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THE (NON) TRANSLATION OF ANGLOPHONE SUFFRAGE THEATRE IN SPAIN: A PROPOSAL FOR ITS RECOVERY

ELISABET PÉREZ-HEREDIA
epehe@alumni.uv.es
Universidad de Valencia
https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9759-4129

GORA ZARAGOZA-NINET
gora.zaragoza@uv.es
Universidad de Valencia
https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9759-4129

Abstract

Theatrical productions by suffragettes played a crucial role in bringing attention to the social and political injustices faced by women in the early 20th century. Despite the significant impact of this form of literature on society and its role in shaping history, most of these texts have not been translated into Spanish, making them inaccessible to the public in Spain. This paper aims to develop a method for recovering these texts, making them available to the public, and sparking the interest of researchers to further explore the reasons behind this lack of translation and address the invisibility of key texts written by women.

Keywords: Translation; Theatre; Suffragism; Recovery; Feminism.

Resumen

El teatro sufragista tuvo un papel decisivo a la hora poner de manifiesto las injusticias sociales y políticas a las que se veían sometidas las mujeres a principios del siglo XX. A pesar de tratarse de un tipo de literatura que influyó profundamente en la sociedad y contribuyó a cambiar el curso de la historia, en la actualidad la mayor parte de estos textos no están traducidos al español, por lo que son inaccesibles para el público general en España. Este trabajo introduce una propuesta para recuperar estos textos, darlos a conocer al público meta y despertar el interés de investigadores e investigadoras en seguir indagando en las causas de esta ausencia, para, en última instancia, combatir la invisibilización de textos clave escritos por mujeres.

Palabras clave: Traducción; Teatro; Sufragismo; Recuperación; Feminismo.

1. Introduction

In 1907, author Elizabeth Robins, a suffragist and feminist, published *Votes for Women!* amid the suffrage movement (Chothia 1998: xxi; cf. Farkas 2019: 75). The play challenges the boundaries between the domestic and public spheres (Croft 2009), aiming to confront the limitations imposed on women at the time. It remains untranslated into Spanish, highlighting the absence of Spanish versions of Anglophone suffragist theatre. These texts hold significant cultural and historical value, and this study seeks to identify the works that remain untranslated, explore possible reasons for their absence, and offer a methodological approach designed to address the lack of awareness of this literature in the target culture. It also seeks to provide tools that facilitate the visibility of such work. Our aim is not only to bring these texts into the target language, but to inform readers that these plays remained largely unknown for decades after their publication, and to consider the reasons why they may have been forgotten. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the historical and social value of these texts and their continued relevance today, so that contemporary audiences may understand why there is a renewed call for their translation a century after their original publication.

Despite Spain being one of the leading importers of foreign theatre (Santoyo 1995), Anglophone suffrage drama remains notably absent.

Descriptive Translation Studies, particularly the notion of preliminary norms, provide a theoretical framework for analysing the receiving context of a given work. This approach facilitates the analysis of translations by considering both initial and operational norms.

Additionally, the works of Santoyo (1995) and Merino Álvarez (2010), which focus on the translation of theatre in Spain during the 20th century, along with Vega Cernuda's (2004) study on the history of theatre translation in Spain, are highly relevant to this analysis, providing a comprehensive view of the landscape of theatre translation in Spain.

To offer an initial exploration of the translation, or lack thereof, of suffragist theatre, a corpus was compiled. This analysis has revealed a substantial gap in the availability of these works in Spanish. The limited existing translations have been examined to determine the objectives behind them and the strategies employed (Massardier-Kenney 1997). Lastly, a methodological proposal is presented for the recovery of these texts, which hold undeniable historical and social significance while maintaining considerable contemporary relevance.

2. Suffragist theatre

Suffragist theatre emerged as a political tool in the struggle for women's suffrage in the United Kingdom and the United States. The suffragist movement began to take shape in the modern era as part of a broader push for women's equality. While women did not achieve political rights during the French Revolution (1789), ideas concerning gender equality and citizenship began to emerge, inspiring future generations (Álvarez Rodríguez 2018: 133). In the United Kingdom, the movement gained traction in 1832 with the passage of the *Reform Act*, which expanded the male electorate (Pacheco Costa 2018a: 18). Nevertheless, voices advocating for women's rights had already surfaced in the late eighteenth century, including Mary Wollstonecraft, whose essay *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) laid early groundwork for the feminist movement. Throughout the nineteenth century, various associations were established as platforms for advancing women's suffrage, such as the *National Society for Women's Suffrage* (1867),

the *Women's Franchise League* (1889), and the *National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies* (NUWSS) (1897). In the twentieth century, Emmeline Pankhurst founded what would become the most prominent suffragist organisation: the *Women's Social and Political Union* (WSPU) (1903). In 1907, Charlotte Despard established the *Women's Freedom League* (WFL) (Pacheco Costa 2018a: 18–19). While all these organisations shared the common goal of securing the right to vote for women, they diverged in their views regarding the appropriate methods to achieve that goal. The more militant faction, represented by Emmeline Pankhurst and the WSPU, advocated for direct and confrontational action, including hunger strikes, protest marches, and property damage, under the slogan *deeds not words*. Conversely, the more moderate wing argued that the movement should operate within the bounds of the law and support women's suffrage through rallies and public campaigns. This stance was promoted by the NUWSS, led by Millicent Garrett Fawcett. However, it is important to note that the division between these two branches was not always clear. Many suffragists participated in multiple organisations and employed both militant and passive resistance strategies. In practice, these approaches were not necessarily seen as mutually exclusive. The binary distinction between militant and non-militant suffragism only became prominent after World War I, as Mayhall (1995) explains.

In the United States, the suffragist movement is characterised by its close association with the abolitionist movement (Kelly 2014: 210). At the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention held in London, Lucretia Mott (1793–1880) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), both advocates for women's rights, met, an event often regarded as the starting point of the suffrage movement in the United States (Pacheco Costa 2021: 249). In 1848, they drafted the *Declaration of Sentiments*, inspired by the United States *Declaration of Independence*. This document denounced the political and legal oppression to which women were subjected. In 1869, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the *National Woman Suffrage Association* (NWSA) to demand constitutional reform that would grant women the right to vote (France 1993). They advocated for changes to

laws on divorce, property rights, and labour rights (Pacheco Costa 2021: 249). That same year, Lucy Stone established the *American Woman Suffrage Association* (AWSA), and in 1890, both organisations merged.

The suffragist cause began gaining visibility in the early twentieth century, largely due to the emergence of protest marches and public demonstrations in the United Kingdom. Although some sectors of the American suffrage movement sought to distance themselves from such militant tactics, many suffragists, especially those from the younger generation, travelled to the United Kingdom to support the cause and learn from their British counterparts. In 1907, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns met during the hunger strikes taking place there, and along with Inez Milholland, would become some of the most prominent figures in the American suffrage movement (Pacheco Costa 2021: 250). The outbreak of the First World War created a rift between the earlier and newer generations of suffragists. The latter advocated for the continuation of the struggle despite the war and, in 1916, founded the *National Woman's Party* (NWP), led by Alice Paul. The party embraced a militant strategy that included civil disobedience, hunger strikes, and public protests (ibid.: 250). By January 1918, women's suffrage had been approved in fifteen U.S. states, and in August 1920, the right to vote was enshrined in the Constitution, making women's suffrage a reality across the country. In the United Kingdom, women began to enjoy the right to vote in February 1918, though with certain restrictions: they had to be over the age of thirty and meet specific property qualifications (Farkas 2019: 116). It was not until July 1928, with the passage of the *Representation of the People Act*, that women were granted the right to vote on equal terms with men.

In early twentieth-century Spain, prominent women such as Clara Campoamor and Victoria Kent began to organise and advocate for equal political rights (Álvarez Rodríguez 2018: 140). In 1918, the *Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas* (ANME) and the *Unión de Mujeres de España* (UME) were founded. Both organisations focused on promoting women's education and political participation (Aguilera Sastre 2021: 134–137). One of the main challenges they faced was the widespread societal rejection of

feminism, which was often perceived as a harmful foreign influence incompatible with Spanish femininity and, by extension, with national values. As a result, these organisations, particularly the ANME, attempted to incorporate patriotic rhetoric into their public discourse. Despite this, they supported affiliation with the *International Woman Suffrage Alliance* (IWSA), which proposed holding its eighth congress in Madrid in 1920. However, internal disagreements among Spanish women's associations led the ANME to oppose hosting the congress in Spain. María Espinosa, then president of the ANME, argued that Spanish women would not be given a voice at the congress and that Spanish would not be recognised as one of its official languages. Clara Campoamor, by contrast, supported the initiative to hold the congress in Madrid. In the end, although the congress was held in Geneva, the IWSA admitted both Spanish organisations as members (Aguilera Sastre 2021: 134–145). Another notable example of Spanish suffragists' involvement in the international fight for women's suffrage was Lilly Rose Schenrich, Marquise of Ter and president of the UME, who represented Spain at the IWSA congresses in Paris (1926) and Amsterdam (1927). She also collaborated with the Inter-American Commission of Women, whose objective was to examine how marriage laws affected women's nationality in different countries (Lee 2004). It is equally important to recognise Clara Campoamor, who played a key role in the passing of women's suffrage in Spain in 1931. During a trip to London, she met with other suffragists and observed firsthand the strategies employed by her British counterparts. While British and Spanish suffragists shared a common struggle for political equality, their historical contexts and approaches differed significantly. British suffragists led the movement with militant tactics, and their eventual success served as a model for Spanish women, who, though adopting a more moderate approach, ultimately achieved suffrage. However, this progress was interrupted by the Francoist dictatorship, while in the United Kingdom women's voting rights were consolidated throughout the twentieth century.

The major victory for women's suffrage in Spain came with the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931, a period marked by significant political

and social reforms. Within the framework of the new 1931 Constitution, women obtained the right to vote, driven by the efforts of the progressive sector of society and led by figures such as Clara Campoamor (Álvarez Rodríguez 2018: 144–151). Spanish women exercised their right to vote for the first time in the general elections of 1933, participating both as voters and candidates, although in relatively small numbers. This marked a historic moment, as it formally acknowledged women's role in shaping the country's political life. However, the onset of Franco's dictatorship in 1939 represented a severe setback for women's rights, which were virtually dismantled. Women's suffrage was suspended, and many rights gained during the Republic were revoked. Under Franco's regime, women were subjected to strict male guardianship and were barred from voting or engaging in political affairs. It was not until the Spanish Transition, after Franco's death, that women's suffrage was fully restored. In the first democratic elections of 1977, women again exercised their voting rights, and since then, they have played a fundamental role in Spanish politics.

The suffrage movement strategically utilised literature to promote its ideals. In 1908, Cicely Hamilton and Bessie Hatton founded the *Women Writers' Suffrage League* (WWSL), a platform where women writers could use their literary skills in support of the cause. Prominent authors such as Elizabeth Robins, Olive Schreiner, Ivy Compton-Burnett, and Sarah Grand were actively involved in the League (Carlson 2006: 100). That same year, Gertrude Elliott, Adeline Bourne, Winifred Mayo, and Sime Seruya established the *Actresses' Franchise League* (AFL). The AFL counted among its members renowned actresses and playwrights including Cicely Hamilton, Inez Bensusan, Beatrice Harraden, and Alice Chapin. In addition to staging plays, the AFL supported other suffrage groups through propaganda efforts and fundraising initiatives (Farkas 2019: 86; cf. Newey 2005: 157; cf. Hirshfield 1987: 3). In 1911, Ellen Terry, Edith Craig, and Christopher St. John founded *The Pioneer Players* as an initiative emerging from both the WWSL and the AFL. The plays staged by the company addressed a wide range of social issues beyond women's right to vote, including motherhood, divorce, and labour inequalities between men and women (Pacheco

Costa 2018a: 21; cf. Farkas 2019: 106). *In The Workhouse* (1911), written by Margaret Nevinson, stands out as one of their most controversial productions. The play highlights the injustices that women faced upon marriage, particularly the loss of legal autonomy.

Theatre served as a powerful medium for political propaganda, enabling the suffrage movement to reach a wider audience due to its accessibility compared to other literary genres. As a result, suffragism and theatre became deeply intertwined: theatre provided heightened visibility to the cause, while the movement itself offered women in theatre (actresses, playwrights, directors etc.) a more prominent role than typically available in conventional, patriarchal plays (Stewart 2019; cf. Pacheco Costa 2018a). Many actresses sought to move beyond the stereotypical roles assigned to female characters in Victorian and Edwardian drama (Hirshfield 1987; cf. Farkas 2019: 56). Additionally, theatre presented activists with an opportunity to refine their public speaking skills in preparation for speeches (Cockin 2007: 4; cf. Kelly 2014: 210). Suffrage theatre prioritised collaboration over competition (Stewart 2019), with its main goal being to support the movement. This fostered inter-organisational cooperation in spreading suffragist ideals. The woman-led theatrical environment contrasted with commercial theatre by adopting more democratic working practices (ibid.). Collective action was emphasized over individual achievement, with sisterhood playing a vital role, as acting collectively endowed participants with significantly greater strength. Rather than focusing on experimental forms, suffrage plays centred on content. They employed conventional structures to appeal to a broader audience, some of whom might have attended with false expectations, unaware of the political nature of the plays, only to be persuaded by the arguments presented on stage. This form of propaganda relied on a non-confrontational strategy, often making use of irony and humour (Pacheco Costa 2018a: 20). The aim was to convey a message that was "clear, accessible, educational, and entertaining" (ibid.: 20). This style has been termed *agitprop comic-realism* by Aston & Reinelt (2000: 5). The accessibility and popular appeal of such theatre may influence the way in which these texts are translated today. If the goal is to preserve

their accessibility, some adaptation to the target culture may be necessary. However, if the aim is to highlight and recover this type of literature, preserving the distinctive features of the texts is essential to help audiences understand the context in which they were created. Many of these plays are set within the home, thereby bringing the traditionally feminine domestic sphere into the public, masculine domain (Newey 2005: 138, 155). The act of women writing or performing on stage itself challenged anti-suffragist arguments that sought to maintain a strict separation between the male and female spheres (Pacheco Costa 2018a: 20). One-act plays were common, as they allowed for lower production costs and a clearer, more direct delivery of the message (Kelly 2014: 211; cf. Farkas 2019: 88).

Suffrage theatre, along with suffrage literature more broadly, should not be regarded merely as a literary product, but rather as a sociocultural act aimed at instigating social change (Park 1996: 457). It is militant literature. To maximise its impact, suffragists deliberately crafted these texts to be accessible to middle- and working-class women. Consequently, these works have often been dismissed in academic circles for their perceived lack of literary value, largely due to their limited formal complexity (Park 1996: 451). Nevertheless, this simplicity was a conscious choice, intended to reach the widest possible audience and achieve broad popular appeal (Newey 2005: 155). Furthermore, suffragists pioneered theatre as a political tool. As Carlson (2006: 99) notes, suffrage theatre "foreshadowed the now familiar conventions of subsequent community-based political theatre." The suffrage movement enabled women to become full citizens and given the central role of theatre in this process, its social and historical relevance cannot be overstated. For this reason, these works must gain wider attention, especially among students in undergraduate and postgraduate English Studies and Translation Studies programs, as this period marked a crucial moment in the political and literary history of Anglophone countries (Newey 2005: 155).

3. The translation of suffrage theatre in Spain

The Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) approach (Toury 1995; Munday 2001) advocates for examining existing translations to identify patterns and norms that shape translators' decisions. This methodology has been adopted by scholars like Chesterman (1997), along with those from the Manipulation School, such as Hermans (1985) and Lambert & Van Gorp (1985). DTS provides a suitable theoretical framework for analysing Spanish translations of suffrage theatre. Within this paradigm, translation is understood as a cultural act, reflecting the norms, values, and historical context of the target culture. One key feature of DTS is its focus on studying translation from the perspective of the target text and its context, rather than the source text. Toury (1995: 18–21) argues that it is the target culture that governs the act of translation influencing text selection, the intended function of the translation, and its status in the receiving culture. He further argues that translations may trigger transformations within the target culture by introducing previously unavailable texts. He identifies three types of norms shaping translation decisions (Meylaerts 2008: 91): preliminary norms, which involve translation policy and text selection; initial norms, which reflect the translator's choice between remaining closer to the source (adequacy) or adapting to the target culture (acceptability), a distinction also discussed by Venuti (1995), who terms adequacy as *foreignisation* and acceptability as *domestication*; and operational norms, which pertain to the practical choices made during the translation process.

Preliminary norms are crucial, as they offer insights into the context of the target culture, helping to form hypotheses about the limited number of suffrage play translations. These norms, linked to translation policies that guide text selection, are key to understanding why some works remain untranslated, whether due to disinterest, censorship, or lack of awareness. Analysing these factors can inform strategies to promote both the translation and increased visibility of these texts. For instance, if the absence results primarily from a lack of awareness within the target culture, efforts could be made to encourage further academic research of this type of theatre to shed light on its historical and social relevance and to examine

its possible exclusion from university curricula focusing on early twentieth-century Anglophone literature.

Santoyo (1995) emphasizes the limited academic attention devoted to theatrical translation compared to other literary genres. He underscores the paradox that, despite Spain's significant translation output, it remains relatively uncritical of translated drama (Santoyo 1995: 14). Merino Álvarez (2010) further contributes through *La historia de las traducciones de teatro inglés en España en el siglo XX: perspectiva desde el proyecto TRACE*, which provides an overview of the research landscape on the translation of English theatre during the 20th century and echoes Santoyo's (1995) call for further investigation in this area. Merino Álvarez (2010: 358) observes that histories of Spanish theatre often neglect translated works in favour of native productions. Translations of foreign plays have traditionally been excluded from the national literary canon. However, translators are increasingly conscious of their own visibility and cultural significance, helping to shift this dynamic (Merino Álvarez 2010: 359). Merino (ibid.: 361) notes the increasing volume of studies on theatre translation but highlights the lack of theoretical frameworks that unify these works. In line with Lafarga's (1997) arguments, he stresses the need to create a history of translated theatre in Spain, which would involve compiling a comprehensive catalogue and contextualising these translations. Lastly, Vega Cernuda (2004) provides a brief analysis of the situation in Spain before the Civil War. He explains that the absence of intellectual property laws in the early 20th century led to frequent misattribution of translations as original works. For this reason, in 1925, the Society of Authors proposed a "tax of a certain percentage, which would benefit the Society" (*ibid.*: 518) to limit translation imports. Concerning theatrical translations, Vega points out that the most popular genre for importation was the one with the highest commercial potential: French vaudeville (*ibid.*: 518). This observation may explain why suffrage theatre remained untranslated: its focus on political and educational themes, rather than pure entertainment, likely reduced its appeal, given the uncertainty of its commercial viability.

The rise of British and American suffrage theatre (1900-1915) coincided with the reign of Alfonso XIII in Spain and, later, with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1930). During this period, some plays featuring the figure of the modern woman seeking greater independence were staged, although they took a moderate approach. The Second Republic introduced a greater openness to feminist ideas. María Lejárraga and Carlota O'Neill emerged as prominent playwrights of this time (Alonso Monedero 2017: 96-100; Arias Careaga 2009: 602). However, after women in Spain gained the right to vote, the need to stage works advocating for this right diminished, particularly in the politically charged manner seen in Anglophone performances. In the years that followed, interest in importing these plays waned, as the ideals of British feminist theatre clashed with the social conservatism of the Francoist dictatorship.

A preliminary database has been created to provide an initial overview of the translation of suffrage theatre in Spain. This database consists of selected playwrights based on the inclusion criteria of key authors and a minimum selection of twenty. This approach allows, on the one hand, the observation of whether the most significant texts have been translated, and on the other hand, the identification of trends, as a sufficiently extensive sample offers a comprehensive view of the current state of the matter. This corpus represents an initial sampling, which will be expanded in future research. To determine which playwrights played a more significant role, a search was conducted in anthologies and publications in the original language, such as those by Croft (2009), Stewart (2019), Carlson (2006), Mayhall (2006), Newey (2005), France (1993), and Hirshfield (1987), as well as in the works of Pacheco Costa (2018a; 2019; 2021). To include the most prominent playwrights, the selection expanded beyond a single country, incorporating British and American playwrights, and one Australian playwright. Additionally, the inclusion of two contemporary authors (Rebecca Lenkiewicz and Sally Sheringham) aims to explore whether greater interest in translating their relatively recent works exists. The aforementioned authors were selected based on their significance and recognition during their time, as well as their involvement in various

suffrage organisations. They represent half of the corpus (10) and include: Inez Bensusan, Alice Chapin, Cicely Hamilton, Beatrice Harraden, Bessie Hatton, Inez Milholland, Margaret Nevinson, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Elizabeth Robins, and Christopher St. John.

In line with Descriptive Translation Studies, Table 1 provides a preliminary analysis of the translation of this literature. It highlights the playwrights, their countries of origin, the most significant texts in the source language, and any translations in the target language, if available, along with their editions and accompanying paratexts. The texts *The Pot and the Kettle* and *How the Vote Was Won* are listed twice, as they were co-authored by Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St. John.

	Author	Country	ST	TT	Translator and edition
1	Bensusan, Inez	AUS	The Apple (1909)	–	–
			Perfect Ladies (1909)	–	–
			Nobody's Sweetheart (1911)	–	–
			The Prodigal Passes (1914)	–	–
2	Chapin, Alice	USA	At the Gates (1909)	En la verja (2018)	Verónica Pacheco Costa, *Teatro sufragista británico*
3	Cheever Thayer, Ella	USA	The Lords of Creation (1883)	–	–
4	Gerberding, Elizabeth	USA	Scissors or Swords	–	–

5	Glover, Evelyn	UK	Mrs Appleyard's Awakening (1911)	El despertar de la señorita Appleyard (2018)	Verónica Pacheco Costa, *Teatro sufragista británico*
			A Chat with Mrs Chicky (1912)	–	–
6	Hamilton, Cicely	UK	Diana of Dobson's (1908)	Diana de Dobson (2018)	Verónica Pacheco Costa, *Teatro sufragista británico*
			The Pot and the Kettle (1909)	La sartén y el cazo (2018)	Verónica Pacheco Costa, *Teatro sufragista británico*
			A Pageant of Great Women (1909)	Un desfile de grandes mujeres (2018)	Verónica Pacheco Costa, *Teatro sufragista británico*
			How The Vote Was Won (1909)	Cómo se ganó el voto (2018)	Verónica Pacheco Costa, *Teatro sufragista británico*
7	Harraden, Beatrice	UK	Lady Geraldine's Speech (1909)	El discurso de Lady Geraldine (2018)	Verónica Pacheco Costa, *Teatro sufragista británico*
8	Hatton, Bessie	UK	Before Sunrise (1909)	–	–
9	Jenning, Gertrude	UK	A Woman's Influence (1910)	–	–

10	Lenkiewicz, Rebecca	UK	Her Naked Skin (2008)	–	–
11	Milholland, Inez	USA	If Women Voted (1911)	–	–
12	Nevinson, Margaret	UK	In The Workhouse (1911)	–	–
13	Nicholson, Miriam	USA	Help Us To Help Ourselves	–	–
14	Nightingale, Helen Margaret	UK	A Change of Tenant (1908)	–	–
15	Perkins Gilman, Charlotte	USA	Three Women (1911)	–	–
			The Ceaseless Struggle of Sex: A Dramatic View (1890)	–	–
			Something To Vote For (1911)	–	–
16	Phibbs, L. S.	UK	Jim's Leg (1911)	La pierna de Jim (2022)	Miguel Teruel Pozas
			The Mothers' Meeting (1913)	Reunión de madres (2022)	Miguel Teruel Pozas
17	Robins, Elizabeth	USA	Votes for Women! (1907)	–	–
18	Sheringham, Sally	UK	The Sound of Breaking Glass (2009)	–	–
19	Solomon, Selina	USA	The Girl From Colorado (1906)	–	–

20	St. John, Christopher Mary (Christabel Marshall)	UK	The Pot and the Kettle (1909)	La sartén y el cazo (2018)	Verónica Pacheco Costa, *Teatro sufragista británico*
			How The Vote Was Won (1909)	Cómo se ganó el voto (2018)	Verónica Pacheco Costa, *Teatro sufragista británico*
			The First Actress (1911)	–	–

Table 1. Presentation of the translation of the corpus of suffragist playwrights[1]

As shown, of the thirty selected texts, only nine have been translated into Spanish, representing less than one third (30%). This comes as no surprise, as Newey (2005: 157) points out, referencing the works of Evelyn Glover, which have not received sufficient academic attention despite their significance. Additionally, the works of contemporary authors Rebecca Lenkiewicz and Sally Sheringham remain untranslated into Spanish. Furthermore, it is notable that seven of the nine available translations come from the same work,[2] *Teatro sufragista británico* (2018), published by *Publicaciones de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España*, all translated by Verónica Pacheco Costa (2018b). The recent appearance of these translations is also significant, particularly when considering the publication dates of the original texts. These works have only been made available in Spanish more than a century after their initial release. A more detailed analysis of the translations will follow in Section 4.

1. This data was obtained by consulting the catalogues of the British Library and the Biblioteca Nacional de España, in addition to the publications previously mentioned.
2. The remaining translations, *Reunión de madres* and *La pierna de Jim* by L. S. Phibbs, were undertaken by Professor Teruel within the framework of a research project (AICO/2021/225). Both works remain unpublished but are currently in the process of publication. Nevertheless, they have already been performed. To examine the translation objectives and strategies employed, as well as the representations, an interview was conducted with Professor Teruel.

4. A proposal for the translation and recovery of suffragist theatre

Analysis of the preliminary corpus reveals a notable absence of translations of suffragist theatre. To provide a framework for the recovery of these texts and authors, particular attention has been given to the translation strategies suggested by Massardier-Kenney (1997), who reflects on the historical undervaluation of the feminine. To address this disparity, she proposes various translation methods aimed at increasing the visibility of women, both as authors and translators. These strategies can be classified into two categories: those focused on the author and those centred on the translator. Author-centred strategies include the strategy of recovery, which involves revising and expanding the literary canon by using translation to reintroduce neglected or censored female authors; the strategy of commentary, which relies on the paratext to emphasize the significance of the writer and explain the reasons behind the recovery of a particular text (such as its exclusion from the canon or prior censorship); and the strategy of resistance, which highlights the fact that the text is a translation, thereby ensuring that readers are aware of the circumstances surrounding its creation (such as its historical context, the author's situation, and other relevant factors). Translator-centred strategies also include the strategy of commentary, but with a focus on the translation process itself. In this case, the paratext is employed to elaborate on why a particular text was chosen for translation, the challenges faced during the process, and the reasoning behind specific translation decisions. Additionally, the strategy of using parallel texts encourages the translator to consult similar works in the target language, facilitating the reproduction of the style or genre of the original text. Lastly, the collaboration strategy involves working with other translators or with the author to enrich the translation process and ensure a more comprehensive approach.

In Pacheco Costa's translation of *Teatro sufragista británico* (2018b), a preface entitled "Ocho obras sufragistas británicas" is included. In this preface, the author-translator highlights the lack of scholarly attention given to female playwrights, noting that interest in their works did not emerge until the late 1970s. She also discusses the challenges faced by

female playwrights, particularly in a field dominated by men. Evidence of this is the tendency to use pseudonyms or remain anonymous (Pacheco Costa 2018a: 8). Additionally, the translator provides a brief overview of the suffrage movement in the United Kingdom and the characteristics of the theatre produced by the movement, referencing the various suffragist theatre organisations (AFL, WWSL, and *The Pioneer Players*). Pacheco emphasizes that all the works in the volume are unpublished in Spanish, marking their introduction to the target culture for the first time. She also outlines the thematic sections in which the volume is organised, grouping the works by content. The final play, *Cómo se ganó el voto*, includes a preface about the authors Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St. John, detailing how the play was written, performed, and translated into other languages. Lastly, brief biographies of each playwright are provided. We can identify author-centred and translator-centred strategies by following Massardier-Kenney's (1997) strategies. The latter are evident in the description of the thematic blocks, where the translator demonstrates an active role in deciding the order in which the texts are presented based on thematic criteria. Author-centred strategies are reflected in references to the status of the study of women's theatre and the historical context. The preface to *Cómo se ganó el voto* and the authors' biographies further contribute to raising awareness about the neglect of these playwrights and advocating for the value of their works. For these reasons, this translation reflects a clear feminist awareness.

Regarding the translation strategies employed in *Reunión de madres* and *La pierna de Jim*,[3] Professor Teruel emphasizes the importance of balancing fidelity to the original texts with accessibility and relevance for contem-

3. Both works by L. S. Phibbs were translated by Professor Teruel within the framework of the research project AICO/2021/225, funded by *Generalitat Valenciana*. The two plays were staged at the University of Valencia and subsequently published by its own *Servei de Publicacions* (Phibbs 2024a; 2024b). The first performance took place on 5 October 2022 at the Matilde Salvador Hall of La Nau Cultural Centre (UV), during the international conference *Women Staging and Restaging the Nineteenth Century*. The second was held on 7 March 2023 at the Palmireno Hall of the Faculty of Geography and History of the University of Valencia.

porary audiences. Following Toury's (1995) framework, the initial norm guiding the translation process involved negotiating between adequacy and acceptability. To achieve this balance, Teruel opted for a contemporary Spanish that preserves the cultural references embedded in the plays, thereby maintaining the historical and geographical specificity of the originals while fostering engagement among present-day readers. This approach simultaneously highlights the author's contribution and bridges the gap between source and target cultures. Teruel further outlines the objectives of the forthcoming edition, which adopts a primarily didactic orientation. Its principal aim consists in introducing these works to younger audiences, particularly students in the final years of secondary education. Accordingly, the paratext will serve an educational function: presenting the author and the suffragist theatre movement, while facilitating students' understanding of the plays. The edition will also include discussion prompts addressing key issues explored in the texts—such as feminism, labour inequalities, and motherhood—encouraging active reflection and fostering a sense of personal connection with the material. Moreover, the translations are intended for live performance in educational settings, such as secondary schools, thereby promoting greater visibility and accessibility. Rather than requiring audiences to seek out these works, the plays will be brought directly into spaces where younger generations can encounter and engage with them.

To advance the recovery of suffragist playwrights, this study advocates for the use of Massardier-Kenney's (1997) commentary strategy, directed towards both the author and the translator. The paratext should highlight the significance of the recovered works and the reasons for their historical marginalisation, justifying their present translation. The act of recovering these authors requires the translator to adopt an active role, making deliberate choices regarding which playwrights to translate and which strategies to implement, guided by feminist awareness. Consequently, the paratext should serve as a platform to underline the translator's cultural agency. Recovery efforts must also consider the translation norms followed throughout the process: the identity of the original work and its cultural

context should be preserved while ensuring accessibility to contemporary audiences. This balance, as Teruel argues, demands a natural and intelligible language capable of engaging a broader readership beyond strictly academic circles. Staging these plays represents a crucial element in their reception and dissemination. Performances must seek to connect with audiences, fostering a sense of relevance and identification, as this was one of the core purposes of the original texts. Their primary function was to inform and persuade; therefore, honouring their original spirit entails striving for productions that genuinely move and involve today's audiences.

5. Conclusions

The translation of suffragist theatre into Spanish remains an underexplored field. Despite the contributions of Pacheco Costa (2018a) and Teruel (Phibbs 2024a; 2024b), a significant number of playwrights still await recovery. Future efforts should not only expand the corpus but also assess the reception of these texts, both in publication (sales, media reviews, academic scholarship) and performance (audience engagement, critical response). The analysis of the few available translations has clarified the specific contexts and purposes underlying their production. This information proves crucial, as it reveals that the existence of these translations results from deliberate efforts to rescue and restore the value of forgotten works. The recent arrival of these translations and the translators' explicit feminist engagement attest to this intention. Both Pacheco's and Teruel's translations exemplify Massardier-Kenney's (1997) recovery strategy, particularly through their use of paratextual elements and careful reflection on the translation norms adapted to their intended audiences.

The marginalisation of suffragist playwrights can be attributed to several key factors. First, literary and political histories, largely constructed from a male perspective, systematically relegated women's contributions, including those of suffragists. Furthermore, a persistent undervaluation of feminist literature affected the reception of suffragist theatre: these works, primarily concerned with the struggle for suffrage and equal rights, were often dismissed as politically driven rather than artistically significant,

diminishing their inclusion in the literary canon (Park 1996: 450–452). Limited access to publishing and performance venues, combined with a critical establishment inclined to ignore or disparage their work, further contributed to their exclusion (Pacheco Costa 2018a: 17–18).

In Spain, under Franco's dictatorship, many feminist advances were dismantled, relegating suffragist writers to oblivion or disrepute. For decades, little effort was made to recover women's history and their cultural contributions, resulting in the loss of much of their work. Censorship stands out as a major factor explaining the absence of translations. As previous studies have shown (Zaragoza-Ninet 2008; 2023; Riba & Sanmartí 2018; Godayol 2017; 2020), Francoist censorship shaped much of Spain's twentieth-century translation history, particularly suppressing works that challenged the regime's ideology, such as those presenting alternative models of femininity at odds with Catholic tradition. Consequently, censorship constitutes a crucial element for understanding the importation—or lack thereof—of foreign works, offering insight into whether requests to translate these texts were made and how they were received. Analysing censorship archives sheds light on the regulatory frameworks governing translation policies of the time and allows this information to be made available to contemporary readers through paratextual elements. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that, under Francoist rule, publishers would have risked proposing the translation of English-language suffragist plays, which would explain the scarcity of censorship records related to these texts in the AGA (*Archivo General de la Administración*). In this regard, although direct prohibition cannot be established, the possibility of self-censorship—where publishers refrained from even requesting translations—must be seriously considered.

Although this study represents an initial step, it underscores the need for further research and emphasizes the importance of introducing these texts to students at high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels. The translations highlight the opportunity these works present for engaging younger audiences on crucial and contemporary issues such as gender equality, labour injustices, and motherhood. It is vital to raise awareness

of these plays, as doing so may stimulate interest from publishers and theatres, ultimately encouraging further translations and performances.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in historical feminist struggles, with feminist theatre experiencing a revival in the contemporary cultural landscape. This has included performances of suffragist stories, although the focus has generally been on more recent national or global struggles. Within the context of a renewed feminist movement, some Spanish theatre companies have staged works that address the history of women's suffrage. Notable examples include *El pecado mortal de Madame Campoamor*, directed by Mario Hernández and performed in 2021 at Teatro del Barrio (Madrid), and *Victoria viene a cenar*, written by Olga Mínguez, directed by Carmen Nieves, and currently staged at Teatros Luchana (Madrid) in 2024. The ongoing performances of such works suggest that the plays by the suffragist playwrights featured in our corpus could find a place within the Spanish theatre scene. It is our hope that this study will help bring greater visibility to this important chapter of Anglophone theatre history in Spain.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

ELISABET PÉREZ-HEREDIA holds a BA in Modern Languages and their Literatures, with a major in German and a minor in English, from the Universitat de València (2019). At the same university she also studied a Master's degree in Creative and Humanistic Translation (2023), focusing on Literary Translation. She is currently working on her doctoral thesis, while enrolled in the PhD programme in Language, Literature, Culture and its Applications at the Universitat de València, under the supervision of Dr. Gora Zaragoza-Ninet. Her main lines of research are feminist translation and the translation of anglophone women authors from the first half of the 20th century.

GORA ZARAGOZA-NINET is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and German at the University of Valencia (Spain). Her research focuses on feminist translation, the relationship between translation and censorship, and the translation and reception of 20th-century English female novelists. She has presented at national and international conferences and published books, book chapters, and articles in indexed journals. She has also been a visiting scholar at leading international research universities and has coordinated research projects in the fields of gender, translation, and censorship.

ELISABET PÉREZ-HEREDIA es graduada en Lenguas Modernas y sus Literaturas, en alemán e inglés, por la Universitat de València (2019). En la misma universidad también cursó el Máster en Traducción Creativa y Humanística (2023) con especialización en Traducción Literaria. Actualmente está realizando su tesis doctoral en el programa de doctorado

en Lenguas, Literaturas, Culturas y sus Aplicaciones de la Universitat de València, bajo la dirección de la Dra. Gora Zaragoza-Ninet. Sus principales líneas de investigación son la traducción feminista, y la traducción y recuperación de autoras anglófonas de la primera mitad del siglo XX.

GORA ZARAGOZA-NINET es Profesora Titular en el Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana de la Universitat de València. Su investigación se centra en el campo de la traducción feminista, traducción, género y censura y traducción al castellano de novelistas inglesas del siglo XX. Ha participado en congresos nacionales e internacionales, publicado libros, capítulos de libros y artículos en revistas indexadas. Ha realizado estancias de investigación en universidades internacionales de referencia y ha coordinado proyectos de investigación en el campo del género, la traducción y la censura.