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Towards a Sociology of Wine: The Power of Processes

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ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with how to construct a sociology of wine. It begins by considering the sociologist's relations to wine, making comparisons to how sociologists relate to music and to art. It comments on the interplay between a love of wine and a sceptical attitude towards wine world phenomena. The major part of the paper concerns proposals to create a sociology of wine based around sociological conceptualisation of long-term processes. This kind of sociology takes as its object of analysis wine's whole 8,000 year-old history, and how wine has travelled around the world. Various -ization and -fication processes are identified, as are the multiple interplays between them. In so doing, a general framework for the sociology of wine is laid out.

Keywords: history, wine, sociology, processes, winemaking

I like on the table,
when we're speaking,
the light of a bottle
of intelligent wine.

Pablo Neruda, *Ode to Wine*

PREAMBLE: THE SOCIOLOGIST AND WINE

This paper will attempt to sketch out one possible approach to understanding wine sociologically. But let us begin not with sociology, but with those who make it, namely sociologists, or those who take on the social role conventionally referred to as 'sociologist'.

It is possible to study wine, sociologically or otherwise, and to have no personal interest in it whatsoever, or even to dislike it. Such a scenario is the more possible the more that the reason for studying wine is more impersonal and the research methodology the more at a distance from actually tasting any wine. Thus, one could take wine merely as case material for thinking about some general intellectual issue or problem, such as how certain sorts of markets work. And one could study this issue by examining statistical data that represent, at a very great epistemological distance from any actual wine, such workings. Doing sociology this way, one need never encounters even just one real grape or barrel or glass. And one could create a very valid study, of interest to other specialists like oneself, without knowing much about wine, apart from some basic information about conventional quality classifications, and one need not even like the stuff to write about it. Instead, wine is rendered into a distant object of analysis, and is processed accordingly, by intellectual tools customarily used in a particular field of study. The lessons from the wine case having been ascertained, one can then move on to another such case, which is also grist to your epistemological mill, be that, for example, coffee, baby food, or gobstoppers.

Yet most sociologists who would want to talk about wine for one reason or another probably have some personal interest in it. Why spend so much time building up a knowledge base for something you cannot stand, or

which—if you are an alcohol-abstainer—you are opposed to on moral or some other grounds? After all, if you publicly present yourself as an analyst of wine, you are publicly associating yourself with it, and audiences will read you as linked to wine in some way. (The hostile reception to wine talks I have given, by students who seemed to be of a religious fundamentalist persuasion, is a case in point.)

Moreover, if you are going to study wine in some sort of way informed by qualitative methods, you are going to have to be around it, and you are probably going to have to taste or drink some of it at some point. You are also going to have to converse in fairly knowledgeable ways with both wine professionals and amateurs—whether the term 'amateur' is meant in the English sense of non-professionals, or in the French sense of those who adore wine. Complete ignorance of wine will not facilitate fieldwork, and indeed there is often quite a high entry cost to entering professionalized wine worlds: people will be more likely to talk with you if they think you know what they are talking about. Hence some wine-related cultural capital is a necessary condition to study wine if you are going to be in some sort of proximity to it and the persons whose social roles and activities are concerned with it. And the easiest way to possess such capital is already to be interested in wine as a private person, holding knowledge which can then feed into one's professional sociological practice. As I like to say at the start of interviews with wine professionals, as a sociologist of wine I am in the business of mixing business with pleasure (in the same manner perhaps as a *blanc de noir* Champagne: 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Pinot Meunier).

Yet the conjunction of personal interest in wine and professional doings concerning it involves a series of challenges. First, there may occur a reproduction of what seems to happen in more basic exercises in the sociology of music. In that field, the person in the sociologist's role is sometimes either a fan of the music they are studying, or used to be, or still currently is, a practitioner of that kind of music. In such cases, the problem arises of the analyst being so close already to the object of study that they may fail to create an adequate distance from it. Therefore, there is a risk that the resultant writing may uncritically reproduce the viewpoints of those musicians being studied. The analysis remains at the level of basic description, not sociological analysis per se, with more unpleasant societal factors of inequalities of class, ethnicity, gender, and so on, being delicately airbrushed out. The study may become a narcissistic exercise in studying not only people like oneself, but also oneself too.

The same scenarios can arise if one is a wine aficionado who is also playing the role of sociologist. (This is a problem I feel particularly acutely when reading Geneviève Teil's account, in this special issue, of wine enthusiasts; her descriptions of their doings sound uncomfortably like my own. Clearly, in some ways I am one of them.) There could result fan-girl and fan-boy studies, both of the kinds of things one happens to like, and of persons akin to oneself, and for whom one feels at least some positive affinities. All the potentially more unpleasant aspects of the lifeworld under study might again be airbrushed out. This is especially so if recurring access to field-sites requires discretion as to what one writes about them publicly. Too much uncensored and critical sociology may hinder repeated access to places where the wine-related action is. A highly critical account of a specific wine environment—possibly playing up both the tacit and not-so-hidden classism, racism, and sexism of wine phenomena—may possibly also sound like sour grapes. Highly critical analyses may be—or be seen to be, by those being subjected to criticism—a function of the ex-fan turning negatively on the previous object of adoration.

The sociologist of wine therefore must strike a balance, between having enough interest in, knowledge about, and access to wine and wine-related people, on the one hand, and some sort of critical distance, which allows for more 'critical' and possibly controversial things to be said, on the other. The relation to the object of study requires the kind of reflexivity and self-distancing advocated by Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Thus, an important part of doing a sociological study of wine involves carrying out a sociological analysis of your own relations to wine, and to the different sectors of the wine-related culture, world, field, or whatever other conceptualisation you may have, both of the more immediate wine phenomena and locations you are dealing with, and also of the wider wine-related context, such as a given wine-making region, or a regional or national wine market. A sociologist of art must reflect upon her or his own orientations to particular styles of art and particular types of art world actors (Inglis, 2005). So too must the sociologist of wine subject to sociological self-scrutiny her or his own relations with, and especially sympathies and antipathies towards, various different wine regions ('established' or 'emerging', etc.), styles ('classic' or 'hipster', for example), and types of wine-relevant actors. Only then will an adequately thought through sociological practice emerge vis-à-vis wine, which neither unwittingly reproduces personal biases, nor makes the mistake of being too close to, or conversely too distant from, the subject matter in question.

But even if the working out of such a sense of epistemological balance is at least roughly possible in practice, another challenge remains. The *sociologizing* of wine may involve, to paraphrase Oscar Wilde, each analyst killing the thing they love. What if one's study of wine production reveals horrible forms of labour exploitation? What if one is forced to conclude that wine connoisseurs—especially those akin to oneself—are essentially a bunch of self-obsessed and snobbish bourgeois idiots, rife with the typical stupidities of their class position? What if professional and amateur wine contexts turn out to be hotbeds of ethnic exclusion and gendered discrimination?

Such findings will probably play well with editors of sociology journals, for those kinds of findings are the kinds of findings such publications typically publish. But will such accounts receive as warm a welcome from industry-facing academic and non-academic outlets? They might possibly, if what one is saying fits with the general temper of the times; if, for example, the critique of ethnic biases from within the wine industry, that has been stimulated partly by the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, continues, and also keeps on winning supporters among the editorial gatekeepers of industry and industry-facing publications. But even if one's critical sociological reflections find some sort of an audience, perhaps that is at the expense of one's own enjoyment of wine. One can no longer operate in the more naïve fashion one did before one sociologized wine and thereby revealed all the various sorts of social unpleasantnesses involved in its making, distributing, and consuming. Sociology has the capacity to spoil the enjoyment of wine much more deeply than does a tainted cork. That is what the sociologist of wine is compelled to risk, as is the potential hypocrisy involved in trying to disassociate one's own private likings from one's professional revelations.

Perhaps the wine-loving sociologist is ultimately left in the manner of the reader of horoscopes identified by Adorno (2001) in the mid-20th century, simultaneously not believing and believing what s/he reads in the astrology columns. In this case, the dialectic of belief/disbelief lies in the sociologist's reactions to winemakers' and marketeers' claims about such matters as *terroir*, tradition, and authenticity (Inglis, 2015). S/he knows all about the ideological biases and deep-rooted cultural assumptions which underpin such claims, as well as being alive to the sometimes outright phoniness and cynicism that can permeate wine talk and sales pitches. Yet still, when s/he savours the bouquet and with relish tastes a particular wine, she cannot dismiss all claims about wine expressing a sense of place and of its being crafted in ways that are irreducible to profit-seeking and techno-scientific interventions. The charm of the wine reasserts itself in the face of sociological scepticism.

After all, given that one could study many other things in the world, the wine-oriented sociologist has most likely chosen to examine wine because, ultimately, s/he likes the taste of it, and finds its multiple contexts endlessly fascinating, despite discerning the socially and environmentally problematic features of them. To continue over time to be a sociologist of wine probably involves and requires the constant reappearance or irruption of the love of wine amongst the proliferating intellectual impedimenta generated by and accompanying sociological investigation of wine phenomena. Can sociology kill that love? In most cases, probably not, although it may have a very good attempt at doing so.

A PROPOSAL: WINE AND SOCIOLOGICAL PROCESSES

We now turn towards consideration of what 'sociology of wine' could look like, intellectually speaking. The introduction to this special issue (Inglis and Almila, 2021) pointed to the various disciplinary, sub-disciplinary and interdisciplinary formations which currently study wine. Many wine studies tend to focus on specific times, places, and personnel, and less on longer-term and trans-contextual dynamics. Yet there are some notable exceptions to that tendency, which engage in 'big picture' thinking about wine across time and space (e.g., Anderson and Pinilla, 2018; Inglis, 2019; Itçaina et al., 2016; Simpson, 2011; Unwin, 1991). But those accounts come from the overlapping areas of geography, history, economic history, and political economy. While they overlap with, and can certainly inform, sociological thinking about wine, they are not sociological per se. Therefore, there is an analytic space which sociology can fill. Sociology can exist as a complement to existing forms of social scientific and humanistic knowledge about wine, while formulating issues in a somewhat different manner, drawing on more specifically sociological theoretical vocabularies.

The main proposal set out in this paper is that a sociological consideration of wine can have the benefit of involving 'big picture' thinking. The sort of sociology I have in mind here involves making connections between *all* possible types of wine-related phenomena, especially discerning connections that otherwise would not be made by other disciplinary approaches. The analytical purview of this sociology should be as wide as possible, both in time and space. The frame of reference must be 'global' in several senses at once. This involves coverage of the whole planet, and within that general outlook also involves consideration of relations both between all parts of the world, and also between all possible factors which are operative within them (which are conventionally labelled 'political', 'economic', 'cultural', 'social', 'legal', and so on). The coverage must also be trans-historical, taking in the whole history of wine making's 8000-year history, and discerning connections between apparently unconnected historical periods. In other words, sociology can be a generalizing science of wine, making generalizing statements about how wine in the broadest sense 'works', both in the past and today, and showing how the past continues to influence the present.

I propose that a generalizing sociology of wine can be rooted in the depiction of long-term processes. Sociology is in some ways an exercise in the depiction of '-izations'. The so-called 'classical' sociology developed in, and involving reflection upon, Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries, was a science of multiple overlapping -izations, including 'urbanization', 'bureaucratization', 'secularization', 'scientization', as well as the master category

of 'modernization', which was often taken to describe the confluence of all of the more specific trends. As one of the masterly figures in the sociology of long-term processes, Norbert Elias, noted, while a focus on such processes may be highly engaged politically—as in the classic case of Karl Marx—it can also foster a sense of detachment from the object of study, allowing for a coolly dispassionate manner of looking at the dynamics whereby history, including of wine, is made (Kilminster, 2009: Chapter 2).

I am not here going to draw explicitly on Elias's approach to such matters, although others have occasionally done so on wine-related issues (Rihouet, 2013), as well as on alcohol matters more generally (O'Brien, 2018). But I do think that Elias's overall reflections on the nature of processes can help the sociology of wine in at least two ways.

First, his work, and that of his followers, points to both longer-term and shorter-term social processes, with the former much more likely to be unintended by any actors, whereas shorter-term processes may be partly unintended and partly intentional on the parts of certain actors deliberately seeking to stimulate some sort of change that acts upon other actors. In both cases, multiple processes feed into each other, possibly having various sorts of unintended consequences (a review of this literature is offered at Inglis (2021)).

Second, Elias's sense of a relatively detached understanding of general and long-term processes helps to deal with the problem alluded to above; that is, the sociologist needing to maintain a certain attitude towards wine-relevant subject matters, encompassing a keen interest in, and knowledge of, wine, while at the same time not becoming overly attached to any particular position on the issues at hand, and not 'taking sides' for or against any particular political position or set of actors in a given wine environment (Kilminster, 2009).

For example, the kind of focus on long-term processes that I have in mind involves not taking any particular side vis-à-vis major wine world conflicts over such matters as the nature of *terroir*, or the effects of 'globalization', or the status of 'natural' wines, and so on. This is particularly important as the few words which exist in contemporary wine worlds and are widely used by actors, which are English language -ization words, or are synonyms of them in other languages (especially French), generally refer to certain processes that are depicted in highly negative ways. Thus, the English term 'globalization' and its French translation 'mondialisation' are generally deployed by (some) wine-related actors in ways which suggest unacceptable homogenization of wine production methods and taste styles (Barthel-Bouchier and Clough, 2005). The related term 'Parkerization' is coined and used by those critical of both the allegedly overweening power of the American critic Robert Parker to rate specific wines and thus to shape production in multiple locations around the world in manners which alter existing wine styles in order to fit his specific taste categories, and of the more general trends towards subjecting apparently every wine in the world to some sort of rating involving points out of 100, or a certain number of stars out of 5, or some such scale of judgement (Feiring, 2008).

Processes referred to by such terms as 'Parkerization' usually are understood by those using them as very negative tendencies, and such terminology often works as a rallying-cry to commence and continue resistance against such perceived pernicious tendencies. Thus -ization words used by wine-related actors tend to carry negative and critical connotations. Even some technical terms referring to techno-scientific interventions in winemaking—like Chaptalization (adding sugar during fermentation) and micro-oxygenization (adding oxygen to shape flavour, texture, and smell)—can be framed by critics of such matters as unnecessary and damaging to the character of a wine, and more broadly to the style taken to be a virtuous expression of a specific *terroir*. Thus Jonathan Nossiter's polemical and highly influential documentary *Mondovino* (2004) mocked the travelling wine advisor Michel Rolland for his constant demands to micro-oxygenate the wine at seemingly every winery he was hired by, thereby creating a blandly homogeneous style that Nossiter viewed as exactly the worst aspect of globalized fine wine production. Techno-scientific intervention processes are hereby strongly connected to negatively construed societal processes such as globalization and Parkerization (Parker also being a target of Nossiter's, as well as a friend of Rolland) (Nossiter, 2009).

But terms coined by sociologists that refer to wine-related processes need not carry either negative or positive connotations. And if they do not, a more dispassionate vocabulary specific to sociology of wine can be forged. As a result, sociologists' -ization processes can be used as intellectual tools to analyze the same sorts of tendencies that wine world polemicists engage with, but doing so in more distanced ways than those of the passionately engaged, while the words and actions of the polemicists themselves can be contextualized within, and thereby understood within the terms of, the very processes that the sociologists can discern.

Nonetheless, a more neutral vocabulary of processes can be supplemented by the sociologist if s/he wishes, and such terminology is available from within the history of the discipline. In classical sociology—and especially in the works of Marx and his varied followers—critical sociological terminology also developed, involving accounts of various '-fication' processes, such as 'commodification' and 'reification' (Nisbet, 1966).

Words in English ending in -ization and -fication refer to concepts which seek to identify broad trends over time, leading from one sort of condition to another in a process of transformation. The political orientation of any

given analyst shapes the evaluative colouring of the word and the concept it represents, with any given process being construable as more desirable or less desirable, depending on which specific author is using it (Bendix, 1967).

In this paper, I will apply to wine matters some central -ization, and a few relevant -fication, words which are important within sociological analyses of long-term term trends. The paper is merely an initial sketch in such a direction. As a result, it does not define these categories in any detailed manner; it seeks merely to give an initial setting out of what a sociology of wine focused around -ization, and to a lesser extent -fication, processes could generally look like, and what kinds of things it can tentatively say about wine, making connections that otherwise might not get made. Later work, whether by myself or others, can flesh out the concepts in more specific ways, drawing on particular schools of sociological thought to render them more concrete. What follows is a very generalizing set of remarks about sociology as a generalizing science of wine. Much remains to be said about the particularities of sociology's capacity to make wine-oriented generalizations.

Nonetheless, a potential benefit of focusing on the kinds of processes outlined here is that they cut across conventional ways of conceptualising wine in some sort of social scientific manner. At the most basic level, one could analytically divide wine up into realms of *production*, *distribution*, and *consumption* (in short, PDC), and then trace out connections between these domains, and how dynamics in one may have different sorts of reverberations in the other two. Alternatively, one can make analytical distinctions between *wine worlds* (construable as social spheres involving interacting persons involved in one way or another with wine), *wine cultures* (comprised of sets of wine-related ideas and values), and *wine fields* (comprised of competing ways of talking and making judgments about wine)—in short, WCF—and one can also trace how they affect each other (Inglis and Almila, 2019).

The kinds of processes which I identify in this paper traverse all the domains identified in both these sets of concepts. While any specific process may, at a certain time or place, be primarily located within, say, wine production or a wine world, it is not necessarily restricted to that domain, for it may also be at work, either contemporaneously or at a later date, also in wine distribution and consumption, or in wine cultures and fields. Identifying how such processes move within and across PDC and/or WCF formations, both synchronically and diachronically, can be a central focus of the sociology of wine.

I will illustrate the general wine processes that I identify below with historical examples of them in operation that I happen to know about. Any number of other examples could have been used by other authors seeking to make the same sorts of general points. The examples I use are scattered in time and space, giving the paper a rather mosaic-like quality. I hope that that feature does not distract from, but rather reinforces, the central point being made here. This is that general wine processes certainly occur across time and space in context-specific manners; but to discern only the specificities without seeing them as instances of more general processes, is to miss the very level of generalizing analysis that sociology is particularly well-equipped to bring to the study of wine.

WINE'S AMBIGUITY: ITS SIMULTANEOUS ROOTEDNESS AND ITS TRAVELLING TENDENCIES

To begin to unpack the types of general processes concerning wine that sociology can develop and utilise, I will start with some basic propositions about the trans-historical quality of wine made from grapes. I contend that wine is deeply ambivalent, located between apparent stasis and diverse forms of mobility. Any such account of wine must commence, at least in part, with the grapes, and that in turn means accounting for the vines from which the grapes derive.

About one hundred grape species grow wild across the world. But wine is initially a phenomenon—or set of interlinked phenomena—that is Eurasian in origin. It is just one single Eurasian grape species, *Vitis Vinifera L. subsp. Sylvestris*, which is the source of 99% of the world's wine today. In its wild, uncultivated form, *Vitis Vinifera* grows from Central Asia to Iberia, spanning a distance of about 6,300 kilometres, within a north to south band of about 1,300 kilometres. All domesticated grape varietals derive from it, in an astonishing variety of shapes, sizes, combinations of sugars and acids, and flavours. There are today as many as 10,000 cultivars or clonal types. Viticulturalists have exploited *Vitis Vinifera*'s tremendous potentials for being altered, manipulated and transplanted to new places. Roughly speaking, cultivated grapes have grown between 30 degrees and 50 degrees latitude, in both the Northern and Southern hemispheres (Taber, 2005).[1]

The earliest evidence of making wine from grapes dates from about 6000 BCE, in the area of the Caucusus now called Georgia (Kassam and Davis, 2017). Evidence shows that wine making was going on about 5000 BCE

[1] In recent years, viticulture has been developed nearer to Equatorial regions, in places with relatively hot climates like India, Thailand, Peru and Brazil, as entrepreneurs seek to open up new areas for production, and to supply both old and new markets of consumers. As this has happened, so too have new hybrids been developed to grow effectively in novel grape-growing environments (Huber, 2011).

in the Zagros Mountains in Iran. The Neolithic period provided suitable social conditions for wine making, as humans were living in the types of settled habitations conducive to domesticated grape-growing (McGovern, 2003).

The grape vine's 'pliable, almost chimeric nature' is perhaps its most notable feature (McGovern, 2003: 13). Part of that polyvalent nature is wine's simultaneous locatedness and its propensity towards movement. A fundamental principle of the sociology of wine should involve recognition of wine's paradoxical nature. On the one hand, wine is in some ways rooted (literally) in the particular places where grapes are grown, and where grape juice is turned into the finished product. Moreover, wine marketing has for millennia been about 'placing' wine, in processes which we could call **the localization of wine**: that is, presenting a particular wine—especially one thought of as being distinguished and of high quality—as being somehow quintessentially redolent of the place it has come from (Beverland and Luxton, 2003; Meneley, 2007).

For example, social elites in the Roman Empire were very keenly aware that what they thought of as good wine came from not just anywhere, but from specific noteworthy regions. These were all in Italy and the Greek islands (Dalby, 2000). In the late republican and early imperial periods, Falernian wine from near Naples was widely perceived to be the best available, along with those from Surrentium, Albanum (today's Alban hills), Praetutium (on the Adriatic coast) and Rhaeticum (near present-day Verona) (Millon, 2013). The author Pliny said that the wines of Campania were famous all across the world, indicating that the concept of global reputation for what are perceived to be especially fine wines is not new (Geraghty, 2007: 1048). Pliny added that two-thirds of the greatest producing regions are in Italy—perhaps an instance of chauvinism in wine appreciation, a phenomenon that also seems to be trans-historical. The great Italian wines were regarded as worthy rivals to the esteemed wines of the islands of Cos, Chios and Lesbos. Elite Romans were keen to be assured as to the original location, provenance and quality of the wines they drank, in ways that are in some sense like those of today's wine aficionados (Dalby, 2000).

Despite the very long-term existence of social processes which 'place' wine, sociology of wine must be founded on the recognition that wine is also all about the travelling and movement of all the elements which make up total wine making and wine drinking processes. From early times, there have been multiple forms of **wine mobilization**: vines and wines have moved along river and sea trading routes (McGovern, 2003; Phillips, 2000).[2] Then they were enabled to move across oceans by the 16th and 17th centuries CE (Hancock, 1998, 2005), the point at which we may perhaps be justified in calling the start of the globalization of wine, properly speaking (Inglis, 2019).

Wine has over history been much more likely to travel than beer and other fermented drinks, for in comparison to them it has more potential for moving over long distances and becoming a circulating commodity, the other drinks historically being more for immediate consumption in the places they were made. Wine therefore has had more capacities, relative to most other beverages, for making socio-economic and other kinds of linkages between different places and for being offered for long-distance commercial sale. It has been less likely than other drinks to be made in contexts of simple domestic production, being more often made in specialized commodity production sites—that is, wineries—which were often separate from places where the drink was actually consumed (Dietler, 2006). For most of the time that wine has been made, special wines made for higher status and wealthier consumers have travelled more and further than have ordinary wines for everyday consumption; moving significant amounts of *vin ordinaire* across very long distances only became economically viable on a very large scale as recently as the 1980s (Capatti and Montanari, 2003: 141).

In all historical periods, it is not just the final product that has travelled, for everything associated with the grape growing and wine making process has travelled too. As well as vines, the human actors dealing with them—viticulturalists and viniculturalists—have moved over often long distances too, as have their respective forms of technology and knowhow. Grape growing, wine making and wines, and all the various appurtenances associated with them, have over history constantly moved around large geographical areas (Inglis, 2019).

The interplay of wine's apparent rootedness, and its simultaneous tendencies towards movement, has generated ambiguities that people have tried to manage. As long ago as the Egypt of the 3rd millennium BCE, the writing on wine jars, and the stamps on clay seals put onto the jars, sometimes indicated quite detailed information: the year of the vintage, the vineyard where the wine was made, the name of the vintner, and sometimes the perceived quality level. All these were important indicators for traders and buyers of where the wine had travelled from, and were early ways of dealing with a subsequently perennial problem—should I trust the person I am buying the wine from, and are they telling me the truth about it, including where it came from (Meneley, 2007)?

[2] The Greek historian Herodotus in the 5th century BCE described in some detail the developed wine trade that ran from the headwaters of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers through to Babylon, which was operated by Armenian wine merchants. This trade could have existed as early as the 4th millennium BCE. Boats made of willow frames and animal skins could take up to 25 tons of wine at a time. We know that circa 1750 BCE, wine could be transported in very large jars of 1000 litres or more, indicating the movement across borders of wine in bulk even at this time. At the end of the journey down the river, the boats could be dismantled, the frames sold off, and the skins taken back up the river again, to be re-used on the next journey—an example of ingenuity and flexibility in the movement of wine (McGovern, 2003: 167).

For example, during Roman imperial times, wines from the island of Cos came in distinctive shapely *amphorae*. This design was copied by unscrupulous merchants from all over the region, to sell inferior wines from elsewhere as if they were from Cos, to cash in on the latter's high reputation (Dalby, 2000). Selling inferior products that could have come from anywhere, packaged as superior items that purport to come from a reputed region, has continued to be a big problem down through the centuries. Modern wine legislation at national and international levels has been in large part concerned to deal with this perennially recurring challenge, involving multiple processes of **the legalization of wine** (see below).

Keeping finished wine from spoiling while it travels over long distances has been a challenge across the millennia. Wine in medieval Europe was often bitterly complained about because of spoilage problems. Barrels—which had replaced ancient *amphorae* as the solution to making wine portable (Murray, 2007)—were often poorly sealed and the wine inside would rapidly oxidize, making it taste very unwholesome. Even when barrels worked properly, once they were opened the wine was good for only a few days before turning sour (Turner, 2004).[3] The spoilage during transit problem has prompted different sorts of technological fixes at different times. Thus, spice was initially added in Greek and Roman times as a preservative, but then drinkers got a taste for it, so it was added also for aesthetic reasons. This is an anticipation of different sorts of modern scientific and technological interventions to make wine appeal more to the mainstream palates of drinkers at any given time, of which more below (Lukacs, 2013).

WINE AND RELIGION: THE SACRALIZATION OF WINE

Wine has abounded in religious significance for a very long time. In the eight millennia of its existence, grape wine has been strongly associated with, and used by, the major religions of central and western Eurasia. In that wide geographical/cultural region, wine has had, and been thought to have, various affordances for religious purposes, with wine being subjected to processes of **sacralization** and **ritualization** accordingly (Lutz, 1922; Younger, 1966). It is only within recent centuries that religious aspects of grape wine production and consumption have shrunk, these becoming largely secular, and wine production and consumption being desacralized accordingly, even if wine still plays some significant roles in religious rituals today.

Wine drinking can create forms of exuberant fellow-feeling among religious congregants (Fuller, 1996). But wine's ambivalently enlightening and befuddling capacities have made it feared or shunned altogether by various religious authorities, especially those oriented towards more austere and self-controlled forms of worship (Fuller, 1996). The meanings attributed to wine in any religious context are 'embedded in a much wider system of "analogies" that accentuate its symbolic role in mediating between the mundane and the extraordinary, the secular and the sacred' (Fuller, 1996: 113). Wine libations used in religious rituals, whether carried out by religious specialists or lay-persons, are simultaneously symbolic and practical: they achieve certain purposes and symbolize certain things. They involve making offerings to the gods, either the wine itself, or the blessings uttered by wine-drinking worshippers (Dietler, 2006: 241).

Wine-based offerings *to* the gods are particularly likely to be offered by human adherents if wine is understood as a gift to humanity *from* the gods. In some creeds, the gods' gift of wine seems like a straightforward benefit to humankind, bringing joy and consolation for life's vagaries. In other religious systems, the gift is seen as more ambiguous, the affirmative elements mixed up with negative, 'poisonous' ones. When wine is understood as divine in origin, it will seem especially precious, possibly sacred per se, and sometimes as dangerous and in need of careful ritual handling. If divine origins are attributed, wine is especially worthy of being offered back to its divine progenitors, part of an ongoing cycle of gifting relations between exchanging parties in heaven and on earth. This sort of scenario can be seen in contexts as diverse as ancient Egypt (Poo, 1995, 2010), and medieval Christianity (Montanari, 2015). Even among populations in which wine's origins and nature were not conceived of as divine, it still has been widely understood as a worthy gift offering for deities (Heath, 2003: 149).

Wine was highly valued in ancient central and western Eurasia. Fermented grape juice was often the most common source of alcohol, and alcohol was he most ubiquitous intoxicant (Purcell, 1985: 2). Wine was variously 'a common table drink, a desirable trade item, a gift to kings, a medical aid, a ritual offering, and part of nearly every aspect of life', used to 'celebrate happiness and sorrow, worship and covenant' (Seely, 1996-7: 207). Religious rituals often involved wine offerings, while explicitly wine-oriented rituals, including at festivals of the grape harvest and new vintages, were important features of the seasonal calendar (Wilkins and Hill, 2006: 182).

[3] French commentators singled out the badness of wine drunk in England. In that country, spoiled royal stocks were sometimes given to the poor, in order to use it up. In the year 1374, the English king allowed a Great Yarmouth merchant to avoid the ban on exporting wine from England, to send twenty casks of spoiled Gascon wine, which even the London poor would have turned their noses up at, 'to the less discriminating drinkers of Scotland and Norway' (Turner, 2004: 131).

In ancient Greece, wine was regarded as a gift to humanity from Dionysos (in Latin, Bacchus)—the wine god *par excellence*. As viticulture spread westward from Egypt, through Crete and the Aegean, to mainland Greece, the cult of Dionysos followed and mutated as it went, taking on some Egyptian and Minoan cultural elements (Ruck, 1986: 180; Stanislawski, 1975: 428). Otto (1965: 151) points out that modern people 'are accustomed to use the gifts of nature to suit [them]selves without being amazed by its secrets'. So, 'whenever there is talk of wine, we think of geniality, high spirits, and, perhaps, also of the dangers to health and morals'. The Greek viewpoint on Dionysos and his gift went much deeper. Wine was a miraculous divine gift, stimulating serious reflection on 'pleasure and pain, enlightenment and destruction, the lovable and the horrible' (Otto, 1965: 151). Dionysos was a friend of humanity, but sometimes also a force for disruption, chaos, and terror. His gift of wine was likewise ambiguous. It was a *pharmakon*: an important aid to humans, but also a poison (Lissarrague, 2016: 5-6). In Greek myths about the origins of wine, Dionysos' gift to humankind was usually accompanied by violence and the deaths of the first recipients of wine (Nencini, 1997: 191). Humans had to learn to treat this most powerful beverage, 'liquid fire', very circumspectly indeed (Wilson, 2012: 31).

Wine was also understood by the Greeks as profoundly mysterious, which could be represented as involving the **mysticization** of wine, a tendency found in other societies, both in ancient and medieval times. The Greeks did not know why the fermentation of grape juice happened spontaneously. Mystical reasons were offered as explanations (Otto, 1965: 147), these both assuming and reinforcing the notion that such a mystifying process must have divine origins and must be a gift from a god. Dionysos was not just a gift-giver, offering joyous bounty; he was also thought to suffer by reason of his giving of the gift. Just as the harvested and crushed grapes had to 'die' to create the marvellous blood-like liquid, so too it was thought that Dionysos suffered, died bloodily, and then was miraculously and life-affirmingly reborn (Ruck, 1986: 191). It was therefore by sacrifice of his own body, an act thought to be mystically re-enacted annually at grape harvest time, that Dionysos could repeatedly give the gift of wine to humankind (Ruck, 1986: 202).

Wine is important in the books of the Hebrew Bible and Judaism's other canonical texts, a situation involving the **theologization** of wine (Smith, 1996 [1975]). There are more references to the vine in the Torah than to any other plant (Phillips, 2018: 71). In many texts, wine is depicted as being given as a gift (Sasson, 1994: 405). Vineyards, vines, and grapes were symbols of fruitfulness and God's care for his children. As Seely (1996-7: 223) puts it, 'the fruit of the vine gave many gifts to ancient Israel', being symbolic of God's grace and the salvation He promises true believers, as well as, on occasion, of his wrath wreaked against impious humankind (Sasson, 1994: 410).

In the Christian New Testament, wine plays various important roles. Indeed, one might say that Jesus is in some ways a wine god, given his repeated associations with wine, both in early accounts of his life, and in subsequent interpretations over the centuries (Phillips, 2014: 50). It is most significant that Jesus' first miracle occurred at the wedding feast in Cana, where he transforms water into wine (Furnal, 2011: 410). Turning water into wine is a feat associated with Dionysos, making the notion of Jesus as both parallel and response to that earlier wine god plausible.[4] The ability to conjure a miraculous appearance of wine when there was none became a favoured miracle of saints in later Christianity. But St. Augustine observed that the real miracle, performed by God every day, is when He transforms water into wine through the medium of vines (Montanari, 2015: 148).

The use by Jesus at his last meal of wine in a cup, explicitly representing his blood, harks back to the Old Testament notion of the covenant between God and His people being sealed by Moses through a blood offering (Klingbeil, 2016: 432-433). Wine, blood, Christian community, and individual salvation thereby became profoundly interlinked (Seely, 1996-7: 222). The sharing of wine was seen to be the major constitutive act of creating and re-creating communities of adherents, while excommunication involved withholding the wine cup (Senn, 2001: 293).

In Christianity's earlier phases, there was an 'intense [and trans-national] propaganda campaign in favour of wine as both an alimentary symbol and a ritual tool of the new faith' (Montanari, 1996: 122-123). We may describe this as the **Christianization** of wine; no other major religion engaged in such a systematic appropriation of wine for its own purposes. Throughout the Middle Ages, Christianity constantly asserted the excellent qualities and exalted status of wine. Wine could not signify 'the mystery of human nature, the ardor of the Holy Ghost, the knowledge of the Law, the word of the Gospels, spiritual understanding, the blood of Christ, conscience, contemplation, love' and other important matters, 'if it were not itself a product of excellence', surpassing 'in dignity and preciousness all other fruits of the earth' (Montanari, 2015: 141). So holy was the gift of blood/wine that from the 12th century onwards, the laity were banned from partaking of the communion cup, for fear of desecrating it through spillage, the officiating priest instead drinking it on behalf of the assembly (Holt, 1993: 84; Senn, 2001: 292).

Protestantism made further changes, Catholic mystery being replaced by reading and verbal exhortations (Turner, 2017: 138). The Catholic belief in wine being transubstantiated into divine blood was dropped in favour

[4] Interestingly, Jesus is seen to turn water into *good quality* wine, and not the usual inferior stuff that would typically be served towards the end of the feast when the better wine ran out.

of wine as mere symbol of blood (Harvey, 2015: 36). Wine could thereby be restored to the laity in the communion service, and God's wine gift was to some extent theologically **democratized** as a result (Phillips, 2018: 85), of which more below.

WINE AND EMPIRES: COLONIZATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Historically speaking, wine is so inseparable from empires that it is largely an imperial product, a result of the imperial dynamics involved in the **colonization**, at both pragmatic and symbolic levels, of land, plants, and people (I take some inspiration here from the contemporary sociology of empires literature—Steinmetz (2014)). Wine-related phenomena have especially been liable to travel when certain sorts of socio-political and socio-economic structures, institutions, and modes of societal organization have been in place that have facilitated movement within and across specific territories and jurisdictions. Pre-eminent among such modes of organization are empires. The primarily westwards shift of wine knowhow from the Caucasus region over the millennia following the invention of wine making, was in large part due to that knowledge travelling both within empires, and also across their borders (McGovern, 2003; Millon, 2013). Thus, another fundamental principle of the sociology of wine is as follows. Processes pertaining to what we could call the **imperialization of wine** have operated in various ways.

A taste for wine drinking may come to colonies and the colonised from imperial centres. This may happen either in the form of correct behaviour to be imposed on subject populations, and thus taken as evidence of the colonized people's new 'civilized' social condition, or also perhaps as high-status behaviour to be emulated by those wishing to take on the manners of their imperial superiors (Dietler, 2006; Sweetman, 2007). The long-term interplay between empires on the one side, and on the other, the originally Greco-Roman notion that wine was a 'civilized' drink—unlike beer, which was for barbarians (Nelson, 2005)—is particularly noteworthy. The Greco-Roman world understood the agricultural trinity of wheat, olives, and wine as profound symbols of civilization, and promoted them accordingly (Serventi and Sabban, 2002: 163).

In a very long-term and durable imaginary, inherited by Europeans from Greco-Roman antiquity, the presence of vineyards in a territory betokened that region's civilized status. The tropes involved here are well captured by de Blij's (1983: 113) rhapsodic prose, involving imagery which obfuscates the brutal realities of past colonialism and present-day social inequalities:

> The cultural landscape of viticulture is the scenery of civilization. Its impress extends beyond vine rows and terraces to the homes and buildings of the winegrowers, the artifacts of industry, even the lifestyles of those who create the wines. Entire regions are dominated, saturated by the imagery of the vine and its culture history. Wherever in the world one enters a winegrowing region, the atmosphere is unmistakably unique, a combination of serenity and civility.

Working with such assumptions, the British authorities in early 19th century Australia promoted the cultivation of vineyards as a way of taming the terrain, while also weaning the immigrant population off hard spirits (McIntyre, 2012). Appropriation of indigenous people's land for winemaking, and the consequent history of alcohol dependency among the indigenous population (Brady, 2018), are just some elements on the broader barbaric tendencies of a colonial administration which claimed to be working in the name of 'civilization' (van Krieken, 1999).

In mid- to late 19th century California, the development of a wine industry was thoroughly tied up with notions as to the 'civilizing' of the West of the continent, and with the need for the US state, which by now was beginning to nurture its own imperial ambitions, to have a wine culture as sophisticated as that of one of its major historical role models, the Romans. Viticulture allowed the landscapes of newly conquered territories to be located within an imperialist narrative of world history, which 'claimed that all powerful nations, since antiquity, had transcendent grape cultures'. Planting vines, as well as making and drinking wines was part of 'an international set of colonial tactics for transforming landscapes and for propagating a particular worldview of cultivation and control' (Hannickel, 2013: 15).

Colonies can also become vital sources of wine supply for metropolitan imperial centres. For example, in the 16th century CE, the Moghul empire's elites were kept supplied by wineries in the Indus Valley and Afghanistan (Anderson, 2004). When new territories for wine making are opened-up by colonial expansion, such as in North Africa under the Roman empire, the scale of production will generally be on a relatively very large scale. Imperial conditions tend to involve much larger production scales than in areas, such as much of Western Europe since medieval times, where a free peasantry have owned smallholdings over multiple generations. At the time of the Roman emperor Nero, only 6 proprietors controlled *all* wine production in Roman North Africa (Johnson, 1989).

Such a situation of massive production and concentration of ownership was repeated in the same region some two millennia later. Just as the Romans had set up North Africa as a massive source of wine production, so too

did the late 19th century French set up Algeria as their major source of supply (Pinilla and Ayuda, 2002). As the local peasantry were thrown off the land in favour of a small number of large industrial wineries owned by big French companies, French colonial wine production jumped exponentially, from 1 million hectares under vine in 1885 to 8.4 million hectares in 1910 (Simpson, 2011). In the early 20th century, France occupied the paradoxical position of being by far both the main producer and the largest importer of wines in the world—most of the imports coming from Algeria—and accounting for more than three-quarters of world wine imports as a whole (Pinilla and Ayuda, 2002). By the 1950s and 1960s, the expropriation of Algerian peasants from their lands to make way for vineyards had become a prime source of anti-imperial politics by leftist French intellectuals (Barthes, 2013 [1957]; Sartre, 2001). It should be added that colonial expansion could also involve the introduction of peasant smallholders who have tiny wine businesses, as was the case in 19th century Argentina and California (Simpson, 2011).

Vine growing and wine making also could have profound effects on the economic and social makeup of core imperial territories as well as those of the colonies. The Roman case is again instructive here. Huge amounts of wine were made and transported around certain parts of the empire, such as from Italy and North Africa into southern and central France (Dietler, 2006). With such large amounts of wine being transported, more land was put under vine, at one point taking up to 85% of all cultivated land in Italy. Wine production required constant and intensive labour throughout the growing season, and so slave labour was more effective than free labour in producing it. Imperial expansion meant grain, from which came the bread that the mass of the population depended on, came increasingly from Egypt and North Africa (Geraghty, 2007). As a result, Italian grain prices went down, compelling large estate owners to move more into wine production. (At the same time, Italian wine prices went up, due to more demand for wine from consumers in the Romanized provinces around the Mediterranean.) As more parts of the Italian countryside were turned over to vines tended by slaves, the free peasantry increasingly migrated to the cities. This was part of a great movement of millions of people from countryside to urban areas in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, a relatively rapid and certainly vast urbanization process that was not to be matched until the massive rises in London's population more than 1500 years later (Sassen, 2001). In this period of economic boom, the richest landowners who owned vast vineyards became even richer, with massive socio-economic inequalities being created, of a kind comparable to those we see today in an age of extreme neo-liberalization (Geraghty, 2007).

The spread of wine making across continents was in large part due to the broader trajectories of European colonization. Spanish Jesuits had begun wineries in Peru in the 17th century, while Franciscan monks did the same in Mexico, and then in California, in the late 18th century (Colman, 2008). In both cases, the motivations were religious rather than commercial. Partly because of new colonial opportunities, between the 16th and 18th centuries more and more money was invested in wine production itself, and not just in the processes whereby it was traded across distances. Investment in search of speculative profit went in into new wine-making regions, like the Portuguese-controlled island of Madeira and the Dutch colony of the Cape in Southern Africa. The Madeira vineyards were begun after the colonial sugar cane trade had been shifted to the Caribbean and Brazil (Hancock, 1998, 2005). New regions did not necessarily produce only bulk wine: Constantia wine from the Cape in South Africa already had a high Pan-European reputation as early as the 17th century (Unwin, 1991).

Wine as a major profit-making entity became more possible the more there was mass migration across oceans and continents. As many as 100 million people migrated in the 19th century, half of them Europeans (Held et al., 1999). A significant minority of these drank wine in their countries of origin, taking their tastes with them across the seas and oceans. A much smaller, but still culturally significant, number also took wine-making skills with them. People from southern Europe migrated to locations including Algeria, the US, South Africa, Argentina and Uruguay, and as new vineyards appeared across multiple continents, this led 'to a significant diversification in the world production of wine' (Pinilla and Ayuda, 2002: 55).

In areas such as California, Mendoza in Argentina, and Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, wine making was densely concentrated, and levels of production grew rapidly, creating homogeneous bulk wines in large quantities. This was made possible by a combination of the natural endowments of land and climate, where huge amounts of grapes could be cultivated, plus the use of modern farming technologies such as ploughs that could be used between the rows of vines (Unwin, 1991). These were fertile terrains for the growth of large industrial wineries, with grape-growers often operating in separate enterprises from the wine makers. Large wine-making enterprises, producing basic wines on an industrial scale, have been a hallmark of much New World production ever since. Already in the late 19th century, much New World wine making was highly concentrated, with about 70% of wine in Australia and the US produced by the top 5 companies in each, while the corresponding figure for Argentina and Chile was about 50%. At the same time, European wine making was still firmly based on small family and co-operative enterprises (Simpson, 2011). It was therefore due to processes of empire and colonialism that the groundwork was laid for the development of what in the late 20th century would come to be defined as the 'New World' of wine.

Earlier phases of imperialization and colonization continue to shape wine today in multiple ways. One such is the overwhelming dominance of wine-related activities by white people today, involving the **marginalization** of non-whites (Inglis and Ho, 2022) and the selective incorporation of some people from some ethnicities but not others (see below).

Another important aspect of the ongoing presence of older imperial formations on wine today involves how, since the 1970s, **neo-liberalization** has played out in terms of how wine is made and by whom. Neo-liberalization of economies and accompanying social relations may be conceived of a form of neo-imperialism (Harvey, 2007). Wine-producing regions which were created as direct consequences of earlier imperialism, most notably Chile and Argentina, underwent enforced neo-liberal reconfiguration in the 1980s and early 1990s, as part of the wider neo-liberalization of those national economies that was enforced by the major institutions of the global capitalist economy, the IMF, the WTO, and the World Bank. There was massive restructuring of patterns of ownership and styles of production, and the ending of protectionist tariffs. Small producers, who had since the beginnings of those national industries made basic table wines not intended for export, now had to survive in harsh new open market conditions, and wine companies had to adjust by making new types of wine that could sell abroad, especially to European, notably British, supermarket chains, which demanded consistent quality and easy drinkability at prices often ruinous for smaller companies. But other enterprises flourished in such conditions, becoming corporate behemoths themselves (Gwynne, 2008; Pont and Thomas, 2012).

In South Africa, another country where winemaking was a direct import of colonialism, from the 1990s onwards neo-liberalization of the industry also meant a massive movement away from domestic towards export markets. In a still predominantly white-owned industry, there were multiple challenging consequences for communities of rural black vineyard and winery workers. A rural lumpen-proletariat was created, scrabbling their living outside of the safety-net of white paternalism, an instance of enforced **proletarianization** and **pauperization** of the wine workforce (Ewert and du Toit, 2005). The manner of treatment of workers has more recently been subject to process of politicization, as we will see below.

WINE AND POWER: SOCIAL CHANGE AND ITS OBFUSCATION

Wine must always be understood in relation to the dynamics of social power, within empires, national states, and national and transnational economies, capitalist or otherwise. In wine-making regions around the world, interested parties very often have wanted to present to the world that their wines are expressions of unchanging tradition and very particular senses of place. Social elites in such regions have been particularly concerned to define what winemaking involves, as far as the rest of the world is concerned (Crenn, 2015). They have also engaged in processes of **consecration**: defining which vintages, wineries, regions, and so on are worthy of appreciation, and thereby commanding higher prices, and also, by implication, which are not so worthy (Allen and Germov, 2010). We may refer here to the **hegemonization** of wine, whereby elites define and frame wine-related phenomena in ways that seek to promote their own interests. They may do so in ways ranging from very deliberate and highly self-consciously on the one side, through to unconsciously in the other, with a great deal of semi-conscious practices in-between (following the terms of Bourdieu (1998)).

While representations of the supposedly quintessential characteristics of wine regions have existed in embryonic forms for centuries, they really only became systematized into a coherent, systematic, thought through, and to some extent self-conscious, manner in France after World War I, most especially in Burgundy. Such innovations were pioneered by an alliance of wine makers, politicians, and journalists in the 1920s and 1930s (Whalen, 2009). They collaborated to deal with problems of overproduction and regional competition, as well as competition from Algeria, and collapsing demand due to Prohibition in foreign markets like the Nordic countries. They popularised and dramatized *terroir* notions (see below), connecting the wines of Burgundy to what were presented as the essential foodstuffs that make up the authentic cuisine of the region. They staged a new, media-savvy range of wine festivals, gastronomic fairs and newly invented brotherhoods of the vine carrying out supposedly arcane wine rituals at public events, which weaved together 'natural resources, historical memory, marketing strategies and cultural performance'. In so doing, they put on a public face of the region's wines and food which emphasised terroir's 'eternal, transcendent and metaphysical properties' (Whalen, 2009: 68, 76).[5] So successful was this strategy, encompassing globally aimed publicity and encouraging international tourism, that it was widely copied, first by other French regions, and then later by imitators around the world.[6]

[5] The need to present this message on foreign markets was well understood. At the 1937 Paris International Exposition, one of the region's tourism officials asked rhetorically, 'Can anyone speak of the wines of this region without invoking the wines whose universal reputation has made Burgundy known across the four corners of the world?' (cited at Whalen (2009: 95)).

[6] For example, see Petrini's (2004) account of how Piemontese entrepreneurs explicitly sought to emulate Burgundy's forms of self-representation, so as to increase their status and presence on world wine and tourist markets.

Scepticism towards presentations of unchanging social conditions and the supposed perpetuation over generations of venerable wine making tradition, has been voiced by, among others, some geographers and anthropologists (Peace, 2006). Sociology can build upon such viewpoints, agreeing that oftentimes 'reputation and tradition are constructed while helping to disguise the reality of social change', and identifying which actors have the power to drive change, and subsequently to represent it, in specific wine making areas (Demossier, 1997: 56). One must recognise that loaded and essentializing narrations of the history of wine in a given area can contribute to the **naturalization** of conditions that are actually products of contingent social dynamics (Ulin, 1987, 2002, 2004)—the very type of phenomena sociology is well-equipped to identify in other social arenas.

A major scholarly challenge to essentialist ways of thinking came in 1959 with the publication of the French geographer Roger Dion's (1959) book *Histoire de la Vigne et du Vin en France* (Gade, 2004). Dion showed that perceived prestige of wine-making regions has mutated over time. The location of the most prestigious French wine-making regions has changed often markedly through time. For example, in the medieval period, Paris had what were widely thought to be the best wines in France, but that reputation evaporated over time, as eventually did wine making in the city's vicinity. The region of Montbazillac, which today is regarded as a source of pleasant but generally unremarkable sweet wines, was once more prized than Sauternes, which today ranks as probably the top sweet wine producing area in the world.

Dion noted that shifts up and down the prestige scale have often been strongly linked to forms of political power. One important reason why Burgundy enjoys such a high global reputation today is that in the medieval period the Dukes of Burgundy had sufficient political clout to put their terrain symbolically on the wine-making map, and to influence the opinion of social elites around Europe that the wine of the region was of outstanding quality (Moran, 1993). What helped here was that the vineyards were close to major travel routes, so the wines could easily be transported to other locations where their reputation could grow, and also that there was a constant stream of elite visitors from all over the continent to the monasteries where the monks had mastered viticulture to a high level (Pitte, 2002: 16). In this way, to do with political, social and economic factors as much as the quality of the wines themselves, Burgundy got onto the European (and later, world) map of elite wine, and has generally stayed on it for more than half a millennium.

Relatedly, the neo-Marxist anthropological work of Ulin (2002, 2004) has shown how the rise to eminence, first in Europe and then across the world, of Bordeaux, was also strongly bound up with political and trading factors. The English monarchy dominated parts of Western France in the 12th and 13th centuries, and it awarded privileges to the Bordelais producers of wine over their rivals located further inland. This stimulated Bordeaux's exporting of wine to England and other countries, sowing the seeds of the strong orientation to world, rather than simply national, markets in the region that is so evident today (Colman, 2008). Bordeaux's reputation for wines of serious quality was strongly intertwined with world market forces. Competition that arose in the 17th century from Spain, Portugal and Italy led to Bordelais growers replacing high yielding crops that produced more basic wine, with lower yielding vines that allowed for higher quality production. These newer wines found ready markets in places as far away as North America and Russia. In a polemical vein, Nossiter (2009: 92) argues that since the 12th century Bordeaux has been profoundly shaped by the dominant political power in the region, and then the world, at any given time: first the English, whose dominance lasted until at least the period after World War II, then the Americans in the later 20th century, and then in the early 2000s, the newly economically empowered Chinese.

Because Bordeaux was integrated into (proto-)capitalist export-driven commodity markets as early as the 13th century, social conditions there did not generate a strong history of political radicalism and dissent. But the opposite was true in the Languedoc, which still today has a reputation for being a centre of small-scale producer resistance to perceived globalization (Ulin, 2002). Political conditions were also further complicated by developments within France itself. After the Revolution of 1789, aristocratic wine properties in Bordeaux were seized by the new government but mostly remained intact. In the 19th century, prosperous bourgeois took them over, while using aristocratic symbolism to present an image to the world of unchanging tradition (Ulin, 2002, 2004).

Conversely, in Burgundy, where much wine making had been on Church lands, once these were confiscated by the revolutionary State and redistributed to the peasantry, they became fragmented into often tiny smallholdings. This situation still today constitutes much of the complex patchwork that characterises the social relations of land ownership of Burgundian wine making areas, and this helps explain the hostility among smaller producers there to the Bordelais and to the kind of profit-grabbing globalization they are widely thought today to represent (Pitte, 2002).

In essence, how particular wine regions are represented, by those either within or without them, is tied up in complex ways with both the property and other socio-economic relations characteristic of a region, which are often the results of long-term historical processes involving many different political, economic, and sometimes religious, struggles between different social groups, and also the socio-legal apparatuses which ratify and regulate them (Colman, 2008).

WINE AND TECHO-SCIENCE

For thousands of years, wine was bound up with the sacred elements of life in deep and complex ways. The **de-sacralization** of wine from the early modern period was of course bound up with wider processes of secularization, themselves complicated and uneven in their geographical and cultural reach (Inglis, 2022).

A major factor in the modern **techno-scientization of wine** was the devastating spread of the phylloxera disease across European wine-growing regions from the 1860s through to the early 20th century. Phylloxera spreads when tiny insects feed on the roots and leaves of vines, eventually killing off the plants. The disease wreaked havoc across the continent, such that by the start of the new century, nearly all vineyards in the affected regions had to be uprooted and replanted with resistant rootstock (Campbell, 2004). Phylloxera was thoroughly trans-national in both nature and consequences. It spread rapidly across European borders, probably carried on plants transported by the new railway network. While railways could take finished wines to ever more distant consumers, they also helped move around Europe the blight that seriously threatened the very existence of the wine industry in most European countries (Macedo, 2011).

The pest most likely had originated in North America, brought over the ocean by steamship. The eventual solution to it was trans-oceanic too: European vines were grafted onto more phylloxera-resistant American rootstocks. In this sense, North America was both source of catastrophe and salvation for the European wine industry (Campbell, 2004). The disease was recognised at the time as a profoundly trans-national problem. International scientific-cum-political congresses devoted to dealing with the threat were called in the 1870s, creating what today might be called an international risk community. International governmental action sought to control the transportation of vines within and between countries (Unwin, 1991).

There were numerous profound consequences of the disease and attempts to stem it. A new topography of vineyards came into existence, intended to make the disease monitorable. This involved much more surveying of wine-growing areas than hitherto, involving the new technology of photography, which rendered in visual terms for the first time a sense of the *terroir* of particular locations (Macedo, 2011). Scientific forms of monitoring and control of vineyards became more systematic and more commonplace, paving the way to the situation dominant by the late 20th century where vineyards and wineries were as much spaces of applied science and technology as they were of 'nature'. Wine started to be made as much in the laboratory as the vineyard, even if the marketing of it denied that fact. Wines made in the immediate post-phylloxera period, from grafted vines, probably in many cases tasted more generic than those made before the disease, potentially paving the way for new, more homogeneous and trans-local wine flavours (Lukacs, 2013).

Scientific wine research facilities, often based in universities in wine-growing areas, came to prominence in the 19th and 20th centuries. The first school for grape-growers opened in Saxony in 1811, and a major wine-making faculty was opened in Montpellier in 1872 (Lukacs, 2013). By the early 1900s, viticulture and oenology were regarded as legitimate academic disciplines. The University of California at Davis established in 1903 a model farm to investigate how wine making could be brought under more stringent scientific regulations. Scientists from that facility were increasingly a presence in the Californian industry from the 1950s onwards (Campbell, 2004).

After WWII, the idea that humans should exercise instrumental rationality and control over all aspects of grape-growing and winemaking, began to take hold. Earlier tendencies towards the **rationalization** of wine were extended, deepened, and accelerated. The most famous exponent of this worldview in the later 20th century was the Bordeaux-based Émile Peynaud, who evangelised for the elimination of both mystical beliefs from wine-making and accidental occurrences, in favour of strict scientific regulation (Lukacs, 2013). The new 'techno-science' of wine was, particularly from the 1970s onwards, the product of trans-national cooperation, between research facilities in major locations like California, South Africa, Australia, and France, and the new know-how was then disseminated trans-nationally (Pinney, 1989).

By the 1990s, innovations in scientific and technological knowledges travelled rapidly around the globe-spanning circuits maintained by the likes of itinerant wine advisers. The new knowledges were taken up rapidly, because now most sizable wineries had laboratories and personnel, often trained in universities with wine-making faculties, competent in applying such innovations. Large companies took up the new knowledges with alacrity, as they seemed to offer the possibility of creating reliable and similar tasting wines year after year, with seasonal variations being brought under control by scientific and technological intervention (Lukacs, 2013). We pursue such matters further below.

TERROIR-IZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

The ways in which many people, professionals and amateurs alike, today associate wine with place, are strongly influenced by ideas of *terroir*. These suggest that wines made in a certain place must and should come from vines

that have been grown in that place, preferably for a very long time. When wine making in a given region is subjected to and framed within notions of *terroir*, we can discern **terroirization** processes at work.

Terroir notions have a long history in France, stretching back to the time of the Renaissance (Parker, 2015). From then onwards, there were strong associations made between the taste of foodstuffs with the region in which they were made, and the allegedly causal power of the land itself to create identifiable foods and wines, as well as distinctive cultures more generally. Wine was widely thought by intellectuals by the 17th century to possess and express *gout de terroir*. In tandem with literary intellectuals, French geographical scientists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, led by figures such as the eminent scholar Vidal de la Blache, carried on those assumptions about profound connections between region, soil, vines, wines, and people, and gave them a scientific as well as literary validation. Terms connected to and assuming the existence of *terroir* proliferated: *climat*, *sol* (soil), *terrain*, *canton*, along with more generalized words like *pays*, *territoire,* and *province*. School textbooks promoted ideas about regional 'genius' being expressed both in wines and in the works of the best local authors (Parker, 2015).

The ubiquity and taken-for-granted nature today of *terroir* ideas across the world is itself a sign and product of globalization, as well as a stimulant of further globalization. The term was not used much in English language discussions of wine until 1980s, at which point its use rose hugely (Matthews, 2015: 148). *Terroir* ideas have travelled the world from their birth-place in France and have been strongly globalized, nowadays constituting the 'international cult of terroir' (Hannickel, 2013: 12).

Some of the most bitter controversies in wine worlds, cultures and fields today concerns *terroir* (Black and Ulin, 2013; Ulin, 2013). One of the key lines of fracture is between those who believe that *terroir* wines and wine making are under threat from the homogenizing forces of what they see as '**globalization**' (mostly meaning huge companies making characterless, apparently place-less wine), and those who believe that *terroir* is over-rated or some kind of scam. If the globalization of wine means the production of ever more standardised wines that all taste roughly the same, and therefore could be made *anywhere*, then this is thought to seriously threatens the existence and integrity of wines that truly express a particular *terroir*—that is, wines that have definitely come from *somewhere*.

One reason for the bitterness of disputes over the nature and benefits of *terroir* may reside in the fact that the term means different things to different people. The phrase has fluid and multiple meanings, even within France. As it has spread around the world, it has become ever more polysemic. A tendency in the US is to understand it as referring primarily or exclusively to the properties of the soil in which the vines grow. French meanings, however, involve the multivalent idea of 'place', which encompasses physical, geographical, cultural, and historical facets (Trubek, 2004).

Those critical of *terroir* ideas—who include some actors in the wine world, as well as some academics who write about such matters—have listed a series of reasons for their scepticism. Some would argue that the notion of *terroir* is both essentialising—it fabricates a homogeneous entity that does not really exist—and vague—products of a given *terroir* are usually known not by what they *are* but by what they *are not*. When asked, even small-scale producers who might be expected to be experts on their own area, can struggle to say exactly what their *terroir* 'is', but they can say what their wines are *not* like—they are not like the wines of some other *terroir* (Parker, 2015).

Critics also allege that *terroir* ideas imply a kind of environmental determinism—somehow the earth 'speaks' through the wines. It then becomes potentially awkward for the wine maker to describe their own role in the process. Are they just 'midwives', allowing the *terroir* to speak for itself? If so, how does one account for the fact that the winemaker is actively involved in all sorts of ways in making the wine? What about her agency, and the array of scientific knowledges and technological devices she uses to bring the wine into existence? What if all wine, including that billed as unique, is less made in the vineyard than in the techno-scientifically-informed winery (Matthews, 2015)?

Wine marketing—the scripts of which have been globally spread—frequently utilises *terroir* imagery, and often implies that wine has been made in a particular place in that particular way since time immemorial. But this disguises the scientific and technical basis of most modern winemaking (Beverland and Luxton, 2005). It also covers up the fact that in the past, winemakers engaged in trial-and-error experimentation to see which vines and which techniques worked best in that environment. But how the wines are made today is presented as somehow natural and eternal, rather than the result of experiments and chance. Meanwhile, the qualities of the wine are attributed to the environment alone, rather than to human agency as such, although 'tradition' can be invoked as part of *terroir* too (Moran, 1993).

For critics, *terroir* ideas and symbolism involve a sort of double freezing, of both history and geography. They indicate that in a particular locale, tradition rules and wine-making techniques have never changed in major ways over time, while implying that the vines and grapes have always been there and did not travel there from somewhere else. According to some, *terroir* thinking is mostly or wholly a marketing strategy (Laudan, 2004). It helps producers and marketers project onto potentially global markets and cultural circuits images of a special sense of place. As those images circulate around the world, the place is apparently subject to **decommoditization** (this is wine made

by tradition and out of love, not for profit), and yet the *terroir* imagery helps fetch higher prices for the wine than if it had not been sold that way. *Terroir* is a way of constructing the 'local' in order to circulate it globally and to accrue profit from it (Heath and Meneley, 2007).

One outspoken critic of *terroir* ideas, the American oenologist Mark Matthews (2015), cites cases of various blind tastings where expert tasters could not differentiate between French and non-French wines:

> The difficulty in identifying the origin of top wines in blind tastings suggests that, given sufficiently similar environments, genotypes, cultural practices, and winemaking technologies, similar (but never the same) wines can be produced from different locations … [E]ven if there are important flavours of the wine that derive from the soil … [it] may be managed toward those desirable flavours, perhaps even to the extent that … the wine from one soil could be made *indistinguishable* from the wine from another soil (Matthews, 2015: 190).

In other word, for critics like Matthews, science and technology can trump *terroir*, which is precisely what advocates of *terroir* would vehemently deny. Terroirizing talk is no match for techno-scientization. For such critics, and for some natural scientists, ultimately the idea of *terroir* is too woolly and vague to be a respectable term. It seems to cover everything, from soil composition to the alleged 'spirit' of the winemaker. It points to inexplicable and ineffable matters, apparently beyond description or criticism, *terroir* claims thus becoming unassailable assertions rather than provable statements. However, as Teil (2012) points out, scientists who want to disprove the existence of *terroir* or its alleged effects on wines seek to reduce it to a stable list of determining factors. When that cannot be achieved, they think of *terroir* as an imaginary thing. Producers and others who believe in *terroir* instead see it as irreducible to those factors, regarding it as a real and resistant object that cannot be infinitely manipulated by human beings.

Some *terroirist* producers say that *terroir* is less a currently existing thing than a quest, an object-in-the-making rather than a finished one. On Teil's subtle account, *terroir* is neither simply real nor fake, nor is it a cunning marketing strategy alone. Just as 'taste cannot be separated from the process through which it emerges, terroir is inseparable from the vintner who brings it into being' (Teil, 2012: 489). *Terroir* on her view is a changing entity that is widely distributed among many winemakers, and is an ongoing collective production, provisional every year on collective actions by multiple people involved in wine production in that area. The qualities of the wines are therefore not pre-existing things, but 'the plural, diverse and relatively unpredictable result of a production process' involving multiple actors across time (Teil, 2012: 490). This approach suggests a way for sociologists and other social scientists to look at *terroir* which avoids buying into one side or the other in the deeply polarised debates that go on across the world today, which we will return to below.

WINE AND LAW

Wine is today subject to a vast array of national and transnational rules and regulations enshrined in law. The **legalization** of wine—not in the sense of it 'becoming legal', like in the US after the repeal of Prohibition, but rather in its being subject to proliferating modes of legal governance—predates the 20th century, but was massively expanded during that century and on into the current one.

There is some evidence to suggest that a legally recognised region of wine production was running in Paris as early as the 12th century CE, although the border apparently was not fully legally codified until the early 15th century. As wine came to consumers more regularly from further-off places, so too did levels of uncertainty rise as to its provenance, and such anxieties in turn led to more demands for regulation of the market, with groups of producers sometimes responding. Claims have been made for 18th century Tuscany, Hungary, and Portugal as the sites of the first real legal recognition of distinctive wine-making areas (Matthews, 2015: 153). For example, in 1756 the Marquis de Pombal instigated geographical boundaries and regulations to guarantee the authenticity and quality of Port wines for their major market, British merchants and consumers (Stening et al., 2004).

Yet the main location of proliferating legalization of wine is France throughout the 20th century. It was against the longstanding and deep cultural background of *terroir* thinking that the French AOC (*Appellation d'Origine Controllée*) legal apparatus which officially recognises *terroir* in law and governmental classifications was created. AOC classifications go beyond simple geographic indications which merely outline the boundaries of a particular *terroir*. Instead, appellation rules are pre-eminenly about restrictions—as to which grape varietals may be planted in the area, how great yields per hectare may be, allowed and disallowed wine-making methods ('traditional' ones are allowed, non-traditional ones likely not), permitted minimal alcohol levels, and so on (Moran, 1993).

A 1905 law against widespread fraud required a delimitation of the location of origin of each wine, but it did not specify which factors made particular locations unique.[7] A 1908 law stipulated that the wine of a given area is so if it has an association with the area that was 'local, loyal and constant'. The boundaries of the Champagne region were officially delimited this way (Guy, 2003). That law did not specify how wine should be made in a delimited region, or how much of it could be made and sold. The major development came in a 1935 law which dealt with such matters, and created the regulatory agency, the *Institut National des Appellations d'Origine* (INAO), to formulate and enforce AOC regulations (Trubek and Bowen, 2008).

An AOC designation defines the geographic boundaries of an area, and in so doing protects the group made up of all producers within the boundaries, rather than particular individuals or specific corporate business entities. Only those wines that the INAO recognises as having clearly defined and provable linkages to the *terroir* in question are protected by the designation. There also must be identifiable and proven boundaries to the area, preferably 'natural' (e.g. all production happens in one valley), but these also can be purely administrative (e.g. all production happens within a particular political territory) (Trubek and Bowen, 2008).

When groups of producers come together to seek recognition of a new AOC, a clear geographical area to be covered and a long-standing history of traditional practices are initial factors that investigating committees assess, but petitioners must bolster claims with scientific data about issues like micro-climate and soil structure (Trubek, 2004). Such committees, and the INAO more generally, are not simply governmental bodies, but are complex configurations of both local-level and national actors, spanning diverse professions (Gade, 2004). In this way, AOC territories are not imposed from top down, but are negotiations between more local and more non-local players. Collectives of producers can request changes to existing AOC regulations, these are usually granted, and local actors are likely to obey the rules as they partly formulated them themselves.

AOC recognition has both more local and more national dimensions. It protects the appellation as the collective property of all the producers *in situ*, as well as recognizing the appellation's role as part of French national cultural, agricultural and gastronomic heritages (Barham, 2003). Recognition also has more global ramifications as regards recognition and recognisability of the area and its wines outside of France, with concomitant effects on prestige and prices. Despite the benefits to some producers, the INAO system also works to keep in check 'too much individuality on the part of a producer', because wines must exhibit 'typicity' of the area, and what that counts as is open to often controversial debate (Gade, 2004: 855) Younger, sometimes more iconoclastic producers therefore today often prefer to avoid what they experience as constraining AOC rules, and to sell their wines under less restrictive nomenclatures.

An AOC appellation and the *terroir* it regulates can be seen as a complicated—and possibly ambiguous—'assemblage' of nature, culture, land, plants, technologies, and practices (Meneley, 2007). Its genesis partly explains its very hybrid nature. The 1935 law that brought the system into existence came about through an alliance of very diverse actors, including agricultural scientists (intent on improving grape varietals and controlling disease), lawyers (interested in the regulation of wine markets), and geographers (interested in the nature and quality of *terroirs*, and restricting wine-making practices supposedly to reflect each *terroir* at its very best). The interests of the most powerful and vocal producers of the time, who had the ears of journalists, overlapped with these various dispositions. A winning alliance was formed that got its (mixed, possibly contradictory) vision enshrined in French law and the State apparatus. The objections of merchants, who disliked *terroir* ideas as they seemed to outlaw the possibility of selling as wines of a region blended wines which used grapes from outside the area, were overcome, in a notable win for those producers who stood to gain majorly by the new rules of the game (Simpson, 2011).

The specific classifications that came about as a result of this particular alliance of players become generalized and autonomized over time. It came to define legitimate wine-making practice, while seeming to most people to be ever more natural and relatively non-controversial, and thereby becoming hegemonic. 'Over the course of many decades, no debate could reach an audience unless it focussed on the search for the best varietals or treatments, the geographic categorizations of *terroirs*, or how these *terroirs* were then recognized in the legal definitions of appellations' (Roger, 2010: 10). The INAO and AOC are often presented as developments purely French in nature and internal to France. Yet various players who passed or approved of the legislation certainly had their eye on the regulations as a way to win in foreign markets. The budget minister of the time (1935) remarked: 'The era when we could sell anything to anybody at any price is over. We must produce quality products to retain the loyalty of our foreign customers', and the way to do that was the official protection of *terroirs* (cited at Whalen (2009: 81)).

Most of the 20th century may be seen as an era of French ideological dominance in international thinking about the legalities and politics of wine, partly because their country was the most economically important in the world wine-wise, and because successive governments were more activist in wine legislation than other nations'

[7] French politicians and experts had already been effective at imposing their definitions of good wine-making practices in early international agreements about wine, like the Paris Convention of 1883 and the Madrid agreement of 1891. French delegates at the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 required all signatory countries not to use the word 'Champagne' in the selling of their own sparkling wine (Peck, 2009).

administrations. French thinking rapidly spread abroad. In 1924 an agreement signed between France, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Hungary, Portugal, and Tunisia very much reflected French framings and concerns. An International Office of Vine and Wine was set up in Paris, dominated by French delegates. French university researchers, closely allied to government and major producers, exported their classification schemas abroad, 'imposing their supremacy beyond national boundaries' (Roger, 2010: 10). But this pre-eminence of French actors, and of typically French ways of conceiving of wine, came under increasingly severe pressure in the 1980s and after (Roger, 2010).

Critics have pointed out flaws and contradictions in the French AOC system, which is animated by *terroir* ideas, showing that it is less pristine than it bills itself as. While it may look like the physical boundary of a region is somehow the cause of the qualities of the wine, the borders of an appellation area could have been set more by economic and political factors than by the environment itself (Mueller and Sumner, 2006). Moreover, 'the attributes of the territory defined by the appellation, especially the physical attributes, are generously and often uncritically advanced as explanation' of quality, when that is open to question (Moran, 1993: 701). Sometimes in AOC assessments of a new *terroir*, the homogeneity of soil or geology in an area is invoked to define *terroir*, but at other times it is the heterogeneity of these that is used as a justification for granting *terroir* status.

One could also argue that the appellation system essentially works to benefit established producers and disadvantage outsiders (Moran, 1993). This involves what we could call the *politics of classification.* The history of winemaking since at least the early 20th century is replete with instances of fights over the creation and maintenance of legally recognised boundaries which demarcate different wine-growing regions. Winners in such struggles are those who have been able to maintain boundaries that have suited their interests.

For example, those chateaux in Bordeaux which were awarded top status in the industry classification of quality and price undertaken in 1855, continue to trade off the reputation which that classification system still offers them today (Matthews, 2015; Ulin, 2002, 2004). Other winners include groups of winemakers who have banded together successfully to lobby government to recognise their region as special and distinctive. An early example here is the case of the winemakers of Chateauneuf-du-Pape, who succeed in gaining government recognition of their terrain in the mid-1930s, the classification transforming the region from a relatively obscure one without much prestige, to one which strongly features on the world wine map as a fine wine region (Moran, 1993).

Producers have also come together to prevent changes that upset their interests. As Meloni and Swinnen (2012: 6) put it, 'whenever changes threatened to reduce their rents, established producers have sought to constrain or outright remove the threat of new developments through political means'. Losers in such processes include winemakers whose properties fall outside of the boundaries of prestigious regions, and whose products therefore fail to share in the reflected glory of these regional reputations (Bowen, 2015). It is no surprise that such boundary disputes are often so bitter, when so much is at stake in them, financially, reputationally and culturally.

Over the last forty years, the exporting of that system, as a set of ideas and practices, to other domains has been remarkable, involving processes of **generalizing** wine-specific and France-specific ideas to other products, domains, and national contexts. Within France, there has been a marked movement to grant AOC status to a great array of foodstuffs, like cheese, salt, olive oil, red pepper, honey, and oysters (Parker, 2015). Partly through that means, olive oil has been reconstructed by some producers from being a mere basic ingredient to becoming a rarified and elite product, to be appreciated in similar manners as wine is, including the recognition of distinct *terroirs* (Meneley, 2007).

The European Union's food labelling programme—involving the classifications Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication, and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed—is a trans-national form of protection for 'national' and 'regional' food phenomena which is clearly inspired by the French AOC system. This can be seen in the fact that for achievement of PDO status, links between a product and an area must be firmly established, and it is not enough just to show that the area is specialised in production of a particular delicacy. Instead, a geographical, environmental or other 'local' link is crucial for recognition, and this thinking can be traced back to French *terroir* notions that animate the AOC wine system (Tschofen, 2008).

The European Union is both expression of, and mechanism for the promotion of, certain sorts of globalization, including the standardisation of production practices and consumer rights and expectations across national borders. Hence its adoption of French thinking and classificatory mechanisms involves a notable generalization and imposition of these, which should be remarked upon as much as the fact that the Common Agricultural Policy affects national wine industries. Paradoxically, the EU's protected status scheme is trans-national in nature, while it promotes 'gastronationalism'—the self-conscious presentation and celebration of products taken to be pure expressions of regions and nations (DeSoucey, 2010).

Other national governments and wine worlds have imitated and adapted the French model, with great consequences for winemaking in those countries. The Italian DOC system was started in 1963. It remains controversial, as it has a tendency to forbid innovation in wine-making practices, lacking the more delicate re-calibrations of the rules possible under the French system. Indeed, elite producers in Tuscany gained international

recognition from the 1970s onwards for their wines partly through breaking DOC regulations and producing them in new ways more immediately appealing to international audiences (Gade, 2004).

Perhaps a more successful national system is the Spanish DO mechanism, which has been flexible enough to encourage innovation but within the rules it sets (Lukacs, 2013). The US has also developed a weak version of the French system, which denotes geographical boundaries of regions, but does not specify regulations as to what is to be done within them. However, given that the US is sometimes presented as one of the great antagonists of France in the world of wine, even the minor adoption of some French-style thinking about regions is testament to the global spread of the French approach. Moreover, the exporting through imitation of French legal apparatuses of *terroir* ideas to the US, not just to wine but to products like cheese, has driven the development of French-influenced ideas and practices of food production 'craft' in the perceived home of industrialised food, the land of McDonald's and Coca-Cola (Heath and Meneley, 2007).

THE PARTICULARIZATION, STANDARDIZATION, AND DE-STANDARDIZATION OF WINE

Terroir ideas and legal protection of the claimed uniqueness of specific wine regions involve and promote processes of **particularization**. These have developed alongside processes of **standardization**. Developments towards standardization and homogenization of wine production and distribution are not entirely new phenomena: they are to be found to some extent on any context where sizable amounts of wine are made and shipped, as in the case of the Roman empire. But the advent of the new technology of the glass bottle and cork in the 16th century CE was a major development in the history of standardizing wine (Millon, 2013). By the 20th century, the standardization of bottle sizes into metric measures significantly rationalised the exporting of wines across the globe.

Wine has not only been techno-scientized, but also has undergone successive waves of **professionalization**, which have promoted modes of standardization. The new breed of globe-trotting wine consultants which appeared in the 1980s and 1990s possessed an ever-expanding palette of overlapping skills, ranging from technical and scientific vineyard and winery knowledges, through to a grasp of economics and global markets, and marketing know-how to help reach crucial customer types (Gwynne, 2008). The highest-flying ones were also rich in social capital, enjoying connections to multiple sorts of power brokers, from the owners of prestigious properties, to influential critics and the organisers of international wine fairs (Pont and Thomas, 2012).

The more wine making was oriented to exports travelling very long geographical distances, as was the case from the 1980s, the less direct connections there were between producers and consumers. The high geographical mobility of the international adviser seemed to be able to bridge such gaps, to allow the wine, suitably modified to be as appealing as possible to certain perceived tastes, to travel to accurately defined consumer groups on the other wide of the world (Pont and Thomas, 2012).

The new breed of experts no longer came from Europe alone, but also from areas that had up until the 1970s been regarded as peripheries, but were now understood as prestigious, namely California, Australasia, and South Africa. These experts both expressed and created a condition of what Lagendijk (2004) calls the 'inter-connected locales' of the globalized and neo-liberalized wine world. Wine-making information of all sorts increasingly flowed from multiple locations, in both Old and New Worlds, to receiving areas in the New World, and then later on back to 'under-developed' parts of the Old World. There was a dispersal of centres of knowledge-making and advice-giving, and of the complexification of information flows across the world. Personnel moved across Old and New Worlds, taking knowledge back and forth and disseminating it through multiple pathways, sometimes fitting in two harvest seasons a year by flitting between hemispheres. Today's wine personnel will likely hold university qualifications in wine management, from institutions in France, Australia, the US and elsewhere (Chiffoleau and Laporte, 2006). These offer increasingly identical curricula, usually in English—the *lingua franca* of global business—which express convergent assumptions about how wine should be made and marketed (Roger, 2010). This convergence is partly due to academics and practitioners who teach such programmes sharing knowledge and engaging in cross-border pedagogic collaborations (Geraci, 2004). Teachers and pupils operate from increasingly similar scripts, whether they are trained in California, Bordeaux, Stellenbosch, or somewhere else.

This has all contributed towards a radical **de-localization** of wine-making knowledges and practices, as certain scientific knowledges, and wine-making practices based upon them, across the continents. Vineyards and wineries the world over became subject to identical forms of intertwining forms of socio-economic and techno-scientific control (Anderson et al., 2004). Thus centuries-old mysteriousness of the wine making process seemed to have been destroyed by the blinding lights of technological and scientific manipulations.

The kinds of present-day expertise described above were both responses to, and further stimulants towards, processes of standardization. By the 1990s, techniques of growing and making that were standardised across the world included: trellising and irrigation systems; the planting of vines at prescribed distances from each other; more

intensive pruning earlier on in the growing season; delaying of the harvest to maximise ripeness of berries; the use of stainless steel tanks for fermentation (allowing dry wines to be made in warm or even hot climates); precisely managed induced malolactic fermentation and the use of artificial yeasts; and imported French oak barrels for maturation and storage. A side-effect of the latter development was a massive growth in the barrel-making industry (Colman, 2008).

In the 1990s, 'quality' in mass market wine was redefined, now equalling 'predictability, consistency and over-delivery' (Pont and Thomas, 2012: 643). This way of thinking translated into ever higher levels of measurability and control in both the vineyard and the winery. This can be seen as a specific version of broader 'McDonaldization' trends, whereby every part of a production process is engineered to fit tightly defined templates (Ritzer, 2007). This is seen in the changing nature of wine world jobs, with the winemaker moving away from being someone simply making wine to her own personal taste, to becoming a sort of manager making standard products for the perceived consumer tastes that are thought to drive global markets (Pont and Thomas, 2012). This change of course sets up the possibility of rebellion from such prescribed roles, by seeing oneself as a winemaker who makes wines according to personal taste, a position markedly present in the 'natural' wine movement (see below).

Standardized viticultural and vinicultural methods helped stimulate the planting of the now-ubiquitous 'international' grape varietals, such as cabernet sauvignon, merlot, pinot noir, and riesling (Lagendijk, 2004). Grape varieties have always travelled both within and between countries, but the further back in the past this happened, the more slowly the travelling was and the more unremarked. Over long periods of time, grapes travelled to a place, were taken up by wine makers there, and were slowly indigenized and then presented as quintessentially 'local' (Huber, 2011). In the pursuit of wines that Developed World consumers would find appealing, wine makers in the 1990s onwards started to plant grape varieties in large numbers in areas never before associated with those types (Huber, 2011). Nowadays, the spread of a grape can seem dizzyingly—and to some observers, worryingly—fast. This is especially so if the new arrivals are planted at the expense of uprooting varietals that have been grown in a region for decades or centuries, these being dug up as they are seen either to make inferior quality wine that cannot be sold to anyone or are thought to lack wider name recognition (Gade, 2004).

The new forms of globalized, standardizing expertise drove quality levels up across established regions, hastening the end of the days of basic *vin de table*. But so too did the levels of homogeneity of taste and character, driven by techno-scientific interventions in the service of perceived consumer demand, such that 'case one tasted the same as case one million' (Colman, 2008: 104). Easy-drinking, consumer-friendly wine could now be made almost *anywhere*, regardless of the terrain, so long as certain prescribed practices were followed (Lukacs, 2013). The new breed of New World mass-market wines followed and promoted a standardized taste pattern: low on acids and tannins, soft textures, fruit-driven flavours, and relatively high residual sugars (Colman, 2008).

This was wine made in such huge quantities that exporting it in bottles was logistically challenging. New transportation technologies were developed, such that it was now sent in large shipping containers with 24,000 litre bags inside them (Murray, 2007). Such shipping methods have allowed for the bulk transportation of even the cheapest wines in the world. Indeed, one might say that some of the most standardized wines are precisely those low-quality productions whose equivalents a few generations ago would never have left their originating regions. Cheap Chilean wine sent in bulk to China may end up labelled as 'Chinese wine' when it reaches its destination, while red wine sold by a California-based brand may actually come from less prestigious parts of France and Italy (Veseth, 2012).

Wines bound for Developed World shelves were ever more marketed through what was an increasingly globalized system of semiotics on labels. These involve bold colours, easy-to-read text with standardised stories about flavours and the supposed natural endowments of the places of production (even if the wines were really made more in the techno-scientifically-driven winery than in the vineyard), and the foregrounding of one of the internationally recognisable grape varietals on the front (Veseth, 2012). Such labelling stood in stark contrast to the arcane and cryptic labels of Old World producers which required higher levels of cultural capital on the behalf of consumers to decipher which grapes may have been used and what the wine tastes like (Peck, 2009).

At the same time as countries like Chile and Australia were becoming massive producers of standardized wine, certain regions within them were being constructed and represented as being worthy of entering lucrative premium wine markets. Certain regions became symbolically associated with specific grape varietals, and the new region/grape symbioses were presented by interested parties as being at least as good as established European areas (Corby, 2010; Sternsdorff, 2013). Hence Argentinian Malbec was energetically promoted as an emblematic grape that flourished so well in certain demarcated terrains in Argentina that it could be mentioned in the same breath as Bordeaux Cabernet Sauvignon or Sangiovese from Chianti. Thus, standardization processes happened simultaneously with, and partly in response to, **de-standardization** dynamics.

Apparently 'unique', higher-level wines are apparently non-standardized, and the marketing of them reinforces that perception. But as Robertson (1994: 40) points out, the world of marketing is populated by experts who promote putative uniqueness by using standardised templates recognisable in most, if not all, parts of the world.

So, standardised imagery of chateaux can equally well be used to represent a locality in Bordeaux—the original font of such symbolism—or in China (especially as the Chinese now build simulacra of Bordeaux chateaux to promote indigenous wine-making—Kjellgren (2019)). Globally recognisable imagery of Hispanic bodegas can be used to give a sense of place for Spanish or Californian wine. Universally utilisable scripts about provenance, authenticity and tradition are deployable on bottles from Patagonia and Georgia. These generalised 'recipes of locality' (Robertson, 1995: 25-26) are parts of much broader cultural processes whereby 'variation is systematically produced' today (Roudometoff, 2015: 9).

High-end wines as much as mass market ones are also made using globally standardized techniques and forms of knowledge, and with standardized ideas about what makes for good wine underpinning them. They are also consumed, especially by professionals and highly interested amateurs, in highly standardized ways too. These include: universal talk, debates and controversies about *terroir*; a ubiquitous 'shopping list' of stock words and phrases to describe scents, colours and flavours, a kind of global wine talk (Nossiter, 2009: 103-104); retail display mechanisms that can be found practically anywhere where wine is sold to private customers (the cheapest bottles at the bottom of the racks, the most expensive at the top, the bottles the seller wants consumers to trade-up to located at eye level); styles of glassware, designed by leading companies like Riedel to enhance flavours and scents, aimed both at wine professionals and at more discerning amateurs across all countries; the apparently inevitable presence of certain brands, such as Champagne marques like *Veuve Cliquot*, in putatively 'upscale' retail outlets the world over, alongside other generic, branded commodities like 'designer' perfumes and sunglasses (Ritzer and Ryan, 2002); and wine professionals the world over framing their products in light of globally-recognisable classifications of quality standards and price levels, such as Rabobank's nomenclature that divides wines into *Basic, Premium, Super Premium, Ultra Premium,* and *Icon* categories. The apparently non-standard is therefore produced in and through standardization processes, as well as sometimes in self-conscious and deliberate rebellion against perceived standardizing homogenization (Inglis, 2019).

WINE AND DE-POLITICIZATION, RE-POLITICIZATION, AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Most wine marketing is concerned to present as rosy a picture of the place where the wine was made as possible (Beverland and Luxton, 2003). Meanwhile, wine-related tourism has developed significantly since the 1980s. This form of tourism is more oriented to winery-based tourist experiences than was the initial burst of touristification in France in the 1920s, which primarily wanted to lure tourists to a region's restaurants and hostelries but not to the sites of production themselves (Whalen, 2009). Contemporary wine tourism renders the winery as a site of attractive pleasure rather than of mundane labour and techno-scientific manipulation. Architecture plays an important role in conveying a certain sort of palatable image, and this ranges from faked chateaux for the edification of mass market visitors (a notable growth area in China), to iconic architects designing statement buildings, therefore reconfiguring wine regions as supposed cultural hubs for the more apparently discerning 'creative' wings of the upper middle classes (Allen, 2011).

Thus, marketing and tourism both tend to present notions of timeless production processes in rural paradises (Meneley, 2007). They each **de-politicize** wine, both in a given region and more generally. They help to create a sense of a coherent regional wine (and food) culture—the idyll that is Burgundy or the Adelaide Hills, for example—even if that is mostly a fabrication which hides local political social tensions, as well as the possible presence of exploited minority ethnic labour and of globalized capitalist agribusiness (Crenn, 2003; Peace, 2006).

Conversely, wine has become increasingly **re-politicized** over the last two decades. Much of what we have reviewed so far can be understood as the multiple processes that have made up the 'globalization' of wine. The phrase 'globalization' itself has become a key term in the globalized wine field. In the early 2000s it became a very hotly debated term. In 2004 the American filmmaker and ex-wine professional Jonathan Nossiter made the controversial documentary film *Mondovino*. In it he set out a case against what he and other radical critics defined as the negative consequences of globalization on winemaking.

Nossiter's (2009: 90), target is 'the barbarism of the new globalization'. On this account, 'almost three quarters of the wines [made] in … the winemaking regions of the world, are produced with total or near-total cynicism by industrial hawkers, false artisans, or misanthropic (or feud-ridden) family estates' (Nossiter, 2009: 55). Mass-market branded wines made through techno-scientific manipulation for the 'new consumer' destroy the economic basis of *terroir* production, and without *terroir*-oriented winemaking 'there is no individuality, no dignity, no tolerance, and no shared civilization' (Nossiter, 2009: 11).

Although *Mondovino* is putatively about the globalized wine world as a whole, its primary focus is really on France and the presence of 'foreign' influences within it. The French focus takes the film in a very definite direction, reflecting the controversies in that country about 'mondialisation' more broadly defined, a term which in French has a mostly negative connotation. Mondialisation is seen by both the French political left and right as perniciously striking at the very heart of France, namely its traditional, *terroir*-based agriculture, and the foodstuffs and cuisine

which derive from it. In this vocabulary, the term *terroir* becomes the antonym of unceasing and rootless globalization, and a rallying cry against it (Waters, 2010). The winemaker, like the peasant more broadly, stands as either a tragic or heroic figure, depending on how successful they are in combatting the destructive forces of globalized markets and predatory foreign capital, of which American money is the most distrusted (Demossier, 2010).

As Heller (2007) shows, French views about threats to *terroir* winemaking regard the processes that constitute the threats as anti-cultural as well as anti-natural. For a long time, French thinking has worked with a definition of Nature that sees it as strongly socialized. What is under threat from globalization forces is not just a physical place but the long cultural and agricultural traditions that are said to have been characteristic of that place over long periods. Thus, what is seen as 'bad' food, like Big Macs, is anti-cultural more than simply unhealthy, because it undermines the possibility of making 'good' food in traditional ways. Genetically Modified food products and vines are both un-natural and un-cultural, because they go against what is taken to be long-standing 'French Nature'. In Anglo-Saxon terms that is an apparent oxymoron—how can something be both cultural (French) and natural at the same time? But French thinking in general, and *terroir* thinking in particular, see no such contradiction. Fears of the end of *terroir* involve worries about the destruction of the French countryside, rendering it into a series of empty, placeless zones, populated by massive industrial food monocultures and ersatz entertainment sites for tourists. In the leftist version of this discourse, popularised by the farmer-activist José Bové who has become a global media star of the anti-globalization movement, the defence of *terroir* is not politically reactionary. Instead, small-scale and artisanal production rooted in place, standing in opposition to mass-market factory production that could be made anywhere, is defined as cosmopolitan rather than parochial (Bodnar, 2003; Trubek, 2006; Waters, 2010).

Nossiter's story about winemaking in southern France is framed in terms of local heroes, foreign villains, and local sell-outs. Academic critics have pointed out its simplifications and possible mythmaking (Lukacs, 2013; Trubek, 2004). Demossier (2010) contrasts this with the actual complexity of the Langudoc region. It is today made up of many diverse actors, spanning local and foreign investors, some of whom are smaller producers who embrace varietal-based and brand marketing, and want to 'go global'. The region is a more complicated and ambiguous terrain than the bucolic one that *Mondovino* portrays.

Mondovino was never just a representation of wine globalization, it was a polemical intervention into the globalized wine field itself. The controversies that *Mondovino* both crystallized and provoked have had multiple effects on the wine field, helping to structure how debates in it have been subsequently framed. *Mondovino* is simultaneously a representation of what it defines as 'globalization', a striking intervention in wine field controversies, and a structuring agent generative of further controversies and framings of them (Barthel-Bouchier and Clough, 2005; Trubek, 2006). Widely viewed by wine professionals across different countries, it has helped set the terms of ongoing debates in the field about what wine globalization involves, and what its effects are. It has both been adulated and bitterly denounced. Precisely because *Mondovino* and Nossiter's other works, as well as works by others inspired by the film, have been widely shown in universities and training programmes to students who will be the wine world professionals as well as wine drinkers of the future, one can say that their effects on the next rounds of discursive struggles in the wine field will continue for some time yet.

Further re-politicization processes are at work today in terms of highlighting abuses of workforces in some national industries, most notably in South Africa (Moseley, 2008). South African labour conditions have recently become a matter of concern for filmmakers, journalists and concerned industry buyers, including those from the Nordic state alcohol monopolies, which may have ethical purchasing as part of their official remits. Whether Fairtrade wine initiatives—an attempted **ethicization** or **(re-)moralization** of winemaking conditions—benefit black employees or not has recently become a contentious public issue (Herman, 2019).

Such controversies point towards vexed issues of **democratization** of wine, both in terms of who makes it and who drinks it. The further back in time one goes, into the first few millennia of winemaking, the more wine is a prestige drink, financially accessible only by elites, and sometimes only to be drunk by those with sufficient social status or endowed with enough spiritual authority (McGovern 2003, Dietler, 2006).

The more wine is made and the more ease of access to it through expanding trade, markets and shipping, the more wine could become part of the lives of social strata existing beneath elites. Thus in 18th century England and Scotland, drinking certain kinds of wine—Bordeaux or Port—was a marker of middle-class national identity (Ludington, 2013), an instance of wine being an important part of **national identification** processes.

In the 19th century and most of the 20th century high-level wine appreciation was a reserve of the upper and upper middle classes in those and other Western countries, with all the attendant forms of snobbery and social **exclusivization** processes one might expect when a product is widely understood to be requiring large amounts of economic and cultural capital for a person to participate in the appreciation of it. So-called 'fine' wine was by and large the preserve of higher class and older men, the supposed repositories of authoritative knowledge, in wine

as in everything else. Recurring processes of **en-gendering** and **patriarchization** of wine throughout the centuries is taken up by Almila (2019, 2021).

But by the late 20th century, one could note a certain level of democratization of participation in wine matters. In some contexts, notably the UK and Ireland, this was partly driven by wine becoming a standardised commodity to be found not in specialist, and potentially culturally intimidating, wine shops, but in that most accessible of consumer locales, the supermarket (Gwynne, 2008). In this respect, we may talk of the development of a consumerist **cosmopolitization** of tastes for and in wine, as more and more people have been exposed to wines of differing styles from differing countries (although this heterogenizing trend goes together with the processes of standardization of production alluded to elsewhere in this paper). In some wine-producing countries, notably New Zealand and Australia, wine had moved since the 1970s from a more marginal position in the national drinking culture to occupying a central one. This shift was bound up with lower-middle and working-class people understanding that wine from their countries had become **legitimized** abroad, was winning international prizes, and was therefore a source of national pride, and something one could take an interest in without fear of being labelled a snob (Howland, 2013).

Yet in all such cases, it was primarily the white ethnic majorities in those countries that were undergoing and expressing (partially) democratized orientations towards wine, and not those in ethnic minorities. Notwithstanding the recent appearance of Chinese and other East Asians into the global wine arena (Ho, 2019, 2021; Kjellgren, 2019), still the marked cultural 'whiteness' (Ahmed, 2007) of much wine marketing and tourism imagery is mirrored in participation at wine events around the Developed World, where non-whites are usually very much in the minority (Inglis and Ho, 2022). The un-democratic nature of racialised and ethnically unbalanced wine phenomena has recently been challenged as part of the recent rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. US-resident, Filipino-ancestry wine professional Miguel de Leon (2020) echoes the views of many other ethnic minority wine professionals who are calling for wine's re-politicization on the grounds of challenging ethnic inequalities, when he calls for wine's **de-colonization**:

> Traditional wine tasting grids and wheels are biased to Eurocentric flavours, and crucial wine vocabularies can centre on foods completely foreign to … [the typically] Asian [p]alate… Wine is rooted in Europe and its white adjacencies, themselves products of colonial and imperialist histories. From Chile to California, we feel the impact of how winemaking was affected by the conscious, hegemonic spread of Christianity … The wine world does not take into account current experiences of its BIPOC [*Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour*] and LGBTQ+ members. It is steeped in a language that is coded and arcane, tied up with legal jargon and French techniques that only the privileged, monied [primarily white] few are able to decipher (De Leon, 2020: n.p.).

Initiatives both to politicize and de-colonize the wine world are growing. There is a burgeoning online presence of groups supporting BIPOC people interested in wine as both professionals and connoisseurs, especially in the US and South Africa (Beckett, 2020). The exclusion of non-whites from higher-level wine industry positions has already for some years been tackled by South African initiatives to involve more black people in professional roles, such as sommeliers (Govender-Ypma, nd). These initiatives intersect with attempts, both individual and collective, by female wine professionals and engaged amateurs to challenge long-standing male dominance within wine's industries and symbolic regimes of judgment, enacting **de-patriarchization** processes as they do so (Almila, 2019, 2021).

Such challenges to long-standing white and male forms of dominance point to further democratization of wine, at least in potential. But other processes work in the opposite direction. One is the **financialization** of wine, where rich investors (including Chinese billionaires and Russian oligarchs) buy old, rare bottles, or new vintages of prestige properties, at very high prices, and are deploying such wine as investments that can accrue far greater value over time than do other comparable assets (Overton and Banks, 2015). This is a process which has become turbo-charged since the 1980s. It has the effect of taking not just particular wineries but sometimes whole regions, notably some in Bordeaux and to some extent Tuscany, out of the normal affordability capacities of ordinary consumers (Ho, 2019). Thus, as mass and mid-market wine has been democratized to some extent, that defined as 'fine wine' has been de-democratized at the same time. In the 1960s, a bottle of highly rated Bordeaux was under the symbolic mastery of old, white men, but still within the buying power of other sorts of persons. Today, the equivalent bottle is theoretically open to all at the symbolic level, but in brute economic terms, it is pragmatically only accessible to the (very) rich, of whichever national and ethnic background they may be (but they are still highly likely to be male).

Another trend which is at least partly de-democratizing in effects, if not in intent, is what could be called **hipsterization**. Highly fashionable and fashion-conscious connoisseurs, operating as either new-wave professionals or passionate amateurs, and concentrated particularly in fashion-centric megalopolises like London, Berlin, and New York, take great pleasure in constantly discovering obscure grape varietals made in ways that are represented as being traditionally associated with them (Lukacs, 2013). They also are very much interested in

'natural' wines (see below). They have particular orientations towards hyper-specificity in terms of places of origin (Smith Maguire, 2018). Such connoisseurs have a tendency to look down upon and disparage the taste preferences of both old-fashioned 'snobs' and 'ordinary' drinkers of mainstream, mass market wines. In so doing, they enact a certain kind of de-democratisation, raising new forms of symbolic boundary and cultural exclusiveness. This is compounded by the predominance of white males in hipsterized wine milieux, reinforcing gendered and ethnic forms of exclusion (Kramer, 2013)

WINE, CLIMATE CRISIS, AND 'RE-NATURALIZATION'

Wine is ambivalently situated between human and non-human worlds, as well as being a hybrid that traverses and engages both of them. As human-induced climate change has come to impact on every aspect of human life, wine also undergoes a series of transformations.

Climate change is already having major effects on wine production, and it will likely have even more impact in the near future. For example, temperatures in Western Europe in the grape growing season rose on average by 3 degrees Fahrenheit from the mid-1980s to the 2010s. This is having major consequences for many aspects of winemaking, from choosing which varietals to grow in warmer conditions, to harvests happening earlier, and weather conditions becoming more erratic (Lukacs, 2013).

This means a consequent series of losses of human control over the wine-making process, the very objective that techno-science has been aiming at for centuries. This amounts to various enforced **de-rationalizations** of wine, and concomitant attempts by human actors to deal with them. Changes in climate also are affecting *terroir*, which ultimately is a form of thinking and wine-making practice that strongly associates particular vines, grapes, and wine-making methods with particular physical territories. As Pincus (2003: 87) argues, climate change, 'the fruit of the Industrial Revolution and continued population growth, is beginning to make decades of wine-making expertise irrelevant. In an increasingly warm world, the particular associations between wine and place will be difficult or impossible to maintain.'

Which types of wine have been made in particular locations, and how they have been made, has never been a matter simply of traditions stretching back to time immemorial. There has always been change, even if it was not thought much about or highlighted by those engaged in it. Yet the difference between the current period and earlier ones is the *rate* of change. In regions where there is a long history of winemaking, the totality of physical and natural endowments coupled together with human labour that has been given the name *terroir,* was born out of relatively slow adaptations of humans and vines to the environment around them, sometimes built up over centuries. The rate of adaptation sped up in some places from the later 19th century onwards, and then almost everywhere after WWII, as increasingly globalized markets upped the tempo for how winemakers, in adapting to new markets, adapt their practices as to how grapes are grown and how wine is made (Unwin, 1991). The increased speed of change throughout the later 20th century was primarily economically-driven—that is, it was created by mostly human factors alone. But what makes the current period distinctive is that those factors are combined together with climate change, that itself is the unintentional creation of human agency (McKibben, 2006).

That combination, of human practices together with a thoroughly human-impacted 'nature', is rapidly accelerating the pace of change in the wine world today, in historically unprecedented ways. If *terroir* was made possible by relatively slow human and plant adaptation to a relatively unchanging environment, then in a period when human life is subject to faster changes than ever before, and when the environment is changing in rapid ways that our ancestors could never have anticipated, then it is no wonder that *terroir* is being unsettled in multiple manners today. As climate changes, it becomes possible to makes richer, lusher wines almost everywhere where wine is made, even in classically 'cold climate' regions like Germany. By the same token, it is becoming too warm in some regions for some grapes and wine styles that require cooler climate conditions. In such areas, like Austria and Alsace, this will in future likely stimulate further moves to produce red grapes in locations that for centuries have only been able to support white varietals. This is a potentially radical disruption of what producers and consumers think of as the *terroir* of those regions. Such dynamics may speed up and radicalise trends to identify wines by grape varietal rather than by geographic origin, at least for mass-market wines (Hannah et al., 2013).

Simultaneously, areas that were previously regarded as too cool for grape cultivation at all are being opened-up to wine making, such as the Netherlands and Denmark (Perkins, 2004). The spectacular and rapid rise to prominence of English sparkling wine over the last 15 years has been made possible by rising temperatures in the south of England, creating climatic conditions similar to Champagne (Field, 2008: 14). This marks a return to the southern part of England of widespread grape vines, which flourished throughout the Middle Ages until the mini-Ice Age of the 16th and 17th centuries destroyed most English production. Even cold, damp Wales can now produce interesting white table wines. As investors define climate change as both risk and opportunity, new patterns of ownership emerge, as in the case of large Champagne producers investing in England in the hopes of having a ready supply of sparkling wine for global markets should production in the home region falter due to environmental

changes (Millon, 2013). English producers have adopted the universal terminology of *terroir* to describe the environment around them, and what they do to it and within it. This suggests that as growing areas change, *terroir* discourse will continue to be the way that producers, at least of higher-end wines, both make sense of what they are doing, and how they sell their wines on global markets. Climate change may indeed stimulate a proliferation of *terroir* ideas and practices—an extension of **terroirization** processes—rather than destroy them.

In terms of environmental degradation, as Hannickel (2013) points out, a lot of contemporary winemaking is just like other forms of industrialized agriculture. It involves such questionable practices as mono-cropping (which radically reduces biological diversity in the surrounding area), and the use of chemical pesticides, while the deployment of methyl bromide to sterilize soils prior to planting grapes contributes to the depletion of the ozone layer. As supplies of water become less available in many parts of the world, so too do fewer areas become available for the planting of new vines. Vines are thirsty plants. For existing vineyards, water shortages are likely to become a more chronic problem, given that in already dry areas they rely on extensive irrigation, misting, and sprinkling systems. Moreover, vineyards in higher areas can despoil delicate higher altitude eco-systems (Hannah et al., 2013).

In such an increasingly fraught global environmental situation, it is not surprising that both producers and consumers, in line with broader trends in food consumption among wealthier groups in the Developed World, have turned ever more over the last decade to wines that are apparently more environmentally sound and ethically virtuous. This has involved the rise of organically farmed wines (which may or may not end up in fully 'organic' wines), and of biodynamic vineyard management, which promotes biodiversity among the vines (e.g., the presence of cows to produce fertiliser, and the presence of insect-eating animals to reduce pest populations). Going beyond organic practices to embrace mystical ideas, first formulated by seers such as Rudolf Steiner, of the vines needing to be in alignment with lunar and astral movements, biodynamic grape farming challenges the idea of the vineyard as a self-enclosed plot of land, it sees it rather as intrinsically connected to the wider planet and cosmos. This could be construed of as a partial **re-mysticization** of wine. Despite the mystical elements, biodynamic winemaking still involves the use of soil science and careful research as to how elements in the total environment affect all the others (Lukacs, 2013).

We saw above that wine has undergone certain de-sacralizing and disenchanting processes over the last several centuries. Yet one might argue that thinking about wine more generally today, widespread among both producers and consumers, has certain 'magical' features (Picard et al., 2018). The dialectical interplay between techno-science's rationalizing of production methods and outcomes, together with hyper-rationalized marketing regimes, on the one side, and the deployment of magical thinking in both these domains and also among consumers, on the other, is a fascinating area for further sociological investigation.

Recent years have also seen the rise of so-called 'natural' wines (Black, 2013; Rothbaum, 2006). These wines are presented as being made in as non-interventionist way as possible, rejecting the techno-scientific trends of the 20th century in favour of something apparently more at one with nature—an instance of (apparent, claimed) **re-naturalization**. Wild yeasts from the vineyard, claimed to be as much part of the *terroir* as the grapes and vines, are used rather than the artificial ones, which industrialized winemaking deploys in the winery. Fermentation begins spontaneously, which may create very different wines each year, making vintages more distinctive, which is the opposite of the year-on-year consistency demanded by heavily techno-scientific winemaking. Sulphur is used sparingly or not at all, although this increases the risk of spoilage. The wine liquid may be moved by gravity rather than by artificial means like pumps. The use of enzymes, filtering, and micro-filtration is avoided, creating wines that are often cloudy and full of sediment. These are taken to be 'natural' expressions of the 'real' wine of the *terroir*. These are wines that their advocates say are 'laughing at modernity' (Rosenthal, 2009: 202). As Goldberg (2013: n.p.) notes:

> Natural wine … appears to most of us as politically progressive, environmentally friendly, and seemingly more authentic than mass-produced, industrial brands. Among its great advantages is its alleged proximity to *terroir*. By consuming natural wine, we believe … that we are circumventing the intrusive hand of man and drinking directly from the Earth, revelling in its unfiltered riches.

Despite the strong emphasis on the hyper-locality of natural wines, they still must be sold in globalized markets, creating the need for ever more emphasis being put on place-based 'authenticity' (Inglis, 2015). The selling of them stresses that very hyper-locality and radicalises long-standing *terroir*-based marketing that presents the winemaker as mere steward of the land, letting the natural endowments of the place come through with minimal actions on her part (Beverland and Luxton, 2005).

Natural winemakers for the most part genuinely believe that they are letting terroir 'speak for itself' in ways that more interventionist methods prevent. But this has created a tension between 'naturalists' and those wine-makers who believe that *terroir* can only really be expressed if certain interventions are deployed. The latter may well complain of the 'excessively conventional taste typical of sulphite-free wines' (Teil, 2012: 483). As one French winemaker explained to Teil (2012: 483), natural wines 'lack identity ... you don't know if you're drinking a cabernet,

a syrah, a merlot'. Paradoxically, for their critics, natural wines betray *terroir*, as without intervention by humans, they all tend to taste the same, wherever they happen to come from—a perverse and unintended form of homogenization of taste. At a more institutional level, in the French case, AOC panels can refuse to certify as typical of a *terroir* some natural wines because of their alleged 'non-typicity', even if formally they comply with the letter of the AOC rules. Such dynamics have heightened disputes over what 'typicity' in a *terroir* actually means (Demossier, 2010).

Such disputes have stimulated more producers, especially younger, new-wave ones, to rebel against established classification rules, and to sell wines under generic regional classifications rather than *terroir* ones. In southern Europe, many of these newer producers are university-educated young professionals who have 'returned to the land', disillusioned with careers in global capitalism, or unable to find graduate-level employment after the economic crash of 2007/8. Such hip and knowing winemakers often have internet-based marketing savvy, in addition to various other forms of cultural capital, and can sell their apparently virtuous and pre-modern wines to the equally hip, hyper-modern young in major cities who are devoted to ceaseless changes in fashions and fads. Natural and biodynamic wines are being sold through the ambiguous means of a kind of anti-brand branding, involving apparently **de-commoditized** selling of what are still essentially commodities in a market (Rothbaum, 2006).

CONCLUSION

This paper has set out a series of processes which future exercises in the sociology of wine can utilize and build upon further. Because this is an initial mapping exercise, inevitably the depiction of such processes remains abstract and lacking in empirical fleshing-out. Still, a focus on such processes can bring to the foreground varied things that otherwise might not be so clearly discernible.

Matters that can thereby become clearer include the following: multiple forms of ambivalence, created in part when various different processes interact, clash, or engender each other; the often ironic outcomes and unintended consequences of wine-related action and interaction, both between human actors, and between humans and non-humans of various sorts; and the continuing power and presence of longer-term trends, some of them lasting for centuries or even millennia, in present-day workings of wine.

The processes indicated here—and others I have intentionally or unintentionally omitted to mention—can now be developed using specific forms of existing sociological vocabulary, while the confrontation of wine phenomena with established bodies of theory may inspire scholars to modify some existing analytical orientations and empirical claims made within and by certain theoretical paradigms. Much could be made of the sociologies of figures such as Norbert Elias and S.N. Eisenstadt, for the purposes of tracing out very long-term trends, and Bourdieu and later practice theories, for the purposes of understanding modes of agency, domination, resistance, and struggles within variant types of wine-related milieux. Types of theorization attuned to matters of gender and ethnicity, as well as class and other forms of inequality, will be crucial in further developing a critical sociology of wine that operates beyond description and is unafraid to bring certain normative evaluations to bear on what it is observing. Any critical sociology of wine will have to come to terms with criticisms of such ways of thinking and researching offered by post-critical modes of conceptualisation, notably Actor Network Theory.

In all of this, what is important is that the sociology of wine be not just deeply historical, but profoundly theoretical too. The core of sociology is not its various methodologies, for any particular method can be carried out by various disciplines; it is the conjunction of sociological theorisations with methods of data collection that render any approach to any matters, including wine issues, sociological as such. There is currently very little sociological theorising about, and inspired by, wine. That stands in stark contrast to the small but vibrant and growing scholarly field of the philosophy of wine, which uses philosophical models to enlighten and enliven discussion of wine phenomena, while deploying the latter to compel proponents of a given philosophical position to justify or rework their views on various matters that wine implies (Allhoff, 2009; Smith, 2009). If philosophers can use wine as both object of analysis and as resource for rethinking some of their own suppositions, there is no reason why sociologists cannot now do the same. As the old saying goes, *in vino veritas*, and it is apropos of wine that sociology can discern new truths, as well as re-examining some of its own afresh. At that point, the sociological study of wine might become as intelligent as wine itself—a point gestured to by Pablo Neruda in the opening of this current contribution to the sociologizing of wine and the wining of sociology.

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