

# BEN'S BEAT 41

**THEATER DORTMUND**

im Opernhaus Dortmund  
24.2.1996,  
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Oper von Stewart Wallace, Libretto von Michael Korie  
Nach einer Idee von John Dew

Ich stehe für mich  
ein als Jude.

Warum nicht auch als Mann  
der Männer liebt.

"HARVEY MILK" in GERMANY  
A RETURN to PARIS

## B E N ' S B E A T 4 1

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### Introduction to Our Trip. Some Books With My Stuff

The major part of this issue is devoted to our trip to Germany and Paris, with a long, too long, I fear, report. I had never expected to visit Germany but when Michael's opera was staged there, in German, it was too important to miss. It was a time for reflection. The opera will also be staged in San Francisco in November and a CD will be made. Following Germany, we revisited Paris. After a 42 year hiatus, we still remembered its classic beauty, although we saw it with older eyes.

Very appropriately, as Janet and I returned in mid-March from our trip to Germany, I received two issues of Screen, Das Phanzine, a very professional fanzine published in that country by Wolfgang Wiesheier, in each of which was an essay of mine, translated by him into German. One is "Lovecraft's Ladies", my most published piece, which has appeared in English in magazines and paperbacks, also in a handsome Japanese language hardcover book; and now in German.

The other essay appears for the first time in any language. "The Long and the Short of It" is a study of Clive Barker, written for a Starmont book which never materialized, updated and revised for this appearance. It is much longer than the other and I appreciate the work Wolfgang put into it, even if I cannot proofread it. These are well-produced squarebacked trade paperback size zines, about 70+ pages each, well illustrated with drawings and photos, on many aspects of horror. If you wish to practice your German and would like a copy, you can write to Wolfgang Wiesheier, Badanger 33, 91358 Kunreuth, Germany. \$10.00.

For Lovecraftians, Chaosium Press has issued a trade p/b collection, The Dunwich Cycle, edited by Robert M. Price. It contains HPL's masterpiece "The Dunwich Horror", plus stories by Arthur Machen, August Derleth and others, including my own story on the theme, "The Road to Dunwich". It is a fine book, \$10.95.

By late May Nick Certo will have published his book of previously unpublished sketches, mostly unsigned, by Hannes Bok, for which I wrote an introduction. A large trade p/b edition is \$20 and a limited, clothbound book with an original sketch laid in is \$125. This h/c is nearly sold out as I write. The sketches are nice and many are excellent. Write to Nick at P.O. Box 322, Circleville, N. Y., 10919. Get his catalog too.

### The Cover

This is the poster, in a reduced card form, for the Dortmund production. The text translates as "I stand for myself as a Jew. Why not also as a man who loves men?" This is certainly true of Harvey Milk, an activist gay man, but it is Michael's own evocation of Milk's philosophy.

## Harvey Milk in Germany, and a Return to Paris

### Foreword

Readers of my zines know that Janet and I are very proud of our son and his opera theatre. He is librettist, and Stewart Wallace, of Texas and now New York, is composer. They have written three operas. The first, *Where's Dick?*, had its premiere several years ago in Houston. The second, *Hopper's Wife*, is scheduled either this or next year in New York City. Their major opera thus far is *Harvey Milk*, based on the life and death of the famous gay political activist. First performances were in Houston and in New York City. On February 24, 1996, it had its European premiere, in Dortmund, Germany, translated into German, and redirected by the director of the company, John Dew. The world-wide attention it has received was mirrored in this small but active town where representatives from newspapers around the country attended. It was an event we, like Stewart's parents and many European acquaintances could not miss either, despite the capricious weather in February. To fill out a vacation, we added a week in Paris as well, which we had visited in the summer of 1954 and never since. It proved to be an exciting and fulfilling fortnight.

### 1. Germany

Dortmund is in the northwest corner of Germany, in the old industrial Ruhr, an hour from Dusseldorf, the gateway city. We flew to the latter, to stay four days and allow time to visit Cologne, a half hour further down on the Rhine. For reasons of personal emotion, Germany had never been part of our travel plans, and we felt slightly uncomfortable about going. Yesterday's horrors can never be forgotten, but we must believe their place is in history. We found ourselves always welcome, and the people we met always friendly, although English is a foreign tongue and we sometimes resorted to a sort of charades to be understood. We arrived on a Monday, and it turned out to be a national pre-Lenten holiday, Rose Monday. It is similar to the Mardi Gras of New Orleans, a long parade of floats, bands, marchers, gaiety, costumed float people tossing candy to the throngs (in New Orleans they toss beads). The joy and good nature was enhanced by oceans of beer being dispensed everywhere. In the evenings, there was nowhere we could go, so our nights were spent watching CNN for some English, although I dislike the programming. German stations were still reveling in the holiday; oom-pa and waltzes were universal. We even saw a show we promptly recognized as the product of the Budapest Music Hall we had seen last summer, pure corn but not unpleasant.

The one uncertain element in the holiday festivities was the presence of some glum looking young people, dressed plainly, who said nothing, hung back, drank beer and urinated in the entrances of the closed stores. I have no way of knowing whether they were the "skinheads" we read about, but they were quite unlike the generally older, rosy-cheeked people on the floats. They are drifters, perhaps part of the problems that arose in the reunification of the two national halves, although they made no trouble. Other evidence of unrest was in the universal graffiti which disfigured many of the trains, stations, fences etc.

At least, Germany has acknowledged its terrible past, and does not try to escape it. Schoolchildren are taken to visit the camps, which are scrupulously maintained. If the horrors of a Nazi regime are to be avoided, they must be understood and remembered. Michael visited Dachau after the premiere and can attest to this attitude. I spoke to several interviewers at the post-premiere party. One asked me whether the references in the play to the Holocaust were in the New York version. He wondered whether they had been inserted for the performance here. I reassured them, the play was the same. We shook hands warmly and hoped mutually that Germany and the world would never know such horrors again, but the sensitivity to those inhuman, horrifying years of Nazi brutality must forever remain a part of German consciousness.

The Ruhr area was smashed in the battles of WW II, and has been rebuilt. Dusseldorf is a sprawling and busy city, but it lacks beauty and a focal point aside from a classy shopping area, the "Ko" or Königsallee. This broad boulevard with excellent stores is divided by a small canal, crossed by many bridges, and frozen during our visit. An Old City, the Altstadt, has ancient buildings, but they have obviously been greatly restored. In this area is a large opera house and several excellent museums. At one we finally saw the great show of art by the unhappy Viennese, Egon Schiele, which we had missed in Vienna due to building repairs. His loving portraits of his wife, who, like him, died young, were touching, amidst his typically erotic paintings.

Another museum was more poignant. It was dedicated permanently to a grim history, with actual documents, of the growth and effects of Nazism in the area. One room was wholly for the small population of Jews of that era, only 1% of the Dusseldorf populace, all lost. The names of the dead were painted across the walls over the exhibits, and a cassette narrated their tragic history, including her own terrifying, personal account of Kristallnacht, when neighbors became brutes, breaking into apartments, smashing and looting. The narrator did recall that humanity was not quite dead; one neighbor play-acted the brutal role expected of him but surreptitiously kept the few terrified people safe.

We went by train to Cologne. The railroads are excellent, quick, on time and quiet, and when the ticket agents did not understand English, they did their best, even coming out to help and guide us. Only the ubiquitous graffiti is a bad note on the trains. The weather was extremely cold, but during our European stay over late February to early March it would not be worse, occasional flurries or rain, nothing like the terrible winter we had back home. Dusseldorf and Cologne are both on the Rhine, which was not romantic at all in the sere gray weather, but Cologne had a more attractive riverfront. Its great gothic cathedral, familiarly known as the "Dom", escaped war damage, excepting much of its beautiful glass. Begun in the 13th century its second tower was only completed shortly before 1900. It is an enormous edifice, black with time, and while impressive, lacks the grace and beauty which distinguish Paris's Notre Dame. It does, however, dominate the rebuilt town. Nearby are several superb museums, one of unearthed evidence, sculpture, artifacts and several superb mosaic floors of villas, evidence of a Roman town apparently of some size built here. The other is a art museum, the Museum Ludwig, whose display of contemporary art is daring and

comprehensive. American as well as European and German artists are displayed here. Joseph Beuys, like him or not, with his lard and the felt suits, being a Dusseldorf boy was in major display in both cities. The Museum also had a fine collection of medieval art.

When Michael called to tell us there would be a dress rehearsal, we had already seen all we wished to (some fine old castles in the area were, unfortunately for us, closed during the winter). Our hotel kindly allowed us to cut a day off to leave for Dortmund. We stayed at his hotel, near the opera house. The latter occupies a block in the city, together with several theatres. The very square it is on was prior to the war the site of an impressive and ancient synagogue, which was razed. A sober monument recalls it, and the square is named for it. Dortmund is a small town. (By chance it was in the news 3-18-96 for a large group of Kurdish people brought in here as workers. They staged a demonstration to gain independence in their home states.) In the century old Rathaus, the Town Hall, itself restored, there is a model of medieval Dortmund, which may to a degree have existed before WWII. It was mostly destroyed in the war, and I was haunted by the expression from Proverbs, "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind." However, it was rebuilt as a modern town with modern facilities including a central pedestrian area, retaining old churches but otherwise active with stores. Throngs of people shopped or promenaded, as on a Sunday when stores were closed. A Salvation Army organ grinder worked his machine and handed out pamphlets.

The real business of the town, however, is BEER, and it produces even more than Munich. We visited the Kronen brewery with a beer museum, which explained the production but still charged for a glass at its cafe. I also enjoyed beer at several characteristic German restaurants. Typically they are dark-wooded, with a large and crowded bar in one corner, loud music playing, which whatever the style is comes out oom-pa, people smoking up a storm as they do everywhere in Europe, good-natured and boisterous, and the food was substantial and good, although pictures sometimes helped us decode the strange menus. German breads have to be the very best bread in the world. Our breakfast buffets daily were large enough, all kinds of meats and cheezes, so that I could make sandwiches for lunch, and their various ryes with different kinds of grains were so good I could hardly wait to eat.

Happily for our interests, Dortmund had ambitious classic and contemporary art museums, each of them fine. Cor-ten sculptures on the grounds of the latter, sad to say, were all were heavily graffitied.

## 2. The Opera

Michael was in gloom because the director, John Dew, had his own ideas about how to stage it. First, he insisted on doing it in two rather than three acts, simply combining the second and third as one, with a subsequent imbalance. Second, he added a heavy load of expressionistic symbolism and even choreography (in the manner of Jerome Robbins). Also, one of the leads was ill, and could not sing. His understudy sang well but did not know the part. So Dew took it over, having the singer stand at the side of the wide stage with a microphone, singing while Dew mouthed along. Stewart was in despair about the quality of the orchestra

and chorus. During the dress rehearsal, everything went wrong -- Dew looked clumsy mouthing the words; gates which were supposed to fall stayed resolutely closed; actors forgot their cues.

Opening Night came, and the place was full, including critics from all over Germany. It is a controversial play, with specific homosexual sympathy and sometimes cruel honesty, as well as crushing reminders of the Holocaust. Its sexual candour sent one couple a few rows in front of us quickly to the exit. Most people stayed, as the play grew in power. I sat with some astonishment as everything clicked into place, at least according to Dew's plans. The music was splendidly played and sung and even the dancing was nice. Dew almost appeared to be singing his role! When it concluded the applause was warm, but when Michael and Stewart were introduced the place went wild. Standing, cheering, it was such a response as we had seen in Houston only. I was in awe! Then the party, within the building, throngs of friends, relations, etc, for hours into the night. Dew made a speech, in German, which the party people laughed and clapped at. At one point he added, still in German, that "Stewart and Michael do not understand a word of this" and got another laugh. My German is next to non-existent, but abetted by my also-weak Yiddish, I picked it up and translated to the boys.

Who cared what critics, those curmudgeons, might say, *this* night was the stuff that dreams are made on! Later I would gather eight German newspaper accounts, from the country round, which I could not fully understand, but they appeared to run the gamut, good, indifferent, etc., but still giving it pictures, front page box headlines in a few cases, and publicity. Yes, good or bad any publicity is good! And Berlin Opera has offered a commission for a new opera to the boys! It was worth the trip, worth the intense cold.

### 3. A poignant evening.

The evening before the opening was Friday, the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath. One of the Opera Board is a lovely lady, Barbara Samuel, who is also a board member in the modest new synagogue. Dortmund had only 5000 Jews before the war, and nearly all were lost. However, after the war a return developed, as one man, a judge, told me. He had survived and gone to Israel, but he came back. He had to, he said. If no Jews remained in Dortmund, Hitler had won. To me it seemed an act of great courage as well as principle. Then Russian Jewish immigrants swelled the ranks. Today there are 2500 Jews of whom 200 families belong to the synagogue. Janet, Michael, Ivan and I went on Friday night (Stewart and his family would have but a friend of his was having a concert so they went there.) The service was in Hebrew, no asides even in German, but one older man, even while singing lustily, helped me find my place, with my sputtering reading ability. The service was Ashkenazi, Eastern European Jewish, similar to that I know, with slight and sometimes delightful differences. The congregation considered itself liberal, but women sat in a balcony.

Afterward, there was the traditional *kiddush*, the repast. This was both delicious and an emotional experience. Many young people, children and teen-agers, were there. The judge looked proudly at them. "This is our future," he said. The table was set up in a wide U, for the several dozen

people, with us as honored guests. The salmon and bread were fine. I looked at these happy adults and children, all of them victims of one dictatorship or another, free now, dedicated, beautiful. Barbara spoke to the people, telling them about Michael, and the following morning, although we were not there, she spoke to the congregation about the opera and its subject. Later she was at the opening and she loved the show. The experience of joining these courageous people in the synagogue moved us deeply, and none of us will ever forget the evening. Above all it was one of hope.

#### 4. Later

Michael and Ivan visited Munich and told us it is beautiful, unlike the industrialized north. They saw many baroque churches and broad boulevards in town. We had taken one week for Germany. What we had seen was encouraging and reassuring. Now we wished, after forty years, to revisit Paris, and that is where we headed, by plane.

#### 5. Paris

In 1954, a year after our marriage Janet and I took a 21 day trip to Paris (four days) then Nice, Monaco, Rome, Florence, Pisa, Venice, Switzerland and by plane for a weekend in London. In those days Paris was the romantic capital, symbolized so well by *An American in Paris*. We are older now, have traveled much, and yet we wanted to see the city again, if only for all the art we missed. The romance is not the same, but it is as beautiful as ever, surely the most beautiful city in the world. It is also the most narcissistic. At night many buildings are illuminated. "Look at us," they say, "how elegant, how beautiful we are. Try to say the same about wherever you come from!" And they laugh. They are right.

The French adore their city, but what a price they paid for its beauty! It is as tragic as it is unforgiveable. But that will come later. First, I must recall again and love again the grandeur, the harmony, the elegance, the dignity of this city, and the ease with which it carries all these elements. Our hotel was only a few blocks from the epicenter, the Arc de Triomphe, located within an impenetrable traffic circle around which small cars never stop rushing. To visit the great Arch one must go down into the Metro and emerge on the island. We also were right on the Rue de Fauborg Saint Honore, which within a block or two becomes the classiest shopping street in town, with every single coutourier and designer, galleries with wonderful early modern art, antiquarian booksellers with beautiful and costly books, and at last the Church of the Madeleine, a crossless church built like the Parthenon, and a bit later the Garnier Opera, freshly restored. This is the Right Bank, which is the tonier side, with nearly all the museums. The Left Bank, across the Seine River which divides the town, is the Bohemian side, more earthy, less elegant, excepting the Luxembourg Palace and its superb gardens. It is more human perhaps, less dedicated to the exposition of wealth. It has much else to see also, but its most famous landmark is the Eiffel Tower, incongruous with the Empire style of the city's architecture, but beloved. We would have little time for the Left Bank, unfortunately, as we had a busy agenda. Our 40 year old slides must do.

Poor Janet! How I harried her, so we might see as much as possible! We actually began with the Left Bank, and the relatively new Musee D'Orsay, a brilliantly reconstructed ancient railway station, converted into a multi-level museum to relieve the crowded Louvre across the river of its 19th century art. The building and especially its glass ceiling is the star here, but its Impressionist collection is unparalleled. I was most impressed by its half dozen Van Goghs, but it also has the heart-warming Rencoir evening dance scene (*La Moulin de la Galette*, beautiful if not quite the equal of his Boating Party Dock scene at the Phillips in Washington.) Whistler's Mother sits dourly here, Manet's courtesan Olympia with her maid and her cat, his *Dejeuner* with the scholarly, almost foppish men and the naked ladies. Courbet has colossal pictures but a small and otherwise unremarkable detailed closeup of female genitalia were it a photo by Robert Mapplethorpe would arouse a storm of protest! A restaurant here is a delight. My Quiche Lorraine was commonplace but I loved my fish soup with croutons and shredded cheese.

After four hours we were glassy-eyed. We returned to the hotel, rested and then walked a mile down our fabulous street. Prices were enormous, unless you think \$4000 for a nice tunic/dress delightfully cut is a bargain. Generally, prices in both countries were high, and one could do better at home. In the evening the better bistros and restaurants open late for dinner and will not serve less until very late. However, cafes exist where one may eat at any time. French cooking is deservedly well known, and one Russian styled cafe was excellent. For \$20 I had a small container of true Sevruga caviar with a delicious blini (pancake) and then my entree, lamb, which, with veal and fish are popular entrees. We had two outstanding dinners. At Bistrot D'a Cote, a well known bistro, intimate, cozy, and reservations necessary, I had salmon, seared on top, tender within, served on a crispy potato pancake, and delicious, with Creme Brulee for dessert. With wine, which I would be embarrassed not to order in Paris, it was a winner. It was perhaps \$125.

However, an incomparable dining experience was at Lucas Carton, one of Paris' three most famous restaurants. It is at the Place de la Madeleine, and we reserved for lunch. (I knew it would be costly and dinner was out of the question.) They have one liesurely sitting, at 1 p.m, and one can count on a two hour luncheon. The restaurant is art nouveau in style, beautiful, with superb service. I gasped at the prices of the a la carte menu but it was Janet's birthday and I had vowed not to complain. Then I saw they offered a prix fixe dinner, which was also great and far less costly in aggregate. Delicous crudites were offered, then I had fois gras, hot, in cabbage leaves, strange but succulent, with freshly ground mounds of salet and pepper in which to swoosh it around and a delectable rack of lamb, superb dessert, espresso, with a Rose wine, delicious and not too costly. I noticed the wine steward tested it before he gave it to me, unusual yet wine was his sole function and he took it seriously. Janet loved her food as well. The lunch came out to about \$250.00, a tidy sum, but, by golly, worth it. I should add the dinner prix fixe would be \$600-800, and a la carte over a thousand dollars for two. Yes sir. Tips, by the way, are always included, at 14-16%. One other food event, on our last day we found a very elegant restaurant, Angelina's, near the Louvre, for lunch, recommended to us by Michael for its hot chocalate. I had to have a light lunch of fois gras first, while Janet had a salad. Then they



served us two cups, a pitcher of hot chocolate and a cup of whipped cream. The hot chocolate poured slowly, and when I tasted it my dazed expression revealed it was all that this concoction could ever dream of being. Janet is not for whipped cream, but I like it, and it was even better with it. Divine! Delectable! We bought packets of the powder, enough for one pot, \$5 the pouch and one day will make it here. It will not be the same. It was beautiful. Vive la Paris!

We were in town for 8 days, so we were able to see almost all the museums we could wish to. The Louvre, in process of being cleaned and restored, is enormous, now containing in its center I. M. Pei's huge glass pyramid, quite handsome, and adding, underground, an entire new entrance and directional focus, as well as many fine shops. Since 1954 I have complained I only had two hours for the Louvre. Well, this visit we were there maybe four, and it made little difference. We saw all we wanted to, but the sad news, for us anyway, is we did not particularly like it. The enormous rooms dwarf both paintings and viewers. Perhaps because we know the art anyway, it is dull, relieved only by new sculpture gardens. The Spanish room was fine, Dutch good, Renaissance often dull. Leonardo's pieces desperately need cleaning as the varnish is black. (Mona Lisa is okay, for the throngs who take photos of the fabulous lady) The Slaves of Michelangelo are lost in a roomful of sculpture. Even Nike, the Winged Victory of Samothrace, seems adrift. I will take the more human sized New York Met any day to this behemoth, although perhaps the on-going restoration will lend it the charm and invitation it badly needs.

I tried, with smaller museums, to get in two a day, about all we could take. There are many. In the Marais, once a Jewish section, we saw an apparently disused synagogue designed by art nouveauist Hector Guimard, a Star of David still on it, in stone. Nearby was the wonderful Picasso Museum, in a beautiful mansion, filled with great works his heirs gave the country in lieu of whopping inheritance taxes; the Musee Cognac-Jay, a beautiful small mansion displaying porcelain as well as Watteau and Boucher; The Hotel Carnevalet with a breath taking art nouveau store within it which Alphonse Mucha made a century ago for a jeweler, plus a wonderful history in art and documents of Paris. Famous, spectacular, but less satisfactory, the huge Pompidou Center is an incongruous modern square building built inside out, huge pipes all over its exterior, and an external tube-enclosed escalator, going in relays up the five flights and affording an eye-popping view of Paris. Four flights are commercial exposition areas, fine for that purpose. The other is an uncomfortably sited, mechanically laid out modern art museum, actually late 19th and early 20th. Art appears to have ended for the French then. There are a few, obligatory, Americans, Jackson Pollock and mid-century names. Nothing really contemporary, even of French artists, and too much at that of inconsequential French artists. We much preferred, far off in a residential arrondissement (one of the 18 or 19 districts the city is divided into) the Musee Marmottan, a delightful museum in a beautiful small mansion primarily containing Monet masterpieces. Outside are parks, elegant shops and palatial homes.

Two islands are in the Seine near the Louvre. The magnificent Cathedral of Notre Dame (one tower wrapped in scaffolding while it too is cleaned and restored) is on one. Its glory even surmounts our forty two year

absence and memory. However, less known but on the same island, wholly within a governmental palace is a small, stunning church, Saint Chapelle. One enters to a bottom floor, nice but undistinguished, then climbs a spiral stone staircase to emerge within a high chamber whose walls are glowing with color. It is, incredibly for such a heavy structure, almost all curtain wall, with marvelous stained glass all around it. We are speechless here. Nearby is the Conciergerie, an ironic name for a building devoted to housing the prisoners and victims of the post-Revolution Terror. Some rooms are made up, with appropriate mannequins, to show how the inmates lived their last days. It is a terrible reminder of the excesses of power.

In one corner of the Tuilleries Gardens, which face the Louvre, is another museum, the Orangerie, somewhat seedy but with a fine collection. Perhaps with the arrival of Spring, like the Gardens, it too will burst into life. It has a half dozen Modiglianis and as many by his buddy Chaim Soutine, who exists in history as a footnote to Modi's genius, Picassos, Matisses, etc, but most impressive, indeed, magnificent, two very large oval rooms, for each of which Monet painted, around 1926, extremely large water-lily scenes from his gardens at Giverny (near Paris but closed until Spring.) Some are thirty feet or longer. He did many paintings in his final years of the beloved gardens, but none are so overwhelming as those in these rooms. They are the very soul of this genius, whose work permeates Paris.

Evenings were difficult, as in Germany. We ate reasonably late, walked about a lively area nearby, and returned to TV's CNN and a British news station called "Sky". The opera and ballet seasons were about to commence, and expensively too, but not yet. There was not much theatre and all would be in French, as would be films. So, CNN. Endless sports, fashion shows and the horror of the Israel bombing terror. We watched and waited for morning and more activity, lots of walking, maybe buses, cabs or most likely the excellent subway, the Metro, which covers Paris very well. Its worst problem is transferring between lines, because this entails lots of walking through endless passages. If you visit Paris and take cabs, know to get them at the frequent taxi stands, not to flag one. If you do you will pay whatever is on his meter, since it never stops running when he is moving. It can be costly.

Gunilla Olsson is an old friend of Stewart's who flew in from Paris for the opera. She is Swedish but has lived in Paris for decades and says she will never leave. She invited us to call her when we came and we did. She lives in Montmartre, the hilly part of the Right Bank, famous for Sacre Coeur, the beautiful white church which overlooks everything else (except the skyscrapers which ring some of the outskirts of the city) and also a past haven for artists and bohemian life. We bussed over, to join her at the very huge flea market where one can buy anything. We bought some trivia, and it was fun. However, the demography of the area is altered. Immigrants from former African colonies have moved to France, to here and to the port cities. One sees many black people, often wearing brightly colored native clothing, also Arabs. The area, like any in change, is deteriorating. There has been racism too, although I think that is also a function of the high unemployment.

I'll close the tour at a vest pocket park, only a few blocks from our hotel, maybe 3 blocks wide, five long, the Parc Monceau, which we as well as the Parisians all loved. It has much statuary dedicated to poets and composers, playgrounds for the children, and also much whimsy, mysterious old columns and small pyramids made of discarded ancient stone, beautiful gardens, trees, etc. It is lined on one side by handsome homes, great stone mansions, mansard-roofed. Two are museums now. One, the Cernuschi, is a Museum of Tibetan and Nepalese art, with a great Buddha within. It is a lovely oasis. The other has special significance to me, and is, indeed, for me symbolic of what happened half a century ago and left a permanent mark of shame on this wonderful country which has given the world so much.

The otherwise excellent Michelin Guide, an indispensable book for the traveler, lists and recommends for a visit the Museum Nissim de Camondo here, for its elegance and furnishings, but the account is incomplete. The house is not huge but it is a lovely mansion, built like all with a gate and wall, an entry-way and a cobblestoned courtyard, where horses or automobiles might enter. A handsome doorway is here and beyond a beautiful ante-chamber with a great marble staircase leading up. Many of the original furnishings remain but they have been augmented, and the house is a treasury of antique furniture, porcelain, art, etc. In itself this is not remarkable, but there is a story. It was built in 1910 by the Count de Camondo for his only son, Nissim. There was a daughter, Beatrice, as well. Unfortunately, the Count's dreams for the continuation of his name ended when Nissim, a lieutenant in the Air Force was killed in action in 1917. The father, from what I could gather, and there were no specific accounts, mostly in between the lines, did not approve when his daughter divorced and remarried. In the 1930's he willed the house to the city as a museum.

The de Camondos were a very old Jewish family originating in Spain. In 1492 they were expelled along with the Jewish population. They traveled to Turkey, where they were very successful. Eventually they made their way to France where they were no less successful, obviously, if the scion had received an honor. We saw his various honors, his Hebrew prayer book, pictures of the family, the gallant son as well as the daughter, who, with a new husband had a son and a daughter. The old man must have died before 1940 when the French army, foolishly dependent upon the static defensive Maginot Line, were overrun by the German army, which outflanked them. It would be the lowest point of the nation's history. France, which had known victory, glory and defeat, had endured revolution and insurrection, had blatantly convicted an innocent man, Capt. Alfred Dreyfus, of treason only because he was a Jew, yet finally redressed the act when other Frenchmen fought for him, this ancient nation which had always professed to treasure Honor, not only abjectly surrendered to the Nazis, but, partly to save their beautiful and beloved city of Paris, collaborated with them in horrors which paled even the excesses of the Terror and the massacre of the innocent Huguenots. In July 1942 the French police, acting perhaps with unhidden enthusiasm, rounded up 13,000 Jews, 4000 children among them, *French citizens all*, and detained them in the suffocating heat of a Velodrome, a stadium. Many died here before they were shipped out to Auschwitz. Only 400 survived the death-camp. Among those who were arrested and who would die at Auschwitz were the

last of the de Camondos, Beatrice, her husband, her son and her daughter. Five hundred years earlier the family had been expelled from Spain, beginning their lengthy saga. Now, in a land to which they and so many other Jews had given so much, their story ended in a final expulsion. Ironically, also murdered at Auschwitz was Madeleine Levy, deported there from France in 1943. She was the granddaughter of Dreyfus.

In the gateway portal area of the Musee de Camondo is a large plaque stating the gift of the home to the city and the death of the son in the first World War. A second plaque is beneath it now, erected, I suspect, only in the last few years when the French have finally begun to face their history with some honesty. It states that Beatrice, her husband and their children, all named, were expelled and died at Auschwitz. It has become fashionable lately for Frenchmen who acted in concert with the loathsome Vichy puppet state to claim they subsequently joined the Resistance. I feel this is mostly a face-saving name for a group which had inadequate members to accomplish much, but I can still visualize the films of the liberation of Paris. The ragtag Resistance is led by the one true Frenchman, Charles de Gaulle, a thorn in the sides of the Allies, but indisputably a man of honor who alone sustained France's name. They are marching up the great Champs Elysses, where Janet and I also walked one evening, although we stayed on the street-wide sidewalk. The majestic Arc de Triomphe is before them, the smiling American army behind them, their saviors who graciously allowed them to wave their tricolor proudly on this day of borrowed glory.

#### 6. A Time Trip

Last night I took down the old slides. I had bought a stereo camera in 1954. It was popular then, a heavy camera with twin lenses. Using a special viewer to see the twin-imaged slides, it offered a remarkable view into apparent reality. Before I gave it up, with increasing difficulty finding a processor, and problems with the camera, I had taken several thousand slides of us, our vacations and mostly the kids. I have not looked at the slides in many years now.

Here we were, caught in time, forty two years ago this summer. Janet, who was a bit slimmer, with a certain hauteur, this the result of a tooth she broke the first morning on a baguette, the great French bread with a hard crispy crust; thereafter she tried not to smile. She also has a cigaret most of the time, an evil she gave up years ago now. I see again the girl I fell immediately in love with the very first evening. I even had hair on my head, a bit heavier too, and I am wearing a beret. Janet felt I would not be a proper Frenchman without one! After that tourists would actually mistake me for one and ask me questions to which I had no answers! I liked the beret and continued ever after to wear berets. Ironically, in France today, I saw only one man with a beret! At least two of us have not forgotten this erstwhile symbol. Around us in those slides there are the colors of summer, which we had to forego this winter vacation, and they lend much to the atmosphere. We feel again the special glow, and it is reflected in Janet's eyes on many of these old slides, of this wonderful city. May it live, in honor, forever.

## A LOC FROM EUROPE

Brant Kresovich is an American student living with his wife and studying at the Riga Business School in Riga, Latvia. Brant sent me "Translation Run Amuck", which is familiar and funny, and I shall share it with you. More important is his moving letter about aspects of the Holocaust in Baltic Europe. This I shall excerpt. It is germane to my comments about Dortmund, Germany in the "Harvey Milk" article. Brant writes:

"Almost all of Latvia's Jews were killed by the Nazis from 1941 to 1944. The only Jews in Riga now are either quite old or Russian Jews. I believe that Yiddish is nearly gone in Latvia. I have visited the old "ghetto" where people were forced to live in the Nazi occupation. I felt very bad, so I have not forced myself to go to the death camp at Salaspils, where there is now a memorial park.

"The ghetto in Vilnius is now clearly marked with a plaque, very easy to see in the old city. Also, the Lithuanians have replaced the steps to the main post office, which the Russians made from headstones from a Jewish cemetery. These are welcome moves, I think, considering that the Poles and Lithuanians are still bitterly remembered by some Jewish victims as eager collaborators for the Nazis. Vilnius was the capital of publishing in Yiddish up to the 1940s. All gone.

"The Jewish Community Center is very close to my school in Riga. I sometimes eat lunch there .. They have a small display of "Latvians Who Saved Jews". Photographs of ordinary people who were very brave to do the right thing. Plain display, very moving.

"That's Europe -- or at least my Europe. History is there for the seeing. Not like my hometown in suburban Detroit. My elementary school, the theater where I saw my first movie, the alley where I first bowled, and countless shops have all been razed. And Americans wonder why they feel rootless and unconnected to anything; maybe why some Americans demand so much from the people around them."

Brant continues, agreeing with my remarks about the mood and scene in Budapest and Slovakia, in my previous travel article, and adds that in his corner of the world, most ex-Russian states are falling behind, Latvia and Lithuania "so-so" but learning, and Poland is "great", with much building going on. I thank you for this sensitive, informative letter, Brant.

As an interesting aside, in her history of Yiddish theatre, *Vagabond Stars*, Nahma Sandrow, speaking of the Vilna Ghetto (I presume Vilnius = Vilna) during World War II, and the attempts of Jews to make life bearable, writes: "There were performances of sections of plays such as (...) and *Man Under the Bridge*, a new comedy by A. Indik..." Some of you know I have written plays and am in Dramatists Guild, so you can believe I jumped at this. My father was born in Poland, not Lithuania, but with an extended family. I know very little of their history, as my parents disliked talking about their European past, which had, long before Hitler, been unpleasant. So I have not heard of a branch in Vilna. Could theatre run in the Indick blood? I wrote to the author, who responded most courteously, although she had nothing to add. "I looked through theatre

sources for more about the playwright Indik but found nothing." She suggested I contact Yivo, a source of Yiddish information in NYC, but I do not recall whether or not I ever did. This was almost twenty years ago, brought back to mind by Brant's mentioning the Vilnius ghetto.

I shall conclude this particular section on a sad note. The young American Jewish girl Sara Duker, who was killed in the first Jerusalem bus bombing by a Muslim Hamas suicide, was not only a Teaneck girl, but, as a child, had been in a nursery school directed by Janet, along with her sister and brother in turn. I sometimes call Janet "Mrs. Chips" because alumni/ae and parents still come up to her, many years later, with warm memories. Today, March 21, at a supermarket, we met Sara's mother shopping, a lovely, stoic woman. Her husband had died when the children were very small, and she brought them up by herself, never remarrying. Sara's death was a terrible blow, as such a tragedy would be to any loving mother, but she did not argue with a younger daughter when she too wished to go to Israel to work on a kibbutz. She is there today.

## Translation Run Amuck Submission by Brant Kresovic

**A**s any traveler knows, communication in foreign countries can take some humorous turns through translation. Here are some signs and notices written in English that were spied around the world by corporate travelers. You have to give the writers an *E* for Effort. Enjoy!

*In a Copenhagen airline ticket office:*

We take your bags and send them in all directions.

*In a Paris hotel elevator:*

Please leave your values at the front desk.

*In a Bucharest hotel lobby:*

The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.

*A sign posted in Germany's Black Forest:*

It is strictly forbidden on our black forest camping site that people of different sex, for instance, men and women, live together in one tent unless they are married with each other for that purpose.

*On the menu of a Swiss restaurant:*

Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.

*In a Leipzig elevator:*

Do not enter lift backwards, and only when lit up.

*In a Belgrade hotel elevator:*

To move the cabin, push button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number of wishing floor. Driving is then going alphabetically by national order.

*In a hotel in Athens:*

Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 a.m. daily.

*In a Yugoslavian hotel:*

The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of the chambermaid.

*In a Bangkok dry cleaners:*

Drop your trousers here for best results.

*Outside a Paris dress shop:*

Dresses for street walking.

*From a brochure of a car rental firm in Tokyo:*

When a passenger of foot heave in sight, tootle the horn. Trumpet him melodiously at first, but if he still obstacles your passage then tootle him with vigor.

*In a Japanese hotel:*

You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.

*From a Japanese information booklet about using a hotel air conditioner:*

Cooler and Heater: If you want just condition of warm in your room, please control yourself.

*In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery:*

You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists, and writers are buried daily except Thursday.

*In a Tokyo hotel:*

Is forbidden to steal hotel towels please. If you are not a person to do such a thing is please not to read notice.

*In a Swiss mountain inn:*

Special today - no ice cream.

*In a Rome laundry:*

Ladies, leave your clothes here and spend the afternoon having a good time.

*Outside a Hong Kong tailor shop:*

Ladies may have a fit upstairs.

*In a Tokyo bar:*

Special cocktails for the ladies with nuts.

*From the Soviet Weekly:*

There will be a Moscow Exhibition of Arts by 150,000 Soviet Republic painters and sculptors. These were executed over the past two years.

*In an advertisement by a Hong Kong dentist:*

Teeth extracted by the latest Methodists.

*In a Zurich hotel:*

Because of the impropriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom, it is suggested that the lobby be used for this purpose.

*In a Czechoslovakian tourist agency:*

Take one of our horse-driven city tours. We guarantee no miscarriages.

*Advertisement for donkey rides in Thailand:*

Would you like to ride on your own ass?

*In a Bangkok temple:*

It is forbidden to enter a women even a foreigner if dressed as a man.

*On the door of a Moscow hotel room:*

If this is your first visit to the USSR, you are welcome to it.

*In a Norwegian cocktail lounge:*

Ladies are requested not to have children in a bar.

*In an Acapulco hotel:*

The manager has personally passed all the water served here.

*In a Tokyo shop:*

Our nylons cost more than common, but you'll find they are best in the long run.

*Two signs from a Majorcan shop entrance:*

English well speaking.  
Here speeching American. ■

## Recently Read

## Science Fiction

The Kilkenny Cats by L. Ron Hubbard

Hubbard was a very prolific writer of pulp fiction in all genera and used many pseudonyms. As Kurt Van Rachen he wrote five associated stories which appeared in Astounding Science Fiction in 1940-1-2. During this same period he was appearing under his own name with many stories including one of his greatest novels, *Final Blackout*, as well as some of his finest work for Unknown. Authors Service, which along with Bridge is republishing Hubbard's work, has collected the five "Cats" stories in a luxurious leatherbound book, gilded on all sides, moire endpapers, one of a series collecting all his Astounding science fiction. It is not great, trend-setting SF but it is always fun and a treat. The popular Hubbard knew how to please the readers and it is scarce wonder his name is so closely associated with ASF and John Campbell, its editor.

The series is set in the future but the inspiration behind its warring parties, the Scientists and the Longshoremen, perhaps lay in the pre-WWII relationship between Nazis and Communism. The stories do not make the Kilkenny cats relationship explicit but in an old poem such cats would war each other until both were gone. It is a pleasant theorem that the bad guys would kill each other off, but in fact usually one emerges as triumphant and strong. Hubbard, however, does not overwork such an analogy. He has a third force, a powerful, evil totalitarian government which ships the leaders and many of their supporters in both opposing camps off to a planet in the Sirius system, there presumably to kill each other off. Ron wastes little time on scientific exposition, simply assumes such a period would be able to zip through light years of space, make instant telephone/video calls back to Earth, etc. His contribution really is his characters, who often overcome stereotype to be real people capable of human strengths and weaknesses, within pulp confines. The settings, whether the familiar worn old spaceship or the extraterrestrial planet and characters, are real. Ron may have worked fast but he was a pro. Typically, his sense of humor is present, resembling but not as broadly farcical as that in his Mission Earth "dekology", certainly the best of that series, the first.

Endymion by Dan Simmons

In 1989 Dan Simmons published his classic *Hyperion*, and followed it a year later with a sequel *The Fall of Hyperion*. The former was a Canterbury Tales set in the future, travelers aboard a spacecraft hurtling toward an uncharted planet. It was dazzling science fiction, on many levels, and if the numerous problems it engendered were incapable of resolution in the novel-shaped sequel, the author could be forgiven for his verve and daring. Most memorable was the episode of a Roman Catholic priest who finds cruciform shapes on a distant planet and is exalted by this apparent proof of the universal appearance, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, the cruciform shapes are at best symbiotes and at worst parasites on a host. It is a cruel and

ironic discovery for the sincere priest. There are many other characters and interesting stories as well.

Simmons was not finished with his tale. Five years later, he has published the first of what is expected to be two novels, completing the story. Again, in a Keatsian mood, he names the novel *Endymion*, although this is the actual name of the young hero of his novel, whose task, hundreds of years after the preceding novels, is to find and safeguard a young girl who may possibly be a future Messiah. His nemesis is a brilliantly created future Roman Catholic Church, transcendent in all parts of the known universe, in a system of controlling power known as Pax, combining traditional religious practice with high technology. In this future, Earth is gone, lost perhaps within a Black Hole, and the Vatican and other special sites have been transplanted intact to new worlds. The Pope is now the political as well as religious leader. More important, he and all those under his sway now bear the cruciform within their chests, and it grants to them the unique ability of resurrection after death. The pope himself has lived through a dozen deaths and resurrections. True death can occur, but by choice (implying resurrection thereafter in Christ) accident or as punishment. The cruciform is not an unmixed blessing, unfortunately, and the papacy is now authoritarian, military and self-serving, while battling against the Ousters, a mysterious non-human force from other galaxies. The girl and her protector together with an android oppose the Church and do not wear the cruciform.

The story is set as escape and pursuit, with many exciting incidents, as well as very imaginative settings. It is told by alternating chapters between the girl's party and that of a pursuing Pax vessel and its intelligent and courageous captain, who endures many deaths and painful resurrections and, worse, must finally face disillusion with his leaders, to whom he has always given blind faith. It is a dazzling performance by Simmons as well as proof that science fiction is his true metier. His *Song of Kali* was a delightful pastiche of old Mysterious East novel styles, and his *Carrion Comfort* was an overlong but original approach to the vampire genre. Later, a trio of Kingesque novels were decidedly secondary work. I look forward to the sequel to *Endymion*.

#### The Snow Queen by Joan D. Vinge

This 1980 novel was a Hugo winner. Some critics compared it to *Dune*. I wouldn't. Although each is set in alien worlds, Frank Herbert's classic (forget the endless sequels) has a sweep which Vinge does not even attempt to match. Hers (for whose inspiration she thanks Hans Christian Anderson) is the story of Tiamet, a somewhat backward planet which is subjected to the dictation of another more technologically advanced planet. Primarily a water world, Tiamet is ruled by a woman who fashions herself a "Snow Queen" and who is alive well past the normal span because of inhalations of an enzymatic substance extracted from a living and possibly intelligent sea animal on her world. Although she is already 150 years old and doing well she fears ultimately she may succumb to age. Therefore she is creating clones which she hopes to use, since, after all, they are herself, as her passport to true immortality. She has a swaggering off-planet origin lover who is as cliched as he



sounds. She is not much better, nor are two clones who are now grown beyond puberty. The author is given to exotic names, such as the Queen's own, Arienrhod, and even offers a page of detailed enunciations ("AIRY-en-rodé"). Strangely, two clones are named very mundanely, if not peculiarly, "Moon" and "Sparks". There is some quirky sex. The clones, female and male, love each other, sort of loving oneself, although they are unaware. And when Sparks is taken away by the Queen, they make love, since she resembles Moon, of course. It is all somehow narcissistic. It goes on and on and after a while I could not care less whether the young lover/selves met again, or whether they reached the world of Carbuncle (talk about mundane names!) Joan, give back the Hugo.

To Arms! by M. P. Shiel

This novel appeared in 1913 in The RED Magazine, a British fiction magazine, and later as a hardcover, The Dragon. It is one of Shiel's "Yellow Peril" stories, a genre popular at the break of the century and essentially part of the Future War theme of science fiction. The Yellow Peril owed its fascination in part to the grip of the exotic and unknown aspects of the Orient on the public, as well as outright racism. Fu Manchu was perhaps the best example of this field, and his stories went along successfully and entertainingly for years. Sex was part of the game with Fu and it is the same with Shiel.

*To Arms!* has all of Shiel's strengths as well as his weaknesses. The prose in the first part is colorful and extravagant, fast and fun. He almost picks the Lusitania to sink, but chooses instead its sister ship, the Mauretania. It is sunk by battleships; Shiel mentions but fails to perceive the hazard of submarines to surface craft. However, he is aware, via a homemade aeroplane, of the vulnerability of battleships to aircraft. Sex rears its head in the person of the delectable Oyone, a mixed blood Japanese charmer who betrays her British lover. Shiel is blithe about Japanese and Chinese, knowing the differences and usually ignoring them as though they were identical.

Shiel commences by showing his future antagonists, the Prince of Wales and a young Chinese student in England, who, although not quite of noble blood, will grasp rule one day. The Prince whips his opponent, incurring permanent wrath and desire for revenge. They grow up and while the former is having a romance the latter, Li Ku Yu, is extending his dragon-like claws over the world in endless machinations. Unfortunately, Li is absent for most of the book, while Oyone, who dreams of marrying him, is his surrogate. She causes trouble enough, but she is not, after all, the chief villain. As a sex object, she is not in a class with the Eurasians and Orientals Saxe Rohmer would later dream up for his Dr. Fu stories. Much of the middle portion of the novel is overwhelmed by endless cataloguing of war movement on a worldwide scale. As in *Dr. Krasinski's Secret*, where opponents in desperate pursuit halt, out of breath, and discuss economics for pages, here it is anthropology. Shiel uses a *deus ex machina*, a deadly blinding invention, to pull victory out of the hat for his hero, hardly unusual in early science fiction, and comes up with a sentimental climax for the defeated Chinese would-be world emperor. The British ladies have period charm and are allowed some

derring-do. Despite the plodding middle, the book is well worth the effort to note the qualities which distinguish SF of the time.

A large spiral bound volume, with a two color cover, the book is a photo-offset of the original magazine parts, produced by Super-Shielians John D. Squires and A. Reynolds Morse. It is a very limited edition for contributors to Morse's book, *Shiel in Diverse Hands*. While it is unavailable, John is considering running off extra copies if there is interest. If you are tempted, drop him an encouraging note at P. O. Box 67, MCS, Dayton, Ohio 45402. There is, of course, no price set yet. John is also a dealer in Shieliana and has o/p items for sale.

#### Non-Fantasy

*Sacred Hunger* by Barry Unsworth won a Booker Award (do not ask me what it is). The title refers to the greed for wealth, and it does motivate the book. It is primarily about the 18th century slave trade and offers a grim and excellent account of it, from the building of a slave ship, recruitment of sailors (often by kidnapping), buying of slaves (from white traders and black tribal chiefs as well). However, the author alternates chapters with an account, reminiscent of Austen or Meredith, of a young man's pursuit of a wealthy young woman who is preparing a play with friends as a birthday gift for her father. It is a bowdlerized version of *The Tempest*. Shakespeare was considered crude in this time and was often rewritten, ludicrously to our eyes and ears. The young man's father owns the ship being built but kills himself when financial ruin faces him. His son drops the dilettantish group so that he may become wealthy and avenge his father.

At this point the ship is still off the African coast, picking up its human cargo. We have already learned of the miseries the blacks will face as well as those of a crew dominated by a cruel captain, but the author abruptly drops everything and years pass. The young man's romance had been lost but he has cynically married for money, which with a few wise investments has made him wealthy. He learns that his father's ship, long presumed lost, is rumored to have been intentionally beached in Florida, and the crew, black and white, are said to be living a Rousseauian life of unity and respect. He goes off to Florida to find them, since, after all, the ship and its tradable cargo are legally his, and the survivors probably mutineers. It may appear a dubious rumor, but he succeeds, and exacts revenge, especially upon a harmless cousin who had been ship's doctor. Unhappily he realizes his long-held hatred was unfair, even reasonless. The author could, I guess, have gone on, with other plots to join these, but he stopped here. None too soon, either.

Many critics and readers applauded his book with its easy moralities. For me the heart of the story, nearly discarded before the other plots, was the slave ship and slavery itself; just as he was about to reach the crisis with it, the ocean voyage with its attendant horrors, he dropped it. The Captain, a man to make Captain Bligh a panty-waist, vanishes before we can see whether or not a mutiny had occurred. The Florida enterprise and revenge are the author's wish-fulfillment fantasy for his protagonist. Barry, give back that Booker.

### Brief Accounts

As an Active Member of HWA and a faned I receive books and stories from writers who are canvassing votes for Hugoes and Stokers. I appreciate freebies, although very rarely are they books I might have bought for myself. Still, they deserve a mention. A popular trend is to append a well-known writer's name as "creator" of some idea and lesser known writers actually fill out the book with stories. Larry Niven created Man-Kzin Wars VII (apparently six SF-war books preceded it. This is a popular genre for folks who can't get enough of military mayhem. This has capable writing, but I prefer the broader horizons SF offers.

The late Roger Zelazny "created" Forever After, and wrote "preludes" to each of the stories contributed by others. My old friend, the able Dave Drake, adds a touching remembrance about Zelazny. However, I wish Zelazny, whose best work was well behind him, and who got mired in the dollar bills of endless Amber books, had done the book himself.

Cynthia Sternau and Martin H. Greenberg edited The Secret Prophecies of Nostradamus, which offers a quatrain by the old seer and then a story each by nearly a dozen writers which are not usually very relevant. Few even mention the old coot, which is not really such a loss, is it? Worse, few have a sense of cosmic mystery, which might seem relevant, given the theme.

Elizabeth Moon is one of the burgeoning female SF writer group, who also like to collaborate. I hate to sound sexist but they have lots of conversation in their books, and like the popular Lois McMaster, of whom a little is great and a little more goes a long way, they are partial to royalty. Moon's Winning Colors is a solo novel, but the content is not dissimilar, more royalty in space. This may be an influence of Frank Herbert's classic Dune or a holdover from fairy tales. After all, even Dorothy finally became a princess in Oz.

Want space pirates and adventuring Out There? Larry Segriff has it all in Spacer Dreams, a novel for young SF readers. At times like this I recall the heavy-footed but gloriously imaginative spaceways of old Doc Smith with wistfulness. Expect no Kimball Kinnison here.

Brett Davis's The Fairy Convention offers a world in which fairy creatures, elves, leprechauns, etc. and necromancy in general are the norm. Effinger and Turtledove did good creative work in this vein, but my appreciation of this novel is tempered by the long-tressed centauress on the cover toting a semi-automatic. I was not disappointed by a workmanlike effort, neither good nor bad, just the expected.

Effinger himself turns up, and, more's the pleasure, so does his Maureen Birnbaum, Interplanetary Swordswoman, familiar but still good for some laughs in one of the 20 stories in Chicks In Chainmail, whose editor, Esther Friesner, spends a lot of time trying to justify the hammy but expressive title. Zelazny offers a variation on the film "Cookie", as an out-of-work swordsman pretends to be a woman fighter. Sex rears its pretty head at last. Elizabeth Moon and some pretty good folks try but the book weaves a perilous path between cutsie-pie and the real stuff.

## BROADWAY BEAT

Winter 1996

Observing a great actor can be a transcendent thing. I concluded last issue praising Zoe Caldwell for *Master Class*. This time it is veteran actress/teacher Uta Hagen for her *Mrs. Klein (OB)*. The play is a true story about the psychoanalyst in 1934 London, and her angry relationship with her daughter, who wanted love but continually knocked her mother's work. It is a well-constructed play, but stately and unexciting, by Nicholas Wright, characteristically British in its reserve. Hagen is strong and honest yet one is always conscious of careful histrionics, an actress in a classical manner. The flamboyant Zoe was vividly alive.

Another well-known actress, Olympia Dukakis, tries to give life to an unsuccessful vehicle about alcoholism and AA, *The Hope Zone (OB)* by Kevin Heelan. No Oscar or anything else for this one, where she is her Mother Earth self, always dishing out advice. The theatre, usually doing shows in the round, is square in shape, and the designer chose to pretend the audience is part of the AA group with plain chairs, sofas, armchairs, many uncomfortable, placed in the first rows. Some audience sat within the playing area. If it was intended to include the audience dramatically, it was pointless. The play was also. Olympia was unbelievable when she shouted, and inaudible when she whispered. Casting was weird. Her lover, allegedly a retired cop with a pension, was no more than 30, half her age, and we were asked to believe they were in love. It was embarrassing.

I have often expressed my fondness for Irish theatre, It was put to too strong a test recently. Brian Friel, a great playwright, chose to make his latest, *Molly Sweeney (Bway)*, a three actor individual recitation. None ever spoke to another or in the present tense, as each, Molly, her husband, and her doctor, described an operation intended to give the blind Molly sight. The problems the operation caused for her and the others are the second act. Janet was bored all the way by this non-play, but after accomodating myself to it, which took half an act, I liked it, because of the beauty of Friel's writing. I viewed it as though I were looking at the play from behind a mirror, hearing the thoughts of actors doing the external play beyond. I was moved at the end by a beautifully abstract backdrop of flowers and colors, as Molly might have seen them.

Irish Rep, a favorite OB place of ours, brought in a production from Ireland which has made a stir there and in London. Written by novelist Pat McCabe, *Frank Pig Says Hello* resulted at intermission in "Janet and Ben Indick Say Goodbye". It was an exasperating, often incomprehensible exercise, using old music hall style and cliches of Irish drama, with a young man and his even younger self, who grunted like a pig. This young self, supposed to be about 10 or 11, was acted by a short, ugly adult who wore *mime* make up, white-face and lipstick, scratched his ass continually, as kids might do, but after 40 or 50 times, enough already. Perhaps unintentionally, he sounded and looked like a retarded child and/or a victim of cerebral palsy. These are not matters of ridicule to me and I detested him and the author of this painful farrago.

The Rep followed the insufferable Frank Pig with a revival of Tom Murphy's 1960s *A Whistle In The Dark*. Janet was still so annoyed with "Pig" I had to remind her how many good shows we have seen here. *Whistle* concerns a sensitive Irish immigrant to London who has married a British girl. His family of five brothers and his father move in on him. They are all louts, braggarts and trouble-seekers, lifestyles their father has imparted to them, with his belt and his false boasting. The youngest brother has potential for more, but in the situation it is impossible for his oldest brother to reach to him. In a tragic irony, the latter kills his young brother. I saw this play here some six or seven years ago, and while this was a satisfactory performance, with punch and power, I think the other was a bit tighter, with a stronger tension. The play is an example of the attitude of the finest Irish playwrights toward their own land and people: they refuse to accept the violence and braggadocio, the sanctification of terrorists. No one can knock an Irishman like an Irishman. Sean O'Casey, J. M. Synge and Brendan Behan were willing to accept the anger of crowds who jeered at their pacifist plays. Murphy is one with such writers. As an Eirophile, I regret the recent bombings by the IRA, which are part of the old response. Whether or not the British are sitting on the peace proposals, these should be pursued peacefully and forcefully in newspapers and TV. Killing bystanders, just as in Israel where bombs create terror and counter-terror, is unproductive and is in fact altogether reprehensible.

One of my favorite American playwrights is A. R. Gurney, an urbane and sophisticated writer, usually comic but also moving. WASPs are his usual subject, although Jews also enter. We saw a preview of his latest, *Overtime* (OB), in which he has the daring to write a sequel, set in contemporary times, to *The Merchant of Venice*, using Shakespeare's characters. They are not quite the same, however. Portia is revealed to be a beautiful but superficial flit. Jessica Shylock's daughter, Jessica, is dippy, but does return her mother's wedding ring to her father, in a moving scene. She also leaves Lorenzo for a woman. Shylock enters just before the first act curtain. Portia has made a big party, and has invited him to make up for "all the unpleasantness." Shylock, in a tux, says he accepted and will eat whatever is for dinner because now that he is "a member of the club" (he had been forced to convert, you will recall), he might as well take advantage of it. What Gurney does throughout is to puncture ideological and racial balloons. No cliché or stereotype is left unturned. At Curtain Shylock and Portia are together.

The play is too long as it is, some scenes unnecessary, but quite funny, often merely because of the shock at what a familiar character is doing. A big speech, about racism, is given to Gratiano, a minor character made into a black man. It is a good speech indeed. Shylock, as might be expected, is the wisest of all in this version, never Shakespeare's clown or heinous fiend. He does admit that sheer anger at the callousness of Antonio, who owed him money, forced him to desire that young man's famous pound of flesh.

I recognized Gurney sitting at the side and spoke briefly, recalling an earlier play, *The Perfect Party*, where the host was inviting a Jewish doctor next door because he would be a useful guest with his "five thousand years of guilt". Gurney laughed in delight to have it

remembered, and acknowledged the communality of that and this play, with their revealing party scenes.

We saw no theatre in Europe (aside from Michael's opera) because of the language barrier. There was some available in both Dortmund and Paris, but not much. However, we quickly got in two plays the first week home, both revivals on Broadway. *Bus Stop* was first and was a delight. William Inge was a successful writer in the 1950s but after his big hits the critics tended to disdain him and his concerns for "little people." A nervous, introspective man, he committed suicide in despondency. There was a simple humanity to his work, and, in *Bus Stop*, some very rich humor as well. Mary-Louise Parker made a very cute stand-in for Marilyn Monroe in one of her best parts. We saw the original production with the luminous Kim Stanley, a fine actress who died too soon. The characters tend to be stereotypes, the drunken professor, the naive high school waitress, the wise-cracking owner of the diner and her boyfriend bus driver and, most of all, the dumb but cute dancer being almost abducted by her headstrong young cowboy admirer, who knows little of women but knows what he likes, but they are alive and believable. The play did not succeed with the critics, but we thought it was loveable.

In mid-March I saw and heard Arthur Miller at Fairleigh Dickinson University here at its Teaneck/Hackensack division. An overflow house (500 plus) filled a large auditorium. Barry Malzberg and his wife came walking by us and Barry asked me whether I thought as many people would come to hear A. E. Van Vogt speak. I said probably not but they would undoubtedly come to hear Barry Malzberg. He laughed out loud. Miller read a long paper about realism in the theatre. It came off like Theatre 101, and proved a soporific to my jaded nerves, although I refrained from snoring. Miller was more personal in a question and answer (to queries on paper, censored by the prof in charge. Had I carried through my resolve and asked "What was Marilyn Monroe really like? Tell us everything" it would not have reached him. At 80 although he just finished working on a film of *The Crucible*, he already had forgotten its star Paul Scofield's last name. (I am 72 and my memory is just as bad.)

Miller has a cousin who lives in Teaneck (he was there too) for whom my kids used occasionally to babysit many years ago. He always said Marilyn was nicer than Arthur. I'll bet. I still like a lot of his stuff, although I think he is hypocritical about the origins of *The Crucible* and *After the Fall*, who can deny he is one of our three great playwrights? There is none active today who might make it a quartette. Who've we got? None who ignite Broadway as Williams and Miller did in the 1940-50 era. Mamet, Gurney, McNally, Shepard, Wasserstein, Shanley, Donald Margolies, Nicky Silver, coming along. Perhaps our finest playwright is August Wilson and his cycle of plays about black people during this century. Will any be for the ages?

A welcome revival by Roundabout (Bway) was *The Night of the Iguana* by Tennessee Williams (the second great playwright! And we shall see the third, Eugene O'Neill this summer at this theatre with his "Hughie" starring Al Pacino.) We had seen "Iguana" around 1962. Bette Davis was its reluctant star. The great lady was feuding with Williams and the director and soon became "sick" and missed shows. The night we went, the

manager came on stage and we knew he'd say "Miss Davis is ill." He did and continued, "But we have a wonderful understudy for this great play by Mr. Williams." He was wrong. Whoever she was, she was awful and the play was also as a result (it did win an award, but with Bette.) Our version featured Marsha Mason in Bette's role, a robust and active woman who owns a fleabag hotel in Mexico. A busload of tourists led by Shannon, a drunken defrocked priest comes by; he is the real star, in a way a male equivalent to Blanche duBois, and one of Williams' best male roles. The star of "The Heiress", Cherry Jones, appears, a spinster traveling with her 97 year old grandfather. She uses him, as he spouts his poetry and she sells her watercolors to tourists. The titular iguana is tied up by hired hands and at her behest, Shannon frees it.

There is an allegory of sorts here, but like much of this overlong play it is murky. Shannon spends most of his time wailing; the spinster admits to two barely sexual encounters in her life, no more, but does not appear, like Alma Nightingale in *Summer and Smoke* to secretly crave and finally actively seek sex. Nevertheless, the play is good Williams. In 1962, 3 and 1/2 hours was not unusual; today it is, and the director, hoping to speed it along, perhaps, ran the first two acts together. I felt this was an error. It upset the natural rhythm. The film starred Richard Burton, Ava Gardner and Deborah Kerr, but since I have not seen it I cannot compare it. I suspect Bette's kick was that the spinster's role was better than hers; she is called upon primarily to swagger around, and there is little shading. Mason played it uncomplainingly.

The future of American Musical Theatre Off-Broadway? Unpromising, judging by a pair of active, enthusiastic but unexciting shows. Cornpone comedies are occasional visitors to NYC theatre, sometimes very successfully. "Greater Tuna" and "Oil City Symphony" were likeable and funny. Cowgirls, a new musical (OB), book by Betsy Howie, music and lyrics by Mary Murfitt (co-author of Oil City) aspires to such, and while I was unenchanted, the audience laughed and even the NYTimes approved. So I am not always a seer. The owner of a small town music hall wanting a country music group hires what she thinks is "The Cowgirl Trio", but actually it is the "Cog Hill Trio", a chamber music group. Needless to say, in the wave of a cow's tail, they are expert country musicians, the thin contrived wisp of story is forgotten and the second act is all turns by the six ladies in the cast at original and not too convincing country music. At least "Oil City" gave us cookies and punch after the show.

*Zombie Prom* (OB) music by Dana P. Rowe, Book and Lyrics by John Dempsey, was not imitation Country, just imitation "Grease", a good show about teens which has become a gold mine. Set in the "nuclear fifties", *Prom* is a good-natured high school level show. A lovesick teen commits suicide by jumping into a waste dump (offstage) but returns, a lovesick corpse, gloriously green with a preposterous wig and finds love. The lady principal, a martinet, acquits herself well. Any high schooler would recognize her. A friend put it well: "Every song owes a residual to 'Grease'". It would do well to mock itself more, which it does too rarely, and in dialogue, not the constant synthesizer-powered high school rock. The cast was good and worked hard. The colors were bright. Still, a discouraging prospect for the theatre.

## Mailing Comments on Mailing 234

*FAPA Amateur:* In re Constitutional revisions, I do not like the word "liability". It appears to be begging for trouble. The disclaimer I recommended is universal, although Judge Speer appears to believe no case would succeed against general membership, so that if FAPAN X is libelous, that is the responsibility only of X, not the group. ^^^^

*Seth and David:* Inasmuch as the 1996 Hugo ballot is only for members of the LA CON, and they receive copies, and no one else can vote, I see no reason to distribute it in FAPA. ^^^^ *Peggy Rae:* Good work again on the egoboo poll. I vote each year, but, alas, never for myself, and I need more votes! I only read the first few "Amber" books but I liked them and would recommend them to you. They will not hurt memories.

*John-Henri Holmberg:* I enjoy your literate zine. I commiserate with you for having to translate King's *Rose Madder*, which, as I wrote last time, has power only during the spousal abuse section. However, there is no denying The Man's popularity. My wife and I were in Germany and Paris during Feb and March (CF the Milk/Paris essay), and in Germany there was a ton of King in translation. (Also Koontz and Grisham). I hope you get royalties! My son's opera was translated and I met the translator. He did a good job, even on the tough colloquialisms. The opera is about a gay man and the American expression for revealing his gender preference is "coming out of the closet." It has no direct equivalent in German, the closest being "breaking the toilet." To show this, the director, who was heavy on expressionistic symbolism anyway, lined up six toilet bowls on stage, within a cage, and the hero was symbolically trapped in there too. When he finally broke down a wall of the cage (with a terrific clatter -- no one slept here!) the bowls fell apart. It was the premiere, so everyone who cooperated in the production came on stage .. except the translator. \*\*\* My wife is now reading Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* and enjoying it. I never read it.

*Ahrvid:* I shall acknowledge the importance of Baltic fandom by mentioning I have had some pleasant correspondence with an American studying in Latvia, Brant Kresovich. I shall include something by him. Does "Swedish Ishes" sound as good in Swedish? ^^^^ *Milt Stevens:* Boris Karloff's Isle of the Dead was a good 1945 weird film. Of the several 1945 fanzines I know, I would surely give an award to Walter Dunkelberger for his Fanews and Fanewscards, which meant a lot to us in the Service. Precocious Joe Kennedy's TTTT (he is now a non-fan prof and poet) was a hoot. I threw everything out one day later on, in pique at the entire genre. Too bad. I returned to it but the stuff was lost forever. (SaM would have them!) CF my comments to Peggy Rae on the Amber books. Edd Cartier is retired and delightfully alive. His son, Dean, is getting together another book of his fantasy art (Gerry de la ree published one some years ago) with commentary, for Chuck Underwood.

*Harry Warner:* I reviewed Joe Sanders' Science Fiction Fandom for *Science Fiction Studies*, and reprinted the article in *Ben's Beat* last year. I wrote there: "The article is marred by inexcusably bad proof-reading." Harry, some of us read 'em thoroughly when we review. Joe Sanders kindly sent me a corrected reprint of the essay. I did, however, goof on Alex Eisenstein's last name. I had even teased him



about the Baron in Fledermaus. My sister's married name is Eisengart and a friend is named Eisenbach! Too many Eisens, I suppose.

*Boyd Raeburn:* A NYC Borough President is elected, and his or her function is to argue uselessly with the mayor and put buddies into offices. Real power is in the hands of the mayor and the City Council. As far as my son's opera and the critics, about 2/3 liked it and the others did not, around the country and the world. In NYC, *New York Magazine* and *The Wall Street Journal* loved it, but *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times* did not. In Germany I have no translations of the eight or so reviews but I think the percentages were the same. As for my pride, I shall put it this way: Michael uses the last name of Korie. At performances, people come up to me and say "Mr. Korie, you must be very proud of your son." I respond, "The name is Indick, and yes, I am." In Germany there was such a crowd at the party afterward I accepted the Korie name. It was far easier.... I saw Frank Sinatra in those halcyon days at the Paramount on Times Square. The place was packed with girls (with lunches, as they came to stay), screaming for Frank. I liked "Daybreak", derived from Grofe's *Mississippi Suite*, but the kids liked the flip side, "There Are Such Things".

*Murray Moore:* Welcome to FAPA. The green is relaxing, and so is your nice random commenting. Another Zelaznist! *Dick Eney:* An amusing conceit. It will not replace Edith Hamilton or Robert Graves, but FAPANS can be proud of their resident Graeco-Roman mythologists. By the way, who has to "authorize" you to do such a guide, Zeus/Jupiter?

*Ross and Gordon:* since we are confessing theatrical sins, I had an opportunity for stardom too which I failed to follow up. It was in the 11th grade, and I starred singing "Hey Babe", with a back-up group. A friend of mine still, and most annoyingly, recalls it!

Helen Wesson: Pork and kosher, pretty good, pretty good. CF my review of A. R. Gurney's play "Overtime" and his Shylock. \*\* That is a nice story about Charlie, and not just for the remarkable inheritance. I worked for a pharmacist who used to tell a story about a man who came in dressed like a bum, and was often treated as such. He was treated courteously here and was an excellent if eccentric customer for years, a man of wealth, although he left no inheritance to the old man. Who didn't need it anyway. \*\* We are getting a new kitchen and upstairs bathroom. Today was the first day of work. Terrible. All that banging, skaking and mess. There is still a lot of snow outdoors so that left messes indoors. They have yet to smash up the bathtub just to remove it. Oh the vibrations! They broke an old pipe and had a cascade in the kitchen below briefly. It was old, I admit, and it is just as well it was discovered, but -- an extra \$900! Heck, for that I could take Janet to dinner one night in Paris (see my report). So I cower, shaking, while Janet does all the talking, and I dream of two or three weeks from now when, hopefully, all will be fine and she will be happy with the new rooms. They actually were needed, but aside from that they were old when we moved in 33 years ago. So do not worry about 1996. It's all bright eyes and lollipops from here on. I hope the Boss has only great health and fun with the baby and with his remarkable wife.

I am happy you got the Vienna Summer palace on *B's B* since it is meaningful to you. As for Theatre, one of the workmen found a 1931 newspaper within a wall, a Hearst paper filled with pretty girls and scandal, and also some nice reviews of 1931 plays, all on paper which crumbled at the touch. I have always loved things Japanese, and saw at least three Japanese companies in NYC decades ago when there was a craze on for such (gone now, alas.) It is most unlikely we shall visit Japan. Janet hates long air rides, and even the 7 hours back from France on Air France, with lousy food and lousier film (Sabrina, dumb as can be in 1995-6) seemed endless.

*Redd Boggs:* I appreciated your natural modesty in the amusing story of Betty Vinmar's Assumption. However, keep in mind this is *your* God. There are others. Mine is not like that at all. He sits buried in sand up to His neck in Miami Beach, with His people. A copy of The Miami Herald is propped up under His chin, and a wet towel is on His head. He moans. "Oy," he says, "these children of mine (he doesn't count that son you mentioned as a *special* child, you know, just a very sweet, well-meaning, unfortunate son! they give me such a headache." (I nearly wrote "doleful news" above but it would have had a different meaning altogether.) "Too Many" is a delight, but actually there *have* been too many Rembrandts. Many museums are removing the master's name from dubious pics. The NYC Met put on a show about it, and even the Louvre, ever loathe to drop a good name even if there is doubt, dropped a few.

Russ Chauvenet: You are most fortunate in your xerox covers. This one is beautiful. To Eric Lindsay, for the comment you chose, I say, "Wait, my boy, wait. You never know which comes first but one will. You'll be better off if it's marriage." I feel less guilty about not calling on you when I zip past Silver Spring, because you did not call me when you chessed it up in the Big Apple. (I know nothing of the game, so had you wanted advice, although I would have checked the Times expert and suggested you used The Manchurian Candidate Attack, it might have been counterproductive.) A classy master like you might have taken that IBM computer too. As for a toga VS a sarong, the latter as worn by Arthur C. Clarke (in my photo) is only from the waist down, almost like a skirt. Whereas, when I spoke last one mid-March morning to Julius Caesar his toga drooped down nobly from a shoulder. H. Jackson's query page is thought-provoking. If K weren't so tired I would think.

*Fred Lerner:* I am indebted to you for the paragraph about Dwig, my favorite type and book designer. I have a "coffee table" book crammed with photos of his work, art and marionettes, and I have his play as well. The book also has a signed letter laid in, which is nice. I shall keep your note about the display room in Boston, although I rarely get there. This would be a must for me... I also appreciate your information about the so-called Ramapough Indians. I believe I have read *corroboration of your statements that their actual ethnic origin is mixed black and white. It is not a pejorative act to describe them thus. There is nothing wrong with their background whatever it is, but to pretend to something untrue is wrong.*

*D. Potter:* I liked your stuff, but do not swab your pages with garlic. It will louse up my coffee (I mush old apazines up and drink them.)

*Joe Sanders:* Another Greenwood book! Congratulations. I regret I did not receive a copy from SFS for review. For personal reasons, I would reject Mullen on nearly anything, but not yours. I enjoyed your travel report; if you have read mine you know we rarely relax on trips. Isn't it Peru which jailed that New York girl for carrying or pushing drugs? I have little sympathy for her if it is true.

*Tom Feller:* You are a busy man. It has been years since I went to a real con. The only one which tempt me are the fantasy and Lovecraft cons. Samuel Delany appears to be regaining a limelight of sorts, the Glasgow Con and a few weeks ago a sizeable article in the New York Times about him. I have never been enthusiastic for his work, and, when I read it years ago (subject to revised opinion now, perish forbid) I disliked Dhalgren.

*Andy Hooper:* Your arguments have merit, as do any against war, but you are naive. You think Hitler were a man to reason with. He was not. He had a mentality festering with hatred, one of the genuinely evil men in history. Evil has its own agenda. We and others had greed, avarice, stupidity, selfishness, but at worst none could approach his horror. Do not joke about the dead (the chiropodist line). There were enough other victims, including mentally and physically incapacitated. What gave this monster the right to place his or anyone's life above another's?

*Norm(an) Metcalfe:* That essay of mine on reappraising Merritt as an adult is so old I should revise it as a GRANDFATHER rereads Merritt! I wrote it for John J. Pierce and Paul Walker and a fanzine they were contemplating a few decades ago. Later I sold it to Darrell Schweitzer for a Starmont book. Now it is a Borgo book, "in galleys", and may come out if we all live long enough. I may, if so, reprint it here. Yes, I am still annoyed about monarchical science fiction, particularly so inasmuch as British royalty is certainly ready for the scrap-heap.

*Bob Silverberg:* I hope you have reconsidered about using your season tix to see Harvey Milk in San Francisco. It will be in English, is 6000 miles closer to you than Germany, and will have new songs written just for this production (and the CD which is going to be made.)

*Jack Speer:* I am not enthusiastic about Bill Clinton, but I also know something about being over 70. Bob Dole may fool himself but he cannot fool me that he is impervious to forgetting, hesitation, internal weaknesses and problems. That plus his current inability to make a single substantive statement make it necessary for me to vote for Clinton. Also, the GOP will still control Congress, and I like our system of checks and balances, to hold the line against those greedy Republicans. The dollar was worth about one and one third Deutschmarks, and about 4.3 Francs, but things are more expensive there than here, per dollar's worth. Janet compared brand names (colognes, leather goods etc) and they are less costly in NYC, which is why many Europeans fly to NYC to buy; it is cheaper in the long run. John Boardman is still further left than liberal. Let's say I myself am

between him and you. If I am not a Gentile to Mormons, what am I? I am certainly not a Latter-Day Saint! Not even a Present-Day Saint. Thanks for REH's stirring poetry. Little vignettes.

This brings me to Langley Searles' wonderful Fantasy Commentator, a cornucopia of interesting articles about that best time of all, the distant past, although the present is hilariously taken care in H. R. Felghenhauer's account of Ray Bradbury. Langley's interview with Bleiler and the Whitehead essay were excellent, as was Mike Ashley's article on Homer Eon Flint. I disagree with Mike's characterization of Austin Hall, who understood drama, if not always logic. "He was gone forever -- The Rebel Soul." What a topper to a tough situation. Unfortunately he strung together all too many words for its boring sequel.) How about "The Man Who Saved the Earth"? "Almost Immortal"? Grand old yarns. Flint was less exciting. I have always believed the best parts of The Blind Spot were Hall's, all the imagination and wonder, primarily within the first third of the book, and the subsequent plodding explanations were Flint's. Of course, Hall had set up impossible parameters. Flint must have been an uncomplaining collaborator even to try. When I was a kid and read the novel, initially in FFM 's serial parts, much the best of it, I was haunted. Then FN offered the entire work, with its deflating latter half. Many years later, I reread it in the Prime Press edition, which only deflated it further, such maturity as I had gained being rather tough on my old favorite. Still, I visualize Rhanda Avec on that Oakland-San Francisco ferry looking directly into the sun, as Hall commences, "Even the beginning." There is a "sentence" for Speer to rail at, but what an opener! Not bad word-spinning.

Sam Youd's letter frankly asks whether Sam's fan history is really of any interest except as nostalgia. I would agree, except that it is history despite the modest size of its heroes, and is valuable to have, if only for that rare instance when a future Moskovitzian historian does archeology within the ranks. .. R. F. Starzl is worth remembering, better than some fairy-tale writers of today. He would have been very proud of his distinguished son.

Sam, my good friend, in Paris I saw some fine first editions of Verne. The pitch on the embossed cover art was the geographical adventure inherent in the story, not science or even fiction, but intended for the armchair traveler in an unknown world where marvels just might happen. As for your Edward Page Mitchell, whom I suspect you made up, stories and all, even making your own time machine to go back and plant those anonymous stories in his newspaper, if anyone is altogether forgotten his influence must be minimal. So okay, P. Schuyler Miller found some merit in him. He bored me! Go, chastise me, he bored me! There. I have said it in print as well as in person. I know you too well anyway. You'll only laugh. And so will I. About those Garrett P. Serviss "Edison" newspapers, surely they are in your possession. As for the Liveright edition of the The Moon Pool they dropped the splendid Coll frontispiece but did use it on the dust jacket. I gave a copy to Joe Wrzos because he did not have enough books. How come we haven't gotten Joe into FAPA yet? Your Hugh B. Cave review was fine. Langley and Sam are very generous to give us this fine zine!