



Images of Youth on Screen: Manipulative Translation Strategies in the Dubbing of American Teen Films

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American cinema's "cultural fascination with stories about and images of young people" (Shary 2003: 576) dates back to the mid-1920s and is still a dominant trend. Since the 1950s, films about teenagers addressing adolescent audiences were regularly and abundantly produced by both Hollywood and independent studios, so that the teen film soon became a formally codified genre (Considine 1985; Doherty 2002). Previous research has shown that youth films have been a privileged site of censorship and manipulation owing to the sensitive issues that they typically address (Bianchi 2008; Ranzato 2010, 2015; Zanotti 2012). Along with attracting censorial intervention on the part of official censorship, the depiction of teenage sexuality, violence, crime and use of strong language has often encouraged manipulative approaches in translation. It has been shown that the level of manipulation imposed on the film dialogue depends on a number of factors, ranging from target cultural norms and values to local regulations and marketing strategies (Bucaria 2009; Chiaro 2007). Under the pressure of these factors, dialogue adapters may act as censorial agents, altering to a greater or lesser extent the source text (Fawcett 2003; Díaz Cintas 2012; Ranzato 2016); but the role played by agents other than the dubbing translators may be even more decisive (Mereu 2012). This paper offers an analysis of the dubbed versions of three mainstream youth films, namely *Rebel without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray,



1955), *Splendor in the Grass* (Elia Kazan, 1961) and *Summer of '42* (Robert Mulligan, 1971), with the aim to investigate whether the strategies adopted in their linguistic transfer into Italian were shaped by censorial concerns or by differences in the way juvenile cultures were represented locally, and to examine how Hollywood's longstanding "courtship of the teenage audience" (Doherty 2002: 2) was exported to other countries, as part of "an increasingly transnational commodity culture in which adolescence was an important conceptual category" (Driscoll 2011: 28). The study is based on documentary evidence gleaned from archival research and manuscript analysis (Munday 2012, 2013, 2014).

1. TEEN FILM AS A GENRE

Teen film is an umbrella term encompassing both films representing adolescence and films targeted at a young audience. As Tropiano (2006: 11) suggests, teen films are "films made *about* teens *for* teens"; however, not only films made specifically for teenage audiences, but also films made for an adult audience that focus on adolescence (French 2006), are included in this category. Teen movies are nowadays regarded as a genre in their own right owing to narrative conventions particular to this type of film and their shared discourse on adolescence (Driscoll 2011: 2-3).

As film scholars point out, the emergence of film parallels the rise of the modern idea of adolescence as a personal and social crisis; moreover, cinema and youth have influenced each other throughout their histories (Shary 2005: 1; Driscoll 2011: 5). Catering for young audiences has been a constant preoccupation of Hollywood cinema, teenagers being its "most seducible clients" since the mid-1950s (Doherty 2002: 18). In *The Cinema of Adolescence*, Considine (1985: 3) emphasises the bidirectional nature of the relationship between youth and cinema, stating that "the young person's strength at the box office, where he functions as a powerful force operating on the cinematic product he consumes" is counterbalanced by his/her susceptibility to influence and manipulation. As Considine (ibid.) concludes, "[t]he relation between the young person and the film industry is thus a dichotomy – while the young viewer is capable of exerting an influence upon the product he consumes, it in turn is equally capable of exerting an influence on him".

Teen film emerged as a distinct and recognisable genre during the 1950s, when the US film industry began to target teenagers as a privileged audience and thus developed marketing strategies aiming at the exploitation of the teen market. This resulted in the juvenilisation of mainstream cinema (Doherty 2002), "with studios capitalizing on youth trends and attitudes through movies" (Shary 2005: 2). The teen genre imposed itself as featuring stereotypical characters in equally stereotypical situations. Shary (2002: 30) argues that before the 1980s there was hardly any attempt "to experiment with or change the types of characters featured in film schools", which mostly:



focused on one type of school character and his or her relation to others, such as the misunderstood rebel played by James Dean in *Rebel without a Cause* [or] the sexually curious but repressed virgin played by popular schoolgirl Nathalie Wood or jock Warren Beatty in *Splendor in the Grass*.

As suggested by Driscoll (2011: 12), a crucial and important aspect of teen film is its close connection with rating systems, so much so that “[i]t is impossible to understand teen film without considering how film censorship and classification systems are premised on protection of youth”. And yet the relationship between adolescence and film censorship is still an under-researched area (ibid.: 126), which would certainly benefit from further investigation in different national contexts. As Considine (1985: 2) points out:

both in the United States and throughout the world, the existence of motion picture censorship and rating systems in one form or another serves as a testimony to the belief that motion pictures are capable of exerting a negative influence on some members of the audience.

Closely tied to political intervention in film content, the censorship systems developed by individual states claim to protect society, the protection of the young being their prime aim (Driscoll 2011: 217). All classification systems have changed through time and these changes have been shown to have “commercial imperatives as well as imperatives driven by moral debate in the public sphere” (ibid.: 128). Influenced by a set of often contradictory forces, classification systems are hence unstable. This has had an impact on the production, distribution and reception of teen films both in source-language and target-language markets. As Driscoll (ibid.: 12) points out, “systems for managing film production, distribution and consumption always relied on a set of debates about age, maturity, citizenship, literacy, and pedagogy that are not only an important context for teen film but shape its content”. The same applies to target-language versions, which inevitably reflect an interwoven association of factors such as the views and values of the audience, local discourse on adolescence, local legislations regarding film content, as well as commercial concerns. Distributors’ preoccupation with producing films that will please both the censors and local audiences is of paramount importance when it comes to translation strategies (Zanotti 2012). It is therefore clear that this multiplicity of factors cannot but affect the way teen films are exported to other language markets as a reflection of dominant ideals and ideologies.

2. FILM CENSORSHIP IN ITALY IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

In the post-war period “Italy became the largest foreign market for the American film industry” (Treveri Gennari 2009: 9). A new film law was introduced in 1949, which “transformed censorial practice into a preventative form of control under the ideological and legislative pressure of the Catholic establishment” (Treveri Gennari



2013: 254). As Treveri Gennari (ibid.: 262) points out, the influence of the Vatican and the Catholic establishment over film production and censorship represents a crucial aspect of the history of both local and imported film in Italy. The standard practice in this country involved state censorship being echoed by that of the Catholic Church, “whose main aim was to ‘promote a moralizing cinema’” (ibid.: 254). It must be noted that the importance of producing morally acceptable films was clearly stated in the *Codice per la cinematografia*, a code published by Anica, the Producers’ Association, in 1945. The code:

suggested that suicide and any other disrespect towards life needed to be abolished; the sanctity of marriage and family had to be preserved; a healthy moral education needed to be the first element to be borne in mind when making a film and anything obscene, indecent or vulgar portrayed in as limited a manner as possible. (Treveri Gennari 2010: 102)

Previous research has shown that “in order to avoid official censorship, film producers would attempt to comply with most of the recommendations of the censorship board when presenting the script” (Treveri Gennari 2013: 260). The same procedure was to be followed with dubbed films: the dubbing script was to be submitted to the censorship board for approval in order for the film to be granted permission for public screening. This is the reason why self-censorship became common practice in post-war Italy, a country where “cultural artifacts” were “produced already with a view to what will prove most likely acceptable to the censors” (Bonsaver and Gordon 2005: 6). The importance of producing and distributing morally acceptable films had an enormous impact on translators’ choices. Since both producers and distributors had to negotiate with the civil servants in order to obtain permission to screen and avoid cuts or rejections, self-censorship has always been the most frequently used device in dubbing translation in Italy.¹

3. THE STUDY

Teen film as a genre “has been identified with a range of specifically US motifs” (Driscoll 2011: 4), which are often said to export an idea of adolescence which is intrinsically American. The cinematic image of youth constructed by Hollywood films has thus inevitably affected the imagery of youth in other cultures. At the same time, teen films have often been a locus of censorial intervention due to the often controversial content of youth-centred stories, especially when it comes to the representation of family life, juvenile delinquency and violence, youth sexuality and language usage. For all of these reasons, the present investigation takes into account the place of teenagers in fictional feature films produced in the US between the mid-

¹ For an overview of censorial practice in Fascist and post-war Italy visit <<http://www.italiataglia.it>> and <<http://cinecensura.com>>, which are the outcome of two large nationally funded projects on film censorship in Italy.



1950s, that is, the age when the idea of catering to a teen audience became more and more attractive (Doherty 2002), and the early 1970s, i.e. the period that precedes the so called multiplex movement, which brought about a number of changes in terms of generic conventions (Shary 2002). This was a time when censorial control over cinema in Italy was still tight, even though from the 1960s onwards “censorship started losing its grip” (Treveri Gennari 2013: 266) and the rise of private broadcasters like Berlusconi, from the end of the 1970s, entailed that re-edited versions of films were aired on television and that “the Catholic veil thrown on sex” was partly lifted (Abruzzese 2005: 182).

The films under investigation in this article are *Rebel without a Cause* (1955), *Splendor in the Grass* (1961) and *Summer of '42* (1971). Along with dealing with issues important to teens and the difficulty of being young, the interesting fact about these movies is that: (1) all of the films are Warner Bros. productions, and (2) all of the films are R-rated teen movies (i.e. restricted to particular audiences) and therefore they were not intended to reach a teen audience. In order to investigate the manipulative interventions that translators operate at the textual level, analysis of source and target language dialogue exchanges will be combined with insights drawn from archival materials. Central to my analysis are the notions of patronage, rewriting and ideology as illustrated by Lefevere (1992). As Wolf (2010: 338) explains:

rewriting denotes both the manipulative interventions on the level of the text and the cultural [...] devices which direct and control the production procedure in the interplay of social forces. The patronage system at work within this interplay embraces individuals, collectives and institutions that are determined mainly by ideology.

This study is based on original documents collected from the archives of the Direzione Generale per il Cinema, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali [Italian General Directorate for Cinema, Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities], also referred to as MiBAC. The MiBAC stores a large collection of files containing various documents regarding the film certifications produced by the film commission. This documentation covers a period ranging from 1913 to the present time. According to Italian law, in order to obtain a certificate for public screening an application form must be submitted by the distribution or production company to the Commission for Cinematographic Revision, i.e. the commission that is in charge of the examination and rating of films. The commission views the film and then decides whether to approve it fully or partly (that is with age restrictions) or reject the film, and whether cuts of specific sequences should be made. Since 1944, individual files are created for each film, which comprise the following documents:

- *Domanda di revisione* [application form];
- *Nulla osta alla proiezione pubblica* [censor's certificate];
- Original and translated *lista dialoghi* [dialogue lists];
- Other procedural documents, minutes, letters, etc.



For the purposes of the present study, the documents that will be under scrutiny are the censor's certificates and the translated dialogue lists of the selected films.

3.1 Protecting the Family: *Rebel without a Cause* – *Gioventù bruciata* (1955)

Rebel without a Cause is a successful juvenile drama released by Warner Bros in 1955, soon after James Dean's death. Often associated with "America's fascination with juvenile delinquency" (Shary 2005: 18), this film "dealt more with the family than with delinquency" (Considine 1985: 90). As Shary (2002: 4) points out, the film reveals "the film industry's fresh confrontation with the conditions of youth", which included dealing with "alcoholism, family dynamics, basic crime, and in more concealed terms, homosexuality". The story revolves around three adolescents who are equally troubled by their respective families: Jim (James Dean), Judy (Nathalie Wood) and Plato (Sal Mineo). That bad parenting and home life are at the root of their problems is apparent from the very opening sequences, which portray the family as "a hotbed of simmering feuds and seething antagonisms" (Considine 1985: 84). This is an aspect of the film which proved especially troubling for the censors. The British Board for Film Censorship, for example, claimed that violent actions and fight scenes were to be removed or substantially reduced, but the main obstacle for them was "the behaviour of the parents" and hence it was decided that "children, even accompanied, should not be allowed to witness the spectacle of ridiculous and ineffectual parents" (in Biltreyst 2007: 19). Finally, there were taboo matters such as Plato's homosexual feelings for Jim, which Hollywood censors considered as "sexual perversion" (Tropiano 2006: 55).

For all of the above reasons, at the time of its release in the US *Rebel* was rated A (i.e. acceptable, though only for adults) by the Legion of Decency, while it received an X certificate (which excluded children and young adolescents) from the British Board of Film Censorship but many scenes had to be cut out (Rathgeb 2004: 181-184). In Italy, the film received an R (restricted) rating that expressly forbade the attendance of children under 16 (MiBAC file no. 20581). Following the same line of thought as the British censors, cuts to several key scenes were imposed by the Commission for Cinematographic Revision, namely reduction of both the knife-fight scene outside the planetarium, which is the scene that incidentally guaranteed the film's notoriety months before its release, and the 'chickie run' scene, where the face-off between Buzz and Jim ends with unexpected tragedy; elimination of the sequence with Jim trying to throttle his father, and reduction of the kiss between Jim and Judy in the abandoned mansion. The age limit was eventually suppressed in 1970, when a new edition of *Rebel* was prepared for television broadcasting and submitted to the film commission. Cuts were made to the scenes featuring violence and rebelliousness, some of which were reduced and others suppressed – this was the case with the sequence with Jim fighting with his father.



The analysis that follows aims to demonstrate that protecting the institution of the family from criticism was clearly a major concern for the translator. In the film, Plato is presented as “the product of a wealthy but broken home” (Considine 1985: 86). Abandoned by his parents, he is tended to by a maid. In the original, the maid is explicitly critical of the boy’s parents and she expresses her criticism in a rather assertive manner. Hence, when an officer at the police station asks about the boy’s mother, the maid’s comment is unequivocally scathing of her behaviour, whereas in the dubbed version she comes out as far less assertive and contemptuous. Moreover, a typical example of translational specification such as the rendering of ‘the holiday’ as ‘Easter’ seems to be meant to reassure the audience that, although a neglectful parent, Plato’s mother is still a good Catholic:

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Maid	It seems like she’s always going away somewhere. She’s got a sister in Chicago, and she’s there for the holiday .	La signora deve sempre andare in qualche posto. Ha una sorella a Chicago ed è andata a passare la Pasqua da lei.	Madam must always go somewhere. She has a sister in Chicago and she has left to spend Easter with her.
Gene	And where’s your father?	E tuo padre dov’è?	And where’s your father?
Maid	They’re not together, sir. We haven’t seen him now in a long time.	Oh, non vivono più insieme. È molto tempo che sono separati.	Oh, they do not live together anymore. It’s been a long time since they separated.

Table 1

In the final dubbed version the idea of the careless father is mitigated through the omission of the sentence ‘We haven’t seen him now in a long time’. Conversely, the fact that Plato’s parents are divorced is insisted on: ‘They do not live together anymore’ and ‘It’s been a long time since they separated’.

Evidence of the translator’s preoccupation with protecting the mother figure is found in the rendition of Plato’s line below. Plato tells Jim that he has memories of his early infancy, which he regained thanks to his therapist, and then adds that his mother objected to the therapy on the grounds that it was too costly, although she allowed herself an expensive holiday soon afterwards. The dubbed version tones down the implicit criticism by replacing Plato’s mother’s objection to the cost of the therapy with another less objectionable reason, namely the divorce, which is thus identified as being at the root of the boy’s problems. It is interesting to note that a closer rendering of the original line is to be found in the dubbing script held in the MiBAC archives:

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Jim	Can you remember back that far? [...] How do	Ma come fai a ricordartelo? [...] E tu come hai fatto?	But how can you remember that? [...] And how did you	Ma come fai a ricordartelo? [...] E tu come hai	But how can you remember that? [...] And



	you do it?		do it?	fatto?	how did you do it?
Plato	I went to a head shrinker. He made me remember.	Sono andato da uno psicanalista (da uno spremi-cervello)./ Ti fanno ricordare per forza.	I went to a psychoanalyst (to a head shrinker). They force you to remember things.	Sono andato da uno psicanalista. Ti fanno ricordare per forza.	I went to a psychoanalyst. They force you to remember things.
Jim	Did he?	Davvero?	Really?	Davvero?	Really?
Plato	Then my mother said it cost too much , so she went to Hawaii instead.	Poi mia madre disse che costava troppo e fece un viaggio alle Auai.	Then my mother said it cost too much and went to Hawaii.	Poi mia madre si separò da mio padre e fece un viaggio alle Hawaii.	Then my mother separated from my father and went on a trip to Hawaii.

Table 2

The idea of an absent family as the cause of Plato's death was also carefully toned down. The words the maid utters over the dead boy's body leave no room for interpretation and so the translated dialogue exchanges replace them with others that turn the viewers' attention away from the prime cause of Plato's death, i.e. his neglectful parents:

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Maid	This poor baby got nobody. Just nobody!	Questa povera creatura mia... l'hanno massacrata!	This poor baby of mine... they massacred him!	Povero figlio mio. Era ancora un bambino!	Poor child of mine. He was just a kid!

Table 3

The scene in which Jim encounters his father wearing an apron and bringing up dinner on a tray for his wife "is without doubt one of the most humiliating images of the American husband the screen has presented" (Considine 1985: 84). *Rebel* portrayed American family life as the mother ruling the house and dominating her husband, "an image of the American father and mother that [was] disturbing" (ibid.). Thus, attempts were made to mitigate this portrayal in the final dubbed version. In the stretch of dialogue below, Jim's mother alludes to her husband's lack of masculinity, clearly aiming at humiliating him in front of their son. In the Italian dubbed version, what we hear is a moralising remark stigmatising drinking habits, which takes the dialogue in a radically different direction:



	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Frank	I cut loose pretty good in my day too.	Anch'io partivo presto ai miei tempi (reggevo male l'alcool da giovane).	I cut loose pretty good in my day too. (I couldn't hold my liquor when I was young)	Anch'io del resto reggevo male l'alcool ai miei tempi.	I couldn't hold my liquor in my day too.
Carol	Really, Frank? When was that?	Sul serio Frank?/ Ed in che epoca?	Are you serious, Frank?/ And when was that?	E lo dici anche? Non ti vergogni?	And you dare to say it! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?
Frank	Can't you wait till we get home?	Aspetta di essere a casa.	Wait till we get home.	Non cominciare con le scene, sai!	Don't make a scene, please!

Table 4

The translator's defensive attitude as regards the father figure becomes apparent in the rendering of the following exchange, where Jim's father's line 'Do you mind if I try?' is replaced by a far more assertive one, 'It is my duty to protect you', whereas a more faithful rendition of the source text is found in the MiBAC dubbing script:

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Jim	You can't protect me.	Tu non puoi proteggermi.	You can't protect me.	Non mi puoi proteggere.	You can't protect me.
Frank	Do you mind if I try? Do you have to slam the door in my face?	Ti dispiace se ci provo? Perché vuoi sbattermi la porta in faccia?	Do you mind if I try? Why do you have to slam the door in my face?	È mio dovere di farlo. E lascia almeno che ci provi.	It is my duty to protect you. Let me at least try.

Table 5

The expression of Jim's angst is severely mitigated when it addresses other members of his family. At some point, he wishes his grandmother was poisoned to death, but in the final dubbed version Jim's line was radically altered and so we hear him wish his grandmother was muzzled:

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Jim	Somebody ought to put poison in her Epsom salts.	Dovrebbero metterle il veleno nella minestra!	Somebody ought to put poison in her soup!	Dovrebbero metterle un bavaglio!	Somebody ought to muzzle her!



Ray	Grandma?	Alla nonna?	Grandma?	Alla nonna?	Grandma?
Jim	Get lost.	Oh, che strazio!!	Oh, I've had enough!	Oh, è uno strazio.	Oh, I've had enough.

Table 6

As Considine (1985: 86) points out, Judy's "relationship with her father is full of sexual tension", an element that was likely to catch the censors' eye. This is perhaps the reason why allusions to incest were noticeably toned down in the final dubbed dialogues, where Judy makes it clear that she does not believe that kissing one's father is as despicable as kissing boys:

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Frank	Girls your age don't do things like that! You need an explanation?	Ragazze come te non fanno cose simili! / Ci vuole anche una spiegazione?	Girls like you don't do things like that! Do you need an explanation?	Ragazze come te non fanno cose simili! / Ci vuole anche una spiegazione?	Girls like you don't do things like that! Do you need an explanation?
Judy	Girls don't love their father? Since when? Since I got to be 16?	Le ragazze non amano il padre? / Da quando? / Da quando compiono i sedici anni?	Girls don't love their father? Since when? Since they get to be 16?	È un delitto baciare il padre? Cosa vuoi? Che vada a baciare i giovanotti?	Is it a crime for girls to kiss their father? What do you want me to do? Kiss other men?

Table 7

There is ample evidence that mental illness was also an object of censorial intervention on the part of the translator. Plato, who is evidently attracted to Jim, joins him just before the 'chicken run' starts. We hear Jim overtly commenting on the boy's enjoyment in watching executions, an allusion that Plato's subsequent remark on his own 'morbid personality' makes overtly explicit. Both utterances were radically rewritten in the Italian dubbed version. However, it is interesting to note that this translation choice was already in the MiBAC dubbing script, which the final dubbed version followed closely:

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Jim	How did you get here?	Ciao./ Come sei arrivato qui?	Hi. How did you get here?	Ciao./ Come sei arrivato qui?	Hi. How did you get here?
Plato	I hitched.	Autostop.	I hitched.	Autostop.	I hitched.
Jim	I bet you'd go to a hanging,	Davvero?/ Sembri uno che va alla	You did? You look as if you're going	Davvero?/ Sembri uno che va alla	You did? You look as if you're going



	wouldn't you?	forca./ Ti senti male?	to your execution. Are you ok?	forca./ Stai male?	to your execution. Are you ok?
Plato	I guess it's just my morbid personality.	Forse perché sono un tipo impressionabile.	Maybe it's because I'm squeamish.	Sono sempre stato un tipo impressionabile.	Maybe it's because I'm squeamish.

Table 8

References to death are a special target of translator's self-censorship.² In the scene where Jim and Buzz look at the rocky shore below the cliff top where the car race will take place, Buzz utters the line 'That's the edge. That's the end', pointing out with a laugh. As we all know, the race will end with Buzz's accidental death, so his words sound as a premonition. The deadly overtone of Buzz's line is neutralised in the final dubbed version, which replaces the original line with a safer remark on the height of the cliff:

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Buzz	That's the edge. That's the end.	Quello è l'orlo./ (ride) Lì è la fine.	That's the edge. That's the end.	Piuttosto alto, eh? Un bel volo.	Rather high, isn't it? Quite a jump.

Table 9

The words that Jim's mother yells at him as he strangles his father were also heavily censored by avoiding any explicit mention of the verb 'to kill', which is on the contrary repeated three times in the original version:

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Carol	You'll kill him! You're killing him! You want to kill your own father?	Smettila Gim./ (f.c.) Lascia stare tuo padre! [...] Perché tratti così tuo padre? Gimmi!!!!	Stop it, Jim. Leave your father alone! Why are you treating your father like that, Jimmy!!!!	Calmati , Jim. Per carità, fermati. Alzare le mani su tuo padre. Jimmy!	Calm down, Jim. Please, stop. Raising your hands to your own father. Jimmy!

Table 10

The same occurs when Judy, Jim, and Plato talk about children being 'so annoying when they cry' and Jim suggests that they should be 'drown[ed] like puppies', a line that was significantly changed into a safer and taboo-free rendition: 'I cover my ears'.

² The dubbing scripts in the MiBAC archives are part of the documentation submitted by the distributors for approval by the film commission/board of censors. As changes were not made on the original text, my inference is that this is a case of preventive self-censorship on the part of the translator.



	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation	Dubbed version	Back translation
Judy	I don't know what to do when they cry. Do you, dear?	Oh, io non so proprio cosa fare quando piangono. E tu caro?	Oh, I really don't know what to do when they cry. Do you, dear?	Oh, io non so proprio cosa fare quando piangono. E tu caro?	Oh, I really don't know what to do when they cry. Do you, dear?
Jim	Drown them like puppies!	Oh... giro con le orecchie tappate.	Oh... I just cover my ears!	Oh... giro con le orecchie tappate.	Oh... I just cover my ears!

Table 11

The above examples show that the targets of translatorial interventions on the source text were traditional taboo subjects such as violence, mental illness and death; in addition, changes to the original text were carried out in order to tone down criticism of the family as an institution. The analysis carried out on both the MiBAC manuscript and the final dubbed dialogues has shown that translation played a key role in the censoring of the film dialogue and it seems to confirm Biltereyst's (2007: 15) argument that "the controversy around *Rebel*, certainly in Europe, has less to do with youngsters' hooliganism and violence, and more to do with the rough portrayal of traditional parental culture values".

3.2 Dealing with Teenagers' Sexuality: *Splendor in the Grass* – *Splendore nell'erba* (1961)

In the early 1960s, teen-oriented films started to address the subject of premarital sex (Tropiano 2006: 68). Set in rural Kansas, *Splendor in the Grass* (1961) revolves around two high-school adolescents, Bud (Warren Beatty) and Deanie (Natalie Wood), whose passionate love is destroyed by social conventions and provincial paternalism. The central tension of the story is provided by the condemnation of premarital sex in US society and the psychological consequences this has on the two characters. Deanie is a teenager eager to do what is right and so she is trapped between virtue and desire, whereas Bud is a high-school athlete, heir to a wealthy family and oppressed by his father's ambitions. After their breakup, Deanie attempts suicide and is sent into a psychiatric hospital.

According to Considine (1985: 226), "[i]n terms stronger than Hollywood had ever used, *Splendor in the Grass* located adolescent sexuality within the context of the family". This is perhaps one of the reasons why *Splendor* received a B rating from the Legion of Decency, which despised the film for conveying the idea that "the denial of premarital relations may lead to serious mental problems" (in Black 1998: 214). The Legion's objections forced Warner Bros. to make several cuts and release the film in the US with a 16-or-over age limit (Black 1998: 214). In Italy, the film received the same restrictive rating "due to the themes addressed and the way some aspects of the love affair between the two protagonists are treated" (MiBAC file no. 36030, my translation).



Only in 1979 would the film receive a “suitable for all” rating (MiBC file no. 3288, my translation).

In the dubbed version, the taboo of sex is handled in a tactful manner but it still “remains apparent that both Deanie and Bud are victims of social attitudes toward sex” (Considine 1985: 231). It is interesting to note that the strategy of explicitation, which is often adopted by the translator in dealing with exchanges of dialogue such as the one below, does result in alteration of the original meaning. In the following example, Mrs Loomis’s reply to Deanie’s question as to whether it is ‘inappropriate to feel so much passion for a boy’ is quite revealing: ‘you’d better not show that you do’.

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back-translation
Deanie	Mom? Is it so terrible to have those feelings about a boy ?	Mamma? [...] È sconveniente provare tanto trasporto per un ragazzo?	Mom? Is it so inappropriate to feel such ardour for a boy?
Mrs Loomis	No nice girl does.	Comunque, è meglio non dimostrarlo.	In any case, you’d better not show it.
Deanie	Doesn’t she?	Davvero?	Do you think so?
Mrs Loomis	No. No nice girl.	No. Non sta bene.	Yes. It’s inappropriate.

Table 12

In the next example, we observe how euphemistic language is paralleled in the dubbed version, although *non abbiamo fatto niente di male* [we haven’t done anything wrong] as an indirect reference to losing one’s virginity does imply a moral judgement:

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back-translation
Mrs Loomis	Wilma Dean, you and Bud haven’t gone too far already , have you?	Piccola, tu e Bud non avete fatto qualche sciocchezza , vero?	Sweetheart, you and Bud haven’t done anything silly, have you?
Deanie	No, Mom, we haven’t gone too far.	No, mamma, non abbiamo fatto niente di male.	No, Mom, we haven’t done anything wrong.

Table 13

‘I haven’t done anything wrong’ instead of ‘I’m not spoiled’ is the translation solution adopted at a crucial moment in the dialogue between Deanie and her mother, undoubtedly a far less explicit reference to lost virginity than the original line:

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Deanie	I’m not spoiled! I’m not spoiled!	Deanie: Non ho fatto niente di male!	Deanie: I haven’t done anything wrong!

Table 14



There are moments in the dubbed version when mitigation seems to be at work even with already euphemistic utterances, as in the following dialogue exchange between Bud and Deanie:

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Deanie	Are we going to the victory dance?	Deanie: Andiamo al ballo questa sera?	Are we going to the dance tonight?
Bud	I can think of things I'd rather do.	Non lo so nemmeno io.	I don't really know.
Deanie	I'll be ready.	Io mi preparo.	I'll be ready.

Table 15

In this case, the strategy of substitution is used by the translator to obliterate the potentially disturbing content of Bud's utterance, who expresses sexual desire even though in an already euphemistic manner.

Particular care is devoted by the translator to the handling of the theme of abortion. In the original dialogue Mrs Loomis overtly refers to the 'awful operations' that are to be performed in order to interrupt undesired pregnancy, whereas the dubbed version offers a far more euphemistic rendition ('got her into trouble' instead of 'put her in the family way'; 'do something about it' instead of 'take her to a doctor'), with no mention being made of surgery. Moreover, it clearly emphasises moral judgement:

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Mrs Loomis	Ginny Stamper is too low for the dogs to bite . [...] She met some man in Chicago, put her in the family way . Mrs. Stamper had to go out there and get her, take her to a doctor . [...] To have one of those awful operations performed.	Quella ragazza è veramente una poco di buono . [...] Ha conosciuto uno strano tizio a Chicago che l'ha messa nei guai . La madre è dovuta partire d'urgenza e correre ai ripari . [...] E così la "santarella" si è levato il pensiero.	Ginny Stamper is a slut. [...] She met some strange guy in Chicago who got her into trouble. Her mother had to go there immediately and do something about it. [...] And so that goody-goody got over it.

Table 16

But what is most striking in the Italian dubbed version is the manipulative intervention made by the translator on Dr Judd's utterance below, where he claims that Deanie will have to accept her parents 'as people, with a lot of faults maybe'. In order to avoid what could have been perceived as lack of respect toward parenthood and family as an institution, the meaning of the line was distorted to the point that we hear Dr Judd claim that Deanie 'can resent anyone except Mama and Papa'.



	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Dr Judd	You'll just have to accept them as people, with a lot of faults maybe but not as Mama and Papa.	Capisco un vostro risentimento verso il prossimo. Potete avere astio con tutti, ma, ma non... non con mamma e papà.	I understand your resentment of others. You can resent anyone except Mama and Papa.
Deanie	As people?	Siete persuaso?	Do you really think so?

Table 17

It is therefore clear that, if euphemistic reference to sexual intercourse was accepted in an R-rated film, abortion remained a taboo subject and protection of the family institution was still a major concern in the 1960s.

3.3 Rites of Passage: *Summer of '42* – *Quell'estate del '42* (1971)

Summer of '42 explores the trope of the rite of passage, often associated with adolescence and a typical feature of teen film (Driscoll 2011: 66). The film narrates a story of sexual initiation while exploiting “nostalgia and its conservative function” (Brickman 2012: 44-45). Set in the summer of 1942, it follows three fifteen year olds, who are spending the summer on an island beach trying to learn about sex and love. The film focuses on the memories of one of the three boys, Hermie, who loses his virginity to an older woman, the wife of a man who has sailed off to war.

The film was the first of a series of modern ‘coming of age’ movies that were to be produced by Hollywood. In particular, *Summer* inaugurates the US production of mainstream teen films that exploit the nostalgia factor, lingering “in a time before the social upheaval and antiestablishment revolts of the 1960s” (ibid.: 43). According to Tropiano (2006: 122), unlike “collective-nostalgia films” such as *American Graffiti* and *Grease*, “private-nostalgia teen films” such as *Summer of '42* “were less concerned with recreating the time period and more concerned with communicating the confusion and mixed emotions of their teenage protagonists”. It is also important to point out, as does Tropiano (ibid.: 115), that “the nostalgic teen films of the early 1970s were not intended for a general audience. Their treatment of mature themes, such as sex, death, war, abortion, and homosexuality, made them more suitable for older ticket buyers”. This explains why the majority of these films were rated PG (Parental Guidance Suggested), even though some of them, like *Summer*, received an R certificate from the MPAA due to adult situations, although no nudity is shown in this particular one (Romanowski 2012: 182). Interestingly, the R rating was inconsequential in terms of box office business (Sackett 1990: 220).

In Italy the film was rated 14-and-over due to sequences that, according to the censors, “insisted on the theme of sexual initiation” (MiBAC file no. 59094, my translation), such as the one where the boys read a sex manual, as well as on the use of condoms, often accompanied by coarse language and vulgar action. Finally, the



censors noted the presence of “erotic sequences” (ibid.) such as the one where Dorothy undresses and leads the young boy into her bedroom.

In one of the earliest sequences, the three boys are shown reading a medical book about sex. In the dubbed version reference to sexual excitement is toned down by replacing lines such as ‘You’ll foam at the mouth’ with less loaded and more neutral wordings:

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Benjie	Let me look.	Fatemi guardare.	Let me look.
Hermie	Go away. You’ll foam at the mouth.	Vattene. Ti verrà un colpo apoplettico.	Go away. You’ll have a stroke.

Table 18

A very similar case is found in the example below, where Benjie’s line ‘You drooled all over it’ becomes ‘You left prints of your sweaty hands on it’, a solution that neutralises the sexual allusion contained in the original line:

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Oscy	Benjie! We’re gonna need the book again.	Bengi. Dobbiamo consultare ancora quel libro.	Benjie! We need to read the book again.
Benjie	You can just whistle. You drooled all over it. I don’t want to get blamed for any warped pages.	Ma certo, ai tuoi ordini! Dopo che ci hai lasciato sopra le impronte delle tue manacce sudate e hai spiegazzato tutte le pagine!	Sure, at your command! Now that you’ve left prints of your sweaty hands on it and the pages are all crumpled.

Table 19

Strong language is another favourite target of translatorial intervention and tends to be dramatically toned down, as in the example below, where ‘son of a bitch’, which in this context expresses disappointment, is replaced with far more neutral expressions such as ‘I thought you were a friend’ and ‘You know what I’m talking about’.

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Hermie	Well, you’re a son of a bitch!	Credevo fossi un amico!	I thought you were a friend!
Oscy	What?	Cosa?	What?
Hermie	Son of a bitch! Why did you tell me? [...] You wanted to ruin my memory of it, you son of a bitch!	Hai capito bene! Perché me lo hai detto? [...] Aaah, tu hai voluto solo rovinarmi la serata per farmi dispetto.	You know what I’m talking about! Why did you tell me? [...] You just wanted to ruin my night just to spite me.

Table 20

In the following example, Oscy is explaining to his friends what the word ‘foreplay’ means and what it culminates in. In the dubbed version, Oscy’s use of strong language



tends to be heavily mitigated, thus resulting in a more innocent representation of the boy's speech: 'the goose is cooked', instead of 'they're screwing'.

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Oscy	Everyone takes off their clothes and they play foreplay. Then he does this and she does this, and he does this. And before you know it, they're screwing!	Si spogliano tutti e due nudi come vermi e comincia la preparazione. Allora lui fa così e lei fa così e lui fa così. E in men che non si dica, è fatta la frittata.	They take off their clothes and they play foreplay stark naked. Then he does this and she does this, and he does this. And before you know it, the goose is cooked!

Table 21

As the character that more frequently uses foul language, Oscy is a privileged target of censoring interventions in translation. In the example that follows, excited at the idea of spending an evening with some girls at the cinema, he tells his friends how he will attempt to lay his hands on one of them during the movie. As can be seen in the transcription below, the original wording was sanitised by means of translatorial intervention and 'I'm gonna squeeze the crap out of Miriam' becomes 'I'm gonna squeeze Miriam's bones'.

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Oscy	I'm all excited. I'm gonna squeeze the crap out of Miriam , soon as the lights go out.	Sono tutto eccitato. Io le spreco le ossa a Miriam appena spengono la luce.	I'm all excited. I'm gonna squeeze Miriam's bones soon as the lights go out.

Table 22

Reference to contraception is toned down too. In dealing with the word 'rubber', slang for 'condom' by 1930s,³ the translator opts either for an equivalent slang word, *impermeabile* [raincoat], or for nouns of vague reference, 'those things/thingies', performing a euphemist function:

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Oscy	You use protection. You use a rubber. Haven't you ever heard of a rubber?	Ma ci si premunisce. Si usa un impermeabile. Sai che cos'è un impermeabile?	But you must use protection. You use a raincoat. Do you know what a raincoat is?
Oscy	So, tonight, I'll bring the marshmallows and you bring a rubber.	Allora, stasera... io porto lo spuntino e tu pensi a quegli affari.	So, tonight, I'll bring the food and you bring one of those things.
Hermie	Need a rubber?	Ti si è rotto anche quello?	Did that one break too?

³ *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=rubber>> (1 June 2015).



Oscy	I need a breather. I also need another rubber .	Devo riprender fiato. Dammi un altro di quei cosi .	I just need to catch my breath. Give me another one of those thingies.
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Table 23

Reference to homosexuality is also sanitised by means of lexical substitution. In the exchange below, Oscy fires back to Hermie's 'Screw you!' by suggesting that he has a homosexual tendency. The allusion was altogether suppressed in the final dubbed dialogue, which reads quite differently: 'You always tell people to screw themselves' instead of 'You're only interested in screwing me'.

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Benjie	What are you guys talking about?	Si può sapere di cosa state parlando?	What are you talking about?
Oscy	Nothing you'd understand.	Ah, non sono cose che puoi capire...	These are things you cannot understand.
Benjie	Screw you!	Va a farti fottere!	Screw you!
Oscy	Yeah, that's your whole problem, Benjie. You're only interested in screwing me. Why don't you try screwing a girl?	Si direbbe che hai un'idea fissa, Bengi. Mandi sempre tutti a farsi fottere. Ma perché non provi tu, con una ragazza?	You just seem to have an obsession, Benjie. You always tell people to screw themselves. Why don't you try and do it with a girl?

Table 24

At another point in the film, Oscy tells Hermie that he is starting to think that he is 'a homo', a word that in the dubbed version has been replaced by 'dumb':

	Original version	Dubbed version	Back translation
Oscy	Hermie, I'm beginning to think that maybe you're a homo .	Oscy: Hermie, comincio a credere che tu sia proprio tutto scemo!	Hermie, I'm beginning to think that you're dumb.

Table 25

That the word 'homo' constituted a 'critical point' (Munday 2013) for the translator is demonstrated by the hand-written revisions that appear in the MiBAC manuscript (file no. 59094). In the following example, the translation for 'homo' originally given in the text was *femminuccia* [wimp], which was subsequently deleted and replaced by a semantically closer equivalent, *finocchio* [faggot]:

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation
Oscy	Word's getting out on you, Hermie. You're a homo .	La sai qual è la verità, Hermi? Tu sei una femminuccia finocchio!	You know what, Hermie? You're a pansy faggot!

Table 26



Another interesting case of manipulative intervention concerns the text of the letter that Dorothy writes to Hermie before she leaves the island.

	Original version	MiBAC file	Back translation
Dorothy	I won't try and explain what happened last night because I know that, in time, you'll find a proper way in which to remember it.	Non tento neanche di spiegarti ciò che è accaduto ieri sera perché sono sicura che un giorno tu saprai ricordarlo nel modo giusto capirlo e giustificarlo./	I won't even try and explain what happened yesterday because I'm sure that one day you'll find a proper way in which to remember it <i>be able to understand and justify it.</i>

Table 27

In the original, Dorothy writes that she knows that Hermie will find 'a proper way to remember' what happened the night before, whereas in the dubbed version she claims to be 'sure that one day he will be able to understand and justify what happened'; a line that has a moralising overtone and hence inevitably throws a different light on the story.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis discussed above provides further evidence in support of the idea that teen programmes have often been an object of censorial treatment in translation, as suggested by previous studies (Bianchi 2008; Zanotti 2012). In their Italian dubbed versions, these films offered a more acceptable, sanitised depiction of contemporary teenage life, which evidently responded to the moralising policy and control imposed on both local and imported film products by the government and the Catholic establishment (Treveri Gennari 2009). Among the most sensitive issues targeted by translational manipulation were the family institution and parental roles, as well as taboo subjects such as divorce, sexuality, contraception, and abortion; whilst violence and strong language were also areas of major concern. The importance of distributing morally acceptable films had an enormous impact on translators' dubbing strategies. Between the early 1950s and the late 1970s, following a tradition inaugurated during the Fascist regime, audiovisual translators continued to act as agents of preventive censorship, providing dubbed versions that would help distributors obtain permission to screen and hence avoid cuts or rejections. In this historical and sociocultural context, self-censorship was the most frequently used device.

In terms of the representation of youth, the *Rebel* case is particularly revealing, not only because it constitutes a key moment in the history of the genre, but also because of the censorial reactions that it generated. Like their British counterparts, the Italian censors reacted "to a perceived moral panic within society" by acting as "moral guardians" (Slocum 2005: 181), an attitude that inevitably affected the translatorial



treatment of the film dialogue. The *Rebel* case also shows “how censorship files may be considered thoughtful indicators of shifts in core societal and moral values being (or being perceived by dominant elites as) threatened” (ibid.).

Access to primary resources such as film distributors’ archives, censors’ correspondence, as well as translators’ papers would add to the conclusions that can be reached by looking at both the dubbing scripts and the final dubbed versions of the films analysed here. From the methodological viewpoint, another conclusion that can be drawn concerns the use of archival work in audiovisual research. In calling attention to translation variants, the present study has shown that translators’ manuscripts can be useful sources of information for research on ideology and censorship.

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