

The Jungle Book: Another Facet of Childhood

Viorica Banciu, Angela Jireghie, and Ionut Erdeli

University Of Oradea

Email: myconferences18@gmail.com, ionut.erdeli@yahoo.com, angelajireghie@gmail.com

Abstract—Kipling indicates that *The Jungle Books* is a book for children in order to easily move it over grown-ups reason prohibitions. The delightful story tackles subjects at the level of children understanding, including a dose of exoticism demystified on the whole by a popular and literary humor of an old English origin. *The Jungle Books* reveals a world full range, without monotony and uniformity. Jungle life gets epic contours. The adventure takes place at the forest level, ruled by laws given by its creatures. In this context Mowgli, the young man raised by beasts and loved by them, was necessary to Kipling's idea of restoring order in nature.

Index Terms—animals, childhood, humor, nature

I. INTRODUCTION

For the child who grew-up in his British parents' bungalow, comfortable and civilized, with local ministers, at the margins of the jungle, India looks beautiful and mysterious. Nature with lush flora and fauna, with dangers watching everywhere, opened the child's heart to the fantasy world of stories. The Middle East made Rudyard Kipling a fabulous poet and a storyteller. At the people around, at the locals, he met the surface obedience necessary for the English master, which made him believe strongly in the mission of civilization to accept the English colonialism. The few years of college spent in England, between 1877 and 1882, at the United Services College in Devon, where he started his literary activity editing a literary magazine, only reinforced his idea, of the necessary human discipline could be brought only by the perfect organization, and the iron hand of England in the colonies. It is true that Kipling's love for India was genuine and deep, as evidenced by the dozens of books dedicated to people and places in this country of miracles and especially a number of critical implications for the English - we have seen in his books, even from the early career.

But strong England, one that brings order and discipline in the chaos of India is forgiving in Kipling's eyes and this is crucial, not the behavior of individual mistakes in the English part. Naturally, when rebellions are large, armed interventions must restore everything. Thus, in the story *The Undertakers* in the *Second Jungle Book* the characters' memories refer to the great memories of the 1857 to the Indian revolt against the British, drowned in blood

For Kipling the English intervention in the Indian life is welcomed by the setting up of a surface designed civilization meant to trigger the locals from the native beliefs and superstitions of their millennial world. Besides the *Barrack-Room Ballads*, for example, as other pages of his work, even in well-known children's stories *Just so Stories*, exalt the idea of imperialism. And Kipling's travels around the globe, China, Japan, America had not changed optics. So that at the moment of the war of the British against the Burrs in South Africa, the British writer support the British cause and publishes a newspaper to spread the same ideas, entitled *The Friend in Bloemfontein*.

Rudyard Kipling's Anglo-Saxon pride is felt not only in his volumes of poetry dedicated to British rule in the world such as *Barrack-Room Ballads*, *Seven Seas* or *Five Nations* which praised his "Rule Britannia". It's particularly obvious in *The Eyes of Asia*, which includes four stories admiring the views of some residents of Asia about England and about its virtues. The conclusion of *A Retired Gentleman* is the most suggestive; the Indian feels so humiliated by the spectacle of the English discipline in the metropolis, thus can make a claim, at least surprising: "We are nothing beside people". I do not think any Indian, however humble, could have pronounced these excessive annihilating words for all the ancient spiritual Indian culture.

But these are the historical boundaries of Kipling's political and social ideal, surrounded by the English horizon, the prospect of obsolete British Empire at that time, affected by the last quarter-century history. His works infused with this view will remain a simple document of a long literary revolutions, interesting only for the British history, in contrast, Kipling's work of generally human interest, which exceeded the vision that good English citizen of the world and is the result a search on the scale of human values remains as a permanent European and universal culture. And this work was crowned with the Nobel Prize for literature, awarded to Kipling in 1907. [1]

II. THE JUNGLE BOOK: THE BOOK OF INDIAN LIFE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Kipling's work is very extensive and varied, and for this reason unequal as aesthetic achievement. Novels, stories, plays, poems, travel notes, sketches crowd around the writer obstructing critical judgments, clearly establishing a unique literary profile. The childhood and youth spent in

India, on the one hand, and English intellectual formation, on the other hand, made him a strange mix, which we meet many personalities of British culture. Two areas of human experience, psychology, historical traditions have interfered in Kipling's literary production. The Indian area was explored with a realistic attention to English eyes, the dissociative ability of a writer descending from the great English novels adventure, which exalt the values of British civilization, but do not ignore the locals' human values, their great spiritual beauty and their natural weaknesses. But usually Kipling investigates deeply the English area that he knows much better. And generally he deals more with the British from the colonies, from India, their happy or sad lives at the periphery of the British Empire. Taking them in the colored world, a little bit bizarre of India, in which the British writer is quite difficult to adapt, he creates the English a framework - unusual, picturesque, exotic, similar to that introduced partly in the English literature at the same time by Joseph Conrad. And in *Plain and Tales from the Hills*, the first volume of sketches and stories, Songs appeared in 1887, after his debut collection of poems entitled *Department Ditties* and *Soldiers Three*, and *Kim*, the novel which the critique calls rightly enough picaresque, and many other works, Kipling presents many facts of life, instant or wider deployments throughout existences. The life of civilian officials and officials of the army of the colonies provided topics for the most sketches and stories. An official wife regains their husband fallen in love with another beautiful Englishwoman (*Three and an Extra*), a poor young man with an informal character arrives in the same environment, cannot adapt and suicide (*Thrown away*), a British police officer becomes the sake of her own beloved her servant, dressed in Indian clothes (*Miss Yonghal's Sais*), an officer who courts mother eventually marries the daughter (*The Story Of The Gadsbys*), a corporal prevents the abduction of a daughter of a colonel by a untrustworthy captain (*The code from the Machine - Deus ex machina*), a child of an Irish soldier, Kimble O'Hara, known as Kim, left an orphan in India, accompanies an old Tibetan lama in his pious ways, passing through a series of adventures, gaining experience and fortifying his character.

"*The Jungle Book*" is among the books of situation as famous as "*Don Quixote*", "*Robinson Crusoe*" and "*Gulliver's Travels*." The literature about animals and animal stories paper has no pair in this.[2]

The Jungle Books (1894-5), like two other great English books, Lewis Carroll *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and Kenneth Grahame *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), can be regarded as stories told by an adult to children. Kipling's younger daughter Elsie (Mrs George Bambridge) described to Dr A. W. Yeats in 1955 how Kipling recited the tales to the children with the lights out in a semi-dark room, and 'the cold narratives of *The Jungle Books* and *Just So Stories* in book form left so much to be desired that she could not bear to read them or hear them read'. [3]

Nobody was able to present the wild beauty of the jungle in India more suggestive than Rudyard Kipling. During the life of the author England was named "world's banker." The vast empire lived primarily on from colonial exploitation. India - Kipling's birthplace - was the most important English colony. The writer saw daylight near the jungles of India and learned to speak the native language before he could speak English. He wrote "*The Jungle Book*" at the age of twenty-eight years. Because of this work, he became famous. Indeed, this book has a specific atmosphere not found in literature. What is this paper? A collection of animal stories? A novel? Both. In this book, special people appear. The main character is a kid who grew between animals. Yet the stories talk about animals. Animals participate in the adventure show human characters are immediately popular. Akela, the wolf, the lonely snake, Kaa, wise and human; Meanwhile, Shere Khan, the tiger is cruel and selfish, as Tabakira, the jackal, pushing and unpleasant, inspires enmity and anger These animals give us the opportunity to know more closely Mowgli, the boy that was lost in the jungle and would have perished if he was not adopted by wolves. He grew up in the wilderness, living among the animals and complied with the laws of the jungle. Mowgli was born man, but because he lives with the animals his soul is the same: wild and tame at once. He was raised wolf, but his human side when it strengthens and turns through people, even if the soul bears regrets. When he went in the first village, he realized the bitterness of life and hostile attitude of people who chased him back among wolves. The *Jungle Book* is a novel of the uprooted; they "put from the moral angle, as *Fram the Polar Bear*, the problem of environmental change and on that line accentuate the social criticism. In such a perspective, Cezar Petrescu's allegorical novel can be read as a response to Kipling's books: the bear up in the world of men and the young man raised by animals. In both, a history of mixing kingdoms and observing the effects it has on the development of a being in a foreign environment as the reaction of the original environment to this alienated being "[4]. In the animal world, there are harsh laws, which serve as lessons to people. They are ideal for the order and discipline of the British Empire, which in Kipling's eyes is the best form of state recommended to the world. This book contains Kipling's most beautiful life memories of his childhood.[5]

III. THE ANIMAL CHARACTERS IN A CHILD'S WORLD

The contact with the large, mottled and fabulous Indian world made Kipling to approach the universe of childhood. The dream, the fairy tale atmosphere, the miracle possible in the Indian spirituality, seemed to the writer able to enter the world of English children rather than in the adult world. The writer seems to be integrated into a literature that seems for children, but actually addresses the fantasy, the confabulation capacity of sensitive people of all ages. In the volume subtitled *Just so Stories*, Kipling indicates that it is a children's book, one can do to move easily across the prohibitions reason of grown-ups. Stories, charming,

addressing the children's understanding, as Kipling says whale got his throat, as mentioned camel hump, enlarged skin as rhino, but is in a very modern, very new, remarkable in terms aesthetic.

And here comes a dose of exoticism, but to debunk the humor of their turnover with old English lineage, and literary folk. The story is charged together with Kipling's own drawings showing, for instance, the rhino rude, dark skin with a waterproof buttons (buttons but not seen, because they are under the belly of the Rhino) and the tree on the Parsee, holy man who only ate cake and whose extraordinary rays emitting hat. And typical story is on its own recipe including, although the author doesn't tell us, an intimate mixture of cheerful Nursery Rhymes, poems for children, based on mnemonic processes, and a humorous way that the writer seems to be borrowed from Rabelais or from his ancestor, the great Laurence Sterne.

The alliterations give special rhythm to the narration: "He ate - the starfish and the garfish, and the crab and the dab, and the plaice, and the daice, and skate and his mate" says about whales, or about seaman's dance in her womb: "... he stumped and he jumped, and he thumped and he bumped, and he pranced and he danced, and he banged and he danged ..." [6] to and so on. Funny chorus word said with some irony, the frequent references to magic and an important air which deflates, all together make up the arsenal style of Kipling, the storyteller for children. In *Kim* which is a novel about a child, he emphasizes on the character formation in an environment, so varied that is the subject to many tests in India, but the adventure itself, aimed to try and develop both the intellectual side, i.e. to sharpen intelligence, as well as the moral aspect of adolescent personality.

"*Captains Courageous*" also emphasizes the importance of living in difficult conditions in order to train a firm character. Young Harvey Cheyne, a boy of 15 years, son of an American millionaire, rude and pampered, got, by chance, falling into the water, from the ship; he was traveling with among the sober and brave fishermen of the deep. And where, in the beginning, it is obnoxious, distant, disdainful and lazy, Harvey becomes through labor and discipline a true man.

The same ethical concerns, prevalent in much of Kipling's work, the same desire to say a word in the thorny matter of training hard characters to young people, imperceptibly creeps under fabrication which the writer builds the vast universe charming stories of the jungle in bringing together two quite uniform books, *The Jungle Books*. That occurred in 1894 and 1895, the first and second *Jungle Book* contain only two narratives that get out of the Indian land: *Quiquern* and *The White Seal*.

The structures of this works about animals, about "the wisdom" of their nobility do not look like the European fable or Middle Ages novels about animals. The *Jungle Books* seems to have distant sources in *Panciatantra* the Indian collection of fables that were retold by Arabs and illustrated by Persians in the beautiful picture of their manuscripts. Funny talking animals that think and talk come from the fabulous golden age whose memory

remains alive in the eternal world of the Asian story-tellers. But the oldest European folklore retains echoes of a magical world where animals have all powers and wisdom and intervene to change the status of inappropriate or unjust things, taking part of the weak, and the defenseless. Many writers reused the often used idea of people friends with animals. Kipling often used this literary motif of talking animals on his literary tall tales for children which I mentioned above and in other stories as *The Maltese Cat*, for instance, where, thanks to a fairy pony, a team wins a polo game.

In *The Jungle Book* a whole world is revealed but, without monotony, and uniformity. The jungle life gets epic contours. The adventure takes place in the forest ruled by laws laid down by her creatures. A universe of power, of goodness existing for centuries on that earth increases Kipling's vision, twinning the young man, Mowgli, with the wise beasts who have adopted him. In a grandiose nature whose roots date back to the creation of the world, big secrets are kept from generation to generation and solemnly utter in certain circumstances, decisive for the fate of the pack. Living in joint property is guarded and secured by the elders who dwelled long ago and were powerful in their time. They know from seeing or from hearing, everything that happened in the jungle, in all species, as if taking part at the genesis. They have the living history of jungle with big wins and passing defeats or the weaknesses that were punished. The more extensive and worse their injuries were the more extensive and established, their right to leadership was. And the law is known by heart especially by old teachers, like Baloo, who passes it to the cubs, who are young, naughty and difficult to subject. The others who act and watch the pack, the letter of the law it is written in blood, in instinct rather than in memory. The law is as old and true as the sky and also includes rules of conduct, behavior, cohabitation, which, taken together, make a real ethics of the forest hunter. This law applies to the members of the Seeonee pack led by the old and experienced wolf, the brave Akela, but in fact, with some variants it is probably of all species of the jungle. For Mowgli will say it to the eagles and snakes in recognition and will be heard. Moreover, he has been raised by greats of the forest, the beautiful black panther Bagheera, and the strong and righteous, Baloo, the wise and caring bear, who taught the other cubs of the jungle (it is them recommended to the respect of the other members of the jungle by the law itself saying: "Keep peace with the Lords of the Jungle – the Tiger, the Panther and the Bear ..." [7]), Mowgli too will become righteous and strong. His body will receive the juices of the earth and water and will come into a perfection which will be respected and cherished by all the forest creatures. And justice will come into it so that all from free will or not will look upon him as a master. Mowgli's coexistence with wild animals of the jungle, is so fruitful in building his character, it is a lesson given to the people by Kipling in order to end enmity between the two kingdoms. In order to restore the link between humans and animals valuing everything worth everything is human in animals almost

everything that can be useful to our lives from the observation of their existence there, is to rebuild a united nature, beautiful, exemplary, full of love. And the commandment of the law is intangible: "... and seven times, never kill Man" (R. Kipling: 1992) the man, defeating the peaceful coexistence rules, killed animals, and they, in turn, killed him. Hathi, the elephant, he also having knowledge of the mysteries, tells about the way fear was born in the world because of these crimes committed against each other.

Mowgli, the man-cub grew by beasts and loved by them, it was necessary Kipling's idea of restoring a new order in nature. And the noble qualities of the various creatures are deducted from each story, tying the most of them linking the fate of large and small animals to that of humans. In distress and needs people are together with their faithful friends, who in turn help them and save them. In the jungle Bagheera, Baloo and Kaa, the great python, who boasts of being the oldest witness of the world, even before Hathi are the closest defenders of Mowgli. They love him, spoil him and save him countless times. Right from the beginning the panther and the brown bear were the witnesses of the receipt of Mowgli in the pack, against so many voices that refused the baby bond with human life and especially against Shere Khan the tiger, the greedy killer, as others call him. They also save him, when from lightly childishness Mowgli is taken by the crazy kin of monkeys, the king of Bandar-log, who has no law to obey to or some kind of discernment. In the city of monkeys, from beyond the river monkeys, from the frozen caves, the subject of a splendid description of the ancient Indian town deserted by people, a great battle is fought for life and death between Bagheera, Baloo, Kaa and all. people Bandar-log for Mowgli's release. Everything ends well after Kaa's terrible game with monkeys and after the punishment that Mowgli receives with obedience from Bagheera in the spirit of the law prescriptions. Another times the difficult confrontation with Shere Khan who watched him with deadly thoughts, Mowgli received the help of Akela the great wolf, who received the little "frog" among wolves. In his turn, Mowgli helps his friends. A terrible battle will be that of wolves against the *dhole* murderers who attacked them dishonestly. At Kaa's advice, Mowgli will accomplish a saving plan for the wolves, although all will bleed terribly in moments of depression brought about by the equally dastardly attack by the unheard drought.

Akela, the old hero, was sent out of the dignity as head of the wolves by his younger displeased and foolish wolves from the pack, Mowgli reinstated him after the fight with Shere Khan and it was him who will receive the last breath from the noble warrior who will fall, as they see fit, in the bloody struggle. Moreover, Akela's drama, pain of the warrior who sees his forces weakening with the inevitable coming of winter of life, is touching as a human drama. And. Mowgli's separation from his friends, now very old, from Baloo, nearly blind, is heartbreaking. But man must turn to his kin with all solidarity which binds him with the animals.

If a man wants to take them into account, their parables moralize him, protect them from dehumanization and from the dangerous intoxication of gold. In *The King Ankus* and *The Jungle Descent to the Valleys*, people, blinded by the lust of owning precious objects, cattle and land, kill his fellow man. In *The King's Ankus*, the killing instrument, made only of precious metals and precious stones and taken by Mowgli from the treasure guarded by the White Cobra, brings death of all who mastered it. And in *The Jungle Descent to the Valleys*, the great of the village wants to get rid of Messua and her husband, Mowgli's presumed parents charged them of witchcraft and tried because they wanted to seize their riches.

The animals which recognize the man as master, fulfilling the true, eternal law of creation, are simple and good and do not know lawlessness. Those who dare wicked acts against men are punished, as Shere Khan, as Nagaina and Nag and the creatures of the forest glorify the right punishment, as Darzee in his song. Kipling's vision on animals is quite different than that of the European epic, the medieval period inspired from the life of animals. The life of forest creatures from *The Jungle Books* runs in a nature of rare beauty, serious and even solemn, in an exemplary manner even for people. They can serve as an example in training the human nature and only rarely provoked amusement, like animals without 'dignity': Bandar-log monkeys, Tabaqui, the jackal. *The Novel of the Fox* designed to arouse laughter by painting the defects of human weaknesses, embodied in the crafty Renard, in Brown, in Isengrin, the greedy wolf, and so on. There was built a miniature world of fable; in *The Jungle Books*, there lives a world of greatness of the Golden Age. And here, in the context of wise animals, the best people are welcomed and initiated, those meant to understand life's true aims, collaboration, and love between the kingdoms.

What Kipling learned from India comprised entirely *The Jungle Books*, in this apparently naive but so profound work of his is trying almost a reinterpretation of world in the vision of miracle, beauty and truth. In the chapter entitled *The Miracle of Purun Bhagat*, the old Indian, who reached wisdom, came to regard the world as a huge miracle. Grasping meanings coexistence of all creatures from the contemplation of the succession of seasons, of the human labor, of the good social order of animals, he makes in his wisdom, acquired in long-toil of thought, a tool to save people.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Jungle Books is the book of ancient love for nature, where little has changed since the beginning of the world. Animal law which prevails here is more just than many of the laws of human beings and the coexistence with forest creatures is much more generous. Jungle Book is a tribute brought by the English writer, to Asia deep, silent and wise.

In the thrill of authenticity the English poet describes the kind of lush jungles of India. Man, the master of the world, must be a real force, hardened in nature and in the battle of adventure, a willingness toward the goal and a

great affection. The image of this strong, righteous man, is, in fact one of Kipling's ethical goals of creation. Here, in *The Jungle Books* it is detailed in narrative, in the epic, what the poem *If* focuses in gnomic recommendations. Big passed tests justify the one who truly aspires to the quality and on behalf of man. Only then *You'll Be a Man, My Son*. [8] The verse sounds as a universal human achievement and promise towards the development, whose touch means a universal human target. And, as I said, a poem as *If* or a vision as that of Kipling's *Jungle Book* is justified the author as a man and writer over all the limits of history and his time.

REFERENCES

- [1] K. Rudyard, *Cartea junglei*, Editura pentru literatura, Bucuresti, 1969.
- [2] D. H. Stewart, *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, vol. 15, no. 1, Winter 1985.
- [3] C. Henry and P. Mari. *Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, Oxford University Press, London, 1984.
- [4] B. Florica, *Literatura Pentru Copii și Tineret Dincolo de "Story"*, Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2007.
- [5] G. Vistrian, *Literatura Pentru Copii și Tineret*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2006.
- [6] K. Rudyard, *Just So Stories*, NuVision Publications LLC, 2008.
- [7] K. Rudyard, *The Jungle Books*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992.
- [8] K. Rudyard, *Something of Myself*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1991.

Viorica Banciu became a member of IERDC. Org. in September 2012. She was born in Sudrigiu, the commune of Rien, the county of Bihor, Romania in August the 18th, 1962. She graduated highschool in 1980 at Ady Sincăi, Cluj-Napoca, Romania and then attended the Faculty of Letters, Babes-Bolyai University. She graduated in 1989, becoming a teacher of English and Romanian. Viorica Banciu, doctor in philology in 2007. She worked for a period in the pre-university education namely secondary and high-school education. Presently, she works at the University of Oradea at the Faculty of Socio-Humanistic Sciences, the Department of Sciences of Education. Her fields of interest are English Literature, Children's Literature, Linguistics, English Language Teaching, Ethnic Studies, and Gender Studies. She published five books, such as *Semantic and Pragmatic Features of Political Discourse*, Cluj-Napoca, Romania Argonaut Publishing House, 2009, *Communicative Skills: Steps in the World of Fairy Tales*, Oradea, Romania, University of Oradea Press, 2011, or papers as: Viorica Banciu, Floare Chipea, Ionut Bancila - *The Social Status and Image of the Romanian Woman Presented in the Nationalist Discourses of the Dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu*, published in IPEDR, vol. 34, ISSN 2010-4626, April 2012 (indexed in EBSCO, WorldCat, Google Scholar, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Engineering & Technology Digital Library), p. 112-116. Current and previous research interests are linked to education and English Language Teaching for children with special educational needs and Children's Literature studies. Dr. Viorica Banciu became associate professor of the University of Oradea in October, the first, 2012 and she is *Member of International Editorial Advisory Board of PTSE- Practice and Theory in Systems of Education*, Budapest, a journal specialized in education studies and also member in the following associations: linguistic Society of Romania; Romanian Society of Applied Linguistics; ESSE (European Society for the Study of English); IERDC. Org.