



**Project Title:** *Transatlantic Discourses on Spanish Migration to South America*

Faculty Research Grant  
Final Report  
Fall 2013

**Dr. Alejandra Karina Carballo**

**School: Arts & Sciences**

**Department of English and World Languages**

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

During the era of massive transoceanic migrations more than four million Spaniards migrated to Spanish America between the mid nineteenth century and the first thirty years of the twentieth century. Global trends such as agricultural, industrial, liberal, demographic, and transportation revolutions in the early phases of capitalist modernization fostered in Spain a migration-prone situation that changed the country's socio-political landscape.

The literary world did not remain oblivious to those changes and the reactions started to permeate from contemporary authors, whose anti-emigration discourses emerged, describing migration as a national calamity, while shedding light on the strong bias of the Spanish elite toward this topic.

This mournful sentiment left its trace in most of the pre 1930 literary production on emigration, blaming it not only for having depleted the nation's labor supply, but also of having threatened the Motherland's morals. In this part of the project, I will analyze and compare the degree of variation and the approach of contemporary authors to the emigration discourse as portrayed on the basis of socio-political, gender, and eugenics views that underpin official concerns on "the emigration problem."

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

This project looked at the literary and socio-political discourses of emigration across the Atlantic between 1880 and 1935 in primary sources such as novels and plays, and supporting sources of newspapers publications, international agreements, and conferences proceedings published in Spain. I started my research in Spain at the University of Alicante, where I worked during six days at different libraries on campus. My major work there was done at the library of "Filología y Letras" but I also consulted materials at the School of Economics and School of Geography

libraries. Consulting books at this campus, allowed me to determine which books deserved my attention and which of them were worthy to acquire. I scanned or photographed some articles, and I started buying some books on a Spanish website that specializes in antique books. Copy right laws in Spain are very strict and I was not able to copy books, in spite of the fact that some of them were a hundred years old or more. Then, I travelled to Madrid where I worked at the National Library for three weeks at the main Reading Room and the Newspapers and Current Periodical reading room.

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

I have corroborated my original hypothesis, but most importantly I have found different approaches to follow. On the one hand, it is true that the literary world did not remain oblivious to the changes brought by the emigration of Spanish citizens to America, and consequently the reactions started to permeate from contemporary authors. According to my new findings, while there were authors who portrayed emigration as a national calamity, there were some who viewed the topic from a very different perspective I had not read or thought about. For example, José Costa Figueiras, a Galician author who emigrated with the purpose of recovering the glory of the Motherland in Argentina emphasizing the work of the intellectuals and members of the Spanish elite in America. For this author, this was “a second chance [for Spain] to conquer America” and considered Argentineans part “of a new race” with Spanish blood, the same one of the Conquistadores from the Fifteenth Century. I am working on two of his novels and another publication that consists of articles published while he was in Argentina. In these articles and novels he lays out the plan Spain should follow to achieve the spiritual re conquest of America, while mildly criticizing the massive Spanish emigration. Another author, Eduardo Zamacois,

portrays the Spanish on both sides of the spectrum, those who depart and those who stay, but are affected by emigration in very different ways.

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

Before going to Spain, my concern was that I only had the names of four possible primary sources for the research out of seventeen mentioned by José C. Moya. In his excellent work on Spanish immigrants in Buenos Aires, the historian only shares names of poems, plays, treaties and official documents, but he hardly names novels, which constitute the backbone of my research. Working in the regional libraries, I found access to articles I did not know existed, and by reading the bibliography published both in critical articles and literary publications, I was able to find ten more sources. I have been reading them while taking notes, and even though I am not writing any articles, at the moment I am analyzing the texts to produce an outline, which would guide me to write a book proposal.