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# Basque Women in Exile: Remembering Their Voices and Impact in Literature through the Cultural Magazine *Euzko-Gogoa*

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Following the War of 1936,<sup>1</sup> many Basque individuals, families, politicians, artists, and intellectuals left the Basque Country and went into exile. According to José Angel Ascunce, the tragedy suffered by those exiled is revealed by two principles: the geographical breakdown and the breaking of one's identity.<sup>2</sup> For Basque women specifically, exile brought renewed self-definitions of purpose and identity, as well as expectations imposed upon them by men. This essay will discuss how Basque female writers addressed the tragedy undergone and the roles they took on,

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1 The term "War of 1936" will be used instead of "Spanish Civil War." As the scholar Xabier Irujo states in *Gernika 1937, The Market Day Massacre* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2015), 225: "Most historians use the term Spanish Civil War to describe the conflict. However, Narcissus Bassols and Isidro Fabela, representatives of the Mexican Government at the League of Nations, criticized the categorization of the war as 'civil' conflict. US ambassador Claude G. Bowers stated that the war was neither Spanish nor civil but a prologue to the World War II, and Congressman Jerry J. O'Connell offered a similar critique by saying that the bombing of Gernika was the work of German planes, German bombs, and German pilots. O'Connell asked Secretary of State Cordell Hull 'to take official notice of what is common knowledge, namely, that Germany and Italy are in fact belligerents in the war of invasion now going on in Spain' Congressional Record: Appendix of the First Session of the 75th Congress of U.S.A., vol. 81, pt. 9, January 5–May 19, 1937 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1937)."

2 José Angel Ascunce, *El exilio: debate para la historia y la cultura* (Donostia: Saturraran, 2008), 37.

from exile, through their participation in the Basque cultural magazine, *Euzko-Gogoa* (Basque-Will).

During the years of the Franco dictatorship, censorship prevented the publication of works in Basque for almost ten years. As a form of maintaining the Basque language and literature, those individuals in exile took the responsibility of transmitting Basque memory, language, and culture in order to fight what José F. Colmeiro calls “historical amnesia.”<sup>3</sup> One example of this effort was the cultural magazine *Euzko-Gogoa*, created by the Jesuit priest Jokin Zaitegi in 1950 in Guatemala. *Euzko-Gogoa* focused on the maintenance of both the Basque culture and the language, and created a foundation for the future of the Basque nation through its writings. *Euzko-Gogoa* hoped to become the place where all the globally dispersed Basque writers could find a platform for collaboration. Basque literature was thwarted by the Franco regime in Spain, and it was mainly from exile that Basque culture could continue to evolve as it had before the War of 1936.

*Euzko-Gogoa* was the second post-war magazine written entirely in Basque, after *Argia Euskaldunak Euskaraz* (The Light. Basques in their Language, 1946–1948). *Euzko-Gogoa* was published during two different periods and in two locations. The first period of publication took place in Guatemala (1950–1955) in the Latin-American Basque exile. Latin America was one of the first geographical areas in which exiles, both Basques and Spaniards, sought refuge during the War of 1936. The second period of the magazine took place, also in exile, in the coastal town of Biarritz, Northern Basque Country (1956–1960). After 44 issues, a total of 1,171 works consisting of 3,658 pages were

3 José F. Colmeiro, *Memoria Histórica e identidad cultural. De la posguerra a la postmodernidad* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 2005), 14.

published, with the efforts of 153 writers—five of whom were women. In other words, the majority of Basque writers who contributed to the magazine were men. In 1960, *Euzko-Gogoa* ended its publications.

In prior studies about *Euzko-Gogoa*, the impact and role of the women involved with the magazine has been generally overlooked. The cultural work of Basque women during Franco's regime, particularly in the 1950s, and more specifically the work of the various women who collaborated in the magazine as well as what was written there in reference to women and motherhood, deserves to be analyzed. The magazine represented the space where women might exercise roles beyond their "natural" female roles (as mothers, wives, teachers, etc.), such as cultural and linguistic transmitters, and political propaganda creators. What follows is some history leading up to the publication of *Euzko-Gogoa*, a description of the Basque female activists of the time, and an analysis of a few specific female authors' contributions. Additionally, an analysis of the discourse used in the articles, poems, and stories of the magazine, both from male and female authors, will be presented.

Although there were female writers prior, it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century when women became relevant in the Basque literary arena. During that time, institutional and cultural platforms were developed with the efforts of women, such as the *Emakume Abertzale Batza*, EAB (Association of Nationalist Women, 1922–23, 1931–36). The creation of this association brought with it many changes for Basque women, by redefining their identities and spaces. The EAB had its precedent in the Irish association named *Cumann na mBan* (The Women's Council) established in 1914. The EAB was born in Bilbao in 1922, by women of the *Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, EAJ-PNV (Basque Nationalist

Party, 1895–). These women went from village to village spreading the EAJ-PNV's ideology, and more concretely the woman's role inside the party. Through these interventions, women gained a public voice for the nationalist ideal, and gradually began entering an environment previously monopolized by men. As Mercedes Ugalde states, their work was to create propaganda campaigns in favor of the Basque Nationalist Party and organize different events related with cultural education as well as social and charity assistance. Education and cultural values were the main areas of concern for women of the EAB.<sup>4</sup>

Policarpo de Larrañaga described the main objectives of the EAB as such: disseminate the Basque nationalist doctrine in the Basque Country and develop activities and initiatives in the charitable and cultural realm.<sup>5</sup> In order to understand the role of women in the development of Basque nationalism. He explains how the EAB manifesto lays out the religious, political, and social goals of the organization.<sup>6</sup> The female nationalist figure that would later thrive in the pages of *Euzko-Gogoa* is largely representative of the pre-war period when the EAB was born. After the War of 1936, the EAB disappeared from the Basque territory to act only in exile.

During the changing times in which women were gaining a voice in politics, they were also becoming more active in the literary community. Literature and politics for Basques during this period were oftentimes intertwined. Basque literature during the early- and mid-twentieth century was described by Amaia Alvarez as "lehen loraldia" (the first awakening). She argues that it was the time to promote Basque

4 Mercedes Ugalde, *Mujeres y nacionalismo vasco: génesis y desarrollo de Emakume Abertzale Batza (1906–1936)* (Bilbao: Servicio Editorial Universidad del País Vasco, 1993), 133.

5 Policarpo de Larrañaga, *Emakume Abertzale Batza: la mujer en el nacionalismo vasco* (Donostia: Añamendi, 1978), 45.

6 de Larrañaga, *Emakume Abertzale Batza: la mujer en el nacionalismo vasco*, 45.a

nationalism, to guard religion/faith, and to defend the Basque language. In regard to women, a patriotic motherly image was promoted.<sup>7</sup> Before the War of 1936, there were many cultural activities in the Basque Country promoted by *Euskaltzaleak*, an association committed to the development of the Basque culture in the Basque language, where many women participated. Also, several magazines were published before the war, such as *Euskal Esnalea* (Basque Language Awakener, 1908–1931), *Euskalerraren Alde* (In Favor of the Basque Country, 1911–1930), *Euzkerea* (The Basque Language, 1929–1936), *Bizkaitarra* (The Biscayan, 1893–1895), and *Amayur* (Amayur, 1931–1936) with the contributions of various female writers, such as Errose Bustintza, Tene Mujika, and Mayi Ariztia.

Mikel Atxaga argues that women authors were able to write in Basque because they had an academic background.<sup>8</sup> As Virginia Woolf states in her classical essay, “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.”<sup>9</sup> Basque female writers came from concrete environments; they were teachers, activists, or relatives of a writer/poet. However, due to the War of 1936, many of these women were forced to go into exile because of their implication with the EAJ-PNV. It was from exile where some of them continued working in favor of the Basque language. In this regard, *Euzko-Gogoa* gave these women a platform to maintain the Basque language while also opening a door for female writers into the literary canon during one of the darkest eras for the Basque language. However, examining the works written by these female writers and the works written by men

7 Amaia Alvarez, “Euskal emakume idazleen lekua literaturaren historian. Dorretaren arrakalak agerian uzten,” *Jakin* 148, (May–June 2005): 50.

8 Mikel Atxaga, *Euskal emakume idazleak (1908–1936)* (Gasteiz: Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, 1997), 6.

9 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1989), 4.

referring to womanhood, one can see how the magazine embraced a double standard. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar state that for female artists, the essential process of self-definition is complicated since it is shaped by patriarchal definitions that intervene between herself and her definition of self.<sup>10</sup> This is certainly the case in the *Euzko-Gogoa*, where self-imposed and imposed definitions of female authors were often polarized, as will be shown later. Nevertheless, in the case of these Basque women writers, who were part of the Basque Nationalist Party, they proudly assumed and embraced their maternal-teacher-language transmitter roles, imposed by the party/men. These women truly believed in and admired the foundations of the Basque Nationalist Party and the figure of the father founder, Sabino Arana. Mercedes Ugalde analyzes how Arana used the symbolic reference of the preindustrial family, with its two basic elements—the *baserritarra* (farmer) and the *etxeoandre* (woman of the house)—to elaborate on the role of women in the party. The *baserritarra* represented the Basque race and the *etxeoandre* was key for the perpetuation of the race and the transmission of values.<sup>11</sup> The women, therefore, played a decisive role in Arana's nationalism construction since they would contribute to the homeland's continuity through their children.

Ander Gurruchaga argues that the biggest contribution of the Basque exile to Basque culture is the political attitude which rejected the Francoist system, as well as giving continuity to the culture.<sup>12</sup> The desire of the Basque exile was to link the old generation with the new generation in order to keep the memory of the past alive, especially

10 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "The Madwoman in the Attic," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (2nd. ed.), ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 813.

11 Ugalde, *Mujeres y nacionalismo vasco: génesis y desarrollo de Emakume Abertzale Barza (1906-1936)*, 43.

12 Ander Gurruchaga, *El código nacionalista vasco durante el franquismo* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1985), 187.

in the political and cultural arenas. The Basque exiles maintained the nationalist code based on a traditional Basque nationalism in line with the utopic preindustrial Basque society. The *Euskara* (Basque language), the *fueros* (Basque laws), tradition, and historical peculiarity were the main ideas promoted. Basque nationalism produced its own space, redefining its limits in exile. *Euzko-Gogoa*, faithful to the traditional nationalist ideals, tried to maintain the Basque Country by rebuilding the Basque national identity and memory. In other words, it generated and perpetuated a Basque community based on the ideas of the traditional, linguistic, and symbolic Basque world.

Given the political circumstances of the time, and the political nature of the writers themselves, it is not surprising that *Euzko-Gogoa* promoted the archetypal and ideal nationalist Basque woman. Through its publications, *Euzko-Gogoa* advocated for the “noblest femininity”<sup>13</sup>: a pure, almost virginal woman; patriotic; Christian; and tasked with conserving and spreading the Basque language and culture. Feeding the Basque language and love for the motherland to her children was of utmost importance, as those children were the future of the nation and the future torchbearers of the Basque language. In the pages of *Euzko-Gogoa*, as well as in the Basque political arena, it was a central argument that women had a greater responsibility of teaching their children the Basque language than did men. As the Kenyan scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o states, “Language is the symbol of a person’s soul and an inseparable tool of any human community.”<sup>14</sup> The transmission of the mother-tongue, in the case of the Basque exiles, was crucial in keeping the national identity alive.

13 Hans Eichner, “The Eternal Feminine: An Aspect of Goethe’s Ethics,” in *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust*, ed. Cyrus Hamlin (New York: Norton, 1976), 616–617.

14 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: J. Currey; Portsmouth, N.H.; Heinemann, 1986), 11.



The lives and contributions of specific women authors whose works appeared in the magazine will be discussed in order to further understand their role. Sorne Unzueta, who used the pen name “Utarsus,” was a political activist during the Basque nationalist movement of the early twentieth century, a teacher, a member of the EAB, a writer, and a mother. She shared the EAJ-PNV’s ideology in different meetings throughout the Basque Country and was a well-known demagogue inside the party. As Igone Etxebarria says, “Her party conferences were vehement.”<sup>15</sup> However, when the political uprising began in 1936, she was forced into exile and moved to France. Once there, she became an active member of the resistance during the Second World War. She was the only woman of the resistance group in which her husband also participated. Etxebarria explains the very dangerous tasks carried out by Sorne: “[Her] job was to carry messages from the free zone to the area occupied by the Nazis.”<sup>16</sup> After more than a decade in exile, in 1953 she returned to the Southern Basque Country with her family. Sorne Unzueta published two works in the magazine, the first being the composition *Itxartu, eusko alabea* (Wake Up, Basque Daughter, 1950), a poem with a nationalistic and propagandistic discourse. The scholar Maite Nuñez-Betelu calls it a “pamphlet poem”.<sup>17</sup> The poem was a call to action for increased participation of women in the national struggle. In the poem, Unzueta also mentioned the father founder of the Basque National Party, Sabino Arana. Unzueta promoted a proactive relationship between women and nation, but always completing her assigned role. She recognized and promoted the minor role of women in politics. Nuñez-Betelu explains that “Utarsus” advocated for the

15 Igone Etxebarria, *Sorne Unzueta “Utarsus”* (Gasteiz: Eusko Jauriaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, 2000), 8. (my translation)

16 Etxebarria, *Sorne Unzueta “Utarsus”*, 12. (my translation)

17 Maite Nuñez-Betelu, “Género y construcción nacional en las escritoras vascas” (PhD dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2001), 143.

equality of women and men with regards to their participation in the patriotic struggle, but each one fulfilling his or her corresponding role as indicated by gender.<sup>18</sup>

Unzueta's second work published in the magazine was the patriotic poem, *Artxanda* (Artxanda, 1952), in which the author examined the relationship between a mother and her son. Maternity was one of the pillars of Unzueta's work. As Etxebarria explains, "In Unzueta's works, common themes are the relationship between the mother and children, the feelings of the mother, and what a mother should teach her children."<sup>19</sup> The poem showed the reality that many mothers faced during the War of 1936: the sorrow of letting their sons fight for the motherland, the loss of the war, the destiny of the sons in the hands of the enemy, and the emptiness and lost identity. The title of the poem is also significant. Artxanda is a mountain in Bilbao, and it was the place where the *gudaris* (Basque soldiers) made a "suicidal" counterattack against the Francoist troops before the inevitable fall of Bilbao. This battle allowed the general population to escape Franco's troops and leave the city. The defeat of the city and the destiny of the soldiers taken in Artxanda was embraced in the poem through the conversation between the mother and the son. The intrinsic relationship between the mother, the son, and the motherland is apparent. Nerea Aresti collects the statements made by Polixene Trabudua, an active member of the EAB, about the pain and containment of emotions of the Basque mothers seeing their sons going to war.<sup>20</sup> She shows how much they loved not only their homeland but also their sons. Rather

18 Nuñez-Betelu, "Género y construcción nacional en las escritoras vascas," 149.

19 Etxebarria, *Sobre Unzueta "Urtasu"*, 16. (my translation)

20 Nerea Aresti, "De heroínas viriles a madres de la patria. Las mujeres y el nacionalismo vasco 1893-1937" *Historia y Política* 31, (January-June 2014): 305.

than attempting to be emotional, these mothers accepted the reality of the situation, knowing they could see both their sons and country lost.

Another author who contributed to the magazine was Karmele Errazti. Errazti was the first president of the EAB and an active writer in the nationalist press, using the pseudonyms “Erxakin” and “Emakume batek” (which translate to “Unknown” and “A woman,” respectively). She was married to the Basque writer Keperin Xemein. She was exiled in Pau, France, during the War of 1936 and never returned to the Southern Basque Country. In *Euzko-Gogoa*, she wrote two works: an obituary about the death of Basque patriots, *Yoan Yakuzan bixitz oroigarriak* (They Left Us, 1951) and a letter titled “Euzko-Gogoa” (Basque Will, 1950) where she highlighted the good work done by the magazine, especially approving the Basque dialect promoted in the magazine, enhanced Gipuzkoan. Nuñez-Betelu states that Errazti tried through her writings to educate the children to love God, the nation, and the Basque language.<sup>21</sup> Errazti was very active in the EAB, and very much pro-“Sabinian” (pro-EAJ-PNV ideology). Sabino Arana advocated for a purist version of the language that replaced Romance roots with neologisms, and a safeguard of the Basque dialects, especially of the Biscayan dialects. According to Sabino Arana’s view, women should be the most important figures in the promotion of language and culture. Hence the rationale for why Errazti was so focused on the use of correctly written Basque.

The third and final female Basque writer included in this analysis, Julene Azpeitia, who signed her work as “Arritokieta,” was one of the main writers who defended the Basque traditions, especially the importance of education in the Basque language. Azpeitia was a vocational teacher

<sup>21</sup> Nuñez-Betelu, “Género y construcción nacional en las escritoras vascas,” 101.

whose main priority was to create an educational model to use with Basque children for promoting the Basque language. For her, the Basque language was the engine that was strongly bound to the nation. In *Euzko-Gogoa*, she wrote *Goizeko izarra* (The Morning Star, 1959), a Christmas-themed tale, where it is possible to appreciate her center of interests: children, the Basque language, and religion. In 1975, Azpeitia received a tribute from *Euskaltzaindia* (Royal Academy of the Basque Language, 1918–), as she was nominated as an honorary member of the academy. Julene Azpeitia was also an active member of the EAB, like Unzueta and Errazti, and promoted the secondary position of women in the Nationalist Party. Nuñez-Betelu states that Azpeitia defended the generic separation of the party and accepted the reserved role for women.<sup>22</sup> Due to her implication in the EAB, she too was forced into exile when the war began. Shortly after she returned to the Basque Country in 1947, she was banished and sent to Burgos (Spain) by the Spanish regime in 1949 as a punishment for having returned.

Overall, Sorne Unzueta, Karmele Errazti, and Julene Azpeitia are clear examples of the literature and actions promoted by Basque women at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their educational work was relevant in the transmission of the Basque language, Basque traditions, memory, and the ideal motherhood practices. Leyre Arrieta argues that in this eagerness to preserve the Basque language, the *emakumes* (women) were able to transcend their existence as exiles and teach the Basque language and traditions to the community.<sup>23</sup> Their participation in patriotic and political activities was also important,

22 Nuñez-Betelu, "Género y construcción nacional en las escritoras vascas," 181.

23 Leyre Arrieta, "Desde las cunas y los fogones: 'Emakume' y emociones en el nacionalismo vasco," in *Emoción e identidad nacional: Cataluña y el País Vasco en perspectiva comparada*, ed. Geraldine Galeote, María Llobart and Maitane Ostolaza (Paris: Éditions Hispaniques, 2015), 5.

but always in their assumed “secondary” role as a complement to the work done by men. Mercedes Ugalde states that women’s activities were more focused on collaboration in the defense of the Basque language, emotional assistance and support, and collaboration in nationalist politics propaganda.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that the role promoted and embraced by these women in their works was closely linked to motherhood, memory, faith, and patriotism. Etxebarria explains that these women were happy and proud of being women and saw their primary role as mothers of the family.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, one can assume that during this time period women were not necessarily focused on being writers, as their priorities were more linked to their family duties. One can also observe that the transmission of the Basque language was central in the ideal woman’s role portrayed in the magazine. *Euzko-Gogoa’s* pages, due to its ideological values, was the perfect space to illustrate the “ideal” Basque woman: patriotic, proactive in the fight for the country (with her limitations), honest, pure, and above all a Basque speaker and promoter.

Turning to an examination of how the male writers of the magazine characterized women, one can find a very polarized discourse where women are either glorified or strongly criticized. The anthropologist Sherry Ortner states, “The psychic mode associated with women seems to stand at both the bottom and the top of ambiguity.”<sup>26</sup> Ortner argues that women can be defined or represented as “subversive feminine symbols” or as “feminine symbols of transcendence”; in other words,

24 Ugalde, *Mujeres y nacionalismo vasco: génesis y desarrollo de Emakume Abertzale Batza (1906-1936)*, 268-280.

25 Etxebarria, *Sorne Unzueta “Urtasus”*, 16.

26 Sherry Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” in *Woman, Culture and Society*, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Luise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 88.

women are portrayed as witches/evil or mother goddesses, but nothing in between.

In 1952, Keperin Xemein, also Karmele Errazti's husband, wrote a text about a married couple (referring to himself and his wife) that were writing in the magazine together:

Senarr-emazte bi ezautzen dodaz nik, Euzko-Gogoa'n euzkeraz idazten dabenak eta Z'zaliak diranak. Bijok, senarr-emaztiak ixan baño lenago, euzkeraz idazten eben, orain berrogetalau urte dirala. Ordutik ona amaika lan egin dabe, bakotxa bere aldetik. Emaztia senarra baño len euzkeraz idazten asi zan. Senarr-emaztiok, bijok dakiz makiñaz idazten eta bijok makiñaz idazten dabe, baña, jakiña, makiña bat baño eztauke, eta bijok makiña berberaz idazti-biarr. Ulertzalle onari itz erdi.<sup>27</sup>

I know a couple that writes in Basque in the magazine. Both were writers before they got married. Since then, they have published so many works. The wife began to write before the husband. And both of them write using the same typewriter. A word to the wise is sufficient. (my translation)

Xemein's comments can be interpreted as a step to break the patriarchal hegemony amongst writers, giving credit to women writers' work. He shows how there is no jealousy between him and his wife and that both are capable of working together for a common goal. However, he was writing about his own wife, not about women writers as a whole. In 1954, in the section "Irakurlearen Txokoa" (Reader's Corner), one of

27 Keperin Xemein, "Laburtkiro," *Euzko-Gogoa*, no. 3-4 (March-April 1952): 25.

the readers wondered why women did not write in the magazine, and Andima Ibiñagabeitia answered the following:

“Emakumeak zergatik ez dute zuen aldizkarian idazten?” Orixe galdetzen diot maiz nere buruari, “Zarautz’ko Eleder” adiskide ona. Zergatik ez dute euskeraz idazten? Gure ateak zabalik dauzkate beñipein... Alare bat baizik etzaigu urbildu, “Emakume bat” abertzale zintzo ta euskal-idazle apaiña. Lenago ba’ziran emakumeen artean idazle punterenguak, Azpeitia’tar Julene, Tene, Zipitria t.a. Orantsu zerura zaigu Mañari’ko Errose (g.b.) bere ipui ederrekin. Ez ote ditu norbaitek aren ipui bikaiñak liburutxo baten bilduko? On eta bearrezko litzake. Azken galdera au, gurean oi bezala, basamorruan galduko da iñolako erantzun gabe. Lotsagarriak gu! Bañan goazen emakume biziatar. Zergatik ez dute euskeraz idazten. Bear bada, seme-alabaxoei gure izkera ederra irakasten gogoz ari dira eta ez daukate idazteko betarik. Ai orrela balitz! Barkakizun lirake, ezin dezakete bada lan ederragorik burutu. Beldur naiz ordea, geienak beren agure saloen sabel-zorroak nola bete ezin asmatu ote dabiltzan atergabeko erdeljarioan. Emakumeak; noiz iarri bear duzute bete-betean euskerari begira? Zuek nai ba’zenute laister pizkortuko eta apainduko litzake gure izkera maitea: emakumeen ezpain zamurrek doai berezi bat dute ortarako. Gure ateak zabalik dauzkatzute; ekin bada, itzez ta idatziz.<sup>28</sup>

“Why don't women write in the magazine?” This is what I am asking myself, good friend. Why don't they write in the Basque

<sup>28</sup> Andima Ibiñagabeitia, “Irakurlearen Txokoa,” *Euzko-Gogoia*, no. 3–4 (March–April 1954): 68–69.

language? Our doors are open if they want to write; however, only “one woman” came to us—a good patriot and honest woman. Before there were very good Basque women writers—Julene Azeitia, Tene, Zipitria, etc. Errose Mañari just passed away. Does anyone want to publish an anthology of her work? It will be a good and right thing to do. This last question, as always, will disappear in the desert without an answer. Shame on us! But let’s continue talking about the women writers, and why they don’t write in Basque. Maybe they are busy teaching Basque to their children and they don’t have time to be writing. If that is true, they will be forgiven; there is nothing more beautiful. However, I am afraid that they are speaking in Spanish. Women, when are you going to put all your efforts into speaking the Basque language? If you wanted, our language would improve and develop: the tender lips of women have a special capacity for language. (my translation)

Ibiñagabeitia is aware of the work and presence of the Basque women writers and he also acknowledges their publications, but he ends up using these women as a symbolic image of the Basque nation where, he assumes, if they are not writing it is because they are doing their duties as ideal Basque mothers by teaching the language (in which case they are forgiven for not taking their time to write). Although their writing skills were welcomed, motherhood was appreciated as their strongest value and considered the main and most primordial characteristic of a woman. Margaret Bullen analyzes the intrinsic relationship between Basque women and nationalism, focusing on the works of Teresa del Valle, Mercedes Ugalde, Begoña Aretxaga, and Joseba Zulaika. These works show that in the contemporary Basque Country’s nationalism



system, as much in the EAJ-PNV as in ETA (*Euskadi ta Askatasuna*, Basque Homeland and Freedom, 1959–2011) before its cessation of armed activity, the figure of women was based on the traditional role of the mother.<sup>29</sup>

At the end of his article, Andima Ibiñagabeitia suggests that it is more likely that women are speaking in Spanish, and for that reason they are not writing. While he appeared critical with women toward their use of the Spanish language, he made no mention of the men that used the Spanish language. The use of Spanish increased in the Basque population due to the social changes that the Basque Country experienced with the growth of Spanish immigrants that came during the Industrialization period. In this regard, in both the Basque Country and the Latin-American exile the cities were considered in the eyes of many Basque nationalists as a bad influence for Basque women, as it was there that the Spanish language was being substituted for the Basque language. For them, it was the Basque women who were the transmitters of *Euskara* to their children, and therefore the survival of the language was in women's' hands. Nerea Aresti demonstrates how the EAJ-PNV tried to encourage women to stay in their rural areas: "Given this threat, it seemed necessary to address the beautiful daughters of the mountain and invite them to leave the cities and return home, to the traditional life of the race."<sup>30</sup> They tried to create propaganda for a more romanticized view of the "purer" women of the rural Basque Country, where they spoke in Basque and avoided the "contamination" of the Spanish influence. This created a dichotomy between subversive/Spanish speakers and transcendence/Basque speakers. Andima Ibiñagabeitia was

29 Margaret Bullen, *Basque Gender Studies* (Reno: Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno, 1964), 197–201.

30 Aresti, "De heroínas viriles a madres de la patria. Las mujeres y el nacionalismo vasco 1893–1937," 293. (my translation)

not the only one who denounced women's inclination to the Spanish language. Antonio M. Labaien argued in his article "Euskeraren kinka gaiztoa" (The Crisis of the Basque Language, 1958) that some women considered the Basque language *arrunta* (vulgar) and to appear more sophisticated, they preferred to use the Spanish language, even though they came from rural areas. Jaime Kerexeta in his article stated:

Emakumea, bere utsakeri berezitasunez, erderara doia geienetan, buru ariñak diran emakumeak batez bere, (ta buru aundiputzak dirala geienak autortu bear, ezkondu aurretik batez bere). Baiña ezkondu ezkeru, jakin egizue, senarrok, zuek zariela etxeko buru ta gogor egin daikezuela emazteari norberen gauzai eutsiten, semeai euzkeraz irakasten eta egiten.<sup>31</sup>

Woman, with her natural triviality, has the tendency to speak in Spanish, especially the ones that are feisty (we have to admit that women are vain in general, mostly before they get married). But once they get married, husbands, you must know that you are the heads of the family, and you must be firm with your decisions, that they have to teach and talk in Basque to the children. (my translation)

The prejudice of female inferiority with respect to men is apparent. Kerexeta's opinion is one that considers women as more imperfect than men—an imperfection that relates to the Genesis story and its main character Eve—but that a woman can improve once she gets

<sup>31</sup> Jaime Kerexeta, "Euzkeraren Alde," *Euzko-Gogoa*, no. 1–2 (January–February 1955): 17–18.

married. Wives and mothers' main tasks should revolve around the transmission, speaking, and teaching of the Basque language. Kerexeta was a Franciscan priest, and his Catholic traditionalism is made evident in his text. For him, a woman's purpose, and even her definition of self, is shaped by a man.

If we analyze Jokin Zaitegi, the founder of the *Euzko-Gogoa* magazine, and his discourse toward women, we observe he promoted a folkloric and romanticized idea of a rural Basque community where women were angelic, virginal, patriotic, and Basque. Zaitegi wrote an article titled "Orixe' ren 'Euskaldunak'" (an article about a nationalistic poem entitled *Euskaldunak*, 1950). In Orixe's poem, one of the most significant plots is the love story between Garazi and Mikel. According to the Basque scholar Ana Toledo, Garazi is a static character typical of how women were portrayed during this period. Toledo explains that in costumbrist literature, there are three common denominations among main characters: they are Basque, Christian, and honest. These characteristics are forged from the traditional motto, "Euskaldun, Fededun" (Basque and Faithful).<sup>32</sup> Zaitegi's article references the relationship between the two characters, Garazi and Mikel, and he acknowledges the image and perception created by Orixe of the ideal Basque female, "Garazi." Garazi, which would be translated as "Grace," is described as a beautiful and Christian girl. Sherry Ortner states: "Mankind's great teacher of purity was the Virgin Mary, a mother goddess who perfectly fit the female role as merciful dispenser of salvation."<sup>33</sup> The dichotomy portrayed and promoted in the magazine by the writers, between the female images of "angels" and "monsters," is certainly observable. Analyzing

32 Ana M. Toledo, *Domingo Agirre: Euskal eleberraren sorrera* (Bizkaiko Foru Aldundia, 1989), 646.

33 Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?," 8ff.

the discourse used in the articles, poems, and stories, from both male and female writers, one can see the imposed and self-imposed female identity that was polarized between these images.<sup>34</sup>

In conclusion, although women found a space in *Euzko-Gogo* during the intellectual movement of the 1950s, their role was still secondary. In fact, the writers of the magazine, both male and female, did not promote women's agency. The female writers in *Euzko-Gogo* represented women as domestic agents, as we have seen in the works of Unzueta, Errazti, and Azpeitia, as did various male writers. The image of women that thrived in the magazine's pages was based on the preindustrial ideas of Basque womanhood promoted by Arana and still embraced by these women writers. Women were portrayed as mothers, patriots, carriers of cultural memory, and a metaphor of the Basque motherland—or, as Mercedes Ugalde states, "Symbols, instruments, mediators, stimuli for the protagonists of the nationalist struggle but never subject agents of it."<sup>35</sup> These women writers did not devise their own self-definitions; rather, their purpose of self was written by a patriarchal and ideological discourse oriented toward promoting a Basque nationalist consciousness where women were perceived as mother-symbols of the motherland, and not as writers. This figure of women did not only belong to Basque nationalist discourse that might be considered "conservative," but also to ETA (the radical branch of nationalism), as described in studies such as Teresa del Valle's crucial milestone in 1985.<sup>36</sup> Through such representation of Basque women, *Euzko-Gogo* showed in its pages the desired female archetype based

34 Gilbert and Gubar, "The Madwoman in the Attic," 812.

35 Ugalde, *Mujeres y nacionalismo vasco: génesis y desarrollo de Emakume Abertzale Batza (1906-1936)*, 50. (my translation)

36 Teresa del Valle, *Mujer vasca, imagen y realidad* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1985).

on those attributes, emphasizing her role as the mother and that role's centrality in the conception of an idealized Basque family.

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