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Euskaldunak or Amerikanuak: An Introduction to the Folklore of the Boise Basques and its Contribution to the Basque-American Identity

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Euskaldunak or *Amerikanuak*: An Introduction to the Folklore of the Boise Basques and
its Contribution to the Basque-American Identity

By Leah Zavaleta

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Senior Independent Study Thesis

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Abstract

There is little to no research on the folklore of the Basques, and what little that has been done is outdated. The Basques are a people that have long intrigued anthropologists, linguists, geneticists, and folklorists. Previous research has attempted to find an origin of the Basque language, and has acknowledged the genetic uniqueness of the Basques and attempted to discover why. The folklore of the Basques was collected almost a century ago and there are no contemporary collections of current Basque folklore. I have attempted to solve this problem by contributing to the literature on the folklore of the Basques. To do this, I interviewed nine women in the Basque community in Idaho about the folklore that is still celebrated today. I found that festivals, religious beliefs, music, stories (family stories, songs, improvised poetry called *bertsolaritza*, and dance), and the Basque language are the instruments of contemporary folklore of the Boise Basques. This paper introduces the term folklore, provides an overview of the Basques in Spain and the Basques in Idaho, and an analysis of the folklore and how it contributes to the creation of the Basque-American identity. It is the first step to creating a new collection of folklore and understanding the Basque people as the unique people they are.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

“So, it feels nice to be Basque in America, feels really nice. People respect your identity and they show true interest to learn more about it and honestly, they give you a chance to develop your Basque identity more maybe because you are outside of your country. You can choose what to develop and what not to develop as Basque...You develop in a way that you wouldn't in the Basque Country, you see that Basque side of yourself more clearly.”

-Olivia

In my childhood I discovered that I was part Irish. I became fascinated with everything Irish: I took Irish dance classes, and I read all kinds of Celtic folklore and mythology. When I reached high school, I became steadily more interested in my English and History classes; I was fascinated with the history of the world, with the people who call this Earth “Home,” and I loved the literature and the imaginations of these people. This is when I learned that my name was Basque, and when I asked my parents about our genealogy. I do not remember exactly where I read my name or heard about its connection to the Basques; it could have been in my history textbooks or one of my teachers asking me about my name. Before then, I always figured my name was Spanish or Italian; I knew that we had family in Peru that we had not been in contact with for as long as I can remember. My family never got into the specifics of our genealogy or the origin of our names. My father had started tracing back our family lineages, both my mother's side and his, and I slowly got to learn more about my family history. But this was not enough, I was still curious to figure out more about this Basque side of me, even if it were small and no longer a part of our current family. This is when the idea for my Independent Study was formed.

It was not until I came to college that my ability to conduct research on the Basques became easier and I was able to learn more about them. My Junior Independent Study focused on the genetic research into the origins of the Basque people, specifically comparing scientific research with the origin myths that were created by the people. A year and a half of research on the Basques led me to the main question for my Senior Independent Study: finding how the folklore of the Boise Basques contributed to their identity as Basque-Americans. This topic combines both disciplines of Anthropology and English into one, and is a topic upon which little to no research has previously been published.

My research into this topic has led me down a long path into the history of the Basques and the complexity of their culture, their language, and their beliefs. I became more interested in the folklore of the Basques, directing myself away from the question of human origins towards the concept of culture and folklore. “Folklore” has been an immense concept to unravel because there is no set definition and every folklorist has a different understanding of what folklore is in relation to a people and their culture. The process of understanding what folklore was and how it related to my research was long and difficult; I spent many nights reading every text I could find on what folklore was, what it meant, where it was found, etc. Once I finally came to an understanding of folklore, I could continue to research the Basques and discern the traditions and ways of life that fit within that definition of folklore. Folklore, for the purpose of this paper, is understood as a combination of different definitions that have been proposed and described in my later chapters. To sum it up quickly, folklore is the expressive works of a culture; it is oral, artistic, and

performative; it is how a culture explains their world through symbols, beliefs, stories, dance, crafts, architecture, etc. (American Folklore Society; Toelken 1979; Glassie 1989; Sims and Stephens 2005: 1-2). This eventually led to unexpected discoveries and searching for answers to the questions I raised at the commencement of my project. Such questions included: How have the Basques maintained their identity in the United States? What have they done to present themselves to the rest of the nation? What are their main forms of folklore that still exist to this day? These question led up to my major research question for this project: how does the contemporary folklore of the Boise Basques contribute to the Basque-American identity?

Book research only provides so much information, it details what has been recorded in the past but not what has been learned in the present. The information I collected from books and articles were outdated, they could only provide details about the past and not how things worked in the present. In addition, the folklore of the Boise Basques was practically non-existent in any published resources.

To answer my own research question and learn more about the current state of folklore in the contemporary Basque community, I went to Boise, Idaho, where a community of Basques have established a cultural museum and educated the public about the Basques. The first section of this paper introduces the population I interacted with and interviewed, as well as how I was able to connect with the Basque community in Idaho. My method is also discussed in the next section in which I describe the process I used to thematically analyze thirty-four oral histories

on the museum website, the kind of interview process I used, and how they were conducted.

Following the introductory chapter is a discussion of oral history and folklore theory. This chapter briefly describes the debate within the study of folklore over a suitable definition for the term and how it relates to the people and the culture. Understanding folklore theory, how it is implemented in the interpretation of folklore, and its contribution to the formation of an ethnic identity provides a foundation upon which the rest of my research was built. Next, I review the literature that has already been published on the Basques, including: an ethnographic background of the Basques in their home country and their migration to the United States; a history of the Basques in Idaho; a brief overview of Basque mythology; and, an anthropologist's analysis of the *laminak* (a Basque mythological character) and how it reflects Basque society. These two chapters are the initial background on who the Basques are and the folklore as it has previously been established. The main problem I encountered was that I could find no current resources or publications of Basque folklore for the community in Idaho, the group I chose to study more closely.

The context of my contributors' histories, specifically relating to their families and the creation of a community in Idaho, are discussed in the fourth chapter. I also viewed thirty-four oral histories that are available on the museum website, and the themes that were recorded by the interviewer. The themes that emerged from these oral histories and my own interviews are discussed in the fifth chapter. Thematic analysis of the interviews ties together the themes that were

commonly found in the oral histories I viewed online, and each woman's interview with a theoretical explanation for how each theme contributes to the formation of a Basque-American identity. This identity is a fusion of both the Basque and the mixed identity of the United States. Members of the Basque community in Idaho have been in the United States for at least three generations and have found a way to pursue their Basque identity within the "melting pot" that is the United States. The fused identity of Basque and "American" was what I wanted to pursue, specifically how folklore was used to create this mixed identity. I wanted to see how the folklore of the Basque Country that I read about in my research was possibly related to the folklore of the Basque-American community in Idaho.

The direction in which this project has taken me has changed multiple times since my junior independent study a year and a half ago. Despite this change, I discovered a great deal about the Basques and found the Basque culture to be unique and intriguing. I even learned more about my last name: one of my contributors was able to translate it and tell me what it means. After five years of trying to figure out this part of me, my research had finally provided me with an answer. My contributor told me that my name essentially translates to "wide open spaces," though there is no telling to what the spaces refer. In the end, I was able to finally understand the origin of my surname, contribute to the literature of the Basques with a contemporary record of the folklore of the Basques in Idaho, and I was able to return my research and results to the museum for their own records.

Methods

The Basque Square in downtown Boise, Idaho, is a small area that houses the Basque Museum and Cultural Center along with two old boarding houses, a *fronton* in which people still play *pelota*, a cultural center where community events are held, and a few Basque-oriented restaurants and markets. It is a commonly frequented area in the Basque community: most of the people I met were familiar with it and found comfort in the community the Square provided for the Basques. During the course of my five-day stay in Boise, I worked in the museum: meeting a majority of my contributors there for interviews and exploring the museum itself as well as the rest of the Basque Square, experiencing the culture through its documented history, its people and its food (mainly chorizo and croquetas, as well as rice pudding at the Three Kings dinner I attended). Not all of this is necessarily typical of Basque cuisine, but it was customary for the people there to eat chorizo and croquetas that they have become a staple of Basque celebrations. I learned from a few people in passing conversations that most of the Boise residents had not eaten chorizo until the Basques introduced it during festivals. This section describes the process I used to thematically analyze the oral histories from the museum's website, details the setting in which the interviews were conducted, and discusses the benefits and drawbacks of interviews as it was the method I used for this project.

The website for the Basque Museum and Cultural Center has a section on oral histories for some members of the Basque community. These interviews were conducted by a few different people, and neither the whole interview nor the full transcription were published online. A select few seconds of recordings, however, are available per person interviewed, as well as a transcript summary of what was said during the interviews. My

own interviews and the oral histories online shared one thing in common: there were some that were short and some were longer, providing varying levels of detail. These oral histories are arranged alphabetically by last name on the website, and there are at least four pages with over one hundred people per page. I only looked through the first thirty-four—still within the “A’s”—and tallied up the themes that arose from the interviews. These themes would have been written down by the interviewer or whoever had indexed the oral history, and only a few did not have the themes listed. Despite the select few out of the thirty-four, I was still able to glean an idea of how life was like for these early immigrants who told their life stories in the oral histories. These themes will be further discussed in my analysis.

I conducted a series of interviews that were made possible by the executive director of the Basque Museum and Cultural Center who contacted nine women: some first or second generation descendants and some more recent immigrants to the United States. Upon arrival at the museum I was provided the office of an employee who was, at the time, travelling. This office was where I conducted my interviews: it was private and had a door so that the room could be closed off from the museum. Interviews were conducted one-on-one after my contributors had read and signed the consent form (Appendix A). This form stated that they knew who I was, the purpose of my project, acknowledging that they were of eighteen years of age or older, that they knew the interview was voluntary and could be stopped at any time, and that the interview would be recorded for documentation purposes. Once they read the form and signed, I started the recording and asked them my questions (Appendix B). I allowed slightly longer silent pauses while they gathered their thoughts; if they could not remember, I moved on to the

next question. Interviews lasted anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour; however, prior commitments and memory constraints made certain interviews shorter and not as detailed whereas the longer interviews provided more information as my contributors were able to remember more details.

Interviews have a series of benefits and drawbacks which I encountered in my research. Two benefits of interviews are that I am able to ask probing and grand tour questions (Frese notes; 2015). The grand tour questions are broad questions that produce general responses, allowing me to ask probing questions to go more in depth and learn more about potentially insightful information. Another benefit is that I was able to develop a relationship with the contributor (Frese notes; 2015). In most cases, before and after the recording occurred, my contributors and I were able to talk and become acquainted, which allowed me to establish an easy flow of conversation. Relationships, even if they are fleeting, are important in creating a rapport between contributor and researcher so that the contributor feels more comfortable.

A drawback of interviews includes the researchers' reliance upon the schedules and assistance of other individuals (Frese notes; 2015). This particular drawback was one I encountered when one of my contributors had a meeting to get to, so our interview was made brief. I would not have been nearly as successful in my research as I was without the assistance of the employees at the museum, especially when it came to contacting potential contributors and asking them to share whatever they knew. The input of my contributors, even those who were afraid they would not be of any help, provided me with the current status of folklore of real life people in today's Basque-American community in Boise, Idaho. Other drawbacks include a reliance on equipment, that

interviews are a time intensive method, and they cannot be duplicated by other researchers (Frese notes; 2015). If the digital recorder malfunctioned, I would have lost precious data. Finally, because each person develops a different relationship with their contributors, the information I gathered is uniquely suited to my experience and another researcher would not be able to collect the same information.

My interviews were formal; they had structured questions that I had prepared before with the aid of my advisors (Appendix B). I had an interview schedule that had been worked out with the executive director of the museum—in fact, my entire visit ended up being scheduled out on that first day I was at the museum (Appendix C). I met with two to three women a day, visited a preschool that was run through the museum (*boiseko ikastola*), attended a funeral, joined a group of people for a dinner and an event at the museum, observed a dance rehearsal, and attended a community meeting joined with the Three Kings dinner. Not all of my data was collected through formal interviews, though, and some of the information arose from informal conversations carried out between myself and various members of the Boise Basque community I met during the events previously mentioned. This informally obtained, yet significant, information was written down after the fact so that I could remember what happened so it could be included in my analysis.

Interviews are time intensive in both the actual process of the interview and in transcribing the recorded conversation. The longer the interview, the longer you spend transcribing the details of the conversation. I spent around two or three hours transcribing a one-hour long interview, and I had multiple long interviews to transcribe so the process took me a great deal of time. The process of transcribing my interviews was a long and

painstaking one. I made sure to mark when I spoke and when my contributor spoke. I included when they laughed, when they coughed, filler words such as “uh” and “um,” and when the interview got interrupted. I even attempted to put into words the Basque or Spanish words that were spoken (although they are very likely to be misspelled or misheard). Isa, Olivia, and Nina were the only contributors who had accents that I did not include in my transcriptions because the accent did not impede or have a large effect on comprehension. My ethics statement and consent form stated that their interviews would be anonymous and so, in my final analysis, all the names of people and places will be changed to maintain this anonymity.

The results of my time in Boise, the interviews I collected, and the experiences I was able to participate in, and the themes from the oral histories, will all be taken into consideration in my analysis. My analysis chapter presents the themes that arose from the online oral histories and my interviews, using oral history and folklore theory to understand how those themes contribute to the larger construction of the Basque-American identity.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORY

Oral history and folklore are complex concepts that have been discussed by historians, anthropologists and literary scholars over the past century. The data collected in an oral history interview, either by an oral historian or someone well-versed in oral history theory, describes someone's life and presents who they are as a person and as a member of the culture to which they belong. Folklore, on the other hand, has been the subject of a century-long debate between scholars of various disciplines who have attempted to define folklore and all its various forms. There is no universally agreed upon definition or complete compiled list of folkloric forms. I discuss below the literature and theory that scholars of folklore have, so far, contributed to the field of folklore studies. This section discusses the method and theory of oral history and how to interpret the resulting data. Oral history data can provide a great deal of information and is a method and theory that is often used by folklorists, according to oral historian and theorist Lynn Abrams (2010: 2, 9). I also discuss the theories surrounding folklore and how to collect and interpret its various forms. Concluding this section is a brief discussion on the transmission of oral traditions.

Oral History

Oral history theory introduces the method of interviewing and interacting with another person to obtain information. Introducing the method and theory of oral history will provide a structure upon which folklore theory can be built. The theory and method of oral history are closely intertwined and depend on whether one is practicing and analyzing the oral history narrative, or physically conducting the interview. According to Lynn Abrams, oral history is both the interview in which information about the past is

collected, as well as the product (i.e. the narrative) of said interview (2010: 2). These stories contain sociocultural events that the narrator was likely not a part of, but the story could still be attributed to the larger historical timeline. Some aspects of oral histories overlap with oral traditions, largely due to the fact that the stories collected are passed down to future generations orally. Abrams suggests that there is a characteristic of oral traditions that is not a factor in oral histories: oral traditions contain oral messages based on other messages that are at least a generation old (2010: 26). This makes it harder to tell exactly when the story originated and thus, harder to define historically (Abrams 2010: 26). Another component of oral history, specifically what Abrams calls “recovery history,” maintains the same structure of interviewing individuals about the past in an attempt to gather information that was otherwise not available from other sources (Abrams 2010: 26).

Abrams and other oral historians she cites suggest that the manner in which one speaks is often determined by the culture to which one belongs; different cultures have different ways to tell stories and different speech patterns that become apparent through the verbal communication of an oral history (2010: 22). She says oral histories are able to establish connections to cultural ways of speaking and remembering (Abrams 2010: 21). This brings her to the conclusion that the source of an oral history is “multi-vocal” because it is comprised of multiple voices of the society to which the contributor belongs (Abrams 2010: 25).

Oral histories depend upon the ability of the narrator to access memories from their past. This raises the question of relying upon the narrator to recall events accurately. Abrams thus paraphrases Paul Thompson, who undermined the distinction between

unreliable and reliable by saying that all evidence presented through oral histories is socially constructed, as most documents have been shaped to present a certain image of the past (2010: 80). This means that events are construed to the desires of the society in order to present the past in a certain light. It may not necessarily mean fabricating events, but leaving out certain parts that would not conform to the particular narrative being told. So, for the telling of events, reliability depends upon the social structure and not necessarily the narrator (Abrams 2010: 80). Every narrator has the artistic license to alter the story, but in the end the story maintains a structure that was constructed by the culture, making it a derivative of the common knowledge of the people belonging to that culture.

Oral history narratives often contain elements specific to the micro group of the culture to which the individual belongs. This narrative, and all other narratives, serves as the main form of communication; it is often told according to cultural conventions which are found in almost every form of communication and in every culture (Abrams 2010: 109). The term “narrative” is distinct from discourse, though, as Abrams makes sure to emphasize (2010: 109). Discourse, according to Abrams, is a message that is usually told and spread through various forms of communication because it is complex, contains multiple layers of detail and conventions, and can be contained within a narrative (2010: 110). To distinguish between the two, and to understand how the narrative is used to explain the actions of the world, Abrams suggests that a researcher use narrative analysis (2010: 106). These narratives contain information about the world we live in, and with analysis a researcher is able to understand the connections between the story being told and the cultural conventions that arise from the discourse of the story.

Often, the researcher is able to personally observe the visual aspects of the telling of the oral history narrative. What arises from this is the performative feature of narrative communication. Abrams acknowledges that oral history is a performance of history telling for a certain audience, often as part of a public context (2010: 131). One of the important qualifiers of performance, especially as it relates to communication, is what Erving Goffman calls “keying:” meaning that there is a set of guidelines that indicates a performance so that the audience understands what they are about to witness (Abrams 2010: 134). Concerning Goffman’s concept of “keying,” Abrams mentions that this set of guidelines varies according to cultural conventions (2010: 134). Based upon these set guidelines, Abrams identifies a situation in which an audience member familiar with these specific cultural conventions will understand the performance, while also being able to interpret the meaning as it specifically relates to that culture (2010: 135). The cultural conventions in a story or performance are “keyed” for a particular culture that would not be fully understood or they would have an altogether different meaning in another culture.

Folklore and folktales are commonly transmitted through storytelling, which is also a performative form of communication. The storyteller is conscious of the role the performance plays in the act of telling, and will alter their performance to suit the nature of the audience (Abrams 2010: 138). Abrams mentions German folklorist Linda Dégh’s “etiquette” of storytelling, which incorporates various aesthetic forms of storytelling such as linguistic coherence and body language (2010: 138). Based on Dégh’s concept of “etiquette,” a storyteller would not tell a fairy tale to a group of adults just as they would not talk about a war to children. There are certain stories that simply do not concern

others. Hence the storyteller needs to be conscious of their audience and change the story accordingly.

The method and theory of oral histories establishes a structure upon which folklore theory can then be placed. Some of the ideas of oral history also relate to similar concepts proposed by folklorists such as the “common knowledge” of folklore and the nature of folklore as an “open text” (Utley 1965: 11; de Caro 2013: 3-4, 14). These concepts will be further discussed in the next section. Overall, oral history is a window into the culture to which a person belongs, and allows for an understanding of the role the individual plays in that culture. Abrams mentions how the culturally constructed speech patterns and conventions of a culture are portrayed through an oral history narrative (2010: 21-25). Folklorists elaborate on how these cultural conventions are similarly portrayed through themes in folkloric material, providing a link between the two theories and making them suitable for my analysis.

Folklore

Folklore has been a topic of debate for over the past century, most of which has been an effort to create a suitable and holistic definition of folklore. The theory surrounding folklore and how to interpret it has been in the published literature since the 1960s, when most theorists finally agreed upon a set of guidelines. All folklorists generally build upon one another, and most of them cite each other in their works, although there is always going to be some contention between theorists when it comes to specifying folklore. I discuss below some of the debates that have been occurring for the past century in an attempt to put together a definition that suits this project. This section will discuss the definitions that have already been noted in previous literature, as well as

exploring some of the criteria and forms of folklore and the various methods that are used for collecting and analyzing folklore.

Anthropologist Richard Bauman starts the timeline of the definition of folklore with its first appearance in the late eighteenth century “as part of a unified vision of language, culture, literature, and ideology in the service of romantic nationalism” (1992a: 29). This concept of “romantic nationalism” can be understood as either an ideology or an aesthetic (Bauman 1992a: 38-39). Bauman describes the ideology as an expression of national identity that is authentically produced from a distinctive language and literature of the people (1992a: 38). Romantic nationalism flourished as an aesthetic because the nation had glorified the products of the folk culture for its “vigor, spontaneity, naturalness, emotional impact, and lack of contrivance” (Bauman 1992a: 39). As an aesthetic, the folk culture had produced the most authentic form of cultural expression that embodied the romantic ideals of the nation.

Folklore surfaced as a form of propaganda in service to this romantic nationalism ideology and aesthetic. This concept, as Bauman discusses in his essay, was built upon by future generations of folklorists after the first emergence of the term ‘folklore’ in 1846 by William Thoms (1992a: 29). This first use of ‘folklore’ in Thoms’ 1846 article sparked numerous different definitions of folklore from different theorists by distinguishing between who the ‘folk’ are, and what ‘lore’ is being told. For theorists such as Asa Briggs, the concept of folklore and folk culture depended upon face-to-face communication, with elements of the culture growing from the material that the people enjoyed (1992: 6). “Folklore” is not to be confused with “mass culture,” Briggs warns, as the latter was a commodity market with profit seeking individuals who falsely claimed

they were giving people what they wanted (1992: 6). This distinction presents the first as the expressive culture of the people, and the other as a money-making endeavor.

Definitions shifted to comply with the type of people under consideration when theorists from various other countries—like Germany and Russia—began to study their nation's folklore.

Definitions have changed, Bauman claims, in accordance with the folklorists' "disciplinary vantage point" so that each different definition often emphasizes one aspect of folklore over another (Bauman 1992a: 30). Folklorist Dan Ben-Amos paraphrases German folklorist Gottfried von Herder's definition that the folktale is an oral narrative told by peasants, the lower classes, or traditional people whose literacy is minimal at best (qtd. in 1992: 101). Ben-Amos says that the people's "verbal art," meaning folklore, was thought to embody the spirit of the nation, which follows the same idea of folklore as a pursuit of "romantic nationalism" (1992: 101). "Romantic nationalism" was the authentic production of folk culture that was promoted by the nation as being a distinct derivative of the nation (Bauman 1992a: 39). The folk whose culture was being expressed and expanded upon were characterized by the German folklorist von Herder as the lower classes of society, a view that was shared by some Russian folklorists (qtd. in Ben-Amos 1992: 101). The Russian theorist, Vladimir Propp, has contributed much to this field of study, especially that of Russian folklore. Propp's understanding of folklore is that it is the art of the oppressed, the peasants and workers, and also the middle classes that are closer to the lower classes than they are the upper classes (1984: 5). In this regard, folklore is saved for those of lower status as a means of unifying the lower classes to create a group identity.

Americans have differed from these Germans and Russians in their understanding of folklore, separating the two combined terms ‘folk’ and ‘lore’ and looking at each one separately. American folklorist Francis Utley claims that the term ‘folk’ refers to any group of people who share at least one factor (Utley 1965: 2). This factor shapes a tradition that the group calls its own, which creates a body of folklore specific to that particular group (Utley 1965: 2). Utley examined every published definition of folklore and found the keywords that are used in almost every definition: oral, transmission, tradition, survival, and communal (1965: 8). Utley thus suggests the assumption that folklore is primarily an oral tradition that serves to homogenize and ensure the continuation of a people’s beliefs; theorist Archer Taylor supports this assumption with his claim that, “folklore is the material that is handed on by tradition, either by word of mouth or by custom and practice” (1965: 34). One definition, proposed by Frank de Caro, is that folklore is a mode of communication that relies upon specific processes of orality and tradition (2013: 3). According to de Caro, anthropologists define folklore as one of three things: 1) an expressive culture of the common people, 2) remnants of a preindustrial society, or 3) the communally accepted understandings of a people (2013: 3). This definition presents folklore as an expressive verbal art that relays the traditions and beliefs of a common group of people who are usually of a lower status in the hierarchy of a society.

“Tradition” is a significant characteristic of folklore because it is the lore that is part of the folk’s expression of their culture. To classify folklore as “traditional,” Richard Bauman states that it has to have “temporal continuity;” that it is originated in the past, but informs the present (1992a: 31). This view, what Bauman calls the “naturalistic view”

of tradition, is being reoriented towards understanding how tradition is symbolically represented in the present (1992a: 31). Bauman considers this reconceptualization of tradition “as a selective, interpretive construction, the social and symbolic creation of a connection between aspects of the present and an interpretation of the past” (1992: 31). In other words, “tradition” is a selected set of symbols that connect the past to the present; and because symbols are a significant component of folklore in its construction of a cultural identity, it thus qualifies folklore as a symbolic construct and opens a venue for interpretation (Bauman 1992a: 31-32). These symbols would be used and interpreted in folklore to remind the present group of people about an important part of the past that they are trying to reintroduce. The connection of folklore with tradition means that, those materials of folklore that have become traditional are the ones that become the “common property” of the people (Utley 1965: 11).

Utley’s operational definition of folklore found that the word “tradition” was used most often, as were variations of “oral,” which leads to a central characteristic of folklore as being an orally transmitted form of the culture (1965: 8). Using “oral” as a defining characteristic raises a new concern because not every orally transmitted expression is necessarily folklore. Keeping this distinction in mind helps folklorists determine what is folklore and what is not (Utley 1965: 8). Despite folklore being characteristically of oral creation and transmission, it can also be transmitted in a variety of other forms. When encountered in these other forms, folklore can either be “pure,” meaning it is folklore by origin and transmission, or it can be of literary origin, meaning folklore by transmission but its origin lies in literature (de Caro 2013: 3). Folklore and literature overlap in this distinction, and various literary materials can be an example of folklore. Folklore

materials can be a part of the literature and art of the people, and also comprised of the beliefs, customs and rites of a people, their crafts, and their language (Utley 1965: 9, 11). All of these materials are part of the culture of the people, thus embodying the entirety of their folklore: the features that identify who the people are and what is unique to them in particular. In terms of the definitions of folklore, the way the materials (the lore) relate to the folk is how 'folk' and 'lore' are able to be combined to complete the whole body of folklore.

Folkloristics, the study of folklore, uses various methods to collect and interpret folklore (Klein 2001: 57). As with the definitions, folklore theorists have spent the past century attempting to identify the most reasonable and accurate ways of collecting and interpreting folklore in its cultural context. Ben-Amos describes one of the first major methods used in folkloristics: the historic-geographic method (1965: 108). This method attempts to reconstruct, locate and date the original form of the folktale through a systematic comparison of both the oral and written forms (Ben-Amos 1965: 108). Of major concern in this analysis and comparison of the tales are the concepts of type and archetype, both of which are identified within the tale and then tracked through time (Ben-Amos 1965: 108). Ben-Amos includes Thomson's definition of "type" as "a traditional tale that has an independent existence," though Ben-Amos counters that it is more likely a construct created out of the themes and events of a tale (Ben-Amos 1992: 107). He elaborates on the definition of a tale type as being "constructed inductively on the basis of all known versions and their variations, thus representing the possible thematic combinations and plot boundaries of tales that manifest similarities in spite of historical and cross-cultural differences" (Ben-Amos 1992: 108). In other words, the tale

type is created after accounting for every variation of the tale, thus the type represents the similarities in themes (simultaneously representing social and cultural similarities) despite other variables in the different versions of a tale.

Folklorists encounter types differently in their study of folklore because tales in an oral tradition exist, but types do not. Ben-Amos explains that types in oral traditions are based in their more primary form, the “archetype,” which is better compared to the concept of “root,” i.e. the basic structure or foundation (Ben-Amos 1992: 108). Part of the theoretical difficulty of relying upon the historic-geographic method, according to Ben-Amos, is that the relationship between type and archetype is weak enough that the type has to be “reified” before the archetype can be uncovered from the text (Ben-Amos 1992: 108). Simply put, the type, or the collective themes and events of a tale that connect variations to different cultures, has to be validated before a tale’s primary form can be discovered. The implementation of analyzing a tale’s type and archetype in the historic-geographic method allows a folklorist to understand when and where the tale form deviates from the original. This helps identify where the variation came from and place the change in the historical timeline so that the researcher can see what cultural or social changes may have occurred to warrant the variation of the tale.

According to Ben-Amos there are three assumptions that can be derived from this analysis and are considered the three laws of tale dynamics: the first is that tales disseminate like a ripple in water, moving out from a point of origin, and often does so independent of human movement, trade, and “linguistic affinities” (1965: 109). The second assumption implies that tales retain thematic similarities through a principle of self correction, which guides narrators towards an accepted middle narrative, a sort of

synthesis of the various versions of the tale being told (Ben-Amos 1965: 109). The third, and final, assumption suggests that new innovations with a positive response are then acquired into the tale, thus creating a new subtype (Ben-Amos 1965: 109). From these assumptions, we can say that tales are able to move between populations without the aid or influence of migrations, trade, or linguistic similarities; that tales can revert to a common middle ground if events are forgotten due to the maintenance of thematic similarities, despite different cultural variations of the tale (type); and that a new version of a tale can be created and subdivided if it receives a positive response from the audience (Ben-Amos 1965: 109). The historic-geographic method, as previously described, can be used to determine where a specific folktale may have originated from and can find where and when the tale may have diverged from the original form. Theorist C.W. von Sydow mentions how it is hypothesized that a tale's original form is the most complete and the most logical (1965: 233). This supports the historic-geographic method; wherever the original version of the tale is found, that is the tales' point of origination (von Sydow 1965: 233). Von Sydow warns that dissemination is not to be confused with being the same as inheritance of folkloric material, nor is the difference between preservation of tradition and new formations of that tradition to be seen as similar (1965: 232). He believed that finding the balance between these ideas would be self-explanatory, but uses Finnish literary historian Kaarle Krohn's metaphor of a ripple in the water to explain. This metaphor exemplifies how a folktale encounters a new culture and assimilates, forming a new version of the tale but leaving behind a trace of the origin of the variable (von Sydow 1965: 232-233).

In response to the problems with the historic-geographic method, the ethnographic method focuses on the people and the tradition of folklore (Ben-Amos 1992: 111). It is centered around the storyteller, the performance of the tale, and its context (Ben-Amos 1992: 111). All of these characteristics of the ethnographic method determine the narrative tradition of a specific culture through the verbal art of its individuals and its social institutions (Ben-Amos 1992: 111). This method looks at how the tale is unique to a particular culture in relation to its indicative conventions. Each culture has its own specific components, which have their own meanings within that particular culture, and are understood through the ethnographic method of focusing on those that would be specifically relevant to the culture (Abrams 2010: 109; Ben-Amos 1992: 111). Despite the perceived problem of language barriers between groups of people, von Sydow mentions Krohn's claim that borders between a group of people would not be a hindrance to the spread of the tale because border populations are bilingual (1965: 232). Therefore, according to the ethnographic method, analysis of a tale that two different groups of people with different languages tell is assumed to be the same tale.

The researcher is not totally dependent upon ethnographic data when it comes to studying folklore as he or she can explain folkloric material's social base by viewing it as an empirical situation. Empirical investigations of folklore examine the social basis of folklore, suggesting that folklore could be an expression of separate or homogenized identity, or the difference between the thoughts and beliefs of an individual versus that of a group (Bauman 1992a: 36). Bauman also notes how empirical investigation of the social formation of folklore as it is used exemplifies how folkloric material may be a

constituent of social relationships rather than simply reflecting or mirroring them (Bauman 1992a: 36). This means that, by looking at the foundations of folklore within a society through an empirical point of view, a researcher could understand how folklore is a building block of social connections rather than serving as an example—or a reflection—of those social relationships. This is because empirical data only quantifies the use of folklore in a society, but it does not get to the roots of why folklore is present and how it is a representation of society. Empirical data accounts for the number of people who are currently using folklore or folkloric materials in everyday social interactions, but it does not acknowledge how folklore is a construct of society.

Bauman briefly discusses another way of looking at folklore: a theoretical approach that is concerned with the temporal orientation of folklore in a society (Bauman 1992b: 55). This approach consists of three different points of view taken by various folklorists and anthropologists when it comes to understanding folkloric material and its transmission and development within a society (Bauman 1992b: 55). The first viewpoint, held by evolutionists of the nineteenth century, views folklore as contemporary adaptations of prior social practices (Bauman 1992b: 55). This perspective looks at current folklore as having undergone an evolution of sorts, transforming aspects of the earlier society into something that is representative of the values of the current society.

The other two viewpoints are components of a processual outlook of folklore: atemporal and synchronic perspectives. Functionalist anthropologists are particularly fond of the synchronic perspective in which one looks at the entire body of folklore of a society at a certain point in time (Bauman 1992b: 56). This viewpoint would yield an analysis of the society at that specific time, presenting the values and sanctions that were

reflected through folklore. Unlike in the evolutionary viewpoint, the synchronic perspective does not consider how contemporary folklore has changed from prior forms of folklore; it is only concerned with the moment of study and how folklore represents the culture at that specific time. The final processual outlook is atemporal, which is commonly used by twentieth century folklorists who are more concerned with the classification and defining features of folklore, therefore taking folklore forms as givens rather than placing them within a period of time or looking at how they compare and contrast to earlier forms of a society (Bauman 1992b: 56). This particular perspective separates folkloric material from the medium of time so that it can be analyzed to understand the underlying structures and themes of the material.

Closely connected with the methods of folkloristics and theoretical concepts of folklore is the actual interpretation of folklore: understanding its meaning and importance within a society. This final component of understanding folklore deals with the connections between the beliefs and values portrayed in folklore and how it is used to explain the world as it is seen by the people of a culture. Interpreting folklore often includes: a structural analysis of the folktale; comparisons of written versus oral forms of folklore; the ties between folklore and literature; folklore as an educational device; how it relates to cultural conventions and a people's presentation of reality within that culture; how it can be seen as a form of communication; and how folklore can help form an identity for a group of people through esoteric and exoteric factors (Propp 1968a: xiii; Kluckhohn 1965: 161; Goody 1992: 12-16, 19; Lord 1986: 8; Ben-Amos 1992: 103; Taylor 1965: 37; Propp 1984b: 5-6; Bauman 1992a: 31; Jansen 1965: 43-44; de Caro 2013: 7).

Structural analysis of a tale can provide an understanding of the connection between folklore and cultural meanings. Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp claims that structural analysis is able to lay bare the basic structure of a folkloristic text, however, the form must be directly related to the culture in which it is found before conducting further analysis (1968a: xiii). This basic structural form contains themes and how they combine to make the folktale, what Levi-Strauss calls “a bundle of features” (qtd. in Kluckhohn 1965: 161). With this form, folklorist Clyde Kluckhohn suggests a comprehensive interpretation of the underlying themes could then provide the researcher with information as to how they recur in various separated geographical locations, as well as historical differences (1965: 161). This means that a complete analysis of the basic form of folklore yields a collection of themes that can be compared across various regions and throughout history. Indeed, Kluckhohn claims most anthropologists agree with this concept that Levi Strauss has established, in which there are thematic similarities between tales that have been collected in a variety of locations (1965: 159). In the structural analysis of a folktale, one can find that there are similarities between the tales told in one region and those told in another, suggesting a cultural connection between the two regions which could then be further analyzed and those cultures compared via the thematic similarities.

Implementing structural analysis depends upon both linguistic and literary theories. Distinguishing between societies with and without writing is important to consider when one is concerned with oral traditions and their transmission (Goody 1992: 12). Cultural transmission is done through oral traditions for those societies that do not have a writing system since there is no other way to pass along cultural beliefs to future

generations (Goody 1992: 12). Societies that are literate are able to transmit cultural beliefs and ideals in ways that oral tradition cannot—through popular literature such as fairy tales, etc. (Goody 1992: 12-13). Folklore is rooted within the oral tradition, the concept of which has a very loose definition; concerning the nature of folklore and orality, oral tradition in a nonliterate society consists of all material that is both created and transmitted orally (Goody 1992: 13; Taylor 1965: 34). In an oral society, all the cultural information and stories are stored in the minds of the adults, therefore calling attention to various culture's traditions of respecting one's elders (Goody 1992: 16).

There is a definite contrast in the portrayal of a folktale in its oral versus in its written form, specifically as it pertains to language and language use. Albert B. Lord suggests that a story can produce a mental image in its oral form, just like a written text would—only with sounds (1986: 19). Lord explains that the sounds would convey the images and ideas without the intermediary assistance of the written word that a text would use (Lord 1986: 19). On one hand, literature records detail more precisely, and on the other, oral traditions have a characteristic of formulaic phraseology which was molded by multiple artists over the course of centuries, existing before the text was made available (Foley 1986: 8). A printed version of a tale does not discredit the oral process of the folktale, but it decreases its own validity. In an orally told tale, the author is automatically associated with the tale. If a story is written down, the cultural context could have been removed or altered and the text deviated from its original context. In other words, validity is not questioned for an oral tale because the author is the speaker and they cannot be removed from the oral event; but once it is recorded and written down, the authenticity of the tale can be questioned because the author is separated and

the tale made ambiguous in terms of its origination. Even though this written version may retain some aspect of its original oral features, criticism of written versions of folklore will call into question various types of evidence (Utley 1965: 15).

Utley warns that the folklorist should be aware of the relationship of oral and written literature—especially when a folklorist encounters a written form of folklore—which invites a whole new interdisciplinary study that should not be confused with the study of oral literature (1965: 18). Folklore and folktales have an interesting relationship with written documentation. Ben-Amos mentions this relationship intersecting in four different types of historical documentations of folklore in which the variables of distinction are the tellers, the writers, and the literary contexts in which the folktale is recorded (Ben-Amos 1992: 103). The first type is “the intracultural recordings of folklore,” which emerged when literacy became more widespread and people were adding documentations of everyday life in society into the oral narrative (Ben-Amos 1992: 103). This classifies written forms of folklore as a historical reality and not a work of fiction, as most folklore is considered to be (Ben-Amos 1992: 103). Ben-Amos claims that the written document “offers sanction to social values, institutions, or dynasties,” only becoming a work of fiction if viewed anachronistically (1992: 103). The written document thus provides evidence to a society’s reality and creates justification and proof for their way of life; only when the document is removed from the specific time and place in which it originated can it be considered a fictive work and classified as folklore.

The second type of historical document of folklore is “folktales in intracultural contacts,” in which a literate traveler would write down the stories of nonliterate natives (Ben-Amos 1992: 103). The traveler would ensure that the nonliterate native’s folktale

traditions would be written down entirely, which would ensure the traditions are passed along to future generations (Ben-Amos 1992: 104). The recording of folktale traditions in this manner also allows for a more widespread audience to access the literature; which classifies this type of folkloric documentation part of de Caro's "recycled folklore," and opens it up for interpretation by audiences outside of the cultural folklore context (de Caro 2013: 4). The "literary writing of folktales" is the third type, and examples of this type can be found in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (Ben-Amos 1992: 105). This form of documenting folktales creates a narrative frame for the tale, similar to how Chaucer sets up his work as a collection of stories told through a man who is accompanying a group of people on pilgrimage (Ackroyd, Chaucer, and Bantock 2009). Literary writings of folktales began around the time when literacy emerged and people started to write down folktales in specific languages and historical periods (Ben-Amos 1992: 104). That way, if this writing were to create widespread circulation of the tale, it would become the first known version of the tale (Ben-Amos 1992: 104). Writing down a folktale also became a way of aiding memory as old oral traditions were fading out; a substitute for storytelling and a rhetorical device for the society; as well as functioning as a motivator for national pride (Ben-Amos 1992: 105-106). This last part becomes evidence of Bauman's definition of folklore as a form of "romantic nationalism," and how folklore is able to encompass the spirit of the nation and emphasize the elements of the nation it claims to be most authentic (Bauman 1992a: 29, 38-39).

The final type is the "deliberate recording of folktales" (Ben-Amos 1992: 106). This type was the first attempt to create a scholarly-literary goal of accurately recording a form of storytelling in a way that reflects the native "vocabulary, style, and narrative

exposition of the oral narrators” (Ben-Amos 1992: 106). All four of these types of the interaction between folktales and literature have been encountered in the study of folklore. Ben-Amos mentions the Grimm Brothers as an example of being proponents of almost every type in their efforts to record the stories of German lower class peoples and create a new scholarly field for the study of folklore and storytelling (Ben-Amos 1992: 104, 106).

Oral forms of folklore contain semantic properties of language that are substantiated by interaction: past meanings of a tale cannot be carried through historically, thus that which is not remembered is lost (Goody 1992: 19). Oral tradition cannot create a formula for remembering every single detail as exactly as it was in the original, or else there would be no variations of a tale, and so semantic details once lost are lost forever. There are different techniques that are used in an attempt to remember as much of the tale as possible. Cases like this include the clichés and colloquial terms of a culture. Where linguistic tricks (such as rhyme and rhythm) fail, though, literature becomes a useful device to ensure the passing of folktales and the survival of this specific folkloric expression of a culture.

The transmission of an oral tradition, and in this case folktales, includes a series of stages through which a tale can pass in an effort to ensure its transmission from one generation to the next. Oral traditions and folktales are structured in a simplistic way; which Goody suggests is seen as a feature of a “primitive mentality” (1992: 19). Resulting from this idea of a “primitive mentality,” Taylor claims that written forms of folklore gain value in the community and become closely associated with literature (1965: 37). He suggests three kinds of relationships can arise out of this interaction:

“folklore is often indistinguishable from literature; literature contains elements borrowed from folklore; and that writers have imitated folklore” (Taylor 1965: 37). With this relationship of folklore and literature, literary analysis and literary theories can thus be used to interpret and analyze folkloric material that has been written down. Taylor reminds the folklorist that an important difference to consider is that folklore makes no effort to disguise its conventional quality while a literary author attempts to do so by avoiding clichés (1965: 40). This difference arises from the characterization of folklore as an oral tradition compared to the transmission of literature through the written word: folklore has devices that are specific to it, and the same poetic language found in folklore and literature convey different meanings and content (Propp 1984b: 6). Taylor recognizes this linguistic quality and notes that a problem emerges from the relationship of folklore and literature in the “identification and interpretation of popular elements in a piece of literature” (1965: 40). Folklore makes use of various similes and metaphors in the construction of proverbs which are used in specific cultural situations, as well as other devices containing “popular elements” to recall memory (Propp 1984b: 5; Rubin 1995: 175). The use of these “popular elements” and clichéd sayings are culturally specific and are unique to the culture from which the ‘lore’ originated; in other words, the folklore is of the people because it uses the speech patterns and sounds the people use in everyday conversation. This substantiates the claim made by oral historian Lynn Abrams about how oral histories exhibit an individual’s manner of speech and how it is culturally specific (2010: 21, 25, 109). The two theories of oral history and folklore intersect in this manner because the speech patterns recorded in the collection of folklore are indicative of

the manner of speaking in accordance with the culture and the person speaking, as described in oral history theory.

Scholars of folklore understand that folklore is a tradition that exists through face-to-face interactions, meaning that the passing of folklore to the younger generations occurs in a public forum. They also recognize how folklore is used as a mechanism of educating people about a culture, whether these people are younger generations or outsiders come to visit and learn. Goody identifies the elders as the storehouses of cultural memory (1992: 16). By storehouses, Goody means that the elders are the ones who share cultural conventions through folklore to the younger generations (1992: 16). Therefore, stories that are told to a large group of people would educate them all through public interaction with the performer and the story. As a factor of the educational aspects of folklore, more recent folk festivals provide information about a specific folk culture to the public, simultaneously creating the same kind of performer-audience public dialogue that serves as an educational device (de Caro 2013: 9).

The social and cultural contexts of folklore create its meaning and significance, without which the discourse of folklore cannot be understood. The symbols within folklore are specifically relevant to the culture from which it originates (Bauman 1992b: 31). William Bascom suggests that, for the anthropologist, folklore is a part of the culture and not the whole of culture, containing various forms to which aspects of a culture can be prescribed (1965: 28). He says the researcher will analyze the content of culture according to its smaller compositional parts, one of them being the arts. Bascom defines folklore within the arts “as a form of aesthetic expression as important as the graphic and plastic arts, music, the dance, or drama” (1965: 28). His view of folklore as part of

culture stems from his examination of the relationship of folklore and art from two different points: the extent to which folklore incorporates rituals, technology, and other cultural details reflecting the culture; and how characters in folktales may do things that are shocking or otherwise taboo in daily life (Bascom 1965: 33). Folklore thus reflects either the various aspects of the culture, or the taboo concepts that would otherwise not be seen or heard of in everyday life. Taken outside of the respective culture the rituals and taboos lose their cultural meaning and may no longer carry the same understanding if viewed by an outside participant, i.e. a visitor at a museum or someone attending a folklife festival. These conventions of the relationship between folklore and culture lead folklorist Frank de Caro to suggest how folklore has come to be seen as “a worldview held by some bygone or exotic Other”—his word choice suggests folklore’s nature of structure and content as a “primitive” concept (2013: 7). De Caro further suggests that combining old traditions and new traditions of a culture within folklore helps to maintain pieces of the old life, which could be interpreted and revealed to those who had possibly lost touch with the old traditions and wish to revive them (2013: 14). The cultural aspects that are embedded within folklore can thus contribute to the formation of an identity for the group of people, and can be called upon to educate new generations or the public, or to revive a lost culture.

The relationship between folklore and identity is comprised of multiple factors, more specifically esoteric and exoteric factors, both of which contribute to the formation of a group opinion about their own culture and how they compare to those around them. Folklorist Hugh Jansen has examined these two factors and has noted that the esoteric factor is what the group thinks of itself and what it believes others think about it, while

the exoteric factor concerns what one group thinks of another and vice versa (1965: 46). Out of these two factors comes the notion of group solidarity and formation of specific group identities. Jansen further mentions how the exoteric factor holds more sway in the relationship between two different groups and the creation of ideologies as it likely derives from the “same sense of belonging due to fear of resentment by the group to which one does not belong” (1965: 46). Jansen claims, according to folklorists, it is likely that these two factors have a role in *blason populaire* traditions when it comes to creating prejudices between one group and another (1965: 43). The esoteric and the exoteric factors both combine to create stereotypes about the culture to which one does not belong, which eventually grow into strong prejudices and are presented in the folklore of the culture. In relation to this interaction between esoteric and exoteric factors, Jansen notes that folklore acts as both a unifying force as well as a divisive one determining one group’s attitudes towards another (1965: 43-44). Understanding how these two factors work in conjunction with one another in the reflection of one’s culture in folklore, certain themes that specifically identify a group of people become more apparent.

Jansen suggests that folklore can embody the symbolic nature of a people’s identity, their beliefs and their traditions, and the manner in which the society passes those values on to future generations. But, folklore is constantly being changed and re-interpreted by people who take away different meanings—the esoteric and exoteric factors Jansen describes can change with time or they can be forgotten. A contemporary society may interpret a particular folkloric expression as something different than what previous members of that society may have intended (de Caro 2013: 3). Frank de Caro states that folklore can be assimilated and interpreted by people outside the original folk

group if folklore can be transcribed, described, recorded, filmed or performed in different venues that are outside their original context (2013: 3). In this sense, folklore can be “recycled,” it can gain new and different meaning through interpretation by people not familiar with the original cultural contexts; or it can be appropriated by other cultures and put on display for public discourse (de Caro 2013: 3). Through different media, folklore is able to be manipulated and exploited outside of the normal contexts in which folklore is normally transmitted (de Caro 2013: 3). In the process of recycling folklore, de Caro notes that the material is not experienced through its normal context but through “literature and elite art, in special performance venues, as tourist symbols, elite decorative objects, or nationalist propaganda” (2013: 4). In a way, recycling folklore transforms it into a form of “high culture,” making it more accessible to a wider range of people and not just the original group for whom it was intended. This “high culture” also exhibits the use of the aesthetic form of romantic nationalism as described by Bauman (1992a: 31-32).

Within the context of “Western” society, folklore is more likely to be encountered in its recycled form (de Caro 2013: 4). Most forms of folklore as they are found in contemporary society are those forms that have not circulated within the “contemporary cultural contexts,” which requires someone explaining how the folkloric material is presented to the “non-folk” world—or those who are outside the primary cultural context (de Caro 2013: 4). This means that the forms of contemporary folklore that exist in present day society could be remnants of a prior culture that have not yet adapted to contemporary culture. Another component of recycled folklore to be wary of is its presentation in a museum, or its documentation in a book or film. This form of folklore is

made more public, is widely accessible as a “disembodied culture,” and is opened to outside interpretation that may differ from the cultural context (de Caro 2013: 8-9). Folklore can become “disembodied” once it is removed from its cultural context and presented to outsiders of the culture (de Caro 2013: 8). Despite folklorists’ efforts to teach the cultural contexts in which folklore lies, new interpretations abound—it is part of the inherent nature of folklore as an open text, constantly in flux and open to interpretation (de Caro 2013: 35).

“Folklorism,” a term defined by de Caro as “having been developed to refer to the ‘life’ folklore has beyond folk contexts,” is uniquely connected with the notion of recycled folklore (2013: 5). It relates to recycled folklore because it refers to the life of folklore outside of its cultural contexts. Folklore as it is represented via multi-vocal (which Turner defines as the symbols in folklore that have a number of different meanings) forms in the contemporary world is widely available to the public, providing an opportunity for various interpretations (Turner 1967: 50). Yet, the same concern with recycled folklore is present with folklorism: that it is a different experience—a “second hand” experience, as Bausinger and Moser suggest (qtd. in de Caro 2013: 5). The “second hand experience” is an example of the multivocality of folklore. Smidchens differs from Bausinger and Moser, though, defining folklorism as “the conscious recognition and repetition of folk tradition as a symbol of ethnic, regional, or national culture”—or as folklore being on display for the purpose of tourism or in an attempt to preserve a culture’s traditions (de Caro 2013: 5). These definitions present folklorism as if it were a way of practicing folklore: of looking at folklore beyond the materials in

which it is present and looking at the use of folklore to exhibit certain aspects of a culture.

The theories and ideas presented here are only a brief window into the century-long discussion on folklore. So far, theorists have come to define folklore in a number of different ways: from claiming folklore as an expression of the lower classes and ranging all the way to explaining it as the encompassing expressions of every person in a culture (Propp 1984: 5; Ben-Amos 1992: 101). Separating the two combined terms, ‘folk’ and ‘lore,’ creates two categories in which a folklorist or an anthropologist studying a culture can classify cultural expressions (Briggs 1992: 6). The folk being studied are the ‘folk’ of whatever definition the researcher uses, and the ‘lore’ encompasses the stories, music, dance, theatrical productions, etc. of those ‘folk.’ Folklore as an oral tradition—and arguably as a cultural performance—is transmitted through face-to-face interactions and is maintained by the elders of the culture, and in this manner folklore is often encountered as an educational device that passes on cultural knowledge. The discussion of folklore evolved from defining the term to understanding folklore as an oral tradition, its interaction with literacy and literature, and how it is being used and interpreted contemporarily as part of various educational institutions. Taylor, Goody, and de Caro (1965; 1992; 2013) all discuss folklore as it has changed throughout the years and how it is being used as an educational device through museums and folk festivals. The transmission of folklore as an oral tradition was only briefly discussed here in terms of the linguistic techniques will be further elaborated on in the next section.

Transmission of Oral Tradition

Understanding the theories and methodologies of oral history and folklore only aids the researcher to a certain extent; however, the process that occurs in the transmission of oral traditions can help to complete the circuit of how oral histories are told and how folklore is transmitted. Oral traditions are not passed down through literature or visual aids, it is done orally. Cognitive psychologist David Rubin discusses different ways in which an oral tradition can be transmitted, an important factor in folklore's survival and a topic rarely touched upon in folklore theory. Some theorists posit different methodologies of collecting folklore and tracing back the disseminated and varied themes to the tales' original form, but that is not the same as understanding the process of transmission. Folklore theory as it has been presented above merely speculates on what Rubin describes about oral transmission.

The transmission of oral traditions is how the stories and ideas of a culture are passed down between generations and to people outside the culture. The manner in which oral traditions are transmitted begins with understanding what Rubin claims as the most important factor: that reproductions are often not even close to the original tale (1995: 122). This reproduction has undergone a process of variability in which different narrators have forgotten what happened next, thus changing the tale; or the narrator changed what they told, in order to avoid miscommunication of a certain cultural context, as a part of the interaction between performer and audience. These variations reflect cultural and social change as well: depending on how the culture has changed over time, so does the tale. Rubin identifies another important factor in the retention and transmission of an oral tradition: pieces of a genre within the tradition must "be retained

within individuals so that they can be retold, spread among individuals, and handed down from older to younger individuals” (1995: 123). All of these factors have already been briefly mentioned in the theory and methods of folklore, but there are other components that play a role in the transmission of oral traditions.

A story is better retained by an individual if it is learned so that the practice of telling a tale is intermittent and there is time between teachings, which aids in remembering it for a longer period of time (Rubin 1995: 125). A flood of information in a quick period of time would not provide long term retention of what occurred. Instead, if information is told in small amounts over a period of time, allowing for repetition and recitation to occur, then the tale becomes easier to remember for a longer period of time. Long term retention also depends on other factors, such as recitation. This pushes the narrator to use what they already know to move on to the next event (Rubin 1995: 129). Recitation is aided by motivation—the desire of a person to learn. Within this factor, a student of oral tradition is given a choice, therefore they can choose a tale that they like and would rather learn instead of one they do not enjoy (Rubin 1995: 129). An important factor in the communication of folklore is the fact that it is enjoyed by the public when performed. If it were not particularly enjoyed, then it would likely not be transferred and would eventually be lost to time (Rubin 135).

The transmission among people within or outside a specific group denotes two different methods. Rubin describes the first as “repeated reproduction” in which, if a story is repeatedly told by the same person, there is repeated access to the original form (1995: 130). This method is better suited for transmission within a group of people who have the ability to talk to someone who remembers the original tale. “Serial

reproduction” is the method used in the retention of memory within, and the transmission between, a group of people (Rubin 1995: 130). This method refers to serial recall of the sequence of events as they occur from beginning to end; recall which is aided by a number of different cues that ties one event to another.

Rubin introduces folklorists such as von Sydow and Dégh, who identify people within a culture as active or passive bearers of the tradition, or they could not be part of the circuit of sharing (qtd. in 1995: 132). An active bearer would be the performer, the one who actively shares a tale. The passive bearer would be the one who hears the tale but does not share it. Those who are not part of the circuit of transmission are those who would be ideal for sharing as they have good memories, but they do not actively perform or share a tale (Rubin 1995: 133). All of these bearers of tradition are found within a group of people and are responsible for the transmission of cultural memory within that group, as well as the presentation to outside groups as it is told through the tale. Similar to the role for the bearers of tradition, a tale would no longer be performed if it was not enjoyed. This enjoyment is closely associated with the interaction between performer and audience and the transference of cultural meaning within a group of people (Rubin 1995: 135). If the message is not received by the audience, then the tale either changes to accommodate the group, or it is forgotten.

Transmitting oral traditions comes in various guises, but ultimately there have to be willing participants in the performance and people who pass along the tale. Folklore, as part of the oral tradition, would not be passed along if there were not people who enjoyed it or if those who participate in it did not pass it along. Rubin’s paraphrasing of von Sydow’s and Dégh’s concept of active and passive bearers contribute largely to the

tradition and its transmission: there has to be people who take in the knowledge and people who spread it to others. The theory of transmission ties in with theories surrounding folklore because if folklore were not culturally relevant, then it would not be transmitted. There has to be significant cultural meaning and willingness to participate in the culture in order for folklore or oral traditions to be passed along to the next generation.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Folklore theory is dense and complex: it explains what folklore is, how it is collected and what it means in the context of the culture. It does not, however, help with understanding the folklore of the Basques without any examples of Basque folklore.

There has been some research on this matter, some anthropologists have collected various folktales and analyzed some of them in the context of the Basque society; but there is not much in terms of a published comprehensive analysis of Basque folklore. The research that I have found on the folklore of the Basques in Europe and the Boise Basques are discussed here, providing a background of the research that has already been done, and a platform upon which my research can be built.

This section details some of the material that has already been published on Basque folklore: providing a description of the mythological characters that were collected by J. M. de Barandiarán and discussing Basque anthropologist Elena Williams' analysis of the *laminak* within a sociocultural context. There is very little anthropological analysis of Basque folklore. Some has been collected and documented by Catholic priests, although one of the priests was more focused on the prehistory and antiquity that could be discerned from the myths he collected. I end the section with a brief overview of an article by Pat Bieter detailing the journey of a Basque immigrant to Boise, Idaho—the only record of Boise Basque folklore I have been able to find in my research. My goal with my research project is to fill in the gap in the literature with a more complete collection of folklore of the Boise Basques, as well as providing an anthropological analysis of the folklore collected.

Laminak

According to folklorist and Basque native Elena Williams, there was no comprehensive collection of the Basque narrative until the 1920s (1989: 107). Once these stories were written, they contributed much to the study conducted by native scholars, the *Euskalerrriaren Yakintza* (the Popular Knowledge of the Basque People) and the scholarly journal *Eusko-Folklore*. Both of these publications were run by native Basques who were familiar with the language and the culture: the main editors R. M. de Azkue and J. M. de Barandiarán were Catholic priests and had studied and published Basque narratives and mythologies (Williams 1989: 107). These publications by Azkue and Barandiarán have aided the field of research in Basque folklore and mythology (Williams 1989: 107).

Azkue was knowledgeable of the theoretical framework of folklore and had a background in linguistics, which he used to compare the collected narratives of the Basques to the narratives of the surrounding Caucasus region (Williams 1989: 107). The main researcher whom Williams focuses on (and I consequently focus on) is Barandiarán, who was a trained anthropologist who shifted the focus of analysis from linguistics to anthropology (Williams 1989: 107). Williams opens her article with this information, establishing a basis of previous research and providing her own literature review.

Williams discusses Barandiarán more in depth, noting his background and focus on the archaeological and prehistoric components of anthropology, and provides a definition of myth as it is used to classify the narratives Barandiarán collected during his work (1989: 107). Barandiarán had collected the forms of folklore, within the time frame in which he was working on certain sites, from the peasants he encountered on his archaeological explorations and had attempted to reconstruct the “ancient religion” of the

Basques from the myths he recorded (Williams 1989: 108). Williams then switches the focus away from Barandiarán and on to myths, especially how myths relate to society and how they can be understood within the social context. She describes myth as a loose term, but provides a general definition of myth, presented by anthropologists Lessa and Vogt as:

a unifying concept which enables scholars to talk about narratives and other forms which make up the body of ‘assumed knowledge’ a given society has about the universe, the supernatural worlds, and man’s place in the totality (qtd. in Williams 1989: 108).

This definition of myth suggests that the myth contributes to the discussion of a society: a discussion which Williams mentions did not occur in previous scholars’ research (Williams 1989: 108).

The complete collection of Basque narrative collected over a period of forty-five years by Barandiarán is compiled into a series of works, the first published in 1960, and each work consisting of multiple volumes (Fornoff et al. 2007: 32). Williams analyzes a selection of legends concerning the *laminak* (Williams 1989: 109). The *laminak* are female supernatural beings and their presence in the real world is transmitted through “*dits*, legends, and even through curses or threats” (Williams 1989: 109). The stories in which these characters are portrayed are short and deliver a moral message in a concise manner, a message that is easy for anyone to understand (Williams 1989: 109). Williams uses the method of structuralism and symbolic analysis to analyze these legends of the *laminak*; doing so by connecting symbols of societal constructs with their corresponding cultural contexts of Basque society (Williams 1989: 109).

Williams thus breaks down her analysis of the tales of the *laminak* into themes of “the individual and society, multiformity of the *laminak*, love and marriage, and women and *laminak*” (Williams 1989: 110, 114, 115, 118). These themes arise from her analysis of ten different texts and combines ethnographic data with the methods of structuralism and symbolism to understand how the texts fit within the societal context of the Basques. The first theme, the individual and society, examines texts which involve transgressions of the Basque ideals of honesty and mutual aid. In the texts Williams analyzes, truth and honesty are upheld when the *laminak* take away someone’s possessions they lied about not having (1989: 111). If a farmer were to say to another that they had fewer sheep than they truthfully did, the *laminak* would punish them and take away a certain amount of sheep so that the amount stated would be corroborated. These *laminak* deal with the conflict of truth and lies, absolving the differences so that the lie would then become the truth.

Williams notes that the value of reciprocity among neighbors has been widely studied by scholars of Basque culture, results of which have exhibited that greed is not acceptable and that the exchange of goods is a given (1989: 111). In anthropological terms, according to Williams, this punishment by the *laminak* could be seen as “a rite of reversal,” in which these rites symbolically express “underlying and normally suppressed conflicts within the society” (1989: 111). Williams suggests, considering the sanctions taught through the discourse of the tales, that the *laminak* are constructed so as to avoid violent conflict, ameliorating the situation without severe threat to the society itself (1989: 111). She draws a parallel to the fact that Basque rural society does not encounter as much conflict over mutual assistance amongst neighbors (Williams 1989: 111).

However, she does note that this valuing of reciprocity may not be due to the supernatural beings, but it is definitely apparent that this is an issue with which Basques are concerned. According to Williams, the legends of the *laminak*, as well as other stories, allow people to explore the ramifications of different levels of behavior (1989: 111). Williams' analysis of one legend in conjunction with Azkue's, Barandiaràn's, and others' ethnographic data of the Basques reflect aspects and ideals of the society (1989: 107). Those ideologies the culture believes to be significant are maintained in their stories, especially by punishing those who transgress these ideals, thereby reinforcing the importance of behaving in a certain way.

The second text Williams analyzed in this context is from the point of view of one of the *laminak* who ends up revealing the nature of how she came into her possessions. This text is more simplistic than the first, according to Williams, and blatantly states the idea of telling the truth and the importance of truth in Basque society (1989: 112). She also mentions that the second text she analyzed identifies the *laminak* as a female being within a decidedly female domain (Williams 1989: 112). To explain her findings, she mentions Mary Douglas' belief that myth functions in a way that exhibits "the contradictions in the basic premises of the culture" (Williams 1989: 112). This statement supports William's own conclusion that these stories portray the ideals of the culture, such as those ideals of the Basques to maintain complete honesty and aid their neighbors (1989: 113). Mutual aid is important in Basque life, especially to the rural communities. Williams analyzes two more texts that portray this mutual aid, describing situations in which humans would leave offerings for the *laminak* in return for help in the fields; the day that these offerings stop (because the humans in the story have stopped leaving them)

is also the day that the *laminak* cease in their aid (Williams 1989: 113). In this case, mutual aid is upheld through something being done in exchange for something else. There is a responsibility, then, that is portrayed through these tales for neighbors to aid one another by giving and receiving, which consequently strengthens relationships among the community.

As has already been noted, the *laminak* are female characters, however, their form as it is represented in various legends and stories fluctuates. Each text that Williams examines provides a different depiction of the *laminak*, ranging from their appearance as witches, to being tiny creatures (1989: 114). She mentions that it is common in the myths of the Basques to encounter overlapping qualities of the *laminak*, such as their behaviors and powers they exert; though, Williams claims that a distinguishing characteristic is that their power is neither evil nor arbitrary (1989: 114). The tales in which the *laminak* are mentioned relate to issues of conflict between different human beings with their role to serve as mediators, as resolvers of a conflict before it becomes violent (Williams 1989: 114). This role of mediation, the duality of their power to either punish or reward, stems from their liminal state of being (Williams 1989: 115). Typically, the *laminak* is a beautiful woman with beautiful long hair and the feet of a chicken, which she keeps covered to avoid being discovered (Williams 1989: 115). The *laminak's* form changes in accordance with the outcome of the story: whether she punishes or rewards. It makes sense for a *laminak* who punishes to appear as a witch or as a vile being and for the one who rewards to appear more inviting and possess more feminine qualities. The tales often range from the *laminak* appearing as witches to being beautiful young women.

In the stories in which the *laminak* appear as beautiful young women, the themes often associate with love and marriage. These stories deal with young men who are enamored with a *laminak* and wish to make one his wife. This man is then warned by his mother or some outside character to check her feet and discovers that she is, in fact, a *laminak*; at this point in the stories the young man often runs away or calls off the engagement and falls ill (with the stories usually ending in his death) (Williams 1989: 115-116). These tales detail a sense of seduction because of the *laminak*'s possession of great wealth and the general flaunting of their female qualities, i.e. their long hair and their feminine physique (Williams 1989: 116). These stories reflect the institution of marriage in Basque society, which involves regulation by the parents considering the effects of merging two households and two lineages has in society (Williams 1989: 117). The conflict presented in the story of the *laminak* concerns marrying outside the societal framework, which consequently serves as a warning for all young men to maintain societal norms and obey their parent's guidance.

While the consequences of illness and death are extreme, the message the tales carry is that there is no happy ending for marrying outside of societal norms. The young men in these stories are often in a liminal phase between boyhood and adulthood and are thus placed within the world of women where they have no experience and hardly any wisdom (Williams 1989: 117). When these stories are understood in the context of ethnographic data, as Williams suggests one does, the act of choosing a *laminak* conflicts with tradition—which entails that a young man usually finds a wife who will produce eligible offspring so that the family name can be passed on (1989: 118). If a marriage were not approved by the parents, then the man would essentially be disinherited from

the family and would not inherit (Williams 1989: 118). Williams notes the importance of the tradition of marriage, of passing along the *baserria* (the family farm) that has been maintained through the centuries and is central to the life of any Basque person; thus it only makes sense that this tradition would be upheld and warned about through tales of the *laminak* (1989: 118).

The final theme, that of women and the *laminak*, is different from the other themes Williams discusses because this one deals with human beings encountering their own similar psyche (Williams 1989: 118). One of the stories examined describes a relationship between a woman—who is a midwife—and a *laminak* who is giving birth and calls upon the woman to assist (Williams 1989: 119). In exchange, the woman is invited to supper, at which time the woman tried to take a piece of bread home (Williams 1989: 119). Similar to other stories, theft and dishonesty are transgressions against the ideals of Basque society, and society members are warned against it in various stories through the actions of the *laminak*. Speaking of warnings about theft, stealing a *laminak's* comb is very dangerous. Some stories center around a woman's desire for something beautiful when they see an elegant comb, which belongs to a *laminak*, and they take it. The aftermath of stealing the *laminak's* comb is not as fatal as a young man's transgression against a *laminak*, since the woman would be warned and return the comb, doing whatever the *laminak* asked as penance (Williams 1989: 120). In other stories, the *laminak* give a lesson to women on how to avoid deception. The story Williams analyzes concerns a woman who has to choose between two pots: one with gold visible on the surface and the other with ashes, and the *laminak* tells the woman to choose the one with ashes because it will be the one containing gold (Williams 1989: 120). The meeting of the

laminak and women relates to the meeting between the two worlds of human and mythical (Williams 1989: 123).

Through the analysis of these themes, Williams comes to the conclusion that the stories involving the *laminak* reflected the Basque belief in reciprocity, customs of marriage, and roles of women (Williams 1989: 123). She mentions how, if a social structure is constant for long enough, the social sanctions would be reinforced by the folklore of the society (Williams 1989: 123). She calls attention to the fact that the stories involving the *laminak* deal with the everyday struggles and lives of both men and women, with these female *laminak* acting as mediators (Williams 1989: 124). The fact that there are female mediators gives power to the female nature and the domestic sphere, because the *laminak* have more power in the interactions in the tales. This is important to remember in the structure of Basque society because the family lines are patriarchal, and yet placing the power in the feminine character focuses more attention on the female sphere and the role it plays in Basque society. The importance of the female sphere and the power that a woman holds is further reflected in other characters within Basque mythology such as the spirits of the Earth, Sun, Moon and the queen spirit Mari (Fornoff et al. 2007: 95-96).

A more complete collection of Basque mythology was collected by J.M. de Barandiarán, as Williams noted in the beginning of her article, and translated by Frederick H. Fornoff, Linda White, and Carys Evans-Corrales of the Center for Basque Studies. Barandiarán was an archaeologist who collected myths from the peasants whom he had encountered near his dig sites (Williams 1989: 107). Barandiarán organized the

myths he collected into different sections: the world of beliefs, the cult of the home (*etxe*), and the world of the Gods (Fornoff et al. 2007: 79-85).

Basque Mythology

The world of beliefs sets up how the world is separated: the earth from the sky (*ostri*), the underworld from the world of men, etc. Barandiarán begins by stating “the earth is known directly only in part, in the locale or region that one has inhabited,” meaning that a people only know the earth in the region where they live (Fornoff et al. 2007: 79). Logically, it would make sense for people to know more about where they live than they would know about other regions, as they do not live there and likely do not travel outside their immediate locale often. Barandiarán considers the rest of the world, and how there are only vague mentions in popular stories which portray the rest of the world as something immensely large (Fornoff et al. 2007: 79). In the Basque belief of the world, the earth is not immobile and there are vast spaces where rivers of milk flow, which are inaccessible to man as long as he lives on the surface (Fornoff et al. 2007: 79). This underworld of milky rivers can only be accessed by pits, caverns, wells, or sinkholes; it is through these that the subterranean world produces atmospheric phenomena: “mainly storm clouds and hurricane-force winds” (Fornoff et al. 2007: 79). Above the earth is the blue sky in which the stars move towards the “scarlet seas” to continue their journey through the sky in the underworld; in the sky is the Sun and the Moon, which are considered to be female entities and daughters of the Earth (Fornoff et al. 2007: 79). Barandiarán notes that folk wisdom differentiates between natural and

supernatural attributes of man, therefore, explanations and cures for certain illnesses can be either natural remedies or they are spells or prayers (Fornoff et al. 2007: 80).

There is a strong custom of the Basque *etxe* (the house) which maintains the family name and is the center of familial life (Fornoff et al. 2007: 80). According to Barandiarán, *etxe* is both “land and shelter, temple and cemetery, material sustenance, symbol and common center of the living and the dead of a family” (Fornoff et al. 2007: 80). In this case, the *etxe* is the center of Basque tradition, custom, and ancestral worship. It is a sacred space that is protected by a hearth, which is a symbol of *Andra-Mari*, whom we will get to later (Fornoff et al. 2007: 80). *Etxe* is the most sacred of Basque traditions: the house is associated with symbols of the sun and provides an offering space for the ancestors of the household. It also contains flowers and symbols that are considered sacred such as laurel, hawthorn branches, ash, and thistle. These flowers are symbols of the sun and have meaning that is rooted in cultural tradition. Finally, tradition mandates that the front door of the house faces the rising sun, though Barandiarán did not provide a reason for this orientation (Fornoff et al. 2007: 80-81).

The *etxe* is the foundation for the principle ways of Basque life and “pursues an ideal: to permit each individual to live without sorrow and without pain in harmony with those around him in communion with his ancestors in this life and the other” (Fornoff et al. 2007: 80). Ultimately, the *etxe* is a source of communication with ancestors, a way of connecting the living and the dead of a home; so that the pain and sorrow of loss the living family may feel is avoided and they can still feel a connection with their dead ancestors. Barandiarán further discusses the *etxe* as a tomb, as a place where ancestors were buried, and how this custom continued and was syncretized with the Catholic

customs of burial once the religion was introduced (Fornoff et al. 2007: 81-82). The family name is what ties the members of the family together, connecting the living and the dead ancestors in a communal fashion. The house, with all its traditions and beliefs, is an integral part of a family's life for the Basques.

The rest of the world of beliefs includes the spirits and gods that help to explain the natural phenomena of the world of man. Barandiarán gives a brief overview of the sixteen gods and spirits that were mentioned while he was collecting the “ancient religion” of the people (Williams 1989: 108). These gods all have variations of their names and various legends and attributes associated with them, depending on the region in which the story was collected. Gaueko is “the spirit of the night,” it is the creature that the house is supposed to protect against (Fornoff et al. 2007: 86). It does not allow men to venture into the night and the Gaueko will punish those who attempt to be brave in the darkness that comes with night (Fornoff et al. 2007: 86). All legends surrounding this spirit contain the same general themes—the outcome of which lead to the belief that it is unwise to challenge Gaueko, which is often seen as the devil in some folk tales (Fornoff et al. 2007: 86). The house cannot protect against all nighttime spirits, however, as the Inguma appears when residents of a house have gone to sleep (Fornoff et al. 2007: 87). This spirit will squeeze the throat of a sleeping person, causing them great pain; however, they can be warded off by reciting a “magic formula” (like a prayer) before going to bed (Fornoff et al. 2007: 87). The Inguma is known all along the Pyrenees, according to Barandiarán, which raises the question of cultural similarities between the populations living along the Pyrenees (Fornoff et al. 2007: 87). Another nocturnal spirit, moving in darkness when no man should leave the protection of the home, is the Ieltxu (Fornoff et

al. 2007: 86). It is seen in various forms, sometimes taking on the form of a man, at other times taking on the form of a bird with flames coming from the mouth (Fornoff et al. 2007: 86). Ieltxu is not evil but it enjoys leading people through dangerous places such as gullies or cliff edges (Fornoff et al. 2007: 86).

The Mamarro is a type of helpful spirit: they are tiny spirits in the form of a human or an insect (Fornoff et al. 2007: 88). These spirits can fit inside a pincushion and are often associated with those who can do extraordinary deeds such as magicians or healers (Fornoff et al. 2007: 88). The Maide is a helpful, nocturnal, male spirit that enters the house through the chimney to receive offerings and is often attributed to the formation of dolmens in the region (Fornoff et al. 2007: 88). These spirits go by many names depending on the region of Basque country (Fornoff et al. 2007: 88). The female counterpart, the *lamin*, or the *laminak* that Elena Williams analyzed, are tiny women with the feet of a hen (Fornoff et al. 2007: 88). The name, *lamin*, is rarely used as the proper name, it simply refers to all spirits of the type that fits the characteristics (Fornoff et al. 2007: 88). These spirits are often seen washing and combing their hair, and they demand offerings in return for plowing the fields or finishing work that was not finished that day (Fornoff et al. 2007: 89).

The Sorguin are witches, whose other names imply that they are protectors of childbirth, which is believed to be related to their jealous need for their existence to be maintained by people (Fornoff et al. 2007: 89). The disappearance of these witches has been attributed to Christianity, especially since there were multiple Basques who were persecuted by the Spanish Inquisition for being witches; though Barandiarán counters that it is commonly believed that firearms are the likely cause for their disappearance

(Fornoff et al. 2007: 89). Another spirit, the Baxajaun, is the lord of the forest and inhabits the deepest part of the forest and often takes on the form of a large and hairy man (Fornoff et al. 2007: 92). The Baxajaun is the guardian spirit of flocks and it will warn the flock of a predator if one is approaching; this spirit works symbiotically with shepherds as it watches the flocks so the shepherd can relax (Fornoff et al. 2007: 92). The Torto is an evil spirit, often described as a Cyclops figure (related to Greek mythology) that lives in surrounding caves of the Basque Country (Fornoff et al. 2007: 92). It plays a part in some of the more terrifying Basque stories because it will kidnap a young person caught outside in a storm or otherwise, then roast and eat them (Fornoff et al. 2007: 92).

Some spirits do not take human form but, instead, are animal spirits. One of these animal spirits is the Erensugue (Fornoff et al. 2007: 93). There are many variations to the legends of the Erensugue depending on the region of the Basque country: each region has different beliefs for its cave dwelling, whether it has seven heads or one, and how it has been defeated in the past (Fornoff et al. 2007: 93). Another serpent spirit is the Sugaar, who lives underground and emerges from various sinkholes (Fornoff et al. 2007: 94). It is commonly believed that the Sugaar rises from the sinkhole of Agamunda to punish disobedient children and is believed to be the husband of Mari, whom we will get to later (Fornoff et al. 2007: 94). Other animal spirits are given the general term of Beigorri—these spirits often take on the form of the horse, the bull, a small red cow, rams, sheep, goats, pigs and dogs (Fornoff et al. 2007: 94). These animal spirits do not allow anyone to enter their homes and they are believed to kidnap those people who have been cursed (Fornoff et al. 2007: 94).

The earth spirit, Lur, is widely considered to be the mother of the sun and the moon, who are all female characters (Fornoff et al. 2007: 95). Lur is the dwelling place of all souls, most “numina” and other mythical creatures (Fornoff et al. 2007: 95). The earth possesses many qualities: she is a life force and she holds a great many valuable treasures under her surface (Fornoff et al. 2007: 95). Lur is believed to be the intended recipient of almost all offerings of ancient times that were left at the entrances to caves (Fornoff et al. 2007: 95).

Barandiarán notes how Mari, a female spirit who has absorbed a variety of functions attributed to other spirits in other countries, is considered to be the most important spirit within the Basque supernatural world (Fornoff et al. 2007: 96). Mari, meaning “lady,” is accompanied by the name of whichever dwelling place a town believes she inhabits (Fornoff et al. 2007: 96). Barandiarán suggests that Mari was syncretized with the Christian Virgin Mary, though he also mentions that there are several other variations of her name, including Maya (Fornoff et al. 2007: 96). Mari can take on multiple forms, just like other spirits encountered in Basque mythology, though each form is mainly some variation of an elegant woman holding a palace of gold (Fornoff et al. 2007: 96). Most intriguing in the legends about Mari is the motif of a female captive. This captive is also called Mari, for reasons that are unexplained, whose captivity is explained by a multitude of reasons, though she is usually cursed or kidnapped and ends up as a captive of the spirit, Mari (Fornoff et al. 2007: 101-102). The spirit, Mari, also has many functions: she creates storms; where she is present there is abundant harvest; she rewards those who have faith in her; and she helps those who ask for her (Fornoff et al. 2007: 103). Similar to Mari, though a subterranean spirit, is

Akerbeltz, who takes the form of a male goat (Fornoff et al. 2007: 107). This spirit is believed to have power over other spirits and can cause storms (Fornoff et al. 2007: 107).

The daughter of the earth spirit, Lur, is the sun spirit, Ekhi (Fornoff et al. 2007: 109). Various regions give Ekhi the connotation of Mari, some even calling her Andre Mari, translating to the Virgin Mary (Fornoff et al. 2007: 109). Beliefs and rituals of the solstice are centered around Ekhi, with festivals giving offerings of items that are believed to be symbolically related to the sun such as circles, *lauburu* (swastikas), and thistle flowers (Fornoff et al. 2007: 110-111). The sun's sister is the moon spirit, Ilazki, which Barandiarán suggests is sometimes translated as “light of the dead” (Fornoff et al. 2007: 112). The general belief is that the moon illuminates the world for the dead; it is because of this that some nocturnal spirit names are etymologically related to the various names for the moon spirit (Fornoff et al. 2007: 112). Other names have also become associated with the moon, for example, Barandiarán notes that the Basque word for Friday is a derivative of the word for moon (Fornoff et al. 2007: 113). This relationship has made it a common practice to leave offerings or get rid of a bewitched item on a Friday under the light of the moon (Fornoff et al. 2007: 113). The Basques attribute to the moon an influence over plants and animals—her presence in the sky is seen as beneficial when planting crops (Fornoff et al. 2007: 113).

Finally, Barandiarán mentions Urtzi, the overall celestial divinity, recalling Aymeric Picaud who uses the term Urcia to refer to God (Fornoff et al. 2007: 114). Barandiarán ponders Picaud's use of Urcia as a synonym with God, because the term seems to relate to an entity that is used in a variety of other spirit names that “have maintained their religious content down to the present day,” though Barandiarán was

writing this in the 1930s (Fornoff et al. 2007:114). It is thus believed that Urtzi is the Basques personification of the sky—a celestial being whose name is a part of those words that translate to thunder, lightning, and hail (Fornoff et al. 2007:114).

These are the sixteen gods and spirits that Barandiarán was able to document during his expeditions in the Basque country. His assumptions surrounding the origin of the names and the functions of each spirit was his attempt to connect it back to the belief system of prehistoric times and does not place the spirits and their functions within the context of contemporary Basque society. He does recognize the slow introduction of Christianity in the Basque Country, and how its presence did not destroy all parts of the old traditions (Fornoff et al. 2007: 118). In some cases, Barandiarán observed that the new religion (Catholicism) was “zealously practiced” until the present time in which he was writing, and how things were already changing in Basque society (Fornoff et al. 2007: 118). The changes in Basque society will be further discussed later in my analysis chapter; but Barandiarán noted that “new modes of economic, social, and political life” have pushed the Basques away from Christian life and towards a new concept of life that accommodate the new social orders that were emerging, further pushing the old traditions to the periphery of Basque social and cultural life (Fornoff et al 2007: 118).

The Shepherd's Dance

The world of beliefs as Barandiarán described it is the basis of Basque life; the *etxe* is the center of a person's life and the gods and spirits are the explanations the Basques have given for certain phenomena such as severe weather, disappearances, and death or illnesses (Fornoff et al. 2007: 79, 80, 85, 101-102). These beliefs have since

been syncretized with Catholicism and its traditions (Fornoff et al. 2007: 118). The folklorist Lucile Armstrong, in 1976, observed and wrote about the tradition of the Shepherd's dance in a French Basque province called Labastide. Armstrong observed this specific dance on Christmas Eve in a church whose altar was decorated with the nativity of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (Armstrong 1976: 211). She describes the costumes of the dancers, their processional formation and how they danced. The dancers were led by their "Fool," who gave orders for the other dancers to follow with specific clicks of his castanets (Armstrong 1976: 211). The procession of dancers included people from the community dressed as an Old Man, an Old Woman, and others—comprising of thirteen dancers in total (Armstrong 1976: 211-212). Armstrong describes their dress as reflecting the customs and livelihood that Basque people lived by: such as sheepskin clothing and homespun stockings (Armstrong 1976: 212). The material of the clothing suggests the pastoral life most Basques would have lived on *baserrias*, or farmhouses (as Marina told me).

The procession of dancers moved down the center aisle of the church, towards the altar at the front where the nativity was prepared; Armstrong guessed that the dancers dressed as the Old Man and Old Woman were reminiscent of the Holy Family, which could explain why they moved up to the altar (Armstrong 1976: 212). She calls this procession of dancers the "Holy" procession—made up of the Shepherds and Kings who presented their gifts to the baby Jesus, dancing up the aisle and bowing to the altar (Armstrong 1976: 212). After the procession danced up to the altar, they led the parishioners out of the church and into the village square, where dancing and caroling sounded out into the night (Armstrong 1976: 213). She concludes her description of the

Shepherd's dance by saying how she "rejoices to see ancient customs still alive performed by local people in their traditional way, and not only by students or revivalists" (Armstrong 1976: 213). Despite the continued practice of this tradition, she notes that the retention of the Old Man and the Old Woman in the dance suggests that they may have had a complete team of traditional dancers and that the syncretization with Catholicism caused them to lose this (Armstrong 1976: 213). This team of dancers may have been representative of other idolized characters in Basque society or in its belief system, but this is speculative and she did not comment on what this would mean. She concludes her observations by saying that there is a clear loss of old traditions and characters, which she does not specify, but that the preservation of the dance maintains Basque folkloric traditions (Armstrong 1976: 214).

Boise Basque Folklore

There is only one article that I have found in my research that pertains to the folklore of the Boise Basques, written by Pat Bieter, depicting the journey of one Basque man into the United States and across the country to Idaho (Bieter 1965: 263-264). Pat Bieter describes the life of the boarding houses as the first centers of the Basque community, providing a sense of solidarity for the immigrants, and a place where games of *pelota* are played every night (Bieter 1965: 264). Most of the Basque immigrants to the country came for sheepherding because it provided the best opportunity for a new life. The boarding houses became the center of the Basque immigrant community, and helped to keep the language, dances, and songs of the Basque homeland alive, thus creating a foundation for the Basque-American identity (Bieter 1965: 265). The dances and

festivals, which all centered around religious holidays, were often scheduled to coincide with breaks in the sheepherding season so that the herders were all able to join in the festivities (Bieter 1965: 266-267). Most of the Basque immigrants to Idaho were from the Spanish regions and were less likely to have been sheepherders before immigration like their French counterparts (Bieter 1965: 269). Bieter considers the Basque herder a myth for this reason, as most Spanish Basques would not have been accustomed to caring for such a large herd of sheep (Bieter 1965: 269). In the conclusion of his article, Bieter notes that the Basques have now become Americanized as most of the newer generations have grown up in the United States and have no direct ties to the Basque country (1965: 269). There are some Basque organizations that are trying to keep Basque traditions alive so that the Basque identity does not disappear completely from the Basque-American population (Bieter 1965: 269). Bieter's (1965) account of the folklore of the Boise Basques describes one person's story that is told about the journey and settlement of one of the original Basque immigrants. As far as my research has shown, this is the only account of the folklore of the Boise Basques, and it is not fully inclusive of the multiple forms and genres of folklore. I hope to fill in this gap with my research and collection of folklore and of the stories that are told between generations.

The published literature on the folklore of the Basques encompasses a great deal of information, though most of what has been discussed here is predominantly comprised of folktales. Barandiarán provides a comprehensive compilation of the mythologies he collected during his time as an archaeologist; and more recently anthropologists have analyzed one of those mythological characters within the Basque context (Fornoff et al. 2007; Williams 1989). Basque folklore in Boise, however, is not quite as developed. In

my research preparing for this project I found only one article, though short, on the folklore of the Boise Basques. This article provided a detailed chronicle of a Basque man's journey to the United States and how he settled down and started a family (Bieter 1965). While this is still folklore, there were no folktales or contemporary collections of Basque folklore. My research has provided me with a background of what used to be, and possibly still could be; this information establishes a basic structure upon which my own research will be built. This section has detailed what has been done in the past and what is currently known about the folklore of the Basques, providing an image of what the Basques use to portray their societal beliefs and their identity.

CHAPTER FOUR: ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF THE BASQUES IN SPAIN

There have been a number of researchers looking into Basque history, attempting to understand their traditions and their customs of daily life. The Basques have a long history, most of which has been uncovered in the past century. In this section I present a brief ethnographic history of the Basques in Spain; reasons for their migration to the United States as proposed by previous researchers; and finally, I discuss the history of the Basque establishment and contemporary maintenance of identity in Boise, Idaho. This information provides a background for the study of how the folklore of the Basques aided in the maintenance of a Basque identity among the Basque population in Idaho, as well as the creation of a syncretized Basque-American identity within the United States. Migratory populations can carry with them the weight of a double identity—that of their place of origin and that of where they ended up. My review of the Basques from their life in the native country to the United States will show how certain parts of the Basque identity have been maintained in the United States and how the Basques have adapted to accommodate their new country. The integration of these different traditions and customs syncretizes the two different identities, creating a unique, new, hyphenated identity.

Ethnography of the Basques in Spain

The border of France and Spain is geographically separated by the Pyrenees Mountains; a mountain range that stretches from the western coast of continental Europe through to Switzerland. Settled in these mountains is a small country that has long been inhabited by a group of people called the Basques. This Basque Country has seven provinces, some of them under the administration of Paris, France, and the remaining

under the jurisdiction of Spain. The provinces under control of Spain are Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa, and Álava, and the ones under Paris' purview are Labourd, Basse Navarre, and Soule (Woodworth 2008: 1). The seventh province, Navarre, has its own autonomous governing body (Woodworth 2008: 1). This division of provinces under different jurisdiction has created definite tension between the provinces, especially in terms of attitudes towards one another. The French Basques tend to view the Spanish Basques as “a little uncouth, and more than a little emotional and unstable in their politics” (Woodworth 2008: 5). Overall, the Basque Country is divided into two political sections and seven provinces, each with their own distinct dialect and cultural differences (Aulestia 1995: 58-61; Woodworth 2008: 1-5).

The Basque country consists of regions of varying terrain: the coast on the western side of the country, and mountains and valleys in the middle. Attributed to each region is a distinct difference in the types of Basque communities and economies. The coastal region has a fishing economy, as well as other maritime opportunities—such as ship building in regions where the geography of the coastline was less rocky and dangerous (Woodworth 2008: 5). This shipbuilding industry allowed for the Basques to contribute to the Portuguese and Spanish journeys during the Age of Exploration, most notable is the Basque crew on Columbus' 1492 voyage to the New World (Douglass and Bilbao 1975: 1). In addition, with these smoother coastlines, the French Basque coastal region was converted to a tourist attraction much sooner than the southern coast (Woodworth 2008: 5). While the coastal region was better suited for trade and economic success, the mountain and valley hinterlands were less successful. The difference in the economies of the various regions created a distinct socio-economic divide: the

hinterlands of Basse Navarre and Soule were substantially more depopulated and poorer than the coastal provinces (Woodworth 2008: 5). There is, however, a decent forestry trade near the mountains due to the continued maintenance of conifer plantations. Below this region of forests, the mountains subside into gentle valleys and meadows where sheep and cattle graze (Woodworth 2008: 4). The most successful industry in this region was mining, consequently making the Basque oligarchy the wealthiest and most powerful group in Spain in the twentieth century (Woodworth 2008: xxii). This wealth accorded the Basques a certain amount of prestige among the rest of Europe (Woodworth 2008: xxii).

The growth of a successful economy in the state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries changed the Basque social order, which led to the creation of a new unified structure in the twentieth century. Economic inequality between the provinces of the Basque country was a great social concern, but the economy was still a major factor in the country's success, as well as a major point of interest for rulers of other countries who wanted to exploit this economy. The economic successes of the industrial age in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consequently created a differentiated class system, which led to the formation of Basque nationalism (Urla 1989: 151). There has been a great deal of discussion between scholars as to the true causes for the development of Basque nationalism, most have been able to finally agree upon two principal instigating factors: "class conflict and insufficient or weak formation of the Spanish state" (Urla 1989: 151). Basque nationalism is a political force that worked to unite people in the Basque country in solidarity as a result of a changing economy and a new social order. With this new social structure—created by the wealth gaps of the new industrial age—the

traditional Basque identity was close to fading out of existence. The invention of new technologies in the early twentieth century changed the way farming was conducted, replacing the plow with machinery, altering the major towns and creating a more economically driven focus on life. Old traditions were slowly being lost with these new inventions, and scholars encountered a “race against time” to record the “essential characteristics of a fading identity” (Urla 1989: 155).

To help preserve the distinct traditions of Basque identity, the *Sociedad de Estudios Vascos*, the Basque Studies Society, was formed in the country in 1918. This society “sought to rationalize Basque studies and society, bringing them out of an era of ‘obscure provincialisms,’ applying to them the latest theories of the scientific world” (Urla 1989: 150). The society’s intention to bring Basque culture to the “modern age” meant that it had to divide elements of the Basque culture into six different fields: “race, language, history, art, education, and social and political systems” (Urla 1989: 155). This Society was extremely important in European Basque history because it provided an encyclopedia of the Basques as a culture, and as a people, that helped to keep the Basque identity from fading out completely.

A wide variety of scientific studies were conducted on the Basque population beginning in the 1980s as an initial part of the society’s attempts to document and maintain the unique Basque identity. Most of the researchers were of Basque heritage, searching for an explanation for their genetic and linguistic differences from the rest of the European population. Since the early 1990s, scholars have explored the genetic makeup of the Basques, showing how they are genetically different from other Europeans. Scholars have also found that the Basque language, Euskara (also spelled

Euskera), is not part of the Indo-European family of languages (Aulestia 1995: 59). Aside from genetic and linguistic differences, the Basques distinguish themselves from the rest of the European population with their unique traditions, which they managed to maintain during and after the Franco regime through the nationalist cause and a period of revitalization (MacClancy 1988: 17).

The Society of Basque Studies remembers the past in a way that produces an extraordinary impact on the history of the Basque country (Woodworth 2008: xxi). Starting in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and continuing up into the modern age, anthropologists and ethnologists have sought to link the country's inhabitants of the Paleolithic and Neolithic eras to its modern inhabitants (Woodworth 2008: xxi). Much of the evidence discovered since then has been greedily seized upon by nationalists and other Basque peoples "as proof that the Basque 'race' had evolved *in situ* [sic] from the Cro-Magnon period" (Woodworth 2008: xxi). The strength and enthusiasm with which the nationalists seized upon a specific account of Basque prehistory was strengthened by the physical evidence of the presence of Basque ancestors in the caves of Urutiaga and Ekain, according to anthropologist and terrorism scholar Joseba Zulaika (qtd. in Woodworth 2008: 17). Zulaika states that the Basque nationalists, in their rise to power during Franco's regime, used this evidence and the "enigmatic past" of the Basques to bolster the Basque identity (qtd. in Woodworth 2008: 17). Times have changed, though, and Woodworth notes that most Basques have rejected the nationalist portrayal of Basque prehistory, with only a few still clinging to the idea. He warns about the danger of retaining the nationalist presentation of prehistory because of the negative connotations that have been associated with "race" since the Holocaust and how the nationalists had

essentially separated the Basques as their own unique “race” (Woodworth 2008: 17). The significance of this connection to the distant, pre-Homo sapien age would provide a truth to the Basque origin myths, stories that suggest the idea that these people have been around for centuries and are the oldest biological connections to a long lost time. Paddy Woodworth suggests that this connection to an ancient past creates a double identity of old and new, quoting Zulaika who describes this duality as coming out of a desire to “be the Red Indians of Europe, and the most post-modern culture on the continent. It is a way of reinventing our identity” (qtd. in Woodworth 1989: xxiii-xxiv). Woodworth claims, according to Zulaika, the connection between the ancient Basques and the more modern, twenty first century Basques, creates this dynamic identity that makes them unique and different from the rest of Europe.

In an attempt to find out more about the ancient Basques, Basque scientists Izagirre and de la Rúa (1999 and 2001 with Santos Alonso) looked at the genetic markers belonging to already identified, specific population migrations that would be able to link the Basques to a particular group of people. Their study hoped to find any biological or genetic connections to other European populations whose histories are documented and, therefore, more well known. In their 1999 article, Izagirre and de la Rúa studied mitochondrial DNA and specific markers called haplogroups, which are believed to be biological markers associated with regionally specific migrations of the world’s peoples. Izagirre and de la Rúa begin their paper by introducing Torroni et al.’s (1998) study in which they analyzed haplogroups V and H in a large group of a modern population from Eurasia (in Izagirre and de la Rúa 1999: 199). Torroni et al. (1998) suggest that haplogroup V was likely to have originated around 10,000-15,000 years before present

(ybp) in the northern part of the Iberian Peninsula and the southwest part of France—coincidentally the region where the Basque Country lies (in Izagirre and de la Rúa 1999: 199). Izagirre and de la Rúa (1999) found in their own study that haplogroup H was in highest frequency in all four of the prehistoric sites where data was collected, suggesting that they are all associated with the Neolithic and Bronze age (202). However, they also found that, while haplogroup V was present in the modern population of the Basques, it was absent in the prehistoric data (Izagirre and de la Rúa 1999: 203).

The presence of this group in one population of the Basques but not the other effectively led Izagirre and de la Rúa (1999) to present three theories that may explain how the marker came to present itself in the modern population of the Basques. The first theory is heterogeneity: this proposes that genetic drift causes a higher frequency in a subpopulation and an absence in others. In the Basque Country, the Pyrenees mountains would be one of the isolating factors leading to genetic drift (Woodworth 2008: 1-3). Second, the date of the origin of haplogroup V occurred more currently than Torroni et al. thought (1998), accounting for its absence in prehistoric times and presenting a possibility for a genetic mutation to have taken effect, therefore causing haplogroup V to be present. The third and final theory is that an immigration of haplogroup V bearing people, likely hunter-gatherers from a small Neolithic population in the northern Caucasus, had come to the region less than 4,000 ybp (Izagirre and de la Rúa 1999: 204-205). A problem arises concerning the third theory: the presence of the haplogroup V in modern Basques remains unaccounted for, and they say there is no evidence of such a Neolithic migration of people from the northern Caucasus. Izagirre and de la Rúa (1999) combined the first two theories to explain their data: concluding that genetic drift allowed

a chance for different frequencies of haplogroup V to occur in different samples, with mutation being a possible cause for the frequency to rise in a smaller population (205).

In Izagirre et al.'s 2001 study, they continued to study genetic variation among the Basque population, looking beyond mitochondrial DNA and genetic markers. Their study tested the idea that if genetic variation is discovered among a people, it is often due to individual variation rather than the cause of a larger scale genetic variation, such as a large population migration. This idea, when attributed to the Basques, provides a possible explanation for their genetic variations (Izagirre et al. 2001: 325). Over the course of the study, it was discovered that the Basques are included in the genetic variation of the European framework and could possibly preserve a pre-Neolithic European genetic component (Izagirre et al. 2001: 325). While not genetically similar to the rest of the European gene pool, this finding suggests that there may have been restricted gene flow due to the geographic isolation of the Basques (Izagirre, Alonso and de la Rúa 2001: 325).

In 1999 Arnaiz-Villena et al. conducted a study that included similar linguistic data, blood types, and genetic markers to place the Basques in a specific population migration group. To explain data from previous research of multiple people from the 1960s onwards, they discussed the possible use of two different theories which were emerging at the time. These theories were used in an attempt to disprove the demic diffusion model, which had been used to explain genetic variation in the past. The first theory they used claims "ancient Iberian populations share a genetic and cultural background with Caucasoid paleo-North Africans and with other pre-Neolithic Mediterraneans. . . Basques belong to the paleo-Iberian stock, and their language was

spoken by Iberians before the Roman invasion” (Arnaiz-Villena et al. 1999: 725). The second theory proposes “ancient Iberians were mostly replaced in Mesolithic-Neolithic transition by more culturally advanced farmers coming from the east into Iberia through the Pyrenees” (Arnaiz-Villena et al. 1999: 726). Through their analysis of genetics, physical anthropology, and linguistics, they were able to disprove the demic diffusion model. Genetic research has shown that the genetic markers seen in the Basques were not part of a population movement of North Africans, but of central Europeans (i.e. the Celts) (Arnaiz-Villena et al. 1999: 737). Skeletal analysis conducted by other researchers shows more characteristic similarities, such as a decrease in stature, that other Iberian populations exhibited (Arnaiz-Villena et al. 1999: 737). As for linguistics, Arnaiz-Villena et al. came to the conclusion that it was entirely possible for Caucasians, Etruscans and Minoans from Crete to have all spoken Euskara at one time, before the populations diverged and became distinct from one another (1999: 738).

Just as there is little truly known or proven about the biology and origins of the Basques, less is known about the Basque language, Euskara. Euskara has not been proven to be among any of the living language families, but it has been found engraved on stones and documented in manuscripts and books since the Middle Ages (Woodworth 2008: xv, 20). A group of archaeologists travelling in Álava in 2006 found a stone dating back to the third or fourth century AD. It was inscribed with Basque phrases about daily life—suggesting eating and drinking—as well as “an apparent reference to a ‘blue star’, all in words close to the current usage” (Woodworth 2008: 20). This was a significant find as the previously known writings of Euskara were from tenth century manuscripts, and the first known complete text of Euskara was the 1545 collection of poems from the French

Basque author Bernart Dechepard (Woodworth 2008: 20). Linguistic studies on the Basque language have not revealed an origin of the language, but these archaeological finds and early written accounts of Euskara show how the language has not changed since ancient times. The language is unique to the Basques and has become a large part of restoring Basque identity. Jacqueline Urla mentions the Basque Spanish scholar Luis de Eleizalde's two main goals of using language to restore the Basque identity: the first is to make Basque a way to express the collective life; the second is to modernize the language so that it can be considered a 'high' language used for science instead of being considered a "language of folklore or religious catechism" (Urla 1989: 170). This concept of having a language that is considered 'high' or something superior to the language of the lower classes is referred to as diglossia (Salzmann, Stanlaw, and Adachi 2011: 136). The Basque language has different dialects for each region of the country including differences in manner of speech in rural and urban areas, this difference made it difficult for people to communicate equally across village boundaries thus resulting in the creation of an official language called *Euskara batua* in 1968 (Aulestia 1995: 58-59; Martínez-Areta 2013: 112).

The language is definitely one of the most striking and defining features of the Basques, but so are their traditions. The introduction of Christianity altered some traditions, but most of the traditions that remained celebrate the rural life of the Basques (Fornoff et al. 2007: 118). The streets of the country and rural areas are the backdrop of folk dances in which folk costumes are still the main attire (Woodworth 2008: xxv-xxvi). A large part of rural tradition is tied to pastoral life of herding both sheep and cattle on the family farm. This life is celebrated by the *joaldunak*: men who dress as sheep and

wear sheep bells on their backs as they walk through fields, clanging their bells to wake up the neighbors for the *jaiak* (fiestas). These men are joined by *momotxorroak* (cattle men), *jentillak* (giants) or *basajunak* (lords of the wood) at the fiestas: where they hoist rocks, play the traditional ball game called *jai-alai* (commonly known as the Spanish *pelota*) and young men perform elaborate sword dances that have been around for centuries (Woodworth 2008: xxv-xxvi). These fiestas are often comprised of old rituals and religious ceremonies which are widely attended by all, customarily celebrated with wine and generally described by attendees as *la juerga*, or “the craic” (Woodworth 2008: 163). Most of the fiestas fall around Catholic calendar holidays, such as the Shepherd’s Dance on Christmas Eve, or around harvest periods as offering to the gods (Armstrong 1976).

The Basques have worshipped old gods until they accepted Christianity as their official religion (Fornoff et al. 2007: 118). However, it is the worship of the old gods that made them the targets of witch hunters and victims of the stake during the witch hunts of the Spanish Inquisition in the seventeenth century (Woodworth 2008: 83). The Spanish Inquisition claimed that the Basque country was infested with witches after thirty men and women of small hamlets received trials prior to an *auto de fe* (translates to “act of faith”; it is a ceremony performed during the Inquisition to condemn heretics): thirteen people died in prison and six at the stake, and all in one province of the Basque Country (Woodworth 2008: 83; Merriam-Webster). Iparralde suffered the deaths of an astonishing eighty people when they were captured by the witch finder, Pierre de Lancre, and burned at the stake (Woodworth 2008: 83). Witchcraft was commonly associated with the Basque people during this time, possibly due in part to their worship of the old Basque

gods and continued worship of Mari (a goddess with witch-like powers) years after Catholicism was introduced (Woodworth 2008: 83).

The introduction of Christianity was met with a long period of resistance before it was widely accepted as the principal religion, but there was no stopping elements of the old traditions and beliefs from being maintained (Fornoff et al. 2007: 118). Evidence of the importance of the Church is exemplified by a French Basque saying: “*Qui dit Basque dit Catholique*,” which translates to “Who speaks Basque speaks Catholic.” This proverb shows how prevalent the Church is in the community, and how the Basque identity has become tightly interwoven with the Church. The old tradition of ancestor worship is still practiced and has become syncretized with Catholic traditions, despite the prevalence of the Catholic church for the Basques, but it has been adapted in a way that creates a new way of life, according to Barandiarán’s observations in the Basque Country (Woodworth 2008: 18; Fornoff et al. 2007: 118). Remarking on this form of ancestor worship through the manner of burial and inheritance of the *baserri*, Jacqueline Urla quotes the famous Basque nationalist Sabino Arana—who determines Basqueness through ancestor genealogy—on how being Basque “was a birthright, traced by one’s genealogy and symbolized by one’s last name” (1989: 157). The Basques determine their patriarchal lineage through the *baserri* name, which is passed down the male line of the family (Urla 1989: 157).

These old traditions, which comprise the unique character of being Basque, were under close scrutiny and threatened by the Spanish Civil War and the occupation of General Francisco Franco (1936-1975 [Bieter and Bieter 2000: 89-92]). Franco’s uprising shifted alliances in the Basque country, and Basque nationalists fought with Spanish

socialists against Basque financiers and Spanish nationalists who had aligned themselves with Franco's regime (Woodworth 2008: xxii). The most significant threat the Franco regime posed to the Basques was the swift eradication of all things Basque: the distinctive culture of the people and their language. The threat against the Basque culture increased the significance of archaeological findings tying the Basque people to prehistoric times—evidence of their long-standing culture that has survived centuries (Woodworth 2008: 16). I mentioned earlier how the Basque nationalists had seized upon the “enigmatic past” of the Basques. Zulaika notes that the nationalist version of Basque prehistory helped to strengthen the Basque identity and their legitimacy in the Basque Country in spite of the Franco regime telling the Basques they were subordinates to restricting the Basques from exhibiting their culture and identity (qtd. in Woodworth 2008: 17; MacClancy 1988: 17-18). The physical evidence of Basque prehistory in archaeological digs created a physical link to the survival of Basque life and culture in the same region, which the nationalists used to promote the Basque identity in the country and prove that they could outlast anything (qtd. in Woodworth 2008: 17). The impact of the Franco regime left an extreme loss of the Basque culture, especially to the language. To preserve the traditions and culture of the Basques, measures were taken to revive the language and re-educate the rest of the population.

During this time of Franco's regime (1936-1975) and the promotion of the Basque identity, a group of radical Basque nationalists (*abertzales*) formed to “fight for an independent Basque country with its own distinct traditions” (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 89-92; MacClancy 1988: 17). The *abertzales* specifically campaigned to promote the Basque language, Euskara, to become the common language and an indicator of Basque

solidarity and identity (MacClancy 1988: 18). Most of the actions taken by the *abertzales* were political in nature, including an attempt to change the laws that had been passed during the *Franquismo* (1936-1975) in which children were not allowed to be given Basque names, or that Castilian had to be spoken in schools rather than Euskara (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 89-92; MacClancy 1988: 17, 18). Even in the face of cultural oppression and change, Basque nationalism was able to keep the language and traditions of the Basques alive. Without the *abertzales*' fight to maintain their distinct cultural identity, parts of the Basque tradition and culture could have been forgotten or blended with Spanish culture to the point where it would be difficult to distinguish what was Basque and what was Spanish.

Migration to the New World

The Basque country is a storehouse of the uniqueness of the Basque culture, traditions, and beliefs. They have created a distinct identity and have found ways to maintain that identity, despite threats from technological advancements of the modern age, civil wars and Franco's dictatorship. However, maintaining one's identity in the mother country is much easier than it is when one leaves that country for another. Basque migration to the United States and South America created a whole new identity crisis for the Basques. The Basques had entered a new culture, especially those who emigrated to the United States— "the melting pot"—and had to find a way to maintain their identity as a Basque.

Why would the Basques migrate? There may have been multiple reasons for each individual had for leaving their home country for somewhere new. Considering that the first major wave of immigrants came in the beginning of the 1900s, I will discuss some of

the reasons as some Basque scholars have previously argued (Egurrola 2003: 1). To start, William Douglass proposes the term ‘emigrant typology,’ which encompasses a variety of situations that may hold true for some. In this ‘emigrant typology’:

there is the intending permanent settler who seeks a New World future. He may be an unmarried individual or the head of an established family. The emigrant may assume a predetermined post within the New World society. Conversely, he may have precious little going for him by way of previous arrangements and be simply entrusting himself to chance as he embarks upon a new life. He may be a sojourner with his sights set firmly upon spending a few years abroad in order to return to Europe with the savings that will accord him socioeconomic mobility within Old World Basque society (Douglass 1989: 259).

Of course, this is only a partial explanation for the migration of Basques. Aside from this, there are other factors to consider, such as political refuge, as was the case for some Basque immigrants. Basque political refugees may have migrated due to troubling Iberian political developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: new politics that created political refugees or politically disaffected immigrants (Egurrola 2003: 1; Douglass 1989: 252). On the other hand, it also appears that Spanish colonialism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provided opportunity for Basques fitting into the ‘emigrant typology’ to migrate to the New World, specifically Mesoamerica and South America, where they often settled in Peru, Buenos Aires, or Argentina (Douglass 1989: 252).

Of main concern to my project is the Basque migration to the United States. What may have been a significant draw for Basques is the promise of a new opportunity to start

over and make money in the New World (Douglass 1989: 261). Specifically, a large draw was the promise of work in the shepherding industry in the American West, a job that soon became characteristic of Basque immigrants in the West once the first immigrants created a good reputation as shepherders. Once immigration picked up, the United States started to change their immigration laws (Douglass 1989: 253). One particular adjustment made in the nineteenth century in terms of land laws was that it made “vast public lands of the American West available to anyone on a first-come basis, stimulating the immigration of aspiring Basque sheepmen” (Douglass 1989: 253). This new land law, and any subsequent laws that were passed later, meant there was less risk and a more definite and stable opportunity that drew new immigrants to the U.S.

The familial order and the tradition of passing down the family farm could also explain the migration of Basques to the United States. The father of a family selected the firstborn, whether it was a son or a daughter, to be the only inheritor of the farm so that the family’s land would not be fragmented (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 25). This system of bilateral inheritance had been followed for centuries; contributors to Basque Studies John and Mark Bieter suggest that the other siblings had a few choices for their future: they could either stay on the farm, obey the heir or heiress and be celibate for life, or they could find opportunity elsewhere (2000: 25). Most of the immigrants in the United States were siblings who had not been chosen to be the heir or heiress to the farm and chose the other path of finding opportunity elsewhere.

Basques in Idaho

Basques came to Idaho because the sheep companies were desperate and the Basques had gained a good reputation as shepherders. It was a job no one wanted, it was

miserable, but it was a job in need of workers and they did not have to know English to do the work (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 4-5). Their choice to go in search of new opportunity paid off once connections were made in the sheep industry. Ties with family and the old country connected new immigrants to “successful pioneers” who had already found their way (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 35). Despite their main identifying characteristic of being good shepherders in the U.S., the Basques usually had little to no experience in shepherding. A few Basques may have had sheep back on the family farm, but the sheep often numbered two or three and were used for subsistence purposes (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 35). Many Basques had never herded sheep on such an industrial scale that the Basque immigrants encountered with sheep companies in Idaho (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 35). They took up the opportunity with the risky business of shepherding, taking a chance on a job that was lonely, incredibly risky and financially unstable, and also dangerous at times (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 35).

Once the Basques had settled and established a steady job as shepherders, feeling “at home” in the community was the next step. It was extremely important for them to settle down and have a place to come to when the season was over or when they were between jobs. To accommodate this growing need, boarding houses were set up. These originally started out as rooming houses in the 1890s, owned by successful Basque immigrants who rented out rooms to newly arrived immigrants (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 43). Eventually, these houses became a central place for Basque immigrants to gather and tell stories, as well as to wait out the few months between jobs (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 46). The establishment of these houses created a center for the Basque community, and it also created opportunity for women immigrants. Before these houses were established,

women only came over to the States when they were accompanying their husbands or fiancées once they had established enough financial security to start a family. Once the boarding houses were established, a larger number of single women travelled to the United States in search of work. With this, it became possible for single Basque men to court and marry a Basque woman, and start new Basque families in Idaho.

With the establishment of these boarding houses and a settled Basque community, a societal organization emerged. A driving factor in this emergence was the need for a more formal response to medical emergencies such as those that might occur while working in the pastures, which led to *La Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos* (the Society of Mutual Security) in 1908 (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 48). More organizations were created in the Basque community that helped establish the Basques further in the United States. One of these is *La Fraternidad Vasca Americana* (the American Basque Fraternity), which was founded in 1928. Its main purpose was to provide assistance for those Basque immigrants who were applying for citizenship, helping them become more accustomed to American laws and, therefore, helping them become citizens. It also helped new immigrants assimilate into their new country and provide financial aid for those who needed it (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 74).

Just as Basques in the old country seized upon the opportunity to show their historical connections to an “ancient race,” as discussed above, so did those Basque immigrants in the United States (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 18). Blood and bone evidence, as well as folkloric migration legends, prompted scholars to believe Basques to be the “sole survivors of Europe’s aboriginal population” (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 18). Much of the concern of what makes the Basques unique was lost upon the second generation

Basques, who were not familiar with life in Basque Country and did not experience the difficulties and dangers of migrating to the United States. This generation had not grown up with a love for the Basque country in the way their parents had. A new Basque-American identity was formed for the second generation, and each subsequent generation, who had grown up with a different experience and in a different culture than their parents (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 3-4).

National loyalties shifted for those Basque immigrants who started to identify as both American and Basque. This new Basque-American identity was formed slowly through the creation of boarding houses and the growth of Basque families. But the question of what makes one Basque, especially those immigrants in the United States, became of major concern when the Spanish Civil War broke out back in the Basque Country. Despite conflict occurring near the immigrants' hometowns, the Basques in Idaho were not as willing to support the Basque cause against Franco, nor were they willing to return home and fight (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 93). To defend their seeming disloyalty, the Basque immigrants had not been in the Basque country for the rise of nationalistic sentiments and had not lived through the struggles of Franco's regime (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 93). A Basque scholar suggested that the Basques in Idaho may have viewed the European situation as a "failed utopian idea," referring to the lack of faith in the nationalist cause in overcoming Franco (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 93).

The Basque-Americans' loyalties to their new country facilitated assimilation into the American way of life, in addition to new laws that made it easier for them to become citizens in their new country. When World War II broke out in the United States, many Basques joined the American cause despite the Basques' reluctance to return home to

their country to fight in the Spanish Civil War. This effort was likely the final push towards becoming Americanized, towards creating a Basque-American identity. This Americanization specifically facilitated the second generation Basques' changing identity towards being more American than Basque (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 95-96). Being an American for the second generation was benefitted by the high regard sheep owners held for the Basques. When the United States changed its immigration laws, the Basques had become so highly regarded in the industry that Western sheep owners pleaded to their government representatives to allow the Basques who had entered the country illegally to become full and legal citizens of the U.S. Their efforts won out as the "Shepherders' Laws" went into effect in the late 1940s and granted hundreds of Basques residency and provided the opportunity of legal entry for hundreds more immigrants going into the sheepherding industry (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 101).

The dual Basque-American identity posed some concerns for the underlying Basque identity, which had been nearly erased by the Franco regime and slowly revived by the Basque nationalists. Even though the Basque immigrants had developed their own new and unique Basque-American identity, the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War on the Basque Country attracted the attention of the Basques in Idaho. The revitalization programs of the old country, such as the Onati program, influenced the creation of a similar program in the States. One of these was a consortium program connecting San Sebastián schools to the University of Nevada-Reno, allowing Basques to "put a real shot of cultural adrenaline" into the Basque community of Idaho and surrounding states (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 28). This resulted in a push for authenticity of the Basque identity and a revitalization of its culture in the United States (Bieter and Bieter 2000:

128). However, upon returning to their home country, Basque-Americans felt alienated from their Basque relatives.

The notion that Americans were rich distanced the returning Basques from their families, with relatives attempting to take advantage of the immigrants and their financial success in the United States (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 128). Money was of great social concern after Franco's regime since the Basque economy suffered from the Basque nationalist opposition to Franco. The Basque country's economic success and wealth from the mining and fishing industries drew Franco's attention as the rest of Spain was relatively poor (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 128-129; Woodworth 2008: xxii, 4-5). Because of this wealth, Franco was determined to keep the Basques politically tied to Spain so as to benefit the Spanish economy (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 128-129). However, in the aftermath of the war, the Basque people suffered greatly and grew jealous of the economic successes of their Basque-American relatives returning home (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 128). The alienation of the returning Basque-Americans was more profound in terms of how they were identified. They were termed *Amerikanua* and seen as not Basque enough (Douglass 1989: 261). They were in a kind of "social limbo" and they were not fully welcomed back into their natal communities (Douglass 1989: 261). In addition to the discomfort of not fully belonging, after having spent years in the wide open expanses of the deserts of the American West herding sheep, the geography of the Basque country came across as small and restrictive (Douglass 1989: 261).

The Basques in the United States overcame a great many obstacles such as the language barrier, homesickness, and legal immigration issues. Opportunities in the country were abundant, but the ability to establish a well defined role, such as the

Basques did with sheepherding, was an extremely lucky accomplishment. Indeed, if the first pioneers had not been as successful, there may not be such a large or well-established Basque community in the United States at all. However, since the Basques did establish a new Basque-American identity in the U.S., collected and documented features of their new culture, and preserved elements of the culture of the old country, all new information about the Idaho Basques is abundant. It is this group of Basque-Americans, specifically the ones who had settled in Idaho, that I am studying.

CHAPTER FIVE: CULTURAL CONTEXT IN IDAHO

The setting: Boise, Idaho, United States of America. Basque immigrants came to the Western United States because of the opportunities that were available, especially those that were in demand and did not require people to speak English (Marina). It was not easy work; it was difficult, long, lonely, and people were away from their families for extended periods of time (Jade). Despite all of the shortcomings of the work, it provided enough money that could be sent back to families in the Basque country (Egurrola 2003: n. pag.). The first wave of Basque immigrants sailed to the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s due to outstanding circumstances, such as economic disparities and political upheavals, as a result of the Carlist Wars of the mid 1800s (Egurrola 2003: n. pag.). Gloria Egurrola of Euskonews, an online journal, states that the largest Basque immigration with the intent to work in the sheep industry arrived in the United States between 1900 and 1930 (2003: n. pag.). This can be corroborated by my interviews with nine women, some of whom are immigrants and some are first generation Basque-Americans. The names of these women, institutions, and place names have been changed so they can retain anonymity throughout my analysis.

The women I met and interviewed were of varying ages and were representative of different generations of Basque-Americans. The first woman I interviewed works at the museum and is a graduate of Bland State University. Her name is Aurora: she is tall, probably mid to late twenties and has a few strands of hair that are dyed. She was about to go and present to some Senators from Washington D.C, so our interview had to be cut short. After my interview with Aurora, I met Isa, the Spanish professor at Bland State University. I had gone to her office at the school for the interview. Her office was larger

than the ones I was used to at my own school, and it seemed more open with the furniture pushed against the walls, a decorative carpet on the floor, and artwork on the walls. She had a whiteboard on one wall by the table where we sat for the interview, and she offered to write down any Basque or Spanish words she said that I did not know how to spell. Our interaction was a little more professional and less personal than most of the interviews I conducted.

The third woman is Marina. She was very talkative and enthusiastic about the interview; she gesticulated a lot during our interview as well. She reminded me of my grandmother, which was interesting to me because I met Marina near the third anniversary of my grandmothers' death. Marina and her husband came in through the back door of the museum, which led me to believe that they were well-known among the museum staff. Indeed, in our dinner before the museum event, she and her husband joined our group and I was able to interact with her on a different social level. Mercedes is the fourth woman I met, I was able to talk to her briefly during the museum event the first night I was in Idaho. She is a nice lady and was very concerned about how little she was able to provide during the interview. She also seemed to know the staff at the museum and a good deal of Basque community members.

The second day in Idaho I got to speak with Olivia, the preschool teacher. She is much younger than the other women I met, and was able to talk more about the Basque country as well as being a Basque-American in Idaho. I also met with Tia on the second day. She is a tall, thin woman, and she looks like an actress from the forties or fifties. She was very composed and seemed to have been a little more prepared for our interview than the other women. Tia even mentioned at the beginning of our interview that she had been

thinking about what she wanted to say ever since my contact at the museum had called and asked her.

The next day I met Nina, the Basque language teacher at Bland State University. She is a woman in her fifties who had colored highlights in her hair. Nina had a calming presence and treated the interview as if it were a normal conversation between a student and a professor. She started singing certain songs as she spoke, which she commented on later and apologized for, though she did not need to as I did not mind. Later in the afternoon, I met with Marisol. She is similar in age and stature to Tia, in my opinion. She passed along her own experiences of doing research about Basque folklore and mythology, and seemed equally as intrigued by my research. Finally, my last day in Idaho, I met with Jade. She had dressed up for the occasion, which she explained the significance of in our interview. She said that the specific jewelry she wore for our interview is iconic of a Basque lady in the community in Idaho. Jade was easy to talk to and, despite not having many folktales to tell, she spoke of her mother's life during the bombing of Gernika. Her stories about her family seemed indicative of a typical Basque immigrant's life—assuming the stories I was told from the nine women can be classified as “normal.”

My interviews resulted in the stories of how these women's families came to be in Idaho: the reasons for them immigrating; how they got to the United States; the work they managed to get while here; and what their lives were like in Idaho. The waves of immigration overlap for my contributors with the parents and grandparents coming over to the United States in the same years that some of the parents of my contributors were born. Those in the first wave of immigration were: Mercedes' grandmother who arrived

in Boise in 1913; Mercedes' father in about 1919; Marina's father in 1921; Marisol's mother in 1948; and Jade's mother who came to the United States as a refugee from the bombing of Gernika in 1937.

Mercedes' father came to Idaho around 1918 or 1919, she cannot remember the exact date, and her mother was born nine months after her maternal grandmother came to the United States (Mercedes). Mercedes' maternal grandmother settled on a farm between Hillside and Bridgeport. Her maternal grandfather was already in Idaho working with a state project that made aqueducts that are still visible to this day (Mercedes). He also worked on the Arne Rhine Dam (Mercedes). When Mercedes' parents got married in 1942 her father was in a partnership with two other men who owned a sheep ranch and her mother was a housewife all her life (Mercedes).

Marina's father was a sheepherder for eleven years before he married Marina's mother and then they opened a variety of other businesses. Marina's mother was a first generation Basque born in the United States and her grandfather had been one of the few to acquire land for sheepherding (Marina). Marina's father was part of a family of millers back in the Basque country and already had two older brothers, who were already in Idaho in the sheepherding business (Marina). Her father, John, was told by his older brothers to stay behind at home to take care of the family, but he was given the opportunity to go to America to make money (Marina). His parents urged him to go to America and follow his older brothers, insisting that they would be fine; when John got off the train in Idaho he met a man who recognized him as being Basque and directed him to the boarding house that was not far from the train station (Marina). A man at the boarding house said he knew John's brothers and was able to send word to them saying

that John was there, which resulted in John getting a beating from his oldest brother who was upset that he did not stay behind as he had ordered (Marina). A few days after arriving in Idaho, John was sent out with two thousand sheep and a dog (Marina). He knew no English and was alone in the valley for a year (Marina). Marina was my only contributor who told me about her father's life as a sheepherder while the other women I interviewed simply stated that their father or grandfather was one for a certain amount of years. Marina is a second generation Basque in Idaho who was able to grow up in the Basque culture because of the establishment of a Basque community by those immigrants who made a life in Idaho.

Marisol's father already had a brother in Idaho, possibly two but she cannot remember (Marisol). He had gone back to the Basque country to find a wife, which is how he met Marisol's mother (Marisol). Her mother came to the United States in a boat in 1948, but not without running into inclement weather, which delayed her arrival by eight days (Marisol). Her mother then took a train to Idaho and was in Idaho nearly eleven days before Marisol was born, making her a first generation Basque (Marisol). Marisol's father was in the sheepherding business for a short while before his older brother got him into construction working on the Sino Dam in California and Little Pine Dam in Idaho (Marisol). Both Mercedes' and Marisol's fathers worked on construction crews on dams in the area, exhibiting that sheepherding was not the only job available for Basque immigrants in Idaho. Marisol's father was also a logger for some time, and they spent time as a family in the mountains in the summer while he worked (Marisol). Construction work and logging allowed Basque men to remain with their families rather than being alone for months on end watching sheep. Being closer to family also meant

that they would be able to remain in town, which prompted the formation of the Basque community that still resides there to this day.

The final member of the first wave of immigration was Jade's mother, who came over to the United States after the bombing of Gernika that occurred in 1937 (Jade). Her mother was 17 during the bombing; her family owned a sewing business, and she was out getting buttons when the bombs fell, separating her in the chaos (Jade). Jade's mother was later reunited with her family, and they were able to contact Jade's grandfather—who had already established a sheep business in Idaho—to get visas to come to the United States (Jade). Influenza broke out on the boat on their way to the United States, so they were rerouted to Cuba for some time and Jade's mother and her family stayed in an apartment until they were cleared to come to the United States (Jade). They came to Idaho where Jade's mother and her sisters worked as maids before Jade's parents finally met (Jade). Jade's father was born in the United States to two Basque parents (Jade). Her father remembers growing up knowing only Basque and finding it difficult to go to school and to not know any English (Jade). It is because of his experience as a child that he insisted Jade's mother speak English at home so that their children would be raised without the language barrier (Jade). Jade is a first generation Basque who has lived in Idaho all her life.

The other contributors I spoke to were younger and were part of later generations, or they came to the United States outside of the typical wave of immigration. Several of these women came to Idaho for teaching opportunities or to attend university. Earliest among these women is Tia, who moved to Idaho in 1962 to study at Bland State University, and then spent thirty-five years teaching (Tia). Her family was based in

Oregon where she spoke Basque with her family until she went to school, and then she brought English back home with her (Tia). Nina came to a university in Nevada from the Basque country to teach Euskara, later going to graduate school at the University of Isle, then returning to teach Euskara at Bland State University (Nina). She married a man she met in Idaho and has been living there with her family, though she still goes back to the Basque country to visit her parents and her brothers (Nina). Isa is an upper level Spanish professor at Bland State University, who also teaches cultural workshops within the Basque Studies program on a variety of topics that are chosen by the students (Isa). Olivia, by chance, ended up in Idaho at the *boiseko ikastola*—a preschool that is part of the Basque museum (Olivia). She had sent her resume to a school in California, which then sent it on to the Basque museum in Idaho where she has worked since 2009 teaching children within a Basque curriculum (Olivia). Finally, Aurora has worked at the Basque museum since 2013: first as the education specialist and now as the acting executive director (Aurora). Her family lives in Nevada but she came to Idaho to attend Bland State University, after which she obtained a position at the museum (Aurora).

My interviews did not provide me with enough of an understanding of who my contributors are as individuals. I did not ask everyone what their jobs were or what they had done in the past. One of my contributors, Tia, told me that she was a teacher and is now retired (Tia). The younger generations told me what their jobs were: Isa is a professor at Bland State University, Nina teaches the Basque language, Olivia teaches at the *ikastola*, and Aurora works at the museum (Isa; Nina; Olivia). The other women I interviewed were older and I suspect that they were likely retired. Marina played the accordion and guitar during the museum event, but other than that I do not know much

about her (Marina). Some of my contributors reminded me of my grandmother on my father's side, it was a bit uncanny. Other than the few visual judgments I made during our interviews and what has already been presented in this section, I was not with my contributors for long enough to be able to know who they are as individuals within the Basque community in Idaho.

CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS

The Basque Country was controlled by Franco's dictatorship from the beginnings of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 to 1975 (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 89-92; Nina). Over the course of his dictatorship, Franco made the Basque language illegal and the Basque culture was nearly erased. The dictatorship ended in 1975 and the Basques tried to revive their culture so that it would not be completely lost (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 89-92; Woodworth 2008: 16). Programs were created in the years following 1972 to conduct research about Basque history and Basque folklore so that the lost part of the culture could be reinvented in the contemporary times (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 124-126). (This has been discussed more in depth in my literature review, in which I detail the formation and function of these programs). The process of creating an ethnic identity is what Kononenko and Karpova (2012) discuss in their article about to the cultural revitalization of Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union. Russia's situation is strikingly similar to the Basque's because both countries were under a regime that undermined and repressed the traditional or folk culture. Kononenko and Karpova examined the use of the various forms of folkloric material and their contribution to the formation of the ethnic identity that had been repressed under the control of the Soviet Union (Kononenko and Karpova 2012: 1). These forms include music, folk singing, dance, and different kinds of social networks using Bourdieu's theory of social capital to explain how all of these forms are part of the social knowledge of Russian folk culture (Kononenko and Karpova 2012: 1).

Folklore is the collective memory or the "traditional art, literature, knowledge, and practice that is disseminated largely through oral communication and behavioral example" (Kononenko and Karpova 2012: 8; American Folklore Society). The body of

folklore contributes to the identity of the people who share it—folklore is a specific worldview of the people (American Folklore Society). Historically, definitions of folklore have been changing over the last century, claiming that folklore was an expression of the oppressed, and then changing to say that folklore was the collective material of a specific group of people (Propp 1984: 5; Utley 1965: 2, 11). Folklore is the collective traditions of the people, their stories, art, music, dance, and other varieties of the way a culture expresses their identity (Utley 1965: 9; Bascom 1965: 28). The Basque-Americans in Idaho have a different body of folklore than those in the Basque country because of a different set of cultural experiences that they have encountered as compared to their Basque counterparts in Europe. Sure, they share a great deal of the same histories, but ultimately the Basque-Americans have a different story because they have had different experiences than the Basques from the mother country. Folklore is rooted within the context of culture that is specific to a group of people; and that group could be created in any venue of life, whether it is an office group or a farming community (Utley 1965: 2). The Basque-Americans I interviewed in Idaho have a different way of expressing their culture because they have migrated from one country to another, gone through a process of assimilating into a new culture, and have created their own fused identity of Basque and American. Their folklore consists of the family stories about coming to the United States, of music and dance, and of the language they use to transmit and maintain their folklore; in its entirety, folklore is what makes the Basques unique within the United States. When I interviewed my contributors I got the sense that, for them, their folklore was how they lived everyday life and how they expressed who they are.

The everyday life of the primary Basque immigrants can be seen through the themes that arise from the oral histories provided by the museum website. In a larger context, the themes encompass the social and cultural forms of early Basque life in the United States. The major themes from the thirty-four oral histories I viewed include “boarding houses,” “immigration,” “schools and education,” “language,” “Basque dancing,” “Basque clubs and organizations,” and “sheepherding.” These themes overlap with some of the themes that arose from my own interviews, and support what my research has shown to be most prominent in the early stages of Basque life in the United States. This section will discuss these themes and their contextual placement in the folklore of Basque-Americans in Idaho.

My interviews were conducted in a small office in the back of the museum, as has been mentioned in my methods section. These interviews yielded new information that I had not yet learned in my research conducted through the library. I have found, after transcribing the interviews and reading them over, that certain themes have appeared that I did not originally assume would be as prominent in contributing to the Basque-American identity. Some of the traditions and beliefs that I imagined I would find were no longer practiced or transmitted, while other traditions seemed to have been maintained as the main forms of exhibiting the Basque identity. The themes that have emerged from my interviews are “festivals,” “beliefs” (including the religious life of Catholicism and old world beliefs similar to paganism), maintenance of “stories” (such as family stories, or those told through songs and dance), “music,” and “language” as a mechanism for educating future generations. This section will analyze these themes within the context of folklore theory and explain how they contribute to the formation of a Basque-American

identity. Quotes from my contributors will be included to provide evidence of these themes as they are used in contemporary Basque society in Idaho.

Oral Histories

The oral histories archived on the website for the Basque Museum and Cultural Center exhibit the everyday lives of the first Basque immigrants. The individuals in the oral histories on the website were usually older and had been among the first or second generation of Basques in the United States. Lynn Abrams mentioned that the source of oral histories is “multivocal,” taking on Victor Turner’s term, defined as how “a single symbol may stand for many things” (Turner 1967: 50). This is the case in the oral histories presented on the website, and for the ones I viewed, because there are many voices describing their lives and similar themes are arising from each individual’s history. Turner suggested that a multivocal symbol existed because there are only a select few symbols that are representative of a whole culture; therefore, people in that culture will have a variety of meanings associated with that symbol (Turner 1967: 50). The thirty-four oral histories I viewed started to show how certain symbols of the early Basque immigrant’s life had begun to reflect the Basque subculture in the United States.

Abrams cites Paul Thomson, a primary scholar of oral history, warning about the reliability of an oral history and its presentation of a culture (Abrams 2010: 80). While an oral history does describe one person’s image of the culture as they lived it, reliability of the narrator or of the interviewer cannot be taken as a given. The problem Abrams emphasizes is that the content of the oral history could have been directed a certain way to present a specific image. The Basque Museum and Cultural Center is focused intently

on sheepherding and boarding houses. They have two boarding houses as extensions of the museum, and an exhibit in the museum of a sheepherder's camp, complete with a campsite and caravan.

Handler and Gable, in their study of the living historical museum of Colonial Williamsburg, mention the difference between front stage and back stage museum management (Handler and Gable 1997: 11). There is a marked difference between what goes on behind the exhibits and what goes on in the presence of the exhibits. Museums have to be aware of social climates and changes to that climate, subsequently altering the presentation of exhibits to accommodate the changes. In Handler and Gable's research, they observed and described a "rehearsal" for museum managers and professionals in which they presented the predetermined themes:

the museum had decided to emphasize, the stories appropriate to each, the artifacts available to convey those stories, the historical documents underpinning both the stories and the artifacts, the particular interpretive difficulties that various artifacts and buildings posed, and the questions visitors were likely to ask (Handler and Gable 1997: 11).

Attributing these concerns to the Basque Museum, the curators of the exhibits had to be conscious of the research, the primary documents and material, and the visitor's response to the exhibits. There were recordings of letters that Basque immigrants had written home and received from their family available in the boarding house, there were artifacts from boarding houses that were recovered *in situ*, and the museum had video recordings of older members of the Basque community telling the stories of their lives. These primary documents and other research support the significance of sheepherding and boarding

houses in the early Basque immigrant life, therefore justifying the predominance of these two factors in the museum. What is lacking, though, are the various other factors of the early Basque immigrant life. The museum did not portray their role in the United States Army, nor did it mention their citizenship in the United States or any other themes that may have come up in oral histories and research; the museum primarily focused on sheepherding and boarding houses, with smaller exhibits and some details about the music and dance.

I do not accuse the museum of purposefully misleading its visitors about the reality of the life of early Basque immigrants. There is a great deal of information and management interaction that goes on backstage that I did not see. I may have worked in an office of one of the museum staff, but I did not witness the decisions the staff made about what is put in the exhibits and what is not. The museum has to be aware of the community it represents and who they are presenting this information to, which could explain the material exhibited. Idahoans likely know the prominence of sheep companies and their connection to the Basque people. There is a great deal of thought and consideration on the part of the museum that it has to put into the creation of these exhibits. My research has similarly shown how Basques gained a good reputation as sheepherders and how boarding houses were the first real centers of Basque life in the United States. The themes arising from the oral histories conducted by the museum further support this evidence from my research. Abrams merely warns that it is a possible drawback to oral histories and not everything learned from the narrative can be taken as the absolute truth (2010: 80). She justifies herself and her warning by saying that the

narrative ultimately maintains the structure as it was constructed by the culture and represents the common knowledge of the people (Abrams 2010: 80).

The themes from the thirty-four oral histories I viewed create a foundational understanding of the beginnings of Basque life in the United States. This foundation will be further built upon with the presentation of the themes I encountered in my own interviews about contemporary Basque life, and the folklore of the Basque community that has contributed to the specific Basque-American identity that has been created. Oral histories provide a more detailed image of one's life and the culture of the time, but this process would have taken longer than I had time for. The oral histories that are available on the museum's website have helped establish a basis of Basque life in the United States to which I can compare the folklore I have personally obtained from my interviews.

Festivals

Festivals are a form of folklore that celebrate the practices of traditions and daily life for a particular group (Stoeltje 1992: 261). A contemporary practice rooted in "ancient customs" and tied to calendrical events, festivals are practiced in various ways around the world in different cultures (Stoeltje 1992: 261). Beverly J. Stoeltje, a professor of folklore at Indiana University, proclaims that festivals have been a mode of syncretization: combining old pagan traditions with that of an official religion—a combination we see in contemporary festivals celebrating saints, the Virgin Mary, Christmas, etc. (Stoeltje 1992: 261). In the context of Kononenko and Karpova's discussion, festivals are a venue for the production of collective memory (which they define as the collective image of a group of people that is created by combining the past

and the present) (Kononenko and Karpova 2012: 8-9). In the Basque community, festivals surround calendrical cycles of certain Catholic celebrations such as those for saints, Christmas, and Easter. Other festivals celebrate cultural events such as markets and pilgrimages to Bilbao—a major industrial center and the capital of the Basque Country—in August (Nina; Isa). Symbolic manipulation of temporal reality, manipulation of social and gendered structures, and transformation of individuals are common thematic processes of festivals as cultures around the world produce them (Stoeltje 1992: 266-269).

Before I become too entrenched in the festivals that are connected to the calendar and Catholic rituals, I want to discuss one festival that specifically celebrates the Basque culture. This festival is called *jaialdi* and was only mentioned once, in passing, by Marina. *Jaialdi* is a festival that has been mentioned in my research in reference to the Basque community in Idaho. Its early counterpart, the Holiday Basque Festival, first occurred in the early 1970s as an attempt by the Basque Studies Program to create a festival devoted to retaining the “Basque subculture” (Bieter and Bieter 2008: 2-3, 154, 157-158). *Jaialdi* is a festival formed by the Basque Studies Program in Idaho that celebrates Basque music and dance, Basque language, culture, food, and sells merchandise with Basque symbols on it as a way to pass along the Basque identity (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 2-3, 154). Kirk Johnson of *The New York Times* quotes a teacher at the museum’s *ikastola* “*Jaialdi* was partly about picking up where past Idaho Basques left off and making sure the next generation did not forget” (Johnson 2015: 3-4). His description of the festival, which occurs every five years, calls it: “one of the biggest Basque festivals outside Europe” (Johnson 2015: 2). The Idaho Basque tradition of this

festival was formed from the “web of interconnected families” of the first immigrants from the Basque country who were all coming from the same region: Vizcaya (Johnson 2015: 2). *Jaialdi* was a way for the first Basque families to connect more deeply with each other and their culture.

The uniquely Idaho Basque festival celebrates what it means to be Basque and it includes activities and events that may not normally be included in traditional Basque festivals (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 151). Marina talked about how *jaialdi* has become a competition ground for the *bertsolari*, an old oral tradition that has regained popularity in contemporary Basque society, and a topic which will be elaborated on later. The festival seems to be exclusively part of the Basque-American culture in Idaho—though it does attract international visitors from the Basque Country—and may be attributed to how festivals are used as a portrayal of “recycled folklore,” a term proposed by Frank de Caro (Bieter and Bieter 2000: 154, 157-158; de Caro 2013: 9). A feature of de Caro’s “recycled folklore” is that it allows for folklore to become an “open text,” creating an opportunity for outsiders to make their own interpretations of folklore (de Caro 2013: 8-9). Festivals as a form of “recycled folklore” also becomes characterized as “high culture,” because these festivals are more easily accessible to people outside the folk group who can observe the culture from the outside and create their own interpretations (de Caro 2013: 3-4). The contemporary folklore festivals of the Basques, in both Idaho and Europe, create a venue through which folklore is open to anyone who visits, thus introducing a variety of different interpretations of the folk culture.

De Caro states how folk festivals provide an opportunity for folklorists to present folkloric material to an audience outside the original folk context (2013: 8). The problem

with de Caro's definition of folk festivals is that it only considers the role the folklorist has in the production of the festival; it does not include a discussion of the agency the original folk have in the presentation of their own culture to those on the outside. The folk have more of a role in the presentation of their culture than a folklorist does, no matter how much research he or she has done on the culture, because the folk have the right to decide what to present and what not to present. This idea is portrayed by one of my contributors, Olivia, in the end of our interview when I asked her what it was like being Basque in America and she said: "It feels nice...they give you a chance to develop your Basque identity more, maybe because you are outside of your country, you can choose what to develop and what not to develop as Basque" (Olivia). The choice of what to develop and what not to develop, what to say is Basque and what is not, is what makes the occurrence of *jaialdi* in Idaho, and not the Basque country, so unique. The ability for the Basque community of Idaho to decide what to present about their culture is what contributes to a festival's importance as a form of folkloric tradition.

One of my contributors, Nina, says that "there's [um] a lot of festivities and traditions [uh] that are connected to let's say [uh] the calendar [um] that go [uh] year round" (Nina). Due to the correlation of celebrations and the calendar, time marks out the passage of the experience and incorporates the actual "festival" act with the greater cosmos (Stoeltje 1992: 268). Temporal manipulation along a calendrical cycle also notes the development of cultural change as the cycle restarts and the festival occurs again (Stoeltje 1992: 268). What my contributors have shown me through our interviews is how the festivals that are still celebrated today have changed over the years. Some of my contributors belonged to different generations of Basques and so they were able to

provide me with a varied account of how festivals were celebrated in the past and how they have changed.

One of the features of festivals that Stoeltje describes is that they are a time of transformation. Most Basque festivals that are celebrated in both the Basque country and in Idaho are connected to the Catholic faith and its practices. Some of the festivals of the Catholic faith, such as Christmas and saints' days, will be discussed in tandem with "beliefs." What interests me most, within the genre of festivals, is the transformative nature of Carnival. Transformation, as an attribute of festivals, allows for various principles of reversal and divergence from daily life (Stoeltje 1992: 268). In Carnival, participants dress up in costumes that portray various characters from mythology and other cultural stories, attributing to the transformative nature of the festival (Nina; Olivia). Olivia spoke of a time when her brother dressed up as a *lamia* for Carnival (*lamia* is a female mythological character who often seduces men)—he even donned a large wig (Olivia). This transformation and gender reversal is what Stoeltje discusses as symbols of the cultural concepts of differences and acts as an agent of social criticism and a form of reflecting social life (Stoeltje 1992: 263, 269). Bascom also mentions how folklore, as a subcategory of the arts, is allowed a certain amount of freedom through the characters in a folktale or other performative form doing something that would be shocking or considered taboo in the culture (Bascom 1965: 33). This cross-dressing or dressing up as different mythological characters during Carnival would be an example of the performative forms of folklore expressing something that would be shocking or taboo in the culture.

Carnival is typically celebrated shortly before Easter, and the time between the two is known as Lent (S.E.W 1896: 257). Nina describes it as “going into a bit of a catharsis,” with Carnival as a final celebration of “freedom before you get into the right path” (Nina). Nina’s and Olivia’s descriptions of Carnival include images of merriment, dressing up and costumes, and the freedom to engage in activities before you must go on “the right path.” She does not, however, exactly describe what she meant by “right path,” and I did not ask her to clarify. I suggest that this “right path” is the time of Lent in which you give up something in your life for the forty days before Easter (S.E.W 1896: 257). Nina’s comment on the freedom that is felt during Carnival supports Stoeltje’s claim of how festivals allow for a period of time in which the participant is able to detract from the behavior of everyday life (1992: 268). This “freedom” as a part of Carnival is an example of the transformative nature of the festival as participants pass from a time of merriment and excess to a time of restraint and self-reflection. Carnival may incorporate some old traditions as people dress up as cultural characters like the *lamia*, but it is also an example of how the Basque people practice Catholic traditions.

Other Catholic traditions have been incorporated into Basque celebrations and beliefs, while still maintaining some aspect of old Basque traditions. The syncretization of some old Basque traditions and newer Catholic traditions was, as Stoeltje mentioned, an effort to ease people into a different belief (1992: 261). This would include syncretizing pagan holidays with Christian ones—for example, in June on the summer solstice, the Basques celebrate the feast of San Juan (Nina). On this day people build a large bonfire and burn old items in hopes for a new beginning (Nina). The Catholic faith celebrates this day in the hopes of change and new things in honor of Saint John the

Baptist (Nina). Other saints are also commemorated in stories that parents would tell their children and in calendars that note when a certain saints' day is (Marisol).

The festivals that are still celebrated in the Basque Country and Idaho retain a syncretized structure comprised of elements in Catholic and older Basque traditions. This syncretization is mentioned by Barandiaràn, which helped to preserve the old traditions so that they were not entirely lost (Fornoff et al. 2007: 118). The maintenance of older traditional celebrations in Catholic festivals, such as Carnival and the festival of San Juan, provide an example of the strength of the Basque culture. Other festivals, like *jaialdi* in Idaho, have been created out of the revitalizing efforts of Basque programs to ensure the survival of the Basque culture and ethnic identity in future generations of Basque-Americans.

Beliefs

The Catholic faith has carefully integrated itself into the Basque culture and way of life from festivals to religious practices and customs. Some of the Catholic beliefs have become syncretized with older traditions among the Basque people as a result of similarities between the two traditions—for example, the syncretization of the Virgin Mary with the “queen of the underworld” (Williams 1989: 125), Mari. The Catholic faith introduced the celebration of Christmas and the feast of the Three Kings into Basque spiritual life. Christmas is celebrated a bit less frequently and broadly than the Three Kings; however, Christmas is celebrated by enough people in the country that a Basque version of Santa has been re-introduced. Olentzero, the Basque Santa, is an old character who has resurfaced relatively recently as of the 1950s (Isa). My research has led me to believe that the Basques were a deeply Catholic country; however, I was shocked to hear

Isa's claim that some of the Basque people no longer want to be associated with the Catholic church because of its history with the dictator and his near eradication of everything Basque from 1936 to 1937 (Isa; Bieter and Bieter 2000: 89-92). This new change of beliefs has led some of the Basques to revert back to their old traditions and celebrate the winter solstice instead of a Christmas, or celebrating other old traditions rather than the syncretized Catholic version (Isa). A few of my contributors have claimed how older traditions are resurfacing in the present, and old symbols with prior cultural meaning are being used in present day Basque society as a visual association with the Basque identity.

The Catholic faith celebrates a number of traditions that follow the calendar. The first of these traditions that I discuss occurs in December. A number of the women I interviewed all said they celebrated Christmas or Three Kings day, and sometimes both. Most often it was Three Kings day that was celebrated with feasts of tripe, pig's feet, Basque paella and tostadas, and leaving your shoes outside for the Three Kings to leave gifts such as oranges and nuts (Mercedes; Marisol). Two of my contributors, Tia and Jade, celebrated Three Kings day instead of Christmas when they were children (Tia; Jade). They did not know of Olentzero before the museum had introduced him to the Idaho Basque community (Tia; Jade). The nature of folklore is constantly changing, as new ideas are constantly being introduced and old ones being discarded, as mentioned by de Caro (2013: 3). The re-introduction of this new Basque Santa Claus, or Olentzero, is an example of this changing culture. Christmas serves as an expression of the Catholic faith and, therefore, establishes itself as a tradition of the religion. What the Basques have done is adapt this religious celebration to their own culture through the creation of

Olentzero. However, with the changing sentiments towards religion in the Basque Country, Olentzero's role is changing. Isa says, when Olentzero was first known in the Basque culture about two centuries ago, his job was to announce the changing of seasons, which changed to announcing the birth of Christ when Christianity became the official religion (Isa). Now that sentiments towards Christianity are different, people are remembering what Olentzero said in the past and are saying that he should return to that role of announcing the coming of a new season (Isa).

Immigration to the United States took place before some people in the Basque Country chose to move away from the Catholic faith, though this is speculation based on Isa's comment that the move away from this religion has been a more recent development. Since the first immigrants to the United States likely still dutifully followed the Catholic faith, they would have transmitted that belief to the next generation of Basque-Americans. The Catholic faith is still strong for some members of the Basque community in Idaho and is a large part of their family practices and family histories. Several of my contributors said that they still attend church on a regular basis (Marisol). If they do not go religiously, then they at the very least go for the significant events in a Catholic person's life such as baptisms, weddings, funerals, communions and confirmations (Jade). While I was in Idaho, I attended a funeral that was held in a Catholic church and followed the traditional guidelines of a Catholic funeral service. The service was held at a church named for St. Ignatius, who is the foremost patron saint of the Basque Country and the provinces of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya (pdf euskadi.eus: 2). Family members of the deceased read from different passages in the Bible and the priest waved incense over the casket as a way to "mark and visualize the soul rising to heaven."

Marisol was encouraged to attend Catholic school during her childhood because her mother thought education equally as important as Catholicism, so the two were pursued together (Marisol). Faith and the importance of education are still so strong in Marisol's family that she used her inheritance money from her mother to put her children through Catholic school as well (Marisol). Marisol knows that things are changing in the Basque country when it comes to the Catholic faith, but it is a part of how she was raised and it remains a part of her life.

Other contributors also acknowledged that they knew things were changing in the Basque country but, for most of them, Catholicism was still a factor in their lives. As Jade put it, "if you're Basque, you're Catholic" (Jade). This quote reiterates what was said of the Basques in the country, as told by Woodworth: if you speak Basque, you speak Catholic (Woodworth 2008: 18). Jade's family also has a strong connection with the Catholic faith and the church as her family has had four generations of weddings in the same cathedral (Jade). The first wedding was her paternal grandparents' who got married at St. James' cathedral in the early 1900s, and the tradition continued up until her daughter became the fourth generation of the family to be married in the cathedral (Jade). She claims, even though they are not currently practicing Catholics, the tradition stems from the belief that "if you're Basque, you're Catholic" (Jade). Some of the Basques in Idaho (I can only speak for the few contributors who said so) still attribute Catholicism to the identity of being a Basque, even though this characteristic of the Basque identity in the mother country is starting to lose strength. This shows that the change in religious sentiment must have occurred after the first immigrants came to the United States, since some Basque-Americans still attribute Catholicism as being a part of being Basque.

One of my contributors, belonging to the younger generation of Basques and a more recent migrant to the United States, expressed one way in which the old beliefs have survived the influence of Catholicism in the Basque Country. She also contributes to the exchange of information between the two Basque cultures concerning social and cultural revisions. Olivia spoke of a “mysticism” that is still present in places like the woods where people believe there are fairies and witches, “it’s pretty much more alive than any place I’ve lived” (Olivia). Catholicism may have replaced belief in witches when it was first being introduced centuries ago, but the mysticism of places like the forest or the mountains seems to have remained in the Basque culture. She is an example of the concept of active and passive bearers mentioned in Rubin’s (1995) article. He paraphrases von Sydow and Dégh’s ideas of this role in the transmission of oral tradition; they state that the active bearer is the performer, the one who shares the story, and the passive bearer is the one who hears the story but does not share it (Rubin 1995: 132-133). These two roles intersect in Olivia’s case. Olivia is the active bearer in the interview—she is the one “performing” the story about the mysticism that is still alive in the woods in the Basque Country. Before our interview, before she passed this story along to me, she would have been a passive bearer because she may not have otherwise passed along this belief.

The changing religious sentiments have led some Basques away from Catholicism towards an introduction of new characters, new traditions, and old traditions that are resurfacing and are being attributed with different meaning. Olentzero is not the only new symbol of Basques incorporating new traditions into the Catholic faith. Similar to how Santa Claus has Mrs. Claus and the elves to help him with the gifts, Olentzero has

recently been bestowed with a wife, Mari Domingi (Isa). This new addition to Olentzero hearkens back to Basque mythology and the main spirit, Mari. She is described by Barandiarán as a female character who is attributed to various phenomena and is seen as the queen of all mythological characters (Fornoff et al. 2007: 96). The incorporation of Mari in Mari Domingi's name suggests that the maintained presence of Mari in today's Basque culture even if the older mythological narratives collected by Barandiarán is not.

Elements of the old Basque belief system (documented by Barandiarán and discussed in my literature review) along with some other older traditions have begun to resurface, both in the country and Idaho. In most cases, these symbols are encountered as a fashion icon and have become visual identifiers of a Basque person—but the cultural meaning that may have once been ascribed to it by prior generations is no longer remembered. Isa talks about the *lauburu*, which is the Basque swastika, how it is being made into shirts and jewelry, and how you can find anyone wearing that symbol and know they are Basque (Isa). In my time in Idaho I noticed that the store at the museum was selling jewelry with the *lauburu* as well as many people wearing it as earrings or necklaces at the funeral or at museum events. Fashion is one of the most common ways in which old symbols are becoming popular again. The *lauburu* may be one of the most common fashion icons, but so is the witches' symbol¹ (Isa). This symbol is supposed to commemorate the witches who were hunted and persecuted during the Spanish Inquisition of the 17th century and is now used as a symbol of pride and a recognition that witches were not evil, and that the Basques are proud of who they are (Isa). Many of

¹ Word lost in transcription of interview

the symbols resurfacing from older times convey this same meaning: they are Basque, they are proud to be Basque, and this is their identity.

Old traditions from the Basque “ancient religion” and mythology are being reintroduced, but again, without the same cultural meanings. Basque mythology mentioned the *eguzkilo* (which is a thistle-like flower that symbolizes the sun and wards against evil spirits) that is traditionally used to protect the house (Isa; Fornoff et al. 2007: 80). Isa comments that some people of contemporary Basque society are putting these flowers in their houses because they are yet another symbol of being Basque. Through the use of these old traditions, people have been able to protect them because of their connection to the Basque identity. These symbols are the roots from which the Basque culture emerged, and the Basques are trying to preserve what they can. Isa spoke of another old tradition tied to the belief of the early Basques that the Earth was flat, a belief which was shared by other peoples as well (Isa). This belief led to the tradition of hitting the ground each night to make sure the sun would come up in the morning, a tradition that is still done to this day by some (Isa). Isa says that some Basque people thank the sun each morning for coming out, for circling back around every day and not leaving the living in darkness (Isa). This greeting may have been maintained in present generations of Basques as part of tradition, but the belief and context of the greeting may have been lost with the changing times. Folklore is generations old and is passed from the old to the young; years may have gone by and the context may have been lost, but the contemporary practice of these old traditions means that this particular folkloric expression has somehow remained as part of the Basque cultural identity.

Other symbols include everyday things that one would see around San Sebastián or Bilbao. The intricate design of a handrail in San Sebastián has been turned into a symbol of “Basqueness,” a simple object along the side of the road that would otherwise be just a normal object (Isa). In Bilbao, a sidewalk pattern that is characteristic of the city has been turned into a symbol of being Basque as well (Isa). These objects were just simple things, something you would see everyday as you walk about the city. But now, these images have become icons of the city, icons associated with being Basque and a visual representation of the Basque ethnic identity. Basques in Idaho and beyond have also started putting sheep stickers on their cars as a symbol of being Basque and as a reflection of the successes of the Basque shepherders in Idaho (Isa). What is interesting is Isa’s comment that people in the Basque country have started doing it too: using the sheep as a symbol of being Basque even though they are not and were not shepherders like the Basques in Idaho (Isa). Integrating the symbol of the sheep into the culture of the Basques as a whole is a form of the “recycled folklore” proposed by de Caro (2013: 3). The sheep is significant as part of the Basque identity in Idaho and has no cultural relevance to the Basques in the country, and yet those in the country have assimilated the symbol because it is a part of the Basque-American folklore that could be reproduced in a different venue outside of Idaho (de Caro 2013: 3).

The incorporation of different folkloric symbols of being Basque, even though some elements of Basque culture have not been shared between the homeland and the United States, can be seen as a sign of an effort to unify the two divisions of the Basque subculture. The Basques in Idaho have been putting sheep stickers on their cars as a reminder of how the Basques started their lives in the United States. This use of the

symbol as a characteristic of being Basque in the United States is an example of Jansen's esoteric and exoteric factors of folklore (Jansen 1965: 43-44). Idaho Basque use of the sheep is an esoteric expression of the Idaho Basque identity—it represents what that particular subculture thinks of itself and believes others to think of it. The exchange of the sheep between the Idaho Basques and the Basques in Europe is an example of the exoteric factor—representing what the Basques in Europe think of the Basques in Idaho. Similarly, the retention of traditional Basque culture from the native country is used in the Basque community in Idaho as a representation of the Basques in Europe. One definition of folklore, described by Bauman, states that folklore is a form of propaganda used to establish a unified group of people who are proud to be who they are (Bauman 1992a: 29). The continued contemporary use of these symbols and traditions, though they may have lost their original cultural context, maintains this idea of folklore as propagandistic material. The use of the symbols of witches, even though they were maliciously hunted and persecuted for being so, and the pride in which Basques exhibit that symbol is a perfect example of Bauman's definition. This symbol has been reclaimed by the Basques because they justify that the witches were "sage individuals" (Marina) and not as evil as they were accused to have been by the Inquisition. Basques are reclaiming their old traditions and proudly exhibiting them as symbols of their identity.

Symbols in folklore are part of the multivocality that Bauman and Turner describe as a "single symbol [that] may stand for many things" (Bauman 1992a: 31-32; Turner 1967: 50). This kind of "residual" form of culture can change the dominant culture, if utilized under certain conditions (Kononenko and Karpova 2012: 10). In the case of the Basques in the United States: their "residual" culture that is maintained through these

multivocal symbols allowed them to create their own fused identity as they integrated the culture of the United States. The symbols of the *lauburu*, the witches, common sights of Basque cities, and sheep have come to represent a portion of folklore of the Basques and are being used as a visual identification of being Basque. When these symbols are transferred from the mother country to the United States and the Basque community in Idaho, they are imbued with the identity of the Basque culture and thus become a symbolic representation of the traditions and beliefs of the Basque people both there and in Idaho. The significance of the sheep stickers being transmitted from Idaho to the country is that the identity the Basques attained in the United States is being shared with the Basques in the mother country. The Basques in the mother country were not shepherders as they likely only had a few sheep on their farm for small subsistence needs. Exchange of that symbol—of the sheep—between the Basques in Idaho and the Basques in the mother country reflects an assimilation of the United States Basque subculture into the whole Basque identity.

The beliefs of the Basques are a closely interconnected web of the old system of beliefs and the religion of Catholicism. Syncretization of the old beliefs with Catholicism allowed for the religion to become more widely accepted, even though the old beliefs and customs still remained. Now that the people in the Basque country—and more recently with some of the Basques in Idaho—are shifting away from Catholicism and its ties to the Franco regime, the old beliefs are resurfacing. The cultural identity of the Basques is being preserved through this reassuming of the old traditional roots such as the beating of the earth or the placing of the *eguzkilorre* in the home (Isa). Remembering the old

traditions, even though the original cultural context may no longer be associated, is a way for the Basques to maintain and revive their cultural identity.

Stories

All of the themes up to now have been closely intertwined because of the relationship between festivals and beliefs, beliefs and stories, stories and music, and how everything is ultimately connected to language as an educational device for the spread of Basque culture. Stories, though, are the centerpiece of all of the data I obtained from my interviews. These stories I collected, however, are not the folktales I had expected to collect. I obtained family stories (which have been briefly discussed in the cultural context section), various songs (including *koplak* or rhymed verses, lullabies, and *bertsolaritza*), and dance as a different performative way of telling the histories and battles of the Basque country. This is still folklore though, according to folklorists such as Goody (1965) and Bauman (1992a; 1992b), these stories are still a part of the expressive culture of the people and are orally transmitted from generation to generation. Family stories are handed down from grandparent or parent to child and grandchild, which establishes the elder as the storehouse of knowledge that Goody described as a component of oral traditions (Goody 1992: 13, 16). Marisol's mother told so many stories about her family that, when Marisol went back to the Basque country, she felt she had known them all her life (Marisol). All of my contributors mentioned that the main kinds of stories were about their families and people their parents or grandparents had known back in the Basque country, and those were the kinds of stories that my contributors would tell their kids or would share with others. These stories were not so much folktales in the form that I was expecting as I came into this project, but they turned out to be

much more important in terms of how my contributors and the other Basques in the community in Idaho have come to identify themselves in the United States.

Family stories were the main form of “folktale” that I encountered in my interviews, and some of my contributors gave me reasons why the other forms of folktales I was looking for were no longer something that was shared. The kinds of tales, proverbs and sayings I was looking for were embedded in the language, which Nina says some people may not have grown up in because it was illegal under the dictatorship (Nina). The disappearance of language is definitely a contributing factor to why some of the stories may not have been transmitted among the immigrants in the United States. Isa, when I asked her if she knew of any stories, said nearly the same thing: “I feel like you need to ask someone who speaks Basque in their family and have the traditions more because like where I live, like the place where I was raised they had a lot of immigration” (Isa). It seems like the language may have been a barrier through which the traditional forms of storytelling and traditional folktales could not pass. Isa also says that the people who are already dead or about to die were the ones who would have been able to hear and pass along those stories (Isa). My interviews led me to believe that most of the folktales I was looking for were embedded within layers of qualifications that can no longer be met because of the passing of time, the near loss of the language, and the changing social and cultural contexts of the Basques.

The other stories are often related to traditions and festivals such as Christmas, New Year's, and Carnival (Nina; Olivia). Christmastime brings the singing of Christmas carols and walking from farmhouse to farmhouse in groups to sing in exchange for food (Nina). Christmas also brings Olentzero, the Basque version of Santa Claus. Olivia says

that some people believe Olentzero was a coal miner who lived in the mountains and would give gifts to children; she also says that some Basques believe Olentzero was burned in an orphanage trying to save children and now returns every year to bring gifts to children (Olivia). My contributors all spoke of Olentzero as a coal miner who lived in the mountains, though Olivia was the only one who mentioned his other story. I suspect that the people who say that Olentzero was a coal miner in the mountains likely live near the mountains, thus bringing them closer to the origin of the story. The others who believe he was burned trying to save children from an orphanage may have a different perspective or live in another region of the Basque country. I do know that Olivia is from a northern region of the country that is closer to the Pyrenees, as are a few of my other contributors, which leads me to believe that those who live near the mountains would be more likely to have heard the version of the story where Olentzero is a coal miner from the mountains. On New Year's people will go around town singing the rhymed verses or *koplak* that generally wish one a good new year and a good winter. Olivia also spoke of a story during Carnival where the people of a town near where she lived burned a thief, and how every year they would build an effigy of the thief and burn it (Olivia).

These stories and traditions relating to celebrations and festivals are unique to the Basque country and unique to all those who share the culture. Olentzero may be a newly resurfaced icon of the Basque country, but he is known to the Basque community in Idaho because of the exchange of information that occurs through the museum and when members of the community visit the Basque country. These stories are part of the collective body of folklore that contribute to Basque identity, though maybe not in such a direct way as previous examples have been. The setting and certain symbols that are

portrayed in these stories of Olentzero, in the *koplak* and carols people sing may relate to specific Basque values and traditions; though I cannot be sure because I did not learn the lyrics or other details from my contributors and any speculation would have to be proven by further research and more discussions with Basque people.

Some songs are not sung at celebrations and festivals, but they are still part of the common knowledge of Basque people. The lullabies that I learned from Nina, like the other lullabies that I was sung as a child, are not sweet but truly scary if one understands the lyrics (Nina). One lullaby is sung by a mother who is asking her child to sleep or else a big dog is going to come (Nina). Nina laughed at her translation because she realized that it was a bit cruel to the child, but it had a soft melody and was a commonly sung lullaby (Nina). Other lullabies include soft melodies though maybe not necessarily appropriate lyrics: one is asking a child to sleep and the father has gone to market and includes a sound (*txuntxalun*²) that is repeated even though it has no meaning, it is simply “conducive for the baby to fall asleep”; the other is about a quiet port and the ships are out at sea to fish (Nina). Nina says that “absolutely everybody knows in the Basque country [um] because they’re part of the tradition. The fabric of [uh] maybe you know the early transmitted [um] culture in a way” (Nina). I was impressed to find some similarities between these lullabies and the ones I was sung as a child, the same soft melodic tone yet disturbing words once you know what they are saying. What is distinctive about these lullabies that Nina shared is that, for one, the third lullaby recalls the fishing industry which Woodworth mentioned was a lucrative part of the Basque economy, before the tourist industry took over (Woodworth 2008: 4-5). Marina told me a song that they teach

² ‘tx’ in Basque sounds like ‘ch’ in English; true spelling of the word lost in transcription

to children, a song that everybody knows, that says “we are constantly taking the scales off fish...we’re Basque” (Marina). The Basque culture is known for its fishing in regions near the coast, which makes this song specific to the Basque culture. The second lullaby tells of a market that could possibly refer to a real market that I was told is held in Bilbao. The first one is different because there are scary creatures that come at night, as mentioned by Barandiarán and Tia, but I have not found any other mention of this nightmarish dog or creature in my research (Fornoff et al. 2007: 86; Tia).

Lullabies are not the only songs that are known by all in the Basque culture. A real event that occurred on the coast of the Basque country around 1910 was made into a song that anyone would know (Marina). This song is not a “folktale” *per se*, but a true story, and has become a popular tale and, therefore, part of the folklore of the people (Utley 1965: 11). One day, in 1910, two planes collided in the sky and fell into the ocean; the song speaks of a man who was told to go out and take care of the wreckage, but he refused to go until the tide goes out (Marina). Marina, as well as others in the Basque community, have recently gained a different connection with this song—outside of its historical context—because she knew a woman who, as a child, was a witness to the event (Marina). Once this information was common knowledge among the Basque community, everyone decided to call the song Lola’s song, after the woman who had been there in 1910 (Marina).

All of these songs contain symbols specific to the culture it originated in, supporting Bauman’s proposed characteristics of folklore (Bauman 1992a: 31). The songs and stories my contributors told me were unique to the Basque culture and to what they maintain as their identity: fishing, historical events, mythology, etc. Others have

simply become a part of tradition after generations of passing them down from one to another. It is because of these characteristics of the songs and stories previously discussed that they can be categorized as folkloric material. The fact that the Basques in Idaho also know these songs and stories means that they contribute to the retention of their Basque ethnic identity as they have assimilated into the United States.

Some songs and stories survive through generations because of the popularity of oral traditions within the Basque culture. They persist through an old phenomenon called *bertsolaritza* that continues to occur in contemporary Basque society (Nina). Gorka Aulestia of the Basque Studies Program describes the *bertsolaritza* as an attempt for the Basques “to preserve their perception of life, their sentiments, and their belief through oral expression” (1995: 12). The content that made up the verses of the songs or poems were rooted in the collective memory— defined as a collection of images of the past and the present of a people that is a component of the formation of cultural identity among those who belong to that social structure —of the Basque people (Aulestia 1995: 12; Kononenko and Karpova 2012: 8). The origin of these verses goes back to “ancient” times, were created by “socially and linguistically closed communities,” and the first known documentation of any poems was in the nineteenth century (Aulestia 1995: 12, 65). There are various types of *bertsolaritza* but the true evolution, according to Aulestia, is difficult to trace (1995: 65). Attempting to discover the possible origins of the “improvised sung verse,” Aulestia mentions Manuel Lekuona, who posits that the lifestyle most conducive for this style of oral tradition lies in a more pastoral lifestyle (qtd. in Aulestia 1995: 66). A couple of my contributors, Nina and Marina, mentioned the *bertsolaritza* in our interviews as a form of oral tradition that spans centuries and has

become a popular phenomenon of Basque culture in both the country and the United States (Nina; Marina).

Marina had only mentioned the *bertsolaris* (those who perform and sing the verses) in passing when discussing the competitive nature of the Basques (Marina). She says that, during *jaialdi* and other Basque festivals, there are competitions between *bertsolaris* where “someone will throw out either words or a topic or whatever and they need to make a song up on the spot” (Marina). These verses may be about any number of things, but Marina says that normally they are about topics such as “immigrating...about the pain of leaving the old country,” and not fitting in with the Basque culture when immigrants returned home (Marina). The stories told in these verses convey meanings that would only be understood by those who share the same cultural and social identities, i.e., other immigrants or other Basques, depending on the topics. Basque-Americans would be able to understand and sympathize with a *bertsolari*'s detailing of the pain of leaving their home country because they had experienced it or were told through family stories how their parents or grandparents had felt. In the construction of the identity of Basque-Americans, this form of collective memory is not done on an individual level, but a “collectively-oriented” one, which Kononenko and Karpova view as a “symbolic consumption” that leads to the creation of tradition and identity of a particular group (Kononenko and Karpova 2012: 8). This collectively-oriented form of a collective memory is similar to Utley's (1965) definition of folklore. To him, folklore is the collection of ‘lore’ that is the “common property” of the ‘folk’ (Utley 1965: 2, 11). There is no individual creating the entire body of folklore of a culture; it is done in a collective

group of people who all share a common factor, otherwise it would not be an expression representative of the people of a culture (Utley 1965: 11).

Nina similarly talks about the competitive nature of the Basques and *bertsolari* competitions, but she also provided me with an example of a song she remembers from her childhood of when she and her mother would sing at home (Appendix D). Nina's mother was from more of a rural environment and she liked the *bertsolaris* more than her father, who was from "the street" (Nina). Her mother would memorize the songs and sing them at home or she would take Nina and her sister to competitions, which is how Nina learned and experienced the art of *bertsolaritza* (Nina: 4). Learning the songs in the home is one of the more common methods of learning the songs: Aulestia proposed that kitchens were the primary place of learning and practicing oral traditions (Aulestia 1995: 14). Lekuona's association of *bertsolaritza* with the more pastoral lifestyle is strengthened by Nina's account of her mother enjoying them more than Nina's father did (qtd. in Aulestia 1995: 66; Nina).

Nina provided me with a written out version of a song she knew well and sang it during the interview (Appendix D). She considers this particular *bertsoak* a typical one that most Basques would know: it describes a conversation between two men, one of whom is wearing two shirts because he was visiting his girlfriend (Nina). Nina says that it is commonly understood among Basques that wearing two shirts is an attempt to be elegant and this comment from one man to another is a joking comment, meant to point out this crazy thing about the man's apparel (Nina). The song continues on with the man wearing two shirts returning the critique by saying that there is no way the other man can have two shirts; he only has one (Nina). This critique is understood by Basques to be a

comment referencing the other man's social status, that he is poor and cannot afford more than one shirt (Nina). Hearing Nina translate this song and explain to me the reason why this was a joke was important for me, an outsider, as I would have otherwise not understood the joke. An explanation for why I did not understand this joke comes from Richard Bauman's idea that folklore contains cultural symbols that pertain to the culture in which it was created (Bauman 1992a: 31). Supporting this claim, Frank de Caro states that, to an outsider (i.e., a tourist, visitor to a museum, etc.) the jokes, taboos or other social and cultural meanings embedded in the folklore would not be understood because they do not belong to that group of people (de Caro 2013: 7). I may have a Basque last name, but I was not raised in the culture and am thus an outsider to all of my contributors. Nina made sure she explained to me the different lullabies, stories, sayings, and *bertsoak* because of my position as an outsider to this community.

Nina also detailed the structure of *bertsoak* verses, both rhythmically and linguistically. This particular *bertsoak* follows an eight-ten syllabic structure, meaning that there are eight syllables in the first line and ten in the second and so on for the verse (Nina: 6). The verse also follows a rhyme scheme that has a predictable nature, allowing audience members to anticipate and participate in the next line (Nina: 5). In this song, the rhyme scheme follows a structure in which every ten syllable line rhymes (Nina: 5). Aulestia describes the different verse models of various *bertsoak* and this particular structure follows what he calls the "main model" of verse (Aulestia 1995: 22). The linguistic structure of *berstolaritzas* follows the rules of the Basque language, Euskara, with a few changes to grammar (Aulestia 1995: 57-58). When *bertsolaritzas* were first being sung, composers of these verses did not have any further education beyond the

elementary level, but this did not mean that they were unskilled with the use of their language in expressing this verbal art (Aulestia 1995: 57-58). Euskara was not a unified language and had many different dialects for each region of the country, that is until the *bertsolaris* started the process of unifying the language without knowing that they were doing so (Aulestia 1995: 58). This unconscious contribution to the unification of the language by *bertsolaris* and their works helped to create a national unified language for the Basques: *euskara batua* (Aulestia 1995: 58-59). The importance of language in the identity of the Basques is significant enough that the Basque way of saying that one is Basque (*Euskaldunak*) essentially translates to “one who speaks Basque” (Douglass and Bilbao 1975: 9-10). Thus, through the unconscious creation of a unified language, *bertsolaris* greatly contributed to the creation of a significant part of the Basque identity.

The fact that some of my contributors spoke of the *bertsolaris* and that their songs and verses are performed at *jaialdi* in Idaho suggests that the oral tradition and practice was significant enough to be transmitted to the Basque-Americans in the United States. *Jaialdi*, as seen in Marina’s interview and the discussion of festivals mentioned earlier, is a festival celebrating the Basque culture held in Boise, Idaho (Marina). The inclusion of competitions of *bertsolaritza* at this festival ties the oral tradition to the performance and practice of the Basque culture as members of that culture present it to the rest of the world.

William Bascom argues that one of the forms folklore can take is dance (Bascom 1965: 28). Aurora told me that the biggest parts of the Basque identity, specifically in the Idaho area, are dance and music (Aurora). With Basque dance, there are “dance groups that perform all over [uh] for different groups and all over the world so they associate

those two things [music and dance] most often” (Aurora). Olivia and other contributors also mentioned that they enjoyed dancing, especially the Oinkari dance group that performs “all the different [uh] dances from the seven provinces of the Basque country” (Olivia; Aurora). While in Idaho I was able to attend an Oinkari dance rehearsal and observe one of their dances that they will be performing at a festival in the summer. I did not interview any of the dancers because a majority of them were under the age I had specified in my ethics statement; it is because of this I only observed the rehearsal. I did, however, watch the rehearsal and observe the types of shoes they wore, the props they used, the music they danced to, and the style of dancing. Aurora also provided some details about the dance styles and the props such as that the dancing included a lot of footwork, men used “swords and sticks and hoops,” and women used “baskets and sticks...ribbons and scarves” (Aurora). During the rehearsal I witnessed that the men did indeed use swords and sticks, and both men and women used hoops in the dance. The shoes they wore had ribbons going up the calf and were soft shoes likely made from canvas-like material, similar to ballet shoes. Basque dance is a large part of the Basque culture because the choreography tells stories of history: some dances were about battles and war, some detailed everyday life of selling fish or celebrating the harvest and spring, and sometimes they told other stories (Aurora). The stories told through the dances are specific to different regions of the Basque Country and are an important part of the Basque identity as it is presented in both the country and the community in Idaho.

The stories I collected were not at all what I had been expecting. I had imagined stories involving the mythological characters Barandiarán had encountered, but what was present was completely different. The Basque community in Idaho remembers the

folklore of the Basque country in a different way. Family stories are the most popular, most of my contributors had told me stories about their family's arrival in the United States and how they settled. Other stories included those associated with holidays and celebrations, such as Carnival or Olentzero. Some stories were transmitted through song and dance during festivals. The stories transmitted through dance were choreographed retellings of historic battles and important moments in Basque history, ensuring that the history of the land and the people would be passed on to future generations. Most popular, though, were the orally performed, improvised *bertsolaritza*, which is an old tradition that has persisted and become a widely known phenomenon. According to my contributors, there are competitions in *bertsolaritza* to this day and it remains an example of the strong oral tradition of the Basque culture.

Music

Music was the other component of the Basque identity that Aurora considered to be the biggest public presentation of that identity for Basque-Americans. Some of the main instruments used to create the Basque "sound" are the guitar and the accordion, and some percussion instruments like the tambourine and spoons (Aurora). Marina believed other immigrant families were like hers when it came to "the transfer of music from our immigrants to us" being the most vital way of preserving the culture. Marina's father was a musical man and would teach her and her sister various Basque melodies by humming the melody to them and having them play it back on their button accordions. On the first night of being in the museum there was an event going on where some of the community members played their accordions, guitars, and one woman played the tambourine. A lot

of the music was upbeat and was classified as what I later learned were *jotas*, or songs that were performed during dances.

The instruments and their contemporary use exemplify the syncretization of cultures and how the Basques adapted them in their style to be more “Basque.” As with a lot of things about Basque culture, various instruments and practices were adapted from other cultures and transformed into something that is now considered specific to the Basque culture (Isa). The button accordion is based on the Italian accordion, but was adapted to be more characteristically Basque and has now become an example of the Basque “sound” and a characteristic of the Basque culture. Other instruments that were historically used in Basque music include: the *alboca*, which is a double reeded instrument of cow’s horn that makes two notes at once; and the *doltzainia* or *egaita*, both of which are similar to each other in that they make a high pitched sound, except the first is made of wood and the other is made of metal (Aurora). These last two instruments are, according to Aurora, making a comeback in Basque music, though I did not see these when I saw the music being performed that first night in the museum (Aurora).

Musical instruments are being syncretized with contemporary sounds within the younger Basque generations. Nina explained that there have been some younger people who have gone through higher education and wish to make the Basque culture their own by incorporating it with what they are learning in university (Nina). One example she gives is of a young musician who was studying music, mainly jazz, and wanted to use the accordion in a jazz piece (Nina). She said that the musician’s reasoning for this was they “wanted to be able to hold on to it, but [I] want to make it mine—kind of my own reality” (Nina). Here, we have a musician who is trying to incorporate something that is seen as a

traditional part of the Basque culture with something different and somewhat foreign. Nina spoke of how this fusion of traditional with nontraditional was controversial in the Basque community.

Bascom's same definition that included dance in the definition of folklore also includes music, therefore music is part of the folklore that contributes to the identity of the Basque-Americans in Idaho (Bascom 1965: 28). Music was a significant part of the Basque culture for some immigrants, such as Marina's father, and was seen as a way to ensure the survival of the Basque musical tradition. The syncretization of Basque musical instruments in more contemporary sounds can connect the Basque traditional culture with the present musical styles of United States culture. Connecting these two cultures is a way for the young Basque-Americans to keep with the traditions of their culture while also assimilating into the American lifestyle and making the culture their own in their own way (Trimillos 1986: 10, 12, 13; Nina). Ricardo D. Trimillos, in his study of the overseas Filipino youth's strategies to maintain their identity through music, states that the creation of newer traditional music stems from the concern of creating a fused identity for the younger generations (Trimillos 1986: 13). This is certainly the case for the musician Nina talks about, though maybe in a different way. Young Basque musicians wish to maintain their Basque identity and the traditional music associated with it, but they also want to create something new that represents the Basque-American youth identity. Using music as the mechanism for this doubled identity is not unique to the Basque-American youth as Trimillos also suggests that music is the medium for maintaining a sense of local or ethnic identity for those who are no longer within their traditional or original cultural area (1986: 13).

Andrew Bennett acknowledges how writers of music and ethnic identity have theorized “the power of music in acting as a source of unification and cultural expression for ethnic identity throughout the world,” an understanding that he disagrees with because it does not consider the influence local knowledge instills upon the music that is played (Bennett 1997: 107). In his analysis of bhangra music in Newcastle upon Tyne, Bennett includes the effect local knowledge has upon the “musicalized forms of cultural expression,” suggesting that bhangra music has been adapted and reinvented to become a fusion of bhangra traditional styling and British styling of music (Bennett 1997: 108). Basque music has been adapted and reinvented in this same way, perhaps not as explicitly, but the musical instruments are being adapted to accommodate a different style of music. As Nina mentioned, the accordion was used in a jazz piece rather than in its traditional style (Nina). This reinvention of Basque instrumentation and stylistic traditions has allowed for younger generations of Basques to create their own interpretation of their identity within the new culture to which they now belong. In this way, the Basque youths are promoting their “minority identity” as a part of immigrant culture in the larger cultural identity of the United States (Bennett 1997: 108-109; Trimillos 1986: 9).

The Basque culture has been reinvented and adapted to exist within the United States cultural sphere. Music is one of the many facets of the Basque culture that has been integrated into contemporary use and stylistically adapted so that younger generations of Basque-Americans can make their culture their own within this new lifestyle (Nina). This adaptation and pursuance of a musical identity strengthens the Basque ethnic identity within the United States because it is the Basque-American’s own

unique way of blending their two cultures. They still maintain the Basque identity and pass along a part of the Basque culture, but they also create their own space within the American life.

Language

The Basque language, Euskara, has a different dialect in the different regions of the Basque country (Aulestia 1995: 58). Until the language was unified in the *euskara batua* in 1968 by the Royal Academy, communicating with people from different regions left some conversations at an impasse as meanings and manners of speech would not be carried over between the two speakers (Martinez-Areta 2013: 112). Most of my contributors were from the regions of Guipúzcoa or Vizcaya: the first borders the coast in the north near France, and the latter is in the south of Basque country bordering Spain. Since most of the people immigrating to Idaho were from the region of Vizcaya, the similar dialect made it easier for immigrants to join together and create the community that still exists to this day.

There may have been an official Basque language but most immigrant parents of the contributors I talked to wanted their child to assimilate into the American culture and ensured that they would know English. Jade's mother thought it important to be immersed into this new culture, which included learning English, and making sure that the same was passed along to her children (Jade). Other immigrant families wanted their children to learn the new culture as well, as Marina claims is probably true of almost every immigrant culture (Marina). She believes that any immigrant parent wants their child to

do well and even better in this new spot so they want them to embrace all of those things they just don't want them to give up the good part of what they brought over on the boat, you know, so in a way if you're [um] in the first generation or two you have the advantage of having had the gifts of both the cultures (Marina).

This quote exemplifies the necessity of ensuring that children of immigrants learn the language and the culture of the new place, but also maintaining their mother tongue and their old culture. Ever since the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975 the Basque culture has been slowly reviving itself, the first and most important part of it being the language (Nina). The Basque language still has a strong presence in Idaho because my contributors all knew the language—though some were fluent and others knew a small amount of it—but it seemed to be limited to the older generation or those who had more recently immigrated. The museum is trying to reintroduce the language into the younger generations by offering language classes and by offering a Basque preschool in association with the museum where only Basque is spoken.

When asked about her job, Aurora mentioned that she organized Basque language classes as part of her previous job as the museum's education specialist (Aurora). The language was something that was partially lost because the immigrants needed to learn English in order to continue working in the United States (Aurora). Introducing language classes into the museum's repertoire was a way for the museum to use language as a mechanism of education about the culture and to revive some of the culture that has been lost as generations get older. A part of the museum is the preschool, the *ikastola*, which teaches a Basque curriculum and encourages the learning of the Basque language. Olivia

describes this curriculum as “what a preschooler would learn in the Basque country...intellectual skills, academical [sic] skills, but we also combine it with the Basque culture and we celebrate what they celebrate” (Olivia). I went to the preschool in the early morning for about thirty minutes and was able to observe some of the early morning activities the children participated in before classes. All of the children and the teachers spoke Basque to each other constantly, no English was spoken at all. In this situation, the acquisition of the Basque language through classes and through the preschool was a way for the Basque culture to be passed down to new generations. The language is unique and is an identifying feature for the Basque people and they can usually identify one another because they speak Basque. Euskara is tightly interwoven with the culture of the Basque people because it is both an identifier of being Basque, and an aid for transmission of the culture.

The museum also has other roles aside from teaching the language. It collects information about the history and culture of the Basque people, in the mother country but specifically in Idaho. The mission of the Basque Museum and Cultural Center in downtown Boise is “to preserve, promote, and perpetuate Basque history and culture” (Basque Museum and Cultural Center). Marisol explained to me in her interview that she was grateful for the work the museum does to preserve the culture:

I can't tell you the importance of them collecting these stories and I'm sure that these people remember [um] and so how wonderful that someone realized the importance of collecting those and I do know that this museum has got a great deal of talent...That's where the strength lies in

collecting all of these things, so we can look back, because I think that [um] there's a strength in that (Marisol).

Carol Duncan discusses the role of a museum as an institution and as a form of ritual. She did so through looking at art museums in particular, but the roles she identifies can be extrapolated to other forms of museums as well. Duncan began by treating the museum as a “ceremonial monument” (Duncan 1991: 90). She presents an argument about separating religious and secular institutions as it has been done after the Enlightenment: that religious truth is a matter of subjectivity and secular truths can be empirically verified (Duncan 1991: 90). Claiming that museums are of the latter, of secular knowledge, Duncan distinguishes how a museum can still be considered a ritualistic institution even though it is technically not a form of religious knowledge (Duncan 1991: 91). Museums, both architecturally and with its artifacts, resemble monuments of ceremony in that they imitate temples, cathedrals, or palaces in their structure (Duncan 1991: 90). The artifacts within them are parts of human knowledge that are ritualistic in their own right because they represent the traditions and values of a culture (Duncan 1991: 91). The museum in Idaho, though I did not copy down labels or take photos to accompany my descriptions, presented some artifacts of “ancient” Basque history as well as artifacts of their history in the United States. The knowledge it shares with the community, both Basque and otherwise, can be verified beyond subjective knowledge as there is physical proof in the surrounding area and primary documents (such as photos and letters) describing how life was upon first arriving in the United States. The nature of the information and artifacts found in the museum make the museum as an institution a place of ceremony and ritual. It is a storehouse of knowledge

of the Basque people and the collective knowledge they share in the community. The building itself may not resemble any monuments, it is a simple building, but the subsequent boarding houses that are a part of the museum could be considered a monument of ceremonial nature due to their significance in the early stages of Basque presence in the United States.

The continued use of the Basque language as a mechanism of education solidifies its role as an important factor of Basque identity. It is unique to the country and to the people, so unique that the Basque people refer to themselves as those who speak Basque or *euskaldun* (Douglass and Bilbao 1975: 9). Continued practice of the language in both the museum and in the preschool ensure that the future generations of Basques in the community will know the language of their ancestors and maintain that portion of their Basque identity in the United States. The museum has a particularly significant role in this preservation of culture via the language class it offers, educating people on the uniqueness of the Basque culture and its presence in Idaho, as well as the role of the museum described by Duncan as being a monument and storehouse of knowledge (Duncan 1991: 90-91). The museum contains artifacts and histories of the Basque community as it formed in Idaho, storing the collective memory and knowledge of the people in the museum for future generations of Basques and people outside the community to observe and learn.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

I started this project a year and a half ago. Originally, it was a reflection of my interest in human origins as a subdivision of the field of Anthropology. When I got to the beginning of my senior year in college, I had a small crisis that made me question my interests. I wanted to change my topic, I did not want to continue because I thought I could not go any further, I thought I wanted to look to another country as my focus. In the end, I did choose to continue with the Basques, despite this internal conflict of interest. Other countries and other cultures still fascinate me; I think that is an attribute most anthropologists claim with pride. Choosing one country was hard, but choosing one culture was even more difficult. It is a great responsibility to pursue a topic that has hardly been mentioned in published literature, even more so when you are talking about the identity of a people when you are not a member of the community. I may have a Basque last name, but I did not grow up in the community I was studying, which put me in a difficult position—one that is in the middle, not quite a part of one side, and yet not quite the other, I was a liminal presence. I hope I have presented the Basque people and the community in Idaho in a way that respects their unique culture and who they are today.

Coming into this project I had a certain amount of expectations. I had the idea that I would be able to go into the field and collect folktales, thus providing a more detailed and contemporary collection than Barandiarán and others have done in the past. My research was slightly more focused on folktales and oral culture as a form of folklore because that was what I expected to be present in contemporary Basque society. I was wrong in my assumptions, though, and my experience in the field altered my perspective

of what the Basques determined to be the best representation of their culture when they left their native land. My contributors told me how their family histories and traditional music and dance were the main forms of folklore that connected the contemporary Basque community in Idaho as distinct from the Basque Country. Every time I asked my contributors about the folklore or folktales they still passed on, they all said that they were never told folktales; stories came in the form of what life was like for their family back in the Basque Country, how their families got to the United States, and the stories and histories told through dance and songs. This new information shifted my focus and I had to do more research on how these forms of folklore contributed to the formation of a Basque-American identity.

This paper builds upon itself in how it is presented. In the introduction I explain why I chose this topic and my own personal position within my research. Included in the introduction is a discussion of my method: the form of interviews I conducted; the people I interviewed; and, the process in which this project was created. Next, I discuss the theories of oral history and folklore to establish a basic foundation of what folklore is and how it can be understood within the context of my research. My research into folklore alerted me to the fact that there is no contemporary research into the subject, which leads me to suggest a need for more recent information on folklore as most of the material is now dated. The theory section is followed by an introduction to the people I studied: the Idaho Basques. This section is a brief summary of the background of the Basques in their native country and in Idaho. In this section I also discuss some of the possible reasons why the Basques may have migrated to the United States. It may have been because of the family structure of bilateral inheritance (this means that a son or daughter can inherit)

or as a result of political and economic turmoil in the Basque Country (Egurrola 2003: n. pag.; Bieter and Bieter 2000: 25). Finally, after I had gone to Idaho and collected my own data, I summarize the context of who my contributors are and analyzed the themes I encountered in the interviews I conducted.

Researching the history of the Basque people and the analysis of the themes from my interviews raised more questions than I am currently able to answer. These new questions call for further research on the Basque culture. First, my research has led me to believe that Basque scholars are the only ones conducting research on their own culture. They know that they are unique and have a collection of origin myths contributing to this belief. One of the myths that was once widely believed was that the grandson of Noah, Tubal, brought the Basque language from the Tower of Babel (Etxegoien “Xamar” 2001: 24). I want to know why a majority of the research on the Basques has been conducted by Basques and why people of non-Basque heritage have not contributed to the research. Second, the Basque Studies Program formed in 1972 is predominantly comprised of Basque scholars. Bieter and Bieter mention, however, that the survival of the Basque-American culture cannot be solely attributed to people of Basque heritage because there were many in Idaho who were not Basque and still contributed to festivals and celebrations promoting the Basque identity. One such case of this is exhibited when one of the main organizers of *jaialdi* was a non-Basque (2000: 157). If this were the case during Bieter and Bieter’s research and final publication in 2000, then why are there no other non-Basque contributors to the retention of Basque culture? There is little evidence in my research outside of this one case of people of non-Basque heritage researching the Basques or helping the survival of their culture in the United States.

The connection between the Basque culture and the Basque language is another topic that needs further research. Euskara is the mechanism through which the Basques are able to transmit their folklore and express their identity. The language is the storehouse of oral tradition and the manner in which culture is transmitted (Isa; Nina). Since the language does not belong to the Indo-European language family, it raises the question: to what family does the Basque language belong? Is there even a proto-language for Euskara or is it truly the original language of the Tower of Babel that the Basques believe it to be? The genetic and linguistic research mentioned in my literature review can be seen as attempts to discover the origin of the Basques, further contributing to their list of origin myths—which I mentioned earlier (Zavaleta 2014; Etxegoien “Xamar” 2001: 24). Further research on the topic of the Basque language could possibly fill in the gaps in the “big picture” of the Basques that researchers have been slowly creating in the past few decades.

A possible method for linguistic research of Euskara could be glottochronology, which uses similar words of different languages to discover the ancestral proto language (Salzmann, Stanlaw and Adachi 2011: 163-164). Envision a family tree: at the top is the common ancestor (the proto language), this ancestor branches out and forms new generations (parent languages), and from this level of generations branches out another level of generations (daughter languages). Glottochronology is a way for linguists to visualize language as if it were genetics; the result of such a process leading to a map of a family of languages, such as the Indo-European family which English belongs to but the Basque language does not (Salzmann, Stanlaw, and Adachi 2011: 141). If this original language is discovered, a linguistic anthropologist would be able to use the similarities in

the same words of different languages (cognates) to understand the culture of the people who spoke the proto language (Salzmann, Stanlaw, and Adachi 2011: 141). Further research into the Basque culture and the folklore of the people would use the process of glottochronology and lexical reconstruction to pinpoint the proto-language to which Basque belongs.

I was only in Idaho for a few days, a short period of time that was certainly not long enough for me to understand the contemporary folklore of the Basque community in Idaho. The time constraints on my research project leave me with more questions than answers, but the results of my analysis have at least provided a framework upon which further research can be built. Given more time, I would have focused on a singular aspect of the folklore—such as the art, dance, music, or songs—I discovered and looked at it more in depth. One of these aspects is folktales, a form of folklore I expected to find but did not. This may be due to the limited amount of time I was there: I was not able to create a trusting relationship in which my contributors could have possibly told me more. I did not go into the homes of any of the Basque residents, and thus, I was not able to observe if the hearth did indeed hold offerings or if there were any old traditions of the *etxe* that were still present. There may have been more about the folklore of the Basques that I was unable to discover because I was a researcher who bore the name of being Basque, but did not belong, and I was not invited to witness something so personal as the folkloric traditions would be.

There is much more research that can be done in the future for the Basques. Most of the information I found in my initial research is now dated, the folklore having been collected nearly a century ago. It is time for a contemporary collection of Basque

folklore, both in the country and the United States, to be published. Given more time and more resources, this would be my end goal. My overall goal for this project was comprised of four steps: first, understand folklore; second, further my research from my Junior Independent Study and go more in depth on Basque folklore; third, to see how Basque folklore was maintained in the United States; and finally, to find some sort of folkloric exchange between the Basque Country and the Basque-Americans in Idaho. I have discovered some of the forms of folklore in the Basque community and have presented in my analysis chapter how they contribute to the formation of an ethnic identity. The syncretization of Basque traditions originating from the native country with the contemporary traditions of the United States is one of the ways that folklore has been adapted to the new Basque-American identity. The re-interpretation of traditional Basque folklore in the Basque-American subculture in Idaho is not entirely the same as the folklore in Europe. It has been adapted to accommodate the culture of the United States.

What I did find in my research is how different social structures are valued more highly in the United States than in the Basque Country. The folklore of the Boise Basques is focused on elements of the traditional Basque culture and primarily maintained through the family. All of the festivals, beliefs, stories, music, and the language are indicative of Basque culture and have all survived because of the value Basque families have placed on them. Generally, the folklore of the Boise Basques is the combined expressive culture of the Basques and the United States as Basque immigrants searched for a way to retain their cultural identity while also integrating into that of their new locale.

Throughout the process of researching and writing this paper I have learned much about how to write, how to compose my thoughts, how to interact with people, and how

to trust myself and my abilities. I have built the framework from the bottom up: from understanding folklore, the history of the Basques, and up to my analysis; my contribution to the body of research on the Basques is only the beginning. I plan to continue my research and focus more specifically on one of the forms of folklore I discovered—such as the music, the dance, participating in and observing *jaialdi*, or learning more stories—hopefully spending more time there and getting to know the people of the Basque community better.

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

Folklore's Contribution to Identity of the Basque in the United States

Who we are

Hello, I am Leah Zavaleta. I am an Anthropology and English student at the College of Wooster.

What we are doing

I am conducting research on the contribution of folklore and ritual to the creation of Basque identity.

Your participation

You must be at least EIGHTEEN years of age or older.

I am asking you whether you will allow us to conduct an interview with you about your knowledge of folklore, oral histories, stories, etc., that you may have heard as a child growing up. If you agree, we will ask you to participate in one interview, possibly a follow-up interview if questions arise during analysis, for approximately one or two hours.

Please understand that **your participation is VOLUNTARY** and you are not being forced to take part in this study. The choice of whether to participate or not, is yours alone. If you choose not to take part, you will not be affected in any way whatsoever. If you agree to participate, you may stop participating in the research at any time and tell me that you don't want to go continue. If you do this, there will be no penalties and you will not be prejudiced in any way.

Confidentiality

All identifying information will be kept in a confidential and inaccessible cabinet and will not be available to others and will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law.

I am asking you to give me permission to tape-record the interview so that I can accurately record what is said.

Your answers will be stored electronically in a secure environment and used for research or academic purposes now or at a later date in ways that will not reveal who you are. **All future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Committee review and approval.**

Your name will not be included in the final analysis. However, for the sake of organization and, should the occasion arise, the need for a follow-up, your name will be connected with the data. Only myself and my two advisors will be able to see your name.

Throughout my project all information, personal or otherwise, will be secured and unavailable to anyone but myself and my advisors. Upon completion of my research project, the recordings and any further data will not be destroyed but will be kept secure in the Basque Museum and Cultural Center as a part of their own archives.

While every effort will be made by me to protect the confidentiality of your information, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will respect confidentiality, even though every member will be encouraged to do so. For this reason you are advised not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

Risks/discomforts

At the present time, we do not see any risk of harm from your participation. The risks associated with participation in this study are no greater than those encountered in daily life.

Benefits

There are no immediate benefits to you from participating in this study. However, this study will be extremely helpful to me in that we hope will promote understanding of Basque identity and how it may differ from Idaho to the home country.

If you would like to receive feedback on our study, I will record your phone number on a separate sheet of paper and can send you the results of the study when it is completed sometime after April 26, 2016.

Who to contact if you have been harmed or have any concerns

This research has been approved by the HSRC Research Ethics Committee (REC).

If you have concerns or questions about the research you may call me at (919) 265-7753, or email me at lzavaleta16@wooster.edu

My advisors are Pamela Frese (pfrese@wooster.edu) and Joseph Aguilar (jaquilar@wooster.edu). Feel free to contact either of them if you have any questions or concerns.

CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research on Leah Zavaleta’s study of folklore, ritual and identity. **I am eighteen years of age or older.** I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop participating at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively. I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally in the immediate or short term. I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

.....
Signature of participant **Date:**.....

CONSENT FOR TAPE RECORDING

I hereby agree to the tape-recording of my participation in the study.

.....
Signature of participant **Date:**.....

I understand that the information that I provide will be stored electronically and will be used for research purposes now or at a later stage.

.....
Signature of participant **Date:**.....

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

When did your family first arrive to Boise?
 Why did they choose Idaho?
 Have you ever asked your grandparents or elders in the community what it was like migrating to America?
 How did they maintain their Basque traditions (have you ever asked)?
 What characteristics, beliefs, rituals or practices do you believe specifically link you to the Basque identity?
 Do you have any old artifacts or heirlooms of Basque heritage?
 What do you remember most about the stories of your childhood?
 What stories do you remember about the Basque country that you may have been told by your parents, grandparents, etc?
 What kinds of stories, fairy tales, bedtime stories do you remember that your parents, grandparents, etc. may have told you growing up?
 Were there any stories that were told repeatedly?
 Where were these stories told? Was it in a group, after a certain event, before bed?
 What do you remember about the stories you were told in your childhood?
 What kinds of stories do you tell your family?
 If you have kids or grandchildren, what kinds of stories do you tell/have you told them?
 Do you tell certain stories more than others? If so, why?
 Do you know any stories of the old gods and spirits such as Mari or the *laminak*?
 Do you follow any of the old traditions and customs of the Basque country?
 How significant is *etxe* in your household?
 Do you leave offerings for your ancestors?
 Do you believe in the sacredness of the hearth in the home?
 Christmas just happened, are there any traditions that you follow for Christmas?
 What kinds of traditions do you follow for other holidays?
 Are traditional dances or games still performed, such as *jai-alai* or the Shepherd's Dance?
 How much of the Basque culture and customs are taught to the younger kids?
 Are they ever educated or reminded of the old ways?

How would you define the culture center?
 Please explain your job at the culture center.
 Are you of Basque origin? If not, what drew you to this center?
 What exhibits do you believe best encompass the Basque identity? How so?
 What kinds of public and community outreach does the center engage in? Explain.
 From where do the material from the exhibits originate? What are your methods of collecting these materials?
 What is the best example of a public performance of Basque identity?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE³

Leah Zavaleta –Folklore & Anthropology Tentative Schedule – January 7 (Thurs) –
January 10 (Sun). 2016

January 7, 2016 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. – — to pick up at hotel
Tour of the Basque Museum/talk to Aurora – new, acting Exec. Director & — – new,
Community Research Project Director
1:00 p.m. – Meet with Isa (30s) Isa teaches Spanish at Bland State and teaches
mythology/folklore workshop for BSU Basque Studies. Information/discussion. 3:30 p.m.
– Marina (60s/70s)– at Basque Museum 5:15 p.m. - Dinner with musicians —to host
(nearby restaurant)
6:30 p.m. – Mercedes (70s)– at Basque Museum (if Mercedes feels OK)
8:00 p.m. – — (60s) – if he has enough steam at the end of the night! (He'll be playing
accordion with us tonight too).
6:30-8:00 p.m. – First Thursday events. Open gallery. Tours of the historic house
beginning at 6:30 on the half hour; music jam session (6:30-8:00 p.m.) Beer & cider
tasting

January 8, 2016 (Friday)
9:45 a.m. – Visit preschool — confirmed with — Director.
10:30 a.m. – Go with —to the funeral of — – Catholic Church
2:00 p.m. – Olivia (late 20s/early 30s) - from —is the teacher at our language immersion
preschool.
3:30 – approx. Tia— confirmed with Tia on 1/7

January 9, 2016 (Saturday)
10:00 a.m. –Nina. (50) Euskara Instructor at BSU. — confirmed via email 1/7
11:00/11:30 a.m. — (80s) - confirmed 1/7
12:30 p.m. – Marisol (60s) confirmed 1/7 – she'll meet you at the Basque Museum.
_____ Aurora will take you with her to Midsummer Hills for the Euskal Lagunak
annual dinner.

January 10, 2016 (Sunday)
1:00 p.m. - Jade at Basque Museum. Confirmed 1/7
1- 4 Dance practice – Oinkari Basque Dancers – Basque Center – I've sent a message to
—, President, so she knows that you may be poking your head in and watching the
practice.

³ Names and places have been changed for anonymity

APPENDIX D: BERTSOAK FROM NINA

*ari naizela, ari naizela
her ikusten dut ixirrita
eta zein ez da harrituko gaur
giza hori ikusita
dudarik gabe egina dio
andregaiari bisita
oso dotore etorri zaigu
bi alkandora jantzita*

*hauxe de lotsa einau didua
gizan antiau saituta
edozer gauza estan dugu
aid tantorkei poztuta
bi alkandora ekeri detut
bat erauztea ahaztuta
pellok bi hola jautzileo ditu
bat besteikan ez duta*

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