



**Project Title:** “*Desencanto y emigración: identidades raciales y étnicas en la obra de Nicasio Pajares*” **presented at the XIV Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispánica, Córdoba, Argentina**

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## **B. Restatement of problem researched or creative activity**

I presented a paper entitled “*Desencanto y emigración: identidades raciales y étnicas en la obra de Nicasio Pajares*” at the XIV Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispánica in Córdoba, Argentina. This project looks at the literary production of Nicasio Pajares, a Galician journalist and novelist who emigrated to the Southern Cone by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at the peak of the migration movement to America.

Among Spaniards, at the time, the subject of emigration to America had, more often than not, supporters at the intellectual level and detractors at the state level. While there seems to be a more consistent consensus among politicians, the intellectuals were more divided in their opinions due to their political points of view, social situations, and geographic origin. Between 1857 and 1958, Italy and Spain were the main sources of immigrants to Argentina, accounting for 46 and 33 percent, respectively, of the total. Galicia made up 70 percent of the Spanish emigrating in pursuit of a better life, making not only a demographic impact, but a cultural and social one.

In a country not foreign to racism, which had been structured to place immigrants of Spanish, Italian, and Jewish origin in an undesirable category, different terms and behaviors have spread to discriminate against certain portions of the population, in particular against those who are referred to as *negros*, *gallegos*, *rusos*, *indios*, and *gringos*. Even though not particularly well-defined in Argentina, the terms are sometimes used with a racist subtext, and tone to spread racist, xenophobic, and spiteful sentiments and attitudes against immigrants.

While it is quite common to find this undertone among Argentinean writers, it is interesting to find a Galician author reproducing this discriminatory and xenophobic sentiment in *El pensador de la selva. La indiada, la negrada y la gringada de las repúblicas del Plata* (1925), and *Cómo pervirtieron a Palleiros* (1931). In these two novels, Pajares discriminates against certain portions of the population, including the Argentinian creoles, reproducing the euro-racism discourse prevalent at a time in which racial supremacy was accepted as an anthropological theory.

### **C. Brief review of the research procedure utilized**

I have been working on the literary production of Spanish authors, from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, on the topic of emigration for a year. This is the second Galician author I am working at the present. There is only one Spanish researcher that had published a general overview of Nicasio Pajares work, but my research is a detailed study of three of the Galician author's books from an ethnic and racial point of view.

### **D. Summary of findings**

“White racism” as a domination practice or abuse of power of one group over other groups, although present, it is not overpowering in the work of the Galician writer Nicasio Pajares, who focused more on constructed differences of ethnicity, appearance, origin, culture and/or language (van Dijk 2005: 2), with the conscious objective of exposing unfinished business from the Conquest times, and to denounce discriminatory practices and stereotypes suffered by the Galician immigrant community in Uruguay and Argentina at the turn of the Twentieth Century.

With his satiric and acute pen, our author creates characters that enjoy a life of leisure and absurd adventures of romantic and territorial conquest, leaving us with a narrative of painful uprooting, and lack of adaptation, not as a result of the inhospitable American environment, such as the author's initial intention, but due to the characters' free will, and innate nature.

### **E. Conclusions and recommendations**

When I presented the paper at the XIV Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispánica in Córdoba, Argentina, I met Dr. Docinda Alvite, a Galician scholar, who invited me to participate at the XI Congreso da la Asociación Internacional de Estudos Galegos in Buenos Aires, Argentina on April 6–8, 2015. My proposal has been accepted to be part of *OS ESTUDOS GALEGOS ANTE O CAMBIO SOCIAL E CULTURAL: IDENTIDADES NA FRONTEIRA, EMIGRACIÓN E EXILIO*, where I will present the finished product of my research on this author. Despite of my initial intention of sending the article for publication, I currently intend to keep this material for a long-term project that will result in a book publication.

*Cited Work*

Van Dijk, Teun A. *Racism and Discourse in Spain and Latin America*. Barcelona: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2005.