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From political construct to tourist souvenir – building the “National” landscape through advertising in Galicia (Spain)

F. López Silvestre¹ and R. Lois González²

¹Department of Art History, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, P.O. Box Santiago de Compostela, Pza Universidade, 1, 15782, Spain

²Department of Geography, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, P.O. Box Santiago de Compostela, Pza Universidade, 1, 15782, Spain

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Correspondence to: F. López Silvestre (hafede@usc.es)

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Abstract

In the contemporary world there is a striking coincidence between the methods used by nationalisms to foster the identification of the image of their peoples through their own landscape and the marketing practices used by public and private institutions to foster certain “mass tourism products” through easily identifiable features of the landscapes they want to sell. In both cases the aim is to highlight difference by means of an essentialist exaltation, or caricature, of certain elements in the landscape. By looking closer to the case of Galicia (Spain) it is possible to demonstrate the validity of this hypothesis. Just as there is a “Castilian” or “Andalusian landscape identity”, there is also a “Galician landscape identity”, with certain topographic, climatic, botanical and cultural elements that shape landscape and distinguish it from others. However, ever since regionalism and nationalism first latched on to territory in the 19th century, some of these elements have been rather over-emphasised. The iconographic elements that helped to define Galicia’s national identity through its landscape have been kept alive throughout the 20th century thanks to tourist publicity. Are these elements still used in advertising today? Is the nationalist imaginary really so different from tourist iconography? This paper sets out to prove the insistence, by television advertisers working for the Galician Autonomous (or Regional) Government, the “Xunta de Galicia”, on the *Galicianness* of the landscape, which is exalted by the use of elements loaded with symbolic significance.

1 Between “Truth” and stereotype

As far as the issue of landscape is concerned, the approaches used by nationalisms and those used by the institutions working in tourism share something in common. If the former are motivated by political reasons and the desire to distinguish local values and characteristics for the sake of their issues, the latter focus more on economic arguments and try to enhance difference to form an imprint of the landscape that tourists

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and consumers can easily identify. Nationalist theoreticians have traditionally rejected the cliché notion of a “people”, typically used by the promoters of tourism, preferring to invoke the “truth” of the land. Yet in both cases, efforts have been made to enhance difference through an essentialist or caricaturisational exaltation of certain environmental features.

It was Ernst Gombrich in particular, who studied in the 20th century the difference between the stereotyped image and its more complex counterparts. The Austrian art historian explored human psychology to distinguish mature art from that which is not – that which he at the end of his life he called “primitive” art (Gombrich, 2002). Whether his conclusions are applicable to contemporary art or not, they are useful when discussing the representation of landscape.

One of the art theories that have prevailed in the West from Antiquity to the 20th century is that art had become an endeavour to attain a permanent idea of things. This theory was much criticised by Gombrich. By aspiring to this idea, the artist was reducing the image to a simple form, and its formal condensation – the process of abstraction used applied – homogenized, diminished, and did not diversify. In fact, as many of Gombrich’s books and psychology studies have shown, the process is the opposite. Clearly, full access to “reality” as defended by the more ingenuous trends in realism was, and is, sheer entelechy. The study of art showed that when an artist portrays a landscape or the human body, he starts out from a series of learned patterns that help him to choose the shapes. Nothing shows up this process of representing reality through patterns better than an anecdote Gombrich tells in *Art and Illusion*. The story goes that, on one occasion, several artists of different nationalities came together with the object of painting the same landscape and how they ended up with completely different things. What they had learned in their countries of origin radically conditioned the final result of their respective works. As noted, for Gombrich, it was obvious that cultural patterns mould our way of looking at things; and it is these patterns that young artists use when starting work and which, in time, lead them from simple to complex representations – even if later they decide to renounce complexity and return

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to simplicity.

This learning process that takes us during childhood from simplicity to complexity has an analogy with the scaffolding used on building sites, where the first structures allow men to climb up the different storeys as they go. The first landscapes we paint between the ages of five and eight showing our house and its surroundings are just a set of lines and simple geometrical elements that give shape to another series of equally simple motifs: a house, a tree, the sun. . . It is only as we grow older that we pause to look at detail, and alter our drawings to create landscapes that are more in tune with our surroundings. According to Gombrich, certain periods of the history of art and of landscape painting reveal the same progress from simplicity to complexity and from the general to the specific. The work of Constable at the start of the 19th century instigated a substantial change with regard to previous landscape painters because he introduced elements which others, preoccupied as they were with reproducing certain literary clichés and incapable of going out into the open to study new motifs and effects, never noticed.

Thus, according to Gombrich – the constant comings and goings of trends, movements, styles and fashions aside – a distinction can, and must, be made between a mature and high quality portrayal of a landscape and a primitive, stereotypical and biased representation (Gombrich, 1998, 55–78; Gombrich, 1987). Of course the artist may deliberately pursue caricature. A person’s face can be rendered by reducing it to its most salient features – the Prince of Wales, for example, can be reduced to just two large ears. Such *caricaturization* assumes its condition of caricature; it is not sold under any pretence that the copy is identical to original. With landscapes it is sometimes different, for the aim is to sell caricatures and stereotypes of landscapes as copies of the original, when in fact they are exaggerations or simplifications based on certain particularly recognizable parts.

From a philosophical angle, Mathieu Kessler has insisted on this difference by analysing individual assessments. Kessler discriminates between the attitude of a real traveller and that of a simple tourist. Both the tourist and the traveller are capable of

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5 enjoying the beauty of a landscape, but there are notable differences. The enjoyment sought by the tourist has little to do with the “genuine” aesthetic pleasure that Kant defined – an impartial and autonomous pleasure – and more to do with the kind of pleasure that is based on agreeableness: that seeks the familiar and comfortable. It is satisfied with pleasures that are domesticated, artificially sweetened, and even trodden on. The traveller, by contrast, does not seek, but walks, tires, finds, thinks, plans. . . According to Kessler’s theory it is possible to demonstrate the distance separating both. The trite, stereotypical photograph or painting is the yardstick that reveals the aesthetics of the simple tourist. The intensity of the experience of travelling through a specific physical geographical space and understanding what we see sums up the aesthetics of the traveller (Kessler, 2000).

10 However, the *stereotyping* of landscapes started before the advent of tourism. Although stereotypes have existed for as long as humans have – for it is the art of simplifying the *Other*, as Stuart Hall explains (2002, 257–268)– it was Swiss historian François Walter who recently linked its development with the blossoming of nationalism and warned of the risk of passing off a rhetorical stereotype as a category of understanding (Walter, 2004, 23–78). It is of course possible to find comments made by ideologues of nationalism in which the “true” vision of the landscape and of the land, as they see it, runs against the stereotyped and saccharine landscape seen by tourists, the fake postcard-type landscape that remains on the surface of the image. This was the sort of criticism that the Galician nationalist leader Ramón Otero Pedrayo made of the vision that he believed was present in the photographs taken by people coming from the capital, Madrid, unfamiliar as they were with the reality of the Galician countryside (Otero Pedrayo, 1980, 188ff.). Whether or not this was a valid point, what is clear is that when the *galleguistas* (regionalists and nationalists) began to use the representation of landscape for their propaganda, a simplified, trite, vision came about which helped foreigners to identify the Galician landscape, though discouraged more critical observations.

25 The case of Galicia (Spain) could hold as a paradigmatic example of his theoretical

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approach. In the first one, we shall study the representation of landscape in literature, press and art criticism during the 19th century and first third of the 20th century in Galicia. As we shall see in the third section, the iconographic elements that helped to define Galicia's national identity through its landscape during the 19th century have been kept alive throughout the 20th century thanks to tourist publicity. Finally, this paper sets out to prove the insistence, by television advertisers working for the Galician Autonomous (or Regional) Government, the "Xunta de Galicia", on the *Galicianness* of the landscape, which is exalted by the use of elements loaded with symbolic significance.

2 The representation of landscape in literature, press and art criticism during the 19th century and first third of the 20th century

The case of Galicia (Spain) could hold as a paradigmatic example of his theoretical approach. No doubt, there is a typical Galician landscape, which is grounding for the identity formation of the Galician people. This typical landscape consist of topographic, climatic, botanical and cultural elements, which is unique to an extent, that shape our landscape to an extent set it aside from others¹. However, ever since regionalism and nationalism woke up to concept of territory at the start of the 19th century, emphasis has been placed on such motifs as the ancient dolmen, the leafy *souto* (woodland), the green meadows, the old *pazo* (manor), the *horreo* (granary), the stone cross, the rugged coastline for instance. A study of how landscape is represented in regionalist and nationalist literature would show how these motifs were latched on to by the press and art critics at the turn of the 19th century.

Indeed, one of the reasons for the ubiquitousness of landscape in artistic manifestations in Galicia at that time is its transformation into the face of Galician *differentialism*

¹Only to a degree, a research by Augustin Berque shows that indigenous peoples see variety in their land and monotony in a foreign one (Berque, 1984, 35–36).

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with its emphasis on a “legitimate Land and Culture”. More precisely, the remarkable development of certain clichés regarding Galicia’s landscape was largely a result of the thrust of the pro-Galician elites; elites that provided an ideal medium for fostering sentimental unity of the Galician people. Such thrust is manifest in both literature and painting.

The number of modern-age Galician writers who, while having links with provincialism, regionalism and nationalism, found in landscape one of their main concerns is considerable. Yet, while the same cannot be said of landscape painters (only a handful were interested in political issues and oriented their landscapes towards an ideal of *land*), certain art critics of the *galleguista* movement did work at reading and interpreting those landscape paintings of greater interest to promote the Galician difference.

The words that the Regionalist critic and leader Manuel Murguía dedicated to the work of landscape painter Serafín Avendaño (1836–1916) demonstrate this. Murguía saw in Avendaño’s paintings a defence of Galicia’s aesthetic landscape and a vindication, through his use of soft colours, of Galician painting which, in his opinion, provided an alternative to the meridional bias dominating Spanish painting. In short, what Murguía sought in landscape painting was a *distinguishing feature of the Atlantic*, but by looking to the work of Serafín Avendaño he was forgetting that this was an artist who had studied with Italian and Madrid-based painters. The nationalist agenda valued anything that exalted this *Atlanticism* in painting, and encouraged, through newspapers, a set of motifs that ultimately reduced Galician landscape painting to an essence – an essence which, because it was so exaggerated, was more akin to caricature than to well-balanced synthesis.

Both in painting and in literature *galleguismo* applauded the dissemination of a repertoire of *enxebre* (genuinely Galician) topics. Of course, the difference in the arena of literature was enhanced all the more by the use of the autochthonous language, Galician. It was to this linguistic hallmark that Castelao referred in 1919 when he turned his attention whole-heartedly to the constitution of a truly Galician artistic expression, one that would be distinguishable by subject matter and by form. While here is not

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the place to pause and explore the forms of expression that were later taken up and promoted by the historical avant-garde, suffice it to say that from 1840 to 1931 there was an aspect common to both writers and painters, which is that all worked together towards the construction of difference, and insisted repeatedly on a limited repertoire of topics. While this was true of poetry and art generally, it is especially obvious in landscape paintings.

As noted, when Murguía referred to the landscapes of the painter Avendaño, he praised what he perceived as a “northern” quality about them as opposed to a more Mediterranean feel. But the painter lived in Italy, and the ideologue eventually asked himself: “Will our friend return to Spain, to his corner of Galicia, to the old manor house and its views of the rolling countryside? The harbour, the islands, the Atlantic waves, the evergreens surrounding his house, and the eternal flowers in the gardens of his motherland all still await him” (Murguía, 1995, 160).

Inspiration for such an inventory was drawn from such celebrated passages as the “Introduction” to the book *Galicia* (1888). Murguía successfully summarised the great myths of our landscape: the meadows and arable land “ideal for all kinds of cereals”, the mountains and green forests “of strong dense colours so cherished by landscape painters”; the riverbanks “peopled with rumours”, the rugged coasts and estuaries, the ships “crossing the agitated waves”, the small islands “covered in green that seem to float”, the spires of churches and old castle towers. . . (Murguía, 1985: V-VI).

A few years later Otero Pedrayo would follow in the steps of Rosalía de Castro’s husband (Manuel Murguía) with a similar book, the *Guía de Galicia* (1926, 10ff.), that set out to synthesize once more our landscapes. Its repertoire, needless to say, was the same as its predecessor’s. Not long before, the rules of a photography competition organised by the nationalist magazine *Céltiga* in 1925 displayed a catalogue of landscapes considered “Galician”: “The village, sweet and pretty, the maize field in bloom, the old castle, the rugged coast, the pinewood, the country lane, the manor, the chestnut grove, the oak forest, the smooth-flowing river, and, in summary, our landscape in its multiple aspects and our most picturesque and traditional sceneries – the

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romería (popular religious gathering), the open market, the procession, fishing, harvesting, grinding, sowing (. . .)” (see *CRG*, 1925).

These were the landscapes fostered by regionalism and nationalism in their propaganda; landscapes which, in time, would incur a paradox: if nationalism always aspired to encourage real knowledge of the country (a knowledge developed by the geographical school directed by Ramón Otero Pedrayo²), by insisting on a limited number of ‘scenes’ they fell into cliché and caricature. In other words, their propaganda of difference drove them away from the real complexity of existence.

An indepth study of Galician verse, painted landscapes, engravings and photographs used in the press or in competitions for promotional purposes reveals an iconography of Galician landscape during the 19th and first third of the 20th centuries consisting of some twenty main themes. Associated with natural landscapes are: verdant forests and lush *soutos* (forests), valleys of blue *brétemas* (mists), a wild and rocky coast, the *piñeiros* (pine woods), the *castiñeiros* (chestnut groves), and the *carballos* (oak woods), the mountain and *o ermo* (the moor); and with cultural landscapes are rural landscapes of agricultural fields, rural landscapes with granaries, rural landscapes with

²We find this promotion of the real knowledge of Galicia as a “country” before the dissemination of the precepts of the Libre Institución de la Enseñanza. Saurín de la Iglesia (1977, 7-21) identified signs of it during the Enlightenment and in members of provincialism. This interest in learning about the reality of Galicia can also be seen in the promoters of the first Regional Exhibition in 1858, such as Vicente de la Riva y De Andrés (1808–1888), (chair professor of Anatomy at the University who published a *Catálogo metódico de la Exposición Agrícola Industrial y Artística [sic] de Galicia: celebrada en Santiago por el Excmo. Ayuntamiento y la Sociedad Económica en Julio y Setiembre del presente año*, Santiago, press of Jacobo Souto e hijo, 1858); and again in the founding father of Galician regionalism: Manuel Murguía (who once claimed that “The mountains in Galicia are, as you know, a wasteland one never reaches and about which little is known” (see Murguía, 1995, 192, –originally in 1885–). The major promoters of a new and accurate geography of Galicia were Otero Pedrayo and Barreiro Paradela, the latter a member of the Seminario de Estudos Galegos and author of a text (Barreiro, 1936) calling for fewer books and more fieldwork.

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palleiros (straw lofts), rural landscapes with stone roadside crosses, rural landscapes with Romanesque hermitages surrounded by rosemary bushes, the Celtic landscape presided over by the dolmen, medieval ruins with *castelos* (castles), the Cathedral of Santiago, the Galicia of the *pazos* (manors) and the marinas with harbours, estuaries and small-sized vessels (Fig. 1).

It is true, however, that with the passing of the years interest shifted from a domestic landscapes to *plenairismo* (literally: “open-airism”). If at first painting and writing sprung from the imagination confined to the four walls of the atelier, in time, creators began to venture out into nature for a more direct inspiration. While this meant a change in the forms employed (brushstroke, format, colours), there was no variation in terms of theme. Photography and postcards reproduced the same scenes throughout much of the 20th century.

Clearly, if the ideologues tolerated and even supported such a simplification or *caricaturisation* of the Galician environment, it was out of a desire to drive home the difference between “home-grown” produce and foreign influences: north versus south, the Atlantic vs. the Mediterranean, damp vs. dry, vitality vs. despair, rural vs. urban, feminine vs. masculine, i.e., Galician vs. Castilian³. This is manifest in texts written by the ideologue Vicente Risco, the archaeologist López Cuevillas and the artist Castelao, who deliberately put art and literature at the service of politics and insisted on *enxe-*

³The Kingdoms of Galicia, in the Northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, and of Castile, were, during certain periods in history, separate. From the 10th to the 15th centuries, the Kingdom of Galicia, created as such in 910, underwent a series of political changes, and went from being an independent kingdom to being one that was dependent on the Kingdom of Leon, then on the Kingdom of Castile, before eventually forming part of the Kingdom of Spain. At that point the representational body of the Kingdom of Galicia was the “Junta do Reyno”. The classic jokes between Galicians and Castilians date back to the Middle Ages, from when records start to exist of examples of popular culture (parodies, carols, jokes). The stereotyping and mutual taunting about each other’s landscapes goes even further back and nationalisms echo this geographical and above all cultural opposition.

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bre (genuinely Galician) subject matters and on forms quite different to Castilian ones⁴. With the arrival of the *democratic transition* and the *Autonomías*, tourism was promoted using the same tried and tested clichés so that potential consumers would be able to identify all things *gallego*.

3 Recovering the essence of landscape in promoting tourism in the Galician Autonomía (1981–2006)

The iconographic elements associated with landscape that helped to define Galicia's national identity remained alive throughout the 20th century by virtue of tourism advertising. There are many examples that have already been studied (Santos, 2005) so that it is not worth mentioning them again here. But it is worth noting that, for decades, valleys of *brétemas* (mists), oaks, chestnuts and pine trees, the *pazos* (manors), *hórreos* (granaries), *cruceiros* (stone wayside crosses) and the Cathedral in Santiago were the protagonists of the posters brought out to promote the region (for example, Fig. 2).

It wasn't until the 1990s that an audiovisual publicity campaign, designed to boost the economy, funded by the Xunta de Galicia (the Galician autonomous government endorsed by a statute of its own signed by King Juan Carlos I in 1981)⁵, and executed

⁴A comment by Florentino López Cuevillas, archaeologist and member of the *Nós* group, whilst suffering a particularly hot summer, shows up this opposition: "This is not our warm embracing sun; it is the sun of Castile. It is Castilian like the language of our bourgeois classes, like the souls of our rulers. Both one and the other sap the life from this land; they reap havoc and kill [...] Whoever said that the sun brings happiness? In other lands, perhaps, but not in ours. Here happiness is in the rain-filled clouds, the mist-cloaked hills, the drizzle that softly falls on spongy ground, the moisture-fed lichen on the rocks and carved stone. Happiness is the soft, subdued light, the grass-loving mother, fecund origin of our siliceous rocks..." (See Cuevillas, 1982, 11–13, originally published in 1926).

⁵ Galicia exercises its administrative and governing functions through the "Xunta" and its "Consellerías". The "Xunta" (government) has powers to collect its own taxes, draft regulations

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mainly by a company of public capital called *Turgalicia* that this same iconography inspired on landscape that Regionalist and nationalist propaganda had fostered was revived⁶.

In principle, the interest that the institutions in charge of promoting tourism had in landscape is absolutely justified. A survey conducted in 2005 reveals, that the main reason influencing people's decision to come to Galicia is its landscape (compare Fig. 3). What is interesting is not that the landscape appears in advertisements but rather how it is portrayed and what people expect to see in them. These are two different yet interrelated problems, which we will address in the following paragraph.

3.1 The rhetoric of landscape

Obviously, any advertisement designed to sell Galicia must exalt all that is Galician about its landscape. How has this "Galicianness" been brought out in recent years? Do we find the same pastoral motifs that Regionalists and nationalists favoured at the start of the 20th century in present-day advertisements? Before we begin, it is worth reflecting on the similarities and differences of images destined for the mass media and artistic images. Then we shall try to discover what specific aspects of their shared visual rhetoric have been used without distinction in the art and literature of *galleguista* propaganda and in the media today.

But can we talk of a visual rhetoric common to both art and the media? In principle, to manage state revenue, and design its own budgets. It also enjoys other exclusive powers, including the organisation of its own self-ruling institutions and those of the districts and parishes; territorial and coastal planning; urban planning and housing; organisation of public powers; territorial and coast town-planning and housing; exploitation of public works, forestry, hydraulic and electrical resources; water; arts patrimony and Fine Arts departments; promotion of culture and research programmes, as well as Galician, tourism and sports; social care; creation of an autonomous police force; foundations; casinos, gambling and betting, etc.

⁶We are grateful to José Manuel Merelles, press officer of *Turgalicia*, for all the information he has given us on these subjects.

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what distinguishes the landscapes used by the media and the landscapes found in art is their goal. While the former owe their existence to the main production, consumption and information systems – systems to which they are subordinated – the latter are parts of secondary systems – art systems – which, at times, either operate in quite different ways to the dominant systems or openly reject trying to fit in to them. Van Gogh's landscapes scenes had no place inside the art system of his day; they were entirely marginal. It was only once the market began to accept them a decade after his death that they became integrated. This opposition between the landscape of the media and the landscape of art is common, though it has not always been so. The relationship between art and political and economic power are not so clear-cut. Painting, literature and power have had close links for long periods of history and in many cases painting and literature have been used for clearly propagandistic ends. This is the case of many of the works of art commented on by Pena (1982, 59–72), Chaquin (1986), Daniels (1992; 1988, 43–82), Pringle (1988, 142–161), Osborne (1988, 162–178), Warnke (1994) and Walter (2004), to name but a few, in their studies on the relationship between the landscape and political ideologies. It is also the case of many of the works used in Galicia by regionalism and nationalism.

The propagandistic imprint on certain topics and forms allows us to talk of the construction by *galleguista* critics in the early 20th century of a visual rhetoric that has been recovered by publicity agents today. This should not surprise us. Publicity develops stereotypes and, whichever the country inventing them, misguided notions of nationalism also foment such a trend. By taking a repetitive image created by other groups as a starting point, it forges a sort of impoverishing rhetoric: “effet de synecdoque, jugement partiel qui se generalise”⁷. What aspects of this rhetoric are present

⁷V. Jeanneney, 2000, 170ff. [This is a selection of the best contributions to the debate entitled “Les stéréotypes nationaux et la constuction européenne” held in December 1999 at the Unesco headquarters in Paris]. The contribution of Robert Franck to the historical study of the origin of the word ‘stereotype’ is particularly interesting. The quotation is his, as is the idea that stereotypes were not only created by the Other but that they then played a central role in

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in both the art of the *galleguista* propagandists and the landscapes portrayed by the media today? To our mind, three fundamental aspects can be mentioned here: the repetition of motifs and colours in the iconic messages, defining meaning through linguistic messages and the use of certain figures or tropes.

5 In his famous article, “Rhetoric of the Image”, Roland Barthes stated that an image resists meaning far better than text does. But he also added that the image, too, can be analysed as a message, especially if it is one used in advertising (Barthes, 1986, 27–49). It is therefore necessary to take into account both the iconic message (with its reproductions, shapes and colours) and the linguistic message associated with it.

10 As with any message, the *iconic messages* carrying Galician landscapes in art and advertising use real “signs”, i.e. they are all composed of clearly defined meanings obtained from a limited and well codified list of culturally given signifiers. In the advertisement of Italian food that Barthes studied, everything made sense: the shopping basket was associated with the freshness of recently bought products and home-made
15 food as opposed to ready-made food; the food items presented and their colours – red, white and green – were synonymous with *Italianness*, and the group of food items were reminiscent of a still life, a genre worthy of aesthetic appreciation.

We found the same feature within nine selected television commercials – which we investigated with special interest in their iconic message –made by different production
20 companies for Turgalicia and for the Xunta – Galicia’s autonomous government – from 1991 to 2006. Depending on what is being advertised, clear motif or signifiers borrowed from the art of the past can be found: *soutos escuros* (dark forests), *carballos* (oaks), rocky coasts, agricultural fields, granaries, etc. (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7)⁸. It is striking, that all
the construction of identity.

⁸A list of the nine advertisements studied: (1) *Ven a Galicia... Volverás*, 1991. (2) *Galicia, lo más natural*, 1993. (3) *Camino de Santiago, El viaje prometido*, 1994. (4) *Ciudades meigas*, 1997. (5) *Galicia, poema visual*, 1999 (20 seconds, in all Spanish theatres in 2001, 2002 and 2003). (6) *Escapada Gallega*, Xacobeo 1999 (presented in Madrid and Catalonia, 15 seconds). (7) *Galicia Viva*, 2003, (50 million pesetas, one of the most expensive campaigns, 30 seconds,

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the commercials containing images of the landscape invariably refer to the stereotype. Wild, natural scenery, the kind face of nature, local culture – in short, all that is *enxebre* (pure, genuine, autochthonous) is constantly exalted and defines the Galician cliché, the Galician difference. Even the palette of colours carries a clear meaning. The light blue of the water makes us think of the light blue in the Galician flag that represents the course of the river Miño and is a symbol of *Galicianness*. The lush green of the valleys, in contrast to Castilian ochre, marks the botanic difference. And the whitish grey of the mists underlines the climatic distance separating Galicia from the scorching heat of the rest of Spain.

Lastly, the technical resources and the weight of art history allow consumers to (consciously or unconsciously) establish a relationship between the landscapes used in advertising and the painterly genre of the past, predisposing them to aesthetical enjoyment. For this end, certain TV commercials such as “Ven a Galicia... Volverás”, 1991, or “Galicia, lo más natural”, 1993, establish visual links with art by using filters that introduce onto the screen a texture similar to that of a canvas, transforming the filmed landscape into a sort of moving painting in which, as one would expect, the same motifs as always are again repeated: harbours, fields... The message, here, is also clear: in Galicia the environment is on a par with art in terms of beauty.

All these iconographic motifs were already present in early 20th century painting and literature and, regardless of the intended meaning of their authors, nationalist critics took it upon themselves to ensure that they were interpreted in the light already described. Once, the nationalist magazine *Nós* devoted a few words to a canvas by the painter Imeldo Corral in which it was revealed that above and beyond the personal reading that the artist may have intended for his work, *galleguismo* always found its own interpretation of the sceneries: “the painting we have before us”, reads the article,

between the months of April and June in the whole of Spain, investment of 3997970 Euros. The aim was to promote tourism after the oil spill of the tanker *Prestige*. (8) *Termalismo en Galicia*, 2006, (30 s, 17 million Pesetas, March). (9) *Galicia sí es única*, 2006 (30 s). Source: Turgalicia.

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“is full of meanings, *although these were not intended by the author* [italics added]. Even so, Imeldo Corral’s landscapes convey emotion, a simple and joyful emotion that is contagious and enduring. Imeldo Corral transmits to us the emotion of the Land”⁹.

As these lines show, the press was happy to endow a *textual message* to representations of the landscape of that period. Indeed, textual messages are of core importance in the world of images, for they seek to dispel the uncertainty that surrounds all icons. Textless images can concatenate infinite meanings and sustain multiple interpretations, which is why they generate certain uneasiness in the viewer and, on their own, are of little use to any discursive cause. Early 20th century nationalism and modern-day tourism advertising share not just the constant repetition of the motifs already mentioned (woods, granaries, oak trees. . .) but also the attempt to avoid uncertainty by sealing off any other possible meanings for the landscape with a textual message. If, however, in the past this text appeared in press reviews of local exhibitions, nowadays it is added on to the image itself.

In the commercial “Ven a Galicia... Volverás” (1991) the voiceover repeated what we saw on screen, with descriptions of the landscapes riddled with clichés. For example, it invoked “magical landscapes dozing amongst oaks and chestnut trees. . .”. In “Galicia, lo más natural” (1993) a voiceover urges us to work off tension by immersing ourselves in Galicia’s landscape. The commercial that makes the most evident use of this fusion of iconic message and textual message is “Galicia sí es única” (2006), which has recently been seen on screens all over Spain. Here Galician words (*luscofusco, ribeira, badalada, carballeira, morriña*) are combined to suggest that both Galicia’s landscape and culture are different. It is a good commercial where inherited clichés are ambiguously fused with a political message and tourist appeal. So while the objectives may vary, tourist boards today tend to echo the same nationalist messages of old in their statements that “Galicia is natural”, “Galicia is different”, “Galicia is attractive”, and “Galicia is a land of dreams”. . .

⁹See *Nós*, Ourense, 1 January 1923, no. 15. Quote [exhibition catalogue] *Imeldo Corral, 1889–1976. Centenario*, La Coruña, ed. Diputación Provincial, 1989, p. 35.

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Taking Barthes' thesis a step further, it is possible to add certain ideas borrowed from the *Rhetoric of Painting* by Carrere and Saborit (2000). In their work they identify a set of tropes that can be applied to both the world of art and to that of visual advertising. Apart from strengthening the theoretical links that can be established between both worlds, these rhetorical figures have in fact reinforced the stereotyping of Galicia's landscape.

In this context it is necessary to mention and clarify at first a specific metaphoric effect, which is an important figure in understanding the nature of stereotypes: the synecdoche. A synecdoche is a trope that consists of increasing the importance of one of the parts of the object to be designated to the point of actually substituting it. In other words, a synecdoche consists of designating the whole while referencing only one of its parts. Through the prism of old nationalism and of modern companies dedicated to tourism, a forest of *carballos* (oak trees), a pine wood around an estuary, a road with a cross, or an *hórreo* or a *palleiro* (straw loft) are all synecdoches, i.e., ways of referencing the "all" that is Galicia through its best-known parts. The art and literature favoured under regionalism and nationalism was motivated by a genuine interest to discover and list the key elements that differentiate Galicia. For example, in addition to those mentioned, the dolmen was also frequently referenced, as Pondal's poems, Castelao's drawings, and Díaz Baliño's watercolours all attest to. What started out as a synecdoche – a poetic trope that refers to something general or abstract by naming a specific feature – transformed into an emblem, that is, a figure that became adopted as the region's distinctive badge. The kind of publicity being made today to sell Galicia, whether through a poster or a twenty-second television video, is incapable of renouncing some of the "emblems" that have come to be automatically associated with Galicia. Such emblems have turned elements such as the *hórreo* (granary) into a symbol of the entire Galician landscape and of Galicia in general. This is why there are such huge coincidences between nationalistic art and the images used for promotion of tourism today.

Another figure exploited formerly and recovered today which has contributed to the

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stereotyping of Galicia's landscape is the *hyperbole*, or exaggeration. The exaggeration of Galicia's landscape can be seen in two ways. On the one hand, through its emphasis on scale. This is exemplified in a poem by one of Galicia's most renowned regionalist writers, Eduardo Pondal, when an excursion to a mountain near his home, the *Gontón*, is described as if the climb were of none other than the Mont Blanc itself!¹⁰. On the other hand, through such exaltation of its qualities and virtues that the *Terra* [the Galician land] was nothing short of Paradise Lost. The ideologue Vicente Risco discussed this propensity to exaggeration in an essay in which he attributed the Galicians' relative lack of religious faith to the fact that they felt no need to aspire to heaven as long as they had their own *ferrado*¹¹ [plot of land]. Tourist publicity agents were not slow to pick up on the epic mountains and paradisiacal valleys described in their poetry. It was very common to hear in Spain in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that Galicia was "the Spanish Switzerland", as if the Ancares were comparable in

¹⁰"A bygone time, sombre Gontón/When, as a child, I would climb up your ruggedness.../My destinations were matched/By your tall rocks and wild pine trees/The boulders, the unknown heights/The torrents, the rough thicket/That eschew human contact, the quiet/Forests of the uneven slopes/A refuge for tribes already passed...". See Pondal, Eduardo: "El Gontón" in Ricón, Amado (Ed.): *Eduardo Pondal*, Galaxia, Vigo, 1982, 134–136.

¹¹A *ferrado* is a unit of measure used in Galicia, the dimensions of which vary depending on the place but which cover from four hundred to six hundred square meters. In Nationalist literature it was Vicente Risco who first claimed that "the Iberian is ignorant of Nature and has no idea of how to appreciate landscape. In all classical Castilian literature there is hardly even one example of a tree being called by its name. For them, a tree, whatever the kind, is just a tree. What is more, Castilians are mystics only because they are detached from their land. Maybe it is because their land is not worth bonding with... They look for pastures in heaven because the ones they have on earth are so ugly. Maybe this is why there is so little faith in Galicia: because, unlike them, we have no need to look for heaven having the land we have, a land that nurtures us and does not expel us because of its harshness, as the land in Castile does" (Risco, 1920, 6).

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height and splendour to the Alps!¹² This stereotype of investing the land with a sense of the sublime and associations of extreme landscapes was, however, short-lived, as advertising and media pundits eventually replaced it with another, equally hypertrophied, model: that of associating Galicia with heaven or paradise. A few years ago there was a tourist commercial called “Ciudades meigas” (1997) which drew on this hyperbolic legacy through a short story. In it, two *trasnos* (imps) and two *meigas* (witches) had left their paradisiacal forest to discover Galicia’s cities, and exclaimed that they had no desire to return to their leafy dwelling as they had found in the cities the heaven they had always been looking for.

Lastly, amongst the many rhetoric figures used in art and advertising, synaesthesia is one of the most remarkable. Landscape appeals to all five senses. Colours activate not just sight but also smell and taste: the blue of the water and the green of the field whet our appetite. Applied to the world of representation, this decidedly *un-Kantian* fusion of agreeable pleasures and genuinely aesthetic pleasures is not new either. It is linked to the cliché of Galicia as a land of culinary pleasures, amongst other things. The association is indeed quite common, especially in Galician poetry. Eduardo Pondal wrote some very famous verses in which he portrayed a vision of the coastal landscape of pine trees mixed with sounds and smells. They have become so famous because they are the lyrics of the Galician national anthem¹³. Publicity agents today are aware of and employ synaesthesia to better effect compared with the poem. They

¹² See Gil Tome, Miguel: “Galicia o la Suiza española” in *El Progreso*, 24-VI-1867, who coined the cliché in the context of Galicia’s burgeoning tourist industry. Fifty years later, the cliché is still alive as the article, “Galicia, país de turismo”, printed in the nationalist magazine *Céltiga* (Céltiga, Buenos Aires, 1925, 15 February, 10) shows. Here Galicia is described as even more beautiful than Switzerland.

¹³ Eduardo Pondal (1835–1917) in 1877 published *Rumores de los pinos* (Santiago, Tip. de Manuel Mirás y Álvarez, 1877). In 1886 he modified it and made a Galician translation: *Queixumes dos pinos* (Latorre y Martínez, La Coruña, 1886). The verses of “Os pinos” (published in *Queixumes...*) were later borrowed to provide the words of the Galician national anthem.

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use sounds evocative of the sea, *enxebre* (Galician, pure, authentic) soundtracks, images of bunches of ripe grapes hanging from vines in humid valleys, mussels encrusted on rocks. . . Such is the importance of these evocations in the advertising message that in “Ven a Galicia... Volverás” (1991) a voiceover insists that we go to Galicia and enjoy it “with all five senses”.

3.2 The social imaginary and the reception of landscape through advertising

Iconic messages, linguistic messages, synecdoche, hyperbole, synaesthesia. . . Thanks to a tradition and a series of well studied devices, the image of the Galician landscape is nowadays a caged bird. Publicists dare not change their approach for fear that people would cease to identify such a well-defined product. It is therefore fitting to make some comments in connection with this issue and with the second question posed at the beginning of this section: what the public expects to see in tourist advertisements about Galicia.

This stereotyped landscape that we have described is today part of Galician, Spanish and perhaps even European imaginary. Social imaginary can be defined as the sum of the notions, discourses, practices and values in currency in a society and which, together, inform many of the new works it brings to light. It is hard to say when exactly a stereotype coined by art or advertising passes into, and becomes part of, the social imaginary, or when the opposite is true – when it is society’s imaginary that inspires an artist or publicist. What does seem to be clear is that, because of the work of first the regionalists and then the nationalists, the clichés surrounding the Galician landscape have become part of our imaginary and influence creators and consumers alike, regardless of their ideology or political inclination. Unlike Jung’s obscure psychoanalytic notion of the collective imaginary, the social imaginary defended by Cornelius Castoriadis (1989) and others has an empirical and social basis. Social imaginaries are to be understood as contracts, at times explicit and at other times tacit, regarding the nature of things. They lie deep in our consciousness, conditioning our ways of seeing, feeling and understanding the world. Imaginary significations are not merely ‘rational’ refer-

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ences but arise from the symbolic order of indeterminate creation. Thus, any society institutes its own world, its own system of interpretation and its identity, and because imaginaries are generally accepted, the notions and values informing them are the true regulators of agency.

5 Some studies have thrown up interesting data. In Brittany and Normandy the construction of a regional landscape stereotype and its conversion into a key element of France's social imaginary happened together. Mention has been made too of the point to which these stereotypes still condition people's mental pictures of Brittany or Normandy (Guillet, 1999, 145–156; Guillet, 2000; Guillet, 2002, 109–120). Similarly, a century and a half of literary and iconographic pressure have sufficed to consolidate a stereotype of the Galician landscape in Spain's social imaginary. How have these images moulded people's *expectations* regarding landscape? And, above all, how were these *expectations* forged?

15 An employee of Turgalicia, Galicia's main tourist board, tells anecdotes that demonstrate to what point the territorial discourse articulated by the ideologues of early 20th century nationalism has been *interiorised*. The publicity campaign called "Galicia Viva", designed in 2003 to mitigate the disastrous effects of the oil spill by the tanker *Prestige*, consisted in part of huge tarpaulins carrying photographs of woodland to be hung over façades in Madrid and Barcelona (Fig. 8). The problem was that the woodland was an eucalyptus forest. Immediately there was an outcry: dozens of calls were received in protestation and the campaign had to be withdrawn. Even though large swathes of Galicia are now covered in eucalyptus trees, people want to see oaks, chestnut trees and pine trees.

25 It would be wrong, however, to think that this idea of the region is shared only by easily manipulated people or by members of the lower classes. Further proof that Galicia's stereotyped landscape has stamped itself on the region's leaders, too, comes with another anecdote that the same employee of Turgalicia told us in March 2006. The story goes back to when the first designs for the publicity campaign "Sumérgete en Galicia" (2000) reached the offices of senior officials of the autonomous government

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that was funding the campaign. The design –innovative, eye-catching, carefree and summery – was based on the idea of water, a very Galician feature. The aim was to foster coastal tourism and the sole motifs used were a ship and a *vieira* (scallop shell). When the official in charge saw it, he said “Something’s missing”. He then had the brilliant idea of getting the designer to introduce a stone granary floating on the waters so that people would “see that it was Galicia”. After much negotiation, it was agreed that the final version would carry an image of the Tower of Hercules (more obviously connected with the sea since it is the lighthouse of the city of A Coruña, built by the Romans) and not the granary. The official’s idea, however, demonstrates the preponderance that stereotypes have when they are part of the social imaginary (Figs. 9, 10).

4 Conclusions

It is practically impossible to uphold in the 21st century the theory of the “innocent eye” or the possibility of pure and direct access, for reality is only accessible through a code, or system, of *symbolic forms* – language, art, religion, science – that inevitably mediate our experience of it. The *social imaginary* that makes up these *forms* is a reality – an “imaginary reality” but nonetheless a reality. There are two radical and not very reliable ways of confronting it. One is by considering that these *imaginaries* are a ‘prison’ from which we cannot escape; and the other is by denying the existence of these bonds and asserting the possibility that the cognitive subject can access truth and facts without prejudice.

This second group should be shown, through the writings of H. G. Gadamer (1976, 114–117), that prejudice is rooted our very way of speaking, in the words we use, and in the images and metaphors we choose, so that it is difficult for us to rid ourselves of prejudice completely. This article, however, is addressed to the first group. They should be told through the writings of Rubert de Ventós (1986) that although prejudice exists, it is these more or less interiorised *symbolic forms* that fail to interpret the different

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realities we face every day, when everything changes in an environment where familiar and finished meanings remain unaltered.

This is true for landscape as well. “National” landscapes are social constructs. It is not only word that is a cultural product, fruit of the technical language used by the 16th century painters, but specific landscapes in each region that are also eventually converted into constructs through literature, art and marketing. We can face this fact from two standpoints. First, by adopting a conservative standpoint and maintaining that this inherited stereotyped landscapes are indestructible and that it acts as a cohesion mechanism that should not be tampered with; or, secondly, by adopting a more flexible standpoint. Although in this article we have attempted to highlight the power, endurance and mutability of landscapes stereotypes – formed in centuries past and maintained today thanks to advertising – the truth is that we favour this second option. The goal of advertising is to broaden the market. This conditions greatly the way in which advertisements are conceived. Whatever the case may be, the public’s relationship with the media is becoming increasingly more dynamic. Until recently the public expected to find in advertising a confirmation of what was already known. Nowadays it accepts and even seeks challenges, suggestions, novelties, and winks of the eye. If this is so, then as much for cars as for television sets, it might be time to think about offering new landscapes too.

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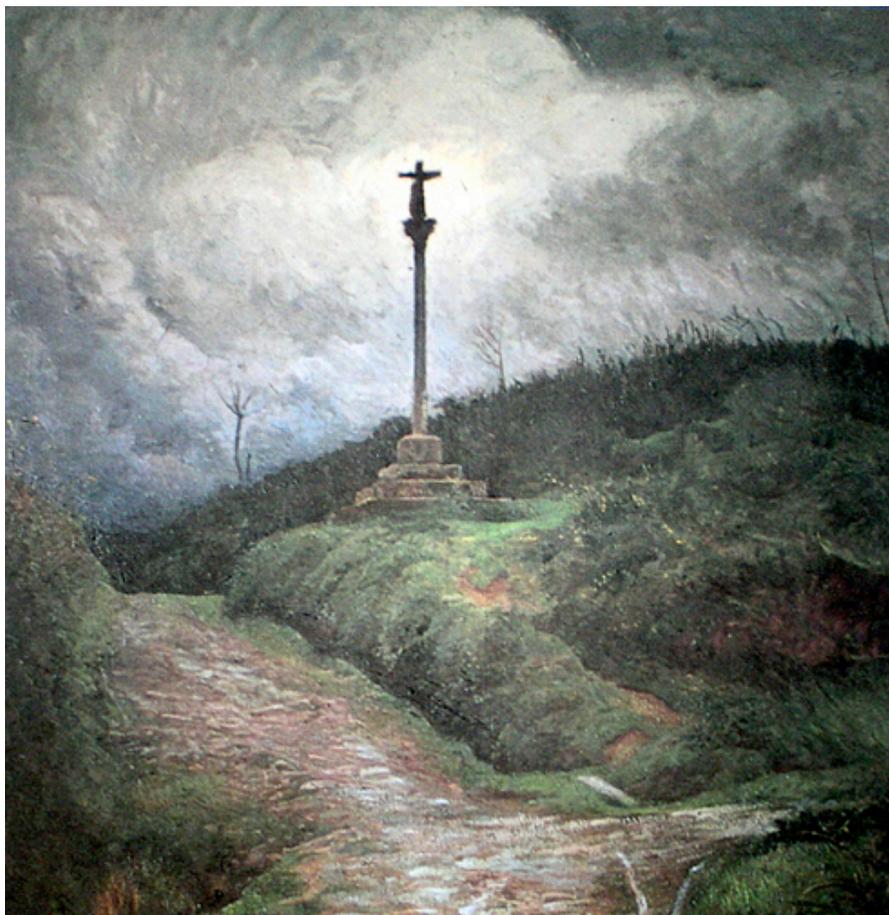


Fig. 1. Bello Piñeiro: *O Cruceiro de Franza*, 1919, oil painting on canvas, 120×125 cm, Private Collection, Ferrol.

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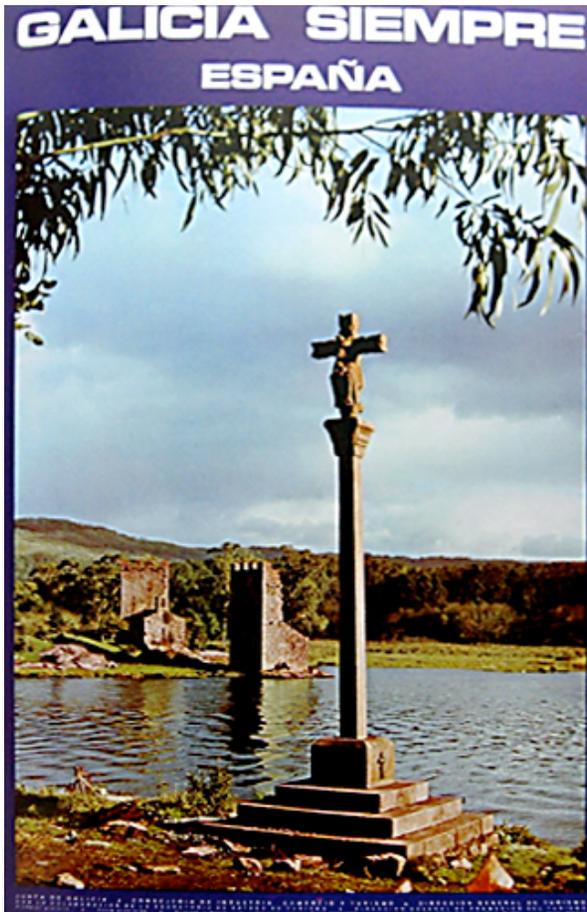


Fig. 2. Poster *Galicia Siempre, España*, of the Directorate General for Tourism belonging to the Galician Ministry for Industry, Commerce and Tourism of the Galician Regional Government, 1980.

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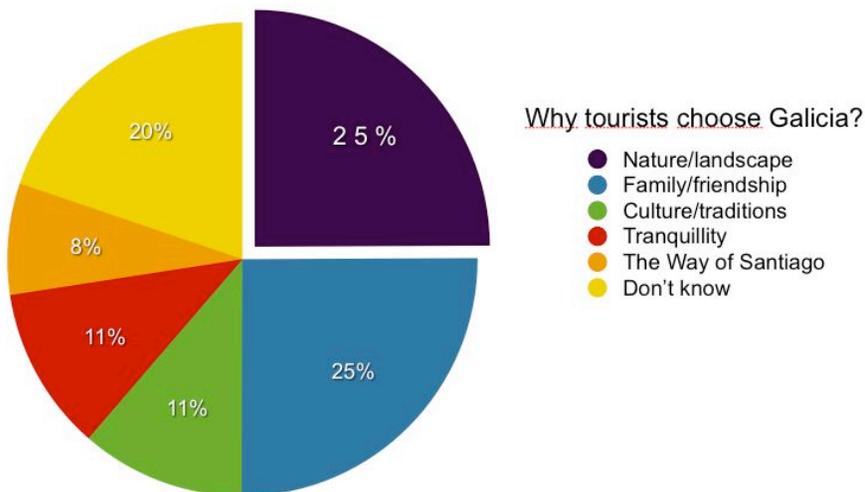
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Fig. 3. Reasons why tourists choose Galicia. Source: Department of Statistics and Operational Research at the Faculty of Mathematics of the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela for Turgalicia, 2005.

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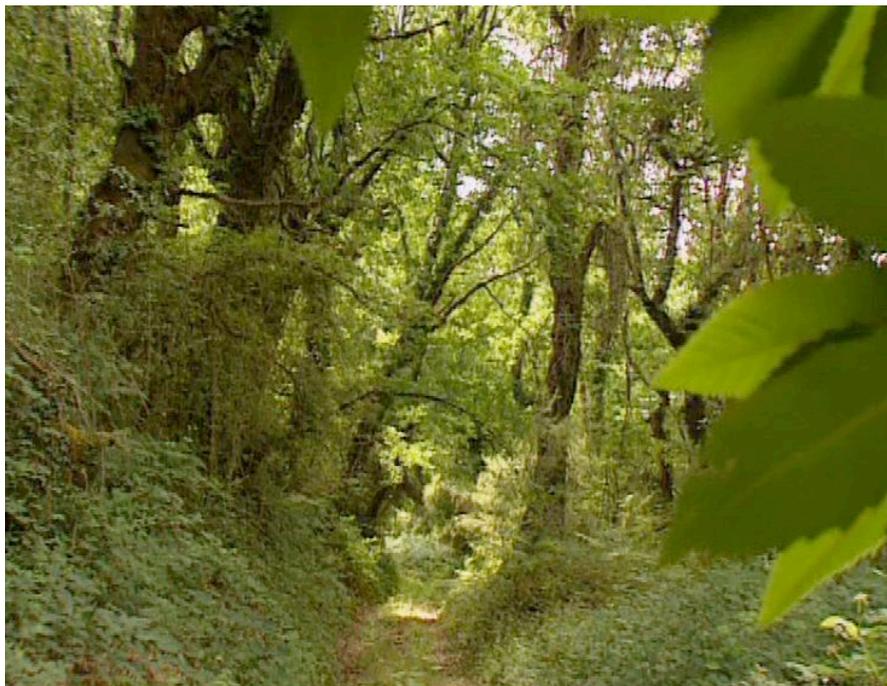


Fig. 4. Still from the spot: *Ven a Galicia... Volverás*, 1991.

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Fig. 5. Still from the spot: *Galicia, lo mas natural*, 1993.

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Fig. 6. Still from the spot: *Galicia, poema visual* , 1999.

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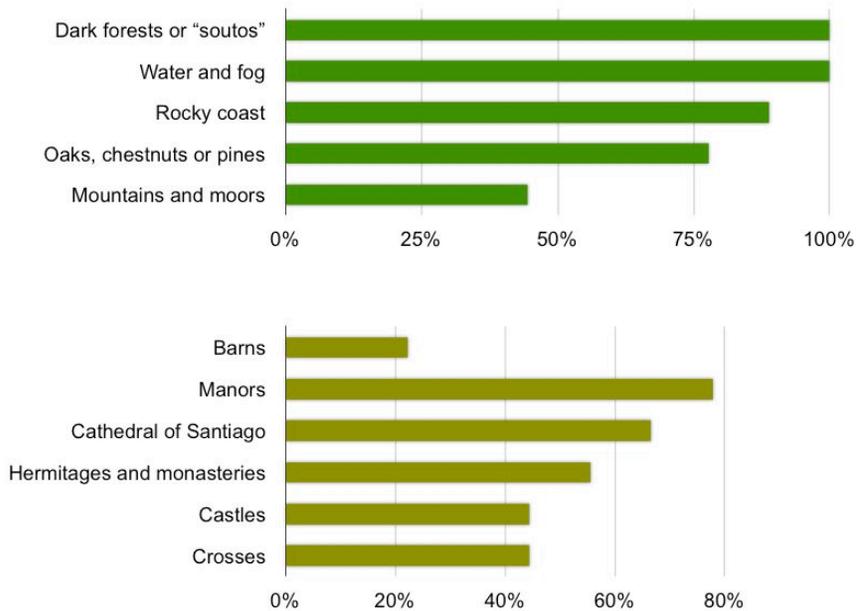


Fig. 7. Presence of typical motifs of the Galician landscape in TV advertising (1991–2006).

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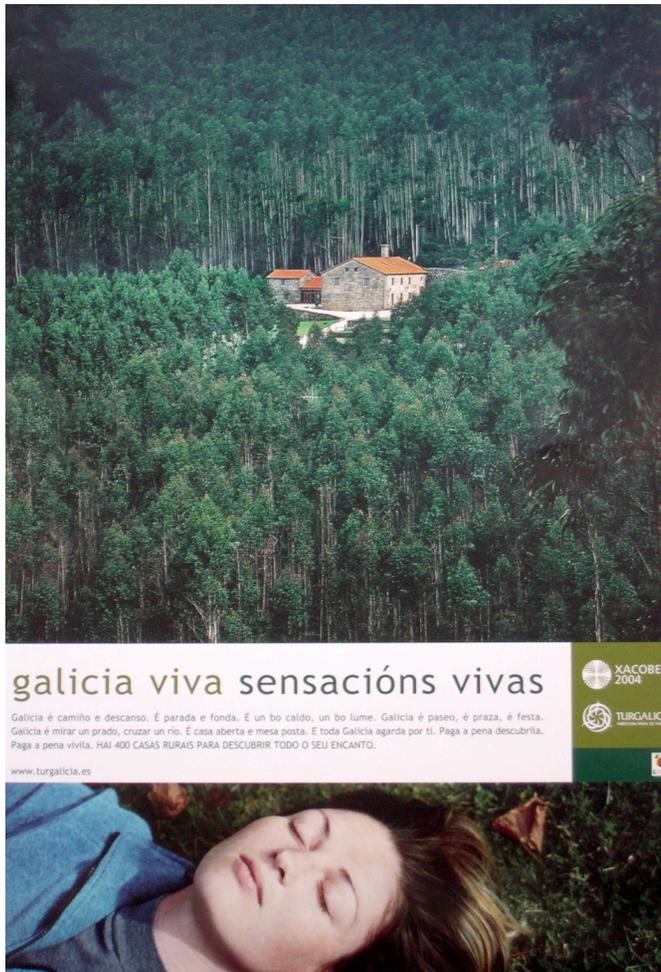


Fig. 8. Still of one of the tarpaulins in the campaign *Galicia viva*, 2003.

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Fig. 9. First modification of the campaign *Sumérgete en Galicia*, 2000.

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Fig. 10. Final version of the campaign *Sumérgete en Galicia*, 2000.

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