

## Editors' Note

This collection of essays arises from both the need and desire to contribute to improving and widening the scope and nature of current Basque Studies. Designed and shaped as a special dossier, this volume of *Territories* integrates a selection of papers presented at a workshop on Basque Studies held at the University of the Basque Country in 2022.<sup>1</sup> The workshop sought to lend continuity to a previous edition that took place in Buenos Aires in 2021, in which we focused on the question of to what extent Basque Studies suffer from self-definition problems.<sup>2</sup> At that time, we argued that Basque Studies are usually considered as a field encompassing a vast set of knowledge disciplines and objects/subjects of study. Spaces, people, processes, categories, words, and worldviews that refer to various aspects of Basque themes have settled into a tradition as objects of study—migration and exile, diaspora, transmission of values and identity, conservation, cultural sustainability, etc., studied by linguistics and ethnography, history, anthropology, literature, genealogy, religion, law, the diaspora, and a myriad of academic specialties. However, we highlighted, the field of Basque Studies has rarely been an object of definition *in itself* and almost never a subject of reflection *per se*.

Nowadays, Basque Studies are indeed at a *crossroads*. They have traditionally been considered as a field that encompasses a broad set of scholarly disciplines. The common denominator that has usually defined them is that they are all those objects/subjects of study that are related to “the Basque”. Behind this weak and fine common thread lies a conventional container focus: Basque Studies in Euskal Herria and the diaspora, with few exceptions, continue to favor mostly, as at the end of the twentieth century, the multidisciplinary—if not intradisciplinary—approach. Consequently, Basque Studies are seen as the sum and juxtaposition of different disciplines with a common fine thread—and, sometimes, a shared mission—, with researchers who do not necessarily work in a coordinated or integrated manner. Another consubstantial effect is that this approach has not only too often been presented as *allant de soi* but has also not contributed to giving Basque Studies themselves an internal coherence.

The 2022 workshop aimed at finding a way out of this crossroads by taking into consideration some trends in current area studies, ethnic studies, and cultural studies in their diversity of continental, insular, and diasporic worlds: the “trans” perspectives. What possibilities do these perspectives open up for Basque Studies? Is it possible to analyze these studies from transdisciplinarity and transnationalism to translocality and transculturalism, among other types of “trans” perspectives? Moreover, is it possible to promote comparative studies between area studies and across regions and stateless nations? What are the challenges and possibilities, but also the limitations and difficulties of the “trans–turn” in Basque Studies?

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<sup>1</sup> II International Workshop on Basque Studies, “‘Trans’ Perspectives for Basque Studies: The deconstruction of the traditional container focus of the discipline”. Leioa, Basque Museum of History of Medicine and Science, University of the Basque Country, Aitor Anduaga and Julieta Gaztañaga, 6 June 2022.

<sup>2</sup> I International Workshop on Basque Studies. ‘Basque Studies from a transdisciplinary approach: dialogue and reflection’. Buenos Aires, Basque Studies Network-Argentina (REVA), Julieta Gaztañaga and Aitor Anduaga, 10 December 2021.

The five essays collected here were conceived with the desire—a research program would be too presumptuous—to provide Basque Studies with a shared view and a certain internal coherence. Selective in approach, and resisting traditional multidisciplinary narratives, they attempted to demonstrate that it is possible to fruitfully apply the different types of "trans" perspectives that have been developed and diversified in recent years in distinct fields of the social sciences and humanities to Basque Studies and their historiography. The emphasis in these selected essays is deliberately transdisciplinary—and, further, specifically diasporic, not homeland-centered; transnational, not Eurocentric; concerned more with socio-cultural processes of intertwining, transposition, and reciprocal relations, rather than with geographical regions; and with the homeland and Basque diasporas, as dynamic spaces and flows of people, relationships, and ideas, rather than fixed features and static regions. In a world with intense and unequal forces of globalization like today's, the mobility of ideas and migration flows make the use of fixed categories from a disciplinary and geographical point of view be no longer justified.

These essays share several concerns, and present five different but convergent perspectives. The first by Aitor Anduaga examines a neglected aspect of Basque Studies, namely its historical disciplinary evolution, taking as a point of departure the multidisciplinary approach promoted by scholars during a large part of the twentieth century, and the subsequent more interdisciplinary approach in the 1990s which, from Eusko Ikaskuntza, sought to dispose of the earlier ethno-historicist localism and focus on issues of practical application for Basque society, with Basque diaspora's studies being at a large extent neglected. Anduaga proposes the adoption of transdisciplinary approaches to overcome the limitations and shortcomings of both historical currents.

If the first essay deals with the historical evolution of disciplinary approaches, the second by Sho Hagio addresses the constraints in scope of current Basque Studies through a case study centered on the Japanese novelist Yaeko Nogami (1885-1985) and her perception of "Basque" born out of a trip to the Basque Country in 1939, which transcends both the limitations of Basque Studies undertaken in the Basque diasporas and those (overwhelmingly) that share a cultural or religious background of Christianity. Realism, rather than Orientalism, became the hallmark of Nagomi's perception, establishing herself as a *bona fide* exponent of the transnational eclecticism and pluralism of early Basque Studies.

"The Basque Diaspora before Paul: Ruminations on the power of transformation of trans perspectives" by Iker Arranz poses the notion of deferred identities as a conceptual unit to explain and elaborate further on the problems of the traditional Basque Diaspora in the West of the US. The article explores the transdisciplinary notions of food, focusing in the use of food items in songs by Basque musicians of the 90s, and establish a comparative line with the notion and symbolism of food for the Basque Diaspora. Arranz draws on the figure of St. Paul, according to Alain Badiou, to discuss the pre-difference moment of the Basque diaspora, and the necessity for a post-difference (after Paul) moment in order to establish innovative myths and cultural collective imaginaries for the 8<sup>th</sup> province.

In "Memories of 'Basque Violence' – political violence, conflict, and reconciliation in the perspective of cultural narratology: a transdisciplinary and transnational paradigm?", Patrick

Eser proposes an analysis of the public debates on the violent past. By drawing on the transdisciplinary perspective of cultural narratology this article provides an examination of the narrative constructions of memories of political violence, conflict, and reconciliation focusing on their recent display in various media and genres. Eser argues that such perspective can be combined with a transnational paradigm in order to understand conflictive pasts and memories and Basque Studies have a paradigmatic role to assume in comparative research.

Looking forward to contributing to a transdisciplinary perspective, Julieta Gaztañaga offers an examination of the social praxis of '*erronka*', a Basque term associated with challenges, usually leading to betting and gambling. "*Erronka(s)* and a Transdisciplinary Approach for Basque Studies" argues that Basque Studies are akin to political *erronkas* because only a transformative imagination can produce new questions and enhance research agendas. Drawing from her ethnography of recent contemporary grass-root mobilizations, the article focuses on *Korrika* —a popular and massive footrace to promote Basque language— in the search for answers about the dynamics of political projects. The article concludes that a transdisciplinary perspective is needed to shed light onto the collective role of *erronkas*, particularly those attached to sovereigntists claims and the realizations of political imagination.

The concluding piece of this volume offers an outstanding review of "Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures" by Kyle Bladow. This insightful review introduces an indigenous perspective, enriching the discussion surrounding a commendable and recommended book.

Aitor Anduaga and Julieta Gaztañaga