria Umberto Primo in Naples in August of [1944], where Italians and Americans and French and British all got together" (JHB to HH, 18 September 1945). As Laura Coltellì has explained, Naples was always the sole Muse of the work, even if not the sole setting. It was enough that "i protagonisti dei 'Ritratti,' anche se li abbiamo incontrati per la prima volta in altri luoghi, vivono tuttavia le loro esperienze più significative proprio a Napoli" (Coltellì 62).⁵

By this point, Burns had also refined his conception of the Promenades, one of The Gallery's more unusual innovations. He now saw that, although the Promenades were to be written in the first person, they would be neither conventional fiction nor autobiography. Their function would be to act as a kind of "adhesive," to use Frederick Yeiser's term, between the nine Portraits. In Burns's words, "The people, who appear in individual blocks, are connected with a stream of thought which might be that of a composite American soldier" (JHB to HH, 18 September 1945). Both aspects of the Promenades--their genre and theme--deserve some attention.

There are numerous similarities between the sentiments Burns expressed in letters home and those contained in his Promenades. These sections ring with a sincerity that most readers have found stirring. Some readers have even mistaken the Promenades for autobiography. For example, Gerald D. Roscoe, book reviewer for the Boston Daily Globe,

called Burns's Promenades "short, informal essays." Similarly, Jerome D. Ross thought of the Promenades as "a matrix of the author's own lively observations in North Africa and Italy." In his enthusiastic review of The Gallery for the New York Herald Tribune, Ross describes them as "a series of random personal reminiscences . . . written in an easy, informal style, with the fusion of Baedeker description and groping philosophy that men overseas put into their V-mail letters."

More accurately, however, Burns intended the Promenades to be read as New York Times reviewer Richard Sullivan described them: "one long, intense, highly subjective, often moving, commentary . . . written in the first person" (7). That the pieces are truly a fictionalized construct can be seen in the fact, observed by Cincinnati's Frederick Yeiser, that Burns's Promenades employ a small group of "recurrently representative GI types: A mess sergeant down to the life; the liberal pfc with horn-rimmed glasses; the company clerk who read the pomes [*sic*] in Stars and Stripes; and less anonymously, Jacobowski, the mess sergeant's friend." That the Promenades are also sincere, bearing an urgent message to a wounded humanity, is likewise unmistakable. We know that, as readers, we too are being begged to "remember."

It might be helpful to consider these sections an early and outstanding example of the "non-novelistic fiction" (Karl 560 ff) that Burns's peers and heirs would explore. The Promenades are a forerunner, preparing readers for Truman Capote's In Cold Blood (1965); Oscar Lewis's La Vida (1966); Norman Mailer's The Armies of the Night (1968); Tom Wolfe's The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test (1968); Tom Wicker's A Time to Die (1975); Paul Theroux's The Great Railway Bazaar (1975); and Maxine

Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts (1976). Frederick R. Karl has defined what is also called "the nonfiction novel" or "new journalism": "it transforms fact into fiction without using the full dimensions of a novelistic sensibility. The stress in this form of writing . . . is on the self of the author intruding into work that is factual . . . [and] introducing novelistic potentialities into a given work" (560).

In alternating more conventional fiction, written in the third person, with these first-person Promenades, Burns was influenced by the work of John Dos Passos, a point mentioned by several reviewers, beginning with Charles Poore's review in the New York Times. In the influential trilogy U.S.A., particularly, Dos Passos had startled readers with technical daring. He alternated in these three polyphonic works--The 42nd Parallel (1930), 1919 (1932), and The Big Money (1936)--sections called "Newsreels," material records of events to come, with chapters of conventional fiction, "Biographies" of famous Americans, and some unusual "Camera Eye" sections that were unlike the "Newsreels" in recording impressions as well as facts.

It is easy to see that Burns learned much from the Master. There are, first of all, the technical experiments in prose. Too, one should note that both Burns and Dos Passos played new tunes on the old-fashioned scales of American naturalism, rearranging the expected and the unexpected, augmenting the mechanical with the organic (see Karl 78). From Dos Passos' fiction, Burns may also have studied ways to represent his hatred of the unfeeling war bureaucracy.

Other writers influenced Burns's The Gallery too--and several com-

posers. Giacomo Puccini is an obvious influence. Michael Patrick is strongly affected when he attends a performance of La Bohème at the San Carlo Opera House across Via Vittorio Emanuele, opposite the glorious main entrance of the Galleria. The bittersweet yearning for true love, for warmth in the midst of winter, and the equally strong urge to escape poverty, disease and death, for the companionship that a healthy, happy society could offer are felt in both Puccini's opera and Burns's first Portrait. Michael Patrick's loneliness is Burns's creation, and his plight very different from that of Rudolfo and Mimi.

It is a later Portrait that owes something to a Puccini plot--the story of "Giulia," a young Italian woman in love with an American captain. Giulia, unlike Puccini's (and David Belasco's) Madame Butterfly, does not yield to her suitor's eager advances. In Madame Butterfly, we see the potentially fatal results of forfeiting one's code of ethics to satisfy baser urges. The Japanese maiden comes to be betrayed by her American Captain Pinkerton, after bearing him a child, and therefore--like her father before her--she must commit hari-kari. The inscription on her father's sword--"To die with honor when one can no longer live with honor"--might have served as a lesson to Giulia, who chooses to live honorably, waiting for her captain's return, and marriage, before yielding to him.

The last Portrait in The Gallery, "Moe," has several echoes from Umberto Giordano's Andrea Chénier, an opera that seems, on the surface, to be far removed from Burns's story.⁶ Sometime during the French Revolution, Andrea Chénier, a Turkish-born patriot, poet, and visionary, is arrested and executed for treason five years after speaking at a Pari-

sian ball on the subject of love. He had, during his speech, sharply criticized the aristocracy and lamented the callousness of the prideful rich for the plight of the poor. Maddalena, his sweetheart and the daughter of the Countess de Coigny, smuggles herself, disguised, into prison, hoping to die in his place. In the end, she goes to the guillotine with her beloved.

Throughout Burns's Portrait, Moe reveals an acceptance of life and its unpredictable ways. He is willing to share whatever he has to offer, even his life, with those who ask for it. At the end, even his death at German hands seems to welcomed, in a fashion. In this, Moe shares a courage in his convictions with Giordano's poet, and he accepts his fate as fearlessly as does Chénier. The telling detail in Burns's story, however, is that, like Maddalena, Moe's Maria Rocco begs him to let her "save" him from the War. After Moe tells her that he must accept life's "crazy logic," as he has accepted everything, she takes him to her, crying the words that Maddalena cries at the end of Giordano's fourth act, when the lovers are about to be led to their deaths. At that moment, Maria asks Moe to kiss her, to embrace her: "Baciami... abbracciami, amore!" (332).

The Gallery has other influences that are less Romantic than these. Both Euripides' Troades [The Trojan Women] and Irwin Shaw's Bury the Dead (1936) offered him their powerful dramatic and poetic expression, along with what he interpreted as being anti-war sentiments. Euripides, first, lending The Gallery an epigraph, seems to have had the strongest impact, portraying the sorrows of the conquered Trojans after the victorious Greeks enslaved their women.

There is a pageantry to the sorrow and poetry here. With great dignity, the virginal, sanctified prophet Cassandra, Queen Hekuba's daughter, chosen to serve as Agamemnon's new wife, accepts her new role, for she can see that a bitter destiny awaits these conquerors. A bitter Hekuba pleads with Menelaos to kill his wife, Helen, for her disastrous adultery with Paris. Then, when the corpse of Hektor's and Andromache's young son, Astyanax, is carried in, recently slain, for burial, Hekuba's grief and nobility are moving. The Queen continues to sing her dirge until she too is taken away, to become the unwilling wife of the conquering Odysseus, and the play ends. In The Gallery, we are reminded, there are Burns's poetic modulations from one mood to another, that book's episodic structure and occasional stasis, his dire warnings to the conquering Allies in Europe, the maiden, married, and widowed prostitutes of Italy, and lamentations over a conquered people. It is not surprising to find that Burns was rereading the great tragedian during the writing of The Gallery.⁷

Irwin Shaw's Bury the Dead, written when he was only twenty-two years old, took America's theater by storm in 1936, the year of Burns's graduation from Harvard. It was produced again and again, on stages all across the country. Even Loomis staged a version of the anti-war drama, with expressionistic set designs by Jack's friend and fellow English teacher Douglas Dixon McKee. Shaw's play has some few traits in common with The Gallery: an episodic structure that Shaw takes to the extreme of producing disorientation, a graphic depiction of the destruction caused by warfare, and an impassioned outcry for the return of humane values such as peace and fellow-feeling. More specifically, however,

Bury the Dead seems to have provided Burns the inspiration for bringing a dead soldier to life again in his third Portrait, "Hal." For the entire action of Shaw's play revolves around the inability of the living to "bury" their dead young men, gunned down in the most recent war.

Two other important influences can be found in Jonathan Swift and Giacomo Leopardi. The well-known premise of Swift's Gulliver's Travels is that English physician Lemuel Gulliver, shipwrecked on a journey from Bristol to the South Seas, struggles to survive the storm and then experiences a series of adventures with the unknown peoples whom he encounters. After discovering almost perfect contentment among the peaceful and cultivated Houyhnhnms, Gulliver ends up being asked, because of a vote of the Grand Assembly, either to be released or to begin being treated as any other Yahoo. The Englishman sails off in a canoe, where he is "rescued" and forced to readjust to life among the Yahoos among whom he had lived before he first left home.

Never would Burns have, simplistically, identified the Neapolitans with the Houyhnhnms, the Americans with the Yahoos. Yet Gulliver's admiration of his newly discovered friends is similar to that expressed for the Italians in The Gallery's Promenades in Naples. Richard Sullivan criticized The Gallery because he felt that Burns's "appreciation of the Italian people grows occasionally into something like a sentimental idolatry" (Sullivan 27). Likewise, to Sullivan, Burns's "bitterness against American crudity comes close in places to a youthful intolerance" (27).

Yet one can value and seek the virtues with which Swift endowed his Houyhnhnms, rather than reduce everything to a mere love for horses. It

might be helpful to remember that the changed Gulliver says, at the end of the book,

I am not in the least provoked at the sight of a lawyer, a pick-pocket, a colonel, a fool, a lord, a gamester, a politician, a whore-master, a physician, an evidence, a suborner, an attorney, a traitor, or the like; this is all according to the due course of things: but when I behold a lump of deformity and diseases both in body and mind, smitten with pride, it immediately breaks all the measures of my patience . . .

Like Gulliver, Burns hated deceit, self-interest, hardness of the heart--in himself no less than in others. To him it seemed that only the desperate struggle to survive enabled the twice-bombed Neapolitans to continue living, and then--even when it meant failing their own code of honor--they did so in spite of the Allies, and not with their assistance. Had not the Americans professed that they were fighting this war to protect their high-minded values? Burns wrote to Holger,

We are both squirrels on treadmills . . . Everyone else has surrendered completely to the illusion of the Empire Builder and the Carpet Bagger. They seem unaware of the implications of what they are doing, of its consequences in the future. . . . There are no ideals in this world other than the simple and workable ones that Jesus Christ taught. . . . I [see] no progress evident in the 20th century . . . The only solution [is] for an intelligent person to try and be a citizen of the world (JHB to HH, 31 July 1945).

Giacomo Leopardi, in the opening selection of his Operette Morali, "Storia del genere umano" ("History of the Human Race"), provided Burns with more fuel for these sentiments. Here Leopardi distilled and refined his version of the myths that the Greek and Roman humanists had told about the creation and early history of mankind. In Leopardi's version, these creatures are not only displeasing to most of the gods,

they are always unhappy themselves, constantly dissatisfied, as if always seeking conflict and suffering. Jove tries several remedies for the situation, but none produce a lasting change in the attitudes of the humans. At last Jove had removed all of the idols--Justice, Virtue, Glory, Patriotism, and so on--leaving Truth to reign below, a fact which caused much misery. The idol Love would be left on earth, uncontested by Truth. Thus humans were always to be divided in two directions. Only occasionally would the truly compassionate Love, the god and son of Venus, be allowed to visit a human. Then, on those rare instances, the other idols might be allowed to hover, invisibly, about that gifted one.

It is clear from his correspondence with friends like David MacMackin and the Hagens that Jack Burns considered himself, after his North African experience, to have been one of Leopardi's elect. Yet he felt humbled by this war experience too, knowing now how ill-prepared he had once been for the crueler realities of life. Despite these new insights into those values of Western culture that he had been privileged to study at Phillips Andover and Harvard, he wanted desperately to believe that The Gallery's message could be heard and understood by all people, thereby defeating the need to rely upon an elite group.

Burns's philosophy seems to owe something to Leopardi's observation that most humans who have not been visited by the god Love, "lo scher-
niscono e mordono tutto giorno, sì lontano come presente, con isfrenatissima audacia" (i.e., "continually scorn and revile him with unbridled audacity, whether away from or in his presence"; Leopardi 52, 53). The Gallery, notably in the Eighth Promenade, exhorts the reader to value this power that belongs to Love, although Burns's G.I. narrator also

treasures Art and Tears, these three being the principal deities of The Gallery's triumvirate.

At the end of The Gallery, Burns's "Exit" includes a passage that reminds us of schoolboy Stephen Daedalus' attempts to confirm his own identity in Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Like Stephen, Burns feels he must locate himself within a larger universe: "Outside the Galleria Umberto is the city of Naples. And Naples is on the bay, in the Tyrrhenian Sea, on the Mediterranean" (342). Yet Burns wanted to avoid writing in a style that resembled Joyce's innovations in Finnegan's Wake. Burns explained that "James Joyce had to resort to private symbols, but I can use English wrenched in the anguish of the world" (JHB to HH, 29 June 1945). Burns thought that, in reaching the wider audience he sought, The Gallery could be more effective than Joyce's last work because Burns had "decided to write definitely in this world and not out of it, which seems to have been the disastrous track of art in the past 50 years" (JHB to HH, 18 September 1945).

Yet Burns, like all modern short-story writers, owes a debt to Joyce. The Gallery, in addition to reflecting some of Joyce's epiphanic short story structure, for example, is a fictional cycle bearing some resemblance to Dubliners. We should also include Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio here, for all three books share certain qualities. Like Joyce and Anderson, Burns criticizes his homeland through indirection, portraying characters caught in an agony of recognition--characters who seek the identity and meaning of self, family, nation, even humanity at large. Like Anderson, Burns retains, throughout, a likeable narrator and witness, in counterpoint to the protagonists of his tales,

to validate the accuracy of their portrayal. That Burns, a third-generation Irish-American, should draw on the quintessentially Irish Joyce and the Midwestern Anderson as literary models seems quite appropriate.

Anderson and Joyce, however, unlike Burns, set their tales in familiar territory. Burns has dared to set The Gallery primarily in foreign and exotic settings, thereby risking the danger of blurring his subjects, presenting a partial and inexact vision. Yet he succeeds in surpassing both Thornton Wilder's The Cabala and Percy Lubbock's Roman Pictures, to which Frederick Yeiser wanted to compare Burns's The Gallery. Wilder's and Lubbock's books are also experiments in fiction, the first using a device that weighs heavily upon Henry James and E. M. Forster, and the second being a clever new travelogue. The Cabala and Roman Pictures are set in Italy, unlike Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio, but Yeiser has set his sights too low. For sources and analogues to The Gallery, we should instead turn to Joyce and Anderson, Dos Passos and Irving, Swift and Leopardi, Puccini and Giordano, Marvell and Euripides.

When readers find fault with The Gallery, the bias of the critic is often as conspicuous as the proffered weakness. This problem makes it difficult for those who admire the book to analyze its faults objectively. In a number of cases, the very quality that one reader thinks is a weakness in the book, another reader will see as a strength.

From the start, readers reacted to The Gallery's frankness in sexual matters. That The Gallery was considered a shocking, even vulgar, book upon publication in 1947 there can be no doubt. In the New York Times, reviewer Richard Sullivan raised the most intelligent objection

along these lines: "The steady stress upon sex--which is certain to affront some readers--grows into what looks like an inadvertent concentration upon one aspect of human experience as if it were the sole aspect" (25). None were quite so blunt on this point as Francis J. Ulrich, writing for the Catholic review organ, Best Sellers: "The author has insisted on revealing the seamy side of what he witnessed. As a result he uses some of the most vulgar language this reviewer has ever seen in print."

Even Harrison Smith, of the Saturday Review, in the very article that got Burns's face onto the cover of this important literary journal, criticizes The Gallery here, characterizing Burns's fictional Portraits as excursions "into pathos, sentiment, and vice, and all the forms of what is lightly known as love" (7). Later, Smith remarks that the Promenades sometimes have such a "pervasive stench" that "Mr. Burns may be said to have written part of his book with his nose. . . . Compared with 'The Gallery' . . . 'Three Soldiers,' the novel that started off the realistic fiction of the First World War, was a fragrant and tender lily" (7).

Years later Gore Vidal would attempt to account for the sexual aspects of The Gallery by saying that Burns, innocent Irish-American, had mistaken sexuality for love ("John Horne Burns" 182). Yet even a cursory examination of British intelligence officer Norman Lewis's Naples '44 reveals how much Vidal's hypothesis distorts the ugly truth of the matter. No one made any mistake about the behavior of the Allied forces with the Italian women. Here is just one of Lewis's many diary entries that describe, in graphic and sordid detail, the Naples of The Gallery, this one being recorded on 4 October 1943:

Somewhere a few miles short of Naples proper, the road widened into something like a square, dominated by a vast semi-derelict public building, plastered with notices and with every window blown in. . . . I followed [the other men into the municipal building] and found myself in a vast room crowded with jostling soldiery, with much pushing forward and ribald encouragement on the part of those in the rear, but a calmer and more thoughtful atmosphere by the time one reached the front of the crowd. Here a row of ladies sat at intervals of about a yard with their backs to the wall. These women were dressed in their street clothes, and had the ordinary well-washed respectable shopping and gossiping faces of working-class housewives. By the side of each woman stood a small pile of tins, and it soon became clear that it was possible to make love to any one of them in this very public place by adding another tin to the pile. The women kept absolutely still, they said nothing, and their faces were as empty of expression as graven images. . . . Once again reality had betrayed the dream, and the air fell limp. . . . One soldier, a little tipsy, and egged on constantly by his friends, finally put down his tin of rations at a woman's side, unbuttoned and lowered himself on her. A perfunctory jogging of the haunches began and came quickly to an end. A moment later he was on his feet and buttoning up again. It had been something to get over as soon as possible. He might have been submitting to field punishment rather than the act of love (25-26).

This description reflects the fact that Burns, in writing The Gallery, selected telling details from the larger, shocking and distasteful reality that he witnessed. Regardless of the popularity of Vidal's often reprinted essay, entitled "John Horne Burns," there can no longer be any mistaking the true nature of Burns's experience.

In contrast to the essay by Vidal, Lawrence Grant White's review of The Gallery, in the Saturday Review, offers a convincing analysis of Burns's lack of inhibitions in describing his characters truthfully. In his review, White recognizes that Burns "sets down exactly what his characters say and do, and the reader is spared no details of their lecherous conversations or bodily functions. But the ring of authen-

ticity lessens the shock of the brutal four-letter words that appear perhaps too frequently."

Other critics, in the manner of Random House, have continued to object that The Gallery is not a novel--still Walter Allen's principal criticism of the book as late as 1964, when he published The Modern Novel: In Britain and the United States (294). Among the reviews in 1947, this complaint was first levied by Charles Poore, in an item for the New York Times. Poore regretfully concurs with the Harper and Brothers "dust jacket's popping salute"; Harper had called The Gallery "shocking, bitter, powerful yet hopeful," Poore mentions, "grabbing something from four adjective bins at once." Perturbed that he can't deny the publisher's praise, Poore admits only that The Gallery's structure seems "pretty much" Burns's own, that Burns describes scenes "wonderfully well." Since Harper had marketed The Gallery by giving it the inaccurate label of "novel," Poore can complain: "Whether his book is a novel or not is another matter."

Let us hope that this question can now be laid to rest. Instead of worrying about an issue that was of no concern to Burns himself--merely a publisher's solution to an economics problem--we should judge The Gallery's success on its own terms. Frederick R. Karl, noting the probable inaccuracy of calling the book a "novel," points out that Burns "took great chances in what he tried to do, and if he failed, as some critics suggested, then his novel becomes a series of discrete, well-written episodes of portraits. On the other hand, if he succeeded, even in part, then he had found some technical means for expressing the war" (100). In the final analysis, readers will have to judge, individually,

whether the unity of The Gallery is strong enough to satisfy--or not.

A similar and related problem was evidently first enunciated by Jerome D. Ross, in the New York Herald Tribune. In his warm recommendation of The Gallery, Ross also comments that Burns "writes unevenly, perhaps deliberately so, sometimes using the shock technique of photographic realism, sometimes employing a kind of stylized symbology, but always with telling effect." Walter Allen states, in his The Modern Novel, that Burns's The Gallery brings together the traditions of Whitman and Wolfe: "He is always in full spate, and one is carried along like a cork on its surface, by his turbulent, breathless, brilliantly coloured prose" (295). Allen goes on to protest that "the portraits in The Gallery vary greatly in merit" (295).

Stating his preferences in cryptic terms, Allen seems to treasure most The Gallery's brilliant "Mamma," the horrible "Queen Penicillin," the moving "Giulia." Edmund Wilson had preferred "Hal," whereas Anna C. Hunter favored "Father Donovan and Chaplain Bascom." Lawrence Grant White had singled out for his praise, along with other Portraits, "The Leaf" and "Moe." Isn't it clear that everyone has his own favorite Portrait? Small wonder that most reviewers, beginning with Sullivan and Ross, could do little more than catalogue Burns's entire cast. Indeed, William McFee, of the New York Sun, was led to complain that, in writing The Gallery, Burns "has been recklessly extravagant in squandering material . . . The clever professional novelist would have made half a dozen novels out of it."

"A designer in marble" Brigid Brophy wanted to call him, "because his was an inherently streaky talent" (199). The comparison is apt.

Brophy points out how often Burns's diction or tone allows "tooth-holds to the critics who savaged him" (200). Yet, Brophy continues, Burns is no George Eliot--nor, we might add, no Thomas Wolfe--in need of "any competent editor with the arrogance to set up his own judgment against hers and strike out all those paragraphs" that seem to contribute little worthwhile to the novelistic world. Instead, "Burns had the courage, and sufficiently overcame his puritanism, to commit himself to his imagination, even where it was artistically unsafe. His prototype (and he is of a stature not to make the comparison belittling to him) is Dickens" (200).

If The Gallery sometimes seems uneven, this quality may also be due to problems inherent in Burns's modulations between one mood, one perspective, one subject, and another. As Frederick R. Karl recognizes, "One of the major problems with the postwar novel, particularly the novel focused on war and/or combat, is the need to provide modulation . . . The novelist is caught in a bind . . . If he stresses the over-all power of war and its commanders, then we lose interest in individuals; or else we have no ultimate reason for caring. If, on the other hand, he stresses individuals, then he is being unfaithful to what war is and what its values are" (101).

In terms of stylistic modulation, one notes the various bits of Italian, French, Latin, GI jargon, 1940's slang, obscure place names--all of which recreate the patois of life in the Mediterranean Theater of War. A later discussion will demonstrate more clearly that, when a reader wonders whether Burns's style in The Gallery is appropriate, he is really being forced to face the experiences, including linguistic

ones, that express the book's themes. Readers will vary--as was true of daily 1940's living--in their abilities to tolerate and understand the different "languages."

On the one hand, then, we have the complaint by the military man, Frederick Yeiser, who could not read Italian, that, because most of The Gallery's Italian phrases "remain untranslated, they serve less as a device to produce local color than as a wearying affectation." In another case, John Farrelly, apparently not bothered by the foreign phrases, says in his New Republic review that the book attempts "to make an artistic language from a jargon. The Gallery is almost a source book of GI idiom" (27). Yet each reader understands what he can--as does each citizen, each soldier, each student of the Italian language.

The central question for Burns's American readers to answer is, finally, one that only the Italian professor Laura Coltelli has discussed in any detail: Is Burns fair to the Americans that he criticizes? Coltelli's discussion itself provides an answer to her question. Because her valuable essay has not been translated into English, and because her ideas are both important and complicated, there follows below a lengthy translation of this portion of her essay, the original passages being contained in the footnotes:

Burns feels in Naples all the emptiness of the American way of life, the fundamental neglect of love, a moral and spiritual laziness generated by a comfortable lifestyle. He claims that Americans even smile too much, a vacant smile that has lost its meaning. He observes, with profound grief, that his fellow soldiers make themselves rich by trafficking in food-stuffs, sees the Italian women cheated by the illusion of marriage, and testifies to thousands of incidents of material and spiritual violence, to which the Neapolitans were subjected through the acts of their liberators. He asserts, with great courage and honesty, that he often felt ashamed of being an

American: "I remember the crimes we committed against the Italians, as I watched them in Naples. . . . It seemed to me like the swindle of all humanity, and I wondered if perhaps we weren't all lost together." This criticism, as it indicates--in the profound disgust for what Burns witnessed firsthand--should probably have been directed not against a single army, but against the horror of war itself (Coltelli 66; quoting from The Gallery 260).⁸

A little further in her analysis, Coltelli returns to this final idea, pointing out that Burns is not blinded by the qualities he admires in the Italians.

It seems that, notwithstanding certain polemical or sentimental deformities, Burns learned to "interpret" the Italy of 1944, approaching her with an obligation to certified truth and to the fact that his "simpatia" for our country did not prevent writing some pages that are hardly favorable to us: it suffices to think about the instinctive avidity for earning a profit, of that natural ability for theft of the Neapolitan thieves, who would have been capable, even, of stealing "the apple of my eye," if only they had had the ability to sell it. Burns is not lenient, but he restrains from moral hypocrisy. He remains convinced that the conquered have nothing to learn from their conquerors. We have already said that his judgment against the Americans probably deserved more meditation. But we would also like to underscore the fact that his criticism, harsh and particularized, honors him exactly because he is an American citizen (Coltelli 71).⁹

It is, in the end, Coltelli claims, the problems of war that Burns addresses, not a mere favoritism or dislike for a particular nation or temperament. Like Swift and Leopardi, Burns's models in satire, he may lean toward pessimism. But there is a romantic, a sentimental, a fully emotional side of him that would like to remain optimistic about the future of the human race. That is the only reason to write such a book as The Gallery.

Perhaps it is good for us to recall what Burns wrote Harry R. Warfel, for quotation in the latter's American Novelists of Today: "No-

thing is worth writing about except America, for we have the power to be the future, whereas everything else in the world is either standing still or looking into the past. I see no point in historical novels nor in those which seek to dose with aspirin the reality of the present. It may be a very noble reality if people will look it straight in the face, and that is one of the functions of the new American writer" (65).

B. Portraits and Promenades

The main characters of The Gallery's nine Portraits live in virtual isolation, struggling through their initiations into a world ravaged by war. They attempt, with varying degrees of success, to find values and community there, some adequate means of communication, and most of all, love. The "Exit" reminds us of their struggle with "the riddle of war, of human dignity, of love, of life itself. Some came closer than others to solving it" (342). In the end, we are told, they "were dots in a circle that never stops." The nine short stories are arranged so that this thematic pattern is slowly revealed.

Near the "Entrance," Michael Patrick, Louella, and Hal, the protagonists of Burns's first three Portraits, must make more drastic readjustments to wartime society overseas than the others. They cannot find a healthy means of coping--and seem to be doomed, partly by the work of their own hands. At the opposite end of The Gallery, the protagonists of "Giulia," "Queen Penicillin," and "Moe" are able to accept whatever lot will be cast for them, having come, finally, to a knowledge of war and its meaning in their individual lives. In the heart of The Gallery, beneath its shattered glass dome, occur three stories that propose some of the various relationships--not all happy ones--that can link the individual with his larger society.

Alternating with the nine "living portraits in this Gallery" are the eight sections Burns called Promenades, which begin in Casablanca and carry us, slowly, inexorably, toward Naples. Gradually, in these Promenades, the tumble of memories and the nearly indecipherable ram-

bling of our G.I. narrator-guide grow orderly, coherent. In the end, he is able to share with us the lessons he has learned about America, Naples, and the War. While he struggles, so do Michael Patrick, Louella, Momma, and the rest.

Ultimately, we are uplifted by the G.I.'s renewed ability to communicate and to believe in the cathartic value of tears, art, and love. By now we ourselves have mourned the plight of Burns's characters, admired his literary power, loved the good-hearted and courageous Giulia. At last, we too are ready to witness the death of Moe and to be purged. And the book's circular, dome-shaped structure is suddenly evident, for, more than anyone else in The Gallery, Michael Patrick had sought escape from the reality of his drunken sorrows through the bittersweet beauty of Puccini's opera and the mute warmth of a young Neapolitan girl.

Michael Patrick is ashamed of "the other doughfeet," who yell at the conquered Neapolitans, calling them paesan, an Italian word meaning "fellow citizen." An Irish Catholic American, he cannot speak Italian and therefore remains unable to communicate his feelings and beliefs. Terrified of death in combat, he wanders the streets of Naples, on a forged hospital pass, thereby aggravating the trenchfoot that prevents him, even now, from fighting Germans with the rest of the 85th Infantry Division, along the line just south of Florence.

A lonely Michael Patrick decides to go to the San Carlo, buying an extra ticket--just in case he meets someone. "He'd never been a lover in his life, but tonight he'd like to have somebody kiss him, to feel somebody's disinterested hands going all over his body" (4). In the middle of the Galleria Umberto, he discovers a nearly empty bar, where

he decides that winning the confidence of the "mousy" Neapolitan waitress would be a more attractive idea than "paying on Via Roma for such a rite."

So nervous that he manages to knock three double vermouths onto the floor before drinking one, Michael Patrick hopes to convince the girl's father of his good will and take the daughter with him to hear Puccini's La Bohème. She agrees to go, when at last the invitation comes, but her father must act as chaperone. Michael Patrick is moved, suddenly, to explain, in his American English, the fear he feels, his sense of loss and sorrow. But she cannot understand him. "Cosa?" she asks. "What is it?"

Before long, Michael Patrick, slowly getting drunk on vermouth, launches a speech about the war and draws the attention of an Australian soldier who has wandered into the back of the bar. Michael Patrick, looking about the Galleria, has a sudden vision of what it must be like to be an Italian soldier during the Allied occupation. He leaves the place, giving up his selfish attempts at seduction. "I'll remember you longer than you'll remember me," he calls to her. Walking out into the sunlight of the arcade, he feels sure that he will die soon.

Near the Galleria, still intoxicated, and feeling that "the vermouth he'd drunk was pressing on his abdomen," Michael Patrick finds a garden within a small courtyard, and urinates into a fountain there, thinking himself alone. As he urinates, a cry behind him expresses the offense he has caused a mother over her child's having had to witness such a "porcherie pubbliche" ("public indecency"). They disappear "behind the long shutter of the balcony door," and Michael Patrick wishes

he could talk to her.

On the way back into the arcade, he passes an American parachutist picking up a Neapolitan girl whose companion, "a scabrous urchin," was attempting to auction her off at a good price. "Michael Patrick in passing attempted by some secret glance to show the girl that he understood and apologized. But she spat her gum on his shoes" (13). He purchases a bottle of cognac and returns to the courtyard, hoping to see the injured housewife again. There he sits, drinking until he blacks out at that same fountain.

Later, in time to make the first act of the opera, he awakens with a slight hangover headache and manages to lunge himself across the busy street to the San Carlo. From his lonely box in an empty palco, Michael Patrick looks down at the orchestra, the audience, the show, allowing the cognac to blur his mind and the music to flow over him. When Mimi enters in Act I, he feels a sweeter reality than any he has known. "He saw for the first time in his life that the things which keep the world going are not to be bought or sold, that every flower grows out of decay, that for all the mud and grief there are precious things which make it worth while for us to leave our mothers' wombs--if someone shows us these priceless things. Before and after this truth, he saw, there's nothing, nothing at all...." (16).

Afterwards, the show over, he is alone again, to look at the moon over Vesuvius and listen to the buzz of Naples. Then he notices a girl who seems to be beckoning him "across some unbridgeable distance. He was too drunk to string ideas together, but it was perfectly clear what they must do, and each understood it in a kind of mute joy" (17).

There, at the familiar courtyard fountain of that afternoon, they make love:

His fingers went through her hair the way children wander in a dark forest, numb and crying and lost.

--Oh I think I love you he said.

Their tears mingled; he felt she was nodding her head.

And thus the first, moving Portrait comes to an end.

With a turn of the page, into the First Promenade, we lose sight of any momentary understanding reached at the end of "The Trenchfoot of Michael Patrick." For the earliest Promenades in The Gallery are a relentless, confusing jumble of impressions that initiate the reader, too, into the experience of war, much as an American G.I. would have been immersed, all at once, into the forbidding atmosphere of Casablanca. Here is a sample of Burns's iridescent prose:

I remember the Place de France and the Boulevard de la Gare and the billboards of the Publi-Maroc. There was a secret yellow bell tower I'd seen as photomontage for Humphrey Bogart. And the long cool Hôtel de Ville in the Place Lyautey, near palm trees, fountains and an MP motor pool. However they might deal with the Ayrabs, the French had hit on a colonial architecture that seemed to grow naturally out of the pink soil of Morocco. There were stained stucco walls around the two Medinas, all of which were off limits to us.

Why is it called Casablanca? Because for all the smell there's a ghostly linen brilliance about the buildings clustered on their terraced levels. This White City is best seen at noon or sunset. I knew that I couldn't be anyplace else but in Africa. There's something festering here, something hermetically sealed. With the exception of the indigenous Ayrabs, all Caucasians here seem to be corpse intruders, animated by a squeaking desire to be somewhere else. The restlessness of Casablanca is of the damned. It's a place where all the tortures of the twentieth century meet and snicker at one another, like Ayrab women under their veils marketing in the Suk (The Gallery 19-20).

Frederick R. Karl points out, astutely, that the Promenades function as a modern-day "Greek chorus, a commentary on the main action. But the commentary, since it is modernist, is oblique to the Portraits, where the war lies. The effect of the Promenades . . . is cumulative, not at all a direct relationship to the Portraits before or after them" (100). Burns's G.I. narrator differs from the ancient chorus of, say, Sophocles, in that he is both a commentator upon and a participant in the conflicts being resolved. The very act of speaking his thoughts helps him to grow, to develop more viable means of viewing the world. His is an organic, changing personality. For these reasons, Burns's Promenades sometimes remind us more of Hamlet's soliloquies than of any chorus of the classical Greek theater.

Karl's cumulative, organic view of the Promenades answers the objection of John W. Aldridge, who claims, in his After the Lost Generation,¹⁰ that "the affirmation of values in Burns's 'Promenades' is constantly thwarted by the negation of values in the 'Portraits'" (145). Yet Laura Coltelli has observed that the gradual crescendo of intensity, as characters come to Naples and the Galleria, typically ends in their having "their more significant life experiences" there (62; translation mine). Coltelli notes that in Burns's Portraits, the protagonists, "however frustrated and disillusioned their starting points, succeed in recognizing or catching a glimpse of the possibility of change. Even this is already a victory" (63; translation mine).¹¹ Likewise, we have Karl's convincing reminder that "the key image is the Galleria, which is life and death, affirmation and negation, heaven for some, nightmare for others" (100).

The first Promenade is a study in beginnings. Its short first paragraph--only two sentences long, yet filled with strong, vividly realistic odors--introduces us quickly, briefly, to Casablanca, which lives on in the past of the remembering narrator. Then it is backwards in time to the nameless G.I.'s trip across the Atlantic from America, his own origins remaining obscure. Like the G.I., we are puzzled and fascinated by the talk of the men who have already seen Casa, then, suddenly, dazzled by Casablanca itself. Before we have regained our equilibrium, the narrator is informing us, too confidentially for our short acquaintance, "I think it was at Casablanca that the bottom dropped out of my personality" (20).

Before allowing us to become better acquainted, he turns philosophical: "Americans profess to a neatness of soul because their country is Protestant, spacious, and leery of abstracts." This man seems to know more than he is capable of telling, and we cling to each kernel of truth, now hearing him confess, "I'm an American uprooted. I'm in a foreign land where I must use a ration card, where there's no relation between the money in circulation and the goods to buy with it. This was the only way I could explain to myself the looks I got from the French and the Ayrabs" (20). "Whatever could have made this man?" we ask ourselves. But his personality will not seem clear until the book draws to a close.

The First Promenade is just the beginning of a long "meditation," to use Brigid Brophy's term. The narrator begins here to speak his monologue. He tells us that, in Casablanca, he first realized that he would die. He first began to lose his youthful innocence there, in

French Morocco. He discovered a new morality. He found that he was powerless to make Casablanca be anything else; he could not change reality. And there he first knew loneliness, "the loneliness that engenders quietism" (24).

In the next Portrait, we meet Louella, a Red Cross volunteer whose self-righteousness propels her, like many other Americans in Naples, into a life of alcoholic insincerity. One of Louella's principal faults is that she thinks too highly of herself. An arrogant dowager on a self-appointed mission, she wants to be "like the pioneer women in covered wagons who followed their men into the West" (25). Insisting, also, on an attractive pose, and enacting with a vengeance the stereotypically boorish American abroad, Louella is already dead inside.

Images of drowsiness mark the fringes of this Portrait, offering a contrast between Louella and her roommate, Ginny, whose conduct shows that she understands the reality of wartime. Ginny's ability to abandon herself to sleep reflects the fact that she lives life fully. Loud and earnest, she does not always enjoy witnessing the suffering of the wounded G.I.'s to whom she serves coffee and doughnuts at the hospital planes each day. Louella, on the other hand, endures a troubled sleep, induced by a mixture of drugs and alcohol, because she wastes time "fighting her own private war in Naples--just being a woman" (25)--keeping herself "vital" in her immaculate and svelte uniform, holding brilliant salons, and trying to improve the less proper Red Cross workers. Whereas Ginny will gladly give affection to any soldier who needs it, Louella keeps herself at a virginal distance from them--and from life.

Nothing much happens in Louella's Portrait. Her life is governed

by ennui and inactivity. Merely crossing Via Roma, and endangering her permanent in the hot Naples sunlight, is a courageous act for her. Her response to a reprimand over failing to organize and announce regular activities for the club she runs is to drown herself in phenobarbital and vermouth. She returns to bed, fully dressed, and sleeps the afternoon away, a living corpse.

Louella's "exhausting philosophy of life"--always trying "to descend to other people's levels instead of insisting that they meet her on her own" (30)--is responsible for her inner death. One evening, in an outdoor café of the Galleria Umberto, Louella misses what may be her final opportunity to rejoin humanity. A shy and dirty orphan, wearing a placard written in English, wanders over to her table. Louella is callous enough to give the hungry child no more than a single one-lira note. She is even corrupt enough inside to feel, treating herself to another vermouth, that "her sympathies had been stretched like an elastic band" in Naples (39). In reality, she feels more sympathy for the G.I.'s who sell goods dishonestly obtained free at the PX.

At the end of the evening, Louella is drunk, in the company of two airplane pilots, towheaded captains--"the backbone of American manhood," the kind of men who believe thinking to be a "pussy disease of modern life" (42). Louella likes them, partly because they speak in a unique "patois" that "was a living language with a syntax of agony." One of them, "obviously the more poetic and sensitive of the two," is too drunk to say anything coherent. The other complains that his wife, "that lovely little bitch," might be a Victory Girl now (i.e., a prostitute favoring soldiers). Louella is momentarily happy to defend "all that's

fine in American womanhood" (43). She staggers home with them, to her apartment in Piazza Carità ("charity"), where the men want "to come up and have a party" (44). Louella, ignorant of their lust for her, goes upstairs alone, and, after a nightcap of vermouth and phenobarbital, drifts off, having spent an evening like that of which she had once accused Ginny.

There should be no doubt that Louella is a despicable person who gains nothing valuable from her Italian experience. We find sarcasm in the narrator's revelation that she had come to Naples "to forgive." In failing utterly, Louella is unlike most of Burns's protagonists. For, as Laura Coltelli points out, most of "i personaggi dei 'Portraits' per quanto frustrante e disilluso sia il loro punto di partenza, riescono comunque a conoscere o intravedere la possibilità di un cambiamento. E' già questa una conquista" (Coltelli 63).¹² John W. Aldridge's early claim--that Louella learns "decency"--is just not true ("America's Young Novelists" 8). More accurate is his later, more considered view: "Her conception of the needs of the men she serves contrasts ironically with their true needs; her usefulness is canceled altogether because her ideals do not provide her with the strength to face the realities of war" (After the Lost Generation 144).

The Second Promenade begins at the American cemetery in Fedhala, bringing us out of Louella's groggy delusions only to face again the war's harshest consequences. "I saw how close and still bodies can be laid together in the earth," the narrator says (45). He contrasts this with the French cemetery, whose angelic marble statuary is more congenially Irish than the neat rafter arms of row after row of white crosses.

That coherent contrast alone tells us that our G.I. is beginning to approach understanding.

The idea of being sympathetic is soon presented here, in a most decadent context, in French Morocco. The G.I. first hears of this idea, couched in the French word sympathique, from the small Bordeaux sailor who comes sometimes to visit him at the bar of the Hôtel de France. There, the hostess, Madame Jean, serves black-market delicacies ("Bonsoir, mes petits américains! Pour ce soir je vous offre un magnifique menu-marché noir. Mais vous mangerez!...pommes de terre en robe de chambre, un biftek merveilleux...et...si vous êtes très très gentils, il y'aura du homard" 48), counting them on her fingers, "screaming them at us with flashing eyes." Just after the narrator recalls Madame Jean's husband, entertaining guests with a ribald, perverse song, he tells us that the idea of being simpatico marked "my initiation into the economics of the world, a gradated graph of moonlight and romance on one peak and the struggle to exist on the other" (49).

For the Second Promenade, contradictions and contrasts are key. Juxtaposed with images of death within the city, and underneath the land of the cemetery, are the animated but unnatural scenes of the Fedhala beach, sparkling in the sunlight. The various times of day are described in exquisite detail, but incorrectly ordered, with dawn located in the middle of the Promenade, sunset at its beginning. The church of Fedhala intrudes between a sluttish, overweight Moroccan washerwoman nicknamed "Busheltits" and the church school that the Allies have converted into a Base Censorship Detachment. When we see the Arabs, their dark beauty and silent, hollow eyes reveal that the whole natural order

of things has been violated. Only the cold bitterness of the white Moroccan wine pierces through to reveal the deceptive undertow that mothers on the beach would warn their children, in French, to beware.

One of America's most respected critics, Edmund Wilson, admired the subject of the Third Portrait, "Hal," calling this character Burns's "most original creation" in The Gallery (62). Another of Burns's initiates into the reality of war, Hal is struck more forcefully and permanently than either Louella or Michael Patrick. His handsome exterior is a mirror that reflects what others need to see in him, belying the fact that he too is but a hollow shell. Eventually, his visions of a dead parachute captain break through to reach his inner self, and Hal cannot bear the strain. He is last seen in the Army's Forty-fifth General Hospital, where his poor mental state requires that he be sedated for "paranoia and delusions of persecution." Hal has finally managed to get through to himself, but perhaps too late.

An intriguing character, because of his uncertain fate and psychological makeup, Hal has received some attention by Burns's admirers. John W. Aldridge, for example, in his After the Lost Generation, explains that Hal goes mad because "the necessity to affirm becomes stronger as the possibilities of affirmation recede, and he requires an understanding of the war that he never required of the less chaotic world of peace" (143). In other words, Hal begins to become actively concerned about the good of humanity only when he sees humanity at its worst, reduced to a suffering almost beyond imagination. Offering another explanation, more specific, Edmund Wilson believes that Hal's crisis is due, in part, to his inability to love and to the fact that he

has no identity of his own (62). In a single, cryptic phrase, John P. Diggins has extended this idea, explaining that Hal "suffers from cosmic pessimism when he realizes man's inability for natural love" (612).

A story by Sherwood Anderson may have influenced Burns in this creation of Hal and the mysterious paratrooper: "The Philosopher," included in Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio. In that story, the eccentric, yellow-moustached Doctor Parcival, with "something strange about his eyes," takes a liking to George Willard, but eventually terrifies him with tales that

began nowhere and ended nowhere. Sometimes the boy thought they must all be inventions, a pack of lies. And then again he was convinced that they contained the very essence of truth (51).

Doctor Parcival tells George about his father's death in an insane asylum, and his own insistence on praying all that night, as he sometimes had when his brother was in town, drinking and shopping. The object of talking to young George Willard, other than to relate how his painter brother was run down by his own truck, is this: "I want to fill you with hatred and contempt so that you will be a superior being" (55). On the day that the Doctor refuses to go down to see a dead girl, just run over by a buggy, he receives a presentiment of his own hanging, and urges George to remember one simple truth: "It is this--that everyone in the world is Christ and they are all crucified" (57).

The meaning of Hal's Portrait is further complicated by what Roger Austen has termed Burns's "bobby-pin clues" to Hal's homosexuality (108), an aspect of his personality that Walter Allen also seems to have noted (296). The first hint is apparent in the story's opening lines:

"Hal said, fastening the gold bar to the collar of his shirt: 'Nothing can hurt you now, dear...'" (54). The use of the term "dear," like Jack's own habitual use--with the Hagens--of the phrase "get her," would have been puzzling, perhaps humorous to heterosexuals, but bore another significance to those readers who were "in the life." Other clues include Hal's apparent hangouts--the docks, Pennsylvania Station (at 5 a.m.), the conservative but cruisy Washington hotel bars, Central Park, Greenwich Village, etc. There are also Burns's references to Fire Island, chorus boys, and the various cliques at the Statler Hilton Hotel bar in Washington, now the Capital Hilton and otherwise not much changed during the last forty years.

Hal's Portrait, beginning in the United States and ending in Naples, is obviously intended to be an emblem for the American experience in the Mediterranean Theater of War. And his insanity is a dire warning against detachment, lack of true feeling, empty religious rituals, sex without love, attitudes and postures of all kinds. As a handsome young second lieutenant, intelligent and promising, he is meant to represent America's brightest hopes for the future. And as a neurotic, self-centered and sexually irresponsible man, with no real emotional or spiritual backbone, he is meant to reveal America--and the G.I. of World War II--at her worst.

The Third Promenade deals with sickness and health, beginning in Casablanca's Sixth General Hospital, where the narrator was once treated for "the GI's" (that is, "gastro-intestinal" illnesses) that had kept sending him "tearing to the latrine" (91). We know our soldier is well now, looking backward with us as always. He describes here, in full,

objective detail, the New England doctors and Massachusetts nurses who worked there. He can see things clearly enough now to distinguish the main ward from those in other hospitals, to characterize one nurse (nicknamed "Butch") more carefully than the rest, to describe the hospital's "nut ward" too--Parker House, where he had visited his buddy, Perkins, after his crack-up. Even though the narrator gets drunk after his visit, worrying whether he could retain his own sanity, we know--from the health in his voice--that he has made it through the worst. He is well.

This, then, is the last Promenade set in Casablanca. The narrator is now to be shipped, in the railroad car the boys called a "forty-by-eight," to Algiers, the new Allied Force Headquarters in North Africa. His destiny, of course, is at this point a military secret and thus unknown to him. But his demonstrably good mental state is further revealed in the fact that he can depict other joes' reactions to these movement orders too. For the first time, we now meet the intellectual pfc, the gruff mess sergeant, and several other "types" whose commentary will henceforth accompany that of the narrator in these Promenades.

As might be expected, images of movement, descriptions of locomotives are prominent. Sleeping on the hay-littered boxcar floors, softened only by their regulation packs and blankets, the G.I.'s would awake occasionally in the middle of the desert to find the train stopped, a few "Ayrab" children appearing from nowhere "as though they'd inched up from the sand" (94). Usually, there were no other people around, and "in the moonlight the sandy hummocks drifted past as though I watched them from a magic carpet" (94).

For the first time, too, the narrator speaks to an Italian, to a captain of the Bersaglieri, who had "something old and warm in his voice such as I'd never heard before" (96). Something about this Italian captain touches the narrator. Lying down again at night, he remembers the faces of the Italians he had watched board the train that day.

And then and there I decided to learn something of the modern world. There was something abroad which we Americans couldn't or wouldn't understand. But unless we made some attempt to realize that everyone in the world isn't American, and that not everything American is good, we'd all perish together, and in this twentieth century.... (97).

Yes, our narrator is well again--although changed, and changing still. Thinking again about the captain of the Bersaglieri, he is stirred profoundly, and he falls asleep, with the sound and peaceful sleep of the fully human. The first one-third of The Gallery is complete.

The middle three Portraits, as discussed earlier, offer an increasingly distasteful variety of possible relationships between an individual and the larger society. In general, "Father Donovan and Chaplain Bascom" treats the ideas of moral responsibility, toleration, and the means of salvation. "Momma" presents, in the protagonist's gay bar, a microcosm of the larger society from which Momma's boys can only momentarily escape. The behavior and speech of the clientele there is a miniature refraction of possibilities in the real world. And in "The Leaf," the paper empire slowly built by Motes and his elect officers is even more sterile and devoid of human values than this.

The Fourth Portrait, "Father Donovan and Chaplain Bascom," is a dialogue dramatizing two characters engaged in a philosophical debate, a form well-known to Burns's beloved Giacomo Leopardi. The differences

between Baptist Chaplain Bascom and Father Donovan, in military rank, theology, ritual, and culture, bring them into regular discussions of issues like Bascom's cavalier use of the word hell, baptism by immersion, drinking alcoholic beverages, venerating Mary. Eventually, the Baptist, a believer in "practical Christianity" (104), and the Catholic, who endorses the "Church's exalted idea of parenthood" (103), are more than merely "high propaganda for the chief of chaplains, showing how all faiths worked together in the army" (98). Especially ennobling is the gradual "conversion" of Bascom toward charity. He orders a drink, symbolic of having moderated his attitudes. And Donovan assures him that the lessons of Naples will indeed be remembered by the soldiers, despite the "atheists in foxholes" that Chaplain Bascom fears.

Across from the Via Verdi entrance into the Galleria, in the Bank of Naples that had been converted into a transient mess for American officers, they dine together peaceably. Afterward, in the sunset on Via Verdi, they notice in the shadows downstairs, between the two stairways leading up into the Galleria, a bar called the Arizona, "For Allied Officers." There, in a small smoke-filled room, the Father orders champagne to celebrate their reunion. Soon, a bevy of attractive prostitutes and mothers, mostly married to Italian P/W's ("Prisoners of War"), come out to join the other men in a progressively wilder frenzy, and the chaplains take their caps and leave, dazed. Outside it is night. Father Donovan wants to give a blond Neapolitan girl there a stick of chewing gum, but she is afraid and darts into the street, the Father running after her. Only the Chaplain notices an English lorry curving rapidly along the one-way route of Via Vittorio Emanuele and around the oblique angle onto the narrow and darkened Via Verdi:

He shouted and leaped into the street after them. The lorry bore down. His ears exploded with the scream of brakes and the crunch of bodies, as collies are mashed under heavy turning wheels.

On the opposite curb the tiny Neapolitan girl watched the truck back off. The two bodies lay there quietly, one with a bit of purple silk ribbon over his heart. She put her gum into her mouth. American! For it wasn't the first time she'd seen the dead lying in the streets of Naples (116).

With the arbitrary intervention of death during wartime, the new understandings we have seen Donovan and Bascom reach may be for naught. Is it enough consolation that they reached them at all?

We are reminded that the glorious speeches of Esther and Magda, the two British "aunties" whose conversation fills the Fifth Portrait, "Mamma," are ignored by the other patrons. When they pass out into one another's arms at the end of the Portrait, the other patrons merely "pushed and wedged in closer to give the corpses room" (150). We have no assurance that even "Magda," the first British sergeant, will remember on the next morning his own new-found belief that the War will demand "a new morality":

How can we speak of sin when thousands are cremated in German furnaces, when it isn't wrong to make a million pounds, but a crime to steal a loaf of bread? Perhaps some new code may come out of all this... I hope so.

--And if not? [asked Esther.]

--Why then, the first British sergeant said in drunken triumph, we shall have a chaos far worse than in Mamma's bar this evening. This is merely a polite kind of anarchy, Esther. These people are expressing a desire disapproved of by society. But in relation to the world of 1944, this is just a bunch of gay people letting down their back hair.... We mustn't go mad over details, Esther. Big issues are much more important. It is they which should drive us insane if we must be driven at all.... All I say is, some compromise must and will be reached.... (149-150).

Magda's understanding is precisely that reached by the two chaplains of the previous Portrait, although the message now carries additional implications about the place of the gay person in society at large.

Roger Austen, in a book entitled Playing the Game: The Homosexual Novel in America, endorses "Momma" as "one of the most brilliant pieces of gay writing in English of this century" (107), saying that here Burns had lifted "the veil to reveal with piercing clarity a glimpse of gay American GIs spending an evening together with their British, French, and Italian counterparts in occupied Naples." Austen also believed, before his death, that the placement of "Momma" at the very center of The Gallery was a strategic manner of casting gay overtones across the whole, a "replica" of which is seen in Lonnie Coleman's placing the homoerotic story, "The Theban Warriors," in the center of his 1955 Ship's Company (Roger Austen to MTB, 4 February 1981).

However, this distortion of the Portrait's meaning is something that Burns would have deplored. Obviously, such a viewpoint overlooks entirely the Portrait's well-chosen protagonist and viewpoint character, Momma, through whose sympathetic eyes we observe the pathetic desperation of the men gathered, by sheer circumstance, in her bar. Austen's view too closely resembles the outlook on life that most Americans in 1945, including even gay people themselves, considered shameless, jaded, maladjusted, perverse. Burns, as a serious artist, had strong opinions on this subject, despite his own use of camp in social settings:

The 20th century homosexual . . . sets up for himself a tinselled world that has nothing to do with any reality, believes himself a golden and divine spirit, gifted beyond other men, and frequently goes over into the realm of art, which

soothes the feminine ganglia in him. Unless he has a first-rate mind, merciless self-appraisal, and honesty too large to force his world on a larger one he becomes an artist as warped as his own psyche; and you get ugliness, negation, and non-essentials substituted for the blood of great art. This is particularly true in the Neverland of America, where art is a luxury, where most don't know or care enough about the European tradition . . . Miss Proust, particularly in Sodome et Gomorrhe has given the coup de grace to the dishonesty of modern homosexuals (JHB to DAM, 28 June 1945).

In contrast, the more temperate critic Brigid Brophy points out that Burns's perspective for "Momma," seeing the homosexual bar through her demi-innocent, both ironic and compassionate eyes, was a bold and artistically right choice that allowed him not to forfeit his immediate knowledge of this subject (197). This Portrait, if read correctly, is the story of Momma herself. Laura Coltelli's understanding of the Neapolitan bar-owner is revealing. Again, the length of the quotation below seems justified by Coltelli's reasonable observations, which have not previously been translated into English:

Momma observes the precariousness of the "grande dame" figure that she has constructed for herself. In spite of the white gloves, the hat with the stuffed bird, she is happy only for three hours a day--namely, during the time her bar is open, sitting behind the cash register, observing what happens in that place. Only thus does she succeed in satisfying, even if artificially, her frustrations as an unsatisfied woman and an unsuccessful mother, pouring out her love to a heterogeneous company of homosexuals who frequent her bar: "Her crowd had something that other groups hadn't. Momma's boys had an awareness of having been born alone and sequestered by some deep difference from other men. For this she loved them. And Momma knew something of those four freedoms that the Allies were forever preaching. She believed that a minority should be let alone...." In her identification with an almost mythical Mother who embraces all of her sons and who understands everything, she even comes to say that "a Momma mustn't be skinny either" (Coltelli 68; quoting from The Gallery 133, 127).¹³

Coltelli understands, as revealed by her elliptical final observation here, that Momma's acceptance of her boys is questionable. Isn't it the patronage of these homosexuals that allows her the wealth, in occupied Naples, to enjoy black-market delicacies, the movies, an unclear respectability? Like that of her boys, released from the strictures of America and Great Britain to the less puritanical sexuality of Italy, Momma's way of life is opportunistic. Were there no wartime pressures to contend with, she might not feel so tolerant. Likewise, were there no reason for the two British sergeants--or the others in her bar--to seek escape from the realities of daily living, Esther and Magda might not have discovered any new truths at all. Does it require, Burns is asking, a perversion of the order of things, for people to understand the importance of values like love, health, freedom, peace? This question is one that The Gallery asks all its readers, regardless of individual sexuality, race, religious heritage, nationality.

"The Leaf" is the last of the central trio of Portraits, and like "Hal," details the experiences of an American moving from the United States, across North Africa, to Naples. A Virginia gentleman and petroleum engineer commissioned as a captain in the reserves when Pearl Harbor was attacked, Motes and his wife Lucinda have known "the ideal love," a "spiritual" relationship that involves spending most of their lives away from each other's company. That the Captain enjoys this arrangement is only one of the many early indications that he, like Louella, will set a negative example for the reader. Like her too, he pays unusually careful attention to his uniform's crisp seams and polished brass. Meanwhile, Lucinda Motes writes poetry that falsifies and senti-

mentalizes their relationship, and we know that Motes himself is symbolized by the "chill dead light of the dawn in the streets of Roanoke" (163).

On the way to infantry camp in South Carolina, Motes "demanded a little more attention than civilians were getting" (163) and "was slightly autocratic with the nigra porters" (164). After more than a year as company commander for an all-black outfit, thinking to himself, "these goddam nigras will drive me mad" (165), Captain Motes ultimately fails as an infantry company officer. His men slowly turn into machines, because of the "invisible regimentation" emanating from within his own "orderly room" (166). Eventually, angry at having landed in North Africa only after the Atlantic Base Section was already in place there, the combat over, Captain Motes lies his way into a general's office and earns the responsibility for setting up a Base Censorship Detachment in ABS. It will be Motes's own empire, allowing him to feel indispensable, important, but signifying that, instead of truly participating in life, he is a mathematically minded arranger, happier among formulas and figures than with humanity.

In this sixth Portrait, Burns utilizes the literary convention--also employed in Norman Mailer's The Naked and the Dead (1948)--of symbolizing depravity by means of homosexuality. The men who gather around newly promoted Major Motes are either too sensual, too refined, or too effeminate for most contemporary readers to have interpreted them otherwise, even though Burns's text remains elusive and ambiguous. Stuki particularly, the dark young lieutenant Motes meets in Casablanca, assumes various homoerotic poses, smiling to reveal his "vanilla" teeth

(178), sending out Motes's laundry (179), giving him a spinal massage with "powerful moist fingers" that make Motes "go slack all over" (180). In addition to Stuki's smoldering sensuality, we have Lieutenant Frank's "broad rear in pink pants" (181) and Lieutenant Mayberry's "cultivated and disciplined mind" (191) to remind us of the deathly artificiality of Motes's organization.

The height of decadence is reached in an episode in Algiers, after Motes's promotion to Major. Because of an impending visit from a brigadier general who needs to reduce the unwieldy size of the North African bureaucracy in order to support the men fighting in Italy, Motes's entire base participates in a theatrical lie. Piling stacks of correspondence about so that everyone looks busy and essential to the war effort, they escape their responsibilities. Motes is able to retain his empire until, in Naples, Captain Mayberry and Captain Frank are transferred to Caserta, and Motes himself, his brown hair now gone gray, is to be rotated to the United States. Stuki will replace him in Naples. Finally, on the night before his return, Motes walks through a darkened Galleria, alone again. He is consoled only by the comforting thought--one of Burns's astute forecasts of the situation in postwar America--that

When he got home, he'd go to the Pentagon and sell them the idea of setting up censorship among civilians in the United States. Americans couldn't trust even one another in wartime (205).

Between these three central Portraits, Burns places two Promenades set in Algiers, the city of Motes's most wicked deception. Together, they form an appropriate bridge, spanning the symbolic distance of Naples from Casablanca. Now, beyond the scourging experience of Morocco,

the narrator's voice is coherent, his mind clear enough to describe what he sees in the form of the familiar essay. The Fourth Promenade begins with a metaphor based on the geographical layout of Algiers, which forced the narrator to learn "all over again how to walk." His ability constantly to readjust his physical gait and sense of balance to the hills of Algiers' Rue Michelet symbolizes the flexibility and equilibrium he feels within. These new qualities have finally replaced the precarious stiff-necked approach to North Africa that his Puritan heritage had encouraged him to adopt.

Throughout the Fourth Promenade, the narrator adjusts to his new surroundings, new faces, customs and pastimes, a new code of conduct in the European Algiers. Since much of the G.I. life was somehow centered around the infamous Hôtel Aletti, it is also the center of this Promenade, the narrator slowing down his typically universal glance across the landscape to examine, individually, the personalities of three very individual Victory Girls who operate there. The Duchess, missing her youth, seems brought to lower herself only partly by economic necessity. Animated and exciting, Emilie's playful lust and pettish coquetry seem staged to contrast with the ennui of the haunted souls who linger too long in the Hôtel bar. And there is Claudette, whose purely economic approach is congenial to the capitalistic Americans.

The bar provides comfort for "a circle of misanthropes, officers and people who wanted to look at the circus without standing in the ring" (120). Our philosophical G.I. fits in well in this setting, where he notices a second lieutenant of the engineers who begins to tease his curiosity. Finally, after a week of silence between the men, the lieu-

tenant breaks the maddening silence rudely and aggressively, angry with the corporal for being "goddam condescending" because he is no longer satisfied with "being convenient and optimistic and slick and conventional" (123). The corporal, our friendly narrator, is surprised, but he does not lash back at the lieutenant, even when this white-haired man rages from the wisdom, experience, and emotion within him. By the last paragraph, we know that the corporal's view is healthier. Far better is it to be happy with one's organic understanding of reality, as we readers have done all along, than to stand alone: "For no one man can put his hands up to stop a locomotive...." (124).

The Fifth Promenade, which comes just after "Momma," has a similar telescopic structure, moving from the detached, God-like perspective on the Algiers sea wall, to the intimacy of a single conversation with, in this case, a French poet of Algiers. There is confidence in the narrator's voice as he recalls that the men in that city gathered around the concrete barrier along the harbor, like "people who stood on the edge of the moon, looking longingly at the earth" (153). The image is appropriate, because this Promenade details the aching of the soldiers for a true participation in life and because its action occurs in the darkness. Nighttime is the setting of this Promenade, just as day had been prominent in the last.

The narrator sounds mournful now, observing at one point how the moonlight accents the mute panic in the men: "At one cry they'd have pushed down the wall and tumbled into the Mediterranean" (154). In the lunar light, the corporal helps old Algerian Frenchmen up onto the wall, to sit and discuss with him the glory and despair of the history of

France. Sometimes he attends the opera, where he finds a new and classier meeting place and a balm for his soul. Only rarely does he set out alone. The reactions of pianist Lélia Gousseau to a drunk who climbs onstage during one of her concerts is "miraculous and noble" and teaches him what great art is.

A break in the Promenade leads into a short section, that reflects the "soft yet cynical mirror of time," emphasizing the idea of variety and difference, of losing one's individuality in favor of understanding life itself. The conversation of the pfc and the mess sergeant, more tempered now, after their earlier hysteria, demonstrates that one can learn from someone who appears to be a subordinate, that intellectual and moral growth depend in part upon a willingness to yield to another's viewpoints. Even the pfc, at the end of this middle section, can reassure us that pity is a valuable lesson to learn, that dignity is still possible after an admission of one's failures.

The narrator, one late night in June 1944, walks around Algiers alone, wondering whether his antipathy to "small talk" and barracks life indicates that he is actually a misanthrope. Even though he feels anguished at moments, he is sane enough to laugh at himself and remain optimistic, when he encounters a Frenchman whose face looks "like a hawk's in repose" (158-159). A sudden confirmation in the narrator's sensibilities, the French poet takes his arm, naturally, "like a little child," and in his room --among the few riches of "the linen on his cot and a dish of fruit on his night table and the leather of his books" (159)--the men find simpatia, even in Algiers: "He told me that I was still young, and that all was vanity. But not yet. He said that men

had wept before I was ever born...." (159).

That something good can survive the devastations of war is demonstrated well in the exultant sixth Promenade, set in Naples and beginning the final one-third of The Gallery. Like the first Promenade in North Africa, this first Promenade in Italy spills and bursts with color, movement, and detail. Yet the narrator's voice is controlled now, unlike before. He begins with the view of Naples and the Bay as seen from the portside of a ship, looking "like a golden porpoise lapped in dawn. She had eggs and lumps on her outline which the sun and light mist grossened into wens" (206). The narrator wants to look more closely at Italy, to correct or confirm preconceptions and fulfill anticipations: "I remember how in my head and in my heart the city of Naples had always nestled like a sleeping question mark, as an entity gay and sad and full of what they call Life. I knew it would be a port town, but a port town over which lay a color and a weight peculiarly Naples' own, a short girl with dark eyes and rich skin and body hair" (206).

The contrasts of this opening are not frightening, but satisfying. There is no hint of concern that the "wens" might mar an otherwise perfect shoreline, no worry that the darkness of the Neapolitan girl might portend something evil. It is important, we know from the beginning, to see fully and completely into the heart of Naples. For, as the narrator observes, symbolically, "everything floated near the piers: watermelons, condoms, chunks of fissured wood, strips of faded cloth" (207). These images, representing life in its variety and fullness, are collected by inscrutable currents to the city where the Galleria is lo-

cated, and where our pilgrimage through the Mediterranean will end.

The compact style of Burns's descriptions in the next few paragraphs excites us and welcomes us into the richness that is Italy, in contrast to the sinister and forbidding effects of a similar style that Burns used in introducing Casablanca in the first Promenade. Here is the G.I. narrator, glorying in his discovery of the reality of Naples:

And I remember the jeeps along Via Caracciolo near the section of Santa Lucia, and how Zi' Teresa's restaurant jutting on a small float was then a French officers' mess, and the tunnel to Bagnoli. I remember whizzing past the statues of the aquarium, the war monuments . . . And just over Naples stand the hills where the Vomero sits on its snaky terraces and flights of stairs like an old lady precarious on a trapeze. The houses of Naples as they swarm up the hillside are yellow or creamy or brown; they get lost in the verdure that mustaches the lips of Castel Sant'Elmo. I couldn't place Naples in any century because it had a taste at once modern and medieval, all grown together in weariness and urgency and disgust. Yet even in her half-death Naples is alive and furious with herself and with life (207).

The narrator seems to remember everything, and everything seems to have a meaning that indicates some sense of normality, of a basic order and continuity to things. The walls along Piazza Municipio, littered with posters of all kinds, the marketplace, the bookstores, the Galleria Umberto--the scenes that our guide selects to describe for us all characterize the fullness of life, the ability to achieve unity in the midst of diversity.

Slowly, happily, he learns Italian. The process is not frustrating, but health-giving, for it enables human beings to understand one another. Again and again, throughout his long description of this process, Burns's enthusiasm and sincerity help us to believe, more generally, in the ability for us to live in peace with one another. The

Neapolitan dialect, "Italian chewed to shreds in the mouth of a hungry man" is as "raw as tenement living, as mercurial as a thief to your face, as tender as the flesh on the breast" (210). For "Neapolitan dialect isn't ornamental. Its endings have been amputated just as Neapolitan living pares to the heart and hardness of life." Even the language, in our narrator's eyes, represents Life itself.

Is it the women and girls of Naples--that "stood for all the women and girls of the world" (211)? Or is it the children that endear him to Naples? There is something about these "scugnizzi," about their honest thievery and lust for life that reaches his heart. Was it the uneasiness of being stranded on high ground, up the endless flights of stairs that lead into the Vomero but from which one could view the inner workings of Italian families, "like walking into a cellar of smells and secret life" (213)? Or was it Naples at midnight, with the stars over a silent Vesuvius and the landing craft rocking "like ducks" in the bay (214)?

--Napoli?... I've had it...or it's having me.... (214).

As "Giulia," The Gallery's seventh Portrait, illustrates, it is possible for one to choose optimism, even in the midst of Italy's sorrow and destruction. While her brother Gennaro steals sometimes, so that their family can eat, and despite her best friend Wilma's decision to sleep with the man she loves, Giulia refuses to move away from the morals she was brought up to believe in. At the end of her Portrait, and her courtship by the handsome American captain, Giulia faces an agonizing decision. She can wait for his return from combat to be married,

but that decision might mean losing him forever. She can cling to her beliefs, but must thereby risk spending a lifetime of regret over the loss of true love. Yet Giulia's "whole life" has been conducted against the odds that bad things can happen to good people. She cannot be false to herself.

Laura Coltelli's view on this subject is instructive. She agrees that Giulia "possesses an extraordinary moral coherence." But Coltelli seems, almost, to condemn Giulia's rigidity: "She will not lower herself to any compromise, even if at times, not merely supported by will power, it seems instead that she doesn't want to escape from a kind of game with inflexible rules" (68).¹⁴ Indeed, at the Portrait's conclusion, Giulia thinks, after speaking her mind to Her Captain, that "she'd gladly pass with him one night in which all their love was rolled up into one knot. But against this, something merciless and logical in her saw the possibility of a lifetime of bitterness and loneliness and aridity" (The Gallery 258). Could it be that Giulia might indeed face this awful prospect precisely because she has passed up the opportunity to live life fully--accepting the good with the bad, learning to adapt as well as has the G.I. narrator? Coltelli's observation makes it clear that the ending of this Portrait is ambiguous.

There are moments, too, in this Portrait, as Coltelli has also noted, where Burns seems to slip into sentimentality. Here is my translation of Coltelli's discussion of this point:

In describing a half-destroyed and starving city, with all the human miseries that could be found concentrated there, it would have been easy to indulge in sentimentality. In the book by Burns this takes place only rarely. Consider, for example, the pages that he dedicates to the children of Naples,

certainly a fit subject for arousing a rhetorical, pietistic participation . . .

Certainly, though, Burns is not always this alert and temperate. In the 'Portrait' of Giulia, the reactions of the young woman in certain scenes are rendered with a somewhat melodramatic tone and that damages the authenticity of the character (Coltelli 70-71).¹⁵

Coltelli's criticisms may be explained, perhaps, as Burns's way of reinforcing an intentional ambiguity. The scene where Wilma first meets Giulia's fiancé, for example, is written in this manner, for the sudden elbow in Wilma's thigh contrasts too starkly with Giulia's "curtsy of humility and joy" (249).

Yet most readers have taken "Giulia" to be a simple love story, perhaps sentimental, but nonetheless rewarding. Her optimism and patience, refusing to steal like Gennaro, had been rewarded--hadn't they?--by her obtaining a decent job at the Officers' Club of the Peninsular Base Section in Naples. Now, in contrast to her friend Wilma, who sleeps freely with the G.I.'s, she has been rewarded by the truer love of her Captain because she continues, despite her baser inclinations, to uphold the traditional values of love, sincerity, trust, fidelity. In the midst of adversity, depravity, and despair, Giulia waits like a beacon of truth for her love to be fulfilled. No one can say what fate holds in store for any one of us.

The seventh Promenade, an early version of which Harper's Magazine printed in May 1947 to promote sales of The Gallery, is where Burns placed most of his direct criticisms of American activities in Italy. The narrator remembers that his heart had broken in Naples "not over a girl or a thing, but over an idea" (259). The opening paragraph announces the Promenade's theme: the American belief in freedom is not a

holy thing, exempting that country from error. Instead, "I found out that America was a country just like any other, except that she had more material wealth and more advanced plumbing." An unflinching condemnation of willful ignorance and irresponsibility, the Promenade illustrates carefully and convincingly that the lives of the Neapolitans in the midst of war could teach the American liberators something.

The G.I.'s wisdom, in combination with his own love of the virtues of America and his honesty, gently guides the reader toward an acknowledgment that there is some inequity between the riches of the United States and the poverty of Italy. There is shame in the detailing of offenses against humanity, when American soldiers sold clothes, cigarettes, food to the Italians in Naples. The misuse of the Neapolitan women, too, is a kind of rape that the narrator finds it difficult to excuse. "Yes," he says, "I remember that being at war with the Italians was taken as a license for Americans to defecate all over them" (262). The starkness of these confessions, realizations, leads the narrator to admit that a "strictly American point of view" would not offer either peace or solution to all of the world's problems (263). It would be necessary to become a "citizen of the world."

Brigid Brophy has tried to explain how it was that Burns could develop a double perspective. The "psychological theme" of The Gallery, according to Brigid Brophy, is "the agony of a personality obliged to choose between two systems of reality" (193). Here in this seventh Promenade the agony of such a choice, parallel to that which Giulia found herself confronted, is most clear. Brophy hypothesizes that the sensation of unreality Burns felt in Italy resulted partly from an

acute, perhaps war-intensified, "traveller's trauma." She further believes that "Burns was shocked by Italy . . . but his imagination made him, by sympathetic adoption, an Italian, and he was then shocked by America" (195-196). This explanation is compelling, for as Coltelli has observed, Burns's portraits of characters like Gennaro are certainly as harsh on the Neapolitans as the comments in this Promenade are on the Americans.

Yet the Italians in Naples taught the narrator of this Promenade, despite his new knowledge of the imperfections in America, "how good most human beings are if they have enough to eat and are free from imminent annihilation" (263). The bulk of the Promenade, and from this point forward, he devotes to a cataloguing of the beauties of life that he had relearned from seeing Naples: "In the middle of the war, in August, 1944," he says, "with my heart broken for an ideal, I touched the beach of heaven in Naples. At moments" (264).

Like the last Promenade, this one is structured and styled with the coherence of an essay, ending with an ellipsis that leads into the next Portrait. Once again, the children and the women of Naples predominate. The narrator presents in more detail the complicated love, fierce and sentimental, devoted and lusty, that he learned in Naples. One at a time, he presents some of the Neapolitan girls he remembers, citing their various individual fates, their different relationships with the American G.I.'s.

At last, despite everything that might have gone wrong in these relationships, between both nations and individuals, the narrator can express a feeling of wholeness. For all of the red tape, the fears about

venereal disease, the anxiety over the results of the war, the need to find something good in the wreckage, there was still

a certain unity in the bay, in the August moon over Vesuvius. Then humanity fell away from me like the rind of an orange, and I was something much more and much less than myself.... (The Gallery 268).

The next two portraits, "Queen Penicillin" and "Moe," like "Giulia," concern three individual attempts to find love and meaning in life. Yet the last two Portraits in The Gallery, in contrast to the optimism built up by the preceding sections of the book, end harshly. Frederick R. Karl's analysis of the curvature in the structure of The Gallery is instructive:

The rising arch of the book comes with the episode called "Giulia," the seventh Portrait. . . . The Promenades surrounding this Portrait are both positive elements, in that the narrator tries to find a meaningful existence in Naples despite the general whoredom of the city. . . . At this stage . . . the unity of Portraits and Promenades is accomplished--more by tone, of course, than by content or ideology. There is no equation between one element and the other, but the attempt by the narrator to discover individual meaning beneath the values of a war society informs all the commentaries in the Promenades, and that attempt--halting, sometimes sentimentalized, sometimes misjudged--nevertheless serves as a cohesive force (100).

Here, in the last three Portraits, then, we find a renewed concentration on individuals occurring there, in contrast to the larger questions about society that the central Portraits had asked. Yet there is a countering of the positive elements in "Giulia" and in the "Naples" Promenades, which are set against the darker realities witnessed in the book's final two Portraits.

"Queen Penicillin" is undoubtedly the most pessimistic of Burns's Portraits. This eighth Portrait takes the reader through a scarifying living hell that one unfortunate and nameless G.I. endured during the earliest days of penicillin, a drug which made its unglamorous but welcome debut in the treatment of syphilis and gonorrhea in American Army camps overseas. The protagonist, betrayed by the Italian Marisa--whom he had loved in several different senses--torments himself nearly as much as do the taunts of the staff officers and the actual, painful shots, administered around the clock, every three hours, for seven and one-half days. The reader reads on, however, in horror, finally emerging into the catharsis of the final Promenade. The story needs to be experienced only once for an indelible impression to be made,

Throughout the story, overtones of perversion and images of death intensify the emotions felt by the nameless G.I. There remains, always, the suggestion he receives early on from the "sergeant with gentian-blue eyes" that it might be better to "stay away from women" (281). There, surrounded in a barbed-wire enclosure, humiliated daily, in need of sleep and tormented over his scarred flesh and psyche, the protagonist of this Portrait is tempted to yield to the sergeant's overtures. The first day of his treatment, looking up to see the sergeant blocking his passage, "that open neck reminded him, with a jump of memory, of Marisa's throat, glistening and tight in its cords after he'd kissed it" (282). In the latrine are tin sinks and cans stuffed with bloody gauze (283).

The G.I.'s life becomes an endless series of three-hour spells, relieved in monotony only by the painful shot that punctuated another part

of his anatomy and marked the beginning of another in the almost unbearable progression. Finally, he decides to ask the gentian-eyed sergeant for an ampoule of penicillin, promising not to sell it for the high price it would earn on the black market. In a gesture of friendship, the sergeant takes the unusual risk. Breaking several regulations, he asks the G.I. to attend the San Carlo with him, and is accepted. In Naples again, on the day of his release, the G.I. goes to the Galleria Umberto:

Though it was noon he seemed to see Marisa standing there with her arms out to him. So he took the ampoule of penicillin out of his pocket and hurled it against the wall where her ghost flickered. The glass smashed; the yellow liquid ran like bright molasses to the pavement (297).

Thereby, he exorcises his ghost, acknowledging at last the fullness of Marisa's deceit. Whether he will say farewell to heterosexual love, as the sergeant had recommended, we cannot know.

Now we have, at last, in the narrator's final Promenade, his clearest exposition yet: "I remember that in Naples of August, 1944, I came again to realities I'd all but forgotten. There are three of them: tears, art, and love" (298). This Promenade is the most highly structured of them all, as might be expected, for the opening sentence, operating as a thesis statement, gives way at once to a discussion of these concepts, in the order of their introduction. Speculative, quiet, humanitarian--the essay is surely one of the finest of the Promenades, explaining, more precisely than any other single piece, why Burns--and our G.I. tour guide--chooses to "remember the Gallery in Naples, Italy. ..." (311). By now Burns and his narrator are finally one, it seems

fair to say, having come at one another as obliquely as the Promenades have approached the Portraits in The Gallery.

Tears are important because they bring together the opposites of young and old, of grief and laughter. If they flow from the heart, they can express the life blood within. Art, in the broadest sense, involves teaching, and the Neapolitan artists had taught this lesson: never to warp one's truth "into what the artist thinks may or should be the truth" (302). If it were truly art--whether music or poetry, painting or architecture--it would be "an act of life and love, with some of the violence inherent in each."

Love is saved until last in this Promenade, because the lessons are complicated and because they connect all humanity. In the end, "the Neapolitans taught us that love's as necessary as eating and excreting" (305). In all of its various forms and stages, love could save Americans from our Puritanical and advertising minds, if only we could learn to "assimilate our minorities, to control vested interests, to distinguish, between talent and ballyhoo, to understand the world in which we live" (309). What is needed is a sharing, between individuals across the globe, enough to allow each of us to say "I am a human being, a citizen of the world" (309). For, he concludes, "all that matters in the twentieth century is that millions of people must never again be thrust out of life through no fault of their own" (310).

At the end of this Promenade, for the first time, someone speaks directly to the narrator, calling him by Burns's own given name, "John." Then, the narrator tells us that "in the twenty-eighth year of my life I learned that I too must die" (311). And we remember that Burns himself

was 28 in Naples in August 1944. Can it really be, we wonder, that here he finally reveals himself to us, ready to accept whatever judgment we see fit to pass upon him and his work?

The Gallery is nearly finished. All that remains is the final Portrait--of Moe, the gentle Jewish second lieutenant, former cab driver, from Brooklyn. His story is heart-rending too. Somehow, Moe is aware that death is near, and he is ready to accept that aspect of life as fully as any other. Never arrogant, hard, nor self-pitying because of his fate or his scars, Moe is kind to strangers, even those who want to use him poorly, and he is at utter peace with himself and his God. Having met Maria Rocco at the PX earlier in the day, he takes her on a romantic drive along Via Carracciolo, which overlooks the Bay on the south, passing by the famous Naples Aquarium on the north. Moe loves Maria, as he loves everyone, with a calm and selfless acceptance. Because she is reassured, even changed, by his loving presence, his inner light, we forget that they hardly know one another. It does not matter in the least that she is a prostitute and that he is just another "joe."

There is a break in the text, for Moe must return to battle, on the line near Florence. We are not sure exactly when he arrives at the farmhouse of Signora Spadini with his men, who are pushing carefully along the Tuscany countryside, making certain that the Germans have evacuated the land. Thirsty, Moe requests wine for his troops and, welcomed by the Signora, he enters her home. As she brings in a decanter of wine, the house is overtaken by Germans, perhaps from within, and Moe meets his death--face to face with his assassin:

For a moment an agony plucked at his brain. He sensed a longing and a regret such as he could never have imagined. But then he saw his mother and Maria Rocco, and he knew he'd come a long long way. It wasn't really so long. But it was farther than most. So Moe smiled back at the German, and he felt his face dropping toward the floor (341).

Moe's death comes unexpectedly, as does this sudden intrusion of a Nazi soldier into The Gallery, reminding us again, graphically, of the tragedy of war. Yet Moe accepts his death peacefully, as he had lived out his last days in Naples. Perhaps it was enough, he had thought, to have come this far. And for us, and Burns, and the other characters in the Gallery, perhaps it is enough for us too. For, as we are told in the "Exit," our tour having come to an end

They were all in the Galleria Umberto in August, 1944. They were all in Naples, where something in them got shaken up. They'd never be the same again--either dead or changed somehow. And these people who became living portraits in this Gallery were synecdoches for most of the people anywhere in the world. . . . For they were dots in a circle that never stops (342).

Notes to Chapter VI

¹ This presentation copy is still in the private collection of Beulah Wescott Hagen, of St. Louis, who has been gracious in allowing me to make a photocopy of this, the original text of The Gallery.

² David MacMackin compiled an inventory of the recordings that Burns owned then and that are now part of David MacMackin's own private collection. That inventory, now in the private collection of Mark T. Bassett, is the source of this information.

³ Professor Laura Coltelli of the University of Pisa, in a valuable essay entitled "L'Italia nel romanzo di guerra americano" ["Italy in the American War Novel"], has commented wisely upon this inevitable progression through the "Promenades":

"vi è un crescendo di intensità man mano che dall'Africa Settentrionale ci si avvicina all'Italia; la registrazione stessa delle diverse impressioni nei capitoli che precedono l'arrivo alla città partenopea è meno varia e più affrettata, i personaggi africani sono come sfuocati rispetto ai napoletani che pure, in gran parte, appaiono come massa. Napoli nel suo insieme è l'unica ispiratrice di quest'opera . . ." (62).

Here follows my translation of Coltelli's observations:

"There is a crescendo of intensity that builds, little by little, as we move across North Africa and approach Italy; even the registration of different impressions in the capital cities before arrival in the Neapolitan city is less varied and more hasty, the African characters seeming out of focus in relation to the Neapolitans, who, though, for the most part, appear in one body. Naples as a whole is the one Muse of this work . . ."

⁴ Jerome D. Ross, the sensitive book reviewer for the New York Herald Tribune, has noted that "each portrait stands by itself, and yet [Burns] has shown such wide and careful selectivity that, taken together, his people present an infinite variety. . . . Each portrait serves as a facet emphasizing its own wartime problem or behavior pattern."

⁵ Here is my translation of this passage: "the protagonists of the 'Portraits,' although we may first encounter them elsewhere, nevertheless have their more significant life experiences in Naples."

⁶ Burns saw Andrea Chénier performed several times, with Maria Pedrini as Maddalena and Benjamin Gigli as Chénier, at the San Carlo, during the summer of 1945. In a letter to Beulah Wescott Hagen, of 8 June 1945, ten days before beginning The Gallery, he says, "G's [Giordano's] style is a combination of Puccini, Moussorgsky, and tricks that can be only his own, plus some of the fruitiest orchestration till Mother Kostelanetz." References to this opera occur, sporadically, in Burns's correspondence. Before long, Burns would come across Giordano briefly in Milan's Galleria, where "together we wept over Italy for half an hour" (JHB to HH, 27 December 1945). Notice the reference, above, to Moussorgsky.

⁷ In a letter to Beulah Wescott Hagen, dated 9 August 1945, Burns says, "I've been reading too much Leopardi and Euripides."

⁸ Coltelli's text reads as follows:

Burns sente a Napoli tutta la vacuità del modo di vivere americano, la fondamentale mancanza di amore, l'assopimento morale e spirituale creato dal benessere. Afferma che gli americani sorridevano persino troppo, di un sorriso vuoto e senza significato. Osserva con profonda amarezza i suoi commilitoni arricchirsi con il traffico dei generi alimentari, vede le donne italiane ingannate con l'illusione di un matrimonio, è testimone di mille episodi di violenza materiale e spirituale cui furono oggetto i napoletani ad opera dei loro liberatori. Afferma con grande coraggio e onestà che spesso sentì vergogna di essere americano: "I remember the crimes we committed against the Italians, as I watched them in Naples. . . . It seemed to me like the swindle of all humanity, and I wondered if perhaps we weren't all lost together." Queste critiche, dettate, sì da un profondo disgusto per ciò di cui Burns stesso era testimone, avrebbero forse dovuto essere dirette non contro un singolo esercito, bensì contro l'orrore della guerra in sé.

⁹ Here is Coltelli's Italian text:

Il nostro parere è che, nonostante certe deformazioni polemiche o sentimentali, Burns abbia saputo "capire" l'Italia del 1944, accostandovisi con un impegno di verità attestato anche dal fatto che la sua simpatia per il nostro paese non gli impedisce di scrivere alcune pagine poco lusinghiere per noi: basti pensare a quell'istintiva avidità di guadagno, a quella naturale abilità per il furto per cui i ladri di Napoli sarebbero stati capaci di rubare "the apple of my eye" se solo avessero potuto venderle. Burns non è indulgente, ma si astiene da ipocriti moralismi. Resta convinto che i vinti non avevano niente da imparare dai vincitori. Abbiamo già detto

che il suo giudizio sugli americani forse avrebbe dovuto essere più meditato. Ma vorremmo sottolineare anche il fatto che la sua critica così dura e circostanziata gli fa onore proprio in quanto cittadino americano.

¹⁰ In 1947, Aldridge published an article in Harper's Magazine, entitled "The New Generation of Writers: With Some Reflections on the Older Ones." Within two years, he had changed his opinion of Burns and his contemporaries enough to begin taking his infamous stance that the American novelists following World War II had "no values" (see his "America's Young Novelists: Uneasy Inheritors of a Revolution"), a position pushed most forcefully in After the Lost Generation. The preface of that book explained his reversal of opinion as due to the feeling among him and his cultivated friends that they had been betrayed by their generation of novelists, surely the single most questionable motive ever offered to justify a volume of literary and cultural criticism. In his more recent 1983 volume, The American Novel and the Way We Live Now, Aldridge reveals little change of mind, but a definite deterioration in style, as the following obscure sentence indicates: "For those of us who have worked closely with contemporary fiction and may even be numbered among its more obsessive diagnosticians, an explanation for this rather curious development [that the "state" of the novel is no longer much discussed by critics] comes easily to mind, although a convincing explanation of the explanation may be enormously difficult to discover" (2).

¹¹ The original text reads as follows: "I personaggi dei 'Portraits' per quanto frustrante e disilluso sia il loro punto di partenza, riescono comunque a conoscere o intravedere la possibilità di un cambiamento. E' già questa una conquista."

¹² English translation: "The characters of the 'Portraits,' however frustrated and disillusioned their starting points, succeed in recognizing or catching a glimpse of the possibility of change. Even this is already a victory."

¹³ Following is the original passage of Coltelli's that I have translated here from Italian into English:

Momma avverte la precarietà della figura di gran dama che si è costruita. Nonostante i guanti bianchi, il cappello con l'uccello impagliato, è felice solo per tre ore al giorno, durante il tempo cioè di apertura del suo bar, mentre seduta dietro al registratore di cassa, osserva ciò che avviene nel locale. Solo così riesce a soddisfare, anche se in maniera fittizia, le sue frustrazioni di donna insoddisfatta e di madre mancata, riversando il suo amore su una schiera eterogenea di omosessuali che frequentano il bar: "Her crowd had something that other groups hadn't. Momma's boys had an awareness of having been born alone and sequestered by some

deep difference from other men. For this she loved them. And Momma knew something of those four freedoms that Allies were forever preaching. She believed that a minority should be let alone...." Nella sua identificazione con una Madre quasi mitica che abbraccia tutti i suoi figli e che tutti comprende, arriva persino a dirci che "a Momma mustn't be skinny either."

14 The original text, of which this is my translation, follows: Giulia "possiede una grande coerenza morale. Essa non vuole scendere a nessun compromesso, anche se a volte, più che sorretta da una forza, sembra invece che non voglia sottrarsi ad una sorta di giuoco dalle regole ferree."

15 Coltelli's text reads as follows: "Nella descrizione di una città semidistrutta e affamata, con tutte le miserie umane che vi si possono concentrare, sarebbe stato facile indulgere al sentimentalismo. Nel libro del Burns questo accade raramente. Si vedano per esempio le pagine che egli dedica ai bambini di Napoli, soggetto certamente adatto a suscitare una retorica partecipazione pietistica Certamente però Burns non è sempre così vigile e sobrio. Nel 'Ritratto' di Giulia, le reazioni della ragazza di fronte a certi spettacoli sono rese con un tono un po' melodrammatico e ciò nuoce alla autenticità del personaggio stesso."

Epilogue

In October 1949, then-famous novelist John Horne Burns left suddenly for Italy--unaware that he would never return to America. Planning only to winter in Milan, Burns had written for the Saturday Review an essay entitled "Drunk with Ink," which eventually appeared in print the week before Christmas. Blending humor with irony and only occasional bitterness, the essay is an odd summary of the career of the "typical" American novelist. Burns's own career so closely parallels his outline that the essay sometimes approaches confession. He writes at one point: "It's the most hideous loneliness in the world--to set down on virgin paper thousands of words that no eye but your own may ever see" (9). Four years later, Burns would feel this loneliness more keenly than ever before--after the rejection of his last novel by his publishers. Then he would die, at the age of 36--from overindulgence in alcohol and overexposure to the August sun of Livorno.

It hadn't been so long ago--had it?--that February of 1946, when, after another year in Italy, teaching elementary Italian at the G.I. University in Florence and interrogating P/W's in Milan, John Horne Burns had returned home from the War. Then he received Mr. B's "juicy offer" to resume his teaching career. Before long, there he was, back in Loomis, "pushing around the souls of adolescents. I'm well paid," he wrote to his friend Beulah Hagen, "but I'm not too happy at it as I've always considered a new England prep school as unnatural and unholy" (JHB to BWH, 29 April 1946). Something must have changed him, overseas,

for he had never seemed really "unhappy" before the war. Even so, by the end of the spring, he finished The Gallery--on 23 April 1946.

The other teachers had thought him well adjusted to civilian life--unlike those other G.I.'s who had trouble finding and holding regular jobs. In reality, however, Jack was still subject to spells of depression that he tried to hide. His dearest friends in the Loomis English faculty were gone now, Sid Eaton having taken a position at Greenough, Doug McKee going on to the American Academy in Paris. Following his own traditions, Mr. B had promoted the senior member of the Department into the position of chairman. Jack, therefore, was to serve under the guidance of Norris Ely Orchard--a man the Army had not taken into its service? That simpering Norrie, who hadn't changed at all, having slept through the War while Jack was transformed from an effete, over-educated snob into a philosophical, experienced man of the world?

Jack started to rebel, in ever more serious ways, from the regime at Loomis. In May, he bragged to his friend David MacMackin about having "entertained a Louer" in his room on campus one weekend: "We drink sherry in my room at teatime, then barge into the dining room and hold a salon at our table" (JHB to DAM, 1 May 1946). Burns's behavior was obviously more carefree, enough for a caricature of him to appear later that month in a parody issue of the Loomis newspaper, the Log:

When it was first known that Mr. Burns had decided to stay on at Loomis, we put on our Florentine shawl and hustled over to Mason Second for an exclusive interview. There in his salon we found Mr. John Horne Burns clad in a night chemise sitting on the mauve ottoman. He was by his record player (the one with the twin speakers) listening to Signora Panteleoni as Desdemona in Verdi's Othello. "Shh," he hissed, "she's just finished Piangea cantando, the Willow Song. Emilia has retired and now--(At this point the two speakers

sobbed Ave Maria piena de' grazia) she retires to her couch, Othello steals in, dagger in hand--(Here we were frightened by sombre contra-basse) and...now...he smothers her, then-oh--"

At this point he swooned away in sympathy and we had to ply him with sal volatile and gillyflower water. When he arose he brought out a hoarded supply of Bruciate Briachi and Zabaione (toasted chestnuts and egg punch) and passed it to us. He continued the interview saying, "The primary reason for my decision to stay on was that I would have an excellent opportunity to drop pearls of culture amid the uncouth element among the U.N. delegates [the parody headlines claimed that U.N. Headquarters was being moved to Loomis] and put on gala operas for the masses." With this he shut the lid of his machine and whirled off toward "La Scala" down by the barn for initial rehearsals of his first project, Il Segreto di Susanna, Suzanne's Secret, which takes place in a smoke-filled drawing room. "Il Segreto will probably shock some, but who cares," he cried as he disappeared into the fog (Loomis Log 24 May 1946: 1).

It is no wonder that a faculty wife would soon tell one of the seniors that she thought Burns to be "the most dangerous man on the faculty" (JHB to BWH, 27 January 1947).

The early reactions of Italian friends and other servicemen to The Gallery had been flattering. When he finished, Burns showed it to his family in Boston: "My sister said My God when she read it through; my mother wept all night long; and a doughfoot gave me the best reaction of all. Unarty. He said, 'Jeez, I tought I was readin just anudder war novel, and pretty soon an atomic bomb dropped on me . . .'" (JHB to HH, 5 May 1946). In his own words, all Burns needed now was to "establish myself for what I Think I Am" (Ibid.). Not knowing quite how to proceed, Burns took the first step at the end of May by delivering a copy of the book to Random House.

A day or two later, on 27 May 1946, Jack sent Beulah a carbon copy of The Gallery as a token of their friendship. The following Saturday, 1 June, he finally returned to New York for dinner at her apartment and

a visit with both Beulah and David. Here is Burns's account to Holger, still in Germany, of his arrival at 38 Sutton Place: "Cradled in my arm was a bunch of tulips and fern. When she opened the door to 4-A, my emotion was so overpowering that all I could do was thrust the flahrs at her, burbling something. . . . As usual I'd brought to bear upon the situation more emotion than was necessary" (JHB to HH, 2 June 1946). Beulah had begun to read the manuscript, and Burns was gratified to hear her "let fall several remarks" indicating that she thought he "had something there." For he had dedicated The Gallery to Beulah and to Holger and to Robert B. MacLennan, all three of whom gave Jack "more than anybody else ever has" (JHB to HH, 18 September 1945).

It turned out to be Beulah who was largely responsible for The Gallery's being published by Harper and Brothers, where she happened to work as an executive secretary. Burns wrote to her on 15 July that Random House had rejected the book, criticizing it because it was not a novel. In early August, on another trip to New York, Burns again visited Beulah, who urged him to submit the manuscript to Harper. She told him that the president of Harper, Frank S. MacGregor, recommended Helen Strauss, one of William Morris' best representatives, as a potential agent.

On 27 September 1946, Burns and Strauss agreed to work together to get The Gallery into print. Burns's only current commitment was dinner the next day with Vanguard, who had been been considering the book. The Vanguard editors wanted him to make some considerable cuts, although willing to publish the manuscript almost "as is," if he insisted. The criticisms seemed just, and Burns set to work revising, cutting, and

editing.

Meanwhile, Frank MacGregor had spoken to both Helen Strauss and Beulah about Burns and The Gallery. By means of their joint efforts, on Thursday, 3 October, Strauss was able to send MacGregor Beulah's unrevised carbon copy of the original manuscript--with a reminder that this book was "Beulah Hagen's discovery." MacGregor accepted it for publication by Harper and Brothers on 15 October, less than two weeks later, and without having seen Burns's revised version.

Burns's publisher set about at once to get production underway. So impressed were the Harper executives with their new author, possibly the World War II version of Hemingway whom so many critics had eagerly awaited, that Helen Strauss was able to work out a favorable contract, committing Harper to publishing three books by Burns. The publishers launched a simultaneous and extensive promotion and publicity campaign. By 3 November 1946, a publicity photo and a short autobiography were obtained from Burns. The plates of the book were made up by late February 1947 so that proofs could be sent--to writers who might appreciate such a book, writers like Harry Brown, Thomas Heggen, John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, and John Steinbeck. When the first words of praise arrived in late March from Harry Brown, author of A Walk in the Sun, a special meeting was called.

It was decided at Harper to postpone the publication date from 7 May until 4 June so as to have bound books with which to promote The Gallery. A booksellers' contest for the best selling letter would generate not only more ad copy but more awareness of the book in the retail trade. Large ads in Publisher's Weekly, the New York Times Book Review,

and so forth would carry the comments of Dos Passo et al., whereas riders on earlier ads would announce Harper's "important forthcoming discovery" (memo from "W.H.R." to various Harper staff, 31 March 1947). When the book at last appeared, it was an immediate bestseller, going smoothly in long-lasting reissues, and received excellent reviews in the press. Burns was elated, of course, and even more so the following year, when he was chosen for a cover story in Saturday Review as the best new war novelist of 1947 (Smith, "Thirteen Adventurers").

Burns writes in "Drunk with Ink":

With your advance check you take off on a lost week end. When you come to in Bellevue, or under an ice pack, you realize that you'll never be the same again, God help you. For you are a Published Author. You attend your publication party and are distressed when the guests pay no attention to you after the introductions. You scan the best-seller lists . . . You groan over the advertising accorded novelists whose books far outsell your own. . . . You subscribe to a clipping service and read your reviews as avidly as a hypochondriac bones up on dreadful diseases (9-10).

These reactions to popular success, with only slight changes in the chronology, were those of Burns himself.

The publication party that MacGregor threw for Jack was a disaster. Burns went on a binge, but not before making a joking comment to the young, new novelist Gore Vidal about the number of exciting, talented authors who happened to be homosexual. Vidal is the only one to have quoted the remark, in his "John Horne Burns": "He was also certain that to be a good writer it was necessary to be homosexual. When I disagreed, he named a half-dozen celebrated contemporaries. 'A Pleiad,' he roared delightedly, 'of pederasts!'" (2). Like Burns's not, to Camp Croft's Father Feeherry, about the preference of forward-thinking Catho-

tics for St. Ambrose, this new blasphemy was intended to shock and surprise as well as entertain. Vidal, always obstinately objecting to what he considers an improper use of this term, took the crack seriously, as did a number of other partygoers, and the rumor was passed around in intellectual circles that Burns's bizarre comment had been sincere.

Burns let them delude themselves. Anyway, there was reason, in those first years after WWII for gay people to feel encouraged. It was not merely their having returned, enlightened and exuberant, from overseas; back home, they were continuing their new, tenuous alliances. Soon, the earliest beginnings of the modern-day "gay liberation" movement, would be expressed in the New York City social organization, founded in 1948, the Veterans Benevolent Association (Katz 635). André Gide had won the 1947 Nobel Prize in Fiction, despite the startling revelations in his Journal! Tennessee Williams was changing Broadway with the tender drama of 1946, The Glass Menagerie, in whose fatherless household the only sane character appears to be the loner and bachelor son Tom.

There would be much support for a liberal-minded 1948 candidate for the U.S. presidency, Henry A. Wallace. In 1948, too, came Vidal's The City and the Pillar, and young Truman Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms. The next year Burns would publish Lucifer with a Book. But the optimism would already have begun to sour by 1949, after the trial of Whittaker Chambers and his accusations against Alger Hiss. Wallace had, by then, been fired by Truman, ending his political aspirations. In some ways, Senator Joe McCarthy's famed 1950 speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, was just more fuel to a growing conservative fear of Commu-

nists and "perverts" in government.

In the end, the tide turned strongly against both Vidal and Burns. Several critics, most notably John W. Aldridge, in his After the Lost Generation (1951), would turn loudly to denounce the novelists whom Burns might have thought formed a "Pleiad of Pederasts"--writers whose fiction includes homoerotic characters, such as Paul Bowles, Truman Capote, Vance Bourjaily, Gordon Merrick, Merle Miller, Gore Vidal, John Horne Burns. Who exactly did Burns name in the conversation with Vidal? Today, the memories remain veiled, confirming the depth of the scars left by Burns's joking comment--and the vicious, homophobic response of some critics--on American literature.

One can do little more than speculate, from the long list of post-war authors whom Aldridge discusses in his 1951 book. Aldridge wrote the book, he says, after experiencing a turn of heart--when he decided that the modern writers' early works expressed no values that he could live by. As Aldridge explains in the Preface, he and his friends at last discovered that their youthful, prewar exuberance had deluded them into believing their generation would be one of "discovery, transition, and revolt."

Despite the unpleasant incident with Gore Vidal and Burns's disappearance from Frank MacGregor's party on a kind of "lost week end," Jack remained in the limelight. There was, still, some truth to Vidal's description of him as "a difficult man" ("John Horne Burns" 2). He made several radio appearances, for example, but somehow failed to arrive for an interview with Mary Margaret McBride, whose influential talk show might have greatly enhanced sales of The Gallery. At Loomis, he became

more and more dissatisfied.

There were several problems at Loomis, contributing to a pessimism that he described in January 1948 to Beulah: "More and more I can account for the accumulated poison of the Puritan Fathers: the shadow of some inhuman vulture constantly spreads his wings over the landscape here and blights all life below" (JHB to BWH, 27 January 1947). He loved teaching, but was annoyed by the clerical work, the dormitory supervision, and the New England prep school tendency to keep the boys too busy to start thinking about anything (JHB to BWH, 18 October 1946). He was disgusted that the choir and Drama Department were continually expected to mount presentations they could not adequately perform. He did not enjoy substituting at Chaffee, the girls' school: "These Little Women are bobbysoxers or virgins with nobility obsessions. They copy one another's papers, weep at low grades, and occasionally are smitten with me. But it is all rather Angora, with the claw showing under the fur" (JHB to BWH, 18 October 1946). Then he was snubbed by a faculty wife, who could see that he was homosexual and told him so, face to face, making him so angry that he turned silently away and never again attended her coffees (Jane Fowles Finley, interview with MTB, 13 July 1981).

Worst of all were the events of summer 1947. By May, Windsor's Congregationalist pastor, the Rev. Joseph Hooker Twitchell, had been appointed chaplain to Loomis. Burns called this decision "the last touch" in the school's "downhill" slide: "It has been decided," he wrote Henry Breul, "that we can pump The Christian Way of Life into the school by hiring an old bleating fool to blather over the Bible several times weekly. Is there perhaps in America some tremendous guilt-sense

which will lead us to the worst fascism yet seen?" (JHB to Henry Hurd Breul, 10 May 1947, MTB). Then came MacGregor's publication party for Burns. After his recovery from the alcohol, Burns received a letter from his agent, Helen Strauss, declining the revision of Learn Valour, Child, and encouraging him to begin a new novel.

At school, Burns felt himself neglected, overshadowed primarily by Nathaniel Horton Batchelder's celebration of his thirty-fifth anniversary as headmaster. The greater importance of this event to the people of Loomis, Windsor, and Hartford soon came harshly home to Jack, despite the glowing reviews his book had begun to receive across the nation. On Sunday, 8 June 1947, the full page of the Hartford Courant's Magazine was devoted to a story about Batchelder (see Hallas), while the most hostile review of Burns's The Gallery ever to appear in print was located several pages further into the magazine (see Keena). After a year of asking the alumni for money to improve salaries, Mr. B had talked the Board of Trustees into endowing a chair with \$100,000 of an estate left to the school by one of the Loomis family, and he gave Norrie Orchard what he referred to as a "richly deserved honor" (see "New Endowed Instructorship," Loomis Alumni Bulletin [ed. Norris E. Orchard] Summer 1947: 3).

And then Evelyn Beatrice Longman Batchelder finished the plaster cast of "what is probably her greatest work of art," a little larger than life-sized bronze sculpture, Victory of Mercy. Into this work, according to the Hartford Times, she had "poured not only a love for her art, but a heart-felt conviction" (Stewart). Located, even today, in front of her studio at Loomis, the sculpture expresses the love she had

come to feel for the boys of the school, and her sense of loss when 44 of them, and one master, Martin Harold Johnson, died in combat. Journalist Ellery Stewart pointed out that, despite her long career, until she conceived 'Victory of Mercy' her heart had never been really touched." "Ironical," Burns would have thought about this comment, seething.

He began to "brood" over plans for the next novel, Lucifer with a Book, and by the middle of July, was nearly ready to begin writing it (JHB to BWH, 10 July 1947). Apparently staying up late at night to write after the summer's few boys had gone to sleep, Jack was drinking one night and stayed up until about three a.m. in his room across from the Fowles' house. Chain-smoking until he went to sleep, Jack seems to have left a cigarette still partly lit, which smoldered until his mattress caught fire and the Fire Department had to be summoned. Jane Fowles Finley recalls watching him walk about, unconcerned and distracted, on his veranda, while they came and put out the fire in his room on that sultry 10 August 1947 (Jane Finley Fowles, interview with MTB, 13 July 1981).

By 23 October, he had nearly finished Lucifer with a Book, which he told Harper Magazine editor Jack Fischer was "rather like Congreve shot through with warmth" (JHB to Jack Fischer, 23 October 1947, HBC). The fall duties at Loomis gradually took more and more time, so writing continued to be postponed, leaving him to finish the book during Christmas vacation. Again, he reported to Jack Fischer that the book was "three inches from completion," and he elaborated on his problems at school, claiming that Mr. B was "in that last stage of mental tabes dorsalis in

which he distrusts all his faculty and sides with the students. He piles more and more works on us . . . This is my last year here" (JHB to Jack Fischer, 11 December 1947, HBA).

Burns revealed the first hints about his new novel to Paul F. Kneeland, reporter for the Boston Globe. The story appeared on Friday, 11 December 1947, and that Monday afternoon, Burns was called in for a meeting with the headmaster. Mr. B was justly upset that Jack had told a reporter about his unhappiness at the school. Kneeland had quoted Burns as saying, "I am now almost immune to the shrieks and guerrilla warfare of nurse-maiding other people's children." Furthermore, Burns had used language that Mr. B found offensive, calling Thomas Wolfe a vendor of "verbal diarrhea." What happened next, no one really knows. We have only the cryptic and biased account in this passage from a letter Jack wrote to Frank MacGregor:

[That afternoon] the headmaster of the Loomis School dealt me what I considered the meanest cut of my life; so I lost my temper and walked out on the spot. It's just as well, because I was knocking myself out there - to no end for what I really want to do with my life (JHB to FSM, 31 December 1947).

We can be sure that Mr. B stated plainly his opinion of Burns's role at Loomis, no doubt insisting that Jack commit himself to teaching and being a good role model for the boys, even if that meant Loomis would take precedence over Jack's career as a writer. A mirror-image of the incident occurs between Guy Hudson and Mr. Pilkey in Lucifer with a Book (292-297), where the fictional headmaster demands that the veteran history teacher wear his Army uniform and conduct military drill in order to protect his future as a teacher. For the content of his fic-

tional account, Burns relied upon the fact that, at Loomis, during the War, Mr. Batchelder had indeed formed a quasi-military unit of boys who, repeating the younger school's response to World War I, "drilled, paraded and learned military fundamentals" (Fowles 88). They must have agreed, that afternoon, that the 1947-48 school year would be Jack's last.

There is no question but that Jack felt he had been deeply misunderstood and seriously injured by Mr. B's attitude. He reacted by planning and carrying out a special revenge on the school. Henry C. White, grandson of the well-respected painter of the same name, was approached at once by Mr. Burns, who gave him the score for the upcoming Christmas program, telling him to "practice" (Henry C. White, interview with MTB, 24 July 1981). On the evening of the special program in the chapel, Jack played at the 5 p.m. service, acting as if nothing were wrong. When the chorus began assembling for the more crowded 7 p.m. service, the room filling with parents, students, faculty, staff, Burns was nowhere to be found (Jane Fowles Finley, interview with MTB, 13 July 1981). He had, by that hour, already left for Boston. The burly coach Ralph Erickson, driving into campus from Windsor to find Jack walking along Batchelder Road carrying a suitcase, had provided him a ride into town to catch a train for Boston (Barbara Erickson, interview with MTB, 15 July 1981).

The Gallery was still earning him royalties the next May, when he revisited under commission from Holiday Magazine the Mediterranean capital cities described in his first book. Feeling a renewed sense of his worth over the publication of a British edition of The Gallery in July

1948, Burns, that month, in a tour of American writers' conferences, delivered an iconoclastic speech entitled "The Creative Writer in the 20th Century," which he presented to Bread Loaf (at Middlebury College), the Indiana University Writers Conference, and the Cummington [Massachusetts] School of Art.

In his talk, Burns blasted a number of literary giants, including James, Joyce, Pound, Eliot, and Kafka, as not writing realistically or of retreating from American life as a subject matter demanding discussion. He wanted to explain how he felt as a "writer who is both honest and sensitive [and] living in a period unsurpassed in horror and precariousness" (37). He wanted to explain that an artist who works with "living language" in a style called "writing" must ignore the critics and schools who attempt to bring him "into line" (36, 38).

Yet, while many of his contemporaries--Vidal, Williams, Capote, Prokosch, and others--were enjoying a "golden year" in Italy (see Vidal, "Some Memories"), Burns stood alone before the podium at Bread Loaf and rejoiced: "No, one of the few things to be grateful for in 1948 is that this time there will be little expatriation by American writers" (42). Burns's ideas about expatriation and the contemporary writer, and his comments about ignoring the "organized and vocal minority" of critics were influenced by an essay that had recently appeared in Harper's Magazine: John W. Aldridge's first published critical article, "The New Generation of Writers" (1947). Ironically, within the next three years, Aldridge's ideas would evolve into the reactionary study After the Lost Generation (1951), which includes a denunciation of Burns's Lucifer with a Book (1949).

Lucifer with a Book, which had been submitted to Harper via Helen Strauss in March, was published in April 1949. The novel's venomous attack on private education and on America in general, and its frank sexuality too, disturbed critics and reading public alike. Of Loomis, the temperate school historian would say, "Reactions to the book were varied:--it merely strengthened the opinions of those who disliked the school and headmaster; it irritated others who knew the real worth of Mr. Batchelder; it interested the faculty more than it incensed them; and as for Mr. Batchelder,--to all outward appearances--he read it and dismissed it from his thoughts" (Fowles 96). The boys of Loomis were not prevented from publishing an article at that time entitled "Norris Ely Orchard Shuns Log Reporter" (8 April 1949: 1, 4). A melodramatic account of a failed attempt to interview "a black and sinister looking figure," this article probably wounded Norrie as much as Burns's book had. Meanwhile, we doubt that Mr. B's soul was quite so placid as his unruffled exterior.

Gradually, Burns became dissatisfied with the decadent lifestyle that his royalties and the Holiday Magazine income had allowed him in a Boston West End apartment, among the lower-class Italians and other ethnic Americans. He fretted for months over the turn-around in his career, continually asking himself whether the criticisms were just. Finally, in October, he failed to appear at a lecture scheduled by the Andover Public Library in his Massachusetts home town. The various pressures led him to decide on a winter in Milan.

Burns's last few years were even more dismal. He took too long in revising and rewriting his third novel, a dissection of the type of bo-

hemian lifestyle he had led in Boston--A Cry of Children (1952), a book that was soundly dismissed by most critics when it was published, despite a few favorable reviews. Brendan Gill's criticism of the book was the most hateful, and the New Yorker showed little mercy either in wielding such an ax. In a review of Hemingway's Pulitzer-Prize-winning The Old Man and the Sea, Gill bloodied the heads of both Burns and his publisher, saying that the novel "should win a place for itself among the worst written" of the year. "In publishing this book, Harper & Brothers show distressingly little respect for the author, for writing, or for themselves" (116).

All winter of 1952 Burns slaved over another book in a cold and musty palazzo outside Florence, near the estate of art historian Bernard Berenson, where Jack lived with his beloved friend, the veterinarian Vittorio Alessandro ("Sandro") Nencini. His income dwindling, his reputation slipping into ruin, Burns made one last effort to redeem himself through writing a fourth novel, now depicting the attempts to discover love of an American woman and an Italian man. The Stranger's Guise was rejected by both publishers; it has never been set in type.

After receiving the lengthy criticisms offered him by David Farrer of London's Secker & Warburg, Jack retired with Sandro to the beach of Livorno, where he began, again, to revise. There he spent much of his time writing, staring into the sea, and drinking Italian brandy in the hot August sun. Within weeks, the last novel two-thirds revised, he collapsed there, and died the next morning, in the Cecina home of the Nencini family, according to the doctor's report, of a cerebral hemorrhage.

In "Drunk with Ink," Burns had written about the new novelist: "Perhaps you'll be prudent, and wait before publishing your second. It's possible to repeat that baptism of print too early--and again too late. . . . Perhaps you may sweat three times as much in the writing of the second as you did with your first. It will avail you nothing. Second novels are doomed from their conception" (10). These words of advice to the aspiring novelist, learned during only four bitter years of experience, were of course formulated too late for Burns himself to profit from them.

Burns's criticisms of American society--our government, our schools, our literature, our way of life--would be more acceptable to readers were they to appear for the first time today. Who knows what he would have become, had circumstance not caused his presence in American literary history to be eclipsed? He might have led the writers of his generation in any number of ways--as an articulate but controversial personality on the order of Norman Mailer or Gore Vidal; as innovator of a "nonfiction novel" with Capote and others; as an essayist, a versatile craftsman writing novels with widely varying effects and styles, a poet using a "living" American language as his vernacular; as a critic of American life and institutions, but one who nevertheless believes in recapturing and remolding for the future the values of our humanistic heritage.

Had Harper & Brothers not promoted him in the manner in which they did, building him up for the most unrealistic expectations, perhaps The Gallery, the only American fiction that might be entitled to be called a masterpiece of World War II, would be better remembered today. Had

Burns been more temperate, more patient, with himself and with the shortcomings he detected in others, perhaps he would not have had such trouble over his second novel. Had the American literary establishment been less concerned about self-serving interests and fulfilling their own childish expectations, more willing to learn from the new writers than to attack them over some false perception about the "death" of the novel . . . But then the story would have not have been Burns's. We would not have America's history, but simply a sentimental fiction. Yet surely he would approve Brigid Brophy's suggested epitaph--not unlike the one a young Keats composed for his own headstone: "May he not be one whose name was writ in water" (Brophy 202).

List of Abbreviations

BDF	Bryan David Farrer
BWH	Beulah ("Mrs. Moe") Wescott Hagen
CBE	Cathleen Burns Elmer
<u>Cry</u>	<u>A Cry of Children</u> (1952)
DAM	David Alison MacMackin
FJW	Fredric J. Warburg
FSM	Frank S. MacGregor
<u>Gallery</u>	<u>The Gallery</u> (1947)
HBC	Harper and Brothers Collection, Princeton University
HH	Holger ("Moe") Hagen
JAE	Jessie Adkins Eaton
JF	John ("Jack") Fischer
JHB	John Horne Burns
KBL	Katherine Brush Memorial Library, Loomis School
<u>Lucifer</u>	<u>Lucifer with a Book</u> (1949)
MTB	Mark Travis Bassett
RBM	Robert B. MacLennan
RH	Ramona Herdman
SLE	Sidney Lovett Eaton
SMB	Simon ("Si") Michael Bessie
SWA	Secker and Warburg Archives, University of Reading
TSB	Thomas S. Brush

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This bibliography serves two purposes. First of all, it provides complete citations for items referred to within the text of the biography. Second, because the work on Burns is scarce and difficult to locate, much of it not yet translated from the original Italian (and therefore having had a negligible impact upon American critical opinion), I have also included here a compendium of sources not specifically cited in my text, but which may be of use to future scholars and critics of Burns.

Generally, I have avoided naming again in this bibliography the many friends, colleagues, and students of John Horne Burns who have been gracious enough to allow me an interview and whom I thank in my acknowledgments. Neither have I listed here the hundreds of letters that Burns wrote to them. Scholars may want to know, however, that the principal private collections of Burns's correspondence are those of Mrs. Cathleen Burns Elmer, of Andover, Massachusetts; David Alison MacMackin, of New York; Beulah Wescott Hagen, of St. Louis; and Holger Hagen, of Munich. The correspondence with Harper is housed as the Harper and Brothers Archives at Princeton University; that with Secker and Warburg is now in the library of the University of Reading, England.

In addition, readers should know that I have made no attempt to incorporate the numerous articles I gleaned from the student newspaper of the Loomis-Chaffee School, the Loomis Log. To do so would have made the bibliography appear even more unwieldy than it presently does.

Omitted from the list have been several items that, because they duplicate information easily available in a more accessible source, do not appear to be useful for studying Burns's life and works. Likewise, I have omitted several journalistic items from the gay press that seem inflammatory rather than helpful contributions. In particular, I have omitted several items that the Burns family finds offensive and that have not influenced my own thinking about their brother's career.

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