
Christian Rubio. *Krausism and the Spanish Avant-garde: The Impact of Philosophy on National Culture*. Amherst, New York: Cambria, 2017.

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The nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth was a time of socio-political upheaval in Spain. The Iberian nation endured fundamental changes in its political landscape. The progressive loss of its empire, together with the internal political problems between liberal and conservative parties, shook Spanish national identity. Intellectuals and pundits acknowledged the ideological stagnation of society and were eager to find an ideological solution that would heal this wound: this solution was Krausism.

Karl Christian Krause is a German philosopher born in Eisenberg in 1781. Krausism “carried great significance” in Europe and Spain in the nineteenth century (xvii). During this time, Europeanization was emerging and Spain was not willing to be left behind. However, the influence of both ideologies—Krausism and Europeanization—on Spain has been object of debate among scholars. They disagree on the quality and the degree of that influence. While some scholars consider that Krausism played a pivotal role in shaping Spanish culture, others believe it faded away as fast as it appeared. Moreover, the concept of Europeanization in Spain has always been understood as the example that breaks the rule. It has been accepted that “the Iberian nation was an entity separate from Europe” (xix). This notion also led scholars to treat and analyze Spanish cultural production differently.

In his new book, Christian Rubio calls for a “realignment of the literature and arts from Spain” (xxi). *Krausim and the Spanish Avant-garde* is a comprehensive study that aims to illustrate the long-lasting effect that this German philosophy had on Spanish society by revisiting two key factors: educational reforms and aesthetical analysis. Rubio’s work underpins a groundbreaking understanding of the artistic and social movements of this era. Rather than separate them in different generations, Rubio entwines them together with the same guiding thread: Krausism.

Why did Krausism fit so well within the nation’s context? Spanish intellectuals sought an ideology that promoted individual and personal development without rejecting the deeply rooted Catholic mindset of the Spanish population. The Krausist’s paradigm could be adapted to those expectations because it claimed that humankind would reach its peak through a rational process in which individuals would discover “God and His manifestation in this world” (10). Although the means and tenets of Krausism remain fuzzily

presented in Rubio's text, the philosophy was a perfect match for Spanish needs and, within this spirit of improvement, intellectuals turned toward education to achieve their goals.

In 1876, Francisco Giner de los Ríos, a convinced and committed Krausist, became the leader of the Spanish educational revolution by founding "La Institución Libre de Enseñanza" (Free Institute of Education) (ILE). His aim was to "change the mindset of people . . . foster[ing] an environment in which a secular education would be imparted . . . promot[ing] the same harmony of humanity Krause had advocated" (29). Giner and his followers developed an innovative curriculum that included for the first time physical education and health, field trips, and aesthetics. They were also fierce defenders of intuitive education, rather than mere instruction, and launched projects that would create a fruitful cultural environment, such as "La Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios" (the Council for the Extension of Studies) (JAE) and "la Residencia de Estudiantes" (the Students' Residence).

Among this affluence of new ideas, two opposing stances appeared: the traditionalists and the trailblazers. Their presentation in the text is somewhat unbalanced and digressive; however, the indispensable concepts remain discernible. The traditionalist view, exemplified by Miguel de Unamuno and Ángel Ganivet, was hesitant about breaking with old traditions and opening the nation's borders to new ideas. In contrast, the trailblazers appealed for breaking from old traditions and restructuring Spanish society, mirroring other European countries. Ramiro de Maetzu and Joaquin Costa strove for improving the Spanish legal system, and figures such as Ortega y Gasset and Ramón Gómez de la Serna did the same through their philosophical and literary production. However, Rubio argues that the connection between all these perspectives and the avant-garde has been overlooked because the Krausist understanding of aesthetics was underappreciated. Avant-garde movements were based on challenging the status quo and freeing the artists' inner thoughts, while Krausism advocated for using art as means of individual realization, making crystal clear the ties between ILE's educational revolution, Krausist aesthetic views, and avant-garde principles.

As its final point, *Krausism and the Spanish Avant-garde* shows the effect that the German philosophy had on women's progress. Despite the fresh air brought by Krausism and Europeanization, women's roles within society were much more constricted than that of their male counterparts. However, ILE's educational revolution became "a springboard for some of the major advances for women" (135). Progressive projects—such as La Asociación para la Enseñanza de la Mujer (the Association for the education of Women) and the Residencia de Señoritas (the Residence for Girls)—nurtured a new generation of female intellectuals who would challenge the status quo. The

plays of Rosario de Acuña and the articles of Carmen Burgos challenged social standards and Catholic dogma. Acuña did so by revolutionizing female roles in Spanish theatre, while Burgos fiercely advocated for the legalization of divorce. Both women were heirs of Krausism and, most importantly, strove for women's equality.

To conclude, *Krausism and the Spanish Avant-garde* constitutes an innovative study that confronts the traditional understanding of culture in Spain during the turn of twentieth century. Rubio's new approach to Spanish cultural studies fits better within the European context because the author places Spain on the same level as other countries, rather than separating it from the rest of the continent. Rubio demonstrates that Krausism and its evolution within the Spanish cultural landscape effectively invigorated and reshaped national culture. Even though the book contains occasional convoluted philosophical digressions and some far-fetched arguments, its train of thought is overall quite self-explanatory and can be followed easily. Still, Rubio's work provides a new thread of discussion in Spanish cultural studies and illustrates the need to revisit traditional understandings of the field.

Darlene J. Sadlier. *The Portuguese-Speaking Diaspora: Seven Centuries of Literature and Arts*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2016. 314p.

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In *The Portuguese-Speaking Diaspora: Seven Centuries of Literature and Arts*, Darlene J. Sadlier makes a concerted effort to cover seven centuries and several continents of literary and artistic works from the Lusophone diaspora. This richly documented study provides an account of topics ranging from the Portuguese imperial project, the diaspora, race in Africa, Casa dos Estudantes do Império, Lusotropicalism, and Africa in the global economy.

Sadlier compares and contrasts different perspectives on the imperial enterprise. Through a close analysis of a wide range of literary texts, archival documents and the works of local artisans, she discusses the impact of the Portuguese presence in Africa. Taking as a point of departure *Os Lusíadas*, an epic poem written by Luis Camões, Sadlier shows how the praised images of discovery of new lands, peoples and riches were increasingly conflated with the images of corruption, failure, moral decline, and loss. In addressing iconic images produced by artists in Africa, the chapter points to the ways the expanding empire produced a hybrid culture that drew inspiration from Portugal and its colonies.

Sadlier next explores varied perspectives on slavery in nine-