

DAWN OF FAME:

The Career of Stanley G. Weinbaum

By SAM MOSKOWITZ

The economic blackness of the Depression hung like a pall over the spirit of America. The year was 1934 and even though many may have desired the temporary escape which science fiction provided, they frequently could not afford to purchase more than a monthly magazine or two.

In such an atmosphere, publishers of the three surviving science fiction magazines competed desperately for a diminishing pool of readers. *Wonder Stories*, Hugo Gernsback's current venture in an exclusively science fiction magazine, gave preference to stories with new ideas and unusual approaches to the worlds of tomorrow. In this, it was joined in grim competition with *Astounding Stories*. This magazine, after a nine-month lapse in 1933, had been purchased by Street & Smith, and it also featured new and startling ideas, labeling its most unorthodox stories "thought variants."

Though harried by financial difficulties, Gernsback humored his teen-age editor, Charles D. Hornig, and took time out to read a short story which had just come in the mail. Publisher and editor, displaying remarkable restraint considering their mutual enthusiasm, wrote in the blurb for *A Martian Odyssey* by unknown Stanley G. Weinbaum in the July 1934 issue of *Wonder Stories*: "Our present author ... has written a science fiction tale so new, so breezy, that it stands out head and shoulders over similar interplanetary stories."

Readers were unreserved in their enthusiasm. The torrent of praise reached such proportions that Hornig, in reply to a reader's ecstatic approval, revealed: "Weinbaum's story has already received more praise than any story in the history of our publication."

This statement was no small thing, for even in 1934 *Wonder Stories* had a star-studded five-year history which included outstanding tales by John Taine, Jack Williamson, Clifford D. Simak, David H. Keller, Ray Cummings, John W. Campbell, Jr., Stanton A. Coblentz, Clark Ashton Smith, Edmond Hamilton, Robert Arthur, H. P. Lovecraft (a revision of the work of Hazel Heald), and dozens of other names which retain much of their magic, even across the years.

Told in one of the most difficult of narrative techniques, that of the flash-back, *A Martian Odyssey* was in all respects professionally adroit. The style was light and jaunty, without once becoming farcical, and the characterizations inspiredly conceived throughout. A cast of alien creatures that would have seemed bizarre for *The Wizard of Oz* was somehow brought into dramatic conflict on the red sands of Mars in a wholly believable manner by the stylistic magic of this new author.

It was Weinbaum's creative brilliance in making strange ventures seem as real as the characters in *David Copperfield* that impressed readers most. Tweer-r-rl, the intelligent Martian, an ostrich-like alien with useful manipular appendages—obviously heir of an advanced technology—is certainly one of the truly great characters in science fiction.

The author placed great emphasis on the possibility that so alien a being would think *differently* from a human being and therefore perform actions which would seem paradoxical or completely senseless to us. This novel departure gave a new dimension to the interplanetary "strange encounter" tale. Tweer-r-rl was not the only creature to whom difficult-to-understand psychology was applicable. In *A Martian Odyssey* there was also the silicon monster, who lived on sand, excreting bricks as a by-product and using them to build an endless series of pyramids; round four-legged creatures, with a pattern of eyes around their circumference, who spent their entire lives wheeling rubbish to be crushed by a giant wheel which occasionally turned traitor and claimed one of them instead; and a tentacled plant which lured its prey by hypnotically conjuring up wish-fulfillment images.

How thousands of readers felt about Stanley G. Weinbaum can best be summed up by quoting H. P.

Lovecraft, one of the great masters of fantasy.

I saw with pleasure that someone had at last escaped the sickening hackneyedness in which 99.99% of all pulp interplanetary stuff is engulfed. Here, I rejoiced, was somebody who could think of another planet in terms of something besides anthropomorphic kings and beautiful princesses and battles of space ships and ray-guns and attacks from the hairy sub-men of the "dark side" or "polar cap" region, etc., etc. Somehow he had the imagination to envisage wholly alien situations and psychologies and entities, to devise consistent events from wholly alien motives and to refrain from the cheap dramatics in which almost all adventure-pulpists wallow. Now and then a touch of the *seemingly* trite would appear—but before long it would be obvious that the author had introduced it merely to satirize it. The light touch did not detract from the interest of the tales—and genuine suspense was secured without the catchpenny tricks of the majority. The tales of Mars, I think, were Weinbaum's best—those in which that curiously sympathetic being "Tweel" figure.

Too frequently, authors who cause a sensation with a single story are characterized as having come "out of nowhere." Weinbaum's ability to juggle the entire trunkful of standard science fiction gimmicks and come up with something new was not merely a matter of talent. It was grounded in high intelligence, an excellent scientific background, and, most important of all, a thorough knowledge of the field.

Weinbaum had read science fiction since the first issue of *Amazing Stories* in 1926. Before that he had devoured Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, A. Conan Doyle, and Edgar Rice Burroughs, as well as many of the great utopian writers.

A graduate chemical engineer, Stanley G. Weinbaum left that field in his early twenties, to try his hand at fiction. His first successful tale was a romantic sophisticated novel, *The Lady Dances*, which was syndicated by King Features in the early 1930s under the pen name of Marge Stanley, a combination of his wife's name with his own because he felt that a woman's byline would be more acceptable on that kind of story.

Several other experimental novels were written during this period, including two that were science fiction: *The Mad Brain* and *The New Adam*. He also turned out an operetta, *Omar, the Tent Maker*, with the music written by his sister, Helen Weinbaum Kasson; a short story, *Real and Imaginary*; and a short-short, *Graph*. None of these was ever submitted to a fantasy periodical during his lifetime. The operetta has never been published or produced. A sheaf of poetry dating from this period must be in existence, judging by the manner in which he interspersed verse into the text of almost all of his novels.

Weinbaum must have turned to writing because he was a creative artist with an overwhelming urge to write, for certainly, as a means of earning a livelihood during the Depression, science fiction was not rewarding. He was thirty-two years old when *A Martian Odyssey* appeared in *Wonder Stories* and the sum he received for the story, at the prevailing rates, could scarcely have exceeded \$55.

Over at Street & Smith, Desmond Hall, as assistant to F. Orlin Tremaine, read the tale and was greatly impressed. He prevailed upon Julius Schwartz, then the only literary agent specializing in science fiction, to see what he could do about getting some Weinbaum material for *Astounding Stories*. Schwartz was also editor of *Fantasy Magazine*, a science fiction fan publication, as well as a partner in the Solar Sales Service with his close friend, Mort Weisinger. He had entry to all editorial offices. The problem now was how to obtain Weinbaum's address.

"Everyone believes that Weinbaum is a pen name for a well-known author," he ventured to Hornig of *Wonder Stories*.

"You mean Ralph Milne Farley?" Hornig queried, after checking his files and noting that both Weinbaum and Farley lived in Milwaukee. His expression was noncommittal. "What address did Farley use?" Schwartz asked, hoping that Hornig would be reasonably cooperative. "3237 North Oakland Avenue," Hornig replied.

That was all Schwartz needed to know. He wrote Weinbaum and offered to handle his work. Weinbaum agreed and sent him a new short story, *The Circle of Zero*. It was turned down by every

magazine in the field, but an agent-author relationship was formed that was to endure long after Weinbaum's death and become a major factor in the perpetuation of his fame.

Anxious to capitalize upon the popularity of *A Martian Odyssey*, Homig urged Weinbaum to write a sequel. Weinbaum agreed and then played a strangely acceptable trick upon his readers.

An earlier draft of *A Martian Odyssey* had been titled *Valley of Dreams*. Weinbaum found that, with a few additions and a little rewriting, it would serve magnificently as a sequel. He made the changes and sent the story to *Wonder Stories*. The story appeared in the November 1934 issue and if the readers suspected they were being entertained by the same story twice you couldn't tell it from their letters. Despite the intervention of the intrepid Julius Schwartz, *Wonder Stories* might have kept Weinbaum on an exclusive basis a while longer had it not been for an overexacting editorial policy. Weinbaum had submitted *Flight on Titan*, a novelette speckled with such strange life forms as knife kites, ice ants, whiplash trees, and threadworms. It was not up to the level of the *Odyssey* stories, but was considerably superior to the general level of fiction Hornig was running at the time. Nevertheless, it was rejected because it did not contain a "new" idea and Schwartz, toting it like a football around end, scored a touchdown at *Astounding Stories*. The story was instantly accepted.

Parasite Planet, which appeared in *Astounding Stories* for March 1935, the month after *Flight on Titan*, was the first of a trilogy featuring Ham Hammond and Patricia Burlingame. Though this story was merely a light romantic travelogue, the slick handling of the excursion across Venus with its Jack Ketch Trees which whirled lassos to catch their food; doughpots, mindless omnivorous masses of animate cells, and the Cyclops-like, semi-intelligent *mops noctivans*, charmed the readers with a spell reminiscent of *Martian Odyssey*.

In a sense, all of Weinbaum's stories were one with Homer's *Odyssey*, inasmuch as they were fundamentally alien-world travel tales. The plot of each was a perilous quest. Beginning with his tales in *Astounding Stories*, Weinbaum introduced a maturely shaded boy-meets-girl element, something brand new to the science fiction of 1935, and he handled it as well as the best of the women's-magazine specialists. The wonderful noted creatures he invented were frosting on the cake, an entirely irresistible formula.

To all this Weinbaum now added a fascinating dash of philosophy with *The Lotus Eaters*, a novelette appearing in the April 1935 *Astounding Stories* and unquestionably one of his most brilliant masterpieces. On the dark side of Venus, Ham and Pat meet a strange cavern-dwelling creature, actually a warm-blooded planet, looking like nothing so much as an inverted bushel basket, whom they dub Oscar. Intellectually almost omnipotent, Oscar is able to arrive at the most astonishingly accurate conclusions about his world and the universe by extrapolating from the elementary exchanges of information. Despite his intelligence, Oscar has no philosophical objection to being eaten by the malevolent trioptm, predatory marauders of his world.

The entire story is nothing more than a series of questions and answers between the lead characters and Oscar, yet the reader becomes so absorbed that he might very easily imagine himself to be under the influence of the narcotic spores which are responsible for the Venusian's pontifical inertia.

Economic considerations as well as loyalty to the magazine which had published his first important science fiction story required that Weinbaum continue to consider *Wonder Stories* as a market, despite its low word rates. Realizing that the magazine was reluctant to publish any story that did not feature a new concept, he gave the editors what they wanted, selling in a single month, December 1934, three short stories, *Pygmalion's Spectacles*, *The Worlds of If*, and *The Ideal*.

The first, appearing in the June 1935 *Wonder Stories*, centers about the invention of a new type of motion picture, where the viewer actually thinks he is participating in the action. The motion picture involves a delightful boy-meets-girl romance, ending when the viewer comes awake from the hypnotic effect of the film to team that he has participated in a fantasy. All is happily resolved when he finds that the feminine lead was played by the inventor's daughter and romance is still possible.

The Worlds of If was the first of a series of three stories involving Professor van Manderpootz, an erratic bearded scientist, and young Dixon Wells, who is always late and always sorry. The plot revolves about a machine that will show the viewer what would have happened *if* he had—married a woman

other than his wife; not gone to college; flunked his final exams, or taken that other job. The humor is broad and the plotting a bit too synoptic to be effective.

The second story in the series, *The Ideal*, has for its theme the building of a machine which will reveal a man's mental and emotional orientation to reality through a systematic exploration of his subconscious motives.

The final story, *The Point of View*, is based on the imaginative assumption that, through the use of an even more remarkable machine—an "attitudinizer"—one can see the world through the minds of others. The three stories are almost identical, varied only by the nature of the invention itself. There is a striking similarity in theme and characterization between this story and Erckmann-Chatrian's short story *Hans Schnap's Spy Class*—even to the use of the term "point of view"—which appeared in the collection *The Bells; or, The Polish Jew*, published in England in 1870.

Despite their slightness, the van Manderpootz tales are important because fascinating philosophical speculations accompany each description of a mechanical gimmick. Enlivened by humor and carried easily along on a high polish, Weinbaum's style now effectively disguised the fact that a philosopher was at work.

Understandably gaining confidence with success, Weinbaum embarked on a more ambitious writing program. He began work on a short novel, the 25,000-word *Dawn of Flame*, featuring a woman of extraordinary beauty, Black Margot, and stressing human characterization and emotional conflict. A disappointment awaited him, however. The completed novel went the rounds of the magazines and was rejected as not being scientific or fantastic enough.

He altered the formula slightly, still featuring Black Margot but sacrificing some of the literary quality for the sake of action and adventure. The new and much longer version—it ran to 65,000 words—was called *The Black Flame*.

With its hero from the present awakening in the future to find himself in a divided world, its beautiful princess, its strange contrast of advanced science and medieval battle, and its fast pace and color, it should have been the answer to a pulp editor's dream. The novel was rejected a second time. In his home city Weinbaum was invited to join a group of fiction writers who called themselves The Milwaukee Fietioneers. Members included Ralph Milne Farley, who had earned a considerable reputation as creator of The Radio Man series and other science fiction novels for Argosy; Raymond A. Palmer, a future editor of *Amazing Stories*; Arthur R. Tofte, an occasional contributor to the science fiction magazines, and Lawrence A. Keating, a popular Western story writer of the thirties. With his ready unaffected wit and his interest in people and the world, Stanley Grauman Weinbaum quickly won the sincere friendship of the entire group.

Within a few months, Ralph Milne Farley—the pseudonym of Roger Sherman Hoar, a former United States Senator from Wisconsin—who was doing a series of detective stories for *True Gang Life*, suggested a collaboration. Weinbaum wrote with Farley, *Yellow Slaves*, which appeared in *True Gang Life* for February 1936.

This was the first of several Weinbaum-Farley collaborations, including *Smothered Seas*, which appeared in *Astounding Stories* for January 1936 and dealt with the appearance of a strange alga which forms a scum over the surface of the seas of the world and then covers the continents, impeding transportation. It was a pleasant but undistinguished story.

The method followed by Weinbaum and Farley in collaboration was puzzling. Weinbaum would complete the entire first draft, and Farley would fill in the details and do the final polishing job. This seems strange, in view of the fact that Weinbaum was a master stylist, capable of writing the most finished prose.

The rejection of *Flame* now convinced Weinbaum that he would either have to write formula material for the pulps, a formula of his own invention, or go unpublished. Precious months had gone by in which he had written stories which satisfied him artistically but produced no income. The records of his agent, Julius Schwartz, show that Weinbaum derived not a penny from writing science fiction from the end of December 1934 until June 15, 1935, when *The Planet of Doubt* brought a check for \$110 from Tremaine at *Astounding Stories*.

The final story of the Ham and Pat series, *The Planet of Doubt* suffers by companion with *The Lotus Eaters*. It is evident now that Weinbaum was planet-hopping for immediate remuneration and not for the satisfaction of using his talent to its utmost. But by the time this story appeared, in the October 1935 issue of *Astounding*, Weinbaum could do no wrong, and this amusing tale of the animated linked sausages of Uranus was taken in stride by the readers.

It has been claimed that the pen name John Jessel, used by Weinbaum for his story *The Adaptive Ultimate*, was adopted because he feared that too many stories bearing his own name were appearing in *Astounding Stories* and that an increase in their number would not be wise.

The record of checks received at the time from his agent does not bear this out. Weinbaum had made no sales to *Astounding* for over six months. While Weinbaum may have thought that recent rejections were the result of too many appearances in *Astounding*, it seems far more likely that he had been "typed" and that Tremaine believed that the readers would look with disfavor upon any departure from his original technique.

Strengthening this possibility is the experience of John W. Campbell, Jr., who gained fame as a super-science writer in the Edward E. Smith tradition with novels like *The Black Star Passes*, *Islands in Space*, and *The Mightiest Machine*, and found it necessary to switch to the pseudonym Don A. Stuart for his mood stories, *Twilight* and *Night*, so as not to disorient his readers.

John Jessel was the name of Weinbaum's grandfather and the first story submitted to *Astounding* under that name, *The Adaptive Ultimate*, was a complete departure from the type of science fiction which established Weinbaum as an outstanding writer in the genre.

Whereas the Martian and Venus stories had been almost plotless travelogues, made narratively diversified by ingenious inventiveness and brilliance of style, *The Adaptive Ultimate* was the most carefully plotted of all of Weinbaum's magazine stories. With possible slight overtones derived from David H. Keller's poignant *Life Everlasting*—the more likely since Weinbaum listed Keller as one of his favorite authors—*The Adaptive Ultimate* deals with a tubercular girl who is injected with a drug that makes her body instantly adaptable to any environmental change. The result is the cure of her affliction, radiant beauty, high intelligence, and the astonishing ability to defeat death by overcoming every possible obstacle, not occluding a knife thrust to the vitals. There is a concerted campaign to destroy her, led by the man she loves, who fears she will eventually rule the world. When, through treachery, he succeeds in overpowering her and changing her back to a sickly, homely girl, he is overcome with remorse. "You were right," he whispers to the unhearing girl. "Had I your courage there is nothing we might not have attained together." His punishment is the realization, even at the moment when nothing remains of her former magnificent beauty, that he still loves her and that there is nothing he can do to reverse the fact that she soon will die.

The Adaptive Ultimate was the first Weinbaum story to be anthologized, appearing in *The Other Worlds*, a fantasy volume edited by Phil Stong in 1941. It has been dramatized on the radio at least twice, the last time on *Tales of Tomorrow* in August 1952. *Studio One* produced it as a full-hour show on television under the title of *Kyra Zelas*, and it was re-enacted twice more under different titles and later released as a motion picture called *She-Devil*.

The strength of this story, so adaptable to radio, television, and motion pictures, rests in its compelling, powerful plot. It clearly showed that Weinbaum could be, when the market permitted him, considerably more than a mere literary stylist.

When Weinbaum wrote Schwartz on July 10, 1935, "I have been laid up as the result of a tonsil extraction for the past several weeks but expect to be able to send you material at a pretty steady rate from now on," there seemed to be little reason for concern. Weinbaum had already begun work on a second story under the John Jessel byline, *Proteus Island*. On August 6, 1935, he wrote to Schwartz in a somewhat more disturbing vein. "Have been laid up again with a sort of imitation pneumonia as a complication from the tonsil extraction, and as a result the John Jessel story is still in the process of being finished."

Proteus Island was a well-written 13,000-word biological tale about an island where a professor's ill-advised experiment has changed the genetic structure of all animal life and vegetation, so that no two

things are alike. The tale is weakened when Weinbaum fails to take full advantage of the potentially powerful plot situation he built up, of a male visitor falling in love with a girl who he believes has been subjected to the harmful radiation of this island and therefore can never have normal children. The story found acceptance nowhere under the John Jessel name.

It was obvious now that Weinbaum was a sick man. Each of his letters spoke of heavier and heavier X-ray treatments which drained him of energy for long periods of time. Despite this, he continued to write. *The Red Peri*, sold to *Astounding Stories* on August 17, 1935, brought \$190 and was featured on the cover of the November 1935 number. In an editorial in that issue, Tremaine wrote: "Stanley G. Weinbaum has been very ill. I hope he's able to sit up and enjoy this month's cover and to see *The Red Peri* in print."

The Red Peri is a woman space pirate of phenomenal cunning, daring, and beauty. The story was intended as the first of a series. Standing by itself, it proved an entertaining adventure story, barely qualifying as science fiction despite its interplanetary locale and the interesting concept that the vacuum of space would be harmless to a human being for short stretches of time.

In the same issue, *The Adaptive Ultimate* appeared as a featured novelette, with its "superwoman" heroine. Add to these the immortal Black Margot of Urbs, from the Flame novels, and the dominant characteristics of Patricia Burlingame of the Ham and Pat series and we find in Weinbaum a powerful fixation on the concept of the superwoman who is tamed by love of a man. Evidence of domination by a strong woman somewhere in his life? Evidence more probably of his subconscious wish to meet a woman who was his intellectual equal.

Despite his illness, Weinbaum continued writing, careful to turn out the kind of stories he knew the magazines would buy. *Smothered Seas*, in collaboration with Ralph Milne Farley, and *The Mad Moon* were sold on the same day, September 27, for \$110 and \$100 respectively.

The Mad Moon is one of the finest of his queer animal stories. It combines such novel creations as the long-necked, big-headed, giggling "loonies"; a "parcat," half cat—half parrot; and semi-intelligent, ratlike "slinkers." Bizarre as this menagerie is, Weinbaum combines them all into a delightful, straight-faced minor masterpiece with just enough pathos to lift it out of the category of ordinary adventures.

The Mad Moon was probably the last story Weinbaum ever saw in print. On November 19 he wrote Schwartz: "Lord knows I'm pleased to get your check on *Redemption Cairn*. I've been in Chicago having some X-ray treatments again, and I'm flat on my back recovering from them. I don't know when I'll be able to get some real work done.

He never stopped trying. According to Ralph Milne Farley, though pain-racked by throat cancer and barely able to speak above a whisper, he continued to work on *The Dictator's Sister*, the first draft of which he finished before he died. Saturday, December 14, 1935, Julius Schwartz, while in the synagogue, received the following telegram from Ray Palmer: "WEINBAUM DIED EARLY THIS MORNING." Though he had never met the man, Schwartz broke down and wept. During the services he offered a prayer for Weinbaum, who was of his faith.

"Did you know that Stanley Weinbaum took off on the Last Great Journey through the galaxies in December?" F. Orlin Tremaine asked his readers in *Astounding*. "That he set his course by the stars I do not doubt. *Astounding Stories* is proud of his accomplishments in science fiction. He created a niche for himself which will be hard to fill."

"A few months before his untimely death," Charles D. Homig, Weinbaum's discoverer, wrote in an obituary in the April 1936 *Wonder Stories*, an issue which ironically marked the end of that magazine under Gernsback's ownership, "he promised us a third tale in the 'Martian' series—but did not have time to complete it."

Fifteen months after his first science fiction story appeared, Stanley G. Weinbaum's career had ended.

Few men were as instantaneously liked as Weinbaum. He seemed to be surrounded by a sort of radiance, both mental and physical, but he was modest and unaffected, with an outgoing friendliness and a genuine interest in people. Under the sponsorship of the Milwaukee Fictioneers, a memorial volume

was published soon after Weinbaum's death. Conrad H. Ruppert, who printed *Fantasy Magazine*, the fan publication edited by Julius Schwartz, played a key role in the preparation of this volume. He set the type of the 313-page *Dawn of Flame and Other Stories* by hand and ran it off two pages at a time in a limited edition of 250 copies. The sheets were sent from New York to Raymond A. Palmer in Milwaukee, who arranged with a binder to have the book bound in black leather and stamped in gold.

This was the first appearance of *Dawn of Flame* anywhere, and it revealed Stanley G. Weinbaum as a completely mature literary craftsman, tremendously talented in dialogue and superbly skilled in characterization. There is high poetry in the closing passages.

The volume contained six shorter stories—*The Mad Moon*, *A Martian Odyssey*, *The Worlds of If*, *The Adaptive Ultimate*, *The Lotus Eaters*, and *The Red Peri*. The introduction by Raymond A. Palmer was deemed too personal by Weinbaum's widow, so another by Lawrence A. Keating was substituted. Six copies with Palmer's introduction are known to exist.

Gemsback's *Wonder Stories* was purchased by Standard Magazines and came under the editorial directorship of Leo Margulies. Margulies placed Mort Weisinger, Julius Schwartz's partner in the Solar Sales Service, in charge of the magazine, which the Standard group retitled *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. Weisinger immediately decided to publish *The Circle of Zero*. An "idea" story, similar in mood to the Professor van Manderpootz series, it deals with the drawing up of memories from the past and the future. Too heavy on theory and too light on action, it reads more like a movie scenario than a completed work of fiction.

Learning for the first time that John Jessel was really a pen name for Stanley C. Weinbaum, Tremaine changed his mind about *Proteus Island* and published the novelette in the August 1936 *Astounding Stories*.

A short story, *Shifting Seas*, which had been sold to *Amazing Stories* shortly before Weinbaum's death, eventually appeared in the August 1937 issue. It was a minor effort dealing with a volcanic explosion that diverts the Gulf Stream, almost freezing out Europe, and the eventual solution of the problem by the construction of an undersea wall.

Now the search through Weinbaum's old papers began in earnest. The first story to be rescued from obscurity was *Real and Imagery*, a charming piece which turned on the solution to a mathematical formula. Retitled *Brink of Infinity*, it was greeted with enthusiasm when it appeared in *Thrilling Wonder Stories* for December 1936. No one noted that it was actually a condensation and rewrite of George Allan England's *The Tenth Question*, which appeared in the December 1915 issue of *All-Story Magazine*. Obviously *Brink of Infinity* was an early exercise in writing, which Weinbaum never intended to have published.

In 1938, several important changes occurred in the science fiction field. *Amazing Stories* was sold to Ziff-Davis magazines and Raymond A. Palmer became editor. He had Ralph Milne Farley polish Weinbaum's last story, *The Dictator's Sister*, which was published under the title of *The Revolution* of 1980 in the October and November 1938 issues of *Amazing Stories*. Having for its theme a dictatorship of the United States, run by a woman who through hormone injections has changed herself into a man, the story is excellent light entertainment.

The Black Flame, purchased at a bargain price of \$200 for its 65,000 words, helped insure the success of the first—January 1939—issue of *Startling Stories*. There seemed to be no end to "last" stories by Stanley G. Weinbaum. His sister, Helen Kasson, finished one, *Tidal Moon*, which was published in *Thrilling Wonder*, December 1935, but as he had written only a page and a half and had left no outline it was not significant.

Firmly entrenched at Ziff-Davis, which published books as well as periodicals, Raymond A. Palmer persuaded the publishers that it would be a good idea to consider seriously Weinbaum's early philosophical novel, *The New Adam*. It appeared in hard covers in 1939 with some rather ambiguous endorsements from Edgar Rice Burroughs, A. Merritt, Ralph Milne Farley, and Raymond A. Palmer on the jacket. The story of a superman with a dual mind who, because of his fatal passion for a woman, sacrifices the opportunity to lead the race that will replace humanity, is morbidly fascinating despite its extremely gloomy outlook. It seemed incredible that the same man who wrote with the delightfully light

touch of *A Martian Odyssey*, and who was able to produce so gay a frolic as *The Mad Moon* while dying of cancer, could have been so devout a disciple of Schopenhauer in a more youthful period.

Still another very early novel, *The Mad Brain*, was condensed into novelette form and peddled by Julius Schwartz to the magazines, with no takers. Finally it was published complete as *The Dark Other* in book form by the Fantasy Publishing Co., Inc., Los Angeles, in 1950. A reworking of the Jekyll and Hyde theme, it seems hardly worthy of Weinbaum's unique talent and is of interest chiefly as a collector's item.

A clever short vignette, *Graph*, dealing with the relationship of business to blood pressure was uncovered by Julius Schwartz and published in the September 1936 issue of *Fantasy Magazine*. As late as 1957, the July issue of *Crack Detective and Mystery Stories* featured a rather second-rate detective story by Stanley G. Weinbaum, retitled *Green Glow of Death* from his original title *Murder on the High Seas*.

The true importance of Weinbaum can best be estimated by his influence. No less a master of science fiction than Eric Frank Russell quite frankly both imitated Weinbaum's style and copied his bent for queer animals to score a success with *The Saga of Pelican West*, published in *Astounding Stories* for February 1937; Henry Kuttner attracted attention in science fiction by teaming up with Arthur K. Barnes to produce the Hollywood-on-the-Moon stories, mimicking Weinbaum even down to the characters Tommy Strike and Cony Carlyle, who were little more than carbon copies of Ham and Pat; John Russell Fearn, a very popular science fiction writer during the late thirties, invented the pen name of Polton Cross just to write stories that were parodies of Weinbaum. More subtly, Weinbaum's methods have influenced dozens of other authors, most strikingly Philip Jose Farmer in his masterpiece, *The Lovers*, a tale which would have done Weinbaum no discredit.

How enduring Weinbaum's personal reputation will be depends upon a relatively small number of stories, probably *A Martian Odyssey*, *The Lotus Eaters*, *The Adaptive Ultimate*, *The Dawn of Flame*, and, paradoxically, *The Brink of Infinity*. The short span of his writing, the insistence of editors that he write to a formula, the ravages of illness, and the economic depression make it remarkable that he achieved even as much as he did. The legacy he left the science fiction world, however, is still apparent everywhere.