

Submitted to the Office of Vice  
President of Academic Affairs  
Arkansas Tech University

FINAL WRITTEN REPORT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Louise Penny's Art for "Those Who Believe in  
Something Undefined and Unrestricted to a Church"

November 8, 2018

This final report describes the results of a professional research project funded by an ATU Professional Development Grant, following instructions provided by the Guidelines for Professional Development Grants.

**RESTATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT  
OPPORTUNITY AND RESEARCH TOPIC:**

I needed funding to attend the 2017 “Captivating Criminality 4: Crime Fiction: Detection, Public and Private, Past and Present” conference in Corsham Court, England, from June 29 – July 1, 2017. The conference was hosted by Bath Spa University. This paper represents a new direction in my research. For the last 10 years I have focused on various aspects of the Gothic. My approach to the Gothic tradition has focused on key tropes, systems of imagery, supernatural “props” and haunted spaces within American, Canadian and British Gothic fiction, including such authors as Margaret Atwood, George du Maurier, Judith Hawkes, Dorothy Macardle, and Shirley Jackson.

However, in the last five years I have been able to teach several on-line seminars in canonical detective fiction, and the research I did to prepare for these classes encouraged me to branch out and continue to study detective fiction. Detective

fiction is an important offshoot of the Gothic, and increasingly scholars are studying its varying trends and taking it seriously as a field of literary study, as witnessed by the numerous national and international conferences devoted to this field.

For the last two years I have been immersing myself in the theory of detective fiction and, as a way of entering this new field, meeting its scholars and beginning to publish, I submitted a proposal on Canadian detective novelist Louise Penny to this conference, one of the premier international conferences on crime fiction.

### **BRIEF REVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY AND RESEARCH:**

I attended the conference and received criticisms that enabled me to plan to convert the paper into a full-length essay to be submitted to the upcoming second issue of *Studies in Crime Writing*, published by Newberry College. *Studies in Crime Writing* is a peer-reviewed, open-access online scholarly journal. Currently, I am finishing a 25-page article expanding the conference paper to meet the journal's January 2019 deadline.

### **SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES:**

I plan to submit this expanded article to *Studies in Crime Writing* in January 2019 for possible acceptance to their second issue.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Since Louise Penny is an exceptional and prolific writer of detective fiction with sophisticated literary techniques, I hope to follow up the above article with conference proposals next year that will focus on her inventive, postmodern adaptation of Margaret Atwood's poetry collection *Morning in the Burned House* (1996).