



Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

**PROGRAMME IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF HANDWRITING  
AT THE UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA**

*(HOMAGE TO HERGÉ, THE AUTHOR OF "THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN", ON  
THE ONE-HUNDRED-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH)*

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**GRAPHOANALYSIS OF HERGÉ (GEORGES REMI)**

*Viñals & Puente's Transactional Graphoanalysis*

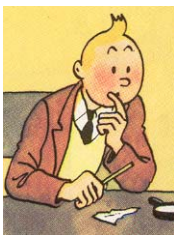
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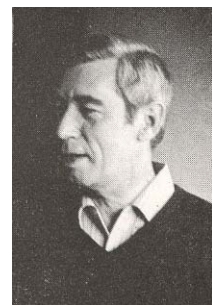
**Initial considerations** From amongst the graphisms examined, we have selected the most spontaneous ones; examples of dedications and of more calligraphic writing have been giving only secondary consideration, since they generally provide no elements worth studying—aside from some small details that supplement the author's natural writing style. The samples and images are taken of "Editorial Juventud"; we are grateful for his collaboration

**PSYCHOSOMATIC CHARACTERISTICS  
(Psychobiology and Temperament)**



A graphological perspective shows us that the psychophysical level accompanied Hergé for quite some time, stimulating him in his need to continually outdo himself. He has a "self-improvement" script, despite the potential difficulties from which he suffers on a permanent basis, but which he is able to overcome thanks to inner strength (he channels handwriting energy via compensations, sublimations, a good basic rhythm, methodical inequalities and elements of fluidity or

harmonised movement).



He is driven by objectives; he needs to feel participant in the act of creation, in a project. At times, he even needs to test himself, to see how he measures up and to show what he is worth. He feels the need to overcome his worries and his meticulousness, to go beyond those anxieties that could block him and make him question (or regret) his undertakings.

There might be inner battles waging due to his need to take risks and prove himself, what with a rather reserved attitude and a greater tendency towards creativity than towards social competitiveness.

He has a temperament which fosters receptiveness, even a creativity of discernment and taste; but that same temperament is also responsible for a kind of nervousness and concern about the image or opinion that others may have of him.

## **VOLITIONAL AND MORAL CHARACTERISTICS (Character)**

He tends to hold himself back and does not like to act impulsively; rather, he prefers to think about what he is going to do and examine the situation thoroughly before making up his mind. He fears failure and takes great pains to make the right decision.

Sometimes an air of moralism or meticulousness might appear, for he cannot bear complications that just end up making things more confused.

This same inner battle can also be seen in a tendency to give undue importance to obstacles as well as in a need for self-affirmation (which is a way of compensating for a feeling of vulnerability). It is as if he has some overriding need to be constantly outdoing himself despite his fears. And yet he is certainly on the right path, because he is aware of his desire to free himself of the script that fences him in. His ability to understand the psychology behind others and to engage in self-analysis (or, to put it another way, his ability to put himself through psychoanalysis) made it easier for him to understand facets of his deep personality and to accept himself with generosity: this is due to having an "inner conductor", which is to say, the Adult from Transactional Analysis (TA) with an important share of Nurturing Parent (progressive/slant to the right, open to the right, softness or concaveness in axes, ascenders and descenders towards the right).

His strong willpower helps him in this drive towards renewal: he strives to be objective and to fit in with the overall social parameters. He won't rebel without reason, nor is he willing to be a misfit or a non-conformist: he chooses to integrate, but always within his understanding of ethics and aesthetics and without ever losing his humanitarian attitude or giving up on the technical and social progress needed. He is aware of what is appropriate—or perhaps he merely has good intuition—and he knows how far his art will take him in his contribution to posterity, offered with a keen sense of justice that evolves together with his personality itself; taken as a whole, these characteristics enable him to perform the role of the best of teachers.



His need for social interaction is more an ideal than a reality: he fears direct contact and prefers to socialize through his art. Nonetheless, due to extreme sensitivity, he feels compelled to respond to those who address him and tries to answer all the correspondence he receives. However, like an introvert who has been all but forced to interact with people, he suffers from a kind of insecurity and prefers to keep his distance, since otherwise he gets hurt easily. He knows that his way of expressing himself is through his art and his stories (not unlike many musicians who are better at composing and interpreting than at conversing). Apart from his need to protect himself (to maintain his independence and protect his fragile Ego, his frightened inner child who has survived thanks to his artistic ability), one notices his moral strength and the high value he places on qualities such as friendship; he projects these qualities onto Tintin himself, but also on to Captain Haddock, Professor Calculus, and other secondary characters of all social classes, from high dignitaries to the humblest outcasts (and not only with his more imaginative characters, but also with those that are faithful images of reality, such as his friend Chang).

Although Hergé manifests Tintin's humility, it is as if he believes deep down that he has an important mission to complete in life—his gentlemanly demeanour does him honour. Indeed, his work has had a very positive influence on many generations of children and adolescents, all of whom (now adults) testify to the educational benefit received in those delicate and formative years.

## INTELLECTUAL AND MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

An ideal combination of quick intuition and deductive logic come together in Hergé's mind, leading to a superior intelligence possessing remarkable graphic and abstract ability. Key elements of social intelligence, such as empathy or the psychological astuteness needed to comprehend personality, provide him not only with technical-scientific skills and ability in graphic design (no need to mention the creative and artistic parts—it has been said that every vignette from his books is a work of art in itself), but also with a masterful ability to assign characterological roles and behavioural manifestations.

He is observant, sharp-thinking, and detailed: sometimes he even goes over ideas too much (slightly obsessive). He tries to get to the bottom of issues and is good at connecting ideas and finding common points to unite different subjects.

He is orderly and strives for clarity in ideas and concepts: he does not like confusion or for things to be complicated. He will omit certain details if necessary to protect himself from a potential enemy, or he will turn it around and say or do things in a different way, which ends up being the way he actually wanted to frame the question deep down.

It is obvious that his aesthetic sense helps his creativity; moreover, being an organised person, he is effective at putting his ideas into practice.

His imagination plays a very active role and his feelings are also focused on aesthetic concerns, meaning he can develop his creativity and contribute ideas that were advanced for their time.

## DEEP PERSONALITY ASPECTS



At times he hides his true emotional state so that others will not realise how emotionally vulnerable he is. He finds it difficult to be completely relaxed and to feel free to express his most intimate feelings spontaneously among others; in social interactions he tries to maintain appropriate behaviour and give the correct "image". Despite this, and as has already been mentioned, he possesses the qualities of receptiveness, willpower, and ability to self analyse; as a consequence, he ends up re-discovering himself and fights for that new personality, all of which favours development and freedom from excessive anxiety.

Nonetheless, fear and insecurity can be seen in inhibitory graphological signs, such as in the suspension of letters or endings, or in the concealing "s's" which are often tied to long descenders, although at times they are also cut short. This variability could indicate a hidden erotic or sexual impressionability (hidden due to fear of showing it openly), or the misogyny of which he has been sometimes accused for not including enough images of women in the books of Tintin, but which has often been explained away as being due to the circumstances of that particular time in history and the fact that boys and girls were kept apart (i.e. separate schools), and that this affected even adventure stories and comic books. Although from a more graphoanalytical perspective, these concealing letters ("s's" which are developed below the base line) imply a complex whose origins can be found in the consequences of his mother's having suffered humiliation at the hands of her husband (i.e. the father of the child): the child perceives this imposition placed on the mother and what develops is fear and at the same time a thoughtlessness towards the parents: towards the father because of his aggressiveness and towards the mother because of her fear of defending her child and because of her giving in to the pressure exerted by the man of the house. Not to say that Hergé was indifferent towards sex: indeed, he had two wives, and the aforementioned erotic impressionability can be seen in his handwriting (in the fluctuations in dimension, changes in pressure, etc.), although it is true that he conceals it due to the shame he feels at his own sexual vulnerability. He is a person who suffers from infantile psychological self-censorship, but he is also conditioned by the cultural and religious baggage picked up in his childhood, and like the perfect Boy Scout he suffers the pangs of bad conscious; he is especially afraid that others might reproach him for his sexuality, even more so when his goal was to create the perfect hero, a model for young people. In any

case, human defects are incorporated into other characters, such as Captain Haddock with his alcohol problem, but sex is never dealt with (sex seems to be a bit of a taboo for Hergé). Although here we must repeat that he is no misogynist: he merely suffers from an excessive sense of public shame.

He is able to overcome his doubts, but they are there: there is variability, inhibitory moments, oscillations, changes in expansion and in pressure. He is a sensitive soul, and yet driven by admirable willpower. Rhythm appears again, it manifests itself and ends up controlling the situation; it is like a river that flows around all obstacles until reaching the sea. His attitude towards life is in fact that of the “Little Professor” found in Transactional Analysis, which is where the subject says: “I’m OK, and when I’m not OK, I find the way to be OK” (the “Little Professor”, being a “Child”, feels bad, insecure; but this “Child”, thanks to the personal computer he has built within his mental configuration to resemble the “Adult”—which is the more mature ego state in the personality, the one which is objective, reasonable, logical and deductive—is able to overcome the prohibitions, censorship, negativities, problems, etc., thanks to ingenuity and creativity).

Hergé’s work is precisely that: ingenious creativity at the service of his need to flee in a positive way (in inventing very real and visionary stories, a profound message delivered with an unmatched wealth of aesthetic, formal and ethical details linked together with rigorously researched knowledge of geography and science). In terms of his writing, we notice evasiveness which is not quite threadlike; an inter-word distance representing great moments of self-reflection and distance from the object and from others, in order to contemplate and bring that same impulse to a stop that appears in some rushed endings and “t” crossbars (and sometimes the upstrokes as well). This may show a certain rebelliousness against negative ideas that he categorises as belonging to prevailing or institutional “authority”, ideas with which he does not always agree and against which he rebels subliminally, indirectly, thanks to the characters from his work (especially Tintin, who, as Hergé himself often stated in interviews, was nothing more than a projection of how he himself would have liked to have been—as sure as millions of his readers would have liked to have been as well).

As well, there are impulsive, sharp, right-slanting traits, which are, however, compensated by dimensional regulation and by the fluctuation of harmonised contrasts: this can be taken as one step further towards the “Integrated Adult” (where both the “Child” and “Parent” are allowed to work under the guidance of the “Adult” from TA). Aggression is perfectly canalised against evil; Hergé’s sense of justice is transformed (through the gentlemanly Tintin) into a way of compensating for potential frustrations, unjust impositions and moral assaults (whether they are suffered directly or indirectly, individually or collectively). The avenging angel rewards the good and punishes the evil, some of whom, like ghosts, rise up again diabolically; but they end up neutralised in the end, always against a perfect backdrop where intelligence (at the service of good) wins out.

Hergé is in fact a great psychologist, although he is unaware of the fact. This could be considered a decisive element in his popularity: on the one hand there is his artistic ability tied to an extraordinary—and almost obsessive—perfectionism (a characteristic of the “Parent” from TA: ligature, revisions for clarification, tied to hybrid elements with the “Adult”: simplifications but with the need to specify details), due to which he would never let any of his books be published unless they are perfectly documented (history, geography, anthropology, politics, technology and science). On the other hand, there is his receptiveness (small variations, garlands, etc.) with subtleness and empathy (moments of decreasing dimension, occasional sharp and pointy strokes, progressive oscillations, etc.). Together they make up an ideal combination for defining each character from his stories, or comics, as well as any scriptwriter, film director, consultant or experts could—and all in one person: Hergé. The “Integrated Adult” from TA (harmony which integrates opposites within the personality) finds its ideal expression in the character of Tintin, as we already pointed out in our book *Análisis de escritos y documentos en los servicios secretos*, Barcelona, Herder, 2003. That is why Tintin is a model; that is why he is a character with qualities and virtues admired by so many.



Then there is Captain Haddock, who integrates conservative moral values but with the contradiction of the inner battle that wages within. On the one hand, he has given himself over to alcohol (to evasive temptations), but on the other hand, there is the Boy Scout's personal conviction that he would be willing to give his life for values such as friendship. He also reflects important aspects of the "ghosts" or "worries" from which Hergé suffers; here Haddock no longer reflects who Hergé would like to be, but rather how he expresses his most intimate feelings, his fears and frustrations, his changing moods, his joys and sorrows, his euphoria and depression. This dramatic aspect of Haddock the realist or positivist (a characteristic which is found in the 2 and the 7 from the Enneagram, that is to say, TA's "Nurturing Parent" and "Free Child") is everything that Hergé would like to shout out loud: his most emotional side and yet, at the same time, a theatre rehearsal in its social expressivity.



Thus, with Captain Haddock, Hergé shows how he has developed and psychoanalytically dealt with the fact that Tintin was too perfect and needed at his side a human being who, despite being a gentleman (something which unconsciously gratifies Hergé and makes up for the rest), had distinct defects. These defects sometimes even appear as assets, which is not always the case with the stupidity that a humble Hergé occasionally attributes to himself in interviews

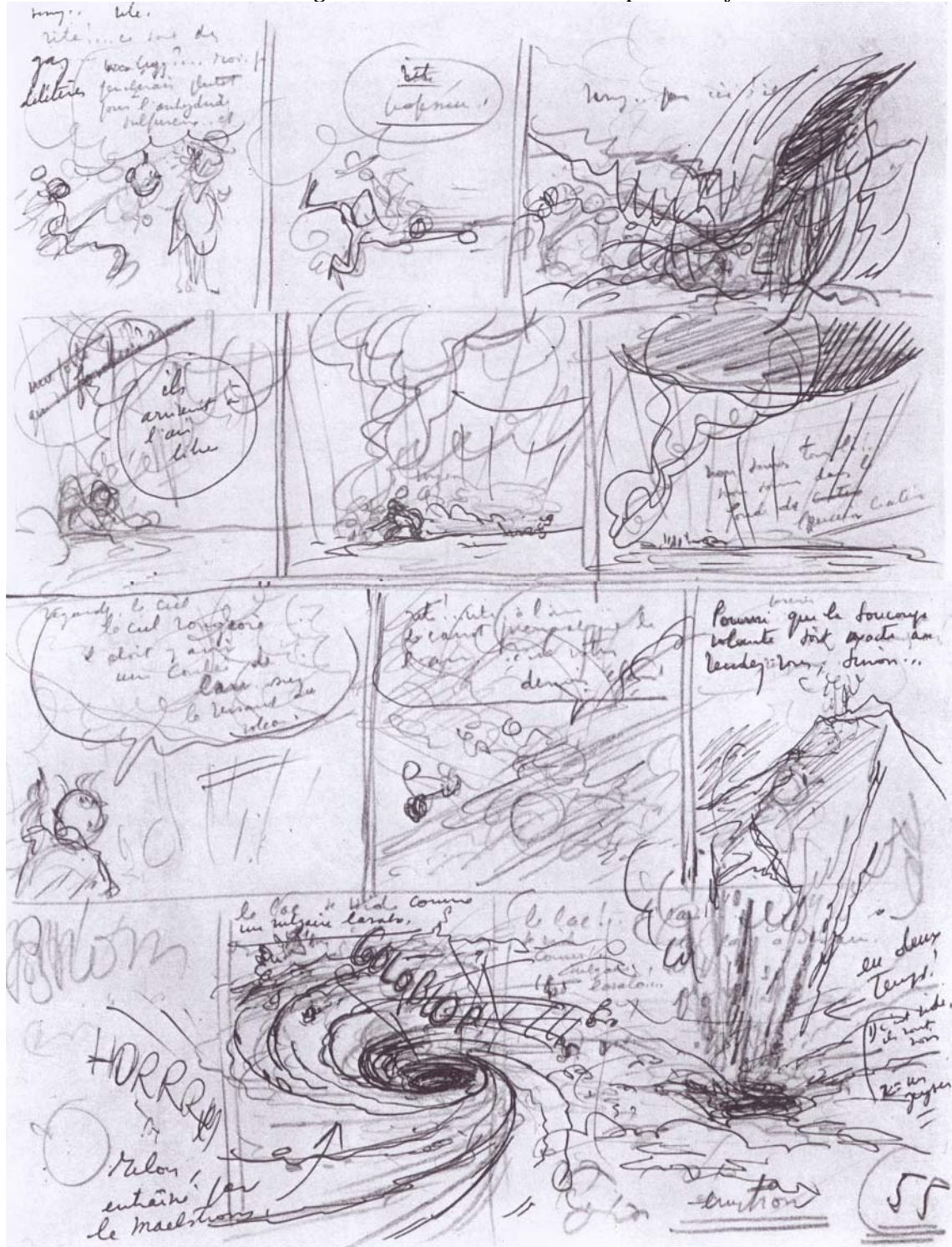
when speaking about the brothers Dupond and Dupont (Thomson and Thompson). These two brothers make up the part that Hergé likes least about himself, although they are his way of laughing at his own silliness; and for that reason, like a good psychologist, he accepts, protects and accompanies them in his comics, out of pity and as a recognition of the fact that wisdom must include compassion for the clumsy and for those with less abilities than oneself (even if they are able to get on the nerves of the most patient person).

So much for the more human side of Hergé. But, like his writing, which is progressive and takes on original shapes and distinct simplifications, Hergé does not stagnate: rather, he develops new aspects of his hidden personality. Take, for example, the introverted or reserved quality that is reflected in Professor Calculus. The professor is not like the emotional and sometimes furious exteriorisation that is Captain Haddock (who also shares a good deal of the "Nurturing Parent" with Tintin and Professor Calculus). Calculus (although he has a big heart, read "*Nurturing Parent*") is a "Nurturing Parent" in the service of all of society through his scientific discoveries. And yet, he is rather introverted and distant, as if absent. Hergé takes on these "oddities": his avoidance, his introspective tendency, his pleasure in imagination, isolated from direct contact (this is backed up by interviews in which Hergé has attested that his parents would either punish him or give him pen and paper so that he would stop pestering them; he learned at that time to retreat into himself via drawing, something which clearly marked him and stayed with him for the rest of his life). This could explain the unconscious gratification he gets from interiorised creativity, which is reflected in Professor Calculus, an inventor who spends all his time locked up in his lab or working on experiments. The professor is in reality another of Hergé's rationalised expressions, logically transformed (like the rest) into an admirable figure. He is admired not because of his appearance, but rather because of the antithesis thereof: a privileged mind which, like Hergé himself, is the first in making scientific progress. This schizoid facet found in both the "Little Professor" and the "Adaptive Child" from TA (or in the 4w5, the 6w5 and the 5w6 of the Enneagram) corresponds to part of Hergé's most intimate personality: the "*frightened child*" or the child who hides and goes off to play alone in his little corner. But this is a child who will manage to get through it, who ends up doing a perfect job (Adaptive Child: clarity, but with vacillations, small jumps, inhibitions, retouches, oscillations, etc.); all the while being critical and rebellious ("Rebellious Adaptive Child" or 5 from the Enneagram: some





diagonal upstrokes, occasional cramped letters); investigating and creating (the contribution of the "Little Professor": original shapes, multifaceted, decreasing, quick); but always with an acute ethical and moral sensibility (the constant presence of the "Parent": ligature with spontaneous and clear writing, readjustments thanks to rhythm and insistent clarifying retouches). Professor Calculus could therefore be taken to be a very personal projection of how Hergé really feels about himself intimately, deep down, there where his psychoanalytical introspection has reached in his construction of ego states towards the harmonic personality of *Tintin*.



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