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Title: The Basque Diaspora before Paul: Deferred Identities, Food and Music for a Transdisciplinary Approach to Basque Studies

Abstract: Although Migration and Diaspora Studies are relatively young disciplines, they are gaining momentum in the post-pandemic world. The pandemic has had a twofold effect on these disciplines, with the deprivation of travel and the effects of lockdowns leading to a collective awareness of autonomy and mobility, while virtual and online environments have become stable points of contact that were previously unrecognized. In this context, minor/small cultures have had the opportunity to review their practices and policies. Despite these changes, the main problematizing frame of the Basque Diaspora remains displacement. However, a "before Paul" diaspora still exists, as Alain Badiou uses the biblical figure of Paul the Apostle as a foundation for universalism. By erasing the differences between Jews and Gentiles, Paul overcomes the political issue of salvation, enabling a higher condition of truth. A similar approach might be taken to the traditional arrangement of diasporas as mirrors of "original" repositories of identity markers. This paper explores the possibilities before and after the pandemic and the re-arrangement of cultural and identity references. It poses the notion of deferred identities as a conceptual unit to explain and elaborate further on the problems of the traditional Basque Diaspora.

Keywords: Basque Studies, Basque Diaspora, Diaspora Studies, Universalism, Identity and Culture

Wordcount: 11,200

Introduction

The question of identity is elusive, slipping through our grasp like sand in an hourglass. This complexity is amplified when addressing the doubts and difficulties faced by third-generation migrants. These individuals often express uncertainty when attempting to replicate the identity paths of their parents or grandparents. While first-generation migrants can answer the concrete question "who are you?" with a simple response of "I am X," third-generation individuals encounter a variety of pathways to arrive at "X," as though navigating a treasure map.

The third generation experiences a contradiction between two main fluxes. Firstly, for the first generation, identity was predetermined by a transcendental entity, such as tradition, history, and religion. Secondly, once the target identity was obtained, the process of constructing it was relatively simple and linear, with identity markers being established through customs, dress code, language, common beliefs, and territoriality. For instance, the beret, a long nose, and rural sports were frequently cited as common identity markers for what it means to be "Basque", in formal and informal conversations among Basque diaspora members.

However, third-generation individuals within diasporic communities struggle to reconcile both fluxes in an era where identities are formed in a fragmented or hybrid manner, as unintentionally they might be giving rise to the possibility of a generic subject in progress. Third-generation Basque youths may not possess the knowledge or skills to "fit in" with the prescribed identity markers, particularly the command of Euskara, the Basque language, which remains a significant identity marker. Therefore, the possibility for the emergence of a new generic subject "in-construction" implies that the particular subject-vessel full of particularities of previous generations is at risk of being replaced by a partially filled subject-vessel, namely, the diasporic subject.

Memories serve as a lens for observing a past that seems increasingly remote, especially for the Basque Diaspora in North America [6-7]. Additionally, there is a tendency among the Basque collective imagination in the Basque Country to romanticize the Diaspora community, assigning traditional and even conservative values. Basque Studies has approached the study of the Basque Diaspora primarily from a historical and, at times, Eurocentric viewpoint [8-15].

In this article, we aim to showcase the use of food items as cultural symbols to challenge, critique, and explore social and political scenarios. The examples we present are primarily drawn from song lyrics of music bands from the 90s. These symbolic usages may not necessarily align with the conservative meanings attributed to food within the Basque Diaspora community. For instance, the Basque Diaspora often associates food with traditional and family-style restaurants, such as Boarding Houses, and menus served at such establishments [16].

As a field of study that is still developing, Food Studies is characterized by its interdisciplinary nature. In this vein, this article seeks to pave the way for Basque Studies to investigate new perspectives that will facilitate trans-disciplinary studies and discussions of topics related to the Diaspora.

To provide an overview of the current state of Food Studies within Basque Studies, it is observed that there is a limited presence of food elements that challenge traditional meanings associated with edible items in Basque literature, in contrast to other literary regions. In Basque culture, food habits are predominantly viewed in a positive light, often serving as a means of comparison with other regions in Spain and France. The high concentration of Michelin Stars in San Sebastian, for instance, is considered a marker of better living standards and economic opportunities. This

tendency is partly associated with the concept of the Basque Oasis, which has been used to pacify social unrest, specially intense during the 80s and 90s. However, interestingly, some cultural expressions, such as music, feature food elements that subvert this favorable outlook and offer a critical perspective.

In the context of Basque culture and the Basque Diaspora, food-related cultural practices have traditionally played a significant role in bringing communities together [24]. Although there have been some examples of cross-cultural experimentation, particularly evident in the menus, it is fair to say that Basque restaurants and picnics in the western United States have tended to stick to a more traditional repertoire as cultural settings.

Hence, this article endeavors to initiate a trans-disciplinary discussion around food elements within Basque culture, to explore the cultural narratives associated with these examples, and to contrast them against conventional narratives that frame food as an economic asset (in tourism) [25-26], an identity marker (traditional Basque cuisine) [27-29], and an international commercial gateway (an entry point for non-Basque audiences to learn about the Basque Country) [22]. The intention is to create a basis for rethinking these narratives in the Basque Diaspora and establishing innovative avenues for exploration. Preceding this set of examples, the article provides a theoretical framework on the concept of the generic subject, as proposed by Alain Badiou through the figure of Saint Paul, which underpins universalism and serves as the locus of (Basque) culture, with its diaspora representing a pre-Pauline moment. The article also suggests the concept of *deferred identities* as the type of subject that the Basque Diaspora displays in the early 21st century, pre-Pauline in nature, transcending the set of differences towards reproducing cultural issues with "new" differences.

The figure of Paul in Cultural Studies and the Idea of Deferred Identities

To take a simple but obvious example, a theorem in geometry that can be found in Euclid's Elements is unquestionably the result of efforts of thought that occurred in the world of Ancient Greece. Yet this theorem, originally written and conceived of in Greek, is clear and comprehensible today in any particular world as a singular geometrical truth, which can be demonstrated again in Chinese or Basque without its truth value being affected
Alain Badiou *The Immanence of Truths. Being and Event III*

The history of Paul the Apostle is already well-known. As Aristotle, later Heidegger, and even later Derrida remind us, biographies hold enough interest to contextualize thinkers' figures. They are not critical, but at times they provide some details that convey the presented ideas. In this direction, we know how Saul, born in Tarsus—present-day Turkey—becomes Paul after having a revelation. As popularly known, it is in the moment that he falls off of his horse while crossing the desert that he visits heaven, unsure whether this visit is attended by his body or his spirit. Paul is struck by this moment deep enough to reorganize the coordinates of his thought. Badiou remarks early in his book devoted to the figure of Paul [30] that he is not interested in the many religious, even moral, venues that Paul visits on his journey spreading the Good News. Instead, Badiou fixes his attention on identifying Paul as the anti-philosopher. For Paul—according to Badiou—"it is a matter of investigating which law is capable of structuring a subject devoid of all identity and suspended to an event whose only 'proof' lies precisely in its having been declared by a subject". The idea of having a generic subject that is suspended *against* history is remarkable, and it is one of the major contributions that Paul makes, according to Badiou:

"What is essential for us is that this paradoxical connection between a subject without identity and a law without support provides the foundation for the possibility of a universal teaching within history itself." (Badiou, 5)

The role of history in the production, consumption, and reproduction of Basque culture and its diaspora is of great interest to this paper, as it is a significant factor in shaping their cultural narratives. While other nations also engage with history in similar ways, the Basque Country's commitment and dedication to historical law is noteworthy. Walter Benjamin's interpretation of Paul Klee's "Angelus novus" provides an insightful pictorial representation of this argument [31], where the angel looks back to history in a form of "anterior future", which is the verbal tense for philosophy, according to Badiou. For traditional Basque cultural production, cultural identity is crucial, as it is composed of various cultural elements that form a complete picture. However, as Badiou emphasizes, the universal must remain free from any association with the particular in any of its forms:

"All access to the universal, which neither tolerates assignation to the particular, nor maintains any direct relation with the status whether it be that of dominator or victim-of the sites from which its proposition emerges, collapses when confronted with this intersection between culturalist ideology and the "victimist" [victimaire] conception of man." (Badiou, 6)

The aforementioned perspective contradicts both the traditional method of cultural production in the Basque Country and the endeavor to create a comparable product via imitation in the Basque Diaspora. Although it remains uncertain at this point, one can speak of a simulacrum in the sense of Jean Baudrillard [32]. Badiou refers to the "culturalist ideology" as the tendency of multiculturalist ideological groups to sponsor cultural specificity. In other words, this can be seen as the exotic difference that sustains many national epic narratives. According to Badiou, this only responds to commercial logic procedures within capitalism, or the idea that the defense of origin—original, native, indigenous—is solely reliant on the capitalization of the subset of oppressed individuals either way to make them quantifiable—meaning numbers and not individuals within the logic of liberal democracy—or to make them profitable—as cultural consumption and appropriation demonstrate in many economically depressed regions and cities [33-34]. This incisive analysis, however, overlaps with many elements of what Badiou terms in a different paper "our current conjuncture" [35]. Badiou is quite clear on this point, indicating that the specificities that arise from cultural roots do not belong on the path of universal truths, and for this reason, Badiou stands behind the figure of Paul. Additionally, Badiou is clear on the relative importance of differences, and he proposes an intriguing detour: rather than intersecting particular differences on the path of universal truths, it is about articulating the generic subject around these truths, in order to - and this is a crucial point - transgress new differences [30]. In some way, Badiou anticipates the renewal of culture, tradition, or customs through this approach.

Badiou focuses on the figure of Paul the Apostle not to deepen into theological positions, but to ruminate on the question of difference and identity. Badiou's *Saint Paul* can be considered a major work in identity politics. For that, Badiou—and Paul—pivot the rationale of difference precisely around its antonym or negation, namely, indifference. Paul's comparison of faith and laws offers an opportunity to reassess what it means to be a Christian believer. By transcending the Jewish laws that dictate what it takes to be a proper believer, and focusing solely on faith in Christ, Paul illustrates the indifference between Jews and Gentiles on their journey towards salvation. Although there has never been an official "manual of the good Basque" within the collective Basque psyche, especially outside the Basque Country, the idea has lingered as a spectral presence until individuals

seeking to join the ethnic group, such as the *euskaldunberri*¹, make it a reality. This, naturally, is the salvation of the soul. Badiou recognizes Paul's argument when he states:

“[H]ow clearly Paul's statement rings out under these conditions! A genuinely stupefying statement when one knows the rules of the ancient world: ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female’ (Gal. 3.28!)” (Badiou, 9)

In considering the salvation of the (in)different subject(s), the notion that nuances are irrelevant for the conditions of truth, ala Badiou, as the extenuate the particularities of minor or displaced cultures in contrast to dominant or hegemonic ones. In this direction, could we claim that there is neither *euskaldun* nor *euskaldunberri* anymore? This approach has been taken in the field of Diaspora Studies, where Basque Studies has often focused on nostalgic efforts of preservation and resilience. Paul's conceptualization of "difference" presents an opportunity for Basque Studies to shift the discourse towards a trans-disciplinary understanding of what it means to be "Basque," particularly in discussions of diasporic identity.

The narrative of displacement of the Basques throughout the West of the US has been predominantly conveyed through a romanticized account of the shepherd, viewed as the archetypal self-made man and conqueror of the ultimate frontier, thus perpetuating a nostalgic framework. As a result, peripheral figures such as women, the LGBTQ+ community, and irreverent individuals have been largely omitted from the mainstream narrative. Exceptions to this trend can be found in works like the film *Brokeback Mountain* [36] or in the poetry and figure of Frank Bidart [37], just to mention a couple.

Incorporating a romanticized vision, sometimes via methodological nationalism, has enabled the definition of the Basque Diaspora "before Paul." This portrayal characterizes a plateau of individuals sharing a common origin and promotes an analysis limited to anthropological or historical terms. However, a diaspora "after Paul" may more accurately address issues that emerge as subsequent generations are left uncertain or misinformed about their identity, traditions, or history. An identity theory "after Paul" necessitates a commitment to universality that challenges conventional research methodologies and requires a trans-disciplinary approach to the question at hand.

The concept of *deferred identities* may serve as a means of addressing certain issues within diasporic communities, in contrast to what Alain Badiou terms the generic subject. Deferred identities refer to multiple sets of identities that do not crystallize into a group of markers in construction defining a human individual or collective in a more static or dynamic way, but instead come deferred into subjects or collectives as they are filtered by displaced memories and references from previous generations. The mechanism of deferring elevates these particularities to the category of pure or perfect, generating what Slavoj Žižek calls "parts without bodies" and what conversely Fernando Pessoa synthesized in the line "Nature is parts without a whole." The idea of the simulacrum, as mentioned by Jean Baudrillard, becomes relevant in this theoretical projection. The filtration of something into its essence in order to rescue the soul of that particular reality, and expanding its existence as a fully completed reality, creates the effect of the simulacrum: a perfect reproduction that is only perfect in its partiality and ultimately impossible to re-produce. Basque diasporic third-generation subjects and collectives face an inherited problem that is impossible to solve, as they commit to their cultural identities in an endless cycle of catching up with the original

¹ The term *euskaldunberri* [new Basque] is used to describe someone who is learning the Basque language. However, this label is contentious, as it implies a perspective of the "pure" or "authentic" Basque speaker. There is a reference for this too, *euskaldun zahar* [old Basque], and it has a precedent in Spanish culture, namely, the *Cristiano viejo*, or old Christian, as an identity marker against the Muslim invader in the 16th century.

pattern. This pattern refers to the pure and perfect parts and fragments that have survived in the memories of the collective itself. Minority and gender studies have been of particular interest in the literature when discussing the formation and study of migratory identities. One possible solution may be in the creation of new identities, or in adopting identity markers that provide a more straightforward formation of identities for both individuals and collectives. In other words, the process of imagining new myths. As Badiou suggests, a possible solution may come too from letting subjects trespass new differences.

Food, Music and Political Discourses in Basque Diaspora Studies

Over the past decades, Diaspora Studies has oscillated between utilizing historical and anthropological methodologies [45-47] and newer endeavors to integrate philosophical [48-49], ethnic [50-52], social [53-55], national [56-57], or culinary [58-60] perspectives into its discourse. This trend is not unique to Diaspora Studies, but rather appears to be a broader phenomenon in which academic fields are shifting laterally [61-62], rather than advancing progressively. In this vein, scholarly attention has been notably drawn towards the Basque Diaspora, as previously noted, with a focus on more specific angles of analysis [63-69].

We should remember that the *renaissance* of Basque culinary arts departs from an adaptation of French cuisine led by Pedro Subijana and Jose Mari Arzak, among others, during the 70s [96]. Therefore, as happens more often than not in food-related cultural environments, Basque cuisine lacks a “proper” origin, or it responds to a process of adaptation, both in the formal part (techniques, recipes, schools and tendencies) and in content (ingredients and processes). We should note that many so called traditional Basque dishes are still based on trans-continental ingredients, such as beans (*indabak*²), red peppers (commonly used in pork products such as *txorizo* and *txitorra* for pigmentation and flavor) or corn based edible products (*talo* being one of the most quintessential food items used in Basque festivals among the seven provinces). Thus, the paradox arises when these food items are used to fuel national discourses, with or without the umbrella of the resilience and resistance of the culture. This kaleidoscope of origins can serve to break the essentialist vision of Basque culture, even in its purest contemporary expressions, and also open the possibility for more *creole* cultural production. It might also provide an explanation for the resistance to this creolization of Basque cuisine and the difficulties that inter-national or trans-national food traditions had to permeate the Basque culinary landscape. This complaint has been almost general before and after the emergence of the Basque Culinary Center effect, in parallel lines or in degree of impact, or even wider, of what has been called by some the Guggenheim effect [97] related to art.

When exploring the factors that serve as community binders for diasporas, food and music are typically the first to come to mind, particularly in the case of the West-American-Basque Diaspora in the United States. For the purposes of this discussion, the West-American-Basque community is defined as those Basque diaspora members residing as far north as Idaho and as far south as Bakersfield, California, encompassing the state of Nevada in between. While it is true that Basque communities exist in other locations such as Seattle (WA) or Malheur County (OR), the three aforementioned centers represent the most significant areas of academic exploration thus far. The decision to use a hyphenated descriptor above is rooted in the concept of cross-cultural adaptation. In essence, Basques who settled in the western region of the US adapted to local customs and have become a mixture—fragmented or hybrid—of Western American and Basque “locals,” influenced

² Composed word in Basque by *in* as for Indian, related to the discovery of the new India aka America, and *aba* as for the latin “faba” and the later Castilian “haba”.

by the unique traits of the seven provinces. Put simply, West-American-Basques embody the Western American tradition, while the East-Basque diaspora is subject to Eastern American cultural influences. It is worth noting that this distinction is not dissimilar to the way a Behe Nafarra identifies as Basque, or how Bizkaiera is regarded as a dialect of Euskara. Nonetheless, the primary question remains unanswered: what symbolic elements does the West-American-Basque Diaspora utilize to preserve their cultural belief system, and how do these differ from those present in the Basque Country? In light of the multidirectional and frequently iterative nature of cultural transitions, particularly in the post-pandemic era, exploring these elements of cultural creation and transition is of significant importance. For that we should explore the different symbolizations of food elements in the Basque Country in the past decades. More concretely, the ones that appear in the lyrics of different musical groups mainly belonging to the 90's.

Berri Txarrak, a renowned rock band in the Basque Country, recorded their album *Denbora da poligrafo bakarra* [70] in Venice Beach, California in 2014, adding to their extensive global tour experience spanning over twenty-five years, enjoyed by diverse audiences from Japan to Germany, while performing solely in Basque. The track "Hemen Sukaldarien Herrian" on this album is particularly noteworthy as it sheds light on concepts that are often overlooked or taken for granted in discussions about identity. The song is a poignant critique of one of the cultural activities that has traditionally defined Basque identity—gastronomy.

Gauzak gordin daude hemen
sukaldarien herrian
minbizi atsegin bat da zuen irria
heriotz jasangarria
bizi ongizatea
gu baino okerrago dagoenik bada³

Territorialization and location, as we mentioned above, is a key identity marker. In this case, the absence of a comma after "hemen" (here) is noteworthy as it is integrated into the sentence. The land of the chefs is fundamentally "hemen," and the two are intertwined. In gastronomic circles, this belief has been reiterated endlessly: the product must be local, grown and harvested in the region, thus providing a means for Basques to congregate around food as an identifier of their culture. During one of my many summer stays in the Basque Country, I observed the evolution of the advertising of tomatoes, a valuable commodity in the area, which, due to weather conditions, can mature into a high-quality product. Local grocery stores have progressed from selling "tomate del país" (tomato from the country/nation) to "tomate de aquí" (tomato from here) in recent years, thus creating a commercial master signifier - "here" - for a product that retains its name in Nahuatl. It could be argued that the song connects the bleakness of "here" as the socio-politic momentum from the song is created with the culinary aspect of "here" as a road for success. Food, one of the primary professional and commercial activities that facilitated the transition after the Guggenheim model for the Basque Country, is precisely what is employed to criticize the surge of seemingly better times.

Similar to the Guggenheim effect which serves as a case study for comprehending the social and economic changes in the Basque Country since the early 2000s [71-73], the full extent of the Basque Culinary Center's (BCC) impact in this regard remains yet to be documented. Presently, chefs exhibit behaviors and practices that deviate from traditional norms: chefs do not talk like "chefs" anymore, dress like "chefs" anymore, or even cook like "chefs." They visit renowned

³ "Things are crude here / in the land of chefs / your smile is as sweet as cancer / sustainable death / mindful well-being / there are people in worse shape" Author's translation.

universities to give talks, appear in popular TV shows to promote their profession, and exchange ideas and projects with writers, scientists and politicians. The question, of course, is the most obvious one: what is a chef that does not look, talk or cook like a chef anymore then? In the Basque Country, the most immediate answer could be one that resonates with the past: they—at least—are Basque.

The song revolves around a presupposition, supported to some extent by historical unemployment rates, GDP figures, and other economic indicators [74-75], that the Basque Country has generated substantial wealth. One of the key rallying cries that has kept the Basque community united is the notion of an "oasis," a sanctuary amidst catastrophic or inhospitable circumstances where people can seek refuge. The idea of "gu baino okerrago dagoenik bada" (there are people out there in worse shape than us) is a source of solace in any situation, but its implications extend across various domains. Some studies suggest that improvements in dietary habits have led to an increase in life expectancy in the Basque Country [76-77], while others point to the Basque Culinary Center (BCC) as the hub of a collaborative economy [78, 79]. Together, these elements provide a holistic perspective that the lyrics of the song purportedly seek to challenge. While the reference to the Basque "oasis" as a cancer may appear to be a harsh criticism, the workings of the contemporary economy actively corrode local innovation—be it in agriculture, art, or productivity. Thus, an entire food culture/economy model is at stake in this song that portrays a macro vision of the food scene in the Basque Country.

Kashbad is a musical group that operated in the Basque Country from 1994 until 2015. In their sophomore album, *Distantzia* (1997) [80], a gastronomic allusion is made that could further amplify the preceding discussion. "Lehen afaria" [The First Supper] revolves around a oneiric encounter that is instigated by the sense of togetherness evoked by the journey's immediacy:

Ametsetan sartu nintzen ate handi batetatik	Betirako ahaztuak ziren azken afariak eta
Mahai handi batetaraino	elkar saltzeak
Jende artean nahastu nintzen eta	Gure artean nahasten ziren
Topatu nituen maite nituenak	Ziegetatik ateratako anai-arreba maiteak
Ospakizunerako ipinita zeuden zenbait	Gure mahaia argitzen zuen bidean
plater eder	Borrokan hildakoen presentziak
Mahaiaren gainean	Eta gero hiltzen ginen
Menua geuk erabakia zen	Lasai, hiltzerik gabe
Denok geunden ados mahaibururik gabeko	Zentzuz betetako bizitza atzean utzita eta
mahaiean	nahasten ginen
Bertan dastatu genituen zapore gozoenak	Lurrarekin
Bertan edan genituen sentsazio freskoenak	Aske!
Atzean geratzen ziren iparririk gabeko	Aske esnatu bitarte ⁴
nortasun antzuak	

4 "In my dreams I entered through a big door / To a big table / I mingled among people and / I run into the ones I loved / some nice dishes were prepared for the celebration / On top of the table / The menu was decided by us, / We all agreed on a table without a president / It is there that we tasted the most tasteful tastes / It is there that we drank the freshest sensations / The non-oriented futile personalities were left behind / The last suppers and self-betrayals were forever forgotten / Among us mixed / The brothers and sisters coming from the cells / Our table was illuminated by the presence of the ones fallen in the way of the struggle / And we were dying later Worry not, without nails / Leaving behind a life full of meaning, we were mixing / With the soil / Free! / Free till dawn"
Author's translation.

In the song, the oneiric sequence begins entering a rabbit hole, ultimately leading to a bustling bar where we must navigate through crowds of people. Upon arrival, we discover our loved ones gathered around a table. The term "table" is mentioned thrice in the first ten lines, each time in a different context. Initially, the table serves as a navigational aid within the dream, then as a physical support for the food, and finally, as a decapitated element (mahaiburu or the head of the table) intended to symbolize equality. The table, which is also referred to as an "organ" in labor relations when mentioned as the "mesa de negociación" (table of negotiation), exhibits various levels of significance, underscoring the vast range of possibilities that social interactions around tables offer in the Basque Country. The table is more than just a decorative item; it is virtually an institution, imbued with agency that binds the community together.

The song in question features constant references to Catholic elements, including the interchange of the "last" and "first" references to the Last Supper, self-betrayals, and the absence of nails, possibly alluding to those used in crucifixion. The sentence coined by the renowned Basque artist Jorge Oteiza, "every Basque has a 200-year-old monk within," seems to aptly describe the gradual conquest and substitution of Basque pagan traditions by the Catholic Church, starting in the late Middle Ages. Despite its susceptibility to criticism, Catholicism in the Basque Country holds greater moral weight and authority than other traditions, particularly in education during periods such as Franco's dictatorship and the Inquisition's witch-hunts [81]. The flipped references to Catholic elements in the song may suggest a path towards salvation that would lead to emancipation from the constraints imposed by the Catholic Church in traditional Basque Country. It is worth noting, however, that these allusions are inextricably linked to the idea of the Last Supper, one of Christianity's most significant events that includes food elements. The suggestion of a pagan "first supper" in the song therefore transforms the dream-like vision into a revolutionary moment. The references to militants affiliated with pro-independence movements, whether from prison cells or killed in action, reinforce this revolutionary moment and could potentially align with Badiou's previous reflections on Apostle Paul. In short, the food allusion in the song represents a type of symbolism linked to political and ideological clashes.

The preceding examples illustrate how food elements can be used to express critical perspectives on socio-political and socio-cultural matters. The third example presented here takes a broader approach to food habits, exploring their continuous intersection with capitalist regimes. In 1996, the Basque rock group BAP!! released the album *Zuria Beltzez + Bide huts eta etxe huts* [82], which combined two earlier albums released in 1992 and 1994 respectively. BAP!! was able to articulate a critical position within Basque culture itself, overcoming any purely defiant or pro-Basque militant stance. They addressed issues related to language ("Celosamente gordea," 1992), private property, the occupation movement, and other social issues ("Azkenengo anarkista," 1988; "Bide huts, etxe huts," 1992; "Zuria Beltzez," 1992), and demonstrated a special sensitivity to issues affecting marginalized collectives ("H.I.E.S.," 1992). The group employed a range of musical styles, including reggae and ska, but predominantly played rock and hard rock. In their 1992 album, they included the song "Plastikozko janariak" (plastic food) to denounce the progressive deterioration of edible products in favor of industrial fast-food market logics.

Kajoi baten barruan
oilaskoak hazitzen
konpuesto kimikoak
ipurditikan sartzen
zakurren haragia
hamburgesak egiteko

coca-cola botila
hautsez egindako edaria
Zenbat diruzale!!
Zenbat putaseme!!

Baserriko bizona

bai dela garbia
landatuko gauzak
sartzen bait dira gorputzera

Sandwich alu bat baino
hobe azababarruna
zoazte pikutara
plastikozko janariekin⁵

The use of ecological messaging elements is not a novel concept, as evidenced by the Basque County's significant protest history against large-scale energy projects such as the Lemoniz nuclear plant [83] and the Itoiz dam, previously analyzed in a different paper [84]. What is significant for the argument of this paper is the use of food and a certain lifestyle—the agrarian lifestyle that is mentioned towards the end—as an alternative to the coming occupation of fast-food establishments that will replace that precise lifestyle. The song's central concept is greed, which is linked to capitalism's spread, resulting in the rural lifestyle that the lyrics defend being conquered. The group itself emerged at a crucial moment in the Basque Country's history when capitalism was in decline, the 80's, resulting in a process of "reconversion" [85] that led to a significant public debate [86]. As a reminder of the connection of food elements and capitalism, the inauguration of a McDonald's location in Moscow's Red Square [87] was one of the most notable signs of the transition to democracy and capitalism in communist Russia. Big lines of Russian citizens outside welcomed the opening day in [88], and it became one of the symbols of a new economic system that was permeating in possibly the biggest communist experiment in history, in length, in time and in extension, which highlights the impact of this economic system on different cultures. The reference to "plastic food" in the song represents a clash between the rural and urban lifestyles, emphasizing the need for a new set of values and principles to reign in economics, represented by food in this context. The song mentions hamburgers and Coca Cola, perfect commodities representing the dialectics of desire, according to Žižek [89].

The food items in the song become stripped of their past cultural values, rendering them as empty signifiers for capitalism that can easily accommodate capitalist values. The concept of a "sandwich" is even vandalized, representing the only English word used in the song, thereby creating a linguistic distance that reinforces the argument that local food tastes and tendencies should prevail over invading ones.. Yet, taste is a construction. The process of constructing a taste is cultural. In the Basque diaspora around the world, there is a pattern to preserve, resist and show resilience as practices to form the cultural tissue itself [90].

Finally, Manolo Cabezabolo's song "El aborto de la gallina" provides an example of the use of edible elements with diverse symbolic value. The song was included in the 1995 *Ya Hera Ora* album [91], which featured anarchist and anti-military themes. Cabezabolo is a renowned punk singer who later formed the group Manolo Cabezabolo y Los que se van del bolo. His personal experiences both inside and outside of mental institutions contributed to his punk persona. Through the use of irony, the song highlights the contradiction between the daily use of eggs as a food commodity and the possible need to concede (human) animal rights:

Las encuestas no pueden ser mas alarmantes
jamás tuvimos un kaso así antes
no se donde iremos a parar

todas las gallinas quieren abortar.
Y vd. ke opina
del aborto de la gallina.

5 "Inside a drawer / Growing chickens / Chemical products / Shoved through our ass / Dog meat / To make hamburgers / The bottle of Coca-Cola / A drink made of powder / How many greedy-needy!! / How many motherfuckers!! / Farm lifestyle / It is clean

indeed / Things you farm / You put them in your body / Better than a damn sandwich / Leeks and beans are better / Go and fuck yourselves / With your plastic food" Author's Translation

Aprobarlo seria el kaos de la economia
 aumentarían los prezios de las tortillas
 no podriamos komer tortilla de patata
 ni nada de eso
 ni huevos fritos, ni pasados por agua
 ni revueltos.
 Y vd. ke opina
 del aborto de la gallina.
 Hemos propuesto ke usen
 la pildora antikonzéptiva
 nos han respondido kon rotunda negativa

el problema se nos eskapa de las manos
 tampoco kieren usar kondon los gallos.
 Y vd. ke opina
 del aborto de la gallina .
 Aprobarlo seria fatal
 todos los animales kerrian igualdad
 si esto no fuera el kaos no tardaria en serlo
 si kisieran abortar ovejas, vacas y cerdos.
 Y vd. ke opina
 del aborto de la gallina.⁶

The song's unconventional theme aside, its lyrics express profound reflections on the exploitation of animals for human consumption. In essence, it serves as a prime illustration of the Marxist principle that the material means of production shape social relations: "The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" [91]. Furthermore, whoever holds control over the means of production also wields control over the surplus value:

As capitalist, he is only capital personified. His soul is the soul of capital. But capital has one single life impulse, the tendency to create value and surplus-value, to make its constant factor, the means of production, absorb the greatest possible amount of surplus-labour. Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks"[92].

What is the production of eggs by chickens, normally within extremely poor conditions and at a massive scale, but a *dejavu* of the working-class conditions at the beginning of the 20th century? How far are Cabezabolo's lyrics from Orwell's acclaimed *Animal Farm* (1945)? Manolo Cabezabolo's lyrics in "El aborto de la gallina" construct a socio-political critique of the current economic system through the lens of the commodity provided by chickens, which is consumed within certain cultural and economic capital logics according to Pierre Bourdieu's taxonomy. This perspective offers a deeper analysis than the previous example, "Plastikozko janaria" by BAP!!, by adding more complex layers to the critical perspective. Cabezabolo's lyrics use fictional examples, allegory, and even surrealism, such as the idea of chickens revolting, to provide a heterotopic space to revisit this social issue. By doing so, the lyrics offer an example of political economy, and can be compared to Orwell's *Animal Farm*, which also employs allegory to "think the unthinkable." It is noteworthy to observe how Manolo Cabezabolo employs an allegory within an allegory, exhibiting a certain elegance in his approach. The significance of this lies in his

6 "The polls can't be more alarming / We never faced a situation like this / I don't know where this can end / All the chickens are going for abortion. / And what is your take / On the abortion of the chickens. / To approve it would mean / an economic chaos / The price of omelets would rise / We could not eat potato-omelets / Or anything like that / Nor fried eggs, or boiled ones / Or scrambled ones. / And what is your take / On the abortion of the chickens. / We have proposed to use / birth-control pills / We got a bold

rejection on it / The problem is getting out of our control / The roosters do not want to use condoms either / And what is your take / On the abortion of the chickens / To approve it would be fatal / All the animals will claim equal treatment / If this was not chaos, it won't take long to get there / If sheep, cows and pigs would ask for abortion / And what is your take / On the abortion of the chickens" Author's Translation.

utilization of this particular example to construct a socio-economic analysis, where he incorporates iconic Basque cuisine, such as the “tortilla de patata,” and poses the hypothetical notion of a nation without it. This concept is deemed impossible or dystopian, and the justification for its absence is anchored in politically radical discourse, specifically the reproductive rights of chickens. The lyrics offer a plethora of analogies that reinforce their strength, as they explore this social issue from a heterotopic perspective through the lens of Michel Foucault's philosophy. Despite its unconventional expression, the song serves as an exemplary instance of political economy.

Yet, in recent years, several transdisciplinary projects have emerged that explore the connections between music and food. One particularly noteworthy example is A Fuego Negro, a local restaurant located in the parte vieja of Donostia. Since its establishment in 2005, Edorta Lamo and Amaia García have blended culinary arts and design in an innovative proposal, complemented by a musical element. Iñigo Cojo, a former R&D researcher at the Basque Culinary Center (BCC), has contributed to the musical aspect of the project by producing various musical projects related to the restaurant, including the “Pintxatu” album and the “A Fuego Negro” comic and recipe book (2008) [94]. The former album blends multiple musical styles in a very creole fashion. The project's use of the word “Negro” alongside “Fuego” is intentionally ambiguous and may refer to a dark side of cuisine, a style that flirts with noir elements and lies on the border between appeal and disgust, or a Black cultural version of Basque cuisine, or perhaps both.

The album's incorporation of songs with varying degrees of relationship to Black music, ranging from rap to soul, ska or reggae proposals, is particularly significant in light of the project's overarching perspective. Fifteen artists, predominantly of Basque origin, offer covers of songs or original compositions, but with a crucial twist. Each song is paired with a single recipe and accompanying visual representation within the album's libretto. An example of this is Sorkun's rendition of "Spoonful" by Howlin' Wolf, accompanied by a similarly titled creation that evokes the less savory connotations of a heroin shot in a spoon, an analogy that Wolf had previously refuted. The included recipe details the creation of a "pintxo" combining wine crystals and deep dark chocolate, while the visual representation remains consistent with the song's analogies and refers specifically to the deadly allure of the "queen of drugs". The lyrics, originally penned by Willie Dixon in the 1960s, use exaggeration to create a lavish and indulgent approach to life by combining disparate elements that can be enjoyed with a spoon:

It could be a spoonful of coffee
It could be a spoonful of tea
But one little spoon of your precious love
Is good enough for me
Men lies about that spoonful
Some of them dies about that spoonful
Some of them cries about that spoonful
But everybody fight about that spoonful [95]

The amalgamation of love, death, and struggle with more commonplace food elements, such as coffee or tea, constitute a set of simple pleasures that may have negative consequences, as explicated by Slavoj Žižek [88]. In the vocal rendition of Sorkun, the song is reinvigorated and imbued with a youthful spirit that exudes a sense of fatalistic determination, or death drive, a force that is often regarded as the catalyst of our innate rationality. However, the lyrics ought to exhibit a radical ambiguity, portraying the path of desire with vivid imagery that draws from food elements.

Iñigo Cojo, also known as Dj Pata, played a significant role in the album's production and was also a participant in the aforementioned interdisciplinary project. The comic book represents an admirable endeavor to amalgamate a comic storyline with an urban flavor while incorporating the dishes available at the restaurant. Throughout the book, the various components of the project, including design, food, and music/urban culture, continuously intersect. The culinary concepts represented by the dishes, mostly presented as "pintxos," intentionally intertwine with the comic strips' narrative to create a unique cultural artifact that aims to elucidate the context of the restaurant's motto. Essentially, the imagery of food and text generates an innovative approach to comprehending urban cuisine from a cross-cultural perspective. The oddity of *A Fuego Negro* as a culinary art artifact further underscores the significant challenges associated with intermingling "Basque" gastronomy with other transcultural traditions.

Over the past half-century, Basque cuisine in the diaspora has primarily been characterized by family-style restaurants. While the dining culture in the western United States has a rich history [98], it is evident that the cultural revitalization of the Basque diaspora remains uncertain in the early 21st century. Notably, Jonathan Gold's review of Noriega's—being the most notorious family style Basque restaurant in the West of the US—is a particularly significant piece in the literature on Basque restaurants [99]. Gold provides a detailed description of Bakersfield, conveying it as a place to pass through *en route* to other destinations in the Central Valley or neighboring Nevada:

“Some people stop in Bakersfield for a burger and a tank of gas on the way to Fresno. Others go on purpose to hear the country & western music, or to throw back a bourbon-and-water in one of its many old bars(...) The drink of choice in Basque Bakersfield is something called Picon punch, a bittersweet cocktail made with brandy, soda, grenadine, and a bitter Basque liqueur named Amer Picon. You may think the cocktail is a tourist affectation, but rest assured: you will see a burly farmer thrust his gut toward a barkeep and snarl, “Gimme Pi-cahhhn (...) But if you walk into one of the bars on a weekend afternoon—Noriega’s, Wool Growers, or the Pyrenees—you’ll find it smoky and teeming, filled with people arguing about farm politics and Fresno State football in Spanish, French, and Basque” [99].

In the realm of Basque Diaspora culinary industry, there appears to be a tendency to adhere to a well-established and prosperous business model for over fifty years. While some notable exceptions such as Red Window in San Francisco and Arizmendi bakery in the Bay Area have managed to import the "know-how" and cooperative model, the notion of augmenting cultural value through food businesses seems to be entrenched and unchanging in the Basque Diaspora at present.

Conclusions: Deferred Identities and Trans-disciplinary Approaches

The foundational references that construct identities in the Basque Country and in the Basque Diaspora seem to be similar. There is no major discrepancy in the inaugural moments of what makes Basque “Basque,” being the battle of Orreaga, the epic of Amalur or the constant references to nature and pagan elements in art and music in both sides of the Atlantic. However, as the Diaspora gets “older,” there is an effect of asynchronization with respect to the point-of-departure for the above mentioned references. In other words, the “original” blurs as the memories of diasporic individuals and collectives go through the decades. This *per se* should not be the problem, but a natural law. The unsolvable dilemma affects it at two levels: the level of content and the level of subjectification of the diaspora subject.

At the level of content, the Basque Diaspora seems to age unevenly. There is an constant taste for the conservation of different traditions that come across borders in the Basque Country, even to

the point of obliterating the very border that separates the Basque territories between Spain and France at some point. The Spanish-French border somehow disappears in these accounts. However, despite punctual creations, such as the *Picon Punch* that almost serves as an element of baptism within the West-American-Basque diaspora in the US, at least the West-American-Basque Diaspora in the US has trouble being genuinely innovative, mainly culturally, which has brought other issues at social and political level. There is always the *potential* to be the 8th province, which never completely crystalizes within a collective subject.

The examples I have proposed around the different symbolizations of food in music aim to signal this very problematic relationship with creativity and innovation. If we take the main musical groups that float in the Diaspora, we will find that they follow, imitate and most of the time cover songs, artists and manners from the traditional side of the Basque Country—*Amuma Says No!* being a good example of this—. It could be suggested that after an extended period trying to preserve tradition and culture, the Basque Diaspora might have trouble changing the pace into different a different phase. The examples could be numerous here to point out to this tendency to *defer* culturally.

The other reading this article proposes is precisely linked to this phase. It is, as if, West-American-Basque Diaspora in the US is in a “before Paul” moment, where the distinctive factor is too important to betray. In other words, considering the memories of previous generations cannot fill the new generation’s collective imaginary, the partial simulacrum is made of essential parts without a whole. The notion of *deferred identities* points precisely to this extra-work 3rd generation West-American-Basque individuals need to invest in order to be “Basque.” In short, they are so concerned with being “Basque” that they never quite achieve the goal of being “Basque.” The accomplishment is thus endlessly deferred in the pursue of the end, as their cultural identities are. In one of the shortest ethnographies on Basque culture, Jack Kerouac establishes the grounds of otherness within otherness for Basque identity. Kerouac, a Catholic himself and raised in a traditional family in the East of the US, shows the contradictions of his own culture in the 60s by projecting the disruption of Basque traditional accounts of the diasporic subject in the (fictional) character of Perry Yturbide, an ex-con that is completely unaware of his Basque identity. At some point in the novel, “Jack” is spending the evening with “Perry” that moves into the following conversation:

“He looks just like me only he’s young and looks like I did when first Cody met me but the point is not that so much, he is tempestuous lost tossed soul just out of Soledad State Prison for attempted robbery with a boyish face and black hair falling over it but powerful thick muscular arms that I realize he could break a man in half with – His name is strange too, Perry Yturbide, I immediately say: ‘I know what you are, Basque’—‘Basque? Is that it? I never found out! Let’s call my mother longdistance in Utah and tell her that!’—And he rings up his mother way other there, on Billie’s phone bill, and here I am bottle of port win in one hand and butt in mouth talking to a Basque ex con’s mother in Utah telling her in fact reassuring her ‘Yes, I believe it’s a Basque name’—She’s saying ‘Hey, what you say? Who are you?’ and there’s Perry smiling all glad—A very strange kid—It’s been a long time in fact in my literary sort of life that I’ve met a real tough hombre like that out of jails and with those arms of steel and that fevered concern that scares governments and makes officials pale, that’s why he’s always put away in prison this type of man” [100]

Yturbide’s identity is lost, or so it appears if we compare it to the traditional account of the Basque good shepherd. Yet, we can include a relevant reading of how identities operate coming from Slavoj Žižek. Rossellini’s utilization of the role of women serves as an excuse for Žižek to

ruminate on the old motto of psychoanalysis: the message always arrives at its destination. In other words, the symptom is craving the space it will later occupy in the problematization of the subject. In this direction, the subject's identity is struggling with its authenticity, or the validation of the self, something closely related to the above-mentioned problem of 3rd generation diaspora subjects. To this respect, Žižek is eloquent. While talking about the distance between the role-player's mask and the self, as the distance that really deceives any personality, especially applied to the role of a woman as a symptom in Rossellini's movies, Žižek provides the following conclusion:

The conclusion to be drawn from this dialectic is the exact opposite of the common wisdom by which every human act (achievement, deed) is ultimately just an act (posture, pretense). Instead, the only authenticity at our disposal is that impersonation of "taking our act (posture) seriously" [101]

Thus, the problem of identity relies, at least in part, on that of identification. The process of identification, or how to acquire a set of particularities (differences, attributes) seems to be constructed. And this construction, according to Žižek, is clearly linked to desire. The dialectic of desire might apply in the case of the Basque Diaspora and precisely the desire to satisfy the authentic ethos, yet, it seems reasonable to return to Badiou. As pointed above, the generic subject is a constant and not an exception, hit by the pure contingencies of truths—as happens to Paul in the desert—who in the meantime, in a lifetime shall we add, enables a series of masks to be socially and intellectually functional. May Badiou's invitation to "trespass" new differences be the path to avoid future deferred identities, and create diasporic masks in the process.

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