

Kant in Spanish Liberalism. On Translatory Dimensions of Pre-Krausist Cultural Exchange between Germany and Spain (1812–1823)

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RESÜMEE

Die Studie behandelt die Rezeption der kritischen Philosophie Immanuel Kants (1724–1804) im frühliberalen Spanien in der Zeit von der Verfassung von Cadiz 1812 bis zum so genannten Trienio liberal (1820–1823). Der Untersuchungsrahmen bezieht sich zunächst auf die diskursiven Einschläge, die in renommierten spanischen Zeitungen und Chroniken bis in die erste Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts in Bezug auf Kant nachweisbar sind. Dazu gehören u. a. *Mercurio de España* (1784–1830), *Crónica científica literaria* (1817–1820) und *El Español* (1835–1848). Der zweite Untersuchungsschwerpunkt bildet die Rezeption der kritischen Philosophie Kants durch den spanischen Juristen und Übersetzer Toribio Nuñez Sesse (1766–1834). Dessen Fassung des Kantischen Kritizismus wurde offensichtlich entscheidend durch die Übersetzung Kants durch den deutsch-französischen Kulturvermittler Charles de Villers (1765–1815) beeinflusst, der als Ordinarius für Philosophie seit 1811 in Göttingen lehrte. Die in der vorliegenden Studie durchgeführte Untersuchung legt nahe, die Rezeption Kants im frühliberalen Spanien als hybride Fusion von zwei trilateralen Transferprozessen zu verstehen.

1. Introduction

The German idealist philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) embodied, without any doubt, a decisive renewal and modernization of philosophy and science as well as of political and social theory in modern history. Notwithstanding, his impact in Europe and the numerous cases of European reception of transcendental criticism have been inves-

tigated only in an introductory manner.¹ In contrast to the more systematically studied influence of Kant in Germany during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,² there has been very little research on the multiple cases of reception of Kant among European nations. Unfortunately, the scientific analysis of the reception of Kant in Spain and the Hispanic world have been neglected. In fact, one must speak of a significant absence regarding transnational approaches to this matter.³

In 1991, for instance, François Azouvi and Dominique Bourel published a very general introduction for the early French reception of Kant in the circle of Prussian Huguenots and Germanophile French enlightened thinkers at the turn of the century such as Louis-Frédéric Ancillon (1740–1814) or the historian and philologist Charles-Claude Fauriel (1772–1844).⁴ Besides these aspects of the reception of Kant in France,⁵ other studies from the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century have investigated the early influence of Kant in England and Ireland.⁶ Nevertheless, the worldwide reception of Kantian philosophy – for example in Italy, Portugal, Greece, or in Eastern Europe, Japan, China, India, and the USA – has only been analysed in a very descriptive way,⁷

- 1 Cf. T. Bruns, *Kant et l'Europe. Etude critique de l'interprétation et de l'influence de la pensée internationale kantienne*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Saarbrücken 1973.
- 2 Cf., for instance, B. Ludwig, *Kants Rechtslehre*, Hamburg 1988; M. P. Thompson (ed.), *John Locke und/and Immanuel Kant. Historische Rezeption und gegenwärtige Relevanz*, Berlin 1991; W. Kersting, *Wohlgeordnete Freiheit. Immanuel Kants Rechts- und Staatsphilosophie*, Frankfurt a. M. 1993; E. W. Orth/H. Holzhey (eds.), *Neukantianismus. Perspektiven und Probleme*, Würzburg 1994; N. Hinske (ed.), *Der Aufbruch in den Kantianismus. Der Frühkantianismus an der Universität Jena von 1785–1800 und seine Vorgeschichte*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1995; H. F. Klemme et. al. (ed.), *Aufklärung und Interpretation. Studien zu Kants Philosophie und ihrem Umkreis*, Frankfurt a. M. 1999; S. Sedgwick (ed.), *The reception of Kant's Critical Philosophy – Fichte, Schelling and Hegel*, Cambridge 2000; D. Klippel, *Kant im Kontext. Der naturrechtliche Diskurs um 1800*, in: *Jahrbuch des Historischen Kollegs* (2001), 77–107; A. Kuhn, *Prolegomena zu einer Kant-Rezeption an deutschen Hochschulen 1789–1799*, in: S. Büttnei/G. Gönner/A. Esser (eds.), *Unendlichkeit und Selbstreferenz*, Würzburg 2002, 182–198.
- 3 Cf. W. Lutoslawski, *Kant in Spanien*, in: *Kant-Studien*, 1 (1896/97), 217–231; J. L. Molinuevo, *La recepción de Kant en España*, in: M. C. Florez/M. Alvarez (eds.), *Estudios sobre Kant y Hegel*, Salamanca 1982, 99–114; R. Fornet, *Anmerkungen zur Rezeptionsgeschichte Kants in Südamerika*, in: *Kant-Studien*, 75 (1984), 317–327; J. E. Dotti/H. Holz/H. Radermacher (eds.), *Kant in der Hispanidad*, Berlin 1988; O. Market, *Kant y la recepción de su obra hasta los albores del siglo XX*, in: *Anales del seminario de historia de la filosofía*, 7 (1989), 195–229; J. L. Villacañas Berlanga, *Kant en España: el neokantismo en el siglo XIX*, Madrid 2006.
- 4 Cf. J. Ferrari, *L'œuvre de Kant en France dans les dernières années du XVIIIe siècle*, in: *Les Études Philosophiques*, 4 (1981), 399–411; F. Azouvi/D. Bourel, *De Königsberg a Paris. La réception de Kant en France (1788–1804)*, Paris 1991 and J. Ferrari, *Kant, les Lumières et la Révolution française*, in: *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 104 (1992), 49–59.
- 5 Cf. R. Heinz, *Französische Kantinterpreten im 20. Jahrhundert*, Saarbrücken 1964; W. Schmaus, *Kant's Reception in France: Theories of the Categories in Academic Philosophy, Psychology, and Social Science*, in: *Perspectives on Science*, 11 (2003), pp. 3–34; J. Ferrari/M. Ruffing/R. Theis/M. Vollet (eds.), *Kant et la France – Kant und Frankreich*, Hildesheim 2005.
- 6 Cf. R. Wellek, *Immanuel Kant in England 1793–1838*, London 1931; G. U. Gabel, *Theses on Kant accepted on Higher Degrees by the Universities of Great Britain and Ireland 1905–1980*, in: *Kant-Studien*, 75 (1984), 375–378; M. Kühn, *Hamilton's Reading of Kant: A Chapter in the Early Scottish Reception of Kant's Thought*, in: G. MacDonald Ross/T. McWalter (ed.), *Kant and His Influence*, Bristol 1993, 315–347; G. Micheli, *The Early Reception of Kant's Thought in England*, in: *ibid.*, 202–312.
- 7 Cf. T. Kadowaki, *Kants Philosophie in Japan. Begegnungen zwischen zwei verschiedenen Denk-Kulturen*, in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch Görres-Gesellschaft*, 94 (1987), 155–161; G. N. Foggia, *Zwanzig Jahre italienische Kant-Rezeption (1968–1988): Ein Rückblick*, in: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 45 (1991), 619–632; H. Robinson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress*, vol. I, Milwaukee, 1995; A. Zink, *Andrej Belyjs*

even within more systematic approaches like the case studies on Kantian transfer to the Netherlands by the midst of the nineteenth century.⁸ Unsystematic scientific proceedings generally agree with the fact that Kant did not gain any substantial influence in Europe before the 1830s or even the 1840s. The famous lectures of Victor Cousin (1792–1867) on Kantian philosophy in 1820, for instance, were not published until 1842.

Especially from a historical point of view, Kant and his critical transcendentalism as well as his political philosophy must be understood as major factors of impact in the formation of liberalism in Europe in relation not only to the level of liberal key terms and arguments but also his significance in concrete reception processes, including specific semantic shifts and content transformations.⁹ Being so, unfortunately, contemporary European historians seem not to be quite familiar with the unique transnational dimension of the European transfer of Kant when it comes to analysing and explaining the “French predominance” in the genesis of the political and social model of modern “European liberalism,” including the semantic treasury of the unique political vocabulary. Nevertheless, some historians at least admit the “asymmetrical character” of the key translation processes that have developed the core of liberal ideas in Europe.¹⁰ This approach has also been discussed in regard to Spain and the Hispanic world as a “field of semantic battle” over the concept of liberalism.¹¹ Due to the historical forerun of the Napoleonic occupation, liberal thinkers in Spain as well as the early Spanish Constitution of Cádiz in 1812 were, in fact, intensively linked to English liberalism such as that promoted by famous masterminds like Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873).¹²

Rezeption der Philosophie Kants, Nietzsches und der Neukantianer, Doctoral Thesis University of Basel 1998; N. Motroschilowa, Kant in Russland. Bemerkungen zur Kant-Rezeption und -edition in Russland anlässlich des Projektes einer deutsch-russischen Ausgabe ausgewählter Werke Immanuel Kants, in: Kant-Studien. Philosophische Zeitschrift der Kant-Gesellschaft, 91 (2000), 73–96; F. Haney, Pavel Florenskij und Kant – Eine wichtige Seite der russischen Kant-Rezeption, in: Kant-Studien. Philosophische Zeitschrift der Kant-Gesellschaft, 92 (2001), 81–104; C. Piché (ed.), *Années, 1781–1801. Kant, critique de la raison pure, vingt ans de reception*, Paris 2002; G. Leyva, Notizen zur neueren Rezeption der kantischen Ethik in der angloamerikanischen Philosophie, in: Philosophische Rundschau, 49 (2002), 290–304; G. L. Partone, Das Gesicht des Götzen. Die italienischen Übersetzungen Kants im 19. Jahrhundert, in: Kant-Studien, 95 (2004), 470–504; L. Ribeiro dos Santos (ed.), *Kant em Portugal: 1974–2004*, Lisboa 2007.

8 Cf. R. M. Wielema, Die erste niederländische Kant-Rezeption 1786–1850, in: Kant-Studien, 79 (1988), 450–466; E.-O. Onnasch, Die erste Rezeption der Philosophie Immanuel Kants in den Niederlanden, in: W. Bryschinkin (ed.), *Kant zwischen West und Ost*, Kalingrad 2005, 105–116; E.-O. Onnasch, Immanuel Kants Philosophie in den Niederlanden 1785–1804, in: S. Dietzsch/L. Grimoni (eds.), *Kant der Europäer – Europäer über Kant*, Husum 2010, 70–96.

9 Cf., for instance, E.-M. Tschurennev, Die Rezeption von Kants politischem Denken im Liberalismus und in der Jeener Frühromantik, in: *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik*, 1 (1993), 255–261 and, especially, P. Guyer, Kantian Foundation for Liberalism, in: *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik*, 5 (1997), 121–140, again in: *id.*, *Kant on Freedom, Law and Happiness*, Cambridge 2000, 235–261.

10 Cf. J. Leonhard, Von der Wortimitation zur semantischen Integration. Übersetzung als Kulturtransfer, in: *Werkstatt* Geschichte, 48 (2008), 45–63, here 47ff. and with samples of asymmetric translations 56ff.

11 Cf. J. Fernández Sebastian, Liberales y liberalismo en España, 1810–1850: la forja de un concepto y la creación de una identidad política, in: *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 134 (2006), 125–176, here 138ff., 145ff. and 149–167; for recent studies see also D. Caro Cancela, *El primer liberalismo en Andalucía (1808–1868)*. Política, economía y sociabilidad. Cádiz 2005 and M. T. García Godoy, *Las Cortes de Cádiz y América. El primer vocabulario liberal español y mejicano (1810–1814)*, Sevilla 1998.

12 Cf. A. Timmermann, *Die gemäßigte Monarchie in der Verfassung von Cadix und das frühe liberale Verfassungs-*

The following analysis focuses on the impact of Kant in early Spanish liberalism during the period from the adaption of the Constitution of Cádiz until the end of the so-called Trienio Liberal (1820–1823). The investigation is divided into two parts: In order to set the contextual bases, the investigation outlines in the first part (2. The Impact of Kant in Spain since 1800) the general discursive echoes of Kant in Spanish newspapers and chronicles during the nineteenth century, for example in the *Mercurio de España* (1784–1830), the *Crónica científica literaria* (1817–1820), or *El Español* (1835–1848). In the second part (3. The Reception of Kant in Early Spanish Liberalism), the introductory frame of discursive analysis is linked to a reconstruction of the reception of Kantian criticism by the Spanish liberal lawyer and translator Toribio Nuñez Sesse (1766–1834). His version of Kantian critical philosophy was influenced decisively by the translation of Kant made previously by the Franco-German “cultural transfer agent” Charles de Villers (1765–1815), who held the chair of philosophy at the University of Göttingen since 1811. Lastly (4. Summary), the paper discusses the theoretical consequences that can be summed up from the Kantian impact in early Spanish liberalism regarding a logical constitutive access to cultural transfer processes in Europe.

2. The Impact of Kant in Spain since 1800

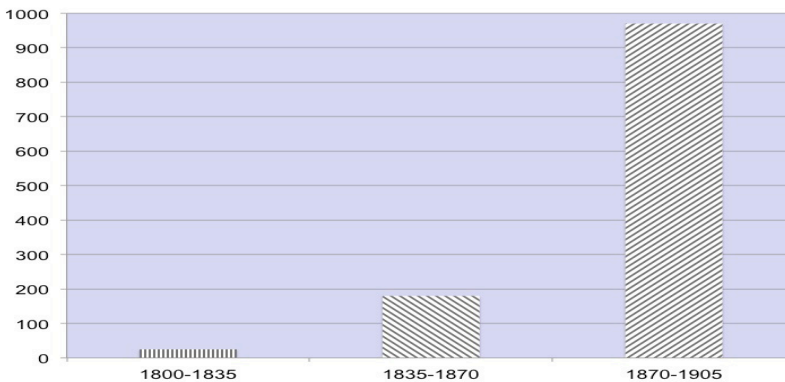
The reception of Kant in Spain during the nineteenth century can be basically divided into three periods: During the first period (1), until the 1830s, preliminary references and quotations generally began to appear without any further or distinctive information on critical philosophy. By the end of this first period, around the midst of the nineteenth century, Kant is being introduced into philosophical handbooks and dictionaries in a very general manner. During the second period (2), until the 1870s, philosophers and critics in Spain started a debate on transcendental philosophy, mainly polemic and related primarily to neo-Kantian philosophy in Germany. The Spanish discourse on Kant did in fact not deepen to include substantial details until the last two decades of the nineteenth century. That is to say, the intensity of reception did not reach levels of understanding before entering (3) the third period at the end of the century.

Contrary to the current state of investigation on the reception of Kant in Spain, which deals with four periods, a statistical analysis in representative newspapers, chronicles, and journals shows that these three different periods of references and quotations on Kant during the nineteenth century in Spain can be simplified and stated more precisely.¹³ It seems that within the course of the different episodes of Kant-related references in

denken in Spanien, Münster 2007; C. Brennecke, Von Cádiz nach London. Spanischer Liberalismus im Spannungsfeld von nationaler Selbstbestimmung, Internationalität und Exil (1820–1833), Göttingen 2010 and also J. Späth, Spanien als Vorbild für ein frühliberales Europa? Das Modell der Verfassung von Cádiz (1812), in: Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (2012) – URL: <http://www.europa.clío-online.de/2012/Article=557>.

13 The following enquiry is based on digital journals, chronicles and newspapers accessible through the webserver of the spanish “Hemeroteca Digital (BNE)” – <http://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/index.vm?q=id:0000182002&lang=es>

Spain, the development of the reception of transcendental philosophy in Spain did not become before the midst of the century quantitatively intense enough to be considered a substantial transfer process. A detailed analysis illustrates that the references to Kant between 1800 and 1835, for example in the famous *Mercurio de España* (1784–1830), did not exceed two quotations in 1801 and 1804. Even if Kant was mentioned up to nine times in other journals like *Memorial literario. Biblioteca periódica de ciencias, literatura y artes* (1801–1808) or the *Minerva. El Revisor general* (1806–1818), and, later on, in the *Crónica científica y literaria* (1817–1820), most of the illustrated journals in the beginning of the nineteenth century quoted Kant only one time in more than thirty years. In contrast, during the last period of references to Kant from the 1870s until 1905, the *Revista de España* (1868–1894), for instance, quoted Kant more than 453 times. As can be shown for the same period in the case of the *Revista Contemporánea* (1874–1904), which referred to Kant almost 500 times, there are in fact more sources and examples that underline the enormous difference from the early decades until the end of the century. During the last 20 years of the nineteenth century, even very royalist hardliners and the Catholic press, for example *La Ilustración Católica* (1877–1894), were expressly mentioning Kant, even though mostly negatively.



The particular development of the reception of Kant in Spain is obviously linked to the circumstance that the translations of Kantian works into Spanish started extremely late. Unlike the quick English translations of Kant's reflections on *Perpetual Peace* in 1795 and 1796 – which intensified the early reviews on Kantian principles, especially in English radical journals due to the immediate background of the political changes caused by the French Revolution – the translations into Spanish did not start before the 1870s. That is to say, the translations of Kantian works in Spain began after the famous neo-Kantian polemics, which correlated, simultaneously, with the start of a more substantial discourse of understanding of transcendental criticism. Fractional translations of Kantian *Metaphysics* and *Practical Philosophy* were undertaken in 1873 and 1877 by publishing houses such as Pérez or Saavedra y Novo, and re-edited in 1881 and 1907 with some general

introduction by the primary translator Antonio Zozaya y Jou (1859–1943),¹⁴ who had been, without any doubt, the most important translator for academic works on Kant in Spain until the 1930s.¹⁵

Due to this tremendous delay of translations, the breakthrough in a direct understanding of Kantian philosophy was postponed to a new generation of philosophers in Spain in the twentieth century.¹⁶ Even though, the very slowly growing academic studies on Kantian transcendental and practical philosophy in Spain remained basically until the 1930s in the tradition of an undisputed predominance of French textbooks and secondary sources on Kant. For instance, as can be proved in the case of the doctoral dissertation by Epifanio Lorda y Roig (n.d.), French philosophers like Jules Romain Barni (1818–1878) or historians of philosophy such as Victor Delbos (1862–1916), and also Plato specialists like Alfred Jules Émile Fouillée (1838–1912) played decisive roles in the Spanish understanding and reception of Kantian philosophy until the end of the first half of nineteenth century.¹⁷

Another particularity of the influence of Kant in Spain during the nineteenth century is related to the so-called neo-Kantian polemics during the second period of his reception. By looking closer at the processes of cultural exchange between Spain and Europe in the midst of the century, the transfer of German idealistic philosophy is a striking influence. This transfer process had a decisive impact on the further discourse of Spanish science and culture in general, including the reception of Kant in Spanish and Hispanic cultures.¹⁸ This German-Spanish cultural transfer was initiated through the unsystematic translations of some works of the almost unknown German idealist Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) by the Spanish philosopher Julian Sanz del Rio (1814–1869), who published two books on Krausian philosophy in 1860.¹⁹ As Sanz del Rio declared in an extensive article in 1854, taking up the chair of history of philosophy in Madrid, the reception of the German idealist Krause had been expressively instead of Kant. In his article published in the *Revista Española de Ambos Mundos*, Sanz del Rio compared

14 Cf. E. Díez-Canedo, En memoria de Antonio Zozaya, in: Desde el exilio. Artículos y reseñas críticas (1939–1944), Sevilla 2010, 571–574.

15 See I. Kant, *Crítica de la razón práctica*, translated by A. Zozaya, Madrid 1886/1907, 1908 and id., *Fundamentos de una metafísica de las costumbres*, translated by A. Zozaya, Madrid 1881, 1904.

16 Cf. C. A. Lemke Duque, *Europabild – Kulturwissenschaften – Staatsbegriff. Die Revista de Occidente (1923–1936) und der deutsch-spanische Kulturtransfer der Zwischenkriegszeit*, Frankfurt a. M. 2014, 221–240.

17 Cf. E. Lorda y Roig, *Principio y fundamento de la moral y el derecho según Kant*, Doctoral Thesis Central University of Madrid 24 March 1930.

18 See, for instance, T. Gil, *Immanuel Kant, K. C. F. Krause und J. Sanz Del Rio. Praktisches Interesse und Versittlichung in der Geschichts- und Gesellschaftsphilosophie*, in: J. E. Dotti/H. Holz/H. Rademacher (eds.), *Kant in der Hispanidad* (fn 3), 97–109; C. Stoetzer, *Karl Christian Friedrich Krause and his influence in the Hispanic world*, Cologne 1998 and T. Neuner, *Karl Krause (1781–1832) in der spanischsprachigen Welt: Spanien, Argentinien, Kuba, Leipzig 2004*.

19 With regard to the controversial state of play on the reception of Krause through Sanz del Rio, see J. Abellán, *Sobre la recepción de Krause en España: la continuidad del derecho natural tradicional*, in: M. A. Vega Cernuda/H. Wegener (eds.), *España y Alemania. Percepciones mutuas de cinco siglos de historia*, Madrid 2002, 131–144, here 137ff. and 143f. as well as E. M. Ureña, *Die Krause-Rezeption in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert. Philosophie – Religion – Staat*. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 2007.

Krause directly with Kant by describing him as a much more complete and universal philosopher due to his ability to finish and perfect the task of all philosophy as a highest synthetic and systematic science.²⁰

3. The Reception of Kant in Early Spanish Liberalism

With respect to the current state of investigation and the three periods of the reception of Kant in Spain during the nineteenth century, there is a basic unsolved question regarding early references and quotations until the general introduction of Kant into classical handbooks of philosophy: Why was the first contact and treatment by Spanish philosophers and critics with Kantian philosophy during the pre-Krausist era so weak and sporadic? It is in fact striking that introducing Kant into academic textbooks and dictionaries took more than fifty years and that the complete translation of the reflections on *Perpetual Peace*, for instance, more than one hundred years.

In order to answer this question, one must rely on the case of the Spanish lawyer, translator, and librarian Toribio Nuñez Sesse (1766–1834), who seems to have been the first and most important disseminator of Kantian philosophy in early Spanish liberalism.²¹ Nuñez Sesse is indeed an outstanding case of transfer because after having studied with the famous lawyer Ramón de Salas y Cortés (1753–1837) he had a substitute take his chair of humanities and canon law on several occasions during the first decade of the eighteenth century. Supported by the duchess of Alba, he was named director of the famous university library in Salamanca in 1812 and started immediately to participate in the programmatic political changes initiated by the liberals in Spain. His draft on a new Law of Public Instruction was presented officially to the parliament in 1814; however, it did not have any direct effect because after the return of King Ferdinand VII (1784–1833) he and other liberal politicians were forced to leave Spain in 1816.

Nuñez Sesse's draft on a programmatic reform of public instruction was finally published in 1820 after returning from Portuguese exile. Nuñez Sesse pointed out in the preamble the urgency of further modernization in Spain following liberal ideas, which, besides Kant, were expressly related to John Locke (1632–1704) and Isaac Newton (1643–1727). After his work and contribution in the restructuring of criminal law in Spain during the Trienio Liberal from 1820 to 1823, Nuñez Sesse was elected a member of parliament from 1822 until 1823 and, as well, a member in several special committees. However, his most important contribution consisted of two publications on Bentham²² emerging

20 Cf. J. Sanz del Río, *Biografías Comparadas: Kant – Krause*, in: *Revista Española de Ambos Mundos*, 2 (1854), 3–148, here 6.

21 Cf. R. Albares Albares, *Los primeros momentos de la recepción de Kant en España: Toribio Nunez Sesse (1766–1834)*, in: *El Basilisco*, 21 (1996), 31–33.

22 See *Espiritu de Bentham – Sistema de la ciencia social*. Ideado por el jurisconsulto inglés Jeremias Bentham y puesto en ejecución conforme a los principios del autor original por el Dr. D. Toribio Núñez, Salamanca, 1820 and *Principios de la ciencia social ó de las ciencias morales y políticas*. Por el Jurisconsulto inglés Jeremías Bentham, ordenados conforme al sistema del autor original y aplicados a la Constitución española por D. Toribio Nuñez,

from his years in exile. The publications turned him into one of the most significant early Spanish mediators of English utilitarianism next to the translation of his former teacher and mentor de Salas y Cortés, who had published an adapted version of Bentham's *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1780, published in 1789) translated from French and also printed at the Parisian Dumont Publishing House in 1821, and re-edited several times until 1838.²³

Spanish liberals had been taking part in the European reception of Benthamian utilitarianism mainly through French agents²⁴ and, in this relation, it seems that the strong anti-Kantian reception of Benthamism in idealistic lawyers in Germany like Friedrich Eduard Beneke (1798–1854) did not have any further effect on the influence of Bentham in Spain.²⁵ Within the wide spectrum of Benthamian impact on social and political thinking on European liberals,²⁶ recent studies on utilitarianism have critically pointed out the insuperable differences between Kantian and Benthamian ethical key concepts. Nevertheless, Kantian philosophy and Benthamian utilitarianism do share some common goals and arguments, especially regarding the establishment of an international peace order.²⁷

In the case of Spain, the predominance of French agents becomes even more clear bearing in mind what Nuñez Sesse confessed in a letter to Bentham at the beginning of the 1820s. According to his letter, his first contact with the Bentham books had actually been through the numerous French translations introduced to Spain by the Napoleonic army stopping in Salamanca on their way to Portugal in 1807. Furthermore, Nuñez Sesse also brought up that he had acquired not only contemporary French translations of the works of Bentham's but, as well, a "famous" French introduction to Kant, which in turn had a huge and decisive impact on his reception of Kantian philosophy. Nuñez Sesse's confessions confirm what current investigations have identified as a general background of Spanish intellectuals getting in touch with Kant at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the commentaries of the famous liberal economist and politician

Salamanca 1821.

23 See, furthermore, L. J. Bentham, *Tratados de legislación civil y penal. Obra extractada de los manuscritos del señor Jeremías Bentham por Estelan Dumont y traducida al castellano con comentarios por Ramón Salas con arreglo a la segunda edición revisada, corregida y aumentada*, Madrid 1821; J. Villanova y Jordán, *Aplicación de la panóptica de Jeremías Bentham*, Madrid 1834; F. Ferrer y Valls, *Principios de legislación y de codificación. Extractados de las obras del filósofo inglés Jeremías Bentham*, Madrid 1834.

24 Cf. C. S. Kenny, *A Spanish View of Bentham's Spanish Influence*, in: *Law Quarterly Review*, 11 (1895), 48–63; J. R. Dinwiddy, *Early-Nineteenth-Century Reactions to Benthamism*, in: B. Parekh (ed.), *Jeremy Bentham. Critical assessments*, 4 vols., Vol. I, London 1993, 255–276 and, lastly, E. de Champs/ J.-P. Cléro (eds.), *Bentham et la France. Fortune et infortunes de l'utilitarisme*, Oxford 2009, here especially the contributions on the nineteenth century, 151–224.

25 Cf., for example, W. Hofmann, *Politik des aufgeklärten Glücks. Jeremy Bentham's philosophisch-politisches Denken*, Berlin 2002, 49–59.

26 See, for example, L. J. Hume, *Jeremy Bentham and the Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Government*, in: B. Parekh (ed.), *Jeremy Bentham* (fn 23), vol. III, 820–835; F. Schoeman, *Bentham's Theory of Rights*, in: *ibid.*, 736–756.

27 Cf., particularly, S. Luik, *Die Rezeption Jeremy Bentham's in der deutschen Rechtswissenschaft*, Köln 2003, here 138–158; S. Splichal, *Bentham, Kant and the right to communicate*, in: *Critical Review. An Interdisciplinary Journal of Politics and Society*, 15 (2003), 285–307 and B. Jahn, *Mill, Kant und der liberale Internationalismus*, in: O. Asbach (ed.), *Vom Nutzen des Staates: Staatsverständnisse des klassischen Utilitarismus: Hume – Bentham – Mill*, Baden-Baden 2009, 249–268, here 255ff. and 263ff.

Ramón de la Sagra (1798–1871) in the *Crónica científica y literaria*, obviously the politically motivated polemic on Kant in France seems to have triggered his early but in any case extremely superficial approach to the German philosopher from Königsberg.²⁸

By expressly stating the key sources for his reception of Kantian philosophy in the letter to Bentham, Nuñez Sesse was referring to the French officer and philosopher Charles de Villers, who was by far the most important French mediator of Kant in early nineteenth century Europe. De Villers moved to Göttingen after the Terrors of the French Revolution in 1794 and stayed in Germany for the rest of his life. In 1811, he was appointed professor for philosophy at the University of Göttingen.²⁹ Besides his very critical reports on the French occupation in 1806, especially in northern Germany, and a prizewinning study in 1804 on the influence of reformation, his most significant contribution, however, was the study mentioned by Nuñez Sesse: *Philosophie de Kant, ou Principes fondamentaux de la philosophie transcendente* (1801). De Villers' main book on Kant rapidly spread, in fact, all over Europe and had a major impact on enlightened bourgeoisie as well as on liberal intellectuals and academics. Only two years after the first publication, the Vatican's *Congregatio pro Doctrina fidei* initiated a *delegation examines* and, finally, placed de Villers' reflections on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1805.³⁰ De Villers' introduction to Kant also reached England and Scotland and was, subsequently, re-edited in Utrecht in 1830.³¹

In order to understand correctly what kind of interpretation of the critical philosophy Nuñez Sesse was dealing with in the first decade of the nineteenth century, there are actually two very characteristic aspects in the adoption of Kantian philosophy developed in de Villers' key source.

In the first place, (a) de Villers apparently did not understand (nor reproduce in a correct manner) the core of the paradigmatic shift that Kant had introduced into modern science through the famous "Transcendental Deduction of the Principles of Reason" in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.³² Nevertheless, there had been several early positive reviews, especially in Germany, within the numerous reactions to de Villers' book on Kant. As the *Intelligenzblatt der Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* in January of 1802 announced, one of Kant's closest colleagues in Königsberg, the philosopher Friedrich Theodor Rink (1770–

28 Cf. the numbers 226, 227, 228, 229 of the *Crónica Científica y Literaria* (1819).

29 Cf. K. Cramer, Charles de Villers, in: K. Arndt/G. Gottschalk/R. Smend (eds.), *Göttinger Gelehrte. Die Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen in Bildnissen und Würdigungen 1751–2001*, vol. 1, Göttingen 2001, 100–101.

30 Cf. I. Tolomio, Le origini dell'antikantismo nella chiesa cattolica. La condanna della *Philosophie de Kant* di Charles Villers, in: *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, 3 (2001), 373–391.

31 Cf. C. de Villers, *Philosophie de Kant. Ou principes fondamentaux de la philosophie transcendente*, Metz 1801; Utrecht 1830ff., 2 vol.; Reprint: Brussels 1973 and also id., *Notice littéraire sur M. Kant et sur l'état de la métaphysique en Allemagne au moment où ce philosophe a commencé d'y faire sensation*, Paris 1798 as well as I. Kant, *Idée de ce que pourrait être une histoire universelle dans les vues d'un citoyen du monde*, translated by C. de Villers, s.l. 1798 and id., *Critique de la raison pure* (translated by C. de Villers), in: *Le Spectateurs du Nord*, 10 (1799), 4, pp. 1–36.

32 Cf. besides K. Vorländer, Villers Bericht an Napoléon über die Kantische Philosophie, in: *Kant-Studien*, 3 (1899), 1–9 and H. Klinghammer, *Die Kantauffassung Charles de Villers'*, Doctoral Thesis University of Königsberg, Elbing 1936, especially, R. A. Crowley, *Charles de Villers. Mediator and Comparatist*, Bern 1978, 56–90.

1821), was planning to translate de Villers' book into German. The book on Kant also found its way into the philosophical thinking of Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811).³³ At the same time, de Villers received a tremendous wave of highly polemic reviews in France, for example in *Le Moniteur*, *Le Mercure*, *Le Journal de Paris*, and, also, *Le Journal de Debats*. Within the more positive reactions in Germany and the generally polemic critique in France, the by far most significant philosophical review of de Villers' book was the extensive commentary of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854) published in the first edition of the *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, edited since 1802 in collaboration with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831).³⁴ In his review, Schelling claims and criticizes de Villers of a double reduction of Kantian criticism.³⁵ In the first place, he accuses him of merely *describing* Kantian philosophy, not explaining the peculiarly *Kantian* but the generally *philosophical* aspects of idealistic transcendentalism in an almost superficial manner. Furthermore, Schelling describes de Villers' book as a simplified exchange between dogmatism and empiricism that in the end defines Kantian criticism as, in fact, purely empiricist.

This strong critique of Schelling, to which de Villers replied by defending his understandings of Kant,³⁶ seems to have been the inspirational trigger for new international investigations that considered the French reception of Kantian philosophy in a prominent *longue durée* light of science in France and mainly determined by a reactivation of Cartesian psychological reductionism through the eclectic philosophy of Cousin until the early modern sociology of Émile Durkheim (1858–1917).³⁷ In fact, Schelling's critique of de Villers' *doubled reduction* corresponds with the results of recent investigations on the general character of the transfer of Kantian criticism to France. The interpretations given by important French civilian administrators like Joseph de Gérando (1772–1842) in his *Histoire comparée des Systèmes de Philosophie* (1804), for example, as well as by other famous representatives of French academia such as Maine de Biran (1766–1824) or, later on, by Paul Alexandre Janet (1823–1899) can be characterized as a psychological interpretation of Kant.³⁸ This kind of *resemanticization* of Kant's philosophy as a psychological critique of the human mind was obviously very far from Kantian transcendental deduction of the principles of reason.³⁹

33 Cf. U. Hansen, Grenzen der Erkenntnis und unmittelbare Schau. Heinrich von Kleists Kant-Krise und Charles de Villers, in: Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, 79 (2005), 433–471.

34 Cf. T. Leinkauf, Schelling als Interpret der philosophischen Tradition. Zur Rezeption und Transformation von Platon, Plotin, Aristoteles und Kant, Münster 1998 and J. Lambinet, La réception de Kant par Schelling, jusqu'en 1801, in: C. Piché (ed.), *Années, 1781–1801. Kant, critique de la raison pure, vingt ans de réception*, Paris 2002, 161–170.

35 Cf. F. Schelling, Villers Kant (Review), in: *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, 1 (1802), 69–93, here 74ff. and 78ff.

36 Cf. the correspondence between de Villers and Schelling, in: M. Isler (ed.), *Briefe Villers*, Hamburg 1879, 242–250.

37 Cf. W. Schmaus, *Rethinking Durkheim and his tradition*, Cambridge 2004, 57–68 and 117ff.

38 Cf. *ibid.*, 89ff.

39 See for an introduction to the key aspects of Kantian criticism, particularly, H.-U. Baumgarten, Kant und das Problem einer prästabilierten Harmonie. Überlegungen zur transzendentalen Deduktion der Verstandeskategorien, in: *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, 51 (1997), 411–425 and M. Oberhausen, *Das neue Apriori. Kants*

The second characteristic aspect (b) of de Villers' adoption of Kantian criticism, which must be closely borne in mind to understand correctly Nuñez Sesse's way of understanding critical philosophy, refers to the way *how* the empiricist reduction to a simple theory of human cognition is realized. Symptomatically, de Villers makes use of a dialogical procedure copied and translated directly from a book published only one year before by the Kant apostate Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814): *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800). Fichte's reception of Kant can be defined, precisely, by a metaphysical increase of human epistemic conditions to an *absolute self* that is based on the actions of practical reason. In order to neutralize the reproof of a denegation of God, Fichte defined the faith in God as the primary destination of all human beings following in this manner, especially in the second dialogical part of his book on *Knowledge* (Wissen), the two-volume *Soliloquies* of Augustine of Hippo (354–430), which were structured as a dialogue between a *Human Self* and the *Divine Reason*.⁴⁰ In Fichte's book on the *Vocation of Man* in 1800, this structure reappeared as *Self* (Ich) and *Spirit* (Der Geist).⁴¹ De Villers, in turn, copied this Augustinian dialogue from Fichte to his book on Kant by having a conversation between a *Transcendental Philosopher* (Le philosophe transcendantal) and an *Empiricist Counterpart* (Le philosophe empiriste).⁴²

Finally, the influence of Fichte over de Villers' book on Kant led to the publications of Nuñez Sesse on Bentham in 1820 and 1821 as an *eclectic fusion* of Bentham utilitarianism with certain philosophical elements expressly *labelled* as philosophical concepts of Kantian transcendentalism. Amazingly, Nuñez Sesse realizes this *Kantian labelling* through a resemanticized version of de Villers' Augustinian narrative structure copied from Fichte by displaying a long dialogue between *Kant*, apparently arguing within a transcendental logic, and a *Self* that defends utilitarian epistemology and ethics. Within the process of resemanticization, Nuñez Sesse's understanding of Kant suffered a similar empiricist reduction of human epistemic conditions to merely psychological mechanisms of cognition. This can be identified in de Villers' adoption of Kant, highly representative of the early materializations of French eclectic tradition of psychological resemanticizations of Kant during the nineteenth century.⁴³ In his reflections on Bentham utilitarianism, Nuñez Sesse uses the empiricist interpretation of human knowledge (misleadingly declared as being compatible with *Kantian* criticism) as a key argument against inalienable rights

Lehre von einer ursprünglichen Erwerbung apriorischer Vorstellungen, Stuttgart 1997, 121–128, 151–160 and 236–24 as well as M. Kuehn, Der Objektbegriff bei Christian Wolff und Immanuel Kant, in: H. F. Klemme/B. Ludwig/M. Pauen/W. Stark (eds.), *Aufklärung und Interpretation. Studien zu Kants Philosophie und ihrem Umkreis*, Frankfurt a. M. 1999, 39–56.

40 See I. Radrizzani, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen: der Wendepunkt zur Spätphilosophie?*, in: *Fichte-Studien*, 17 (2000), 19–42 and lastly, A. Nuzzo, Determination and Freedom in Kant and Fichte's *Bestimmung des Menschen*, in: D. Breazeal/T. Rockmore (eds.), *Fichte's Vocation of man. New interpretive and critical essays*, New York 2013, 225–240.

41 Cf. Johann Gottlieb Fichtes sämtliche Werke. Vol. 2, Berlin 1845/1846, 199–248 or respectively J. G. Fichte, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen. Auf der Grundlage der Ausgabe von F. Medicus revidiert von H. D. Brandt. Mit einer Einleitung von H. Verweyen*, Hamburg 2000, 37–68.

42 Cf. C. de Villers, *Philosophie de Kant* (fn 30), 417ff.

43 Cf. *Principios de la ciencia social ó de las ciencias morales y políticas* (fn 21), 483–522.

of natural law. The purpose of his book on Bentham was to promote the pursuit of happiness as an inclination that, according to utilitarian arguments, was essentially conditioned by emotions and sensations so as to determine the knowledge of morally good or bad in legislation and politics exclusively depending on *psychological cognition*.⁴⁴

4. Summary

The analysis of the pre-Krausist reception of Kantian philosophy in Spanish liberalism and its translatory dimensions can be summed up in the following results:

(1) As far as a current state of investigation, there has not been any substantial direct exchange between Germany and Spain regarding *Kantian* philosophy until the mid-century when Sanz del Rio introduced a part of the works of Krause to Spain. None of the works of Kant had been translated directly into Spanish before the 1870s. It is not until the last two decades of the nineteenth century when a first substantial understanding of Kant in Spain began.

(2) A closer look on the pre-Krausist reception of Kantian philosophy in Spain reveals a bilateral filter of cultural transfer through French. The mediator of Kantian transfer from Germany to Spain was, in fact, a French transfer agent: de Villers. Anyhow, his early reception and interpretation of Kant, crucial for the fast dissemination of Kantian philosophy in Europe at the beginning of the century, was determined by a very ambivalent empiricist reduction and did not expose the core aspects of Kantian criticism: the transcendental deduction of the principles of reason. With respect to the functional elements of a Logical Constitutive Model of Cultural Transfer, this trilateral string of transnational European resemanticization of Kant to early Spanish liberalism contains at least one first grade source of transfer, which, later on, shows up as a second grade source with discursive significance within the target culture.

(3) The trilateral transfer of Kant to Spain worked basically as an extension of the French settings of resemanticized dissemination of Kant in Europe through another transfer agent: Nuñez Sesse. His reception of Kant embraced, at the same time, a particular reception of Benthamian utilitarianism that, in turn, favoured empiricist arguments (in this occasion misleadingly merged with Kant) and served to attack natural law instead of promoting a deontological theory of ethical intentions and duty. Without any doubt, Nuñez Sesse's resemanticized reception of Kant in Spain has acted as an important background for the enormous impact later of pre-Kantian on idealist metaphysics of Krause in Spain. Hence, the trilateral transfer of Kant to early Spanish liberalism reveals two strings of transnational European resemanticization processes as one hybrid cultural transfer. Spanish liberal reception of Kant was, in fact, directly connected to another trilateral transfer between Spain and England, also filtered by eclectic French translations.

44 Cf. *ibid.*, 466ff. and 473ff.

(4) Deepening transnational historiographic analysis through a logical constitutive approach reveals that bilateral cultural transfer processes are, actually, part of an intensively cross-connected space of hybrid acculturation composed of multiple strings of transnational resemanticization. In this sense, the Kantian transfers to early Spanish liberalism (1812–1823) can be understood, in fact, as a hybrid acculturation process.