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Reassessing the Concepts of Subordinate and Superior in Hergé's The Adventures of Tintin

Paniz Fallahi ¹ 0009-0008-4114-4998 **Fatemeh Khan-Mohammadi** ² 0000-0002-5043-9893
Behzad Hashemi ³ 0000-0002-4041-9741

1. Department of French Language and Literature, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: Paniz.falp@yahoo.com
2. Department of French Language and Literature, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: fatemeh_khan@yahoo.fr
3. Department of French Language and Literature, Arak Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran. E-mail: hachemibehzad73@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Despite great criticisms addressed to Hergé, the author of *The Adventures of Tintin*, regarding racial and ethnic biases, his works have maintained their popularity even with groups that were directly or indirectly the subject of these biases. The way that readers encounter the *Adventures of Tintin* is placed within the framework that in postcolonial theory is defined as the relationship between the subordinate and the superior. In this research, we assess different models that Hergé used to define the identity of subordinate groups. On the same basis, it is established that with making changes in the concepts of the subordinate and superior, and contrary to the expectations of the superior, subordinate groups are not merely the consumers of the cultural products of the powerful people. Consequently, by using the tools that have been produced by them, the subordinate influence the dominant groups and thus cause changes in their dialogues and perspectives. The hybrid views of inferior groups deviated from Eastern traditions and religions have caused them to not recognize any boundaries for the different parts of the world. That means, by appropriating the unknown and concealed tools and controlling them, the subordinate not only establish communication and compatibility with them, but also interprets them with his own perspective and ideology. It can be said that the reverse cultural confiscation is not only expressed in *The Adventures of Tintin* and affects the Iranian and non-European (subordinate) readers, but also causes the readers to identify with the characters of *Tintin's Comics* based on their views and opinions.

Hergé's success in publishing his works should be attributed to his unique talent in reflecting the political and social events of his time in the language favored by youth; the language which encourage and express the thought of the superior Western world powers after the two world wars and justify their presence and dominance among the inferior countries and nations. Hergé's early works are reflections of the provisions of the eleventh chapter of the United Nations Charter and the subject of "Declaration on Non-Self-Governing Territories" and also the twelfth chapter of this Charter about the "International Trusteeship System", which has been written by the dominance governments during the war and after the establishment and division of the territories of the Eastern and African countries between them. If Hergé reflected a humorous and harsh image of racial and cultural prejudices in his early works, we should not separate these views from the two-sided concepts of United Nations Charter on Human Rights. The emergence of anti-colonial and racist movements, which Hergé himself witness their growth, prompted him to remove his image and writings from the color of discriminatory concepts, and make his early works free from these concepts. Revised editions of *The Adventures of Tintin in Congo*, which was later changed to *Adventures of Tintin in Africa*, is indicative of such an approach. But despite this change of approach, Hergé cannot be among independent and free-thinking writers. Undoubtedly,



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Hergé is a capable writer who is waiting moment by moment for performing his mission during his historical era in defending Western values. The cold war between the two blocks of East and West did not let him to forget defending the Western values vis-à-vis Socialist Soviet Union and Communist China.

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