

# **PAINTING AS A TEACHING RESOURCE FOR THE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN THE STUDY OF GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE: THE EXAMPLE OF THE VINEYARD LANDSCAPE**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The landscape is a representative block within the curriculum of primary education. In the case of Castilla y León it joins a set of contents of conceptual, procedural and attitudinal character as collected in the *ORDEN EDU/519/2014, de 17 de junio, por la que se establece el currículo y se regula la implantación, evaluación y desarrollo de la educación primaria en la Comunidad de Castilla y León*, and the theme of the landscape will be addressed from the social sciences, in particular, from “Bloque II. El mundo en el que vivimos”, associated with the contents of geography, but it will also appear in other block contents which work implicitly in “Bloque III. Vivir en Sociedad” or “Bloque IV. Las huellas del tiempo”. Although throughout the courses we will find content directly and indirectly related to the landscape, it will be in the fourth year when explicit reference will be made to these aspects defining landscape, its elements, the types of existing landscapes and, at a regional level, the characteristics of this territory landscapes, as well as the elements that shape it like the weather, hydrographic slopes, forests, or the relief in the case of landscapes in the natural environment, but the economic activities and production sectors of the population, or the artistic and cultural heritage also contribute to shape the landscapes.

The student, along its way through primary education, must acquire a number of concepts related to landscape, but also skills. Of the latter and among all, social and civic competence which will allow students to gain knowledge and social attitudes from different perspectives that will enable them to understand the situation of a constantly changing world. But in addition to these skills, we must also highlight mathematical skills and basic science and technology skills, as the landscape has a very important

component belonging to the physical environment oriented to the preservation and improvement of the natural environment. Alongside these two, which would be the most noteworthy, others can be worked such as skills related to consciousness and cultural expressions, as there are also heritage landscapes and different types of cultures that students must respect; or the use of Information Technology for the treatment of information concerning this issue through digital competence.

Within these aspects this article is framed, as the agricultural landscape of the vineyard is one of the most representative of the region, where, through painting, not only references to the vineyards and the tasks carried out in them are made, but a window in which you can see other elements that make up these spaces as the moors, rivers, vegetation, elements of traditional architecture, etc., all pieces of a greater puzzle that make up the different contents of geographic space that students have to acquire in the primary stage, and which come together to give a more accurate view of the reality of Castilla y León.

## **2. PAINTING: AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE TO EXPLAIN THE LANDSCAPE IN THE CLASSROOM**

The landscape is an important content in the curriculum of primary education used for better learning of the contents that make the geographical space. There have been many researchers who have taken to reflect the treatment given to the landscape from the didactics of the social sciences, and have stressed the need for the student to value this concept in explaining other aspects

Direct observation of the territory, the use of photographs, paintings or films among other tools, are a representative method for the study and understanding of the landscape. However, for this paper, we will use pictures, an instrument that will allow students to understand what is in the environment and why it is in that particular place.

You can consider painting as a teaching tool that helps to study and analyze the landscape of a territory, and see the usefulness of this tool in helping to understand the geographical space. While it is true that we must take into account that the pictures will reflect the idea that a painter has over a territory, being therefore an unreliable source, we will not only use an artist in particular, but the look of various painters to contrast each other's vision in order to reach some conclusions more consistent with reality. This is the same as a geographer as landscape will be analyzed with the highest possible fidelity to reality, but from their point of view.

Because of the importance of the subject in the curriculum, the use of paintings as a didactic resource arises to explain a type of landscape, in this case agricultural, in particular the vineyard, but which could be extrapolated to any other. A group of

painters have been selected who captured the landscape of the vine and wine from the mid-twentieth century to the early twenty-first century, highlighting Vela Zanetti, José María Castilviejo, Gabino Gaona, Cuadrado Lomas and Mariano Macón, all born in towns in Castilla y León, who perfectly knew the lands they inhabited.

Once the search for paintings related to the subject of study was done, we proceeded to divide the found pictures in three types depending on its content, therefore, there are paintings in which the landscape of vineyards is shown (some of them embedded in the rest of a typical Castilian environment), the harvesters; and the wineries. All elements that shape the typical image of the vineyard landscape through art, but at the same time, provide information on the territory, economic activity, the work of people, buildings characteristics, etc., that is, very useful and interesting information about the rest of the geographical area that can be seen in the picture, which will allow us to talk about them in the classroom to introduce other contents of the curriculum.

It is in this way the teacher can transfer knowledge to the students through direct observation of the work in class and the description of what is in it, as there are elements that should be recognized as it is expressed in the curriculum. Through the exposure of what is observed in the picture many concepts can be explained, for example, if we talk about the trees, we will know the season and will be able to explain the characteristics presented by one or another type of vegetation, prevailing weather conditions, or the type of crop planted at that time. Therefore, the description of these pictures leads to analyze not only the painting but also everything that revolves around the contents therein represented, so that it is beneficial to do a description exercise to see which elements are part of the landscape, and after that, a reflection to understand why.

### **3. OBSERVING ART TO UNDERSTAND THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE: THE EXAMPLE OF VINEYARD LANDSCAPE**

To develop the practical case, a set of paintings related to the vineyard landscape have been selected, from which information on various areas of the space environment will be extracted. Although the main focus is the vines and everything that surrounds them, the background presented is very wide, and therefore many typical elements of the rural areas of Castilla y León, both biotic and abiotic are included.

The extent of the region and the aspects derived from ecological conditions in the territory give rise to a wide variety of agricultural landscapes in Castilla y León. A rich variety which has influenced the economy of rural people by allocating certain sectors to a particular type of agricultural use. Without doubt, the cereal landscape is predominant with a major expansion on the land honoring the saying “Castilla granero de España.”

However, this varied landscape has led to the presence of other crops, such as vineyards, irrigation or meadows among others, and has helped to consolidate the image of Castilla as an agricultural area.

The theme of the landscape has been treated directly and indirectly throughout history by various groups of professionals like painters, writers, geographers, architects and anthropologists, giving each of them a particular vision of what a particular territory was and represented. Through their works we can see how the landscape has been changing over the years adapting to the passage of time and human action.

The geographical perspective on landscape was born and joined the geography of romanticism with the German Alexander von Humboldt and Carl Ritter as the two most representative authors of this school of the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, whose work was able to include objective and subjective views of the landscape.

Since then the landscape studies in Spain, in particular agricultural, have lived moments of splendor with important scientific work and others with a less representative production. In the field of painting, agricultural landscapes have been a recurring theme. Through these artistic representations we can understand a part of the agricultural history and rural people of Castilla y León as well as the types of crops they had, how there were distributed in the territory, its peculiar constructions, population, etc.

The analysis is divided into three parts. First the study of the vineyards, secondly, the harvest and those involved in it, and thirdly the constructions used to make wine.

The first refers to the most common representations of the vineyards, highlighting works by Cuadrado Lomas as an exponent of the landscapes of vineyards in their stage of undress, as opposed to Mariano Macón who is responsible for representing the vineyards in their heyday with the strains loaded with leaves and bunches of grapes in the summer and early fall. In the work of Cuadrado Lomas there will appear some initial differences between his earlier and later works. While it is true, the first represents a vineyard landscape in their time of lower splendor in the winter, with bare strains and a gray sky to strengthen the feeling of cold. Opposed to the representations of Lomas's vineyards of Castilla y León are those by Mariano Macón with a completely different landscape. This time dressed strains, with their green intense leaves and clusters almost ready to be cut are represented, but especially after the harvest with characteristic changing colors of the leaves after the arrival of autumn filling colourful vineyards. Along with them, he inserts other characteristic features of the rural landscape such as the villages with their church towers, trees, other farmlands, and of course, the characteristic plain relieves, terraces and glacis with its slopes where most of the vineyards of the region are set.

Secondly, there are the works that reflect the jobs being done in the vineyards with the actors that develop them. Vela Zanetti and José María Castilviejo have been some of those responsible for translating these two aspects in many paintings where we can glimpse the influence wine had in their lives, as they both lived in two municipalities with a strong wine imprint in the center of the region.

All the analyzed works focus on a key period of this activity as it is the harvest, between mid-September and early October, coinciding with the beginning of autumn, which will also reflect a vineyard landscape with shades of red, green, yellow and orange leaf during this period, to which the reflection of the sun's rays characteristic of this season must be added, bringing a special light to the pictures.

Thirdly, we will analyze the representations that have been made of traditional wineries and their most important architectural elements such as facades, "zarceras", vents etc., constructions that have originated a very peculiar landscape in the plains of the Duero. The buildings in the fields of Castilla are a very unique and important element of the landscape. Some will be highlighted as dovecotes, shepherds huts, farming tools huts, animal pens, but above all the wine cellars. This type of construction is present in many villages in the region with some wine industry, or those which one day had and still remain nowadays, although some of them in a deplorable condition, maintaining their position as a symbol and to remember the weight the wine had in these territories.

Castilviejo's work is one of the most representative in this area. He has been responsible for representing the unique Castilian wineries and their most important elements in isolation or integrated within the urban and rural landscape. Therefore, we can distinguish a set of compositions representing mainly the stone facades so characteristic of the wine cellars, and on the other hand, some of the elements that form part of its architecture such as fireplaces, "zarceras", but above all, the vents.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

This paper aims to show how the description of the pictures can explain concepts in the curriculum of primary education such as geomorphology, biogeography, hydrographic, economic, social, etc., elements that go unnoticed to the naked eye because they are not the important part of the pictures, but if analyzed give us much information about the space in which they find themselves. Therefore, the description will help students go beyond the main thing, not to stay with the first thing he sees, but to observe, in this case, the painting as a whole with all its details.

The landscape can be worked with different methods and sources such as direct observation in the field, a photograph, a satellite image, archival documents, a novel, a movie, or a painting, all showing a landscape that can have different interpretations

according to the person who sees it and carries it out, and they help explain other contents which are present. Moreover, for this research, the painting will be an educational resource that will serve to expose with clarity and simplicity important information about a particular landscape. Through the pictures students and other people can be explained how a given territory is, what activities take place in it, its history, etc., we could even extrapolate it to pre-schoolers because through this source you can work with colors, shapes, people or trades.

All these aspects let us confirm that the painting is consolidated as a strategy for teaching geography with which you can analyze, understand and describe the landscape, while conceptual contents are acquired. An educational tool easily accessible to students but also to teachers who can use it in their classes, and which is a more innovative way to study the theme of landscape in education integrating various elements found in the space and connecting them, and not seeing them as separate components.

In this case we used the vineyard landscape as an example. The various works of the painters analyzed have helped understand how was the traditional wine landscape, which elements were part of it, the organization of the vineyards with a system of planting in glass as opposed to the current trellises, how the harvest was carried out, the clothing of the harvesters, or how the underground cellars were. In addition to these own specific aspects of this type of landscape, it has been possible to see how these artists have shown other elements present in the environment such as trees, relief, traditional architecture, animals, etc., most of them contents in the different official curricula of Castile and Leon at different educational levels. An example that can be extrapolated to any other type of landscape such as the urban, natural, industrial landscape, the landscape of cereal or irrigation, as each of them will incorporate its own characteristic elements that will define and delimit them, and which will allow us to understand that particular landscape and everything around you, always linking it to the curriculum of primary education by involving students in building the knowledge and acquisition of basic skills mentioned above.