

tintin in the congo by herge

Tintin in the Congo by Hergé: A Closer Look at a Controversial Classic

tintin in the congo by herge is one of the earliest adventures of the beloved Belgian comic book character Tintin, created by the legendary cartoonist Hergé. First published in 1931, this graphic novel has both captivated and sparked debates among readers, historians, and critics. Its portrayal of Africa and its people reflects a different era's perspectives, making it a fascinating subject for study in the context of comic book history, colonial attitudes, and evolving cultural norms.

The Origins of Tintin in the Congo by Hergé

At the outset of the 1930s, Hergé (real name Georges Remi) was just beginning to shape the character of Tintin, a young Belgian reporter with a knack for adventure and an unyielding sense of justice. "Tintin in the Congo" was only the second Tintin story to be serialized, following "Tintin in the Land of the Soviets." This early work set the stage for Tintin's global escapades but also revealed the influences and limitations of its time.

Hergé was inspired by popular colonial adventure tales and was working under the Belgian colonial mindset prevalent in Europe. The comic originally appeared in the Belgian newspaper *Le Vingtième Siècle*'s children's supplement, aimed at a young audience who were eager for exciting stories about faraway lands.

Understanding the Story and Themes

The plot of Tintin in the Congo follows Tintin and his dog Snowy as they journey through the Belgian Congo, encountering wild animals, hostile tribes, and colonial officials. The adventure involves hunting, exploration, and encounters with various indigenous peoples and wildlife. While Tintin is portrayed as brave and clever, the story's depiction of Congolese characters and colonial life is now understood as problematic.

Historical Context and Colonial Influence

To fully grasp the nature of Tintin in the Congo by Hergé, it's essential to place it within the historical and political context of the Belgian Congo in the early 20th century. Belgium's colonial rule over the Congo was marked by exploitation and harsh treatment of the native population, though the comic reflects a more sanitized, Eurocentric view.

The comic reflects the paternalistic attitudes common in Europe during that era. African characters are often depicted in stereotypical and simplistic ways, which has led to accusations of racism and cultural insensitivity. Readers today frequently critique the work for its portrayal of Africans as naive or childlike and for the glorification of colonialism.

Artistic Style and Evolution

Despite its controversial content, *Tintin in the Congo* by Hergé offers a glimpse of the artist's early style. The artwork is characterized by simple lines and bright, clear colors, typical of Hergé's clear line (*ligne claire*) technique that would later be refined in subsequent Tintin adventures.

Hergé's attention to detail in illustrating animals and landscapes was notable, and the comic served as a foundation for his storytelling and artistic development. Over time, Hergé's work would become more sophisticated, with deeper plots and more nuanced characterizations, moving away from the simplistic portrayals seen in this early comic.

Controversies and Modern Reappraisals

Over the decades, *Tintin in the Congo* by Hergé has been the subject of significant controversy. Many modern readers and scholars criticize its racist stereotypes and colonial propaganda. Various editions of the comic have been censored or accompanied by disclaimers explaining the historical context and acknowledging the offensive elements.

In some countries, the book faced bans or restrictions due to its content. However, others argue that it should be preserved as a historical artifact, reflecting the attitudes and norms of its time rather than endorsing them.

The Legacy of Tintin in the Congo by Hergé

Despite the criticism, *Tintin in the Congo* remains an important piece in the Tintin canon. It represents the nascent stage of a cultural phenomenon that would go on to inspire millions worldwide. For enthusiasts and scholars alike, the comic offers insight into how popular media once mirrored colonial ideologies and how storytelling has evolved since then.

Tips for Readers Approaching Tintin in the Congo Today

If you're new to Tintin or revisiting "*Tintin in the Congo* by Hergé," here

are some pointers to keep in mind:

- ****Contextualize the Work:**** Understand the historical and cultural environment of the 1930s to better grasp why the story is portrayed the way it is.
- ****Critically Engage:**** Don't shy away from recognizing problematic elements. Use the comic as a springboard for discussions on colonialism, racism, and media representation.
- ****Explore Companion Resources:**** Reading articles, essays, and critiques about the comic can provide a broader perspective.
- ****Compare with Later Tintin Adventures:**** Notice how Hergé's style and approach to storytelling matured, reflecting changing sensibilities.

The Cultural Impact of Tintin in the Congo

While contentious, the comic has undeniably impacted the world of graphic novels and popular culture. Tintin himself became a symbol of adventure and curiosity, inspiring countless adaptations, from animated series to feature films. The story also serves as a case study in how media can both reflect and influence societal attitudes.

Final Thoughts on Tintin in the Congo by Hergé

Engaging with "Tintin in the Congo by Hergé" today involves balancing appreciation for Hergé's artistic talent and storytelling with a critical awareness of its dated and problematic elements. It's a reminder of how far storytelling—and society—has come, and how important it is to view historical works through a thoughtful, informed lens. Whether you're a comic book fan, a historian, or someone interested in cultural studies, Tintin's early journey through the Congo offers much to ponder and learn from.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is 'Tintin in the Congo' by Hergé considered controversial?

'Tintin in the Congo' is considered controversial due to its portrayal of African people and colonial attitudes that reflect stereotypes and racism typical of its time, which many readers today find offensive and outdated.

When was 'Tintin in the Congo' first published?

'Tintin in the Congo' was first published in 1931 as part of the Adventures of Tintin series by Belgian cartoonist Hergé.

How has Hergé responded to criticism of 'Tintin in the Congo'?

Hergé later acknowledged the colonial biases in 'Tintin in the Congo' and expressed regret, admitting that the work reflected the prejudices of its era rather than his own views.

What is the plot of 'Tintin in the Congo'?

The story follows the young reporter Tintin and his dog Snowy as they travel to the Belgian Congo, where Tintin experiences adventures involving wildlife, local tribes, and colonial officials.

Is 'Tintin in the Congo' still published today?

Yes, 'Tintin in the Congo' is still published but often with disclaimers addressing its historical context and the outdated, offensive stereotypes it contains, to provide readers with critical perspective.

Additional Resources

Tintin in the Congo by Hergé: A Critical Examination of Legacy and Controversy

tintin in the congo by herge stands as one of the earliest and most debated entries in the iconic Tintin comic series. Originally published in 1931 by Belgian artist Georges Remi, known by his pen name Hergé, this work has sparked extensive discussion for its artistic influence, narrative style, and the complex socio-political implications embedded within its pages. As a foundational piece in the Tintin canon, "Tintin in the Congo" offers a unique window into early 20th-century European perspectives, while simultaneously raising questions that continue to resonate in contemporary discourse about representation, colonialism, and cultural sensitivity.

Historical Context and Creation

The inception of "Tintin in the Congo" occurred during a period when European imperialism was still prevalent, and colonial attitudes were often uncritically accepted in popular culture. Hergé, who had launched the Tintin series with "Tintin in the Land of the Soviets," followed up with the Congolese adventure, reflecting prevailing Belgian colonial narratives. The comic was serialized initially in the children's supplement of the conservative Belgian newspaper **Le Vingtième Siècle**, which influenced its tone and thematic choices.

This backdrop is essential for understanding the artwork and storytelling of

the comic. The depiction of the Congolese people and the landscape reflects a Eurocentric viewpoint, often characterized by stereotypes and simplified portrayals. While this was consistent with much of the media produced in that era, it has invited scrutiny and criticism in later years, particularly as global perspectives on colonialism and racial representation evolved.

Artistic Style and Narrative Structure

Hergé's clear line drawing style, known as **ligne claire**, is prominently displayed in "Tintin in the Congo." This technique, characterized by clean, uniform lines and minimal shading, contributed to the accessibility and visual clarity of the story. The panels are structured to guide readers smoothly through the narrative, emphasizing action and humor.

Narratively, the story follows Tintin, the intrepid young reporter, as he embarks on a journey through the Belgian Congo. The plot combines adventure, wildlife encounters, and interactions with local inhabitants, framed through Tintin's investigative lens. Compared to later Tintin albums, the storyline is relatively simplistic, focusing more on episodic events than complex character development or political intrigue.

Characterization and Representation

One of the most contentious aspects of "Tintin in the Congo by Hergé" concerns its portrayal of indigenous Africans. The characters are often depicted in a manner that modern readers find stereotypical and demeaning. For example, many Congolese figures are drawn with exaggerated features and presented as either childlike or comically naïve. This contrasts sharply with Tintin himself, who embodies European ideals of bravery, intelligence, and civility.

Hergé's initial lack of firsthand experience with Africa contributed to these portrayals. Subsequent editions of the comic saw some revisions aimed at mitigating the most problematic depictions, but the core issues remained. This aspect has led to ongoing debates about the appropriateness of the work in contemporary settings and discussions about censorship versus historical preservation.

Controversies and Modern Reception

The legacy of "Tintin in the Congo" is marked by its controversial status. Over the decades, criticism has mounted regarding its colonialist undertones and racial stereotyping. Several countries and institutions have questioned its suitability for children, with some libraries and schools restricting or banning the book.

Conversely, defenders argue that the comic should be viewed as a product of its time, offering insight into historical attitudes rather than serving as a template for modern values. This perspective supports the inclusion of contextual information when the work is presented, allowing readers to critically engage with its content.

Comparisons with Other Tintin Adventures

When compared to later Tintin albums such as "The Blue Lotus" or "Tintin in Tibet," "Tintin in the Congo" reveals a less sophisticated approach to cultural representation. Hergé's later works demonstrate increased research, cultural sensitivity, and nuanced storytelling. For instance, "The Blue Lotus," set in China, benefited from Hergé's collaboration with Chinese artist Zhang Chongren, resulting in a more respectful and accurate portrayal.

This evolution highlights Hergé's growth as an artist and storyteller but also underscores why "Tintin in the Congo" remains a controversial starting point. The contrast emphasizes the importance of context and progression in evaluating historical creative works.

Legacy and Impact

Despite its flaws, "Tintin in the Congo" played a significant role in establishing the Tintin series as a global phenomenon. Its adventurous spirit and pioneering comic art style influenced generations of readers and artists alike. The album also serves as a case study in how popular media can reflect and perpetuate prevailing societal values, for better or worse.

The ongoing discussions around this comic have prompted publishers to include disclaimers or forewords that acknowledge its problematic aspects while preserving its historical significance. This approach attempts to balance the preservation of cultural heritage with the need for critical awareness.

Key Features and Takeaways

- **Historical insight:** Provides a snapshot of early 20th-century European colonial attitudes.
- **Artistic innovation:** Showcases Hergé's **ligne claire** style, foundational for modern comics.
- **Controversial content:** Contains racial stereotypes and colonialist perspectives that are widely criticized today.

- **Evolution of storytelling:** Contrasts with later Tintin works that exhibit greater cultural sensitivity.
- **Ongoing debate:** Sparks discussions about censorship, historical context, and media responsibility.

The conversation surrounding "Tintin in the Congo by Hergé" remains complex, balancing appreciation for its artistic achievements with a critical understanding of its cultural implications. This duality ensures that the comic persists as a relevant and thought-provoking work within the broader landscape of graphic literature and colonial history.

[Tintin In The Congo By Herge](#)

tintin in the congo by herge: *Tintin in the Congo* Hergé, 2016 This English language edition of Tintin in the Congo, in colour, completes the series of 24 Tintin adventures, created by Hergé, making it an essential volume for collectors. Tintin au Congo first appeared in June 1930, in *Le Petit Vingtième*, the children's supplement to the Brussels newspaper *Le Vingtième Siècle*, where it was published as a serial over a period of a year. In 1931 the story was published in book form by Les Editions du Petit Vingtième and a few months later by Editions Casterman of Tournai. The first English language edition, translated by Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper and Michael Turner, was published in 1991 by Sundancer, London. Tintin in the Congo featured the full length version of the story with black and white illustrations. In 1946 Tintin au Congo was revised by Hergé and published in colour by Casterman in the standard 64-page album format. It is from this edition that the present book is translated. In addition, when Tintin au Congo was later to be published in translation in Scandinavia, Hergé redrew page 56, and the revised version of this page is included here. In his portrayal of the Belgian Congo, the young Hergé reflects the colonial attitudes of the time. He himself admitted that he depicted the African people according to the bourgeois, paternalistic stereotypes of the period - an interpretation that some of today's readers may find offensive. The same could be said of his treatment of big-game hunting.

tintin in the congo by herge: *Tintin au Congo* Hergé, 1946

tintin in the congo by herge: [The Adventures of Tintin, Reporter for "Le Petit Vingtième" in the Congo](#) Hergé, Michael Turner, 1991

tintin in the congo by herge: [Herge: The Man Who Created Tintin](#) Pierre Assouline, 2009-10-29 One of the most beloved characters in all of comics, Tintin won an enormous international following. Translated into dozens of languages, Tintin's adventures have sold millions of copies, and Steven Spielberg is presently adapting the stories for the big screen. Yet, despite Tintin's enduring popularity, Americans know almost nothing about his gifted creator, Georges Remi--better known as Hergé. Offering a captivating portrait of a man who revolutionized the art of comics, this is the first full biography of Hergé available for an English-speaking audience. Born in Brussels in 1907, Hergé began his career as a cub reporter, a profession he gave to his teenaged, world-traveling hero. But whereas Tintin was fully formed, clear-headed, and positive, Assouline notes, his inventor was complex, contradictory, inscrutable. For all his huge success--achieved with almost no formal training--Hergé would say unassumingly of his art, I was just happy drawing little guys, that's all. Granted unprecedented access to thousands of the cartoonist's unpublished letters, Assouline gets behind the genial public mask to take full measure of Hergé's life and art and the

fascinating ways in which the two intertwine. Neither sugarcoating nor sensationalizing his subject, he meticulously probes such controversial issues as Hergé's support for Belgian imperialism in the Congo and his alleged collaboration with the Nazis. He also analyzes the underpinnings of Tintin--how the conception of the character as an asexual adventurer reflected Hergé's appreciation for the Boy Scouts organization as well as his Catholic mentor's anti-Soviet ideology--and relates the comic strip to Hergé's own place within the Belgian middle class. A profound influence on a generation of artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, the elusive figure of Hergé comes to life in this illuminating biography--a deeply nuanced account that unveils the man and his career as never before.

tintin in the congo by herge: Hergé, Son of Tintin Benoit Peeters, 2012 Author of the critically acclaimed *Tintin and the World of Hergé* and the last person to interview Remi, Benoit Peeters tells the complete story behind Hergé's origins and shows how and why the nom de plume grew into a larger-than-Remi personality as Tintin's popularity exploded. Drawing on interviews and using recently uncovered primary sources for the first time, Peeters reveals Remi as a neurotic man who sought to escape the troubles of his past by allowing Hergé's identity to subsume his own. As Tintin adventured, Hergé lived out a romanticized version of life for Remi.--Jacket.

tintin in the congo by herge: Tintin: Hergé and His Creation Harry Thompson, 2011-10-13 The little black-and-white cartoon figure of Tintin first appeared in Belgium in 1929 in a Catholic newspaper where his creator, Hergé®, worked. Harry Thompson looks at the story of Hergé®, of Tintin and his origins, and beyond to when President de Gaulle could call Tintin 'his only rival'.

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tintin in the congo by herge: The Real Hergé Sian Lye, 2020-12-28 “If you are looking to understand a bit more about the circumstances that inspired *The Adventures of Tintin*—this book will provide a good snapshot.” —The BookBuff Review Hergé created only twenty-four Tintin books which have been translated into more than seventy languages and sold 230 million copies worldwide. *The Real Hergé: The Inspiration Behind Tintin* takes an in-depth look at the man behind the cultural phenomenon and the history that helped shape these books. As well as focusing on the controversies that engulfed Hergé, this biography will also look at his personal life, as well as the relationships and experiences that influenced him. “Tintin is more famous now than when Hergé was actually writing and illustrating his adventures. Sian Mye’s book is another in the excellent series

about the real lives of our most famous authors, and is well worth a look. Brilliant!" —Books Monthly
"It is certainly possible to enjoy the Tintin books without knowing Hergé. But they are more interesting after learning about this complex, sometimes frustrating, man. We can learn from him, even if we learn from his mistakes." —Rose City Reader

tintin in the congo by herge: *Masters of the Ninth Art* Matthew Screech, 2005-01-01 In English-speaking countries, Francophone comic strips like Hergés's *Les Aventures de Tin Tin* and Goscinny and Uderzo's *Les Aventures d'Asterix* are viewed—and marketed—as children's literature. But in Belgium and France, their respective countries of origin, such strips—known as *bandes dessinées*—are considered a genuine art form, or, more specifically, the ninth art. But what accounts for the drastic difference in the way such comics are received? In *Masters of the Ninth Art*, Matthew Screech explores that difference in the reception and reputation of *bandes dessinées*. Along with in-depth looks at *Tin Tin* and *Asterix*, Screech considers other major comics artists such as Jacques Tardi, Jean Giraud, and Moebius, assessing in the process their role in Francophone literary and artistic culture. Illustrated with images from the artists discussed, *Masters of the Ninth Art* will appeal to students of European popular culture, literature, and graphic art.

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