

= Tom Swift =

Tom Swift is the main character of five series of American juvenile science fiction and adventure novels that emphasize science, invention and technology. First published in 1910, the series total more than 100 volumes. The character was created by Edward Stratemeyer, the founder of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, a book @-@ packaging firm. Tom's adventures have been written by various ghostwriters, beginning with Howard Garis. Most of the books are credited to the collective pseudonym "Victor Appleton". The 33 volumes of the second series use the pseudonym Victor Appleton II for the author. For this series, and some of the later series, the main character is "Tom Swift, Jr." New titles have been published as recently as 2007. Most of the various series emphasized Tom's inventions. The books generally describe the effects of science and technology as wholly beneficial, and the role of the inventor in society as admirable and heroic.

Translated into many languages, the books have sold more than 30 million copies worldwide. Tom Swift has also been the subject of a board game and a television series.

Several famous people, including Steve Wozniak and Isaac Asimov, have cited "Tom Swift" as an inspiration. Several inventions, including the Taser, have been inspired allegedly by Swift's fictional inventions. "TASER" is said to be an acronym for "Thomas A. Swift's Electric Rifle."

= = Inventions = =

In his various incarnations, Tom Swift, usually a teenager, is inventive and science @-@ minded, "Swift by name and swift by nature." Tom is portrayed as a natural genius. In the earlier series, he is said to have had little formal education, the character modeled originally after such inventors as Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss. For most of the five series, each book concerns Tom's latest invention, and its role either in solving a problem or mystery, or in assisting Tom in feats of exploration or rescue. Often Tom must protect his new invention from villains "intent on stealing Tom's thunder or preventing his success," but Tom is always successful in the end.

Many of Tom Swift's fictional inventions described actual technological developments. Tom Swift Among the Diamond Makers (1911) was based on Charles Parsons's attempts to synthesize diamonds using electric current. Tom Swift and His Photo Telephone was published in 1912. One source claims the process for sending photographs by telephone was not developed until 1925. However, the first commercial wired telefax service was established in 1865, more than a decade before the invention of the telephone. Tom Swift and His Wizard Camera (1912) features a portable movie camera, not invented until 1923 according to one source. However, many early movie cameras were portable by one man, and a hand @-@ held home movie camera for semi @-@ professional work was designed in 1921 by Emanuel Goldberg. One source mentions Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive (1922) was published two years before the Central Railroad of New Jersey began using the first diesel electric locomotive; however, the book refers to a purely electrical locomotive powered from overhead lines, of the sort that began regular service during the late 19th century. The house on wheels that Tom invents for 1929's Tom Swift and His House on Wheels pre @-@ dated the first house trailer by a year, but post @-@ dates the widespread use of Romany caravans for living by about a century. Tom Swift and His Diving Seacopter (1952) features a flying submarine similar to one planned by the United States Department of Defense four years later in 1956, but this book was published more than a decade after the Soviet flying submarine project began and nearly 50 years after Jules Verne's 1904 novel Master of the World featured a flying submarine. Other inventions of Tom's have not happened, such as the device for silencing airplane engines that he invents in Tom Swift and His Magnetic Silencer (1941). In any case, technical ideas are often described speculatively by newspapers and magazines for many years prior to commercial realization.

= = Authorship = =

The character of Tom Swift was conceived about 1910 by Edward Stratemeyer , founder of the Stratemeyer Syndicate , a book @-@ packaging business , although the name " Tom Swift " was first used in 1903 by Stratemeyer in Shorthand Tom the Reporter ; Or , the Exploits of a Bright Boy . Stratemeyer invented the series to capitalize on the market for children 's science adventure . The Syndicate 's authors created the Tom Swift stories by first preparing an outline with the plot elements , followed by drafting and editing the detailed manuscript . The books were published using the house pseudonym " Victor Appleton " . Edward Stratemeyer and Howard Garis wrote most of the volumes of the original series ; Stratemeyer 's daughter , Harriet Stratemeyer Adams , wrote the last three volumes . The first Tom Swift series ended 1941 .

In 1954 , Harriet Adams created the Tom Swift , Jr. series , which was published using the pseudonym " Victor Appleton II " as author . The main character Tom Swift , Junior , was described as the son of the original Tom Swift . Most of the stories were outlined and plotted by Adams . The texts were written by various writers , among them William Dougherty , John Almquist , Richard Sklar , James Duncan Lawrence , Tom Mulvey and Richard McKenna . The Tom Swift , Jr . , series ended in 1971 .

A third series was begun in 1981 and lasted until 1984 . The rights to the Tom Swift character , along with the Stratemeyer Syndicate , were sold in 1984 to publishers Simon & Schuster . They hired New York City book packaging business Mega @-@ Books to produce further series . Simon & Schuster produced two other Tom Swift series : one , published from 1991 to 1993 , and the Tom Swift , Young Inventor series , begun in 2006 .

= = Series = =

The longest @-@ running series of books to feature Tom Swift is the first , which consists of forty volumes . Tom Swift (technically Tom Swift , Jr .) was also the name of the protagonist of the 33 volumes of the Tom Swift , Jr . Adventures , the 11 volumes of the third Tom Swift series , the 13 volumes of the fourth , and a half @-@ dozen more for the most recent series , Tom Swift , Young Inventor , for a total of 103 volumes for all the series . In addition to publication in the United States , Tom Swift books have been published extensively in England , and translated into Norwegian , French , Icelandic , and Finnish .

= = = Original series (1910 ? 1941) = = =

In the original series , Tom Swift lives in fictional Shopton , New York . He is the son of Barton Swift , the founder of the Swift Construction Company . Tom 's mother is deceased , but the housekeeper , Mrs. Baggert , functions as a surrogate mother . Tom usually shares his adventures with close friend Ned Newton , who eventually becomes the Swift Construction Company 's financial manager . For most of the series , Tom dates Mary Nestor . It has been suggested that his eventual marriage to Mary led to the series ' demise , as young boys found a married man harder to identify with than a young , single one ; however , after the 1929 marriage the series continued for 12 more years and eight further volumes . Regularly appearing characters include Wakefield Damon , an older man , whose dialogue is characterized by frequent use of such whimsical expressions as " Bless my brakeshoes ! " and " Bless my vest buttons ! "

The original Tom Swift has been claimed to represent the early 20th @-@ century conception of inventors . Tom has no formal education after high school ; according to critic Robert Von der Osten , Tom 's ability to invent is presented as " somehow innate " . Tom is not a theorist but a tinkerer and , later , an experimenter who , with his research team , finds practical applications for others ' research ; Tom does not so much methodically develop and perfect inventions as find them by trial and error .

Tom 's inventions are not at first innovative . In the first two books of the series , he fixes a motorcycle and a boat , and in the third book he develops an airship , but only with the help of a balloonist . Tom is also at times unsure of himself , asking his elders for help ; as Von der Osten puts it , " the early Tom Swift is more dependent on his father and other adults at first and is much

more hesitant in his actions . When his airship bangs into a tower , Tom is uncharacteristically nonplussed and needs support . " However , as the series progresses , Tom 's inventions " show an increasingly independent genius as he develops devices , such as an electric rifle and a photo telephone , further removed from the scientific norm " . Some of Tom 's inventions are improvements of then @-@ current technologies , while other inventions were not in development at the time the books were published , but have since been developed .

= = = Second series (1954 ? 1971) = = =

In this series , presented as an extension and continuation of the first , the Tom Swift of the original series is now the CEO of Swift Enterprises , a four @-@ mile @-@ square enclosed facility where inventions are conceived and manufactured . Tom 's son , Tom Swift , Jr . , is now the primary inventive genius of the family . Stratemeyer Syndicate employee Andrew Svenson described the new series as based " on scientific fact and probability , whereas the old Toms were in the main adventure stories mixed with pseudo @-@ science " . Three Ph.D.s in science were hired as consultants to the series to ensure scientific accuracy . The younger Tom does not tinker with motorcycles ; his inventions and adventures extend from deep within the Earth (in Tom Swift and His Atomic Earth Blaster [1954]) to the bottom of the ocean (in Tom Swift and His Diving Seacopter [1956]) to the moon (in Tom Swift and the Race to Moon [1958]) and , eventually , the outer solar system (in Tom Swift and His Cosmotron Express [1970]) . Later volumes of the series increasingly emphasized the extraterrestrial " space friends " , as they are termed throughout the series . The beings appear as early as the first volume of the series , Tom Swift and His Flying Lab (1954) . The Tom Swift , Jr . , Adventures were less commercially successful than the first series , selling 6 million copies total , compared with sales of 14 million copies for the first series .

In contrast to the earlier series , many of Tom Jr . ' s inventions are designed to operate in space , and his " genius is unequivocally original as he constructs nuclear @-@ powered flying labs , establishes outposts in space , or designs ways to sail in space on cosmic rays " . Unlike his father , Tom Jr. is not just a tinkerer ; he relies on scientific and mathematical theories , and , according to critic Robert Von der Osten , " science [in the books] is , in fact , understood to be a set of theories that are developed based on experimentation and scientific discussion . Rather than being opposed to technological advances , such a theoretical understanding becomes essential to invention . "

Tom Swift , Jr . ' s Cold War @-@ era adventures and inventions are often motivated by patriotism , as Tom repeatedly defeats the evil agents of the fictional nations " Kranjovia " and " Brungaria " , the latter a place that critic Francis Molson describes as " a vaguely Eastern European country , which is strongly opposed to the Swifts and the U.S. Hence , the Swifts ' opposition to and competition with the Brungarians is both personal and patriotic . "

= = = Third series (1981 ? 1984) = = =

The third Tom Swift series differs from the first two in that the setting is primarily outer space , although Swift Enterprises (located now in New Mexico) is occasionally mentioned . Tom Swift explores the universe in the starship Exedra , using a faster @-@ than @-@ light drive he has reverse @-@ engineered from an alien space probe . He is aided by Benjamin Franklin Walking Eagle , a Native American who is Tom 's co @-@ pilot , best friend , and an expert computer technician , and Anita Thorwald , a former rival of Tom 's who now works with him as a technician and whose right leg has been rebuilt to contain a miniature computer .

This series maintains only an occasional and vague continuity with the two previous series . Tom is called the son of " the great Tom Swift " and said to be " already an important and active contributor to the family business , the giant multimillion @-@ dollar scientific @-@ industrial complex known as Swift Enterprises " . However , as critic Francis Molson indicates , it is not explained whether this Tom Swift is the grandson of the famous Tom Swift of the first series or still the Tom Swift , Jr . , of the second .

The Tom Swift of this third series is less of an inventor than his predecessors , and his inventions

are rarely the main feature of the plot . Still , according to Molson , " Tom the inventor is not ignored . Perhaps the most impressive of his inventions and the one essential to the series as a whole is the robot he designs and builds , Aristotle , which becomes a winning and likeable character in its own right . " The books are slower @-@ paced than the Tom Swift , Jr. adventures of the second series , and include realistic , colloquial dialogue . Each volume begins where the last one ended , and the technology is plausible and accurate .

= = = Fourth series (1991 ? 1993) = = =

The fourth series featuring Tom Swift (again a " Jr . ") is set mostly on Earth (with occasional voyages to the Moon) ; Swift Enterprises is now located in California . In the first book , The Black Dragon , it 's mentioned that Tom is the son of Tom Swift Sr. and Mary Nestor . The books deal with what Richard Pyle describes as " modern and futuristic concepts " and , as in the third series , feature an ethnically diverse cast of characters .

Like the Tom Swift , Jr. series , the series portrays Tom as a scientist as well as an inventor whose inventions depend on a knowledge of theory . The series differs from previous versions of the character , however , in that Tom 's inventive genius is portrayed as problematic and sometimes dangerous . As Robert Von der Osten argues , Tom 's inventions for this series often have unexpected and negative repercussions .

a device to create a miniature black hole which casts him into an alternative universe ; a device that trains muscles but also distorts the mind of the user ; and a genetic process which , combined with the effect of his black hole , results in a terrifying devolution . Genius here begins to recapitulate earlier myths of the mad scientist whose technological and scientific ambitions are so out of harmony with nature and contemporary science that the results are usually unfortunate .

The series features more violence than previous series ; in The Negative Zone , Tom blows up a motel room to escape the authorities .

There was a derivative of this series featuring Tom Swift and the Hardy Boys called A Hardy Boys & Tom Swift Ultra Thriller that was published from 1992 to 1993 , and only had 2 volumes released . Both books dealt with science fictional topics (time travel and aliens landing on earth) .

= = = Fifth series (2006 ? 2007) = = =

The fifth series , " Tom Swift , Young Inventor " , returns Tom Swift to Shopton , New York , with Tom as the son of Tom Swift and Mary Nestor , the names of characters of the original Tom Swift series . The series features inventions that are close to current technology " rather than ultra @-@ futuristic " . " Tom Swift , Young Inventor " , goes to the sea to test his new invention .

= = Other media = =

Parker Brothers produced a Tom Swift board game in 1966 , although it was never widely distributed , and the character has appeared in one television show . Various Tom Swift radio programs , television series , and movies were planned and even written , but were either never produced or not released .

= = = Film and television = = =

As early as 1914 , Edward Stratemeyer proposed making a Tom Swift movie , but no such movie was made . A Tom Swift radio series was proposed in 1946 . Two scripts were written , but , for unknown reasons , the series was never produced . A television pilot show for a series to be called The Adventures of Tom Swift was filmed in 1958 , featuring Gary Vinson . However , legal problems prevented the pilot 's distribution , and it was never broadcast ; no copies of the pilot are known to exist , though the pilot script is available . Twentieth Century Fox planned a Tom Swift feature movie in 1968 , to be directed by Gene Kelly . A script was written and approved , and filming was to have

begun during 1969 . However , the project was canceled owing to the poor reception of the movies Doctor Dolittle and Star ! ; a \$ 500 @, @ 000 airship that had been built as a prop was sold to an amusement park . Yet another movie was planned in 1974 , but , again , was cancelled . Scripts were also written for a proposed television series involving both Tom Swift Jr. and his father , the hero of the original book series . Glen A. Larson wrote an unproduced television pilot show entitled " TS , I Love You : The Further Adventures of Tom Swift " in 1977 , as well . This series was to be combined with a Nancy Drew series , a Hardy Boys series , and a Dana Girls series . Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys were eventually combined into a one @-@ hour program with alternating episodes .

A Tom Swift media project finally came to fruition in 1983 when Willie Aames appeared as Tom Swift along with Lori Loughlin as Linda Craig in a television special , The Tom Swift and Linda Craig Mystery Hour , which was broadcast on July 3 . It was a ratings failure . In 2007 , digital studio Worldwide Biggies acquired movie rights to Tom Swift. and announced plans to release a feature film and video game , followed by a television series . As of 2015 , these plans had not come to fruition .

= = Claims of racism = =

It has been suggested that the book Tom Swift and His Electric Rifle contains heavy racism , depicting Africans as brutish , uncivilized animals , and the white protagonist as their paternal savior .

In the book , as in America today , the black people are rendered as either passive , simple and childlike , or animalistic and capable of unimaginable violence . They are described in the book at various points as " hideous in their savagery , wearing only the loin cloth , and with their kinky hair stuck full of sticks " , and as " wild , savage and ferocious ... like little red apes " . "

= = Cultural Influence = =

The Tom Swift books have been credited with assisting the success of American science fiction and with establishing the edisonade (stories focusing on brilliant scientists and inventors) as a basic cultural myth . Tom Swift 's adventures have been popular since the character 's inception in 1910 : by 1914 , 150 @, @ 000 copies a year were being sold and a 1929 study found the series to be second in popularity only to the Bible for boys in their early teens . By 2009 , Tom Swift books had sold more than 30 million copies worldwide .

The series ' writing style , which was sometimes adverb heavy , suggested a name for a type of adverbial pun promulgated during the 1950s and 1960s , a type of wellerism known as " Tom Swifties " . Originally this kind of pun was called a " Tom Swiftly " in reference to the adverbial usage , but over time has come to be called a " Tom Swifty . " Some examples are : " ' I lost my crutches , ' said Tom lamely " ; and " ' I 'll take the prisoner downstairs ' , said Tom condescendingly . "

Tom Swift 's fictional inventions have apparently inspired several actual inventions , among them Lee Felsenstein 's " Tom Swift Terminal " , which " drove the creation of an early personal computer known as the Sol " , and the taser . The name " taser " was originally " TSER " , for " Tom Swift Electric Rifle " . The invention was named for the central device in the story Tom Swift and His Electric Rifle (1911) ; according to inventor Jack Cover , " an ' A ' was added because we got tired of answering the phone ' TSER . ' "

A number of scientists , inventors , and science fiction writers have also credited Tom Swift with inspiring them , including Ray Kurzweil , Robert A. Heinlein , and Isaac Asimov . The Tom Swift , Jr. adventures were Steve Wozniak 's favorite reading as a boy and inspired him to become a scientist . According to Wozniak , reading the Tom Swift books made him feel " that engineers can save the world from all sorts of conflict and evil " .

Gone with the Wind author Margaret Mitchell said she read the series as a child .