

Stanley G. Weinbaum

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Stanley Grauman Weinbaum



Stanley G. Weinbaum

Born: April 4, 1902
Louisville, Kentucky

Died: December 14, 1935

Occupation: Novelist, short story author

Genres: Science fiction

Influences: H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Shelley, Edgar Rice Burroughs

Influenced: Isaac Asimov, Stephen King, H.P. Lovecraft, Jack Williamson, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Robert A. Heinlein Richard Matheson

Stanley Grauman Weinbaum (April 4, 1902 - December 14, 1935) was an American science fiction author. His career in science fiction was short but influential. His first story, "A Martian Odyssey", was published to great (and enduring) acclaim in July 1934, but he would be dead from lung cancer within eighteen months.

Contents

- 1 Biography and Writing Career
- 2 Planetary series
- 3 Van Manderpootz stories
- 4 Bibliography
 - 4.1 Novels
 - 4.2 Short stories
 - 4.2.1 Posthumous publications
 - 4.3 Collections of stories and poetry
- 5 External links

Biography and Writing Career

Weinbaum was born in Louisville, Kentucky and attended school in Milwaukee. He attended the University of Wisconsin, first as a chemical engineering major but later switching to English as his major, but contrary to common belief he did not graduate. On a bet, Weinbaum took an exam for a friend, and was later discovered; he left the university in 1923.

He is best known for the groundbreaking science fiction short story, "A Martian Odyssey", which presented a sympathetic but decidedly non-human alien, Tweel. Even more remarkably, this was his first science fiction story (in 1933 he had sold a romantic novel, *The Lady Dances*, to King Features Syndicate, which serialized the story in its newspapers in early 1934). Isaac Asimov has described "A Martian Odyssey" as "a perfect Campbellian science fiction story, before John W. Campbell. Indeed, Tweel may be the first creature in science fiction to fulfil Campbell's dictum, 'write me a creature who thinks *as well as* a man, or *better than* a man, but not *like* a man'." Asimov went on to describe it as one of only three stories

that changed the way all subsequent ones in the science fiction genre were written. It is the oldest short story (and one of the top vote-getters) selected by the Science Fiction Writers of America for inclusion in *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame Volume One, 1929-1964*.

Most of the work that was published in his lifetime appeared in either *Astounding* or *Wonder Stories*. However, several of Weinbaum's pieces first appeared in the early fanzine *Fantasy Magazine* (successor to *Science Fiction Digest*) in the 1930s, including an "Auto-Biographical Sketch" in the June 1935 issue. Despite common belief, Weinbaum was not one of the contributors to the multi-authored *Cosmos* serial in *Science Fiction Digest/Fantasy Magazine*. He did contribute to the multi-author story "The Challenge From Beyond", published in the September 1935 *Fantasy Magazine*.

At the time of his death, Weinbaum was writing an uncompleted novel, *Three Who Danced*. In this novel, the Prince of Wales is unexpectedly present at a dance in an obscure American community, where he decides to dance with three of the local girls, choosing each girl for a different reason. Each girl's life is changed (happily or tragically) as

a result of the unexpected attention she receives.

In 1993, his widow, Margaret Hawtof Kaye (b. 1906 in Waco, Texas), donated his papers to the Temple University Library in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Included were several unpublished manuscripts, among them *Three Who Danced*, as well as other unpublished stories (mostly romance stories, but there were also a few other non-fiction and fiction writings, none of them science fiction).

A film version of his story "The Adaptive Ultimate" was released in 1957 under the title *She Devil*, starring Mari Blanchard, Jack Kelly, and Albert Dekker. The story was also dramatized on television in the 1950s (at least one such production by Studio One was called "*Kyra Zelas*", the name of the title character).

A crater on Mars is named in his honor.

Planetary series

All of Weinbaum's interplanetary stories (he wrote nine and began a tenth which was completed after his death by his sister Helen Weinbaum) were set in a consistent Solar System that was scientifically

accurate by 1930s standards. The birdlike Martians of "A Martian Odyssey" and "Valley of Dreams", for instance, are mentioned in "Redemption Cairn", and The Red Peri and the Venusian trioptes of "Parasite Planet" and "The Lotus Eaters" are mentioned in "The Mad Moon". In Weinbaum's Solar System, in accordance with the then-current near-collision hypothesis, the gas giants radiate heat, enough to warm their satellites to Earthlike temperatures, allowing for Earthlike environments on Io, Europa, Titan, and even Uranus. Mars is also sufficiently Earthlike to allow humans to walk its surface (with training in thin-air chambers) unprotected.

Van Manderpootz stories

Three short stories deal with Dixon Wells, a perpetually late playboy who runs afoul of the inventions of his friend and former instructor in "Newer Physics", Professor Haskel van Manderpootz, a supremely unmodest genius who rates Einstein as his equal (or slight inferior). In "The Worlds of If", Wells tests an invention that reveals what might have been; in "The Ideal", the professor creates a device that can show the image of a person's ideal (in Wells' case, his perfect

woman); the contrivance of "The Point of View" allows one to see the world from another's perspective. In all three, Wells finds and then loses the woman of his dreams.

Bibliography

Novels

- *The Lady Dances* (King-Features Syndicate 1933) - This story (published under the name of "Marge Stanley") was published as a newspaper serial in early 1934 and has not been reprinted.
- *The New Adam* (Ziff-Davis 1939)
- *The Black Flame* (Fantasy Press 1948)
- *The Black Flame (Complete Restored Edition)* (Tachyon Publishing 1997; ISBN 0-9648320-0-3)
- *The Dark Other* aka *The Mad Brain* (Fantasy Publishing Company 1950)

Short stories

- "A Martian Odyssey" in 7/34 Wonder
- "Valley of Dreams" in 11/34 Wonder
- "Flight on Titan" in 1/35 Astounding
- "Parasite Planet" in 2/35 Astounding

- "The Lotus Eaters" in 4/35 Astounding
- "Pygmalion's Spectacles" in 6/35 Wonder
- "The Worlds of If" in 8/35 Wonder
- "The Challenge From Beyond" in 9/35 Fantasy Magazine (Weinbaum wrote the opening 800+ words of this multi-author story.)
- "The Ideal" in 9/35 Wonder
- "The Planet of Doubt" in 10/35 Astounding
- "The Adaptive Ultimate" in 11/35 Astounding (as by John Jessel)
- "The Red Peri" in 11/35 Astounding
- "The Mad Moon" in 12/35 Astounding
- "The Point of View" in 1/36 Wonder
- "Smothered Seas" in 1/36 Astounding
- "Yellow Slaves" in 2/36 True Gang Life (with Roger Sherman Hoar writing as Ralph Milne Farley)
- "Redemption Cairn" in 3/36 Astounding

Posthumous publications

- "The Circle of Zero" in 8/36 Thrilling Wonder
- "Proteus Island" in 8/36 Astounding
- "Graph" in 9/36 Fantasy Magazine
- "The Brink of Infinity" in 12/36 Thrilling Wonder
- "Shifting Seas" in 4/37 Amazing

- "Revolution of 1950" 10-11/38 Amazing
(with Roger Sherman Hoar writing as Ralph Milne Farley)
- "Tidal Moon" in 12/38 Thrilling Wonder
(with Helen Weinbaum, his sister)
- "The Black Flame" in 1/39 Startling
- "Dawn of Flame" in 6/39 Thrilling wonder
- "Green Glow of Death" in 7/57 Crack
Detective and Mystery Stories
- "The King's Watch" Posthumous Press 1994
(this story is a variant of "The Green Glow
of Death" from 7/57 Crack Detective and
Mystery Stories)

Collections of stories and poetry

- *The Best of Stanley G. Weinbaum*,
Ballantine, 1974
- *Lunaria and Other Poems*, The Strange
Publishing Company 1988
- *The Black Heart*, Leonaur Publishing, 2006
- *Dawn of Flame: The Stanley G. Weinbaum
Memorial Volume*, Conrad H. Ruppert, 1936
- *Interplanetary Odysseys*, Leonaur
Publishing, 2006
- *A Martian Odyssey and Other Science
Fiction Tales*, Hyperion Press, 1974
- *A Martian Odyssey and Others*, Fantasy
Press, 1949

- *A Martian Odyssey and Other Classics of Science Fiction*, Lancer, 1962
- *Other Earths*, Leonaur Publishing, 2006
- *The Red Peri*, Fantasy Press, 1952
- *Strange Genius*, Leonaur Publishing, 2006

External links

- Short biography by George C. Willick
- Stanley G. Weinbaum at the Internet Speculative Fiction Database
- *She Devil* at the Internet Movie Database

The Planetary Stories of Stanley G. Weinbaum

A Martian Odyssey | *Valley of Dreams*
 | *The Red Peri* | *Tidal Moon* | *Parasite Planet*
The Lotus Eaters | *The Planet of Doubt*
 | *Redemption Cairn* | *The Mad Moon* |
Flight on Titan

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Categories: 1902 births | 1935 deaths | American science fiction writers | People from Milwaukee

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