

BOSH

.....
Damon Knight once wondered "Oughtn't there to be a Collected Works of Bob Shaw?" and 15 years later that still seems a fine idea. Perhaps a future issue of Fanhistory might consist of "A Bedside BoSh" but in the meantime (for the benefit of those who've missed the some 20pgs of Shaw material which have appeared in recent issues of Warhoon) this sheet should serve as a reminder to exercise your vote in Taff (Bob is a candidate this year). Hopefully there will be one of these brief collections of quotes from 20 years of Shawvinism with each Locus up to the May 31st voting deadline. Unfortunately, that's not too many. Ballots are available from Dick Bergeron, 11 East 68th St, NYC, NY, 10021, or Steve Stiles 1809 2nd Ave, NYC, NY, 10028. :: This is BoSh #1, 28Mar69.
.....

STROLL (Slant 7, winter, 1952)

The tiny ship floated down out of the night sky and, for the first time in eight years, its tripod nuzzled into the soil of Earth. The engines gave a brief sigh, like a man settling into his favourite chair after a long walk, then were still.

Presently the airlock opened.

Frank Houseman sat for a long moment on the rim of the lock. The air of Earth was pleasant to him -- in eight years he had forgotten just how sweet it was. After a while he took out a cigarette and sat drawing on it in the darkness. The tobacco smoke tasted better somehow, when it was mixed with the scents of the familiar meadow.

From all over the ship came clicks and whirs as each machine busied itself with the task of becoming deactivated. Houseman grinned, savouring the feeling of being home.

He finished the cigarette and jumped down into the lush grass. They would be waiting for him at the house.

With a leisurely stride he covered the half mile to the south gate and turned into the lane leading to his home.

Eight years, he thought, eight years since he had seen his mother and father. Back in the old days he would have had to run. Eight years had been a tenth of a lifetime before The Shots.

The strangeness of the idea had often intrigued Houseman...were they very much different in those days? Did they run everywhere, knowing that their time was short? Did death not frighten them?

Using three hundred years of training, he put the subject out of his mind.

When Houseman reached the last bend before the house came in view, he paused and leaned on the gate to the orchard. The night air was heavy with the scent of apple-blossoms, and Orion had just lifted above the horizon. He lit another cigarette, and stood watching until the misty Pleiades reached their zenith. Perhaps three hours passed. Never having carried a watch, Houseman wasn't sure.

Strangely, he felt a slight surge of impatience. He continued on his way, walking rather faster than usual.

In eight years the house hadn't changed.

There were lights on. The detectors would have let the family know he had arrived. Probably his mother had prepared a meal for him -- again Houseman grinned.

The front door opened for him, and he went in, feeling glad to be back. His mother in another part of the house heard the clatter of his booted feet. He heard her voice before he saw her...

"I didn't expect you back so soon, Frank," she called cheerily, "Did you have a nice trip?"

"Quite nice, mother," he answered, "What have we for breakfast?"

THE UN-MANAGEABLE AUTHENTIC-SF (Hyphen 7, March, 1954)

I have been watching with increasing trepidation as AuSF appears month after month with the total number of issues creeping higher and higher. Over 40 issues now -- and still in Vol.1! How many keen collectors have spent thousands of fan hours devising

new methods of fastening, trimmmng and glueing to fit them all into one volume, only to hurl themselves despairingly into some dark river as the number becomes just Too Much. And, not only that anybody who did manage it would never be able to read them without looking as if he was playing an accordian.

PUN PRIMER (a letter in Bem 2, June, 1954)

In Belfast we have a strict tenet of punning which says that, to be truly, and not mechanically, humorous, a pun must have relevancy. Anybody can take a word and come up with several alternative meanings by using the known pun-making processes, and trot them out, labelling them puns. Actually they are puns, but of a purely mechanical form. I don't think there would be much difficulty in constructing a robot that could produce these puns in large quantities. The word 'relevancy' in this case means that the pun should be inserted into the conversation or script in such a way that it seems to have been inevitable when one looks back on it. I have known fans to try and edge the conversation into the proper track for the presentation of their pun as much as ten or more speaking turns in advance. I remember one occasion when it took a certain fan almost ten minutes before he could drag in Lee Hoffman talking her mother into permitting her to attend her first convention so that he could say 'it was a case of mind over mater'. All this applies to the pun that has been thought up in advance and not to the truly spontaneous pun. Here again the pun must dovetail properly. If the conversational opening is not of the exact size and shape to house his pun the punster must swiftly and skillfully fill in the additional framework required before releasing his masterpiece. The really memorable pun is constructed in the same manner as an onion, i.e. it has layers, each one complete in itself. Similarly a brilliant pun has strata upon strata of meaning -- a very difficult thing to achieve. A pun with three semantic layers is as rare as a ten letter word at Lexicon.

YOUR FIRST MURDERS (Hyphen 10, September, 1954)

"Who are you?"

"I'm your friend."

"What are you?"

"I'm similar to yourself."

"What am I then?"

"As far as I can make out we are both entities realised by the Reader of some sort of book."

"How is it you know more than I do?"

"I believe it is because the Reader has ascribed to us both certain characteristics from the depths of his own experience and, as it happens, I have been granted a more comprehensive knowledge than you."

"I feel I know what a Book is. The reader just uses it for his pleasure, and when he gets tired -- what will happen to us?"

"When he gets tired he will imagine the words 'The End' -- and that will be the finish of us, friend."

"How can the Reader imagine those words -- are they not already there?"

"Not in this space; it is really blank. The Reader will just read till he gets tired -- and then..."

"It is horrible. Can we not prolong our life at all?"

"Not unless we do something to interest the Reader enough so that he will not want to stop reading."

"Maybe if we went upside down, like -- LHT??"

"No, friend. That was a mistake. You made the Reader uncomfortable. He grows tired."

"I'm sorry! You're right -- I feel it coming. It -- it was nice to have existed with you friend."

"It was nice to have existed with you."

"Goodbye."

"Goodbye, friend."

THE END