

tarzan of the apes author

Tarzan of the Apes author Edgar Rice Burroughs is one of the most iconic figures in American literature, renowned for his contributions to the genre of adventure fiction. Born on September 1, 1875, in Chicago, Illinois, Burroughs created a vast and diverse literary universe that has captivated readers for over a century. His most famous character, Tarzan, has transcended generations, inspiring countless adaptations in film, television, and other media. This article delves into the life and legacy of Edgar Rice Burroughs, exploring his influences, works, and the enduring appeal of his creations.

Early Life and Influences

Edgar Rice Burroughs was born into a middle-class family, the son of a Civil War veteran and a homemaker. His family background provided him with a stable environment, but Burroughs was not particularly academically inclined. Instead, he showed an early interest in adventure and exploration, influenced by the stories of his father and the popular literature of the time.

Education and Career Beginnings

1. **Schooling:** Burroughs attended several schools but struggled with academics, leading to a lack of formal education. He graduated from high school in 1895 but, feeling unprepared for college, sought adventure elsewhere.
2. **Early Jobs:** After high school, Burroughs held various jobs, including working as a pencil sharpener salesman, a railroad police officer, and a store clerk. These experiences, combined with his love for adventure novels, fueled his desire to become a writer.

Literary Aspirations

Burroughs began writing in earnest while working as a cowboy in Idaho. He started submitting stories to magazines, and despite facing numerous rejections, his persistence paid off. In 1912, he finally achieved success with the publication of "Tarzan of the Apes" in a pulp magazine called "All-Story." This marked the beginning of his illustrious career as a writer.

The Creation of Tarzan

Tarzan of the Apes emerged from Burroughs' fascination with the wilderness and the idea of the "noble savage." The character of Tarzan, a man raised by apes in the African jungle, epitomized freedom, strength, and a deep connection to nature.

Concept and Themes

1. Noble Savage: Tarzan represents a critique of civilization and a celebration of primal instincts. Burroughs explored themes of identity, belonging, and the dichotomy between civilization and nature.
2. Adventure and Exploration: The novel is filled with thrilling encounters, showcasing Burroughs' love for adventure. It reflects the early 20th-century fascination with exploration, particularly in Africa, which was still largely uncharted.

Plot Summary

The story of Tarzan begins with the shipwreck of John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, and his wife, who are marooned on the coast of Africa. After their deaths, their infant son is adopted by a tribe of apes, who name him Tarzan. As he grows up, Tarzan learns the ways of the jungle, developing extraordinary physical abilities and a deep understanding of the natural world.

The plot follows Tarzan as he discovers his true heritage, encounters other humans, and struggles with issues of identity and belonging. His journey is not just physical; it is also an exploration of what it means to be human.

Impact and Legacy

Edgar Rice Burroughs' creation of Tarzan had a profound impact on popular culture and literature. The character quickly became a symbol of adventure, freedom, and the romance of the wild.

Literary Influence

1. Pulp Fiction: Burroughs is often credited with shaping the genre of pulp fiction. His writing style, characterized by vivid descriptions and fast-paced action, set the standard for many adventure stories that followed.
2. Fantasy and Science Fiction: Beyond Tarzan, Burroughs created numerous other worlds and characters, including the Barsoom series (set on Mars) and Pellucidar (a hollow Earth). His work has influenced countless authors in the fantasy and science fiction genres.

Adaptations and Cultural Impact

The character of Tarzan has been adapted into various forms of media, making him one of the most recognizable figures in popular culture:

- Film and Television: Tarzan has been portrayed in numerous films, starting with silent movies in the early 20th century. The character continues to appear in animated adaptations, live-action films, and television series.
- Comics and Graphic Novels: Tarzan's adventures have been serialized in comic strips and graphic

novels, reaching new audiences and keeping the character relevant.

- Merchandising and Branding: The Tarzan brand has expanded beyond literature and film, with merchandise ranging from toys to theme park attractions.

Burroughs' Later Life and Works

After the success of Tarzan of the Apes, Burroughs continued to write prolifically. He produced numerous sequels and other works, establishing himself as a major figure in early 20th-century literature.

Continued Success with Tarzan

1. Sequel Novels: Burroughs wrote more than 25 sequels to his original Tarzan story, including "The Return of Tarzan" and "Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar." These works further developed the character and expanded the Tarzan universe.
2. Crossover Characters: Burroughs created a shared universe by connecting his various series, allowing characters from different stories to interact. This concept would later influence modern comic book universes.

Other Notable Works

Beyond Tarzan, Burroughs authored several other notable series, including:

- John Carter of Mars: This series features a Civil War veteran who finds himself on Mars, facing alien civilizations and epic battles.
- Pellucidar: A series set in a prehistoric world inside the Earth, showcasing Burroughs' imagination and adventure storytelling.

Burroughs' Enduring Legacy

Edgar Rice Burroughs passed away on March 19, 1950, but his legacy continues to thrive. His works have had a lasting impact on literature and popular culture, inspiring generations of writers, filmmakers, and artists.

Influence on Modern Media

1. Film: The various adaptations of Tarzan and other Burroughs characters have influenced the direction of adventure films and animated features.
2. Literature: Many contemporary writers cite Burroughs as an influence, particularly in the realms of fantasy and science fiction.
3. Cultural References: Tarzan has become a cultural touchstone, referenced in various media, from

cartoons to serious literature.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Tarzan of the Apes author, Edgar Rice Burroughs, remains a pivotal figure in literature. His creation of Tarzan has not only shaped the adventure genre but also left an indelible mark on popular culture. Through his vivid storytelling and imaginative worlds, Burroughs has captured the hearts of readers and audiences around the globe, ensuring that his legacy will endure for generations to come. The themes of identity, adventure, and the struggle between civilization and nature that he explored through Tarzan continue to resonate today, making his works as relevant now as they were over a century ago.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the author of 'Tarzan of the Apes'?

The author of 'Tarzan of the Apes' is Edgar Rice Burroughs.

When was 'Tarzan of the Apes' first published?

'Tarzan of the Apes' was first published in 1912.

What inspired Edgar Rice Burroughs to create the character Tarzan?

Burroughs was inspired by his own experiences and a fascination with adventure stories, as well as themes of nature versus civilization.

How has 'Tarzan of the Apes' influenced popular culture?

'Tarzan of the Apes' has influenced popular culture by spawning numerous adaptations in film, television, and literature, making Tarzan a cultural icon.

What themes are explored in 'Tarzan of the Apes'?

Themes in 'Tarzan of the Apes' include the conflict between civilization and the wild, identity, and the nature of humanity.

Was Edgar Rice Burroughs involved in any other significant literary works?

Yes, Edgar Rice Burroughs is also known for creating the Barsoom series, which features the character John Carter, among other works.

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