

The Historiography of Science and Religion in Europe

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DRAPER IN SPAIN: THE CONFLICTING CIRCULATION OF THE CONFLICT THESIS

by Jaume Navarro 

Abstract. This article delves into the reception of John W. Draper’s *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* in Spain. With two translations into Spanish appearing almost simultaneously in 1876, the conflict became a weapon in a long political dispute. The tensions between conservatives and liberals, between monarchists and republicans had the university and pedagogical reforms as one of the main battlefields. One of the chief reformist movements was informed by “Krausism,” an ideology that had academic freedom as one of its central tenets. The similarities between the educational agenda of Draper and that of Krausists explain why the former’s book resonated among members of the latter group. The article argues that in order to understand the reception of Draper in Spain, one should pay attention to the disputes about national identity and educational reforms, so as to place the so-called conflict thesis in the context of opposing Spanish patriotisms.

Keywords: conflict thesis; John W. Draper; history of science and religion; nationalism; science and religion in Spain

In their somewhat programmatic 1986 article, David Lindberg and Ronald Numbers argued that John W. Draper’s (1874) famous *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* as well as Andrew White’s (1896) work

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culminating in his *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* articulated for the first time the overarching thesis that science and religion have historically been in conflict and, thus, arguing for the irremediable incompatibility between them. Like many before and after them, Lindberg and Numbers presented a number of case studies in which Draper and White were simply wrong, thus showing the naivety, or ill-intention, of such a simple thesis. John Hedley Brooke's so-called complexity thesis was soon to come (Brooke 1991).

Although professional historians of science no longer use the conflict thesis as an explanatory framework, the centrality of Draper and White's books in originating the conflict thesis is still part of the received view (see, e.g., Hardin, Numbers, and Bizley 2018). More often than not one encounters the uncritical statement that, indeed, Draper and White created the thesis that science and religion were (and are) in permanent conflict. Recently, James Ungureanu has challenged the usual interpretation of the primary intentions and immediate reception of Draper and White's works, placing them in the context of American liberal Protestantism in the late nineteenth century. Ungureanu (2018, 2019) compellingly shows that the conflict Draper and White were actually articulating was one between modern science and what they called "orthodox" Christianity and "theology"; that is, institutionalized religion in the form of the traditional Christian churches.

This interpretation is consistent with, for instance, the nuanced most recent readings of the agendas of the members of the X-Club and the Belfast address (Barton 1987, 1990, 1998; Stanley 2015). It was *institutionalized* religions, with their traditional power on universities and education at large and their dogmatic claims to truth and morals, that a number of mid-Victorian scientists saw as the enemy to beat in their attempts to professionalize science. As historian of science Matthew Stanley put it, "Huxley and his friends' difficulties in finding work became one of their defining characteristics. Even further, their decision about who was responsible for their difficulties helped shape their identities for the rest of their lives: the Church of England" (Stanley 2015, 24). This point is important because much of the belligerent rhetoric of Huxley and others was not aimed against religion *per se* but against its monopolization by the traditional academic elite, which happened to be mainly members of the Church of England. Rather than antireligious, their attacks were mainly anticlerical.

Similarly, Draper and White defended the emancipation of scientific research and education from ecclesiastical intervention. But, according to Ungureanu, they also aimed at the reformation, not the disappearance, of Christianity in tune with the "New Reformation" movement of the second half of the nineteenth century in the Anglo American world. Naturalists, liberal Anglicans, and dissidents imagined a new brand of Christianity devoid of dogmas about Nature, the supernatural or God but preserving

some kind of theism, private faith, and a sense of cultural belonging. Moreover, Ungureanu's claim is that, contrary to the traditional reading of their works, Draper intended to harmonize, rather than establish a conflict between, science and (the new) religion by separating the latter from what they called, rather pejoratively, theology and orthodoxy.

Not surprisingly, however, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* and *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* were not received in the way their authors supposedly intended. Triggered by the more extreme interpretations of the books, both by conservative Christian theologians and clerics as well as by radical positivists and atheists, these harmonizing intentions backfired, not least because of their choice of catchy but misrepresenting titles, especially by Draper.

As often happens in the field of science and religion, Ungureanu's study of the reception of Draper and White's books is limited to the Anglo American world, the original primary target audience. Inevitably, this narrows his thesis down to the specificities of American and British public debates as well as to Anglican and Protestant theological traditions. Controversies around liberalism and positivism, the role of the State and of tradition, not to mention theological and ecclesiastical disputes were very different in post-Napoleonic Continental Europe and Latin America as compared to Britain, its empire, and the United States. In the context of this special issue on non-Anglo-American history of science and religion, I intend to explore the reception of Draper's work in a different cultural, social, political, and theological setting, in Spain, as a way to challenge the claims to universalism that mainstream science and religion historiography often assumes.

Thus, this article delves into the reception of Draper's book in Spain. With two translations into Spanish appearing almost simultaneously in 1876, the *Conflict* became a weapon in a long political warfare that had materialized throughout the century in a number of regime changes and three civil wars, known as the Carlist wars. In 1874, after a short-lived First Republic, the Bourbon monarchy was restored and, with it, came a political purge that included a number of intellectuals. The tensions between conservatives and liberals, between monarchists and republicans had the university and pedagogical reforms as one of their main battlefields. One of the chief reformist movements was informed by "Krausism," a movement that had academic freedom as one of its central tenets. The similarities between the educational agenda of Draper and that of Krausists explain why the former's book resonated among members of the latter group, especially among those suffering the consequences of the purges.

The Krausist movement can also be seen as religious, albeit with pantheistic ideas far from traditional Catholicism. In a country that had traditionally been almost exclusively Catholic, many understood pantheism and liberal Christianity as synonymous with irreligiosity and atheism. Thus, when Nicolás Salmerón, a well-known Krausist politician then in exile,

wrote a 70-page long prologue to the Spanish translation of Draper's book, he was remodeling the *Conflict* into a weapon of his group's conflicts with Spanish new conservative academic and political authorities. And so did the restorationists, who opened up a contest for the best anti-Draper book.

In the first section, I shall set the stage with an account of the origins of the so-called *Polémica*, the popular idea that Spain was a naturally lazy, ignorant, and backward country. Stemming from the late eighteenth century, the idea was (and still is) often used as a rhetorical device by reformers of all kinds, and had revived in the disputes of the 1860s and 1870s. I shall argue that Draper's reception can be better understood as an episode of the long debate about the *Polémica*. In the next section, an account will be given of the process by which the astronomer Augusto T. Arcimís decided to translate and promote Draper's book and the supports he had, including Salmerón's prologue. Finally, we shall explore the responses and uses of the book in the aftermath of its publication by Krausists, liberal, and reformists as well as by Catholic authorities and conservative intellectuals.

THE *POLÉMICA* OF SPANISH SCIENCE

Historians of Spanish culture traditionally place the origin of the *Polémica* in an article on Spain that the French writer Nicolás Masson de Morvilliers wrote in the early 1780s for Diderot's 206-volume *Encyclopédie Méthodique* in which he claimed that Spain had contributed to nothing to world culture, neither in the sciences nor in politics, philosophy, or the arts. A "lazy nation," he wrote, unable to move a finger to improve communications, to acquire learning, to travel, even "unable to have the willingness to be happy since such willingness is already too hard a job for such a lazy and proud nation" (Masson de Morvilliers 1782, 556). Not surprisingly, Masson stated that Spain was like one of those "weak and wretched colonies in permanent need of help from the metropolis" or, worse, like those "desperate terminally ill patients who, unable to feel their illness, reject help from those who give life" (565).

Not surprisingly, at a time when public opinion and political reformers were struggling with the new ideas from the French Enlightenment, many Spanish intellectuals regarded Masson's article as an unacceptable insult, thus triggering a plethora of articles and pamphlets challenging this negative view of Spain. Local intellectuals turned this debate into a question of patriotism, into a dispute between competing nations. Challenging the amount, quality, and scope of Spanish science and arts was tantamount to being unpatriotic. For some, like the traditionalist writer and jurist Juan Pablo Forner, Spain was much better than the so-called enlightened nations since it avoided the useless philosophical sophistry and dangerous public unrest of the latter. Reformists like the lawyer and editor Luis María García del Cañuelo seized the opportunity provided by the exaggeration of

nationalist apologists to criticize the lack of political reform. For them, the development of the natural sciences was just one more element of progress, a necessary tool for social reform.

The element I want to stress here is that this early dispute, triggered by a foreign article, was not specifically about scientific progress but about national pride and the different ways to achieve economic and social progress. In the words of historian Ernesto García Camarero, “what was at stake in this debate was not so much the existence of a scientific culture in Spain but the usefulness or uselessness of the physiconatural sciences to promote the welfare of the nation” (García Camarero 2016, 68). Although reformers saw the natural and physical sciences as a necessary tool for economic progress, traditionalists thought the best way forward as a nation was the cultivation of political sciences, philosophy, and the humanities at large, in which Spain had excelled above any other nation, so they claimed. In other words, this first *Polémica*, as much as many of the supposed science-and-religion conflicts, can be regarded as early examples of what much later would be categorized as the two cultures divide.

Toward the end of the long and fickle reign of Queen Isabel II (1833–1868), the *Polémica* erupted again. Heeding the complaints of political traditionalists and the Catholic curia, minister Alcalá Galiano issued a decree against the teaching of “pernicious doctrines” in Spanish universities (Otero Carvajal 2017, 29). In response, a number of intellectuals and professors started a campaign to oppose the decree, an opposition that eventually led to the armed repression of a students’ protest by the army, causing over a dozen casualties in what came to be known as the “night of Saint Daniel” (April 10, 1865). This was the most relevant instance of a deeper dispute about intellectual freedom between conservatives and liberals. Among the latter, the most significant group were the “Krausists,” followers of the interpretation of the philosophy of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause by the Madrid Law professor Julián Sanz del Río, a kind of post-Kantian philosophy blending pantheistic and theist elements as well as a strong defense of liberalism and pedagogical reform.

In these public disputes, the word “science” was often used but one should take into account that more often than not, “science” stood for philosophy and law and only seldom included the natural sciences. Perhaps the only exception was José Echegaray’s inaugural address as member of the Academy of Sciences in 1866, on the “History of Pure Mathematics in Our Spain.” In it, Echegaray portrayed a very grim view of pure mathematics in Spain throughout history, especially after the expulsion of the Arabs from the Iberian Peninsula. Although all other European countries had provided the world with a long list of mathematical heroes, Spain seemed a barren land. Being a historical account, he regretted he could not write a “history of science in Spain, since hardly can a people with no science have any history of it . . . where there was nothing but whip, iron, blood, prayers,

brazier and smoke” (Echegaray [1866] 2004, 709). Importantly, whenever Echegaray referred to “science,” he meant pure mathematics, without any practical application, and nothing else, since, from his point of view, Spain did indeed produce many practical men in astronomy, physics, geodesy, mechanics and, most importantly, industry, as well as in the arts and the humanities.

The highlight of this ideological dispute took place from late 1874 onward when, after the so-called *Sexenio Revolucionario* (the six-year term between 1868 and 1874), in which Spain saw a number of liberal political regimes, including a short-lived first Republic (February 1873–December 1874), the Bourbon monarchy was restored. In February 1875, minister Manuel Orovio issued a decree similar to the one by his predecessor a decade earlier, by which university professors were reminded that “the majority of Spaniards, if not all, are Catholic and the State is Catholic, the official teaching in State institutions needs to obey this principle,” and therefore they were banned from “teaching against the dogma that is the social truth of our nation” (Otero Carvajal 2017, 37).

Protests against this decree ended up in a purge, with the ousting of a number of professors, a few of whom were sent to jail or house arrest for some time. In that turmoil the writer, former Krausist and influential literary critic Manuel de la Revilla wrote that the history of the sciences in Spain (meaning the natural sciences as well as philosophy) was “terrible,” in contrast with the glories of literature, and he argued that this was due to a “defect of our national spirit, more fertile in mystics and dreamers than in reflective and independent thinkers,” but also due to “our fierce religious intolerance” (Revilla 1876, 507). Interestingly, de la Revilla claimed that since the “intellectual activity of man needs solace,” the Catholic censorship chose to give “freedom to literature, so that Spanish ingenuity used its strength in harmless entertainment rather than in other more dangerous tasks” (509). This surprising argument was often repeated by Krausist apologists in order to justify the asymmetry between the arts and the sciences under the general inquisitorial-repression thesis.

A very young Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, who was already on the track of becoming one of the major outspoken Catholic intellectuals, responded to this article with an essay entitled “Mr. Masson Revived,” in reference to the above-mentioned article by the French ideologue almost a century earlier. The public dispute between Menéndez Pelayo and de la Revilla took place in poignant articles in the journals *Revista Europea* and *Revista Crítica*, respectively, and became the tip of the iceberg of a larger controversy on the role and importance of Spanish knowledge, science and culture, past and present.

An erudite and, as he called himself, a helpless bibliophile, Menéndez Pelayo provided long lists of contributions to science by Spaniards so as to challenge the negative story of Masson, Echegaray, Revilla, and

many others. Seneca and the Iberian-based Arabs were included among the Spaniards, and as for science, preeminence was given to “the most important of sciences”: philosophy. But naturalists, mathematicians, engineers, medical doctors, and physicists were also present in his enumeration of national men of science (only once does he use the neologism “scientist,” accompanied by a pun). Interestingly for the contemporary historian of science, Menéndez Pelayo rejected a history of science “reduced to the biographies of six, seven, or eight astounding men,” as if “only them gave light.” This kind of history of science would “neither be history nor science, but an amusing and entertaining book.” Contrary to what one might do with a history of literature, where one can legitimately avoid the lesser works of minor authors, in the history of science, “how to forget the tireless work of those modest toilers who have paved the way to geniuses . . . and who, if not great men, they have at least been essential for the progress of human understanding?” (Menéndez Pelayo 1876b, 134).

To address what he regarded as an unpatriotic, self-diminishing attitude toward national science, Menéndez Pelayo argued for the creation of six professorial chairs in the history of Spanish sciences, one for each science, namely, theology, law, medicine, philosophy, philology, and one for the natural, physical, and exact sciences. The idea was part of a major plan of educational and university reform coordinated by his former professor and long-life friend Gumersindo Laverde Ruiz for which Menéndez Pelayo produced preliminary syllabi. Needless to say the plan never materialized but it is a good indicator of the understanding that he had about science, its history, and the role of the history of science in the configuration of a sense of national pride.

As for the oft-repeated thesis that the explanation of all evils in Spanish science could be reduced to intolerance, Menéndez Pelayo argued that “we should note that, due to the lesser relation of the physical, natural and exact sciences to religion and politics, the former should have been the less repressed” as compared to philosophy, theology, law or, even, literature: “nobody would have disturbed the Inquisition or the king for formulating the law of gravitation, for discovering the method of fluxions, or for spending time in deep studies of optics and mechanics. . . . What obstacles could one find to he who occupied himself with a new classification of plants, destroying an old chemical nomenclature?” And as an amusing example he mentioned the sixteenth-century “witty poet and failed geometer” Geronimo Falcó, whose “eccentric geniality” led him to “waste his time and money researching the squaring of the circle and died thinking he had succeeded” without the opposition of neither king nor Inquisition (Menéndez Pelayo 1876a, 338).

While writing these letters, Menéndez Pelayo was faced with an article, which he could not but energetically confront, written by his former professor and politician (including his six-week long term as prime minister

of the Spanish Government during the First Republic) now in exile in Paris, Nicolás Salmerón. The essay was the prologue to the Spanish translation of John W. Draper's book, which appeared in the summer of 1876.

THE SPANISH VERSION OF DRAPER'S *HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT*

In the mid-nineteenth century, Salmerón had been a strong defendant of Krausism. One of the central ideas of this political and philosophical movement, relevant to the subject of this article, was the so-called "pantheism," a kind of organic pantheism in which they tried to make both God's immanence and transcendence compatible. This gave Krausism a mystical flavor in which law and educational reforms were part of a rational and spiritual task that would lead humanity toward its union with God.

With the collapse of the six-year revolutionary period and the restoration of the monarchy, Salmerón and other Krausists had to rethink their philosophical foundations and they reformed their views under the influence of positivism (Nuñez 1975). The result, the so-called Krausopositivism, had a more pragmatic approach and became, in spite of State opposition, highly influential in educational reforms through its institutional materialization: the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (ILE, Free Education Institution) founded by Francisco Giner de los Ríos (see below). This was the context in which Salmerón wrote his lengthy introduction to Draper's book from Paris.

Before discussing the content of the prologue, we should introduce the translator into Spanish, the astronomer Augusto T. Arcimís. Based in Cadiz, located in the southernmost tip of Spain, a place with a long astronomical tradition due to its atmospheric conditions as well as its buzzing port, Arcimís developed a passion for astronomy and meteorology. Although he always regarded himself as an amateur, and such was the view of the Spanish astronomical establishment, yet he found abroad the recognition as an astronomer he did not find at home with, for instance, his appointment as fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of London or for his many publications in Italian astronomical journals. Moreover, he was a pioneer in the use of spectroscopy for astronomy, and thus in the new field of astrophysics.

Having had liberal leanings since his youth, it was also in Cadiz that Arcimís met and became very close to Giner de los Ríos and to the Krausist and positivist traditions of the 1870s. Also in those years, Arcimís suffered a personal, spiritual, and economic crisis. His business as wine merchant was in decline and three of his children died prematurely. These events challenged his already weak Christian faith. It is in this context that he came across Draper's book, which he interpreted as a diatribe against the dogmatism of the Catholic Church and the sclerotic mentality of Spanish men of science. So he decided to ask Draper for permission to translate it.

The correspondence between author and translator, preserved in the Draper archives at the U.S. Library of Congress, shows how Arcimís felt Spain was a most “unfortunate nation,” with high rates of illiteracy and, worse, a country where “those who are learned have their minds generally emancipated” (Arcimís to Draper, August 28, 1875). He foresaw problems finding a publisher for the Spanish edition and, indeed, his first attempts were unsuccessful: “The best printer of Cadiz to whom I showed the manuscript and who is, of course, an incredulous man, refuses to print it on account of its contents, because he fears the consequences if he undertook it” (Arcimís to Draper, October 9, 1875).

Draper granted permission with only one condition: “I consider it essential that the translation should be made from the American or English copy. The French translation is so full of errors that I cannot look upon it without shame” (Draper to Arcimís, September 17, 1875). Arcimís agreed but, sadly for both, an adaptation from the French version appeared in the Spanish market as he was finishing his translation. It was as part of a collection of books known as “Biblioteca Contemporánea” (Contemporary Library) and it was sold in weekly installments. This took Arcimís, and indeed Draper, by surprise and explains why his version had, in its title, the clarification that it was a “direct translation from the English text.” As for the initially pessimistic estimation that the book would hardly sell beyond a few hundred copies, Arcimís was right in foreseeing that the condemnation by the Congregation of the Index, “whose doom generally fosters inquiry for the book it prohibits,” would benefit them. And indeed, it did. New reprints of Arcimís’s translation were issued in 1885, 1886, and 1888 (Anduaga 2005, footnote 37). As we shall later see, the book sales also benefited eventually from the competition that the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences announced for the best work refuting Draper’s *History*.

The printed text of Arcimís’s edition was 380 pages long, and Salmerón’s programmatic prologue took up 72 pages. Invited by the main Krausist of the day, Giner de los Ríos, who had become a kind of intellectual father figure for Arcimís, Salmerón agreed to write such a prologue as a mental exercise at a time when he was moving from Krausism to positivism: “the preface in some measure reflects that state of mind,” he would tell Arcimís and Draper (Arcimís to Draper, November 7, 1876). Actually, Draper reacted very positively to Salmerón’s offer, because he had known him “by reputation” as an icon in “the cause of liberal ideas” (Draper to Arcimís, February 17, 1876). The result was a rather complicated and obscure text which, as Arcimís noted, “everyone says they don’t understand . . . , and since I do . . . I regard myself as a wise man” (Arcimís to Giner de los Ríos, October 4, 1876).

Salmerón’s aim was to place the book within the Spanish *Polémica* and his Krausopositivist views, as well as in the broader context of the German

kulturkampf going on at the time. He argued that since Draper's book had found "religious respect . . . among the friends of freedom of thought" and a "deep ungrateful impression among those interested in maintaining dogmatic impositions" (Salmerón 1876, vi), it would be a good weapon in the defense of liberal ideals in Spain. Ironically, however, the prologue seriously criticized the book since, while the work tried to give a historical account of a permanent conflict between "Positive Religions" and science, the message one should take, according to Salmerón, was not that of a necessary, essential conflict between science and religion but only the contingent conflicts due to the imperfection of historical religions, mainly in its Catholic materialization: "it is unfounded and even irrational to think that the conflicts and contradictions that arise only from the limits and historical representations to which the human spirit has been tied for some time should be attributed to the very essence of Religion and of Science" (xv). Contrary to the philosophies of Hegel, Vacherot, Strauss, or some positivists, Salmerón did not think religion was only a transitory state of human reason but a natural condition of it. What did he mean, then, by religion? "It consists in the union of all beings in life," he said, and it takes place when reason manages to produce a "total conception of the World, fixing an ideal representation" that shapes education. This new "religious formula will only appear when a new and superior conception of Reality and of Life penetrate and takes root in the consciousness of man." Then, the harmony and consistency between "Religion and Science" shall take place (xvii–xviii).

Interestingly, Salmerón used an argument not too dissimilar from orthodox Catholics, namely, the aversion to the doctrine of a double truth so as to warn against any form of dogmatism in Science: "since the object of Science is Truth . . . it should be distinguished from the partial and relative knowledge men achieve at a particular time. Concepts are formed and re-formed, are narrowed down or extended . . . but Truth is always the same, universal and eternal," And with this in mind, "Science is always in free and progressive evolution: its historical manifestations are not closed, exclusive or imposed" (Salmerón 1876, xvi). On this, Salmerón was establishing a distinction between absolute and provisional truths and arguing for an evolutionary development of science.

And it is in this point where he made the strongest criticism of the book: "Draper seems to be saying that there is no other Science than that of natural observation, thus denying a whole world to research, that is, the world of ideas, which is indispensable to understand and systematize empirical data." Moreover, Draper seemed to "negatively prejudge the conscience of the Spirit, and reduces Conscience simply to the relation of external senses, thus dismissing the absolute principle of Reality and Life from the infinite reign of Truth" (Salmerón 1876, xxix). In other words, Salmerón was preventing the reader from falling into a purely positivistic reading of

the book that might also lead to the rejection of the idealistic elements that were the foundations of his notion of freedom. This point is made more explicit toward the end of the long prologue, where Salmerón warned that “to limit the sphere of what is intelligible simply to the phenomenal and to consider knowledge to the establishment of relations only” might lead to the “reduction of freedom to simply unconscious and mechanical determinism” and to a monism that would reduce the Universe to simply an organism that evolves in itself (liv–lv). From this, he claimed, any political reform of laws or education would be irrelevant; it would not be based on the sure foundation of Being and Reality around which all laws, of movement as well as of political societies, find their source.

Salmerón also criticized a number of historical theses. First, the absence of any reference to Spanish intellectuals and mathematicians of the early Middle Ages such as Isidoro of Seville or Alfons X, whose contributions to the history of science, he claimed, were eclipsed with the later advent of the Inquisition and the repression of the modern state. True to the spirit of the *Polémica*, the “Spanish national genius” existed and only needed to be rescued from “theocratic absolutism” (namely, the politics of the restored Spanish monarchy). Second, Salmerón criticized Draper for talking about Christianity and Islam as similar in their essential relations to science. For him, one could not but praise Christianity for allowing speculation about a mediation between a totally other God and the world through “the principle of the Word, a divine Mediator” that introduced an element of intelligibility about the world (Salmerón 1876, xxxiii). It should be noted that the liberal project of Salmerón and the Krausist world was explicitly pro-European, regarding France, Britain, and especially Germany, as the places to imitate.

Third, and perhaps more relevant in reference to Ungereanu’s thesis above mentioned, Salmerón criticized Draper for not distinguishing between Catholic, Reformed, and liberal Christianity. From his point of view, Draper’s criticisms were valid against the Catholic Church but not the Reformation that, “together with the classicist and naturalist turns” of early Modernity led Europe to “the free reflection of its own spirit” while Spain remained “petrified in the old dogmatic impositions” (Salmerón 1876, xlvi). In Salmerón’s reading, Protestantism had increasingly purified religion from dogma and had evolved toward an understanding of religion “founded in the purity and integrity of Consciousness” and consisting in the “rational and pious union of Man with all the beings of the World, under the principles of Reality and Life” (l). That is why Salmerón warned against the more than likely reading of Draper’s book against all religion, including that toward which liberal Protestantism in Europe was moving.

From a letter Salmerón indirectly sent to Draper, we can infer that the latter was not too happy with the text and with his qualification as

a positivist. The exiled politician apologized “for the censure which, unwittingly, has slipped from my pen,” informing Draper that “my temper is unsuited to encomium and irresistibly prone to censure” (Arcimís to Draper, November 7, 1876). As for positivism, Salmerón clarified that, for him, at the time, any naturalist ontology that reduced Nature to the “internal differentiation and evolution in the variety of beings of the world as the sole reality” was a form of monism that could be equated with positivism and, thus, Draper fell into that category. This shows how Salmerón and the new Krausists (or krausopositivists) lived in a political, religious, and intellectual world very different from that of Draper and equally different were the uses they wanted to make of the *History of the Conflict*.

SPANISH RESPONSES TO DRAPER

As noted at the end of “The Spanish Version of Draper’s *History of the Conflict*” section, Salmerón’s prologue was published separately even before the book appeared and Menéndez Pelayo immediately responded to it. He hardly mentioned anything about the book, except that it was “crudely impious,” written by a “positivist *yankee*,” who could be compared to the “baron d’Holbach or Dupuis” (as icons of atheism) and full of “factual errors” (Menéndez Pelayo [1876] 2008, 181). As for the “long, grave, majestic, mystifying and rather sleep-inducing” prologue, Menéndez Pelayo understood it as a diatribe against the compatibility between science and religion and an unpatriotic exercise of Spanish defeatism. On the former, he dismissed the pantheistic, unorthodox views on religion that Salmerón was proposing; but it is to the latter that he devoted most of his criticism by, as he did in previous writings, flooding the reader with endless lists of Spanish “men of science” of all times (and by science meaning any intellectual, not only naturalist, activity). By showing that there had indeed always been scientific activities in Spain, Menéndez Pelayo hoped to challenge Salmerón’s thesis that the Catholic Church, especially in its Spanish incarnation, was and had been one of the worse enemies of knowledge. It should be noted, in passing, that the animosity between Menéndez Pelayo and Salmerón came from the days the former had been a student of the latter.

Menéndez Pelayo and Salmerón were, thus, situating the reception of Draper’s book within the context of the *Polémica* and the academic and political climate in Restoration Spain. As mentioned earlier, it was also in 1876 that Giner de los Ríos led the formation of the ILE, a pedagogical venture that eventually became crucial in changing the face of Spanish education (Cacho Viu 2010). But in 1876, the ILE was only a project bringing together many of the professors purged the previous year and wanting to establish an educational institution “alien to any religious, philosophical or political interests, with the only principle of the freedom

and inviolability of science” where the only valid authority would be “the professors’ conscience” (Estatutos 1876, II.2). It should be noted that most actors in the creation of the ILE were politicians, philosophers, and social reformers, not scientists in the modern sense of the term.

Arcimís’s translation appeared almost simultaneously with the commencement of the ILE. Without mentioning it explicitly, the economist Laureano Figuerola, rector of the Institution, made multiple implicit references to Draper’s book in his inaugural address of September 29, 1876. Spain was, in his view, a place where the state and the church had evolved in a way that obstructed the development of science “for 200 years,” thus throwing the country “in the abyss of ignorance, misery and disrepute” (Figuerola 1876, 2). Science would have achieved its legitimate place “without the fighting, without the blood, without the excesses” used by state and church (6). In this warfare, and even though it “used all its ammunition” (7) against the illegitimate weapons of its enemies, science always lost in the first instance but eventually won over the dogmatism of church and state. The thought of a final victory would give hope to all champions of science and, he continued, “let no-one stir our weapons for we will use them every time we are provoked”(7). As we can see, the ILE was using the rhetoric of warfare so as to defend the freedom of science, of speculation, and of teaching from any interference by church or state.

Also in 1876, Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* and Ludwig Büchner’s *Man in the Past, Present and Future* appeared in Spanish translations, as well as a new edition of the latter’s *Force and Matter*, fuelling the public dispute that had been going on around evolution and Darwinism. Indeed, the expulsion of some professors from their chairs at the beginning of the Restoration was triggered by their defense of the Darwinist thesis (Pelayo 1999; Glick 1982), and Draper’s book can also be largely placed in this dispute. As the writer Leopoldo Alas (who began using the pseudonym Clarín precisely in the mid-1870s) put it in his review of *The Conflict*, Draper’s was a “battle book” in this context (Hibbs 1998, 291).

Part of the popularity of the book came, as Arcimís had envisioned, from the official responses of the Catholic authorities and other Catholic milieus of post-Vatican I ultramontaniam. Indeed, the Spanish translation appeared almost simultaneously with its introduction in the Index Librorum Prohibitorum, and this certainly shaped the response by Spanish Catholicism. Shortly after its publication, a new Catholic periodical, *La Ciencia Cristiana*, translated the critical reviews that the Italian Jesuit Giovanni Maria Cornoldi had produced for *La Civiltà Cattolica* and which later appeared in book format (Cornoldi 1878). The first locally produced book-length rebuttal to Draper came from an Augustinian friar, Tomás Cámara, whose 1879 book *Response to the ‘History of the Conflicts between Religion and Science’* saw three editions (in 1879, 1880,

and 1978), and the structure of which was to follow Draper's chapter by chapter, even keeping their titles. Following the recently defined dogma of the total compatibility between faith and reason, Cámara (1880) criticized the limited notion of science that Draper had, limited only to "physics, chemistry, and other natural knowledge" (604). And in a cynical response to the "new religion" that Draper and Salmerón were imagining, Cámara wrote: "neither heaven nor sublime inspiration, neither communion nor religious order, neither priesthood nor guidance for doubts; freedom to curse the sacred, freedom to interpret the Bible, freedom to interpret Nature, freedom, freedom" (606). Draper's book and Salmerón's prologue were, thus, received as anti-Catholic propaganda in the cause of political liberalism.

But the highlight of this response was the call, in July 1878, of a prize of 8,000 Reales at the Royal Academy of Moral and Political Sciences to the best monograph to "prove that between the Catholic religion and science there cannot be any conflict" (Nuñez 1987, 34), in clear reference to the title of Draper's book. The call was the initiative of a Catholic landowner, the Marquis of Guadiaro, who donated the money to the Academy for this purpose. The venture was a strange episode that reflects the disunity among the many trends within Spanish Catholic conservatism. On the one hand, and after an extension of six months, 51 manuscripts were submitted by the new deadline on July 13, 1879. The selection committee, however, was formed by four laymen, none of which came either from the natural sciences, theology, or philosophy. The president of the commission, for instance, was Manuel Colmeiro y Penido, a well-known political and economic historian. The archives of the Academy preserve the minutes of almost a dozen meetings in which the commission progressively discarded some of the works until they selected a shortlist of four manuscripts. The whole process took them twelve months after which, unable to make a clear decision, they decided not to allocate the prize and the four works were granted *ex aequo* a secondary award consisting only in covering the expenses for their publication: the lawyer and journalist Juan Manuel Ortí y Lara (1881), the historian Joaquin Rubió i Ors (1881), the writer Abdón de Paz, who rejected the *ex aequo* prize, and the priest Miguel Mir (1881).

This unexpected outcome took many by surprise not least the very donor of the prize, who claimed his money back, refusing to pay for the publication of those works, since those were not the terms of the agreement. "Can it be," he disappointedly enquired, "that the ingenuity that inspired [a previous generation of apologists] has been extinguished in our beloved homeland, in the face of the sad spectacle of having no manuscript deserving the prize in this subject of foremost interest to our Holy and wise Religion?" (Guadiaro to Academy, July 1, 1880, de Guadiaro 1880, 18). The tension between the Marquis and the academy ended up in

the former publishing a leaflet with all the correspondence between them, demanding the Marquis's public honor to be restored and announcing that the money initially intended for this prize was finally given to the president of an association of Catholic Schools (Guadiaro 1880). Also, the press refereed the event, liberals mocking the inability to clearly reject Draper and conservatives regretting the unprofessional spectacle given by the Academy.¹

Away from this contest, the most relevant apologetic works against Draper were the one written by the famous and influential Jesuit José Mendive (1883), *The Catholic Religion, Vindicated from Rationalist Impositions*, and the 1880 book of the Catalan priest, Antonio Comellas y Cluet, *Demonstration of the Harmony between the Catholic Religion and Science*. Among many of these Catholic writers, Draper's book was received as anti-Catholic propaganda, as an attempt to introduce a new natural religion that could be traced back to liberal Protestantism. In Mendive's words, Draper was the "producer of new philosophical drugs" for whom "Catholic religion is a kind of polished paganism, preserved so far only by the admirable work of a certain political spiritual power, an enemy of enlightenment as much as promoter of tyranny" (Mendive 1883, xix). It should also be noted that most of these books delved into the foundational compatibility between "reason" and "faith" from a Thomist point of view, which had been one of the central tenets in the dogmatic declarations of Vatican I, and they also criticized the grammar and vocabulary used by Arcimís in his translation: "barbaric" according to Rubió i Ors (1881, 162).

Interestingly, like Salmerón in his prologue, many promoters of *The Conflict* did so because it was a book for the battle against the church in spite the many failures they could see in it. One of the first reviews published in the liberal press, as early as April 24, 1868, when only the translation from French was available, was written by the journalist and, at the time, member of parliament Francisco de Asís Pacheco. In it, we can read that the book had produced much turmoil among ultramontanists in Europe because it was a "fighting book against the aspirations of Catholic theocracy" and thus should be read: "it has been written in the heat of battle . . . and with the passionate energy that one uses against a terrible enemy." And, thus, one could condone the "excessive passion that prevents the American professor from judging certain facts with due impartiality," since it was "compensated with the violence, excessiveness, and injustice with which ultramontanes combat us all" (Pacheco 1876; see also Mir 1881, 200–201).

CONCLUSION

In his prologue, Salmerón said Draper's book was a contribution "in the work of human redemption," and he wished it to be highly publicized

so as to help “our nation to shake off the lethargy of our religious and scientific conscience” (Salmerón 1876, lxxii). As we have seen, this prologue was the idea of Giner de los Ríos, around whom the old Krausists and the new Positivists coalesced. Draper’s book came in handy at a time where this group of intellectuals was creating the ILE after their removal from state-controlled universities. Had that not been the case, Arcimís might have not finished his translation and Draper’s book, sold only in installments and shabbily translated from the rather poor French version, would have hardly had the same impact in Spain.

Salmerón’s endorsement of the book came hand in hand with a few criticisms, two of which are important here. First, he held traditional Protestantism, broadly understood, in higher regard than Draper: for the former, the real enemy was not Christianity, let alone religion, but the Catholic Church mainly in its Spanish incarnation. This reinforces Ungreanu’s (2019) thesis that Draper’s dream of a “New Reformation” of Christianity was seldom understood by his readers: Salmerón, and also Arcimís, read the *Conflict* as an antireligious work, even if they promoted it for reasons analogous to Draper’s original intention. Second, Salmerón and Draper had different ideas of what true science was and should be. Being a philosopher with idealist and neo-Kantian leanings, Salmerón did not reduce “science” to the natural sciences but to something more like the German “Wissenschaft.” As a matter of fact, most actors in the Spanish controversy about Draper’s book, both for and against it, were philosophers, lawyers, and politicians. There were hardly any natural scientists. As the historian of science José Luis Peset ironically says, the *Polémica* was a dispute about the place of the natural sciences in Spain among people in the humanities (Peset 2010).

The use of Draper’s translation by the promoters of a new pedagogical reform in universities and education at large, the ILE, also echoes with Frank Turner’s (1978) argument of the professional dimension in the origin of the conflict thesis. However, in Spain the stakes were different compared to Victorian Britain. If in the latter case, members of the X-Club and others were advocating for a new profession, that of the scientist; the Spanish dispute was more about academic freedom and ideological control of education.

Finally, the fact that the reception of Draper’s *Conflict* was embedded in the larger dispute of the *Polémica* points at a larger problem often forgotten in the histories of the relationship between science and religion: the nationalistic dimension in the origins of the conflict thesis. As we just saw, both promoters and debunkers of Draper used patriotic and nationalistic arguments. “Science,” again, broadly understood as “Wissenschaft,” played an essential role in the configuration of a national identity and progress, and that is why the kind of science, the ways to achieve knowledge and its practical implementation, were key elements in this story.

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NOTES

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1. See *El Liberal* July 13, 1880 and *El Fénix* June 28, 1880, respectively.

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