

**Michele Sala (ed.)**

**GENDER, LANGUAGE AND  
TRANSLATION.  
REPRESENTATIONS AND  
TRANSCODIFICATIONS**









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Michele Sala (ed.)

Gender, Language and Translation:  
Representations and Transcodifications

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ROXANNE H. PADLEY

## “Tell me what you don’t like about yourself:” The Translation of Gender in *Nip/Tuck*

### 1. Introduction

#### *1.1. Brief Overview of AVT*

Within the scope of translation studies, audiovisual translation (AVT) first began to be identified as a field of its own during the nineties and 2000s during what can be labelled as its golden age, and when several prolific authors produced important studies within the field (Gambier 1995, 1996, 1998; Gottlieb 1997, 2000). Such an advancement is related both to developing technologies and wider access to films and other forms of media (TV series, sitcoms to name but a few), but also due to its emergence as a professional activity and a growing area of academic research (Díaz Cintas 2009).

AVT is not homogeneous in nature as the variety of different types of translation sources are numerous. While original studies of AVT categorised it within the same translation subgroup as film translation, and thus classified as an evolution of literary translation (Snell-Hornby 1995: 32), Fresco (2006) posits that AVT is indeed an autonomous discipline. Therefore, it cannot necessarily be considered as a subgroup of translation studies which can be grouped with literary and film studies. Indeed, contrary to original studies which highlighted a greater value in cultural transfer in film translation than in AVT (Delabastía 1989), the very nature and range of genres available in AVT (as well as varied target audiences) require diverse translation approaches and considerations (Díaz Cintas 2009).

The diversity of AVT not only renders it an autonomous discipline (Fresco 2006), but also brings with it a variety of challenges for the

translator who, first and foremost, may need to deal with issues such as fast paced dialogues, dialectal variations, overlapping speech, music and also cultural references. Díaz Cintas (2009: 6) offers the following considerations in such a case:

...we must view translation, and especially audiovisual translation, as a more flexible, more heterogenous phenomenon, one that is able to accommodate a broader range of empirical realities, to subsume new and potential translation activities within its boundaries and that therefore also calls for adapted research methods.

Thus, audiovisual translators are presented with considerations which broach the issue of managing the oral source text and selecting the relevant type of translation strategy. This most certainly depends on whether the translator is creating an oral source text to an oral target text reproduction (either through dubbing/revoicing or voiceover) or if the oral source text is then converted into a written target text i.e. in subtitles. However, while in the earlier days of AVT a translator's toolbox was limited in terms of translation strategies, this is no longer the case and specific research frameworks for both subtitling and dubbing are now extensively available (Díaz Cintas 2003; Chaume Varela 2004).

In terms of translating cultural elements between the source culture and the target culture, the dominance of Anglo-Saxon culture (and particularly that of the USA) is undeniable. The sheer quantity of cinema, television and online audiovisual production from the USA brings forth various questions regarding the feasibility of transferring the very same culture into all target languages and cultures. Díaz Cintas (2009: 9) highlights that "AVT is always constrained by the presence of the original production, which lives on semiotically through images (and sound) in the adoptive culture." Such a concept of course brings to the forefront Venuti's (1995, 1998) translation model of domestication or foreignisation, which has been widely applied as an effective translation tool. However, while the premise of this translation tool is that of foregrounding the 'invisibility of the translator' when opting to either represent the source culture in the target culture as 'self' through domestication or as 'other' through foreignisation, such an approach may not always be a feasible one in AVT. This is due to the culture bound elements which may be present in AVT as well as the semiotic

significance that goes beyond a linguistic dimension (Díaz Cintas 2009). Therefore, it could be argued that it holds true that AVT is indeed an autonomous branch of translation studies which has developed and will continue to develop its own sets of translation strategies and approaches.

### *1.2. Gender studies and translation*

The study of gender translation and feminist theory was grounded much more firmly in studies regarding literary translation up until the early 2000s when initial studies into AVT and gender were addressed in greater depth (von Flowtow/Josephy-Hernández 2018). In turn, this has led to relatively slow progress in the field of AVT in comparison to media studies which were already addressing the role of gender in films as early as the 1960s and 1970s when representations of women's lives were first examined (Cohen 1998). Topics such as glamourising women's lives and how they should be lived were addressed (Gallagher 2013: 24) as well as how stereotypes of women were portrayed (Tuchman 1978) and the sexualisation of the female body mainly presented for the male gaze (Mulvey 1999). Gallagher (2003) also highlighted how these initial analyses identified patterns of discrimination against women in the media and their role in society.

Furthermore, other early analyses of gender in the media identified clear indications of clichés of masculinity and heteronormativity reinforced throughout (Gallagher 2003: 24). Indeed, von Flowtow/Josephy-Hernández (2018) posit that audiovisual products drive cultural and socio-political representations of gender and in turn this gender is intertwined with a particular socio-cultural behaviour and sexual identity. This is further emphasised by the fact that pre 2000s media generally represented women as connected to their relationship to men. Thus, while such themes were neglected in translation studies until more recent times, the norms and stereotypes of gender were already well embedded (and identifiable) in other fields from the 1960s onwards.

### *1.3. Audiovisual translation studies and gender*

While studies into AVT and gender are more recent, the ways in which voices in narratives are translated from the source culture to the target culture (either through subtitling or dubbing) are fundamental. Beyond the initial studies regarding women's voices and their representation in media studies, more recent studies have also drawn their attention to non-binary voices and queering (von Flowtow/Josephy-Hernández 2018). In terms of the ways in which AVT studies have developed gender themes, there are three main approaches which derive from feminist studies from the 1970s.

The first approach looks at the role of women within films from a feminist stance and generally observes the cultural and social translation strategies employed from Anglo-American media (thus English language) to romance language translations during the 2000s (Chiaro 2007; Bianchi 2008; De Marco 2012). The second approach examines the differences between subtitles and dubbed versions of audiovisual products and examines how gender may be represented through language to the target audiences through different translation choices (Feral 2011). Finally, a third approach examines gender issues in AVT (Lewis 2010; Chagnon 2016) by investigating non-binary and queer linguistic representation in translation (von Flowtow/Josephy-Hernández 2018).

Within the scope of this study, the second approach will be investigated in terms of translational differences between subtitles as outlined above. Furthermore, the sociolinguistic aspects will be taken into consideration in terms of a specific interest in the differences in gender talk, mainly represented by male and female talk (Coates 2004) but also queer talk. The details of such are outlined in the methods section of this paper.

## 2. Dramatisation of plastic surgery: study context

*Nip/Tuck* is an American FX medical drama which aired from 2003 to 2010, totalling 6 seasons and produced by Ryan Patrick Murphy. During its time airing it received 45 award nominations and won one Golden Globe and one Emmy Award. The topic of plastic surgery covered within the TV series solicited a great deal of interest from the general public and medical professionals alike with a mixed reception. The first four seasons are based in Miami while the final two seasons are based in Los Angeles when the plastic surgery duo (McNamara/Troy) transfer their practice there.

The settings themselves are noteworthy in terms of the topic of glamour and plastic surgery as these two cities are well known hotspots for high rates of plastic surgery in general. Therefore, on the surface, this TV series falls in line with stereotypical principles (D'Agostino/Dobke 2017) surrounding plastic surgery (i.e. it is a medical discipline for the vain, beauty is intrinsically linked to happiness and plastic surgery can hold that very key to happiness).

There is no shortage of medical dramas on American television and indeed studies have shown that audience perception of medical professionals can be more negative after having watched medical TV series (Chory-Assad/Tamborini 2003). *Nip/Tuck* is no exception to this rule as, despite receiving acclaimed television awards, medical professionals in general expressed a relative degree of distaste towards the show. Hopkins Tanne (2003) gathered fellow plastic surgeons' opinions regarding the programme and conclusions were generally that it was not a realistic representation of plastic surgery private practice. Furthermore, McDonald (2009) echoes further dismay regarding the topics covered in the series and criticises the supposed satire present stating that the topics are over exaggerated, glamourised and generally excessive.

However, despite the criticisms put forward by the medical community, *Nip/Tuck* cannot be overlooked as a television series which is in line with much societal progress of the time (late nineties and early 2000s) regarding taboo topics and greater sexual freedom/expression as well as issues of gender, identity and anxiety to name but a few

(Lafrance/Manicom/Bardwell 2018). The protagonists themselves are two male surgeons in their thirties/forties, namely Sean McNamara (a family man on the surface) and Christian Troy (a single, charming lothario). The other main characters are the friends and family of the two lead protagonists and each episode (except the very first pilot episode) is named after the patient who is the protagonist of each individual episode.

Each episode begins with the famous line “Tell me what you don’t like about yourself,” (*Mi dica cosa non le piace di se stesso*) which is directed at the patient who proceeds to describe which part of their body they would like to enhance. During the consultations, there is usually a further psychological element (or at least hidden factor) presented by the patients, which the lead characters investigate in a variety of manners. What usually emerges throughout the different episodes is a series of crises (lived out by both the patients and the surgeons) as well as self-realizations. Therefore, it is critical to highlight that while this series may seem to address “superficial” topics on face value, each of the episodes tend to sway from glamourising plastic surgery (obscene sex scenes and gory blood in the operating theatre) to metaphors of life obstacles. The two main characters seem to base their decisions on their own moral compass which is linked to whether or not physical perfection may or may not equate to happiness. Indeed, what they appear to be selling is happiness (an almost God-like attribute), which arises from altering a patient’s body.

In terms of previous studies regarding *Nip/Tuck*, various themes arise in terms of morality and elective plastic surgery (Strauman/Goodier 2008) as issues regarding financial rewards as well as ethical legitimacy are directly and frequently called into question. Further questions surrounding morality (in particular moral ambiguity) are investigated by Gever (2010) who posits that this is indeed linked to anxiety. Lyons (2007) also echoes this concept by stating that there are a number of ambivalences which span moral and ethical behaviour to erotic and sexual behaviour and how these are enacted by the characters.

The representation of sex, gender and sexuality have also been investigated by some scholars who look at the ways in which plastic surgery is a kind of violence to the body (Tait 2010) drawing into question agency, empowerment and pathology. However, she states

that while this “violence” can be interpreted as anti-feminist, the very act of choosing (electing) to undergo plastic surgery is indeed indicative of “post-feminism which asserts our right to shape ourselves” (Tait 2010: 133). However, while Tait (2010) posits that the question of female gender and choice is embodied in post-feminism, Akass and McCabe (2007: 126) suggest that the TV series adopts almost a “misogynistic gaze”, particularly through characters such as Kimber Henry and Julia McNamara. Indeed, they claim that the show reinforces the ideal feminine beauty very much associated with Caucasian, slender, youthful and toned feminine bodies (as represented by Julia and Kimber) and thus could be considered as representing oppressive feminine standards.

Finally, other studies have investigated the representation of transgender characters within the show (Kaveney/Stoy 2011; Lafrance/Manicom/Bardwell 2018), which claim that the topic of transitional gender surgery is addressed on a moral and personal level whereby the struggles of the transgender patients are addressed and also supported by the protagonists. Therefore, the array of topics and scope for analysis within this television series is ample and only some of the above-mentioned topics highlighted will be addressed in the following sections, particularly in terms of gender and sexuality.

### 3. Study Aims

Based on the premise that the role of gender is intrinsically intertwined with the context of plastic surgery, this paper intends to investigate AVT and the cultural gender translation of the abovementioned television series *Nip/Tuck*. The study will adopt a twofold analytical comparison of the subtitles in the source text (English) and the target text (Italian) using corpus based quantitative methods and qualitative analysis of selected excerpts. The main interest of the investigation will be that of examining linguistic and cultural issues related to gender and the role of the two male protagonists in terms of their interaction and linguistic representation with the other main characters. The translation

of their identities and the interpersonal linguistic choices will be analysed making considerations on specific translation choices made.

## 4. Methods

### *4.1. Twofold analysis*

The approach adopted for the analysis of this study makes use of corpus-based methodologies (Baker 2006; McEnery/Hardie 2012) in order to provide a quantitative overview of both the source text subtitles (English) and the target text subtitles (Italian) as well as a qualitative approach which employs a descriptive translation studies framework (Toury 2012).

### *4.2. Corpus collection*

The *Nip/Tuck* subtitle corpus (NTSC) comprises the thirteen episodes of the first season of the television series (2003) and compares the linguistic translated features of the source language subtitles (English) with those provided in Italian (the target language). The subtitles were extracted from the DVD series and were annotated in order to include speaker identity and gender. The analysis was carried out using the corpus software Sketch Engine (Kilgariff *et al.* 2004). Multiword keyword analysis was performed on each of the subcorpora in order to provide an overview of the key topic areas and the reference corpora English Web 2020 and Italian Web 2020 were used for the respective languages. Qualitative comparative analysis was then conducted in order to delineate the identity construction of the main characters based on the key topic areas which emerged from the keyword analysis and in terms of questions of gender construct.

## 5. Corpus Analysis

### 5.1. Quantitative overview

An overview of all thirteen episodes, which were uploaded in their separate languages (English and Italian), produced a quantitative count of the two corpora. The source language subtitles (English) had a total of 72,160 tokens (56,139 words) and 7,291 sentences while the target language subtitles (Italian) had a total of 68,420 tokens (54,806 words) and 8,082 sentences.

### 5.2. Multiword keyness

A multi keyword analysis produced the following terms in the source language and only the first fifteen relevant terms are listed as they hold the highest keyness score when the focus corpus and reference corpus are compared (Table 1).

	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Relative frequency per million</i>
1	Plastic surgeon	15	207.87
2	Nose job	7	97.01
3	Tit job	6	83.15
4	Sophia Lopez	5	69.29
5	Tummy tuck	5	69.29
6	Julia McNamara	4	55.43
7	Midlife crisis	4	55.43
8	Reassignment surgery	4	55.43
9	Real father	4	55.43
10	Child molester	4	55.43
11	Grace Santiago	3	41.57
12	Kimber Henry	3	41.57
13	Porn party	3	41.57
14	Swingers party	3	41.57
15	Crazy bitch	3	41.57

Table 1. Multiword keyness analysis of the English source text corpus with the raw and relative frequency per million.

Terms 1, 2, 3 and 5 refer to much of the content of the episodes, which is an expected feature of the corpus considering the nature of the TV series based on a private plastic surgery practice. However, the terms which refer to actual operations are presented in their layman versions (i.e. *nose job* rather than rhinoplasty, *tit job* rather than breast augmentation and *tummy tuck* rather abdominoplasty). This is also an expected feature as the characters (and the patients) made few references to actual plastic surgery operation technical terms and opted for layman terms on the whole. Of interest, is the third example of *tit job*, which could be considered a vulgarised version of boob job and is one of the first indications of the sexualisation of the female body within this TV series, which will be investigated further qualitatively.

Other key multiword terms refer to some of the main female characters (interestingly the actual protagonists themselves are excluded). *Sophia Lopez* is noteworthy as she is a minor character and one of the patients (Episodes 4 and 9 are named after her), however, she returns throughout the first series (Episodes 9, 10 and 12) and represents a significant theme which will be investigated qualitatively, that of transgender and gender reassignment (example number 8 in Table 1). The other female characters who are highlighted as key are *Julia McNamara* (Sean McNamara's wife), who appears in all episodes, *Grace Santiago*, the clinic's psychologist, who also appears in almost all episodes, and *Kimber Henry* who makes recurring appearances as one of Christian Troy's significant love interests. All of these female characters will be investigated along with another female character, Liz Cruz, who is the clinic's anaesthetist and is also the most predominant homosexual character in the series.

Finally, other themes identified as key areas include *midlife crisis*, *real father*, *porn party*, *swingers party* and *crazy bitch*. Of particular note is the theme of a *midlife crisis* which can most certainly be applied to both male protagonists, and throughout all the episodes we see either Sean or Christian undergoing some kind of existential crisis, which is either supported or opposed by the other surgeon. Indeed, *midlife crisis* (*crisi di mezza età*) are identified as key in both corpora but rank higher in the English corpus compared to the Italian one (7<sup>th</sup> place versus 11<sup>th</sup> place respectively). The higher ranking in the English corpus is likely due to the statistical relevance in relation to the reference corpus but may also indicate the different emphasis placed on

the topic in the English version compared to the translation in the Italian one. Moreover, in line with identity crises (often related to a midlife crisis) in general, it is also a typical plot development to see one of the male protagonists criticise a particular characteristic of the other at the beginning of an episode (e.g. Christian's superficialness). This often creates friction which later leads to a realisation of a certain truth in that sense on behalf of that character.

Another example of a clear crisis, and recurrent theme throughout the whole series, is Sean's marriage crisis (eventually leading to infidelity), separation and then reconciliation in the final episode. Indeed, the concept of *real father* arises from such a marriage crisis and Julia carries out a paternity test for her son (suspecting he could be Christian's son rather than Sean's), the results of which are not revealed in this season. Finally, the other key areas of investigation relate to the highly sexualised topics throughout most episodes which range from pornstars and swingers requesting surgery as well as other sexual fantasies, desires and addictions which are explored throughout the season. For reasons of brevity, only some of these key terms will be explored qualitatively.

The same multiword keyness was performed on the Italian target corpus and produced the following initial terms (Table 2).

	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Rel. frequency</i>
1	Dottore Troy	33	482.32
2	Dottore McNamara	25	365.39
3	Dottoressa Santiago	11	160.77
4	Chirurgo plastico	16	233.85
5	Sofia Lopez	6	87.69
6	Julia McNamara	4	58.46
7	Paio di tette nuove	3	43.85
8	Riconversione sessuale	3	43.85
9	Tetta nuova	3	43.85
10	Tetta rifatta	3	43.85
11	Crisi di mezza età	3	43.85
12	Kimber Henry	2	29.23
13	Party scambista	2	29.23
14	Pazza psicotica	2	29.23
15	Naso nuovo	2	29.23

Table 2. Multiword keyness analysis of the Italian source text corpus with the raw and relative frequency per million.

As can be seen in the above table, many of the same characters and themes are repeated in the Italian target corpus (despite a different reference corpus being used). Of note, are the first three terms which introduce the two main protagonists (unlike the English corpus) and which place Grace Santiago in higher prominence. From a translation perspective, it is significant that these three characters are introduced by their titles (*dottore/dottoressa*) rather than by their names, which seems to be a more recurrent theme in the English corpus. This is an expected finding to a certain extent as within a medical context (as is the case with these three professionals), Italian culture tends to adopt the usage of professional titles more than the Anglo-Saxon culture does (Lobasso *et al.* 2018).

Further translation comparisons of keyness include the equivalent terms *crazy bitch* and *pazza psicotica* ranking 15<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> place respectively as well as the different representations of *tetta* in the target text. In the former case, the use of derogatory and misogynistic terms is an overall theme of this series (mainly related to the main character Christian) and will be investigated further in the following section. The use of the terms *tits* (*tette*), instead, has the same occurrence throughout both corpora (n = 6) but in English is represented purely by *tit job* while in Italian there are three occurrences of *tetta nuova* and three of *tetta rifatta*.

In light of the keyness identified in both the English source texts and the Italian target texts, and for reasons of brevity, only some of these themes will be investigated in the next section with examples of individual translation choices. Specifically, the themes of misogyny (mainly related to Christian), the gender identity of the main characters as well as the minor character Sofia Lopez.

## 6. Qualitative Analysis

### 6.1. Christian Troy's linguistic engagement with the female sex

On face value, Christian Troy embodies the frivolous, charming and superficial stereotype of a plastic surgeon who is driven by money, success and promiscuity with the opposite sex. His relationships and interaction with the opposite sex are frequently misogynistic and this in turn leads him into a variety of crises throughout the series. The crises he faces are usually brought about when he is placed before his behaviour by other characters in the series (particularly Sean as well as Julia, Liz, Grace and Matt).

The language which he employs when talking to (or about) women is often flagrant, derogatory and offensive throughout most of the season, as shown in some of the following extracts (1 and 2).

(1)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
K: "Right this way, ten." The perfect 10. That's what he calls me.	K: "Da questa parte, dea." Dea della perfezione, è così che lui mi chiama.
C: You fix the flaws, you could absolutely be a 10.	C: Ma, eliminati i difetti, potresti essere davvero una dea.
K: Well, what am I now?	K: E cosa sarei adesso?
C: You're an eight.	C: Una ninfa.

In this extract, Christian (C) and Kimber (K) have met for the first time the previous evening and spent the night together at Christian's apartment which is illustrated through a passionate sex scene (alternating with another monotonous sex scene between husband-and-wife Sean and Julia). In the English version of the dialogue, we see Christian deliberately diminishing Kimber's self-esteem by stating that she is by no means a "perfect 10" but rather an eight who has flaws that can be fixed. He dehumanises their relationship in that sense as he then goes on to highlight all of her "flaws" with a lipstick and proposes plastic surgery to her so that she can be "perfect" (a request made by Kimber) [Figure 1].



Figure 1. A still taken from the first episode where Christian uses a lipstick to highlight all of Kimber's "flaws" to be addressed.

In the first dialogue (1) between Christian and Kimber, the cultural reference which Kimber uses to refer to herself is the concept of the "perfect 10," which became a part of popular culture following the film "10" (produced and directed by Blake Edwards in 1979). The number 10 refers to a "beauty scale" whereby points are assigned for beauty with 10 being the highest and 0 being the lowest. Christian's choice to label Kimber as an eight shows his intention to belittle her rather than reaffirm her. From a translation perspective, the same cultural references are not transferred with the translator preferring references to Greek mythology and beauty (Goddesses and Nymphs) rather than the point scale in the source text.

Example 2 demonstrates Christian's level of superficialness and belittling even further as he claims that death is preferable to stopping striving for "perfection." The translation of "you might as well be dead" is intriguing in Italian (*sarà la tua fine*) as it softens somewhat the reference to death, expressing it only implicitly.

(2)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
C: Let your shortcomings and flaws fuel you. Let them push you further than you ever though you could go. When you stop striving for perfection, you might as well be dead.	C: Fa' che i tuoi difetti siano uno stimolo... per spingerti oltre ogni limite conosciuto. Quando smetterai di cercare la perfezione, sar� la tua fine.

The same point scale referred to in Example 1 is repeated in different episodes in connection to Kimber in Episode 6 (3) and then she herself uses the point system in Episode 9 (4).

(3)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
C: Look at you sweetheart. You're an eleven.	C: Guardati, dolcezza. Ora sei una dea.

(4)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
K: Yeah? Well, you'll still be a 4.	K: Rimarrai un cesso comunque.

In Example (3), Christian sees Kimber after some time and pays her a clear compliment. However, the translation does not effectively render the concept that she is now an eleven rather than a ten as the translation proposes the same for both i.e. *dea*. Example (4) instead is in response to a provocation that Kimber receives from another surgeon who says that she should leave Christian for him. Her response uses the same points scale against the man in this case and the translation corresponds the number 4 to *cesso*. The translation is arguably more offensive than the points scale in the source language.

Christian Troy does not limit himself to insulting only Kimber but, for space reasons, only a few more examples are illustrated of such language used against women below (Examples 5 and 6).

(5)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
C: Because you've got a carved face, and in my estimation...that's the worst tit job I've ever seen. Here's my business card. You want to look like a woman instead of a carnival freak, call me.	C: Perchè hai una faccia orrenda, e quelle sono le peggiori tette rifatte che abbia mai visto. Questo è il mio biglietto da visita...Se non vuoi sembrare un fenomeno da baraccone, chiamami.

(6)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
C: I sliced that bitch's wattle off 15 months ago.	C: Ho già affettato l'anno scorso il gozzo di quella stronza.

In Example 5, Christian has paid for the services of a prostitute but when she accuses of him of being homosexual as he cannot sustain his erection, he attacks her verbally and pushes her. The choice to use “carnival freak” (adeptly translated to *fenomeno da baraccone*) is extremely derogatory and once again reveals his linguistic choices in terms of the female gender. Example 6, on the other hand, is in reference to a patient who is being demanding and to show his frustration, he offends her by calling her a bitch and animalising her by comparing her to a cockerel's wattle. While bitch is arguably faithfully translated as *stronza*, wattle instead is translated as *gozzo* which is synonymous of a pathological neck swelling related to hyperthyroidism. Overall, Christian can be considered the main character who uses the most derogatory language when faced with the female gender with few consequences for such behaviour.

### 6.2. Homosexual Identity

Another recurring topic throughout the entire season is that of gender and sexual identity, which is first introduced in the second episode through the main character Liz Cruz (the anaesthetist). Her sexuality is first introduced by Sean who offers Liz health benefits for her partner (Example 7) in a bribe to ask her to return to work following a violent incident in the operating theatre in the first episode.

(7)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
S: Complete health benefits for your partner, Jean.	S: Cure gratuite per la tua compagna, Jean.

In the English source text version, it is not overtly obvious that Jean is a female name (in reference to her partner) but the gendered noun (*compagna*) in Italian makes this reference obvious to the Italian audience before it does so to the source audience. However, in the following lines, Liz explains that they have just broken up and refers to her partner by using the possessive adjective “her,” which then also subsequently clarifies her sexuality to the source public.

As the series progresses, Liz’s character is one of clear homosexual identification and is also one who challenges Christian’s misogyny. Christian tends not to assume misogynistic language to the same extent with her (despite their numerous disputes) but rather respects her role within the clinic (see Example 8). These dynamics could be related to either the fact he views her as an equal on a professional level or her character is not sexualised in his eyes (due to her sexuality).

(8)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
L: Every time I see what women do to themselves with these tit jobs... it makes me feel ashamed of what I do for a living. C: These tit jobs are 70% of our business, Liz. Think about that next time you slip your grossly overpaid ass... into your courtside seats at the WNBA.	L: Ogni volta che vedo cosa combinano le donne alle loro tette, mi vergogno di quello che faccio per vivere. C: Le tette rifatte rappresentano il 70% delle nostre entrate. Perché non ci pensi quando posi il tuo culone strapagato... in tribuna per assistere al basket femminile?

Example 8 is translated using appropriate colloquial references (i.e. tit jobs to *tette rifatte*). The reference made by Christian to Liz’s “grossly overpaid ass” however is rendered more misogynistic than it is in the source text. The choice to use *culone* as a translation draws into question Liz’s weight in the target text while this would not seem to be the source text’s intention, as “grossly” is in reference to her wage not

the size of her behind. Therefore, in this case, Christian is not actually employing offensive language but rather an informal colloquialism, which is not transferred into the target culture.

In terms of other homosexual characters, Matt (Sean's son) is in a relationship with a cheerleader (Vanessa) at the beginning of the series who then cheats on him and discovers that she is indeed homosexual. This relationship also explores sexuality in other ways as Matt is involved in three-way sexual intercourse with Vanessa and her girlfriend (Lexi) at a later point in the season. The language employed for the lesbian relationships that both Liz and Vanessa engage in is therefore worthy of note, as there are several occasions where terms such as "dyke" and "lezzie" are translated in a more elusive way (Examples 9, 10 and 11).

(9)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
L: I have a tattoo on my right breast. Two female symbols intertwined. C: Double dykes. L: I'm expressing my lesbian identity.	L: Io ho un tatuaggio sul seno destro. Due simboli femminili intrecciati. C: Due farfalline? L: Esprimo la mia identità lesbo senza falsi pudori.

(10)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Vanessa: Wait don't go. Lexi: Get your hands off me, dyke.	Vanessa: Aspetta, non andartene. Lexi: Toglimi le mani di dosso, lesbica!

(11)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Lexi: I'm not like you. I'm not a lezzie. Lexi's mother: What's a lezzie? Matt: Your daughter likes vagina.	Lexi: Io non sono come te, non sono dall'altra parte. Lexi's mother: Cosa significa, Robert? Matt: A vostra figlia piacciono le donne.

Example 9 illustrates a conversation which takes place in the operating theatre whereby Christian jests about Liz's tattoos. As can be seen from the translation offered, "double dykes" is translated as *due farfalline*,

which, as regards a tattoo, does not necessarily allude to sexual identity. The same censorship can be seen in Example 10 in an argument between Vanessa and her girlfriend where “dyke” is translated simply as *lesbica*. Instead, in Example 11, the references to both “lezzie” and “vagina” are entirely removed from the translation. Literature shows that the translation of topics such as sexuality into Italian for subtitles and dubbing is often in favour of such censorship (Beseghi 2016; Dore/Zarrelli 2018). While some argue that this is due to a lack of equivalence in Italian (Parini 2014), others claim that this is deliberate censorship (Díaz Cintas 2012). The translation presented in this series would seem to fall more in line with the lack of equivalence than a real wish to censor, particularly when considering the explicit sexual and bodily content which is explored in the rest of the series.

### 6.3. Transgender identity

The transgender character, Sophia Lopez, introduces the concept of transgender identity in a variety of ways, specifically through her interaction with different characters and also her reassignment surgery. As previously stated, Episode 4 is named after her and focusses on her request to repair a tracheal shave<sup>1</sup> which had left her scarred and she also reappears in a later Episode 9 entitled “Sophia Lopez II.” The episodes deal with many of the discriminatory issues faced by transgender individuals such as judgement regarding identity (12), parenthood (13), healthcare (14) and sexuality (15). Each of these is lived through a shared experience that Sophia has with one of the main characters namely Sean and Liz.

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1 A tracheal shave refers to the reduction of the commonly referred to *Adam’s apple* and is an operation usually requested by trans women and non-binary trans individuals in order to reduce its size.

(12)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Sean: I'm afraid pro bono is out of the question. We do that type of work... on people who have suffered accidents or birth defects. Sophia: Being one gender inside and another on the outside... is a birth defect.	Sean: Spiacente, ma è fuori questione eseguire pro bono per un intervento simile. Prestiamo questo servizio... solo a persone vittime di incidenti o con difetti alla nascita. Sophia: Essere interiormente di un sesso e esteriormente di un altro è un difetto alla nascita.

This extract introduces the first concept of how many transgenders identify and forces Sean (who is the much more traditional and conservative protagonist) to confront this identity reality. The dialogue continues with Sophia asking if Sean has a problem with her, directly asking him if it is due to her identity. Sean claims that he does not but at this stage in the episode his judgement is apparent. Indeed, he reprimands Christian afterwards for not having warned him about his “transsexual patient” as he assumes Christian organised the appointment in order to prove how uptight he is. The translation is faithful in this extract.

(13)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Sean: Either you hand over what you have, or you find another surgeon. Your choice. Sophia: That's my son Raymond. Sean: I don't understand. Sophia: When a man and a woman love each other, they have sex and nine months later... Sean: You said you always knew you were a woman. Sophia: I didn't admit that to the world back in the day.	Sean: O mi consegna quel che nasconde, oppure cerca un altro chirurgo. Può scegliere. Sophia: È mio figlio, Raymond. Sean: Ma come l'ha avuto? Sophia: Sa, quando un uomo e una donna si vogliono bene. A volte fanno sesso. E poi, nove mesi dopo... Sean: Non ha detto di essersi sempre sentita donna? Sophia: E pensa che è stato facile ammetterlo?

This scene is from just prior to Sophia's surgery when she has a hidden photo with her. The questions of parenthood and identity are directly addressed in this scene. Of note, are the three interrogative forms used

in the Italian translation which are not entirely faithful to the source text. The question *Ma come l'ha avuto?* is much more explicit than the original version in expressing Sean's confusion and the closing comment is posed as a rhetorical question in Italian whereas in the source text, the meaning is much more explicit.

(14)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Sophia: A week ago she had a gender reassignment surgery... by the same doctor who did my neck. [...]	Sophia: Una settimana fa ha fatto la riconversione sessuale... dallo stesso chirurgo che mi ha operato al collo. [...]
Sean: What's the opinion of the doctor who examined her?	Sean: Cosa pensa il medico che l'ha esaminata?
Sophia: The nurse stuck us in here two hours ago. Nobody wants to touch her.	Sophia: L'infermiera ha fatto una capatina qui due ore fa. Ma nessuno vuole toccarla.

In this scene, Sophia calls Sean to the hospital where her transgender friend has some medical complications following reassignment surgery. What emerges in this scene is the discrimination faced within the healthcare system by transgender individuals. While the translation is faithful on the whole, the target text using the term *capatina* fails to render the concept that they have been left without attention to the same extent that it does in the source text. Following these encounters, Sean proceeds to help Sophia and other members of her community and the realisations that his character goes through are likely in line with the realisations that society were also confronting at the time of filming this season (2003).

(15)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Liz: Why get a sexual reassignment surgery?	Liz: Allora, spiegami perchè fai la riconversione sessuale?
Sophia: Because my façade is hiding my person. I'm not trying to be a beautiful woman.	Sophia: Perché la mia facciata sta nascondendo la mia persona. Non mi opero per diventare bellissima.
[...]	[...]
I'm just trying to get rid of the man on the outside as much as I can...	Cerco soltanto di liberarmi dell'uomo che appare all'esterno.

In this episode, the question of sexuality is brought to the forefront when Sophia decides to undergo gender reassignment surgery. She commences a relationship with Liz (who is homosexual) but states that she herself is not homosexual and that she identifies as a heterosexual woman. Her identity is also fortified as she clarifies that she wants to “get rid of the man on the outside.” This relationship draws into question the complexities of sexuality as well as its fluidity for the audience in both cultures. In fact, the translation is produced faithfully (except for the omission of “beautiful woman”), which is translated only as *bellissima*, therefore placing less emphasis on gender and more so on the aesthetic results. Sandrelli (2016) indicates that there are still very few LGBT characters in Italian mainstream media, even today, and therefore the character of Sophia Lopez within the timeframe of 2003 most certainly brings to the forefront key questions of sexuality that were arguments of greater polarisation than compared to the current day in both cultures.

#### 6.4. Female identity

A brief note must also be made regarding the other two main characters who were identified as key within the corpus i.e. Julia (Sean’s wife) and Grace (the clinic’s psychologist). The two characters represent a relative degree of juxtaposition in terms of their personalities. Julia is initially portrayed as insecure about herself as she asks her husband if she needs an operation on her breasts (16) and their marriage is in crisis from the very beginning of the first episode.

(16)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
J: I kind of feel that my boobs are disappearing. Do you think I should consider something?	J: Ho l'impressione di essere piatta come un'asse da stiro. Pensi che dovrei prendere qualche provvedimento?

Her initial presentation to the show in the first episode is through these insecurities, however, despite her initial fragility, she then decides to revendicate her independence by returning to university to study medicine (previously abandoned due to falling pregnant). Julia’s is a complex character and confronts a number of highs and lows

throughout the season including a miscarriage, a paternity test for her firstborn as well as Sean's infidelity.

Grace, on the other hand, is first introduced as a self-confident professional who Sean initially finds attractive and then later employs as the clinic's psychologist. She is a single career woman with several academic qualifications, and she consistently challenges the two male protagonists' positions and points of view. However, despite her strength of character, she still has to defend her position as a woman within the plastic surgery clinic and is eventually seduced by Christian following an argument where she accuses of him of having an addiction to sex (17).

(17)

<i>English Version</i>	<i>Italian Version</i>
Grace: I've given you the information. What you do with it is up to you. Christian: Dr. Santiago, perhaps you should consider having your own orgasm... every now and then so that you don't have to live through mine.	Grace: Le ho fornito le informazioni. Sta a lei decidere ora. Christian: Perché non contempla la possibilità di avere, di tanto in tanto, un orgasmo suo? Così non dovrebbe vivere dei miei.

The translation is rendered faithfully in the target language and this excerpt is indicative of frequent interactions that Grace has with Christian. Of note, is the formality used, which in the source text is presented through the use of Grace's title (Dr. Santiago) and in the target text is achieved through the use of *Lei*.

The representation of these female figures is significant in terms of gender within this series as, while both women correspond to emancipated females, they also both "depend upon" the male protagonists in different ways. Therefore, overall, they still fall under the umbrella of female characters who exist in association with their male protagonist counterparts (von Flotow/Josephy-Hernández 2018).

## 7. Conclusions

The scope for investigating gender roles within this *Nip/Tuck* television series is ample. The main arguments addressed included the protagonists' interactions and relationships with the other main characters, questions of sexual identity, transgender identity and female gender roles. While the arguments of sexual and transgender identity would appear to be in line with the historical socio-cultural advancements of that time (2003), the female gender roles seem to be represented (and translated) in a more "traditional" way. Indeed, all of the heterosexual women in this series are sexualised to a certain extent and co-exist along with their relationships connected to the two male protagonists.

In terms of translation choices, considering the relatively explicit and sexual nature of this series, along with its flagrant (sometimes taboo) language in the source culture, there are several instances of censorship in the target culture. However, this is a feature which would appear to continue into the current day (Beseghi 2016; Dore/Zarrelli 2018). Despite this, the overall subtitled translation would appear to be appropriate and faithful even though there are clear instances of censorship into the target culture, regarding homosexuality in particular. Indeed, further investigation in this vein, as well as into topics which were not covered in this paper (i.e. sex and identity in terms of "body parts"), would likely lead to further interesting considerations and will be pursued in future studies which also include the successive seasons.

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