

## Different gender stereotypes for different subtitles:

### *Divorce – Italian style*

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#### *Abstract*

*Building on the research framework of the Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury, 1980, 1995), this paper compares and contrasts the way in which gender stereotypes in the Italian classic film Divorce – Italian Style have been translated in two English subtitled versions – one produced by an Italian translation company (Cristaldi) and the other one released by a US film studio (Criterion). As specific analytical tools, the study avails itself of Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007: 200-207) taxonomy of translation strategies for culture-specific references, slightly modified and adapted for the translation of gender stereotypes, and also considers the issues of semiotic cohesion in the context of translating gender. Assuming that the transfer of gender stereotypes can be influenced by different cultural perspectives and specific translation practices, the analysis concentrates both on the translation process and the product by looking at the translation strategies used and their effect on the representation of gender.*

**Keywords:** gender stereotypes, subtitling, AVT, translation strategies, Italian cinema

## 1. Introduction

Long excluded from debates in Translation Studies, Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has finally started to attract considerable academic interest and research over the last three decades. In the same period, and within the wider framework of cultural theories of translation postulated by authors such as Snell-Hornby (1988) and Bassnett and Lefevere (1990), issues of gender and translation have come to the fore in such studies as von Flotow's (1991, 1997), Simon's (1996) and Santaemilia's (2005). As a new academic discipline, however, AVT's intersection with gender has so far remained almost uncharted territory with the notable exception of De Marco's (2012) comprehensive investigation of the sexist nature of gender stereotype manipulation in Italian and Spanish dubbing of UK and US cinema. Two further interesting studies on gender in AVT have been conducted by Feral (2011a, 2011b) who has explored ideological manipulation in the French

dubbing of US TV series on the basis of the target culture gender construction. In relation to the other main mode of AVT, i.e. subtitling, one study which has produced similar findings to De Marco's and Feral's research is the analysis of how gender discourse in the English subtitling and dubbing of the Spanish film *¡Átame!* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1990) is made to conform to society's male-dominated discourse (Joyce, 1997).

Building on previous research, this paper aims to make a further contribution to the exploration of the issues and challenges involved in the translation of gender in the area of AVT by comparing and contrasting two English subtitled versions of the classic Italian film *Divorzio all'italiana* (*Divorce – Italian Style*) directed by Pietro Germi in 1961. The main objective is to look at how gender stereotypes have been translated in two subtitled versions of the same film – one produced by an Italian translation company, Cristaldi, and the second one by the US film studio Criterion – assuming that the translation process can be influenced by different cultural perspectives as well as by certain subtitling practices. In order to carry out such analysis, the nature of gender stereotypes will firstly be clarified following the definitions provided by some of the main experts on the subject. Subsequently, the research frameworks of Polysystem Theory (Even-Zohar, 1978) and Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury, 1980, 1995) in which the study is rooted will be briefly discussed. In addition to these two overarching frameworks, the methodology also draws upon the articulation of various translation strategies that are commonly used to describe the transfer of culture-specific references (CSRs) and will be used as heuristic tools to delve into the analysis of the subtitling of gender stereotypes. The discussion will then proceed to a microlevel analysis by looking at specific translation examples, which will then allow for the drawing of some general conclusions at a macrolevel and the unveiling of some potential general trends. The issue of semiotic cohesion among the various audio and visual layers of meaning and the likely interference with the subtitling of gender will also be analysed. Finally, the nature of the various translation processes at play will be foregrounded and the way in which they may be influenced by different cultural perspectives and subtitling practices will be summarised in the conclusions.

## 2. Gender stereotypes: some definitions

Although stereotypes in general and gender stereotypes in particular often emerge from various types of discourse in society and, particularly, the media, the nature of such stereotypes is only rarely defined. Before analysing the subtitling strategies applied to gender stereotypes in *Divorce – Italian Style*, it is therefore essential to provide clear definitions of such key concepts.

Deaux *et al.* (1985: 145) write that “the human race can be divided rather easily into the two groups of males and females. A consequence of this fact is the development of cognitive categories to describe and process gender-related

information, a categorization process that can be termed ‘gender stereotyping’”. Along the same lines but also in keeping with their main research tool, i.e. a list of adjectives to be rated in their study as “more characteristic of one sex than another”, Williams and Best (1990: 15) define gender stereotypes as “generally held beliefs concerning differences in the ‘psychological makeup’ of women and men”. Most researchers agree that an essential characteristic of these gender stereotypes is that they “are strongly held overgeneralizations” (Basow, 1992: 3); that is, they are applied to all women and men regardless of individual differences, such as the stereotyping of all men as “aggressive” and all women as “nurturant”. For the purposes of the present article, the latter is a simple, working definition which allows the reader to understand the nature of the gender stereotypes discussed.

### 3. The film and the subtitling studios

Before discussing the methodology, the film as well as the subtitling studios under discussion should be presented to the readers so that they can familiarize themselves with the object of analysis. *Divorce – Italian Style* (the translated title of both DVD versions) is a classic of the *Commedia all’italiana* – Comedy Italian Style – a cinematic genre of the 1960s which centres on the satire of a rapidly changing society and frequently sends up old gender stereotypes and new sexual mores (d’Amico, 2008; Comand, 2010). In this particular film, the story develops in Sicily around the main protagonist, Don Ferdinando Cefalù, who, after twelve years of marriage, has grown tired of his relationship with his wife Rosalia. Since divorce was not legal at the time in Italy, he devises a cunning plot to rid himself of his wife by exploiting a piece of legislation known as *delitto d’onore* [crime of honour]. According to the Italian legal system of the period, the man who, following an outburst of fury and indignation, killed his wife, sister or daughter, after having found them *in flagrante delicto* with their lover, was the subject of special consideration by the court. Gender representation in *Divorce – Italian Style* revolves to a great extent around sexuality, the rigid and fixed roles of women and men in a patriarchal society and the code of honour of an archaic and deceitful society that is driven by double standards. In such a traditional and androcentric scenario, men exert absolute power over women, whose sexuality and sexual behaviour are kept under strict surveillance by fathers, husbands and brothers. On the other hand, ironically, not only do men flaunt their masculinity and transgress the standard code of honour by having extra-marital sexual relationships but they also take every opportunity to laugh at the ‘dishonoured cuckold’ of *Divorce*, Don Ferdinando.

Belonging to a genre deeply rooted in Italian culture and society which did not normally export well (Günsberg, 2005), *Divorce – Italian Style* was one of the few films of Comedy Italian Style to gain international recognition. In the US, the film obtained Oscar nominations for Best Director and Best Film but it was actually the screenplay which won the Academy Award and was for some time discussed

in US cinema circles as a brilliant, modern approach to narrative devices (Sesti, 1997: 238). As aforementioned, the plot is based on the law on *delitto d'onore* [crime of honour]. A crucial cultural concept upon which the stereotypes of the cuckolded man and the licentious woman hinge, the *delitto d'onore* is translated differently by the two subtitling companies. While the Italian studio translates the term literally, using 'crime of honour', the US studio's cultural equivalent, i.e. 'crime of passion', arguably conforms to the stereotypes of unbridled passion associated with the Latin lover and familiar to US society. As Díaz Cintas (2004: 27) points out, different companies bring with them different subtitling practices which have an influence on their normative behaviour. The films included in the online catalogues of the subtitling companies under analysis clearly show that both aim for art cinema, Italian in the case of the Italian studio and international in the case of the US studio, whose artistic vocation seems even more pronounced. Indeed, the US studio's website includes special features such as theatrical trailers, interviews and commentaries by actors and directors and even essays by film critics in the presentations of the films they distribute ([www.criterion.com](http://www.criterion.com)). From a translational perspective, the indication on the back cover of the DVD that this is a "new and improved English subtitle version" is a most interesting feature and acknowledgement. Yet what is really important for the purposes of the present discussion is to analyse how this claim is actually substantiated in practice by comparing the translation approach observed in the US studio's subtitled version with the one released by the Italian studio, in the context of gender stereotypes.

#### 4. Methodology

From a methodological perspective, the analysis of *Divorce – Italian Style* follows the main study of this kind already published, i.e. the above mentioned investigation of gender issues and their translation for dubbing conducted by De Marco (2012) and based on the research frameworks of the Polysystem Theory and Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). As Even-Zohar (1978) explains, far from being a marginal phenomenon which has tended to be considered in terms of its single translation instances per se, translated literature can be a literary system in its own right and therefore constitute a driving and innovative force in the literary Polysystem in specific circumstances, such as the introduction of new literary models into a young literature. Applying the theory to the field of cinema, Díaz Cintas (2004: 22-23) suggests that this paradigm opens the way for dubbed and subtitled films to no longer be viewed as inferior by-products of the original films and instead allows them to acquire the same cultural status as the products of national cinema. Building on the Polysystem model, DTS break away from traditional approaches that consider translations according to the structuralist/linguistic theory of equivalence and propose to view translation as a "norm-governed activity" (Toury, 1995: 56) where regularities can be detected.

One of the greatest advantages of this approach is that it allows the investigation of actual translation practice with the ultimate goal of using empirical data in order to inform the debate about translation theory. From this perspective, the present study constitutes a snapshot of a wider research project, which aims to contribute to “a clear map of translation practice” (Díaz Cintas, 2004: 26) in the field of subtitling from Italian into English.

In addition to the above mentioned general theoretical framework, the study also makes use of the taxonomy of translation strategies put forward by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 200-207), devised originally for the transfer of CSRs in subtitling and slightly modified in this study to better cater for the analysis of the translation of gender stereotypes. This taxonomy has been preferred to others such as Pedersen’s (2011) or Ranzato’s (2016) because the latter have been partly designed to account for the findings of their studies. Díaz Cintas and Remael’s, on the other hand, is a general taxonomy for the transfer of CSRs in subtitling which can more easily be adapted to deal with the translation of gender stereotypes in the context of the present and future studies. The taxonomy consists of the original ten strategies, to which erasure has been added to supplement Díaz Cintas and Remael’s (ibid.) and the concept of addition has been expanded:

- 1) **Loan**, where the ST word is borrowed from the ST language and incorporated into the translation.
- 2) **Literal translation** is a word for word translation.
- 3) **Calque** is a literal translation that sounds unnatural in the TL. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 202) give the example of “*Secretario de Estado* in Spanish for *Secretary of State*, when *Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores* [Minister of Foreign Affairs] would be a more common and transparent title”.
- 4) **Explicitation** is a strategy whereby the translation explains more than the original, usually by means of hypernyms (generalization) or hyponyms (specification).
- 5) **Substitution** is similar to explicitation and refers to the use of a hypernym or hyponym for space limitations rather than lack of a corresponding word in the TL.
- 6) **Transposition** consists in the replacement of a gender stereotype belonging to the ST culture with one belonging to the TT culture.
- 7) **Lexical recreation**, as can be deduced from the wording, involves the creation of a neologism on the basis of the ST (invented) word.
- 8) **Compensation** aims to make up for translation loss in an exchange by “overtranslating or adding something in another” (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 206). It is very useful in the translation of humour and could therefore be interesting to examine its potential in the case of sexual references with humorous intent, although none have been observed in *Divorce – Italian Style*.

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- 9) **Omission** is used here to indicate that a gender stereotype has been omitted in order to comply with the technical constraints of subtitling and is distinguished from the strategy of erasure. It is not much of a strategy as Díaz Cintas and Remael point out (2007: 206) but is often imposed by space and time constraints.
  - 10) **Erasure** differs from omission in that the disappearance of the gender stereotype cannot be justified by technical constraints.
  - 11) **Addition** is encountered usually in the form of supplementary information which is added to the TT in order to make the gender stereotype more comprehensible to the TT audience. In this article, however, addition is also used to refer to a translation which generates a gender stereotype in the subtitled version where there is none in the original.

Finally, the general trends detected in De Marco's study (2012) on dubbing as a result of the manipulation process and categorised here under reinforcement, similar impact or softening of gender stereotypes, have been found useful for summarizing the results of the manipulation process produced by different translation strategies in the present study.

## 5. Microanalysis of translation examples

By comparing and contrasting the two subtitled versions, several examples emerge as particularly indicative of the different translation approach adopted by the US and Italian studios. The first example occurs in a scene where Don Calogero, after having read the personal diary of his daughter Angela, rails against her and demands to know the name of her secret lover. Since the only amorous relationship a single daughter is allowed is the official engagement with a fiancé approved by her family, the father repeatedly labels the daughter *svergognata* [shameless woman] for her inappropriate conduct. In other words, she has transgressed the socially shared code of honour, which automatically brings the risk of the whole family falling into disrepute and being branded 'dishonoured'. *Svergognata* is a Sicilian dysphemism used to refer to a woman who has violated a social code, expressing disapproval though it is not a strong insult. It may designate a woman of loose morals. Therefore, the transposition operated by the US studio with the term "hussy" stays arguably closer to the source text, while the nouns "bitch" and "slut" employed by the Italian studio are examples of transpositions with clearly stronger overtones. Further instances of pejorative gender stereotype reinforcement can be observed on several occasions in the Italian studio's subtitled version. Another case in point is the scene where the old baron (Don Ferdinando's father) harasses the maid and responds to her protests by saying: *Stai zitta. Tu provochi* [Be quiet. You are provocative]. Using the strategy of explicitation, the

Italian studio's translation, "Shut up. You ask for it", turns the gender stereotype of the provoking woman more specifically into one who not only likes but even deserves sexual harassment. On the other hand, the US studio's "Be quiet. You're a tease", translates the concept literally, although the word *tease*, indicating "a person who tempts someone sexually with no intention of satisfying the desire aroused" (ODE), is only slightly softer than the original "provocative".

US Criterion's subtitled version features further instances of a different way of translating gender stereotypes in comparison with Italian Cristaldi. One example comes from the scene where Agnese, left by Rosario after the whole family has been dishonoured by the cuckold Don Ferdinando, accuses the latter of being *curnutu cuntentu* [cuckold happy] with his situation, because he has not reacted to the disgrace in the traditional and expected manner, i.e. by killing his wife. In this case, the Italian studio's translation, "You're a cuckold and you like it!" is closer to the original literal meaning. On the other hand, the US studio's explicitation, "You're a cuckold, and proud of it!", clearly goes beyond the literal meaning, introducing the idea of personal pride which could suggest, to some extent, a resistance to the tribal code of honour (Brunetta, 2008) and be interpreted as an instance of "hijacking". According to von Flotow (1991: 79), the latter is a translation practice which consists in the appropriation of the text in order to make it reflect one's own political intentions. Here, it is the term *cornuto* which has been appropriated with a feminist agenda. Furthermore, the US studio employs the strategy of lexical recreation to translate the disparaging Italian term *cornuta* [cuckold woman], which is normally only used in the masculine form *cornuto* to insult the husband. Thus, while the Italian studio opts for the standard "cuckold", the US studio prefers to translate the term with the interestingly creative "cuckoldess". In the androcentric sexist society depicted in *Divorce*, this may be seen as a further instance of "hijacking" in order to highlight how the woman who reacts to the betrayal by killing her husband is treated very differently from the man who does the same. It is the character of Mariannina who represents the *cornuta*, a lowly born woman who lived with the man to whom she was not married and later killed for cheating on her. Inspired by what he has heard at her trial, Don Ferdinando develops his astute plan to push his wife into the arms of an old admirer, Carmelo Patanè, with the ultimate goal of killing her and exploit the law on the "crime of honour". In the film, Don Ferdinando calculates that his case would be substantially different from Mariannina's since he belongs to a noble family, holds a university degree and has been a model husband for thirteen years. Above all, however, he is a man in a male dominated society rooted in gender inequality, as demonstrated by the different verdicts of the court which sentences Mariannina to eight years in prison and Don Ferdinando to only three.

A further example of the US studio's approach can be found in one of the frequent scenes in which Don Ferdinando's sister, Agnese, is found in compromising circumstances with her fiancé, Rosario. In this particular scene she tries to justify herself by declaring *non devi pensare male* [you must not think badly]

with a voice and expression which denote her sense of guilt and embarrassment toward her brother, Don Ferdinando. Here, the Italian studio's literal translation "do not think badly" becomes in the US version "don't get any ideas", which portrays Agnese in a very different light, much more confident and assertive. On the other hand, this linguistic characterization risks clashing with the submissiveness expressed through the acoustic and visual channels, which in turn results in an instance of semiotic incoherence.

Indeed, the issue of semiotic cohesion also interferes with the translation approach of the Italian studio, as can be observed in a scene recalled by Carmelo Patanè. It is Rosalia – Don Ferdinando's wife – who forms the object of his amorous and nostalgic recollections and whom he recalls seeing one day during the town's traditional procession, while he was helping to carry the statue of the Virgin:

#### Example 1

<p>CARMELO: Ieri t'ho vista, Rosalia, durante la processione. <b>Eri bella e pura come una Madonna<sup>a</sup></b>. Avrei voluto morire in quel momento, morire così, con quell'immagine di te, con te dentro l'anima, <b>con quel desiderio immenso che ho di sentirti mia</b> e che mai la vita potrà concedermi.</p> <p>[Yesterday I saw you, Rosalia, during the procession. You were beautiful and pure like a Madonna. I would have liked to die in that moment, die so, with that image of you, with you inside my soul, with that immense desire which I have of feeling you mine and which never will life be able to grant me.]</p>	
ITALIAN STUDIO	US STUDIO
<p>342 - 00:44:21,287 --&gt; 00:44:24,563 I saw you, Rosalia,</p> <p>343 - 00:44:24,607 --&gt; 00:44:27,075 <b>as pure and beautiful as the Madonna.</b></p>	<p>407 - 00:46:16,340 --&gt; 00:46:20,071 I saw you yesterday, Rosalia, during the procession.</p> <p>408 - 00:46:20,377 --&gt; 00:46:22,675 <b>You were as beautiful and pure as the Virgin Mary.</b></p>
<p>344 - 00:44:32,767 --&gt; 00:44:35,679 I wanted to die with that image of you</p>	<p>409 - 00:46:28,585 --&gt; 00:46:30,450 I wanted to die on the spot.</p> <p>410 - 00:46:30,554 --&gt; 00:46:34,251 To die with that image of you in my soul,</p>



345 - 00:44:35,727 --> 00:44:39,686 with you in my heart, <b>craving to make you mine.</b>	411 - 00:46:34,358 --> 00:46:36,485 <b>with this immense desire</b> <b>to know you were mine,</b>
346 - 00:44:39,727 --> 00:44:44,278 but that will never be, alas!	412 - 00:46:36,593 --> 00:46:39,687 which life will never grant me.

<sup>a</sup> Bold added do draw attention to the parts of the original speech and the corresponding subtitles which are of particular interest.

This scene features a close-up of the statue of the Virgin Mary alternating with a close-up of Rosalia clad in a traditional white dress and a veil. The subsequent scene in which Rosalia is instead described as a “pagan divinity” further helps to contextualize and reinforce the cinematic construction of the gender stereotype of the woman as a virginal Madonna. Therefore, the choice of translating *immenso desiderio* [immense desire] with the sexually connoted verb “craving” clashes with the textual and visual discourse of the director, producing once again an instance of semiotic inconsistency. One interpretation for such a mishap, i.e. that the subtitlers did not fully appreciate the interplay between the different channels of communication, seems to confirm the traditional view of some authors (Titford, 1982: 115; Mayoral *et al.*, 1988: 363) who consider such polysemiotic interplay one of the potential pitfalls faced by audiovisual translators. Indeed, these examples seem to reinforce evidence of a previous study on semiotic cohesion in subtitling (Alfano, 2014), which highlights the difficulty faced by the professional to produce a translation which does justice both to the issues of gender and semiotic cohesion, especially when the latter is further compounded by other important considerations such as humour and culture-specific references.

Besides foregrounding the complexity of managing semiotic cohesion onscreen, the scene under analysis also provides evidence of the various factors at play when it comes to gender representation and perception by the audience in the two subtitled versions, namely, the impact of translation strategies such as omission and addition, the choice of particular lexical solutions and the limit on the extension of the subtitles, based on the maximum number of characters per second that the viewer can be assumed to be able to read in a comfortable manner. In this sense, the Italian studio, for example, omits redundant linguistic information such as the repetition of the verb “to die”, the verb “you were” (as pure and beautiful as the Madonna) and the information available from the visual channel, i.e. the actual procession of people in the streets, but, curiously enough, it adds to the translation the interjection “alas” (subtitle 346), which cannot be found in the original speech. Such addition further strengthens the stereotype of the woman as the object of sexual desire which has the effect of leading to the frustration of the male and is created by the translation of *immenso desiderio* [immense desire] with the verb “craving”, resulting thus in semiotic inconsistency.

Unlike the Italian studio, US Criterion translates these phrases literally – *immenso desiderio* with “immense desire” and *dentro l’anima* with “in my soul” (as opposed to Cristaldi’s “in my heart”) – adhering more closely to the textual and visual cinematic discourse. The US version also translates the verbs “to die” and “you were” (as pure and beautiful as the Madonna) omitted in the Italian version. By including such redundant information, US Criterion accelerates the reading speed of the text, as the number of characters per second has been increased, making the subtitles more difficult to process. For instance,

408 - 00:46:20,377 --> 00:46:22,675  
You were as beautiful  
and pure as the Virgin Mary.

lasts 2 seconds and 7 frames, has 49 characters and a reading speed of 21 characters per second (cps) which goes over the current professional convention of approximately 15 cps. On some occasions, however, the opposite happens with the Italian studio condensing far too much:

342 - 00:44:21,287 --> 00:44:24,563  
I saw you, Rosalia,

lasts 3 seconds and 7 frames and has only 19 characters, when it could easily have over 45 characters in total. By contrast, US Criterion’s subtitle,

407 - 00:46:16,340 --> 00:46:20,071  
I saw you yesterday, Rosalia,  
during the procession

lasts 3 seconds and 18 frames and has 50 characters, which is roughly 15 cps and more in tune with current professional practice. A further instance of the problem of upping the reading speed can be found at the beginning of *Divorce – Italian Style*:

Example 2

<b>Voice off:</b> Le favolose, invisibili donne di Agramonte, che celavano la loro bellezza e il loro ardore dietro le grate, pardon, dietro le stecche di vereconde persiane.  [The fabulous, invisible women of Agramonte, who hid their beauty and their ardour behind the grating, pardon me, behind the slats of bashful shutters.]	
<b>ITALIAN STUDIO</b>	<b>US STUDIO</b>

24 - 00:04:11,727 --> 00:04:15,686 The invisible women of Agramonte <b>hid their beauty</b>	33 - 00:04:24,230 --> 00:04:25,891 The marvelous, invisible women of Agramonte,
25 - 00:04:15,727 --> 00:04:19,242 behind the slats of chaste shutters.	34 - 00:04:25,999 --> 00:04:28,763 who <b>hid their beauty and ardor behind the grating –</b>
	35 - 00:04:28,868 --> 00:04:31,769 pardon me – behind the slats of bashful shutters.

Here, the subjective point of view of Don Ferdinando describing the women of his town as *favolose* [fabulous] has been translated with “marvelous” by US Criterion but has been omitted by Italian Cristaldi, thereby erasing to some extent the point of view of the male narrator on his female fellow citizens. Moreover, while the US studio has reproduced the director’s pun on the gender stereotypes of the beautiful and sexually ardent women who need to be literally kept behind bars *dietro le grate* [behind the grating], so that they do not pose a threat of cuckoldry to their husbands or temptation to other men, the Italian studio has deleted such ironic allusions by omitting *ardore* [ardour] and *dietro le grate* [behind the grating]. Overall, Italian Cristaldi’s omissions, some of which do not seem technically driven by the issue of reading speed, soften the original gender representation significantly in this case, while US Criterion stays closer quantitatively speaking to the original and manages to reproduce the gender stereotypes and the claustrophobic and strict environment in which women are kept in a fairly literal manner. However, in order to incorporate all this information, the US studio has produced a subtitle (number 33) which consists of 43 characters, stays on the screen for only 1 second and 16 frames, and requires a reading speed of 27 characters per second, which may be too fast to be processed by some viewers.

Following on from this description of the women of the town where the story unfolds, Don Ferdinando goes on to describe his relatives including his sister and her fiancé:

### Example 3

<b>Voice off:</b> Mia sorella Agnese, <b>nubile e a carico</b> , ufficialmente compromessa, cioè fidanzata, con Rosario Mulè, della onorata ditta Mulè e figlio, agenzia di pompe funebri.	
[My sister Agnese, single and dependent, officially compromised, that is engaged, with Rosario Mulè, from the honoured firm Mulè and Son, funeral parlour]	
<b>ITALIAN STUDIO</b>	<b>US STUDIO</b>
38 00:05:29,167 --> 00:05:32,284 My sister Agnese,	50 00:05:44,744 --> 00:05:47,372 My sister Agnese,

officially promised	unmarried and still dependent
39 00:05:32,327 --> 00:05:35,444 that is, engaged, to Rosario Mulè,	51 00:05:47,480 --> 00:05:51,280 officially compromised – i.e. engaged – to Rosario Mulè,
40 00:05:35,927 --> 00:05:40,125 of Mulè & Son, Funeral Directors.	52 00:05:51,384 --> 00:05:54,353 of the respected firm Mulè and Sons,  53 00:05:54,454 --> 00:05:56,354 a funeral parlor.

In a few lines Don Ferdinando encapsulates the gender stereotype of the daughter of an aristocratic Sicilian family of the 1960s. Agnese is dependent, as she would not be allowed to work and is therefore waiting to be married off to a suitable party to whom she is engaged. The sarcastic “officially compromised” in the US studio’s literal translation probably refers to the compromising circumstances in which Agnese and Rosario are repeatedly found by Don Ferdinando, which the Italian studio transposes to the familiar gender stereotype of the woman promised in marriage. A crucial component of the stereotype is that Agnese is dependent on her family, which also means that her life has already been decided upon by arranging her marriage with Rosario, thus ensuring the strict control of women with which this society is obsessed. Again, the stereotype is omitted by the Italian studio, Cristaldi, due to the time constraints of subtitling. Interestingly, the US studio, Criterion, translates the stereotype by transposing it to the US society’s equivalent, i.e. that of a daughter who is *still* dependent, the implication being that she is waiting to become independent.

Two more such examples can be observed in which the Italian studio resorts to the translation strategy of omission because of time constraints, whereas the US studio fully translates the original. The third example comes from the scene in which Don Ferdinando’s mother brings him breakfast to his room, where he has secluded himself after having an argument with his wife Rosalia:

#### Example 4

Voice off: Ferdinando, t’ho portato a colazione, a mamma.	
[Ferdinando, I’ve brought you breakfast, your mom]	
ITALIAN STUDIO	US STUDIO
332 00:40:58,247 --> 00:41:01,557 I’ve brought your breakfast.	396 00:42:46,096 --> 00:42:47,996 <b>Mama’s</b> brought you some breakfast.

Here, whereas the US studio translates fully, the Italian studio omits this use of the word “mom” which derives from the Sicilian dialect, can be understood to express affection between a mother and her children and could be translated with an equivalent going beyond the literal translation such as “my son”. However, this loses the connotations of the gender stereotype implicit in the original, i.e. that every Italian man is an eternal boy depending on his mom, who in turn will attend to him forever, and which is well rendered by the US studio’s translation “mama”.

The fourth and final example can be observed in the scene of the film which shows the whole population of the town flocking en masse to the screening of Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita* (1960):

#### Example 5

<p><b>Voice off:</b> Erano arrivati anche dalle campagne, percorrendo decine di chilometri a dorso di cavallo e <b>creando problemi di promiscuità per i galantuomini di Agramonte.</b></p> <p>[They had arrived even from the countryside, going tens of kilometers on horseback and creating problems of promiscuity for the gentlemen of Agramonte]</p>	
ITALIAN STUDIO	US STUDIO
<p>609 01:14:23,007 --&gt; 01:14:27,478 people had poured in from miles around</p>	<p>734 01:17:35,217 --&gt; 01:17:37,048 They even came from the countryside,</p>
<p>610 01:14:27,727 --&gt; 01:14:31,117 <b>creating problems for the gentlemen of Agramonte</b></p>	<p>735 01:17:37,152 --&gt; 01:17:39,814 riding for miles on horseback,</p> <p>736 01:17:39,921 --&gt; 01:17:43,584 <b>making the gentlemen of Agramonte anxious for their wives' virtue.</b></p>

The gender stereotype of the jealous Sicilian men obsessed with the control of women is deleted here by the Italian studio, which omits the word “promiscuity” from the translation, and generalised by the US studio, which utilizes the translation strategy of explicitation.

In all the aforementioned examples, the Italian studio’s use of omission as a translation strategy seems to have been dictated by the technical considerations of subtitling, i.e. the need for a comfortable reading speed. Indeed, the US studio’s tendency to translate the original message fully, on the other hand, produces faster reading speeds than those normally allowed in current professional practice (15 cps): 27, 18, 19 and 18 cps respectively. Hence, as the above discussion clearly shows, the two studios have adopted very different strategies, and, in order to appreciate the possible reasons for these differences, it is necessary to refer back

to the translation practices of the two subtitling companies under discussion and their influence on normative behaviour (Díaz Cintas, 2004: 27). The analysis of *Divorce – Italian Style* shows that the “improved subtitle version” by US Criterion consists of 994 subtitles and 6,435 words as opposed to Italian Cristaldi’s 825 subtitles and 4,717 words, a reduction of approximately 17 per cent in terms of subtitles and 26 per cent words respectively. Consequently, the two studios have followed different “matricial norms” which determine the “fullness” of the translation (Toury, 1995: 58-9). The dynamics of the “retranslation theory” postulated by Berman (1990) and Gambier (1994) may also help to explain such important differences. According to this theory, the first translation tends to assimilate the ST to the TT conventions and culture, whereas subsequent translations tend to compensate for this departure from the source by going back to the original with a more literal version. To a certain extent, the retranslation theory arguably explains the translation approach of the US studio, i.e. its tendency to translate the original speech fully and literally. But, on the other hand, US Criterion also features frequent instances of translations which tend to assimilate the ST to the TT culture. Such are the cases of *delitto d’onore* [crime of honour] translated with “crime of passion”, *onore* [honour] with “respect”, *cornuto contento* [cuckold happy] with “You’re a cuckold, and proud of it!” or *concubina* [concubine] with “common-law wife”. These concrete translation examples partly complicate the retranslation argument and make *Divorce* an interesting testing ground for this theory, which could be further pursued by looking at other film retranslations, whether in the field of gender stereotypes or otherwise. In any case, as suggested earlier, the tendency to omit or subtitle more or less of the original speech also has a direct impact on the extent to which gender stereotypes are translated or omitted and, consequently, on gender representation in general.

## 6. Conclusions

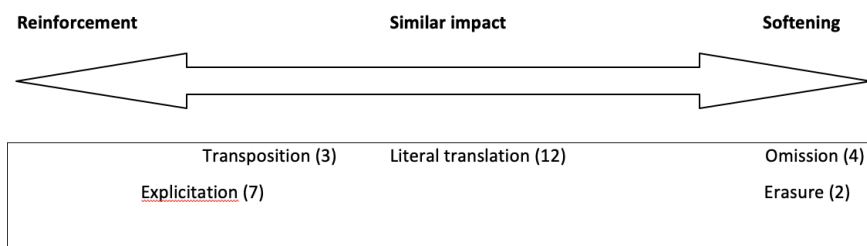
In order to draw some conclusions from this analysis of the approaches taken by the two studios, it is also essential to examine some quantitative data and find potential links with the previously discussed trends in the translation of gender stereotypes. This investigation has already shown how the translation strategies used in the two studios’ subtitled versions may produce instances of gender stereotype reinforcement but also softened stereotypes or a similar impact, i.e. neither reinforcement nor softening, for example in the case of literal translation<sup>1</sup>.

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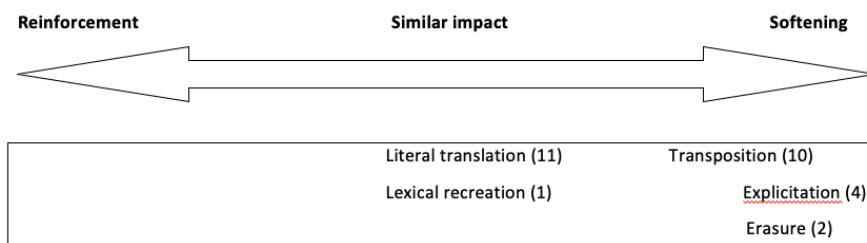
<sup>1</sup> I prefer the definition of ‘similar’ rather than ‘equal impact’ because the translation of such culture-specific concepts as gender stereotypes cannot arguably have an identical effect on the target audience as it has on the original viewers. For example, even when translated literally as ‘crime of honour’, the concept of *delitto d’onore* is likely to be received differently by the US audience who will not be able to relate to the cultural, social and

Graphs 1 and 2 show the different strategies adopted by the subtitlers of the two versions with the number of instances that each translation strategy has been employed. The continuum diagram helps visualize where the various strategies sit depending on their tendency toward reinforcement or softening of gender stereotypes:

Graph 1 – Cristaldi (Italian studio)



Graph 2 – Criterion (US studio)

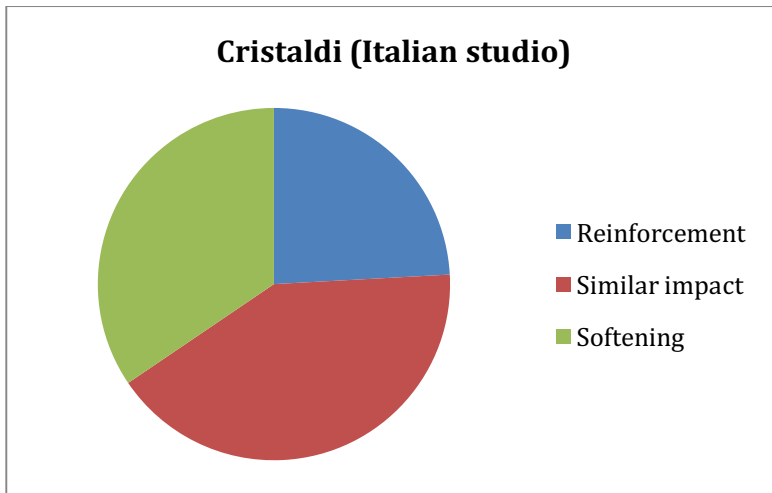


For some of the strategies the results are clear-cut: literal translation ought to create a similar impact, whereas omission and erasure tend to lead to softening. Strategies such as explicitation and transposition, on the other hand, are the ones most likely to produce different results. For instance, of the seven instances of explicitation found in the Italian studio's subtitled version, five lead to reinforcement and two to softening, while all four examples of explicitation observed in the US studio's subtitled version soften the gender stereotypes. The same can be said of transposition: of the ten instances of this translation strategy in the US studio's version nine lead to softened gender stereotypes and one to reinforcement, while of the three instances of transposition present in the Italian studio's version two lead to reinforcement and one to softening.

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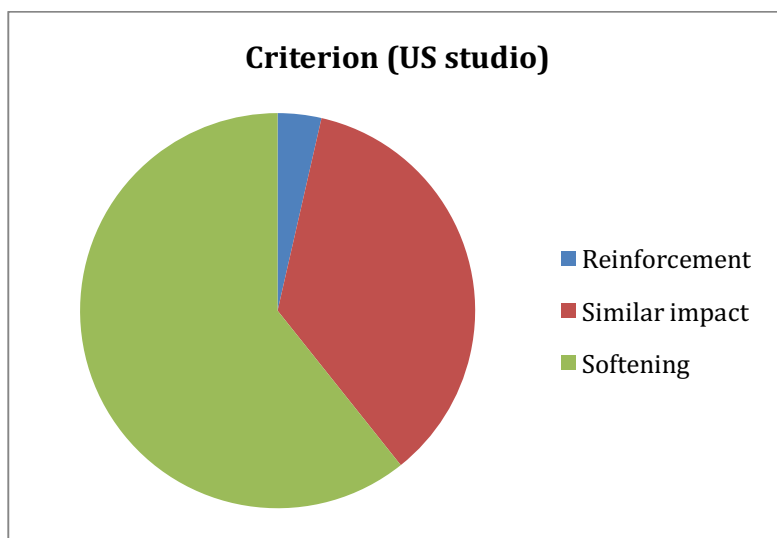
affective associations it retains in the Italian context.

On the whole, the US studio's version features one translation producing gender stereotype reinforcement, seventeen instances of softening and ten of similar impact. The Italian studio's version features seven examples of gender stereotype reinforcement, ten of softening and twelve of similar impact. The results are visualized in graphs 3 and 4:



*Graph 3*





Graph 4

Admittedly, some of the results are not as clear-cut as one might wish, as both studios use strategies leading to softer, similar or stronger gender stereotypes. However, the analysis has also provided sufficient evidence to support the argument for different trends in the subtitling approach of the two studios. Although quantitatively speaking, the Italian studio's subtitled version features slightly more instances of softening than reinforcement, some of the softened gender stereotypes, though not all of them, are the result of omissions which can be traced back to technical requirements such as a comfortable reading speed. Most importantly, however, from a qualitative viewpoint the nature of the manipulation process of the Italian studio often leads to a sexist reinforcement of the represented gender stereotypes. For the US studio, on the other hand, the findings suggest a more balanced approach to the translation of gender and a tendency to soften the stereotypes with only one isolated instance of reinforcement in the whole film. Regarding the interaction between the different channels of communication, the analysis has shown how the challenges faced by audiovisual translators when having to deal with the preservation of semiotic cohesion can be further complicated when issues of gender come into the equation.

To sum up, while the analysis of the Italian studio's subtitled version supports De Marco's (2012) and Joyce's (1997) argument on the sexist nature of the manipulation process, the results from the US subtitled version show a different trend toward the softening of gender stereotypes with some instances of lexical hijacking, which may be interpreted as examples of feminist translation (von Flotow, 1991). Hence, the findings suggest that different cultural perspectives as

well as subtitling companies' diverse practices affect the nature and extent of the manipulation process by producing different gender representations through translation. Clearly, the validity of these findings is limited to the film in question and will need to be corroborated by further research on a wider corpus. It is therefore hoped that the analysis of other films belonging to the same genre and subtitled by both studios such as *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (Mario Monicelli, 1958) and *Seduced and Abandoned* (Piero Germi, 1963) will shed more light on the results obtained from the present study.

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