

Slips" and "Jule's Last Jam") made it to Broadway. "Paper Moon" never crossed over the Hudson river from New Jersey.

"Passion", another variant of the "Beauty and the Beast" story (the lady is the unlovely one), is due to open on Broadway late this season. It is based on a 1981 Italian-French film directed by Ettore Scola, which was in turn derived from an earlier Italian novel. The handicap of its obscure (at least for New Yorkers) genealogy is likely to be overcome by the transforming genius of Stephen Sondheim, who is reunited for this show with James Lapine, his collaborator on "Sunday in the Park with George" and "Into the Woods". Mr Sondheim, who recently shared a box with President Clinton after receiving a Kennedy Centre honour for the arts, today seems as much part of Broadway's old guard as Mr Styne, who is now 88. The two of them wrote "Gypsy" together as long ago as 1959. As Broadway starts on its next 100 years, where are the new Sondheims and Stynes?

Jacob Lawrence's paintings Negro exodus

WASHINGTON, DC

GR**EAT** movements of people are a *Leitmotiv* of American history, from the early settlers on. Waves of migration have shaped the country. As important as any was the mass movement of America's blacks during this century from the rural south to the urban north. Between 1910 and 1970, 6.5m blacks moved from south to north—a vast migration even by American standards. The country is still adjusting to the change.

The largest numbers (about 5m) headed north after the second world war, as mechanisation transformed the economics of cotton farming. But it is the earlier period of the great migration that is the theme of Jacob Lawrence's "Migration of the negro", painted in 1940-41. This powerful series of 60 small paintings with a simple text, which has been on show at the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, is about to begin a national tour.

In fact, the exhibition is a story of three migrations. The first is the immediate subject of the paintings: the exodus of blacks from the first world war on, driven out of the south by racial discrimination and economic privation, lured to the north by labour-hungry industry. Mr Lawrence's artistry captures a human drama of epic proportions.

Mr Lawrence was not himself one of the south-north migrants. He had never been to the south (he was born in Atlantic City and from the age of 13 lived in Harlem). He had never seen a cotton field or a boll weevil (whose ravages he portrays in one of the



Let my people go

paintings in the series). Yet the experience he depicts was intensely personal; it is that of a witness. This is no abstract history of the migration but, as Mr Lawrence himself puts it, "a portrait of myself, a portrait of my family, a portrait of my peers."

The series begins and ends with crowds at railway stations. Trains, stations, buses, throngs of people—the images recur, creating an impression of relentless movement. "And the migrants kept coming" ends the text, with biblical simplicity. The sharp, repetitive colour scheme adds to the sense of irresistible rhythm. Mr Lawrence's stylised figures are on the move too, bent forward as they walk, pointing at the view from railway carriages, bowed over newspapers urging them to come north.

Starkly, the paintings show the reasons why people left. There are pictures of ruined crops, bare tables, racist courts, nasty planters, child labourers. One picture shows the bowed figure of a woman after a lynching. In the north, the series continues, the migrants found better living conditions and education, but also disease, race riots and new forms of discrimination—including from the smartly dressed established northern blacks who "met their fellowmen with disgust and aloofness".

The series won much acclaim for the young Mr Lawrence (23 years old when he painted it). *Fortune* magazine reproduced 26 of the paintings in November 1941, and Edith Halpert's Downtown Gallery in New York put the work on display. The art world was impressed—so much so that a second migration began, this time of the work itself.

Both the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington wanted to buy the series. In 1942 each bought half of the 60 paintings—despite the fact that Mr Lawrence had written to Halpert explaining why he did not want the series split: "The complete

story was conceived within the 60 paintings; therefore to sell any one painting out of the set would be to make it an incomplete story." The current exhibition is the first time in over 20 years that the entire set has been back together. It will migrate around America during 1994 (moving to Milwaukee, Portland, Birmingham and St Louis) before arriving in New York in 1995.

The series is not quite in its original form. The third migration story the exhibition tells is that of language. Mr Lawrence decided to update his text for the current display. The word "negro" has disappeared. So, for example, the opening caption now reads: "During World War I there was a great migration north by southern African Americans." This intrusion of political correctness is unfortunate. The original text was in step with the painful times the series so vividly described.

London art galleries

Aussie contrarian

BOLDNESS is sometimes rewarded. In 1988 Rebecca Hossack, a thirty-something ex-lawyer from Melbourne, opened her first art gallery in London. She launched a second in 1991, when recession was closing galleries all around her. She has profited from her courage. Hers are among the few contemporary art galleries which have not only survived but thrived, and they have done so because they do not depend on the ephemeral thrills of trendy art.

In the 1980s Miss Hossack was horrified by where art was going in Britain. She felt the art world was being led by a rich clique of "self-appointed arbiters of taste", who subscribe to flashy international art magazines and favour transnational art move-

ments. She says:

They have ignored, to their great cost, wonderful, eccentric British artists, following in the tradition of William Blake and Samuel Palmer, in favour of those like the sensationalist American Jeff Koons, who has shows in New York, Düsseldorf etc, etc, simultaneously.

Unhappy with what she calls the chain-store mentality of international art dealers, she found that some of the best modern British artists are marginalised figures, many of them visionaries and outsiders. A lot of them are also immigrants. But her biggest achievement has been to search out and show non-European art. When she put on a show of paintings, prints and embroidered quilts by African Bushmen last year, Bushmen from the Kalahari desert came to London for the first time since 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee.

Just as the western avant-garde turned to Africa for new ideas and inspiration early this century, so Miss Hossack believes that now "the only way out of our cultural impasse is through non-western art, which still has passion and colour and, when used to inspire western artists, can result in a new hybrid vigour."

In 1988 she put on a sensationally good show of Australian Aboriginal painting. To western eyes, this figurative, desert-based art, so reverent towards nature and animals, appears marvellously abstract and endlessly inventive. Miss Hossack has travelled widely in the Australian outback in her search for the best new work in an art movement whose renaissance dates back to 1972. Over the past six years, she has organised annual seasons of Aboriginal art in London, often attended by the artists themselves. Among the top Aboriginal artists she has befriended are Clifford Possum and Ginger Riley Munduwalawala.

In the much more informed climate which she has helped to create, Miss Hossack aims to stage one-person shows for selected Aboriginal artists. She also plans over the next year to show pictures by Namibian bushmen, paintings by Nepalese village women and (a real discovery) mod-



Rush-hour in the Kalahari

ern primitive paintings by a man known only as Kano, which she came across during a recent scout for talent in Ethiopia.

It takes an imaginative leap for westerners to appreciate art from tribal traditions. "Magiciens de la terre", a big exhibition in Paris in 1989, provided a springboard by

juxtaposing works by leading contemporary western artists with those from tribal artists, who draw unselfconsciously upon ancient sources of culture and wisdom. There is an assurance and a sense of mystery about the best of their art which westerners contemplate with awe—and natural envy.

The cold war

In the blue corner

THE DEVIL WE KNEW: AMERICANS AND THE COLD WAR. By H.W. Brands. Oxford University Press; 243 pages; \$25 and £19.50

HISTORIES of the cold war tend inevitably to read like ringside commentaries at a championship bout where only one fighter is visible. American policy towards the Soviet Union was in Harry Truman's day already being constantly examined by Congress, the press and diplomatic historians. By contrast basic questions about Soviet policy towards the West lay, and still lie, shrouded by the ringside smoke.

Did Stalin plan from 1945 on to impose Soviet communism in Eastern Europe? Or would he once have settled for friendly democracies, and did he change his mind in response to events in the region and to pressure from the West? Did Stalin mean it when he told Roosevelt's son in 1947 that America and Russia could co-exist peacefully, or was he bent from the start on a struggle to the death with western capitalism? As the cold war wore on, Soviet intentions did not get clearer. The West was often surprised: by the break with China, by Soviet missiles in Cuba, and, at the end, by the Soviet system's sudden collapse.

Politicians and historians have, or ought to have, rather different reactions to such questions. For much of the cold war, American leaders had a robust answer to uncertainties about Soviet intentions: granted, those could not be known for sure—few adversaries' plans ever can be—but whatever the Soviet Union was up to, the wise course was to plan for mischief. Historians, on the other hand, are paid to be bloody-minded in their questions and to demand evidence in the answers. Until scholars have had the chance to mine the Soviet archives, many basic issues are going to remain open. Describing the moves of the boxer in the red corner will continue to involve guesswork.

In the meantime, the one-sided commentary goes on in a stream of histories and biographies. Many are by such young Amer-

ican scholars as H.W. Brands, who belongs to the "revisionist" school of historians. This school's starting point is that American politicians systematically misread Soviet intentions and exaggerated the threat, military and otherwise, posed to western inter-



ests by the Soviet Union.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s much American writing about the cold war was coloured by that view. This was a period of thaw in Soviet-American relations and a time when confidence in the virtuousness of American aims was shaken by the Vietnam war. But the climate hardened once more and in the 1980s the first generation of revisionist historians was pretty much driven from the field. They were taken to task for sloppy scholarship and for refusing to see the overall pattern of Soviet trouble-making and aggression. Now that the outside world has had a chance to look inside the "evil empire" and to see what a gimcrack affair it was, the revisionists are making a comeback.

Mr Brands avoids oversimplifications. He does not say, as earlier revisionists implausibly claimed, that the cold war was the result of American aggressiveness or imperial design: America slashed defence spend-