Sisters in Crime

Translating the Dark Side of Emancipation on the Small Screen

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The proliferation of academic publications focusing on crime seems to testify to an active role of given individuals involved in criminal organisations around the world. Such a novel performative role has led criminology, anthropology, cultural study and gender study scholars to connect the phenomenon of the so-called 'criminal emancipation' of women (Fiandaca 2007), and the resulting gender competition within the criminal arena (Arsovska/Allum 2014), with the rising trend of female emancipation through crime. Yet, it is surprising to notice that the recent televised representations of female criminal actors still tend to exclusively rely on stereotyped portrayals of such characters whose agency is often diminished and sometimes undermined by patriarchal models.

This seminar introduces some discursive issues related to the representation of gender in translation and the ideological implications as well as the occasional constraints that the shifts of meanings (be it purely linguistic or linked to other forms of semiosis) may bear on the construction of the female image. In particular, by focusing on the audiovisual translation of various other-representations of female criminal individuals in recent TV crime series, I will highlight the persistent negative portrayal of female characters, which are still framed from a totally male hegemonic perspective in media productions.