

# The World of Tintin

A Critical Analysis

By Ranjan Kumar Auddy

- Tintin is the ‘eternal youth of the west capable of defeating evil without losing his original identity and purity’ (Apostolides, 55). He is the modern and diminutive Galahad, the successful medieval hero of romance traditions: instead of the Holy Grail, Tintin’s missions are humanitarian. In the process he secures knowledge of the world. Moreover, his mission is free from bloodshed as Tintin never kills a villain. This is a great virtue of the comic series.



# Tintin as a superchild: as a little version of Superman

**Superman**, German **Übermensch**, in [philosophy](#), the superior man, who justifies the existence of the human race. “Superman” is a term significantly used by [Friedrich Nietzsche](#), particularly in *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883–85), although it had been employed by [J.W. von Goethe](#) and others. This superior man would not be a product of long evolution; rather, he would emerge when any man with superior potential completely masters himself and strikes off conventional Christian “herd morality” to create his own values, which are completely rooted in life on this earth.

Tintin’s adventures have a benevolent and good mission. Herge has forged a new myth in ‘The Adventures of Tintin’ and it is as representative of twentieth century as Galahad, Don Juan or Faust were representatives of their respective times.

# Post World War theme of rupture from the past

- Freedom from parental control and restrictions. Tintin needs no parental guidance
- Tintin's adventures represent 'an eternal repetition of the moment when the father's power is discovered to be limited, a discovery that typically takes place during adolescence.
- And freedom from worries as Tintin has an identity as a reporter.
- The rise of Hitler and Nazism was built on patriarchal mythologies of Fuhrer. For the generation who were born along with Tintin in the 1930s those myths was refused along with the authority of the Father. Confer Sylvia Plath's *Daddy*. World of childhood completely differed from the post war reality.
- Captain Haddock and Professor Calculus are elders but they are sort of buffoons who evoke fun and laughter.
- Tintin takes his own decisions.

# Floating timeline: the world ages and evolves but Tintin remains forever innocent and young

- Each adventure ends only to begin a new adventure in a world where time is repetitive.
- Tintin is forever adolescent.
- He does not show any sign of sexual desire and thereby detached from growth and maturity and decay.
- Tintin only ages within being enriched with knowledge of the world.
- Comic characters are generally frozen in time. In detective fiction, Satyajit Ray's Feluda and Topshe and Jatayu (Lalmohan Ganguly) also exist in floating timeline
- Not Sharadindu's Byomkesh who is a sexual being and ages with time.

# Patriarchal

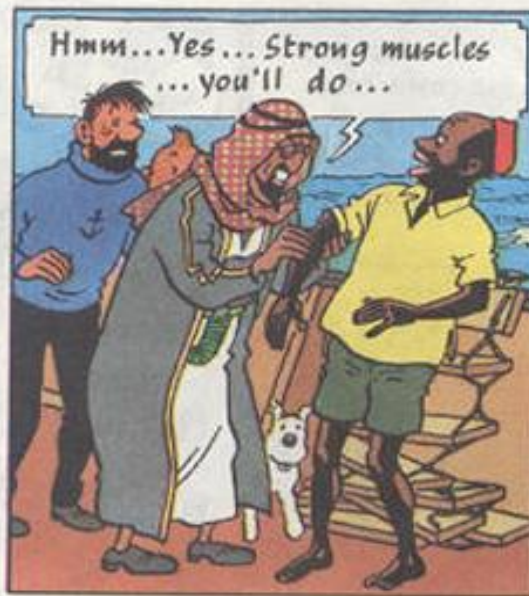
- The world of Tintin is frequented by males where women are almost absent. Bianca Castafiore is the only woman in the entire series.
- Some have therefore brought the charge of misogyny. Some have explained this as an outcome of Tintin's asexual nature.
- Tintin's world is a boyish world of convent school where women are far away at home.
- As if the rightful place for women is home and the rightful place for the western European males is the world outside home.

# Colonial or postcolonial?

- In Western fictions set in Asia, 'Europeans and Americans move among the Asians with relative ease and affluence, as did many of the authors (and Tintin, for that matter) embodying the power of the dominant races ... (Winks and Bush, 9).
- However, Tintin is always attuned to world's diversity and respectful of different cultures. The very mission of this comic series is to introduce the young reader to the cultural and geographical diversity of the world.
- Tintin and Haddock feels for the unfortunate black men in 'The Red Sea Sharks' and saves them from slavery. Tintin risks his life violating all ridicules of Haddock to save his friend Chang. He takes on the side of the Chinese rickshaw-puller when a white man thrashes him disgracefully in 'The Blue Lotus'.
- Today in the twenty-first century, he is eternally young and symbolize the universal spirit of adventurism and sympathy for the oppressed and unfortunate and the good.

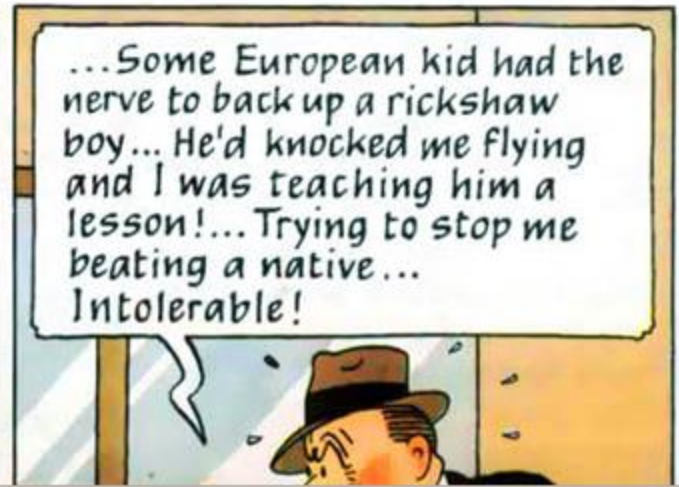
# Haddock and Tintin rescues African Muslims from illegal slave trade



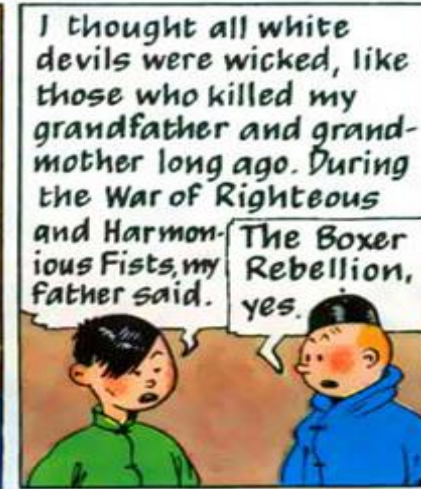


# Tintin against the colonial white man in *The Blue Lotus*



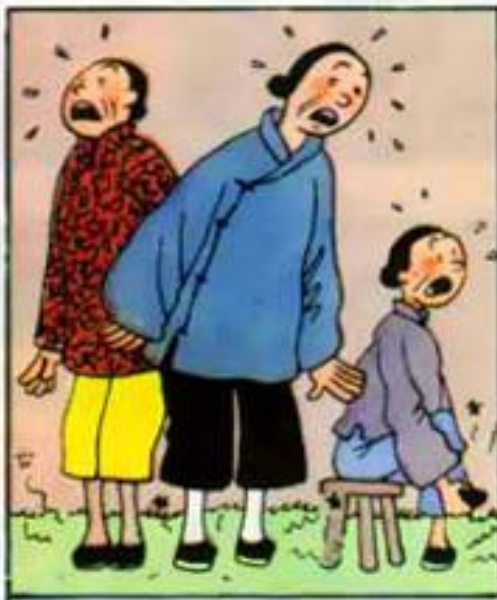


# Friendship of Chang and Tintin as an antidote to the evils of colonial history





... that all Chinese are cunning and cruel and wear pig-tails, are always inventing tortures, and eating rotten eggs and swallows' nests...



The same stupid Europeans are quite convinced that all Chinese have tiny feet, and even now little Chinese girls suffer agonies with bandages...



...designed to prevent their feet developing normally. They're even convinced that Chinese rivers are full of unwanted babies, thrown in when they are born.

So you see Chang, that's what lots of people believe about China!

They must be crazy people in your country!!

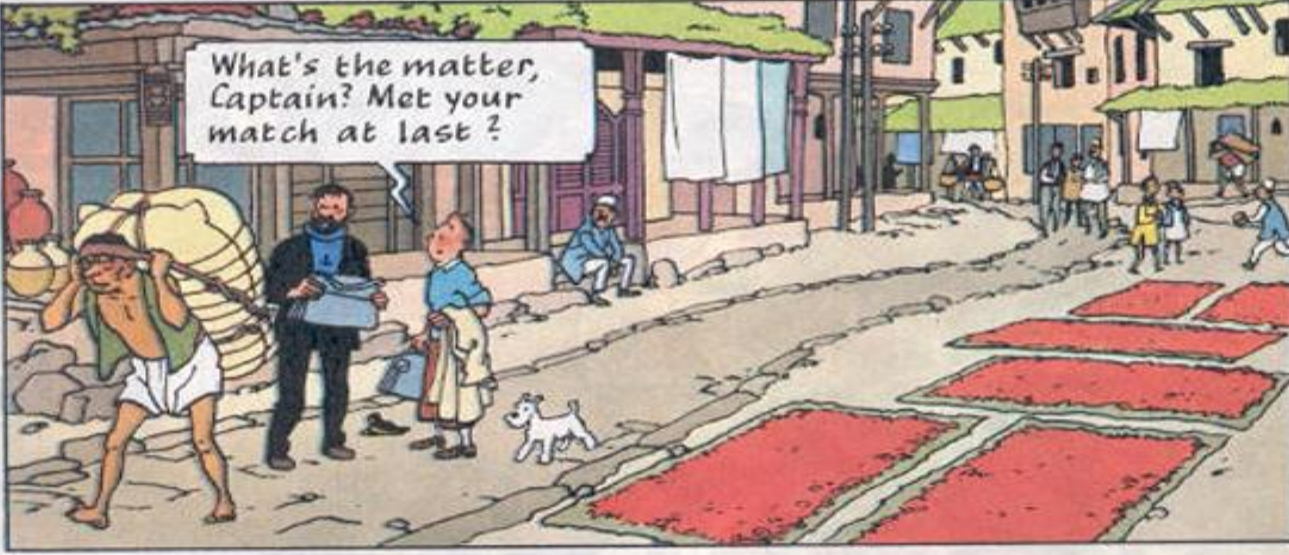
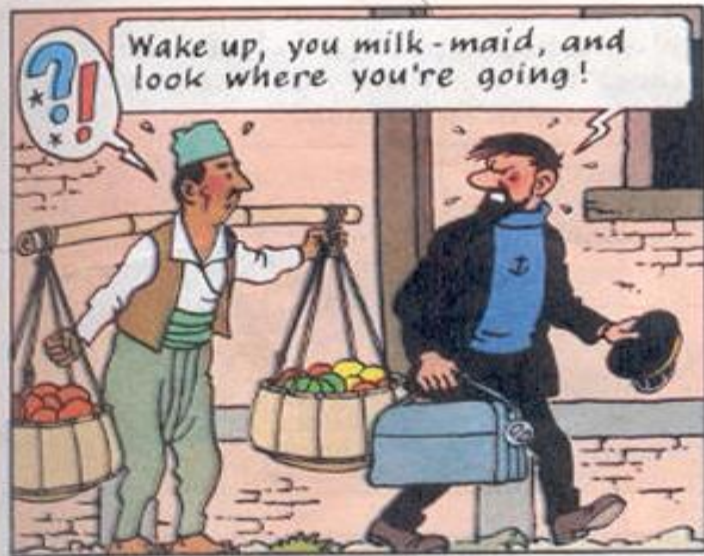


# Chang as the saviour in the climax of the story



Herge is a polyglot and his works weave a discourse against linguistic imperialism





# Encyclopaedic and a model for the modern times

- The world of Tintin serves as a Children's Encyclopaedia and a modern fable
- Each book gives an idea of the people, climate and culture of a particular country or place and simultaneously delivers a discourse on universal brotherhood.
- Instead of creating a fairyland Herge shows the variegated and fascinating aspects of different parts of the globe.
- The comic series also updates the readers on contemporary socio-political issues like human trafficking in 'the Red Sea Sharks' as well as with contemporary interest of science fiction such as the 'Yeti' in 'Tintin in Tibet'. 'Cigars of the Pharaoh' depict drug-smugglers.
- It also updates us on modern development of science such as parapsychology and telepathy in 'Tintin in Tibet'.
- It may have inspired the great Satyajit Ray as Feluda series is also encyclopaedic in a similar way.

Thank You

