The Misadventures of Tintin: (Post)Colonial Representations and Imaginative Geographies.

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Abstract

This article aims to fuse postcolonial theories with visual analytical techniques, to position *The Adventures of Tintin* comic book series within a distinctly geographical context. Firstly, by connection to Edward Said's (1978) notion of 'imaginative geographies', Hergé's *Tintin* will be seen to operate through a complex visual/textual discourse that represents and re-affirms the colonial ideology of 'the West', rendering 'the East' as lazy, barbaric, mystical or evil *Others*. The narrative structures and visual tools of four *Tintin* albums – *Tintin in the Congo*, *King Ottokar's Sceptre*, *Land of Black Gold*, and *Tintin and the Picaros* – alongside the dichotomous representation of Tintin and *Others*, and the postcolonial construction of landscape and nature, will be detailed. Yet whilst Geography's 'cultural turn' has seen an explosion in the desire to conceptualize the representation of people and place, comic books have seen little focus. The visual/textual symbiosis of the comic book renders *Tintin* an analytically rich text within which to understand the implications the colonial imaginary has brought to the contemporary world. The literal and ironic nature of *post*colonial study, leads us to reject the notion of 'the end of colonialism', and the representational/material interface *Tintin* can bring us, strengthens the bond between geographical study and the comic book.

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Acknowledgements

Thank-you to anyone who put up with my constant criticism of just about *everything* and how it could invoke the colonial imaginary; not least my housemates who were happy to throw themselves into, at times, heated (and drunken!) debates surrounding the topic of postcolonialism. Thanks also to those who, unknowingly, radically changed my own perceptions, notably anyone at the School of Environment and Development, whose lectures or tutorials enabled me to further my interest in Culture and Imperialism, to steal Edward Said's title. Finally, a somewhat twisted gratitude to Hergé (1907-1983), without whom I would have been lost for inspiration. His rich, complex and analytically-rewarding comics mean I have developed my own embryonic interest in the 'ninth art', and consequently I see them in a completely new (geographical) light.

1. Introduction

'There is still the perception among some people that geography is boys conquering the world by various strange means. TV programmes can give this image. It does make me despair, partly because it's so laddish, and completely misses what geography has to offer, but also because it's such a disrespectful view of the planet - not only to the people already there, but also because it resonates with that imperialist view that we can have a right to go anywhere and treat the world as our playground. That really worries me'.

(Massey 2009: 82)

The opening quote, by the economic geographer Doreen Massey, introduces several key concepts I intend to cover when analysing *The Adventures of Tintin* comic books. Massey, having been born on the 'the biggest council estate in the world' in Manchester, was according to herself, brought up with an acute awareness of unfairness in the world (Massey 2009: 82). Yet the interview, whilst drawing upon her childhood and early academic career, also explores three distinct themes when *current* geographical issues are discussed.

Firstly; 'the perception…that geography is boys conquering the world', a concept arguably constructed through the heroics of the colonial explorer, and one that still exists today. Secondly, the idea that 'TV programmes can give this image [of geography]', and consequently can strongly influence (positive or negative) perceptions of the world; yet Massey could equally have used a novel, painting or comic book, to illustrate this idea. Then finally, the 'imperialist view that we can…treat the world as our playground' and the worrying consequences of thinking we have the right to go anywhere, and not appreciate the historical baggage that comes with our ability to travel the world. In a nutshell then, Massey highlights the cultural effects colonialism still has in the 21st century. The idea is that the Empires of Western countries, notably Britain, France and Belgium in this context, whilst no longer physically/politically existing, still exert a considerable amount of cultural control over the representation of people and place. It is these processes and practices that are commonly critiqued under the remit of *postcolonialism*[1], a term Castree (2005: 141) says is both a 'literal and ironic' concept designed to question the end of colonialism.

Challenging the 'post' in postcolonialism then, has led many academics, not least those broadly associated with geography, to consider the effects of Empire within socio-cultural and geo-political realms. Geography's self-professed cultural turn of the last 20 years, has opened the door to a richer, more complex reading of these links, shifting its concerns to a wide range of texts, from landscapes (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988) and maps (Harley 1988), to science fiction novels (Kitchin and Kneale 2001), photographs (Schwartz and Ryan 2003), comic books (Dittmer 2005) and magazines (Lutz and Collins 1993). The list becomes almost exhausting, as geographers have cast their collective nets far and wide, in order to find the spatial characteristics of postcolonialism.

The cultural entanglement of colonialism/postcolonialism however, has no less of a material impact upon the everyday lives of the individual, than the economic or military for instance. As Gregory (2004:8) has sought to confirm, 'culture involves the production, circulation, and legitimation of meanings through representations, practices, and performances that enter fully into the construction of the world'. As Thomas (1994: 10) further details;

> Colonialism has always been…a cultural process; its discoveries and trespasses are imagined and energized through *signs, metaphors and narratives*; even what would seem its purest moments of profit and violence [the politico-economic and military realms] has been mediated and enframed by structures of meaning. Colonial cultures are not simply ideologies that mask, mystify or rationalize forms of oppression that are external to them; *they are also expressive and constitutive of colonial relationships in themselves.* (Emphasis added)

Arguing that cultures constitute colonial relationships *in themselves*, helps to bridge the gap between the so-called 'physical' manifestations of colonialism, notably the geo-political or the economic, and the lesser considered imaginings formulated through cultural texts such as Massey's TV programmes, Harley's maps, or Schwartz and Ryan's photographs.

This renewed emphasis upon the textual medium, leads us to consider the comic book. Hergé's[2] *Les Aventures de Tintin* (in English as *The Adventures of Tintin*) series was first published on 10th January 1929, as a weekly children's supplement to the Belgium newspaper, *Le Vingtième Siècle*. 81 years later, *The Adventures of Tintin* (*Tintin* hereafter) has sold over 230 million copies worldwide, and has been translated into more than 80

languages, and comprising of 24 albums of Tintin-led adventures (Moulinsart 2008). Aside from being popular with children and adults alike, *Tintin* has also been heavily scrutinized by academics intent on reading deeper into the political, cultural and social construction of Hergé's work. By fusing comic book and postcolonial analysis, I intend to consider how Hergé formulates the notion of 'imaginative geographies' (Said 1978) for the reader, and specifically, how the comic book represents and re-affirms ideas about colonialism.

2. Geography, (post)colonialism and textual analysis

I. *Orientalism and the geographical imagination*

   Edward Said's seminal text *Orientalism* (1978) has served as a key reference point for a wide-range of academic disciplines, linking political scientists, human geographers, and literary critics, to name but a few, to an overarching framework of postcolonial theory. Said's reading of Western/Eastern relationships focused upon the romanticization and 'false' representation of Asia and the Middle East, in order to justify the West's (post)colonial ambitions. In critiquing such assumptions, Said opened up studies of imperialism to new research questions and new methodological approaches (Schwartz 2003). His desire for a contrapuntal reading of literary texts across the East/West divide, and a greater conception of the 'overlapping territories and intertwined histories' of both, help to make explicit the links between the physical act of colonialism and the cultural 'baggage' that comes with it, formulated through the 'geographical imagination' of the West. As Said (1994: 6), now famously, wrote;

> Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about *images* and *imaginings*. (Emphasis added)

   In highlighting the struggle over images and imaginings, Said opened up the opportunity to analyse the links between imperialistic attitudes, and the narratives of both visual and fictive geographies. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Said critiques many of the key works that make up the Western literary canon. Authors such as Jane Austen, Joseph Conrad and Rudyard Kipling all are subject to scrutiny by Said for their implicit acceptance and formulation of the colonial regime in the West. Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) is the site of a lengthy analysis by Said, owing to her omission of the colonial links between the Bertram estate and British-controlled Antiguan sugar plantations. Austen's assumptions about the British Empire are important to consider, as, as Said explains, we must 'calibrate the signifying power of the references to Antigua in *Mansfield Park*' (Said 1994:107), by understanding the 'evident historical realities' that Austen alluded to.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) also does not escape Said's intensive evaluations. A semi-autobiographical account of his own journey to Africa, the story follows an Englishman called *Marlow*, and his explorations into King Leopold II of Belgium's private colony, the Congo Free State, as captain of a steamboat. Said (1994: 26) explains;

> …*Heart of Darkness* works so effectively because its politics and aesthetics are, so to speak, imperialist, which is in the closing years of the nineteenth century seemed to be at the same time an aesthetic, politics, and even epistemology inevitable and unavoidable [sic]. For if we cannot truly understand someone else's experience and if we must therefore depend upon the assertive authority of the sort of power that Kurtz [an Ivory trader] wields as a white man in the jungle or that Marlow, another white man, wields as narrator, there is no use looking for other, non-imperialist alternatives; the system has simply eliminated them and made them unthinkable. The circularity, the perfect closure of the whole thing is not only aesthetically but also mentally unassailable.

Said continues to deconstruct Conrad's imperial narrative and talks of 'Conrad's tragic limitations' and his inability to 'conclude that imperialism had to end' (Said 1994: 34), providing rich evidence for the cultural and ideological power such a narrative could wield. Moreover, Said's references to both 'Kurtz…as…white man in the jungle', and 'Marlow…as narrator', highlight the dual workings of both author and protagonist, each wielding authority and power over the reader.

Yet Said never reduces his concern to just the British or Belgium Empires; Albert Camus, an Algerian-French author is also criticized, as Said contends that 'we must ask whether [his] narratives…are connected to, and derive advantage from, earlier and more overtly imperial France narratives', and understand 'the degree to which his work inflects, refers to, consolidates, and renders more precise the nature of the French enterprise [in Algeria]' (Said 1994: 211).

Guiseppe Verdi's Italian opera, *Aida* (1871), is also the focus of a postcolonial critique; conceived and written by the French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette, the opera is firmly situated within the metropoles of the West. As Said elucidates;

> As a visual, musical, and theatrical spectacle, *Aida* does a great many things for and in European culture, one of which is to confirm the Orient as an essentially exotic, distant, and antique place in which Europeans can mount certain shows of force…Subaltern

cultures [are] exhibited before Westerners as microcosms of the larger imperial domain. Little, if any, allowance was made for the non-European except within this framework. (1994: 134)

The cultural representation of the Orient as 'exotic, distant, and antique' is placed by Said within the same referential framework as depictions of Africa. Operating in similar (yet distinct) ways, imperial representations of the 'Other' across the continents of Africa and Asia specifically, are also brought to the fore by other theorists *within* the geographical academy.

Derek Gregory's (1994, 1995, 2004) work on imaginative geographies is also extremely important to consider, updating Said's earlier analyses to establish the key geographical themes inherent in imperialist discourse. Gregory evaluates Said's interest in spatiality and power, and explores the implications of his work, and the constitution of Said's geographical imagination (Gregory 1995: 448). Gregory's desire to think about the two sites of the West Bank and the Left Bank (proxies for East and West) *as one*, binds together two distinct parts of the world, where politics are discretely enclosed in separate geographies. Gregory demands linkages between culture and politics, between the imaginative and the physical, through which 'power, knowledge and geography are drawn together in acutely physical ways' (Gregory 1995: 448), and criticism by the likes of Jacobs (1996) and Philo (2000) are easily dispelled, rebuking the notion of cultural geography and postcolonialism's poor connection between theoretical abstraction and 'on-the-ground' reality.

Further, the (largely, Western) academic field of postcolonial studies has been well-served by key contemporary thinkers who originate from *non*-Western countries. Indian-born Gayatri Spivak's output has seen a marked progression, from translating Jacques Derrida's (1976) deconstructionist text *Of Grammatology*, to her reading of the subaltern (1988) and the issue of terrorism (2004), yet has always remained fiercely self-critical, transcending the typical boundaries between literary critique and political mobilisation, grounding her theories in the practicing of 'other-ing'. Homi Bhaba's seminal title *The Location of Culture* (1994) is also a key signpost for postcolonial analysis, as is his more recent re-connection, alongside W.J.T. Mitchell, with Said's (2005) work, and his continuing legacy.

However, despite his obvious achievements in critiquing the imperial project, Said remained eerily quiet on the topic of both gender and sexuality (Gregory 2004: 352), as well as an exclusive focus upon novelistic representations. His failure to engage with

predominantly visual images opened up opportunities for cultural geographers to fully combine Saidist spatializations with the image-ing of (post)colonialism, through the notion of 'the gaze'.

II. The Imperial Gaze: Culture and visualization

The imaging of Colonialism, whether through painting, sketching, map-making or photography, has been oft-ignored in conceptualisations of East/West, empire and Other-ing. While the 'struggle over geography…is not only about soldiers and cannons…' (Said 1994: 6), many have failed to attribute (post)colonial attitudes and practices, to the rhetoric of the visual text. Yet, geography's cultural turn has seen an explosion in a critique of the visual, not least its power/knowledge dynamics. Extensive critiques of Michael Foucault's panopticism, and corollary terms such as 'the gaze', have highlighted the culturally-constructed, and historically-grounded nature of the image, or as Ryan (1997: 19) contests, showing that 'images do not simply "speak for themselves" or show us the world through an innocent…eye'.

Donna Haraway's (1988, 1991) conception of 'situated knowledge', to which the gaze is premised upon, illustrates the difficulties of achieving geographical objectivity. Haraway's feminist standpoint sought to critically destabilize the position of power epitomised by imperialist strategy, and aimed to empower those who had become objectified by western, imperial and/or male authority. As Haraway explains (1988: 583),

> The "eyes" made available in modern technological sciences shatter any idea of passive vision… all eyes, including our own organic ones, are active perceptual systems, building on translations and specific *ways* of seeing, that is, ways of life. There is no unmediated photography or passive camera obscura in scientific accounts of bodies and machines; there are only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organizing worlds.

Haraway's critical engagement with feminism, serves to deconstruct the 'imperial gaze', through which the white, Western male has viewed peoples and place. Haraway's argument for situated and embodied knowledges echoes the sentiments of Said, who elucidated his own ideas about overlapping territories and intertwined histories (Said 1994), with both challenging the ideologies of the 'masterful gaze of detached authority' (Schwartz 2003: 155).

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Those who have critically engaged with photography/empire have sought to unravel the workings of imperialism through various histories, places and methodological remits. Gregory's addition to Schwartz and Ryan's (2003) *Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, draws on the exhaustively compiled *Description de l'Égypte* (1809), documenting Napoleon's military/scientific expedition to the Middle East. His continuing critique of imperialism leads him to consider the 'visual appropriation of the Orient' (Gregory 2003: 197) by Napoleon, and the 165 engineers, surveyors, and cartographers who accompanied the military force to Egypt. As Gregory details;

> A scopic regime [such as the medium of photography] imposes a systematicity on the visual field; a structuring effect on who sees, through the constitution of the viewing subject, and on what is seen, through the production of a space of constructed visibility that allows particular objects to be seen in determinate ways…In general scopic regimes are constituted through grids of power, desire and knowledge, and their visual structures and practices enter intimately into the production of imaginative geographies.

The colonial imaginary Gregory talks of, was embedded in the workings of *Description de l' Égypte*, and more importantly, by way of photography. The idea of a 'scopic regime' of photography is deeply involved in the process of colonial hegemony, affirming and re-constituting the physical appropriation of space.

James Ryan's (1997, 2003) explorations into the visual imaginings of the Victorian British Empire remain strongly crucial to geo-cultural representations of Colonialism too. The similarities between the late 19th century maps, framed by 'emblems of flora, fauna, racial types and colonial citizens…' (Ryan 1997: 20), depicting the British Empire in all its spatial manifestations, and the role of photography in representing the world in two dimensions, were noted by institutions and explorers from the start. The Royal Geographical Society (RGS) played an influential role in the dissemination of imperial knowledge, and saw photography as central to the symbiosis of science and the arts. As Ryan (1997: 22) continues, 'photography was implicated in a discourse of geography and a developing geographical science which took as its *raison d'être* the exploration and conquest of space'. Consequently, RGS-sponsored expeditions, mainly to the 'Dark Continent' of Africa, saw photography as crucial to 'an ambitious collective enterprise of visual survey' (Ryan 1997: 23).

Further, Schwartz's (1996, 2003) similarly incisive analysis of photographs from the edge of Empire, again embraces the visual/empire nexus. Her focus upon photography

as 'geography lesson' in the former, highlights the dual workings of the photo/geo-graphical connection, as both a pre-text for (post)colonial travellers and a surrogate for travel (Schwartz 1996: 16). In the latter, Schwartz contends;

> The new medium [of photography] was employed in various ways to establish imperial control, extend imperial connections, and articulate imperial identity…Photographs were spaces where facts, in visual form, were stored and communicated, ordered and conceptualized, reconstituted and transformed by an imperial gaze into the myths and metaphors of place and identity. (2003: 155)

This new 'weapon' of imperial authority and control, was far removed from the frontline battle over territory, instead producing knowledges *for* the West, predominantly *in* the West. Schwartz's chosen site of analysis, in her latter article, was the city of Toronto, which in the mid-19th century, had political aspirations to be the colonial capital of the British Empire. The photograph became a medium through which Toronto could express and disseminate their desires, documenting the city's economic well-being and architectural sophistication. As Schwartz concludes;

> …The Toronto photographs [were] more than just a visual record of the façade of Toronto's past. Through selection, portrayal, and ordering, the [photo] portfolio [to send to the British] conveyed the values and beliefs of Toronto's civic promoters… present[ing] a social and political narrative…For the city's politicians. The media, and the citizens of Toronto, the portfolio was a strong and clear visual argument, enabled by photographic technology…(2003: 169)

In her case study, Schwartz uses a place – Toronto – less often considered within a central colonial context, yet is able to reveal the linkages between physical place and symbolic space, within a postcolonial methodology of representation and imagination.

So far, photography/empire has taken centre-stage. Some of the above-mentioned critics – Gregory, Ryan and Schwartz – have taken Said's 'imaginative geographies' concept, and directly applied it to the visual text, a medium Said had scantly considered. Others, such as Haraway, have combined contemporary political objectives – Feminism – with 'the gaze', a concept fervently developed through a colonial context. However, whilst a breadth of geographical context has been greatly considered, with the British,

French and Belgium Empires all subject to critique, there is a greater need to consider other equally important visual mediums.

Subsequently, the comic book is brought into focus. It has seen little geographical enquiry thrust its way, despite unique narrative structures and mass readership world-wide (in all its culturally-specific formats, as Anglo-American comics, Francophone *bande dessinée* or Japanese manga etc.), and so its exclusion from debates surrounding the postcolonial context of the visual, is outwardly baffling. A detailing of the history of Franco-Belgian comics follows, but first I have decided to approach the medium somewhat backwardly, through geography's own embryonic attempts to fuse comics with geo-politics, nationhood and postcolonial narratives.

Jason Dittmer's (2005, 2007a, 2007b) engagement with the *Captain America* comics, as well as Dittmer and Larsen's (2007) critique of *Captain Canuck*, serve as the only waypoints for geographers in combining comics with politico-cultural narratives. As Dittmer (2005: 628) has highlighted; 'the seemingly innocent nature of the comic book medium contributes to its significance [in exploring geographical themes]…because it usually operates beneath the gaze of most…critics'. Other geographers, more concerned with re-inventing the visual as an appropriate format for academic presentation, have actively used the comic book structure to re-think maps (Krygier and Wood 2009).

However, it is Dittmer (2005: 627) who argues that the character of *Captain America* works to affirm US-national identity, legitimate its (questionable) foreign policy, and articulate the perceived notion of American supremacy, authority and power;

> Captain America is an example of popular culture's role in [the affirmation of nationhood]. Significant to this role is Captain America's ability to connect the political projects of American nationalism, internal order, and foreign policy (all formulated at the national or global scale) with the scale of the individual, or the body. The character of Captain America connects these scales by literally embodying American identity, presenting for readers a hero both of, and for, the nation. Younger readers may even fantasize about being Captain America, connecting themselves to the nation in their imaginations. His characterization as an explicitly American superhero establishes him as both a representative of the idealized American nation and as a defender of the American status quo.

Moreover, what is crucially important, is that Dittmer embraces Said/Gregory's notion of the geographical imaginary, and succinctly links the symbolic to the performative, by 'outlin[ing] a frame through which the world can be

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viewed…enabl[ing] the reader…to adopt that frame and act based on it.' (Dittmer 2005: 631). This recto/verso process of articulation/affirmation intimately connects the fictional geopolitical narratives and spatial structures of the comic book, with 'real-world' practices, through a construction of geographical imaginaries. As Dittmer (2007a: 251) concurs;

> …comic books, like all popular culture, serve as political texts, shaping geopolitical (and other) identities…through language, both visual and textual, that connects representations of the "reality" as understood by the reader…with the parallel, but vastly different universe of the [main protagonist].

This triptych of spatial sites; the 'real', the fictional and the imaginary, are all at play within the comic book, each configuring the other. Yet it is the geographical imaginary to which many comics actively seek to engage, and the process of Othering, seen in *Captain America*, is echoed in many other publications, not least Hergé's *Tintin* series. However, whilst Dittmer, and Dittmer and Larsen, have fought a geographically-led appropriation of the comic book, their conclusions remain stunted by a refusal to engage with critical visual methodologies, instead, as Krygier and Wood (2009: 214) contest, opting for a straightforwardly interpretive approach.

III. Semiotics and text

It therefore remains for me to detail the analytical approach I intend to employ throughout this postcolonial critique of *Tintin*. As a comic book series, any such analysis could quite understandably transcend two closely related practises; textual[3] and visual analysis, due to the comic book's reliance upon both image and text to form a narrative. Arguably, both practices are as crucial as each other when analysing a comic book for any discourse, not least imperialistic ones. Moreover it is critical that both text and image are analysed *in relation* to each other; as notions of an imperialist discourse may only become apparent when image and text are analysed in concert, helping to decode what might have been an otherwise obscured and partial reading of the key issues.

Whilst textual and visual analyses are integral to the reading of *Tintin*, there are many such methods that can be used to explore the text; with different tools and analytical perspectives. One such approach that has been used extensively across both visual and textual mediums is semiology. As Rose (2001:70) explains; '[it] entails the deployment of

a highly refined set of concepts which produce detailed accounts of the exact ways the meaning of an image [or text] are produced through that image [or text]'. As semiology (also known as semiotics) stands for 'the study of signs', such analysis dissects the workings of ideology, through a focus on image (or text) itself. In order to carry out a critical visual methodology, it remains necessary to outline the characteristics of a semiological analysis.

However, despite semiology being broadly associated, at least in its relative infancy, with a structuralist approach originating from Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), the methodologies utilised in this analysis, draw emphasis instead from Roland Barthes' (1973, 1977) culturally interactive approaches, as well as Michael Foucault's (1972, 1977) power/knowledge engagements.

Most crucial to the deployment of semiology, is the understanding of key terms and concepts that underpin the process of the analysis. As Rose (2001: 71) explains, the 'sign' is the most fundamental unit;

> [It] is a unit of meaning, and semiologists argue that anything which has a *meaning*…can be understood in terms of its signs and the work they do. Signs make *meaning* in complex ways, and much of the technical vocabulary of semiology describes the precise ways in which signs make sense. (Emphasis added)

The 'sign' consists of the signified (a concept or object) and the signifier (a sound or image attached to the signified). Work by Saussure detailed a systematic understanding of how language functions, and it was Saussure who argued 'that there is no necessary relationship between a particular signifier and its signified.' (Rose 2001:74). The recognition of the arbitrary nature of the signified/signifier relationship is crucial, as it allows for the problematization of the relation between the two.

Although Saussure's work is crucial to the fundamental understanding of the structure of signs, the complexity of visual imagery often limits the use of his linguistic-based theories. The likes of Bal and Bryson (1991) and Iverson (1986) refer more frequently to American philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce's 'richer typology of signs…to consider how different modes of signification work' (Iverson 1986: 85). Pierce's use of three kinds of signs (iconic, indexical and symbolic) allows for a more thorough analysis of the complex sign systems present in the visual format. These signs refer to wider systems of meaning, termed 'codes', 'referent systems' and 'mythologies' by various academics, all with some sort of reference to social and cultural conventions.

The importance of codes, referent systems and mythologies to this particular research is profound. The analysis of different kinds of signs, and their position within conventionalized systems or structures can help to deconstruct *Tintin* within an imperial context. While the meaning of signs is incredibly complex, and such meanings are multiple (or, 'polysemic'), Hall (1980: 134) explains that most images have preferred meanings;

> Any…sign is potentially transformable into more than one connotive configuration. Polysemy, however, must not be confused with pluralism…Any society/culture tends, with varying degrees of closure, to impose its classifications of the social and cultural and political world. These constitute a *dominant cultural order*, though it is neither univocal nor uncontested…The different areas of social life appeared to be mapped out into discursive domains, hierarchically organized into dominant or preferred meanings. (Original emphasis)

So whilst a whole variety of different connotations can be interpreted from a 'text', there are nonetheless preferred readings that impose ideological order. Through a semiological analysis, the above mentioned codes and referent systems, can not only be 'discovered' so to speak, but more importantly; *understood* in relation to the arbitrary, culturally-specific nature of imperial/colonial ideology.

Yet, the notion of imperial ideology, or other closely-associated terms, combining the geographical identity of 'the West' with a paradigm, discourse or indeed, ideology, demands a critical appraisal of Foucault's questioning of power and knowledge. As Hall (1997: 42-43) rightly explains;

> What concerned [Foucault] was the production of knowledge (rather than just meaning) through what he called *discourse* (rather than just language). His project, he said, was to analyse "how human beings understand themselves in our culture" and how our knowledge about "the social, the embodied individual and shared" comes to be produced in different periods.

This departure from Saussurian/Barthesian semiotics, was, in Foucault's words an attempt to re-engage the 'violent, bloody and lethal character' of conflict (1980: 115), and thus the shift from 'language' to 'discourse' enabled a critique of systems of representation. This notion of discourse therefore 'is about the production of knowledge through language' (Hall 1992: 291), but as Hall continues; 'since all social

practices entail *meaning*, and meanings shape and influence what we do…all practices [are]…discursive'. Thus, we arrive at a multi-liner method, derived from the work of both Barthes and Foucault, focusing upon both visual codes/structures *and* power/knowledge constructs.

3. An introduction to *bande dessinée* and Hergé

At this stage it must be stressed that any attempt to conduct an analysis of all 24 *Tintin* albums would be both feeble and counter-productive. Instead, four albums have been selected. *Tintin in the Congo* (hereafter, *Congo*) is chosen for Hergé's portrayal of Belgian colonialism, *King Ottokar's Sceptre* (hereafter, *Sceptre*) for a depiction of Nazi Germany's foreign policy, *Land of Black Gold* (hereafter, *Black Gold*) for its Middle Eastern conflict storyline, and finally, *Tintin and the Picaros* (hereafter, *Picaros*) for Hergé's representation of South American dictatorships. But firstly, the *bande dessinée's* history, as well as academic interest in the medium, needs to be discussed.

I. *How* **BD***s became an acceptable textual/visual medium for analysis*

The medium of the comic book, in all its manifestations, is at once culturally powerful yet woefully under-appreciated, and under-represented, across the field of academic study within the UK.

The specific analysis of 'Francophone *bande dessinée*' (McQuillan 2005), 'Francophone comic strips' (Screech 2005a), 'Belgian and French comics' (McKinney 2008b), Franco-Belgian comics or *BDs*, is thus a small yet growing analytical field for English-language scholars. However, the contrast could not be greater to mainland Europe, and the wider Francophonie world, where *BDs* mainstream popularity, cultural and national significance, and acceptance as a medium worthy of critical evaluation, far outstrips the niche appreciation of the general UK public, or its embryonic focus in the academic arena[4].

Regardless of the lack of cultural importance comic books hold in the UK, where they are often seen as juvenile, Franco-Belgian comics are commonly considered as the 'ninth art', borne out of the illustrated stories of Rodolfe Töpffer (1799-1846), a Swiss artist who Screech (2005a: 5) attains;

> …enabled fixed images to develop through time by dividing events up into sequences of panels…arranged in chronological order; each panel grow[ing] out of the previous panel and prepar[ing] for the following one.

As Groensteen and Peeters (1994) further elaborate, Töpffer was the first (modern) practitioner of the text/image interaction, in order to, in Screech's (2005a:5) words,

form 'a unified, interdependent whole…opening up new dramatic and humorous possibilities'.

The *BDs* most fervent theoreticians were to arrive much later however, in mainland Europe, and courtesy of a growing interest across the academic landscape in the study of *bande dessinée*. Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle's *La bande dessinée: Essai d'analyse sémiotique* (1972), offered a semiotic analysis of early Hergé-generation *BDs*, art-historian David Kunzle's *History of the Comic Strip* (1973) brought politics to the *BD*, and Jean-Bruno Renard's *Clefs pour la bande dessinée* (1978) utilised Propp's (1929) folkloric framework of analysis.

Yet, more recent BD analysis, informed by the death of Hergé in 1983, brought together comic-book creators and critics as one. Benoit Peeters, a student of Roland Barthes, and *BD* artist in his own right, offered a Barthesian reading of Hergé's *Les bijoux de la Castafiore* (1963) in 1984. Thierry Groensteen's position at the *Centre national de la bande dessinée et de l'image* (CNBDI[5]), also coincided with the publication of the seminal *Système de la bande dessinée* (1999b), that built on the prior work of *BD* critics and wider cultural theorists alike (McKinney 2008).

Here in the UK, where academic interest has been focused around the field of Francophone cultural studies, English-translated editions of Groensteen's *Système* (2007), essay collections by Forsdick et al. (2005) and McKinney (2008), and titles by Barker (1989), Screech (2005a) and Grove (2006) have only scratched the surface in English-language *BD* critique. Important online journal publications such as the *Image [&] Narrative*, the US-based *ImageTexT*[6], and the *International Journal of Comic Art*, all serve as nuclei for focused image/text analysis across the Franco-Belgian comic book landscape and wider fields in Japan and America.

The evolution of *bande dessinée*, and the healthy state of the *BD* industry across the Francophonie world, has been coupled with growing interest from the film industry, not least from within the English-language arena. The recent big-screen adaptation of Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2000), the Sylvian Chomet-directed animation, *Belleville Rendezvous* (2003), and the forthcoming release of Hergé's *Secret of the Unicorn* (2011), all serve to highlight the *BD*s mainstream potential, outside the traditional Franco-Belgian market.

Thusly, Hergé's *Les Aventures de Tintin, au pays des Soviets* (1930), first published as a weekly cartoon in *Le Petit Vingtième*[7], began a 24-album adventure following the exploits of a young Catholic boy-scout named Tintin. Hergé's signature *ligne claire* (clear line)

style, as practiced by many of his fellow collaborators, such as Roger Leloup and Jacques Martin, added to the general admiration of Hergé's fast-paced narratives, engaging characters, and frequent comic interludes. What follows below is a detailing of each of the four critiqued albums, in order to provide context and perspective to the postcolonial study.

II. Tintin in the Congo

Tintin's second adventure began life in serialised form in June 1930 in *Le Petit Vingtième*[8]. The first English language edition was translated by long-time collaborators Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper and Michael Turner, in 1991 by Sundancer publishers (Hergé 2005), from the 1946 colour edition. The most recent update is the album subject to analysis, and was published in 2005 by the London-based Egmont Books.

The story itself is rather poorly developed, and sees Hergé awkwardly incorporating the religious desires of *Abbé* Norbert Wallez. Tintin and Snowy travel by steam liner to Africa, where they engage in the trivial big-game hunting of crocodiles, monkeys, lions, snakes and elephants, and engage in several comic battles with the story's two antagonists; a local witchdoctor and an American gangster.

Tintin and Snowy take it upon themselves to rid the locals of the superstitious and fetishistic witchdoctor, bringing rational medical thought, moral judgement and religio-educational practices to the Congo. Meanwhile, the American gangster, sent by Al Capone is eventually captured, and his presence in the adventure is explained to the reader ('Al Capone decided to increase his fortune by controlling diamond production in Africa. When he heard of your [Tintin's] departure…he thought you must have got wind of his plans, so…arrange[d] for you to disappear' Hergé 2005: 52.1).

The story ends with several more 'comic' hunting scenes, and Tintin and Snowy are saved from a charging buffalo by an aircraft, and taken back to Europe for their next adventure.

III. King Ottokar's Sceptre

The 8th album in the *Tintin* adventures, *Sceptre* was first serialized from 1938-1939, once again, in *Le Petit Vingtième*[9]. The first English-translation edition appeared in 1958,

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courtesy of Methuen (Hergé 2002a), and the most recent revised edition was published in English by Egmont in 2002, and it is this version that is subject to analysis.

Whereas *Congo* was questionably lacking in aesthetic detail and narrative depth, *Sceptre* is a strongly developed adventure, with Hergé sending Tintin to Eastern Europe in an attempt save the fictional country of Syldavia from the invasion of neighbouring Borduria.

The story begins firstly in Brussels, where Tintin meets a sigillographer called Professor Alembick (an expert on the study of document 'seals') and uses his investigative abilities to follow a few mysterious Eastern European characters.

Tintin then accompanies Professor Alembick on an official visit to Syldavia, where he becomes involved in a conspiracy to remove King Muskar XII from the Syldavian monarchy. He manages to survive numerous murder attempts by corrupt Syldavian police officials and other Bordurian conspirators, and acts to find and retrieve the stolen Sceptre needed for King Muskar XII to remain in power. An ensuing battle with the antagonists who stole the Sceptre results in Tintin crossing the border into Borduria and witnessing their military intentions. The final encounter sees Tintin and Snowy return the Sceptre to a grateful King, and the aims of the Bordurian leader, 'Musstler' (an amalgam of Hitler and Mussolini), are explained to the reader, before Tintin, Snowy and able assistants, the Thom(p)son twins, fly home to Belgium.

IV. Land of Black Gold

Hergé's 15th album, *Land of Black Gold*, initially ended in mid-adventure in 1939, with the onset of World War II, and the artist's decision to join the Nazi-controlled newspaper *Le Soir*, dropping the politically-sensitive storyline. However, 9 years later, Hergé re-drew, coloured, and republished the adventure in *Le journal de Tintin*, in a serialized format, from 1948-1950. In 1972 the album was re-drawn again, with the help of Bob de Moor[10] after significant alterations to place names and characters, to best please the English publishers, Methuen. The 2008 edition published in the UK by Egmont, is simply a reissued version of the 1972 album, and the focus of the analysis.

The initial adventures (1939/1948) were both set in the British Mandate of Palestine, and made reference to the sea port of Haifa, now in modern-day Israel. The subsequent 1972 re-draw, at the request of Methuen, removed all 'out-dated' references to the

British Mandate and the Jewish terrorist group, the Irgun, instead setting the story in the fictional Middle Eastern state of Khemikal, and replacing the Irgun with Arab militants.

Tintin is initially seen investigating an exploding fuel catastrophe, seen occurring in the Thom(p)sons' car, and said to be widespread across Western Europe (Hergé 2008: 1-5). He proceeds to board the Speedol Star oil tanker along with Thomson and Thompson, in order to solve the mystery of the exploding petrol, and docks in the seaport of Khemed, in Khemikal. An early confrontation with Sheikh Bab El Ehr, leader of the Arab insurgents, leads him to discover the sabotage of an oil pipeline and another key antagonist and recurring character, Dr. Muller.

A subsequent sandstorm sees Tintin, Snowy and the Thom(p)sons end up in another city, Hasch Abaibai, the home of the ruling Emir of Khemikal, Mohammed Ben Kalish Ezab. Tintin then continues his investigation by talking to the Emir about the oil crisis, who explains to Tintin the ensuing row between two petroleum companies; Arabex and Skoil, the former for whom hold the lease to oil concessions in 'Khemidite Arabia' (Hergé 2008: 35.13), and the latter for whom Dr. Muller is working for, and whose collaborator, Bab El Ehr, attacked the Arabex oil installations.

The plot further develops when the Emir's son, Prince Abdullah, is kidnapped by Dr. Muller and Bab El Ehr, and Tintin makes it his mission to find him. The final scenes see several head-to-heads between Tintin and Muller, before Muller concedes, Prince Abdullah is returned to his father, and a lengthy explanation as to the exploding petrol, is attributed to Muller's 'Formula Fourteen' (a compound designed to trial the effects of contaminating the oil reserves of 'the enemy', in the event of an outbreak of war, Hergé 2008: 62).

V. *Tintin and the Picaros*

Tintin and the Picaros was Hergé's 23rd and final adventure before his death. Published in full 62-page colour format in 1976, Methuen were responsible for the English translation, published in the same year, with Egmont releasing the most recent edition in 2002.

The story follows Tintin, Snowy, Captain Haddock and Professor Calculus as they embark on a journey to the fictional South American country of San Theodoros, to confront its dictatorial leader, General Tapioca, and aid revolutionary, General Alcazar, and his guerrilla organisation – the Picaros - in leading a government *coup*.

As with previous albums, Tintin is seen discussing the key issue at home, when it is reported that his friend and opera singer, Bianca Castafiore, has been arrested in San Theodoros for an alleged plot to overthrow the government. A war of words between Haddock and Tapioca are exchanged through newspaper articles, television interviews, and telephone messages, before Tapioca invites Haddock *et al.* to travel to South America for 'talks', to which Tintin initially declines.

Once in Tapiocapolis (the capital of San Theodoros), Haddock and Calculus are greeted by Tapioca's *aide-de-camp*, Colonel Alvarez, and whisked away to a country hotel while Tapioca is 'unavailable'. Tintin and Snowy eventually arrive; and the former immediately discovers that something is not quite right. A failed attempt to kill Tintin and friends by Tapioca's aides, Alvarez and Colonel Esponja (sent by General Kurvi-Tasch of the Stalinist state of Borduria, to assist Tapioca), leads Tintin to Alcazar and his 'jungle hideout'.

An encounter with the native Arumbayas, and with Alcazar's Picaros clearly drunk on Tapioca-deployed whisky, sees Tintin and Alcazar discuss the merits and opportunities for a revolution, before Tapioca is forced to surrender following an Alcazar-led *coup*.

The final pages see Bianca Castafiore successfully being freed, before General Alcazar expresses his delight at being appointed leader of San Theodoros, and Tintin and friends return to Europe.

4. The (mis)adventures of Tintin

With the context for the analysis in place, hereafter the focus is directed through various visual/textual themes. Firstly, Hergé's use of narrative tools and visual structures is detailed, with express reference to each adventure. Secondly, Hergé's *ligne claire* drawing style is scrutinized alongside the numerous 'real-world' sources used by the artist to create the fictional world of *Tintin*. The next two chapters deal with the two textual sites of Tintin and Other, in constituting the West/East dualisms employed by Hergé, and lastly, the landscapes of *Tintin* are analysed in reference to perceptions of peoples/places.

I. Consolidating the colonial project: Hergé's use of narrative tools and visual structures

The interpretation of colonial ideology throughout Hergé's albums lacks depth and substance without a sufficient analysis of the narrative tools and structures actively employed by the artist himself. As Beaty and Nguyen allude to in Groensteen (2007: viii), *BDs* 'offer a wide range of possible insights into the spatial and temporal operations of the image', whereby panels can form direct or indirect relationships in order to elucidate the narrative. Groensteen's conceptualisation of, what he terms, 'braiding', confirms the operation of a spatial network of sequential images. Baetens and Lefèvre's (1993) analysis further cements a reading of the comic book that works 'beyond linear relations', and a general acceptance of panels, continuously or discontinuously, being linked by a system of iconic or semantic correspondences. What remains crucial to a reading of *Tintin*, is the verification of colonial 'explicits', that is, obvious references to (post)colonial endeavours, by way of scrutinizing image/text spatial structures.

One fine example is Hergé's ability to re-create a collection of typical Tintin 'actions' that help to provide the reader with a framework for negotiating the narrative. While content and situation change, Hergé is able to use stock poses that recreate the position Tintin finds himself in. The panels, within which these actions appear, are linked through a 'hyper-topic', situating the poses within an infra-narrative series (Groensteen 2007: 147). It is these repeated images that re-affirm Tintin's characteristics, and thusly constitutes his actions as important to the narrative. His overtly colonial ambitions in

Congo and monarchical sympathy in *Sceptre* are both consolidated by a braiding of images, reinforcing the narratives of both.

One initial schema (Hergé 2005: 3.1), is used when Tintin reacts to an internal thought. The image aims to provide the story with a needed change in pace, and offers the reader an easily-interpreted 'cue' highlighting the importance of the following frames. When considered within a (post)colonial context, these tools can help to re-affirm the narrative, imbuing the story with a strong set of assumptions for the reader to interpret. In this much repeated action; Tintin is seen running, and in the following frames, discovering something of importance to the storyline. In the example from *Congo*, the initial panel introduces one of the story's main antagonists (the American gangster), following an injury to Snowy (Hergé 2005: 2-5). The iconic image, of Tintin 'springing into action', is used numerous times by Hergé to confirm to the reader that 'this is where the story *really* begins'. The panels that directly follow unequivocally rely upon the 'run/discovery' image of Tintin.

This image is once again repeated in *Sceptre*, where Tintin is seen running down the stairs in pursuit of two Syldavian characters (Hergé 2002a: 12.10). Operating in a similar way to the first example, the panel of Tintin running is succeeded by one of Tintin 'discovering' the two men he assumes sent him a letter bomb (12.11), and another two pages of Tintin chasing the perpetrators (13-14). Later in the story, this action is repeated again, as Tintin runs to King Muskar II's castle to explain how the sceptre was stolen (Hergé 2002a: 45.1).

Both instances in *Sceptre*, in which Hergé has drawn Tintin in this pose, come just before an important scene of narrative progression. The reader, therefore, is not only drawn to this particular panel, but also to the images' firm narrative bond, and its inclusion on other pages, in different scenes, or, crucially, in different albums. Somewhat ironically then, given the context of this analysis, Groensteen (2007: 156) has alluded to 'the imperialism of braiding', and the power the process of image repetition holds as a semantic network, with the ability to richly imbue both 'narrative consequences and symbolic implications'. The colonialist narratives created by Hergé, are fixed in place by narrative structures such as braiding, and the affirmation of West/East dichotomies are enforced through these processes.
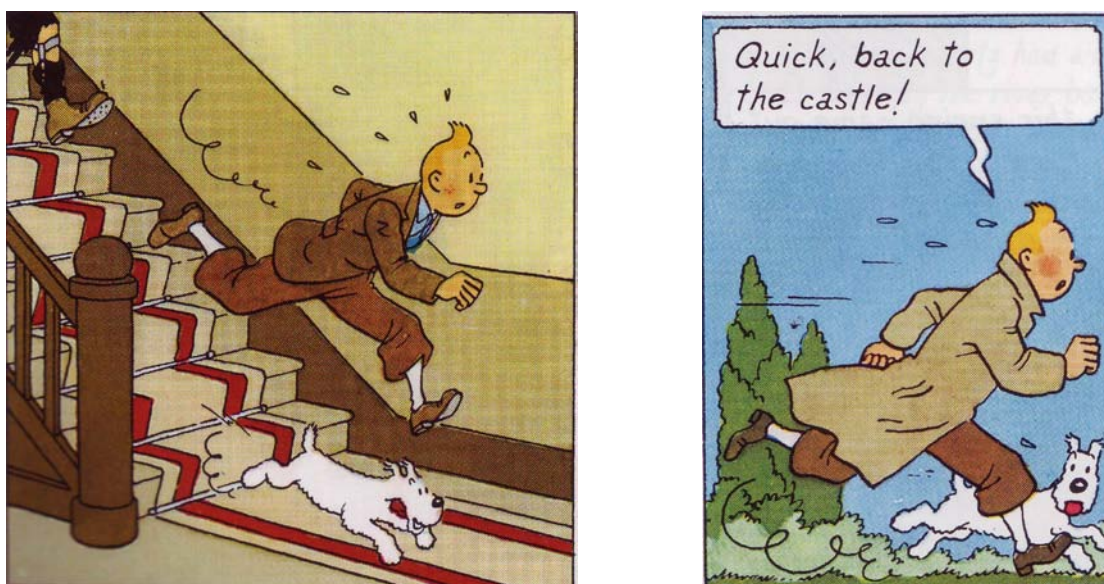
Figs. 1 & 2. The iconic 'run' pose (Hergé 2002a: 12.10 and 45.1).

Another tool utilised by Hergé is an equally intriguing process, and refers to his playful structuring of panel space and positioning, within both the frame and the page. Groensteen (2007), again, offers to testify the importance of such a process by providing evidence for such occurrences, courtesy of analysis by Jean-Claude Raillon (1990). Raillon's observations of *Sceptre* revolve around a scene where Tintin rushes to Professor Alembick's aid (Hergé 2002a: 15.10-16.4), in another 'run/discovery' sequence. However, as Raillon explains, Hergé has managed to combine the representational act of Tintin crossing a doorstep (15.14), 'and the gesture of the reader, who, accompanying him, turns the page…' (Raillon 1990: 72). Whereas above-mentioned scenes in both *Congo* and *Sceptre* do not contemplate a representational/material bond, Raillon's example does. The physical process of turning the album's page, required of the reader in order to continue the story, presents a unique opportunity for Hergé to materially enact the rhetoric of the narrative.

Yet Hergé had already utilised the double-page format of the *BD,* to this exact effect, in *Congo*. In the first example, Snowy is scared by a black handyman brandishing a saw with the threat to kill him (Hergé 2005: 3.12), and exits the panel in a desperate manner. His exit is directed towards the bottom-right of the panel, as if he is leaving page 3's narrative. His entry on the first panel of page four is from the bottom-left, successfully bridging the gap from page to page. The positioning of Snowy within both panels acts

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to draw the reader into turning the page and continuing the story. The representation of Snowy's act is reciprocated in the materiality of the physical page, each informing each other, and reinforcing Snowy's visual movement. Another example, in the same scene (5.12-6.1), sees Snowy jump through a porthole and into the ocean, with his exit situated in the final panels the first page, before appearing in the water in the first panel of subsequent page.
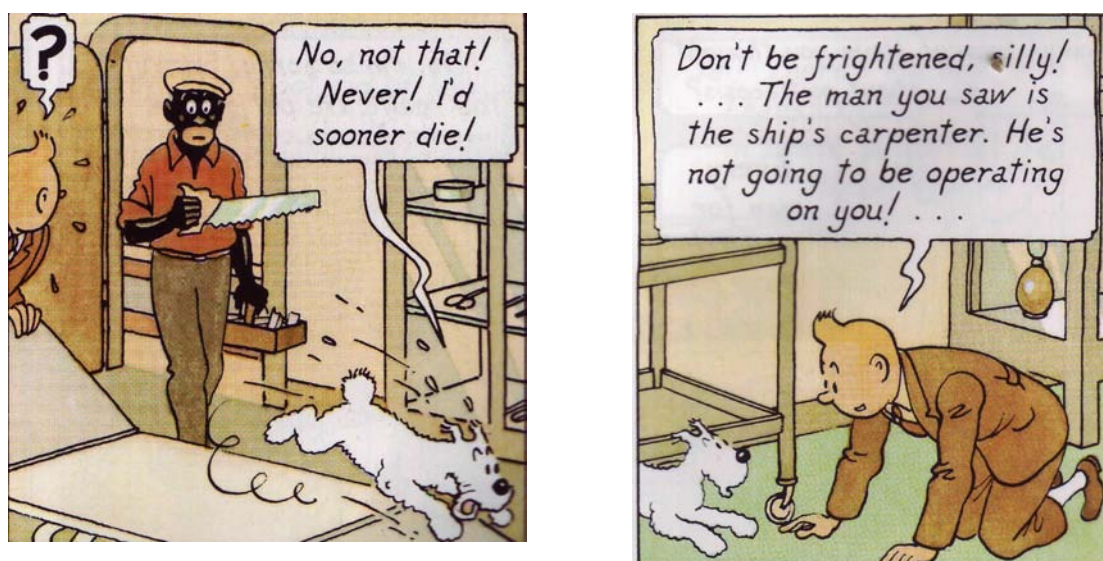
Figs. 3 & 4. (Left) Snowy exits bottom-right before (right) entering the next panel from the bottom-left (Hergé 2005: 3.12 and 4.1).

Importantly, the employment of spatial structures within *Tintin* determines a panel's place in not only reading protocol, but also reading *emphasis*. The centrality of a theme, subject, or character within a *BD* is only as powerful as the tools used by the artist to represent them. The first process of braiding enables a strong attachment of otherwise estranged images, within an iconographic sequence of relevance. The second process, focused around a panel's position on the page, and specifically at the recto/verso axes, helps to reinforce the themes or characters present. In *Congo*, the examples analysed contain key characters crucial to ideological dichotomies. In *Sceptre* the sentiment is echoed by Hergé, who by implementing these structural tools over-emphasises their position in the narrative. The reader, recognising these subtle hints proceeds to interpret these instances as central to the album's narrative, yet as *Tintin* operates in sequential

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albums as well, these tools can be, and were, applied series-wide by Hergé in order to replicate themes, character traits and discourse deemed important to the *Tintin* story.

Continuing the focus on Hergé's use of structural tools, the employment of the 'larger' panel is an often utilised form used to re-focus the narrative. In *Congo* (Hergé 2005: 9.1), the standard-sized panel is replaced on the first strip with a margin-to-margin image of the ocean liner Tintin is aboard[11]. The larger panel not only acts to represent the size of the cruise ship itself, but also the enlargement of the *narrative focus*, re-setting the storyline along Hergé's, arguably, pre-determined path. This technique is repeated several times over the course of the album, where landscape images and drawings of native animals, for example, are represented within the larger panel. Further, in *Black Gold*, the larger frame is used for two interlinked reasons. A short scene involving the Thom(p)sons not only serves to emphasis their comic characteristics, but alludes to the size and 'nothingness' of the desert, when they confuse a mirage with an actual palm tree (Hergé 2008: 19.10). The importance of the Middle Eastern landscape will be discussed later on, but for now, it is suffice to say that Hergé manages to elicit two key narrative processes in one image; the Thom(p)sons' personalities, and the landscape's emptiness.
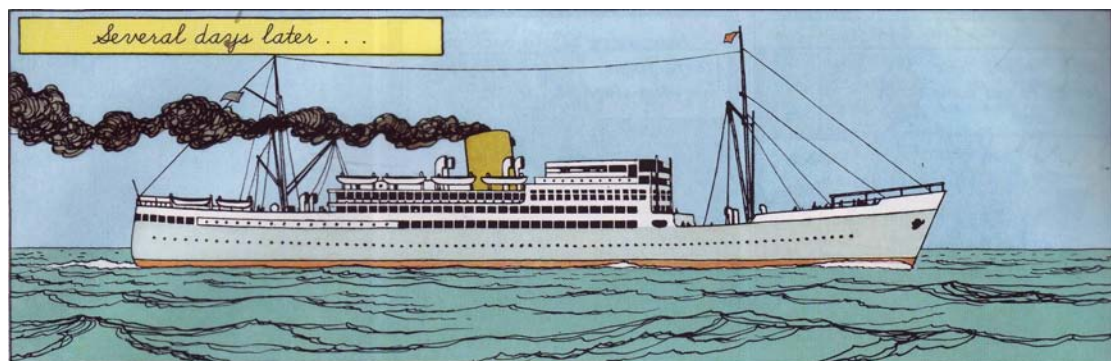

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Fig. 5. (Top) The steam liner's shape is represented by the chosen panel format (Hergé 2005: 9.1).
Fig. 6. (Above) Thomson and Thompson mistake a mirage for a real palm tree (Hergé 2008: 19.10).

This process helps to bind the physical space of the frame with the diegetics authored by Hergé, and the decision to choose a particular image to 'enlarge' is bound-up within the politics of the story. Yet as Groensteen (2007:45-46) vehemently contends, there must be refrain in assuming 'an automatic correspondence between the form and the dimensions of the frame and the length of the supposed action that it enframes'. What Groensteen alludes to, is a temptation by some *BD* analysts to overlook context, in favour of a dogmatic connection between frame size and importance. Many contemporary *BD* artists use frame size in various ways, not simply to express narrative speed. As highlighted above, Hergé alters frame size, not only for the changing of narrative speed, but also to elucidate character traits, and provide a greater detailing of background images.

II. Clear line realism: A fictional world for the empiricist

Closely interlinked with Hergé's narrative tools and panel structures, is the artist's unique drawing style. Commonly referred to as *ligne claire*, Hergé pioneered a drawing technique that would later became not only synonymous with the Brussels School of Belgian *BD* artists (Bob de Moor, Edgar P. Jacobs etc.), but also reflecting his own personal desire for absolute realism.

As Miller (2004:308) explains;

> In the work of both Hergé and Jacobs, aesthetics and ideology were fused through the drawing style which would become known as the *ligne claire*. Based on clear outlines and meticulous delineation of the settings, the *ligne claire* presents as self-evident what [Bruno] Lecigne has called 'la vision petite bourgeoise du monde [the lower middle-class view of the world]'

This 'self-evidence' that Miller alludes to, is Hergé's ability to construct the fictional world of *Tintin as real*, that is, with 'accurate' dimensions, proportioned characters, and 'believable' adventures. Fresnault-Deruelle (1999:8) has further elaborated on the importance of *ligne claire*, by describing the process as that of labelling and cataloguing,

from which any ambiguity can seldom take place. Screech's (2005b) analysis of French *BD* artist Jean Giraud also references Hergé's realistic tendencies. Giraud's work fits, what Lecigne and Tamine (1983) term *nouveau réalisme*, differing from Hergean realism in the absence of conventional narrative structures, and the twisting of commonly-associated drawing 'rules' practiced through a realist discourse. As Screech details (2005b: 99):

> In previous realist BDs (eg. Hergé's *Aventures de Tintin*) adventures led, through a rationally linked sequence of developments, to the hero's triumph. Hergean realism made the story plausible: it created the illusion that the hero's triumph was happening in the real world. [*Nouveaux réalistes*] revell[ed] in aspects of everyday life which Hergé had tastefully filtered out (sex, violence, swearing, etc.), they replaced the virtuous hero's inevitable triumph with a loss of innocence. [*Nouveau réalisme*] shattered Hergé's reassuring illusion.

This immutable bond between the *ligne claire* style, narrative structure, and the ideology of Hergé in *Tintin*, cannot be ignored. Arguably, without the clear, detailed and demarcated practices Hergé employed, his realist ideology could not be enforced.

The fluid association between all three distinct, yet overlapping concepts leads us to consider the real-life references Hergé based his fictional world upon.

The attention to detail and the desire for total authenticity are both evident when Tintin takes flight for the Balkans in *Sceptre*. The aeroplane he boards can be identified as a Savoia-Marchetti (Hergé 2002a:16-17), operated by Belgium's national airline, SABENA[12] and used as a passenger plane on the route from Brussels to the Belgium Congo. SABENA itself was initially funded by Belgian colonists in the Congo, and Hergé's understanding of the context within which SABENA was financed and operated would have been fairly extensive. His decision to use specific aircraft *and* specific flight registration numbers[13] highlights his material desire for the ultimate precision in his albums. The *ligne claire* style Hergé pioneered helped to reduce irregularities, and aimed to blur 'the border between realism and caricature' (Tilleuil 1999:179). Both Hergé, and later, his drawing companions, de Moor and Jacobs, all used legitimate sources for images of vehicles, buildings, landscapes etc., utilising trade brochures, design manuals and the National Geographic to draw 'precise' recreations (Farr 2001).

The real-life parallels between Hergé's fictional Arab country, Khemed, in *Black Gold*, and the various real-life Middle Eastern countries used to compile a fictional geo-politics, such as Israel, Saudia Arabia and Iraq, are seen all the more intriguing in the real-life influences on Hergé's Arab characters.

It has been noted by Farr (2001:133) that the ruling emir's son, Prince Abdullah (Hergé 2008: 39), was modelled upon Faisal II, the last King of Iraq. Faisal II, who unlike his father, King Ghazi I, remained closely aligned to British forces through the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1948 and the Baghdad Pact of 1955 (Butt 2003). The monarchy installed by the British was subsequently overthrown in a military coup, in which Faisal II was killed and pan-Arab nationalism was re-ignited under the eventual reign of The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. Yet, for a long period (1921-1958), Iraq had been closely guided by British colonial interests. The important connotations drawn from Hergé's inclusion of a key character based on Faisal II, and a narrative that revolves around Tintin finding the kidnapped Abdullah, seem to uphold an implicit support for British imperial control in Iraq, and more broadly, Allied interests in the Middle East.

Another fellow antagonist in the story is Dr. Muller. Muller acts as a representative of the German oil company Skoil, under the alias of Professor Smith, and attempts to persuade the ruling emir that he should cancel the current oil agreement with the British-owned company Arabex. However Dr. Muller's actions, including the sabotage of a British-controlled oil pipeline (Hergé 2008: 24-26), bear striking resemblance to the actions and affiliations of the real-life German Ambassador to Iraq, Fritz Grobba (Time 1941, Nicosia 1985). Grobba himself was vehemently anti-British; much like Dr. Muller who, as a 'representative' of the German oil company Skoil, attempts to oust the British oil company Arabex from Khemed.

The real-life influences Hergé had used to create the fictional country of Khemed, and the fictional characters of Dr. Muller, Bab El Ehr, and Prince Abdullah were bound up inextricably with Middle Eastern geopolitics. The story of *Black Gold* is a thinly disguised adventure based on British and German-based interests in the discovery of oil in the Middle East. Later attempts to rid the story of dated references to the British Mandate of Palestine and Jewish militant groups, only serve to hide explicit references to real-world politics, leaving Hergé to represent such political subtleties in the form of character stereotypes and narrative structure. Hergé's reliance upon the *ligne claire* drawing style becomes even more visible when these explicits are removed, leaving other tools to invoke a narrowed, and familiar interpretation from the reader.

Yet as Hergé continued to publish more albums, the *ligne claire* style slowly lost its credibility, and became associated with 'old-fashioned' *BD* creations. As Screech (2005a:111) contends, Hergé's cultivation of stylistic homogeneity led to a 'crisis of reality', leaving a new wave of *nouveau réaliste BD* artists during the 1960s/70s, to reject the objective truths Hergean realism intended to purport.

However, Hergé still continued to draw in his (in)famous style. The bureaucratic workings of *Studio Hergé*, a company created to assist Hergé with the production of new adventures, brought a new dimension to *Tintin*, and subsequent stories echoed the changing geo-politics of the real world. In *Picaros*, Hergé amalgamated real-life countries, militant organizations, presidents/dictators and companies, all serving to, supposedly, bridge the gap between fiction and reality.

Fig. 7. Tintin meets General Alcazar, or is it Che Guevara? (Hergé 2002b: 26.12).

For example, San Theodoros' present leader – General Tapioca – has explicit links to the fascist regime in Borduria, the fictional Eastern European country mentioned in

Sceptre, and is considered to loosely represent the pro-Soviet leaders of South America during the Cold War period (Farr 2001). Meanwhile, General Alcazar, as leader of the Picaros, is intent on overthrowing Tapioca. Whilst it may seem at first that Alcazar bears visual similarities with a Che Guevara-type revolutionist (Hergé 2002b: 26.12), his financial backing by the International Banana Company was far from based upon any arrangement in Guevara's political endeavours. As he fought against US-backed dictators such as Cuba's Fulgencio Batista, I suspect he had very little respect for the real-life United Fruits Company[14] (Farr 2001:193). It becomes clear that Hergé's efforts to re-align his Guevara-esque character alongside a vaguely American/Western European political viewpoint, affirms his pro-Western desires for a victory of 'good' over 'evil'.

   The importance of Hergé's drawing style, in bringing together fictional politics, stylistic interpretations of real people, and accurately-sourced objects, highlights the symbiosis of a particularly powerful semantic network, used by Hergé to ensure narrative clarity and lucidity.

III. The innocence of Tintin: How the Boy Scout came to represent the morality of the West

   Gregory (2004: 4) has outlined Said's (1994) imaginative geographies process as two-fold; dealing with both the 'self-constructions of "the West"' and, 'constructions of the other'. Here, we deal with the former; the narrative instances where Tintin is seen to embody the ideals, values and beliefs of a moral, imperially dominant 'West'.

   This self-construction is at first evident in *Congo*, where one particular image encapsulates the character of Tintin. The penultimate panel of the adventure (Hergé 2005: 62.1), encompassing the space of nine standard-size frames, shows a now partly-'civilized' Congolese village. Totem poles of Tintin and Snowy are religiously worshipped by one character, another two are seen playing with Tintin's photography equipment, and even a small dog dreams of Snowy's return (!). Other individuals comment on Tintin's characteristics; '…in Europe all young men is like Tintin…' and, '…if you not good, you never be like Tintin!', both of which should construct a strong representation for the reader. The following frame, the last of the story, sees Tintin and Snowy cheerfully walking away and the affirmation of Tintin's god-like status is more-or-less complete.

It is Screech (2005a) who most succinctly details the opening scene in *Sceptre*, another familiar series of panels that construct Tintin in a moralistic manner. He is first shown walking through a city park[15] and finding a briefcase (Hergé 2002a: 1.1-1.7). As Screech explains, 'the [mundane] opening sequence eases readers into the story, by reducing the gap between fiction and the real world… Hergé is encouraging the impression that Tintin shares every reader's reality.' (2005a:26). By *Sceptre*, he had perfected the art of the mundane opening sequence, using it to place Tintin within a fictionalized Western European landscape. It served to close the gap between Hergé's hero (Tintin) and his readers. However, the good deed Hergé gave Tintin to carry out in the opening pages of *Sceptre* is, more importantly, meant to strengthen the ties between his formulated representation of good (Tintin) and the readers. The result, arguably, leaves them less attached to any potential evil antagonist arriving in the adventure, and acts to affirm Tintin's moral superiority in *Sceptre*.

Another example, this time in *Black Gold*, sees Tintin praising the values of western democracy, at the expense of the 'barbaric' ways of the East (Hergé 2008: 61). The emir, Ben Kalish Ezab, upon discovering that Professor Smith is Dr. Muller in disguise, is pictured reacting angrily (61.8-11).
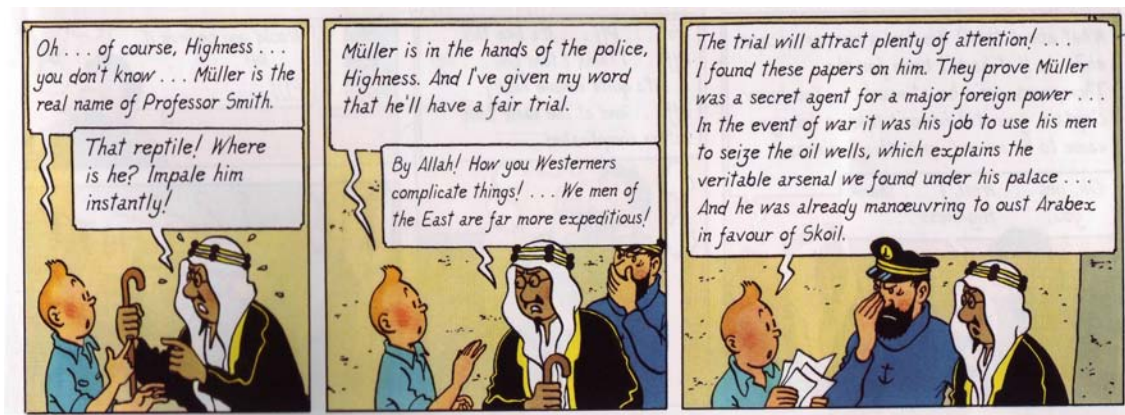

Fig. 8. Tintin and Ben Kalish Ezab discuss the fate of Dr. Muller (Hergé 2008: 61.8-12).

The notion of Tintin embodying western values, is enhanced through the use of some important dualisms, notably physical force/legal procedure, fairness/efficiency and rationality/irrationality. The emir uses the words 'impale', 'expeditious' and 'Allah', all in the space of two frames, including a straightforward understanding of certain differences between Westerners and the 'men of the East' (61.9). Yet it is Tintin who

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displays the textual power over Ben Kalish Ezab, as he leads the conversation and details the trial of Dr. Muller, whilst the emir is restricted to two irrational statements in response. Tintin's use of the phrase 'fair trial', his mention of 'the police', and the absence of any exclamation marks following his comments (unlike BKE, used to visually depict a loud voice), helps to position Tintin as the (rational) representative of the West. Disregarding the effect this portrayal has on the 'Other', Hergé manages to re-affirm certain characteristics the reader should have already attributed to Tintin, through a combination of these frequent exchanges.

Further, in *Picaros*, Tintin manages to persuade General Alcazar to avoid killing anybody during his revolution (Hergé 2002b: 43-45). In a series of panels, Tintin is seen sitting down with Alcazar, and discussing the possibilities for a 'revolution without bloodshed' (43.12), to which Alcazar is visibly annoyed. In the exchange, he calls Tintin 'crazy', and a 'traitor' (43.13), whilst he continues to digest his proposal. Yet Tintin is unmoved and following Alcazar's tirade, simply turns for the door of the revolutionary's hut, just as one of Alcazar's men throws a tear-gas grenade their way (44.5). Subsequent panels see Tintin question the possibility of mounting 'a successful revolution with [a] bunch of boozers' (44.11), and Alcazar is seen pleading with Tintin to let him shoot Tapioca and his ministers (45.1), before finally succumbing to his overwhelmingly efficient bargaining powers!

Once again, a number of key distinctions can be made between Tintin and the opposing character in the scene, General Alcazar. Tintin is seen expressing his hatred for both physical force and alcohol, yet in contrast, Alcazar is more than ready to kill Tapioca and his officers, whilst his own revolutionaries enjoy drinking Loch Lomond whiskey by the crate (Hergé 2002b: 40). Visually, Alcazar expresses his desires in a particularly forceful manner, with the pointing of both his finger and cigar (44.1, 44.3); whilst Tintin's negative body language shows him visibly scared (45.7), yet remarkably composed (44.10-12). This scene seems to recall some of the characteristics of Tintin discussed in *Black Gold*, and re-iterate Tintin's pacifism, placidity and good-nature. Whilst it can be assumed that Hergé has continued to re-mould and re-construct the character of Tintin throughout his adventures, the recurrence of certain key traits – from *Congo* to *Picaros* – has seen Hergé actively provide Tintin with a set of morals, values and beliefs about the world. This can be further confirmed through Hergé's own values, instilled to him through his childhood as a boy scout. As Farr (2001: 9) details;

> The young Georges Remi [Hergé] found his only release from a rigidly boring bourgeois upbringing in scouting. His dull childhood memories, he admitted, "only began to brighten up and gain some colour with scouting"…*Its code, principles and enthusiasms were his and were soon to be embodied in Tintin*, as much a boy scout as he was ever a reporter. (Emphasis added)

It is this interaction between Hergé's experiences as a child, and the embodiment of certain boy scouting principles in the character of Tintin, that act to affirm these moral values expressly drawn into the narratives of *Congo*, *Sceptre*, *Black Gold* and *Picaros*.

IV. The importance of the Other: From the 'lazy' African to the 'militant' Arab and beyond

We now move onto a different site/sight in the Hergean canon, as a detailing of the characteristics of the 'Other', needs to be sought.

The separation made between Tintin and Other is mobilised in the (post)colonial critique Said details (2000:577);

> To build a conceptual framework around a notion of us-versus-them is in effect to pretend that the principle consideration is epistemological and natural – our civilization is known and accepted, theirs is different and strange – whereas in fact the framework separating us from them is belligerent, constructed and situational.

Hergé uses this conceptual framework to construct opposing characters as embodying and practicing different values and beliefs. As Gregory (1995: 457-459) has also contested, it is the combination of 'division, detail and vision', that serve as 'scopic regimes', enforcing these exclusionary geographies. It is the latter two distinctions – detail and vision – that re-affirm the division between Tintin and Other in Hergé's adventures.

Subsequently, the rapturous reception Tintin and Snowy receive upon docking in the Congo affirms such suspicions. Tintin regally waves to the crowd as a host of bizarrely dressed Africans greet them by shouting 'Welcome, Tintin!' and 'Welcome, Snowy!' (Hergé 2005: 9.3). In the subsequent panel two men are depicted with shields and spears, whilst another is seen beating a drum, and others are drawn in western-style suits and shirts. Tintin, still dressed in his familiar beige trench coat, is carried on the

shoulders of enthusiastic natives, like a colonial saviour. Whilst Tintin displays well-proportioned facial features, *all* the black people drawn in *Congo* sport oversized pink lips, alongside the Pidgin English Hergé gives them to speak, which results in the formation of an incredibly strong set of caricatures. The European/African dichotomies at play throughout this particular album are heavily reinforced by not only these caricatures, but also the structural tools Hergé employs to position Tintin, Snowy and Other.

Another subtle example of Hergé's use of colonial stereotypes can also be seen in the many exchanges Tintin has with Coco[16] (Lefèvre 2008). Their first meeting sees Coco agree to accompany Tintin on his travels (Hergé 2005: 11.10) whilst the final frame of the same page shows Tintin driving a newly acquired trans-Saharan vehicle (11.11) laden with vital equipment (camera, tripod etc.). A subsequent encounter sees Coco appear easily overpowered, where even Snowy demands '…you must never be afraid!' (Hergé 2005: 14.7), and Tintin heroically arrives to fight the 'evil gangster' who stole his car (14.6-15.5).
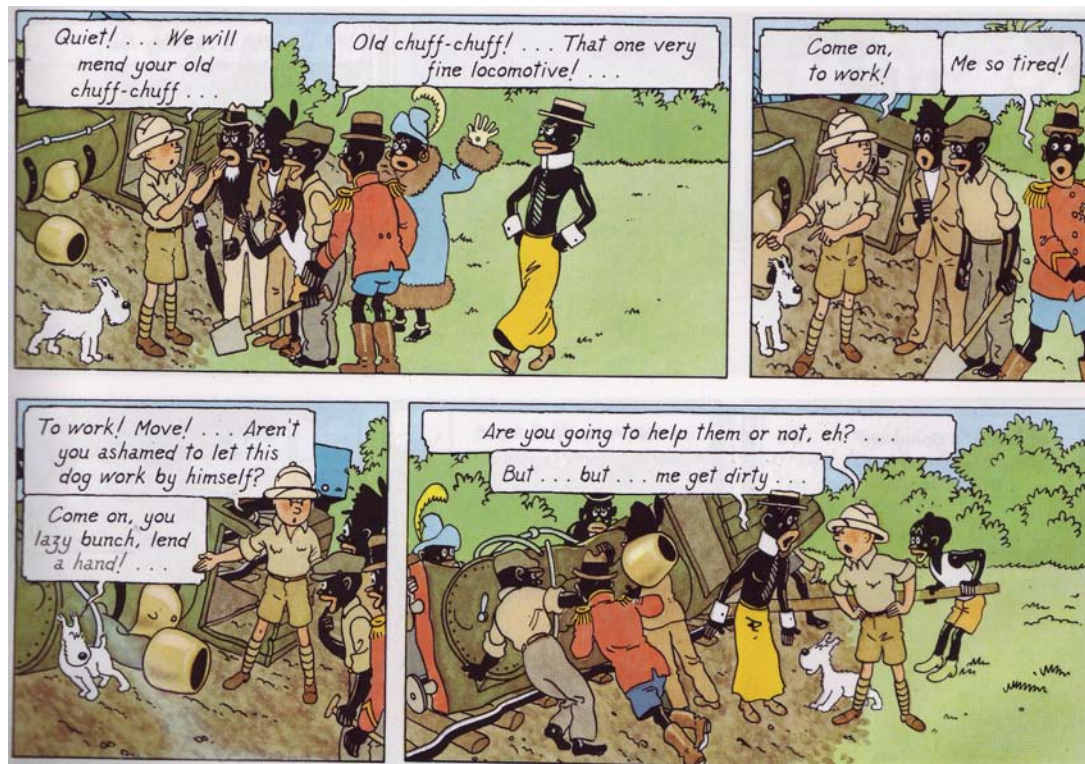
Fig. 9. Tintin enages with the African *Others* (Hergé 2005: 20.2-5).

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Aside from such exchanges, Tintin and Snowy continue their adventure across the Congo, with one particular incidence representing the 'inherent' work-shy ethic of African people. At first, Tintin manages to maroon his trans-Saharan vehicle on a railway track, into which an oncoming train manages to crash. Following a confrontation between a quite-visibly angry Tintin (Hergé 2005: 20.1) and several passengers, he offers to mend their 'old chuff-chuff' (20.2) yet demands they get 'to work!' too (20.3-4), whilst one African character proclaims, in poor English, 'Me so tired!' (20.3), another refuses to help for fear of getting 'dirty' (20.5), and Snowy calls them all a 'lazy bunch' (20.4).

Another scene sees two local tribes – the M'Hatuvu and the Barbaorum – declare war on each other (Hergé 2005: 28.12), and adhere to common perceptions of barbarism associated with African stereotypes. A combination of bows and arrows, spears, shields and blunt swords make up the M'Hatuvuan weaponry (29.1), yet Tintin's clever solution to hide an electro-magnet in order to attract 'all the arrows and spears' (30.5), sees the tribe surrendering to Tintin and the Barbaorum. The lack of 'modern technology', and the inability to comprehend the workings of Tintin's phonograph and film equipment (26-27), sees the tribes people depicted as inquisitive, yet lacking in reason and rationality; qualities only Tintin seems to possess.

However, the context and form of the Other is neither immutable, nor constant, within *Tintin*. Whereas in *Congo*, the Other was depicted as native Africans and American gangsters, *Sceptre* is composed of a distinctly separate group of characters, notably Bordurian peasants and members of the 'Zyldav Zentral Revolutzionär Komitzät' (ZZRK, or Syldavian Revolutionary Central Committee).The first such example sees two smartly-dressed men covertly listening to Tintin and the owner of a lost briefcase, Professor Alembick, discussing sigillography (the study of document seals) in the Professor's apartment (Hergé 2002a: 3.5). Both men have been drawn by Hergé with distinctive curved, black moustaches, and are later identified as being Syldavian conspirators hoping to overthrow the present ruler of the country of Syldavia, King Muskar XII. The symbol of the 'curved, black moustache' is used by Hergé to represent the evil characters in the album. While various others are seen with facial hair in general (Professor Alembick has an oversized white beard and the Thom(p)sons both have bushy, black moustaches), the distinctiveness of the well-formed curved moustache is allowed only for the evil characters associated with overthrowing the King (members/affiliates of the ZZRK). Again, the process employed by Hergé allows for

constant, easy reference throughout the narrative, to avoid the tedious rendering of new characters by the reader. The iconographical representation of the Other in *Sceptre* is no different in technique to that used in *Congo* by Hergé, albeit in a more subtle and less strikingly racist manner.
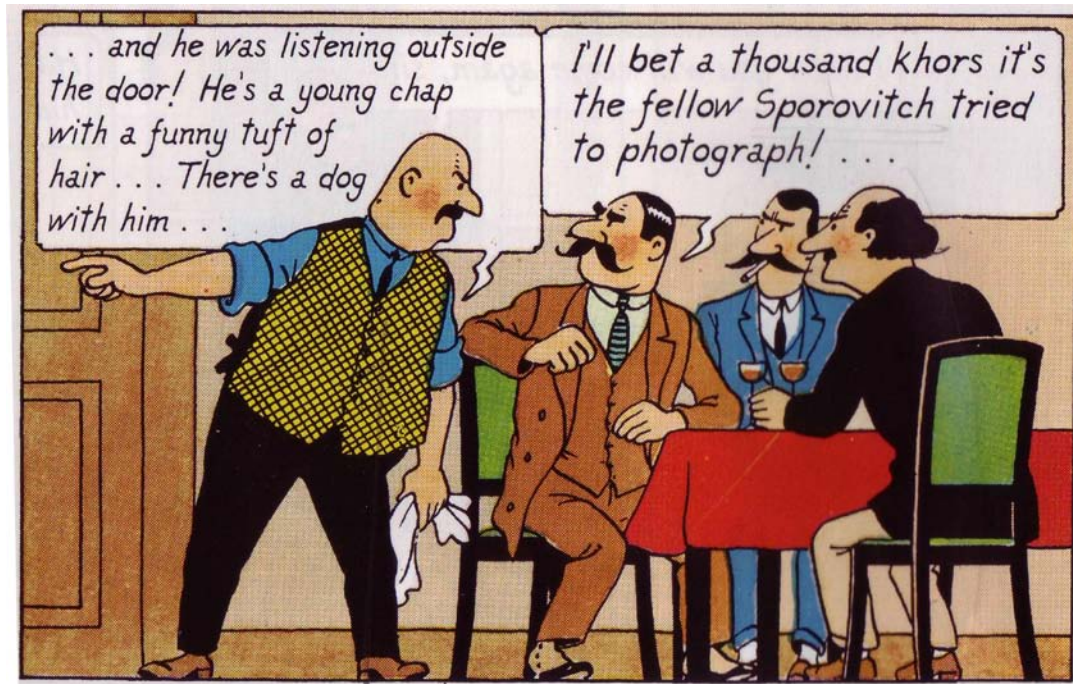

Fig. 10. The curvy moustache; a distinctive sign to depict the Syldavians (Hergé 2002a: 5.11).

Moreover, *Black Gold* brings Tintin face-to-face with the Arab characters of both Ben Kalish Ezab, and Bab El Ehr. Whilst Tintin sides with Ben Kalish Ezab, thus reinforcing the emir's position as ruler of Khemikhal, and the contract with Arabex, subsequently, the evil antagonist in the adventure, Bab El Ehr is portrayed as a short-tempered, irrational terrorist. It seems far from coincidental that Hergé chose such a character to replace the militant Zionist group, the Irgun, from the original publication, with another just as equally involved in Middle Eastern militancy. Hergé's ability to draw Bab El Ehr with distinctive facial features is again at play in *Black Gold*. He is seen with a long, pointy, oversized nose, and an equally sharp, protruding beard, complete with snarling white teeth (Hergé 2008: 16-18). One particular scene, after Tintin is kidnapped by Bab El Ehr's accomplices, sees a perfect instance of the angry/irrational Other. The following strip (see next page) details the exchange between Tintin and Bab El Ehr, after the latter discovers Tintin has not brought him his weapons (17.9-11).

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It is this extract that serves to position both characters within a polemic schema of good/bad. However, the emphasis in this instance has not been placed upon Tintin, and his pacifist ideals. Instead, it is Bab El Ehr and his hatred for the Khemikal police ('those snivelling lap-dogs'), his religious beliefs ('I swear by Allah!), and his caustic behaviour ('you lied to me, son of a mangy dog!') that construct a vivid representation of the Arab Other in *Black Gold*.

Fig. 11. Bab El Ehr shows his 'evil' side to Tintin (Hergé 2008: 17.9-11).

Further elaboration as to this polemic schema, is possible in a focus upon the visual characteristics of both Tapioca and his government officials in *Picaros*. General Tapioca is first seen in a news report on a TV at Marlinspike Hall (Captain Haddock's country house), regarding the arrest of Italian opera singer, Bianca Castafiore (Hergé 2002b: 8.9). He is seen to be bald, with large, black, bushy eyebrows, sideburns and moustache, dressed in a green military outfit, and possessing a sharp temper. In short, Hergé has created the stereotypical dictator, with even Haddock calling him a 'fancy-dress fascist!', and directing his usual torrent of comic expletives at the image of Tapioca on the TV (Hergé 2002b: 12). Haddock's *tête à tête* with Tapioca, directed through the 'Daily Reporter' newspaper on the subsequent page, only deepens the reader's perception of Tapioca as 'bad guy' (Hergé 2002b: 9-10).

Tapioca's assistants are also portrayed in a similar light, and the clever use of the 'curvy moustache' as a visual aid to the reader, again makes use of the West/Other dualism. Upon touching down in Tapiocapolis, Captain Haddock and Professor Calculus are greeted by Colonel Alvarez, 'aide-de-camp to His Excellency General

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Tapioca' (Hergé 2002b: 12.7). Alvarez is, just like Tapioca, dressed in full military uniform, complete with black sideburns and the ubiquitous curvy moustache, alluding to the fascist regime in Borduria of 'Kurvi-Tasche'. Both Haddock and Calculus are then led to a black vehicle by the Colonel (13.4). The car itself is modelled upon a Mercedez-Benz 600, a vehicle synonymous with Communist leaders such as Fidel Castro, Nicolae Ceaușescu and Josip Broz Tito. The use of such a model is obviously intended to infer a relationship between the Tapioca regime, and the real-life regimes of Soviet-aligned countries. Another image sees the black vehicle in greater detail, accompanied by military police escort, and armed policemen in full green uniform and the now customary curvy moustaches (Hergé 2002b: 20.10).
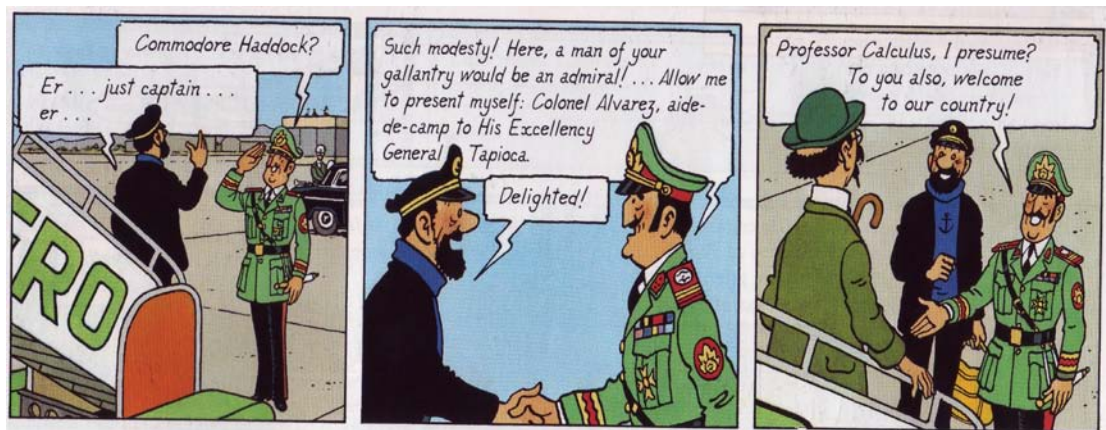
Fig. 12. Colonel Alvarez welcomes Haddock to Tapiacapolis (Hergé 2002b: 12.6-8).

Further to Hergé's ability to create the stereotypically evil characters of Tapioca and Alvarez, other individuals such as General Alcazar adhere, loosely, to the dichotomous good/bad structure. The reader first gets to see Alcazar saving Tintin and friends from a fake ambush set by one of Tapioca's assistants, Colonel Esponja (Hergé 2002b: 26). General Alcazar, quite obviously modelled on real-life revolutionary Che Guevara, is seen wearing full combat uniform, complete with a military cap, smoking a cigar and sporting long, black hair, sideburns and a moustache (26). However, whilst Hergé's main influence is synonymous with the Cuban revolution, Alcazar shares few personal characteristics with Guevara. He is portrayed as being naïve, submissive, irrational, and ill-equipped to regain control of San Theodoros, at least without the help of Tintin. Following a forest trek to reach the Picaros base camp, Tintin and friends meet

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Alcazar's wife, Peggy Bazarov (Hergé 2002b: 41). Upon their first encounter, Alcazar is hounded for '[being] gone three whole days!' (41.2), while Peggy complains that he has left her in a '…beat-up palliasse crawling with bugs and roaches!', instead of a '…palace in Tapiocapolis!' as promised (41.4). Later panels see Alcazar washing dishes in a pink apron (43.4), smoking a cigar in a relatively cosy domestic setting (43.6) and bowing to Tintin's desires to have a bloodless revolution (43.6-45.7). In short then, Hergé has managed to construct his own 'revolutionary' character, without the commonly associated characteristics of well-known revolutionaries such as Guevara, despite visually, drawing an individual with explicitly common features.
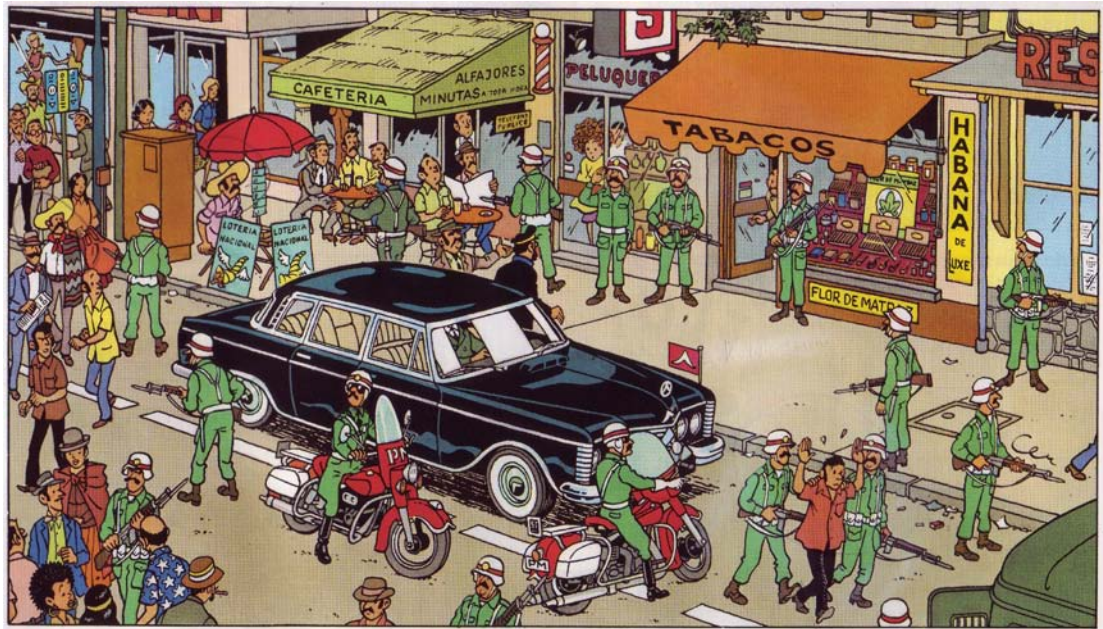
Fig. 13. The flag of the 'Kurvi-Tasche' regime is visible on the bonnet of mock-Mercedez-Benz, whilst Tapioca's military police all sport curvy moustaches and matching green uniforms (Hergé 2002b: 20.10).

V. The text/image fusion of geopolitics and foreign landscape: A distinctly Hergean construction of nature

The 'adventure' aspect of *Tintin* has so far, been scantly considered. Hergé's drawing of unique natural backdrops to help the narrative process now leads us to consider the fusion of geopolitics and foreign landscapes, and how the representation of 'nature' is bound up in the colonial imaginary.

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Farr (2001) for instance, has made clear the interaction between Hergé and travel articles/photographs, as providing the scenes of many of his adventures. Under a paragraph entitled 'Mountain Landscape', Farr details the intricacies of Hergé's *Tintin in Tibet* (1962);

> [His] subscription to the National Geographic Magazine provided a series of *photographs* of value…[and his] Himalayan mountainscape is by no means monotonous, even if it for the most part, like his dreams, it is overwhelmingly white…The vivid Tibetan scenes of the adventure's climax are matched by the compelling realistic pages earlier showing New Delhi and Katmandu…Such are the cinematographic qualities, it is as if Hergé has taken a production team to these colourful cities and filmed and location. (2001: 167-168) (Emphasis added)

Further, the photograph, as Schwartz (1996: 30) contends; 'as an instrument of cultural imperialism, [has] helped to establish and affirm identity…proclaim[ing] cultural, technological, industrial and military superiority' for the West. When Farr (2001) talks of Hergé's drawings as 'vivid', 'compelling[ly] realistic' and 'colourful'; he means to highlight their overwhelming power in formulating a particular view of foreign 'nature'. The construction of Tibet, in this case as a place worthy of awe and wonder, is one propagated by the West[17].

Gregory (2001) can help to unravel the workings of Hergé's landscape scenes. The 'prospect of dominating nature' (Gregory 2001: 91), and of bringing the unruliness of nature under the regulation and domination of the West, helped to enframe the discourses of colonialism. Further, Mitchell's (1988) 'the-world-as-exhibition' concept collapses the distinctions between reality and representation. Consequently, the concept of 'nature' is constructed through multiple practices and performances that 'stand for' the material *natural* world (Gregory 2001: 92). Hergé's visualization of nature therefore, constitutes a colonial ordering of the world, specifically for the West's ambitious needs. The dual sights/sites of the colonial imaginary presents, as Gregory (2001: 101) contends, 'two exhibitions of nature', one of excrescence, the other of abundance.

In *Congo*, Hergé depicts the African landscape within a framework of both the exotic and the bountiful, *and* the dislocation of people from place. As Farr once again details (2001: 22); 'the African bush [In *Congo*] has a greenness much more reminiscent of a European zoo than the parched, dusty expanses of reality', deriding Hergé's 'stiff and artificial' drawings. Yet, however critical Farr is of *Congo*, he sadly refrains from

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explaining *how* Hergé's depiction of the Congolese environment were produced, instead attributing his artistic choices simply to another youthful transgression (2001: 21), associated with Hergé's bourgeoisie upbringing. In contrast to Farr's conclusions, it seems obvious that Hergé had spent a considerable amount of time constructing a particular representation of 'the African bush', just like he had with the peoples of the Congo.

Early scenes (Hergé 2005: 14-15) see Tintin passing through exclusively luscious fields of grass, with very little variation in colour, style or form of the background landscape. This dislocation of background from foreground, or landscape from narrative, can be interpreted in several ways. Firstly, the presence of simply 'natural things' within the background, such as grass, shrubs, trees and rivers, constitutes the Congo landscape as *only* these things, devoid of other structures such as buildings, railway lines etc. except for when Tintin is involved (Hergé 2005: 19-21, 24-28). Other scenes throughout the adventure continue to confirm this reading, where the monotonous blue sky/green grass relationship (Hergé 2005: 33-35, 47 and 55-57 are all exemplary scenes), act as a fixed, theatrical backgrounds, to Tintin's adventures. Secondly, this blue sky/green grass relationship serves a normative and pedagogical function, as persuading the reader that this is all that constitutes Africa/Congo/Other; a landscape to be colonized, where natives have no *real* connection with the land upon they live, and one where the European can claim as their own.

Moreover, the lengths to which Hergé went to create the fictional countries of both Syldavia and Borduria in *Sceptre*, is greatly affirmed in the representation of a tourist brochure Tintin reads on his journey to the Balkans. Underneath a margin-to-margin wide panel of the aeroplane (Hergé 2002a: 18.7), Tintin can be seen with a magazine entitled 'Syldavia: Kingdom of The Black Pelican' (18.8-10). The following three pages see a full-size representation of the brochure, complete with detail on the country's history and peoples. The magazine helps to affirm that Syldavia exists outside of Tintin's adventure, in what Bridgeman (2005: 117) calls the 'textual-actual world', so the reader is persuaded that Syldavia is a country with unique culture, geography and politics.

However, once again, we must consider *why* Hergé has described Syldavia in this format, and how this particular representation acts to frame our own consideration of the country, and its context in the adventure. Drawing upon the dichotomies of Tintin/Other, reveals a similar relationship between Syldavia and Borduria. As the tourist brochure drawn by Hergé shows (see next page).

This short introduction to Syldavia, outlines the 'importance' of the geographies, peoples and cultures of the country, acting to connect all three together. An emphasis is

Fig. 14. The full-page cover of the Syldavian tourist brochure (Hergé 2002a: 19.1).

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made upon terms such as 'picturesque', 'colourful', and 'unspoilt', due to their influence upon the reader in framing the (positive) perception of the country, and their ability to work alongside the dichotomous representations of medievality/modernity and isolation/accessibility. As evident in *Congo*, Hergé uses a connection between landscape/peoples to justify his ideological values. Whereas in *Congo*, Hergé dis-located the African landscape from its peoples, here in *Sceptre* he makes explicit his desires to firmly re-locate the singular (beautiful, 'natural' etc.) geography of Syldavia, with its people and cultures, into one conceptual whole. This process re-affirms the importance of, later in the adventure, Borduria's failed invasion of the country.

Black Gold sees a similar set of representations to *Congo*, used to affirm the connection between peoples and landscape. An extensive section of the album takes place in the deserts of Khemed, with all the main characters engaged in some sort of encounter, played out in front of Hergé's desert background.

Firstly, Bab El Ehr's hideout is situated within the desert itself (Hergé 2008: 17-18), which, alongside his evil characteristics, aims to represent the desert as a place of militancy. Secondly, the Thom(p)sons' are pictured driving through a barren, horizon-less landscape, mistaking palm trees, settlements and oases for mirages (Hergé 2008: 18-20, 22-23), and generally providing the reader with a humorous representation of their disorientation. No character escapes the hostility of the desert however, as Tintin and Snowy experience the unbearable heat of the day, and the freezing temperatures of the night (Hergé 2008: 21-24), as well as the brutality of Bab El Ehr's 'sand-hoppers' (21.11). Continuing this rather lengthy segment of the adventure, both the Thom(p)sons, and Tintin and Snowy, also find themselves lost in a sandstorm (Hergé 2008: 30-33), unable to escape the disabling effects of The Khamsin[18].

The use of the Khemedian desert as a backdrop to this adventure, as well as the obvious allusion to the area's geopolitical importance, in the title of the album – *Land of Black Gold* – narrows the perception of the landscape for the reader. While Hergé only included two specific instances of human settlement in the desert, Bab El Ehr's hideout, and when the Thom(p)sons mistake a group of Arab men praying, for mirages (Hergé 2008: 22), his explicit references to the desert's uncompromising nature, hostility and openness frame the tension, danger and excitement Tintin finds himself in. Gregory's (2001: 103) detailing of 'the desert' as nature *in extremis*, bare and hollow, re-affirms the colonial/natural imaginary at play. Moreover, the narrative, focused around control over the oilfields and pipelines of Khemed, ensure the reader is constantly reminded of the

area's trade and economic worth to Allied European countries, intent on continuing their hold over key geopolitical sites and routes in the Middle-East.

However, *Picaros* sees a more explicit set of dualistic representations, and Hergé's full repertoire of visual tools, grounding the ideology of the Tapioca regime in *Picaros*, shows intense detail for constructing a fictionalized geo-politics within the 'textual-actual-world' of Tintin.

Fig. 15. The rich/poor divide Hergé is at pains to show in Tapiocapolis (Hergé 2002b: 11.8-9).

Two scene-setting panels show a dichotomy between rich and poor in the South American city, just before Haddock and Calculus reach Tapiocapolis (Hergé 2002b: 11.8-9). The left panel (11.8) displays a large piece of modern public art in the foreground, with a group of visiting tourists photographing the scenery behind it. Two tall, glass-fronted office blocks are topped with flags of the Tapioca regime, and a row of hedges separate the car-lined streets from the pedestrians on the other side. In contrast, the right panel (11.9) sees two military policemen (dressed in typical uniform, and sporting curvy moustaches) patrol a slum, presumably on the edge of Tapiocapolis. A large yellow sign with 'VIVA TAPIOCA' emblazoned on it is visible behind a wooden house, and a mother cooks food whilst two emancipated children wander in the foreground. Hergé's attempt to scrutinize the contrast between the rich and the poor in

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San Theodoros, results in a powerful conception of Tintin's desire and ability to 'right wrongs' in the battle against evil dictators and immoral companies. Such a collaboration of contrasting images helps to re-affirm Haddock and Calculus' decision to travel to Tapiocapolis, as well as Tintin's later arrival to 'save all our friends in prison' (Hergé 2002b: 21.10).

Fig. 16. The lack of change in San Theodoros as Tintin *et al.* leave for Europe (Hergé 2002b: 62.11).

Whilst the story ends with Alcazar in power, following a successful overthrowing of Tapioca's government; the penultimate panel suggests Hergé is far from comfortable with the outcome he has created (Hergé 2002b: 62.11). The scene is meant invoke a similar response from the reader as was intended with the previous 'rich/poor' panels seen when Haddock and Calculus fly over Tapiocapolis (11.8-9). Two military policemen wearing the uniforms of General Alcazar, with one nonchalantly swinging a baton, patrol a slum in front of a yellow 'VIVA ALCAZAR' sign. Rubbish is still seen strewn across a barren landscape, the wooden houses remain, and an impoverished mother and child complete the picture. The image bears striking resemblance to the similar panel seen with a 'VIVA TAPIOCA' sign, wooden houses, and impoverished children, suggesting the lack of social change Alcazar is set to bring. However, whilst

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many readers might point to Hergé's derision at the 'see-saw' nature of South American politics, Tintin is nevertheless satisfied at the completion of another adventure, where Tintin and Haddock both agree '[they] shan't be sorry to be back home in Marlinspike…' (Hergé 2002b: 62.10), and both are seemingly unaware of the continuing poverty in San Theodoros.

The implications for Tintin's pursuit of adventure stem from Hergé's portrayals of near/foreign lands, tied implicitly to notions of other, foreign political ideologies. Whilst all four albums display subtle differences in the representation of landscape, they all succeed in either re/dis-connecting peoples to the land, in order to suit Hergé's carefully structured narratives. The strength of the Tintin/Other dichotomy is reinforced, and re-affirmed by the construction of Here/There, not just through a characterisation of Western/Eastern cultures, but also through their historical, political and social fixity with the 'natural' environment. By distancing the connection of the African peoples to the land in *Congo*, Hergé suggests the environment can be appropriated, dictated and ruled by the West. Yet, in *Sceptre* Hergé affirms Syldavia's importance through links to cultural history, and in *Black Gold* he represents Khemed as a savage, uncompromising and dangerous place, whilst still confirming the Allied West's right to control it's oilfields and pipelines. By *Picaros*, we see another change of course, with Hergé outwardly displaying his discontent at the failed politics of South America, yet through Tintin's (lack of) action, a preservation of the geo-political status quo.

5. Conclusion

As Frey (2008: 28) has rightly contested in his analysis of Hergé's anti-Semitism in *Flight 714* (1968), 'Hergé shapes the world of Tintin via a Manichean competition between the forces of good and evil'. Much in the same way Hergé depicts the character of Blumenstein in *714* to represent evil through racist cartooning, visual cues, and textual anchors, so he does with African locals in *Congo*, ZZRK members in *Sceptre*, Arab militants in *Black Gold*, and both Soviet dictators and US 'revolutionaries' in *Picaros*. Although Frey refrains from noting any other post-war publications of *Tintin*, other than *714*, that imbue strong racist, xenophobic and colonial representations, he does proceed to outline a course of action for future analysis of the post-war Tintin adventures (Frey 2008: 42);

> …the evidence that I have marshalled suggests that we should reread the later Tintin books, often considered to be less politically or ideologically marked than Hergé's earlier Tintin stories (*Tintin in the Land of the Soviets*; *Tintin in the Congo*; *The Shooting Star*), to see whether they too carry a political subtext and what they may be. How did Hergé depict other marginalized groups in those books? Were his representations less stereotypical than in the stories published from 1929 through the 1940s? It is time to engage in an open debate over the meanings and value of these books.

This call to arms by Frey, demands a re-connection between Hergé's earlier adventures, such as *Congo*, and the so-called 'less ideologically marked' narratives of later albums. Subsequently, I have sought to detail *Tintin* using Said's (1978) Orientalist theory, to uncover the representational processes employed by Hergé to affirm certain ideas about the (post)colonial world. Moreover, the employment of associated dualisms; West/East, Good/Bad, Tintin/Other, enables Hergé to carefully construct a fictional world, of *supposed* realism, that helps the reader to form a set of assumptions about the 'real' world, namely through the Saidian/Gregorian notion of 'imaginative geographies'.

Notably, Hergé's careful deployment of particular narrative tools and visual/spatial structures, provide the foundations for *Tintin* to which the colonial imaginary is built upon. Not least legitimising Hergé's *ligne claire* drawing style, obsessive attention to detail, and his empirical desire for absolute accuracy. Further, *Tintin*'s depiction of

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peoples and cultures, provide evidence for Hergé's colonial values and beliefs. Tintin's moral, physical and religious power allows him to represent the West as inherently all these things, affirming the imperial gaze of the colonizer. The subjugation of *Other* characters as lazy, barbaric, evil or mystical, completes the necessary dichotomy needed in colonial ideology (West/East), affirmed through the above-mentioned textual/visual structures. Finally, through a re/dis-connection of peoples and landscape, Hergé is able to appropriate the East for the West, and thusly, legitimise the colonial/imperial ideologies of the West.

Yet despite all this, *Tintin* has received little analytical focus within geography, despite the evidence to suggest inherent spatial/political/cultural themes of interest to geographers. The (post)colonial processes that operate throughout Hergé's comics have otherwise been well-researched through other textual mediums such as photographs, maps and exhibitions. By fusing Foucault's power/knowledge theories and Barthes' semiological techniques, with Said's Orientalist framework, it becomes far easier to interpret *Tintin* through an ideological perspective, and open the door for the interaction between geography and the comic book. Massey's (2009: 82) reading of the 'world-as-playground' can do much to dispel to the notion of *post*colonialism, and the irony of such a concept lends itself to a greater (continued) emphasis upon the present-day workings of colonial ideology, not least through the medium of the comic book.

Notes

1 I use the term postcolonialism in two closely-linked ways. As a complete word – *postcolonialism* – it refers to the academic discourse, also known as post-colonial theory. Yet both forms are frequently questioned. Said (1994: 8) preferred to use imperialism instead of colonialism as it meant; 'the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory', rather than the 'implanting of settlements on distant territory', in reference to colonialism. It allowed him to extend his elaborations of the West's cultural impact, through 'theories and attitudes'. However, Gregory (2001: 84) uses *postcolonialism* to utilise its dual meaning; of both an historical period of time *after* the physical act of foreign rule, and, for its academic weight as a standalone theory challenging the end of colonialism. Sometimes, using *(post)colonialism*, allows me to better detail a process taking place recto/verso between the two historical time periods. The title, for instance, allows me to challenge *Tintin* at both the time of its publication (during the early 20th century; during colonialism) and 'after'; during the contemporary era. See Sidaway (2000) for an exploratory essay concerning the 'postcolonial', or Nash (2002) for a wider focus on the semantic merits of postcolonialism and cultural geography.

2 Hergé was the pen name of Georges Remi (his initials reversed and pronounced as in French), who lived from 1907-1983. As a Brussels-born comic book creator and illustrator, best known for *The Adventures of Tintin*, he was survived by his second wife, Fanny Rodwell (previously a colourist for *Studio Hergé*), who founded the *Hergé Foundation* (often known as *Moulinsart* after the French name for Captain Haddock's country house) in 1987 and subsequently became the copyright owner of Hergé's work after his death.

3 Here, I use the term 'textual' in the narrowest sense, to mean a writing system, comprising of characters. However, in general I refer to 'textual analysis' in the broader sense of analysing any cultural object, artwork, photography, institution etc., concurrent with Rose (2001), and the methodological frameworks discussed in Blunt et al. (2003).

4 Yet, from time-to-time the British press has taken notice of the *bande dessinée*. Judah (1999) debates the racism in Tintin, Grove (2009) talks about the confusion over Tintin's cult status, and The Economist (1996/2008) has published articles on Tintin through the ages.

5 The institutionalisation of *BD* within France and Belgium has also been paramount to its continuing popularity and cultural dominance. A medium which has its history rooted in the early comic-book creations of *Asterix, Tintin* and *Zig and Puce*, was 'formalised' in the 1980s, with the state-funded opening of the *Centre belge de la bande dessinée* (CBBD) in Brussels in 1989, and the CNBDI in Angoulême, France in 1990 (McQuillan 2005). Yet, preceding the grand political statements made by the then French Socialist government, the annual *Festival International de la Bande Dessinée d'Angoulême*, held in France since 1973, has served to bring 'the power to consecrate the form [of *BD*] officially with prize giving and exhibition space' (McQuillan 2005: 10), celebrating contemporary graphic artists such as François Schuiten, 'David B.' (Pierre-François Beauchard), and Marjane Satrapi.

6 W.J.T. Mitchell (media theorist), as well as Frederic Jameson (Marxist political theorist) both serve as advisors on the editorial board of ImageTexT, alongside critics such as Barker and Kunzle.

7 *Le Petit Vingtième* was the weekly children's supplement to the Brussels-based Catholic newspaper, *Le Vingtième Siècle*. The paper itself was run by *Abbé* Norbert Wallez, an ultra-conservative anti-Semite and anticommunist, up until WWII.

8 After being published across the space of a year in *Le Petit Vingtième*, it was subsequently compiled as a complete album, first by the newspaper itself, and secondly by the Tournai-based publishing company, Casterman, in black-and-white (Hergé 2005). 1946 saw a major revision by Hergé, with the publishing of a colour, standard format 46-page album.

9 An updated colour version was re-published in 1947 by the Belgium publishers Casterman, this time with the help of artist Edgar Pierre Jacobs, a friend of Hergé's and another well-respected Franco-Belgian comic book creator.

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10 Bob de Moor was another of Hergé's close friends and some-time assistant at *Studio Hergé.*

11 The standard size panel used in *Tintin* was generally 5-6cm^2, whilst the margin-to-margin panels were roughly 5.7cm x 18cm. The term 'recitative' or *récitatif* in *Congo* (Hergé 2005: 9.1) is used 'to refer to the text usually found in rectangular boxes at the edges of a *bande dessin*ée frame…to provide temporal, geographical-situational, or logical-sequential indications to the reader' (McKinney 2008a: XIV).

12 SABENA is the acronym for *Société Anonyme Belge d'Exploitation de la Navigation Aérienne* (Belgian Company for Exploiting Aerial Navigation), Belgium's now defunct national airline.

13 00-AGE, the flight registration number assigned to the Savoia-Marchetti lookalike (Hergé 2002a:17), was actually registered in real-life to a Westland Wessex IV operated by SABENA in the early-1930s, a possible error in the 1947 colour re-issue.

14 The United Fruits Company was a US-based company that traded in fruit grown, primarily, in South America. Hergé's International Banana Company quite obviously drew upon the neo-colonialist exploitation the UFC were often accused of.

15 The park itself was most likely modelled on Cinquantenaire Park in Brussels, designed and built for the celebration of Belgium's independence in the late 19th century.

16 Coco is the small African boy Tintin chooses to take as his local guide on his adventure across the Congo.

17 *Tintin in Tibet* (1962) is one of Hergé's most compelling adventures. At a time when he was suffering from the breakdown of his first marriage, *Tibet* is more a journey of self-discovery for both Tintin and for Hergé. A particularly engaging geographical analysis could unravel the mystical/religious concepts Hergé attempted to fuse to the 'natural' mountainous landscapes, to construct a particular (Western) view of Tibet.

18 The Khamsin is a particularly suffocating localised wind often experienced in the Arabian Peninsula.

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