

Final Written Report  
Professional Development Grant

“Marginalized Characters after the Spanish Civil War in the Short Stories of Ana María Matute”

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This final report addresses the results of a professional enhancement project funded in part by an ATU Professional Development Grant. This report follows the instructions provided in the Guidelines for Professional Development Grants.

- A. Title Page (see above)
  
- B. Restatement of Professional Enhancement Opportunity

Abstract of conference paper presented:

My research and presentation explore the lives and conflicts of marginalized anti-heroes in the Spanish short stories of the contemporary Spanish author, Ana Maria Matute, who wrote stories of the hardships and suffering of many of the victims in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War. In a comparative analysis of four of her most well-known stories, "El árbol de oro," "Rafael," "El pecado de omisión," and "La conciencia," I reveal how the author incorporated social criticism beneath the surface of her fiction in order to avoid censorship that existed under General Francisco Franco's Fascist regime from 1939-1975. By applying the literary criticism of the Russian Formalists' *defamiliarization* of depicting the ordinary in poetic and abstract terms and Bertolt Brecht's dramatic alienation techniques of distancing the reader from the text through historical perspectives, I render a new interpretation of her short stories in order to portray how the author is able to transcend the dreary lives of her characters to inspire hope for freedom for future generations in Spain. Although many intellectuals were executed, exiled, or imprisoned, Ana Maria Matute persevered by indirectly condemning

the underlying social conditions in Spain through her portrayals of the characters through the eyes of the victims in the guise of young children, the handicapped, and poor women. In my study of Matute's stories in light of this literary criticism, I underscore how the underdogs in these narrations cope with the harsh realities of post-wartime Spain and ultimately survive the injustices of the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War and transcend the isolating effects of the Spanish dictatorship.

#### C. Brief Review of Professional Enhancement Opportunity

I attended the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual South Central Modern Language Conference in San Antonio, Texas. I flew out of Little Rock on November 7, 2012, and I presented my paper entitled "Marginalized Characters after the Spanish Civil War in the Short Stories of Ana María Matute" on November 8, 2012 in the Spanish II Session: Spanish Literature After 1700. I also attended many literary sessions and the presentation by the keynote speaker of the conference as well as gathering new material for my classes and meeting with other professors from the region. At the end of this very informative conference, I returned to Russellville on November 11, 2012.

#### D. Summary of Experiences

At the conference, my paper was well received in the Spanish session and led to a panel discussion with many distinguished professors of Spanish from diverse universities such as Baylor, Louisiana Tech University, and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville to name a few. All in all, I benefited greatly from the comments and observations from the other professors who attended the session, and I was able to glean new ideas from the presentations and sessions that I attended as well. This conference proved to be a very valuable experience in allowing me to develop my expertise in nineteenth and twentieth-century Spanish literature and culture. The knowledge that I gained at this conference will allow me to enhance the learning experiences of my students in these areas.

#### E. Conclusions and Recommendations

In addition to receiving positive feedback in regard to my paper and making valuable connections for future publication and scholarship at the South Central Modern Language Association, I was able to attend other literary sessions related to my fields of study. Currently, I am in the process of sending my partial rough draft to the publisher at Edwin Mellen Press, and I am looking forward to pursuing my research and writing as I anticipate finishing my book for publication. I am very grateful to the committee for awarding me the funds that helped to make my trip to the conference possible, and I will continue to use the material from my

research not only for my future writing project but for background material for my classes as well.

Thank you for your support.

Copies to: Dr. Carl Brucker, Department Head, English and World Languages

Dr. Micheal Tarver, Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

Dr. John Watson, Vice-president, Academic Affairs



