

author of conan the barbarian

Author of Conan the Barbarian, Robert E. Howard, is a pivotal figure in the world of fantasy literature. Born on January 22, 1906, in Peaster, Texas, Howard created a vast and intricate universe that has inspired generations of writers, artists, and filmmakers. His most famous creation, Conan, embodies the quintessential heroic archetype, and this article delves into Howard's life, his creative process, and the enduring legacy of Conan the Barbarian.

Robert E. Howard: A Brief Biography

Robert Ervin Howard grew up in a small town where he developed a love for storytelling at an early age. His father, a physician, encouraged his literary pursuits, and Howard read extensively, drawing inspiration from classic literature, history, and various mythologies.

Early Life and Influences

Howard's formative years were filled with influences that shaped his writing. Some key aspects include:

- Exposure to classic literature, including works by Edgar Allan Poe and H.P. Lovecraft.
- An interest in history, particularly ancient civilizations, which fueled his imagination for creating rich, detailed worlds.
- A passion for boxing and adventure stories, which instilled a sense of action and heroism in his writing.

By his late teens, Howard had begun to write and submit stories to pulp magazines, finding a niche in the burgeoning genre of fantasy and adventure fiction.

The Creation of Conan the Barbarian

Conan the Barbarian first appeared in the pulp magazine "Weird Tales" in 1932. Howard's creation of Conan was revolutionary for its time, presenting a hero who was not only physically strong but also morally complex.

Character Traits and Themes

Several defining traits and themes characterize Conan as a hero:

- **Physical Strength:** Conan is often depicted as a peak human specimen, embodying the ideal of physical prowess.
- **Cunning and Intelligence:** Beyond his brute strength, Conan is resourceful and clever, often using his wits to outsmart adversaries.
- **Moral Ambiguity:** Unlike typical heroes, Conan operates in a morally gray world where survival often necessitates violence and cunning.
- **Exploration of Civilization vs. Barbarism:** Howard explores the tension between the civilized world and the barbaric, often suggesting that barbarism can be more honorable than the hypocrisy of civilization.

These traits not only made Conan relatable but also provided a commentary on the human condition, setting the character apart from other heroes of the time.

Conan's Adventures

Howard wrote a series of stories featuring Conan, many of which are now considered classics of the genre. Some notable tales include:

1. "The Phoenix on the Sword": Conan becomes king but faces threats from his enemies.
2. "The Tower of the Elephant": A tale of adventure and discovery, where Conan seeks a stolen jewel.
3. "The Scarlet Citadel": Conan's capture and subsequent escape from a sorcerous king.
4. "The Hour of the Dragon": The only full-length novel featuring Conan, detailing his battles against dark forces.

These stories showcase Howard's ability to blend action, adventure, and rich world-building, captivating audiences and establishing a devoted fanbase.

The Impact of Howard's Work

Robert E. Howard's influence extends far beyond his lifetime. His creation of Conan the Barbarian has had a lasting impact on the fantasy genre and popular culture.

Influence on Literature and Media

Howard's work has inspired countless authors and creators, leading to the emergence of various sub-genres and adaptations:

- **Sword and Sorcery:** Howard is often credited as one of the pioneers of the sword and sorcery genre, which emphasizes heroic adventures in fantastical settings.
- **Comic Books:** Conan's adventures have been adapted into numerous comic book series, introducing the character to new generations.
- **Films and Television:** The character has been portrayed in several films, including the iconic 1982 film starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, and has appeared in animated series.
- **Video Games:** Conan has been featured in various video games, allowing fans to engage with the character in interactive ways.

These adaptations have helped to cement Howard's legacy, ensuring that Conan remains a prominent figure in fantasy lore.

Legacy and Recognition

Despite his struggles during his lifetime, Robert E. Howard has received significant recognition posthumously. Some key points of recognition include:

1. **Posthumous Publications:** Many of Howard's unpublished works and letters have been released, offering insights into his creative process.
2. **Awards:** Howard has been honored with various awards, including the Bram Stoker Award and the World Fantasy Award, celebrating his contributions to fantasy literature.

3. Cultural Studies: Scholars have studied Howard's work, analyzing themes of race, gender, and morality in his stories.

Today, Howard is regarded as one of the most influential fantasy writers of the 20th century, with his creations continuing to resonate with audiences worldwide.

Conclusion

The **author of Conan the Barbarian**, Robert E. Howard, has left an indelible mark on the landscape of fantasy literature. His unique blend of adventure, moral complexity, and rich world-building has inspired countless creators and entertained millions of fans. As the character of Conan continues to evolve and inspire new works, Howard's legacy remains a testament to the power of storytelling in shaping cultural narratives. Whether through literature, film, or gaming, Howard's work will undoubtedly continue to captivate audiences for generations to come.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the creator of Conan the Barbarian?

The character Conan the Barbarian was created by American writer Robert E. Howard.

What year was Conan the Barbarian first introduced?

Conan the Barbarian was first introduced in 1932 in a short story titled 'The Phoenix on the Sword'.

What genre does Conan the Barbarian belong to?

Conan the Barbarian is primarily associated with the sword and sorcery genre, a subgenre of fantasy.

How has Robert E. Howard's Conan influenced modern fantasy literature?

Conan the Barbarian has significantly influenced modern fantasy literature by popularizing the sword and sorcery subgenre, inspiring countless authors, games, and adaptations.

What adaptations have been made based on Conan the Barbarian?

Conan the Barbarian has inspired a variety of adaptations, including films, television series, comic books, and video games, with notable films starring Arnold Schwarzenegger in the 1980s.

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