

ENGLISH HONOURS, SEMESTER III, CC VI
NAME OF THE PAPER: POPULAR LITERATURE
THE THEME OF FRIENDSHIP IN TINTIN IN TIBET

- Herge himself thought of this book as an ode to friendship, composed “under the double sign of tenacity and friendship”. “It’s a story of friendship.” Years later, he said, “It’s a love story.”
- True friendship : a plane flying towards China from Europe, getting knocked in the Himalayas, with Chang onboard; Tintin’s belief that he is alive; cause of his journey, a tour of redemption; states that trust and confidence can triumph.
- Tintin’s nightmare about his friend Chang, Tintin’s vision turning into a moment of truth the very next morning and he embark upon his journey to save Chang.
- Friendship is irrational---affection between friends often defies logical behavior. The conflict between reason and emotions informs the core of the book. Captain Haddock cannot persuade Tintin to give up his plan of saving Chang all along. He says that though the accident happened the day before, he saw Chnag in his dream, calling for help. This dream is practically a premonition and it becomes more real than the news of his friend’s death. Chang becomes alive because he is imagined to be so. And the world around suddenly seems to be full of signs that affirm his conviction.
- Tintin faces resistance from different quarters like the airport manager, the Sherpa, Tharkey and others. But nothing can deter Tintin. These endings are overcome by new beginnings. Faith wins over reason again and again; selfless love conquers self-protection. The grand beginning comes at the very end---heralding a new phase in Chang’s life, as also in his friendship with Tintin.
- Chang---representation of Herge’s friend Zhang Chongren. The book was thus a tribute to his lost friend.
- Hergé is a man of his words. *Tintin in Tibet* is centered on friendship. Searching for a friend against all the odds is the most obvious motif. But more than Tintin’s telepathic connection to Chang, *Tintin in Tibet* is all about the dynamics between Tintin and Captain Haddock. Captain Haddock loyally supports Tintin despite his near madness (not without some boisterous swearing and temper tantrums, of course). The high point of *Tintin in Tibet* is seeing how one would sacrifice his life for the other. Tintin and Captain Haddock: truly a friendship for the ages.

- Another defining pair in the story is the Yeti and Chang. Herge, very consciously deconstructed the age-old belief that the Yeti was a creature who was inherently cruel and abominable. The Yeti is shown as a creature of compassion, who seeks love and coziness. Herge writes, "My Yeti is a being that also seeks friendship. Already at the outset I had the intention of making him more human and not at all abominable." Yeti was finally considered to be a creature that looked like a beast but had a warm heart. Chang's words towards the end of the story are enough evidence to testify that it was only because of the Yeti's care and comfort that Chang could sustain and did not succumb to the pressing needs of hunger and cold. The final scene of the story is bound to melt one's heart when the Yeti is found looking at the caravan that is carrying his friend Chang away from him forever, with eyes soft with sadness and pain of separation.

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