

“Once, Twice and Again!” Kipling’s Works in the Russian Twentieth Century Retranslations

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Abstract

The article traces the evolution of the image of Rudyard Kipling and of the role his works played in the Russian literature and culture. The study is performed on the material of Russian retranslations of Kipling’s poetry and of *The Jungle Book*, which followed different patterns and contributed differently and at times even dissonantly to the construction of the image of Kipling and his literary legacy in the Soviet Union. Strong competition of big independent publishers in the Russian Empire ensured multiple retranslations of *The Jungle Book* in order to cater for the demands of the wide readership. The change in political powers in 1917, the nationalization of print, and the focus on education worked towards the development of a very selective approach to the rendering of *The Jungle Book*, which eventually reduced itself to recycling a limited number of episodes. By contrast, Kipling’s poetry translation took the form of pioneering work, especially in the context of the ban on Kipling in the 1930 – 1970s. These two opposite vectors that Kipling’s translations took in the twentieth century had a tangible effect on the perception of Kipling as an author and inspired the Russian art of the second part of the twentieth century in the fields of literature, music, and film.