



## Audiovisual translation, gender, and multilingualism: *Godless* or the return to a stereotyped feminist Western

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**Abstract:** The global phenomenon of multilingualism is increasingly common in film productions and television series, which often feature characters from different geographical and linguistic contexts. Until recently, women in such series were relegated to the background and their characters defined according to stereotyped gender roles. However, with gender roles beginning to shift at the turn of the millennium, it is worth studying if this change has steered the entertainment industry in a new direction. In this paper, we analyze the mini-series *Godless* (Frank, 2017), which at the time of release was advertised as a seven-episode feminist Western set in La Belle, New Mexico, a town populated mostly by widows after the collapse of the mine where the local men used to work. The premise of the series, which at first glance seemed to represent a clear departure from the stereotypes of the traditional American Western, is nonetheless not completely fulfilled. Although the female characters are featured prominently and show a clear development, they do not always break away from stereotypes, as the audience might expect. In this article we will analyze some of these female characters in order to determine whether they in fact portray a new style of woman or if, conversely, they perpetuate old clichés while disguising them as modernity. Moreover, questions pertaining to the depiction of multilingualism in the series are explored. Given that the linguistic hegemony of English in the series is challenged through the presence of two authentic third languages, namely Paiute and German, it is worth examining how this multilingual identity has been transferred in the Spanish version in order to confirm if it is maintained or lost and whether, overall, it perpetuates identity stereotypes.

**Keywords:** audiovisual translation; gender; multilingualism; Western; *Godless*.

## I. Introduction

Subscription-based video streaming services, which allow viewers to watch TV series and films via an internet-connected device, are becoming increasingly common in our everyday lives<sup>1</sup>. Millions of people worldwide use such services to consume audiovisual content translated into various languages. These TV shows and movies reproduce and represent identities, exerting a strong influence on our perception of gender (Álvarez-Trigo, 2021), and shape and consolidate through translation “different rewritings of multilingual and multicultural identity with an a priori agenda that wants to banish some old stereotypes while at the same time (they) perpetuate(s) others or even create(s) new and different ones” (Pérez L. de Heredia & De Higes-Andino, 2019, p. 11). By examining the (para)textual information surrounding the latest-generation television series transmitted via these platforms, we can ascertain whether they are as subversive as they are portrayed in their marketing materials or if, in fact, they perpetuate stereotypes which should not be common today. At the same time, since most of these TV series include female characters of various ethnic origins as well as heterolingualism, thus representing a departure from the traditional hegemony of the English language on screen, they allow us to explore how identity is represented in terms of multiculturalism and multilingualism. This interconnection can be illustrated in the way women can break the stereotype of being monolingual in the English-speaking world, which at the same time can be seen as a means of empowerment and also allows them to show their authenticity. Furthermore, since these series have been translated, it is worth studying if they contribute to the stereotyping of women in the target culture or whether, on the contrary, roles are reversed, and gender identities are transgressed. Since translation is an activity that entails “a political and ideological commitment and (which) is at the same time a powerful reconstruction of historical and cultural reality<sup>2</sup>” (Pérez L. de Heredia, 2015, p. 266), we see the need to analyze the reality projected by such products of serialized fiction in Spain.

The case study we delve into here is that of *Godless*, a TV mini-series released by Netflix in 2017. This drama series is framed within the Western genre, which has long been associated with a patriarchal and traditional view of masculinity (Averbach, 2000). Given that, by contrast, the series has been presented by critics as a feminist Western<sup>3</sup>, it seems like an interesting case study to analyze the role of women and see if that claim can be validated or refuted via an analysis of the way its characters are depicted.

## 2. TV series and gender representation

There is consensus among television studies theorists when it comes to delimiting the first two golden ages of television fiction (see Cascajosa Virino, 2009). Nevertheless, such agreement does not extend to “label[ing] the [television] boom that begins in the late 90s” (García Martínez, 2014, p. 1). Despite that, some authors argue that we are now experiencing a third golden age of

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, Netflix was the leading video streaming platform in 2022 with approximately 231 million subscribers worldwide (Orús, 2023). That same year, Amazon Prime Video and Disney Plus ranked second and third, respectively, in terms of their subscriber base (Orús, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all the translations into English of quotes originally in Spanish are our own.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the reference to this expression made by Barroso (2021) in her analysis of the series.

television driven by mass audiences and new forms of consumption determined by our current lifestyle (Martín Varela, 2021). It is precisely this latest boom or golden age that is of interest to us here, as it presents a more radical change of combinations, leaving behind the role that had historically been assigned to women, almost always “secondary and conditioned by stereotyped roles that propagate gender clichés that sponsor conservative and traditional values” (Pérez L. de Heredia, 2015, p. 279).

With the beginning of this new golden era, television also witnessed the opening of new distribution and broadcasting spaces that had the power to transform the reality of viewers around the world through translation (Pérez L. de Heredia, 2015). The discourse in television series, which had until then been fundamentally white, patriarchal, monolithic and static (Pérez L. de Heredia, 2015), started to change to incorporate cultural, gender and even linguistic combinations, as in the case of the series *Godless*. Fiske (1987, p. 9) argues in this regard that “characters on television are not just representations of people but are encodings of ideology” and, as such, their influential and transformational power should not be overlooked. In this sense, it seems that, even before the film industry, television has discovered the talent and diversity of the feminine<sup>4</sup>, and it may well be the case that the days of TV spreading global gender stereotypes may be numbered. In fact, with the change of millennium, women began to have larger roles and gender roles experienced an intense transformation fuelled by the new broadcasting platforms such as HBO or Netflix, which allowed greater ideological audacity and redefined the traditional concept of television, by offering on-demand content and personalized experiences. It can therefore be said that what González-Iglesias and Toda Iglesia (2013) have called “new globalized fiction” is giving way to female creativity as the emblem of a broader, worldwide conversation.

Today, we find in the market more TV series that incorporate female icons as the main characters, leaving men in the background so that they are even “objectified things and reduced to the grotesque” (Pérez L. de Heredia, 2015, p. 266). By now, this shift is a *fait accompli* and no one is surprised by the new role of women on the small screen, but are gender stereotypes on television and in the globalized society that consumes such products a thing of the past? And what can be said specifically about the Western genre? We have to consider in this regard that, due to their nature, television series are usually longer than films. This allows the characters to evolve in such a way that they are able to externalize drives and identities that society can condemn more at ease than in films. Furthermore, character development in TV series requires a thorough and detailed process that takes into account the character’s past and their motivations in order to explain the actions that will take place during the narrative progression of the story. Such process is even more critical when creating female roles that avoid stereotypes (Galán Fajardo, 2007, p.65).

Although, overall, gender representation in television today is improving, it still has a long way to go. According to a study by Lauzen (2020, p.1) on the representation of women on screen and behind the scenes during 2019 and 2020, television programmes “on streaming services featured substantially more female protagonists than programs on cable or broadcast networks”, a fact that highlights the progress that has been made thus far. However, those same programmes employed relatively low numbers of women behind the scenes (Lauzen, 2020, p. 3), and white women were

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<sup>4</sup> See below in this same section the study carried out by Lauzen (2020) where the presence of women on screen is analyzed.

overrepresented on screen (66% of female characters) compared to women of colour (Lauzen, 2020, p. 2). Therefore, there is still a need for more creators, protagonists and realities that have been hitherto poorly represented. As indicated above, this article examines one series to gauge whether there has been progress in terms of representation in television fiction, and specifically within the Western genre, and to determine how such issues have been tackled in translation.

## 2.1 The Western genre and gender representation

One of the main narrative devices of a Western film or series is that, inevitably, at some point in the story, two men confront each other in a duel. Although women are also present in such stories, they are not the focus. Rather, they are often relegated to a background role. In fact, in the Western, “the woman is essential, not to provide a fantastic tone, but to value the virile principle of which she is the antagonist” (Astre & Hoarau, 1975, quoted in Freijo Escudero, 2018, p. 72). According to this definition, in this traditional genre the role of women is defined as a contrast to that of the dominant male presence. However, even if that were the case, women in Westerns are far from being simple accessory characters, since they “transmit complicated cultural coding about the nature of westward expansionism, heroism, family life, manliness, and femininity” (Matheson, 2020, p. 10). Thus women, thanks to their active and multifaceted role, contribute to the construction of identity and collective memory.

Women can be assigned many roles in the fictional Western world, some of which are reflected in the characters of the series analyzed here. For example, Clemente Fernández (2007, p. 2), commenting on the “femme fatales” of the Western, establishes a binary opposition between those women who are supposed to be the “good” ones (those in the roles of mother, wife, and faithful companion) and the ones who represent the devil, incarnating manipulation and corruption for men. Nonetheless, not every women character can be reduced to this simplistic view. Women can also be seen as “the redeemer”, the one who acts as a civilizing agent for the man and saves him from evil (Clemente Fernández, 2007, p. 5), or “Cinderellas in brothels” (Clemente Fernández, 2007, p. 7), sex workers with a kind heart who ultimately find redemption from their bad actions by marrying a male character and leading an honest life from that point on. Once again, it seems that in these depictions, everything revolves around the masculinities and this is so because women’s roles are either subordinated to them or linked to them in some way, which limits the complexity of their roles.

However, the symbolic importance of the woman is undeniable, since her presence “ensures the future of the lands of the West and the continuity of patriotic values” (Clemente Fernández, 2007, p. 11). The female figure has been progressively used to vindicate the rights of minorities in the last decades, and new roles have emerged which have allowed an evolution in the type of representations that minorities have on screen. Thus, in *Godless*, LGBTQIA+ presence is acknowledged, and multilingualism and interracial relationships are also represented. Although something seems to be changing, a more detailed analysis is required to confirm whether there has been a real shift in terms of representation in this genre traditionally linked to men.

### 3. *Godless*

*Godless* is an original Netflix drama mini-series produced by acclaimed film director Steven Soderbergh and written by screenwriter Scott Frank. It premiered in 2017 on the Netflix platform and consists of 7 episodes of longer duration than American series usually have, about 70 minutes per each episode. The title in Spanish has not been translated, which is usually a common strategy to identify the “USA series”, an unmistakable mark of quality and status for many (Pérez L. de Heredia, 2015, p. 272).

The series has been described as a western set in 1884, in a New Mexico town. A mining accident claimed the lives of all the men who resided in La Belle, so the local women and widows had to restructure civilization to keep the land. Another key plot point in the series is the arrival of Frank Griffin, a bandit who wants revenge on his former partner Roy Goode and who is staying at the ranch of one of La Belle’s toughest women, Alice Fletcher.

From the outset, the fact that a Western is figuratively populated with female characters seems to challenge the conventions of a very traditional genre. However, as is often the case in audiovisual products (Pérez L. de Heredia, 2015), a more detailed study of the miniseries reveals that sometimes stereotypes that are not always positive are perpetuated. In fact, according to critics, *Godless* is “a frayed western that does not take advantage of its interesting premise”, but merely presents a different scenario for the classic confrontation between two outlaws (Albertini, 2018).

In the analysis that follows, we first examine the evolution of these female characters in order to determine whether they actually present a new female archetype or merely perpetuate old clichés disguising them as modernity in both the English and Spanish versions.

#### 3.1. The female characters in *Godless*: No man’s land

This being a series primarily populated with women, there are several female characters that are worth studying. However, due to space constraints, we will focus on those who, for one reason or another, have the most prominent roles in the miniseries, beginning our journey with the first woman to appear on screen, Alice Fletcher, played by British actress Michelle Dockery.

Alice is the owner of a ranch just a few miles from La Belle, where she lives with her son and his paternal grandmother. She happens to be the only non-native Paiute woman who speaks the language in the series, making her the main multilingual character in it. She does not get along with the other female characters in town who, in turn, think there is something sinister about her. Although she has to do business with those women in order to survive by working her land, she cannot forgive them for their men murdering her husband.

Alice has been forced to adopt traits traditionally attributed to the male gender in order to survive, her being a widow with two other people to take care of by herself. Desirable and beautiful, she can be considered to possess “aggressive” femininity (Schippers, 2007, p. 95): she is a proficient horsewoman and is absolutely capable of defending herself, not hesitating to shoot when she has to. However, “she is not as proficient in handling horses as Roy [Goode] and is represented as his inferior” (Hockenhull, 2020, p. 233). Her shooting prowess is also first shown in the series when she uses it against Roy in the first episode, thus demonstrating it when facing a vulnerable man (Roy arrives to her ranch already wounded), a skill which does not align with the changing trend in the

representation of female characters. Apart from these, she exhibits other traits which do not appear to challenge stereotypes but rather conform to them: she sometimes changes her attire to wear more feminine clothes, and, above all, she shows emotional vulnerability by having a romantic relationship with the main male character, Roy Goode, and later with the sheriff who saved her from gang rape. Therefore, she can be seen as simultaneously embodying signs of both resistance and compliance (Connell, 1987, quoted in Freijo Escudero, 2018, p. 74), making her a complex female character in a traditional genre in which women were usually relegated to the background.

Turning now to another important female character in the series we find Mary Agnes McNue (Maggie), played by actress Merritt Wever, who won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in 2018 for her performance.

Widow of the former town mayor and the sheriff's sister, Mary Agnes is a very interesting character since she is the one that contests the gender order in the series in a more radical way. After the mine accident that practically killed all the men in La Belle, she changed her corset and other clothes for cowboy attire, and "because of her appearance, she is frequently the object of speculation from the townspeople and visitors" (Hockenhull, 2020, p. 231). She has also reclaimed her maiden name and leads negotiations with prospective mining executives. In fact, "the greatest power in La Belle is allocated to Maggie" and Callie Dunne (Freijo Escudero, 2018, p. 76), a prostitute-turned-school teacher with whom she has a romantic relationship.

Maggie must therefore be given credit for giving visibility to the LGBTQIA+ collective in the series, particularly in a genre such as the Western, where there is a notable absence of bisexual characters on screen, with the few that exist lacking a realistic portrayal. When viewers come across bisexual women in TV shows and movies, they often end up perpetuating sexist stereotypes, such as the promiscuous woman, or portray their bisexuality as merely a phase (Corey, 2017). In the case of the Western genre, women are usually depicted as either "good" or "bad" girls, the former acting as mothers and wives and the latter accused of manipulating and corrupting men (Clemente Fernández, 2007). In Maggie's case, everything seems to indicate that she has changed her sexual preference due to the absence of men at La Belle, which could have triggered a natural transition in this regard: "Maggie's gender identity remains feminine while her physical appearance and sexual practices are shown as a fluid choice that is influenced by practicality" (Freijo Escudero, 2018, p. 76). The same would be true of Callie, the woman she has a relationship with.

Callie Dunne is a character played by actress Tess Frazer: she is the school's resident teacher, and Maggie's love interest. A former prostitute, she is now the richest woman in La Belle precisely because of her previous job, and she is in a position of power. The sex worker is usually an accessory character in Westerns (Farley, 2017), but Callie is not: she appears at the beginning of the series as the most direct and self-controlled female character, aware of the power that money gives her. On the one hand, she seems to redeem herself from her previous life as a prostitute by becoming a teacher, but, on the other hand, she engages in a romantic relationship with another woman, which represents a departure from past genre conventions.

Maggie and Callie are strong characters forming a power couple. Callie has the capital, while Maggie, as already indicated, has strength and technical knowledge. They both wield guns during the day and caress at night, leading to a rediscovery of their sexuality. Through these aspects the feminist and LGBTQIA+ themes run in parallel in this western, at least when it comes to these two



characters. “Maggie displays her choice with pride and turns it into her trademark” (Freijo Escudero, 2018, p. 76), with Callie being her partner in crime in this regard.

With respect to the rest of the female characters, we can refer to Iyovi, Alice’s Paiute mother-in-law and Martha, who come to portray both multilingual reality and confusion in the series, a challenge for the translators (Chiaro & De Bonis, 2020). The other characters do not present specific traits that make them stand out over the male characters of the series. Regardless, for a village populated almost exclusively by women, feminism does not seem to have a prominent role in *La Belle*.

### 3.2. A feminist Western?

Although *Godless* presents those female roles as the central elements driving the narrative forward, after our study of the main characters and their development throughout the episodes of the series, it can be argued that “there is no suggestion of either a feminist production or a change in structure to the Western” (Hockenhull, 2020, p. 237) taking place here, as some were expecting when it was released.

As Averbach (2000, p. 246) rightfully indicates, “the appearance of female characters in the central role does not mean that these westerns are changing the basic scheme” of the genre. Thus, it can be argued that, even if the set of femininities described above blurs the gender order, male characters are still given a more prominent role, which is reflected in the series in the opening and closing scenes. For instance, the first seven scenes of the series, which last a total of 15:40 minutes, deal with the three main male characters of the show: Frank Griffin is wounded and visits a doctor’s office; Roy Goode arrives at Alice’s ranch, also wounded from a gunshot, and Bill McNue’s is seen attempting to cure his blindness using Paiute medicine (Freijo Escudero, 2018, p. 77). Therefore, as Freijo Escudero (2018, p.77) points out, the first moments of the series focus on three wounded masculinities in search of a cure. Women in those scenes are nowhere to be seen except for Alice on the ranch. Moreover, in this first episode, men account for 73% of the dialogue while women account for the remaining 27%, which provides an indication of their presence/importance at the beginning of the series (Houghton, 2017).

On the other hand, the series’ final six scenes all focus on events that are important to the masculinities of the show, leaving the women out of focus. Therefore, there only seems to be closure for the men: “of the three masculinities, one has been killed, and the other two have been healed and regained their hegemonic masculinity” (Freijo Escudero, 2018, p. 77). Although the series could be regarded as inclusive in various aspects for its depiction of sex, race and heterolingualism, as we are about to see, it fails to give women the development and focus they deserve.

## 4. Multilingualism and identity representation in translation

Just like other media such as film and literature, which “are essential to the construction of narratives, which then can create identities, entail interactions between subjects and become a vehicle for cultural transfer” (Van Hecke & Lanslots, 2020, p. 9), TV series occupy that same cultural space. In that regard, audiovisual products can be perceived “as a microcosm of society” (Taylor,

2016, p. 227), with the use of multilingualism in such texts fulfilling various functions related to identity, such as indicating the personal background of the characters and/or reflecting the overall social and professional backdrop (Lerma Sanchis, 2020, p. 135). Since “in the current multicultural era, and given that identities (like borders) are increasingly hybrid, multilingualism becomes the undisputed protagonist of their evolution” (Pérez L. de Heredia & De Higes-Andino, 2019, p. 11), it is paramount to analyze how such multilingual identities are reproduced and disseminated through translation and to “rethink the concepts of cultural transfer, border and identity” (Van Hecke & Lanslots, 2020, p. 9). Delabastita and Grutman (2021, p. 27) indicate that “the translation of multilingual texts [...] involves the reconfiguration of multilingual relations obtaining within source texts, but the significance of these relations is deeply rooted in the source culture by the way in which they represent or transform multilingual relations existing in social reality”. As Taylor (2016, p. 227) points out, “AV translators need to be careful in dealing with cultural differences between nations/languages/communities” to avoid potential misrepresentation. However, due to the technical considerations caused by “interlingual dynamics[, which] are indeed generally perceived as a problem by translators and commissioners, who claim to act in the best interest of a reading or viewing audience that is too often constructed as being monolingual” (Grutman, 2020, p. 344), and “also because it flies in the face of many perceived notions of language, culture and identity, to start with - linguistic diversity is usually at considerable risk of disappearing or having its subversive potential downplayed in translation” (Delabastita & Grutman, 2021, p. 28). In turn, this process may result in multilingual identities being obscured.

*Godless* Castilian Spanish viewers who are not proficient in the English language can resort to the options provided by Netflix and receive this North American product in a target language (L2), previously transferred from the original (L1) language. Nonetheless, an interesting development among television series is the fact that the presence of a third language (L3) on screen has become more prevalent. The appearance of these L3s (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011; De Higes-Andino et al., 2013; De Higes-Andino, 2014), in the case of *Godless* Paiute and German, represents a break from the dominant role of the English language, thus turning the television screen into a heterolingual mirror. These multilingual identities seem to be at the forefront of Netflix programming, since the platform appears to have adopted a diversity-focused approach that “put[s] particular emphasis on racial diversity and non-white identities, gender and disability representation, and language and cultural diversity, the latter reflected in multilingual productions” (Savoldelli & Spiteri Miggiani, 2023, p. 1).

Unlike other series which feature bespoke constructed languages, the two L3s used in *Godless* are real, extant languages: on the one hand, Paiute is the language spoken by the Native American tribes that inhabited the territories of the present state of Utah and had to cope with the arrival and settlement of Anglo-Mormon communities on their lands (Holt, 2006). In *Godless*, a Paiute tribe lives near La Belle, and the paternal grandmother of Alice’s son Truckee, Iyovi, speaks the language. Alice and her son also understand it and are able to speak it. In the case of Paiute, this L3 in the original version is either only audible, but not visible on screen, or presented with subtitles, a choice which English-language viewers who are not used to reading subtitles may not favour. This L3 seems to act, following Chiaro and De Bonis (2020, p. 688), as a means “to enhance viewers’ perception of authenticity of what they see on screen”. In any case, such text is only visible when the emotional



charge of the scene seems to require it, and it is always linked to a female character, the grandmother.

When it comes to translating the series into other languages, such as Spanish, having an L3 complicates the work of the translator. This new language embedded in the screen is, as per Chaume (2012, p. 183), a dynamic textual insert, a type of graphic code that poses challenges that cannot be ignored, since, in a case like the one we are dealing with, these L3s constitute an important part of the plot and the emotional load of the series (especially Paiute, as has been indicated). The translation challenge is even greater if the L3 coincides with the main target language, which is not the case in this series. In this example, L3 would correspond to L2 in the United States version and thus facilitate its insertion in the Spanish version. The choice made in this respect in the Spanish dub is the same as in the original version: to use Spanish subtitles for the scenes where the Paiute leads to a more emotionally charged scene and to ignore them for the rest. Therefore, out of the 19 examples in which Paiute is uttered by Iyovi in the series, only 3 of them (approx. 15.7 % of the cases) are visible on the screen in subtitles, both in the English version and in the Spanish one (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Examples of Paiute utterances subtitled in *Godless*

L3	L1 (English)	L2 (Spanish)
[Paiute] (Ep. 1) Ex. 1	“He stinks of death, that one. And if he stays here long enough, he’ll make us stink of it, too.”	“Ese apesta a Muerte. Y si se queda el tiempo suficiente, hará que nosotros apestemos a ella también.”
[Paiute] (Ep. 1) Ex. 2	“He looks simple. I will call him «Stray Dog».”	“Parece simplón. Lo llamaré «Perro Perdido».”
[Paiute] (Ep. 7) Ex. 3	“He’ll spend a few nights in the trees and come home”	“Pasará unas noches entre los árboles y volverá a casa”

Source: Authors (2024)

They are made visible because of the emotional charge of what is being said: in the first example, Iyovi is warning Alice about the possible threat that can mean for them to keep Roy hidden at their barn, since, as she states, he “stinks of death”. In the second example, Roy sits at the table for the first time with Alice, Iyovi and Truckee, who acts as translator for what Iyovi says about Roy. This would be an example of “contextual translation” (Baldo, 2009), where one of the characters becomes an “accidental interpreter” (Chiari, 2019) and takes charge of linguistic mediation in this case to avoid conflict: her impression of him has changed and instead of representing a danger, he is now seen more as a simple guy. The whole scene is humorous since Truckee translates into English his grandmother’s words so that Roy can understand them, but he does so by changing “simple” for “strong” and “Stray Dog” for “Wandering Star”, thus leaving Roy pleased. The last example where Paiute is not only audible but also visible corresponds to the final episode, and it is also part of an emotional clip where Truckee has been in danger and her grandmother is trying to play down the issue by assuring Alice that he is probably out there experiencing some adventure to later come home safe and sound. Iyovi speaks very few lines in the whole series, but when she does she always

has something remarkable to say. She also understands English, but refuses to speak the language, thereby marking the importance of the audibility and visibility of a third language on screen.

Concerning the German language, it appears in the series when the figure of a Pinkerton detective comes looking for Martha Bishoff, a German woman who usually wanders half naked through the streets of La Belle and who is regarded as suspicious because of her behaviour. Martha's husband has sent this detective to take her back home, but she refuses to go back by stating her feelings in her native language. The technique followed in the case of this language is always the same in that it is not made visible at any point in the form of English subtitles. Thus, the average English-language viewer is not aware of much of the content of these conversations and can only intuit it. In this solution, "viewers are assisted by images and the overall context, from which they can infer the meaning of what they see on screen" (Chiaro & De Bonis, 2020, p. 693). German is therefore also related to a woman, Martha, who, despite not having a prominent role in the miniseries, certainly makes an impression in the viewer, as she also "challenges the gender order since she has run away from her husband, walks naked in the streets of La Belle and is proficient in handling guns" (Freijo Escudero, 2018, p. 75).

In those cases where the L3 appears, it becomes either audible or visible (in the form of subtitles) and therefore it seems to continue with the general trend that "there is a general acceptance of, and frequent enthusiasm about instances of multilingual diversity" in audiovisual products (Bleichenbacher, 2008). As already mentioned, in the examples in which this L3 can be listened to, it is uttered from the mouth of a female character. This is an important pattern, considering that, especially in the case of grandmother Iyovi, it gives her an aura of mystery, since she does not communicate in any other language despite her understanding English.

Both the emotional connection that seems to prevail between female characters and the actual translation of the L3 confirm that identities are more and more represented in TV series as both racial and multilingual, even in a conservative genre like the Western.

## 5. Final reflections: Perpetuating stereotypes?

In 2007, Galán Fajardo (2007, p. 45) concluded that despite the small advances made in the representation of women on screen, TV series still continued to feature the same stereotypes, "often associated with the world of emotion, passivity, maternity and sexuality". The Western does not seem to be an exception in this case, although as Averbach (2000, p. 246) indicates, "it is a flexible genre" and "the basic scheme has changed and has been modified several times", which can be a starting point for future evolution.

While *Godless* has been dismissed by some as an unoriginal Western that fails to meet its potential to push the genre in a new direction (Herman, 2017), the series constitutes, as highlighted by the positive reviews that it has received, a television product which "doesn't resist its classification as a western with a capital W, and instead embraces the genre's outsize influence in the American film canon" (Nevins, 2017). In this article, the most relevant women characters that inhabit its world have been examined briefly from the perspective of gender stereotypes. The analysis presented in the previous pages confirms that these women, and the power they hold, give credence to the idea that *Godless* challenges some of the stereotypes disseminated via TV and Westerns until now.

However, on closer inspection, they are not so transgressive in some respects. Women have the most important roles in the *Godless* universe and, what is more, this happens as a natural progression due to the events that take place in the show, which can be considered the most transgressive aspect of all in a fiction space dominated by men until now. Nonetheless, our conclusion agrees with the idea expressed by Hockenhull that, “despite its masculinized female characters and the predominance of women, *Godless* retains the tradition of a male hierarchical figure in which violence rules, and its women ultimately conform to being feminine stereotypes” (Matheson, 2020, p. 14).

As has also been seen, multilingualism is gaining ground and becoming increasingly common on the screen, and when aligned with characters which used to represent minorities before, like women in the Western genre, it indicates that there is progress towards including linguistic sensitivity in products which are disseminated worldwide, like the case of *Godless*, and linked to identity representation. In this case, the Paiute and the German spoken in the show by women characters represent a step forward in these rewritings of multilingual identities which should become the norm and not the exception. The presence of this L3 in the Spanish version is the same as in the English one, making its appearance an insert which is visible only at some points, but audible all the time, thus contributing to the heterolingual landscape.

In Pérez L. de Heredia’s (2016, p. 207) words, “the power of gender has reached TV and it is here to stay” and the trends that can be observed in the most popular shows today confirm this. Until very recently, television was a site of cultural (re)production where dominant (Anglo, male) ideological beliefs about race, ethnicity, sex and gender were reinforced and re-circulated through the use of stereotypes, including monolingualism. But, apart from providing entertainment, television also forms identities, “plays a significant part in the regulation of gender” (Barker, 1999, p. 91), and transmits a series of values worldwide that are capable of transforming the global audience. As Gallego Ayala (2021, p. 323) aptly states, “the renewal of the classic feminine models is of utmost importance to promote new referents to new generations”. It is therefore extremely important to place television products where they deserve within the field of audiovisual translation and to continue studying them in depth as an essential part and reflection of the progress of the discipline.

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