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### **Frank Bergon's Fiction: From Black To White**

Basco. That is the how Basque Americans in the US West are referred to nowadays. Basque Americans enjoy not only the acceptance, but rather the fascination of the American community. However, it was not always so. For decades Basque Americans were derisively called Black Bascos. Basque children were frequently be picked on at schools or playgrounds. Adults were often ruthlessly rejected by the mainstream and were given jobs that no one else wanted, such as sheep herding.

The aim of this presentation is to analyse how the term Basco has shifted from being demeaning to entailing pride. To do so, the fiction of the Basque American writer Frank Bergon will be analysed. His novels, *Shoshone Mike* (1987), *The Temptations of St. Ed and Brother S.* (1993), *Wild Game* (1995), and *Jesse's Ghost* (2011) comprehend the identity variations over four generations. So far, Bergon is the only writer to have illustrated the linear history of Basque Americans in the West and how they have shifted from being The Other to being part of the US community.

Bergon's four novels, based on true events, capture the essence of the West through the writer's first – hand experience as a Basque American. Bergon, a third – generation Basque, is proud of his ethnic heritage, as he expresses through the character, Jack Irigaray, in *Wild Game*. *Shoshone Mike* recreates the killings of three Basque shepherds in the hands of a Shoshone family. Through this novel, we learn about first – generation Basques, who usually gathered in close circles and whose interaction with Anglos was scarce. Bergon's second novel recreates the nuclear conflict of Yucca Mountain, 100 miles from Las Vegas, through the monk St. Ed Arrizabalaga. *Jesse's Ghost* reveals, for instance, how countless Basques were obliged to shorten/modify their surnames to sound more Anglo.