

NOELIA HERNANDO-REAL. *ROSAS EN LA ARENA. LOS RELATOS DE SUSAN GLASPELL*.
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In the field of American Studies in Spain, the ‘Javier Coy’ book series (*Biblioteca Javier Coy d’Estudis Nord-americans*), issued since 2001 by the University of València, is a key reference. Under the direction of Professor Carme Manuel, it develops two lines: on the one hand, critical studies of various aspects of U.S. culture; on the other, translations of relevant American texts.¹ Within it, Noelia Hernando-Real, from the Autonomous University of Madrid, published in 2014 *Voces contra la mediocridad: la vanguardia teatral de los Provincetown Players, 1915-1922*. Embedded within the second branch, it gave Spanish readers unprecedented access to selected pieces by members of the innovative company, two of them by Susan Glaspell. Three years later, Hernando-Real’s contribution was reinforced by a volume signed by Nieves Alberola Crespo, from the University of Alacant: *Susan Glaspell y los Provincetown Players. Laboratorio de emociones (1915-1917)*. With exclusive focus on Glaspell, Alberola translated and commented four of her plays. Together, these books offered a stimulating analysis of Glaspell’s role in the birth of modern American

¹ <https://puv.uv.es/biblioteca-javier-coy-destudis-nord-americans.html>

drama. In 2022, Hernando reappeared within the ‘Javier Coy’ series with *Rosas en la arena. Los relatos de Susan Glaspell*, a volume that complements these two titles by paying attention to Glaspell’s historically neglected short fiction.

After other high-quality publications about Glaspell in English—among them *Staging the Power of Place*, reviewed by Inmaculada Pineda for this journal (2012)²—Hernando-Real, who has served as President of the International Susan Glaspell Society and is currently in its Executive Council,³ has chosen to share her understanding of Glaspell’s narrative with the Spanish-speaking readership. *Rosas en la arena* is one of many outstanding results of two decades of research about Glaspell’s life and work on Hernando-Real’s part, and it displays her skills as critic and translator. Its unusual focus—Glaspell is best known as dramatist, as proved by the revision of the literature in *Rosas*—is the first indicator of the book’s relevance: Hernando-Real not only unearths some of Glaspell’s most representative stories, but actively vindicates a place for her within the American narrative canon. Through an intelligent use of academic sources about short fiction, she builds on previous knowledge to defend her thesis that Glaspell’s stories deserve prejudice-free critical attention (16). She describes the two axes that have dominated the Glaspell scholarship of the last twenty years—her female protagonists and her feminist themes (108)—and elaborates her proposal in forms that are interesting for American studies researchers, comparative literature academics, and readers of narrative in general.

Rosas en la arena—a beautiful artifact in itself, with a clean edition and evocative photographs—is organized in two sections: Part I encompasses ten chapters situating Glaspell from the historical, cultural, and literary perspectives. They are coherent as a unit, with smooth transitions between the different aspects treated. Hernando-

² Other works about Glaspell reviewed for *REN* are Oziebło & Dickey 2008 and Carpentier & Jouve 2015.

³ <https://blogs.shu.edu/glasPELLsociety/>

Real connects Glaspell's life and texts with American history from the Mayflower until the recent waves of feminism, mostly with a neat style and avoiding academic obscurity. One possible exception to this is Chapter 9, where the accumulation of names and titles undermines the informational register that dominates in the volume allowing for strong chapters like 4 through 6, where Glaspell's qualities as narrator are the epicenter. Although on occasion it is not fully clear whether Hernando-Real has had direct access to some of the pieces mentioned, Glaspell's evolution as a short story writer is a resistant thread that unifies the volume, and the well-conducted analysis completed in the first half justifies the choice of corpus for the second. In this regard, Hernando-Real does not hesitate to contest received opinion: for instance, in the name of representativeness she places "The Tragedy of a Mind" side to side with "Polen," despite their radically different critical reception. Likewise, she reevaluates "The Faithless Shepherd," detecting thematic and stylistic values that may have been too swiftly dismissed by other specialists. Thus, she identifies the need for "a new critical strategy" to study Glaspell's short narrative (111) and develops her own, offering alternative approaches (e.g., reconsidering Glaspell's position within the modernist storytelling tradition, or tackling all the Freeport pieces as a cycle) and opening windows onto future research.

The excellent writing communicates Hernando-Real's passion for her object of discussion, which is also a danger, for she sometimes falls into hyperbolic praise of everything Glaspellian. Nevertheless, this sign of the author's investment in the project does not diminish the value of the outcome. As a whole, Part I of *Rosas* is an original revision of Glaspell's biography and short fiction: her literary achievements pivot significantly around events, people, and places that Hernando has studied in depth. Her knowledge about this writer is vast, informed, and thoroughly documented. She activates relevant secondary sources about American history and literature, and she exercises gender mainstreaming in a fluent manner. Reviews contemporary to Glaspell are used, none of the key authors who have

studied Glaspell is missing (Ben-Zvi, Carpentier, Makowsky, Noe, Ozieblo... they all feature in the volume, as they should), and Hernando only resorts to self-citation—which she could do frequently—when absolutely necessary. Furthermore, and as a novelty within Glaspell scholarship in Spanish, she situates the stories in their editorial context. Reading the first half of the book we learn about Glaspell’s narrative, but also about the Anglophone press of the *fin-de-siècle*, the tensions between politics and the publishing business, or the importance of adapting texts to their target audiences.

Part II evinces Hernando-Real’s indefatigable archaeological task around Glaspell, as well as her awareness of the gaps in the archives—the roses that may still be buried in the sand. It is dedicated to the eight primary texts selected for translation, which had been introduced in Chapter 10 in skilled but unbalanced ways, with extensive theoretical backgrounds for some, but brief summaries for others. Before presenting her Spanish version of Glaspell’s stories, Hernando provides enough information to make them appealing, without spoilers detrimental to the reading experience. Among the texts is a revision of the previously translated “A Jury of her Peers,”⁴ alongside the first-ever Spanish renditions of seven more published under Glaspell’s name between 1896 and 1927. Hernando-Real makes a good choice organizing them chronologically to illustrate Glaspell’s progression as narrator, explained in the first half of the book. In addition, the challenging job of translating is done brilliantly. Hernando-Real manages to convey successfully the different styles,

⁴ The first translation of “A Jury of her Peers” into Spanish, under the title “El jurado de sus iguales,” was done by Mario A. Marino and is included in the 1957 volume *Cuentos* in the ‘Temas Actuales’ collection of the Argentinian publishing house Àgora. Already in the 21st century, it appeared within *Crímenes de mujer: los mejores relatos de damas del crimen* (2002), under the title “Juzgada por sus iguales” (translated by Nuria Salinas for Diagonal). In 2017, it came out as “Un jurado de sus iguales” in *La nueva mujer. Relatos de escritoras estadounidenses del siglo XIX* (translated by Gloria Fortún for Dos Bigotes). In 2022, it was published independently by Avenauta as *Un jurado de iguales*, translated by Yolanda Morató.

registers and tones that Glaspell cultivated, with few minor slips (e.g., using “en breves” or changing from *El fin del cristianismo* to *El fin de la cristiandad* while referring to the same title). These, however, mean nothing within a hundred-page translation that reveals Hernando’s mastery of Glaspell’s universe.

In conclusion, *Rosas en la arena* is a very welcome addition to the ‘Javier Coy’ series, commendable both for its content and its form. A well-written book about a creator that we have come to know as the mother of American drama and whose fiction we are learning to appreciate. Noelia Hernando-Real’s discussion and translation of eight of her short stories—seven of them previously unpublished in Spanish—is a gift for the growing body of scholars and students fascinated by Susan Glaspell, as well as for members of the general public interested in American literature or history and looking for new materials to read. Let us hope that other roses will be dug up in the near future, and that the author of this volume will show them to the world revitalized by her insight.

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