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## EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS' MARTIAN NOVELS AS AN EARLY PARADIGM OF RACIAL TOLERATION

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**Abstract:** The Martian novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs (ERB) provide an early paradigm of racial toleration by displacing the heterogeneous race conflicts of the U. S. to an interplanetary location. There, the protagonist John Carter, representing Burroughs himself, introduces a level of racial acceptance and integration almost unheard of on the Earth of that era (the early twentieth century).

"A man who escapes into fantasies of other worlds uncovers himself with every page he creates," noted Irwin Porges in his 1975 biography of Edgar Rice Burroughs [a.k.a. ERB] (p. xiv). Sadly, for decades few concerned themselves with Burroughs. Though more attention has been given to the author by literary scholars in the past twenty years, certain aspects of his work lack considered analysis. This is true even though his books sell briskly at the dawn of the 21st century (McWhorter, "Edgar Rice Burroughs," [vii]; Markley, 184; Scholes & Rabkin, 171).<sup>1</sup>

Many writing about Burroughs' novels over the years beheld racist fantasies on virtually every page. In 1992 Richard Slotkin connected ERB with eugenicist Madison Grant, author of *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916), and Thomas L. Stoddard, author of *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy* (1920). In John Carter, the hero of the Martian novels, Slotkin argued the writer created his own Frontier Myth, with Carter "as the repository of the racial energy that will sustain, and if need be regenerate, the hegemony of the Great Race." Another ERB critic wrote in 1994: "Racism underlies nearly all of his writing" (Slotkin, 202; Silver). While both suggested ERB was not racist in the modern sense, they did not realize his leap forward on race, representing, as Robert Markley postulated in 2005, an "interplanetary populism" that "strip[ped] Eurocentric science fiction of its imperialist legacy." (Markley, 186-187).

A familiarity with the writings of Burroughs and with the extensive American racist literature at the turn of the century prompts the thesis that Burroughs' Martian novels provided an early paradigm of racial toleration by displacing the heterogeneous race conflicts of the United States to a remote interplanetary location, that location being Mars. There, by the active intervention of the hero, a degree of racial harmony is achieved. True, the lead character is white, but this is because he was, as Richard Lupoff wrote, "Burroughs in his most dearly imagined dreams" (Lupoff, *Barsoom*, 33). In other words, the race of the protagonist was a coincidence of the author's birth.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the struggle on Mars represented a conservative and peculiarly American attempt to achieve justice within the preexisting confines of the society. When Burroughs' heroes brought change, its purpose was conservative -- "to restore a lost order, to put a rightful prince back on the throne" (Orth, 223).

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## The Martian Novels

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Burroughs' Mars — "Barsoom" — was a dying planet to which Captain John Carter, a Virginia Confederate veteran, was mysteriously transported by a type of astral projection.<sup>3</sup> On Mars, however, he became flesh. The planet resembled somewhat that of Percival R. Lowell about a dying civilization, though the author's

scientific understanding was sketchy at best. (Mullen, 230; Markley, 186-187; Brady, 33-34; Clute, 177-179). While the stories may show a paucity of scientific knowledge, they revealed much about ERB's predispositions on race. It appeared that "Burroughs develop[ed] his heroes and their arenas for adventure according to his conception *how the world is and how it ought to be* [Italics added]" (Kudlay and Leiby, 68).<sup>4</sup>

Superficially the Martian novels were action-adventure tales for adolescent boys. Lupoff, however, in his *Barsoom* found that the "tales are laden with symbols... The books have several levels of meaning" (p. 26). Erling B. Holtmark wrote that the author was "in the mainstream ... of his day" and had a "presumption that 'our' [i.e., the American] way is unquestionably desirable and therefore to be imposed." More recently, Silver stated the society of the author "had certain racist tendencies with which Burroughs was indoctrinated" (Holtmark, 7; Silver). Yet, the novels provide little substantive support for these propositions.

The above racism observations are only true in a narrow sense. It was as Harry Stecopoulos said in a 1997: "Burroughs felt somewhat estranged from the status quo at the beginning of his pulp writing career." While the primary heroes in most of his novels were white men, they had an "attraction to difference." Stecopoulos deduced that there was racial ambivalence revealed in ERB's attitudes and writings (pp. 171, 177, 188). This attraction to difference and the accompanying ambivalence led to flaunting of the racial norms of the era.

At the same time, Burroughs supposed "indoctrination" was mild. In this period of extreme racism<sup>5</sup> even the U.S. Chief Justice Edward Douglas White, a Louisiana

Catholic, was a former Klansman (Cook, 172). Though American race relations were at their nadir, bolstered by the pervasive ideas of social Darwinism as popularized by Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner, and in the best-selling fiction of Thomas Dixon, author of *The Leopard's Spots* (1902) and *The Clansman* (1905), as well as the pseudo-scientific writing of R. W. Shufeldt, author of *The Negro: A Menace to American Civilization* (Hofstadter, 1-66; Hayes, 330-344)<sup>6</sup>, Burroughs' novels heralded toleration and even miscegenation.<sup>7</sup>

The above is particularly significant, for author Robyn Wiegman argued that popular American entertainment of the last half of the century upheld the male patriarchy through "gender sameness" of white-black interaction whereby "the male bond displaces social fears around miscegenation" and "[non-sexual] love of men does indeed circumvent the threat of miscegenation" (pp. 150-155). Yet Burroughs' fiction, written over a half century before this analysis, combined male bonding and miscegenation, exhibiting a conception of racial interaction more developed than that in much popular entertainment later in the century. It is revealing that Carter married outside his race, while Tarzan mated with a civilized white woman and therefore did not violate conventional racial norms. This may explain not only the many Tarzan movies, but also why the Martian novels were never made into films in the 20th century.<sup>8</sup>

A few writers, most notably biographer Porges, essayist Jeff Berglund, and analyst [F. X. Blisard](#), have argued that Burroughs was not a racist. "In fact," wrote Berglund, "his rather positive personal record of intercultural and interracial relations might suggest otherwise." Blisard found instances for viewing ERB as a promoter of "racial dialogue," including the "virtual adoption of a black Civil War veteran ([James M. Johnson](#)) into the Burroughs family," his sympathies for Native Americans, his admiration of "Buffalo Soldiers," "his introduction of a "black supremacist ... society in the first Barsoom sequel," and discovery of the author's poem "[The Black Man's Burden: A Parody](#)" (Porges, 60, 70, 426-427; Berglund, 59; [Blisard](#)).<sup>9</sup> Despite this, the Mars books have not been studied as the premier evidence of the author's racial tolerance.

On the other hand, Burroughs' Tarzan novels have long been criticized for black racial stereotyping, though Burroughs offsets this by throwing in stereotyped malevolent whites. He actually sympathized with the Africans. In *Tarzan the Terrible* (1921), for example, there is "criticism of contemporary attitudes toward blacks." ERB was not a subtle writer and, had he been so disposed, his alleged racism would have revealed itself as clearly as that of his contemporary, Thomas Dixon. (Holtmark, 45-46, 48-49; Greer, 16-121).

Born in Chicago in 1875, Edgar Rice Burroughs spent his youth in Illinois, Maine, and Iowa, and knew many Union veterans, including the black James M. Johnson. He attended a military academy and served a two-year stint in the army in 1890s, but decided against a military career. Burroughs soon found himself married, with a family, and stifled in a clerical job. In 1912 he launched his career as an author with the story "[Under the Moons of Mars](#)" in the *All-Story Magazine*, which became the basis of *A Princess of Mars* (Holtmark, 1-15; Brady, 353).

Given Burroughs life, it is curious that he selected an ex-Confederate cavalry officer as the protagonist in his Mars series. But the instant Captain Carter awakens on Mars, transported by an implausible means from earth and is confronted by enormous green men, we see the logic of this selection. Mars is revealed as a multiracial planet in a perpetual state of war. Who better to recognize this racial divide than one with direct experience of its dangers? Military dictatorship seems the preferred form of government. Who better to deal with this than a military man?

Of course, Carter is not just a fictional character, but is an embodiment of the ideals of his creator. The captain's distinctiveness and abilities derive from his earth origin and character, not his color. No wonder Carter believed, and by extension Burroughs, "It is the character that makes the man, not the clay which is its abode" (*Swords of Mars* & *Synthetic Men of Mars*, 340).

As a southern gentleman and a military man, Carter easily adapts to the Martian environment. Among the warlike green Martians (the Tharks), the Virginian's fighting ability endeared him (*A Princess of Mars*, 1, 36). So began his encounters with the races of Mars. In nearly every race he found an ally, the white-skinned Therns, interestingly enough, being the significant exception. He fought side by side with each race, and married the beautiful red Princess of Helium, Dejah Thoris. He became a nobleman of Helium and Warlord of Barsoom.<sup>11</sup>

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## The Races of Mars

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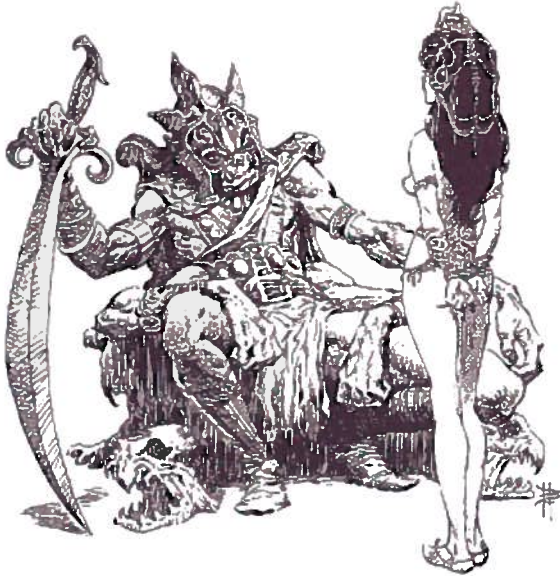
"The [science fiction] form has been a bit advanced in its treatment of race and race relations," wrote Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin in their 1977 study of the genre (p. 187). In this arena, Burroughs was certainly an original innovator. Unlike many authors of the period Burroughs did not find race and gender analogous and the frequent interracial male bonding, as noted earlier, did not preclude racial intermarriage.<sup>12</sup> In ERB's novels it is through the hero's interaction with a variety of races that a truly advanced racial accommodation manifests itself.

**The Tharks, a tribe of the green men of Mars**, were the first Barsoomians John Carter came into contact with when he awoke on the Red Planet. A patriarchal nomadic people, standing fifteen feet tall, with four arms, heavily armored, and carrying a variety of weapons, they were both imposing and threatening. As it turns out, Carter landed near one of their nests, where eggs were incubating. All the races of Mars reproduced through eggs. After escaping using some amazing acrobatics, Carter was finally confronted by one of the warriors, who laid aside his weapons. This figure was Tars Tarkas, who becomes Carter's first true friend on Mars. He, along with the other green warriors, was impressed with the agility of the newcomer. The Virginian became prisoner of the Tharks -- a status he did not long maintain (*A Princess of Mars*, 29; *The Warlord of Mars*, 152).

Soon after arrival at a deserted city, Carter downed a boorish warrior and proceeded to kill one of the great white apes of Mars. Carter noted that these events "and my feats of jumping placed me upon a high pinnacle in [the green men's] regard.... These people



fairly worship physical prowess and bravery, and nothing is too good for the object of their adoration as long as he maintains his position by repeated examples of his skill, strength, and courage" (*A Princess of Mars*, 34).



At another point in the narrative, Carter and Princess Dejah Thoris escape and are recaptured. Tal Hajus, the cruel Jeddak (leader) of the Tharks, ordered the death of the Princess, adding: "But before the torture you shall be mine for one short hour" (*A Princess of Mars*, 106). This type of rape scenario is suggested many times throughout the novel, most often with Dejah or some other beautiful red woman as the potential victim.

Carter maneuvered things in such a way as to force a battle upon Tal Hajus, who had killed the mate of Tars Tarkas. In a brief fight Tars Tarkas takes his revenge, kills the Jeddak, and rises to a position of power over the Tharks. Carter now had a powerful friend among the chieftains of Mars. He freed Dejah and returned her to her own people (at least temporarily). Tars Tarkas later leads the green men in alliance with Carter and Helium against the Therns, the Black Pirates, and the yellow men of Okar (*A Princess of Mars*, 92-93, 156; *The Warlord of Mars*, 152; Wright, 41).

A number of authors have identified the Tharks with American Indians, but Burroughs equated the red men with Native Americans. When his hero saw a large group of them arrayed in feathers and finery, he noted: "I could not but be struck with the startling resemblance the concourse bore to a band of the red Indians of my own Earth" (*A Princess of Mars*, 136). For the Tharks, Lupoff, in his study of *Barsoom*, found another earthly parallel:

Certainly the nomadic existence of the green men, their disdain for manual work, the role played by their women (at once treasured and protected, yet oppressed and exploited), their admiration of the martial attainments, their preference for desert rather than urban life, the emphasis placed upon horsemanship (thoatmanship)—all are suggestive of the Arabs, especially as they were known through the popular media of Burroughs' time (pp. 50-51).

This view is more logical than seeing the Tharks as Indian-like. Edward W. Said wrote in his book *Orientalism*: "If the Arab occupies space enough for attention [in western writing], it is as a negative value" (Said, 286). Given the average American's association of modern Arabs with Jihad and terrorism, if anything, the identification of the violence-prone Tharks with Arabs may be even stronger for current readers than for readers of Burroughs' generation.<sup>12</sup> To say that the green men resembled Arabs does not make them such. For one thing, they were clearly not humanoid.

In spite of the non-terrestrial language and culture of the green men, Carter adapted to their ways with intelligence, skill, and a surprising level of tolerance. This adaptation presaged how the hero would later deal with the other alien races. These future interactions were greatly simplified by the fact that all Barsoomians spoke the same language (Roy, 125-126).

**The red men of Mars** were among the most technically adept races, traveling and fighting using great air ships, and living in the most advanced walled cities, the most important of which were the twin cities of Helium. In physical appearance they resembled Native Americans.

Even though Burroughs may have been slightly influenced by the "Noble Savage" idea, it is worth considering that he was posted in the American Southwest while in the army and had first hand familiarity with American Indians. In fact, he produced a book in 1927, *The War Chief*, from which the editor insisted on deleting many of the favorable comments about the Apache. The author's comparisons of Indians with "civilized" whites were often unfavorable to whites. His personal acquaintance with Indians in Idaho, New Mexico, and Arizona seems to have been his inspiration for the red men of Barsoom (Porges, 426-427).<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, as is proven by the ease with which ERB created villains of a variety of racial backgrounds, including not only whites, but reds and blacks as well, his creations avoid what Roger Sandall called, an "imaginary landscape of romantic primitivism."<sup>16</sup> His aliens consisted of individuals, who were both savage and noble, good and bad. Carter even fought power-hungry red men such as Prince Sab Than of Zodanga, a city state that challenged Helium for preeminence on Mars. Sab Than kidnapped Dejah Thoris and threatened the destruction of Helium unless she married him. Carter subdued Zodanga and rescued the Princess with the help of hordes of green allies (*A Princess of Mars*, 138-152, 160-164).

Soon after Carter arrived on Mars, the Tharks did battle with a fleet of air ships and captured a young red noble woman. The Captain is immediately entranced by her beauty and falls for the scantily clad woman, Dejah Thoris, Princess of Helium. Though Dejah is supposedly a scientist, this idea is never developed, and she is constantly getting herself into sexually threatening situations that require rescue by the star struck hero (*A Princess of Mars*, 46, 54-59; Brady, 88). Clearly, ERB's views on gender lacked the progressiveness of his attitudes on race.

Few race sins at the turn of the century were more egregious than that of miscegenation. Madison Grant warned that ignoring race distinctions was sweeping America toward "a racial abyss," while Lothrop Stoddard felt the need for Americans to "exorcise the lurking spectre of miscegenation" (Grant, 228; Stoddard, 309). Dixon in *The Leopard's Spots* even asserted that to "become mulatto... that is death" (p. 242). Despite prevailing views, it was clear early on that Carter did not shrink from the implications of his feelings for the oviparous Dejah Thoris, whom he believed to be "all that was perfect; all that was virtuous and beautiful and noble and good." By the end of the novel he and his princess are married and await the hatching of "a snow white egg"—their first child (*A Princess of Mars*, 78, 171). That the red race itself is a product of race mixing further demonstrated Burroughs' departure from the norms of his time.<sup>15</sup>

Social Darwinists maintained the inferiority of Native Americans as well as blacks. In Franklin Giddings' *Principles of Sociology*, first published in 1896, the author declared that American Indians were virtually exterminated because "the Indian has shown less ability than the Negro to adapt himself to new conditions." Lord James Bryce observed in 1912, "One seldom hears of a pure Indian accomplishing anything or rising either through war or politics, or in any profession, above the level of his class." Writing in 1914 geographer Ellsworth Huntington theorized, "The Indians are very backward. They are dull in mind and slow to adopt new ideas" (Giddings, 328-329, quoted in Degler, 17; Bryce, 184; Huntington, 192).

In any event, in racist theory the mixture of blood of a superior with an inferior race resulted in a lesser breed. "The intermarriage of people of one colour with people of another colour always leads to deterioration," wrote Alfred P. Schultz in 1908. Noting race mixing in South America in 1915, famed Sociologist Edward A. Ross attributed to a Bolivian sociologist the belief that a half-breed was "inferior to both the parent races." "The valuable specializations of both breeds cancel out," wrote Stoddard, "and the mixed offspring tend strongly to revert to generalized mediocrity" (Schultz, 7; Ross, *South of Panama*, 41; Stoddard, 301).

This is especially notable because the offspring of the union of Carter and Dejah Thoris, the young Carthoris, was a fine human specimen. At his first encounter, having been transported back to earth and returning to Mars after an extended period, Carter did not recognize his own son. "His features were very regular," observed the perplexed earthman, "and, like the proportions of his graceful limbs and body, beautiful in the extreme." He later was much impressed with the martial prowess of the boy (*The Gods of Mars*, 93, 105). In the end, we find that Carthoris possessed the better physical attributes of his mother and father, combined with a sharp intelligence. He lacked any characteristics associated in the eyes of early 20th century racists with the hated "mongrel." In a later novel of the series, the couple had another child, a daughter, Tara, who was also an exquisite human specimen (*The Chessmen of Mars*, 7-70).

In fact, what happened in the Burroughs novel is precisely what was being encouraged at the time by Franz Boas of Columbia University. Boas argued against popular notions of inherent biological racial inferiority, positing culture and environment as more important factors in explaining race differences. As early as 1911, Boas advocated racial intermarriage as a solution to the nation's race problem, and felt racial amalgamation would "be of advantage" and presented "the greatest hope for the immediate future" (Stocking, 213; Boas, "The Problem of the American Negro," 393-395; Degler, 79).<sup>16</sup> Carter practiced what Boas preached!

**The Therns were the primary white race of Mars** and held a significant position in Martian worship of the Goddess Issus. Higher status members of the race, the Holy Therns, served as the supreme protectors of the superstitions that constituted the primary system of Martian belief. The Therns dwelled in the fortified palaces on the outer slopes of the Ortz Mountains.

All Martians lived to be very old, at least one thousand years, and seldom died of natural causes. In old age, the typical Martian who managed to live so long would sail down the



River Iss to a supposed celestial paradise, not realizing that what awaited was either death by the blood-sucking plant men or capture and enslavement by the white Martians. Instead of finding Heaven, unsuspecting pilgrims found a Martian hell (*The Gods of Mars*, 29; Roy, 126-129).

Carter, after sailing up the Iss, first encountered a Thern in the Valley of Dor, land of the dead, overseeing a group of red prisoners. The Captain saw that he was "a wicked-faced man, neither red as are the red men of Mars, nor green as are the green men, but white, like myself, with a great mass of flowing yellow hair.... He was about my own height and well muscled and in every outward detail moulded as precisely as are Earth men" (*The Gods of Mars*, 32-33). He later found that the hair was merely a wig covering a bald pate.

While the Therns most resemble Carter himself and should, based on the racist ideas of the time, be his most suitable allies; they proved to be the opposite. Their mercilessness, religious rigidity, and insufferable sense of superiority made them among Carter's most persistent antagonists. They had few redeeming characteristics. The prisoner, Thuvia, even told Carter in disgust, "The Holy Therns eat human flesh, but only that which has died beneath the sucking lips of the plant man—flesh from which the defiling blood of life has been drawn." Phaidor, the daughter of the Thern leader, boasted, "As man may eat of the flesh of beasts, so may gods eat of the flesh of man. The Holy Therns are the gods of Barsoom" (*The Gods of Mars*, 39, 75).



Carter's black ally, Xodar, explained the origins of the white race of Mars: "The Therns are but the result of ages of evolution from the pure white ape of antiquity. They are a lower order still. There is but one race of true and immortal humans on Barsoom. It is the race of black men" (*The Gods of Mars*, 69). It cannot be mere happenstance that Burroughs reversed one of the most popular of racist Darwinian arguments. This argument is best exhibited in the words of R. W. Shufeldt, who, writing in 1907, stated that the Negro "exhibits a much closer approach to the anthropoid apes than any other race of the genus Homo." (p. 36).

Carter felt no sense of identification with people in whom "ages of narrow fanaticism and self-worship had eradicated all the broader humanitarian instincts that the race might once have possessed" (*The Gods of Mars*, 86-87, 182). A combined assault upon the Therns quickly reduced their temples to rubble. The attackers "had cleared the fortresses and the temples of the Therns when they had refused to surrender and accept the new order of things that had swept their false religion from long-suffering Mars," reported Carter in *The Warlord of Mars* (p. 5). One is struck by this twist on the Darwinian concept of "survival of the fittest." After the fight, the small remnant of remaining Therns accepted their defeat and "so ... it was now no longer uncommon to see them mingling with the multitudes of red men" (*Thuvia, Maid of Mars*, 96).

Interestingly, three other white races appeared in other books of the Barsoom series and all were in decline. In *Thuvia, Maid of Mars* the Lotharians proved able to kill "by the power of suggestion," but had lost "the martial spirit" and became "a race of spineless cowards." There were no women among the surviving Lotharians and Tario, the Jeddak of Lothar, unsuccessfully attempted to keep Thuvia of Ptarth as a captive wife (pp. 50, 66).<sup>12</sup> As if to make the point clearer, a third degenerate white race, the blue-haired Tarids, appeared in the eighth book in the Barsoom series, *Swords of Mars*. This race lived upon the Martian moon Phobos. Though they had mental powers sufficient to render themselves invisible, only a few thousand survived. (*Swords of Mars* and *Synthetic Men of Mars*, 124-133).<sup>13</sup> Finally, a fourth white race was discovered in *Llana of Gathol*. The remaining members of the Orovar race, from which Therns, the Lotharians, and even the red men descended, occupied the ancient city of Horz. Carter stumbled across the hidden city and was sentenced to death, but escaped. This race like the rest was sliding toward extinction (*Llana of Gathol* and *John Carter of Mars*, 7, 13, 22-51).<sup>14</sup>

That Burroughs pictured all of his white races in decline and verging on extinction cannot be coincidence. To the social Darwinist of his era extinction was the appropriate outcome for a race lacking the ability to adapt. In Darwinian terms, dying races deserved their fate.

**The Pirates of Barsoom, a race of black supremacists**, were yet another tribe encountered by Carter in the second Martian novel, *The Gods of Mars*. They called themselves the "First Born" and were portrayed as superior fighters, often raiding the Therns and carrying off female captives. The women so captured were to serve as slaves to the figure that sits at the apex of Martian religion, the Goddess Issus, a black Barsoomian. The muted rape mythos existed in Victorian form throughout ERB's books, but like Martian slavery was interracial.<sup>15</sup>



When Carter had his first encounter with the blacks, they were attacking the Therns and Carter was disguised as a Holy Thern in order to rescue his beloved Dejah Thoris. Impressed by his military skills one black cried out to him, "But for your detestable yellow hair and your white skin you would be an honour to the First Born of Barsoom" (*The Gods of Mars*, 59).

Burroughs went to great lengths to fully describe the black race of Mars:

They were large men, possibly six feet and over in height. Their features were clear cut and handsome in the extreme; their eyes were well set and large, though a slight narrowness lent them a crafty appearance; the iris, as well as I could determine by moonlight, was of extreme blackness, while the eyeball itself was quite white and clear. The physical structure of their bodies seemed identical with those of the therns, the red men, and my own. Only in the colour of their skin did they differ materially from us; that is of

the appearance of polished ebony, and odd as it may seem for a Southerner to say it, adds to rather than detracts from their marvelous beauty (p. 55).

Compare the above description with the following description written near the same time of a black Union soldier in Thomas Dixon's best seller *The Clansman*, which had already toured the nation as a successful play in 1905-06, and was being made into a film (Cook, 135-154, 161-167) while ERB was writing his Martian novel:

He had the short, heavy-set neck of the lower order of animals. His skin was coal black, his lips so thick they curled both ways up and down with crooked blood-marks across them. His nose was flat, and its enormous nostrils seemed in perpetual dilation. The sinister bead eyes, with brown splotches in their whites, were set wide apart and gleamed ape-like under his scant brows. His enormous cheekbones and jaws seemed to protrude beyond the ears and almost hide them (p. 216).

This is a dramatic contrast for two men of basically the same generation. Dixon, born in 1864, considered many of the blacks he described in his novels as sub-human, whereas Burroughs, born in 1875, rated his Martian blacks as superior human types.

That Carter's attitude toward the blacks was indicative of Burroughs' own real life attitude is without doubt. While in the army, ERB worked under a black sergeant and observed: "Without exception they [African American sergeants] were excellent men who took no advantage of their authority over us and on the whole were better to work under than our own white sergeants." In 1899 he mocked Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden," with a parody that identified white culture with bringing "the white man's God, and rum." Then he proceeded: "Take it because you must; Burden of making money; Burden of greed and lust" (ERB's Autobiography [unpublished ms.] and from parody in ERB's Scrapbook, in Porges, 60, 72).

Notwithstanding the overall positive view presented of the black race on Mars, one member of said race was the epitome of evil: Issus, Goddess of Death and Life Eternal. Issus was central to the Martian religion, upheld by both the Holy Therns and the Black Pirates of Barsoom. Carter learned of her true nature when told by a black friend, Xodar, that "she eats only the flesh of the best bred Holy Therns and the red Barsoomians." Slaves were summarily executed after a Martian year in her service. Also, Issus was supposedly beautiful, but in fact used her telepathic powers to entrance others. Carter, not subject to her powers, related that the true vision of the goddess was that of an old, wrinkled hag, who was repulsive and emaciated, except for a grotesquely "distorted abdomen" (*The Gods of Mars*, 87-88).

Carter, with the aid of his green and red allies and his black friend, Xodar at his side, overthrew the hag whose merciless and superstitious cult enslaved all Barsoom. He threw the false goddess to the "betrayed and vengeful" First Born, who ripped her to shreds. Thereafter, Xodar was elevated to Jeddak of the black race of Barsoom (*The Gods of Mars*, 203; *The Warlord of Mars*, 2). Thus Carter cemented another alliance.

**The yellow men of Barsoom** lived in isolation in the frigid cold of the north polar ice cap. Carter and a friend, Thuvan Dihn, set out on a mission toward the north to find Tardos Mors and Mors Kajak, the grandfather and father of Dejah Thoris. In the wastes of the north, Carter and Thuvan Dihn, come to the defense of a yellow warrior battling five others by himself, all "fierce, black-bearded fellows, with skins the color of ripe lemon" (*The Warlord of Mars*, 80). The earthman and his friend earn the gratitude of Talu, Prince of Marentina, who helps them gain entrance into the city of Kadabra, capital of Okar, the land of the yellow men.

The city, encased in a giant glass-like dome, had its own atmosphere plant. Therein Carter found that Dejah Thoris, whom he thought safe, had fallen into the hands of Salensus Oll, Jeddak of Okar, who had plans to marry her, proclaiming her beloved husband dead. Carter, disguised as a yellow man, was exposed, arrested, and imprisoned. He finds Tardos Mors, Mors Kajak, and leads a prisoner revolt that ends in the death of Salensus Oll and the installation of Talu as the new Jeddak of Okar (*The Warlord of Mars*, 97-132, 148). Thus Carter redeemed the yellow men.

What of turn-of-the-century views on the world's yellow races? In 1907 Shufeldt believed that while the Chinese were superior to the Negro "they, too, from the very nature of their unprogressiveness, are unsuited to the form of Indo-European civilization." As early as 1901, Stanford Sociologist Ross coined the term "race suicide" to describe Asian profundity that threatened displacement of whites. Stoddard speculated: "There is no immediate danger of the world being swamped by black blood. But there is a very imminent danger that the white stocks may be swamped by Asiatic blood" (Shufeldt, 161; Johnson quoted in Matthews, 623-624; Ross, "The Causes of Race Superiority," 87-88; Stoddard, 301).

The menace being noted was popularly termed "the Yellow Peril." The San Francisco Chronicle called in 1905 for restrictions on Japanese immigration along the lines of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. "The yellow terror is threatening us," wrote Schultz in 1908, "and will probably soon be at our throats." During the 1912 presidential campaign Woodrow Wilson even said of Chinese and Japanese immigration: "I stand for the national policy of exclusion... We cannot make a homogeneous population of a people who do not blend with the Caucasian race" ("The Yellow Peril...," Schultz, 178; Gyory, 1-2; Wilson, 24:238).<sup>21</sup>

At the time Burroughs was writing, the idea of the devious oriental villain had been established as far back as 1892. While ERB was in 1913 serializing the installments of his *Warlord of Mars*, the book in which the yellow race appeared, another author, Sax Rohmer (Arthur S. Ward) published in England *The Mystery of Fu Manchu*, appearing under the American title *The Insidious Fu Manchu*. Fu Manchu was "the Yellow Peril archetype" (Nevins). Burroughs, though familiar with this popular view, did not share such prejudice.

Given the popular attitudes toward Mongoloid peoples in the United States, it is notable that Carter found a trustworthy ally among yellow persons. Burroughs himself once petitioned unsuccessfully for a position as a trainer for the Chinese Army after the thwarted 1900 Boxer Rebellion (Porges, 96-97).<sup>22</sup> This was at a time when the U.S. had



excluded Chinese and was considering Japanese exclusion, and suggests a certain liberality in ERB's attitudes.

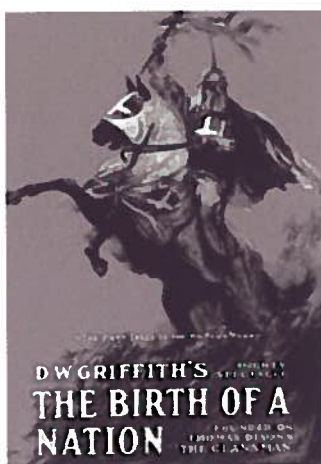
After World War II, Burroughs did produce some anti-Japanese polemics, calling Imperial troops "sub-men," "monkey men," and "yellow beasts" in his novel *Tarzan and "The Foreign Legion"* (1946). This seems to have been prompted more by his familiarity as a war correspondent with wartime atrocities than by inherent racism (Greer, 27-29). If anything, this makes his earlier toleration of yellow people an even more outstanding demonstration.

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## Conclusions

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The popular racial attitudes in the America at the beginning of the 20th century centered around the concept of Anglo-Saxon superiority. The idea of equal political rights for minorities had lost much of its appeal, especially after the U.S. obtained foreign possessions occupied by non-white peoples (Bloomfield, 400-401). Other races were thereafter definitely viewed as inferior, with gradations from Asian to African—the latter at the bottom in the Darwinist schemata.



The success of Thomas Dixon proves the point. Dixon's novels sold millions and were reviewed in the New York Times and other journals at a time when Burroughs' books were seldom noted.<sup>21</sup> The silent film, *Birth of a Nation* (1915), based primarily on the author's Reconstruction novels, made Dixon a millionaire. *The Leopard's Spots*, which alone sold over one million copies, carried the revelatory subtitle "A Romance of the White Man's Burden," echoing the Kipling poem ruthlessly parodied by Burroughs (Slide, 45). Dixon's influence was so pervasive through the 1920s that one historian wrote: "Dixon probably did more to shape the lives of modern Americans than have some Presidents" (Williamson, 40).

Dixon's works reinforced racial stereotypes and solidified the concept of "whiteness." "One drop of negro blood makes a negro," wrote Dixon in his first Klan novel. "It kinks the hair, flattens the nose, thickens the lip, puts out the light of intellect, and lights the fires of brutal passions." His books, plays, and film had huge followings, and led historian William L. Link to conclude "that Dixon simultaneously represented his time and led the way toward reshaping it... Dixon embodied the racial divide that had opened up in early twentieth-century America" (Dixon, *The Leopard's Spots*, 242; Romine, 124-150; Link, 207).

Though Burroughs was "the most successful writer of the pulp era," he never had the sales in his lifetime that his contemporary enjoyed (Holtsmark, 10; Wright, 24; Porges, 340; Slide, 74, 185).<sup>22</sup> Yet, today Dixon's books are seldom read; but the novels of ERB are still

standard fare. The resurgence of interest in Burroughs' started in the early 1960s and continues. Lupoff in his book *Barsoom* wrote that "it has been the 'fantastics,' in particular the Martian series ... that have won consistent public acceptance" (p. 14). These novels, with their non-stereotypical portrayals of race, have influenced generations of authors (Brackett, 9).<sup>25</sup>

Carter, Burroughs' alter ego, was not a typical imperialist and seemed inclined toward self-determination. For example, after his triumph in Okar, he declared that ...

The red men are ruled by red Jeddaks, the green warriors of the ancient seas acknowledge none but a green ruler, the First Born of the south pole take their law from black Xodar nor would it be to the interests of either the yellow or red man were a red to sit upon the throne of Okar (*The Warlord of Mars*, 148).

*The Warlord of Mars* was published in serial just before World War I. Burroughs presaged Wilsonian self-determination of nations, though without the overt racism of Woodrow Wilson.

One analyst wrote that the "Martians differed from one another no more than do red, black, yellow and white people on earth" (Lupoff, *Barsoom*, 97). Certainly races did not differ much in Burroughs' eyes and his portrayal of race varied significantly from the notions of the time. ERB envisioned justice for all men, irrespective of race — an extraordinarily rare thing in a race-conscious era. Early in the series Carter married Dejah Thoris even though she was an oviparous alien. This was bold, suggesting that races were not destined to remain separate and distinct, but might amalgamate with beneficent results — hence Carthoris.

Carter resolved many conflicts on Mars, creating a more equitable and just society in the process. The hero, however, was not utopian. For example, Carter did not eliminate slavery, which was a non-racial institution on Barsoom, but he eliminated its worst aspects, as when his overthrow of Issus ended the executing of slaves after a year's service to the goddess. Nor did he alter the authoritarian structure of Martian society, but rather introduced his own sensibilities into that society, changing the type of leaders who assumed authority. The hero responded to an oath of fealty by promising to "never call upon you to draw this sword other than in the cause of truth, justice, and righteousness." No wonder Carter thought it was "character that makes the man" (*The Gods of Mars*, 146; *Swords of Mars* and *Synthetic Men of Mars*, 340). This un-racist notion was echoed later by Martin Luther King Jr., who dreamed that his children would one day "not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character" (p. 146).

While Burroughs is often credited with giving most import to heredity, he also believed in the efficacy of environment. According to John Taliaferro, the popular author produced "a sublime synthesis of nature and nurture" when he invented Tarzan (p.15).<sup>26</sup> It is notable that nurture likewise played a significant role in his Martian novels. The environment is the primary influence on Martian peoples, who were not just the hapless victims of their genes.

Thus Clark A. Brady wrote: "Carter helped to begin a new era of cooperation among the many red nations, and even the yellow, white and black races, who had been so hostile to the red race and each other for so long. Even some of the tribes of savage green men began to participate in this new understanding" (p. 34). Dejah Thoris, in a plea to the green men, called for them to "come back to the ways of our common ancestors, come back to the light of kindness and fellowship. The way is open to you; you will find the hands of the red men stretched out to aid you" (*A Princess of Mars*, 55).

John Carter served as the catalyst to move the people of the dying world toward a unified humanity — a humanity that existed in the distant, highly romanticized past. While this view of the exotic Martians bears some resemblance to racist romanticism about Asiatic peoples as outlined by Said (pp. 98-99), it must be noted that modern, clearly non-racist writers (David Brin, for example) often rely on exotic races and romanticized story lines (Stableford, 42).<sup>22</sup>



Whatever the case, avid readers of the future will continue to devour the novels of Burroughs, and as T. J. Glenn recently averred: "As long as literature exists the words of Edgar Rice Burroughs and the epic deeds of his undying hero will also live; immortal, unconquerable and exciting" (p. 28).

Certainly, the longevity of the Martian novels as popular literature, regardless the manifold changes in society, commend them for further serious study. Most assuredly, those reading of distant Barsoom will be entertained; and, if they likewise learn some lessons on racial toleration, that will be an added, and perhaps not altogether unintended bonus.

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## Endnotes

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1. Burroughs' Mars novels are featured in e-text at the Official Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. sites: [www.ERBzine.com/mars](http://www.ERBzine.com/mars) and [www.JohnCarterofMars.ca](http://www.JohnCarterofMars.ca)

An online guide to all of Burroughs' novels is located at:

[www.ERBzine.com/chaser](http://www.ERBzine.com/chaser)

A good guide to the printed versions of the authors work is Robert B. Zeuschner, *Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Exhaustive Scholar's and Collector's Descriptive Bibliography of American Periodical, Hardcover, Paperback, and Reprint Editions* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1996).

2. Why should one expect otherwise? It is always easier to write from a known perspective. No one today questions an African American writer writing from a black perspective, or a Native American writing from an Indian perspective. Carter is Burroughs and Burroughs is Carter—both were white.

3. The very unusual way that John Carter transports to Mars is discussed at length by James Michael Moody, "Is Barsoom Really Mars," *Edgar Rice Burroughs' Fantastic Worlds*, ed. by James Van Hise (Yucca Valley, CA: The Author, 1996): 73-80.

4. Kudlay and Leiby concentrate on Burroughs' Pellucidar series, rather than his more popular Barsoom or Tarzan series. The authors argue that several themes are readily apparent in all of Burroughs' writing, including: "Burroughs' distaste for modern civilization; his affinity toward the brute simplicity (and honesty) of animal life; his conviction that heredity, not environment, plays the decisive role in character development; his belief that man is more deadly than the deadliest beasts." (p. 68)

5. The term "racism" herein means the belief that the primary determinant of traits and human capacities is race and that the differences resulting make a certain race superior to others. Such a view requires not only open expression, but also some direct action or strong support of policies to the detriment of the supposed inferior race. Prejudice is, in this sense, a milder thing than racism. A reading of Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), broadens the definition of race to virtual meaninglessness wherein the conception of "Occidental" (i.e., Western) and superior is contrasted with "Oriental" (i.e., Eastern) and therefore inferior. Thus racism as perceived by Said, encompasses culture, religion, literature, as well as standard social Darwinian concepts of the biological nature of race differences. Said would argue that a priori knowledge in Western Europe and America of what was West determined what was East. Said made sweeping and pretentious conclusions about Western racist attitudes, often on extremely flimsy evidence, or on no evidence at all. His philosophical and abstruse meanderings, dealing with Orientalism as an academic approach to the East, seem especially irrelevant to the popular, totally non-scholarly writing of Burroughs. In addition, Said's arguments are answered with devastating effect by Ibn Warraq's *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007), p. 35: "The important thing to emphasize here is the grossly biased nature of Said's seemingly scholarly selection; one could go through Western literature and find much evidence that contradicts his thesis." Indeed, in over 500 well-documented pages, Warraq does just that (his notes and bibliography alone run to 106 pages). At the same time, as Warraq points out, it is not Westerners who dichotomize the world between us (the West) and them (the East), but Islam: "The civilization least open to 'the Other' is Islam, which divides the world between believer and infidel, Dar al-Islam against Dar al-Harb." (p. 13) The fact that name "Ibn Warraq" is a pseudonym is a revelation in and of itself. The author, as has become increasingly the case among critics of fundamentalist Islam, did not want to be subject to a successfully executed Islamic fatwa! In the final analysis, the simple truth is that Burroughs was, after all, an American novelist and based most of his attitudes on direct, and in the case of African and Native Americans, frequent personal interactions. One case where the Oriental thesis might apply to some extent is in the case of the Tharks, whom some view as Arab, and the yellow men of Mars, who one could suppose are stand-ins for Asians. Even these cases strain credulity because the Tharks are non-mammalian and the yellow-men are Asian only insofar as being yellow. The description of the latter otherwise does not identify them as being particularly Asian-like. In the final analysis, Burroughs, like most Americans, would have seen race in the United States primarily through the lens of an Anglo-Saxon-African American divide. That he rejected this simplistic approach for a more nuanced view, which he then transferred to interactions with alien races, reveals how far ahead of his time he truly was.

6. There has been some dispute over whether Chief Justice White was ever a member of the Klan. Cook, Thomas Dixon's biographer, attributes the White quote -- "I was a member of the Klan, Sir" -- to Dixon's own unpublished manuscript, "Southern Horizons: An Autobiography," p. 423. Dixon was recording what he recalled White said at a private meeting the author had with the Chief Justice. This is evidence from a primary source and must be taken as authentic unless



some contemporary evidence contradicts the report. The Reconstruction Klan was very loosely organized and did not maintain membership records. Unless a legitimate primary source can be found refuting the Dixon quote, then it seems highly probable that White was a Klan member. The Judge's Catholicism would not have barred him from membership because the Reconstruction KKK accepted Catholics and Jews as members. As to the issue of Darwinism: Social Darwinism was heavily influenced by Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1862) and *The Study of Sociology* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1873) and by William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe Each Other* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1883). Early American Sociologists, as indicated by Hayes, tended to be highly racist, in part owing to Social Darwinism. The application of Social Darwinism to the race issue was popularized in such non-fiction works as R. W. Shufeldt, *The Negro: A Menace to American Civilization* (Boston: R. G. Badger, 1907). Dixon's writings further popularized such racism in *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1902), which sold over one million copies. His second novel *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1905) did even better.

7. The term "miscegenation" started as part of an elaborate hoax in 1864 with publication of a pamphlet supposedly promoting what was at the time called race amalgamation. The hoax was so successful that "miscegenation" passed into the permanent lexicon of American English. See Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001), 324-328 for details about the hoax.

8. For example, Wiegman devotes an entire chapter to male bonding and its relationship to gender and race in popular entertainment from the 1960s forward through analysis of such productions as *The Lords of Discipline*, *Heat of the Night*, *Enemy Mine*, *White Nights*, and *Lethal Weapon*. Wiegman argues: "While the visibility of the African-American in a narrative offering egalitarian possibility seemingly redistributes masculine power, its primary political effect is not only a reaffirmation of the masculine as the basis of cultural power but also a confirmation of the centrality of white supremacy" (p. 145). Later Wiegman states that "the chaste love of men does indeed... circumvent the threat of miscegenation" (p. 155). In other words, the superiority of the white is reaffirmed and the purity of race maintained in the popular male bonding films of the late 20th century. In such a case, what is one to make of a white masculine figure (Carter), who procreates with another race on a planet where miscegenation is a common practice? Burroughs' Tarzan became the subject of popular film. His mating was "natural" and did not violate racial mores of the period. If his mate had been an African one can readily speculate that no Tarzan films would have been made.

9. The Porges biography of Burroughs is a very valuable and enlightening study. Though other biographies have been written since 1975, the Porges book remains the most extensive biography to date. "The Black Man's Burden: A Parody," was originally published anonymously in *The Pocatello (Idaho) Tribune*, April 8, 1899. Porges found a clipping of the poem and Rudyard Kipling's original, "The White Man's Burden," in a Burroughs scrapbook among the author's papers in the early 1970s. Burroughs had lived in Pocatello in 1898-99. A copy of both poems as they appeared in the newspaper can be found at F. X. Blisard, "Tarzan versus Tarzan," an ERBzine Site: <http://www.erbzine.com/mag2/0291.html>

10. At one point Carter's son calls him "overlord of a world," but in truth John Carter does not seem interested in running civilian governments, though he holds preeminence in the military affairs of the planet. See Burroughs, *Thuvia, Maid of Mars*, 7.

11. Wiegman draws a close analogy between race and gender and follows it throughout the book *American Anatomies* (especially note pp. 43-78, 149-178). As indicated in note 6 above Wiegman

thought the male bonding scenario generally and necessarily precluded miscegenation (p. 155). ERB was a sexist and shared the views of his society about sex. At the same time, however, his Martian novels integrated non-white males more completely into the patriarchy than would have been acceptable at the time, while leaving females essentially un-liberated in the feminist sense.

12. Robert Spencer, director of *Jihad Watch*, has written a number of best-selling books, including *Islam Unveiled: Disturbing Questions About the World's Fastest Growing Faith* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002), *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2005), and *The Truth About Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2006), that make cogent arguments relative to the connection of Islamic religion and terrorism. All of the books mentioned have been on the *New York Times'* best sellers list. One need not maintain that there is an association between terrorism and Arabs to conclude that the popularity of such books indicates that many Americans associate the two.

13. According to Ter Ellingson in his book *The Myth of the Noble Savage* the idea of primitive people's, and most especially American Indians as Noble Savages, was first developed in the writing of Marc Lescarbot, French lawyer and explorer of early 17th century Canada. The idea of noble Indians did not especially appeal to the Anglo-Americans of the 18th and early 19th century, but a renewed concept of the Noble Savage started to re-emerge by the latter half of the 19th century, promoted by the development of racist ethnology. The concept started to spread from scientific circles into popular literature and dime novels (pp. 13-34, 106-109, 235-247). This was in the period when Burroughs grew up, but he seems to owe most of his attitudes about Native Americans and blacks to personal contact and not to any study of ethnology or popular literature of the era. Direct evidence is easy to come by to support this view, especially in Irvin Porges' biography of ERB and the later essay of F. X. Blisard.

14. Roger Sandall, *The Culture Cult: Designer Tribalism and Other Essays* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 181.

15. For more elaboration on popular racism of the era see Fred H. Matthews, "White Community and 'Yellow Peril,'" *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 50 (March 1964): 623, and James R. Hayes "Sociology and Racism: An Analysis of the First Era of American Sociology," *Phylon* 34 (4th Quarter 1973): 330-441. For more on Thomas Dixon's views on the dangers of "assimilation" — intermarriage and miscegenation — note John David Smith, "'My Books Are Hard Reading for a Negro': Tom Dixon and His African-American Critics, 1905-1939," *Thomas Dixon Jr. and the Making of Modern America*, ed. by Michelle K. Gillespie and Randal L. Hall (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 49-53.

16. For an elaboration on Franz Boas' general view on race see: "The Instability of Human Types," *Papers on Interracial Problems Communicated to the First Universal Congress Held at the University of London, July 26-29, 1911* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1912), 99-103. Boas was in fact advocating the position of the hoaxers in the 1864 pamphlet on miscegenation. He, however, was making a serious proposal. See note 6 above.

17. See a further account of these events in Lupoff, *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure*, 64, and also in Brady, *The Burroughs Cyclopeda*, 200.

18. See the synopsis on these races in Brady, *The Burroughs Cyclopeda*, 187, 316-317.

19. See a synopsis in Brady, *The Burroughs Cyclopeda*, 147, 249.

20. That Burroughs did not see the capture of white Thern women by the Pirates of Barsoom as a prelude to rape is especially noteworthy because it departs from the popularly accepted myth of the aggressive over-sexualized black male as challenger to the political, economic, and sexual position of the white man. The alleged propensity of savage blacks for rape was most often used as justification for lynching, which was an assertion of the white maleness of the lyncher. See Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 95-100.

21. Josiah Royce noted that after the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War he heard some say, "It is they who are racially our superiors" Royce, "Race Questions and Prejudices," *International Journal of Ethics* 16 (April 1906), 270. The cited issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 9, 1905, is available on the web at: <http://www.densho.org/causes/primarysource/C1-d-05large.jpg>

22. If further evidence is needed of Burroughs tolerance of blacks and Asians, Orth points to "[Beyond Thirty](#)," a story by Burroughs produced in 1915 as WWI raged in Europe, and adds: "Both the Ethiopians and the Chinese are sympathetically handled.... Neither Ethiopians nor Chinese are perfect, but Burroughs clearly prefers either of them to the savage Europe which war has produced..." (p.225)

23. A quick search of the *NY Times Article Archive* online <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/nytimes/advancedsearch.html> for "Thomas Dixon and Books" yields 166 hits for 1900-1946, but a similar search for "Edgar Rice Burroughs and Books" for the same period yields only 30 hits. The end year used was the year of Dixon's death. This little survey reveals that Dixon was reviewed in the newspaper in question far more often than Burroughs. If you take the period when Dixon was at his height, 1900-1925, the results are an impressive Dixon majority of 98 to 7. The Tarzan books were far more likely to be reviewed than Burroughs' "scientific romances."

24. Burroughs was earning over \$98,000 a year from writing in 1921, but Dixon was estimated to have earned more than \$1,000,000 from his share of the profits of a single film, *The Birth of a Nation*. The latter would have been in addition to Dixon's substantial earnings, estimated at over \$250,000 on his best-selling novels. Unfortunately, Dixon, unlike Burroughs, did not display any particular business acumen and squandered his considerable fortune by 1934.

25. Leigh Brackett (1915-1978), a popular author of science fiction and fantasy, is but one example of the continued influence of Burroughs. She stated: "Edgar Rice Burroughs influenced me more than any other single author... I believe that because of Burroughs I became a writer of a certain type of science fiction; possibly it was because of Burroughs that I became a science fiction writer at all, and it is possibly because of science fiction that I became a writer at all." Brackett's novels, especially her Eric John Stark series, encompassed what has been called "her favourite neo-Burroughs Mars." See John Clute, "Leigh Brackett," *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, 150. For praise from Arthur C. Clarke, Carl Sagan, Ray Bradbury, and others see Markley, 184.

26. While Kudlay and Leiby, *Burroughs' Science Fiction*, argue that Burroughs believed "that heredity, not environment, plays the decisive role in character development," (p. 68) there is much on Barsoom that is environmentally driven. Indeed, the entire civilization of the planet seems to be the byproduct of cataclysmic environmental change. We learn, for example, that in ancient history Mars was a much more civilized and more peaceful planet. The war-like nature of the Barsoomians seems to derive at least as much from the scarcity of planetary resources as from the characters of the respective peoples of the planet.

27. David Brin's *Uplift Series* is filled with exotic aliens.

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