

Final Written Report
Professional Development Grant

The Transformative Traditions of Saint John's Day in Alejandro Casona's *La Dama de Alba*

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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 presentation explores the obstacles that Alejandro Casona had to overcome during the aftermath of the post-war period of the Spanish Civil War when Spain was under the dictatorship and censorship (1939-1975) of the Fascist regime of General Francisco Franco. The playwright delves into the area of folklore to reinforce the traditional and regional values of Spain during a time when Franco forbade the use of regional dialects and many cultural celebrations as he sought to consolidate Spain under his authoritative control. I examine the folkloric traditions that form the backdrop of the drama which takes place during the celebration of the day of San Juan in Asturias in northern Spain. Traditionally, this is the longest day of the year and the time of courtship for the locals. The playwright blends both the religious and symbolic rituals of baptism with pagan bonfires and Celtic traditions. The legend of San Diego suggests rebirth for the realistic and mythical characters who portray the enactment of pilgrims who traveled the road to Santiago de Compostela in search of miracles. In essence, Casona continues the quest for a new Spain through his depiction of the magical customs of the regions as well as defying the oppressive spirit of dictatorship that hovered over the peasants during this period of history in Spain when many people had to hide their dialects, legends, and local customs.

C. Brief Review of Professional Enhancement Opportunity

I attended the 72nd Annual South Central Modern Language Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, from October 31 – November 4, 2015, and I presented my paper entitled “The Transformative Traditions of Saint John’s Day in Alejandro Casona’s *La Dama de Alba*” on November 1, 2015 in the Spanish in the Folklore Session at the 72nd Annual Conference of the South Central Modern Language Association. I also attended many literary sessions as well as the presentation by the keynote speaker of the conference where I gathered new material for my classes. In this very informative conference, I met many professors from different regions, and I discussed their research interests and plans for the upcoming SCMLA Conference which will take place in Dallas, Texas.

D. Summary of Experiences

At the conference, my paper was well received in the folklore session and led to a panel discussion with many distinguished professors of languages from diverse universities such as Baylor, Louisiana Tech University, Louisiana State University, and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville to name a few. I also presided over the Spanish II Session of Spanish Literature after 1700 in which I served as chair. All in all, I benefited greatly from the commentaries 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. This conference proved to be a very valuable experience by allowing me to develop my expertise in nineteenth and twentieth-

Century - Spanish literature and culture. The knowledge that I gained at this conference will enable 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. At the conference, I also served as chair of the 2015 Spanish II Session of Spanish Literature after 1700. Currently, I am in the process of pursuing my research and writing in my field of post-war Spanish literature. 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 of Spanish Short Stories, Spanish Literature, and Spanish Culture and Civilization.

Thank you for your support.

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

Dr. Jeff Woods, Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

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