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The Law of the Jungle and the Law of God: Translating Kipling's *The Jungle Books* into Italian

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ABSTRACT

Adaptation seems to be the key word concerning the study of children's literature in translation. Since the beginning, different levels of adaptation have been identified and these entail from changing some small details to deleting or modifying entire parts of a story for children, on the presupposition that children's literature should have a didactic role and had to be used to teach children. This was particularly true in the past and many books, which underwent a process of adaptation, passed from being originally written for adults to becoming children's classics, see Gulliver's Travels in many translations in different times. The current study intends to analyse the translation of Kipling's Jungle Books in its translation in Italian in 1928, the second in order of time, which shows a certain degree of adaptation that permeates the translation into two instances: omission and addition. This becomes particularly relevant since the translation seems to be faithful to its original, by retaining the content, the style, names and places of the English version.

Keywords: Translation Studies, Children's Literature, Rudyard Kipling, The Jungle Books, Adaptation

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1. Introduction

The Jungle Books is probably Rudyard Kipling's most famous book. It is a collection of short stories, set in India, and all of them regard animals. Most of the stories are about the boy Mowgli and his relationship with the animals of the jungle: each story is preceded by a poem. The novel has long been studied for its content and its link with the colonialist view of the author within the Victorian culture.

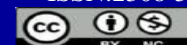
A previous study carried out by Mette Rudvin (2011) investigated the illustrated translations in Italian to show the remaining links with the Victorian mindset in the pictures of the Italian editions, but it was not focused on the first Italian translations. The scholar found linguistic and conceptual simplifications and mitigations of the Victorian-colonial themes and a rewriting of the subtext at many levels (37). In fact, adaptation is the common element in translation for children, since translations, unlike originals, can be adapted and modernised to a new readership, especially to current norms. At the same time, it is an opportunity for the translator to re-shape the new text into a reconsolidation of existing target norms. This main idea is underpinned in the current study which wants to

investigate the translation strategies adopted for an early Italian translation of *The Jungle Books* in order to highlight changes and modifications which might have made the book acceptable to the target culture of that time. The text is not illustrated, it is one of the very first translations into Italian and, as it will be later demonstrated, the text not only presents some changes and adaptations at linguistic levels, but also two main conceptual changes in the form of omission and interpolation right towards the end of the story which eventually raise some questions about their nature and objective.

2. Children's Literature as a Genre

Since Bassnett and Lefevere's studies (1998), the interest in a descriptive translation analysis has moved on the cultural context of the Target Text and its effect on the Target Readers, especially in children's literature.

One of the earliest studies devoted to this subject was Göte Klingberg's (1978) who paved the way to possible future developments in the field: from the statistics related to the translations of children's literature according to technical and economic factors and the process of book selection for translation to their reception and impact on the Target Culture.



Specifically, Zohar Shavit (1986) carried out an analysis of the evolution of children's literature through time in order to point out how the production and translation of books for children changed according to the idea of childhood in a given culture in a particular historical moment. The image of childhood, for example, underwent a complete change during the XVII century with the establishment of a literature for children which dates back to the second half of the XIX century. In fact, no literature was specifically conceived for children until it was recognized that children had specific needs which were different from those of the adults. As John Rowe Townsend claimed (1977: 17) 'Before there could be children's books, there had to be children—children, that is, who were accepted as beings with their own particular needs and interests, not only as miniature men and women'.

For the first time, angelic qualities such as innocence and sweetness were recognized in children, as qualities already recognized within the domestic environment. Consequently, the need to preserve children's well-being originated together with the important role the adults played in supporting their growth, education and health. Children, then, became creatures to be protected and educated, therefore the need to implement an educational system and the consequent demand for children's books, at first conceived merely as pedagogical instruments, raised. For this reason, books for children aimed at educating and teaching religious and moral ideas. During the second half of XIX century in Europe children's literature began to be detached from a purely didactic approach and to be characterized by the production of books for entertainment and pleasure.

The tight bond of this genre to the educative system was the main cause for the delay of its diffusion as a fully recognized literature, accepted by society and regarded as equally valuable as adults' literature.

Among the reasons for which children's literature was long considered as inferior was the fact that children's books were written for a minority: children in many cultural systems, and equally women, were considered as if living on the borders of the society.

Moreover, children's literature, conversely from literature for adults, was characterized by very simple fixed structures, such as the opposition between good and evil and the happy ending, and for

this reason it was not considered as worthy of any attention. Moreover, the strong presence of women in the production and translation of this type of books contributed to give an inferior role to this genre. Thus, the structure of the literary system was a mirror of the hierarchy within the family between 1800s and 1900s, characterized by male predominance. As Betsy Hearne claimed (1991: 111): "The conventional literary system is very like the traditional family: adult male literature predominates, women's literature is secondary, while children's literature is at the bottom of the heap [...]."

2.1 Theoretical approaches in translation of children's literature

As Shavit (1986) demonstrated, the peripheral position of this literature allowed free manipulations of the texts on behalf of the translator or the publishing houses according to two basic principles: first, making a text appropriate and useful to the children, according to the educational conventions of the society in a given time; secondly, changing the text language and content in order to be adapted to reading and comprehension abilities which the society would recognize to children. Moreover, Shavit underlined that in different periods one of principles prevailed on the other; in fact, the first principle was dominant when children's literature was conceived as an educational tool, especially in the past. On the contrary, the current tendency is to pay attention to the level of understanding of children and its consequent modification to meet their needs. Finally, according to Shavit there are five *Systemic Constraints* (1986: 93) which regulate translation choices and in general the translator's approach towards the content and linguistic reformulation when translating for children. First, the text should conform to the pre-existent models in the target system; secondly, it is possible to delete parts of the text which could be considered as difficult to understand or not conformed to the dominant moral principles. The third constraint entails that the text might be bridged, simplified in its structure, topics and language; the fourth is based on the idea that children's literature is an educational tool and then it might be adapted to the prevailing educational theories; finally, it is necessary to conform the text to the stylistic norms of the genre, which can change according to the target culture.

Gideon Toury (1980), on the other hand, affirmed that a translation should not

just merely be a reconstruction of the original, but a text with its own status which belongs to the target literature and, hence, must respect its literary and linguistic norms. So, he recognized two main principles ruling translation: adequacy and acceptability. The first would entail a text which respects linguistic and literary norms of the source, while the latter would entail a text mostly adherent to the norms of the target literary systems.

According to Toury, one principle prevails on the other according to two translation norms: preliminary norms, which influence the choice of the text to be translated, and operational norms, which lead the translator through the translation process. In the case of children's literature in translation, it is the child, as a model reader, who determines the translation choices according to the principles of acceptability, since children may lack a general background knowledge which could help them to understand elements from other cultures.

Göte Klingberg (1986), on the other hand, started from the idea that the source text author has already taken children readers' needs, skills, abilities and interests into due consideration so to make the source text already appropriate to children and, ultimately, this degree of adaptation must be maintained in translation. So, Klingberg supports the idea of adequacy, preferring adherence to the source text and the original degree of adaptation. In his view, though, there is no mention of the possible differences between two different literary systems, which may entail different levels of linguistic difficulty or contrasting ideas concerning the adequacy of a book for children. What is important is that he is probably the first scholar to mention this core idea of adaptation which permeates the production and translation of children's literature.

2.2 Problems in translating children's literature

One of the main difficulties for a translator is, first, the limits in terms of general knowledge of children as far as languages, geography or different cultures are concerned. In order to solve this problem, the technique of domestication is often used. So, the term *Cultural context adaptation* (Klingberg 2008: 14) usually indicates a series of procedures used in translation in order to make some elements more familiar to young readers, such as names or places, food, beverages, units of

measure and currency. Although adaptation or domestication is the most used technique, many scholars are against it on account that this technique underestimates children's ability to project their views towards new and different realities.

In children's literature names are often very important in the plot, in fact it is rather common in stories for children and comics to find double names or alliterated names, such as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Peter Pan (Katerinov 2012: 90). At the same time, it is quite common to use proper names which embody some distinguishing features of the characters, as Harry Potter books widely demonstrate. In some other cases, as in French literature in translation, names related to people, places and concepts linked to a different country are domesticated in order to give the text some universal characteristics.

The same translation strategies come into play when translating food and beverages, which are among the most recurring themes in children's literature. Food represents joyfulness and security. It is used as a tool to give rhythm to the narration (Lathey 2006:86).

Another key element of books for children is the chance of reading-aloud (Oittinen, 2000) and this must be considered when translating such books. For children who cannot still read, listening to stories is the only way to access to literature and, therefore, it is mandatory that the text must be fluent, almost musical. Rhythm becomes an important feature to be preserved and so is punctuation in order to indicate pauses, stresses and intonation during reading aloud. Thus, repetitions, rhymes, onomatopoeias, puns are all characteristic features of children's books which represent a true linguistic and creative challenge for the translator.

When reading aloud, the adult is almost reciting for the child who acts as a spectator. In this case, the adult who reads acts also as a moderator able to influence child's perception of the tale. At the same time, the adult can clarify passages which may be obscure or even omit or modify parts which the adult considers difficult to understand or inadequate to the child.

Children's books are very often accompanied by images which the translator should take into due consideration and the visual dimension of these books has been widely investigated. The layout of a book is extremely important to a child and often it includes not only illustrations within but



also the cover, the first page, font, all elements which have an emotional impact on the reader.

Even though the language of images might be considered as international and able to overcome linguistic boundaries, in translating illustrated books, no element - whether a word or a picture - can be isolated (O' Sullivan in Lathey 2006: 113). The interaction between visual and verbal, i.e. what images show in relation to words, creates a gap of meaning which the reader should fill: the more intricate the relation between images and words is, the more difficult the translator's task is.

Another translation procedure is cultural context adaptation, which includes all those changes linked to ideological and moral factors. As previously affirmed, especially in the past, children's literature had a tight bond to education and for this reason some topics were considered as taboos: death, violence, sex. So, in the past many books underwent a process of purification, that is censoring some texts or parts of a text not conformed to the current moral; this procedure was regarded as an act of safeguard towards children and, ultimately, towards the well-being of the society.

[3. Kipling's Jungle Books](#)

The Jungle Books is an example case of those texts which Shavit defined as ambivalent. This means that some books can be enjoyed both by children and adults, like *Alice in Wonderland* or Harry Potter's books. As ambivalent texts, read and accepted by adults as well, they are likely to be altered and adaptation enters into play in most of the foresaid cases. Obviously, much depends on the source readers and the target readers and whether they coincide in the ultimate step of the translation process and this would imply a certain level of adaptation.

Kipling wrote the book in 1894, when he had just moved to Vermont with his wife; its origins can be tracked back in his story *In the Rukh*, where Mowgli appears as an adult ranger for the Indian Forestry Department. There are other influences in the background, among which there are a souvenir of his readings and a bit of personal life experience (Mallett 2003: 11). The book is a collection of short stories set in Central India, but they are based on Kipling's memories of Mewar, in the north of the sub-continent, which he had visited in 1887.

Although enjoyed also by adults, *The Jungle Books* are written for children and

they deal mostly with emotions children can easily identify (friendship, defy). Furthermore, Mowgli's stories can be appealing to children because Mowgli and the other characters swim, run, have secret passwords and fellowship. At the same time, they have a link with the tradition of the allegories or animal fables. Allegory can be identified in the *Law of the Jungle* which is what stands between the single individual and anarchy whose main threat is madness - *dewanee* or despair. Despite the Victorian culture in which Kipling lived, there is no link with the Christian idea of a Law and Justice, in fact, according to the *Law of the Jungle* Justice is only a matter of settling debts, likewise, at the beginning of the novel, Bagheera buys Mowgli's life by giving a bull he has killed.

The evidence of a colonialist mindset can be traced along the narration and this has led to a certain reproach towards the author in later times. Anyway, as Rudvin pointed out (2011: 8), the so-called *colonial gaze* can be perceived in a meta-reading of Mowgli's role and the colonial aspects are mostly in the relation between three main parts - Kipling, Mowgli and India. At the centre of this interpretation there is Mowgli's development from child to man and from "animal" to human. India and the Jungle, then, convey different meaning in the narration; India for Kipling was a memory of his family and loving care during his stay in Great Britain, where his father had sent him and his sister so that their health would have not been threatened by the Indian climate. Kipling described these years as a boarder in a family in a story and this period was recalled as one of the worst in his entire life. Hence, the idea of India as a place for loving care and family union. At the same, the Jungle embodies a peculiar aspect of children's literature: childhood enclosed in a space, whether it is localized or delocalized. The jungle, thus, on one hand, is presented as a utopic paradise, in which the Law is what can guarantee everybody's safety and health; on the other hand, it is close to the features of Peter Pan's Neverland with little territorial distinction.

The Indian setting, moreover, represented a problem for the early translators because they were faced with the challenge of translating what they probably had never seen nor experienced before - India, at the end of XIX century was still a distant, and to a certain extent, mysterious land. This difficulty was amplified by the irony used by Kipling when describing

British-India (Zablocka M, 2018). In fact, Kipling often used irony when depicting the British Indian inhabitants and towards them he had a kind of ambivalent attitude. He relied on irony to draw attention to social inequalities, as he had found himself between two cultural areas: the British Culture and the Indian Culture. For those outside this privileged position was difficult to understand the irony in Kipling's style and, as a result, the early translators decided to use expansion as the main strategy of translation in order to unveil what the writer's irony was somehow concealing. As it will be seen, the same strategy, detected in the first Polish translations of some of Kipling's short stories, was also used in the early Italian translation of the Jungle Books.

4. Translation Analysis

The translation analysis carried out is a diachronic comparison between Kipling's novel dating 1894, for which an e-book from Project Gutenberg was used, and the Italian translation dating 1928, published in Milan by Delta Edizioni and edited by Umberto Ammirata. Very little is known about the latter, who, from a brief research, seems to have edited also the second volume of *The Jungle Books* but any other reference to his works is now rather unknown. As far as the Italian translations of the *First Jungle Books* are concerned, the first translation is dated 1922 under the title of *Il Figlio dell'Uomo* (*Son of a man*), translated by Angelica Pasolini Rasponi. In the 1928 preface, a note from the publisher states that they intend to "start printing new, correct and perfect translations of Kipling's works". This leads to think that the 1922 translation was revised or even not used in favour of a new translation, which is presented as the most accurate.

Finally, for the analysis, some parts of the book are object of study, particularly those which contribute to the main themes of the plot and which depict the main characters, as well as the last episode of Mowgli's adventures (*Tiger! Tiger!*), which is the ideal conclusion of the story.

4.1 The opening of the book

One of the most peculiar features of Kipling, who was able to build up short stories, is his use of language. In fact, he was able to lead the reader into the depth of the narration by using a few words and some simple and smooth syntactical structures.

The novel starts as it follows:

It was seven o'clock of a very warm evening in the Seonee Hills when Father Wolf woke up from his day's rest, scratched

himself, yawned, and spread out his paws one after the other to get rid of the sleepy feeling in their tips. [...]

In a few lines, we are immediately immersed into the scene – the Hills of Seonee, in the heart of India – and the moment: the dawn. Father Wolf awakening is described with three consecutive verbs (*scratched yawned, spread out*) which could be easily found in a description of any daily routine: a man awakening, yawning and scratching. Animals in Kipling, as we can notice, have human moods and behaviours which makes it easier for a young reader to see animals acting and speaking like human beings.

Il tramonto, caldo e opprimente, scendeva sulle montagne di Seonee, allorchè Padre Lupo si destò dal suo lungo sonno diurno. E che doveva fare, subito? Grattarsi, sbadigliare, stirare le gambe, stralunare gli occhi e scuotere lentamente la testa. Ebbene, egli non fece, nè più nè meno, che questo [...] (p. 9)

The 1928 Italian translation seems to complicate and expand the sentence structure, adding sentences which amplify the descriptions so that the "dawn is warm and suffocating, while descending over the mountains in Seonee" and "Father Wolf awakes from his long day's rest". Moreover, there is no longer a reference to an exact hour of the day (*seven o'clock*), probably because the back idea of the translator was to depict a morning scene, when a family awakes from the night, rather than the opposite, in order to provide a familiar situation for a possible child reader. A rhetorical question has been added (*What else was he supposed to do?*) to introduce the sequence of actions. The scene ends with another juxtaposed comment (*Well, what he did was no more than this.*).

At first sight it is impossible not to notice how Kipling's style, plain and simple, is changed into a very articulated style. The 1928 translation explicates the animals' anthropomorphising, using the Italian equivalent of *legs* instead of *paws*. We must notice that Kipling uses personal pronouns to indicate the different animals of the jungle, in order to hide and overcome those boundaries between the fable and the story, the India/family and the Empire/authority, as seen before.

After this depiction of the awakening of the wolves' family, like most of human families, the author presents the hero of the following adventures: Mowgli.



“Man!” he snapped. “A man’s cub. Look!”

Directly in front of him, holding on by a low branch, stood a naked brown baby who could just walk-as soft and as dimpled a little atom as ever came to a wolf’s cave at night. He looked up into Father’s Wolf’s face and laughed.

“Un uomo! – urlò – un cucciolo d’uomo!”

Proprio dirimpetto a lui, sostenendosi a un ramo basso, stava un bambino bruno tutto nudo, che a stento poteva camminare; nè mai una tana di lupo era venuto, di note, un piccolo essere più morbido e più tenero...

Guardò in faccia a Padre Lupo, e rise. (p.14)

Even in this excerpt, the translation presents a certain degree of adaptation, particularly in Mowgli’s portrayal, who is presented as “bruno”. The Italian adjective could refer both to the colour of the skin and to the colour of hair, which are plausible interpretations, considering that Mowgli should be of Indian origins. However, it might be unusual to find elements such as nudity, vengeance, physical violence, hate, killings in a translation produced under a totalitarian regime, such as was the Fascist government in those years in Italy. If we consider the output of translation during the Fascist regime between the 20s and 40s, we would notice that since 1930s in Italy there was a great output of translation so that Italy could be regarded as one of the few countries where translation increased exponentially (Rundle, 2010: 16). According to Rundle, the Fascist attitude towards censorship was never univocal: it started to be an instrument of systematic control only during the 30s, due to the alliance with Germany and to the African campaign. Probably for this reason, there are not censored elements in the translation: censorship was not systematic and strict yet. Moreover, during the 20s there was a great interest in escape literature which could allow people to be entertained so not to focus on the war. Since there were not such writers in Italy, many books coming from France and Great Britain were translated and among those there were the works of Kipling, who could provide a great contribution to the education of young people towards the harsh life forecasted during those war times (Bonsaver G., 2007)

4.2 The other characters

After Father Wolf, other animals appear in order in the cave and each of them is particularly depicted and characterized by

Kipling. The first to meet the wolves is the jackal, Tabaqui.

It was the jackal – Tabaqui, the Dish-licker- and the wolves of India despise Tabaqui because he runs about making mischief, and telling tales, and eating rags and pieces of leather from the village rubbish-heaps. But they are afraid of him too, because Tabaqui, more than anyone else in the jungle, is apt to go mad, and then he forgets that he was ever afraid of anyone and runs through the forest biting everything in his way. Even the tiger runs and hides when little Tabaqui goes mad, for madness is the most disgraceful thing that can overtake a wild creature. We call it hydrophobia, but they call it dewanee – the madness – and run.

Tabaqui’s description is very powerful and conveys the feeling of disapproval around this character, which acts sneakily and for this reason it is despised, but, at the same time, it is feared because of the madness, the *dewanee*.

Era lo sciacallo Tabaqui, il leccapiatti. I lupi dell’India disprezzano Tabaqui perchè va in giro a far pettegolezzi e a dir bugie, e a masticar avanzi di stracci e di pollami trovati fra i mucchi di spazzatura dei villaggi.

Tuttavia hanno paura di lui, perchè Tabaqui va soggetto alla rabbia, più di ogni altro animale nella Jungla e quando è assalito dal terribile male corre per la foresta morsicando tutto quello che incontra.

Perfino la tigre scappa e si nasconde, perchè la rabbia è la più brutta cosa che possa capitare a una creatura selvatica.

Noi la chiamiamo idrofobia, loro la chiamano dewanee (la pazzia) e fuggono. (p. 10).

In the Italian version Tabaqui’s depiction is even more unpleasant, since the animal is keen on gossiping (*tales* was translated with *gossip*) and on telling lies (in the original, *mischief*) and, moreover, he goes stealing chicken meat (*pollame*, poultry), clearly showing a certain degree of expansion in the translation. At the same time, there is no reference to the fact that the Jackal might lose all its fear of the other animals when it is in full *dewanee* (*he forgets that he was ever afraid of anyone*). Moreover, the term hydrophobia is maintained in the translation, since it is a specific technical term, but when a more informal register is needed, it has been translated first as anger (*rabbia*) and then, when the same word is used to define the

Indian *dewanee*, it is changed into madness (*pazzia*). The common Italian term for hydrophobia is *rabbia* (rabies) which could also mean, as showed above, anger however playing with its meaning and providing a double version of the same word might cause some misunderstanding in an ideal child reader.

When Shera-Khane makes its entrance, it is announced by its roaring. It is the tiger, probably the most ferocious and dangerous of all the animals in the jungle.

The tiger's roar filled the cave with thunder. Mother Wolf shook herself clear of the cubs and sprang forward, her eyes, like two green moons in the darkness, facing the blazing eyes of Shere Khan.

"And it is I, Raksha [the Demon], who answers. The man's cub is mine, Lungri – mine to me! [...]"

E il ruggito della tigre riempì la caverna come un tuono. Madre Lupa si scosse i cuccioli di dosso e saltò avanti, i suoi occhi, fissi in quelli ardenti di Shere Khan, erano come due lune verdi nel buio.

-E sono io, Raksha (la diavola), che ti rispondo: il cucciolo d'uomo è mio, Lungri, mio, proprio mio. [...]" (p.15)

The first thing to be noticed in the translation is that the excerpt starts with a linker (*E*, and) as to emphasize that the scene is abruptly interrupted by the arrival of the tiger. Apart from a different syntactical organization, when the wolf and the tiger look one in the eyes of the other, we should notice that in the translation Shere Khan is a female tiger, as it could be drawn from its presentation, *Raksha (la diavola)*: the word *demon*, translated with *devil*, is changed into *female devil* by the determiner *la*. This is because in Italian, the word tiger is always feminine but in Kipling's story there is no reference to the character's gender as female and the writer refers to it by using the pronoun, *he*.

Finally, Mowgli is brought in front of the other animals (*the Pack Council*) who have to decide about him and two other main characters are presented: Baloo, the bear, and Bagheera, the panther.

Then the only other creature who is allowed at the Pack Council – Baloo, the sleepy brown bear who teaches the wolf cubs the Law of the Jungle: old Baloo, who can come and go where he pleases because he eats only nuts and roots and honey – rose upon his quarters and grunted.

Allora l'unico animale che possa prendere parte al Consiglio del branco, Baloo, il sonnolento orso bruno che insegna

ai lupacchiotti la Legge della Jungla; il vecchio Baloo, che va e viene dove vuole, perchè mangia soltanto noci e radici e miele, si alzò ritto sull'anche e borbottò [...]" (p.19)

In the translation of this excerpt, we should notice the passage from *creature* to *animal* (*animale* in Italian), which could be interpreted as an expansion of the meaning. Probably this is to underline that, although it is able to think and communicate, Baloo remains an animal, distinct from the only human in the Council, Mowgli. This opinion could be supported by the choice of translating *quarters* with *anche* (*haunches*), probably more generic for any creature with legs or paws.

In Kipling's descriptions there are often exotic and symbolical images, so it is rather difficult to translate them. Particularly challenging it is the description of Bagheera, the Panther, which "buys" Mowgli's life by giving a bull in return. When it first appears in the novel, during the meeting of the pack of wolves, Bagheera comes down from a tree in the middle of a clearance.

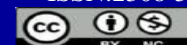
A black shadow dropped down into the circle. It was Bagheera the Black Panther, inky black all over, but with the panther markings showing up in certain lights like the pattern of watered silk. Everybody knew Bagheera, and nobody cared to cross his path; for he was as cunning as Tabaqui, as bold as the wild buffalo, and as reckless as the wounded elephant. But he had a voice as soft as wild honey dripping from a tree, and a skin softer than down.

More than its powerful body, it is its colour to enter the scene, coming down like a black mass from the tree, like a fruit which lands on the grass.

Bagheera's fur is dark, dense, homogeneous like ink; Kipling compares the waving movement of the reflections of the light on it to the watered silk, a type of elaborated silk similar to the waves on the fabric. This simile is unusual and provides the readers with a very clear image.

Un'ombra nera comparve nel cerchio.

Era Bagheera, la Pantera Nera, tutta near come l'inchiostro, con delle macchie che sotto una certa luce apparivano come la seta ondata. Tutti conoscevano Bagheera; nessuno amava contrariarla, perchè era furba come Tabaqui, fiera come un bufalo selvaggio, e temeraria come l'elefante ferito. Ma la sua voce era molle come il miele selvatico che goccia giù dall'albero, e la sua pelle era morbida come la piuma. (pp.19-20)



First thing to be noticed is that even Bagheera is turned into a female panther, just because in Italian *pantera* is always feminine. Secondly, the verb “*dropped*” is translated with “*appeared*” (*apparve*). Clearly it is not a mistake or a misunderstanding, but a stylistic choice by which the dramatic effect is reduced. Lastly, the fabric is translated by a calque and not with the correct attribution, probably more specific. It is a very explicit solution which could indicate that the translator did not want to cause any difficulty in reading the book, especially in the case of a child.

4.3 Additions and deletions

Tiger! Tiger! is the third tale of the whole work and it is also the last tale about Mowgli in this collection. In fact, Kipling will tell about Mowgli and his life as an adult in *King of the Jungle* in *The Second Jungle Books* (1895), with which Mowgli’s story ends and “we won’t hear from him anymore”, as Kipling wrote in a letter (Carrington 1970: 261). This tale is almost entirely set in the village where Mowgli goes after leaving the pack; for this reason, many elements of the Indian world can be found within the chapter and those elements sometimes were a problem for the translator, especially in 1928 where information about India was difficult to gather. So, for instance, words like *pariah* (42) or *huqas* (44) are maintained. In the latter, Kipling used an Indian word, which was foreign to the English reader, but in the meantime, depicting an everyday scene of the Indian tribes makes it clear what the word is about (water pipes). Other Indian words, such as *dhakm anna*, *tulsi* are maintained without any explanation in the translation.

Later in the chapter, Mowgli tries to adapt himself to the life of the village and takes part to the meetings with the other people and listens to the story of the old men about a spirit inside of a lame tiger. Mowgli dismisses all of this by saying: “*Are all these tales such cobwebs and moon talk?*”. This expression is not an idiom nor is crystalized in the English language, so the translator chose to eliminate the colourful expression in favour of a plain: *Ma tutte le vostre storie sono scemenze e fantasticherie come questa? [nonsense and fantasies – my back translation]* (82).

As Mowgli is not accepted by the tribe of the human beings, who are afraid of him and his abilities, he is always mocked at by calling him a brat:

“*Oho! Is it the jungle brat, is it?*” and “*Thou canst not even skin him properly, little beggar brat[...]*”.

-*Oh, è il bastardo della Jungla che parla eh!* (83)

The meaning of the word is clear, and the context provides clarification for the use of brat which is translated with “*bastard*” (*bastardo*) and produces an amplification of the meaning and the context of use. In fact, the old hunter who calls Mowgli this way is a symbol of a hierarchy, a system which Mowgli is defying, which wants him to remain at his place.

This chapter is particularly of interest since it presents two episodes of omission and amplification.

At the end of the chapter, Mowgli manages to kill Sheere Khan and shows its skin to the wolves.

“*Mowgli made up a song that came up to his throat all by itself, and he shouted it aloud, leaping up and down on the rattling skin, and beating time with his heels till he had no more no breath left [...]*”.

As a sign of victory, Mowgli sings a song and jumps and leaps on the tiger skins, reaffirming his supremacy and the defeat of his enemy. The 1928 translation omits this scene and maintains Mowgli’s Song between this tale and the following (cfr 98). I confronted this part with other two translations, one dated back in 1953, which is an edition clearly for children since it is accompanied by pictures, and two more recent translations dating 2014 and 2016 – none of them omitted this part.

The reasons for which this part was deleted are not clear and I may suppose two main causes. First, with no editing and checking, probably this part was simply skipped and left out. Secondly, we can track back an explanation of this by noticing the acquired meaning of such a gesture in a different culture. Singing and dancing on the skin of an enemy can be considered as a barbarous behaviour, void of any human feeling and it must have been perceived as of the utmost cruelty if performed by a young boy.

Moreover, his hymn to victory can be associated to the pagan rituals which the Roman Church has always condemned.

Early in the chapter, there is a case of amplification in the episode where Mowgli is trying to learn about the customs and rules of the tribe and he is unwilling to accept them. The 1928 translation presents a whole part about God and the respect of his rules which cannot be traced in the original.

Quel che fosse la paura non lo sapeva certo, perché quando il prete del villaggio gli disse che il Dio nel tempio si sarebbe adirato contro di lui se mangiava i suoi frutti di mango, egli prese l'immagine, la portò a casa del prete, e gli chiese di fare adirare Dio, per avere il piacere di battersi con lui. Fu uno scandalo terribile, ma il prete lo mise in tacere, e il marito di Messua diede molto argento lucente per consolare Dio. (80-81)

He [Mowgli] did not know fear, because, when the priest of the village told him that the God in the temple would be angry at him if he had eaten his mango fruits, he took the image, brought it to the priest's house and asked him to make God angry, just for the pleasure of battling with Him. It was a terrible scandal, but the priest silenced it down and Messua's husband gave a lot of silver to console God. [My back translation]

Confronting this part with the other editions (1959, 1995, 2014, 2016), none of them seems to have this moralizing episode, nor does the 1953 edition. In fact, this part seems to have been inserted in order to prevent any offence to God, which might be in contrast with the norms of the Target culture – being Italy so influenced by Catholicism and the Church at that time, too. Reproaching such a behaviour in a young boy can be read as a moral teaching towards the young readers who might hold up Mowgli's example. In a few lines, the translator has also conveyed the idea that all kind of transgression towards God, which is something outside the Jungle, where for its own nature any other kind of behaviour could be accepted or tolerated, should meet its punishment.

5. Conclusions

Through the translation analysis carried out, comparing the original text and the Italian translation, a certain degree of adaptation, in the form of expansions, as well as some omissions, had been highlighted. All the examples seem to indicate a teaching moral beyond this, probably directed to a child reader or listener. If the text had to be read by an adult, the latter could find a nice story of animals and a child, written in a very formal and elaborate style while at the same time the young reader could enjoy a fable with a moral at the end. In fact, emphasizing the human side of the animals make them more like a fantasy and the story might assume a greater fairy-tale atmosphere.

The cases of omission and interpolation in the last part show a strong bond with the perception of children's education in 1928 Italian society - deleting and inserting some lines seem to indicate a clear moral and educative intention on the behalf of the translator. The idea of a Law of the Jungle, out of any form of civilization, can justify any behaviour or images not thoroughly conformed with the target culture, as Mowgli's nudity would suggest. But when Mowgli is depicted to be back into the civilized world and the human society, he can no longer be and behave like an outsider. Once he had killed the tiger, he had to show some respect to his opponent and prove a kind of Catholic mercy towards his defeated enemy. So, dancing savagely on his skin is something that probably must be deleted, as part of Mowgli's conforming to the society of men. Likewise, entering in the society of men and becoming an adult means also accepting the Law of God which prescribes showing him blindly the due respect. Although Mowgli can be called "bastard" by an adult, he had to conform to the hierarchy, both on the human and on the religious level: to be part of society is ultimately to conform and assume the place assigned to a child.

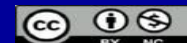
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" The Law of the Jungle " was a law code used by wolves and other animals in the jungles of India. It is also known as jungle law or frontier justice. The phrase was used in a poem by Rudyard Kipling to describe the obligations and behaviour of a wolf in a pack. However, this use of the term has been overtaken in popularity by the other interpretations above. Just to give you an idea of the immense variety of the Jungle Law, I have translated into verse (Baloo always recited them in a sort of sing-song) a few of the laws that apply to the wolves. There are, of course, hundreds and hundreds more, but these will do for specimens of the simpler rulings. Now this is the Law of the Jungle " as old and as true as the sky; And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf that shall break it must die. As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth forward and back " . For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wol