

Research Proposal

Title – The Impact of Theistic Existentialism in the Poetry of Antonio Machado

Program of Study – Spanish

Presentation Type – **Oral: textual investigation**

Mentor and Mentor Email - Dr. Andrew Milacci (afmilacci@liberty.edu)

Student name and email – Kayla Hamlin (Khamlin@liberty.edu)

Category: Textual

ABSTRACT: This presentation examines the influence of existentialism and religious thought on the poetry of Spanish Generation '98 writer and philosopher Antonio Machado. Machado studied in Paris with Henri Bergson and wrote poetry, essays, and plays with spiritual and existential themes. (Friedman et. al 211). The generation of (18)98 was movement of Spanish thinkers responding to the crisis of losing Spanish territories in the Spanish-American war, in effort to develop a new identity. During this period, many writers took a modernist approach (“Sociólogos contra...”); Machado, However, was ahead of his time and appeared to have taken a theistic existential approach that we might say foreshadows postmodernism. This presentation defines theistic existentialism as an existence before essence mentality, that does not preclude the need for God. We use theistic existentialism to analyze “Proverbios y cantares: XXIX” in which Machado addresses the reader, urging him to make his own path in life by walking forward. While the reader can see the path he has created over time, he must never return there. Thus, the reader must walk a path that doesn’t really exist, unless he makes it exist by walking forward. The theistic existentialist view of the poem helps the reader uncover subtleties that he or she may not have noticed otherwise. In short, “Proverbios y cantares: XXIX” reflects the tension between Machado’s draw toward existentialism and his fascination with religious symbolism

by addressing the reader, attempting to define existence, and making religious allusions through the title; at the same time, it foresees a postmodern relativistic future.

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