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**Vine to Wine: An Analysis of Value Construction or
Destruction at the Point of Production**

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Abstract. Due to topographic circumstances, the Finger Lakes Region of New York is capable of producing wine; albeit the region is limited by the climate and soil types of this region. While the potential is apparent to viticulturists and oenologists, the consumers seem to be unaware or unconscious of these abilities and hold the area to standards outside of its capabilities; in regards to both volume production and varietal preference. Since the region is a consumer driven area, the relationship has been developed with wine that evolves around consumption; this emphasizes volume production that is only possible via machine practices. This use of mechanization is what fosters a disconnect between producer and product: an alienation of the vines, vintner and winemaker. This paper analyses the value construction or destruction at the point of producing and consuming wine in the Finger Lakes Region of New York.

Keywords. Product, Consumer, Production process, Labor.

JEL. C90, D13, N30.

1. Introduction

Wine making is a unique trade that has been celebrated for many years, by many different people. Of specific interest is the culture that surrounds this commodity and gives it life; wine has alluded consumers for millennia with the vibrant culture that surrounds it. The wine trade has started wars and helped people get through them, and it is a socially complex commodity that has evolved over generations. Millions of people have contributed towards its depth in addition to its inherent magic, which makes it all the more unique and enticing as a commodity. Over time, the popularity of this product has created a lucrative and socially booming industry in wine producing regions. As consumers become increasingly more enamored with the product, they remove themselves further and further from the process that has led to the thorough fetishism of the product, place, people and experience, this results in an alienation of the magic. This is intriguing since the magic of the process is what winemakers are so enamored with and what has driven this industry forward for thousands of years.

Alas, the fetishism of the product by consumers has led to an emphasis on volume production that forces vintners and winemakers to rely on machines to keep up with demand. This alienates those involved in the process and in turn has created a disconnect from a holistic or authentic consumer-product, consumer-producer, and even producer-product relationship. We see this inauthenticity throughout the vine to wine process, especially in young wine producing regions,

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like New York, which produce wine with the mindset of this new generation of winemakers. The use of mechanization and the influence of science and tourism guiding the craft. The following discussion is critiquing the way in which we are producing and consuming wine in the Finger Lakes region of NY; both are applauding its achievements while challenging its methods.

Today, wine grapes are grown on nearly every continent although the most prominent wine producing regions are: Argentina, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Ireland, Greece, Italy, Japan, Australia, Georgia, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine and various states within the United States (Robinson, 2006). The 8,000-year history that trails this industry's success and multiplicity has left the current generation with valuable wisdom and humbling tales of both the process and the product. Since wine is very complex, to keep from being vague or from generalizing the current social patterns, experiences, and cultivation practices within the global market, the following will be in reference only to the wine trade within the Finger Lakes region of New York State. This is a unique area because the presence of wine making and the culture that surrounds it is fledgling; when considering how long the industry has been around. While we've accomplished a lot in a region, there are things to work on to continue to progress with quality wine production and a sustainable and authentic vine to wine relationship between producer and the process and also consumers and the process. The transformation from vine to wine is extensive, involved and, therefore, emotional for those contributing to the process. Even today, with the rise of technology, industrial equipment, and a greater understanding of the viticultural and scientific processes, those involved in the actual production of the commodity are physically and emotionally invested, as this is the nature of the work.

This critique is based on conversations had with the vine community of the Finger Lakes. King Ferry Vineyard uses manual rather than mechanical methods of cultivation to foster a healthy and communicative relationship with the vines. This paper is calling for a regional shift in practice so as to continue to develop the quality and authenticity of wine production and consumption in this region.

2. The Fetishism of the Process Vine to Wine

We live in a period that is economically and socially shaped by consumption; over time, a relationship has developed between producers and consumers that dictate what is available in a market. Most commonly, it is easy for suppliers to fulfill consumer's demands because producers have likely traded to facilitate these desires. Also, globalization has made the consumers' life easy in terms of purchasing products (wines) in anywhere in the world with the help of the internet superhighway.

Observing these consumption habits in a different light, we can consume blindly, without ever considering where a good is made or how a service is rendered in addition to who contributed to its production. Both producers and consumers handle the way in which we interact with the marketplace, and both contribute towards perpetuating these practices. Perhaps this could be attributed to the way in which goods are produced; it is rare in today's society that the production process of a commodity is carried out by one person or one business, alone due to outsourcing and off-shoring.

While this is a common understanding today of the way in which we consume, certain commodities are so unique that the process is as special as the product, and they should be acknowledged because of it. Due to the concept of terroir and the distinction between wine and place, wine is one of those exceptions! It is a distinct commodity that has been celebrated for thousands of years and because of this,

Journal of Social and Administrative Sciences

there is a dignity that must be accredited; both for the vines and for the sake of the industry's heritage.

To understand the way in which we have fetishized this commodity, we must understand the process of commoditizing and fetishizing a product. A commodity is a good that has achieved social status, given an identity and spirit, given a cultural role within society. In order to more eloquently explain this, it is referred to the scholar, economist, and the philosopher, Karl Marx who describes it simply: "This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labor, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is, therefore, inseparable from the production of commodities." (Marx, 1999; 474).

The consumer's relationship with things becomes more substantial than the relationship with persons, and in some cases dominates the relationship entirely. When a commodity has achieved cultural status or has become a fetish within a culture, its' consumers become invested in the worth of this good and the benefits they receive from the good or service, which often overrides the connection to the product or those involved. This saturation of fetishism between consumer and product effects not only the worth of the product but also the relationship between producer and product. This paper discusses the sacrifice of the producer-product relationship through technology that is in effect due to the demand from consumers for volume production as opposed to a focus on small-scale, holistic and, therefore, quality production.

An important distinction to be made is the difference between commodification and commoditization. When an object is "turned into or treated as a commodity", it is at the sacrifice of the human connection to the product both in production and consumption, it has been commodified (Webster), whereas the act of commoditizing a good is in a sense idealizing the product without regard to the differentiation between versions, varieties or other variables that factor into making a product unique. "Commodification is more of a crime of the market against humanity while commoditization is more of a market problem for the manufacturers of branded goods." (Rushkoff, 2005); both exhibited in and around the commodity of wine.

Robert Ulin (2013, p.69) eloquently makes the connection between the fetishism of wine and the detriment to the loss of connection between process and product; both the detriment to those involved socially and to the very magic of the wine. As the magic associated with the product has driven the fetish forward yet in the end, we have lost the magic because of the commodification and commoditization of the product. Producers demonstrate this with the focus on volume production that is achieved via an industrialized process, and consumers demonstrate this with the fetishism of the product as opposed to the process that calls for this volume production. In turn, the alienation of both the magic and the labor force, which was interestingly the initial intrigue of the product thousands of years ago.

Marx allows us to imagine commodities taking control of the interaction between commodities and consumers although it is humans that structure this very control. Vines have been fetishized both for what they can produce and also for their expression of place. Both research and the overwhelming spread of viticulture allowed us to understand the scientific and sub-surface happenings of growing grapes. This allowed us to see the influences that the particular characteristics of place bring to the flavor of wine; rock, soil type, topography, and climate. This has allowed us to give prestige to certain areas, and exploit certain vines that are where the concept of terroir comes into play. Since research has allowed us to verbalize this, it seems that we have "solved" the question of chemical requirement enough to mechanize it, and, therefore, reproduce it mechanically. Over time, an industrial

production approach has led to a less direct human interaction with the process; sometimes referred to as the transition from wine making as an art form or craft to more of a scientific or mechanized approach in the process of the vine to wine.

Second, this paper observes the fetishism of place through the concept of 'terroir.' Thousands of years ago, when wine was first transitioning from local to global consumption via trade, we naturally eliminated the association of place with the product due to the few places that were able to produce it successfully in comparison to the massive demand for it. Although, the industry attempted to reclaim this by using terroir as an explanation of why wine's association with a place is more significant than most other commodity's relationship to place; unfortunately this too was a concept that grew "grotesquely" (Marx, 1999, 473).

Lastly, recognition of the fetishism of this commodity as a fetishism of the product which alienated the people involved in production; demonstrated by the role of machinery and science in the viticultural and oenological process, which hasn't eliminated the human role, per se, but most gave humans a different position. Marx has led us to recognize the connection between the concepts of alienated labor as it is a result of the fetishism of a commodity. In addition to the alienation of the labor force, there is also an alienation of the magic and the authentic experience of wine because of the in-depth fetishism of people, place, and vines; due to the element of time, these themes will be referenced but further research should be explored on these topics in the future.

3. Alienated labor

Wine grapes are one of the most expensive agricultural commodities, although wine is considerably more lucrative than grapes due to the additional value that is accumulated by the end of the fermentation process. From vine to wine there is an enormous transformation of worth, and while the process of fermentation happens because of an organic process, wine could not be achieved without the efforts of many individuals contributing towards the finished product. As well as, the accumulation of generations of wisdom to be understood in order for this rigmarole to be successful: timing and accuracy both in grape cultivation and in the fermentation process, an understanding of one's terroir and application of that throughout the year, and achieving sugar to acid balance in the wine, among many other factors. It is impossible to count the number of variables, both tangible and intangible, that contribute towards the production of a block of vines or a case of wine.

For all intensive purposes, there are three roles in the vine to wine process that must be recognized to understand the functionality and significance of the process, those being: the vintner and his or her crew, winemaker, and the vine as a laborer. The following discussion speaks not to the particular efforts or roles of these three forces of labor, but specifically to the way in which they are alienated from the process via science and technology. The vintner is alienated through the use of technology and machinery, and with that their purpose or personal influence in the process is also alienated; instead of experiencing the grapes/vines the vintner aids the machinery in doing so. An ordinary vintner of the Finger Lakes say, "I spent 60 hours on the harvester this week," this tells us that his connection is directly connected to the machinery and with that, there is a loss of connection directly with the grapes.

When the conversation between vine and vintner is changed in this way, it is detrimental to the quality of the wine. As a result of this relationship or dependence on machinery, there is a consequence of an alienation of the vintner; this ultimately leads to a rupture of the vines. For example, by using an industrial approach to

winemaking we are finally deeming all plants in a field and of the same variety to act, in the same way, which is wrong for many reasons. In addition to topography, each vine is exposed to a unique experience because of climate that is due to the access or excess of resources like the wind, water, type of soil, etc., this function is later referred to as Micro-climate, Meso-climate, and Macro-climate. Furthermore, the unique and uncanny happenings within a field of vines are what contributes to the complexity and quality of the wine. Therefore, it is to the benefit of all those involved in production and consumption, for the vintner to treat each vine as an individual that is having a unique experience. An example of how mechanization has eliminated this individuality is the evolution of pruning, harvesting, and hedging practices that will be explained later.

Other important laborers that should be recognized are the winemaker who is also alienated through the use of science and machinery; this is often characterized as the difference between winemaking as a science versus art. While this is an important relationship to study, as the winemaker holds an indispensable role in the process. Ultimately, in terms of the fetishization of the commodity there becomes a demand for volume production, and to fulfill these demand vintners and winemakers rely on machinery and the knowledge of science to achieve volume at an efficient rate and this industrial approach ultimately alienates the worker at every level of the process. This region's consumption habits and the way in which we indulge in the wine industry can be acceptable so long as we don't alienate ourselves from the fact that there are people producing what we consume; so long as we don't alienate the vines and the magic from this tasty drink, and the vintner and winemaker from this very personal process.

4. Terroir

It is impossible to understand why people are so enamored with wine and the culture that surrounds it without recognizing how unique it is as an agricultural commodity; "Wine making has been described as one of the most geographically expressive of agricultural activities" (Newman, 1992; 301). To understand the uniqueness, it is important to comprehend the concept of 'terroir.' The word 'terroir' and the ideology behind this word comes from the French language; the root of the word is "terre" meaning earth, soil. Robert Ulin observes that the ideology around terroir was built during the rise of capitalist production, in other words, a time of non-distinct, mass production of goods (Marx, 1999; 452). Therefore, this term was used to acknowledge the significance of the land and also emphasize those that contributed towards the success of the commodification of wine during a time when the process of production was widely unacknowledged.

Regions with distinct terroir have been branded by the abilities of their land, Example; "Bordeaux" and "Champagne". However, we cannot attribute the success of wine making to terroir alone, as the element of human labor in the production process is essential; grapes won't successfully ferment by themselves. Therefore, the human interaction with grapes is significant to the production process. This is widely characterized as the difference between *vin d'effort* and *vin de terroir* (Ulin, 2013).

It is clear that human contributions vary depending on the region and even within a region, meaning two pieces of land that are home to the same variety will produce different outcomes; this can be attributed to many different geographic variables, although the varying human contribution undebatably plays a part. Examples of this are: the way in which one prunes the vines or the particular day of harvest, whether you harvest mechanically or by hand, hedging and pruning practices, and countless steps within the fermentation process. After considering all

of the factors that contribute to the production of wine, we must reflect to comprehend what a phenomenon terroir has become; although it has differing cultural significance dependent on the region.

5. The Uncanny Role of Geography

Several factors contribute to the success of a vine, all of which concern the untamable, Mother Earth. While the role of humans in the grape growing process is fairly standard from season to season or from year to year, the role of Mother Nature is ever-changing and consequently, so is the role of the viticulturist. Viticulturists have accumulated observations since the 13th century; in hopes of better understanding the relationship between geographical and topographical characteristics as they are intricately interrelated. Furthermore, the unique characteristics of the Earth dictate the quality and prestige of the wine; therefore, certain regions are more productive or successful at growing and producing certain wines.

Areas of the world that are most successful in growing wine grapes share similar geographic qualities, and these qualities can be characterized by three levels of climate: Macroclimate, Mesoclimate and Microclimate. Microclimate refers to the atmosphere of an entire region; this highlights natural topography and other considerable geographic factors. Close distance to a lake or an ocean serves as a year-round temperature regulation for the vines and is essential for regions with frigid winters or scorched conditions. Observing temperature extremes is especially important when considering the variety. So, Macroclimate observes the regional circumstance whereas Mesoclimate focuses on the specifics of one's property or the topography of one's land. Too much water over saturates the vine and its berries; whereas planting on a hill allows to happen naturally. Besides, a hilly region enables the wind to help the vine process fog and frost depending on the time of year. Also, the wind helps the vines in pollination as they are a wind pollinating species.

Another variable of Mesoclimate is the type of soil that is being planted in, whether that be clay, dirt, sand or rocky soil. Soil and rock type are crucial, as it influences the flavor of the wine and quality, alike. Having a rocky soil also helps the vine process excess water as rocks serve as somewhat of a natural drainage system for the vines. Once you have declared the region and area of land you are planting on, it is important to make sure that your macroclimate and mesoclimate will help facilitate the regularity of your microclimate or the climate surrounding each particular plant. Microclimate zooms in on each plant as each vine is situated in a different location that has access and limits to different variables. Therefore, each vine has a different experience.

Due to specifics in climate, geographers consider the wine industry to be most successful in two areas of the northern and southern hemispheres.

6. The Presence of Viticulture in the Finger Lakes Region

The reason New York state has a thriving wine community is because of the topography that developed many centuries ago. This region was home to massive glaciers until mother earth decided on a topographical shift:

It is due to the topographical circumstance that this region can grow grapes: "microclimate effects of the lakes and their valleys make viticulture possible." (Newman, 1986, 301). Since 1829 people in the Finger Lakes have been producing wine around the four main lakes, Canandaigua Lake, Keuka Lake, Seneca Lake and Cayuga Lake. However, it was not recognized as an American Viticultural Area until October of 1982. The reasoning behind the lag in recognition as a wine

producing region can be attributed to the timing in which this region discovered their ability to produce successfully the *Vitis Vinifera* varieties (FLWA, 2013). At first, settlers attempted to make wine from indigenous grape varieties like Catawba and Conchord; while their attempts to ferment these grapes were successful, these wines were not marketable to the greater wine industry. The wines coming from the Americas were characterized as “foxy,” yet lacking depth (Pearson, 1908), or “New York wines were primarily sweet, thick and dull at a time when dry and complex wines were coming into vogue.” (Goldberg, 1996; 9). It was in 1950 that French, hybrids such as Sevil Blanc and Vignoles were introduced and, like the American *labrusca* varieties, they produced sweet, rather bland wines (Johnson & Robinson, 2013; 316). The greater wine market was still wary of the capabilities of the Finger Lakes, and as a result, the market for these wines remained in the state for local consumption.

It wasn't until the 1960s that European vintner Dr. Konstantin Franc came to the Finger Lakes and saw its' potential for producing cool-climate *Vitifera* varieties like Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir. Identifying our varietal niche has been a long journey thus far, and every sign from the viticultural community shows that it will continue to seek a broader varietal identity in the future. In some ways, this is troubling since we are moving farther and farther away from our original identity as a wine producing region. Furthermore, the reasoning behind this desire to create an identity outside of its indigenous varieties is due to pressure from consumers.

7. The Sacrifices of an Industrial Approach to Viticulture

This region perpetuates an unattached relationship with vines and therefore, with wine, via science and technology. Besides, the influence of tourism and consumer's demands seem to mold or guide the market more than is necessary or organic. As a result, producers are not honoring the inherent capabilities of this region; an example of this is our dependence on grafting vines that aren't indigenous to this region and also the heavy use of fungicides and in some cases pesticides that are necessary to facilitate the production of non-indigenous grape varieties. Also, there is a custom of buying grapes to keep up with the demand (quantity) at the cost of the holistic process and in many cases, the quality of the wine.

The identity of the Finger Lakes for producing wine has indeed evolved since the 1960s and now carries a prestige far surpassing its indigenous capabilities; meaning, that while grapes are indigenous to this area, most of the grape varieties that are produced in this region today are not indigenous. The indigenous grape population initially stimulated this region's interest in the advancement of wine production, but we see that the industry has truly taken on a new image since local research and technology has allowed us to facilitate the cultivation of non-indigenous varieties.

Fermentable grapes grow indigenously in parts of North America, although the vines native to North America do not produce the wine that is historically able to compete in the global market. These native vines are known to make “foxy” or wild wines; indigenous varieties include *Euvitis* varieties, *labrusca*, *riparia*, *rupestris* and *berlandieri* (Bezzant, 1987; 215). For several years, European settlers attempted to collaborate with the plethora of these native vines in hopes of making wine that was comparable to that of Europe's. It was eventually decided that these hardy, indigenous vines weren't ideal for wine making but, their rootstock could be grafted to traditional varieties of the Mediterranean and could, therefore, be successful. By grafting native rootstock with the *V. Vinifera* Scion, one get the

Journal of Social and Administrative Sciences

strength of the indigenous root with the quality of the foreign grape; the two share a symbiotic relationship, and we can cultivate grapes that are not native to North America. There are several styles of grafting that originate from the Ancient Roman's methods; the diagram below shows the most common system used today.

Grafting requires a lot of precision, which in my experience leads to an unsuccessful graft or a bloody finger. Due to this reality, machinery and vine cultivation nurseries have developed throughout wine producing regions in the U.S. and the Finger Lakes is no exception. Grafting has allowed this region to produce unique varieties that are more appealing to the consumers' palette and certainly to the global market.

Since Dr. Konstantin Franc came to this region in 1962 and brought his knowledge of *Vinifera* vines with him, this region has seen a transformation of identity (FLWA, 2013). Specifically with Riesling and Gewurtztraminer varieties, but also with red varieties like Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir. Part of this shift in identity can be attributed to the pressure from consumers to produce the wine that the majority wanted to drink and delight. It is no secret that this region's viticultural practices involve the use of chemicals and heavy machinery that help facilitate particular grape's relationship with climate and topography; but ultimately, some varieties aren't meant to grow here although we do our best to help them along.

The role of technology that has shaped our ability as a region has been discussed, along with the positive and negative results of a technologically driven production process: alienation of the labor force and fetishism of the product with little regard to the process. While technology expedites the process and allows us to achieve quantity, in some ways, we sacrifice quality, because of the relationship and dependence on technology. In trying to keep up with production to meet the demand of consumers, we've allowed a few other details to keep us from succeeding in quality. It is a fact that grape production in this state and this country is highly industrialized; while there are quantitative benefits to these practices, there are sacrifices that we make for our originality as a region, specifically, speaking to the influence of machinery which eliminates the human connection in the vine to wine process. Maybe not so much eliminates it but changes the human role via technology, example, differences in pruning and harvesting techniques, hedging versus tucking, or even buying versus growing grapes. For the vine to cultivate the right amount of fruit that its circumstance can handle it needs to be in balance with its surroundings. It is certainly in our best interest to do this methodically and correctly to cultivate healthy grapes, although this is one of the many tasks that have been mechanized to perform on an industrial level, which in turn impersonalizes the worker's relationship with the vines.

One unique characteristic of a vine is that it's a perennial, a vine is a permanent wooden structure that inhabits a trellis system. While roughly 90% of the vine is pruned every winter and through the spring, the trunk and a select number of buds that will later push, canes are consistently in the trellis. Over time, a vine learns to mesh with the terroir in its microclimate. Therefore, they get wiser with age and produce better fruit because of it; just as wine gets better with age.

What's more intriguing is their structure tells the story of this. An experienced eye can look at a vine and approximately suggest the age by counting its pruning stubs and assessing it's gnarly. One can see evidence of past fungal outbreaks or the presence of Phylloxera and Crown Gall from hot and humid summers, or a vine that is entirely spur pruned because the winter was too harsh, and the canes froze to the trellis. By assessing the current vigor of the vine, one can tell whether the spring or summer came with too much rain; in this case you would need to leave more buds horizontally, because of the lateral vigor, and so on. The point is, with

mechanized pruning we don't have this conversation or even develop a relationship with each vine or read the accumulative effects on its structure and listen to what it needs to be healthy again or grow bigger, smaller, or whatever it may be.

Instead, much of this region's pruning is being done mechanically. Mechanical pruning is quite a different approach, instead of assessing each vine and its circumstance, the machine prunes every vine to the same bud count based on the variety and the average vigor within said plot of vines. While machinery is efficient, it is taking our conversation with the plant away, and it isn't replacing it; the machine isn't giving us any information as to how the growing season was and how we should make decisions in the future. Essentially machinery is doing all of the communicating but in a very different way, instead of asking the plant we are telling the plant. Instead of acknowledging the fact that each plant is unique and should be treated this way, we are eliminating the individual experience of vines and reducing them to their variety alone.

Another example of our unforgiving industrial approach is the way in which we harvest: machine harvesting versus hand harvesting. It is not a question of which practice is better for the vines or which is better for making quality wine because the answer is what one would assume. According to Ulin (19, 2013), "Harvesting by hand, for instance, is equally justified rationally (as it limits damage to the grapes and allows for more efficient sorting) and irrationally." Hand harvesting better lends itself to the quality of the grapes and the human interaction and connection to the process. Machine harvesting is quick and unattached, a method that is completed in one pass and does not allow any decisions to be made regarding cluster quality. Machines are not able to sort groups; it takes the ready and rotten, the ripe and unripe, the leaves, the mice, you name it. It's removed, to the point, non-emotional and ultimately an anticlimactic ending considering all of the energy put in throughout the year to get a quality yield. All of the stress over the summer heat, the autumn frost, the hail storm that shows up on a Tuesday or the excess of rain that does not ease the vines or the vintner, the hours upon hours of mental emotional and physical labor put forth; all wrapped up in one pass of an enormous and obnoxiously loud machine.

In addition to the reasoning mentioned above that supports the claim that machine harvesting does not lend itself to quality, production is linked to what we know of the glacial history of this region. The past has left us with unique soil patterns that are not especially noticeable to the eye unless of course you try to grow something or interact with the soil in some way, and then the quirks become very apparent. When machine prune or prune to the average bud count, or machine harvest a whole field in one swipe without any regard to the vines or clusters that need more time. When each vine is allowed to perform individualistically, no two plants will produce the same fruit that is applauded because this creates complexity in the wine; in all honesty this is the very element that this region lacks.

Not to say it could be achieved by only these particular practices alone, as this entire paper demonstrates the complexity of the process and all of the variables that contribute towards a single bottle of wine, but surely we can visualize the connection. By characterizing the performance of a grape based on its' variety, we are eliminating its inherent draw to interact with its terroir and unusual circumstance in a unique way that is what produces good wine. By cutting corners to achieve volume, we are forgoing the magic of the process that in turn takes away from product quality. The reason this region is going about it in this way is because of the economic objectives influencing our decisions. There is pressure to expedite the process because the focus is on the product, and we only achieve these economic goals if we produce it, and a lot of it. This is not saying that there is not quality wine being produced in the region. However, this region is clearly focused

on producing a lot of wine as opposed to keeping small scale and better quality production.

It is indeed customary for neighbors with unique terroir to trade a few tons of a variety that their land produces well, as no two pieces of land will produce the same grape and winemakers do not necessarily want to be creatively limited to the abilities of their terroir. However, the ratio of wineries to vineyards explains to us that this region is extremely comfortable with this unattached mentality to the grape growing process. Buying grapes has led to a disconnect between the winemaker and his or her process, which facilitates a disconnect between the consumer and the product. Producers are allowing customers to fetishize the product without acknowledging the process because they are in fact doing the same. This practice of buying grapes is justified because the consumers are uninformed or consume blindly due to the focus on the product and the experience surrounding this commodity and not necessarily the authenticity of the product itself; reinforcing the idea that these practices alienate the labor force, vine to wine.

8. The Incredulous Consumer and its Direct Effect on the Region's Objectives

The Finger Lakes region is a stunning place with many adventures and possibilities nestled in and amongst the natural beauty. Many characteristics contribute to the regional experience of the Finger Lakes: the bustling local economy, an array of fabulous restaurants, the presence of viticulture and agriculture (albeit very different appearances), the plethora of state parks, the lake and all of the activities that surround it. One of the Finger Lake's shiniest ornaments is undoubtedly, the wine industry. Not only does it contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the region, but it also lures people to the region since wine is expressive of place, and so it encourages people to come and experience the physical and visual dimensions. Therefore, tourism is an undoubtable influence in the molding of this industry, no matter the region.

According to the New York Wine and Grape Foundation in 2008, there were 4.98 million wine-related tourists in NYS, which brought \$376.5 million in wine related expenditures. Not to mention the \$802 million that was dispersed as direct wages among locals directly from the wine industry, in addition to the revenue from local hotels, restaurants, shops, markets, etc. (Stonebridge, 2010). The economic influence of this industry in the state of New York has quickly become a primary source of revenue which is why Cuomo is financially contributing to the industry; what is most intriguing, however, is what he is specifically giving money towards, research!

There are two common complaints or criticisms of this region: the high price of the wines and discrepancies with the varieties produced. The interesting thing about this is that this incredulous pressure from consumers for producing wines that they want to drink instead of wines that are grown indigenously is what drives the unceasing advancement of research around fungicides and pesticides, new techniques and technology to satisfy customers. Also, the demand from consumers for volume drives an industrial approach to the process that spikes the price of production. The combination of these variables is what makes wines so expensive since the price of wine is not dependent on quality, but it's based on the amount of money it took to produce the wine. The more money spent on fabricating something to meet the demand, the more succumb to the fetishism and commoditization of wine and the wine industry.

Due to the demand from consumers- both locally and globally- we are attempting to produce outside of our inherent capabilities and because of this we

are still searching for regional identity in wines. An example of this is the demand for grape varieties that produce “in vogue” styles of wine when our region is compatible with cold, hardy varieties. Funding and efforts have been put forth to plant varieties like Merlot and Syrah although they froze to the trellis, because of macro-climate. While this region has successfully grown Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc, it is with great effort that these vines are kept alive and even when they produce a healthy yield, they do it with a lot of sass and inconsistency.

Since the region has been seeking its varietal niche for some time, it has developed as a region with advanced research practices and facilities. Among the most productive facilities is at Cornell University. Cornell is recognized as a leader in research and the study of specialty crops for the U.S. and the Finger Lakes Region. Such praise has been given to them that in March of 2014, Governor Cuomo announced that \$1.1 million in federal funding would be granted to the state of NY through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Funding will go towards further research, safety and promotion of specialty crops in New York State. Most of this funding will be given to Cornell’s research facilities. It should be acknowledged that this is not the first time the state has offered aid in efforts to build the local wine industry and in turn stimulate the local economy. In 2012, \$200,000 was given specifically towards wine and grape research in the Finger Lakes although \$1,000,000 was given to state efforts under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (Cuomo, 2014).

Besides, inconsistent financial assistance that helps outweigh untimely weather throughout the year has been given throughout the history of this region. While aid of any kind is generous, there are obvious economic objectives that justify, if not encourages this assistance: tourism and the distinct and significant economic influence that the wine industry has on the regional economy, also, this economic influence justifies the industrial cultivation and processing practices. It’s especially intriguing, because all of this effort and financial commitment to meet the demand of consumers shows that Finger Lake Region attempting to gain regional recognition and identity through the wine industry, but due to the disconnection between the approach to production and the fact that work outside of the natural abilities of the land, it has been able to achieve an authentic regional identity. The Finger Lake Region is acting under methods that are not holistic, FLR does not practice an integral connection to the process that forces the region to question both the sustainability and authenticity of this region.

9. Conclusion

Wine is a unique commodity celebrated all over the world, although the ability to cultivate and produce wine in a holistic manner is incredibly unique to the place. The process vine to wine has been delighted in for nearly a millennium, and over time the process has evolved as well as the social allure or identity as a commodity. Due to the evolution of the trade and the cultural structure that surrounds this process there is an undoubtable magic associated with grape growing and wine making. It is a craft that is both physically and emotionally demanding for all those involved, and due to the intensive request of the laborers, there is an expectation from the consumer for the way in which they imbibe. There are authoritative tradition and an unspoken magic that is associated with wine and the way in which we produce and consume it.

An observation of the Finger Lakes Region is a lack of connection or curiosity with consumers and the process, as it is convenient for customers to become enamored with the final product and the vibrant culture that surrounds this commodity. Unfortunately, because of this focus on the product, the process has

Journal of Social and Administrative Sciences

been estranged, therefore, alienating the unique group of individuals invested in producing this distinctive commodity. The way in which this is demonstrated is through the use of machinery which is used to expedite the process to keep up with the demand of consumers. In addition to the influence and application of scientific findings in our cultivation and fermentation practices used in order to cater to consumer's varietal preference. The commoditization and commodification of wine result in a thorough fetishization of the product and turn we alienate the human laborers and the vines as laborers who contribute to the loss of the magic; this is intriguing since this is what makes wine so unique, and what has driven this industry forward for nearly 8,000 years.

It takes time, patience, knowledge and the experience of several people to cultivate a vine or to make a single bottle of wine. Since this region is part of such a unique and archaic practice, it is crucial that both our producers and consumers understand this; it is important to realize the process of making wine appreciate the product. Wine is magical, poetic, romantic, alluring; it is not something to be consumed but enjoyed and delighted. Grape growing and winemaking is a practice and culture both fresh and memorized, both old and new. The region feels emotional towards it because of the culture that is rooted in it, but we allow it to evolve naturally because of the complexity and mystery that keeps us asking questions and understanding the curiosity and magic of it all. It is a commodity unlike any other and should be treated this way, both in production and consumption practices. To get the magic from the grapes, it is vital that you put the energy into the grapes and after that; from vine to wine. Terroir carries a spiritual presence as the contribution of the land is evident in the finished product, but this relationship is entirely unseen by the vintner and therefore, intriguing. Attempts to better understand the scientific happenings of the process have been made, especially in regions that culturally identify with it and; therefore, the demand for greater production is necessary. Although, perhaps it is because of the rise in technology and the understanding of wine that have lost this idea of the magic of the grape and the process of the vine to wine. Perhaps because the words for the intangible happenings of grape growing and winemaking we have lost the connection to the product even though "There is no other product on earth, agricultural or industrial, where the value is as directly and precisely related to where it grows and is made." (Ulin, 2013).

As a region, the existing privilege to be able to produce wine. The region must still take time and honor the intricacies of wine-making so as not to demean the natural process to a mechanized and impersonal one. In order to achieve a quality product, it is imperative to understand our inherent terroir, in addition to minimizing the influence of machinery in the regional cultivation and grape processing practices. It is necessary to change the ways to continue making better wine than we do currently, and have produced in the past. To create and successfully stimulate a plan for change, an in-depth understanding of the way in which winemaking has been alienated from the process is necessary to understand further the consumer's construction of value; this will allow for a reconstruction of a more authentic relationship with customers and the product.

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