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**William Douglass & Joseba Zulaika. Basque Culture: Anthropological Perspectives. Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2007.**

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**William Douglass & Joseba Zulaika. *Basque Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*.  
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*Basque Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* is the last title in the Basque Textbook Series published by the Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. As implied by the title of the text and the name of the series in which it is included, the book is an analysis of Basque culture, past and present, from an anthropological point of view. Presented as a textbook, each chapter includes additional required readings on the topic covered as well as suggested readings that can extend the learning process outside of the classroom. Additionally, the objectives of each lesson are listed at the end of the chapter, as are different essay topics for possible assignment and submission. Black and white photos illustrate many of the chapters.

The authors of the book, William Douglass and Joseba Zulaika, are two well established scholars in the field of Basque Anthropology. Besides being credited with founding the Basque Studies Program at the University of Nevada, Reno, Douglass is the author of many articles and books on the subject. Similarly, Zulaika is a former director of the Basque program who has published extensively in the field. *Basque Culture* is the result of their combined and respective experiences and interests, including field work in different Basque towns and studies on migration and Basque politics. The fact that Douglass is an American and Zulaika is a Basque also provides the book with a comprehensive view of the subject matter, which is presented as experienced by both an insider, Zulaika, and an outsider, Douglass.

The book is divided into five main parts. The first four present an anthropological approach, while the last takes on a cultural studies perspective. Discussion of different trends and issues in anthropology and the evolution of the discipline are included throughout the book. Part one (*Defining the Basques*) attempts to characterize the Basques. After describing the geographic location of the Basque region between the Spanish and French states, the authors highlight the unknown origin of the Basques. They present many of the different theories that have dominated the discussion of Basque origin and subscribe to the commonly held notion that the exact origin of the Basque people cannot be pinpointed. However, like others who continue to investigate the history and origin of the Basques, the authors suggest that Basque area archeological remains provide sufficient evidence that the Basques have inhabited the area for at least the last five centuries. The unknown origins of the Basque language and its lack of relation to any of the other languages in the world also contribute to the anthropological appeal of this ancient culture, about which there is still so much to discover.

A common theme throughout the book is the importance of the past in the current lives of the Basques. Thus, part two (*Basque History*) is devoted to a historical overview. It begins with the first historical accounts of the Basques as provided by the Roman historian, Strabo. Douglass and Zulaika tend to agree with Strabo's depiction of the Basques except with respect to two commonly held but questionably accurate notions: that of the Basques as a matrilineal society and the supposed practice of the *couvade*, a ritual in which men experience the pains of childbirth. So much is unknown about the Basques that their very being has produced many myths, which the authors attempt to dispel.

Douglass and Zulaika continue their historical account throughout the Middle Ages into modern times, highlighting the following events: the initial creation of the Kingdom of Navarre due to Moorish threat; the unification, for the first and only time in history, of the Basque territories under king *Sancho, el Mayor* (1000-1035); the progressive division of the Basque territories and their ascription to the rule of the kings of Castile, France or England (11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries); the inexorable loss of traditional Basque rights, previously respected by those kings (17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries); the birth of Basque Nationalism (late 19<sup>th</sup> century); and the creation of ETA

(20<sup>th</sup> century). The last chapters in this section provide a detailed historical account of the Basque presence in South America, the American West, the Philippines, and Australia. These chapters also consider the reasons behind Basque migration and discuss the different occupations Basque immigrants tend to hold, depending on the area of the world to which they migrate.

Part three (*Traditional Lifestyles and Worldviews*) explores agriculture and fishing, the historical foundation of Basque economy until it became industrialized. Using as an example the fishing town of Lekeitio, the authors illustrate how fishing is still a communal activity for many Basques. Similarly, when describing agricultural practices, Douglass and Zulaika highlight the self-sufficient Basque *baserri* (farmstead), an entity which can only be sustained with the support of the entire *auzo* (neighborhood). As an example of Basque worldviews, the authors explore customs regarding courtship and marriage in the countryside, views towards animals (i.e. hunting and running with the bulls), a popular mythical character named Mari, as well as witchcraft and witch hunts, and funeral rites. The interaction of Catholicism and traditional Basque beliefs contribute to a particular view of the world by the Basques.

As opposed to the first three parts, in which the emphasis is primarily on exploring the past, the last two sections of the text focus on the present and speculate about the future. As such, part four analyzes the current pillars of Basque economy, while part five examines the contemporary cultural milieu. In each section, however, reference to the past is made to show how past, present, and future blend together.

The city of Bilbao takes on a protagonist role in part four (*The Contemporary World*) when talking about the Basque economy. The authors assert that the city's importance as an industrial center throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its decline in the 1980's, and its reinvention as a new tourist urban center in the 21<sup>st</sup> century speak to the vitality of the area. Also, the Mondragon Cooperative Group is presented as an example of a successful Basque economic enterprise that attracts worldwide interest. At the same time, the authors ponder the future of the Basques within the frame of the European Community and contemplate the place of the Basques in a global economy. Part five (*Basque Cultural Studies*) explores the evolution of race and ethnicity studies concerning the Basques. Gender issues within Basque studies and the relation between language and identity are also considered in this part. Traditional and modern music, oral and written literature, cinema, and art are the focus of the last chapters. The authors consider the major representatives in each discipline, such as Mikel Laboa in music, the *bersolariak* or improvised oral poets, the most translated writer, Bernardo Atxaga, the movie director, Julio Medem, and the internationally renowned sculptors, Jorge Oteiza and Eduardo Chillida, to name just a few. These modern artists incorporate not only Basque traditions but also contemporary international styles.

Although clearly written from an anthropological perspective and intended to add to the discussion on Basque Anthropology, *Basque Culture* is appealing to a much broader audience. Anyone with an interest in Basque culture will find a wealth of interesting and thought provoking material. Each chapter presents a well-informed analysis of a relevant topic. Additionally, the list of supplemental readings encourages the reader to continue exploring the subject. Basques and non-Basques alike can investigate a culture about which there is still so much to discover.