

Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Paula Sanmartin

Department: Modern & Classical Languages & Literature

College: Arts & Humanities

Leave taken: ☒ Sabbatical ☐ Difference in Pay ☐ Professional Leave without Pay

Time Period: ☒ Fall 2021

☐ Spring

☐ Academic Year

☐ Other

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Post Sabbatical Report for Fall 2021

Section 1. Reporting the Success of the Leave

Accomplishments of the leave in relation to objectives/goals of the original proposal:

One of the objectives of my Sabbatical leave was to work on a prospectus for my book project entitled *Black Voices Matter: Black Characters and Truth-Telling in Cuban and Puerto Rican Foundational Fictions*, which I planned to submit to one of the several presses that had contacted me after I had given a conference presentation on this subject matter in Spring 2019. In addition, I intended to spend time working on a chapter I had been asked to submit for an edited collection on gender and nation in Hispanic literature. As I had just received the request for an abstract when I applied for Sabbatical leave and the editors were mentioning a tentative submission date of Spring 2021, I was expecting to be working on final revisions in Fall 2021. Finally, I planned to spend time collaborating with Dr. Samina Najmi from the Department on English, as the co-organizer of a conference on the late African-American writer and Fresno State alumni Sherley Ann Williams, to be held in 2022.

Black Voices Matter examines two novels and a novella by Cuban and Puerto Rican authors from the XIX and XX centuries that present black characters holding the truth that remains hidden to the main white protagonist of the story. My project focuses on the novels *Sab* (1841) by the Spanish-Cuban writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, and *Cecilia Valdés o la Loma del Ángel* (1882) by the exiled Cuban author Cirilo Villaverde, as well as the novella *Maldito amor* (1986), in which the Puerto Rican author Rosario Ferré writes about Puerto Rico at the turn of the twentieth century. Throughout the Fall 2021 semester I conducted research on articles, theses, and book chapters that analyzed the three texts I was working on for my prospectus. On the other hand, my work on the book chapter was closely related to the book prospectus, as it was a comparative study of *Maldito amor* and *Sweet Diamond Dust* - the latter is the English translation/version of the novella, also written by Ferré herself - focusing on the main mulatta figure in the novella as an allegorical representation of Eve, in a recreation of the myth of the original sin that revises the paradise lost imagery that permeates the novel written by a white male character within the novella. In Spring 2021, I was given a September 2021 deadline to turn in the book chapter. After presenting a first short 10-page draft in a May 2021 virtual conference, I gave a second presentation in an August 2021 virtual conference. Both conferences demonstrated that there was a strong scholarly interest on my discussion of the changes Ferré had made to the mulatta character's voice in her self-translation of her novella. In order to prove the dearth of critical studies on the changes I had discovered, my research on the chapter was very extensive, especially in regards to translation studies, and I submitted my chapter on October 2021. Scholars participating in the edited collection were asked to submit an abstract by September 30th for the NeMLA (North Eastern Modern Language Association) conference taking place in Baltimore in March 2022, and I submitted an abstract which was accepted for a presentation on my book chapter as part of a two-day panel organized by the book editors. I received effusively positive feedback on my chapter at the end of November, with editors only asking me to shorten the chapter a bit and turn it in by mid Spring semester 2022.

Gender and Nation in Contemporary Latin American and Iberian Cultures edited by Stephanie Mueller has been submitted to *Hispanic Issues* in April 2022. It includes my book

chapter entitled “Revising and Translating the National Allegory: Paradise Lost and the (Re)Construction of Black Female Identity in Rosario Ferré’s *Maldito amor* and *Sweet Diamond Dust*.”

Modifications, if any of the original proposal:

Though the original proposal has not been really been modified, finishing my book prospectus has ended up taking longer than I anticipated, mainly because of the extensive research that I had to undertake on translation studies for the book chapter I submitted for the edited collection on gender and nation, in order to develop my argument on the changes Rosario Ferré made to her self-translated text. Given that Ferré herself had never acknowledged and/or discussed changes to the mulatta character’s speech at the end of *Sweet Diamond Dust* when discussing her self-translation of *Maldito amor*, and the fact that these changes had gone unnoticed on the few comparative studies that I have been written (including several theses), it was crucial to learn more about translation theory before developing a consistent argument on the matter. This material was included in my book chapter, which ended up being 33-pages long with seven full pages of bibliographical information. Editors agreed on accepting a longer chapter in the edited collection, after pointing out the chapter’s quality and its being thoroughly researched.

Though the chapter analyzes the symbolism of the mulatta figure as (Black) Eve expelled from paradise, my research on the changes the author made to her self-translated text will be useful for my book project *Black Voices Matter*, which also focus on Ferré’s *Maldito amor* while exploring how Caribbean authors recognize the need to include black voices in national identity discourses in the Spanish Caribbean.

Goals of the original proposal that were not accomplished and the circumstances that originated which necessitated these modifications:

Despite the preliminary research on the three authors that form part of my book project *Black Voices Matter*, I did not finish the book prospectus during my leave, as I chose to put more focus on one of the authors, Rosario Ferré, in order to try to write a ground-breaking study of Ferré’s *Maldito amor* and *Sweet Diamond Dust* for the book chapter. The feedback I received after my two conference presentations in May and August allowed me to further understand the importance of developing a thoroughly researched argument when discussing my discoveries of never-before analyzed changes in Ferré’s self-translated version of *Maldito amor*. In addition to dedicating more time to the chapter, I submitted an abstract that was accepted for a presentation as part of a two-day panel organized by the book editors at the NeMLA international conference taking place in Baltimore in March 2022.

On the other hand, developing the conference project on Sherley Ann Williams was postponed. In March 2021 I was appointed as Resident Director for the CSUIP in Spain, and while working on my projects in Madrid last semester I took time to visit the CSUIP offices in Madrid and Granada in order to better prepare myself for my work next academic year. Through my communication with Dr. Najmi in the Fall, I was informed that she was going to be on leave in Spring 2022, and since next academic year 2022-2023 I will be working in Spain as Resident Director, conference planning will need to take place after my return.

Section 2. Benefits to the Researcher as a Faculty Member

Greater command of subject matter

I was brought to the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures to expand Caribbean studies as an area of study within the Department. My work during the Sabbatical leave has helped me this semester as I taught *Span 143: Introduction to Spanish American Literature* and especially the graduate seminar *Span 215: Hispanic Women Writers*.

Students in both courses read *Maldito amor*, and the best final essay by a graduate student in the course discussed the findings I had presented to my class after I had returned from participating at the NeMLA conference in March. Two of the main topics of the seminar were the concept of using silence as a tool and the need for (black)women's voices to be heard as part of national identity discourses, an issue that I focus on in my analysis not only of Ferré's text but of the fact that critics had not noticed and/or studied the added lines to the mulatta's final speech in *Sweet Diamond Dust*. These issues fully resonated with both male and female graduate students of predominantly Hispanic background in my seminar, as we discussed in class the difference audiences Ferré attempted to reach when writing in English and Spanish.

Shift in Areas of Academic Emphasis:

Having previously published (in English and Spanish) on African American and Afro-Caribbean women's writing, my latest research during my Sabbatical leave will allow me to continue to be immersed in comparative studies through a new lens emphasizing translation studies, and thus be able to participate in scholarly debates on this area.

On the other hand, through my participation in the two-day NeMLA panel with other scholars working on the topic of gender and nation, I am adding a new layer of research to my study of black women's writing in the Americas, that previously focused on the issues of motherhood and literary revisions of official historiography.

Improved organization of curricula:

After my Sabbatical leave, I made changes to my syllabi for *Span 143* and *Span 215*, in order to dedicate more time to studying *Maldito amor* in the last part of the semester. My having attended the conferences and having gotten feedback on how other scholars approached teaching the text, as well as my research on Ferré's changes in her self-translation of the text, allowed me to have a better understanding on the author's use of polyphonic voices in her novella, a topic that was thoroughly discussed with my students in class.

Moreover, Ferré's text was one of the texts included in the Caribbean question for the new version of the Comprehensive exam that students took in Spring 2022, and therefore I was able to use my research to help graduate students prepare for this culminating experience.

Section 3. Benefits to the University

My book chapter forms part of the increasing number of publications on Caribbean Cultural Studies that have achieved recognition in the last decades. Though it participates in some familiar trends and critical tendencies, it links together several subject matters and two texts written by the same author in different languages, in order to demonstrate new possibilities of research in comparative literature and translation studies. On the other hand, as mentioned by the book editors in email correspondence, my chapter's comparative study expands the current discussions around intersectional feminism. This research will be of benefit to the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, the College of Arts and Humanities and the University.

Department: In the last five years, the Department has been focused in expanding the area of translation studies within the Spanish section, and one of the problems we have encountered when trying to hire faculty in this area of specialization is the fact that a new tenured-track faculty member could feel the area is not supported by other professors' research within the Spanish section. Thus, my new contribution to literary translation studies demonstrates that expanding areas of studies as a faculty member is important so that professors can collaborate when their interests intersect, and they can also show students how different areas of interest such as literature and translation can be connected.

College: My research on the book chapter and on the book prospectus can be used by different Departments and in different areas of study such as African Studies, English Studies, Women's Studies, following the College's promotion of cross-departmental collaborations. In addition, presenting my research in several conferences also contributes to promote the extraordinary research done in the College of Arts and Humanities. In this sense, after my participation at the NeMLA international congress in March, a Princeton faculty member that participated in the panel with me, has contacted me twice to be part of panels in two future international congresses. Moreover, material on the late Afro-Cuban author Georgina Herrera that I used in my book chapter will be helpful when I write the essay I have been asked to submit in November 2022 as one of the contributors for the *Afro-Hispanic Review* issue in honor of Herrera that is being edited and prepared by Dr. Juanamaría Cordones Cook.

University:

Through my presentations in May 2021 at the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) 2021 39th annual international congress (I was also panel organizer) and in August 2021 at the 13th biennial international/interdisciplinary Research Conference of the Afro-Latin American Research Association (ALARA), where I presented two preliminary drafts of my chapter, I was able to introduce my work to scholars all across the States, Latin America and Europe. Having been able to present my finalized book chapter in a two-day panel at NeMLA 53th annual convention in March 2022 further allowed me to share my research with scholars around the globe. These contributions benefit Fresno State's promotion as both a teaching and a research institution.

Section 4. Original Proposal

See attached copy of the original proposal.

Section 5.

It was discussed with the Department Chair in Spring 2022 that I presented my research during the Sabbatical leave through my participation in the NeMLA conference. In addition, after my return from the conference I discussed my book chapter with my students in the graduate seminar *Span 215: Hispanic Women Writers*.

Please see attached appendices for:

- Appendix Report 1. Emails from Editors, *Gender and Nation in Contemporary Latin American and Iberian Cultures*
- Appendix Report 2. First page of book chapter with chapter abstract
- Appendix Report 3. Conference LASA, May 2021

- Appendix Report 4. Conference ALARA, August 2021
- Appendix Report 5. Conference NeMLA, March 2022
- Appendix Report 6. Volume submission to *Hispanic Issues*