

At different times during the course of his career he was called a reactionary, a romantic, a fascist, a visionary, a conservative, an Objectivist, a troglodyte, a technocrat, a racist, and other sundry epithets—some more caustic, some more complimentary. He was all of them and none of them.

John W. Campbell, Jr. was an individualist in the truest sense of the word, rejecting all labels and refusing to admit to following any particular philosophy. There will never be another like him. He was the prime mover in shaping science fiction into its present day form and the genre will bear his imprint for as long as it exists. To his monthly editorials in *ANALOG* he brought a unique combination of prejudice and objectivity which guaranteed the reader an unusual, idiosyncratic approach to any given subject.

He's gone now and *ANALOG* isn't quite the same. It's still the best s-f magazine on the market, still the largest selling . . . but something's missing. The editorials don't have quite the same punch, color, incisiveness. He was a giant and a tough act to follow.

## BINARY STAR

Campbell was 20 years old when his work

first saw print in the January 1930 issue of Hugo Gernsback's *AMAZING STORIES*. The genre was a natural for an imaginative MIT student who liked to write fiction. Subsequent tales rapidly gained him an ardent following and it wasn't long before s-f editors realized that the John W. Campbell name on the cover meant rapid sales on the newsstand. In a little over four years he was considered to be the most popular science fiction author in America, rivaled only, perhaps, by E. E. Smith.

That position was soon challenged by a new name—Don A. Stuart—whose "Twilight" was published in the November 1934 issue of *ASTOUNDING STORIES*. This story, a mood piece about man's far-flung future, entranced the science fiction world and further Stuart efforts such as "Atomic Power", "Blindness", "The Escape" and "Night" put Campbell's name in near total eclipse. Stuart's stories were something new to s-f; they were more subdued, more emphatic than Campbell's cosmic-scale romances, and they tolled the death knell for the Bug Eyed Monster—and fantastic invention-riddled space operas which had typified science fiction until then. Stuart's work formed the vanguard in science fiction's coming of age, when mood, plot and characterization began to rate equal time with the scientific aspects of the story.

Stories bearing the Campbell name became few and far between; and after he took over the editorial post of *ASTOUNDING STORIES* in September 1937, they became virtually extinct. His energies were now totally devoted to reshaping the face of science fiction. Strangely enough, the Don A. Stuart name disappeared, too—but by then most knowledgeable s-f fans knew that Campbell and Stuart were one and the same.

*ASTOUNDING*—which changed its name to *ANALOG* with the February 1960 issue—became Campbell's life for the next 33-plus years. (It should be mentioned that he also edited the lamented *UNKNOWN WORLDS* from 1939 to its demise in 1943.) He decided that it was time for science fiction to move out of its gee-whiz-lookit-that phase and become a more mature medium of expression. Scientific extrapolation is the core of good s-f, yes, but Campbell wanted the writer to put some flesh on his characters: he began demanding personality and motivation, a theretofore rare finding in the field.

A group of young writers who could fill the Campbell bill began to cluster around *ASTOUNDING*. Campbell nurtured the likes of Asimov, van Vogt, Sturgeon and Heinlein, berating them and

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challenging them—throwing them ideas that he had no time to develop himself. He became the Ezra Pound of science fiction. As Isaac Asimov put it: "Nothing I have ever written, whether he was directly involved or not, whether it was science fiction or not, fails to carry the impress of his influence." [1]

For over 33 years he conducted a continuous search for new talent. If a new author submitted a story that didn't make the grade but showed promise, Campbell would often send it back with a note explaining *why* he rejected it. You have no idea what a buoying effect such a note can have on an author who has previously received only mimeoed rejection slips from other editors!

If Campbell found a story good enough to be published, however, the author received only a check. This was typical of the man. He loved an argument, loved to inundate an opponent with a flurry of off-beat alternatives; but he quickly lost interest in people who agreed with him.

War-time paper shortages threatened all the pulp magazines but Campbell's editorial policies had made *ASTOUNDING* a leader in the field and it managed to pull through; not so its fantasy-oriented sister, *UNKNOWN WORLDS*, which gave up the ghost in October 1943. So Campbell's time was once again exclusively devoted to *ASTOUNDING*: he steered it through the so-called "Golden Age" of the Forties and the big boom of the early Fifties, through the slump of the late Fifties and early Sixties which decimated the s-f magazine population until only a handful were left. And he brought the magazine as *ANALOG* into the present resurgence of the genre.

## NEW WAVE

The world changed quite a bit during that period and so, naturally, did the people who make up s-f fandom. Many of today's younger fans have a mystical/collectivist orientation toward life and non-romantic tastes in literature; consequently, they demand and receive science fiction that suits their inclinations. In other words, pop-philosophy and pop-literary styles caught up to s-f (which many new writers interpret as "speculative fiction").

Thus was science fiction's "new wave" born. Campbell, for the most part, avoided direct personal involvement in the debates, although the antithesis of the "new wave" style was being called Campbellian s-f. *ANALOG* editorials, however, became more topical, more barbed and the "new wave" folk moved further and further away from Campbell.

What else could they do? Campbell's editorials had a marked tendency to reaffirm the concept that *A is A* and to find value in the sovereignty and efficacy of the individual. He dared to find value in capitalism! ("Capitalism motivates the individual to *be* an individual, and to see just how much he can accomplish in competition with all other individuals." [2]) Mystics and collectivists resent such

"twaddle."

He rejected stream-of-consciousness and similar pop-styles, insisting on publishing stories with both a beginning and an end and some sort of logical connection between the two:

The major factor that makes an *ANALOG* story is a consistency both internally and externally—i.e. the story develops logically from given data in the story, and doesn't violate known science pointlessly and without explanation. [3]

The author, to earn his keep, has to think things out in a direction the reader never considered, or in detail greater than the reader bothers to, or to a logical conclusion the reader shied away from. [4]

He was Aristotelian to the core and a firm believer in what he called the Schwartzberg test: "The measure of the rigor of a Science is the index of its ability to predict." Consequently, he had little faith in psychology (except in some of its applications to the market) and even less in sociology, referring to them as the modern day black arts. He railed against the Scientific Establishment for refusing to take seriously any research into psionics—telepathy, for instance—maintaining that it was probably a dead end, but it shouldn't be dismissed until it had been investigated.

## ICONOCLAST

He warred with all Establishments, in fact, believing that the more entrenched and snug and comfortable one became with one's conceits, the more one resisted movement, especially *forward* movement. His editorials challenged everything, spanning the galaxy from esoteric discourses on chemical engineering or the "black holes" of deep space, to the deaths at Kent state or the ecology movement.

The ecology movement . . . a particular thorny problem for Campbell who was a veteran bird watcher and all-around nature lover. But he also had a love for man and his works, and a scientist's faith in technology. What brought him into conflict with the ecology movement was the fact that he was an omnivore as far as scientific knowledge was concerned, and consequently he knew a good deal about ecology, something which set him apart from most of the movement's activists. He knew the life cycles of many fauna and flora, both macro- and microscopic, knew the effects of a temperature change on them and which way the population distribution curve would skew in a given situation. He knew that many of the additives in those wonderful lead-free gasolines were carcinogens. You couldn't frighten him with stories of nuclear reactors blowing up because he knew that the uranium in a modern reactor has about

as much chance of reaching critical mass as does the uranium hiding in the granite of Manhattan Island.[5]

Campbell did not favor disrupting the ecology of our world, but neither did he favor returning to a pre-industrial type of existence in order to avoid doing so: he put his faith in people's ability to perfect technology to the point of harmony with the environment. He saw the ecology movement as good because it gave impetus to efforts toward this end, but he attacked it for its hysterical, irrational and anti-intellectual overtones.

Read the editorials. They cannot be summarized with any justice, they cannot be broken down. Each must be read as a unit. There are numerous places about the country selling back issues of *ANALOG* . . . start with December 1971, the issue with Campbell's last editorial, and move backward. There's the one on the ecology of inner-city rats (5/70) or the one on "freedom of medicine" (10/70). Other topics include public utilities and unionism (5/66), the perfect spacesuit (6/69), the FCC and cigarette commercials (7/69), victimless crimes (8/69), the chemistry of man-made elements (9/69), race and intelligence (10/69), and on and on. Harry Harrison edited a collection of older Campbell editorials for Doubleday which is still in print. I've read in excess of a hundred, concurring with many and vehemently disagreeing with the rest. But I've never found one that bored me.

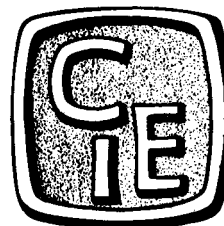
Most of my correspondence with Campbell occurred during a period in which I was living in rural Missouri. In the spring of 1971 I happened to mention in a letter that I'd be in the New York City area during June; Campbell wrote back and asked me to drop in at the Conde-Nast offices so we could meet face to face. Well, one thing led to another and before I knew it, June was gone and I was back in Missouri without ever having met him. I wasn't too concerned, however, because I was moving back East permanently in 1972 and there'd be plenty of time for us to get together.

In mid-July I received a letter from Kay Tarrant, *ANALOG's* managing editor at that time, saying that John W. Campbell, Jr. had died in his sleep on July 11, 1971.

The unique individualist who propagated fine science fiction for over 33 years and renovated the entire genre, who acted for so many as both irritant and mentor, was gone. Science fiction and I are so much the poorer for his passing. □

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES:

- [1] *ANALOG*, November 1971, pg. 169.
- [2] Personal communication, December 16, 1969.
- [3] Personal communication, August 11, 1969.
- [4] Personal communication, July 9, 1970.
- [5] A summary of Campbell's ecology arguments can be found in the September 1971 *ANALOG*.



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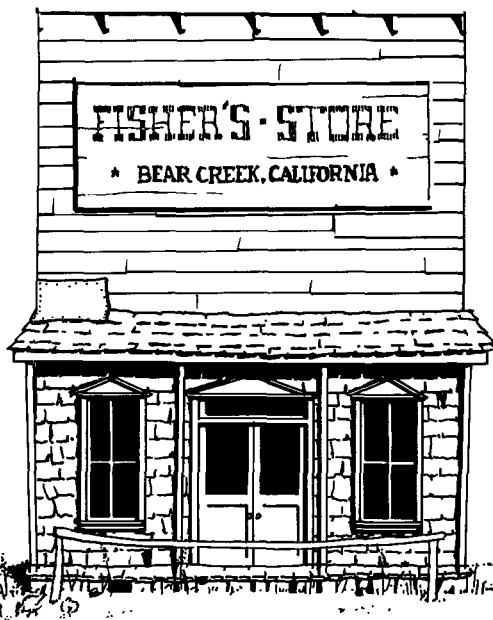
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## The Other World

Robert Greenwood

*This month, for the first time, REASON presents a work of fiction. REASON is not a literary magazine and does not plan to become one; we have selected Mr. Greenwood's story at least as much for its message as for its literary qualities. We may occasionally print other works of fiction that have something important to say to our readers, if the response is favorable. Mr. Greenwood provides some interesting food for thought as 1973 draws to a close.*

I kept thinking about that line from Emily Dickinson, the one about the horses' heads being pointed toward eternity. Only I wasn't on a journey toward eternity, metaphysically speaking. My immediate destination was Fishers' Store, and I was driving the buckboard, and with a single mule, not a team of horses. The mule kept flicking her ears, switching her tail. It had been a long pull up the grade from the canyon. I had rested her at Traverse Creek at the gravel ford, where the bridge used to be until it had been washed out in the floods several years ago. She took the grade at her own casual pace. I could see Fishers' Store ahead through the low branches of the live oak trees.

I caught sight on my right of the old hulk of an automobile rusting away in the manzanita bushes. George Fisher had not traded in cars now for several years. At one time he had taken them in trade and sold parts. The old hulk was one of the last models that had been made in the old Chevrolet Monte Carlo series. It had been cannibalized long ago: the tires were gone, all the upholstery stripped away, even the glass removed from the window frames. It was only a carcass; there was something vaguely disturbing about it, an association

that roused old memories, unpleasant to contemplate if you let your mind wander back into time.

I tied the mule to the porch rail close enough to the water trough so that she could help herself to a drink. Two wagons were tied up at the other end of the porch; one belonged to George Fisher. A bicycle leaned against the front steps. Three white chickens with red combs were scratching in the dust. An old brown dog looked at me out of the corner of his eye from underneath the porch and then went back to sleep. The store was a large frame building covered with cedar shakes, unpainted and rough in its general appearance, and the shingles were discolored through long exposure to sun and wind. I unloaded eight cases of fresh peaches from the buckboard, carried them up to the porch and left them in the shade.

I stopped before going inside the store to feel my pocket, to make sure it was still there. It was, and my fingers were reassured by its familiar shape, its tactile quality. "Hello, Tom," George Fisher said as I walked inside. "Those look like nice peaches." He stood behind an old wooden counter, that familiar squint on his face.

Heaps of merchandise and groceries, much of it locally produced, filled the long tables and rows of shelves; sacks of shelled corn and grains leaned against the counters, presenting to the unfamiliar eye an aspect of confusion. "They're the best of the orchard," I said, walking up to the counter. "I want the wooden cases back, when you get around to it."

"I have your IOU here." He marked it paid, signed it, and handed it over the counter to me. He had taken my IOU six months ago on the promise of the peaches. He smiled and gave me that appraising look of his, suggesting an aspect of his character that was curious by

nature. His head was nearly bald, with a fringe of curly gray hair around the crown. He had an angular nose, pointed at the tip. Some men had let their beards grow out, and kept them trimmed with scissors, as I did, but George was always clean shaven.

At the other end of the store three people were gathered around a long table. I watched them for a moment. "My mother wants to know if you have any honey today," I said.

"Good honey is hard to get. I have a little that John Ferguson brought in last week, very good, too. The best substitute for sugar there is. How much do you need?"

"How much can you let me have?" I asked.

"Let me look and see," he said, and he moved down the aisle between shelves stocked with rows of glass jars and bottles, in all shapes and sizes. I was always amazed how quickly he found exactly the item he wanted among all that discontinuity. "Here it is. John Ferguson's honey. Look at that amber color," and he set it down on the counter. "John takes first class care of his bees. He brought in twenty pints. Your mother will find this is fine to cook with. How is your mother, Tom? Is she feeling well these days?"

"She works hard, but then we all do these days. She's inclined to fret too much about a lot of things. Otherwise, she's fine." Over at the long table there was a small excitement, a commotion

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*Robert Greenwood has published in REASON, THE YALE REVIEW, THE PARIS REVIEW, WESTERN HUMANITIES REVIEW, THE ANTIOCH REVIEW, POEMS AND STORIES, and THE LIBERTARIAN. He has been employed in the publishing business for the past fourteen years.*