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## From English School to British School: Modernism, Revisionism, and National Culture in the Writings of M. H. Spielmann

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### Abstract:

This article explores the increasingly central critical concept of the English, and later British, "School" in art, ca. 1880–1910. After briefly surveying the work of several professional critics writing in the press, it then focuses on Marion H. Spielmann's prolific writings across varied venues—journalism, his editorship of *The Magazine of Art*, a monumental scholarly study of Victorian "New Sculpture," the catalog of British art at the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition, and multiple entries for the 1911 *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The essay analyzes his conservative yet populist views of Victorian art through lenses of emerging late-century notions of Britishness, competing national cultural identities, and conflicted views about modernity in art.

## From English School to British School: Modernism, Revisionism, and National Culture in the Writings of M. H. Spielmann

by Julie Codell

From the 1880s to about 1910, critics on both sides of the Channel re-examined and re-wrote each other's art history, as well as their own. In these surveys, art was segregated by national "schools," with French and English artists contrasted according to different strengths (e.g., British color, French draftsmanship). The notion of national "schools" hardened in this period, further embattled by competing national claims to modernity. French critic Robert de la Sizeranne and German critic Julius Meier-Graefe argued that England did not have modern artists. But German critic Richard Muther separated the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's (PRB) realism from a later Pre-Raphaelite generation's idealism and linked James Whistler, Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and William Morris to argue for an English modernism.<sup>[1]</sup>

English writers on art history lavished praise on the Pre-Raphaelites: William Sharp in 1886, Harry Quilter in 1892, Cosmo Monkhouse and Percy Bate in 1899, and J. Ernest Phythian in 1905 dubbed Pre-Raphaelitism a renaissance, a salvation, the peak of British art and a great "influence on the painting of the world . . . the revolt of naturalism against convention, of sincerity against affectation."<sup>[2]</sup> Although disagreeing on its influences and leaders, English critics unanimously considered Pre-Raphaelitism a national movement without a trace of foreignness, a re-assessment begun following Rossetti's death in 1882. By 1908 Marion Harry Spielmann hailed Pre-Raphaelites as exemplary British moderns in his catalog for the British section of the 1908 Franco-British exhibition. The PRB's own early radical internationalism—reflected in their 1848 list of "greats," a list of their own canon of their favorite writers and artists from all over Europe and all historical periods—was erased by the strident nationalism of Hunt and Millais late in the century and uttered in Millais's interviews and Hunt's autobiography and by British and Continental art writers' nationalistic revisionism.

The notion of a national school changed between the 1870s and 1900 from identifying an informal group of artists to asserting a more contentious national identity. I will first briefly summarize views of a group of critics, some active as scholars and curators, who wrote for the mass public in the periodical press and popular art books and for whom the notion of a national school was not central and sometimes even disparaged. I will then focus on Marion Harry Spielmann (1858–1948; fig. 1), editor of the *Magazine of Art* (1886–1904), art writer for the daily paper, the *Graphic*, and stalwart supporter of the Royal Academy, whose writings solidified the nationalistic meaning of "school" in response to the Frenchification of British art, at a time when Impressionism was capturing the world market.



Fig. 1, John Henry Frederick Bacon, *Marion Harry Spielmann*, 1904. Oil on canvas. © National Portrait Gallery, London. [\[larger image\]](#)

Despite recent claims for the modernity and even avant-gardism of Frederic Leighton, G. F. Watts, and the Pre-Raphaelites, perhaps their most adamant advocate, M. H. Spielmann, remains in scholarly shadows. Spielmann articulated conservative artistic taste, the reason perhaps for his marginal status today, yet he had a great deal of influence on Victorians and praised many of these now-revivified Victorian artists. Many artists sought his counsel on professional activities, market prices, publicity in the press, and relations with patrons and dealers.<sup>[3]</sup> He fought for art in the university curriculum, for copyright protection for artists, and against taxing inherited art collections. An advocate of the Pre-Raphaelites and Watts, Spielmann also promoted such artists as Stacey Marks and William Orchardson, whose reputations remain Victorian in the anti-modern sense—genre painting, conventionally gendered domestic subjects, and conventional in content, form or technique.<sup>[4]</sup>

Spielmann's wide-ranging late-century writings—his 1908 Franco-British international exhibition catalog, his 1901 book on British sculpture, his many entries in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and his prolific writings in the press—had considerable influence on public thinking about art as a reflection of national characteristics in a period of the increasing suturing of culture and nation.<sup>[5]</sup> During this period he edited the *Magazine of Art*, wrote for seven other periodicals, and authored over 20 books on British and Continental artists, Chaucer, Ruskin, portraits of Shakespeare, the Wallace Collection, and *Punch's* history and illustrators. He also edited *The New Art Library* series on painting techniques and genres.

Nationalism as a concept jostled with the increasingly internationalism of markets and exhibitions in this period. Spielmann's work had an international range: he was an expert on Velasquez and popular Continental art, advisor to the Gaekwar of Baroda for whom he collected European paintings, and a member of a cosmopolitan Jewish community in Britain.<sup>[6]</sup> His brother Sir Isidore (1854–1925) was joint Honorary Secretary with Sir Robert Witt of the National Art Collections Fund (founded 1903) and organized English art for international exhibitions for decades.<sup>[7]</sup> Organizers of these exhibitions' massive displays of objects, from manufactured goods and machines to fine art, although classified by nations, claimed to have an international purpose ever since the landmark 1851 Great Exhibition. Yet, despite fifty years

of exhibitions that increasingly incorporated art from outside European cultures, by 1908 M. H. Spielmann elided national schools into nationalistic schools in a Euro-centric, even provincialized battle over modernisms.

### The English School

The English school was a loose concept originating as early as the seventeenth century and embodied in the establishment of the Royal Academy. Articulated by James Barry, Joshua Reynolds, and Allan Cunningham, it was characterized, according to Morris Eaves, by cultural progress that “favors modern art in general, puts English art on a plane, at least level with the art of other nations, and readily adapts to the introduction of empirical elements that give it the look and feel of a thorough modern theory.” But it was not fixedly national: “The discourse is nationalistic insofar as it envisions modern English art as a national effort threatened by time (old masters) and distance. . . . But this is an international or secondary nationalism that must remain open to the claims of both time and distance.”<sup>[8]</sup> Early arguments for an English school were “broadly economic in motivation, historical in form, and prospective or open vantage . . . to construct a diagnostic, remedial, and prognostic narrative that grants English art an honorable place in European art history.” Its appeal was “driven by a principle of improvement that is transferable across historical periods and across culture”; removing obstructions and implementing countermeasures permitted “the principle of improvement . . . to operate freely,” in a presumably evolutionary pattern “based on the cumulative acquisition of concepts and skills.”<sup>[9]</sup>

The notion of a school emerged through overlapping institutions: the Academy, the canon, theories of “timeless” formal properties, and practice.<sup>[10]</sup> One dominant sign of progress was the synthesis of binaries—line and color, painting and sculpture, Florence and Venice, native and foreign. Syntheses marked the culmination of history and progress and were later vital to Spielmann’s defense of British art as British, modern, and the culmination of all art history anywhere.

A national school discourse existed in the populist art press. From the 1840s, Samuel Carter Hall, editor of the *Art Journal*, avidly promoted the Academy, continuing even after other exhibition venues emerged from the 1870s on.<sup>[11]</sup> The *Art Journal* promoted buying works by living British artists, fueled by growing attention to British art’s competition with Continental art in international exhibitions in Paris in 1855, London in 1862, and in the massive display of British art in Manchester’s Art-Treasures Exhibition in 1857.

George Scharf’s organization of paintings by chronology and national schools, which Scharf learned from German scholar Gustav Waagen and applied to the organization of the 1857 Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition, was innovative in Britain and influenced subsequent exhibitions.<sup>[12]</sup> Furthermore, the 1862 International Exhibition in London was organized by “schools,” and flooded with the fine arts that had been largely absent in the Great Exhibition in 1851. This exhibition’s organizers sought to define British art (and the art of other nations) to distinguish these art styles from one another and also to argue for the progressive nature of British art and its special expertise in landscape.<sup>[13]</sup> The attempts to define a national school were consolidated by Richard and Samuel Redgrave’s 1866 *A Century of Painters of the English School*.<sup>[14]</sup>

### Professional Critics and the English School

M. H. Spielmann's career trajectory was not entirely unique. Art critics regularly wrote for periodicals and addressed issues of good taste and the nature of criticism, indicating a public interest in these topics. J. Bevington Atkinson (1822–86), *Blackwood's* art critic and antagonist of the PRB and Ruskin, wrote for the *Portfolio*, *Contemporary Review*, *Fraser's Magazine* and the *Art Journal*.<sup>[15]</sup> Tom Taylor (1817–80), *Times* critic from 1857, wrote for the *Graphic*, among other newspapers and journals, and was a *Punch* editor. In 1863 Taylor promoted art that served “national sentiment . . . national greatness.”<sup>[16]</sup> F. T. Palgrave (1824–97) wrote regularly for the *Saturday Review*.<sup>[17]</sup> Philip Gilbert Hamerton (1834–94), critic for the *Saturday Review*, wrote for *Cornhill Magazine* and edited the *Portfolio*.<sup>[18]</sup> Sidney Colvin (1845–1927), Slade Professor of Art at Cambridge and Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum from 1884, wrote for the *Fortnightly Review*. F. G. Stephens (1828–1907), a co-founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, was critic and art editor of the *Athenaeum* for forty years (until his dislike of Impressionism ended this career), contributor to the *Art Journal* and *Portfolio*, and Keeper of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. William Michael Rossetti (1829–1919), another PRB member, was art critic for the *Critic*, the *Spectator* and the *Crayon* (American). Emilia Pattison Dilke (1840–1904) wrote for the *Saturday Review* and *Academy*, for which she was art editor.<sup>[19]</sup> These writers' art books, often versions of their press articles, tapped into a growing market for art literature. Writing to educate public taste, they urged the public to buy art by living British artists, as they moved in a shared circle of artists, dealers and other critics.<sup>[20]</sup>

In 1871 Hamerton turned the *Portfolio* series on British artists into a book, *English Painters of the Present-Day*, with essays by Stephens, Rossetti, Atkinson, Taylor, Colvin, and himself.<sup>[21]</sup> The original essays had been written on the heels of the 1863 Royal Commission on the Academy and debates over mural decoration. The artist-subjects of these essays were diverse: genre realists, classicists, Aesthetes, Pre-Raphaelites, and Academicians, all happily compared to Old Masters.<sup>[22]</sup> Interestingly, the book's photographic reproductions were largely of drawings, not finished oil paintings, and thus privileged the creative process and implying critics' intimate knowledge of this process and of the artists themselves.

In Hamerton's edited book, individuality and internationalism trump the notion of an English “school” which was at times disparaged in the book, as was English art in general. Colvin described Edward Poynter as one who can take a “place in the general stock of trained European art.”<sup>[23]</sup> Atkinson described Edward Armitage's “foreign style” as “severed from our native school, which . . . pleased the eye without much expenditure of thought.”<sup>[24]</sup> For Atkinson, “our English school has condescended to seek popularity and profit through naturalism, individual character, and pretty domestic incident.”<sup>[25]</sup> “School” here referred to informal groups of artists, such as the St. John's Wood's “school,” or to loose stylistic similarities, defined largely by style or genre, not geography, and less important than artists' participation in the larger historical and geographic canon of art history: “The broad school of art is catholic, universal, and all-embracing; it descends to the level of humanity without loss of dignity.”<sup>[26]</sup> Interestingly, Colvin noted how difficult it was for an artist to represent national glory “without having . . . his tongue in his cheek.”<sup>[27]</sup>

Colvin used “school” “in the lax sense in which . . . it is alone appropriate” (34) and did not identify it with the Royal Academy (with which it was identified in the eighteenth century) because the Academy, in his view,

has at no time completely represented the various tendencies of individual genius in England. It has represented those tendencies in English painting which have been . . . most popular with . . . the art-public; excluding, in the main, the most characteristic and original counter-tendencies. And so the individual genius has been left in isolation, to insist on his own views and work out his career at disadvantage.[\[28\]](#)

Colvin defined “modern art” by “its enormously widened range of ends as compared with ancient art, and its greatly impaired command of means,” forcing modern artists to seek “gradual experiment and groping” toward “singularity and divergency.” He used “national” cautiously: “Our national character (if one may permit oneself a generalisation that will not be accused of rashness) has tended in art, as in other things, to breed among us decided, independent, and even stubborn individualities,” meaning for Colvin that there was “no school (since to speak of an English school is little more than a verbal shift).”[\[29\]](#) Authors in this book were not concerned with defining the “Englishness” of art.

These critics disparaged a national English school in favor of a flexible informality exemplified by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: “The absence of ‘a [national] school’ has, in the course of nature, produced schools [informal groups],” such as the PRB.[\[30\]](#) In 1871 “school” was not associated with nation or racial “blood,” as it would be ca. 1900.[\[31\]](#) In several essays artists were seen as resisting an English school because they were highly individualistic (Watts, Burne-Jones, Simeon Solomon, Ford Madox Brown, Marks), or trained on the Continent (Poynter, Armitage, Philip Calderon, Leighton, Brown), or influenced by Impressionism (Andrew Maccallum, Alfred Pizzi Newton, Peter Graham), or foreign by birth or family (Calderon, Marie Spartali, English-Italian Newton, Anglo-American Maccallum). For these critics, it was gender that dominated praise or criticism, anticipating later discourses of degeneracy and decadence.[\[32\]](#) Colvin called Poynter “masculine,” and all the authors used “manly” repeatedly throughout these essays.[\[33\]](#)

Furthermore, these critics were often disapproving of British art’s tendencies, e.g., praising landscape painters as observant and “true,” but without passion to affect spectators,[\[34\]](#) or decrying popularity as charlatanry. In this context it is worth mentioning their reference to Watts’s deposition before the 1863 Royal Academy Commission: he encouraged mural painting to gain “that gravity and nobility which, though deficient in the English school of painting, are latent and ready for development in the English character.”[\[35\]](#) This remark anticipated changes in the meaning of school, as “school” became nationalized, and was defined as embodying the presumed reciprocity between art and the artist’s character, later also attached to cultural xenophobia with consequences for the meanings of school and of modernism.[\[36\]](#)

### **Spielmann, New Journalism, and the British School**

Although the notion of a national school was denigrated in the 1871 reprinted *Portfolio* essays, Spielmann would return to it in the 1880s in an attempt to dilute or even dispel French influence and French claims to modernism which threatened London’s position as the art-market center.[\[37\]](#) Furthermore, the flow of Asian and African art into museums, markets, and

artists' studios threatened to provincialize Europe. What once was "primitive" was moving toward the center of "civilisation" and "culture," making the return to the notion of national schools a reflection of colonial anxieties, as well.

Although Shearer West considers the concept of the British School weakened by Continental influences, Spielmann and the Franco-British exhibition committees of 1908 still categorized works by national schools and diluted transnational influences.<sup>[38]</sup> Spielmann emphasized English art's fixed, prescribed principles: didacticism, everyday subjects, restrained color and decoration, and an idealistic and hygienic realism, unlike French Realism (Degas's *L'Absinthe* exhibited at the Grafton Gallery in 1893 horrified many English spectators<sup>[39]</sup>). But many British and French artists complained about the exhibition's process of artist selection and the omission of French and English "modern" art.<sup>[40]</sup>

Spielmann's discourse had been profoundly affected by New Journalism techniques he learned while working for W. T. Stead at the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the early 1880s: sensationalizing news, interviewing and promoting celebrity, and intending his writing to influence readers, markets, and government officials. He introduced interviews of artists, debates over timely issues (e.g., the nude in art) and gossip columns, and revealed the secrets of the art world—studio smokes when artists partied in each other's studios, Academy hanging-committee decisions—to debunk stereotypes of artists as Bohemians and represent them as domesticated bourgeoisie. He incorporated Stead's jingoism, patriotism, and moralistic tone in the *Magazine of Art* that he edited (1887–1904). In addition, he borrowed features from society journalism characterized by informality, first person voice, gossipy content, assertions of authorial intimacy with the subject, and a focus on rich celebrities, in this case financially successful artists.<sup>[41]</sup>

Spielmann's editorial presence in the *Magazine of Art* was restrained, but in the *Graphic* he tantalized readers with anecdotes, gossip, and excessive praise—every artwork was a masterpiece. Working to knit artists and the public, in his *Graphic* gossip column "An Artistic Causerie" (what he called "babble") he attacked modernism. He labeled Beardsley's art decadent and called him "our weirdest genius."<sup>[42]</sup> He defended Simeon Solomon's work, despite Solomon's "moral deficiency," and wrote in 1906 that Solomon would be "remembered and honoured as an artist," despite his "demoralized" skill.<sup>[43]</sup> He questioned the sanity of Impressionists and Post-Impressionists and praised Newlyn School artists as much for their modest lives as for their art.<sup>[44]</sup> He described Hunt's art as having "purified and vitalized the art of England," stirring "the emotion of the nation" with *The Light of the World*. Focused on artists' moral character and hostile to excessive ornamentation, Spielmann loathed Rossetti and attributed Rossetti's style to Italian "blood," shoving him to the margins of English art history, while pushing Millais, Hunt, and Watts to the center.<sup>[45]</sup>

However, the art press differed from New Journalism in that it also endorsed "timeless" ideals of aesthetic value and beauty, not just transient or topical news. The art press never abandoned the educational mission of the old journalism; its success depended on educating readers to assure increased subscriptions and to make the purchase of British art both patriotic and commercially successful—the overriding mission of both the *Magazine of Art* and the *Art Journal*. Spielmann's strategy to promote artists' professionalism and their social and economic needs encouraged shared values between artists and the public: respectability, a work ethic, and success. The magazine reported on art-market prices, sales, and the ways "high" art could be

joined with commercial realms (e.g., furnishing, advertising, postcards, posters).<sup>[46]</sup> Spielmann shared not only his taste but also his pragmatism with his middle-class audience.

Spielmann promoted the Academy and national cultural superiority. He endorsed art's didactic and consoling functions tied to moral virtues and artists' characters, earning him the contempt of "New Critics" sympathetic to French Impressionism and Art Nouveau, both of which Spielmann abhorred. Writing to Spielmann, sculptor Hamo Thornycroft blamed Manet's influence for "insincere bosh and ignorant trash" and condemned New Critics for the "fungoid growth that has smothered French art and now is coming here" and their "denunciation of everything Academic," views Spielmann shared.<sup>[47]</sup>

For Spielmann, painting was largely an art of realism and genre subjects, while sculpture could embrace allegory, classical subjects, and idealism. Spielmann idolized Watts, who combined these; his allegorical paintings were modern in their asceticism and Victorian in their didacticism. Watts was "a true patriot and philanthropist" whose art bore "the stamp of our English Nationality in character."<sup>[48]</sup> Watts's "artistic and philosophic" principles marked him as "the greatest of the few essentially intellectual painters" in England. He sought "the restoration of Art to her true and noblest function. . . . Mr. Watts has held . . . that it is the power of paint to stir in man something more sublime than is possible to a simple, sensuous appreciation of tones and 'values,' colour and line."<sup>[49]</sup> Advocating art-making as self-sacrificing and patriotic, Spielmann attacked formalists like Whistler who, he believed, endorsed a "simple, sensuous" focus on color, line, tones and value.<sup>[50]</sup>

#### **From English School to British School and New Sculpture: Vasari Manqué**

What distinguishes Spielmann's resurrection of the notion of a national school is that he uses "British" School, not English School, in an effort to expand the notion of a national culture and perhaps in reaction to the rise of a new Scottish art movement and regional modernisms, such as the Newlyn "school" of realist painting. On sculpture, Spielmann, at his most modernist critical self, tried, with mixed success, to delineate the nature of a British school of sculpture. He escorted Rodin through English sculptors' studios,<sup>[51]</sup> although he attacked Rodin's "insincerity," a quintessential Victorian aesthetic criterion.<sup>[52]</sup> He did admit that while Jacob Epstein's nude sculptures on the façade of the British Medical Association building were "too grim and sculpturesquely brutal for my taste," they should remain on the building, nonetheless, taking the artist's side in a controversy in 1908 over these sculptures' nudity.<sup>[53]</sup>

His 1901 *British Sculpture and Sculptors of To-day*<sup>[54]</sup> focused on living artists, unlike its most important antecedent, William Bell Scott's 1872 *The British School of Sculpture* that included only dead sculptors represented by engravings of their works and excessive praise: "Our School of Sculpture has already overtaken the other European competitors in the race, and has to some extent acquired a reputation of its own."<sup>[55]</sup>

Edmund Gosse in the *Art Journal* in 1894 invented the designation "New Sculpture," whose main features were naturalism of figural movement; attention to surface texture; allegorical, poetic, or classical subjects (e.g., dreams, womanhood, Icarus); bas-relief revival; picturesqueness; intimate, small-sized works; and revival of the lost-wax method. Gosse described developments year-by-year, artist-by-artist, and work-by-exhibited work. For him, painting was a matter of "anarchy" as new movements appeared in rapid succession "without any central



principle of taste.” Sculpture, however, was focused “around a theory of execution clearly perceived and consistently adhered to by a group of men of various talent . . . their loyalty to a common ideal,” resurrecting sculpture from “the lowest depth of desuetude.”<sup>[56]</sup> Inspired by French art that innovatively displayed “the human body as it exists before our eyes,” New Sculpture was identified by Gosse as initiated in Britain by Leighton’s *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (1877) and fully realized as revolutionary in the 1882 appearance of Alfred Gilbert’s work at the Academy exhibition.<sup>[57]</sup>

Spielmann’s focus on living sculptors was intended not just to praise and construct a canonic genealogy, but also to market sculptors’ works to the public. In 1902 he helped organize the exhibition “Sculpture for the Home” at the Fine Art Society to encourage buyers of small New Sculpture bronzes. New Sculpture artists received long entries and photographic reproductions in Spielmann’s 1901 book. His “partly descriptive, partly critical” text was

designed to inform the public how admirably our school of sculpture has developed at the present day, and how competent are its members. . . . In Mr. Alfred Gilbert, Mr. Thornycroft, and Mr. Bock, British sculptors are provided with a lead that is raising them to a very high place among the schools of the nations. . . . When work of national importance is to be executed and noble designs to be created, there are not lacking men capable of sustaining the credit of the British School.<sup>[58]</sup>

Like Gosse, Spielmann insisted that New Sculpture was a “revolutionary . . . new direction to the aims and ambitions of the artist and raised the British school to a height un hoped for, or at least wholly unexpected, thirty years ago.” His vocabulary was thoroughly New Journalistic: “revolutionary,” “height un hoped for.” He quoted Millais that British sculptors were comparable to “the greatest masters” of antiquity and worthy of all Europe’s praise.<sup>[59]</sup> New Sculpture’s origins were rooted in Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux’s ideas transmitted through Jules Dalou, who came to England during the Paris Commune, Edward Lantéri, and the Lambeth School. Spielmann insisted, however, that despite French color, decoration, and greater realism in modeling learned abroad and brought to England by Gilbert and Onslow Ford, “the character of English sculpture even in its most decorative forms is not in the main other than British”<sup>[60]</sup>

Spielmann typically yoked diverse ideas: realism of the figure with the picturesqueness of accessories. While this combination offended “puritans of art” for whom sculpture must be of “Ideas, not Things,” Spielmann argued that “in picturesqueness, restrained and in good taste, lies the future of sculpture.”<sup>[61]</sup> He condemned both classical “Muses, Nymphs, and Goddesses” as “pseudo-art without Life” and the harshness of French Realism. British sculptors “give life without actual realism—a suggestion of reality shrouded in poetry and grace,” which made their nudes symbolic, not erotic, in his view. The value of moderation (restraint, modesty, subtle tones) dominated his assessments.<sup>[62]</sup>

Spielmann prescribed rules. Marble required dignity; bronze could be playful, textural, and modulated in color with restraint, but color was only fit for bibelots, so artists should avoid “prostituting marble” to “frivolous” subjects outside the “laws that govern art and inspire and control taste.”<sup>[63]</sup> Bad taste meant vulgarity (Realism as practiced in France), excessive sentiment, and disproportionate ornamentation. To encourage public interest, he proposed

that his readers purchase statuettes for their homes and suggested a National Sculpture Gallery and a Fine Arts Department of artists and connoisseurs, not *dilettanti*, to make London as beautiful as Paris.<sup>[64]</sup> Spielmann praised women sculptors but aligned them with color, which for him was a feminine element. This “bevy of fair sculptresses” were “satisfied with a lighter vein,” influenced by French sculpture’s “vitality, grace and elegance.”<sup>[65]</sup> He feminized French art against British artists’ “manly” (his word repeatedly) style.

Spielmann’s most enduring relationship was with Gilbert, upon whose death Spielmann became his executor. He publicized Gilbert’s school in Bruges, printed Gilbert’s protests of innocence when accused of pirating and copying his own works, and negotiated the sculptor’s royal favor when Gilbert wanted to return to England.<sup>[66]</sup> Gilbert’s position in the art world

has long since been proclaimed by his brother-sculptors and accepted by the public. Their admiration, which is born of sober judgment, has set him on a pedestal so high that his work as a whole is almost beyond the range of outside criticism, even as his reputation is beyond harm and attack. The enthusiasm with which his name is everywhere received and his work welcomed amongst artists and connoisseurs is the result of no sudden vogue but of a deliberate verdict after critical examination. Rarely has a man, in the whole history of art, burst upon the world with a message of hope conveyed in more splendid achievement and so gallantly maintained the position at the very front of his profession into which he quickly sprang.<sup>[67]</sup>

Spielmann, deploying New Journalism hyperboles, compared Gilbert’s *Perseus* to Donatello’s *David* and the Praxitelean *Dionysos* in Naples: “exquisite realism . . . with nineteenth century feeling, with its beauty and variety of surface, the highly elaborated modeling, modestly quiet, the pose so graceful, so natural, yet so sculpturesque.”<sup>[68]</sup>

His comments on Gilbert echo Vasari in style and emphasis: excessively laudatory with artistic individualism made heroic. For Spielmann and Vasari, art history was propelled by both geniuses and the lesser artists who imitated them and transmitted their inventions in academies, workshops, and studios to weave a collective national art history. For Spielmann, the Academy’s absorption of geniuses institutionalized individualism and sustained geniuses’ achievements; that great artists belonged to the Academy justified for him the Academy’s claim that it fostered national art. Just as Vasari presented artists as noble contributors to Italy’s fame, Spielmann connected both brilliant and mundane sculptors in a nationalistic master narrative.

On Gilbert’s monument to Queen Victoria, Spielmann merged queen and artist:

Queen Victoria, the Queen of England and the Empire, the head of State—in all her magnificence of office, personifying in herself all the splendour, all the greatness of her vast realms, dignified and superb, bearing easily all the emblems of majesty the artist has so happily devised—yet gentle, the mother of her children, tinged with melancholy at her lonely state, her face lined with noble furrows earned in the service of her people—such is this statue, surpassed in excellence and perfection by no effigy, no monument ever wrought by artist to be honour of the Sovereign he loved and revered. . . . It marks the highest level . . . reached for many generations, perhaps for centuries past.<sup>[69]</sup>

Here in a rare ekphrasis of nationalistic identification among monarch, artist, and critic, Spielmann's illusion of being historical (chronological) and objective was fit to a mystifying language of empire, domesticity, originality, and the "sculpturesque," in which New Sculpture was cleansed of "foreign" influences that had, in fact, initiated it.

### **Franco-British Exhibition, 1908: The International British School**

This curious combination of acknowledging foreign influences and then arguing that British art cleansed itself of these influences is repeated in Spielmann's long essay for the catalog of the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908. This exhibition was a spectacle whose purposes included endorsing the Entente Cordial and uniting France and Britain against a militarizing Germany. The exhibition's nationalism and empire themes were, as Paul Greenhalgh has explained, part of a highly charged political environment: the organizers recreated an Irish village during an intense period of agitation in Ulster, dedicated a pavilion to economy and education in an effort to address workers' dissension, and placated suffragists with a Palace of Women's Work.  
[\[70\]](#)

This was an especially anxious time and exhibition place in which to revive what Spielmann called the "British" school, a term he often repeated rhetorically: "A collection such as has never been set before British eyes on British soil." He acknowledged the competitiveness between French and British "schools" concluding with a kind of draw: "The British Retrospection Section carries it off over the corresponding French department," although "the French Section of sculpture triumphs over our own." Despite omissions, including Whistler, Britain was still represented by "the cream of the production of British and Irish art."[\[71\]](#) Spielmann identified many masterpieces that he described lavishly and in gendered terms (e.g., Romney's art was effeminate). He slotted artists into an aesthetic hierarchy, some great, others merely "small fry."  
[\[72\]](#)

In this mode of fixing identities by nation and canonic placement, Spielmann repeatedly emphasized the Britishness of artists and art, especially watercolor. Attempting to make Britishness flexible to accommodate any artist's individuality, Spielmann also diluted it in order to homogenize the canon despite regional and individual differences he recognized. While insisting on Hogarth's painterly qualities, not his didacticism, in line with a modernist focus on form,[\[73\]](#) he joined Hogarth's refusal to dandify his sitters with Reynolds's "return to grace and fancy," by which Reynolds "entirely nationalized and assimilated" his subjects.[\[74\]](#) Such connections would have horrified both artists but typified Spielmann's tendency to synthesize and thus dilute the heterogeneity of the British school to make it all-embracing, a tendency equally pronounced in the Redgraves' 1866 book.

As Greenhalgh notes, the exhibition was largely aimed at Britons "to reaffirm slipping values . . . with an eye on the looming international situation."[\[75\]](#) Criteria were not always purely aesthetic, embracing sincerity, truth, and charm along with color and drawing, skills often described as virile. Criteria were identified with nations: Although Thomas Lawrence was a "brilliant draughtsman and second-rate painter and colourist," draftsmanship was "not everything . . . beside fine colour and artistic sympathy," a statement implicitly pitting long-standing nationally identified painting qualities: British color and sentiment against French draftsmanship.[\[76\]](#)

Spielmann's admitted apogee was his claim that Pre-Raphaelitism was the origin of modern British art. Discussions of Pre-Raphaelites' merits and modernity first appeared in the wake of the 1857 Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition, in which English, French, and American critics debated the movement's modernity, naturalism, and Englishness.<sup>[77]</sup> Repeating a genealogy invented by the PRB, who claimed descent from Hogarth and Blake,<sup>[78]</sup> Spielmann boldly linked Pre-Raphaelites and Impressionists not by style but by their "protests against growing conventionalism and dulled artistic sense."<sup>[79]</sup> Indeed, "Monet, Manet and their followers" adopted PRB tenets,<sup>[80]</sup> he insisted, while stopping short of the Post-Impressionism that he abhorred. Critic Ernest Chesneau had already promoted the PRB as exemplifying the rebelliousness of the English.<sup>[81]</sup> Colvin, too, linked the PRB and English art under French influence as equally revolutionary in style.<sup>[82]</sup>

But members of the modernist New English Art Club of Impressionist-trained British artists rejected Spielmann's revisionism of the Pre-Raphaelites as founders of modernism. The limited exhibition selections, motivated by national school categories, provoked a protest letter in the *Times* complaining that the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Engravers was not represented on the Franco-British Exhibition committee. On the other side, British spectators were not receptive to much modern art. Even the small display of Impressionist works stirred up the British art press's hostilities, though knowledgeable critics like Walter Armstrong recognized that Impressionism was already superseded by Post-Impressionism (to which even French exhibition organizers were hostile) and commented on Cézanne's absence. As Greenhalgh notes, in 1908 Braque was holding a one-artist show, and Matisse signed a contract with Bernheim-Jeune, indicating how outdated were organizers' animosities toward Art Nouveau, Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism.<sup>[83]</sup>

Kate Flint argues that in the 1870s, cultural revolutions, repeatedly identified with political revolutions, were attacked by critics who favored evolutionary changes that sustained "subordination and reserve" in art and condemned Impressionists as anarchists.<sup>[84]</sup> Yet Spielmann makes radical change benign by homogenizing Pre-Raphaelitism and Impressionism, thus making British art the precursor of French modernism. Uncoupling artistic and political change, he turns cultural revolution into evidence of British modernism, while marginalizing French Realism and Post-Impressionism outside his invented genealogy of modernism. He clearly is aware that French claims to modernism have credibility, so he roots French modernism in British sources.

To do this, Spielmann also had to rewrite PRB history. He applied post-1851 criticism to Millais's *Lorenzo and Isabella* that had actually been well received in 1849 to make Millais appear more rebellious and suffering, notwithstanding his tremendous success, wealth, and Academy presidency. He claimed the public did not like *The Huguenot* despite its public appeal and naturalistic detail. Whiggishly, he asserted that "time has had its revenge" on behalf of "this remarkable little canvas."<sup>[85]</sup> Oddest of all, Spielmann introduced the metaphor of class: "Art, intellectually speaking, is not democratic, but aristocratic, and the appeal to the many is the appeal to the inferior." He also denigrated artists' aspirations: "Plain Brown, Hunt, Jones . . . became Madox-Brown, Holman-Hunt, Burne-Jones," which increased public respect for them and attracted followers.<sup>[86]</sup> He denied Rossetti a place among PRB cohorts because his "Italian blood . . . carried a stream of sensual poetry in his veins . . . foreign to the Saxon

sturdiness of Hunt and the British vigour of the sportsman Millais.”[87] Uniting Pre-Raphaelites’ differences, he insisted they “were all working with a common ideal, a common denominator, however different their individual outlook,”[88] and that ideal was manly Englishness: Burne-Jones’s *Golden Stairs* derives worth “not from the strength of the painting but from the beautiful personality of the painter.” Watts was “the modern Titian whose virility of character and voluptuousness compares nobly with the languorous yearning of Rossetti,”[89] while Brown was sometimes “lacking in . . . virility.”[90]

Spielmann’s aesthetic was nationalist, racial, gendered, and regulatory but also curiously contradictory and uncertain. He struggled to support British artists, but in the process had to accept a modernism he did not like in many cases. John Frederick Lewis’s *In the Bey’s Garden* had a “remorseless accuracy . . . with its hardness of colour and sentiment, a masterpiece in its way, nevertheless.”[91] He generally disliked PRB followers Frederick Sandys and J. M. Strudwick, but praised them for striving after truth, not commercial gain. He accused Sargent’s *Portrait of Mrs. Murray Guthrie* for failing to portray “gracious womanhood,” though he praised Sargent’s portrait of Mrs. Wertheimer, noting curiously, “we are conscious as we gaze upon these pictures that we are standing before masterpieces which in future times will be discussed as we discuss Reynolds and Gainsborough to-day.”[92] He advocated individualism as an English artistic trait in landscape painting, which permitted “the widest divergences of artistic view, for here the painter is free to see nature as he pleases” in microscopic details or broad masses or through light and atmosphere, but then denigrated Wilson Steer and William McTaggart who painted a mere “impression” of landscape.[93]

Spielmann noted that the exhibition embraced both the Academicians and their adversaries, the New English Art Club, the International Society, and the Scottish school, and he concluded that “foreign influence, mainly French and American, has so permeated the ranks . . . that the foreigners now form part of the mass.”[94] Contradicting himself again, he then claimed this exhibition presented “the national character . . . changed slowly with the march of time and the attendant events that have moulded and controlled the national sentiment.”[95] British sculpture sustained “the greater qualities inherent in sculpture—nobility, style, ideal poetry, and dignified treatment,” avoiding “the pitfalls” of French sculpture.[96] On architecture he praised Norman Shaw, who transformed “London into an Imperial City in appearance,” but supported this with a quote from a German expert: “England is miles ahead of any other nation in domestic architecture.”[97] But architects Shaw and Philip Webb were both absent from the architecture exhibits, and Arts and Crafts was subsumed within a nationalistic discourse. Art Nouveau was viewed in Britain as “internationalist, antihistorical . . . having a certain spirit of liberation even amorality in the symbolism of its forms and the methods of its construction,”[98] as expressed by Spielmann who considered Art Nouveau “a place of exquisite and elaborately contrived discomfort and, usually, of ugliness.”[99]

### Spielmann and the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1911

For the *Encyclopedia* in 1911, Spielmann wrote 20 entries and was cited in sixteen entries’ bibliographies.[100] In his section of the multi-authored “painting” entry, he declared 1875 as the birth of the British school following an idyllic period of popular support, equity between supply and demand, and nonpartisan cordiality among artists, a view that hardly reflected art-world realities.[101] Parliamentary Commissions since the 1840s regularly investigated the

Academy procedures about which artists complained. At the 1862 Commission, Tom Taylor condemned the Academy for its conservatism and pandering to the public.[\[102\]](#)

Ironically, Spielmann's proposed originary moment of 1875 was actually marked by a collapse in patronage as buyers focused on large houses, rancorous artists competed for attention from a distracted public, and there was a spike in French influences—all divisive changes symbolized by the Grosvenor Gallery's successful opening in 1877 as an alternative to the Academy. Admitting that French art attracted British artists seeking "greater freedom and boldness, for a better chance of asserting their individual capacities" and compensated for weak teaching in England (though Spielmann never blamed the Academy), this attraction became, in his view "exaggerated . . . and reckless," abandoning the "quietness of subject and reserve of manner . . . for foreign sensationalism and exaggeration . . . extreme vivacity . . . coarse presentation of unpleasant incidents from modern life. . . . They were the source of a distinct degeneration in the artistic taste, . . . certain unnatural tendencies," including "depreciation in the instinctive colour-sense of British painters," replaced by French "tone-relation," "colder and cruder."[\[103\]](#) What "unnatural tendencies" alludes to we can only imagine—Oscar Wilde's trial, Walter Sickert's subjects, Whistler's *Nocturnes*, Post-Impressionism? Spielmann invokes the degeneracy discourse to assert the priority of British artistic values ("quietness," "reserve"), again a sensationalism he had already adopted second hand from American New Journalism. In this degeneracy twist, he turns finally to the language of naturalization—"instinctive," "unnatural tendencies"—as a last resort by which to identify a British School which he admittedly recognizes as infiltrated by foreigners for both good and bad.

In his historiography, the British School arose from contention and disarray, to be saved by a middle course: the English "realists," Stanhope Forbes, Henry Tuke, Frank Bramley, and the Newlyn School, all having resisted becoming "hybrid, with the French strain predominating."[\[104\]](#) Clearly, Spielmann's attitude toward French influence was mixed. He condemned French Realists but appreciated Impressionists' juxtaposed unblended colors; Impressionism's influence was benign, and he listed forty British painters affected by Impressionism, many becoming Academicians. In Spielmann's master narrative, everything returns to Englishness through the Academy's institutional transformation of individuality from threatening eccentricity into a Utopian national identity constructed out of European influences made British.[\[105\]](#) Given the high quality of this encyclopedia and its decades-long influence, Spielmann's xenophobia was part of many Britons' art-history education.

### **Conclusion: Art and the Nation**

The concept of schools ca. 1900 appears to mediate between centripetal nationalism and tradition and centrifugal internationalism and modernism, the latter identified with individualism, rapid changes, and influences from abroad. Eighteenth-century art writers focused on English identity "as a *relation*, and a *mode* of differentiation,"[\[106\]](#) modes that in Victorian art writing became a shrill defense of nationalism in times of crisis or change.[\[107\]](#) In 1882, Ernest Renan defined nation by culture, an equation similar to Ruskin's, in which art reflected national morality and power: much was at stake in contentions over cultural dominance.[\[108\]](#) Although as editor he expanded the world of art represented in the *Magazine of Art*, with many essays on Asian art,[\[109\]](#) Spielmann advocated nationalism within a provincialized European cultural war.

Spielmann wrote in a crisis mode, reflected in his prescriptiveness, his contradictory assessments, and his awareness of and resistance to modernist and market changes. He wavered between an emphasis on sentiment and on form, and between different aesthetic positions—attacking French influence on British art, yet reluctantly acknowledging, almost against his will, the importance of Whistler and Sargent. He attacked public taste, while believing that popularity united artists and public in a national identity. He expressed an aesthetic uncertainty over an increasingly global market and French artists' self-proclaimed modernism, and a frustration with the public's declining interest in art amid a vast array of competing visual experiences and goods.

Fissures appeared everywhere: PRB artists hyphenate their names to gain social status; the public fails to support artists; English artists absorb too much French art so as to undermine centuries of hegemonic values and threaten Britain's "rising" status, especially in sculpture. English culture was endangered from without (French influence) and from within (artists' individuality and new aesthetics), saved only because the Academy admitted and domesticated revolutionaries, undergirded by the art-world machinery of markets, critics, press, and exhibitions. Change could only occur incrementally through institutions, including a Whiggish "time" that corrected mistaken opinions in its inevitable "progress."

For Reynolds, "school" referred to a style distilled from pan-European art since antiquity, balancing invention and imitation which were embodied in the Academy's principles that promoted national greatness to match British literature and science that also had international recognition.<sup>[110]</sup> In Hamerton's book of essays, "school" designated an informal group of artists. For Spielmann, "school" expressed a cultural siege mentality. Reynolds's linking of the English school to the "Grand" Renaissance style differs sharply from Spielmann's grudging acknowledgement of foreign influence in his ambivalence toward modernist individualism and French influence "corrected" by unchanging British characteristics: relationship to nature, moderation in style, and artists' moral character.

Spielmann argued that individualism, a characteristic of both modernism and Englishness, must be restrained to both avoid eccentricity and submerge French influence beneath an imagined cultural unity. Spielmann used "school" to homogenize British art history and make it appear unified, yoking Reynolds with Hogarth and Blake, the PRB with Impressionism, idealism with realism in New Sculpture, and English with French sculpture that artists Anglicized. His anxious narratives about the British school and modernism reflect "an ideal homology between the nation as state and as culture,"<sup>[111]</sup> exemplifying what Mark Cheetham describes as "changing historical intersections between English artwriting and the discourses of national identity and nationalism."<sup>[112]</sup>

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*Coronation Durbars* (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2012), *The Political Economy of Art* (Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008), *Imperial Co-Histories* (Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), and co-edited with Laurel Brake *Encounters in the Victorian Press* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), and with Dianne S. Macleod *Orientalism Transposed* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998). She has published extensively on the Pre-Raphaelites, the Victorian art press, India under the British Empire, colonial photography, and film. She is currently organizing with a team of scholars an extensive study of replicas/replication in the 19th century across science, literature, art, manufacturing, design, media studies, and print culture.

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## Notes

I wish to thank Peter Trippi and Martina Droth for their comments and helpful suggestions for my essay, and Robert Alvin Adler for this copyediting.

[1] See my survey of this literature in Julie Codell, "From Rebels to Representatives: Masculinity, Modernity and National Identity in Histories of Pre-Raphaelitism," in *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites: Text, Context, Subtext*, ed. Michaela Giebelhausen and Tim Barringer (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 53–79.

[2] Anonymous review of *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters* by Percy Bate, *Magazine of Art* 24 (1900): 125. See Codell, "From Rebels," 53–79.

[3] Julie Codell, "'The Artist's Cause at Heart': Marion Harry Spielmann and the Late Victorian Art World," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 71 (1989): 139–63.

[4] See *ibid.*; and Julie Codell, "M. H. Spielmann and the Press in the Professionalization of Artists," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 22 (1989): 7–15.

[5] The relatively recent scholarly interest by Jason Edwards, David Getsy, and Martina Droth in Victorian sculpture, and the recent 2014 Yale exhibition *Victorious Sculpture* may offer opportunities to reassess Spielmann's contributions to Victorian sculpture's historiography.

[6] See Ruth Sebag-Montefiore, "From Poland to Paddington: The Early History of the Spielmann family, 1828–1948," *Jewish Historical Studies* 32 (1990–92): 237–57.

[7] Sir Isidore's achievements include Director of Art, Board of Trade; Executive Committee, National Art Collections Fund; Advisory Council Member, Victoria and Albert Museum; juror or Honorary Secretary and Delegate for British sections of international exhibitions from 1897 to 1926; and Member, Council of Imperial Society of Knights Bachelor.

[8] Morris Eaves, *The Counter-Arts Conspiracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 21–22.

[9] *Ibid.*, 22.

[10] *Ibid.*, 23.

[11] Julie Codell, "The Art Press and the Art Market," in *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850–1939*, ed. Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 128–50.

[12] Melva Croal, "'The Spirit, the Flesh and the Milliner': Hanging the Ancient Masters at the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 87 (2005): 55–56.

[13] See Julius Bryant, "'The Progress and Present Condition of Modern Art': Fine Art at the 1862 Exhibition," in "Almost Forgotten: The International Exhibition of 1862," special issue, *Decorative Arts Society Journal* 38 (2014): 59–81.

[14] Shearer West, "Tom Taylor, William Powell Firth, and The British School of Art," *Victorian Studies* 33, no. 2 (Winter 1990): 310; and Julie Codell, "Righting the Victorian Artist: The Redgraves' *A Century of Painters of the English School* and the Serialization of Art History," *Oxford Art Journal* 23 (2000): 93–118. Richard Redgrave, who installed "The National Gallery of British Art" at South Kensington in 1857, was the special commissioner for Fine Arts for the 1855 Paris Exposition and curated the selections for 1862; Samuel Redgrave curated the watercolors in 1862.

[15] See his obituary, "Fine Art Gossip," *Athenaeum*, October 30, 1886, 574.



- [16] West, "British School," 319.
- [17] Taylor testified on Ruskin's behalf in the 1878 Whistler v. Ruskin trial.
- [18] For example, F. T. Palgrave wrote "How to Form A Good Taste in Art," *Cornhill Magazine* 104 (August 1868): 170–80, and Hamerton (1834–94) wrote "Art Criticism," *Cornhill Magazine* 8 (1863): 334–43.
- [19] See Meaghan Clarke, *Critical Voices: Women and Art Criticism in Britain, 1880–1905* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).
- [20] Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, "The Periodical and the Art Market: Investigating the 'Dealer-Critic System' in Victorian England," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 323–51.
- [21] Philip Hamerton, ed., *English Painters of the Present-Day* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1871).
- [22] Millais's *Vanessa* was compared to Titian, Velasquez, and Reynolds. "The Royal Academy," *Art Journal*, n.s. 8 (1869): 198. Watts was called the English Michelangelo and Millais's revival of fancy-dress portraits made him the Victorian Reynolds.
- [23] Sidney Colvin, "Edward J. Poynter, A.R.A.-Albert Moore," in Hamerton, *English Painters*, 1.
- [24] J. Beavington Atkinson, "Edward Armitage, A.R.A.," in Hamerton, *English Painters*, 19.
- [25] J. Beavington Atkinson, "G. F. Watts, R.A.," in Hamerton, *English Painters*, 25.
- [26] J. Beavington Atkinson, "H. S. Marks," in Hamerton, *English Painters*, 55.
- [27] Colvin, "Poynter," 3.
- [28] Colvin, "Ford Madox Brown," 31.
- [29] Ibid.
- [30] Tom Taylor, "Philip Hermogenes Calderon and the St John's Wood School," in Hamerton, *English Painters*, 37.
- [31] See West, "British School," 325–26.
- [32] Especially Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, 1895.
- [33] Colvin, "Poynter," 3. Examples from other essays in this book: Atkinson in "Edward Armitage, A.R.A.," noted that Armitage loved manly action in Christianity, 24; Philip Gilbert Hamerton in "The Landscape Painters," complained that Dudley Gallery artists lacked manly feeling, 61; Tom Taylor, "George D. Leslie, A.R.A.," praised Leslie for his "manly delight in feminine charm," 69, and for avoiding "morbid," "unmanly" and "sensual" work, 73; for Sidney Colvin in "Simeon Solomon—Frederick Walker," Solomon's figures embodied "insufficient manliness," 15.
- [34] Hamerton, "The Landscape Painters," 58.
- [35] Atkinson, "G. F. Watts, R.A.," 28.
- [36] Kate Flint, "Moral Judgement and the Language of English Art Criticism 1870–1910," *Oxford Art Journal* 6, no. 2 (1983): 59–66, describes xenophobia in Wake Cooke's art writings, for example.
- [37] See Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, eds., *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).
- [38] West, "British School," 320.
- [39] J. A Spender attacked the painting in the *Westminster Gazette*, March 1, 1893, 1–2. See Kimberly Morse-Jones, "The 'Philistine' and the New Art Critic," *British Art Journal* 9, no. 2 (Autumn 2008): 50–61; Kate Flint, "The Philistine and the New," in *Papers for the Millions*, ed. Joel Wiener (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 211–24.
- [40] Paul Greenhalgh, "Art, Politics and Society at the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908," *Art History* 8, no. 4 (December 1985), 449–50; and Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 212–13.
- [41] J. O. Baylen, "The 'New Journalism' in Late Victorian Britain," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 18 (1972): 370–71; and Gary Weber, "Henry Labouchere, *Truth* and the New Journalism of Late Victorian Britain," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 26 (1993): 36–43. See Julie Codell, "M. H. Spielmann and the Press in the Professionalization of Artists," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 22 (1989): 7–15; Julie Codell, "Marion Harry Spielmann," in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, ed. L. Brake and M. Demoor (Ghent: Academie Press; London: British Library); CD-ROM version ProQuest 2009.
- [42] M. H. Spielmann, "An Artistic Causerie," *Graphic*, March 26, 1898, 386; and Sept 4, 1909, 294, respectively.

- [43] Spielmann, "Causerie," *Graphic*, November 18, 1895, 656; and Spielmann on Simeon Solomon, *Jewish World*, December 7, 1906, 626, respectively.
- [44] Spielmann, "Causerie," *Graphic*, January 25, 1905, 11, and Feb 6, 1892, 175, respectively.
- [45] Spielmann, "Causerie," *Graphic* October 8, 1904, 472.
- [46] Codell, "Art Press," 2011.
- [47] Thornycroft to Spielmann, November 10, 1910, English MS1300/21, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. Spielmann refers to "New Critics" D. S. MacColl and R. A. M. Stevenson, critic Harry Quilter, and critic-etcher Joseph Pennell in a letter to Fildes: "As to their attempts at mischief-making by setting me up as the 'apologist,' the 'champion,' or the 'lackey' of the Academy . . . all this is simply intended to sow discord." L. V. Fildes, *Luke Fildes, A Victorian Painter* (London: Joseph, 1968), 169–70. On moral content in British criticism, see Flint, "Moral Judgment"; and Flint, "Philistine," 3–8.
- [48] G. F. Watts to Spielmann, February 7, 1897, English MS 1301/74, Rylands Library, University of Manchester.
- [49] M. H. Spielmann, "Mr. G. F. Watts: His Art and His Mission," *Nineteenth Century* 41 (January 1897): 161.
- [50] *Ibid.*, 162.
- [51] Richard Dormont, *Alfred Gilbert* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 77.
- [52] Spielmann, "Causerie," *Graphic*, February 23, 1901, 279.
- [53] Spielmann, "Causerie," *Graphic*, July 4, 1908, 22.
- [54] M. H. Spielmann, *British Sculpture and Sculptors of To-day* (London: Cassell, 1901).
- [55] William Bell Scott, *The British School of Sculpture* (London: George Routledge, 1872), 1.
- [56] Edmund Gosse, "The New Sculpture: 1879–1894," *Art Journal* 56 (1894): 138. See Benedict Read, *Gibson to Gilbert: British Sculpture 1840–1914* (London: The Fine Art Society, 1992).
- [57] Gosse, "New Sculpture," 139.
- [58] Spielmann, *British Sculpture*, iii.
- [59] *Ibid.*, 1.
- [60] *Ibid.*, 2.
- [61] *Ibid.*, 2–3.
- [62] *Ibid.*, 3. Flint, "Moral Judgment," 61–62, provides several examples from the 1870s to 1910.
- [63] Spielmann, *British Sculpture*, 5–6.
- [64] *Ibid.*, 8.
- [65] *Ibid.*, 12.
- [66] See Lavinia Handley-Read, "Alfred Gilbert: A New Assessment," *Connoisseur* 154 (1968): 22–27, 85–91, 144–51; and Jason Edwards, *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).
- [67] Spielmann, *British Sculpture*, 75–76.
- [68] *Ibid.*, 76.
- [69] *Ibid.*, 80–81.
- [70] Greenhalgh, "Art, Politics," 436–37; and Greenhalgh, *Vistas*, 440–41.
- [71] M. H. Spielmann, "The Fine Art Section," in *Souvenir of the Fine Art Section, Franco-British Exhibition, 1908*, comp. Sir Isidore Spielmann under the auspices of The British Art Committee (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1908), 17–18.
- [72] *Ibid.*, 35.
- [73] *Ibid.*, 23 on Hogarth.
- [74] *Ibid.*, 26 on Reynolds.
- [75] Greenhalgh, *Vistas*, 451.
- [76] Spielmann, "Fine Art Section," 35.
- [77] Elizabeth Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 182–86.
- [78] See Julie Codell, "The Artist Colonized: Holman Hunt's 'Bio-history', Masculinity, Nationalism and the English School," in *Re-framing the Pre-Raphaelites*, ed. E. Harding (Aldershot: Scolar, 1995), 211–29; and Julie Codell, "Constructing the Victorian Artist," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 33 (2000): 283–316.

- [79] Spielmann, "Fine Art Section," 23.
- [80] This association was not new; painter William Powell Frith tied these movements together as "fungi on the tree of art" in "Realism Versus Sloppiness," *Magazine of Art* 12 (1889): 8.
- [81] Ernest Chesneau, *The English School of Painting* (London: Cassell, 1885).
- [82] Colvin, "Ford Madox Brown," 34.
- [83] Greenhalgh, *Vistas*, 449–50.
- [84] See Flint, "Moral Judgment," 60, for citations of critical comments.
- [85] Flint, "Moral Judgment," 50.
- [86] M. H. Spielmann, "Fine Art Section," 51.
- [87] Ibid., 52. In "Picture Exhibitions," *Saturday Review*, January 20, 1883, 82, Rossetti's figures are described as "distorted," and "degraded" with "giraffe-like necks" in "morbid sickness." See also Flint, "Moral Judgment," 63.
- [88] M. H. Spielmann, "Fine Art Section," 83.
- [89] Ibid., 53–54.
- [90] Ibid., 96.
- [91] Ibid., 54.
- [92] Ibid., 65–66.
- [93] Ibid. 77–79.
- [94] Ibid., 57.
- [95] Ibid., 84.
- [96] Ibid., 93.
- [97] Ibid., 102, 104.
- [98] Greenhalgh, "Art, Politics," 448.
- [99] Spielmann quoted *ibid.*
- [100] His entries include sculpture, British painting, various genres and techniques, and a wide range of European, as well as British artists.
- [101] M. H. Spielmann, "British Painting," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910–11), 498–99.
- [102] West, "British School," 319.
- [103] Spielmann, "British Painting," 498–99.
- [104] Ibid., 499.
- [105] Antony Easthope, *Englishness and National Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), 54–56.
- [106] Mark A. Cheetham, *Artwriting, Nation, and Cosmopolitanism in Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 15, citing Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 15.
- [107] Cheetham, *Artwriting*, 16.
- [108] Easthope, *Englishness*, 35.
- [109] The *Magazine of Art* regularly published articles on pan-European domestic realism. See Philip Hook and Mark Poltimore, *Popular 19th Century Painting* (London: Antique Collectors' Club, 1986).
- [110] Anne-Pascale Bruneau, "Tradition and the 'English School': Reading Reynolds's Discourses," *XVII-XVIII. Bulletin de la société d'études anglo-américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* 57 (2003), 26–27.
- [111] See Cheetham, *Artwriting*, 3, citing Easthope, *Englishness*, 46ff.
- [112] Ibid., 15.

## Illustrations



Fig. 1, John Henry Frederick Bacon, *Marion Harry Spielmann*, 1904. Oil on canvas. © National Portrait Gallery, London. [\[return to text\]](#)