

Expressing Basque Identity through Documentary Film: *Ama Lur* and *Pelotari* as Agents for Social Change and Cultural Responsibility

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As a part of the LARC program, I intend to research 1960s Basque documentary and its role in preserving the identity of a nation without a state. During this era, the Basque people suffered under the oppressive dictatorship of Franco, whose regime undermined Basque identity as he outlawed cultural festivals, religious practices, and the use of Basque language. I am particularly interested in analyzing the works of Fernando Larruquert and Néstor Basterretxea, namely *Ama Lur* (1968) and *Pelotari* (1964), to discover the extent to which documentary not only reflects a threatened identity but also creates a sense of collective selfhood.

Specifically, I intend to conduct a close reading of the films, exploring the techniques of visibility vs. concealment, reappropriation of art as evidence, and the representations of gender and language. Furthermore, as the learning community for this LARC seeks to comprehend the “the social and cultural role of ... media in the creation of new publics and counterpublics,” I intend to examine the role of the aforementioned documentaries in archiving identity, as the filmmakers summon a collective consciousness to preserve the Basque past in the nation’s future.

This project serves as an ideal counterpart to both coursework and experience. This semester I have been enrolled in a course called “Visible Evidence” that explores the nature of documentary film. As a class, we pay special attention to documentary’s capability to influence history and identity. This knowledge would inform my participation with LARC as I have considered how reproducing information and art in documentary through editing and recontextualization reveals a new “truth.” Also, next semester I will

This LARC would be invaluable in terms of my academic and vocational goals.