"Painted in Spanish": The Prado Museum and the Naturalization of the “Spanish School” in the Nineteenth Century

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“Painted In Spanish”: The Prado Museum and The Naturalization of the “Spanish School” In the Nineteenth Century.

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The present article will examine the role that the Prado Museum in Madrid played in the cognitive consolidation of Spain's national culture by promoting the notion of a "Spanish School" of art. The museum, whose exhibits were collected thanks to the artistic patronage and the protocols of gift exchange of two royal families (mainly the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons), was opened to the public in 1819 as the Museo Real or Museo Fernandino; following the 1868 revolution it was declared property of the state, and in 1872 it became Museo Nacional de Pintura y Escultura del Prado after its merger with the former Museo Nacional, known as the Museo de la Trinidad.[1] As I will argue, the need for a concept of a "Spanish School" was intrinsically linked with the development of the Prado into a museum representing a centralized and bordered Spanish nation.[2] We shall see that, despite being initially rejected, by the end of the nineteenth century the notion of a "Spanish School" was already perceived as the manifestation of Spain's "national spirit".
The studies of the Louvre and the British National Gallery suggest that the transformation of royal and aristocratic private collections into national institutions tends to elicit questions of how "men in the street" could relate to a museum which was Royal no more. As [70] indicates, when the Louvre was proclaimed "National" following the 1789 Revolution, these questions were discussed by the Museum Commission and the Conservatoire, which determined that a display by "school" and chronology could provide a required filter for explaining the idea and the function of a national museum ([70] 107–16). Whitehead traces a similar use of art-historical display mode in Britain ("Establishing the Manifesto"). Continuing this line of research, I will place the debates surrounding the reorganization of museum collections by "schools" into the context of the changing art-educational curricula which were normally concomitant with the establishment of European national museums.

Responsible for displaying, developing, and transmitting knowledge about the historical manifestations of aesthetic categories, museums construct an image of time which only appears to be linear. This is why they have been described as spatial representations of stasis, an all-encompassing and "indefinitely accumulating" time ([47] "Of Other Spaces" 22). Hans-Georg [49] pointed out that modern museums succeed in obliterating their historical origins in the private or royal collections by presenting their audiences with a timeline which is artificially reorganized or completed:

A museum... is a collection of such collections and characteristically finds its perfection in concealing the fact that it grew out of such collections, either by historically rearranging the whole or by expanding it to be as comprehensive as possible. ... Thus through "aesthetic differentiation" the work loses its place and the world to which it belongs insofar as it belongs instead to aesthetic consciousness. (86–7)

Thanks to the aesthetic reorganization of time, museum displays can substantiate virtually any interpretation of history by re-signifying the historical roots of the displayed objects. Uncovering the tensions obliterated in museums' representations of history as if it were an actual signified, rather than the effect of discourse and narrativity, has become a particularly productive direction of inquiry ([74] 206).[3]

Much current research is dedicated to examining the relationship between art museums and the most conflict-ridden narrative of modern history: nation-formation.[4] Museums are now viewed as foundations which exemplified the rupture in trans-national circuits of elite cultures by developing national canons and furnishing the image-repertoires of nations.[5] Another promising object of study is the museums' role as schools of governance and sites of "civilizing rituals".[6] Yet in my view the interdependence between the development of aesthetic categories, museums, and nation-formation needs to be further clarified. Although museum displays were laid out following existing classificatory systems, these systems themselves relied on—and were ultimately naturalized by—their display in the museums. Thus, such cultural practices as museum-going, as well as architectural and cultural travel or the cultivation of natural landscapes, were crucial for the popularization of aesthetic categories. According to [49], these seemingly dynamic activities "are drawn into the simultaneity of aesthetic experience, either through the modern techniques of reproduction, which turn buildings into pictures, or through modern tourism, which turns travelling into browsing through picture-books" (87). Yet how is aesthetic experience reinserted into the narratives of history? This question, relevant for understanding how modern knowledge was constructed and transmitted, acquires particular importance in the context of examining the museums' role in nation-formation. Predictably, the space of nineteenth-century museums was set to match the bordered and centralized territories of nation-states, whilst the classificatory tools which museums promoted matched (or at times anticipated, as in the case of German art) the political maps of the world ([9] 44–8). But nation-centered aesthetic categories, such as national "schools" of art, cross-border influences, and national canon, could only be experienced within the walls of art museums alone. At the same time, an art museum would only be called "national" if it represented a national artistic "school". Furthermore,
the impact of museums on nation-formation should be traced to the practices of museum-going embedded in
the popularized education of aesthetics.

Politics and the "Spanish School"

Artists became classified by "schools", rather than "workshops", when the Renaissance academies raised the
status of art from a \textit{techne} to a noble vocation. Over the course of this transformation, the place of the artists'
apprenticeship would become increasingly less relevant than the locations where artists were directly instructed
or exposed to certain works and discourses of art, thus acquiring a system of artistic techniques and ideas which
defined a "school". Eighteenth-century [59] intellectuals used the term "Spanish school" interchangeably with
plural "Spanish schools" (not capitalized) to propagate the value and knowledge of "las riquezas de España en
Pintura y Escultura" ([73] 2). In 1800 Juan Agustín [18] synthesized the locality-based typology of Spanish art into
a scheme of three "árboles genealógicos de la doctrina artística" underlying the teaching and transmission of
pictorial art "1. en los antiguos reynos de Castilla y León: 2. en la corona de Aragón y reynos de Murcia y
Navarra: 3. en los cuatro reynos de Andalucía y confín meridional de Extremadura" (vol. 1, xxxii). The opening of
the Prado museum in 1819, followed in 1837 by the consolidation of the \textit{Museo Nacional de Pintura y
Escultura} (\textit{Museo de la Trinidad}) housing the confiscated property of religious communities,[7] and the merger
of the two in 1872 created the possibility of generalizing artistic "schools" by enabling a direct comparison
between works of art. Yet the Prado's collection did not merely represent different parts of Spain through their
artistic production, but rather mapped a new territory by forging a centralized and homogeneous tradition for
Spain.

The earliest museum plan reflected in the 1819 catalogue by Luis [42] included canvases only by Spanish artists.
Eusebi's 1821 catalogue, listing Italian masters as well, incorporated a division into "Escuela española" and
"Escuela italiana". Eusebi's 1824 catalogue employed subdivisions by "Escuelas" (now capitalized) but avoided
connecting paintings in a chronological sequence. In Spain, Eusebi recognized an "Escuela de Sevilla" and
"Escuela de Valencia". The "Escuela" of Castile or Madrid, which would later set the foundation of a unified
"Spanish School", was nowhere to be found. Some artists, including Velázquez and his son-in-law Mazo, were
not classified; instead, their biographies stated that they worked and died in places different from the ones
where they were born. In Eusebi's 1828 catalogue, the "Spanish school" was already juxtaposed with other
"schools", defined in political terms as "escuelas Española, Italiana, Francesa y Alemana, ... Flamenca y
Holandesa" ("Advertencia," s.p.).

José de Madrazo, a Spanish neo-classical artist who had trained in Paris under Jacques-Louis David, was named
the director of the Prado in 1838. Under his guidance (until 1857), as well as under long periods of directorship
of his oldest son [63] (1860–1868 and 1881–1894), the Prado became a cultural institution mapping a
homogeneous artistic territory for Spain via the display of a unified "Spanish School". The directors' agenda was
communicated to considerable numbers of visitors and art connoisseurs through the museum catalogues, all of
which between 1843 and 1920 were signed by José de Madrazo's second son, Pedro de Madrazo (1816–
1898).[8] The three members of the Madrazo family presented the collection of the Prado as a material relic of
the Habsburg Empire, while legitimizing the Spanish nation as an entity constituted by the Crown and the
citizens with educated taste but without the sovereignty of the uneducated masses (Alvarez Junco 81).

The national cultural space constructed in the Prado Museum was not a federated space of interconnected
regions, but rather the territory of Royal sovereignty tied to the courts and oblivious of the peripheries. In this
context, the recognition of multiple "schools" of art in Spain was increasingly dismissed as unpatriotic. In 1832,
José Musso y Valiente, who after [18]'s death in 1829 carried on the work on the annotations for José de
Madrazo's series of lithographed copies of the paintings from the Prado and the Royal collections, [9] had to
defend the threefold classification of Spanish "schools" (of Castille-León, Navarra-Aragón-Murcia and Andalucía)
against Madrazo's attacks: "¿Por qué no hemos de significar nosotros de alguna manera que hemos tenido artistas en varias provincias, los cuales han trabajado sin comunicar los unos con los otros, aprendiendo del que tenían más a mano? Quiero decir, a la vista de esto, que su distribución en tres grupos no es enteramente infundada y contribuye en alguna manera a la gloria nacional" (quoted in [64] 148).

Between 1828 (last catalogue published by Eusebi) and 1843 (first catalogue signed by Pedro de Madrazo), the Valencian "school" disappeared from the Museum registries, while the "school of Madrid" was created and received a venerable genealogy thanks to Madrazo's new classification of Velázquez as "el fundador de la buena escuela de Madrid, aunque por su patria y maestros pertenece a la Escuela sevillana" (Pedro de Madrazo Catálogo de los cuadros 12, italics in the original). The "Madrid school" absorbed artists who lacked attribution in Eusebi's catalogues, such as Luis de Menéndez, Juan Bautista del Mazo and many others. Like Eusebi, Madrazo did not classify artists who did not fit into a single national territory; only now their numbers increased, as Ribera (who worked in Valencia and Naples) ceased to belong to any "school" since the "Valencian school" was no longer recognized. The story of the museum collection which Madrazo narrated complemented the centralized picture of Spanish art by adding to it an imperial dimension, as it presented the "Spanish School" as an entity encompassing the artistic traditions of all territories of the Habsburg Empire and beyond:

Los Reyes de la casa de Austria, guiados por la generosa idea de que el culto de lo bello no está sujeto a la mezquina limitación de suelos o climas, ni a un nacionalismo exclusivo y contrario a la propagación de las luces, rivalizaron entre sí en proteger dignamente a los artistas de todas naciones, y mandándoles su oro compraron para sus dominios la civilización artística y los elementos de que se formó la Escuela española, admirada hoy en toda la Europa culta. (Pedro de Madrazo [43], [45] v–vi, italics in the original)

Despite its obvious unifying agenda, the linkage between the idea of the museum and the territorial configuration of the nation-state, developed by two generations of the Madrazo family, locked the discourse of the "Spanish School" and its display in the Prado into a double impasse. On the one hand, contemporary connoisseurs found the idea of the "Spanish School" visually unsustainable. As José Musso y Valiente expressed it trying to defend the notion of the "Valencian school":

Aunque digamos que lo de la escuela Valenciana es inexacto, siendo cierto, que no es lo mismo decir pintores españoles, porque para lo primero basta haber nacido aquí, y para lo segundo supónense siempre unos mismos principios, no menos inexacto sería comprender a todos estos paisanos en una escuela, cuando en realidad no lo son. Por ejemplo, ¿qué tiene que ver Juan de Juanes con Murillo? Al menos, diciendo que uno es de la escuela valenciana y el otro de la sevillana, se da a entender que nada tienen de común, lo que es verdad. (quoted in [64] 147–8)

The fact that artists working in different regions did not learn directly from each other made the existence of different Spanish "schools" hard to deny. In his own art gallery—one of the most prominent collections of the time—and outside the nation-building agenda of the Prado, José de Madrazo displayed paintings by the old principle of multiple local artistic "schools", recognizing the "Spanish school", the "schools" of Valladolid and [75], and listing José Ribera as "creador de la escuela napolitana" ([67] 101).

On the other hand, the difficulties of national integration rendered the idea of multiple Spanish "schools" non-representable in the nation's most prominent art museum. Thus, when in 1838 Louis Philippe opened his "Spanish Gallery" in the Louvre, Federico de Madrazo, in a letter to his father, who had just been named the director of the Prado, criticized its catalogue for attempting to implement a strict taxonomy of local schools in his catalogue: "notará V. muchas tonterías en el Catálogo que le mando a V. El barón [81] [the author of the catalogue] ha tenido el empeño de poner una porción de escuelas. ... Y por el abuso de escuelas de este
Catálogo ha salido un charlatán articulista en el *Diario de los Debates* diciendo que él no consideraba como escuela a la española, que no era más que una reunión de pintores que se habían formado con las escuelas italiana y flamenca" (*Epistolario* I, 147). In the 1872 edition, which was the first published after the museum was taken over by the state, Pedro de Madrazo quoted his brother Federico's unpublished memorandum, where the multiplicity of Spanish "schools" was explicitly related to the difficulties in the Spanish nation-building process: "Este dividir y subdividir sin término ni motivo sirve tan sólo para darnos un indicio de cuán costosa debió ser la formación de la unidad política de la nación española, vista esta deplorable tendencia, tan común entre nosotros, a dividirnos en pequeñas fracciones, en vez de agruparnos para formar un todo único" (Madrazo *Catálogo descriptivo e histórico* xxiv–xxv). In his own introduction, Pedro de Madrazo fully subscribed to his brother's judgments, declaring nonsensical the notions of "escuela de Toledo, escuela de Granada, escuela de Valencia, escuela de Zaragoza" (xxiv, italics in the original).[10] Madrazo justified the need to unify the "Spanish School", as well as the difficulties of such a unification, by the political reorganization of Europe, placing the debate about art in the center of contemporary political battles: "en una época como la presente, en que las escuelas germánicas tan encarnizadamente contienden entre sí y mutuamente se arrebatan los más preclaros maestros, y en que no está todavía claramente deslindada la jurisdicción entre dichas escuelas y las del Norte de Francia, entre las flamencas y alemanas, entre las holandesas y flamencas, etc." (xvi).[11] Yet the catalogue's subtitle (*Parte primera: Escuelas Italianas y Españolas*) suggests that the difficulties with postulating only one "Spanish School" still persisted in 1872.

**Exhibiting the canon**

Displaying works of art labeled as "Spanish" in a museum open to the public had an undoubted civic effect, as, in Pearce's terms, it made "the nation a visible reality", giving to a "political abstraction" a "symbolic form in the shape of tangible 'masterpieces'" (100). But the civic role of the museum required "a new philosophy and a new iconography" (100), along with a new display system, which took more than a century—until 1927—to be implemented in the Prado. Keeping and defending, at any cost and against public opinion at home and abroad, the Prado's reputation as a collection of masterpieces, rather than a display by schools and periods, helped to defer the question of the unity of the "Spanish School" until a time when its existence could be consolidated discursively and performatively in the museum catalogues and floor-plans.

It was in the second part of the eighteenth century that the idea that a national art gallery had to illustrate the birth, the apogee and the decline of artistic "schools" was accepted in public debate in Britain (although the British National Gallery had yet to be founded) and implemented in the art galleries of Dusseldorf, Vienna and Stockholm. It took the proclamation of the Louvre as the revolutionary museum—followed by the diffusion of the model of the Napoleonic museum in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars—to recognize the model as the only appropriate one for a progressive knowledge-producing institution deserving of being called a museum. In the nineteenth century, national museums were expected to have a display illustrating the national artistic school as their institutional objective ([70] 107–16); merely showcasing masterpieces was deemed appropriate to the national collection. The debates about exhibitionary modes resonated in the Prado as well. In the late 1830s Pedro de Madrazo praised the Prado (at this time still the property of the Crown) for being a true "Museum", which, in his view, simply meant displaying a large amount of masterpieces: "De los cuatro Museos que he visto en Bélgica y en Holanda creo que ninguno de ellos puede llamarse Museo; hay particulares que tienen muy buenas galerías ... En cuanto al Museo de Madrid, me ha parecido portentoso en el estado que ahora se encuentra, y que me ha parecido lo más digno de la capital de la monarquía española" (quoted in [64] 184). The systematic flight from exhibiting the development of "schools" mirrored the reluctance of the influential fractions within Spanish cultural elites to accept the narrative of progress. Instead of a chronological display, the members of the Madrazo family configured an anachronistic artistic tradition whose achievements, consolidated as the canon, were used to justify its unity.
As late as 1893, the liberal journalist Federico [8] mocked the arrangement of canvases in the museum: "en cada pared, un cuadro grande ocupando el centro; a sus lados, en perfecta correlación, otros cuyos tamaños y asuntos armónicamente se corresponden; un retrato hace pareja a otro retrato ...; a un país otro país, a un florero, otro florero ..." (204). To be sure, suggestions and requests for re-arranging the exhibit taxonomically came in at different historical moments and from different parts of the world. As early as 1820 La Crónica Artística published a review denouncing the Museum's display as proper of a "gabinete particular o una prendería" and looking for "euritmia o simetría para complacer al ignorante, dejando al inteligente en la precisión de adivinar las diferentes épocas del arte en nuestra España" ([6] 425). In 1843 the French museum inspector Louis [83] called it a "mere vast aficionado's cabinet" and a "simple collection of works of art" (Viardot 20, my translation).

When the Prado was declared state property, the unification with the former Museo Nacional (de la Trinidad) seemed to put the possibility of a display by "schools" within reach, as it offered a chance to complete the inventory and cover the lacunae triggered by the collecting habits of the Spanish monarchs. Writing in 1868, the restorer Vicente Poleró noted that by uniting in one "gran Museo Nacional" works from the Prado and the Museo de la Trinidad the Prado could become the site of a display of at least one school of art, the "Spanish School", thus warranting it the right to be considered a national museum (6). However, the expectations did not bring any fruit even at the end of the nineteenth century. Three years after the merger with the Museo de la Trinidad, Ceferino [5] affirmed that the distribution of the collection, "colocando las obras por naciones, por orden cronológico y reunidas siempre todas las de un mismo autor", was yet to be achieved (13). While the collection of the Prado indeed possessed considerable lacunae, the rejection of a this approach to Spanish art only finds explanation in the fact that the "Spanish School", challenged by the heterogeneous nature of its fragmented artistic traditions, could not be represented in a convincing single display. In order to exhibit the "Spanish School" the museum authorities had first to "invent a tradition" ([54]) capable of proving its existence.

Until 1856, there was no indication of the artists' names next to the paintings ([76] 46).[12] Hence, for an understanding of how the national "Schools" were consolidated in the museum, their display was equally if not more important than their discursive configuration. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Prado was rearranged and reconstructed several times. In the museum floor plan, the reconstructions reflected an increasing consistency in exhibiting in a single space works belonging to a single artistic tradition, identified as a national "School" ("Escuela francesa", "Escuela italiana", "Escuela flamenca", and so on) but lacking a chronological order. In this context, the "perfecta simetría" ([8]) of the display and the use of the entire surface of the wall, which prioritized large paintings and made smaller ones less visible, encouraged a comparison among the large-size artifacts resulting from important commissions (normally coming from kings and wealthy religious communities), rather than the mass products of workshops or bourgeois art (Figure 1).
The earliest images of the Prado by Fernando Brambilla already showed an inscription "ESCUELA ESPAÑOLA" above the entrance to the Grand Central Gallery (Figure 2). By the 1860s, the Central Gallery developed into a space containing the museum’s most important works (besides those displayed in "Sala de la Reina Isabel"), and was divided into two sections dedicated to the Spanish and the Italian "Schools", respectively. The photographic images of the gallery completed by Laurent and Co. in the early 1880s show the frieze of the Spanish section with the names of Spanish artists of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries in letters large and small. In large letters, six surnames were written. The words "Velázquez" and "Murillo" occupied the whole space between two niches. The other four surnames were paired: "Ribera" shared space with "Juanes", and "Zurbarán" with "Alonso Cano" (Figure 3). The six artists were recruited into the canon of the "Spanish School" according to a classificatory principle which determined an artist's nationality by birthplace, thus making Ribera a Spanish master. Federico de Madrazo used these six names to prove the existence of the "Spanish School": "La patria de Velázquez y Murillo, Ribera, Zurbarán, Juanes y Alonso Cano no necesita subdividir en provincias su Escuela" (cited in Pedro de Madrazo Catálogo descriptivo e histórico xxxii). The fact that the Museum authorities only used the artists' last names, making them look like the names of pre-modern "old masters" (such as Rafael, Titian, and so on), responded to the need of chronological inversion for the sake of "inventing a tradition". No longer belonging to their local workshops, artists were moved into the center of the new canon as foundational figures of the unified "Spanish School", rather than as heirs to a long development of local traditions and cross-border exchanges.
The names of some of the precursors to the six "founding artists" also appeared on the frieze. Those fifteenth-to early seventeenth-century local artists representing several pre-modern workshops were mentioned in smaller letters underneath the "grand masters" and provided with first names. But the Castilian Bartolomé González was not, in any way, a precursor of Ribera, under whose name he was listed. Nor did the Sevillian Juan de las Roelas and the florentine Vicente Carducho, who worked and died in Madrid, form a single tradition with the Valencian Juan de Juanes. The a-historical narrative written on the frieze gave priority to artists working at the Imperial courts, such as Luis de Carbajal, Gaspar Becerra and J. Fernández [72], at the expense of those who were not subject to royal patronage or worked in other regions.
We can now conclude that the eclectic floor-plan, favored by the authorities of the Prado against the common conviction that only a display by "schools" mode made an art collection a true museum, deferred the problem of justifying the unity of the "Spanish School", which would be otherwise unsustainable. Instead, it configured a national canon which was used to found the existence of the "Spanish School" retrospectively, on the grounds of the achievements of the artists born within Spain's political borders, working at the Royal courts, and represented in the collection of the Castile-based Hapsburgs.

The authorities of the Prado did not reject the need for a search of origins for the "Spanish School". But they did this by producing a new centralized genealogy, in which Ceán Bermúdez's three "trees" merge, converted into two branches of one single tree:

No, no hay, hablando con exactitud artística, más que una Escuela española de pintura, o dos a lo sumo, la castellana y la andaluza, ramas de un solo y corpulento árbol, y este árbol de la Escuela española tiene su filiación gloriosa y legítima en las escuelas veneciana, boloñesa y flamenca, aunque al emanciparse de aquellas poderosas raíces se desarrolló y transfiguró, grande, original, majestuoso y bello, como lo es siempre todo lo natural, ingenuo y verdadero. (quoted in Pedro de Madrazo Catálogo descriptivo e histórico xxxv, small caps and italics in the original)

Federico de Madrazo's genealogy of the "Spanish School" was complemented by another naturalizing metaphor: that of an "artistic family", which set the foundation of an ancestry national in scale and political by nature. That is why in Madrazo's classification artists who were born in the territory of one modern nation-state and later moved to another are still included in the national "School" of the country in which they were born:

Sucede que todos los artistas de verdadero genio retienen fuera de su país, y por muy larga que sea su permanencia en una escuela extranjera, algo, o más bien mucho, de su índole nativa y del acento patrio; y esta consideración ha debido, sin duda alguna, resolver la cuestión de la escuela artística de los pintores residentes en tierra extraña, porque todos los biógrafos convienen ya en que el pintor pertenece a su país natal, y no a aquel en donde estudió. (quoted in Pedro de Madrazo Catálogo descriptivo e histórico xxxi)

The museum director presented the family analogy—one of the most recurrent articulations that the discourse of the "imagined communities" has generated—as a step towards developing the positive scientific knowledge rooted in Taine's "race, milieu, et moment":

En todos los ramos del saber humano han formado agrupaciones o escuelas los hombres que a ellos se han consagrado; y si esto ha sucedido en el cultivo de las mismas ciencias naturales, tan sujetas, al parecer, al raciocinio y a la prueba experimental, ¿cómo no admitirlo en el de las Bellas Artes, donde no hay más guía que el sentimiento, tan desconforme en todos los hombres, y tan dependiente de las circunstancias, ya necesarias, ya eventuales, de raza, de localidad, de educación, etc.? (quoted in Pedro de Madrazo Catálogo descriptivo e histórico xxv–xxvi)

For Pedro de Madrazo writing after the 1868 revolution, the meaning of the "Spanish School" is fully political. In his 1872 catalogue, Madrazo used "School" as a synonym of "raza" and as an overarching classification emphasizing the common traits of artistic "families":

[El orden alfabético que hemos adoptado no prescinde de una manera absoluta de la división por escuelas, sino que, agrupando todas las que entre sí son afines, ... se aplica a las clasificaciones más genéricas y comprensivas, como si dijéramos, las grandes y cardinales divisiones de razas artísticas y se desentiende de las desemejanzas secundarias de las varias familias, por decirlo así, de cada nación, comparadas unas con otras ... . Por consiguiente, el orden alfabético de autores
rige para cada una de esas tres grandes divisiones de Escuelas italianas, españolas y germánicas separadamente ... (Pedro de Madrazo Catálogo descriptivo e histórico xviii, small caps in the original)

In this description Pedro de Madrazo hierarchically organizes earlier classificatory systems, including the one coined by his brother. His taxonomy merges pre-modern "schools" into new national "Schools", bounded in the same way as political entities. Thus, the scientific impossibility of postulating a unified "Spanish School", combined with the political need to represent a territorial unity, made necessary the figurative use of the new term, which was subsequently presented as a modern classificatory tool firmly grounded in positivist science.

"La España Pictórica": the naturalization of the "Spanish School"

The consolidation and transmission of knowledge about the "Spanish School" following the 1868 revolution and the nationalization of the Prado resulted from a series of educational reforms lead by the Krausistas, a group of Spanish intellectuals associating themselves with the panentheist thinking of the German philosopher Karl [84] Friederich [56], propagated in Spain by Julián Sanz del Río. [56]'s philosophy of art, similar to Hegel's, viewed art as an indication of each nation's historical progress towards achieving its "ideal": "en la historia de la cultura humana, la historia de las bellas artes guarda con la total de cada pueblo secreta correspondencia" (141, quoted in [60] 15). From this point of view, the study of a nation's artistic production was meant to uncover the secret laws of history and the Creator's plans for that nation.

The Krausistas' participation in the educational reforms (incipient during the "bienio progresista" of 1854–1856 but really noticeable after the 1868 revolution) was marked by the growing importance given to the teaching of art history by the institutions of secondary (and later, elementary) education. In 1876, Francisco Giner de los [80], Sanz del Río's disciple, founded the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, which became the major promoter of the reform. Its main objective consisted in introducing a rationalist "intuitive method" of direct observation following the positivist trend which by that time had inspired educational changes in Belgium, England, France and the USA ([20] "Sobre la reforma de las universidades inglesas", "Carácter de pedagogía contemporánea", [27], "Sobre la enseñanza estética en Inglaterra"). The teaching of art history as a "comprobación ... de los principios y el método racional y práctico de [24]" became an important item on the reform agenda ([51] ix).[13]

In the continuum of learning practices, the progress of observation skills from those suitable for understanding pictorial form to the ones applicable to natural phenomena was thought to eventually lead the observer to an understanding of the "ideal" in the divine creation: "Cuando somos capaces de ver la naturaleza con los ojos impregnados con toda la belleza de la tradición artística, entonces sí, la naturaleza llega a ser lo supremo. Para llegar a ver a Dios en la naturaleza es precisa una larga serie de ejercicios espirituales" (from [20]'s conversation with his disciples, quoted in [86] 77; see also Portús and Vega).

The comprehensive definition of the concept of the "Spanish School" belongs to the previously-quoted Manuel Bartolomé de [20], art historian, director of the Museo Pedagógico, and Giner's successor as the head of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza.[14] The Krausista underpinnings of [20]'s views of national art turned the connection between the consolidation of Spain as a nation-state and the development of Spanish art, postulated by the Madrazo brothers, into a subject of direct "intuitive" observation:

[33] no puede comenzar hasta que haya España; y, aún habiendo España, no hay España pictórica hasta mucho más tarde. Quiere decir esto que faltan en la pintura española de los primeros tiempos rasgos propios y sustantivos, o mejor, que si los tiene, como en razón debe pensarse, no saltan a la vista tan claros que puedan determinarse fácilmente, siguiendo en ello la ley de todo desarrollo que va de lo indistinto, común e indeterminado, a lo concreto, individual y característico. ("[25]: Ideas generales" 376)
Furthermore, the *Krausista* approach allowed Cossío to elaborate a sophisticated timeline of the development of Spanish art within art history as well as Spanish history in general: "El examen de las fuentes [34] de la pintura española, o sea de las obras y de los escritores, demuestra que aquélla obedece en su vida a las mismas leyes que la historia general del arte, y sigue la marcha de la historia general de España" (ibid.). This enabled Cossío to provide an art-historical genealogy for the contradictory definition of the "solo y corpulento árbol" which the Madrazo brothers had given to the "Spanish School" and which, as we have observed, was marked by unresolved contradictions with Ceán’s teachings. In a series of articles published in the Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza Cossío deployed the available art-historical knowledge to explain how the Spanish artistic tradition had evolved since the twelfth century from a range of foreign influences coming from Venice, Florence and Bologna. These articles explain that Spanish art started to show national characteristics in the sixteenth century following the unification of Spain under the Catholic Kings, was centralized later in the same century at the Royal courts, flourished in the seventeenth century, withered under the Bourbon dynasty, and began to offer a promise of regeneration in the second half of the nineteenth century (Cossío "[26]: Ideas generales", "La pintura española hasta el siglo XIII", "La pintura española en el siglo XIII a XV", "La primera determinación de la escuela", "La pintura española en el siglo XVI").

Crucially, Cossío’s approach to national art on the basis of its compenetration with nature as an encoded manifestation of "el genio de la raza" or "el genio de la tierra y del alma española" in spatial terms (Cossío "La pintura española: Ideas generales" 378, "[35]" 380) resolved two main contradictions that haunted the configuration of the "Spanish School" at the Prado Museum: the difficult classification of transnational artists (such as Ribera) and a weak integration of local schools. In the first place, the recognition of a continuity between artistic form and national spirit allowed Cossío to end the uncertainties about the attribution of artists who were born or schooled in one country but worked in another. These artists had to be naturalized if they demonstrated the "carácter patrio", Cossío wrote in 1885, reworking the Madrazo brothers’ definition of the "Spanish School": "la condición indispensable para dar carta de naturaleza de pintor español, no es la de haber nacido o pintado en España, sino la de mostrar en sus producciones el carácter patrio" ("La pintura española: Ideas generales" 375). As synonymous to the "carácter patrio" Cossío returns to Federico de Madrazo’s old definition of the "School" as a family (rather than an overarching "racial" or political unity of several families, as Pedro de Madrazo suggested): "de aquí que cada pueblo reclame como suyos aquellos artistas que nacieron o se educaron fundamentalmente en su seno; pero ni el nacimiento ni la educación bastan para dar nacionalidad a un artista, si falta en sus obras el aire de familia, ni cuando éste se tiene, son necesarias, para concedérsela, aquellas condiciones" ("La pintura española: Ideas generales" 375).

Moreover, Cossío’s approach to the "Spanish School" solved the problem of the obvious lack of cohesion between Spain’s heterogeneous artistic traditions by reversing the notions of the national and the local. According to Cossío, the local variations observable in Spanish art were not to be interpreted as an impediment to the consolidation of the "Spanish School", but rather as a sign of its full realization. Thus, speaking about the sixteenth century, when Spanish art began to show national characteristics, Cossío takes the absence of local schools as a manifestation of its still incomplete integration: "La escuela española de pintura a mediados del siglo XVI está bien manifiesta, pero no hay todavía en ella escuelas locales interiores" ("[26]: Ideas generales" 377). Consequently, the obvious presence of local "schools" in the Spanish art of the seventeenth century, which in the 1830s had inspired Musso y Valiente’s protests against the exhibition of a single "Spanish School" at the Prado, become but a proof of its completion in Cossío classification. Within the framework of the *Krausista* view of art history as a foundation for understanding the "ideal" of each nation manifesting itself in time with increasing plenitude, Cossío argues that the local traditions so clearly distinguishable in Spanish art of its supposedly high period testify to the full articulation of national spirit:
Lejos de vivir, pues, la pintura española desde esta época de inspiración ajena, sucede lo que es natural con toda personalidad rica y fecunda, que influye a su vez, imprime carácter, forma centros y se diversifica interiormente, dando lugar a escuelas que sería inútil buscar antes de ese tiempo, porque hasta ahora no han tenido razón de ser, ni era posible que naciesen. ("La pintura española: Ideas generales" 378)

This reverse chronology of local schools provided a dialectical ground for accepting the double nature of the "Spanish School", implicit in the Madrazo brothers' reluctant acceptance of "dos a lo sumo, la castellana y la andaluza" schools, examined earlier. At the same time, much like the Madrazos, Cossío rejects the existence of the Valencian school:

> Y tanto es así, que las escuelas no se forman sino allí donde el elemento local se ha manifestado siempre más vivo y enérgico, es decir, en la región alejada del litoral y que ha experimentado menos el influjo extranjero: Castilla y Andalucía; mientras que en la zona oriental—Cataluña y Valencia—más en contacto con la vida de otros pueblos, no hay centro de pintura característico en esta época de florecimiento. ("La pintura española: Ideas generales" 378)

Thus, Cossío's art-historical approach proposed dialectical solutions to the aporias inherent in the notion of a "Spanish School" by focusing on the formal manifestations of "national character" through art and by attributing the existence of local pictorial traditions to its high stage of development.

Krausista educators introduced in Spain the practices of educational excursions designed to assist learners in developing the skills of intuitive knowledge. Grounded in the study of any phenomena's visual form, the excursions combined the teaching of art with a range of other disciplines, from science to religion ([1] García 500). For the study of Spanish art, this approach meant that the relation between the "Spanish School" and Spanish history could be verified by means of direct observation: "La historia del arte, enseñada en excursiones y museos, es uno de los instrumentos poderosos de la educación y debe ir ligada a la historia" (Program of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza). Thanks to these excursions the knowledge of art became communicated through a combination of public visits to the museums and travel for the purposes of examining monuments. In these cultural practices led by Cossío and other members of the Institución, "ya con sus alumnos, ya con el público [34] intuitivo", the notion of a "Spanish School" reached wide layers of Spanish society of different professional, age and gender groups (Cossío "[22]" 177). The end-of-the-century memoranda from the Prado testify that by that time the organized visits to the museum were a customary part of education, not only of the urban elites, but also of future teachers (male and female), army officers, education professionals and the general public. As Cossío's summaries of the museum tours for children and adults demonstrate, the intuitive production and communication of knowledge about the "Spanish School" was the central part of these visits ("[23]", "Los alumnos de la escuela de Madrid en el museo de pintura. Consejos prácticos para hacer una excursión"). The schedules of public lectures held at the Prado and at the Ateneo in the early part of the twentieth century, featuring a variety of topics pertaining to Spanish art, suggest that interest in the subject was expanding. In the 1920s, reproductions of paintings from the Prado (mostly Spanish) routinely appeared on the covers of such mass publications as Esfera and, later, Estampa (Figure 4).
FIGURE 4 The popularization of Spanish art. Throughout 1917, the popular magazine La Esfera featured paintings from the Prado (predominantly Spanish) on its covers.

The practices of artistic touring promoted by the Institución Libre de Enseñanza were further reinforced by an early form of organized cultural tourism, known as excursionist societies. Originating in Belgium and France, these public associations were created for the purposes of acquiring and transmitting first-hand knowledge of monuments, traditions, and landscapes of a country. In Spain such societies appeared between 1876 (Sociedad Catalana de Excursiones) and 1893 (Sociedad Española de Excursiones). The latter's foundational document proclaimed as its objective "el estudio de España considerada desde todos sus aspectos, y principalmente desde el científico, histórico, artístico y literario" (1893, Año 1, N° 1, 1). Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones. Arte, Arqueología, Historia published articles on Spanish pictorial art, intertwined with submissions dedicated to monuments of different regions of Spain and reports on cultural tours of the Association's members. Partially overlapping in their membership and agenda with those of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, the "excursionist societies" transmitted the practices of direct observation far beyond the Institución's immediate circle, as they established the connections with the local Comisiones de Monumentos, increasingly dominated by Neo-Catholics ([16]). In the Spanish Excursionist Society's publications aesthetics and museum culture became detached from the circles of museum visitors and reached educated middle-class men and women not necessarily residing in the capitals. As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century, the linkage between art and nation was solid enough for the notion of a "Spanish School" to be used intermittently with those of "art of Spain" or "Spanish art".[15]
Summary
Initially configured at the Prado Museum and met with considerable resistance, in the late nineteenth century the notion of a "Spanish School" was already viewed as a reflection of a Spanish national ideal and became used by wider circles of Spanish society in contexts not limited to the museum. In particular, I have argued that the consolidation of the canon of the "Spanish School" helped to separate artists and their artifacts from the localities of their dwelling by generating among the literate museum visitors an appeal for a unified "School," otherwise non-existent. I have also identified the nation-building tropes which linked the discourse of Spanish art to the discourse of the Spanish nation and ensured the acceptance of the invented notion of a "Spanish School". Furthermore, I have examined how the construction of a unified artistic tradition was grounded in a retrospective genealogy, which allowed earlier artists to be inscribed into the canon as predecessors of those artists whose belonging to the canon was least disputed. The same retrospective process explained the weak integration of local traditions as acquired characteristics of a fully-articulated national "School".

Initially the product of a museum display, the "Spanish School" received its confirmation from an intellectual movement relating national art to the "character" encapsulated in nature. The paradoxical "return to nature" of what was but a classificatory tool was made possible by an anachronistic usage of the notion of a museum for narrating the development of Spanish art. Since the "School" united artists who, unlike the members of pre-modern "schools", could not learn from each other directly, Spanish art historians used the blueprint of the museum to explain how tradition evolved within the canon. Thus, art historians transformed royal art collections into museums of sorts by describing them as places where the knowledge of art was communicated. Cossío included El Greco in the "Spanish School" by postulating that Velázquez became El Greco's indirect disciple when he saw his work in Toledo and at the Escorial ("[35]" 374, 376). In 1915, Aureliano [12], the artist, art historian, and future director of the Prado (1918–1922), applied the same procedure to prove Goya's learning from Velázquez. For Beruete, this became possible thanks to a proto-museum founded by Carlos III in the new Royal Palace: "En aquel año, Goya... consiguió ver por vez primera las regias colecciones de pinturas que habían estado diseminadas hasta hacía poco en los Sitios reales. Carlos III acababa de dar las órdenes para que casi toda aquella riqueza esparcida, se instalara en el Palacio de Madrid, nuevo entonces. La visita y estudio de tanto cuadro podía, pues, hacerse con facilidad" (259–60).

In the final analysis, the history of the "Spanish School" as a classificatory category originating in an a-historical display at the Prado and appearing coherent only in the reverse chronology of Cossío's theories demonstrates how the tension between aesthetics and history could support the naturalization of aesthetic knowledge. In nineteenth-century Spain, once the knowledge of aesthetics was combined with that of history and reached different social groups thanks to the teaching of art history at the post-secondary, secondary and (to a limited extent) elementary levels, aesthetic categories were included in the general discussions of race, nature, and national "ideal". Thanks to the notion of a "Spanish School", by the early twentieth century aesthetics would become a major source supporting nationalist discourse and the classificatory abstraction became studied as yet another "language" in which the Spirit articulated its message: "porque las [obras] de estos pintores, por varias y antitéticas que nos parezcan,todas tienen una dicción, una última expresión semejante, todas están pintadas en español" ([12] 261).

Acknowledgements
A much earlier version of this article was presented at the session "Museum Culture in the Nineteenth-Century Spain" at the 2002 Annual MLA Convention in New York. The research necessary for the completion of this article was made possible by the grant from the Fundación Carolina in 2004. The author wishes to thank the anonymous readers of JSCS for their helpful comments, corrections and suggestions.
Notes

1. After King Ferdinand VII’s death in 1833, his widow Regent Queen María Cristina initiated several law suits (1834–1835, 1845 and 1865) with the objective of bringing the collection back as the personal property of the Royal family and dividing it between herself and her two daughters (Mariano de Madrazo 129–32). Simultaneously, several times during the century (1839, 1842 and 1855) the discussion as to who owned the Museum brought forth the project of separating the Royal Patrimony from the Crown and transferring it to the nation (Mariano de Madrazo 178, 214). In all cases, the Museum was declared the undividable property linked to the Crown but not legally belonging to the nation. Following Queen Isabel II’s dethronement on October 15, 1868, a Council in charge of conservation, custody and administration of the possessions of the Spanish Crown took over responsibility for the museum. On February 23, 1872 King Amadeo of Savoy declared the Prado property of the nation. After King Amadeo's abdication, under the law adopted on July 24, 1873 by the government of the I Republic regulating the transfer of the former property of the Crown, the Museum was proclaimed property of the state.

2. For a recent multifaceted analysis of the impact of national literature on nation-formation in Spain, see the volume Spain beyond Spain. Modernity, Literary History, and National Identity, edited by Brad [41] and Luis Fernández Cifuentes. The territorial consolidation of the Spanish nation-state through its pictorial canon which will be examined here finds intriguing parallels with the processes taking place inside print culture, described in the contributions by Jo [57], Elisa Martí-[69] and Wadda [80] Font. For a relevant study of the National art exhibitions in Spain in the context of nation-formation, see [57], "[58]".

3. Relevant sources about the museum’s narrative structures include [74] 196–207, [52] 25–9, [79] 119–48, [7].

4. The ensuing list of references is limited to the literature about art museums as participants of nation-formation. An understanding of their role would be impossible without the framework of Pierre [13]'s interpretation of the consumption of art as a vehicle of personal, class, and national identity-formation and without his theory of fields (Bourdieu Distinction and [14], [15] et al.). Likewise, current attention to museums is much indebted to Michel [47]'s analysis of the disciplining impact of space of the trademark institutions of modernity ([48]). Important contributions to the current understanding of the role of museums for the production of cultural, racial and national identities are contained in [62] and Silverstone, [10] ([11]) and [19].

5. [38], [39] (Civilizing Rituals), Conlin.
7. For more information about the Museo Nacional de Pintura y Escultura, also known as the Museo de la Trinidad, see [72] Prieto and [3] Lopera (19–83). Due to lack of funding and museum space, the Museo de la Trinidad, which had to share space with the Ministerio de Fomento for most of its history, could actually never offer the possibility of seeing side-by-side works of art from different regions of Spain. The interpretation of "schools" in Spain's first National Museum is analyzed in Alisa [61]'s The Galerie Espagnole.

8. [76] writes that the number of re-editions of [65]'s catalogue signified its commercial success (46). Although Pedro de Madrazo died in 1898, catalogues of the Prado continued to be published under his name until 1920.

9. Forty-two cuadernos of La colección litográfica de los cuadros de Madrid were published between 1826 and 1853 ([82] 137–61).
10. The Madrazo brothers' criticism could have found easy targets in Baron [81]'s Catalogue and in the literature about local artistic schools, such as the books by Fracisco [87] (1869) and, most certainly, Gregorio [36] Villaamil, the subdirector of the Museo de la Trinidad. Although the Museo de la Trinidad did not display a unified "Spanish School" (which was in part explained by the severe lack of space), the 1865 catalogue Cruzada established three chronologies of Spanish "schools": the workshop-based transnational "primitive" schools, the locality-based "Spanish schools" of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (which included the "[66]" of Madrid, Seville, Granada, Toledo and Valencia) and the "contemporáneos". The "Escuela de Madrid" (capitalized) had the overwhelming numeric and qualitative advantage.
11. The catalogue was issued two years after the 1870–71 Franco-Prussian War.
12. In any case, in 1840, only 10% of Spaniards could read; in 1860, this number doubled, reaching 20%, and in 1900, approximately one-third of the Spanish population could read and write ([17] 26).

13. The accounts by Hermenegildo Giner de los [80] (Giner’s brother) and Manuel Bartolomé de Cossío (Giner’s disciple and successor in the Institución Libre de Enseñanza) trace the new discipline’s genealogy. It begins with José Fernández Jiménez's 1867 precursor lectures at Nicolás Salmerón’s Colegio "El Internacional", followed by Juan Facundo Riaño's 1868 first monographic courses on History of the Arts at the Escuela Diplomática (H. Giner de los [80] viii) and later in the Escuela de Institutrices (Cossío "[22]" 177). The "plan de estudios" adopted after the 1868 revolution included "el estudio de los principios del arte y de su historia en España" into the curricula of secondary education (Decreto de 25 de octubre de [37]). Francisco [50], [80] was named the first Chair of the Principles and History of the Arts (without retribution) at the Instituto del Noviciado (later the Instituto de Cisneros). For more information about the Krausista education of art history, see [46] Folgoso and [55].

14. For an overview of Cossío's educational program, see Otero Urtaza.

15. The tradition of referring to the Spanish collection of the Prado as a unified "Spanish school" continued in the twentieth century. It is present in the 1992 catalogue of the "Spanish School" by Santiago [2] Blanch. Yet the author does not provide any theoretical explanation for his use of the term "School" in the introductory notes, limiting his exposition to the history of the museum collection and the museum’s institutional history (3–7). In the latest guidebook of the Prado (2008), the notion of the "Spanish School" is used extensively (Introduction, 5, 10, 23, 66 and so on). The authors, however, also recognize regional and local "schools", such as the "schools" of Toledo, Valencia, Seville and Madrid (42, 84, 132, and so on). The concept of the "Spanish School" refers to the ways in which Spanish national tradition was declared to the international community thanks to its representation at the Prado: "it is not by chance that the Prado's inauguration coincided with the international discovery of the 'Spanish School'" (23, see also 66, 140, 198).

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