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FROM GRAPES TO WINE TO BRANDS TO CULTURE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF KENTUCKY WINERIES AND KENTUCKY WINE PRODUCERS

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FROM GRAPES TO WINE TO BRANDS TO CULTURE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY
OF KENTUCKY WINERIES AND KENTUCKY WINE PRODUCERS

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DISSERTATION
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor Philosophy in the
College of Communication & Information
at the University of Kentucky

By
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Lexington, Kentucky

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Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

FROM GRAPES TO WINE TO BRANDS TO CULTURE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY
OF KENTUCKY WINERIES AND KENTUCKY WINE PRODUCERS

The Kentucky wine industry has grown from six wineries in 1999 to more than sixty wineries as of 2013. However, the industry has reached a crucial point in its development as funds allotted from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement ended in 2014. As a result, Kentucky wine producers must navigate the demands of local, regional, national, and international wine markets without the same amount of economic support provided in the early stages of the industry's development.

The purpose of this study was to investigate (1) how Kentucky wine producers use cultural associations to manage their brands, (2) communicate with multiple stakeholder groups in varying contexts, (3) determine the structure of the industry, (3) analyze how the industry's organization affects stakeholder communication, and (4) identify the most pressing challenges affecting the industry.

A conceptual framework was constructed in order to answer the following research questions: (a) what are the cultural meanings produced through the communicative interactions of Kentucky wine industry producers and stakeholders, especially consumers? And (b) how do Kentucky wine industry businesses use brand management to position themselves in wine markets? A qualitative study involving participant observation, website analysis, and interviews was conducted.

Analysis revealed similarities between the Kentucky wine industry and Bourdieu's description of a field of cultural production. Cultural associations were determined by local geography, local culture, and individual winemaker life experiences. Cultural associations were integrated into brand management strategies with interpersonal communication, particularly wine tastings and winery events, as the primary channels of stakeholder interaction. Websites were used as a channel for information dissemination. Future brand management concerns involve the establishment of a Kentucky terroir, availability and quality of local grapes, and the cultivation of partnerships with other state alcohol industries and state universities.

Implications suggest that the cultural production of wine functions in the same manner as the aesthetic fields of art and literature. Also, wine is a postmodern product in an industry demonstrating postmodern communication. The study expands the use of Rothenbuhler's ritual communication and demonstrates the value of secondary texts for identifying the cultural position of a phenomenon as Oriard predicted.

KEYWORDS: Kentucky, Wine, Field of Cultural Production, Brand Management, Ritual
                  Communication, Qualitative Research

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March 19, 2015_____
Date

FROM GRAPES TO WINE TO BRANDS TO CULTURE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY
OF KENTUCKY WINERIES AND KENTUCKY WINE PRODUCERS

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Dedicated to my wife, my daughter, family, and friends who prove to me daily that loving and generous interactions are the foundation of culture.
To the creators that believe their products—and the act of creating those products—possess value and meaning.
And, naturally, to those who believe alcohol holds more value than as a means of intoxication.

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I would like to thank the interviewees that were willing to participate in this study. Without their assistance, the research would not have been possible. The graciousness and openness of the interviewees was energizing exciting. The interactions with them fed my enthusiasm for the subject. I hope this study has a beneficial impact in some way, somehow, on their endeavors. I also hope to find the interviewees productive and prosperous if and when we cross paths again.

All I have is gratitude for my dissertation committee members. Even though I did not finalize my committee until the last possible minute, when I set out to select members, each member was my original choice. It may not always be readily apparent, but each one of my committee members influenced my study immensely. Their fingerprints can be seen throughout my work. I would like to thank Dr. Chike Anyaegbunam whose guidance made the dissertation manageable. Every conversation instilled confidence in my interpretation, reduced my stress and concerns over the process, and created the perfect relationship to complete "a different beast" as he puts it. I would like to thank my other co-director, Dr. Douglas Boyd, whose advice was always right and invaluable. I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Lindlof who, even though, in his words, is a "methods guy," pushed me towards the right theories. I would not have a dissertation without those recommendations, and Dr. Phillip Hutchison who taught me how to understand the discourse surrounding theory and figure out in which approach-to-theory camp I sit. Finally, I want to thank Dr. Mark Williams, without his invitation into the world of agriculture, I would not have a subject for my dissertation. I admire and respect each member of my committee and having the opportunity to sit at a table with each of them was one of the most humbling, complimentary, daunting, and intimidating moments of my life. I will not forget the experience any time soon.

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I cannot express enough gratitude to my parents whose support, in ways too numerous to list, got me here. They may have some skepticism over the PH.D. education, but they never questioned my decision, and they were always some of my most passionate supporters.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Curious signs run along a number of the highways cutting through the Kentucky

countryside. At points along the long stretches of horse farms and green grass, at off

ramps that appear after a plunge between limestone cliffs, on state highways that twist

and turn through the hills of Northern Kentucky, and even as highways reach the urban

centers of Louisville and Lexington, signs of green, blue, or brown read "Winery next

right." To some that know Kentucky as a bourbon, bluegrass, basketball, and horse state,

these Kentucky winery signs—and Kentucky wineries—may come as a surprise. When

disclosing the topic for this study, most respondents asked, "There's wine in Kentucky?"

"There is." I would respond, only, no matter how I tried to explain Kentucky

wine, I could not describe what a Kentucky wine was. Instead, I would instruct people to

visit a Kentucky winery and try the wines for themselves. I would point out that even if

the wine was not a favorite, the winery and wine tasting experience would be worth it.

Most of the time, my response would generate a dubious stare. There may be wineries in

Kentucky, but most people may not be sold on a Kentucky wine, not yet at least.

Still, the Kentucky wine industry has found a small, but stable position in

Kentucky's agricultural industry. In the beginning, the Kentucky wine industry consisted

of six licensed wineries in 1999, but the industry has grown to more than sixty wineries

as of 2013 and the number of wineries may be closer to seventy as of 2015. The industry

can boast "over 113 grape producers growing 583 acres of grapes; 280 acres are ready for

production" (Wineries making a comeback in central Kentucky, 1999; Kentucky

Department of Agriculture, 2013). While the acres of grape production may have

declined as a result of harsh winters over the last two years, the industry is looking to continue its expansion after establishing a supportive, local consumer base.

A large amount of the industry's initial success can be attributed to its link to the local food movement in Kentucky, in particular, funds to establish wineries, subsidy support for establishing vineyards, and advertising and marketing support, especially through the Kentucky Proud (KyP) marketing campaign and the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council. The KyP campaign has encouraged the endorsement and purchasing of local Kentucky agricultural products by local Kentucky communities. Part of the reasoning behind this support was the state's desire to improve the economic livelihoods of former tobacco farmers that had suffered after the loss of national tobacco subsidies associated with the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (TMSA) and subsequent tobacco industry changes. In support of agricultural diversification, Kentucky wine advertising and marketing leveraged localism and the local food movement that has not only been popular in Kentucky but throughout the United States.

Presently, Kentucky wineries are attempting to enter regional, national, and international markets. Part of the urgency in expansion and recognition involves the ending of financial support from the TMSA as of 2014. However, social and economic issues related to the history of agriculture in Kentucky and the current state of agriculture in Kentucky present challenges to the expansion of the Kentucky wine industry. Also, the culture and practices of wine consumers possess specific challenges for Kentucky wine businesses as wine production, consumption, ritual and cultural practices are new and unfamiliar to many Kentucky wine consumers and stakeholders. Because of these issues, the Kentucky wine industry will be forced to navigate particular communication

challenges associated with the production, distribution, sale, and consumption of Kentucky wine. A brief history of the Kentucky wine industry and its current challenges follows in order to establish a context and rationale for the dissertation.

Historical Background on the Kentucky Wine Industry

Kentucky was the site for the first American commercial winery in 1860 (Kentucky Vineyard Society, 2013; Mudd, 2006). At its height, Kentucky was the third largest commercial producer of wine in the United States (Kentucky Department of Agriculture, 2013; Lane, 2011; Wineries making a comeback in central Kentucky, 1999). John James Dufour is credited as the founder of Kentucky's wine industry. Even though his vineyard failed, he wrote a book on his experience, helped to found the Kentucky Vineyard Society, and his associations with Henry Clay, Kentucky congressman John Brown, and Kentucky governor James Gerrard cemented his influence on the industry. Of import were his published experiences. They were valuable insights into establishing vineyards in Kentucky (Kentucky Vineyard Society, 2013; Mudd, 2006). Early grape growing and wine production was associated with landowners and the elite of American high society. Dufour had even conversed with Thomas Jefferson on wine, and Jefferson had encouraged Dufour's attempts at establishing a vineyard.

These early wine successes would not last. During the American Civil War, production was halted for a brief time, but recommenced at the war's end. This early stoppage hurt Kentucky's wine industry and an even more severe setback occurred in the early 20th century. During the Prohibition era, because of the ease of grape fermentation, the destruction of vineyards became a priority for the state. Essentially, these measures ended wine production in Kentucky. Even more devastating than the vineyard

destruction was the severance of a grape growing and wine culture and infrastructure in

the state. Support for grape growing and wine production ended, and most of the

technical information (outside of Dufour's book) was lost (Kentucky wine expert,

personal communication, April 4, 2014). Interest and support of a Kentucky grape

growing and wine industry was absent until the 1980's when preliminary measures were

passed to encourage small ventures associated with education, viticulture research and

pilot attempts to assess the viability of grape-growing and wine production in Kentucky.

Still, for a significant portion of the second half of the 20th century, Kentucky

agriculture was not interested in a Kentucky wine industry. The established horse and

tobacco farming industries, along with corn and soy bean production, dominated

Kentucky agriculture until the 1990's. However, with national pressure to end tobacco

subsidies supplied by tobacco quotas, a significant portion of the Kentucky agricultural

industry looked to be in jeopardy, especially the small, family farms that depended on

income from tobacco sales. Fisher (2012) found that almost fifty percent of Kentucky

Proud farmers (an organization with marketing links to Kentucky grape growers and wine

producers) had a present or past affiliation with tobacco farming. This change in the

agricultural landscape prompted the Kentucky state government to search for new

avenues or ways to diversify its agricultural industry.

An important moment in the re-establishment of the Kentucky wine industry was

in direct response to the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement. The TMSA was an

agreement signed in 1998 between the forty-six states and the four major tobacco

companies in the United States focused on settling lawsuits concerning health issues. In

Phase II of the settlement, the Tobacco Growers National Settlement Trust was

established, with money from the tobacco companies being allocated to tobacco producing states in order to address the expected loss in revenue from the settlement (The National Association of Attorneys General, 1998). This trust would allot a portion of the settlement to farmers. In 2004, a second act, the Fair and Equitable Reform Act was signed. The act ended tobacco quotas and price protection for American tobacco farmers. The act also created the Tobacco Transition Payment Program (TTPP), oftentimes called the tobacco buy-out, to support tobacco farmers as they left the industry or transitioned to new agricultural products (United Stated Department of Agriculture: Farm Service Agency, 2013). Between the two agreements, $5.15 billion in funds were made available to the states with further money being given based upon yearly, national cigarette sales. The revenue is apportioned according to criteria agreed upon in the TMSA between fourteen tobacco producing states, including Kentucky (National Association of Attorneys General, 1998). Up to ten billion dollars is believed to have been allotted to agricultural diversification so far.

These payments lasted from 2005 until 2014. Kentucky is estimated to have received 3.45 billion dollars by the end of the payments (Office of Attorney General, 2013). For Kentucky, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board deemed it essential that the funds were allocated to diversification projects within agriculture rather than transitioning into another economic industry or sector; the goal was to help tobacco farmers keep their farms in operation. Fifty percent of funds were allocated to the agricultural diversification. Crop diversification was deemed essential in order for former tobacco farmers to keep farmland operational and productive.

The Kentucky wine industry was one of a number of agricultural areas identified as a possible replacement industries for tobacco growers to enter. The Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP), The Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) collaborated with support from Kentucky's state government to allocate TMSA and other funds, establish advisory boards, councils, and marketing campaigns (including KyP) in order to support areas for diversification and development. A key element of the development was linking the agricultural areas chosen for diversification with the local food movement.

There has been a recent trend in social movement activism towards addressing food system localization, and a central tenet is to counter global food systems and companies. This movement has been labeled the local food movement and is considered part of the larger alternative agriculture movement (Allen & Hinrichs, 2007). Three major concerns of the local food movement are the global integration of the food system, economic consolidation in the sector, and the environmental degradation that modern, industrial agricultural methods may cause. In popular culture, the influence of the localism and the local food movement can be seen in the works of writers such as Michael Pollan (2006) and Eric Schlosser (2001).

The local food movement can also be considered an extension of the localism and eco-localism movements, and also part of the much larger American environmental movement that began in the 1960s. It is oftentimes associated with the "back-to-the-land" and agrarian populism movement and writings of Wes Jackson and Wendell Berry (Jarosz, 2011). Two aspects of the local food movement embraced by Kentucky wine

and KyP were: (1) eating within the local food-shed and (2) appreciating local characteristics of food as food moves into new and global locales.

The Kentucky wine industry's link to the local food movement was an essential partnership for its success. The importance of locale and geography in grape growing and wine making made it a perfect match for localism and the local food movement. The link also supported the coherence of the narrative history of Kentucky as a wine state. The importance of agriculture to Kentucky was also supported through this partnership. The agricultural link connected wine to the Kentucky farmer, and therefore, to tobacco (another crop with a storied history in Kentucky). These connections allowed for a justification of agricultural diversification, of specific crop diversification, and the allocation of state and settlement funds and resources.

Being labeled local or part of the local food movement, and in particular, earning the "Kentucky Proud" label with a socially-shared meaning of a "local food" was and still is an important aspect of Kentucky wines. The Kentucky wine industry's ability to attach itself to this local food movement, and more importantly to the Kentucky Proud label, has increased its importance, connection, and meaning to its primary consumers. A significant portion of Kentucky wine consumers are local residents that enjoy the "local" aspect of the wine and are less concerned with international wine reputation. The lower price point and local designation are much more important to the majority of Kentucky wine consumers (Mudd, 2006). Even though quality is an issue for wine, quality can be greatly affected by narrative associations and attractiveness as well as price (Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 4, 2014). Therefore, the label becomes "a tool of differentiation that embodies the socio-spatial meaning given by regulators

(governments), producers (farmers), suppliers (industrialized system), and consumers"

(Fisher, 2012, p. 4). Normative agricultural and food behaviors are cultivated, and in this

case, the "local" aspect of food, and its relationship to a community, and to ideas of local

foods that may include freshness, quality, economic attractiveness, and environmental

awareness are considered when purchasing a local product (Busch, 2000). For Kentucky

wine, how the product relates to culture, to former tobacco farmers, environmental

effects, class divisions, or the international wine community were secondary issues to

local economic support, local origination, and price.

The state government supported this labeling and interpretation of Kentucky

wine. The GOAP believed that agricultural investments would help to preserve

Kentucky small family farms. The GOAP also hoped that these investments will

preserve rural Kentucky culture and will have a significant economic impact. The

rationale supporting this planning believed that these investments would increase jobs in

agriculture, introduce new Kentucky products, and increase a variety of Kentucky

agricultural sales (GOAP, 2000). Furthermore, the KADB and the GOAP believed that a

county level approach to the fund allocation, even though the planning was at the state

level, would also emphasize the local elements of the project. It is important to reiterate

that the connection between the local and its underdeveloped agricultural commercial

products was primarily an economic concern. However, the local connection, historically

referential narrative, and the technical similarity between growing tobacco plants and

establishing vineyards, culturally justify the rationale.

The current organization of the Kentucky wine industry and its supporters

follows. The industry is made up of individual grape-growers and wine producers.

These are independently owned, either by local, independent growers or by corporations. These independent growers are further separated into groups as grape-growers and sellers, wine producers (these producers can be organized on a continuum of solely local grape-growing producers of wine to wine producers that import grapes from other locales and produce wine in Kentucky), and finally, a third group of vineyard owners that include agritourism, such as vineyard and wine producing site tours, wine tastings, and food service along with grape-growing, selling, and wine producing. Again, this last group also resides on a continuum dependent upon its wine producing choices as well as what services and amenities they offer. The most important distinction with this last group is the choice to include agritourism as part of its grape-growing and wine producing services. No matter what category of grape grower or wine producer, final responsibility falls on the individual, not the community nor the state government supporting the diversification.

Of the TMSA funds that were allocated for support, funds were apportioned in two areas to help promote the Kentucky wine industry. First, the Kentucky small farm wineries fund (2007) was created to support marketing and distribution costs for Kentucky wines in conjunction with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) and the Kentucky Department of Travel and Tourism. Secondly, as mentioned earlier, Kentucky grape growers and wine producers were included in approved of industries KyP could include in its marketing campaign. KyP has been described as "a state-run vehicle that has received Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement funds to promote agricultural products through marketing campaigns" (Fisher, 2012, p. 1). This choice officially linked the Kentucky wine industry to local agricultural products, the local food

and localism movements, and increased marketing support beyond the small wineries fund and the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council marketing campaigns.   Finally, the allocation money and start-up funds associated with the TMSA and the Tobacco Transition Payment Program (TTPP) helped to alleviate the costs of diversifying commercial crops or starting a vineyard in Kentucky. These statutes were a direct response to the ending of tobacco subsidies in Kentucky with the hope of improving "the economic conditions of tobacco farmers and tobacco-impacted communities by maintaining or achieving direct farm impact" (Fisher, 2012, p. 9). These statutes officially connected KyP approved products to a certain type of farmer and identified that farmer in need of help and support, Kentucky wine being one of those products.

Aside from government support and assistance there are a number of other organizations that support Kentucky grape growers and wine producers. The Kentucky Vineyard Society (KVS) was an important commercial and organizational society that supports the connection, networking, social, and educational aspects of the Kentucky wine industry. The society promoted conferences and meetings, offers a place where growers can advertise, connect, and communicate with one another, and it publishes a resource section with information on grape growing and wine producing as well as ways to contact specialists that can support growers and producers. Perhaps most importantly, the society did not discriminate between those involved in the industry, enthusiasts, and amateurs interested in getting involved or individuals wanting to express their appreciation of Kentucky wine. The society defined its membership as "vineyard owners, winery owners, professional winemakers, amateur winemakers and many others with an interest in grapes, love for wine and the expanding grape & wine industry in

Kentucky" (Kentucky Vineyard Society, 2013). The services of the society were essential to the cultivation of the industry, helped it to grow, connected the industry to the local community and the local food movement as well as the history of grape growing and wine production in Kentucky (the society makes a point to emphasize that it was founded in 1798). The KVS offered a service that the state government could not cultivate. KVS supported the historical narrative and development goals in a way the government could not because of its links to local communities and the cultural history of Kentucky. Unfortunately, despite the organization's legacy, the KVS disbanded in 2014.

To summarize, the social and local connections established by state support and funds link the establishment of the Kentucky wine industry to its local and state communities, to its Kentucky Proud connections, and to the local food movement. The historical narrative of Kentucky as a wine state emphasizes the production of the commercial product without the socio-economic distinctions of its past or the socio-economic distinction between more established and prestigious Kentucky agricultural industries. Establishing a fledgling value-added agricultural industry is quite an impressive feat considering the lack of infrastructure and modern history Kentucky has with grape growing and wine production. Still, many challenges remain, and a number of them concern communication. Recently, the challenges have intensified with the report that two of the largest wineries in the Lexington, Kentucky area have either been placed on the market to be sold or have been auctioned off in order to repay bankruptcy debt (Evan, 2014).

Statement of Purpose

In order for the Kentucky wine industry to not only survive but continue to grow, then Kentucky wine producers and stakeholders will have to balance multiple identities, markets, and positions determined by the context in which they communicate. This study investigates (1) how the Kentucky wine producers use cultural associations to manage their brands, (2) communicate with multiple stakeholder groups in varying contexts, (3) determine the structure and organization of the industry, (4) analyze how the industry's organization affects communication, and (5) identify the most pressing challenges that may prohibit the continued growth of the industry.

Until recently, the Kentucky wineries' primary focus has been on marketing Kentucky wine as a local product connected to the local food movement. Even if it is still in its relative infancy, the Kentucky wine industry has stabilized, and the Kentucky wine must begin to function not as a local food association, but as a sub-industry of the international wine market. The importance to managing communication between multiple stakeholder groups is intensified due to the end of the TMSA payments. No longer will the same amount of marketing and subsidy support be available to Kentucky grape growers and wine producers. Instead, acceptance in the international wine community has increased in importance. As a result, Kentucky wine producers have to consider the multiple demands and perspectives of not only local food consumers but the expectations of cultural wine consumers. However, the cultural associations, references, expectations, and evaluations of these multiple stakeholders and audiences do not always align and may be in conflict. The contradictions may be especially pronounced when local cultural associations are used in international wine contexts. For example, how are

locally, non-traditional wine grapes marketed as quality wine grapes? Are references to horse farms, tobacco, Kentucky urban centers, Appalachia, and local cultural associations (such as the Kentucky hot brown) successful wine associations? Will the re-appropriation and meshing of historical narratives persuade consumers to purchase Kentucky wine or will the manipulation of history appear inauthentic?

The first step for this research was to investigate the cultural associations used by the Kentucky wine industry. To do so, the Kentucky wine producers and their communicative acts were observed and analyzed. An understanding of the current state of the Kentucky wine industry, of the most common communicative acts, and the content of the communicative acts needed to be identified. Only by identifying and analyzing the most common cultural associations could one understand the ways in which Kentucky wine producers were using cultural associations to communicate with stakeholder groups. Since the Kentucky wine producers generate the initial communicative acts and wineries are the primary site of Kentucky wine interactions, the Kentucky wine producers and their wineries were the first choice for investigation. Cultural wine enjoyment includes purchasing and consumption; therefore, nonverbal communicative acts were also considered. Also, by looking to the Kentucky wine producers, the motivations and intentions of the communicative acts could be considered. Understanding how a young wine industry is communicating and how the industry is using cultural associations is the starting point for understanding the structure, culture, context, challenges, and considerations that influence Kentucky wine communication.

However, Kentucky wineries are businesses, and as businesses, they offer cultural products. Since cultural products are commercial products, they are also brands. The

Kentucky wine industry cannot be understood without taking into consideration the brand and product that motivates the communication. Since Kentucky wine is a cultural product and not a commodity (e.g., the product is not being sold in bulk where profit margins are based on quantity rather than quality), the brand meaning and associations needed to be considered and not just through a cultural lens, but through a brand lens that considers brand identity, awareness, image, and management.

Because of the study's design, Kentucky's wine industry and brand management was considered in relationship to the larger international wine industry, so an overview of the organization of the industry, the communicative acts inside the industry, its structure, and the influences on Kentucky wine's functioning and communication were investigated. Ancillary, but influential actors, be it government and support institutions, wine media publications, or particular communication channels, were also considered. All of these separate considerations influenced the study and the research questions. Overall, the site of inquiry, the characteristics of the industry, the ways in which it functioned, and the potential for the industry's future pushed the research towards a descriptive, interpretive, and qualitative study. The nature of the industry also influenced the research questions generated. By conducting this study, the inquiry could produce recommendations that improve the future of the industry, increase our understanding of the relationship of culture and communication, of brands and culture, and the communication of a field of cultural production.

Research Questions

Kentucky wine drinkers must be convinced that Kentucky is a wine state, and this is especially difficult considering Kentucky is already a bourbon, horse farming, coal-

mining, tobacco and bluegrass music state. Connecting the Kentucky wine industry to the state's history increases the acceptance of Kentucky wine and how it is to be understood by Kentucky wine consumers and the larger populace. However, the narrative must establish distinct criteria for what a Kentucky wine is. This criterion serves a dual purpose, it establishes authenticity and quality of a Kentucky wine under the overarching criteria of what one can consider a quality wine in any wine market, and this criterion reinforces the French concept of terroir. Terroir alone is problematic as this concept of quality is controversial, and examples are locally, contextually, socially, and personally constructed, especially in new wine drinking regions. Secondly, not only must this narrative be communicated to the consumer, how to understand or evaluate the narrative must be communicated. Another way to understand the second challenge is recognizing that not only the specific Kentucky wine narrative must be communicated; consumers must be educated on how to enter the wine consuming community as many consumers may not be familiar with wine consumption.

On a related note that is not a direct communication concern but affects communication is the need for continued investment and support for grape growing and wine infrastructure. Currently, there are more wineries and more demand for Kentucky wine than what the vineyards can provide. Because of this issue, grapes used for wine production are imported which creates uncertainty as to what a Kentucky wine should taste like or resemble. Also, with a lack of historic records on successful varietals/cultivars of grapes that can be used to produce a quality Kentucky wine originating from Kentucky soils and climate, what is a Kentucky wine, what characteristics, especially flavor notes, backstory, production process, and origin of

inputs, especially grapes grown in Kentucky, is currently unknown and contested.

Therefore, a Kentucky wine, what a Kentucky wine is, and what the label symbolizes is

currently being constructed and negotiated. This negotiation occurs through brand

management actions by Kentucky wine makers, decisions by influential Kentucky wine

stakeholder (such as individuals that can determine the criteria for a Kentucky Proud

label), and by Kentucky wine consumers. This construction and negotiation is a

communication issue.
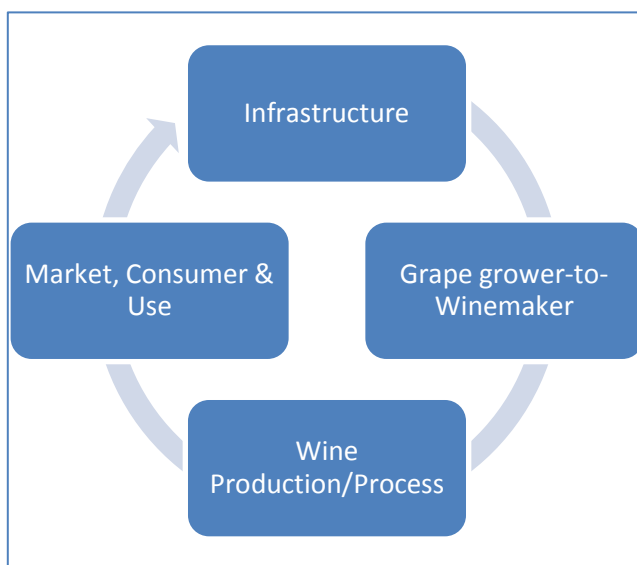
Figure 1: Wine production process

The preceding diagram illustrates the process of creating wine for a consumer.

The different areas are considered in the construction of this study. As the diagram

reveals, the wine production process is cyclical as wine is produced in yearly vintages,

and the results of the year before are inputs for the new vintage. Communication occurs

throughout the production process, but preliminary research identified the labeled areas

as stages of the production process with significant communication and/or meaning

production concerns. Along with communication, economics was a concern throughout

wine production. Wine is a product being produced for the purpose of purchase, so the

economics cannot be removed from the process even when the focus of the research is on communication. Therefore, particular aspects of the analysis may influence the communication, but the only way to understand the communication is to understand the relationship of issues such as economics to the communicative acts.

The following research questions have been developed in order to gain an understanding of what Kentucky wine symbolizes or means, how that meaning developed through the communication of Kentucky wine criteria which involves narrative elements and wine community and consumption criteria and expectations, and the reasoning behind why certain narrative elements and consumption criteria are used and required. This communication process is usually a business and industry stakeholder driven process directed at consumers. The first question asks:

1. How does the Kentucky wine industry use brand management to position itself in the wine market?

Brand management is the managing of the associations, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, and experiences evoked by the brand image and brand (Keller, 2009). Brand management is traditionally conducted by the business and usually through marketing departments as it is focused on the consumer or client. The orientation is business and strategic communication focused which is more appropriate for the analysis of a business and a commodity.

Establishing the most attractive brand image with consumers is extremely important for the wine industry. The process of connecting a wine producer to a consumer is extremely difficult. The first option is through direct sales. Kentucky wine can be sold to consumers at a winery or vineyard. In other wine markets, wines can be

shipped directly to consumers as well. The other option is through distributors, but the process is complicated and competitive: Wine must go from maker (first tier) to state-licensed distributor (second tier) to local retailer (third tier). 7,000 brands worth $30 billion in retail sales have to squeeze through 550 distributors in 50 states on their way to 76 million wine consumers (Veseth, 2009). Knowledge of the relationship between brand management to cultural meaning to consumer choices and actions has significant repercussions for wine consumption.

Two issues arise when one conceptualizes the Kentucky wine industry in business and economic terms and when one considers wine as a commodity: (1) Wine, outside of amateur production, is a product produced to be sold to a consumer. Over time, consumers have more control over brand image and management, therefore assessment of stakeholder's input and negotiation over brand image can assist in understanding the process and construction of Kentucky wine's meaning. (2) Wine is a cultural product, imbued with value and meaning through the process of production, and the product's evaluation is determined by comparing the wine against a criteria of what is representative of a quality product. The product and the criteria are created, negotiated and representative of a local, specific, spatial-temporal place. Again, local stakeholders are involved in cultural production since cultural production is an interactive process between individuals in a specific culture and community (see Geertz, 1972; Rothenbuhler, 1998). In order to fully understand the construction and negotiation of meaning, the research must address the negotiation of brand management actions in relationship to Kentucky wine's community of consumers. Therefore, the second question asks:

2. What are the cultural meanings produced through the communicative interactions

of Kentucky wine industry producers and stakeholders, especially consumers?

The second question is concerned with the result of the interaction between a brand

management action (initiated by a Kentucky wine stakeholder, more than likely a

Kentucky wine business owner, producer, or employer, but it could also be a wine media

gatekeeper or critic that can influence value and meaning) and another stakeholder,

usually a consumer. This interaction is a communicative act, in a particular context,

conducted through textual communication or performative act. This communicative act

has an influence on the culture (attitude, values, and beliefs) of Kentucky wine

stakeholders and specific Kentucky wine associations (i.e., the brand). Kentucky wine is

symbolically represented in the product, and it is engaged through the purchasing and

consumption of the Kentucky wine under specific circumstances.

In order to answer the research questions for this dissertation, one must discover

what meaning brand management and cultural and ritual communication produce. The

meaning is constructed through the production of cultural products imbedded with

associations produced through textual and performative acts. The production of meaning

for a cultural product has three related parts: (1) the relationship of the acts to the

referenced associations. (2) The intentions and motivations of the stakeholders in

relationship to the associations and the act. (3) The societal interaction with others in a

specific time, space, and place. In order to understand the meanings of the cultural

products, the researcher must come to understand the associations, intentions,

motivations, conceptualizations, and understandings of Kentucky wine industry

stakeholders. This also involves understanding the perceived role of the stakeholder

within Kentucky wine in relationship to others as well as in relationship to the

stakeholder's historical and geographical (contextual) time and place.   This contextual

time, place, and community is a social constructed reality.

Brand management, cultural, and ritual communication interact in order to

negotiate the culture and community of the Kentucky wine industry and a Kentucky wine

product. This culture, community, and its product can be compared to and engage with

other, regional, national and international wine cultures, communities, and products. The

resulting interactions can help to determine the positioning of Kentucky wine. Naturally,

there will be variability in the underlying meaning of Kentucky wine depending on the

individual, community, and perspective, but societies construct their realities, and

different communities will exhibit different associations, attitudes, values, beliefs,

perceptions, thoughts, and feelings (i.e., culture). Even though culture is constantly

contested and negotiated—therefore in a considerable state of flux—and

spatially/temporally specific, stable and/or emerging, dominant and/or oppositional

cultural characteristics, issues, challenges, desires and motivations can be identified,

understood, analyzed, and evaluated. The findings can then produce insights,

recommendations, and a better understanding of a socially constructed community,

culture, and product.

Organization of Dissertation

I have organized the dissertation into the following chapters.

Chapter one provides a description of the context and the challenges facing the

Kentucky wine industry.   The description includes the historical context for the

emergence of a Kentucky wine industry, in particular the agricultural and government

changes and support associated with the Kentucky wine industry. The chapter ends with

the research questions and a brief explanation and rationale of the questions and the

question's key concepts.

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework for the study and the rationale for

the framework. The chapter begins with an overview of the scholarship on wine as a

cultural product and wine culture. The chapter then establishes the concept of terroir

which offers the foundation for the analysis of wine as a cultural product. The chapter

then turns to the major aspects of the theoretical framework: Bourdieu's theory of the

field of cultural production (1993), the postmodern approach to organizational

communication analysis, ritual communication, textual communication, and brand

management theory. The chapter explicates the necessity of an integrated theoretical

framework. The chapter concludes with the value the study adds to the theories used and

the benefits provided to the analysis of wine as a cultural product and to the Kentucky

wine industry.

Chapter three is the presentation of the study's methodology. The chapter

provides the research design with a discussion of participant observation, textual analysis,

and semi-structured life-world interviews. Ellingson's (2009) crystallization is used to

support the application of multiple qualitative methods. The chapter presents information

on the data collected including necessary study information such as the sampling size,

sampling method, and the rationale for the selection of the population. The analysis

section gives information about the coding choices and process. The chapter ends with a

discussion of the benefits and challenges of using qualitative methods grounded in the

specificity of this study.   Issues such as generalizability, reliability, and validity are addressed.

Chapter four provides the study's results.   The results are divided into two sections. Section one presents the results pertaining to the cultural values associated with Kentucky wine as they are produced and negotiated through communicative acts and how the process is related to brand management. Attention is paid to the differences in the communicative acts and process depending on the context, for example, the differences and similarities surrounding textual or ritual communication. The second section discusses the most pressing challenges to the Kentucky wine industry and attempts to establish wine as a cultural product through communicative acts by providing "thick description" of the major areas of concern and difficult.

Chapter Five situates the results in the field of study surrounding cultural production, communication, and wine. Recommendations are made on how wine businesses, especially Kentucky wine businesses, can improve their cultural communication in various contexts. The chapter also reflects on the contributions the study adds to the theories applied to this study and how the perspective functioned as an integrated theoretical framework. Finally, the discussion addresses the major concerns associated with cultural products including issues concerning the shifting nature of the industry, the education of stakeholders, the relationship between culture and organizational and corporate communication, public relations, advertising, and brand management. Of particular interest are the communication implications for the merging of culture and business or economic endeavors.

Chapter Two: Wine as a Cultural Product

Wine has been linked to culture since the beginning of civilization. Greek historian Thucydides wrote, "The peoples of the Mediterranean began to emerge from barbarism when they learned to cultivate the olive and the vine" (Johnson, 1989, p. 35). The Greeks considered wine to be related to culture, progress, and religion. Their elites highly valued the liquid. The Greek god Dionysus was the god of grape harvest festival, winemaking, and wine, and festivals and cults emerged surrounding him. Most of the prominent ancient cultures that made wine believed that wine was a divine liquid from their gods. Genesis labels Noah the original vintner (Lukacs, 2012). This reverence came from the "magic" fermentation process of wine as opposed to the clearly human involvement in the production of beer (Lukacs, 2012). As early as 6000 BC, there is evidence of Egyptians burying their pharaohs with wine in order to entertain guests in the afterlife, and they recorded their wine experiences on the walls of their tombs (The New York Times, 2007). From early on, wine was a central aspect of society, religion, and culture, wine was included in a society's ceremonies and rituals.

However, more recently, wine experienced a series of crises that limited its cultural value and consumption. Ancient wine did not taste anything like modern wine, and even up until the medieval ages, wine available to most individuals was sour and uninteresting if not unpalatable. Most wine was amended with other ingredients, including lead. Also, availability of good wine was extremely scarce except for the wealthiest of elites and royalty.   Wine also spoiled quickly. It was not until the Renaissance that wine improved due to new scientific processes and understanding of wine, fermentation, and spoilage. This new knowledge was combined with the work of

mostly monks and their documentation of grape vineyards to produce better wines. Also, an emerging middle class came to desire and mimic the upper class. The desire for better wine grew. However, a number of crises almost caused the wine industry to collapse, and these challenges definitely diminished the demand and availability of wine. First, agricultural challenges emerged in the 1800's. Powdery and downy mildew were brought over from the New World and hampered grape production. Eventually, it was discovered that these mildews could be treated through sprays, and the crisis was averted. However, only a few years later, a devastating pest, the grape phylloxera, an almost microscopic insect similar to an aphid, was also imported from America. Throughout the late 1800's, phylloxera infested and destroyed vineyards all over Europe. Cures were proposed, and only at the turn of the century was grafting European vines with American vines approved as the best method for saving European vineyards (having evolved along with the pest, American vines could survive phylloxera), only at this point did European vineyards begin to rebound. A social backlash to drinking and a worldwide depression also hampered cultural wine consumption. Then, at the outbreak of World War I, the most established European vineyards were destroyed including many of the famous French vineyards. Also, cheap wine was commissioned for military use which led to a generation of drinkers that believed wine was a low quality alcoholic beverage. Finally, in Europe, the economic prosperity needed to consume higher quality wine was not widespread. Due to these setbacks, stiff competition from other alcoholic beverages, and the lack of quality control mechanisms in the wine industry, the cultural consumption of wine almost disappeared. After WWII, the cultural consumption of wine began to improve as new technical winemaking practices, governmental quality control measures,

and agricultural advancements were adopted throughout Europe. Still, it was not until the early 1980s, when a couple of warm and dry years, did the passionate, enthusiastic, and worldwide demand for European wine, in particular French wine, explode (This is a very brief history of the cultural consumption of wine. See Lukacs, 2012 for the extensive history).

While the cultural consumption of wine began to flourish after WWII in Europe, wine did not catch on in America until the 1960s, and at the beginning, it was cheap wine. Cheap wine became the drink of the counter culture movement in the late sixties. Wine could be found at concerts, protests, and gatherings and differentiated counter college society from mainstream America. America's counter culture embraced wine a class symbol for outsiders, not the elite. Acceptance within and outside counter culture circles was made easier by America's interest in Europe and Americans' familiarity with European wines (Lukacs, 2012). Over time, as more counter-culture baby boomers entered the white collar work force, the demand for more sophisticated wines with higher prestige and quality entered the American market (Fuller, 1993; Lukacs, 2012). Also, having a domestic market desiring wine helped to establish a domestic wine industry.

A number of vintners, researchers, and merchants (importers) were integral to the establishment of the American wine market. First, in the 1930s, Frank Schoonmaker, a wine merchant and importer, labeled quality wines with his slogan, "a Frank Schoonmaker selection" (Lukacs, 2012, p. 254). During WWII, Schoonmaker began to include Californian wines, and after selling his business, he became an influential wine writer that endorsed Californian wines. In the 1950s, two University of California professors, Alfred Winkler and Maynard Amerine, catalogued the best Californian

grapes, wines, and the most appropriate geographical areas for specific grape cultivation in the state. This work improved the quality of wine grape and wines in the state. The early vintages from Beaulieu Vineyard by André Tchelistcheff, a Russian immigrant, and John Daniel Jr. (himself influenced by Tchelistcheff), were influential in cultivating Cabernet Sauvignon in California. Martin Ray and James Zellerbach were also two early pioneers that produced strong Cabernet, Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir vintages in California.

These early pioneers began as very small producers, who proved that good wine could be produced in California, with California grapes varietals (not imported), with a strong winemaker vision, and a strong foundation in new science and technological knowledge of fermentation. Only in 1976, at the Judgment of Paris, where two Napa Valley wines were mistaken as French wines at a wine tasting, and were judged as better quality than the French wines, did the world recognize California as a home of good, quality wine. This judgment also reinforced the importance of international wine awards. The wines were produced by Stag's Leap Warren Winniarski (a Cabernet Sauvignon) and Chateau Montelena's Miljenko "Mike" Grgich (a Chardonnay). A final early influential figure was Robert Mondavi, a strong salesman and marketer, who heavily affected the American shift in perception towards American wine. Mondavi offered food, music, and wine tastings at his vineyard and winery. Mondavi compared his wines to European wines at many of these tasting, but not to prove his were better, but to prove how similar his and other Californian wines were to European wines. These services increased the cultural and social value of wine in America. By the late 1980s, wine had become a drink connected to socio-economic class and associated with social rituals, the most

prominent of which is the wine festival. The demand for better wines emerged in the 1980s, but this demand was mostly for European wines. Only a small group of American wines, almost all from California, were successful.

The growth of the American wine market in the 1980s, especially after the establishment of the California wine industry, increased the scholarly interest in wine as a cultural product. The main topic of interest in studying wine as a cultural product involves wine's disproportionate cultural value in relationship to the product's cost of production. Specifically, wine's cultural value tends to inflate its economic value. Beckert, Rössel, and Schenk (2014) describe the issue:

> The wine market is an extraordinary example because most consumers and even experts are not able to differentiate between wines based on objective sensory characteristics and cannot rank wines in blind tastings according to their price. (p. 1)

Even though recent research has broken new ground on the chemical compositional differences of similar wines from different regions, the market price and quality of wine is primarily determined by social and cultural influences. These influences are commonly described as "aesthetic" values. The difficulty in accurately evaluating the economic value of aesthetic products is called quality uncertainty. Unlike many other products with "hedonic" value (the product's value is in some way related to a physical attribute of the product), wine's "quality" has less to do with any material attribute and more to do with the wine's position and prestige. Base-line quality is determined based on whether or not the wine is "clean" rather than imperfect, and then the pricing is based on social factors including winery prestige and market demand. However, the attributes of a highly rated wine can be analyzed and deconstructed, and wines can be developed with similar profiles. This process is common in wineries with the resources to conduct

research on the taste profiles of critics and of highly rated wines (Lukacs, 2012). Still, this research is expensive and not ubiquitous in the industry. This difficulty in wine-value evaluation is a serious concern for economists as "failing to recognize a distinct idea of cultural value distorts our valuation of cultural goods and thereby their production and preservation" (Marks, 2011, p. 252). Establishing a relationship between the cultural and social value of wine and its economic value has plagued researchers as long as they have been studying the libation.

For example, in developed societies, where the most basic needs can be met, a good's "value stems largely from symbolic qualities ascribed to the products based on interpretation" (Beckert, Rössel, and Schenk, 2014). In fact, in most wine markets, the symbolic characteristics of wine have gained prominence.   Beckert, Rössel, and Schenk (2014) remark:

> For the field of wine, there is evidence of a growing importance of symbolic criteria of evaluation. One indicator for this is the increase in wine reporting. The number of specialized wine magazines has grown and important popular journals have extended the number of articles on wine. (p. 5)

 The question then becomes, what are the symbolic qualities? How are they communicated? How and why are they valued, negotiated, and processed? For these economics scholars, they added an additional question: how are these values given a market price when their value is unique and asymmetric? To determine wine's value, scholars analyzed the relationship among cultural or symbolic value, quality uncertainty, and market valuation of wine (see Beckert, 2011; Beckert, Rössel, and Schenk, 2014; Karpik, 2010; Lecocq & Visser, 2006). What was not given as much attention in the analysis of these relationships was the communicative processes that created, negotiated, and established the symbolic value that allowed for cultural and economic valuation.

The symbolic value of wine is related to the craftsmanship of the wine. The specific culture's values, beliefs, narratives, and place referenced by the product in an individualized and creative way establish its cultural capital. The skill by which the product references the culture creates its value, often termed aesthetic value, especially in the art world, or its authentic value, since the product must appeal to be a quality representation of the culture (Beverland, 2005; Gade, 2004). This value may or may not translate outside of the specific region and locale as other sets of symbolic criteria dominate in different markets. The constantly shifting criteria make the evaluation of wine difficult (Miller, Genc, & Driscoll, 2007). For this reason, research concentrating on the cultural production and value of wine has been problematic, and the challenge is magnified with attempts to translate the value into economic terms. However, researchers are slowly making the case for the cultural value of wine, especially in established and productive wine regions (Allen & Germov, 2011).

There is research on the impact of perceived quality indicators that may or may not relate to wine. The influence of size of the bottle, of vintage, grape variety and taste are all believed to have an effect on the reputation on wine purchases (Frick, 2004; Landon & Smith, 1997). Wine magazine's ratings in relationship to purchase price have been studied, and winery reputation has been isolated as a significant influence on cultural capital (Combris, 1997; Landon & Smith, 1997, 1998; Miller, Genc, & Driscoll, 2007; Nerlove, 1995; Oczkowski, 1994). These factors do affect quality and even the symbolic value of a wine, but in the research conducted, the purpose was not to determine the cultural value or the process of what characteristics are associated with

quality (in these domains), but to determine the influence of these factors on consumer behavior, again, a more economic-focused approach.

Even though the research has not proven the exact economic value of the cultural value of wine, research has established that symbolic value can be converted into economic value (Schenk & Rössel, 2012; Bourdieu, 1986). The symbolic value of wine stems from the relationship between cultural and social values represented in the wine product; therefore, further analysis on the symbolic and cultural value of wine, especially the process by which the product is imbued with these associations, is justified (Beckert, Rössel, and Schenk, 2014). In fact, at the higher end ($50 to $70 bottles of wine), almost all of the economic value stems from the brand and winery reputation as there is no discernable material difference between cheap and expensive wines correlated with quality. Moreover, in multiple blind tastings, experts and enthusiasts could not distinguish between the value of wines based on material product attributes (Lecocq & Visser, 2006; Mayyasi, 2013; Veale 2008). The criterion is perceptual and social (i.e., cultural).

Because of the social construction of quality, an alternative understanding of wine became the study of consumer behavior. Since quality could not be discerned through direct producer, product, or consumer research, demographic and lifestyle variables were explored as socio-economic inference could lead to the isolation of wine quality characteristics. Bruwer, Li, and Reid (2002), Johnson and Bruwer (2003), and Bruwer and Li (2007) developed a wine-related lifestyle (WRL) scale for determining categories of wine drinkers based on lifestyle practices and characteristics. Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2001) summarized lifestyle as "patterns in which people live and spend time and

money," including activities, interests, and opinions, in other words, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, and social practices (p. 219). Early difficulty in developing the scale highlighted two key findings about wine's value: one, wine's social and cultural role was related to the lifestyle of the wine consumer where lifestyle represents social and cultural values and practices, and two, categories are constantly in flux and membership in a category was highly correlated with the choice of wine. The latter findings corroborate Bourdieu's (1986) theory of the field of cultural production as positions are constantly shifting.

In response to the social element of wine, a number of researchers looked at the social role of wine. Ritchie (2007) found that United Kingdom wine drinkers' behavior depended on situation and occasion, whether wine was consumed alone, given as a gift, consumed at a party, or at a restaurant. Spawton (1991), Charters and Pettigrew (2002), Charters (2004) and Beverland (2004) all corroborated the importance of situation and occasion to the choice of purchasing and consuming wine, again connecting wine to social and cultural events. Not only was the wine interpreted through its social value and role, wine's contextual importance linked the product to the social occasion which almost always involved a cultural element.

Since the situation and occasion are important aspects of wine consumption, issues of class (cultural and social values are submerged in class distinctions) are present in the field of wine production. As mentioned earlier, Fuller (1993) argued wine's use in class distinctions, first for the counter culture in the sixties, and later for baby boomer in establishing a yuppie "drink," created an American wine class. An important aspect of this wine class was the lack of available American wines even as the Napa Valley region

was developing. Therefore, entrance into the wine class was through the consumption of prestigious European wines, a partly symbolic act (Prince & Lewis, 2013).

The importance of culture has also been researched in relationship to wine tourism. One of the most lucrative tourism areas is the touring of wine regions and wineries. Wine tourism involves the relationship of wine to the region which is not only the geographical inputs that affect wine production, but also the human factors such as the history of the winery, the winemaker, the village, town, city, and/or region and its people. Education at wineries on issues associated with the winemaking process has been valuable in increasing wine sales of specific wineries (Ali-Knight & Charters, 2001). A key component of wine tourism is not just the educational experience of learning where and how a specific wine is produced, but also to experience the lifestyle associated with the wine, winery, and wine region (Carlsen, 2004). As mentioned earlier, lifestyle encompasses the cultural and social practices of the people.

The conceptualization of wine as a cultural product can be found in wine's use throughout history and in the scholarship surrounding wine. Because the fermentation process of wine was hidden from humans, wine was considered a divine product, thereby granting wine a cultural and sacred position, linking the product to rituals and ceremonies. Wine's consumption by elites, and later by a significant portion of alcohol drinking populaces, established wine as a cultural symbol of particular socio-economic classes. The scholarship on wine, especially the difficulty in evaluating the cultural value of wine, further implicated the cultural characteristics and social uses of wine as a major concern in understanding wine as a product. For both the general populace and for scholars, wine has been considered a cultural product.

For scholars, the analysis of wine as a cultural product emerged through economic research. Difficulty arose in attempting to translate wine's cultural and social value into economic terms. Because wine's hedonic value is difficult to identify, wine's value, market price, and quality was determined to be entirely, socially constructed. These findings emphasized wine's cultural and social characteristics and research turned towards the lifestyle and behaviors of wine consumers. Again, difficulty emerged in isolating both the cultural values and social uses of wine as the consumers and wine's uses shifted depending on the context, situation, and social position of the consumer. They even discovered that wine could be viewed as a form of art. Finally, wine has not only been identified as a cultural product through its social role, but through its symbolic representation of place. Winery reputation has been found to be a significant variable in determining quality, and wine tourism and wine tourism research, has revealed that place and people are commonly associated with wine. Even though it has taken time for the conceptualization of wine as a cultural product to take hold in the majority of scholars' minds (arguably because of its dual nature as both commodity and cultural product and the difficulty in isolating wine's exact cultural characteristics, value, and role), wine is truly a cultural product.

Instead, gaps remain in the research on how specific cultural characteristics come to be associated with wine and how these characteristics are negotiated by stakeholders. Since cultural products are symbolic products, this process is a communicative process. This study is an investigation into the communicative processes that connect cultural characteristics to wine. In analyzing the communicative processes, the study also

identifies the cultural characteristics associated with Kentucky wines. What follows is an

overview of the rationale for the conceptual framework chosen for the analysis.

Analysis of Wine as a Cultural Product begins with Terroir

Wine is complicated. It is, from my perspective, best understood as a postmodern

product, with an emphasis on its post-structural elements. Just as complex as wine is, the

industry rivals wine's complexity. In order to gain insight and interpret the Kentucky

wine industry, it is necessary to construct a conceptual framework that takes into account

the complex nature of wine, especially wine-as-a-cultural product, the wine industry, its

stakeholders, and the interactions of various influences on wine.

Imenda (2014) recommended the use of a conceptual framework when a theory or

a set of concepts from one theory would not provide enough guidance for the research

problem. Instead, conceptual frameworks synthesize or integrate a number of related

concepts that will be used to guide the research study. Imenda (2014) defined a

conceptual framework as the "'end result of bringing together a number of related

concepts to explain or predict a given event, or give a broader understanding of the

phenomenon of interest – or simply, of a research problem" (p. 189). Imenda (2014)

found that conceptual frameworks were partly inductive and primarily used in qualitative

research where context is important to consider (all characteristics found in this study).

Because of the complexity of wine, the site of inquiry, and the multiple concepts being

investigated, a conceptual framework became the appropriate conceptual/theoretical

guide for the study.

The first step in constructing a conceptual framework is in approaching wine in

not what it is (a foodstuff commodity consumed primarily for enjoyment or intoxication),

but what it *means*. Another way of understanding this premise is recognizing a

perceptual shift in viewing wine not as an economic commodity but rather a cultural

product. While this distinction has been oft-overlooked or not the primary focus of the

research, Lo Monaco and Guimelli (2011), Allen and Germov (2011), and Marks (2011)

believe the cultural value of wine to be a central component. The publication dates of the

research reveal just how long it took scholars to recognize wine's role in society and

culture. Wine is a cultural product understood through its narrative, multivalent story,

possibility, and meaning, and attempting not only to serve the physical needs of the

commodity but the social, communicative, and economic needs of producers, consumers,

and associated shareholders.

Recognizing the cultural and societal role of wine opens up the commodity and

the industry to communicative interpretation and analysis. It is not the production of

wine that is of interest, but how, once the product is available, it is presented to someone.

The interaction, negotiation, and response of the presentation and positioning of wine is

essential for understanding its meaning, and the analysis of such interplay can give

insight into what role wine plays for producers and consumers.

In other words, it is wine's cultural and social "power of representation" that is of

interest (Oriard, 1993, p. xxii). However, difficulty remains in attempting to analyze the

millions of actual meanings of wine and the billions of potential meanings. A researcher

cannot identify all the actual interpretations and meanings associated with wine. Instead,

because of the communication and media practices of the wine industry, it is possible to

analyze a significant portion of the proposed interpretations by wine producers and

primary wine *meaning negotiators* and the major sites and practices of their

communicative actions. In a burgeoning wine region such as Kentucky's, it is even easier to identify and isolate such attempts.

The term *terroir* offers entrance into the understanding, evaluation, and interpretation of wine as a cultural product. The French Wine Guide (2014) defines terroir as "a group of vineyards (or even vines) from the same region, belonging to a specific appellation, and sharing the same type of soil, weather conditions, grapes and wine making savoir-faire, which contribute to give its specific personality to the wine." The terroir can include historical and regional culture, although overly expansive interpretations, especially the inclusion of extensive human elements and influence on the terroir remain controversial. A good heuristic for terroir is "sense of place," and it should consist of the defining characteristics, unique and emphasized qualities of a type of wine made in a particular region. Kingston's (2001) *The Unfulfilled Promise of Cultural Capital Theory* (2001) believed that the concept of terroir was necessary for wine to possess any social or cultural capital. Kingston's logic seems valid as terroir represents place and people, and wine, through the representation of a specific place, becomes a symbol of the place.

A significant goal of this study is to develop the appropriate conceptual framework for analyzing the terroir of Kentucky wines, the communication practices and negotiation of Kentucky wines' terroir/s by Kentucky wine's producers and primary stakeholders. Kentucky's terroir/s sets the boundaries for the analysis (at its largest, Kentucky's terroir would be its state borders), and since the creation and negotiation of a terroir is a complex process, the conceptual framework must be flexible enough to address the elements involved within terroir.

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What follows is an overview of the theories included in this framework including Bourdieu's (1993) theory of the field of cultural production, Taylor's (2005) postmodern analysis of organizational communication, Rothenbuhler's (1998) ritual communication, Oriard's (1993) approach to textual analysis, and the brand management perspective.

The Field of Cultural Production/The Field of Cultural Wine Production

The value and meaning of cultural products to society is similar to the value ascribed to literature and art: aesthetic. However, the difficulty is in determining the product's cultural and aesthetic value. Significant challenges exist in identifying the social contexts that determine rules, roles, and the individuals involved in the particular cultural industry. Further issues involve the determination of how cultural and artistic authority is assumed or attained, distributed, gained, and/or lost and by whom. Therefore, one must understand the functioning of a social group and a social construction of an industry and community. This conception invites a sociological approach and social theory, such as the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who attempted to develop theories of culture and of cultural production.

Bourdieu (1993) argued that cultural production could only be understood by beginning with the space. Bourdieu labeled the space a field which can also be understood as the cultural industry. In order to study the field, one must first construct "the space of positions and the space of the position-takings [*prises de position*] in which they are expressed" and each position "is subjectively defined by the system of distinctive properties by which it can be situated relative to other positions" (p. 30). Bourdieu called this process the "space of literary or artistic position-takings" (p. 30). His conceptualization emphasized relationships and interdependence as the basis for

understanding the distribution of power, fame, access to resources, and prestige (i.e., value). Bourdieu (1993) stressed "that every position, even the dominant one, depends for its very existence, and for the determinations it imposes on its occupants on the other positions constituting the field, i.e. of the space of positions" (p. 30). Bourdieu specified that each position was "objective" or independent of the other, and an individual can only take up one position at a time. In the end, it is the position *in relationship to all of the other positions* that determined not only every important aspect of the product and field, but determined why and how it existed: "nothing other than the structure of the distribution of the capital of specific properties which governs success in the field and the winning of the external or specific profits (such as literary prestige) which are at stake in the field" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 30). For some, such a simple premise may make the analysis of a cultural industry appear easy. Unfortunately, in determining how and why positions are taken within the field and how and why capital is allocated to and within the field, is much more difficult to understand and determine.

Nevertheless, Bourdieu's interpretation of the field and his positional focus allows an entrance into the study of cultural production. His positional understanding allows for analysis that could not be conducted from a more independent perspective that would attempt to individually analyze every wine producer and product. As Bourdieu warned, "the structured set of the manifestations of the social agents involved in the field...is inseparable from the *space of literary or artistic positions"* (p. 30).

In order to understand the positions within the field, one must first set boundaries on the field. Each field has a "determinate quantity of specific capital (recognition) and, at the same time, by occupation of a determinate position in the structure of the

distribution of this specific capital" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 30). Capital may come in many forms such as prestige or access to economic resources. Of particular value is the specific capital of the field of production, a combination of prestige, recognition, cultural rewards, fame, and economic rewards, but the latter reward is usually deferred. Obtaining the specific capital creates a field of forces where industry actors interact in a field of struggles where one attempts to transform or conserve the field of forces. The "objective" positions filled by the actors orient and determine the available actions. The available actions are based upon the actual or potential position-takings (i.e., how the choice will allow for a new actual or potential position), and each position can be understood through a value determined through what it is not, or by the position it is not. The negative relationship delimits the actual position available to be filled. Every time there is a change in any position in the field, all of the positions are changed. Changes in positions occur because of changes in power. Such a conceptualization of a field is quite postmodern with referential positions, no ideal or centered position, and an unstable, constantly shifting space and identity.

Bourdieu recognized that his understanding of a field was in essence the explication of a sociological system, but he wished to address an issue oft-ignored. Instead of only expanding an understanding of the phenomenon and its potential to the field in which it resided, he wanted to take into account the "social conditions of production" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 33). He did not believe a field of cultural production could exist outside of larger society. Bourdieu saw an advantage to such an approach as it avoided internal readings of the value of a product which could be misinterpreted in its isolation, and conversely, external, or allegorical readings, which generalized human

experience and moved the focus of the analysis too far away from the cultural product.

Such an analysis, especially for artistic and literary fields, deterred the assumption that

such products were pure creations, not created in association to social class, ethical, and

aesthetic values of certain groups of people. Instead, his approach included individuals

not directly involved in the creation of the product since the larger community helped to

establish its value: "symbolic objects [exist] only if they are known and recognized, that

is, socially instituted as works of art and received by spectators capable of knowing and

recognizing them as such" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 37). Producers of meaning for a product

involve individuals outside of the material production. For wine, this includes

distributors, critics, marketers, advertisers, collectors, and many other agents that inform

and educate potential consumers of the value of the cultural product. Moreover, in order

to understand, inform, and educate, one must also take into consideration the social

history and conditions that allowed for the producers and for the field. Bourdieu's

conceptualization allows room for the analysis of not just producer/consumer

interactions, but also producer and stakeholder interactions which clearly affect the

meaning of Kentucky wine. Finally, in this conceptualization, the power to consecrate

products with symbolic value falls on the power accrued by the field as a whole. A

portion of that power is bestowed upon particular positions and products. Because of the

power inherent in these relationships and in the whole field, Bourdieu (1993) recognized

that in order to understand a cultural product, one must understand the entire field

holistically, which meant understanding power relations and determinants "inherent in its

structure and functioning" (p. 37).

Analysis of a specific field (industry and/or region) of cultural wine production is an example of the inability to analyze a product without taking into account the entire field. The recognition of wine could not be understood outside of the society. How actors in the field obtain capital, power, and their social positions have an effect on the value of the wine. Consider the effect of geographic region on the cultural meaning of wine. France has a long-standing wine tradition which affects its value. Even a cheaper French wine possesses a different, and arguably, higher prestige position than a more expensive Kentucky wine. Kentucky wine could not be analyzed without taking into account these "field influences" not directly present in the communicative interaction. These differing values are in part based on the history of wine making, not just the talent of the wine maker or the consumptive quality of the wine. The well-known tale of the establishment of the California wine industry is another example. Even though California wines were of high quality, because they were not from an accepted and traditional wine making region, they were not valued as highly as French wines. Only through the head-to-head, blind comparison of California wines on two different occasions were California wines finally accepted as quality wines in relationship to traditionally accepted wines from traditionally accepted wine regions. The above example reveals the complexity of analyzing the cultural value of any wine.

In order to determine the cultural value, one must take into account numerous variables and relationships that cannot be understood without understanding the entire field and the influences on the field. However, recognizing that fields of cultural production are complex with numerous variables and influences that determine positions is not enough in order to analyze a cultural product. Therefore, Bourdieu offers two

important considerations that allow for the analysis of cultural products: the field of power and the structure of the field.

   The field of power. One of the most important contributions of Bourdieu's theory is his ability to not only conceptualize, but visually illustrate the autonomous yet connected relationship between the specific field of cultural production, the field of power, and the field of class relations. The following squares are the most simplistic representation of the relationships:
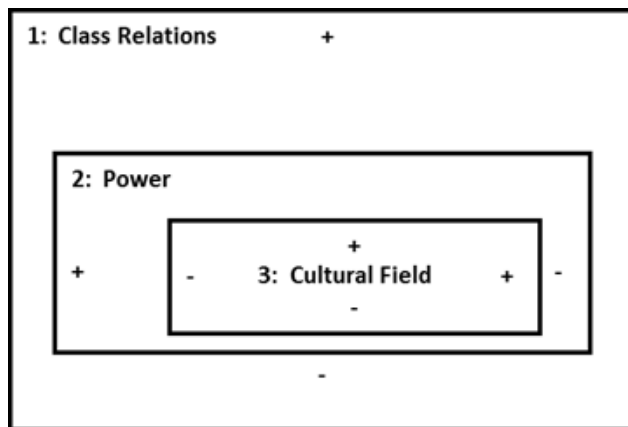
 Figure 2: Bourdieu's power and field relations

Each smaller field is contained and dominated by the larger field. The cultural field, for example wine, exists inside the larger societal fields of power and class relations. The contained field is always affected by the laws of the field which encompasses it. In fact, the cultural field may disappear altogether and the rules of power and class relations may remain (this phenomenon occurs when wine is viewed as a commodity rather than as a cultural product).

However, the positive and negative signs allude to the relationship of autonomy of one field to another, especially the cultural field. As a cultural field becomes governed by more autonomous principles of consecration (cultural prestige, recognition, or specific capital), the less it must adhere to power and class relations' rules. For example, the more wine awards earned by a wine or winemaker, the less it must adhere to economic evaluations of quality. Bourdieu calls this structure a double hierarchy, and it has an inverse relationship. The more autonomous the field and the more a cultural product fulfills the principles of its field, the less power and class relations it needs, and the more specific cultural field prestige it accrues, for, in more autonomous fields, producers produce for other producers not for consumers. This relationship makes it difficult to quantify the cultural value of a cultural product in economic terms (even though cultural value may be of economic value). Furthermore, for cultural producers, this relationship means it is of value for producers producing cultural products for other producers to be disinterested in economic value as economic value and economic capital is connected to class power originating outside of the field of cultural production. These class/power relations and the field of cultural production are oftentimes in opposition. The cliché of artists making art for themselves, for arts' sake, or for other artists instead of making art for collectors, benefactors, an audience, or fans references this functioning of the field. The field's cultural prestige and autonomous awards are not governed by the class relations. The field influences the intentions of the producer of the cultural product.

This relationship tends to create a struggle between individuals of the field that have or adhere to economic and political recognition of power and class relations and those that have or adhere to the field's specific capital. The resolution is not in the hands

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of the individuals, but in the position of the field in relationship to the dominant fields. However, the cultural field's position can be altered by the influence of individuals and their adherence to the more autonomous principles of specific capital. Or in other words, the more the autonomous principles of the field are valued by more individuals in the field, the more the position of the field moves towards autonomy, and to the increased value of the specific capital of the field.

Depending on the position of the individual within the field, the individual may adhere more to the influence and demands of the dominant fields or to the autonomous principles of the field as power and capital originate from these field influences. This concept is important for understanding legitimacy and authority in a cultural field. If the cultural field is closely aligned to the dominant fields, then the dominant fields' principles for legitimation and authority preside in the cultural field. To use a wine example to elucidate, if the specific field of wine production is closely aligned to power and class relations, then economic principles, such as amount sold and revenue earned, preside in determining the value of cultural products in the field. If autonomous principles of wine production are valued, then quality of the wine, based on the field's ideals of quality wine, determines the amount of specific capital an individual and cultural product possesses. Thus, the heteronomous versus autonomous position of the cultural field determines whom, and by what principles, the cultural field determines its definitions, such as wine producer, grape grower, distributor, and how much recognition each individual should be afforded.

There are two additional pieces to understanding this conceptualization of the field which leads to understanding the structure of the field. First, the field's position is

never universal or ahistorical. It is one particular state in an ongoing struggle, and in

order to gain membership to the field, all one has to do is affect its position. Two,

boundaries are the focus of struggle since the only way to evaluate the field's position,

principles of legitimization, the cultural product, and an individual's position in the field,

is to recognize the boundaries between fields, between members within the field, and

their associated cultural products. This focus forces the researcher to describe states

rather than determining a priori criteria for who is or is not a member of the cultural field.

Therefore, in analyzing the Kentucky wine industry, first, the researcher must

accept that anyone that affects the Kentucky wine industry can be considered or request

membership in the field. Two, the boundary of the Kentucky wine industry can be

determined by those who do or do not affect the Kentucky wine field of production.

Since there is not a preset criteria for Kentucky wine membership or cultural value or

meaning, the researcher must describe the state of the position of the agent and the

product in relationship to principles of legitimization. Because the Kentucky wine

industry is a burgeoning wine region, its struggle for legitimization is between power and

class relations' concerns, primarily economic viability, and autonomous legitimization

through the development of internationally respected Kentucky wines representative of

established Kentucky wine terroirs. During analysis, the researcher must look to

describing the position of the agent in relationship to its adherence to legitimization and

authority, where the agent earns its recognition. The researcher can only determine the

position of the agent by interpreting the communicative acts (for example, brand

management choices) that reveal the position and thereby the principles (i.e., meanings

and values) of the agents their positions in the field. Furthermore, Bourdieu believed the

positions and actions are often taken mechanically or unconsciously which increases the importance of researcher description and interpretation for analysis of the cultural product.

Structure of the field. Bourdieu provided a further elaboration on the structure of cultural fields that assists in interpreting agents' positions. The audience for the cultural product can help to determine its position. For example, wine produced for other producers to evaluate informs the researcher that the wine producer inhabits a position primarily concerned with autonomous principles of recognition. The structure of the field can also be determined by recognizing the polar opposites within the field. Wine producers producing for other producers will not be looking for economic prestige and vice-versa. The more extreme the position, the more likely one is able to recognize the structure of the field.

There also may be sub-fields within the cultural field. This situation is the case for the Kentucky wine industry. The Kentucky wine industry is a sub-field in the cultural field of international wine production. The site of inquiry for this study is the sub-field of the field of cultural wine production. Therefore, the sub-field must balance its localized concerns and principles for its particular audience (stakeholders and consumers) with the principles of legitimization of the international wine field.

Recognizing a sub-field is important for a few reasons. One, as a sub-field emerges, the new position affects all positions within the field. The field is now different. All the positions have changed due to the changed relationships. Two, an increase in potential consumers expands the field of cultural production. This growth has been documented in the press as major outlets have recognized that less wine is being

produced than what the world demands (Gray, 2013). There is an available position for the Kentucky wine sub-field. With the expansion of the field of production, the more power available to the field to autonomously establish its criteria for production and evaluation, thus, the opportunity for Kentucky wine to develop its own terroir. However, the more a cultural field moves towards autonomy of cultural value, the more it must produce individual products "oriented towards the search for culturally pertinent features endowed with value in the field's own economy" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 117). In other words, the creation of a position for the sub-field of a Kentucky cultural wine demands more production of Kentucky wines concerned with the production of wine imbued with the cultural values relevant to Kentucky and to the international wine field of cultural production.

On the consumer side, education is essential for a well-established cultural industry. Education is necessary for interpreting cultural codes and references. Furthermore, the cultural value of the product is established by the rarity of individuals possessing the education necessary for deciphering the codes as this "unequal distribution" creates an environment where the lack of knowledge and information (and therefore the demand) necessary for interpretation must be sought out (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 120-121).

In most cases, educational institutions manage the unequal distribution of information, knowledge, and education. This system allows for a level of control over the value of the cultural products, especially when one considers the complexity of the codes of the cultural products and the vast positions, with their specific cultural products possessing idiosyncratic cultural codes; cultural competence and mastery of any cultural

product is difficult without institutionalized education. It is worth noting that the class and position of the consumer is likewise established by the cultural education appropriated. This reason is why participant observation of consumers can give insight into the cultural codes and meanings of specific wines. Moreover, the ability to consecrate cultural products is determined by the amount of education appropriated by the agent, be it person or institution. The greater the education, the more legitimacy and authority possessed by the agent, and thereby the more legitimacy and authority that can be bestowed on a cultural producer or product. This process explains why an American wine connoisseur, Robert Parker Jr., became the most important critic and awarder of cultural value on wine, especially French wines. This structure also makes the role of educational institutions the mediator in cultural fields, the significant consecrator of cultural value, and the primary creator of producers, consumers, and demand. Finally, education creates cultural need and a means by which to satisfy the demand. Learning cultural codes can increase enjoyment, creating a cycle of desire for increased cultural education, which increases cultural consumption and simultaneously reinforces the legitimacy of the cultural field and of the educational institution.

For wine, education is a significant concern, and the possession of education a significant value. The Court of Master Sommeliers controls the consecration of industry expert wine tasters and manages rarity through a rigorous exam that only 219 living people have earned. With the retirement of Robert Parker and the dispersal of wine legitimacy and authority throughout an expanding cultural wine field, especially of potential wine consumers (and the reluctance of the largest wine distributors to acknowledge the legitimacy and authority of the cultural agents benefiting from the

dispersal), the sommeliers awarded master sommelier status have become major awarders of cultural value backed by the cultural control of the Court of Master Sommeliers. At the local level, the most famous and visible sommeliers, critics, and academic viticulture experts become the major holders of cultural power.

This educational situation is important for the Kentucky wine industry for two reasons. First, Eastern wines are distinct from the traditional wines consumed by most wine consumers. The cultural power is more concentrated as it is less familiar to most wine consumers. This situation increases the cultural authority of local experts and allows for unlikely individuals to hold significant cultural authority such as agricultural experts at universities and colleges. However, the overall cultural value of Eastern wines is limited as the international controllers of the cultural value of wine have not consecrated Eastern wines as culturally valuable as traditional wine vintages. Secondly, increased education is essential for the growth of Kentucky wine consumers and for Kentucky wine demand. This fact has been corroborated by local experts (Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 4, 2014; Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 27, 2014). Thankfully, no matter how much education one receives there is always more to learn about wine (Robert Chartrand, personal communication, April 30, 2014), and this fact combined with more wine demand than supply which encourages the production of new and unfamiliar wines along with the lack of knowledge about each new year's vintage of established wines, allows for the increase in education without the fear of lessening the rarity and value of the cultural product, especially the Kentucky wine product, for the foreseeable future. A focus of this study will be on the educational practices of the Kentucky wine field of cultural production.

Relationship of postmodern analysis to Bourdieu. Bourdieu's

conceptualization of the field of cultural production, especially its relational construction,

connects to postmodern and poststructural interpretations of society. In particular, the

lack of a central, structural core references postmodern intertextuality. Kristeva (1980)

coined the term intertextuality, Bryan Taylor credits Foucault's interpretation of the term

as an influence on his work, and Taylor (2010, 2002, 1994, 1992) has used it in his work

analyzing the nuclear industry, its rhetoric and communication. Intertextuality can be

defined as the meaning of any text being created through the text's association and

reference to other texts. Taylor used intertextuality to understand organizational

communication, and the application of intertextuality is beneficial for understanding the

Kentucky wine industry. There are a number of other postmodern concerns useful in

analyzing the Kentucky wine industry.

The postmodern approach of Bourdieu and Taylor emphasizes power, knowledge,

value (especially Bourdieu), and discourse. Taylor (2005) lists phenomena that are of

interest in postmodern analysis of organizational communication. These phenomena

emerge within the Kentucky wine industry, and some of the findings of the analysis will

be discussed in relationship to these phenomena. Taylor interprets postmodernity as a

tension or "mutually constitutive relationship" between assumptions of modernity (the

epoch from the 16th to 20th century) and postmodernity (Taylor, 2005, p. 115). Wine is

an incredibly postmodern product. Wine is constantly fluctuating between modern ideals

within a postmodern industry and society.

Documenting all of the characteristics of modernity listed by scholars would be a

dissertation in its own right. Instead, a list of some overriding issues is included. First,

the development of technology and industrialization along with scientific breakthroughs and rational thought are essential influences on modernism, especially theoretical revolutions and the positivist position. These themes can be seen in the evolution of wine and the evaluation of wine through the creation of terroirs, advanced agricultural methods, and the attempts to prove the impact of terroirs empirically on the taste and value of the wine (Morgan, 2014).

Corporations, international markets, and consumer capitalism are important issues as well, and their influence is seen throughout the wine industry. Kentucky wine cannot be understood without understanding Kentucky wine's relationship to the international market, to the larger wine producers, and the tension between the cultural and commodity production of wine. Fluctuating world markets as a result of globalization and the interests of nation-states are of concern. World markets most certainly affect Kentucky wine. Arguably, there is not enough wine to supply the world, new wine markets come online periodically and their practices and stories re-orient the industry. Losing old world wineries also affects the Kentucky wine industry (Gray, 2013). These concerns do not even take into account the influence of older wine regions dictating the evaluation and positions of Kentucky wines or their influence on consumers' expectations.

Finally, the importance of mass media and its relationship to the influence of nation-states and associated ideologies are important to modernism and can be seen in the Kentucky wine industry. Media is essential for connecting with Kentucky wine consumers. Also, the agricultural interests and agricultural sectors of the United States and countries involved in wine production influence the choices and support for the Kentucky wine industry. Wine being sold in a relatively free market economy and the

vacillation between commodity and cultural product is an example of this modern influence. The French ideology of terroir and the practice of only labeling champagne from Champagne, France are examples of the imperialist practices established during modernity.

Postmodernism, in Taylor's (2005) conceptualization, addresses the breakdown and exacerbation (Taylor uses the word continuities) of many of these influences. For example, postmodernity looks at the disintegration of colonial systems that spread ideology and affect, often negatively, other peoples. The inability of the French wine industry to prohibit consumer belief that Californian champagne style wines should be categorized with French champagne is one example. The emergence of postindustrialization, especially through information technology innovations in conjunction with media (a subject addressed in this dissertation), is another.

Of extreme relevance to the Kentucky wine industry is the effect of globalization on organization and interpretation of the wine world, the influence of wine organizations, wine industries, and associated stakeholder perceptions of Kentucky wine within an international wine industry. Boundaries of space and time have collapsed, foundational narratives are no longer relevant, contextualization is relative, often localized, and can be decontextualized easily when moved to a new locale. Stable identities have disintegrated. For organizations, the lack of identity makes it difficult to create organizational culture and appropriate practices. In one aspect, this is a benefit as postmodernity allows for new creative and artistic practices which have opened room for a Kentucky wine and new terroirs. Unfortunately, these changes leave individuals having to make sense of a world that is often "characterized by ambiguity, fluidity, fragmentation, partiality, and

simultaneity" (Taylor, 2005, p. 117). All of these issues are found in the analysis of Kentucky wine.

Taylor (2005) lists five key assumptions of postmodernism that will be embraced for the analysis of the data collected with this study. They are (a) *Organizations are (inter-)texts*. This characteristic has been alluded to already. Textualization occurs as "organizational members use discourse to define, clarify, and manage the conditions of their organizational lives" (p. 122). Stakeholders will use "cultural ideologies that prescribe the use of particular norms, values, and beliefs as resources for sensemaking and expression" (p. 122). Organizational "texts" or "discourses" are not singular or stable. They are multiple, competing, interacting, and influence organizational members by orienting them "*to* and *by* multiple discourses" (p. 122). These discourses may be cultural and historical (within Kentucky wine and with terroir, they are most certainly historical); there is no central or singular truth, discourse, or meaning. Instead, they are "entangled textualities," and are thereby *intertextual* (Carlone & Taylor, 1998; Taylor, 1999). With this assumption, the focus is on the relationship of competing discourses rather than determining a stable, single truth since the discourse is constantly evolving.

Secondly, (b) organizational cultures and identities are fragmented and de-centered. Tension emerges between modernist values and pre-determined narratives and individuals' identities which are actual, involved in local and situational contexts, shifting, and not set on stable, modernist ideals. Once again, the multiple ideologies and discourses are at work, and therefore, the organizational cultures and identities remain fragmented and de-centered. Again, this tension can be found in the pre-set historical

narratives of Kentucky and the way in which Kentucky wine identity is actualized within the state.

Foucault's legacy will forever imbed postmodern theoretical frames with issues of knowledge, power, and identity in relationship to discourse. In considering the relationship of these concepts, one must accept that (c) organizational knowledge, power, and discourse are inseparable and that their relationship should be deconstructed. Discourse should be analyzed with the understanding that power lies in the language in use and not in positions or actors. Knowledge helps to legitimate power, and knowledge of wine, of the process of making wine, and of navigating the wine industry are all relevant to the understanding of discourse, power, and knowledge. However, in these organizations, (d) the communication and discourse involves complex relations of power and resistance. Importantly, power is "multiple and widely distributed" and that an individual can be both dominant and dominated at the same time (Taylor, 2005, p. 128). The positional shifting of the Kentucky wine industry is evidence of this phenomenon. A Kentucky wine business may possess a position of power in relationship to another Kentucky wine business when the issue is Kentucky wine, but in the international wine arena, the dominant Kentucky wine business may not possess much power in relationship to international wine businesses.

Finally, these effects of discourse and relationships assume that (e) knowledge of organizational communication is representational, and in response, the research studies should be reflexive of the symbols, metaphors, and power of the communication. This final assumption supports Bourdieu's (1993) interpretation of the field of cultural production, especially relational positions within the field and the positions' meanings,

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and Sennett's (2008) analysis of cultural products and their implicit meaning. This assumption justifies the study's focus on the meanings produced through the Kentucky wine industry's language, communicative acts, and relationships.

A value in this postmodern/poststructural framework is the avoidance of allegorical, mythic, and/or deterministic understandings of Kentucky wine. Emphasis is placed on the agency and acts of specific manifestations of Kentucky wine meaning and how it is manipulated. There may be ideological, and especially mythic elements as history is connected to the terroir of a wine, but the focus will be on individual interpretations of these elements. There is not one monolithic, dominant, or hegemonic discourse in Kentucky wine, although there may be dominant demographics in Kentucky wine and wine community as a whole. There are multiple voices and interpretations. Yes, treating wine as a cultural product does require an amount of economic capital which can marginalize groups, but such an approach is oversimplified and does not address the actual site of inquiry. It may benefit society to analyze wine based upon those that are marginalized, but to assume that that actual industry is a duality of dominant and dominated is erroneous. Instead, as mentioned earlier, it is best to recognize the boundaries of the site of inquiry and to account for the contested and negotiated relationship between the power present in texts and their meanings and the power of stakeholders to influence and shape the meanings. As Oriard (1993) understood, symbolic representations of power do not always account for the consequences found in a material world, especially the "actual people experience" (p. 15). The hope is that this conceptual framework will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the meanings inherent in Kentucky wine, complicates the understanding

as well as present the processes, by which the meanings are contested, especially by the producers and primary marketing and advertising stakeholders. By better understanding the meanings, the intentions, and the process of contestation and negotiation, the findings should be able to improve the communicative acts of Kentucky wine producers, stakeholders, and consumers.

Textual Analysis

Oriard (1993) believed a textual approach to cultural studies could be applied to meaning production in mass-mediated societies. This study extends his cultural-textual analysis into the wine industry, brand image, reputation, and management research, and into the field of cultural production and cultural communication.

A key aspect of analyzing the wine industry in a similar fashion to Oriard's approach is in acknowledging that the texts to be analyzed are "secondary texts." For wine, these secondary texts (websites, marketing, and advertising samples—primarily digital) are used to interpret the primary text, a Kentucky wine business' wine. These texts "provide material for making the abstract concrete" (Oriard, 1993, 10). Or, conversely, they provide material for making the concrete abstract. The secondary texts provide potential semantic and symbolic meaning to a liquid. These potential meanings are posited to Kentucky wine drinking stakeholders and are negotiated in Kentucky wine communal spaces.

These meanings become the cultural expressions of the business and Kentucky wine community, and they can be found in these "texts." The texts may be actual texts such as advertisements and website photographs and writings, but they may also be the cultural expressions enacted during wine tastings, festivals, or winery on-site events

(which will be discussed in a later section). Geertz' 1972 fundamental essay, "Deep Play: Notes from Balinese Cockfights" contains the foundation for interpreting cultural expressions in textural or performative form. When confronted with the text, the understanding is that the text makes a "metasocial commentary" about a culture, especially its "metaphoric content" and "social context." As mentioned earlier, because of the postmodern/poststurctural approach, timeless, universal, allegorical and mythic qualities are questioned. A focus is on the specific formulations and nuanced perspectives, the singular meanings posited through a textual construction of a possible Kentucky wine meaning-manifestation.

Interpreting text as culture can also offer insight into particular aspects of a culture that may be more difficult to understand through interactive approaches. The jargon, vocabulary, and language nuances of the culture may be more clearly presented in text than during human interaction. Texts may also reveal the rules, standards, and norms in a clearer manner as well, and material production, especially documents, help to codify, cement, or solidify the standards, criteria, and expectations of the culture. For the wine industry, and especially the small Kentucky wine industry, these secondary texts are the sites where consumers meet wine and their meanings. Texts are one of the most significant sites of power and meaning. Texts are where the acceptable meanings are determined by what is emphasized in the text and how text is framed. When attempting to interpret contested or constantly negotiated meanings, texts offer an opportunity to understand a culture in a way that may not be possible by observing performance alone.

Wine texts and material culture coordinate the behavior of individuals. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) recognized that this is a function of documents. They offer legitimacy

as to what is associated with Kentucky wine. It preserves the culture which the Kentucky Vineyard Society and Kentucky wine have already attempted through their recounting of Kentucky wine's history, and most certainly, Kentucky wine documents are produced for consumption, for example, advertisements and wine labels. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) state that "the introduction of a material object makes a difference in the existence of social order, albeit with the (often unwitting) complicity of the people who adopt, care for, tell stories about, and otherwise incorporate the object into their lives" (p. 219). This phenomenon is implicit in the research questions and the conceptualization and interpretation of a socially constructed reality and culture. For this reason, an analysis of the Kentucky wine industry would not be complete without a theoretical approach to analyzing the texts and material culture of the Kentucky wine industry.

This interaction creates diverse and contested cultural symbols and meanings that can be analyzed, but must be understood based upon the local, geographical, and historical concerns of the Kentucky wine industry at a certain time. Altheide (1996) supports the interpretation of texts as symbolic as well. Analyzing the texts of Kentucky wine businesses as cultural expressions laced with metasocial commentary allows for a deeper, or thicker description (to use Geertz' term), understanding, and analysis of the Kentucky wine industry.

A further reason for choosing Oriard's approach to textual analysis was his treatment of power and aversion to a dialectical, critical analysis. The contested, relative, and shifting nature of terroir (not necessarily of land, but of the wine making techniques and predilections of consumers of a specific wine terroir, especially of new terroirs such as Kentucky's)—even over time—prohibit a more dominant/oppressed, dialectic analysis

of Kentucky wine's meaning, terroir management, and communication. Instead, a conceptual framework that emphasizes key aspects of the process of wine negotiation will provide stronger insights and findings than attempting to isolate and categorize a multitude of consumer/audience interpretations.

This does not mean that power struggles and ideologies are not present within wine industry communication and practice. On the contrary, power and ideology are significant factors in leisure activities and cultural production, only in this case, the multiple actors and variables allow for an amount of agency that may not be available in other areas of human experience.

Culture as Text: Ritual Communication

Geertz (1972) considered cultural expression as a form of text to be read or interpreted for its meaning, in particular its "metasocial commentary" on a culture. However, complications to this form of analysis can arise through the difference between a researcher's interpretation of the cultural expression and the intentions and interpretation of the cultural actor. For this study, the goal was not to know what the individual, or consumer in this case, knows. The intention was to interpret what is available for public negotiation and interaction, to shed light or add a new perspective on the cultural product and expression. The research questions direct the researcher's focus to the following issues: (1) brand management practices and how they can be improved, (2) the meanings, either acknowledged or unconsciously communicated through Kentucky wine producers and through what communicative practices.

Oriard (1993) argued that Geertz' approach allowed for the researcher to situate him or herself in between ideological interpretations and audience analysis. The same

rationale applies to this conceptual framework. As mentioned earlier, the dissonance between an ideological or audience analysis approach to the Kentucky wine industry (because of the nature of the industry and the nature of the researcher) necessitated an alternative approach. This conceptual framework offers a combined perspective which better addresses the complexities of the Kentucky wine industry and wine and the perspective of the researcher. Therefore, situating the analysis between theories focused solely on the producer, on the communication of power and ideology, or on actual consumer reception, is a stronger approach, and this approach mirrors Ellingson's (2009) crystallization which is also applied to this research.

The challenge came in developing a systematic approach to the analysis of cultural expression. Geertz, either through anthropological training or familiarity with the Balinese culture (more than likely both) was confident in his perspective and interpretation. Because of the complexity of the wine industry and wine consumption and the ease as to which actions and use can be confused (such as the switch from wine being considered a commodity rather than a cultural product) warranted a more formalized interpretation of cultural expression. Rothenbuhler's (1998) ritual communication became the theory for answering the dissertation research questions and interpreting cultural expression. Rothenbuhler (1998) defined ritual "as the voluntary performance of appropriately patterned behavior to symbolically effect or participate in the serious life" (p. 27). Ritual acknowledges the slow to change process of culture. Most importantly, ritual considers the referential nature of a cultural symbol, and it gifts the actor's agency in the creation of meaning since it is based on local, contextual, and contingent circumstances.

Rothenbuhler (1998) argued that ritual is communicative, symbolic, and written to be read (therefore available for interpretation and analysis). Meaning created through ritual considers, includes, and is referential of others within and outside the event and community. Ritual references other locales and individuals, and ritual also references related issues. Such referential practice links this approach to poststructural interpretations of reality and intertextuality. As mentioned earlier, these concepts are essential for understanding the nature of wine and the wine industry. Ritual communication forces the researcher to interpret or come to understand that which the ritual actor references. In many instances, latent meanings, representations, and symbols are revealed. The actor uses the resources available at that local time and place in order to create meaning. Therefore, ritual communication implies that the meaning of a cultural artifact can only be understood within the local and partial performances of the actors and through the specific expression or manifestation in which it is used. Ritual communication respects the study's conceptualization of wine and the Kentucky wine industry and offers a perspective by which it can be analyzed.

Why ritual communication or any predetermined theory rather than a grounded interpretation? Carrey's (1989) cultural approach to communication asserted that communication has two primary functions, either as the transmission of information and/or reinforcing culture through its ritual use and elements. The primary purpose of this study is to interpret the associations (values, beliefs, and meaning, i.e., culture) of Kentucky wine. These are cultural issues, and if culture is reinforced in communicative acts through ritual, then ritual aspects of cultural communication must be addressed in the

analysis. Two previous studies with evidence of rituals and their importance to the findings can elucidate this connection.

Geertz's (1972) "Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight" is the quintessential example of this understanding of culture, ritual, and how it can be read as a text. Geertz argued that the cockfights and the cocks symbolized something in society and also something about the individual. What the symbol meant to an individual and to the community was subjective and contested. The meaning of the symbol (the metaphor of the cock or the cockfight to use textual terms) was determined in a social context. Geertz did not emphasize the ritual, but the symbols and their meanings were negotiated through the ritual of the cockfight. Without the ritual context, especially the boundaries and choices available which, in turn, situate the actions, intentions, and associated references, meaning could not be determined. Only through the ritual, its rules, and available actor actions, could the meaning of betting against one's community be understood.

In another example, Rosen's (1985) "Breakfast at Spiro's: Dramaturgy and Dominance" recognized the ritual of advertising dinners, how the local performance and the context culturally asserted a reality. The action of the individuals and the already referenced culture influenced one another. Some, such as the creative department, contested the business dominance through alternative attire that could only be understood once the ritual of an advertising dinner had commenced. One could not understand the social positions of the creative department, or their opposition to business culture without the context of a ritualized awards dinner where more formal and business dress was expected. The importance of creative values to the creative department, and the value (or lack thereof) of creative ideals to the advertising community could only be understood

within the ritual. To reiterate, only through the specific, ritual performance could symbol and meaning be determined.

One final note, ritual communication accounts for this study's research questions involving brand management. Brand meaning is an accumulation of associations, determined by marketing decisions affecting communication, and the results are only registered over time, often over a longer period of time. The brand management cannot be interpreted until the negotiation of the text or act has commenced between individuals, when not through text, almost always through ritual communication. While the analysis of brand management of Kentucky wine industry businesses may help to understand cultural production, the interaction and performances between Kentucky wine producers, stakeholders, and consumers also determines the meaning and positioning of the cultural product and brand.

Brand Management

With the conceptualization of the cultural field and its postmodern characteristics established, the next theoretical demand concerns attempts to understand the communication choices and actions of Kentucky wine producers. For many commercial consumers, the products, especially products with abstract value and meaning, are considered and treated as brands. In order to better analyze the communication choices and actions of producers, this study incorporates the brand perspective into its conceptual framework.

Originally, a brand was defined as the distinguishing name and/or symbol attached to a good or service created by a seller or group of sellers to differentiate the good or service from competitors (Ghodeswar, 2008). However, over time, the definition

of a brand has evolved into its current understanding (Karmark, 2013; Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009). A brand is a collection of all its associations and meanings along with the position of the brand in the mind of the consumer. The associations may also include thoughts, emotions, feelings, perceptions, images, and experiences linked to the brand as well as loyalty to the brand, the promises a brand makes, and the brand's ability to satisfy the promises or needs of the consumer. Brands are now dynamic social processes, and they should be analyzed as such (Merz et al., 2009). The concept of a brand has been around for a long time (Koehn, 2001). Arguably, brands have existed since ancient times, and the concept of a brand entered marketing literature in the early 1900s (Merz et al. 2009; Room 1998; Stern, 2006).

A brand's associated characteristics are usually divided into brand awareness and image which are aspects of brand knowledge with awareness concerned with recall and recognition (meaning) and image with evaluation and performance. The awareness and image combine to become the brand identity. The brand identity is what, how, and why the associations make the brand unique. Brand equity is the estimated value of the brand based upon the brand assets and liabilities of the brand identity. Aaker (1991) deconstructed brand equity into four components: perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations. Aaker (1991) believed if one could determine the value of these four concepts for a specific brand, one could determine the brand's value. For businesses, brand management practices developed as an attempt to manage the brand associations that created brand identity in the hopes of affecting a brand's equity or value (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Establishing a brand identity and making brand management a business priority has become one of the primary ways for products and companies to differentiate themselves in a globalized world (Bennett, 2004). As a result, brands have become one of the most important assets for businesses (Madden, Fehle, Fournier, 2006; Simon & Sullivan, 1993). Branding, brand orientation, and brand curation are all processes associated with brands and brand management. However, in modern studies of brands and branding, each concept has distinct uses and even distinct disciplines.

Brand management is the managing of the associations, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, and experiences evoked by the brand image, identity and brand (Keller, 2009). Brand positioning is the concerted effort to create an image in the minds of consumers. Brand management is traditionally conducted by the business and usually through marketing departments as it is focused on the consumer or client. The goal of the brand management is to influence the beliefs, motivations, and ultimately the consumer purchasing choices.

Brand Management is a sub-process and practice of branding. Merz, He, and Vargo (2009) define a brand "in terms of collaborative, value co-creation activities of firms and all of their stakeholders," but the scholars expand this definition to include attempts to evaluate a brand's value (p. 328). Brand value can be defined "in terms of the stakeholders' collectively perceived value-in-use" (p. 328). All of these concepts can be included in brand associations and meanings. According to Arvidsson (2005), brand meanings include "values, commitments and forms of community sustained by consumers" (p. 236). These brand meanings are socially constructed as brand meanings allow consumers to affect meaning, share their contributions to the socially constructed

brand identity, and "create something in common" (p. 236). Over time, consumers appropriate more of the power and responsibility of managing brands (Bengtson and Östberg, 2004; Keller, 2009). In fact, Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that the involvement of the stakeholder in brand co-creation has caused a shift in branding from differentiation of a good in order to influence customer behavior to the process of offering a service available for exchange.

The inclusion of the potential consumer, internal and external customers ("purchasing" the identity or brand of the company by working for and being an ambassador of the organization rather than being an external customer purchasing a good or service), and extended network or stakeholder involvement into brand research evolved over time. It began with brand community research. Brand community research established that the community of brand consumers, either physical or symbolic consumers, co-created the brand through brand negotiation, interaction, personal narrative and experience (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) defined a brand community as:

> A brand community is a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand. It is specialized because at its center is a branded good or service. Like other communities, it is marked by a shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility. (p. 412)

A shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of belonging or responsibility to the community were three important indicators for the creation of a community. Brand community research helped to establish the co-production and negotiation of brands. These brand experiences may be direct or indirect, but they have the potential to create appreciation for the brand (McAlexander, 2002). Within brand community research, the

co-creators do not have to own the brand or product, only admire the brand, believe it has value, and interact with one another.

However, the stakeholder perspective recognized that it was not only brand community members that affected the brand but also dynamic forces such as networks, stakeholders, the larger industry and society that all affected the brand. Merz et al. (2009) labeled this conceptualization of brand management the stakeholder-focus brand era or the stakeholder perspective to branding: "all stakeholders contribute to a brand's value, whether or not these stakeholders are part of a social unit and adhere to the markers of community" (p. 339). Stakeholder perspective brand research also included research involving the networks and ecosystems of stakeholders (Iansiti & Levien, 2004). The stakeholder perspective addressed differences that brand community research could not. For example, the consumption rituals of two different individuals enjoying the same wine brand may differ greatly. Furthermore, two different Kentucky wine brand stakeholders may not be part of the same brand community, but if both stakeholders request that a local restaurant carry their Kentucky wines, then more Kentucky wines may be carried by local restaurants. Brand research needed to account for these add-on network and industry effects.

Holt (2002) labeled this consumer appropriation "postmodern brand management" as brands have become cultural resources appropriated and used by consumers. The goal of the business is to benefit from the ways in which consumers use brands to create something new or create new associations. In this new form, brand management is focused on creating a relationship between the brand and the consumer. Likewise, brand value is "the perceived use value of determined collectively by all

stakeholders" (Merz et al., 2009, p. 329). Hatch and Schultz (2009) summarized the new understanding of brand ownership: "Brands are, and always have been, interpreted and judged by all who touch them" (p. 118). Brands can no longer be understood without taking into account all brand stakeholders.

In the end, brands can be used in multiple ways varying from functional to symbolic. Each evolution in understanding and use of brands incorporates former brand uses (Merz et al. 2009). Sometimes a brand may encourage certain consumer behaviors. Other times, the brand may be an inspiration for a consumer to create new brand associations or adjust self-identities. The tension between different brand functions references Taylor's (2005) postmodern organizational analysis. Arvidsson (2005) recommended that the interpretation of a brand's use should be decided based upon its "context of consumption" (p. 244). Anderson (1996) would interpret Arvidsson's focus on context as a postmodern communication theory position which is another reason why postmodern organization communication concerns were included in the conceptual framework.

The nature of brands invites a communal, stakeholder, and socially constructed conceptualization of them. Brands possess meaning and associations referring to something larger than the figure, letter, or graphic considered the brand, and certain associations could be considered what Rosen (1985) termed the bases of culture: attitudes, values, and beliefs. The references are the cultural codes Bourdieu (1993) argued were essential for artistic and cultural product perception. Thus, a brand can be considered a cultural symbol, product, or artifact. For this study, the specific brand in question is Kentucky wine. The culture is that of Kentucky wine industry. The brand

management is the form of communication and the process used to position the brand.

The association and brand meaning is negotiated through the interaction of brand

management choice and action in either a textual or performative communication act with

Kentucky wine stakeholders and/or potential consumers in a specific context and

environment. This approach is supported in the literature; Marshall (2002) considered

brands an intertextual commodity. Arvidsson (2005) believed brand management went

beyond the brand and was concerned with managing the brand environment. Brand

environments are:

> A mediatic space that anticipates the agency of consumers and situates it within a
> number of more or less precise coordinates. Within those coordinates consumers
> are free to produce the shared meanings and social relations that the branded good
> will help create in their life. The associations must be interpreted through the
> observable phenomenon. The findings can be considered symbols with meanings
> of a specified culture within a specific time, space, and place. (p. 245)

Part of brand management is directing the brand interaction and environment. Merz et al.

(2009) supported this understanding of brand management as brand value "must be

understood in the context of complex networks that are part of dynamic service

ecosystems, comprising not only firms and customers but their contextual communities

and other stakeholders" (p. 331). For this reason, the current brand management

approach aligns with textual and ritual communication and analysis already included in

this conceptual framework.

Branding and brand management is closely related to corporate branding and

corporate reputation. These relationships can lead to some confusion especially when the

product or service brand is difficult to differentiate from the firm's brand. Likewise, the

corporate reputation could be confused with the brand image which could be considered

the brand's reputation. Also, research on corporate branding and corporate reputation

introduced the importance of the stakeholder to branding and reputation (Hatch &

Schultz, 2001, 2008; Karmark, 2013). Kärreman and Rylander (2008) found that overall

brand meanings, including corporate brands and corporate reputation along with the

concept's relationships to one another were ambiguous, abstract, incoherent, inconsistent,

and even contradictory in the minds of stakeholders. Christensen, Morsing, and Cheney

(2008) and Hatch and Schultz (2009) both found that the ideals underlying corporate

branding and reputation goals and models to be just as ambiguous within the businesses

analyzed. In part, the confusion is believed to have derived from the ability of

stakeholders to co-create brands and bring multiple meanings to brand interpretations.

For these reasons, this study will only focus on the brand management of specific

brands and not focus on the corporate brand or corporate reputation. Also one business

may possess multiple brands. Analysis will address the brand management of a specific

Kentucky wine brand. Brands will be identified based on the efforts of the business to

separate or distinguish one brand from another (i.e., one wine brand being labeled reserve

while another not, or, if the winery makes an effort to distinguish white wines from red

wines), and as always, how stakeholders distinguish brands during and after brand

interactions. For some wineries, they may only produce one brand, and in such cases,

there may not be much difference between the brand image and the corporate brand and

reputation. These overlaps are another reason for the multiple concepts included in the

conceptual framework and methods.

For this study, the brand associations represent the culture of the Kentucky wine

industry. Therefore the brand management productions are cultural productions of the

Kentucky wine industry, and they will relate to Kentucky's terroir which relates to

aspects of Kentucky's culture. The meanings of these cultural productions are then

interpreted by other Kentucky wine industry stakeholders. Even when brand

management is conducted through a textual production, it is in relationship to the

consumer (Keller, 2009). Therefore, the cultural product disseminated for brand

management exists in a local, contingent, spatial/temporal moment for consideration by

consumers. The resultant change in the brand image through brand management by the

negotiation of Kentucky wine stakeholders in a particular context affects the positioning

of the brand. The collection of findings that result in the documentation of repeated

brand associations can be used to determine the qualitative positioning of the Kentucky

wine brand.

The strategy of brand management asserts that their signs are in flux and are

contingent on associations. These associations are decided by the collective of the

Kentucky wine industry, and are determined through local performances which are

communicated through various channels and methods. The brand associations or

meanings can even spread beyond the initial brand management choice and action by the

attention and recognition consumers give the brand. Tensions may arise from attempts to

sustain or change symbolic meaning or associations and local and partial expression by

an agent. This situation can be exacerbated if positions in the field have been altered for

some reason.

Conclusion

This conceptual framework applies a number of theories into new areas,

specifically, into the analysis of wine. Bourdieu's theory of the field of production has

been applied to food since his work *Distinction* covers food in relationship to body, class,

education, and social status. However, wine has often been grouped in association with other drink and food consumed by different classes (which makes sense since this was Bourdieu's original approach and goal and his background in Sociology), or as the beginning of a more specialized analysis of wine, such as the economics of wine. This latter application tends to take the holistic conceptualization of cultural production, the specific industry and associated cultural field and sublimate their relationships and interactions in support of other interests or disciplines (see Watson, June 19, 2012 for a superficial example of Bourdieu's theory applied to food groupings; for applying Bourdieu's theory to the economic analysis of wine see Beckert, Rössel, & Schenk, 2014; Roger, 2013). Bourdieu's theory is most often used in the support of the existence of cultural capital (which again makes sense since he wrote a book concerning the forms of capital and included cultural capital as one of the forms; Bourdieu, 1986). There are numerous studies in many disciplines concerning cultural capital. More specifically to wine, Bourdieu's theory has been used to support discussions of the cultural capital of wine, certain types of wine, and the cultural capital of certain wine regions and wines, often with a critical bent (Zhao, 2005). Bourdieu's theory has been used as theoretical support for the categorization or quantification of products, especially in cases where researchers are attempting to understand the economic behavior of certain social classes (Beckert, Rössel, & Schenk, 2014; Maclean, Harvey, &Press, 2001). This study offers another application and empirical evidence of the function of the field of cultural production.

In explicating the process and management of a cultural product in a cultural field, the study deepens our understanding of cultural products, cultural capital, and

cultural value. By increasing understanding, this dissertation expands the literature on

the importance of cultural value in a capitalist market. Throsby (2001) explains the

importance of such a venture:

> If we are serious about striving for theoretical completeness, and eventually for
> operational validity in decision-making, it is essential that cultural value be
> admitted alongside economic value in the consideration of the overall value of
> cultural goods and services. (p. 41)

Marks (2011) explains why estimating the overall value of a cultural good is so important

in the current era:

> Among other things, a central theme in the discussion is globalization and
> concerns that dedication to the apparently narrow economic model promoting
> efficiency, competition, market growth, and consumer sovereignty will
> undervalue cultural goods so that they are under-produced or lost in competition
> with mass produced goods responding to 'international tastes' (p. 252).

In other words, by documenting the value of a cultural good such as wine, we take a step

towards protecting culture, and in a world where economic concerns place pressures on

our cultural life, such actions are important preservation activities.

The purpose of the brand management is to take the abstract associations

(meanings) discovered through ritual and textual analysis and evaluate the ways in which

the brand management choices have affected the position of the specific Kentucky wine

brand or cultural product within the field of Kentucky cultural wine production. The

position and meaning of the brand and the cultural product is then considered in

relationship to postmodern concerns and the field of cultural wine production issues.

Arvidsson (2005) understood that brand management could be used to address different

levels of brand management depending on the communicative act. Furthermore, this

framework extends the brand management theory and research by applying

communication and postmodern theories that can analyze brands in a way that

specifically accounts for the social process brand management is. Merz et al. (2009) called for further research on "how non-brand-focused communities help co-created brand value" and the relationships among stakeholders in the co-creation process (p. 342). This study contributes to that research.

An issue remains in only analyzing the production side of the Kentucky wine industry and particular spaces where producers interact with stakeholders or present their product to consumers. This approach can only produce partial findings on the cultural meanings of wine. However, Bourdieu (1993), Oriard (1993), and Rothenbuhler (1998) would all argue that a comprehensive assessment of cultural meanings of wine would be impossible. Taylor (2005) would argue that there is no one truth to the cultural meaning of wine anyway. This study is a qualitative description of the cultural meanings discovered through the specific observed phenomenon. These are interpreted cultural meanings as well. The purpose was to discover some of the more prevalent meanings found in the cultural negotiation of Kentucky wine, and to illuminate examples of brand management practices conducted in the Kentucky wine industry. A final hope was to not only document the brand management practices of the Kentucky wine industry, but to discover tensions, misunderstandings, and ways to improve the communication of producers, stakeholders, and consumers. As with all other aspects of this study, the success of this last hope is left up to the conclusion of the reader.

Finally, as the literature review of the study revealed, little research has been devoted to the communicative processes involved in the negotiation of wine as a cultural product. This study offers an analysis of not only the processes but also of the most used communication channels in the Kentucky wine field of cultural production. By doing so,

this study also identifies the most significant cultural characteristics associated with

Kentucky wine. In wine research, one of the difficulties has been in determining the

exact cultural qualities, be it cultural values, social roles, or uses, of wine. This study

offers a conceptual framework and associated methods for investigating the

communicative processes, channels, and cultural characteristics associated with wine,

areas that have eluded researchers in the past.

Research Questions

The final goal of the conceptual framework is to answer the following research

questions:

1. What are the cultural meanings produced through the communicative interactions

    of Kentucky wine industry producers and stakeholders, especially consumers?

2. How do Kentucky wine industry businesses use brand management to position

    themselves in the wine market?

Chapter Three: Methods

The methods used for this study were informed by the research questions, and a primary consideration in choosing the methods was identifying the space where Kentucky wine producers interacted with stakeholders. The space or site of inquiry influenced the choice of methods for the study. Related to where producers interacted with stakeholders, how producers interacted with stakeholders also affected the choice of methods. The process of positing wine associations and allowing their negotiation and contestation influenced the methods for data collection and analysis. Beyond the structural logic of this approach, it also supports Maxwell's (1992) development of validity by establishing the appropriateness of the research questions and methods to the data that would like to be collected for analysis. Ceremony, ritual, social interaction, and engagement in the "serious life" all demand certain methodological processes in order to collect the related data (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 27). Finally, why—the intention of Kentucky wine producers—certainly demanded an appropriate method that could shed light on the producers' motives and desires.

The research questions established the ontology for this study. The nature of reality is language, a world of symbols and meaning that is at the same time an interactive, social construction manifested through local improvisation and agency, representative of all possible improvisations, and working within a coded system of understanding (i.e., culture; Anderson, 1996). The conceptual framework acknowledged this ontology, and the methods must respect the appropriate epistemology for such a life-world.

Limits to knowledge construction for such research questions and world of

inquiry are established by the interpretive nature of language and reasons for action. One

human cannot know why another human has attempted any action. Even when the action

is explained, the limits of language and it symbolic references necessitate collection,

analysis, interpretation, and inference. Thus, from the outset, the research questions

assume a hermeneutic empiricism. Meanings and actions must be interpreted. The social

negotiation of the communicative act reinforces the interpretation as well. Finally, the

ways in which the culmination of language, interpretation, and interaction produce

genuinely new results are also scrutinized. All of these considerations influenced the

choice of methods; methods that attempted to document the actions of Kentucky wine

producers and stakeholders within the spaces used for communication, interpret the data

collected with the purpose of isolating potential associations and meanings, and finally,

grounding the interpretation in the local context through corroboration, comparison, and

reference. The research questions led to the use of qualitative methods as qualitative

methods attempt to make sense of the meanings humans associate with phenomena

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

In order to do so, a number of qualitative methods were chosen with the

aforementioned goals in mind, and multiple qualitative methods were chosen to

strengthen the findings through Ellingson's (2009) crystallization. The purpose of

crystallization is to combine:

> Multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent
> text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of
> phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researcher's
> vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed
> meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes
> them. (Ellingson, 2009, p. 4)

Crystallization creates room for the exploration of a number of concerns and issues with this study. This methodological approach embraces the reflexive position of a researcher, and it acknowledges the researcher's role in piecing together a puzzle which interprets and creates new meaning based on the position of the researcher and the contextual, contingent, and historical elements of the site and subject of inquiry. This new creation is knowledge in its own right, even if it is partial.

Crystallization also aligns with the Bourdieu's (1993) shifting nature of cultural fields and postmodern scholar's concerns of multiple truths. Ellingson (2009) acknowledges this consideration: "Unlike triangulation, crystallization is informed by postmodernism, meaning that it presupposes that no truth exists 'out there' to discover or get close to, but only multiple and partial truths that researchers (and others) co-construct" (p. 22). In consideration of multiple truths, Ellingson calls for multiple qualitative methods (included in this study) along with deep and thick description. Finally crystallization acknowledges that the impact of interpretation, negotiated meanings, and agency limits the claim of a singular reality or interpretation.

The methods combine to offer a version of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss 1987). While this conceptual framework is not grounded theory, the qualitative methodology appropriates aspects of the theory, especially the constant-comparison method. Beginning with data collection, positions and associations were identified from the data rather than being organized and analyzed through a priori categories and positions. A conceptual framework rather than a theoretical framework allowed for this flexibility. The usefulness of the conceptual framework could then be tested against the data and analysis. Jamerson (2010) studied the Napa Valley wine

industry with a cultural approach similar to this study. However, in Jamerson's study, the researcher began with a priori categories that were quickly dismissed due to the variability, slippage, overlap, and inability of real-world examples to fit cleanly into the categories created. The flexibility in this methodological approach avoids the troublesome fit between generalized ideal and context positioned example.

Research Design

The process by which Kentucky wine producers interact with stakeholders affected the choice of methods. In particular, textual analysis and participant observation emerged out of the most commonly executed communicative acts of Kentucky wine producers. The rationale for these three methods reflected these communicative strategies. The predominant communicative channels for Kentucky wine producers are internet websites and vineyard and winery tours, tastings, and private events. Therefore, textual analysis was employed for the internet websites and participant observation in order to collect data of the interpersonal communicative acts between Kentucky wine producers and potential consumers. Semi-structured life-world interviews were conducted in order to gain insight into the communication choices, motives, desires, and intentions of Kentucky wine producers. Also, qualitative research interviews were conducted with subsequent Kentucky wine stakeholders that could add rich description to the study, fill gaps in data collection, or add a valuable perspective to the study. Other stakeholders beyond consumers include distributors, grape-growers, Kentucky wine enthusiasts, and academic experts. Altogether, these methods looked at the subject of inquiry at a personal, thick or deep level, as "there is often as much difference within cultural groups as between them" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 143). The conceptual

framework presented in chapter two was used to focus the data collection process and interpret the data.

Site for Study

The site for this study was determined by the boundaries of the Kentucky wine industry. The boundaries were fluid and flexible with two basic criteria (1) the Kentucky wine producer identified him or herself as a member of the Kentucky wine industry and (2) the producer demonstrated a communicative act in reference to Kentucky wine. This broad definition could create some confusion. For example, what if someone identified him or herself as a Kentucky wine producer and argued that Kentucky wine was superior to California wine in a wine tasting at a winery in California? Also, a few Western Kentucky wine producers are located in Indiana.

To resolve this possible confusion, a third criterion was implemented: The Kentucky wine producer, winery, and/or wine must have been listed on the state's Kentucky wine website. The state government-sponsored website (found at Kentuckywine.com) is the primary and most efficient resource for locating Kentucky wineries. By being added to the website, the Kentucky wine producer makes a symbolic communicative act that notes the producer's entrance into the Kentucky wine field. Bourdieu (1993) supports this interpretation of the act. He argued that all one had to do to enter a field of cultural production was to decide to be a part of the field. Subsequent acts would determine the position of the individual within the field. The Kentucky wine list was the most comprehensive acknowledgement (although not definitive) of a producer entering the field at the time of this study. Therefore, the Kentucky wine list found on the Kentucky wine webpage was used to determine potential webpages for

textual analysis, wine tasting rooms, vineyards, and wineries available for participant observation, and for wine industry producers that may be available for interviews.

The Kentucky wine website and its associated organizing and sponsoring body, the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council, is the established, institutional legitimizing and consecrating organization. Bourdieu (1993) described the importance of such legitimizing and consecrating bodies to cultural fields. These institutions assist in the orientation of members of the cultural field. They communicate values and associations for different cultural field stakeholders. These institutions also have a position in the field with their specific associations and values as well. As a cultural field expands, competing consecrating bodies will emerge. A number of competing consecrating bodies have been identified for the Kentucky wine industry: Kentucky wine and the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council, the Kentucky Wineries Association, the Northern Kentucky Vintners & Grape Growers Association, and until recently, the Kentucky Vineyard Society. However, because of the stage and size of the Kentucky wine industry along with the state government's support, the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council's position as a consecrating body, especially in relationship to the public, is much larger than any of the other consecrating bodies. For that reason, the Kentucky wine website was chosen. Over time, other competing bodies may overtake or have a more legitimate consecrating position for the field but that is not the current condition.

The Kentucky wine website separates the Kentucky wine industry into four regions: North Central, Eastern, South Central, and Western. The divisions relate to climate, soil, and population factors that could eventually become separate Kentucky terroirs (this possibility will be discussed in a later section). Also, the regional divisions

can predict the primary markets for a number of the wineries. For example, a customer in Indiana is more likely to have access to a wine from Louisville rather than Lexington. However, this expectation is not concrete and does not apply to every winery. A number of wines from wineries close to Lexington Kentucky could not be found in retail outlets in Lexington while Louisville wines were available. The size of the winery, the market identified and available to the wine producer, and the relationship of the wine producer to the distributor are all factors that could affect wines available in certain Kentucky wine markets. Finally, some counties where Kentucky wines are produced are dry counties, and therefore, these wineries must export their wines to other wine markets. These divisions were acknowledged and considered during the sampling process. Steps were taken to ensure that data were collected from wineries from each region. When applicable, these divisions were taken into account during analysis. Along with region, the size of the operation was also taken into consideration when selecting wineries.

As for other stakeholders who could add valuable insight into the field, snowball sampling was used. Recommendations from individuals were contacted. The primary area where snowball sampling was used was the semi-structured life world interviews. The snowball sampling will be elaborated upon in that section.

Participant Observation

Overview and rationale. Participant Observation is the first of the three qualitative methods employed for this dissertation. Participant observation can be defined as "the craft of experiencing and recording events in social settings" (Gans, 1999 as cited in Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 135). The observations involved wineries and vineyards that offered public wine tastings and vineyard tours. The observations were

similar to Rosen's (1985) participant observation and analysis involving Spiro and Associates advertising agency. The goal was to analyze the relationship of culture, cultural and ritual practices, and cultural symbols and meanings associated with Kentucky wineries. The understanding is that the aforementioned practices and symbols are used to "influence ideas, thus influencing action, thus shaping experience, consequently shaping ideas" (Rosen, 1985, p. 33). The researcher analyzed how the wineries and vineyards were attempting to shape the Kentucky wine industry through communication, cultural and ritual practices, and symbols. A secondary goal was to "better understand the experience of others" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 134). As Lindlof & Taylor (2011) also stated, the overall goal was to provide a "holistic description of a culture's material existence and meaning systems and depicts how its members achieve, maintain, and change their status" and to give "the contextual significance of social practices for their performers" (p. 134-135).

The choice of employing participant observation aligned with my research questions and conceptual framework. As Lindlof and Taylor state (2011), the purpose of participant observation in the fashion of ethnography (very much an influence on this research) is to describe and interpret "the observable relationships between social practices and systems of meaning" (p. 134). A significant purpose of the participant observation was to describe and interpret brand management choices posited by Kentucky wine producers and the interaction of such choices and actions on Kentucky wine's potential consumers. Furthermore the data collected from the participant observation consisted of "various practices and constructs" describing "how participants account for each other's presence in a particular scene, how they evaluate each other's

presence in a particular scene, how they evaluate each other's related performances, and so on" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 136). Participant observation was an appropriate method for collecting data that can be interpreted by employing ritual communication as the practices and performances, and more importantly, the reactions and evaluations, can be interpreted. Finally, participant observation was justified in combination with other methods as Lindlof and Taylor (2011) note that it is common practice to combine participant observation with other methods.

The researcher took on the observer-as-participant role developed by Gold (as cited in Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Also, the wine tastings, the rooms, and the vineyards allowed for the aesthetic and "nondiscursive textures" of the sites to appear (Stoller, 1989 as cited in Taylor & Lindlof, 2011).

A secondary and important reason for using participant observation was the site and space visited. Wine tastings and wine tasting rooms are the primary sites for businesses in communicating with consumers and managing their brands (Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 4, 2014). These influential interactions can only be observed by visiting the site, and therefore, participant observation became the most appropriate method. Finally, by frequenting a number of sites, the goal was to observe a multitude of differences in processes, and products.

By deconstructing Rothenbuhler's ritual communication definition, I was able to focus on the cultural expressions of Kentucky wine industry businesses. Rothenbuhler (1998) defined ritual communication "as the voluntary performance of appropriately patterned behavior to symbolically effect or participate in the serious life" (p. 27). While some would argue that producer communication with stakeholders and consumers is

necessary rather than voluntary, the communicative choices and channels are voluntary,

or in other words, conscious decisions; they are not natural. For this research and the

Kentucky wine industry, common performances are any physical and/or material

manifestations and acts involving producers in the presence of stakeholders and/or

consumers. Common wine industry performances involved scheduled events, wine

tastings and winery tours. Rothenbuhler (1998) incorporated Bauman's (1989) definition

of performance to describe the actions: "an aesthetically marked and heightened mode of

communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience" (p. 262).

Rothenbuhler emphasized the someone (audience) and of something (the subject) as a

way to recognize a performance. I would argue *display* is a key word in understanding

performance. Performance is a public or social act. This element implies interaction, and

therefore a communicative act. "Appropriate" concerns the logic and rationale of the

choice in relationship to the context, circumstances, rules, and standards. Patterned

behavior involves the repeated or structured elements of the communication. This

reoccurring behavior is usually connected to a calendar or cycle, and this aspect is

certainly true of rituals involving the wine industry. The industry emphasizes the

seasonal process and yearly vintages. What allows for agency within the patterned

behavior revolves around the effect (intention, meaning, and power of the symbol) and/or

the participative act (behavior). These choices differ based on the ritual, the individual,

the context, and the effect, which may be cultural and/or informational, symbolically

referenced meaning, especially ideals as ritual involves subjunctive topics, not actual

presentations of reality. Furthermore the symbols are packed, layered, or condensed.

Naturally, the combination of the social and the representative establishes ritual as

communication. "Serious life" differentiates ritual from an interpretation of ritual behavior as habitual behavior. Rothenbuhler (1998) credits Durkheim with its origin. The serious life is concerned with "earnest," and to the individual, "necessary" activities with a serious objective, not "frivolous," not-serious," "carefree," "recreational," "convenient," or "habitual" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, pp. 12-13). Rothenbuhler (1998) warns against categories and dichotomies though. Rather, the serious life should consider the attitude of the people involved in the research. A heuristic for analysis is "some things are more important than others" and "deserve to be set aside and protected" (p. 24). For commercial wine producers, communicative acts between stakeholders and consumers are quite serious, and wine is more important to these producers, and the product is most certainly put aside and protected (from spoilage especially).

The above definition allowed not only for the identification of rituals, but more importantly, it directed the researcher towards interpretation and analysis of the references, representations, ideals, and values of the ritual. Ritual communication allowed for the textual analysis of cultural expressions. Moreover, ritual communication takes the first steps towards operationalizing Carrey's (1989) cultural communication.

Sampling. The sampling for participant observation followed a convenient sampling approach based on the Kentucky wine webpage. The webpage divided the wineries based on region, had an interactive map which supplied directions to the wineries as well as contact information and information associated with wineries offering tours and tastings. The Kentucky wine website either supplied the availability and dates and times of tours and tastings and/or connected to the winery's website which supplied information about tours and tastings. Not all Kentucky wineries offer tours and tastings.

Even with wineries that offer tours and tastings, some wineries do not have tasting rooms at the vineyard, and other wineries only offer tours and tastings by appointment or during certain times of the year. In response to these factors, wineries were initially chosen based on proximity to the researcher. However, the observations expanded from the researcher's base outwards in order to collect data from every wine region in Kentucky. The size of the winery as well as the prestige of the winery (awards, renown, etc.) was also taken into considerations in order to gain data on a cross-section of the entire industry.

The goal of the participant observation was to visit at least 1/6-1/5 of all the wineries in Kentucky. The region, size, and prestige of the winery were taken into account when selecting the wineries for the observations. The observations lasted at the minimum of an hour, but could last longer depending on the locale. The purpose was to describe and interpret "the observable relationships between social practices and systems of meaning" of the Kentucky wine industry site, a vineyard and/or winery (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 134). The systems of meanings were interpreted with the purpose of presenting "a *holistic* description of a culture's material existence and meaning systems and depicts how its members achieve, maintain, and change their status" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 134-135).

The observation varied, but the primary position of the researcher was to take-on the role of a customer and wine consumer visiting the winery for a tasting. The researcher experienced firsthand the wine tasting process. Immediately after the tasting and/or tour ended, the researcher recorded the field notes. Along with the tasting and tour process, notes reflected the physical layout of the site, the décor, attractions, and

stakeholders and consumers present. To ensure a full range of sensory data collection, when possible, photographs were taken of the site. Conversations with wine producers, employees, other stakeholders, and potential consumers should be considered informal interviews described under the ethnographic interview section designated the Semi-structured life world interview method. When possible, brochures and advertisements related to specific wineries were collected for additional reference and analysis.

Textual Analysis

      Overview and rationale. Textual analysis was used to interpret the material products, especially the Kentucky wine texts and documents that expressed the cultural values of the community.   The method involved collecting, reading, and interpreting Kentucky wine producers' digital texts for coding and analysis of brand associations and the communicative strategies used to express those associations. As Lindlof and Taylor (2011) explained, the texts were interpreted "in light of theory, history, and other contextual evidence" (p. 218). The primary texts analyzed were the documents, advertisements, press releases, and content produced digitally on Kentucky wine producers' websites.

      Not only were advertisements and press releases available through winery and vineyard websites, but the ideal brand image that the Kentucky winery wished to communicate could be analyzed based on website content. Website construction can communicate a tremendous amount about the values and attitudes specific Kentucky wine businesses associate with their products. Material culture evokes "our memory of the discourses and cultural associations that have built up around it over time" and that

will be the primary goal of the textual and material analysis (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010, p. 222).

An emphasis in the process of the analysis concerned the description of the semiotic qualities of the cultural product. The analysis took into consideration the historical, cultural, and communicative importance of the product. An important part of the process was comparing the specific product to others and recognizing similarities and differences with the purpose of recording and analyzing repeated associations with Kentucky wine and positional differences between wine producers and wines. The goal with this analysis was to gain a "deeper, multidimensional understanding of the material culture" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 227). Of importance was the consideration of the texts and material culture in relationship to Kentucky wine producers' brand management strategies and cultural and ritual associations.

The process of imbuing material objects with associations and meanings, in other words, making material objects symbols, means analyzing not the material object itself (wine is a liquid, recognized by color and shade; there is no cultural or social meaning physically found in the color. The same lack of cultural or social meaning can be applied to its other physical characteristics such as taste, viscosity, etc.), but the ways in which wine is imbued with associations and meaning. Since the liquid cannot physically absorb cultural and social meaning, it is wine's secondary texts such as labels, bottles, advertisements, and press releases that create its meaning (see chapter two for a detailed explanation of secondary texts and meaning). Oriard's (1993) four pronged argument as to why a critical interpretation of a mass culture or cultural product illustrates why textual analysis of secondary texts will produce data and findings valuable for association and

meaning negotiation as well as brand management acts. The four negative considerations are: (1) the lack of an atomized experience, (2) of instrumental use, (3) predictive results, and (4) inauthentic experience. A discussion of each follows.

There are certain instances when the consumption of wine is individualized. Most certainly, the act of drinking is individualized, but the act of comparing the process of consumption to the expectations and evaluations of socially constructed meanings and emphasized characteristics is a communal act. Communal considerations apply to the wine producers as well. As Bourdieu (1993) argued, no two cultural producers can inhabit the same position in the field of cultural production, and no two winemakers can produce the exact same wine, nor do they wish to. However, the wine makers do produce wine based on the communal expectations of what the boundaries of a wine are (at the broadest, a drink containing alcohol, derived from grapes). Furthermore, in many situations, especially those endorsed by wine producers, the experience of wine tasting and consumption is social, one only need to review the multitude of wine tastings, festivals, and contests, let alone the ritual settings of wine consumption at dinners and special events, to recognize this aspect of wine consumption.

Consumption of wine can be instrumental, but the consumption of wine *as a cultural product*, cannot. Instrumental consumption usually involves consumption for intoxication or because someone "just wants to have wine with dinner" for example. But in these cases, wine is being conceptualized for its use (i.e., as a commodity). When wine is being consumed as a cultural product, it is being consumed in conjunction with its meaning. The same criterion once again applies to the production of wine as well. When wine is produced as a cultural product, it is to instill certain qualities, certain flavors, in

the wine, which possess meaning both to the producer and to the consumer. The cultural value is part of the consumptive practice, either as an additional object used in ritual consumption behavior or as the central object in the performance of the "serious life" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 27).

As for predictive results, again, the cultural consumption of wine is connected to surprise, enjoyment, and comparison to ideal expectations (Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 4, 2014; Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 27, 2014). The point system and other evaluative systems used in wine assessment recognize this integral aspect of the evaluative process. The ways in which the wine exceeds or fails to align with ideal expectations *as conceptualized in semantic, communicative, and symbolic language* determines the wine's cultural value and is part of the enjoyment of consumption for wine drinkers. Every time a wine is consumed, the consumptive experience is affected by a number of variables. For example, the fermentation process, the wine maker's individual input, the storage of the wine, the knowledge and narrative known by the wine consumers, the environment, and food and drink pairings with the wine may all affect the experience. Because of the multitude of variables that may affect the consumption experience, a predictive experience is unlikely. Yes, wines are expected to adhere to ideal criteria, but it is the differentiation, the unique divergence of the wine that is emphasized (for better or worse), not its uniformity. For producers, the grape-to-wine process is never the same. This is why vintage is so important to wine. Along with human elements which may change the wine with each vintage, changes to the climate from year to year also change the wine. These variables limit predictability.

The circumstances surrounding an authentic or inauthentic experience are related to the predictive experience. Since consumption of wine possesses a hint of spontaneity, participation in the consumption has an authentic quality. The consumption occurred. Again, the same applies to producers. Each vintage is a distinct production. Variables linked to the actual experience will not be reproduced exactly the same ever again. This is an authentic experience.

The four-pronged criteria Oriard (1993) used to justify a hermeneutic interpretist approach to the analysis of American Football applies to study of Kentucky wine field of cultural production as well. The multitude of consumption experiences do not allow for more deterministic approaches. Instead, the focus is on the collective communicative negotiation of wine by wine industry stakeholders. The expectations of the wine industry bound the choices of action, but they cannot determine or predict action. Anderson (1996) would categorize this as *Postmodern Empiricism*, and this theoretical framework very much utilizes a postmodern/poststructuralist framework with a focus on agency, even within textual analysis, in order to understand how specific stakeholders' actions affect the meaning of Kentucky wine. A focus is placed on the process of how the sign becomes meaningful, the relationship of what can be recognized as the possibility of understanding and what can be understood.

Sampling. Based on the available Kentucky wineries listed on the Kentucky wine website, the websites of sixty-eight wineries were analyzed. Kentucky's Department of Agriculture has estimated there are between sixty and seventy wineries in Kentucky (Department of Agriculture, 2014). This sampling is a convenient sample, although, based on the estimated number of wineries found in Kentucky, this sampling is

at least 97% of the Kentucky wine industry with the potential of being an analysis of all commercial Kentucky wineries. With certainty, this textual analysis is a comprehensive overview of the brand associations of Kentucky wineries at this time.

As mentioned previously, the Kentucky wine website was chosen as it is the established consecrating and legitimizing body for Kentucky wine. The Kentucky wine website offers the easiest public forum for entering the Kentucky wine field. The state government-sponsored website (found at Kentuckywine.com) is the primary and most efficient resource for locating Kentucky wineries. By being added to the website, the Kentucky wine producer is making a symbolic communicative act that notes the producer's entrance into the Kentucky wine field with the organization most associated with Kentucky wine potential consumers. Also, with support and resources from the state government, the Kentucky wineries list provided has a high likelihood of being updated and current at the time of sampling.

Semi-Structured Life World Interviews

Overview and rationale. The research questions address an interest in the local manifestation and negotiation of cultural products. This phenomenon influences individuals, and the associations are used in communication and interaction with others. The products, their use, the rituals, and the environment all influence the discourse and how it is used to construct a local reality and to help an individual make sense of his or her place. Organizations involved in Kentucky wine are central to this process, and the negotiation of meaning implies multiple, contradictory and evolving meanings. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) acknowledge that semi-structured life-world qualitative interviews possess a postmodern focus on the production of knowledge, linguistic and interactional

aspects of experience with an emphasis on the narratives constructed in interviews. The

relationship between culture, symbols, and meaning has already been discussed, and the

connections between these concepts are essential to the wine industry (Gray, 2014;

Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 4, 2014). Interviews will help to

interpret the relationship between cultural symbols, cultural and ritual practices, texts and

how they are contested in specific locales.

Schwandt (2001) believed that qualitative interviews opened up the social

sciences to philosophy and humanities by drawing upon phenomenology and

hermeneutics as well as narrative, discursive, conversational, and linguistic forms of

analysis related to the hermeneutic interpretations of the meanings of texts and the

postmodern emphasis on the social construction of knowledge. This reasoning supports

the use of interviews as a method for the research questions posited. Interviews also offer

a focus on interpretation and the negotiation of meaning of the social world with an

emphasis on local contexts. The analyses of texts, rituals, culture as a text (see

Rothenbuhler, 1998; Oriard, 1993; and Geertz, 1972; Taylor 2010, 2002, 1994, 1992) are

all forms of analysis concerned with the social construction of knowledge and reality.

Interviews reinforce and offer insight into how individuals construct their reality, their

identities, and the motivations and desires for their associated communication and actions

(Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Because of the nature and results

associated with the qualitative semi-structured life-world interview, this method aligned

perfectly with the research questions and conceptual framework for this study.

Few methods allow a researcher to understand a subject, especially a subject

negotiating cultural products and meaning, and a socially constructed reality like the

semi-structured life-world interview. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) define the semi-structured life-world interview as an "interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena" (p. 3). Descriptions of the life world can reveal associations, intentions, and motivations which will allow for the interpretation of the meaning of Kentucky wine industry cultural productions. Intentions and motivations are revealed as "the interview serves as a social technique for the public construction of self" (p. 12). As one constructs a self, intentions and motivations can be revealed and interpreted. By its very nature, an interview is an attempt to understand the world from a subjects' point of view. Since interviews are part conversation and part production of knowledge (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011), it is an opportunity to "get to know other people, learn about their experiences, feelings, attitudes, and the world they live in" (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, xvii). The interview allows the interviewer to go "deeply and broadly into the subjective realities" of the interviewee, into their socially constructed reality (Lindlof & Taylor 2011). The experiences, feelings, attitudes, and their world are the associations that construct meaning for their cultural products. Thus, interviews are an appropriate method for understanding the meaning negotiated through the experience of cultural production and ritual communication.

There are a number of types of interviews and forms. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) list ethnographic interviews, informant interviews, and respondent interviews as three possible options. These are not the only types of interviews. Depending on the scholar and his or her conceptualization, there are many more types including focus group interviews, even a narrative interview. The three initial interview types listed, the

ethnographic interview, the informant interview, and the respondent interview were the three types employed for the dissertation research project. These three types of interviews were conducted with Kentucky wine stakeholders, experts, and producers respectively. The purposes behind these three types of interviews justify their use in the data collection.

For the ethnographic interviews, which were mostly conducted as the opportunity arose during participant observation, they offered a better understanding of the social actor's experience, of the rituals employed, of observing the acts and the process of cultural production. The ethnographic interview allowed for the understanding of a Kentucky wine stakeholder's experience as it happens as well as a better understanding of the site, and the local, contextual elements affecting the negotiation and contestation of meaning. This type of data and insight can only be gathered by being there in the moment, and it is much more difficult to record and produce in other settings. The ethnographic interview also allowed for informal questioning that arose during participant observation (mostly during wine tastings and tours). Ethnographic interviews were intermittent, and they informed and affected the participant observation.

The purpose of both the informant and respondent interviews answer questions and produce data that cannot be collected through ethnographic interviews. The informant interviews produced expert knowledge of the Kentucky wine life world including important and influential actors, specific language, challenges and details pertinent to understanding and interpretation. This expert information was essential. For example, knowing the specific challenges placed upon wine production in a region with cold winters in a wet and/or humid climate, how choices of grape varietal and wine

varieties are discussed, how community issues, especially concerns over alcohol production and consumption in conservative and dry counties, were all revealed (see Mudd, 2006). The informant interviews offered insight into brand management and positioning in relationship to markets, especially with experts that understand larger regional, national, and international wine markets.

To elaborate on the experts that were interviewed, individuals that assisted in grape growing and wine production in an official capacity, either individuals employed by vineyards and wineries (i.e., owners and/or growers and producers) or experts employed by supporting institutions such as state colleges and universities were selected. The only experts that were not selected for the study were individuals employed by private consulting organizations and businesses. While these firms are abundant, valuable, and lucrative in other wine regions, they were not as established or active in Kentucky wine region. In Kentucky, the role of the private consultant is commonly filled by college and university experts, primarily through agricultural extension services. In subsequent sections, when needed, the position or associated experience of the expert is provided as accurately as possible without giving away the interviewees identity. Beyond viticulture knowledge, experts were included for their exposure and understanding of wine industries outside of Kentucky.

Furthermore, exploratory interviews with informants assisted in the preparation and improvement of future interviews, especially interviews with Kentucky wine producers. For example, expert interviewers helped to familiarize the researcher with the language, history, details, and context of the site. This knowledge was essential for interview preparation, question construction, and the ease of constructing

improvisational, follow-up questions. Not having knowledge of how grapes are grown, wine produced, wine tastings conducted, how wine is distributed and sold, or the nature and culture of the Kentucky wine businesses and consumers could have prevented the proper data collection. This knowledge was even more necessary because of the inclusion of participant observation in the study. One must be familiar with the site and the behaviors in order to interpret observations in a valid manner. Without the proper preparation, validity would have been a significant issue.

As for the respondent interviews, the respondent interviews offered the best opportunity to understand the wine producer's experience and perspective. Specifically, it allowed the researcher to understand what Kentucky wine, and especially a specific (the producer's) wine, means to the producer, what the producer associates with Kentucky wine, and what ideals the producer wishes to associate and communicate to others about Kentucky wine. The data collected from the interviews supported the understanding, analysis, and holistic construction of the brand management and led to an understanding of the brand management strategies. As these interviews are part narrative, they should address the past, and for this study, the past history of Kentucky wine along with the state's agricultural history (especially to tobacco) can be understood.

Both Lindlof and Taylor (2011) and Kvale and Brinkman (2009) describe the qualitative, semi-structured life-world interview as a form of narrative since people narrate their lives. Narratives include symbols and meanings which support ritual and culture. The narratives can be analyzed in order to understand cultural logic, frameworks for understanding issues, and how texts might be interpreted which can be used to understand the cultural acts of Kentucky wine stakeholders. Kvale and Brinkman (2009)

would argue that the interview will allow for the interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the social world, especially local contexts. This understanding of the qualitative semi-structured life-world interview, its purpose and qualities, informed the type of qualitative interview, the process of analysis and interpretation of data, validating the interpretation and negotiating multiple truths to the interviews and interpretations.

A final note on why interviews: interviews offered the opportunity for epiphanies, serendipity, revelation of paradox, and contradictions, not just between different individuals interviewed, but within and with a single interviewee. Fontana and Frey (2000) in "Interviewing: The Art of Science" in Denzin and Lincoln's *Handbook of Qualitative Research* argued that epiphanies are interactional moments that leave marks on people's lives and have the potential for creating transformational experiences for the person. Assumedly, epiphanies occur through the interactive production of knowledge during interviews. Merton and Barber (2004) acknowledged a related phenomenon, serendipity. They defined it as the art of being curious at the opportune but unexpected moment. While these moments are considered positive, they can also lead to moments of friction (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007). They can also lead to paradoxes and breakdowns. Poole and Van de Ven (1989) encouraged these revelations as they demand the researcher's attention and understanding. It is difficult to discover, let alone fully explore the aforementioned phenomenon through surveys, even qualitative, open-ended surveys, demographic data collection, or quantitative, cause-and-effect constructed experiments (among other excluded methods). Even textual analysis alone cannot shed light on the local, contextual, contested construction of meaning and social realities. Qualitative interviews allow for a production of knowledge on a socially constructed

reality that cannot be gained through other methods. Quite simply, the semi-structured

life world qualitative research interviews allowed for an efficiency in data collection—a

primary rationale for including qualitative interviews in studies (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011;

Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Sampling. The interview sampling was a convenience and snowball sample. As

with the participant observation, 1/5-1/6 of the wineries was the intended target for

interviews. Electronic, phone, and face-to-face invitations were conducted beginning

with the area closest to the researcher, and then, expanding outward to cover vineyards

and wineries throughout the state. Again, the Kentucky wine website was used to obtain

contact information for interview requests. A request script and form was sent to each

potential interviewee (see appendix for the interview invitation script). A second script

detailing the ethical expectations and design of the interview was presented verbally to

the interviewees before the interviews began. The ethical expectation script was

designed with instruction and approval from the university's IRB (see appendix for the

ethical expectations script).

For experts and influential Kentucky wine industry stakeholders, snowball

sampling was used to solicit interviews. Through many interviews, individuals were

recommended as contacts with valuable input and information about the wine industry.

The researcher was able to gain access to individuals that were not identified or were not

available through the convenient sampling via the Kentucky wine website.

The qualitative interviews were on average one hour in duration. However, the

duration varied dramatically based on the interviewee. Expert interviews tended to stay

near an hour in duration with the opportunity for follow-up interviews if needed.   The

informant and respondent interviews lasted a minimum of an hour, but could last all-day depending on the situation and individual. Oftentimes, vineyard and wine tours were connected with the visit. Whenever possible, the interviews were recorded and an interview script with questions and categories was used (see appendix for the interview and question script). The recorded interview was then transcribed in order to code and analyze. On some occasions, field notes were all that could be taken from the interview. Usually, the choice and use of field note instead of a digital recording device was based on the preferred arrangement of the wine producer. Some producers preferred to discuss their experiences in settings not suitable for digital recording. Also, respondents that requested to not be recorded were not. In these situations, field notes were also taken. Finally, whenever possible, photographs were taken for reference and analysis purposes.

Only by utilizing a number of qualitative methods could the research questions for this dissertation be answered with a degree of validity and cohesion. The multiple methods allow for a crystallization of findings that can offer a thick description Geertz (1972) described and that scholars such as Lindlof and Taylor (2011) would approve. The methods align with the theoretical framework and take into consideration the contextual elements unique to Kentucky wine.

Analysis

As Lindlof & Taylor (2011) describe, the interplay of textual analysis, participant observation, and interviews create data for analysis and interpretation. The following is the process of analysis for each type of data. For all three methods, the following grounded theory, constant comparative method was conducted. The data collected was interpreted using at a minimum, a two-order coding process with subsequent steps. The

first-order coding was an exploratory, open-coding phase concerned with the winery's symbolic and cultural associations or references and/or a specific brand management strategy or tactic. These references were then ordered or categorized based on "symbolic links—or tropes—that tie the first-order meanings to second-order concepts" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 266). The second-order concepts were then analyzed in search of patterns that established the wine producer, winery, or wine's position in the Kentucky wine field. The next stage involved integration and dimensionalization through axial coding; categories were compared to discern connections between them. New codes, or more accurately, principles of integration were established such as "historical reference," or "Kentucky bluegrass reference," and even clearer categories such as "Kentucky bluegrass historical reference" rather than Kentucky Appalachian historical reference." Finally, through dimensionalization, the properties and characteristics of the concepts and categories were teased out in order to determine the cultural associations and brand management strategies of the Kentucky wine producer in consideration of the conceptual framework (Spiggle, 1994).

Whenever possible, the researcher attempted participant observation and interviews before conducting the textual analysis. This choice was made in an attempt to not have the website impressions corrupted by observation or producer interaction. In many cases, the manufactured impression of the website differed from the effect of physically visiting the site. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2011) these differences add value to the coding, analysis, and interpretation, and the researcher made every attempt to preserve these differentiated experiences. However, such a process was not always possible. Sometimes, producers' schedules would not allow for this ordering of methods.

The season also affected the process. Vineyards and wineries are not open year round. Websites are.

Difference in the order of methods was recorded, noted, and analyzed. Instead of the re-ordering of methods and procedures being a detriment, the multiple ordering added depth and richness to the study. Analysis and interpretation on the order of exposure offered insight onto how one communicative channel functioned as first exposure or as support for the physical experience of visiting a vineyard and/or winery or attending a tasting. As already mentioned, these differences are essential in qualitative research, and when applicable and important, this issue is noted in the analysis and interpretation.

Differences between website, participant observation, and interviews of the same Kentucky wine producer were also cross-analyzed. The differences were examined for researcher error, and when an error was not found, the difference was noted and included in the analysis and findings. The differences in the process data analysis due to data collection methodology and context, website/textual analysis, participant observation, or qualitative interview are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Participant observation. Both emic and etic view positions were considered during the participant observation research. The researcher attempted to balance the meanings stakeholders attached to their actions with the perspective of an outside observer. An emic stance was useful in the analysis of ritual communication and is supported by Rothenbuhler (1998). An important question the researcher had to always consider was "What role does this communicative act serve in this person's life," or in other words, "Why is this stakeholder embracing this role and acting in such a manner?" An etic approach was valuable in coding other characteristics, such as the values

associated with a refurbished barn. As Lindlof and Taylor (2011) mention, both perspectives go together, or combine, in order to interpret the site of inquiry.

      Textual analysis. The constant-comparative method was used to develop categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). However, a conscious choice was made not to cross-compare the different codes for each website/winery all at once, but rather, to allow the coded concepts and themes to emerge at one website/winery, to build one website/winery "position" with the specific associations revealed through the specific website/winery's codes. After the codes were organized and a position constructed, a summary of the position was drafted. The researcher "stepped-away" from the constructed position for a time before returning to the website, taking in the website presentation in a holistic fashion, and then returning to the constructed position and re-evaluating the constructed position. Only after the position description had been verified was there any cross-comparison with other Kentucky wine producer positions. By conducting a cross-comparison, the researcher ensured there was no error in coding and position construction as, according to Bourdieu (1993), no two cultural producers or products can possess the same position at any given time. Furthermore, codes and categories were dynamic and updated as needed during the analysis. After the winery position was established and compared through textual analysis, the results were then compared with participant observation and interviews.

      The participant observation analysis followed the same coding procedure as the textual analysis. Photographs were taken of the wine producer site whenever possible. The photographs were coded in combination with the field notes. Informal and ethnographic interviews as well as stakeholder interactions were also noted and coded as

well. The data went through the same first-order open coding, second order coding, integration, and dimensionalization. The "positions" constructed were then examined across wineries before being compared to the data from the other qualitative methodologies.

Semi-structured life world interviews. As with the data collected through the other methodologies, the semi-structured life world interviews were transcribed, coded and categorized through first and second-order coding, then integrated and dimensionalized. The interviews produced insight into the motives of Kentucky wine producers, and the motives could then be compared with the physical manifestations found through textual analysis and participant observation. The qualitative interviews were invaluable in adding a further dimension to the research. As with the other research, the data was cross-compared with other interviews before comparing across qualitative methodologies.

With the expert interviews, while the coding and categorizing followed the same procedures, the application of the findings was not handled in the same fashion. Since there was no specific Kentucky wine producer in order to apply the findings, the results were used for meta-analysis, etic, conceptual, and validity purposes. The expert interview information was valuable in orienting and checking fieldwork and respondent interview data and reorienting results into new contexts such as an international wine industry rather than a Kentucky wine industry, or in relationship to an international wine potential consumer rather than a Kentucky wine potential consumer.

Limitations and Reflexivity

      The most important limitation to this qualitative study is the limits to generalizability. Maxwell's (1992) internal generalizability to other Kentucky wine producers does apply. Kentucky wine producers will be forced to make decisions based on the cultural field. There are only so many options, resources, and positions available. However, the findings may not be generalizable to state wine industries without similar cultural, industry, and economic challenges to Kentucky. Nevertheless, there are transferable parts to this study. The process by which cultural and symbolic values are associated with products is not place-bound. Also, wine industry brand management strategies are transferable. Specific to this study, processes and strategies may be transferable to emerging wine industries of Eastern or Continental-Climate grape and wine climates. There are contexts that may be similar to Kentucky's. Of particular note will be approaches that address the current state of the international wine market (i.e., an international wine market within California and other New World wine regions that were not established when the California wine region came online).

      There are limitations to the reliability of qualitative research (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). How can a qualitative interview be reproduced exactly? Obviously, it cannot. In the same vein, how can a particular participant observation be conducted a second time? Again, it cannot. Therefore, reliability, or a substitute, must be addressed through an alternative route. The primary means is through the explication of the qualitative research conducted. This perspective can be considered a form of credibility. The research study is an attempt at producing credibility through the presentation of the research process in as clear an approach as possible.

Validity. Similar concerns to those raised about reliability can be applied to validity, but as previously discussed, it is the trustworthiness of the research conducted and the success of the researcher's explication that generates the trustworthiness, and as a result, validity. To the more post-positivist, objectively obsessed scholar, equating trustworthiness with validity may be anathema. However, since all scientific works are "contextually grounded linguistic and interpretive practices," the validity is based on a trustworthy interpretation (Mishler, 1990, p. 421). Trustworthiness is exemplified through a "tacit understanding of the actual, situated practices in a field of inquiry" (p. 415). Validation can then be defined as "the process(es) through which we make claims for and valuate the 'trustworthiness' of reported observations, interpretations, and generalizations" (p. 419). This trustworthiness creates the study's legitimacy.

Ideally, this study demonstrated the brand management practices and associated cultural values of the Kentucky wine field. Mishler (1990) further argued that validation was a social construction, and the write-up of this research study enters the research into a discourse over its validity and/or credibility. Specifically, this study is an exemplar of how Kentucky wine producers use brand management in order to associate cultural symbols with their wine, thereby imbuing it with cultural and societal value (apart from its value as a consumable commodity). The study must adhere to the conceptual framework and produce results that can be assumed to be reasonably produced through the methods employed, the inferences made, and the "tradition of inquiry" (Mishler, 1990, p. 419). If the study does not adhere to these criteria, then it is not valid. This approach aligns with Brinberg and McGrath's remark that "validity is like integrity, character, and quality, to be assessed relative to purposes and circumstances" (1985, p.

130). This view is also reminiscent of Eisenhart and Howe's (1992) belief that research

studies are arguments and various standards have been created to assess the validity of

the argument. This approach places emphasis on the inferences, arguments, conclusions,

and recommendations made from the analysis of data as long as the methods applied to

the study were appropriate for the forms of data needed (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983;

Maxwell, 1992). I believe the appropriate and successful explication is an argument for

the trustworthiness, credibility, and legitimacy of the study and the authority of the

researcher—contextual, partial, and local of course.

Maxwell's (1992) belief that validity comes from understanding partially

underpins the successful explication. The association of researchers and scholars (which

in this case begins with my dissertation committee), must come to understand the data,

findings, interpretation, and inferences. These results must align with the conceptual

framework and produced through the methods presented. If understanding is achieved

through this process, then, if the interpretation of the current standards by the committee

members is established, the study should lead to trustworthiness, credibility, etc.

To that end, a number of Maxwell's (1992) qualitative validity measures are

attempted in this study: descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical. These types of validity

are addressed through the construction of the research study. Descriptive validity is

ensured through the methods, such as recording and photographing the phenomena.

Since each winery represents a different reality for members, interpretive validity is

addressed through the multiple samples. Grounded theory supports theoretical validity as

the constant-comparison method reviews concept, causal, and critical validity.

Reflexivity. One reflexive concern for this study was keeping aware of my personal perspective, and how my perspective could influence the categorization of data. There is the chance that my interpretation could be at odds with Kentucky wine industry stakeholders. Jamerson's (2010) study embraced a methodology with a researcher and researcher preference as authority. To elaborate, Jamerson (2010) identified informants that she believed fit her a priori categories of how she saw the Napa wine industry. She believed, by observing behavior, dress, actions, and communication as well as comparison of other Napa wine industry participants at other sites, that she could accurately identify and categorize stakeholders and informants. Beyond the lack of empowerment and the right of stakeholders to represent and classify themselves, Jamerson's approach did not account for potential researcher error or mis-assessment, and her informant sampling choice builds upon a theoretical framework that could be imperfect (in this case her a priori categories); therefore, the reliability and validity of the entire study were at risk.

There is no argument that my analysis and interpretation are very much the way I see the Kentucky wine industry. However, because of my conceptual framework and grounded analysis, the findings and results allow for the production of knowledge with more stakeholder representation and "stakeholder-balanced" description. For this researcher, this approach lessons the potential for researcher oversight and error. At its most basic, this approach allowed for sensitivity to discrepancies between the researcher's perception of Kentucky wine industry field and stakeholder's perceptions. This sensitivity ensured that the study spoke to or with two communities to ensure that the interpretations were "true to the local meanings of the scene (the community of

participants),” and that they engaged “with the intellectual heritage of one or more subfields of communication (the community of one’s peers)” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 242).

As a “human instrument,” there were a number of subjective concerns in analyzing the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). First, the knowledge that cultural wine consumption is an elite and leisure activity had me inclined to look for status and class symbols. Rosen’s (1985) “Breakfast at Spiro’s” had also primed me to notice class difference. However, Bourdieu’s (1993) conceptualization of positions held this analysis in check. Even though cultural wine consumption may be an elite activity, one consumer may be purchasing the wine for social status purposes while another consumer purchases the same wine for cultural capital or even, simply, enjoyment purposes. A cursory coding and evaluation would not suffice in determining the nuanced positions of two Kentucky wine producers that cater towards elite or leisure wine drinkers.

A second concern is my interest in wine. I would not have undertaken this research study without an interest in wine, so I was aware of the educational component of wine consumption (Multiple expert interviews, personal communication, 2014; Bourdieu, 1993). This focus was reinforced as I noticed my personal enjoyment for participant observations where educational and narrative elements were included with the tasting experience. Jamerson’s (2010) Napa wine study also reinforced the importance of wine education. After determining whether or not wine education was a concern of the producer, I had to separate my observations and analysis from this focus. These “primed” concerns, either through experience, personal preference, conceptual

framework, or the literature review, were addressed through methodological "checks" including photographs that allowed for a later review of the observation.

I also began drinking Kentucky wine as well. I realized after I began expert interviews that I would need to know more about the difference in Eastern or continental climate wines and wines produced from more traditional grape varieties and wine regions, especially European, American West Coast, Australian, and established South American wine regions. Before I began this study, I could have been considered a novice wine drinker with a beginner's level of grape variety and wine understanding. I knew the types of wine that certain regions specialized in producing, I understood the critics' rating systems, and I knew that good wines did not have to be expensive. I could tell the difference between dry and sweet wines and knew I preferred reds. My background as a bartender also informed my understanding of alcohol and the alcohol industries, but this education was more of an overview of all the industries, and I had much more knowledge of hard liquor (bourbon and whiskey especially) and craft beer (although with the explosion of the microbrewery industry, I am not up-to-date on the industry). It was only after I began this study did I start to notice the difference in taste of grapes, of notes and flavors. This was an important issue as Eastern grapes have a different flavor than imported grapes that cannot be grown in the American continental climate. I wanted to know the difference as this was of import to the industry. I learned, and it was evidence that I was changing from the research.

The relationship of tobacco and wine was also a reflexive issue. Because of Kentucky wine's government support originating from tobacco settlement funds, an overriding question was how the wine benefitted tobacco farmers. This

historical/agricultural concern led to socio-economic concerns. Wine producers do not normally come from the same socio-economic class as tobacco farmers. However, as with the winery representation, there is a tremendous amount of variability in the socio-economic class of Kentucky tobacco farmers. In order to understand this relationship, it became a primary subject of analysis.

Relatedly, because I am a white male with access to variable dress and familiarity with upper class, upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, working class, and even impoverished communities, I had the ability and means to ingratiate myself with different producers, stakeholders, and potential consumers. This circumstance along with the largely white-male demographic of the Kentucky wine industry granted me an advantage in gaining access to the Kentucky wine field that may not have been given to others. There was still the difficulty in gaining access and trust to an agricultural field, but I may not have had to deal with some of the demographic challenges that other researchers might have faced. See Jamerson (2010) for an overview of the challenges an "androgynous woman" faced and the changes she was forced to make in order to gain access to the Napa Valley wine field (p. 78).

Deception was an issue during participant observation. I take every step to avoid any deception when conducting research. I rarely conduct deceptive research whenever possible as I have ethical issues with such research. However, for this research study, the deception could not be avoided. In fact, for some of the participant observations, I had other individuals accompany me to the wineries. Having others along and posing as a potential consumer lessened the potential for disruption of the normal rituals and performances. This deception was difficult to accept. I genuinely enjoy and support the

Kentucky wine industry. However, I instructed companions to not mention the research project as it could corrupt the data collection. Even though the deception was an uncomfortable act, the personal enjoyment of learning more about the wine industry was enough to dismiss, at least momentarily, the concerns over deception. It eased my ethical dilemma as I reminded myself that I would have gone to some of these wineries just for the experience and being able to conduct research was an added benefit.

Finally, I am personally attached to the environmental movement and the alternative agricultural industries (as a fanatic and intensive gardener). Because grapes and wine offer a much more sustainable agricultural product than tobacco, I am positively biased and supportive of the industry. I believe in the environmental and agricultural practices that are more sustainable and offer a more productive, healthy, and balanced relationship to nature. At first glance, such a bias might induce a researcher to paint a rosy picture of the Kentucky wine field. However, poor practices and strategies produce unsustainable businesses and markets and are actually a hindrance to the industry's future. Therefore, it is not the drafting of a positively biased interpretation or of "going native" that is of a concern, but rather, as alluded to earlier in the reflexive section, of losing the ability to recognize key findings. My enjoyment of learning about grapes and wine can lead to distraction. The multiple qualitative methods and different perspectives (textual analysis rather than fieldwork) are reflexivity checks included in the study's construction.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter reports the findings from the research conducted on the Kentucky wine industry. The three methods employed were participant observation, website textual analysis, and qualitative interviews. Multiple qualitative methods were chosen in order to crystalize the findings into a more coherent text of the site of inquiry. The findings are contextual to the time and place of the research conducted. Even within the timeframe of the study, the ownership of wineries has changed and websites have been updated or shutdown.

The research conducted attempted to answer the following questions:

R1: What are the cultural meanings produced through the communicative interactions of Kentucky wine industry producers and stakeholders, especially consumers?

R2: How do Kentucky wine industry businesses use brand management to position themselves in the wine market?

The conceptual framework guided the organization, categorization, and analysis of the data collected. Cultural associations, ritual communication, brand management choices, postmodern characteristics or elements of Kentucky wine organizations, and evidence of a field of cultural production were categories considered when analyzing the data. The order of the following sections, participant observation, website analysis, and qualitative interviews is both a chronological approach and also a logical approach as the evidence from one method influenced the categories and analysis of subsequent sections. This approach could not be helped. All of the methods could not be employed at once. However, the approach was able to answer the research questions, and each new method

employed provided new data that could not have been found through the previous method.

Participant Observation

Lindlof and Taylor (2011) describe participant observation (through its anthropological roots of ethnography), as "A *holistic* description of a culture's material existence and meaning systems and depicts how its members achieve, maintain and change their status" (p. 135). Based on Bourdieu's conceptualization of a field of cultural production, a fully-accountable, holistic description is difficult if not impossible through participant observation. According to Bourdieu (1993), no two actors in a field of cultural production can inhabit the same position; therefore, visiting a specific site can only give "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of that actor in that specific position at that specific time. These positions are dynamic and consistently in flux. Every actor in the field would have to be observed in his or her position, at the same time, in order to give a fully-accountable, holistic description of the phenomena.

Instead, participant observation was used in combination with other methods in order to discern the interpretive schema used by Kentucky wine participants, specifically wine producers, in constructing and associating meaningful phenomena (Liberman, 1999). As a result, the purpose of this participant observation was to discover the most prominent cultural associations used in the specific Kentucky wine's brand management. The goal was to "offer a broad perspective on key events and reasonable demands for participating in them" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 137). The associations were identified and assessed through their physical manifestation (such as a logo or choice of winery facilities), and through the communicative acts interpreted through Rothenbuhler's

(1998) ritual communication. In order to organize the cultural associations, through

Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory, the most prominent cultural associations

were identified and coded into categories. Tensions in the way these associations were

used were also coded and interpreted. How the use of these cultural associations affected

brands was the last step in the observation process and where interpretation was the

strongest. The data is separated into cultural meanings and communicative acts,

processes, and channels.

Cultural meaning categories. Four prominent categories were developed out of

the observation findings: local Kentucky cultural references, wine culture and

community references, individual winemaker/owner input, and broader regional and

national socio-economic cultural associations.   Even though these categories limit

options, the variability within each category and the interaction of the different categories

offers enough variety that each winery is able to inhabit a different position within the

field of cultural wine production. Each category will be discussed independently with

exemplars included for description and explication.

Kentucky cultural references. Kentucky cultural references refer to the specific

local and/or statewide cultural references embraced by the individual winery. The degree

to which local cultural references were emphasized was also evaluated. For example,

barns were a common choice for housing wine tasting rooms and wine facilities. The

barn is a significant symbol in agriculture, Kentucky has a significant agricultural sector,

and the choice of using a barn for winemaking and wine tasting facilities references

Kentucky's agricultural community and culture. Barns can be found on premises, on

labels, in winery names, and on signs or logos. One winery chose to specify the barn and

Kentucky associations by including references to the horse industry through the use of horse logo. This reference connected the winery to the bluegrass region of Kentucky.

As an example of the diversity and multiple combinations of references, another winemaker sponsored local festivals and concerts involving participants from the surrounding community, thereby continuing and increasing the connection to Kentucky culture and community. However, another winemaker would not emphasize such a strong connection to local Kentucky culture. Even though some wineries have the resources to offer events hosting individuals from the local community, they did not. Overall, geography was often the driving factor for cultural references. When geography did not determine cultural associations, it was much more difficult to determine the rationale for cultural associations through participant observation.

A significant local cultural affiliation was the choice to associate the wine with the local food movement, most commonly acknowledged by the Kentucky Proud (KyP) label. By placing this label and logo on the wine bottles or in the window of a winery, the winemaker was connecting the winery to the Kentucky agricultural industry, its government and affiliated supporting organizations, and the local communities that made a concerted effort to support the local agriculture, food, and culture. The KyP label was found at every winery visited.

Geography also played a significant role in the cultural associations. Wineries close to Lexington were much more likely to reference the horse industry. Partly, the association was unavoidable. A number of wineries are in the midst of horse farms. Once the landscape changed and horse farming was less likely to be the chosen agricultural choice, the references changed. For example, tasting rooms, especially in the

Bluegrass Region were commonly found in barns. The inside of the barns were renovated to serve wine customers, but the original cultural reference was apparent. In an area with much steeper and more forested land, horse farming was abandoned and references to the local culture and community's interests involving hunting, cattle grazing, and specific crop cultivation were chosen. At more than one winery, historic buildings were incorporated into the wine facilities if they were part of the original farm or business found on the property. Old stone buildings, perhaps once used for lodging or an outdoor kitchen were repurposed to serve the new agricultural business. By choosing to do so, the winemaker wanted to associate the winery with the history of the place. Local references tended to trump state references. For instance, wineries were not likely to reference the horse industry or the Kentucky Derby unless there was a direct connection with the land, winemaker, or wine. Wineries were sensitive to the local culture, and they would make Kentucky culture associations appropriately.

International wine community. A second category was the extent to which the winery referenced the international wine community. The international wine community has specific associations for the way the wine community consumes and associates with wine. Multiple wine publications discuss the appropriate wine to consumer with particular food, which wines to hold in a cellar and which wines to consumer immediately, and wine industry magazines even offer which products to purchase to fill a room where wine is held (see Lukacs, 2012; *Wine Spectator*; *Wine Enthusiast* for examples). These publications are evidence of an international wine community that is used for inspiration, reference, and for symbols that exemplify inclusion in an international wine community. This category, the larger international wine community

and its cultural associations, was the most likely category to be in direct tension with local Kentucky cultural associations.

The most pressing tension was between the socio-economic class of international wine enthusiasts and local Kentucky wine consumers. Many international wines can demand prices beyond fifty dollars, and some of the most expensive wines in the world can demand tens of thousands of dollars (www.wine-searcher.com). According to multiple Kentucky wine experts, the individual purchasing the most expensive wine in the world is not the target Kentucky wine consumer. Nevertheless, lifestyle choices are associated with the economic resources available to different consumers. Also, enthusiasts and consumers will adopt the lifestyle choices of the subgroup or socio-economic class that they which to be identified as part of or that they aspire to enter (Bourdieu 1984, 1993). Kentucky winemakers made choices as to the degree to which they chose to identify with the larger international wine community. These associations allow the Kentucky wine consumer to associate, and even enter, the sub-group of wine enthusiasts.

The most obvious communicative act that signaled a desire to be associated with the international wine community was through food rituals, food pairings, and food service. An essential aspect of cultural wine consumption is the role it plays in rituals (Lukacs, 2012). Publications associated with the international wine community recommend certain food pairings with wine.   This relationship was established in the United States in the 1970's and 1980's by Robert Mondavi in California (Jamerson, 2010). Why is this relationship indicative of an international wine community association and not a Kentucky culture association? The choice of food pairing evoked

international wine references rather than Kentucky cultural associations. When a winery offered a European cheese plate instead of a Kentucky hot brown, the cultural reference was easy to distinguish.

Two additional symbols were clear references to the international wine community. The first was the displaying of competitions won. Medals from wine competitions were displayed by most wineries that had won competitions. Medals were commonly found draped around the neck of a display bottle of the wine that won the award, or as a collection of awards framed and placed on the wall of the tasting rom. The practice of wine tastings and competitions did not originate in Kentucky, and the competitions chosen originated in and are adjudged by wine industry actors. The importance of legitimacy and admiration from the authoritative bodies from field of cultural wine production that consecrate wines that should be considered valuable was not lost on the winemakers, and the winemakers believed this reference would not be lost on Kentucky wine consumers as well.

The second reference concerns the choice of wines produced. Wine consumers will only purchase the wines they want. Predominantly, the wines that Kentucky wine consumers want are made from grape varietals that are most common in wines from regions outside of Kentucky. Therefore, Kentucky wine producers feel they must import grapes from these regions and make wines from these grape varietals. Unfortunately, these grape varietals struggle to grow in Kentucky. The winter of 2013-2014 was a colder winter than the norm for the last five to eight years, and as a result, the Kentucky vineyards and wineries that were growing the more popular grape varietals experienced moderate to extreme crop loss. When perusing the wine list of Kentucky wineries, many

wineries offered Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Pinot Noir, even though these are not wines that can be made from the grape varietals most easily grown in Kentucky. This choice is a reference and association with the cultural wine produced by the wineries in other wine regions around the world. While this choice may be predicated by consumer taste and demand, the consumer taste and demand is in relationship to the international wine market, not the Kentucky wine region.

Individual winemaker and winery reputation. An individual winemaker and winery reputation is arguably the most important input into the cultural value and related price of a wine. Of many of the controllable variables, winemaker and winery reputation is one with a large effect on the cultural value of the product, and therefore, of much importance. For these reasons, scholars have been studying the influence of winemaker and winery reputation on cultural capital (Combris, 1997; Landon & Smith, 1997, 1998; Miller, Genc, & Driscoll, 2007; Nerlove, 1995; Oczkowski, 1994). Very early in the participant observation, it became clear that individual winemaker choices and their effect on winery reputation were important on-site themes and choices, and these choices had an effect on cultural associations. Such observations are in line with an understanding of the symbolic and cultural value of wine, that the cultural value can then affect economic value, and that the process also follows the process of human inputs being included in discussions of terroir.

Individual winemaker cultural references were recognized and determined based on their lack of association with the other categories. These cultural associations were more likely to be references to personal life experiences, personal travels, personal hobbies, personality, and interests. For example, one winery tasting room was decorated

by the owner's wife. Another winemaker enjoyed small, interpersonal interactions with the winemaker's potential customers, and so designated a movable bar in a small space close to the wine vats as the primary place for interaction with customers. Another winery chose to have extensive food, lodging, arts, and gift shop services as the owner was interested in other ventures beyond winemaking. With a winemaker that wanted to express the breaking of winemaking rules, he had posted the famous picture of Johnny Cash expressing his displeasure with the camera. These are all individual eccentricities, and many of the winemakers made reference to their life experiences or other career before entering the wine business.

National and international socio-economic cultural associations. A final category involved cultural associations with national and international cultural symbols more closely aligned with socio-economic class affiliations. Bourdieu (1993, 1984) documented that different theaters in France appealed to different socio-economic classes. These distinctions could be quite intricate rather than a simple division between lower, middle, and upper class. The same cultural distinctions could be discerned during Kentucky winery participant observation. A winemaker's cultural references could be to a mass cultural group through the choice of music, such as the choice to play mainstream country music in the tasting room, whereas, another winery could choose to play classical music, thus attempting to associate the winery with an intellectual, aristocratic, or elite consumer. Price of wine was often adjusted along these lines as well. The price of wine would be slightly more if the cultural associations ranged from the upper middle class to the upper class. This price adjustment tended to trump wine awards that adjudged the quality of the wine. Why were these associations determined to be national or even

international associations (in the case of elite class in relationship to classical music)? The cultural reference could not be classified as a cultural association located within Kentucky. For example, if Taylor Swift was playing in the tasting room, then the country music reference could not be directly connected to Kentucky. The same category determination applied to all references that could not be placed in an alternative category.

Associated décor and material choices were essential in determining cultural associations, especially national and international cultural associations. The choice to purchase a common fan from *Target*, *Home Depot*, or *Lowes*, or the purchase of common outdoor furniture, corroborated assumptions of socio-economic class. At one winery, the outdoor construction was ongoing, and the boxes and purchase information of the materials was easily documented. It was clear from the information that the materials purchased were from a general home improvement store. The choice to purchase supplies from a general home improvement store rather than a specialty store was telling. The purchasing choice communicated that a generic acceptance of décor for a middle to upper middle class customer was the most important cultural association. The association was a general association not directly referencing any cultural association, but the replica of a sign to communicate a non-committal general atmosphere of what would be considered the appropriate décor for middle and upper middle class homes and leisure spaces. The aforementioned examples of pop-country music, and also the Johnny Cash poster are examples that do "double duty." These cultural signifiers also connect the winery to national-level groups with specific signifiers, codes, and underlying values.

The differing categories are not mutually exclusive, and oftentimes, signifiers carried multiple meanings that had to be sorted or combined in order to discern the

cultural associations evoked. For example, many wineries have multiple used oak

barrels. These barrels are used in Kentucky bourbon aging as well as in wine

fermentation. The barrels then come to reference both Kentucky and the international

wine industry. Many wineries use the wine barrels, wood interiors, polished or

unpolished, and a rustic feel that could reference Kentucky or the international wine

community. In such cases, it took multiple objects to discern associations.

On the extreme end of the multiple and overlapping cultural associations was the
experience described by Walter Benjamin (1982) as the surreal, decontextualized

Another strange and fascinating object was the "wine slush" machine. The wine

slush machine is similar to the frozen margarita machine that can be found at many

restaurants. The wine slush machine has national cultural associations with

establishments that offer frozen alcoholic drinks. However, at one winery, the employee

confessed that the wine slush had become a favorite of the local wine consumer. It had

been appropriated by that wineries local customer. This practice was not the case at all

wineries employing the slush machine. At another winery, the slush machine was placed

to the side of the tasting room, unused and apparently out of service. Based on the

condition of the wine slush machine, it had not been in service for some time. The wine

slush machine did not hold the same value for the winery and its most likely customers.

On the extreme end of the multiple and overlapping cultural associations was the

experience described by Walter Benjamin (1982) as the surreal, decontextualized

experience found at department stores in urban settings. In department stores, the

multitudes of consumer goods available are out of their environmental contexts. For

example, a men's suit section could be placed next to the kitchen equipment and bridal

registry stations. These decontextualized combinations demand their own brand of

aesthetics in order to understand and interpret their position in the cultural lives of urban

inhabitants. Taken to the extreme, it can be argued that such consumer stores have created a new, urban aesthetic with all new cultural references and signifiers. Something similar at one winery where the multitude of objects and services offered had no obvious link to the local community, the combination of national references, and wine industry associations were quite confusing. A subsequent interview with one of the winery's employees revealed that the impression was not misinterpreted. The owner had many interests and, according to the employee, displayed the symptoms of "Adult ADD." The multiple associations did not contain a coherent theme and, instead, were the results of the owner's whim as he gravitated from one idea to the next. Thankfully, there was only one winery that demonstrated such surreal and disconnected references.

Ritual communication. There were a number of clear rituals related to on-site Kentucky wine communicative acts. Ritual "as the voluntary performance of appropriately patterned behavior to symbolically effect or participate in the serious life," was easier to observe, identify, and classify than what was originally expected (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 27). There were four distinct ritual categories, and like the cultural thematic categories, each category was not mutually exclusive. The rituals engaged could be classified as wine consumption in order to (1) Taste the specific wine, (2) Consume wine as part of ritualized food and drink consumption, (3) Engage in a leisure activity, and (4) To tour and experience a wine and/or agritourism opportunity. These categories do not directly relate to the thematic categories and can be combined in multiple ways depending on the winery and winemaker.

Wine tasting. If a winery offered on-site services, then wine tasting was the absolute minimum of service offered. The environment, setting, and behavior associated

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with the wine tasting and evaluation could take on many forms, but the underlying motive was the same: taste the wine made at the winery. The ritual was voluntary as the consumer would have to request the desire to taste the wine. The behavior always involved the pouring of the wine and then the tasting by the consumer. The winery offered the wine in an environment and through a process of patterned behavior that placed the wine in front of the consumer for consumption. The offering was either a single pour from a wine bottle, or all of the wines were poured at once and offered to the consumer as an overall presentation. This patterned behavior signified the importance and seriousness of winemaking and wine consumption. The glass was almost always a specialized glass, and the pour was always limited to distinguish tasting from large quantity of wine consumption; however, based on the interaction of the server and the consumer, the quantity of the wine poured could vary or increase during the ritual.

A sub-ritual of wine tasting involves wine club members. Wine club members purchase a "subscription" and membership to a club where a selection of wines are purchased at a discount rate and usually received every month or in one or two larger shipments. Since there are restrictions on direct shipping (wine cannot be shipped to dry counties), the most appealing option is for consumers to pick up their wine club shipments at the winery or winery retail outlet. At most wineries offering wine club pick-up, wine club members were constant customers. Many of the wine club members would choose to consume one of their purchased wines or a wine available for consumption. The wine club members were clearly imbibing as part of the serious life of a cultural wine consumer. Many of these members would sit at a bar and consume a wine, patiently, discussing the taste with others that accompanied them to the winery, with the

server, with other patrons. Wine club members came from mostly upper and middle

socio-economic class. The primary purpose and motivation for these wine club members

was to enjoy the cultural consumption of wine. Wine club members were primarily

white, although this demographic identifier could be the result of the demographics of

Kentucky and the socio-economic status of individuals with discretionary income

available for wine purchases.

Interestingly, most wine club members were male, although, as one conversation

with an experienced and educated server reported during an informal conversation, the

men visit bourbon distilleries while the women request visits to wineries. Investigating

this discrepancy was beyond the scope of this study.

An important environmental, physical, and spatial requirement for the ritual

consumption of wine is the bar. Bars serve a utilitarian purpose, they are necessary for

place holder for a drink when not consuming it. However, the bar allows for the

presentation of the wine. It creates a place for aesthetic presentations; the bar represents

a central altar for ceremonial presentations. Without a presentational platform, wine

could not be offered as a part of the serious life. Therefore, the bar is a central aspect of

the cultural consumption of wine. The bar's importance can be seen in its position in

tasting rooms, usually as a focal point, if not in the central area of the tasting room, then

as a prominent feature. This spatial choice may differ slightly from restaurants where the

bar may be hidden or placed in an adjacent room so that customers wishing a private

space can be accommodated.   This choice was not evidenced in the tasting rooms visited,

even if the tasting room included food options and pairings. The bar was always an

essential aspect of the physical layout of the tasting room or restaurant. Much like a

church, the consumption of wine was a focus of the winery and held in high enough regard to be accentuated in the physical design. This physical emphasis reinforced the ritual of cultural wine consumption. Cultural wine consumption cannot exist without the appropriate pedestal.

Wine as part of the food consumption ritual. Closely related to the wine tasting ritual is the wine and food pairing ritual. The distinction between wine tasting and food and wine pairing has to do with the shift of focus from the ritual of cultural wine consumption to the more general cultural and leisure food consumption. The shift in emphasis is a shift in the specific ritual enacted. Ritual drink and food consumption is one of the most ancient rituals enacted by humans, and wine has always been a central drink for the ritual (Lukacs, 2012). Thus, certain wineries choose to include this ritual as part of their services. However, the choice to offer wine and food pairing rituals is difficult to perform. The cultural knowledge in food preparation and service makes this service much more complex. Many more resources must be drawn upon, and as a result, a number of wine producers chose to not offer such service.

Of the wineries that offered wine and food pairings, the ritual service varied significantly. Because of the knowledge and education needed to offer the appropriate pairing, the preparation needed for the ritual service, and the economic investment required, many food and wine pairings were not complete. Instead, the food offerings were symbolic gestures recognizing that wine and food pairings are important rituals, and while a complete and authentic ritual could not be performed, a gesture recognizing the importance of such a ritual could be conducted. For example, cheese plates were offered, not with the pairing outlined by cultural wine consecrating institutions, but with cheese

choices that were approximations of the cheeses recommended. Instead of an actual soft-cheese from England, or a hard-cheese from Spain or Italy, an American version would be offered. Relatedly, in certain cases, more common food for potential consumers were chosen rather than the food pairings more commonly associated with the international wine community. For example, fried chicken wings would replace a roasted chicken in a pairing.

An interesting alteration on the wine and food ritual involved the replacement of the appropriate food pairing with close approximations that expressed Kentucky cultural associations instead of the expected food offerings. The Kentucky associations were not recognized as secondary approximations of the original wine and food ritual, but a local re-constitution of the original ritual. Kentucky beer cheese and the Kentucky hot brown are two examples of Kentucky cultural associations commonly used as replacements. Such playful and local representations of an ideal ritual recognized the context in which the wine was produced, the stakeholder community, and the culture represented in the wine.

Wine consumption as leisure activity. The third category, the leisure ritual, encapsulates the desire for individuals to enjoy free time in a manner that celebrates the ability to choose a way to consume one's time rather than being forced to use one's time in pursuit of economic gain or primary need fulfillment. The leisure use of time involves the performance of an activity that does not directly translate into economic gain or attainment of life-needs such as water or shelter. Leisure consumption is a ritual that celebrates the attainment of life-needs and also references socio-economic ideals and aspirations traditionally reserved for the upper class; thus, the ritual performance of

leisure consumption is an act referencing an ideal social role and position. By choosing wine as the appropriate cultural product to associate with leisure consumption, cultural wine consumption as leisure activity individuals associate wine as a cultural product of enough value that it is an appropriate choice for leisure time consumption. For the leisure consumption of wine, importance is placed on the consumption of a sign that represents available leisure time and social class distinction that consider the cultural consumption of wine as an appropriate ritual choice for a leisure activity (see Baudrillard, 1970/1998, 1980 for more on the topic of the consumption of cultural signs).

At multiple wineries, cultural wine consumption as leisure ritual participants wore similar clothing. For men, the appropriate dress was a polo shirt, almost always, and dress pants. Women had more freedom in their dress, but their dress still situated the woman in an upper middle class category that considered cultural wine consumption as a leisure ritual worth wearing clothes of good quality, fashionable for age and station, usually a dress or blouse and shirt pairing, rather than traditional "housework," "exercise," or "yard-work," clothes, common for their socio-economic status. The leisure ritual involved the consumption of wine while conversing with others, usually at a table, reclining or in a relaxed situation and position. The relaxed pose is essential for this designation. The sign-consumption must communicate that the individual is not working. With this ritual, the emphasis is on the individual rather than the wine or the wine or food pairing.

A related sub-category that could be considered its own category would be the event ritual. In these instances, wine was considered the appropriate drink option for important social and cultural events including bridal showers, birthdays, weddings, art

festivals, family and professional gatherings.   In fact, the connection between social/cultural events and wine consumption is so common for the Kentucky wine industry that multiple Kentucky wine producers and experts mentioned such events as the primary setting and situation for interaction with potential Kentucky wine consumers and Kentucky wine stakeholders.   Kentucky wine and Kentucky wineries are strongly associated with important social/cultural situations. This association is not overly surprising as wine has been associated with important social and cultural events since ancient times (Lukacs, 2012). Kentucky wine consumers continue to support the connection between events and wine. For many wineries, these events are what keep the wineries in business and are essential for the industry.

Events were not given their own category as many times, the events were coordinated with leisure activities.   Art festivals, music performances, murder mysteries, and comedic acts were all events hosted at wineries. These events can be considered leisure activity/ritual choices rather than social or cultural demands such as a wedding.

Wine as agritourism. The final category related to agritourism. Another ritual associated with wine and wineries, but also within many agricultural sectors, is agritourism. There is interest in how agricultural industries produce their products. Agritourism consumers are also believed to be interested in reconnecting with rural and natural associations and actions unsuitable for daily modern living and lifestyles (Schauman, 1998). Many wineries offer tours of vineyards and wine facilities, either on daily schedules or by appointment. The act of scheduling and attending a winery tour makes it a serious activity; the tour must be planned. Pamphlets, brochures, plaques, or tour guides are provided for many of the tours as well, once again reinforcing the tour's

position as part of the serious life. The act of touring involved specific acts, such as

following a trail or tour guide, observing specialized machinery, grapes, and vines. On a

larger scale, the Kentucky Wine Trail, an appropriation of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail

ritual, is the macro-scale ritual of touring multiple "wine-trail-consecrated" wineries

where the goal is to observe the facilities and consider purchasing the winery's wines.

Tours can be self-guided or winery guided and individual or part of a group. Since tours

are conducted at the wineries, the ritual is very much voluntary. Agritourism allowed for

more heterogeneous socio-economic participants. In part this freedom had to do with the

lack of wine consumption and freedom of acts available for inclusion in the ritual. For

example, observing vines in a field can be performed by individuals that choose not to

drink and by minors. Offering the agritourism ritual allows for the involvement of

individuals that do not wish to or are not able to indulge in the other rituals. Finally,

unlike the other rituals where the focus is on the wine, the food and wine pairing, or on

the individual, the emphasis is too large to view at one time. For this ritual, the emphasis

is on the winery. Only parts of the winery can be viewed at any time. Therefore, the

focus of the ritual is broken into segments where at one time the focal point are the wine

barrels in the wine cellar, at another point, the focus are the wine fermentation tanks, and

hopefully, at some point, the wine itself, either through the purchasing of a bottle or

through the consumption of wine during a wine tasting, the wine is the focus.

As with the cultural categories, the ritual categories are not exclusive. They often

overlap. A wine tasting may also be part of a meal, and as mentioned earlier, an event

may be considered a leisure activity. Through repeated observations, certain aspects of

the ritual were emphasized, and these emphases clarified the appropriate ritual. Also,

rituals could be combined or stacked. A wine tour could end with a wine tasting. In all of the rituals, patterned behavior, voluntary participation, and evidence of the "serious life" was observed. Rothenbuhler's (1998) ritual communication was easy to identify, record, and categorize for all of the rituals.

Brand management. The cultural and ritual associations of the previous sections combine to create the symbols and associations of specific brands. The associations are determined based on the categories of cultural symbols and signs described previously, and the associations are primarily communicated through the rituals identified under ritual communication. Again, the cultural associations and combination of rituals chosen create the specific brand management choices and strategies, and this process provides a multitude of options and examples. However, there were significant brand management communication processes that are worth explicating.

First, the wine tasting ritual is a key brand management choice that all wineries employ. The particulars of the brand management ritual varied, and there were a few specific details of the ritual that affected the brand management and brand experience. Through exploratory research and the literature review, interpersonal communication brand management opportunities are key interactions for the Kentucky wine industry. Therefore, interpersonal communication processes were observed and recorded. During the ordering and purchasing of wine for wine tastings, on only one occasion did a retailer or server discuss or support the wine tasting process. Cultural education is an essential aspect of cultural consumption, and cultural wine consumption functions in the same way (Bourdieu, 1993; Featherstone, 2007; Lukacs, 2012). In every other occurrence, the wine was served, information on which wine was which was provided, for a few servers, notes

on the expected taste of wines was provided, and then the customer was left to consume the wine on his or her own.

For the exception to the norm for wine presentation, the server provided information on how the wine was harvested, stories on the struggles on developing the wine, the history of the winemaker, the winery, food pairings, expected wine tastes, and connections between the wine producer, winery, and associated winemakers and wineries. The server directed the customers on the appropriate order for wine tastings in order to optimize enjoyment. The server also offered alternatives to the wine menu options provided. This server was originally employed in the bourbon industry and had moved onto the Kentucky wine industry.

A second interpersonal brand management communicative act involved a wine club member of a winery. In this instance, the wine club member had exhaustive knowledge of the blackberry wine produced at the winery. Blackberry wines are extremely popular at Kentucky wineries (Mudd, 2006). Almost every winery produces blackberry wines, and many wineries produce multiple fruit wines. This wine club member advocated for the blackberry wine. He opened his blackberry wine and had a glass immediately. Then, the wine club member initiated discussion with other potential customers at the bar in the tasting room. The wine club member wished to discuss the blackberry wine, his excitement about the wine being issued and ready for consumption. The wine club manner discussed the timetable and fermentation process as well as the best food pairings for the blackberry wine. The wine club member was extremely educated on the blackberry wine, proclaimed it the best wine the winery produces, and encouraged potential customers to taste and purchase the wine and consider enrolling in

the wine club. Conversely, when questioned, the server at this winery did not know the expected taste of the winery's wines or details of the winemaking process even though the server professed a personal relationship with the winemaker's family and experience in the field with vineyard cultivation. The server confessed that he had only recently moved to the tasting room position.

Physical brand management choices, such as logos, signs, and informative markers were limited and discussed in previous findings sections. Most signs were not ostentatious or overly large. In fact, many of the logos and signs were quite small. Repeated logos or signs representing the specific winery were not observed at any winery. The Kentucky proud logo could be found at every winery visited; however, at only one winery that was visited did the winery make it clear that every wine produced used only Kentucky grapes. The extent that local grapes were used was less clear at any of the other wineries. A number of wineries had government highway information signs that provided directions to the wineries. The winery grounds were in a wide array of maturation. Specifically, some wineries had well established grape vines, tasting rooms and gift shops, and other amenities, fully furnished and constructed. One winery offered a walking tour with numbered stops providing further information on the history and purpose of specific sites, materials, and machines. Another winery provided a pamphlet with similar information. Other wineries were in the midst of construction, expansion, or maturation and did not provide such information. The impact of the physical brand management structures will be discussed in the next chapter.

Every winery visited sold its wine on the premises. The bottles were visible and on display. If the winery had won awards or medals for its wine, the awards were

displayed. Most wineries displayed the awards on walls, usually framed, with plaques

providing information on the year and award earned. One winery draped the winning

wine with the medals won.

The wines offered at each winery varied. Wines were divided into three

categories: reds, whites, and fruit wines. A sub-category, the dessert wine, was offered

as well. Wines could be categorized as made in the European/Californian tradition with

grapes that are grown in these regions, such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, a blended

red wine, and a Chardonnay. A second category included Eastern American wines such

as Chambourcin, Concord, Norton, Traminette, Chardonel, Vignoles, Vidal Blanc, and

Eastern blends of blush, rose, and Eastern red grapes were common. Rieslings and

Cabernet Francs, grapes and wines that can be grown and produced in

European/Californian climates as well as Eastern American climates were quite common

at all wineries. Beyond a blackberry fruit wine (expected and offered at all but one

winery visited), raspberry, strawberry, and blueberry fruit wines were offered.

Blackberries were imported from the West Coast even though blackberries grow in

Kentucky. The preferred variety grows on the West Coast, not in Kentucky.

As mentioned in the previous section, events were another brand management

choice. Every winery offered event services. These event services support the brand

associations, positioning, and relationship with brand stakeholders. The most significant

event service offered was site availability for weddings. Fourteen of the fifteen wineries

visited offered wedding services. Two of the wineries offered consistent music venue

services, although all the wineries were capable of offering music services and had on

previous occasions. One winery demanded that all winery visits, tastings or events, be

scheduled in advance. One winery offered overnight lodging services with the

expectation that reservations were to be made in advance. The other wineries had set

hours of operation for certain events, calendars for scheduled winery events, and contact

information for scheduling personal events such as weddings. One winery offered

information on the Kentucky wine trail, a play on the bourbon trail, with information on

which wineries were included on the Kentucky wine trail and a sign off sheet for each

Kentucky wine trail winery visited.

Postmodern findings. Postmodern findings supported evidence of postmodern

communicative acts. Specifically, no common core reference was found during

participant observation. The lack of a common core reinforces intertextuality. The

wineries defined themselves in relationship to each other (no two wineries were the

same), and the winery identities were based on a combination of characteristics. Each

winery cultural construction was based on a combination of references aligned with

Bourdieu's (1993) description of a cultural field.   The combination of international wine

industry references and Kentucky references exhibits the playfulness, uses of signs and

signifiers separate from specific meanings, evidence of agency on the part of wine

producers and stakeholders observed, and the creation of new cultural products and signs

are all postmodern phenomena.

The tension between modern conceptualizations of history, be it wine industry

history, such as vineyards and winery infrastructure, of Kentucky history such as horse

industry and agricultural images such as the barn, and the postmodern recreation and

combination of these images was observed during participant observation, and these

tensions, ironies, and contradictions also represent postmodern practices. The tension

between modernity and postmodernity was evidenced in the repurposing of older buildings and foundations such as barns and colonial stone structures. The traditional, or modern (as in the modern time period rather than postmodern) purpose of a barn was to house livestock. Now, the bluegrass barns are being used to house winemaking equipment, especially giant steel vats of juice and wine. While the vats are examples of progress, technology, and science, all modernist characteristics, their appearance and location in a barn created a contradiction on purpose and a decontextualizing of location, boundaries, and land use, characteristics of postmodernism.

The wines served are also playing with the idea of wine. The wines created use alternate grapes from the ones traditionally used in making wine, and a number of the wines are not made from grapes at all but from other fruits, and they are labeled wine. This act is doubly confusing as modern wine is oftentimes expected to be made from grapes, but throughout history, fruit has been used in the fortification of wines, again complicating what wine even is (Lukacs, 2012).

These postmodern communicative acts support Taylor's (2005) postmodern organizational communication list that organizations are intertexts, that organizations are decentered and fragmented, and that the knowledge of the organizations are representational (in this case of a history that did not quite exist and also representational of the local geography and culture). However, there was difficulty in observing the fragmented or multiple identities of wineries, winemakers, and stakeholders. The servers or winemakers take on the identity of a host, and this role persists throughout the tasting. The multiple identities of server, but also winemaker, of winemaker or owner, but also of

doctor as some owners' backgrounds are outside of the wine industry, but these identities are not normally present during the tastings, tours, or events at the winery.

Still, the power of discourse was observed during participant observation. Only through the information and narrative of the server or winemaker was the importance of the wine actualized. It was not the consumption of the liquid that created the event. Rather, and this characteristic aligns with ritual communication, the power came from the performative act and the context, provided in part by the language and conversation of the server with the consumers, that created the appropriate circumstances for the consumption of the wine. Actual enjoyment was increased through the ceremony and discourse surrounding the wine. It is not by accident that wine tastings are conducted in social rooms with the bar at the center and not only at individual tables. The server presenting and serving the wine at tastings also makes for the communal event, and along with the presentation, the description of the wine, what to note, what flavors to expect, and any other information demonstrates the importance of the discourse in determining the importance of the wine. During the tours, the interest is in how the site is presented, not on the physical landscape. Guided tours were much more populated than self-guided tours where individuals stopped to read signposts (still, the stopping to read the signposts reveals the power in the discourse, and the ability of the discourse to create the appropriate context). Language, education, and narrative contribute to the wine consumption experience (if not establish it), and this important factor will be discussed throughout this chapter and the next chapter as well.

The agency of individual stakeholders was also evidenced during participant observation. Wine consumers can decide how involved they are in the process. They

can be disinterested, casual consumers, class focused consumers (drinking wine for the status), and wine consuming enthusiasts possessing local and international knowledge of wine. There are many more positions as well. The numerous positions and the voluntary nature of the wine tasting participation (you can always visit a winery and not drink), provide an agency if one can afford to purchase wine. How much wine to consume is also a form of agency. An individual that informs the server or winemaker that he or she did not like the wine shifts the positions of power and demonstrates agency. Overall, agency affects the context and environment for wine consumption. The implications of these postmodern communicative acts will be discussed in the next chapter.

Bourdieu and the field of cultural production. Most simply and clearly, participant observation supported Bourdieu's (1993) conceptualization of the field of cultural production. Cultural Kentucky wine production fits Bourdieu's (1993) criteria and description. Each winery inhabited a different position in the field, and no two wineries inhabited the same position, or even similar positions. The wines made, the cultural references, and the physical environment created different positions for each wine, wine producer, and winery. The multiple cultural references that can be combined can create an endless array of positions. References to the international wine industry and Kentucky's historical images can be compared to determine the position of each winemaker in relationship to each other. The relationships can be used to determine the distribution of power, renown, access to resources, and prestige (i.e., value). The presentation of awards confirms the presence of consecrating institutions, cultural capital, prestige, recognition, and legitimacy. The references to socio-economic class implies Bourdieu's (1993) field of power. The findings support Bourdieu's claim that the field of

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cultural production is linked to the field of power and class relations, and all three fields

are influenced by historical factors.   The use of the Kentucky proud logo and the

presence of local stakeholders support the claim that the sub-field of Kentucky wine must

balance local concerns with international considerations.

Overall, the participant observation supported the conceptual framework

established in Chapter two. The findings were categorized according to themes identified

in the data. The combination of categories helped to construct positions in the field of

Kentucky wine cultural production. Ritual communicative acts were also observed as

well as specific brand management choices. Postmodern tendencies and evidence of

Bourdieu's (1993) field of cultural production were found. These latter concerns were

recorded, however, in-depth discussion of these characteristics has been withheld for the

Discussion chapter. The impact of the participant observation in combination with

textual analysis and qualitative interviews will be discussed in the subsequent chapter as

well.

Website Textual Analysis

Website textual analysis was conducted in conjunction with participant

observation and qualitative interviews. The textual analysis was conducted as the

websites are living artifacts that, while dynamic, can be considered snapshots or photos

of idealized associations wine owners, producers, and makers wish to connect with their

wines and wineries. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) believe texts have a lot to say when read

"alongside the living voices of informants and other social actors" (p. 217). Mehan

(2001) and Schudson (1989) connect material and textual analysis with important aspects

of culture and communication that cannot be understood unless material evidence is

analyzed. Textual analysis of websites is an appropriate method for understanding the cultural associations and brand management of Kentucky wine producers.

In considering the website findings, the data was considered an element of communication, or a resource, referent, and nonverbal sign (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). As referents and signs, the websites contain meaning. The meaning is directly related to discourses and cultural associations. The data was coded and analyzed based on the choice of discourses and cultural associations selected by the website creators and attributed to the wines and wineries analyzed. The coding developed from a basic level of description, and then to the categorization of elements based on themes identified during analysis related to other methods used in this study. Also, categories were identified that are solely or primarily applicable to website communication (such as links and tabs). As Lindlof and Taylor (2011) predicted, the cross-website and cross-data analysis allowed the researcher to become sensitized to the associations, brand management strategies, and website features that were most prominent in the data.

The websites were considered personal documents consisting of subjective presentations of the cultural associations and persuasive arguments intended to (a) persuade a potential consumer to purchase the wine and (b) present cultural signs that possess meanings that producers wished to have associated with the wine. Overall, sixty-eight winery websites were analyzed. These are all of the wineries submitted to the Kentucky government's communication and marketing division that was established to promote Kentucky wine, appropriately titled *Kentucky Wine*. The websites are listed on their website (kentuckywine.com) and are updated as wineries come on and off-line. Of the sixty-eight potential websites, ten of the wineries did not have a website link with

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their information, did not have a working connection or website for their website link, or the link was rerouted to an erroneous website. Two entries were secondary stores for existing wineries where both winery links were re-routed to the same website. These two entries were counted as working websites but were not analyzed separately. The website design and text was categorized into the following categories, first, similar to participant observation, the websites contained Kentucky references, international wine industry references, winemaker eccentricities, ritual communication, and brand management strategies. Secondly, the websites were assessed based on last-updated dates and template or non-template use, important additional information, such as directions, contact information, and purchasing instructions, and perhaps most importantly, the grape varietals used in making the wines, and the wines available for consumption. Lastly, postmodern elements and evidence of the field of cultural production were considered.

Cultural meaning categories. Many of the following categories and the findings will overlap with the participant observations findings. The difference will be in the display, signifier and referential meaning, the combination of visual, technical (especially interactive elements), and the difference between mediated and interpersonal communication. As Oriard (1993) noted, these textual references help to determine what is culturally important, what the references mean to Kentucky winemakers in association to their wines, and what cultural meaning is being communicated to Kentucky wine stakeholders. Findings that are similar to the participant observation will be summarized, and the bulk of the findings will focus on the differences and discoveries unique to the website medium.

The four prominent categories developed during participant observation were identified while categorizing website associations. The four categories include local Kentucky cultural references, wine culture and community references, individual winemaker/owner input, and broader regional and national socio-economic cultural associations. As mentioned earlier, subsequent categories specific to websites were identified and will be discussed as well. As with the participant observation, each category will be discussed independently with exemplars included for description and explication.

Kentucky cultural references. Kentucky cultural references refer to the specific local and/or statewide cultural references embraced by the individual winery. Even more pronounced than through observation, specific, geographic Kentucky regional references were noted. For example, local associations with geographic regions, such as horses in the Bluegrass Region, were quite common on websites for bluegrass wineries. Wineries located amongst the much more pronounced rolling hills of northern Kentucky were more likely to include references to grazing farms, camping, and hunting. The eastern Appalachian wineries mentioned the Appalachian Mountains, oftentimes living in valleys or growing their vines on the side of the hills. Western Kentucky wineries were more likely to mention growing corn and soybean, animal farming, and, depending on the winery's distance from Louisville, Churchill Downs or the urban environment of the city. Kentucky wide references, such as the Kentucky Derby, horses, and bourbon or the bourbon trail were mentioned by a significant minority of the wineries (n<15). Two other significant references were the mentioning of the soil and of the history of either the winery or of the area. Interestingly for soil, whether the fertile soil or the significant

difference of the soil in Kentucky, the presence of limestone, was mentioned even though, historically, grape vines grow and produce better fruit in difficult or inhospitable soil. The latter reference to history was most commonly a reference to the agricultural history of the winery (not as a winery, but as site of agricultural production), and then to specific buildings on the winery premises. For many wineries, houses, barns, and other structures were renovated and included as a facility dedicated to wine production. A second sub-category related to agriculture concerned the distinction between estate grown grapes or the purchasing of grapes from the area. This category will be discussed in more detail in the section concerning grape and wine varietals.

Interestingly, five of the wineries made direct connections to tobacco farming. This reference is an important aspect of the Kentucky wine industry as the industry was identified as an area of potential growth that could make up for the revenue losses related to tobacco.

The Kentucky Proud Label was found on many of the websites, often on the front page (n=21). Even though the KyP label was found on almost a third of the websites, even more references to local grapes, local farmers, local communities, local grape growing and wine associations, and local markets was common. What was more important than the KyP label was establishing a connection to local grape growers, local consumers, and local markets. The KyP label was more prominent the closer the winery was to the center of the state. Proximity to members of KyP and to resources and institutional support may be the reason for more KyP references closer to the center of the state; however, the general reference to "the local" limited the centralization surrounding KyP.

A final, minor association that overlapped national but also local associations was the prominent display of discounts for military veterans. The phrase, "We support our troops," often accompanied the discount. While this association could be regional or national, the association was classified as local as different regions of the country may have different feelings on the military and is more likely to be associated with conservative areas of the country and areas that do not have as strong a connection to the international wine community.

Overall, Kentucky cultural associations, especially local geographic associations, trumped all other cultural references. The following screenshots demonstrate the reference to Kentucky cultural associations. In the first screenshot, the horse is seen in between the grape vines, integrating horses, grape growing, and wine.

Figure 3: Vineyard and Kentucky horse associations

While the previous picture demonstrates the seamlessness of incorporating grape growing and wine associations with Kentucky associations, some associations were much more

overt. In the following image, the horse, or horses are used as a reference to the history

of the winery (as a former farm), and the connection to Kentucky heritage.

Figure 4: Horses as heritage

To some, there may be difficulty in differentiating between Kentucky barns and barns

from other regions, but Kentucky residents, the following barn images should be

recognizable.

Figure 5: Barn and vineyard

Figure 6: Barn as tasting room

In Figure 5, much like the image of the horse in the vineyard, the barn is integrated with the vineyard. What is often a picture of Kentucky barns and open horse fields is now an image of barns and vineyards. In the second picture, while not integrated with the vineyard, the barn has been renovated into a tasting room and event site. In Figure 6, there is no mistaking the barn for another type of structure. The Kentucky, rural, and farm associations are clear and meant to be connected with wine and the specific wineries.

International wine community. The most common international wine community website references consisted of awards listed, descriptions of wines, wine and food pairings, food rituals, and food service, the reference to terroirs, the "old world," and famous European wine regions, although the offering of wine supplies, such as wine aerators and wine racks, were also evidence of the larger wine community.

Twenty-one of the Kentucky wineries claim to have won a wine award. Predominantly, the awards are won at regional or Eastern competitions (i.e., Indiana and Kentucky competitions, but also the Finger Lakes competition in New York). However, a few of the wineries have won at Western United States competitions, such as the San Francisco competition, and this competition has national and international prestige. As mentioned previously, even if the awards won are regional or national, awards for wine are an international affair, and so associations with awards won is considered an

international association. With over a third of the wineries announcing their honors, the winemakers find this association important to consumers and important for increasing prestige, reputation, and desirability of the wine. While an exaggeration, it seems like every winery has won an award. As one Kentucky wine expert claimed, every winery has one good wine, other state wines must win awards as well, and honors are awarded every year, and so, over time, announcing honors and awards may hold less meaning. Still, when Kentucky winemakers claim their wines can compete with wines throughout the world, they are not exaggerating, according to the awards, they can. This consecrating ritual is important to Kentucky wine producers, is believed to be important to wine consumers, and it is clearly important to the international wine community.

Perhaps even more important and more evident of international wine community references is during wine descriptions. Wine descriptions carry the familiar feel, style, and word choice found in any wine magazine. Almost half of the websites (n=29) made use of international wine descriptions, pictures of wines in glasses, or wine bottles, or of pouring wine (as a specific image referencing the ritual wine through a specific glass, bottle, or wine as a liquid, in the case of visual imagery. Most websites will have pictures of wine or wine bottles, but these images were not considered international references if the images were not accentuated as part of the ritual or to emphasize the international context.), or descriptions of the wine making process. In order to protect the identity of the wineries, the following example of an international wine description is paraphrased, but it is reminiscent of many of the international wine descriptions found on Kentucky wine websites: "This wine is a bold, fruity, full-bodied wine with hints of chocolate and tobacco, with a finish rich in spices. The wine pairs well with hard cheeses, or along with

a dessert of chocolate and strawberries. This wine is a dry red and can also be paired with steak or chicken for dinner." Initial indicators of international wine descriptions was the noting of flavors that do not directly relate to grapes, such as other fruit or food flavors and mineral or soil associations (i.e., "earthy," or "tobacco" flavors). Wines need to be described, and rather than trying to develop a new lexicon, websites chose to use international wine descriptions. When websites did not use international wine associations, the descriptions were either general, abstract, or sticking to directly related grape flavors (descriptions such as sweet, fruity, grape juice flavors were not classified as international wine descriptions), or in some cases, the websites did not provide a listing of their wines or descriptions of how their wines should taste.

Food and wine pairings, food services, or the food and wine rituals were evident on a minority of sites (n=6). International food references were distinguished from offering food services based on the description and space allotted food. Many wineries offered food services, but they did not dedicate descriptions, food and wine pairings, and separate website pages to the food and wine associations. A minority did offer more space and text to the food and wine pairings. For example, winery websites would explain which wines paired well with which foods, or, for wineries that offered extensive food services, wineries that provided menus, lists of wines, or again, the recommended wine pairings if one came to eat and imbibe, then these references were classified as international wine references. A few wineries offered information on the international language and consumption associated with wine, and even one winery offered wine tasting education and lessons. These references were in the minority, but, based on the

language, pairings, visual images, and space allotted, clear evidence of international wine associations. The following figure is an example of the food and wine associations.

Figure 7: Food and wine pairing

In Figure 6, the wine is blurred which is an example of how the researcher differentiated wine as a reference from the food and wine ritual. Food appears as a central component for the ritual. As for an international food and wine reference, the meal is lamb, not a common (and also expensive, which hints at upper-middle class and upper class associations) meat in Kentucky. Red wines are often associated with the red meats as well, again, another international wine reference.

One of the most interesting references was the mentioning of European or "old-world" connections at the wineries. This reference was not as prominent during participant observation. Oftentimes, this connection was made clear through text. There were references to terroirs, to specific European wine regions, especially Bordeaux and Tuscany regions, medieval imagery, a Dante quote, and mention of the "Rhine of Kentucky" in reference to the German wine making region. Kentucky wineries were

quick to make connections with European wine regions through text and visual imagery, much more so than during participant observation.

Five of the wineries offered the opportunity to purchase wine accessories online. Again, this may be a minority of wineries, but the acknowledgement of appropriate tools and accessories for interacting with wine reference an international community. Such references were easy markers of an understanding and involvement in an international wine community. There were a tremendous amount of indirect international wine community references. As wine barrels and stock pictures could be considered international wine community references, there were abundant images, which made this association common, especially as one considers dual purpose associations, such as awards (that do as much for the individual winemaker and for brand management as well as for international wine community associations and positioning). The indirect nature of the associations somewhat lessened the power of the international associations unless the connection was directly referenced and recognized. In the following images, the connection is made to the wine barrels used for aging wine. Barrels are used in the aging of many alcoholic beverages, so the image does serve as a dual wine/bourbon connection, but the image is also a common wine reference.

Figure 8: Wine barrels as international wine reference

Another quite common international reference was the grape vine, leaves, or fruit as a close-up shot (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Common zoom-in image of grapes and leaves

Finally, the image of wine pouring into a wine glass or wine glass full of wine and a wine bottle are two images commonly associated with the international wine community. This image will be referenced throughout this study.

Figure 10: Common international wine images

Individual winemaker and winery reputation. The individual winemaker and winery reputation references were perhaps the most interesting to analyze. Because of the uncertain directions of communication and varying interest of consumers during participant observation, the lack of education and training of winery employees, and the lack of time, individual winemaker and winery references were less pronounced during

interpersonal interaction and clearer in the more static, website medium. Almost all winery pages had an "about' page.

Websites still varied on the amount of personal information they disclosed, but the wineries with heavily involved winemakers asserted their uniqueness. Lukacs (2012) documented that a strong winemaker presence almost always accompanied a successful winery, and Kentucky wineries just as readily promoted their successful winemakers. Of particular note were winemakers that promoted their achievements and awards, experience, or education. Most successful (i.e., award winning) winemakers possessed ten or more years of industry experience with twenty or more years being the longest time involved in the industry. Wine education involved experiences in Europe or in California with both practical and institutional education experiences included. This timeline supports Kentucky wine expert claims that it takes three years to create a functioning winery, but the best winemakers in the state had over ten years of experience. A number of these winemakers started in the 1990s when the provisional approval for Kentucky winemaking and government support was passed. For many of these winemakers, either amateur or test-years were conducted before the wineries became commercial operations. The winemaker and his or her information are a symbol of individual experience and education that models the appropriate social behavior and position for winemakers (see Goffman, 1976; Reeves, 1988; and also Rothenbuhler, 1988 for a short overview).

Novelty and unique characteristics were also promoted. The winery with the youngest winemaking, also a female, was prominently communicated with a page devoted to the vintner. Peculiarities were also expressed. One winery called their vintner

a "maestro." Another winery expressed a medieval or "castle" theme that bordered on obsession based on its inclusion in all aspects of its merchandise and service. Peculiarities were not contained to vintner identity characteristics, the presentation of wines could verge on the irreverent or informal. In such cases, these wineries expressed winemaking as "fun," "an irreverent approach to winemaking," and/or "eschewing winemaking customs and culture" (quotes are paraphrased to avoid identification). One website contained ramblings on the universe, spiritual connections between the land on humans, and lacked coherence or updates.

Histories of the wineries and winemakers were included. Oftentimes, the history or bio was in longer paragraph form, difficult to read and overlong for website presentation. Included in the history and bio of the winemaker were often family references to the history of the winery or history of the family. A few of the wineries in Kentucky recognize their Italian heritage (n=3). Only one winery with a Bulgarian heritage was listed, otherwise, no other ethnic heritage was announced. Heritage descriptions discussed the experience of growing up with wine as part of their childhood experience to visiting Italy and recreating Italian social and consumption rituals. Along with heritage references, references to the amount of time spent or generations spent at the winery locale or at the farm were common. The longest time spent by one family on a winery site was five family generations although many of the farms claim foundation dates as far back as the late 1700's. These references claim connections to the first Kentucky winery (Kentucky claims to have the first commercial winery). These family connections to mostly converted farms were usually the link between history and Kentucky cultural associations. Farms converted into wineries were common among

websites (n>15—whether or not some of the wineries were farms was unclear). Also, in many cases, pictures of family members, and even pets, were included in the webpages (n=11), and a number of wines and wineries were named after prominent family figures. Again, these family connections linked the winery with the past, with the land, and with Kentucky or international wine associations. Rothenbuhler (1998) argued that these mediated communicative acts were mythmaking in order to manage social change as "fundamental issues are brought into discourse" (p. 92). This issue, highlighted through stories of a winery's history, has to do with legitimacy within the international wine community, and legitimacy is partly determined through tradition, a tradition (fabricated or real) of grape-growing and winemaking (see Lukacs, 2012 for a discussion of fabricated tradition and history). This issue will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Creating an official, timeless document verifying the connection and history is an attempt at creating legitimacy.

Eight of the winemakers or wine owners presented blogs. Two of the blogs were not updated and only one of the blogs was consistently updated. While blogs were an interesting choice and look into the winemaking process, thoughts, and perspective of the winemaker, most of the blogs did not have enough entries, the appropriate structure, or enough insight to warrant inclusion.

Interestingly, ten of the wineries were founded by individuals that had no connection to agriculture or wine. This number is double the amount of wineries claiming a direct connection to tobacco farming. Furthermore, this relatively new industry appears to be open to female winemakers and especially wine owners. Even though women are a significant minority among wine producers, two of the most

prominent and award winning wineries are owned or operated by women. Moreover, in a

number of cases, women were usually partners at wineries. If they are not producing the

wines, they are running the wineries and overseeing their services offered.

Individual winemaker, winery, and wine associations were as prominent a

category as international wine community references. However, the individual

winemaker references were much more direct than the international wine community

references. The direct reference allowed the uniqueness of winemakers to standout, and

this direct reference increased the power and importance of the successful, unique, and

individualized winemaker.

National and international socio-economic cultural associations. Only two of

the wineries had clear socio-economic cultural associations. At first, the lack of socio-

economic cultural associations was disconcerting. Questions persisted as to why these

associations were so difficult to identify. However, while watching an episode of

Anthony Bourdain's *No Reservations*, the answer became clear. Bourdain was visiting

Cuba, and he asked a photographer Roberto Salas if photos present the truth (Bourdain,

2011). Salas vehemently answered "no." Salas claimed it was his choice on how his

subjects were framed and what the photos expressed. As Salas is a successful

photographer and this study is not directly investigating photographic perspective, this

research and information, which may be more common in the photographic, graphic, and

predominantly visual mediums, had not been considered as an appropriate reason.

Nevertheless, especially with socio-economic cultural associations which often need

multiple associations and references (partly because socio-economic is a broad collection

of references, but also because the associations are heavily dependent on context and

environment), Salas' observation was a strong rationale for why more socio-economic cultural associations were not identified on the websites. Photos, pages, and captions are taken out of context and out of their normal environment. Without subsequent support throughout the website, it was difficult to detect socio-economic orientations and admirations. Yes, cultural consumption of wine is considered an upper-middle class and upper class activity, but as Lukacs (2012) continually notes in his history of wine, good wine is now available to most individuals of all socio-economic classes; therefore, it is more difficult to determine the exact socio-economic associations. Because of the ability of the website medium to decontextualize photos, pages, and text, it was difficult to orient socio-economic references, and as Arvidsson (2005) observed, the "context of consumption" is essential for understanding brand associations and specific brand management strategies. Rothenbuhler (1998) defines rituals of style uniqueness that marks texts or performances as characteristics of a group or person, but unfortunately, in cyberspace, it was difficult to determine the context or environment or to use Rothenbuhler's (1998) words, how and where do these acts demonstrate involvement in the serious life? In other words, the ecosystems of stakeholders, especially the signifiers of socio-economic status, were difficult to discern through website references (Iansiti & Levien, 2004). Only two websites were clear on this orientation by repeated references to socio-economic class. For example, the two above wineries referenced pictures to the dress and activity of sport hunting practices by the upper class, and in another instance, by including multiple pictures of upper-middle class individuals in upper middle class dress and environments.

On a related, decontextualized note that reinforces the inability to discern socio-economic references, pictures of vineyards were oftentimes decontextualized in relationship to the size and current state of vineyards and wineries. Many photographs on websites were professionally taken to capture the best aspects of the vineyards and wineries, oftentimes giving disproportionate estimates of space and venue resources. Other times, stock footage made it difficult to determine what an actual onsite experience versus a cultural reference was. Participant observation confirmed a dissonance between website presentation and onsite experience. Figure 11 demonstrates the lack of context. In this example, the actual size of the winery and vineyard, especially the acres under grape production, cannot be discerned from the image. The vineyard appears to run on for miles outside of the picture. However, the larger Kentucky vineyards are around thirty acres and the average under ten acres of production which is nowhere near the acreage of the large, established vineyards in prestigious wine regions (Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 4, 2014).

Figure 11: De-contextualized Kentucky vineyard

Ritual communication. "Thick description" of the ritual communication conducted by the wineries was not possible through the website descriptions (Geertz, 1972). Therefore, the section on rituals, beyond documentation of what rituals are

important to the wineries, is not as descriptive as with participant observation. However, the rituals valued by the wineries could be discerned. Also, rituals important to the modern, cultural consumption of wine could be documented. Rothenbuhler (1998) argued that media communicates the "central symbol systems of the society at hand" (p. 90). As with participant observation, the rituals could be classified as wine consumption in order to (1) taste the specific wine, (2) consume wine as part of ritualized food and drink consumption, (3) engage in a leisure activity, and (4) to tour and experience a wine and/or agritourism opportunity. These "categories" of ritual communication define the central symbol systems for the Kentucky wine industry. The use of the symbols within these four categories varied greatly, and so a definitive list of the exact symbols could not be determined, but the "types" of symbols were.

Wine tasting. Almost every winery offered wine tastings. Only six wineries did not, and the two most predominant reasons were dry county laws or the choice to not offer tastings and only distribute wine through retail outlets. Tasting hours and services varied with some wineries opened almost daily while others were opened on the weekend, and a few only open by appointment. While the extent and actual experience of wine tastings could not be documented through website analysis, it is important to note the importance of the wine tastings by the number of wineries offering tastings and the hours of operation. Consumption of wine is a significant, if not primary goal, of all of the wineries. If wineries do not have tasting rooms, this service would be the first addition to the winery if the winery became interested in increasing interaction with potential consumers. The following images are examples of the wine tasting ritual. Figure 12 consists of images of tasting rooms. Notice the focus on the wine bar in both images.

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Not only are wine-tasting rooms a common image, but the ritual of wine tasting is also a common image (see Figure 13).

Figure 12: Wine tasting rooms
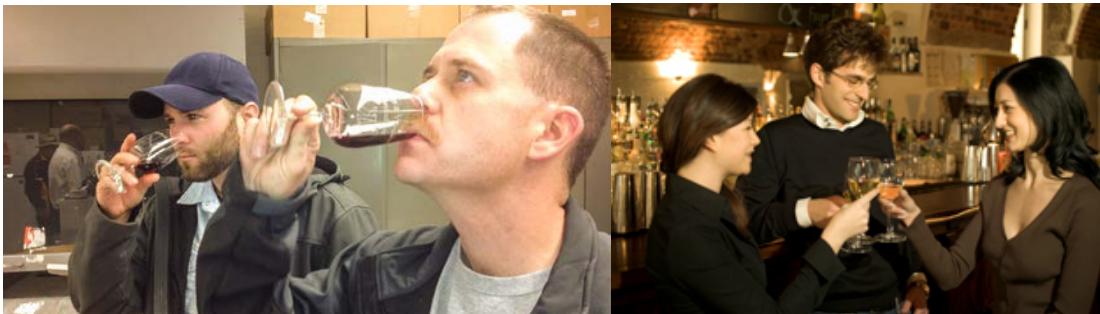
Figure 13: Wine tasting images

As a sub-category of wine tastings, wine clubs are not as prominent throughout the state even though the presence of wine club members was found to be significant during participant observation. Eleven wineries promoted their wine clubs. Many of the websites included the forms in order to sign up for the wine club as well as information on the benefits of enrolling in the wine club. A number of the wine club options had graduated or different levels on wine club commitments. It is important to note that only eleven of the wineries promoted their wine clubs. This number does not mean that other wineries do not offer wine club options, only that they did not promote the clubs on their websites.

Wine as part of the food consumption ritual. Seven of the wineries offered food and wine or dinner service at the wineries. As discussed in the participant observation section, the lack of dinner service involves the resources and knowledge necessary to offer full food services. Of wineries that offered food services, menus were oftentimes included on the website. At many wineries, there was an interplay between Kentucky associations and international food and wine associations.

As an alternative, two of the wineries encouraged consumers to bring their own food to the wineries. These wineries had a large amount of land and multiple venues for individuals in order to enjoy food and wine in a particular, agricultural environment. While these services could be considered agritourism, the wineries recognized the importance of food and wine as an important ritual.

Wine consumption as leisure activity. Along with wine tastings, the leisure consumption of wine, especially during events, was the most advertised ritual on websites (n=39). Wineries have space, and again, as related to agritourism, the agricultural

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landscape appeals to many potential consumers. The idea of spending time close to nature, in a rural setting, or near agricultural sites that are aesthetically pleasing appeals to many individuals. Wineries recognize this desire, and they have adapted accordingly.

The sub-category of the event ritual varied in complexity and offerings depending on the winery. The events included bridal showers, birthdays, weddings, art festivals, comedy shows, dinner and murder mystery theatre, music offerings, family meetings (such as reunions), cooking competitions (for example, a chili contest and an amateur wine contest), and professional gatherings.   Events have been recognized as an essential ritual for Kentucky wines, and while thirty-nine wineries promoted their venues for events, only four wineries openly stated that they did not offer event services. On most websites, event services had their own pages with pictures, pertinent factual information on the venue, and the contact information for scheduling events. The larger and more event-focused wineries employed event-planners and communication employees to handle events. Figure 13 demonstrates wine as a leisure activity. Notice the expression and repose of the women along with the setting and the wine. This image is not meant to invoke a wine tasting or a wine and food pairing. In Figure 14, the setting, especially the fire, associate the winery with relaxation at the end of the day.

Figure 14: Wine as leisure activity

Figure 15: Fire and wine

The primary event advertised was weddings. Vineyard and wineries are idyllic sites for weddings, and many websites advertised the service with pictures of weddings. Turning water into wine at a wedding was one of Jesus' first miracles in the Bible; the association of weddings, wine, and wineries appears to be amenable to most of Kentucky's most conservative stakeholders (excepting stakeholders in dry counties). The following images are examples of wedding services. The second image is not a direct wedding reference, although the image was found on the wedding page, and the extended

reference, of not only weddings (directed by the text), but also the reference to proposals

and dating extends the association of wineries and wine to romantic events.

Figure 16: Wineries and weddings

Wine as agritourism. A number of the aforementioned rituals overlapped with

agritourism, and as mentioned previously, event services could be considered a form of

agritourism. One winemaker considered wine tasting as a form of agritourism,

considered himself to be in the tourism business, and believed eighty percent of his

business came from tourists interested in visiting a vineyard and winery (Kentucky

winemaker, personal communication, December 9, 2014). However, as noted in the

participant observation section, there are particular agritourism services offered by the

wineries. First, as noted earlier, there is interest in agricultural processes. The picking of

grapes, the maceration process, wine barrels, stainless steel fermentation tanks, the

pouring of wine into different vessels and containers, wine bottling, and overall facilities

are pictured on many of the websites. Descriptions of the grape juice to wine process

abound. Eight of the wineries directly mention the winemaking process as part of their

agritourism offerings. This number does not include the indirect referencing of the

winemaking process (without the offering of facility tours), or vineyard and winery tours

that may include information and access to winemaking facilities as this information

could only be discerned through direct observation.

The more general discussion of tours, either offered daily, at certain times during

the week, or by appointment, was more common (n=14). This number only considers

wineries that promote their tours. At most vineyards and wineries, informal tours of the

premises were allowed and offered. Larger vineyards and wineries, available employees,

and designed tours are needed for official tour offerings. Still, the decent number of

official tours offered demonstrates the importance of this ritual to winemakers and the

desire by potential consumers to embark on a tour.

A burgeoning agritourism ritual is the wine trail tour. Based on the Bourbon Trail

tour (one winery website mentioned the Bourbon Trail), the wine trail tour includes

selected wineries that are listed on the tour, and in return for visiting all of the wineries

on the tour, the visitor receives a stamp for each winery visited, and usually a gift, such as

a shirt. Different wine trail tours (such as the Back Roads Wine Trail see Figure 16)

across the state are common and popular now. One winery employee stated that the wine

trail gave tourists that are tired of bourbon, especially women, another alternative. Wine

trail tours will continue to be an important aspect of winery agritourism.

Figure 17: Website advertisement for a Kentucky wine trail

One of the most interesting agritourism rituals was overnight lodging options. Five of the wineries offered overnight lodging. There is an interest in "getting-away" and spending time in a rural and agricultural setting with amenities beyond a vacation home (winemaker, personal communication, November 4, 2014). Two of the venues were in areas where hunting and camping are common. In these cases, offering lodging appeared to be the norm for the local culture. These wineries are also close to larger, urban centers, and so, "getting-away" appears to be an attractive option. Another winery clearly planned for lodging as part of their services and amenities (which were considerable and planned before the vineyard and winery facilities were constructed). Originally, lodging was not included as an agritourism ritual, but throughout history, inns for travelers offered lodging, and the desire to engage with a rural, agricultural establishment, appears to be a viable option.

Brand management. Websites are a form of brand management, and one of their primary goals is to increase awareness, a key aspect of brand management (Aaker, 1991). Websites may also promote perceived quality and brand associations. As with participant observation, the cultural and ritual associations of the previous sections combine to create the symbols and associations of specific brands. The associations are determined based on the categories of cultural symbols and signs described previously,

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and the associations are primarily communicated through the rituals identified under ritual communication. Again, the cultural associations and combination of rituals chosen create the specific brand management choices and strategies, and this process provides a multitude of options and examples. However, there were significant brand management communication processes that are worth explicating.

First, the wine tasting ritual is a key brand management choice that most wineries employ. As wine tastings are an essential element of persuading a potential customer to purchase the wine, promoting wine tastings, the hours of operation for wine tastings, the location, options, and directions were essential brand management techniques that all wineries employ on their websites. Even for wineries that do not offer wine tastings, announcing that wine tastings are not offered and the reason why are key areas of ritual communication that are used to manage the brand.

Announcing awards is also a form of brand management. Awards are a way of evaluating the performance of the brand. Even though individuals within the international wine community are the evaluators and the potential customers are not, the "judges" are considered respected, credible, and qualified consecrators of the wine, and therefore the brand. Moreover, as mentioned elsewhere, Bourdieu (1986) argued that legitimate consecrating bodies must approve of the cultural product or the product would not be legitimated by other members or followers of the field. It is not known if any of the wineries did not promote their awards online, but the constant and prominent display of awards is a clear brand management tactic of Kentucky wine.

Logos and slogans are two of the most simplified ways of managing a brand. By having a distinct logo, oftentimes accompanied with a brand slogan, is a traditional brand

management tactic designed to differentiate one brand from anther. The inclusion, or rather, the exclusion of, especially a logo, but also a slogan (a large number of Kentucky wineries included a slogan), was a key evaluator of the brand management savvy of a Kentucky winery and website. Twenty-five wineries promoted a distinctive logo. Only one winery had a poorly designed logo that was difficult to determine if it was the logo for the winery and wine. These findings do not mean that all the other wineries and wines do not have logos, only that the logos were not singled-out and promoted as part of the website design and website brand management. In a number of cases, an attractive font that ran alongside a picture or pleasing background could be found at the top of the website, but an attractive font with a name such as "Triana winery" does not designate a logo. Logos were identified based on a clear symbolic, sign-design that could be found and repeated, or alternately, identified elsewhere on the webpage rather than at the top of the website. A number of wineries had logos, especially logos on their wine bottles, but they did not include these logos on within their websites. Only one winery had a slogan without a logo. This lack of brand understanding will be discussed in the next chapter.

Events must be considered a form of brand management. The specific events offered associate the brand with certain rituals, cultural values and beliefs, and leisure activities. The most prominent event associated with wine was weddings. This association has already been discussed. Also, the way in which events were offered also determined brand associations. "By appointment or reservation" associated a wine brand with a more formal or specialized ritual. Wineries that offered events positioned their wine brands as either a public service offered for enjoyment or as a natural part of everyday life, especially nightlife or weekend enjoyment. These event distinctions

clearly define the brand position of a wine. A winery visit and wine tasting that must be planned by appointment takes more energy and resources, with prior planning and time set aside for the visit, whereas, an open winery with knowledge that the wine tasting room or event space will be open every weekend may take less energy, time, and promote a different brand experience. Moreover, wineries that offer comedy nights, dinner and murder-mystery theatre, local art festivals, and local music, possess a different position with the local community than a "by-reservation" winery, a tasting-room only winery, or a winery that offers lodging, food services, and multi-day, weekend, excursions. Event services are an important aspect of brand management, and events define what role a wine, and especially a winery (and therefore the brand), serve in an individual's life.

Wine clubs serve a similar purpose to events in brand management, although, wine clubs more precisely represent brand communities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Most of the time, wine clubs consist of brand community members that admire and appreciate the brand. The participant observation example provided previously is an example of a wine club member that appreciates the brand and is enthusiastic about its consumption. Wine clubs offer the opportunity for the brand community to support and appreciate the wine. The brand community can also interact and communally enjoy the brand. A number of the wineries offer wine club members' nights at the winery where small and new vintages are released and shared with the wine club members first. These communal, social, and ritual events offer the brand community opportunities to celebrant the brand, increase brand connection and loyalty, to share their experiences, and interact

with fellow brand members. Offering a wine club membership, especially through a website, is an important brand management technique.

Only three websites offered education services or educational pages concerning wine or Kentucky wine. Two additional websites described the importance of education in entering the winemaking field thereby stressing the importance of grape growing and wine education. One winery offered wine tasting/education services so that wine consumers could feel comfortable consuming Kentucky wine. Another website offered explanations of grape varietals, what could and could not grow in Kentucky, and how or why certain wines taste a certain way. Another website offered video and text explaining how to smell, taste, and evaluate wine. Education on wine, especially Eastern American and Kentucky wine, is a form of stakeholder community brand management. Bourdieu (1986) explained that establishing the appropriate cultural codes, rituals, position, and understanding of a cultural product (and of the whole field), and the reinforcement and reproduction of the field, the legitimacy, and consecration of field members, is all conducted through education. Education is a form of stakeholder-brand management, a form of field of cultural production management, and a form of singular-brand management. Brands that offer education possess a tool for inducting new members into the Kentucky wine community. Being the first wine or winery that provides the confidence and opportunity to consumer Kentucky wine may be associated with positive emotions and feelings that can then be attributed to the brand.

Nevertheless, a significant negative finding concerned the lack of opportunity for stakeholders to participate in the managing and meaning of the brand. A few websites offered opportunities for comments and responses, but no website had a strong

stakeholder presence. However, social media, especially Facebook, offered an alternative means of stakeholder-brand management. Thirty-two websites offered Facebook and/or other social media offerings. In-depth analysis of Kentucky wine social media platforms was outside of this study, but a few insights were gleaned from the findings: (1) Stakeholder and community interactions were delegated to social media platforms. There are two reasons for this delegation. One, the increased ease and efficiency of wine producer and stakeholder interaction through social media, and two, the predominant use of social media by stakeholders in order to interact with one another. (2) Websites primarily were used to communicate information regarding the brand and to advertise the brand. The division of use reflects the social use of technology for specific brand purposes.

  Unique website features. Walther, Gay, and Hancock (2006) argue that communication technology, in particular, the internet, should be studied based on how the technology changes communication, through what technological processes, and why, not with a direct focus on how the communicative acts change. Looking at the communicative acts in a new context would be the study of say, interpersonal communication, but only in a new environment. To understand communication technology, how it is used to communicate, and the importance of its unique characteristics, the analysis must focus on the technology. This philosophy was the approach for this section on unique website features. Related to participant observation and qualitative interviews, if particular findings were only available, identified and categorized during website analysis, and attributed to the specific functions and characteristics of website communication, it is addressed in this section. Three major

categories were found: (1) last date of use, website design, evaluation and use of a template, (2) additional information and purchasing options, (3) grape varietals and wines offered.

Update date, website design evaluation, and template use. The design of the websites could be considered an example of Rothenbuhler's (1998) rituals of style and status. The website design "is a *necessity* [italics by the author] of texts and performances, for they could not be put together without it" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 111). The design provides stylistic conventions that "express some relation, idea, or evaluation of social order" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 111). To elaborate, style is considered the choices of redundancy and available options of sign systems as modes of expression that communicate and can be interpreted as signs of social position, attitude, and social hierarchy. Rothenbuhler (1998) situated this understanding of ritualistic style as "a nonlinguistic expressive element of culture," and that is how the website designs were interpreted (p. 111). It is important to note that stylistic rituals become meaningful when a number of individuals in a society act on the communication (by going to the winery or supporting the winery and winemaker) and can create collective definitions or meanings of the website symbols. Eventually these lifestyle choices (such as supporting a winery or winemaker, "liking a Facebook page," recommending a website, can all become "means for the construction, performance, and display of self, all available to social judgment and, hence, forms of symbolic participation in the serious life" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 113). Therefore, from the website design, and with the inclusion of particular technology, symbols, options, and construction, the website reader and potential

Kentucky wine consumer can integrate the wine, through stylistic ritual, into his or her life, and use it to perform in the serious life.

The design of the website was interpreted in a similar fashion as the form and style of journalists' work. Rothenbuhler (1988) argued that in consideration of an audience "the journalist's work must be ordered by shared symbolic conventions" (p. 86). Layout, such as a horizontal menu bar, appropriate, high quality visuals, acceptable colors, and systematic color use (for example designating a few website redundant color use rather than choosing a different color for different fonts without a system or pattern), appropriate length and spacing of captions, and appropriate language. Rothenbuhler (1988) is correct in his claims that deviations by journalists from the ritual norms are viewed with suspicion. Rothenbuhler (1988) does not elaborate on why journalists are more likely to be viewed with suspicion than artists that deviate from the norms of their cultural and ritual productions (social and cultural norms of the industry are the most likely reason), but involvement in the selling of a product, public relations, marketing, and advertising, and all of these acts and industries have specific forms for successful and professional websites, provide expectations for the appropriate website design. Deviation from these expectations was also viewed with suspicion. Still, some websites were able to deviate from the norm successfully. It is important to remember that the failure in website design (for whatever reason, lack of information, aesthetically unpleasing choices, difficulty in navigation, etc.) is a failure of the brand to fulfill the needs of the consumer. The website design findings are discussed below.

Websites were evaluated on a letter grade scale (A, B, C, D, and F). Nuances were addressed with a minus or plus sign. Gradations were determined based on the

aforementioned criteria summarized by the phrase "appropriate, professional, website design." Without writing a textbook on website design, evaluation was holistic, but it consisted of an ideal model of professional website design that concerned appropriate spacing, color, font, images, layout, technical options (horizontal page bar, contact information, last-update-date, etc.), ease of use, and alignment with current website practices (such as larger photos at the top and left, article tags and lists to the right, summaries of articles below pictures and titles, drop-down menus, the use of video and photo slides, etc.). All of these different features were identified and then combined for an overall, holistic evaluation based on the overall experience, information offered, brand management, and style of the website.

Table 1. Winery Website Evaluation Grades

Grades				
A	B	C	D	F
8	28	10	6	4

*56 wineries evaluated[1]

The above table lists the grades for the winery websites. Overall, a grade of a "B" meant the website was acceptable, and the website navigation and website experience did not inhibit or negatively affect the brand. "A" grades meant that the website demonstrated the up-to-date website design strategies and techniques on par with large organizational websites and/or the best Kentucky winery websites. With such grades, the actual website navigation could improve the brand image and awareness (i.e., brand knowledge). "A" grades not only included exemplars that could be compared to

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[1] Two of the winery websites were secondary shops that linked to the original winery websites. These two entries were not counted in the analysis as they would have been redundant and assessed a website twice.

international wine websites and with sophisticated websites in other industries, "A"

websites also included websites that deviated from the expectations of a website, but still

evoked interest, were aesthetically pleasing (for example, "clean and clear"), provided

ease of navigation, and provided the necessary information. "C" grades denoted

deficiencies in the website as far as information, navigation, and sophistication, and "C"

grades had the potential to adversely affect the wine brand, but the website may not affect

the brand, depending on the needs of the potential consumer. "C" grades also denoted

that the website was acceptable for a local potential customer that had experience with

the Kentucky wine industry or with small organizations that do not have the resources

that could be applied to website design. "C" grade websites would not be acceptable for

most international wineries or international organizations. "D" and "F" grades denoted

significant deficiencies in the website that could include poor design and planning, a lack

of information, or non-working pages. "D" and "F" grades were usually accompanied

with major flaws in web design. For example, a few websites used multiple colors on

different lines on the same page (black, teal, red), different fonts, all caps, and provided

multiple, non-categorized information on one page in a list, such as events, dates, wines,

discounts, directions, and personal information all on the first page. Also, "D" and "F"

websites included informal and inappropriate images that did not enhance brand quality.

For example, a blog from the perspective of the family dog that is not creatively written

and focused on the wine was not given high marks. Yes, such inclusion could build

uniqueness and make connections with local customers that know the winemakers and

owners or dog-lovers, and in such cases, these inclusions were considered in relationship

to how these informal, inappropriate, or unexpected inclusions benefitted the brand or

served a need in the potential customers' lives. Typos and commonly repeated sentences or phrases without alterations were commonly found on "D" and "F" websites. "D" and "F" grades implied that the websites most likely adversely affected the brand.

Thirty-four websites used a template. Website template is a pre-designed template or pre-written html code where someone is able to add original content to the template design. Template designs have the potential to give off a generic, rigid, or inaccurate feel to the website. Some templates may not offer all of the options needed for the appropriate website communication, especially for such a specialized industry like the cultural production of wine. However, other templates may communicate professionalism and appropriateness. For example, an online shop template that resembles the major online shops can communicate that the winery understands online shopping. A number of the templates earned "A" and "B" grades. Because of the limitations of the templates, a lack of creativity, time, planning, and an understanding of website design adds to the potential of producing a poor or inefficient website. Templates are a concern in website design, and even when wineries had third parties design their website (n=6), many of the third parties still chose to use templates.

There is one more issue concerning websites. *WordPress* is a poor choice for an entire website design as it is primarily used as a template for blogs. The site can offer the appropriate categories and a basic design. However, its more subtle software, such as its ability to continually scroll down in order to read past blog postings does not work as well for a website. Professional websites rarely scroll down infinitely (unless they continually upload new articles), there are borders, usually based on categories and offerings, and this limited design is more common and more aesthetically pleasing for

professional websites offering commercial services. *WordPress* offers more advanced templates for a fee, but for most of these wineries, the standard template was used, and this design rarely offered a structure and technical options needed to meet the needs of potential customers.

A final, important aspect of website design involved the last-update-date. Websites are the most valuable when they are updated regularly. Unfortunately, regular updates require resources and employees consistently involved in website edits. For most wineries, this allocation of resources is difficult if not unrealistic, even though the use of websites and social media may be the best choice for direct communication with potential customers outside of interpersonal communication. Sixteen websites were not up-to-date or the last date of website edits could not be discerned. The inability to update a website is a significant concern when there are event pages and blogs provided where potential customers will look for further information and increased interaction with the winery. Furthermore, the layout and choice of information to provide should be considered in relationship to how often a website can be updated. A website with a page for events but a calendar with no events has the potential to send a message that the winery is not interesting, that the winery may not be open or active, or that the winery employees are not concerned with their customers or their business. Such implied messages can adversely affect a wine brand.

Additional information and wine purchasing options. Additional information, especially directions, is important information to convey to potential customers that cannot be reached through other communication channels. Only six wineries did not offer directions. Even one winery that did not offer tastings or tours provided directions.

The directions were less likely to work if the directions were not embedded and were provided by an outside link. Some websites provided extensive directions that included an interactive map, written directions, directions depending on which direction from which one has heading to the winery, and information that may differentiate from GPS directions. As interpersonal communication is a highly valued form of interaction in the Kentucky wine industry, directions were an important aspect evaluated on the websites.

Another category of additional information concerned the retailers that carried the specific Kentucky wines and where they were located. The three-tier wine and alcohol distribution regulations apply to Kentucky. The three-tier system is a division between producer, distributor, retailer, and consumer. The system is designed to prevent large producer-distributor monopolies which did happen early in American wine production, specifically, a few decades before, during, and right after Prohibition even though the Anti-Trust Act was passed in the 1890s (Lukacs, 2014). Different organizations must produce, distribute, and sell the alcohol. This system does cause inefficiencies and problems for small producers that will be discussed in the interview findings, but it also means that wineries must advertise where customers may purchase their wines outside of the wineries. This information is extremely important for wineries in dry counties or for wineries that do not offer wine tastings or have gift shops. The information is also important for wineries as distance and the inability to make it to the winery during operation hours would otherwise prohibit the purchasing of the wine. Retailers carrying specific winery wines were best distributed through a website than through any other means of communication provided the information was up-to-date.

Nine wineries offered online wine purchases or online wine stores. This number is surprisingly low considering the ease at which one can setup online ordering, either through a website or by using an application, other software, or a third company website. The reason for such a low number is not surprising though. State restrictions on the direct shipping of alcohol are the main deterrent to online wine shipments. Kentucky is one of the most confusing. With Kentucky's dry counties, rules on alcohol shipping differ throughout the state, and for that reason, many wineries (and even some direct alcohol shipping companies) refuse to ship to counties and states with confusing regulations on alcohol shipping. For this reason, for some wine producers, it is easier to not ship rather than expend the energy and resources needed to follow the confusing laws. Also, many states are against direct alcohol shipments (lobbyists from distributors and retailers in some states are pushing for direct alcohol shipments to remain illegal), and concerns over maintaining positive government and political ties may convince some winemakers not to offer online wine sales.

Grape varietals and wines produced. One of the more difficult findings to ascertain during participant observation was the importance of grape varietals and wines produced at different Kentucky wineries. Websites allow for more description of grape varietals and wines. The jargon and language associated with grape growing and winemaking was also clearer, and categories of American (i.e., Eastern American, or Continental climate grapes) or European variety (also the grape varieties grown on the West Coast of America) were much clearer. These distinctions are much more difficult to elaborate and discuss in person, especially with the high level of variance in grape growing and wine education in Kentucky.

Only three wineries were unclear on their grape varietals and wines produced. Grape varietal used and wines produced are important information for wine consumers for multiple reasons. First, the type of wine and taste of wine produced is heavily influenced if not dictated by the choice of grape. Eastern American or continental American grape varietals taste extremely different from European and Californian varietals. Eastern American grape taste has been described as "foxy," (Lukacs, 2012). A second division involves the estate versus imported grapes. Estate grown grapes, which can be placed on the label to increase demand and prestige, designates the grapes as grown on the property. Relatedly, the imported grapes can be imported from a local grape grower or out-of-state. Out-of-state grapes could be imported from areas where Eastern American grapes do not grow and European grapes are more likely to grow (i.e., the West Coast). Forty-six wineries produced Eastern American grape varietals, although a number (n=11) produced both European and American varietals. Cabernet Franc grapes can grow in Europe and in the Eastern United States. Also, a few wineries in Western Kentucky claim to be able to grow European grape varietals. Nine wineries claimed to only use estate or Kentucky grown grapes. Six wineries offered a large amount of fruit wines, although almost all of the wineries offered dessert or blackberry wines of some sort. These designations are important to understanding how "Kentucky Proud" and how accurate the wine produced is to a wine that is "from" Kentucky. Not all wineries are clear on the importation of grapes, from where, and how much is imported. Most Kentucky wineries that only use Kentucky, local, or estate grapes promote their wines as such. The issues with these distinctions will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

As mentioned earlier, these grapes are used to determine what wines are produced, and these wines can produce white wines that can range between sweet, semi-sweet, semi-dry, and dry, and red wines with the same distinction. This production then leads into the description of how the wine should taste and its food pairings. A predominant amount of Kentucky's climate is suited for grape varietals that can be fermented into successful and prestigious, award-winning white wines most easily. These choices, on what grapes are produced, and then spreading the awareness as to what wines are produced at the winery, their descriptions, and awards or prestige of the wine is then used to establish brand awareness, a Kentucky terroir, knowledge for the brand and stakeholder community.

Postmodern findings. Website findings also supported evidence of postmodern communicative acts. Once again, no common core reference was found during website analysis. Instead, attempts at establishing a tradition or history of grape cultivation and wine making, either through Kentucky's history and short-lived involvement in wine making, through a family's heritage at a specific site, or through a connection to Kentucky agriculture was attempted. These references refer to an ideal that does not exist. Also, the bio's, histories, and stories are playful attempts at re-writing history. The lack of an ideal with a worldly manifestation can be verified in the history of wine. American wines cultivated in the seventeen and eighteen hundreds in Kentucky have little resemblance (and may not even be the same grapes) grown in Kentucky now (Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 27, 2014; Lukacs, 2012). Instead, these references create and re-appropriate cultural signs and signifiers. Furthermore, these signs and signifiers are virtual; they are not related to anything

concrete. Evidence of the appropriation of agricultural and Kentucky cultural

associations and applying them to the international wine community (for example,

horses, barns, and camps for hunting and lodging) have all been associated with the

postmodern consumer culture (Featherstone, 2007). This postmodern use of history and

tradition also references the tension between modernity and postmodernity recognized by

many postmodern scholars (Taylor, 2005). This historicization leads to legitimacy,

eventual consecration, and power.

Conversely, the de-contextualization of cultural associations, especially socio-

economic associations, is also evidence of postmodern consumer culture. No longer are

the signs and symbols grounded in the world. They are virtual symbols with meanings

that can be manipulated to fit the simulation (in this case a website). These symbols

become part of "language games" (Wittgenstein, 2010). Baudrillard (1983a, 1983b) and

Jameson (1985, 1991) both speak to the lack of a connection to reality through the

reproduction of signs and images.

This tension between modernity and postmodernity is also evidenced in the use of

symbols to appeal to the international wine community (an allusion to international

organizations), the presence of nation-states through regulation and the official

determination of terroirs, and international trade, all characteristics of modernity. At the

same time, postmodern characteristics, such as an information-age economy seen through

the use of websites as an integral aspect of direct to consumer communication, expansion

of markets, and improved distribution, fragmented websites (especially poor websites that

give little sense of the wine or winery), un-grounded reproductions and re-appropriated

cultures (such as the Italian reproductions at Kentucky wineries), the new creation of

wines that break rules or blur the lines of importing or state grown grapes, and a fragmented Kentucky wine industry.

This last point demands further elaboration. On the Kentucky wine webpage, there is no central authority. There are four regions, North Central, South Central, West, and East. These regions have no central point. Furthermore, larger or smaller wineries, or the most powerful and influential wineries are not specified online. The regions reinforce network connections of wineries that are close to one another. Kentucky cultural associations are dominated by these local connections. The website designs exhibit play, informal and new attempts at communication, and the Eastern American wine producing wineries, are appealing to a niche market (Taylor, 2005 ascribes niche markets as a postmodern organizational strategy). Overall, in website design, the diversity of logos and slogans (or the absence of such), and the names of unique and new wines denotes diversity. A focus on a wide and dizzying array of awards shifts the focus towards innovation and quality and can be assumed to be included in order to gain prestige, a positive reputation, and higher sales, which all lead to increased influence and power. All of these characteristics create ambiguity and uncertainty in the more modern international wine community.

Consequently, power and identity are constantly shifting within the Kentucky wine industry depending on context and agency. No matter which Kentucky winery markets itself as a successful international winery with an internationally respected wine, the winery and wine will be met with suspicion and disbelief. However, if a large and respected winery, either throughout Kentucky or with its local stakeholders, positions itself as such, or uses the necessary Kentucky cultural associations to position itself as

such, then the winery can obtain power and status by altering the discourse. These multiple identities, shifting contexts, and power fluctuations are all considered postmodern phenomena.

These positions can also be considered oppositional. If a winemaker and winery decides to eschew the international wine community or its local stakeholders (and winery websites varied drastically in their appeals to either group) these acts can be considered oppositional to the expectations of the community or the winery's position. Overall, if a winery can gain power in one context, out of the norm for the traditional hierarchy, then these acts are oppositional.

Bourdieu and the field of cultural production. Like participant observation, website analysis supported Bourdieu's (1993) conceptualization of the field of cultural production. Cultural Kentucky wine production fits Bourdieu's (1993) criteria and description. Each website inhabited a different position in the field, and no two wineries inhabited the same position, or even similar positions. The combination of associations, the choice of photos, the template or original website development, the services offered, the language used, all of these characteristics, easily differentiated each winery. As mentioned in numerous places during the analysis, the presence of awards confirms the process of legitimacy by consecrating institutions earned through the accumulation of cultural capital (respected wines), prestige, and recognition. Connections to the field of power were more difficult to discern. However, wineries without awards or without unique and individual winemakers had to rely on other services, pages, and information to attract potential customers, and this practice could be seen as an alternative appeal to

the field of power as the specific winery lacked cultural capital and recognition from the cultural field.

Significantly, when considering websites, cultural and aesthetic value and meaning shift from the actual wine, winemaker, winery, and site of wine consumption to the websites and their successful design elements, including texts, discourse, and positioning. Instead of limiting or challenging Bourdieu's framework, these shifts reinforce Bourdieu's assertion on the importance of positioning, relationships, and associations. Instead, difficulty increases in understanding context and relationships due to the virtual nature of websites. The implications of this issue will be discussed in the next chapter. The fragmented and network nature mentioned earlier, especially of wine regions helps to establish relationships, although clear terroirs, while a modern idea, may be more successful. Again this issue will be discussed in the next chapter.

The introduction of new players is relatively easy in the field of cultural wine production, as Bourdieu (1993) argued. *Kentucky Wine* will post the information of any winery and website that meets its criteria, and based on the websites found on the website, some were simple blog-like, homemade websites (and wineries) that sold wine commercially. Moreover, the presence of *Kentucky Wine* and Kentucky Proud reference the social forces that influence the field of cultural wine production.

Bourdieu (1984; 1993) lists education as essential for cultural products, for the field, and for culture. With such importance placed on education, the lack of educational services by winery (as there are not many wine-institutions in the state offering wine educations), is a significant issue. Without education on Kentucky wines and wineries, customer's needs cannot be met, and a desire cannot be created. Yes, websites spread

information and awareness, but as already mentioned, the information is fragmented and decontextualized, and therefore, make it difficult to learn the cultural codes of Kentucky wine. A website has difficulty in providing a full Kentucky wine education.

Finally, the information revealing the backgrounds of winemakers, especially earlier careers before entering the Kentucky wine industry or land that has been in a family for generations sheds light on the allocation of resources within the field. While there were startup winemakers, a number of winemakers earned the required resources through other means before entering the industry or by having access to land being used for other purposes before being used for grape growing and wine production. In understanding the background of the winemaker before commercial production, specifically if the winemaker shifted wine production from amateur to commercial wine production or entered the industry with extra economic capital (money or land) before producing commercially, had massive influence on the position the winemaker took up in the field.

Qualitative Interviews

Ten qualitative interviews were conducted as part of this study. The goal was to conduct fifteen or more interviews. Unfortunately, time constraints and difficulty in convincing winemakers to participate in the interview process limited participation. One interviewee that works in a supporting role related to the Kentucky wine industry lamented the lack of participation by winemakers in similar endeavors. Lack of available time due to winemaking demands and lack of perceived value of the study for the winemakers were cited as the main reasons for little interest in study participation. In one attempt in recruiting participants, the e-mail exchanges were so infrequent that the

winemaker appeared to struggle to follow the details of the recruitment process including the scheduling a time and date for an interview. Also, on more than one occasion, winemaking demands forced the rescheduling of an interview. The lack of participation will be discussed in the limitations section of the next chapter.

Nevertheless, winemaker interviews proved fruitful (which should become evident over the next two chapters if I have done my job properly), and many of the interviews lasted longer than the one-hour time limit. The analysis of the interviews was supported by knowledge gained from expert interviews conducted as part of an earlier, exploratory study. From time to time, the expert interviews are referenced in corroboration of interview details. Along with winemakers, a grape grower was interviewed, although the interview was not recorded as the interview coincided with a tour of the vineyard. A subsequent written questionnaire was sent to the grape grower, and the written response is included in the interview findings. An individual involved in support services was also included in the interview process as the individual was recommended by multiple winemakers and Kentucky wine experts. Unfortunately, no wine distributors responded to requests for interviews. Thus, this distributor's perspective could not be included in the analysis. Time restraints did not allow for further attempts to recruit distributors. Instead, the omission of distributors offers opportunities for future research directions. As mentioned previously, informal interviews were conducted during participant observation and during personal visits to Kentucky wineries. These informal interviews also influenced the data analysis and are referenced as corroborative evidence. The names of wineries and winemakers have been removed in order to safeguard confidentiality. In certain cases, specific information and

direct quotations could not be included in the findings as the information could be used to identify the interviewee.

Interviews were conducted at a location determined by the interviewee. In almost every case, the site was usually the vineyard or winery of the wine producer. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. If an interviewee felt it necessary to address any subjects discussed during the interview at a later date, the opportunity and information was provided to do so, although, no interviewee chose to re-evaluate their responses. Interviewees were given the opportunity to disclose information that would be "off-the-record." This information was not included in the findings, but the option was provided in order to respect the interviewee, to cultivate a positive and productive relationship with the interviewee, and to return power to the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In a few cases, follow-up correspondences were conducted, but in all cases, it was not to clarify data but inquiry into specific situations and updates on the status of the interviewee and his or her position. With the support position interviewee, e-mail correspondence was used to clarify regulatory issues.

As the interview data analysis was conducted after participant observation, previous Kentucky wine categories were considered. However, interview data was analyzed with consideration for categories, themes, concepts, opinions, and perspectives that did not fit neatly into the already developed categories. Of particular note were the winemakers' concerns regarding regulations, the role of Kentucky wine industry support institutions and organizations, and the serious issue of Kentucky grape growing and the establishment of a Kentucky terroir. An important aspect of the interviews was the rich description and insight into the motivations and decision making processes for website

design and purpose as well as a deeper understanding of the brand management strategies and tactics, their purpose, motivations, and goals. The interview data demonstrate the importance of "rich description" and multiple qualitative methods for gaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon and site (Geertz, 1972).

The interview findings begin with wine producer concerns over regulations. Cultural associations and ritual communication categories have been collapsed and will be referenced in a combined section. Nevertheless, interviews revealed that wine producers connected cultural associations, ritual communication, and brand management in a fluid continuum, and these concepts overlap in a number of sections. The topics of website design, digital media, and mass communication will be covered under brand management. As with the other sections, the interview findings will end with postmodern and field of cultural production. Lastly, like the specific characteristics of digital media, the qualitative interviews revealed data specific to the interview process: the role of the University of Kentucky in supporting the Kentucky wine industry. The qualitative interview findings will end with a discussion of this subject.

Regulations. There were a number of regulations that were of issue to Kentucky winemakers. The first had to do with the range of alcoholic products winemakers could produce. The second issue had to do with the distribution regulations associated with the alcohol industry, the three-tiered-system. The three-tiered-system references the requirement that separate entities must produce, distribute, and commercially selling the alcoholic product. In other words, no one entity can be involved in more than one tier. This system was introduced after the end of Prohibition in the United States in order to avoid the monopolization of the alcohol industries by the largest companies. With the

exception of Washington State, all states use some version of the three-tiered system, although some states may have state controlled distribution monopolies. Also, exceptions are sometimes made for smaller alcohol establishments, such as local breweries. For Kentucky, originally, small farm wineries were the exception, although that exception has since been rescinded. The change in the exception was the issue and will be discussed below. Finally, some winemakers had individual concerns with wine label requirements and Kentucky's dry county laws.

Distillation regulations. In all interviews, at some point during the discussion, the issue of Kentucky wine industry regulations arose without a direct question from the interviewer. The regulatory discussion tended to emerge through an organic discussion of the wine making experience, but two questions tended to elicit the discussion of regulations: (1) what is the most difficult or challenging aspect of wine production? (2) how did you get involved in the wine industry? This second question opened up the discussion into the specifics of wine making experiences, and, therefore, discussions would address local community concerns.

The most prominent issue on the minds of winemakers was the distillation options available for small farm wineries. Kentucky winemakers operate under the small farm winery license which allows Kentucky winemakers to produce up to 50,000 gallons of wine each year. This license allows winemakers to offer on-site services such as wine tastings as well as offering their products at farmers markets and fairs. If a Kentucky winemaker produced more than 50,000 gallons, the winemaker would be required to purchase a winery license which is much more expensive, and this license does not allow for on-premises services. In essence, the winery license would signal that the winery has

moved into the mass production of wine which is more likely for wine as commodity and wineries looking to generate revenue through quantity of wine sold rather than the quality of the wine. No Kentucky winery has reached the 50,000 gallon limit although two to three wineries are believed to be close to the limit. Importantly, the gallon limit varies from state to state, and this fact may be why quite large wineries exist in other states under equivalent small farm winery licenses.

Because so few small farm wineries are close to the gallon limit, the limit is not the primary concern. Instead, the issue is with the limits on alcoholic drinks that may be produced under the small farm winery license from the grapes or juice acquired by the winery. Currently, only wine may be produced under the small farm winery license. Many of the winemakers would like to distill cognac, brandy, and/or port from the grapes and juice. One winemaker described the rationale behind expanding the acceptable spirits distilled from grapes and juice:

> Because I have a tank that's sitting there full of wine, this is a red wine tank, and it's wine that I've given up on. It's never going to be good enough to sell. So I pump it into there. And it's only a 300 gallon tank, so it's not like tons of wine, you know. But um, it's 300 gallons of juice. It's nothing wrong with it, it's too tart basically. It's not ripe enough…Yeah, so we could distill that and use it to make port, use the brandy to make port, or age brandy cognac style brandy, or make a fruit brandy that could be sold right away, or a lighter, sweeter, brandy that could be made or sold right here in the tasting room. That's what we're hoping.

This rationale, of utilizing all of the grapes or juice purchased, is the driving force behind the desire for distillation rights to be included in the small farm license.

Even if the distillation processes were required to be in separate facilities, winemakers would like to be able to setup separate bonding facilities at the same sites, in separate buildings, under one license. In fact, this issue of multiple facilities led to

exasperation over the sometimes contradictory or confusing regulations. As one

interviewee explained:

> For example, you can have a brewery license and a distillery license. You can
> have a distillery license and a winery license. You can't have a winery license
> and produce   anything [else]. But I can have a distillery and a brewery. The
> other thing you're not allowed to own, and this hurt me personally, I was an
> investor in a very good restaurant system…So I had to sell my shares over night
> in the restaurant business because they threatened to pull all of the liquor
> licenses. That's the kind of thing is very frustrating in   this business. It's not
> how am I getting my grapes here, where are my customers, it's all about the
> legalities that really a lot of them don't make sense.

Many alcohol statutes and laws do not come with a rationale or explanation behind them,

and in Kentucky, a number of the regulations have to do with concerns stemming from

the repeal of Prohibition, and thus, the reasoning cannot be clearly discerned due to the

change in context and the passage of time. In relationship to the aforementioned facility

and business separations, one of the major concerns of state government after prohibition

was the prevention of consolidation and alcohol monopolies by bourbon companies that

were able to stay in business through medical exemptions during Prohibition. This

concern was quite real as a number of states experienced alcohol industry consolidation

after the repeal of prohibition (Lukacs, 2012).

Interestingly, when questioned as to why the state has not approved distillation

under the small farm license, more than one winemaker referenced the bourbon industry,

their lobbyists, and a close relationship with Kentucky's Alcohol Beverage and Control

Board (ABC). Explanations included:

> Interviewee 1: I think the bourbon industry, I don't know why they're scared, I
> think they're making 80 million gallons of bourbon a year, and they can't make it
> fast enough. I don't think my 300 cases of cognac. You know, no one is ever
> going to wake up on derby day and go, "Hey let's get a mint julep, no, no, forget
> the bourbon, let's have a cognac." That's never going to happen, but they're
> acting as if it's a big threat.

Interviewee 2: Um, I think, they want what we can do, so they can't do it, so they don't want us to be able to do it. They don't think it's a level playing field… They don't want us to be able to do it as much as we can. We have more lenient rules on that than they do…So it seems to fly better, but they're jealous of what we can do, so they fight it.

The second interviewee is referring to the freedom of services including on-premises services and serving wine at fairs and festivals. However, as to why, that the bourbon industry is against small farm wineries based on equality or fairness, may not be accurate.

When inquiring over the position of bourbon industry from a state-employed, third party interviewee, the interviewee gave more insight into the rationale and perspective of the bourbon industry:

If you have talked to the wineries, they seemed to always say there's strife between the bourbon and wine industries because they see the bourbon industries not allowing the swine industry to do what they want to do to grow. But from the outsider who kind of works with both, there's no strife in the bourbon industry about the wine industry, they just don't care. You know, they are huge, and the wine industry doesn't matter to the bourbon industry. They have their interests that they protect, uh, the distillation being one of those interests.

In this case, distillation must be separated from wine and considered on its own terms.

The bourbon industry is singularly interested in distillation, not the *distillation (fermentation) of wine*:

They [the wineries] want everything to be under the small farm winery license. But in looking at that, it's a $100 to $120 dollars a year, and suddenly you add language in that they can distill, people that want to have a small distillery are going to have a small winery license as opposed to getting a micro-distillery license. So they're saying they just want to keep it under a distillery license.

The micro-distillers are the key concern for the bourbon industry. The large bourbon companies do not want micro-distillers using the small farm winery license to get around the distillation regulations for non-wine related fortified spirits (i.e., bourbon).   This misunderstanding, which should be an easy fix through appropriate communication, has

created tension and conflict between two alcohol industries that could mutually benefit

from a stronger relation and inter-alcohol-industry partnerships (more on this issue in the

next chapter).

This conflict has been further exasperated by the actions of Kentucky's ABC even

though, through the ABC, a compromise could be reached. As the third-party

interviewee explained, "It's a really simple fix. It's probably something that needs to be

done with the ABC's yearly legislative agenda that fixes the laws and makes them

compatible" (personal communication, January13, 2015). Unfortunately, the ABC's

defense of the laws as they are currently in place has caused misunderstanding and

enmity for the ABC and the bourbon industry:

> Interviewee 1: The absolute over regulation from the ABC on everybody. That's
> the toughest part. If you read those laws, you probably won't get into the
> business. It's brutal.

> Interviewee 2: The ABC is to me, is not a lawmaking organization, they should
> be an enforcement organization. But guess what, we've been told by everybody,
> if you want anything passed, you should go to the ABC and get their approval.
> Well that's ridiculous. That's totally against their charter, they're an enforcement
> agency. They're not a law. They don't make laws, why do we need their
> approval? There just there, if the legislators say we can make whiskey, they
> should say, "okay." Okay well that's the law, you know? They have no say in it,
> but they do have a say in it in Kentucky.

As the second interviewee's comments reveal, actions by the ABC, in combination of

lack of context, the passage of time, and personal interpretation of the role of the ABC

can lead to strife and frustration.

These issues can lead to serious emotions and positions. For example, for one

interviewee, the discussion of the role of the ABC ended with these comments:

> We had a meeting with the ABC, and they said, "We're really here to protect the
> players in existence," and I thought, don't say anything, cause that's totally, why
> would they be protecting the distillers and the wholesalers, and the retailers?

That's the legislature's job, not the ABC's. The ABC shouldn't be protecting anybody, just enforce the laws that are out there…But the ABC shouldn't be on their side. What right do they have to go to Frankfort? …I don't know how they get away with it. Somebody ought to be saying something.

When pressed as to why no one has spoken about the issue, the interviewee responded with, "Everybody is scared to piss off the wrong people because everybody kind of wants to be anonymous" (personal communication, December 9, 2015). Perhaps, somebody should discuss the role of the ABC as there may be a misunderstanding between the current role of the ABC and personal interpretations of the role of the ABC.

To elaborate, the ABC's role is to regulate an industry *that is already in existence*, and so is in a sense, the ABC has been established to protect the current *players in existence*. Furthermore, the bourbon industry generates more revenue and employs more Kentucky workers than small farm wineries (Kentucky Department of Agriculture, 2015). Therefore, the state benefits when it protects the bourbon industry. As for wholesalers and distributors, in order to avoid monopolies and in consideration of the laws of dry counties, the ABC has been delegated the task of regulating these processes of the alcohol industry. Finally, as has been mentioned earlier, the passage of time, lack of context, and lack of industry/regulation experience, distance private citizens and legislators from understanding and interpreting alcohol laws successfully. ABC employees may be the only state employed actors with enough industry experience to understand the laws in place. Misunderstandings and poor communication have hindered the potential partnerships between sections of Kentucky's alcohol industry and have produced comments like this: "Nothing against assault rifles, but I'm saying the weapons industry is easier than the alcohol industry, and that shouldn't be. That's the toughest part of this" (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, September 19, 2014).

Distribution restrictions. In the United States, as a result of post-Prohibition and business consolidation concerns, the three-tiered system was developed in order to avoid alcohol industry monopolies. The three-tiered system requires a separation between alcohol producers, distributors, and retailers. However, exceptions, leniency in the interpretation and enforcement of these laws, and loop-holes in the system have created additional concerns for wine producers. Two specific issues involve the ability of wine makers to establish distribution companies by placing the company under a family member's name (which cannot be done for retail holdings or a restaurant), and the early exception of small farm wineries from distribution regulations has created resentment since that status has been revoked. This exception was originally in place to help small farm wineries get started, but, as of 2007, the exception was rescinded and small farms must hire separate distributors to sell their wine.

This change has created difficulty for some of the smaller wineries. As one interviewee explained, many of the smaller wineries cannot get distributors to carry Kentucky wines: "They've [distributors] got enough Kentucky wineries already. And it doesn't sell very fast, so. They don't want to carry more Kentucky wineries," (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, December 9, 2014). Instead, Kentucky wineries must hire independent distributors. One interviewee explained the process:

> So I've got an independent guy that will take it to close places. It's a guy with a truck, and he has a day job, and he'll carry them for a fee for me, and he's filled his paperwork. He's a business, he's a distributor, and a lot of small wineries are doing that. There's a few guys like that that will do it, but you have to do your own marketing, and then he'll carry the wine. He'll come, he'll drive out here, pick up two cases of wine, drive them to Versailles where I go every day, and then drive them back home.

The frustration is understandable when the winemaker travels by the retailer every day. However, these laws are in place throughout the United States.

In response, the state has attempted to entice larger distributors to carry more Kentucky wines through subsidies, but as a third party interviewee explained:

> The wholesale grant was created as kind of a way as a kind of way to hopefully entice wholesalers to carry Kentucky wines, and that was something that some of the more powerful wholesalers suggested be done, and then they said if that's done, then we'll carry Kentucky wines, and it was, and then they didn't really. So it's still a huge problem.

The interviewee went on to explain that this situation created a "Catch 22," the small wineries could not get large enough to generate interest from the large distributors because they could not get their product distributed.

There is another model that might help the smaller wineries. As with almost every issue involving winemaking, there is a model that can be appropriated from another wine region. In this case, the Virginia wine industry has an alternative that is being considered:

> They [Virginia] have this really cool system, and it's called the Virginia winery wholesale company. Something really generic sounding, but they're kind of going through this same thing, so what they did, they created a distribution company under the Department of Agriculture, and then they have a board that runs it, and everything is done online, and the wineries act as independent contractors to the wholesaler, and so they log on, and they do their transactions, and they pay three dollars, which covers the taxes, and then from there they just self-distribute, but it's all under a distribution company. And all the wholesalers are okay with it because they have 3000 case load, if they reach that in a year, they get kicked out of the program, but if they have 3000 cases, a wholesaler is probably going to pick you up. So that's an awesome system.

This alternative has not been proposed in Kentucky. The difficulty has to do with such a proposal being a "huge initiative," and "you have to get a lot of people behind you" (third

party interviewee, personal communication, January 13, 2015). Once again, the issue involves the cooperation and communication among a number of individuals.

Consequently, not all of the distribution stories have been negative. Some of the larger wineries have created their own distribution companies and that has helped the wineries grow, especially when the distribution network is local or in designated areas of Kentucky. Kentucky has a few primary areas for distribution, Louisville, Lexington, and the Kentucky areas close to Cincinnati. Also, because of *Liquor Barn's* (an alcohol retailer) and *Kroger's* significant presence in Lexington, a local distribution company only needs to establish a strong relationship with two alcohol retailers in one of Kentucky's major markets. Distribution outside of Kentucky requires different licenses and is much more difficult, but a number of wineries have been able to establish strong local consumer support with this distribution blueprint.

Finally, at least one winemaker found value in employing an outside distributor. An issue arose over the attempted self-sale of wine. As the interviewee explained, "I found when I went into restaurants doing my own marketing, and I say I own [name of winery removed], I'm the vintner there, I'd love for you to try, they know I'm going to say it's a great wine. They know of course I want you to buy it because it's my winery" (Kentucky wine maker, personal communication, September 19, 2014). Instead, this winemaker found the third party sales representative valuable. Instead of mistrust due to the conflict of interest surrounding self-distribution, the winemaker found that:

> The sales rep develops a relationship with the restaurant owner or who is in charge with getting the wines. Well after a while, that person, that rep goes in there, the sales, the person responsible for it, says, here, what do I need to get? And they say, oh here, I'm going tell you what you need to get, you need to get three cases of [wine name omitted], and they go, sure, okay. Because they trust their reps, and they listen to their reps more than someone from the company

> because of course I'm going to sugar-coat everything. So they trust their reps, so if you can get a good relationship with the reps, they're the ones doing a lot of work for you, because they get a lot more sales than you would.

Clearly, there is value in a strong relationship with a sales representative, and there are different communicative skills needed to sell wine to distributors, retailers, and restaurants, skills that winemakers may not be able to develop as they have so many other duties. These benefits and their importance to brand management will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Additional regulation issues: Wine labels and dry counties. Wine labels have strict requirements that are not known to most of the American populace. For example, in order to have the name of the state on the wine label, 75% of the grapes used in making the wine must come from that state. Imported grapes cannot have the vintage year printed on the wine bottle. Wine may not have the word bourbon placed on the label[2]. These regulations can become issues for some wine makers. Wine aged in bourbon barrels has been a successful product for a number of winemakers. This benefit has to do with the growth in popularity of bourbon worldwide. Placing bourbon on a wine label, much like bourbon-aged beers have, increases sales. However, this practice is illegal. Nevertheless, some wineries have done so despite the regulation. I have viewed such wines for sale in liquor stores as have a number of winemakers interviewed. Such practices are a concern for some winemakers as they feel this practice gives some wineries an unfair advantage. In reaction, one winemaker called the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) to report the practice:

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[2] This regulation references wine history. Wines were often fortified with other spirits, unbeknownst to consumers. This regulation is an attempt to prohibit such practices and end the practice of misleading customers (Lukacs, 2012).

So, this came about in the last week, as a matter of fact, I was on the TTB recently as this morning, and I talked to somebody Friday, and they knew that they had a problem, and they said, well I'm going to have to call you back on this. And they never called back, so they left a message that afternoon, and they called me back this morning, and they said, "Absolutely, they cannot use that wording," well that's kind of funny cause your file number is right here saying you approved it. She looks it up, and says, "Yup, well it shouldn't have been," and I said, "That's fine," obviously, and I said, "And this can go one of two ways, I mean, you can make them pull everything off the shelf or you can allow us to do it, I'm okay either way." So I was told that they were going to pull everything. They won't. I'm going to have to get an attorney to take care of it.

This interaction took time out of the winemaker's day. The winemaker spent one day perusing the TTB site to see if the label was originally approved. He then spent two days on the phone with the TTB. Finally, the winemaker will spend more time and resources getting attorneys involved in the regulatory issue. This time and the resources spent on regulation take away from time spent on other areas of the winemaking process. The consequence of such choices will be discussed in the next chapter.

Such issues are not limited to American wine industry regulations either. Local issues, especially the dry counties in Kentucky, demand time and communication in order to establish positive and productive relationships with local stakeholders. Mudd (2006) reported on such an issue with a winery in central Kentucky. In interviewing a different winemaker, the winemaker described the time and resources devoted to convincing local stakeholders to support Sunday alcohol sales. Sunday alcohol sales are extremely important to wineries as Sunday is one of the three most profitable sales days for wineries. This winemaker recounts the second time the winery requested Sunday sales. The year before, the petition failed:

In order for them to take on that baby, I had to go collect the majority of signatures so not even just 25% of my voters I had to collect 55% of the signatures in our precinct to show them that hey we're gonna pass this again, I'm going to try and save you 10 thousand dollars of the county's money. You have

this election, we're going to get this too, so they did the responsible thing and uh, were actually prohibitive, we're open one to seven whereas if I took it to an election, we would have been open 1-11.

The winemaker was required to go door-to-door to get these signatures. The winemaker did this after doing the same thing a year before which did go to a special election and did cost the county ten thousand dollars. The time, money, and communication spent on these regulatory issues is of deep concern, and in this last case, a deciding factor in having a profitable winery, and the efforts take away valuable resources that could be allocated to areas of winemaking that can increase sales, improve brand management, and cultivate relationships with potential customers.

Cultural associations and ritual communication. With Kentucky winemakers, discussion of cultural associations and ritual communication was much more organic than analytical. Cultural association categories consisted of characteristics that overlapped with data found through participant observation and website analysis. Cultural references developed out of geographic-specific associations and individual winemaker's experiences both wine-related and life experiences unrelated to grape growing and winemaking. These experiences often included specific socio-economic life experiences and interactions with the international wine market. For example, a number of the winemakers formed their opinions of the international wine industry by visiting and/or working in California or in Europe, especially France. These experiences informed a winemaker's conceptualization of where his or her specific Kentucky wine fits in the larger wine marketplace.

Locally, Kentucky winemakers considered their local communities. Sensitivity to the local community was also influenced by familial connections. Only one winemaker

interviewed was not from Kentucky; thus, winemaker's were aware to what cultural

artifacts were important to the community. As one winemaker explained, "We're on a

horse farm in Fayette County. I'm not evicting horses to grow grapes, I don't think that's

the thing to do, I think Fayette county needs the horses, um that's our bloodline. We

need, we have to have that" (Kentucky winemaker, September 19, 2014). As a result, the

winemaker's consideration of horses influenced the choices of images on the website, in

this case, images of the horses. Another winemaker was sensitive to the winery, and its

physical location in the community: "The one thing I thought we had very good, believe

it or not, was location [in-depth description of the area removed to protect

confidentiality]… It's a wonderful area for tourism down here" (Kentucky winemaker,

personal communication, January 9, 2015). Geographic sensitivity was a significant

factor in cultural associations.

Still, almost everyone interviewed struggled to summarize what Kentucky wine

meant in specific and direct terms. Responses to the question, "What does Kentucky

wine mean to you?" included:

> Interviewee 1: Jacques Dufour, vintner for Revolutionary War hero the Marquis
> de Lafayette, started the first vineyard in the country in the1790s with funding
> help from Henry Clay after a search across several states for a locale similar to
> that around his home in France… The story needs to get out if Kentucky wines
> are to become competitive outside the state.

> Interviewee 2: I want people to think of Kentucky, Bourbon, good wine, horses,
> you know I want to be in the mix, I want wineries to be considered good.
> Interviewee 3: I think the Southern hospitality is what differentiates it… So for
> me what makes Kentucky wines important and what makes Kentucky um proud is
> the blood sweat and tears, the Southern hospitality, the experience, uh, that you
> get from a Kentucky small farm winery.

These Kentucky wine descriptions hold two problems. First, these cultural associations

cannot be elicited in the wines directly. Human history and Southern hospitality cannot

be tasted in wine. Secondly, these cultural associations are vague. Southern hospitality

and goodness are ambiguous terms with unclear definitions and associations. The grape

growers and winemakers separated the symbolic meaning of wine from the actual taste of

Kentucky wine. Where international wine descriptions will include references to tastes

found in the wine, direct notes such as hints of a specific fruit, or indirect notes that

reference place such as spiciness derived from the soil, Kentucky wine makers are using

associations that are completely separated from concrete references. The cultural

references needed to be teased out of the interview process which may affect brand

management choices and the establishment of a clear terroir (since geographic and human

input are considered part of terroir. There will be more discussion of this subject in a

subsequent section).

Significant rituals and ritual communication was much more evident from the

interviews. Whether discussing what winemakers desire for the Kentucky wine industry

or in their observations of interactions surrounding the cultural consumption of Kentucky

wine, there were discussions of wine rituals. For example, one winemaker discussed the

goals the winemaker's winery has set for their potential customers:

> We're not selling wine, we're selling the experience, from the full wine, the full
> flavor, you know, it should be three tier, it should be, you know a full-bodied
> experience. But that same is true for the hospitality, and the atmosphere, and the
> ambiance, and you know, enjoying the night sky, the food, it's important, we try,
> you know, the quality of our food is very important. Just because we're selling
> the experience, not wine, at all.

The winemaker's description aligns with Rothenbuhler's (1998) description of a ritual by

attempting to create patterned behavior with symbolic effects (in this case

human/cultural/societal effects) in order to participate in the serious enjoyment of wine.

The experience takes into account not just the wine, but also the service of the employees

(hospitality) and the environment or context (atmosphere and ambiance) and the

accompanying props (quality food). For this winemaker, the cultural consumption of

wine is not about the consumption of a liquid, but an entire experience, and the

winemaker expects to communicate that perspective through the ritual attached to the

wine. Interestingly, later in the interview, when asked directly if the winemaker could

identify any rituals associated with the consumption of wine, the winemaker could not

answer. Again, cultural associations and ritual communication were not easily

recognizable to winemakers.

Nevertheless, other winemakers were more aware of the rituals. One winemaker

was well aware of the rituals associated with wine, accepted rituals willingly, and

believed they supported the entire wine industry. As the winemaker described:

> Oh yeah, you know the whole decanter thing. The decanter serves a purpose,
> bringing air to the wine. Oxygen is the enemy for 90% of the wine's life, but
> when you open the bottle, now it has to breathe. So the decanter makes sense, but
> at the table, it's just a cool presentation. And you can ask all the chefs, the
> presentation is a lot. Throw a steak on a table, and throw a potato on it, not very
> appetizing, you know make a potato, cut it, make the steak with a little garnish on
> it, it's a big event. Wine is a same way, I think alcohol, and wine is the same way.

Not only does the winemaker recognize the value to the enjoyment of the consumption of

wine, but the winemaker moves quickly into the aesthetic enjoyment of the wine ("it's

just a cool presentation"). Furthermore, the winemaker argues that the ritual *increases*

the enjoyment of food and wine by making it "a big event." To this winemaker, the ritual

improves the wine consumption event, establishing the ritual as part of culture or the

serious life.

In fact, this winemaker believed so ardently in the rituals associated with wine

that more efficient, cost-effective and quality effective measures would not replace the

rituals surrounding wine. When the interview moved onto innovations in wine, in particular, the prevalence of boxed wine (wine in plastic bags actually preserves wine better than glass bottles), the winemaker discussed the ritual and cultural issues that have limited the adoption of the boxed wine presentation:

> Rothschild tried. It's perfect. People on yachts buy box wine, in all those nooks and crannies you can put a box wine. So that parts of it makes sense, but I don't think it's ever going to replace the bottle. The eco bottles now are 25% lighter, and I think they're going to regulate that pretty soon. They're less expensive for once, even if it's better, it's less expensive, kind of a surprise. But that might be a step to get a little more green, but the ritual around the bottle and stuff has got to be there.

This response is layered with ritual issues. First, boxed wine gained a place as elite wine drinkers desired the box wines for their yachts. The box wine was then endorsed by a prestigious French winery, Rothschild. The box wine was setup for acceptance by the elite, and yet, the box wine could not gain a foothold in the international wine market. The glass bottle (as part of the process of consuming wine) is so important to the consumption of wine that instead of replacing the glass bottle with a more efficient and higher quality product, the glass bottle is considered essential to wine consumption. Lukacs (2012) explains the importance of the glass bottle in the tradition of wine consumption; however, in many places, he also notes that wine consumption has consistently embraced advancements in technology. The winemaker's response illustrates the triumph of the cultural consumption of wine over advancements in quality and efficiency (the early adoption of glass bottles and corks were quality and efficiency choices), a strong example of ritual communication.

Overall, ritual communication was more apparent than the choice of cultural associations. Perhaps, the identification of ritual communication has to do with the

adoption of the rituals of a social group, and cultural associations emerged out of lived experiences, with some of those experiences (such as place of birth) being out of the control of the winemakers. The winemakers chose a very specific life, and they must be sensitive to the consumers—and their way of life—in order to meet their needs. These issues will be discussed in the next chapter as well, and they will also be considered in relationship to the brand management choices of the winemakers.

Brand management. There were three brand management issues addressed during the qualitative interviews, website purpose, wine community and consumption education, and the establishment of a Kentucky terroir. The last issue, the establishment of a Kentucky terroir, took up the bulk of the conversation other than regulatory concerns.

The role of websites. Analysis of websites offered a researcher's interpretation and impression of what the websites' communicated. Qualitative interviews offered insight into the motives and intentions of the winemakers when designing or allocating design of websites to others. When these insights are aligned with the approach to cultural associations and website reception, much can be understood about the digital communication of Kentucky wine producers. First, qualitative interviews confirmed website analysis that the importance and resources allocated to website design and upkeep varied with the different wineries. Where one winery would claim, "Our website is very important," another winemaker would lament, "I don't think mine is as good as it should be" (Kentucky winemaker, November, 4, 2014; Kentucky winemaker, December 9, 2014). The responses to "What role does your website play in your brand management," or "How important is your website to your brand, to your winery?" ran the

gamut from integral to not much. However, as the previous answers revealed, all the

winemakers believed the website and a digital presence was essential for marketing and

communication. The issues involved the ability to allocate time and resources to website,

digital media, and social media efforts.

Interestingly, the most successful Kentucky wineries had a strong and specific

(i.e., clear and definable) approach to the role a website plays in the brand management

of their wine and the potential benefits. As one winemaker explained:

> We do a lot of e-commerce in comparison to other wineries. So, in my former,
> you know, when I worked in the corporate world I managed uh a call center and a
> website, seven different websites. We managed seven different websites. So as
> far as e-commerce, I'm familiar, and it's huge… So it's huge. It's a huge
> industry, a huge market, and very important, and that's something a lot of small
> farm wineries struggle with, even this one, to some degree, until I came, of
> course, but having someone with the, you know, the know-how.

In this instance, the winemaker recognized the value of a website for increasing sales.

Again, findings from website analysis demonstrated that many of the websites were not

maximizing online sales opportunities. This winemaker recognized the importance of

online sales, even if online wine sales are hampered by shipping restrictions and age

restrictions for ordering and receiving shipments.

Still, websites are not only retail outlets, even if this purpose was the primary goal

for one winemaker. Another winemaker thought of the winery's website as a central hub

for information distribution. The winemaker described the winery's strategy for the

website:

> We probably generate more activity through Facebook right now, but we want to
> be able to do more with the webpage per se. And it's a lot easier to feed people.
> And that's the way I've always looked at it as a good place to feed everything. So
> we can have a calendar there. You can sign up for the wine club. You'll know
> what's going on, what's coming up, even and all of that, and it's all in one central
> location.

The winemaker referenced social media, and during the interview, social media was mentioned a number of times; therefore, in a follow up question, the winemaker was asked to define the role of a website in relationship to social media:

> Well, the website I think is just a broader tool, um, and again, again, I think it's kind of a broader tool, now that being said, there's an awful a lot of people, particularly, or in my estimation, is that the younger they get, the less likely they are to land on the website or to land somewhere else…So the website I think it just a good place that we can control the content, we don't have people posting to it, so it's more of a controlled advertisement I guess, and again, what I seen mainly is us just trying to feed people to it for information… And obviously you can get that with a website, so it works for us, but it's just part of the mix, but I don't see that as a keystone necessarily, but it is a good place to get information and control it. You know you get to a social media site, and you can get lost in your own blather, and posts that you make and everything else.

The winemaker has a clear role for the website, as a place to disseminate and, importantly, to control the information. When the website is the "keystone" of digital media information, then all the other outlets can be managed in relationship to the official information outlet. This strategic understanding of digital outlets is important, especially as brand community and brand stakeholder scholars have recognized the lack of control and community construction of brand meaning once the message is out in the world (Hatch & Schultz, 2009; Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009; Iansiti & Levien, 2004; McAlexander, 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Other winemakers elaborated on the importance of the website for information, specifically, directions to the winery, and indirectly, pictures and information that may entice a visitor to choose a specific winery over another. When used in this way, the website becomes the channel by which interpersonal (and the most important) communication can be conducted between winemakers and potential customers. One winemaker described this phenomenon:

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Most of the visitors from out of state have googled us, or they'll google wines in Kentucky or Lexington, and they'll look down, well this one is close to the interstate, we get a lot of people because we happen to be close to the interstate, but I think it's important to have the electronic media out there, for the phone apps, especially, because a lot of people have to be able to read it on a phone. A smartphone. We get a lot of walk-in traffic from out of state because they have a smart phone, and they punch it in, and there it is. Um, but you also have a lot of people that like to see that, so we have a lot of pictures, so we have our wine descriptions.

For this winemaker, the website is an invitation to the winery, and information on the location and pictures that set an environment (even if it may be out of context, see website analysis section). The winemaker even considers the look of the website on smart phones as visitors will look up the website while on the road.

As an offshoot of the website as directional tool, Kentucky's Department of Agriculture developed a Kentucky wine website and interactive application that provides information, location, and directions to all Kentucky-registered wineries. Many of the winemakers mentioned the value of the website: "That wine trail app is amazing. We get a lot people in there because of that" (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, December 9, 2014). While the website is often called the wine trail app, the website is actually a larger collection of Kentucky wineries. However, the website can link wineries based on region (for example, Eastern, Western, etc.), and the website does link to information about different wineries that have partnered to advertise a "Kentucky wine trail." Kentucky wine trails mimic the bourbon industry's bourbon trail. Visitors to all of the wineries on a specific Kentucky wine trail, such as the "Back Roads Wine Trail," receive a stamp on a wine "passport" and a special gift, such as a t-shirt or coaster. As one winemaker explained wine trails advertise to "People that love to travel, that love Kentucky and love the scenery and love to drive through the horse parks and love to

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make stops and do that kind of thing," (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, November 4, 2014). When a website, or a number of websites and wineries partner together, the directions, photos, and information become an invitation to visit, have an identified and specific potential customer in mind, and market a brand of agritourism. In these instances, the website functions as an advertisement not just for wine, but for a life-experience targeted at customers with particular identities, and this identity includes clearly defined cultural and ritual characteristics.

As for social media, instead of the social media platform being used for informational purposes, social media platforms were used to encourage communication with customers and to announce specials with the winery community. Recognizing the actual demographics of the individual winery stakeholders was key to using social media successfully. As one winemaker explained, identifying an individual winery's community and the appropriate social media platform was difficult:

> I'm sure there's stronger social media sites out there for certain age groups that we aren't hitting as well. But right now, Facebook is so huge it's hard to avoid, maybe Twitter is somewhat the same way, and Instagram, and in this meeting this last weekend, I was talking to a young winemaker, like an intern, still in college, it was the same thing, I was saying, "Where do you go now? Facebook seems like it keeps skewing older and older all the time," and this guy says, "I'm on Facebook, I just don't check it a lot, you know." So I says, "Well what is?" and he says, "Well I don't know, probably Instagram." But I guess you could ask ten people and get ten different answers.

For this winemaker, a constant concern with social media is the changing landscape for different demographics. The winemaker was concerned that because the winery's primary customers skewed younger than normal for wine drinkers, and as the winemaker mentioned, and Facebook's demographics tend to skew older. Furthermore, this winemaker had found traction on Instagram where marketing specials were offered in

connection with photographs. The use of Instagram by the winemaker's customers had piqued his interest in emerging social media sites. Still, the uncertainty and fluid landscape of social media emphasizes the importance of a winery's website; the website is a stable place for information dissemination, and importantly, the website and social media can lead to essential and more accurate information on potential customers than more traditional forms of advertising and communication. One winemaker praised digital media: "The thing I love about digital media is that it's measurable, so you know, we know how many people went to the website or clicked on a page, or whatever, and that's something you don't get with television, or radio, or newspaper" (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, January 9, 2015). A Kentucky winery website may be important for a number of reasons including e-commerce, information dissemination, directions and invitations for interpersonal communication, and for market research. Whatever the reason, Kentucky winery websites and associated digital media (social media platforms) are essential for a Kentucky winery's business plan. The qualitative interviews shed insight as to why.

Wine education. As mentioned throughout this study, education about wine and wine culture is essential for the international wine community and especially for burgeoning wine regions where interaction with wine as a cultural product may have been limited previously. Wine education carries various components including the specific wine and winery narratives, the creation of context and an environment for cultural wine consumption, and the establishment of clear expectations for customers that may not be as familiar with wines that are not similar to European, Californian, and well-known New World wines. One winemaker summarized the goal of education in wine:

> Education is very important. People need to know, it's kind of like a three-ring circus. You need a ring leader that has to point and go, you need to be looking at this, you know, you need to see this. If you sit back, people don't know what to look at… You have to show people. This is good. Because, it's like, with music or anything, if people aren't composers themselves, they don't really know what they're looking, somebody says it's really good because it rocks out this way, but this is why it's being listened to by so many people.

The winemaker's understanding of education references Bourdieu's (1993) explanation of cultural education. Individuals must be indoctrinated into the community that consumes the cultural product, and they must know what is important and what is not in order to join the community, and thereby, enjoy the product on a social or cultural level. If winemakers can direct customers as to what is important in their products, and the customers can find a way to enjoy those characteristics of a product, then a situation is created where a desire and a way to fill that desire are present. Bourdieu (1993) argued this process was key to the continuation of culture.

Cultural products such as wine, which are highly complex, require extensive education. One wine enthusiast confessed "You can never stop learning about wine" (Robert Chartrand, personal communication, April 30, 2014). One winemaker gave an example into how confusing wine may be for new American consumers:

> I also explain why we have sediment in big dry, red wines. It's not floaties. That's why the German exporters that send their beer to the states, Spaten and all those guys, their beers don't have any active yeast, whereas in Germany there's active yeast particles to the point you shake them up and poor them in there at the end. You pour three quarters of the bottle, roll it on the table, and then poor them in. If people were served that here without knowing it, people would go, "There's floaties in here." And that's the same thing about wine, you have to educate. I read an article that said the American wine producers need to educate the people about sediment.

The issue of sediment is connected to the fermentation and choice of filtering methods used by winemakers. In the above example, the winemaker is only discussing one small

aspect of wine, the presence of sediment. There are still the issues of taste, grape varietal,

color, food pairings…and the list can go on indefinitely.

The most natural, and perhaps most efficient way to communicate wine and the

important characteristics is through the story of the wine and what to expect as a result of

the creation of wine. The following winemaker response to the question "Where does

education fit into wine?" illustrates how the telling of a wine's story from vine to wine

glass can create interest, expectations, and desire in the customer:

> The perfect winemaker is also a socialite who enjoys engaging with the
> customers. So, my biggest, the biggest days that we have the most enjoyable I
> think is when the customers really get involved and participate is when the
> winemaker takes them on a tour. Because our bartenders, it's very difficult to
> train a bartender to give a good tour and explain the wines… an ideal winemaker
> would be a socialite who enjoys the documentation of his work, who is so proud
> of his work, or her work, that they want to publish it, publicize it, and share it,
> because that's what people come here for. They come here with a bazillion
> questions. They come to want to understand and learn and the experience. And
> it's the vineyard, it's the grapes, it's the harvest, they want to meet our harvest
> team, they want to see them crush it, because all that's stuff they've never seen,
> and that's part of it too. So, ultimately, as a whole it's understanding the process,
> understanding, um, and getting good and making good wine that is pleasing to the
> palate, but also providing an experience and a methodology that is satisfying to
> the full body of the customer, that engages them.

This extensive quote illustrates how the whole process entices the consumer to enjoy

wine and also how complex the wine process can be. However, "the understanding" of

the process creates a desire to consume the end result. Understanding the process also

establishes a context and environment that justifies the way and why a specific wine

tastes as it does.

The environment created is key to the education. As a Kentucky wine industry

supporter explained:

> I get sucked into it every time, is especially in California, you go to a winery, and
> you go through the tasting list, and you're in this wonderful location that's pretty,

and you see the vineyards, and typically, I'm not rich at all, so you're normally looking at $10 to $15 dollar bottles of wine, but you go out there and you see a $45 dollar bottle of wine, and you taste it, and it's the best wine ever. And then you spend $45 dollars on the bottle, and a week later, you open it at home, and it's okay, but it's not nearly as good as I remembered. So, when you have the customers in the location and you got the vineyards out there, and you can talk to them and you can tell them the story about how that wine was made and what went into it, and any problems you had during fermentation, anything personal that makes them feel like they're part of it, I think you have captured the customer, and you can pretty much sell them anything. Now once they get home, you know, who knows…

This interpersonal communication in a specific environment with clear expectations can create a significant moment (and desire) for the customer. Secondly, the story, the environment, and the expectations create a performance for the voluntary participator to engage in the serious consumption of wine (i.e., a cultural ritual). One of winemakers interviewed explained:

Let's say if you were, I'm trying to think of an example here, you're getting your car fixed, and all of a sudden somebody comes up with a high-end glass of wine and says taste this, you're going to go, "yeah, whatever," but when you're at a winery, when you're at a restaurant, that is part of it. Your senses are not drinking, it's the whole ambiance, especially with alcoholic beverages, the whole ambiance about it. It's the thing of the bottle, the whole pulling the cork out—the twist-off caps, they don't have the longevity—but if I'm paying an eighty bottle dollar of wine, I don't want it to have a screw-off top.

The story (high-end wine) and the environment (a restaurant) create expectations (a cork) that combine in a performance (the presentation of the wine) specific to the way humans create and then consume wine as a result to what goes into the creation of the wine, and all that goes into the wine can only be understood through the communication of the narrative.

In the end, narrative education has to do with interpersonal communication and connection. One winemaker described this interpersonal communication as *touching people*: "We gotta touch people, or they're not gonna buy it. Now we might touch

people, and they in turn might touch other people, and what we've done, we've gone from two years ago running about a 1000 cases a year and we just finished up two years later doing 7000 cases" (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, January 9, 2015). A separate winemaker elaborated on the interaction:

> The wine has to be good, but they're really not here for the wine, they're here for the experience, but wine is part of the experience, and you have to be super, you have to make sure that they're, it's almost like going to a restaurant, you have to make sure that everything's right. You've got to have the atmosphere, you've got to have the servers are really key. They have to be super friendly, um, you know. Show them around, give them a little tour. Talk about the wines, don't just pour it, you know, and sometimes we get busy and we don't do all that, but, that's the goal, to give everybody some attention, find out you know what, where they're from, talk to them about the wine, that's the best way cause then they have a really good experience.

The winemaker references the aforementioned "experience," but the winemaker focuses on the individual: "show them around a little," "give everybody some attention," and "find out where they're from." All of these actions create a direct, interpersonal connection with the customers. Such an experience and a connection cannot be accomplished without the narrative, context, environment, and expectations (i.e., the ritual and the culture).

However, creating and repeating the perfect interpersonal communication experience is difficult without the properly trained support staff. Unfortunately, one of the most difficult issues of education for the winemakers is having a qualified staff that can support the education of potential customers. Unlike other cultural industries, wine does not have the established academic institutions that cultivate cultural demand for the industry. A number of winemakers lamented the lack of an educated workforce. One winemaker reported that it was the most difficult challenge at the winery: "Honestly the biggest challenge is staffing, and I think across the board for the whole industry, is

having, good educated, hard-working, staff" (Kentucky winemaker, personal

communication, November 4, 2014). This issue was also observed during participant

observation. The third-party interviewee also recognized this issue:

> As far as I know there hasn't been any initiative to educate the winery owners and employees how to tell that story. That's actually a pretty good idea…looking into seminars where we bring people in and talk about how to talk to people in the tasting room. I might do that. I might steal that idea.

If wine is complex, and narrative, environment, context, and expectations must be

communicated clearly in order to create an interpersonal connection and experience, then

education becomes central to the creation of cultural demand and fulfillment. Therefore,

for wine, as for many cultural products, an essential aspect of brand management entails

educating potential consumers about the brand. In the end, education becomes central to

not just brand management, but the cultural production and selling of wine. The

importance of addressing wine education will be discussed in the next chapter.

Terroir. Beyond regulations, the bulk of the qualitative interviews involved the

discussion of how to establish Kentucky as a wine region. The key to an established

wine region involves a defined terroir. An identifiable terroir has three key components:

unique winemaker inputs, specific geography, and selective grape varietals used in the

production of a wine (Lukacs, 2012). Winemaker input is individualized and

communicated through the wine narrative. Geography is already decided, and as

evidenced, recognized by the winemakers and considered in production choices. Related

to geography, and the most predominant concern as part of the development of a terroir,

is the appropriate grape varietal/s chosen. For Kentucky, the key controversy in the

development of a terroir involved the choice of grape varietal, either American or

European (vinifera), private industry developed or state supported, the role of grape

growers in growing the key varietal/s, and the importance of the wine media in establishing a wine region. This process is important as terroir is an essential aspect of wine brand management. If a specific wine region can be paired with a particular, quality wine, then local and international demand can be encouraged.

Interviewees were asked their opinion on the importance of a terroir. All interviewees agreed that Kentucky wine should be known for "something." The question remained as to what Kentucky wine should be known for and how it should be decided. The first decision was to decide whether the grapes should be a European varietal (vinifera) as these varietals of grapes are most commonly used in winemaking. The argument for European varietals has to do with quality: "I think if you're going to peg your industry to a grape, and you want to be a wine region that makes it in the world, you know it has to be a vinifera grape, you know a grape of hi-quality. And we don't really know what that is yet, there's still a lot of experimentation" (Third party interviewee, personal communication, January 9, 2015). This interviewee had extensive experience with the international wine market, and also recognized that most grapes used in quality wine production were from established vinifera varietals. Some of the white wine varietals, especially varietals used in Northern European climates (e.g., Germany) may grow well in Kentucky.

Currently, the harsh winters and humid summers make it difficult to cultivate large acres of European varietals in Kentucky. Instead of European varietals, a number of winemakers have argued for an American, Eastern, or hybrid varietal to be the grape varietal of choice for the Kentucky wine region. Interviewees listed a number of the most prominent American grapes including Norton, Chambourcin, and Vidal Blanc as possible

choices. A combination of hardiness, variety of use, and acres in production accounted

for the recommendations. There was an underlying industry strategy if the winemaker

endorsed an American varietal: uniqueness, or what Lukacs (2012) termed, specialty

wine.

Specialty wines are wines that deviate from the traditional varieties used in

winemaking. When discussing the choice of an American varietal, there was a rationale

for the American choice. As one winemaker explained:

> My contention is, if Kentucky is going to do it, you've got to have something
> uniquely Kentucky.   The other thing is the different hybrids that we grow here,
> and nobody takes them real seriously. Well, that's because we haven't taken
> them real seriously…I think that will be the thing that makes the difference in
> where we can sell it in the U.S. and frankly around the world. That's what's
> going to make us stand out.

Another winemaker referred to Kentucky wines as "boutique wines" (Kentucky

winemaker, November 4, 2014) which is another way of categorizing wines that are not

grouped with traditional wine types. The contention here is that Kentucky wines cannot

make California or European wines better than those other regions, so why try?

However, if one goes to a winery, there are up to ten different wines from

different American varietals. Kentucky wine experts warn against such choices when

grape growers establish vineyards, and winemakers express frustration as to such choices

as well:

> One of the problems that exists in the industry is that people grow too many
> varietals. Um, I can't tell you how many people come harvest time want to sell us
> fruit, but they tell you I've got a half ton of this, I've got a half ton of this and half
> ton of that, and that doesn't do much good, you know that half ton translates to
> about 75 gallons of juice… I say, number one, you don't want to plant varietals,
> you want to plant one varietal, and that way you might generate ten tons of fruit
> that might be useful to someone like us.

These choices, which are arguably the choices of a young industry dealing with

experimentation and a learning curve (and agricultural learning curves can last as long as

ten years for each individual grower), have hindered the establishment of a terroir.

Winemakers that offer ten different wines do not help the establishment of a

terroir. As one winemaker put it, the established wineries in prestigious wine regions

offer their estate wines, not a large variety. While this position is relatively true (some

wineries may offer a number of wines, but they will offer the type of wine known in their

wine region), for a number of reasons, some Kentucky wineries offer a large amount of

wines as part of their marketing plan. A winemaker explains:

> Business wise, um, people come in, and if you don't have, if they're coming in,
> and they've driven 20 miles, or a hundred miles, and they come to your winery,
> and you don't have the style of wine they like, they're going to go away a little bit
> upset, disappointed, they may give you bad reviews somewhere, they're not going
> to tell their friends to come, but if you just have a couple of wines they like, say
> they're a white wine drinker, and you've only got one white wine, and it's a dry,
> and you've got a little semi-sweet, they're not happy. But if you've got a dry, a
> semi-sweet, a little bit sweeter, real sweet, and liquid syrup, then, somebody
> comes in and says, what kind of wine do you like? "You know I like a dry wine,
> a dry white wine," and they go "eh, that's ok," and you go with a semi-sweet, and
> they go "oh, yeah, I really like that. And then you go a little sweeter, and they go,
> "eh that's a little too sweet for me." And then you STOP. You know, you don't
> go to the syrupy one. But if they go, if you go, and they go "oh that's better," and
> a little sweeter, and they go "Oh that's better yet," it's pretty good, I like it better
> than the other ones, but it's not quite what I want, "Oh, then try this sweeter one,"
> Oh that's it.

This description of a wine tastings demonstrates the importance of having a wine for

everyone, or almost everyone. Between word-of-mouth and the considerations of being

involved in drop-in agritourism, there are reasons for offering a large selection of wines

even if the reasons may hurt the development of a Kentucky terroir as the winemaker may not emphasize a particular varietal.[3]

Emphasizing a particular varietal is extremely important in establishing a wine terroir, especially in the United States where private industry choices are leading to the development of recognized wine regions. Interviewees mentioned Virginia as the model for private industry development of a terroir:

> Interviewee 1: Personally, I want it to be like Virginia. People think of Virginia wine, and they think, that's good wine. Virginia has really good wine. Now maybe, twenty years ago, they go, "Wine in Virginia? How do they grow wine in Virginia?"

> Interviewee 2: Best example where I think Kentucky could go, I guess, maybe not in exactly the same way. I would use Virginia. Now here's somebody that actually is starting to be recognized as a wine state.

> Interviewee 3: I do like the idea of what states like Virginia have done. They don't necessarily have a state grape, but they've got grapes that they focus heavily on, Petit Verdot, Cab franc and [undistinguishable], and those they've basically made marketable grapes for them. And they plant those because they get more money for them.

Virginia grape growers and winemakers chose privately what grapes to cultivate and what wines they wanted to make. With support from the government, both in marketing and elite customers choosing Virginia wineries as the sites of choice for receptions (a former governor was a strong supporter of the Virginia wine industry), Virginia has a growing reputation as a wine region. However, there is an important distinction in the Virginia's rise to wine prominence: they grow European varietals, varietals difficult to grow in Kentucky.

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[3] The winemaker gave a second reason, "I really like making wine. I like experimenting and trying all different kinds of wine, like I make a paw paw wine" (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, December 9, 2014). Naturally, winemakers will like making and experimenting with wine, but making many wines and offering them through normal channels may actually hurt the establishment of a Kentucky terroir.

Even though Virginia grape growers and winemakers received support from their state government, the state government did not establish a state grape or regulate grape growers and the wine region. In Europe, especially France, the appellations that designate official terroirs, are regulated by the government. The grapes grown and the quality of the grapes, vineyard, and wine are all government regulated. In some American states that are attempting to establish a wine region, the state has decided to recognize an official state grape. Missouri has recognized the Norton, and Indiana the Traminette. However, there are concerns about officially establishing a state grape:

> And I think that, I think Indiana, they have only something like 150 acres of Traminette grape or something, it's really a miniscule amount, and Traminette grape isn't a grape known for quality. So they've kind of pigeon-holed themselves into having that state grape. I think it's kind of backfired on them. (Third party interviewee, personal communication, January 13, 2015)

A winemaker also referenced Indiana, Traminette, and the lack of acres in production as a concern for their state grape. Another winemaker referenced a state grape as a "marketing ploy," and the only reason to have a state grape would be to encourage grape growers to grow it. However, if the state were to attempt growers to grow more of the state grape, then there may be the need for subsidies in order to encourage the cultivation of a state grape.

There was a second concern with the involvement of the government and the growing of a state grape, and that was the introduction of a government regulated wine region. As one winemaker warned, there is much to consider when inviting a heavily regulated wine region or appellation:

> Also there's a lot of appellation d'origine contrôlée in France, they are cutthroat, they are really, it's worse than the IRS. I can say that. If you do not, if you own a winery, you are yes or no sir and smile because they can ruin your day. But they are also, a lot of the French growers, for example, people in the um, gosh, the

name escapes me now, but they are so controlled, you have to make this grape, the grape has to have this amount of brics, or you are not allowed to be in this appellation.

A French system for regulating wine is probably not likely for the United States, especially since California has not established such a system. Still, if there is going to be a state grape, and there may even be subsidies attached to growing the state grape, then this path leads to the governance and regulation of growing a state grape.

A number of the winemakers discussed the issues of regulating the growth of grapes. The actual regulatory process demands a group of experts that can accurately regulate an industry:

> Interviewee 1: Uh, if you are going to be that strict and have all the appellation all that stuff right, then you've gotta have somebody to enforce it… Now, who is going around checking all of the other wineries, going wait a minute, how much percentage, because if you do the math on how much they're growing and how much they're making?

> Interviewee 2: I'm all for checking it. I follow the rules. Everybody else should follow the rules. If you look at mine. Some say Kentucky and some American. So I think, I'd be all for more reporting, especially if there was some sort of designation, and um, a Kentucky state grape designation, or something like that on the bottle…If there was some designation, where you have to submit your receipts, where you got it, now if you grew it yourself, that would be harder, because somebody would have to come out, and you would have to figure out how many grapes are on these vines.

The state regulation of a wine region based on characteristics of a wine terroir can be quite demanding. For an industry that is already struggling to obtain state funding and has a good amount of independent winemakers, considering a state grape and how to support a state grape, involves concerns far beyond the private development of a wine terroir. Nevertheless, no wine region has ever developed an internationally known terroir without the support of the state and support institutions (Lukacs, 2012). Therefore, the role of the state must be decided by industry, government, and institutional stakeholders.

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The arguments over American or European varietals and of private development or state supported wine region establishment all lead to the growing of grapes within Kentucky. There is a significant problem with grape growing in Kentucky, and this issue was revealed during the interview process: there are not enough grapes grown in Kentucky to supply all of the wineries that have been founded. Therefore, no matter what grapes are identified as approved Kentucky terroir grapes, the wineries may not be able to make enough of that wine. This matter has serious consequences. A third party interviewee explained:

> Most casual wine drinkers don't really understand where the wine comes from. You go to a winery, you see an acre of vines, and you assume that all the wine comes from there. And so that's kind of flying right now because consumers in Kentucky aren't as educated as consumers elsewhere…But grape acreage is actually declining, so that's a huge problem right now, so eventually we're going to get to this point where the consumers expect the grapes to come from the region that they're in, and, if those grapes can't come from there because the vineyards are gone, the whole industry is going to collapse.

Authenticity and legitimacy are behind the interviewees claims. Without the authenticity that the wine is from Kentucky, then why drink it? Why not buy a wine from the region where the grapes were imported? How will wine consumers feel, especially if they are connected to the idea of a local, or specific region wine, if they discover their Kentucky wine is not a Kentucky wine?

This concern has a second layer based on the resources of a particular winery. During the discussion of procuring Kentucky wines, if a state grape and wine were developed, smaller wineries believed that the larger wineries would outbid them for the state grapes. One winemaker described the local grape purchasing process, "I call up growers, and they tell me they're already selling their grapes to [winery names removed]. Almost all of the growers, they don't get stuck with grapes very often. They find

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somebody that needs them" (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, December

9, 2014). Simply put, Kentucky does not grow enough grapes to establish a Kentucky

terroir. A third party interviewee summed up the situation, "Something has to be done. I

think that we're at the make or break point. It's going to be too far, we're going to get

too distant, and it's going to collapse so. People are definitely going to know. It's just a

matter of figuring out what we need to do to save it" (Third party supporter, personal

communication, January 13, 2015). If authenticity and legitimacy is undermined because

there are not enough Kentucky-grown grapes, there may not be enough support (or

credibility) to ever establish a Kentucky terroir.

As for the most prominent local agricultural product campaign, Kentucky Proud,

the label has not been significant for wine. There is a reason for the lack of direct impact:

Only part of the production process needs to be conducted in Kentucky for a product to

be labeled Kentucky Proud. Most winemakers do not have an issue with this point. In

fact, all the winemakers were of the impression that "everything I do is Kentucky Proud

since I do it in Kentucky." Therefore, the label had little meaning, especially once one

considers the other regulations placed on location designation and wine. Wine can only

be labeled with Kentucky on the bottle if 75% of the grapes come from Kentucky.

Vintages can only be put on the label if the same criteria are met. Therefore, the

Kentucky Proud label is less valuable to winemakers. Because of these industry

differences, the Kentucky Proud label does not carry the same significance for wine as it

does for other Kentucky Proud products. State affiliated wine supporters looked into

other quality assurance labels, but there has been pushback from the Kentucky wine

industry and consumer research that has predicted confusion in the marketplace as to

what all of the different labels mean. The winemakers do not believe a label, when few people understand all the designations on labels, will enhance wine sales. The winemakers are waiting on quantitative proof of increased sales from a quality assurance label, even the Kentucky Proud label. This data is not available. Establishing a Kentucky terroir may be the only alternative.

For now, winemakers import grapes and hinder the establishment of a clear and authentic Kentucky terroir, but most winemakers lament having to import grapes or juice. One winemaker apologized, describing himself as the "worst offender in the state" (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, January 9, 2015). Another winemaker made the point of adding a different label on imported wines to differentiate the brands. However, another winemaker looked at the situation from a different perspective, arguing that a better grape cannot be grown in Kentucky, so the winemaker imports higher quality grapes from outside of the state:

> I can't grow a better grape in Kentucky at three times the cost, that's a fact. I think I pay on the average of fourteen hundred and fifty dollars a ton for Sierra Foothills grapes. That's already picked into bunches. We crush and de-stem here, but that's here. Um, and they come in a re-fridge truck, so it's a very practical situation, you know it's not tough to do that. But I can't grow a better grape at three times a cost.

Since the winemaker cannot make a better wine (or grow a better grape) with Kentucky grapes, then the winemaker sees little incentive in using Kentucky grapes. Furthermore, the Kentucky grapes cost more than imported grapes. For this winemaker, making a quality wine involves the highest quality grapes and winemaker input to create a distinctive wine. This winemaker has won awards, and much like the third-party interviewee, has been influenced by the international wine community, and so, the winemaker's choices have been justified by consecration and connection to an

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international community of interest and admiration. However, what the winemaker has chosen to do is remove geography from the discussion of terroir. Stripping geography from the definition of terroir has serious consequences for the Kentucky wine industry. Again, these consequences will be discussed in the next chapter.

If and when a Kentucky wine terroir is identified, the last question is how to promote the new terroir. Unanimously, the answer was through wine media. One grape grower recommended a full-scale, massive, Kentucky wine industry promotion: "Wine columns, magazines, websites, and wherever else wines are described should be targeted for vigorous promotion, but only for quality products" (Kentucky grape grower, personal communication, February 14, 2015). Most interviewees believed it would take a big name critic or wine magazine to endorse Kentucky wine, perhaps just one article. So far, no critic or magazine has chosen to do so. The process is simple: "So somebody breaks through, and they get a good rating for Robert Parker or whatever, and now people recognize that as a wine region. Then that's usually the way it works" (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, January 13, 2014). Another winemaker described the industry as 99% hype. As a third party supporter claimed, all one of the major wine media publications would have to do "is write a feature article and give it a ninety-five point rating and then say something about Kentucky's on the map and hit the ground running, then suddenly, then Kentucky is a serious wine region. Unfortunately we haven't had that yet" (third party interviewee, personal communication, January 13, 2015). Arguably, awards would create enough prestige for press coverage. Unfortunately, almost 75% of wines receive a medal in a competition (this issue will be elaborated on in the postmodern section). Also, some articles in some wine, leisure, and

travel magazines are paid for by organizations, and because the wine industry has had a history of rewarding critics with cases of wine or by having too-close relationships, the amount of credibility needed to establish an entire wine region rests with a few wine media outlets.

At first glance, the terroir section of Kentucky wine brand management findings may have portions of data that do not appear to directly affect brand management, but one has to understand that establishing an internationally renowned terroir is the most direct method of positively managing a brand. The only issue is, establishing a terroir is as complex as wine itself (or terroir may be what makes wine so complex). These issues were revealed during the qualitative interviews. Negotiating the choices of American or European varietals, the role of the state, how to handle the importation of grapes and quality control, how to support Kentucky grape production, and garnering interest from the major wine media publications, are all complex decisions, and they all have communicative elements that affect the brand meaning and position in the wine-world. Importantly, these communication and brand management issues are all revealed when unpacking what goes into the process of establishing a wine terroir.

Postmodern characteristics. Kristeva's (1980) intertextuality was evidenced throughout the interviews. No interviewee referenced a core to the Kentucky wine industry that was used as a concrete or idealized center of the Kentucky wine industry. The use of "Southern hospitality" is another example. This term has no center or specifics to reference. In this interpretation, the qualitative interviews supported a postmodern approach to the Kentucky wine industry. Secondly, power issues were identified. The power issues will be discussed under Bourdieu's (1993) field of cultural

production. The emphasis on power should be considered a postmodern characteristic as well as a characteristic of the field of cultural production.

The blurring of boundaries in the Kentucky wine industry, of the importation of grapes or the use of Kentucky grapes, the ease by which imported grapes and juice can be used, and the identification of a Kentucky wine that may use either imported or Kentucky grown grapes are all postmodern considerations, especially for organizations and their discourses. One winemaker described the difficulty in identifying, categorizing, distinguishing, and interpreting imported ingredients and "home-grown" grapes: "If I was getting juice, you could freeze that, and I would never know you froze it. But I get the grapes in, they're never frozen, there's even a little meter that says the temperature that they were the whole time" (Kentucky winemaker, September 19, 2014). The winemaker went on to describe how this process does not differ from large wineries storing grapes in holding tanks after harvest as not all of the grapes or juice can be processed in one day. The only difference in the two situations is that one is moving, shipping across borders, whereas, the other leaves the grapes stationary. For the wine industry, spatial boundaries have collapsed. These issues of technological advancement, globalization, and the tensions with the traditional and ordered are all challenges recognized by postmodern scholars. For organizational communication, these tensions affect the discourse. In the above example, should this Kentucky winemaker be considered a Kentucky winemaker or a Californian winemaker? What is the identity of the winemaker? These are important questions, and they are evidence of postmodern organizational communication.

Playing with the criteria for terroir is also evidence of postmodern characteristics. As mentioned in the theory chapter, the concept of terroir emerged from a modernist perspective to wine. Terroir reinforces hierarchy and order, and it was created in order to categorize wine once modern technologies allowed for the stable and predictable production of wine (Lukacs, 2012). However, Kentucky winemakers challenge the traditional interpretation of terroir. First, Kentucky winemakers are considering the promotion of American grape varietals as a cornerstone of a Kentucky terroir. Such a choice is not the norm for established wine terroirs. Secondly, some winemakers would remove, or selectively consider terroir criteria. What further complicates this approach is the fluidity by which terroir is interpreted. In the following interviewee response, the winemaker has argued against the establishment of a Kentucky terroir under the traditional French definition, including government input. However, as the winemaker responds, the winemaker's approach to terroir shifts (portions of the response have been removed to protect the winemaker's identity):

> They [French wineries] develop yeast strains over the years, and they always use the same yeast that is different than the guy across the street. And that's very important. And so terroir is terribly important. But I don't have that option here. I can't grow a better grape for three times the cost, so if I can't grow a better grape, that takes that part out for me. But what I do, I always buy from one producer… So whenever you buy a bottle of [winery name removed], you know it came from the Sierra foothills. I guess if they were my vineyards it would be the same thing. But I think that is important, that's what separates every wine, the yeast the use, and the process in making it… All these things come into the fact that I want a wine with longevity. Um, and I guess the terroir goes back to all of that. It is important to make wine like that, you have to have all of that clear.

In fact, this winemaker does have all of the terroir criteria clear. The winemaker uses the same yeast strain, the same grapes and juice, and uses the same fermentation process (the process was addressed in a separate portion of the interview). In essence, the winemaker

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has established a clear terroir, only the process is more fluid and fragmented than the traditional interpretation of terroir and winemaking. As Lukacs (2012) explained, wine technology has upended the traditional (i.e., modernist) understanding of wine.

On a shorter note, the approach to regulation and the role of the government and state institutions in the Kentucky wine industry are evidence of an ideology, an ideology that influences the winemakers' approaches to the Kentucky wine industry. Specifically, the "libertarian" and "conservative/republican" approach to politics, capitalism, and business influence the expected roles of state and support institutions (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, January 9, 2015). Even though this ideology informs the organizational identity of many Kentucky winemakers, it is at odds with the establishment of a Kentucky terroir. Again, no established wine terroir has gained international renown without significant support from state and support institutions.

Finally, all of the findings reveal multiple discourses informing and presenting fragmented organizational identities. Kentucky winemakers must consider their identities based on local customers, international wine markets and customers, the choice of wine's produced, the materials used, the size of the winery, and their individualized position in the field of cultural production. All of these identities hold different criteria for individualized positioning and interpretation.

History. Tension between the modern and the postmodern were most clear in the interpretation and appropriation of Kentucky's wine history (Taylor, 2005). Kentucky is home to the first commercial winery and at one time was the third largest producer of wine. One winemaker interpreted and applied this history to the winery's position as such:

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> You know back in the seventeen and 1800s, that's what Kentucky was known for. We were California? No. Kentucky grows better grapes, you know we can, we have the potential, and we use to, but prohibition, and all of our regulatory and legislative, crooked politics, is what has crippled this industry, so we're fighting hard to put us back on the map for good wine, you know, for good Southern hospitality, and good wine, and the way to do it.

None of this interpretation of Kentucky's wine history is accurate or true. Kentucky was not known for its wine. In fact, pre-twentieth century wine was poor quality (Lukacs, 2012). Kentucky wineries do not even use the grapes grown pre-Prohibition (Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 27, 2014). Instead, pre-twentieth century Kentucky wine benefitted from being close to the Ohio River which ran into the Mississippi River, thereby benefitting from the same water transportation system as the early bourbon industry (Kentucky wine expert, personal communication, April 4, 2014). The historical re-appropriation used to justify an approach to Kentucky wine and to create a Kentucky wine identity is an example of a postmodern approach to historical discourse.

Awards. Awards also follow a similar re-appropriation of wine history. In this case, the history and tradition of wine competitions. Wine competitions are extremely important and have an important place in the international wine community. The "Judgment of Paris" that established California as a respected international wine region was a wine competition. Oregon established itself as a strong wine region for Pinot Noir as did Washington State by winning international wine competitions (Lukacs, 2012). Interestingly, a large amount of Kentucky wineries have won American wine competitions. It appears that almost every winery has won an award for a wine. When a third party interviewee was questioned about the abundance of awards and yet no international acclaim, the interviewee explained the reason: "The American

competitions, 75% of the wines entered, on average, get a medal. At least a bronze

medal. The European competitions it's the complete opposite. 25% medal" (Third party

interviewee, personal communication, January 13, 2015). Unfortunately, this American

practice is difficult to change:

> If we have our competition and we only give out 25% medals, we're not going to
> get any entries into our competition. So I don't know. From the American
> standpoint, and within the industry, competitions, at best, are kind of a marketing
> tool for wineries, so it's almost like they pay to promote themselves.

Instead of the competition representing any significant attachment and relationship to

history and tradition, the competitions have become "marketing tools." The discourse is

an advertising fabrication bereft of any concrete attachment. Awards are symbols with

detached cultural meanings, significant cultural meanings as some wineries use the

awards as advertisements and marketing strategies to great effect (Third party supporter,

personal communication, January 13, 2015).

The award system also reveals the arbitrary nature of cultural wine pricing. When

discussing why a winemaker entered a wine in a specific wine competition, the

winemaker responded that it was at the behest of his grape supplier. The supplier also

argued that the wine was of such good quality that it could fetch upwards of $50 in the

market. However, this winemaker argued that the lack of demand in the Kentucky wine

market could not allow the winemaker to charge more than $30 dollars for the wine.

Still, intrigued by the potential prestige of the wine, the winemaker entered the wine in

the competition. The wine won a medal, and as the winemaker explained, "When I

looked at the winners, and there was some names I recognized, and there were some $100

dollar bottles of wine in the bronze section, so I thought that's okay" (Kentucky

winemaker, personal communication, September 19, 2014). The award for a Kentucky,

less than $30 bottle of wine, next to $100 bottle of wine shows there is no direct connection between quality and pricing. Again, the symbolic and cultural value of wine has no relationship to anything concrete. The context, environment, and discourse establish the wine's cultural value, quite a postmodern phenomenon, and a phenomenon that has flummoxed economic wine scholars for years (Beckert, 2011; Beckert, Rössel, and Schenk, 2014; Karpik, 2010; Lecocq & Visser, 2006; Marks, 2011). The wine awards process, especially the American wine awards process, illustrates the postmodern characteristics of wine and their cultural value, perhaps more than any other aspect of the international wine marketplace.

Field of cultural production. Bourdieu's (1993) Field of Cultural Production was once again supported through qualitative interviews. From all aspects of the interview process, it was clear that the winemakers, associated experts, and Kentucky wine industry support personnel all inhabit different positions in the field. Even with the opening question of "Describe how you became involved with the Kentucky wine industry," it was clear that all the lived experiences were quite different.

Different lived-experiences do not constitute the verification of the field of cultural production. Through the explication of the influences of the lived-experiences on the winemaker's industry choices, one can see that the lived-experiences set the different winemakers in different directions that eventually influenced their individualized positions in the field. For example, one winemaker was heavily influenced by early life experiences in France. These experiences led to a choice to create a blended wine in the fashion of California and French dry red wines. This choice differentiates the winemaker from a winemaker that chooses to make sweet reds to meet

the demand of many casual Kentucky wine drinkers. Even though the second winemaker may make a dry red as well, the choice to make sweet wines differentiates the two winemakers. This influence also affects the choice of grape varietals used, the winemakers' positions on the importation or use of native grapes, and even the extent of appropriate regulations.

Professional life experiences also affected the position of the winemakers in the field. In one example, professional experience outside of the Kentucky wine industry informed a winemaker as to the importance of e-commerce. Therefore, these experienced influenced the specific winery's website approach, and a website designed to encourage digital wine sales distinguished the winery from another winery with a website more focused on encouraging interpersonal interactions and winery visits.

This difference, based on professional experience, can be seen in the choice of labeling, marketing, and brand management of one winemaker. This winemaker hired an advertising and marketing company to conduct research on the potential reception of an irreverent and humorous label and marketing strategy. The winemaker had come from outside of the wine industry but did have private industry experience with advertising, marketing, and promotional campaigns with traditional media outlets. The winemaker already had a concern for traditional vineyard and winery names that had creek or river in the title as the winemaker felt such names did not do much to differentiate the wines. Instead, the winemaker wanted a name, label, and marketing campaign that allowed the winery to "standout." The winemaker described the development of the marketing campaign:

> Same thing here, we wanted to get something more memorable. But we wanted something just a little bit off the wall so we could stand out of the clutter a little

bit. So we, again, I like the idea of playing off the whole urban thing, and we were the only guys in Kentucky, at least at this point, to have an urban winery. It's not unheard of around the country, and not in California, but in Kentucky, it's unusual. Everybody thinks of a winery and they think of the rolling vineyards and it's beautiful… And so, it's just a little, we try to be a little tongue-in-cheek with it. Again it's helped us kind of gain some footing, and it's easier to standout a little bit, so that's kind of how we arrived at that.

"Standing-out" not only allowed the winery to differentiate the winery from competitors, the "tongue-in-cheek" choice signaled to potential customers their position and approach to winemaking. As Bourdieu (1993) describes the field, these signals communicate to the audience (for wine, potential customers) exactly who they are what type of cultural product they are offering. In return, the cultural product with "tongue-in-cheek" offerings will attract an audience that desires "tongue-in-cheek" cultural products. As the winemaker describes the choice and process, it appears as if the winery has attracted that customer.

There is a final layer to this process with this winemaker. Bourdieu (1993) also argued that the cultural producers will also react to one another. These relations are influenced by relationships not just with each other, but also in relationship to the field of power and class relations. The same winemaker described the consideration of power and class relations in the field of cultural wine production:

Some people go for quality, we're saying, look, we know, we know, my contention is, having been in the Kentucky wine business for a few years, I know nobody, I know no wine snobs out there are going to take me seriously no matter how good the wine is they're not going to think it is because it's from Kentucky. So our thought was, so let's just make fun of it ourselves, and we'll have a better time with it. So it's working, and we're selling it well and so forth, and then, the nice thing is too, that people, if people try it, now they're usually pleasantly surprised that the wine doesn't suck.

The "wine snobs" and the people that will not take a wine from Kentucky seriously are other individuals in the larger international field of cultural wine production.

Internationally consecrated winemakers (internationally award-winning winemakers and wine regions such as France and California) along with audiences, especially elite consumers with class and power concerns outside wine quality (wine enthusiasts that want to be seen drinking a $300 bottle of wine), will not embrace Kentucky wines. The international wine community has not embraced Kentucky wines so far. Bourdieu (1993) explicated this phenomenon for literature. In response, anti-establishment, art-for-art's sake (in this case wine-for-wine's sake), and avant-garde cultural producers will develop oppositional positions. Clearly, this Kentucky winemaker has taken up such a position. However, instead of an openly hostile position, the winemaker uses humor to challenge the existing hierarchy. This Kentucky winemaker's process aligns with Bourdieu's (1993) description perfectly.

The recognition, but lack of importance of American awards for wine, and the importance of International awards for wine and the importance of wine media in consecrating newly prestigious international wine regions reveals who holds the consecrating power in the international wine community: international wine judges/critics and the wine media. The audience consumers, even the elite, do not have as much influence as the winemakers and critics. Bourdieu (1993) would argue that such separation from the influence of the elite classes reveals the industry's independence. This assessment of the relationship may be partially true. However, one of the most important wine media publications, *Wine Advocate*, was recently bought by a wine company (Gray, Feb. 20 2013). On the other hand, the Chinese elite are purchasing the most highly valued wine, especially from France, on name alone, not on assessments of quality. As one interviewee noted, the Chinese have a practice of mixing soda (not club

soda, as in a spritzer, which would be viewed negatively by wine enthusiasts) with their

wines. With a portion of the elite not as interested in the details of the industry (at least

not yet), the international wine community has more autonomy.

Un-categorized interview category: The University of Kentucky. As with the

website characteristics, qualitative interviews revealed a specific concern for the

Kentucky winemakers that was not revealed through other qualitative methods included

in the study. The issue concerned the role of the University of Kentucky for Kentucky

winemakers. Kentucky winemakers view the University of Kentucky as a support

institution that should educate students wishing to enter the wine industry and for

supporting current Kentucky grape growers and winemakers through educational

extension and expert knowledge support (such as disease identification). The issue has to

do with the new budget models, research directions, and incentives for academic

departments. To put it succinctly, the University of Kentucky would like to establish a

research and commercial winery and sell the wine it produces rather than dumping the

wine. A similar issue arose when researching the Sustainable Agricultural Program and

their choice to offer a community supported agricultural program (CSA), selling organic

vegetables in association with research initiatives. In the same manner that some farmers

thought the CSA was direct competition, Kentucky winemakers view a University of

Kentucky winery as direct competition with unfair advantages.

A number of Kentucky winemakers discussed the issues with a University of

Kentucky winery in similar terms. The winemakers listed their grievances:

> Interviewee 1: Unfair competition, they've got unlimited labor, unlimited land,
> unlimited resources, it's all free, and they can sell it for whatever they want and
> still make money… The problem is, it just seems the government getting into
> competition with industry seems like, unfair advantage to the wineries, we're

struggling, I have a corker that you grab like this and go "errr," I can't even afford a push button pneumatic cork, well all they have to do is write a grant or uh, they're going to get this money, and well I need a corker, "okay."

Interviewee 2: There have been some steps towards getting bonded, getting licensed, and creating a label for UK's winery. That's a no, no for us. It's a deal breaker. It's not a good thing for the industry. And the reason being, first all we know how powerful UK's label is. You put a UK wildcat on anything, and people will freaking buy it no matter how shitty it is… We can't compete, I can't compete with free labor, I can't compete with, I mean we're talking about a $700,000 grant, federal money, my tax money, that I'm paying, to go to build and fund this entity that's essentially competing with private investors.

There are two issues listed in these grievances. First, the University of Kentucky "arguably" has free labor through the use of student workers (arguably as either the state or the students are paying for the experience); however, the budget model is not the same as a private winery. More importantly, the University of Kentucky has a brand more valuable than any Kentucky winery. University of Kentucky supporters and alumni will purchase the wine in order to have the UK-labeled wine. The interviewees are correct in their assessment that the university is using its state and federally funded position to its advantage in the marketplace. However, these ventures are not new to American colleges and universities. For example, university sports programs use their players' likenesses in the merchandise they sell in competition with private organizations. The difference in this situation is that the Kentucky wine industry has not dealt with this situation before. One winemaker described the situation as "There's a line that hasn't been drawn, and so we're flirting" (Kentucky winemaker, personal communication, December 9, 2014). Kentucky grape growers and winemakers need to discuss the relationship they would like to have with the University of Kentucky.

Interestingly, the farther away the winery from the University of Kentucky (geographically), or the less likely a winery was to offer the same services as the

university winery is expected to offer (e.g., a tourist attraction with a variety of wines rather than one), the less likely the winery was to object to a UK winery. The wineries in the Bluegrass Region and the larger wineries with multiple services were the wineries that were rumored to be the most upset with the planned university winery.

Consequently, there were many university services grape growers and winemakers recognized as valuable to the Kentucky wine industry. In fact, many of the winemakers would like to see more educational and expert knowledge support. One winemaker expressed a need for more oenologists (wine experts):

> We've had for the last eight years, maybe ten years, I don't know if it's been quite ten years, a state oenologist if you will, who was funded by UK as an extension agent, it's a guy who has been around, there's only been one the entire time, a guy who has extensive wine experience in California and New York, what have you, an older gentlemen, they just defunded his position. He's gone as of March 5th. And I really hate to see it, because I think his presence has helped people make better wine here, and we need to help people do that.

Unfortunately, this position has been terminated by the university, but the university is expected to replace oenologist, although, the exchange will be a one-for-one switch rather than an expansion of industry support. Also, the new candidate may not have the wealth of specified Kentucky wine industry experiences the last oenologist possessed.

Even winemakers not involved in grape growing have recognized the value in the extension and grower support resources. A winemaker expressed value in the newsletters and field updates:

> UK, Agricultural people are doing a great job in advising people, putting the alerts out when they find certain diseases or insects that are the problem, they don't always tell you look out the woolly worms are coming, but they also tell you how to fix it. So that's really important. I read that kind of stuff even though I don't grow, so I know they're doing it, so that's a good thing.

Extension support has also been praised in articles on the Kentucky wine industry (Lane, 2011; Mudd 2006). Kentucky grape growers and winemakers truly value the oenology and viticulture support from the university. All of the interviewees lauded the oenology and viticulture efforts of the university.

When asking Kentucky winemakers how they would like to see the university's support expanded, there were two requests. The first was to expand the available experts. A number were upset with the termination of the long-serving oenologist. The second was to offer internship, hands-on field experience, and alcohol industry skills such as distillation and fermentation knowledge:

> It's very important to us that, you know, students coming out of UK's wine program or spirit distilling, they have experience and they have worked in wineries and they see it, and have capabilities first hand to get their hands on. We, huge supporters of that, we need viticulturists. We need educated people in our industry, to help grow our industry, that's what we want.

The winemaker discussed class credit, internships, and co-ops as part of the potential industry experience the winemaker would like to see incorporated into the university's agricultural curriculum. The winemaker was familiar with the plans to establish a course and perhaps an alcohol industry-related major and was recommending these options in relationship to such a curriculum. Further discussion on the role of the university will be presented in the next chapter.

Overall, the qualitative interviews extended and supported the other qualitative methods conducted for this study. Specifically, the qualitative interviews revealed the concerns over regulations, explicated the cultural associations and ritual communication used by Kentucky winemakers, extended the understanding of Kentucky winemaker's brand management strategies, especially, the motivations, approach, and believed

purpose of websites and the use of social media, expanded the importance of wine

education, and unpacked the complex issues involving the establishment of a Kentucky

terroir, this latter issue being an extremely important aspect of brand management. The

interviews also revealed the crisis involving the lack of Kentucky acres in grape

production and the tension with the University of Kentucky, two issues that were not

apparent through participant observation and website analysis. The qualitative interviews

also supported the postmodern analysis of the Kentucky wine industry and Bourdieu's

field of cultural production. In the end, the inclusion of the qualitative interviews assist

in creating a coherent, yet incomplete, understanding of the Kentucky wine industry just

as Ellingson (2009) believed crystallization should.

Conclusion

The next chapter will discuss and summarize the findings. In an attempt to begin

the crystallization of data into a compiled text, the findings revealed a number of

important Kentucky wine industry characteristics. First, cultural associations are

determined by geographical location, winemaker background and experiences, and the

extent to which the winemaker rejected or embraced the international wine community.

Participant observation emphasized the importance of geography whereas website

analysis and qualitative interviews revealed the importance of personal history and

experience to winemaker input and consideration of an international wine community.

Cultural associations were not determined by brand management decisions or market

research. Socio-economic determinants were less relevant as the research went on, only

influential during the participant observation where groups of potential consumers were

observed. Instead, cultural associations influenced brand management choices and

market research was used to determine the acceptability of initial decisions (in the few cases where market research was conducted).

Participant observation was also the site that revealed the importance of interpersonal communication, especially wine tastings, in the brand management of Kentucky wine. Education and narratives are essential for successful interpersonal communications over Kentucky wine, and the interpersonal communication surrounding Kentucky wine could be categorized according to particular rituals including wine tastings, food and wine pairings, wine as a leisure activity, and wine as agritourism. These rituals were found and reinforced through the website analysis and the qualitative interviews. Events, especially weddings, were found to be extremely important to Kentucky wineries, but to what extent the events directly impact the brands is unclear. However, the events do improve the economic status of the wineries and increase awareness that Kentucky wineries exist.

Website analysis and qualitative interviews revealed aspects of the Kentucky wine industry not apparent through other qualitative methods. Website analysis identified the use of templates in website design which can be a highly effective choice for successful brand management if the resources and expertise are allocated to the website design and upkeep. Likewise, the online options for online wine sales are varied and can be used as alternative outlets for wine sales. Interestingly, few Kentucky wineries employed all of the online sales options available. Some of these options, especially wine club membership, can have extremely beneficial effects for brand management and identity. The websites were also sites for elaboration on wine descriptions and the type of grapes used in the wines. This information was not always available during participant

observation, and the choice of the language used, the extent of the description, and the revelation of grapes used provided information that affected the winery's position on the international wine market (where much of the wine descriptions originate). The information also provided insights into the winery's position on the importation of grapes which affects a winery's position on the establishment of a Kentucky terroir and to what extent a Kentucky winery is local and how "Kentucky" the winery actually is. Finally, websites need to be updated; inclusion of sections where updates or lack of updates are apparent emphasized the importance of the continual updating of websites. These findings were reinforced by the qualitative interviews.

The qualitative interviews reinforced all of the aforementioned categories and findings. Beyond the affirmation of findings from the other methods, the qualitative interviews provided insight into distillation and distribution regulations, the positions on the establishment of a terroir, and the tension between a number of winemakers and the University of Kentucky. The distillation and distribution issues are conflicts of misunderstanding and a lack of alternatives for small farm wineries. The standoff between the bourbon industry and the Kentucky wine industry involves a lack of understanding of the two sides' positions and a lack of communication on how to resolve the issue which has seemed to originate from the poor or non-existent relationship between the two alcohol industries. The distribution issue originated from the changing of a law that now aligns with the laws found in most U.S. states. Because of the lack of an alternative, that the small farm wineries cannot attract distributors, has created resentment and a need for supporting institutions to remedy the situation since the wineries cannot fix the situation due to regulations.

The concerns over the University of Kentucky and the university's efforts to found a university winery for research and the commercial sale of wine was an issue that could only be discovered through qualitative interviews. The discussion involving a UK winery revealed concerns over the power of a UK label in selling wine, a UK wine taking away sales from other Kentucky wineries, the impression that the position of UK, in particular the availability of "free labor" and resources, provides UK with a distinct and unfair advantage in a relatively free market, and that a UK winery does not serve the land grant purpose of the institution. This information is a serious finding as no established wine region has succeeded without the support of its institutions housing grape and wine research.

The issue of an established terroir was revealed during the qualitative interviews. The creation of a Kentucky terroir can affect not only the brand management of Kentucky winemakers, but also the existence of many Kentucky winemakers as some import grapes, and there are not enough grapes in production in Kentucky. This issue, lack of grape acreage, was revealed through the qualitative interviews and the discussion of a Kentucky terroir. A crisis on Kentucky grape production might be imminent, and the long term prospects of the Kentucky wine industry are affected by the amount and type of Kentucky grapes in production.

Postmodern organizational communication was found throughout all three method phases. Intertextuality, the importance of representation and symbol, fragmented and multiple identities, tensions between modernity and postmodernity, irony, play, and contradiction, and the power of discourse were all identified during data analysis. Some of these characteristics were found in the brand management of Kentucky wine, and at

other times in the communicative acts of Kentucky winemakers and stakeholders. The importance of these postmodern characteristics will be discussed in the next chapter.

The criteria for Bourdieu's (1993) field of cultural production was found in the data collected for this study. All of the winemakers researched for this study inhabited different positions in the field of the cultural production of Kentucky wine. The winemakers also had different relationships to the field of power. Some winemakers were focused on making great wine while others wanted to make wine that appealed to particular groups or referenced wine from other regions, therefore appealing more to the influence of the fields of power and class for interest. The findings demonstrated the importance of education, essential for any cultural field. The findings also revealed the consecrating institutions, the awards and wine media critics, also players in the field of cultural production, and the influence and importance of the support institutions, which Bourdieu would argue need to be considered as part of the field, was also found. Terroir, distillation concerns, and distribution regulations are evidence of the influence of history, tradition, time and place on the Kentucky wine industry. Bourdieu argued that all of these factors are characteristics of a field of cultural production. Based on Bourdieu's framework, the Kentucky wine industry is part of a field of cultural production.

All of these findings do not create a smooth and seamless text of the Kentucky wine industry. Hopefully, the findings present a coherent text of the Kentucky wine industry even if it is not complete or whole. The next chapter will attempt to make further sense of the findings by elaborating on the importance and implications of the findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to create a coherent, but incomplete text of the Kentucky wine industry that revolved around the study's research questions (Ellingson, 2009). The study's research questions were:

R1: What are the cultural meanings produced through the communicative interactions of Kentucky wine industry producers and stakeholders, especially consumers?

R2: How do Kentucky wine industry businesses use brand management to position themselves in the wine market?

The discussion chapter will synthesize the findings to answer the research questions and summarize the Kentucky wine industry's communicative acts and brand management. The coherent text will include the researcher's perspective, and the interpretation will be guided by the communication theories included in the conceptual framework.

The research questions were derived from the specific circumstances surrounding the establishment of the modern Kentucky wine industry. The Kentucky wine industry benefitted from the resources allocated to government, in particular, the marketing and advertising support provided by the Department of Agriculture's funding through the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council or through the more general support allocated to Kentucky Proud products. The resources were generated from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement. The marketing and advertising coincided with the larger American consumer demand for local products, especially local agricultural products. These efforts and trends created a local consumer base and interest in Kentucky wine.

The industry was also supported by regional agritourists that chose to visit wineries in a similar manner to visits to California wineries and/or Kentucky Bourbon distilleries.

The development of the industry through such measures led to questions as to how Kentucky wineries were integrated into Kentucky society, and conversely, how Kentucky wineries appropriated Kentucky cultural associations to communicate a position within Kentucky cultural industries, Kentucky agricultural industries, Kentucky culture, and Kentucky society. The first research question was crafted with such considerations in mind.

The second research question emerged out of the ramifications of the appropriation of cultural associations by specific Kentucky wineries. How these choices affect the relationship between Kentucky winemakers and Kentucky wine consumers and, simultaneously, alter the position of Kentucky wineries within the larger International wine community. With different international perspectives, consumers, and positions, the analysis demanded a perspective that accommodated the industry and available organizational positions wineries can inhabit in modern society. Therefore, the cultural associations were considered as part of the larger brand management of Kentucky wineries with consideration for local stakeholders and an international wine community. Emphasis was placed on postmodern issues of tension, conflict, irony, play, contradiction, and power.

The melding of culture and brand management required a theory that could be used as a lens for analyzing not only the multiple positions and stakeholders involved in wine at the different levels, but also the multiple forms of organizational—stakeholder communication. Unfortunately, one theory could not account for all of these concerns;

therefore, a conceptual framework was constructed to analyze the data collected (Imenda, 2014). Bourdieu's (1993) Field of Cultural Production offered a framework that explicated the position of Kentucky wine producers within a cultural industry and sub-field. The framework offered an explanation of the multiple positions a wine producer may inhabit, deeper insight as to why the positions exist, how the cultural industry functions to reinforce positions, how stakeholders navigate relationships, how the industry incorporates actors beyond producers, consecrates cultural products and stakeholders of value, how the industry uses education to create demand for the cultural product, and how the industry re-produces itself in order to survive. The macro-level framework proved helpful in organizing the Kentucky winemakers and understanding how such a wide variety of winemakers could exist.

As the analysis moved towards lower levels, a postmodern approach to organizational communication illuminated tensions between the history and tradition of an ancient cultural product and the challenges found in the 21st century workplace. Specifically, the postmodern approach offered a deeper understanding of the symbolic and cultural meanings of wine and how those meanings are or are not related to the traditional and historic assumptions and understandings of wine (i.e., how the symbolic and cultural meanings can be completely separate from any grounding in reality).

At the micro-level, ritual communication and textual analysis guided the study. Ritual communication allowed for the cultural interpretation of communicative acts, especially nonverbal and communal acts that considered the voluntary performance in events or rituals. Ritual communication presented a blueprint for connecting the interpersonal communicative acts to social construction and cultural meaning. The

theory linked singular rituals to overall lifestyle choices that constitute culture. The

textual analysis, while not a theory, nevertheless, provided justification for the

interpretation of websites. Oriard (1993) argued that secondary texts (for Kentucky wine,

the secondary text was the website, but could include wine labels and pamphlets) are

documents providing evidence as to how a society integrates a phenomenon into its

culture. Both of these approaches offer a micro-level interpretation of communicative

acts that connects the communication phenomenon to culture, and based on the results

and interpretation, the micro-level analysis can be translated to mid and macro level

concerns of postmodern communication and the field of cultural production.

The analysis, especially the construction and negotiation of cultural meanings, is a

form of brand management. The aforementioned theories and approaches create a

context for understanding the potential impact of the cultural associations on the brand

management of Kentucky wine. The multiple methods accounted for multiple

perspectives of the winemaker's communicative attempts. Also, the multiple methods

provided a means for collecting data that could not be discovered through one or more of

the other qualitative methods included in the study. The qualitative interviews presented

an opportunity to affirm assumptions about the intentions of brand management strategies

and tactics and double-check the credibility and trustworthiness of the data collected and

the researcher's interpretation.

The conceptual framework was used as a lens by which to identify and interpret

the data, especially repeated and emphasized concepts (primarily cultural) used in the

communication of Kentucky wine and its societal meanings and values. A more

grounded approach allowed for the inclusion of new categories and themes as the data

was collected and analyzed. Categories not originally accounted for in the conceptual framework included functional and specific communication channel characteristics. These characteristics were analyzed for their influence on communication or how the characteristics were manipulated in order to communicate. The final category list included: cultural associations, ritual communication, brand management, specific communication channel characteristics, regulation and distillation issues, terroir, postmodern communication, and the field of cultural production. These categories will be used as guides during the discussion chapter. The synthesis involves the combining of data found through the multiple qualitative methods (participant observation, website analysis, and qualitative interviews). The coherent text crafted attempts to make sense of the findings and to answer the research questions drafted at the outset of the study.

Cultural Associations

The interest in cultural associations developed out of interest in how wineries appropriated the cultural associations of local stakeholders and how the wineries (successfully or unsuccessfully) integrated themselves in the local communities. Overall, the predominant factor in choosing cultural associations was geographic influence. The geographic influence is not surprising as wine, even more than distilled spirits and beer, is heavily connected to specific, and quite visible, agricultural inputs. Wine is often produced near the vineyards where they are harvested or in the vineyard's local wine region (but not in all cases as this study demonstrated). The ways in which the grapes are grown influences the quality and taste of the grapes, influences the challenges and the eventual story of the creation of the wine, and the choices the winemaker must make in producing the wine. While alcohol producers throughout the world must deal with some

of these issues, these geographic, spatial, and physical concerns do not seem to possess the same influence on other alcoholic products as they do on wine.

The most likely reason has to do with the fermentation process. Wine has the most direct fermentation process whereas beer and distilled spirits demand a more complex process that can include more grinding, roasting, mashing, and other processes that distance the original forms and origins of materials from the final product. For example, barley cannot be grown in many environments where beer is made. The final product ends up being more representative of the beer maker's inputs and skill than the imprint of the original inputs. The winemaker that chose to input out-of-state grapes is an example of how the geographic influences are diminished or eliminated from cultural meanings imprinted on the wine. On the other hand, wine has the simplest fermentation process (Lukacs, 2012). The yeast needed for fermentation is found on the skins of the grapes. All that is needed is for the grape skin to crack. With less processes and complexity, the original materials have more influence on the final product. Therefore, geography possesses more influence, more explanation of why the final product is what it is, and is more readily used as a cultural reference for communicating meaning.

However, as mentioned throughout this study, the final, cultural meaning is a step removed from the physical grape and juice fermented. The construction of cultural meaning of Kentucky wine demonstrates the two-way (if not more) process of cultural associations. For example, say a theoretical Kentucky winery establishes itself in the bluegrass region of central Kentucky close to Lexington. The winery is situated on a defunct horse farm adjacent to two prosperous horse farms, perhaps only a mile or two from Keeneland racetrack. Let us add a little more history to this theoretical farm. Let us

say that a former horse that has won the Bluegrass Stakes was bred and stabled at this defunct farm. Naturally, these Kentucky cultural associations would be considered as part of the brand management of the winery. The cultural images link the winery to the local community, and at the same time, reference the important geographic properties that not only affect raising a horse but will also influence grape growing. By using the image of the theoretical Bluegrass winning horse and the name of the horse on the wine label, and perhaps the story on the back of the wine bottle and on the website, the geographic inputs are recognized, at the very least, by local stakeholders. The picture of the horse in a field of grass references the soil, particularly the limestone. The soil and limestone will be considered as part of the grape growing process and responsible for instilling a particular taste on the grapes that can be recognized in the wine (again, theoretically). The sunlight, open spaces for rows of grapes, the warm and humid summers, and the cold winters could also be referenced through the horse and farm images which are also inputs, positive and negative, on the grapes. In this manner, geographic inputs are found in the cultural associations.

However, the same references can also take a turn for the more societal. The horse community is also referenced through the farm and the Bluegrass Stakes winning horse. Keeneland racetrack, the fall and spring races, the Bluegrass Stakes, the class of horse owners, their communities, their money, the foreign horse owners, the tailgating, the outfits of the crowds, and much more, is also referenced. In this way, the theoretical wine from this theoretical winery comes to embody cultural meanings removed from the physical production of the grapes. Still, these cultural meanings are derived from the

geography. The participant observation, website analysis, and qualitative interviews all demonstrated the importance of geography in establishing cultural meaning.

The second important input was the individual winemaker's experiences and influences. The history of the winemaker, how many years making wine, amateur or professional training in winemaking, an outsider or someone that grew up within Kentucky, especially within Kentucky agriculture, were all important factors that influenced cultural associations. Individual preferences could determine which grapes were used, American, hybrid, or European, which types of wines were made, in what style, and how the wine and winery were presented to potential consumers. The individual inputs were not only professional, but also personal. For a number of wineries, an Italian heritage prompted wineries with Italian themes, and in one case, Italian wines. On a more professional note, a number of winemakers were influenced by France or California and made wines in those styles. The reference to the "old world" was a common international wine community association, but again, this reference was commonly associated with individual winemaker connections to the "old world."

In many cases, these choices could also be influenced by the demands of consumers, but as demonstrated by the qualitative interviews, winemakers are also influenced by their personal histories. Winemakers trained in France emulate the French winemakers. Winemakers close to the land and to the Kentucky agricultural community are more likely to include native grape varietal. While some individuals would argue that the consumer drives these decisions, Bourdieu (1993) argued otherwise. The producer chooses his or her position, and the audience finds the appropriate producer. This study

is not definitive proof of Bourdieu's (1993) understanding of the field, but the evidence does not disprove his explanation. It is partially supported from this study's findings.

The winemaker's individual preferences affected the positioning of the Kentucky winery in the international wine market. For example, decisions were made on whether to use, and to what extent, international descriptions of wine. Half of Kentucky wine websites made overt reference to the international wine community. The same choices were evident on the websites through the use of stock footage, of what items and context was used with images of wine, such as the pouring of wine into a wine glass (a common image), and food pairings. Food pairings and wine descriptions were found to be the most prominent cultural associations referencing the international wine community. The same approach applied to the entrance in wine competitions that generate awards, prestige, and recognition. The awards can only guarantee so much recognition, and awards were less likely to affect the wine's international position than the individual winemaker's winemaking input. Although, the winemakers interviewed did not consider their choices in relationship to the international wine community. The international wine community positions and relationships were built inductively or organically out of local and individual winemaker preferences and concerns.

The qualitative interviews supported an organic approach to cultural references. Winemakers could not explain their cultural references directly. The associations were indirect references to underlying ideals such as "Southern hospitality." How the international wine market positioning is determined is an important finding for understanding how a winemaker's position and industry choices are determined and as to how the Kentucky wine industry functions for the majority of Kentucky winemakers.

Local and regional influences and concerns trump international wine community demands.

Socio-economic positioning lost importance as the study progressed and as more methods were incorporated. On websites, the lack of context limited socio-economic identifiers. The overall impression was wine as, in Bourdieu's (1984) a luxury product, or as a cultural product (in my words), and therefore a discretionary purchase or choice, and was more likely affiliated with a socio-economic class having the resources needed to spend money on discretionary products, naturally, the more discretionary resources, the higher the socio-economic class. Kentucky winery websites did not appeal to working class, commodity, and necessity purchasing. Still, outside of vague references, many website designs did not clearly delineate socio-economic divisions. The researcher was not able to discern if this was a conscious choice by winemakers. As a recommendation, winemakers may want to consider creating enough context to attract specific customers of specific socio-economic classes. Some winemakers have a strong understanding of who their most likely customers are. One winemaker interviewed mentioned a large amount of tourists (notice the broad socio-economic options within this descriptor) while another referenced 35—75 year old women consumers skewing older. Another winemaker believed that his wine's customers skewed younger.

With all three of the associated websites for the wineries mentioned in the last paragraph, socio-economic references were difficult to identify on the websites. With the first winery, the socio-economic descriptor was too broad to determine clear socio-economic references, although it was clear the website was designed for tourists. The second website was not overtly targeting women consumers of a certain age and socio-

economic status. In fact, on some of the website's pages, the researcher felt the references skewed male rather than female, although the references skewed towards the upper class. Only in the last instance, with the winery's choice of humor and irreverent stance, could the website references appear to skew younger, but again, younger does not necessarily become a socio-economic descriptor. Wineries may want to consider clearer socio-economic references that address specific socio-economic sub-groups. Although, limiting the potential customer base is just as detrimental as offering too broad a socio-economic appeal. As the brand community research recognized, factors outside of the organization's control can affect the brand's customers (McAlexander, 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Also, as Bourdieu (1993) argued, the audience will find the producer. Market research may identify potential consumers for a brand, but the other players in the field, especially already established producers, may limit the connection between wine producers and targeted consumer groups.

An important absence from the cultural associations was the influence of the tobacco industry. The Kentucky wine industry has been supported by the Kentucky state government in hopes of offering revenue to offset the lost economic returns from tobacco. However, tobacco references were not common through participant observation and only mentioned as an aside during the qualitative interviews. Only five wineries directly referenced tobacco on their websites. The direct link between tobacco and Kentucky wine was not present. The lack of a connection is not a surprise as, for the most part, the Kentucky winemakers were not originally tobacco farmers (although in a few cases, tobacco was grown on the farm or by the family that opened the winery). This cultural reference is not likely to be found, and probably will not be found to be more

common in the future. As the history of a Kentucky wine region grows, and as the

connection to the history of Kentucky "as a wine state" continues to gain momentum, the

likelihood of the tobacco cultural association gaining preference will continue to lessen.

Kentucky Proud products (KyP) and the logo for Kentucky Proud products (see

Figure 17) are both cultural symbols and a Kentucky brand. Interestingly, while most

winemakers believed the logo did stand for Kentucky products, the broad definition of a

Kentucky Proud product for most of the Kentucky winemakers interviewed limited the

benefits of the logo's cultural meaning. The KyP logo could still be found at the

wineries, but for most of the winemakers, the logo applied to any product that had any

part of its production process completed in Kentucky or a product that originated from

Kentucky. Such a broad definition does little for an "add-on" agricultural product where

complexity in the production process, the regulations and expectations of the wine

industry, and the importance of geography in the process of growing grapes create

confusion as to how and why the wine is a Kentucky Proud product. For example, if the

grapes are from California, but the fermentation process occurs in Kentucky, and

meanwhile, the glass bottle is imported from China, and the cork is from Portugal, is it

accurate to claim that the wine is a Kentucky product? For most Kentucky winemakers,

the answer is yes, but the final product does not have the same distinction as a wine with

all of its parts obtained within the state, and alternatively, the symbol does not carry the

same connotations for wine as it would for a Kentucky agricultural product that is not

processed, for example, an organic, Kentucky cucumber. For this reason, the

winemakers do not place much cultural significance on Kentucky Proud. Instead, the

symbol is a bare-minimum label that must be shown and communicated to local

customers. It communicates that the winery is aware and connected to the state and local

community. The symbol does not communicate much direct meaning about the specific

wine. The lack of KyP logo cultural significance affects Kentucky winemakers'

positions on the allocation of the state's marketing and advertising resources for

agricultural products. In the beginning, Kentucky wineries did benefit, perhaps

indirectly, from the local food movement. Presently though, most Kentucky winemakers

believe they are more likely to benefit from resources directly allocated to the Kentucky

wine region. The cultural characteristics of the KyP symbol and the opinion of the

symbol in the eyes of Kentucky winemakers are important considerations for brand

management, marketing, and advertising decisions.

As hoped, the combined findings crystalized into a coherent text, or at least a

coherent understanding of how cultural associations are appropriated, constructed, re-

constructed, and negotiated. Geography and individual winemaker inputs influence the

cultural associations used in communicating the cultural meaning of Kentucky wines to

stakeholders. So far, this discussion has given an overall account of how the cultural

associations are used, but future sections will dig deeper into the use of cultural

associations based on context and how they are used, for example, cultural associations

used in rituals or as part of website texts. This section outlined the general use of cultural

associations and answers the first research question. The subsequent sections will assess

the cultural associations in consideration of the contexts in which the associations are

used. The choice to divide the cultural association findings is a result of the conceptual

framework employed, but also the positioning of the researcher. The researcher views

agency and context as essential influences on cultural meaning, and the cultural

associations cannot be understood without considering these variables.

Ritual Communication

Throughout this study, wine was continually used as part of rituals to participate

in the serious life. Four prominent rituals associated with the cultural consumption of

Kentucky wine were identified: wine tastings as the appreciation of the consumption of

wine for some other reason than caloric intake, food and wine pairings for the

appreciation of the consumption of a meal, wine and winery visits as an appropriate

option for the expenditure of free time, and as part of the ritual of visiting agricultural

sites (agritourism).

The wine tasting ritual is the primary ritual associated with Kentucky wines (and

probably the most common ritual at any winery in the world). Every winery visited

positioned the physical bar used for the serving of wine in a prominent place in the

tasting room.   As mentioned in a previous chapter, the wine bar is an altar for

worshipping wine, and this physical necessity links the cultural consumption of wine

with religion. Through the physical space, wineries position wine as an essential element

for participating in the serious life. It might appear obvious that wine is central to

participating in the cultural consumption of wine, but the manipulation of the space

reveals that the wine possesses a hire status than the winemaker, the community, or the

consumer. The wine is most important to the community. Interview discussions supported this approach.

As an off-shoot of the wine bar, the ritual of wine tasting emphasizes certain aspects of cultural wine consumption as necessary for the performance beyond wine and the bar. The next necessary piece of the ritual is the server and/or the winemaker. Sometimes the servers or winemakers are the same people, especially at smaller wineries. Other times, the server is a knowledgeable stand-in for the winemaker. When the winemaker fills the role of educated server, then the ritual socially models the "star" behavior representative of many producer positions in cultural industry such as the head chef in a five star restaurant. The server is the authority on how to approach and view the wine from the perspective of the producer during the wine tasting ritual.

There are key distinctions for this role. The approach demonstrated by the server is not the same as the wine critic whose role it is to evaluate the wine. The server models the "star" behavior of producers, for producers, and for the enjoyment of the audience/potential consumers. The star role and behavior is similar to the models presented for chefs and artists that "perform" in the kitchen or during an art show.

This position in the ritual has a long history and is linked to agrarian and working class positions. The server/winemaker is similar to the "host" of Bourdieu's (1984) working class café: "Its [working class café] focus is the counter, to be leaned on after shaking hands with the landlord—who is thus defined as the host (he often leads the conversation)—and sometimes shaking hands with the whole company" (p. 180). The working class café differs from the tasting room as the purpose (in Bourdieu's view) of the café is to offer male companionship. The purpose of the tasting room is to worship

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wine. Still, the role of the "host" remains the same. The server/winemaker leads the tasting, leads the conversation, and is expected to greet the tasters. These roles were adopted from rituals that have been present in human society for centuries, and it is of little surprise that the tasting room possesses similar roles to working class cafes; wineries and their cellars could be found in rural areas, and while some of the wineries were owned by rich winemakers, owners, and royalty, the vineyards, tanks, and cellars, were maintained by working class individuals, and of course, not all vineyards and wineries were owned by the wealthy. The importance is in the role of the server or winemaker as star and host.

The role of the star or host leads to educational and narrative expectations. The host is expected to present the context and background needed to understand the consumption process. The host is the most qualified individual to explain why certain flavors and notes are detected in the wine and which flavors or notes to focus on during consumption. The host explains the appropriate temperature, glass, and even year when the wine should be consumed. This information is informed from the intention of the winemaker. This information may differ from the information and experience required by the critic in order to evaluate the wine. The host sets the initial criteria from the perspective of the winemaker and his or her original expectations and goals for the wine. The critic alters the criteria based on his or her interests, experiences, reputation, and audience. The roles differ.

Usually with the best hosts, these expectations lead into the narrative behind the creation of the wine. The winemaker's intentions must be explained, why certain grapes were chosen, why the wine was aged for so long, what challenges and obstacles were

faced, and why this year's vintage differs from last year. These details create the context

and environment for why the wine is received a certain way, both physically in its taste,

and also culturally. The ritual and the host role reinforce the importance of education and

narrative in the cultural consumption of wine. Education, narrative, context,

environment, and ritual then combine to increase the cultural enjoyment of the

consumption of wine. The original meaning of the wine is conveyed through the tasting,

and new cultural meanings are created through the participation of tasters in the ritual

consumption of wine. The role of the host was emphasized by the qualitative interviews.

The tasting ritual exemplifies Rothenbuhler's (1998) criteria for rituals including

the reference to others not present (the winemaker, other winemakers and wineries, past

and present, broader society through the role of the host), the reference to cultural

meanings, the creation of new meanings, the agency or participation of many in a

communal act, and the contextual setting of the ritual.

The wine and food pairing ritual revealed the contextual re-appropriation of the

international wine community practice of pairing wine with selected foods. When

Kentucky cheeses or other dishes replaced expected foods that are traditionally paired

with wine, the exchange emphasized the cultural place of wine in Kentucky culture,

specifically the local community's acceptance of wine as part of local culture. Relatedly,

the wine as part of the leisure ritual highlighted the importance and position of wine in

society as an appropriate cultural product for the allocation of resources. The leisure

ritual also demonstrated acts of admiration or mimicry of the elite and upper class that

has available leisure time. Wine as part of agritourism rituals allowed for a broader

inclusion of people that may not be interested in consuming the wine. Agritourism rituals

also revealed the importance of wine trails. The wine trail ritual links wine with agricultural and rural areas, with the bourbon industry, and establishes a virtual, and yet physical (you have to travel the roads to get to the wineries) place for wine. Like the glass wine bottle establishing its place in wine rituals to the point more efficient boxes and plastic bags are not widespread, the wine trail ritual entrenches the winery and vineyard visit in Kentucky society. With the linking of societal events, including weddings, festivals, reunions, and art shows, the rituals positioned the winery and wine as appropriate settings and cultural products associated with important moments and other valued rituals in society. These ritual examples reveal how the analysis of communication phenomena through the lens of ritual communication can highlight aspects of our culture and the importance of settings and products. As the rituals change, the overall position of wine in Kentucky's culture and cultural value of wine is better understood.

The aforementioned rituals involve interpersonal communication. However, ritual was observed during textual analysis as well. Textual analysis revealed the importance of websites for wine rituals and also that websites can also be used ritualistically. For Kentucky wineries, the most likely ritual is the use of websites as the source of information in planning an outing or event at the winery. Whether the event is one staged by the winery (a music festival or art sale) or for placing a reservation (for a wedding), accessing the website is a likely first step in the ritual. The website provides times, dates, contact information, and directions. One could begin the day, look outside, discover wonderful summer weather, and decide it was the perfect day for a winery visit. A step in preparation for the ritual would be accessing the appropriate information.

While some might find the inclusion of information searches in a ritual as dubious, one would only need to observe the preparation for particular masses and ceremonies involved in the Catholic religion as these rituals similar preparatory steps. The priest must find the right literature for the specialized mass, prepare a homily (on some occasions), review the readings and gospel selections, and even peruse the list of participants. The preparations, even website information acquisition steps, are part of the wine tasting and winery visit ritual.

Rothenbuhler (1998) also argued that media content could be used as part of a ritual, and Kentucky winery website content can also be used as part of the wine ritual. There are a few important characteristics to consider in the use of website content (as media content) when it is included in wine rituals. First, Rothenbuhler (1998) notes that "a text or artifact is not an element of ritual until it is put to use by people and functions in that way" (p. 89). The content must be "identified as instances of the central symbol systems of the society at hand" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 90). Finally, Rothenbuhler (1998) identified three areas where media content is used as part of a ritual or to reinforce ritual communication (usually by referencing the ritual as part of a society's mythmaking). Media content can be used to position a ritual within its place in a society. When a coronation is broadcast on a television, not only is the coronation reinforced as a myth and ritual, but the broadcast positions the coronation within the society. When wineries are advertised on websites as sites for weddings, the websites are communicating that wineries are the appropriate place for weddings and that for the appropriate socio-economic group or potential customer, the winery is the appropriate

place for which contributes to the positions the winery, wine, and weddings have in the society.

Secondly, the conventions or forms of the rituals can be preserved through mediated content. Certainly, on websites, rituals are preserved. The international wine descriptions, food pairings, associated products, and the appropriate leisure activities are all preserved on the website. The ritual of producing a wine for potential accolades and awards is preserved. Even the purchasing of wine, of having contact information and directions (which reinforce the winery visit ritual), of writing about wine, and having an about section that informs potential consumers about the history of the winery, wines, the vintner (all conventions of the wine narrative), and perhaps as mentioned throughout this study, the act of pouring a wine into a wine glass are all wine rituals or aspects of wine rituals communicated and preserved on winery websites.

Thirdly, and Rothenbuhler (1998) believed this claim to be controversial mediated content possessed a "magical" social status, especially mediated content on television. The strange pseudo-presence, absence, timeliness, timelessness of mass communication granted mediated content a special place in society, which, through extension of that special place and special use, made the consumption of mediated television content a ritual. Rothenbuhler (1998) described the viewing experience as "one that is not wholly here and now, one that is not wholly fact or fiction, reality or fantasy" (p. 92). Consumption of information on websites, and the use of computer, laptop, touch-pad, and phone screens may not be that different than televised mediated communication. With media convergence, a user is watching mediated television content on other screens, and winery websites contain videos, slideshows, and audio files that could be broadcast on a

television, and therefore, may possess a similar, otherworldly position. As a user links from one tab to the next on a website, the traveling through cyberspace, of consuming information but also experiencing a virtual space may be an other-worldly experience. The viewing of wine and winery videos online, the reading of multiple histories and about sections, of purveying the wines offered and the grape varieties used, of being lost in the world of wine, or of Kentucky wine, of being lost in this virtual world, is all part of the ritual use of mediated content. The fact that much of the information is used for persuading consumers to purchase a wine, and is therefore an advertisement does not preclude ritual. Rothenbuhler (1998) notes that Goethals (1981) and Goffman (1976) considered advertising as a form of ritual.

Identifying Kentucky winery website use as a form of ritual extends Rothenbuhler's concept of ritual communication. As alluded to in the preceding paragraphs, Rothenbuhler (1998) looked at television as the primary form of mediated content for rituals and for media rituals. Internet use, advances in mobile technology, and Web 2.0 were not in ubiquitous use when Rothenbuhler (1998) presented his concept of ritual communication. This study advances ritual communication into the realm of online content and even into social media as social media can be used in many of the same ways as winery websites were used.

The study documents the ritual of cultural wine consumption in Kentucky which does have similarities with the ritual of wine consumption throughout the world. Still, this study records how wine was consumed in Kentucky at a certain point and time in human society. The rituals surrounding wine have changed throughout history. In ancient times, Greek and Roman societies used wine to encourage discussions and

communication in small group setting (Lukacs, 2012). No longer does modern society

use wine for such purposes as often (although some groups, maybe a collection of

undergraduate philosophy students) still use wine as part of such rituals. Instead, this

study documented the use of Kentucky wine in four prevailing rituals: wine tastings,

acceptable pairing of wine with food for the appreciation of the consumption of a meal,

wine and winery visits as an appropriate option for the expenditure of free time, and wine

as part of the ritual of visiting agricultural sites in order to experience new regions, their

rural and agricultural sites, and associated food and liquid consumption while on such

visits. These rituals may not differ much from other places in the world, but slight

distinctions, such as Kentucky wineries as part of the agritourism ritual may be

distinctive. When individuals visit California wineries, most are going to taste the wine

at the winery as it is a known wine region, not to tour the agricultural and rural areas of

California (which are much more diverse and larger than Kentucky's agricultural and

rural landscape).

Finally, the literature review found few examples of Rothenbuhler's (1998) ritual

communication being applied in academic research, at least directly. Only two articles

mentioned ritual communication or Rothenbuhler directly, and one of the articles was a

conference paper (Rosenbaum, 2007; Sella, 2007). The lack of articles directly tackling

ritual communication or Rothenbuhler does not mean his work is not cited or discussed in

other scholarly articles, only that there is not a tremendous amount of research primarily

concerned with ritual communication. In other articles, Rothenbuhler's (1998)

understanding of ritual may be implied in the analysis, especially in the study of ritual,

but rarely is his definition of ritual communication central to the analysis or paper. This study adds to the small amount of literature conducted thus far.

Brand Management

As proposed in the theory chapter, individual Kentucky wines are brands associated with specific Kentucky wineries. Kentucky wines are brands with distinguishing names and/or symbols attached to a good or service created by a seller or group of sellers to differentiate the good or service from competitors (Ghodeswar, 2008). The research has recognized that when one considers a product as a cultural product or brand, one must include all of the associations and meanings along with the position of the brand in the mind of the consumer. The associations include thoughts, emotions, feelings, perceptions, images, and experiences linked to the brand as well as loyalty to the brand, the promises a brand makes, and the brand's ability to satisfy the promises or needs of the consumer. Kentucky wine brand identity can be divided into two categories, brand awareness (recall, recognition, and meaning) and image (evaluation and performance).

An essential aspect of brand management involves the managing of brand associations, including cultural associations, which helped to merge the cultural portions of this study with the brand management research (Asker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). As brand management is the managing of the associations, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, and experiences evoked by the brand image, identity and brand, not only are cultural associations included in the research on Kentucky wine brand management, but concerns over wine quality, origin of grapes, and the establishment of a terroir were also included (Keller, 2009).

The altruistic (arguably), applied, and industry benefits of this study involve the improvement of successful brand management of Kentucky wine brands as interpreted from the perspective of the Kentucky wine producer. If these issues are addressed successfully by the Kentucky wineries, then the wine brands can improve their positions in the local and international wine markets. The successful brand management will allow Kentucky wine brands to better position their brands in their markets. Brand positioning is the concerted effort to create a specific image in the minds of consumers. The goal of the brand management is to influence the beliefs, motivations, and ultimately the consumer purchasing choices (i.e., persuasion, usually conducted through some form of communication). It is important to remember that the brand is not controlled by the organization; the brand is co-constructed with the brand community and more indirectly by Kentucky wine industry and international wine industry stakeholders (Arvidsson, 2005; Bengtson and Östberg, 2004; Keller, 2009; Merz, He, and Vargo 2009). Successful brand management choices from Kentucky winemakers may only ever be partially successful. Overall, Kentucky brand management choices are negotiated with Kentucky wine stakeholders through textual or performative communication acts in a specific context and environment. Still, the results of the brand management choices and brand stakeholder negotiations of those choices influence the meanings inherent in the wine on the market.

The study found that the most successful and most prominent brand management strategies for Kentucky wine producers were interpersonal interactions, predominantly conducted at the wineries, and special events onsite or offsite. This finding was in-line with exploratory research on the Kentucky wine industry as well as discussions

conducted during participant observation and the qualitative interviews. Interpersonal communication is at the heart of successful Kentucky wine brand management and will be discussed at length. The events did involve interpersonal communication; however, some events, such as weddings, produced strong sales as the winery was the supplier of the alcohol for the event. In instances where the wine was secondary to the context or environment, the brand management involved marketing the winery as an appropriate site for events.

Marketing the winery as an appropriate venue for an event was primarily conducted through digital communication on winery websites. Websites promoted the winery as an ideal place for an event. The website also included contact and reservation information for reserving space at the wineries. During participant observation, more than one winery noted that they host weddings throughout the wedding season (May—October, but pretty much anytime once the weather and vegetation has improved to make the winery an idyllic agricultural visit). Most wineries are booked every weekend, and some wineries will serve two or three weddings in a day. The websites offer wedding pictures, some stock footage of weddings and some photographs of actual weddings hosted at specific wineries, and images of the wedding site and facilities in order to induce reservations. Many of the wineries have added on facilities or renovated areas of the vineyard and/or winery in order to serve weddings and other events. Oftentimes, the photos and information is included on the website. This marketing has pushed vineyards and wineries into Kentucky culture as an appropriate place to host a wedding. For a number of Kentucky citizens, the winery and vineyard can now be considered as a suitable setting for a wedding. The winery and vineyard is now an acceptable option for

inclusion in the wedding myth (myth not defined as an untruth but as an important narrative for a society). The event marketing increases the value of the brand as the presence of the winery has been integrated into Kentucky culture. Since the event site is associated with a special event, the wine brand takes on a special connotation (the special connotation may not always be positive, especially if the wedding experience was poor). The wedding association is so valuable that one website address re-directed the researcher to a Kentucky wedding site. Also, a few wineries have employed event managers. It is a recommendation of this researcher that every winery offering events should employ an event manager for managing reservations and also for planning events. Again, internship opportunities, especially through college and university partnerships, could be created to fill this need. The experience would be highly beneficial for students. As time passes, the affiliation of weddings and wineries can create a familiarity with Kentucky wineries and assist in establishing Kentucky wineries as a legitimate part and experience of Kentucky culture.

There is a downside to this marketing approach. The association of weddings and wineries can pigeonhole wineries and wine as best consumed when putting-on a wedding. In such cases, Kentucky wine is not considered a part of everyday life, but rather, a special occasion for weddings, pre-wedding events such as bachelorette parties (directly observed by the researcher), or for rehearsal dinners and post-wedding receptions. There is the potential for Kentucky wine to be seen as a special drink such as the mint julep, supplied in bulk for the Kentucky Derby and then put away until next year. This outcome is unlikely as the international wine community uses wine for multiple rituals and occasions, but there is a difference between a Kentucky wine and a wine from an

established wine region. If the difference is emphasized as Bourdieu (1984) argues is an almost instinctual act by most humans, Kentucky could become the wine of Kentucky weddings and not a wine option for other occasions.

When interpersonal brand management is not focused on the winery or vineyard, but on the wine, the findings highlighted two characteristics of the communication exchange that are necessary for a successful interpersonal brand management interaction: education and narrative. Participant observation, qualitative interviews and exploratory research supported this interpretation. Indirectly, website analysis also supported this interpretation through the inclusion of education services and information as well as winery, vineyard, wine, and vintner narratives included on website pages.

Of the potential improvements to brand management and emphasis on education may be the most important. Cultural industries do not survive without education (Bourdieu, 1993; 1984). The consumer must have the appropriate schema in order to evaluate the cultural product. Having an understanding of the appropriate schema directs a consumer as to what, how, and why a cultural product is produced in a certain manner and what to pay attention to when consuming the product. The education presents the rules by which the product is to be evaluated on and what the producer considered when making the product. This information allows the consumer to engage with the product at a deeper level than at the surface level. The information can also support the positioning and organizing of the cultural product in the consumer's own life and also help to position the consumer within the field of cultural production (as an audience member/consumer). Education creates expectations that can be met by the product which

creates a demand in the consumer that the product can now meet. Arguably, education, especially cultural education on a cultural product, creates the cultural product.

Throughout this study, offering educational services or an educational experience was missing from most wineries and websites, and consumer education was not one of the first thoughts or priorities of wine makers. Educational services are especially important in an industry where a third party (usually an academic institution) does not supply the education for the cultural industry. In such cases, educational services are usually offered by winery servers when serving the wine for wine tastings, during meals, and tours. Kentucky winemakers lamented the lack of trained servers and winery employees, but sometimes even the winemakers were not focused on, did not have the time, or did not possess the skills to educate the consumers effectively. Educating the workers can be the difference between selling three bottle of wine rather than one bottle, and the difference between a one-time customer and repeat visits from a customer.

Education increases enjoyment (Bourdieu, 1993), but educational training is not a one-step process. However, it is difficult to complete the education process as transmitters of the information and education must be trained, and then the information and education must be transmitted to consumers. This researcher highly recommends that the industry offer resources, information, and services on how to train servers and winemakers (any winery host) on educational communication. Also, the University of Kentucky may want to include internship and classes on direct consumer interaction with a focus on marketing and sales as part of an alcohol industry curriculum. The skills developed through such a focus are very valuable inside and outside of the alcohol industry. Personally, the one winery with an educationally trained employee was the

most enjoyable experience the researcher had during the participant observation. The employee was originally trained in the bourbon industry. This study revealed the lack of emphasis on education as part of the brand management strategies of a cultural industry.

The educational training necessary was identified during this study. The host must supply the wine's narrative in order to create the appropriate context for the consumption environment. There is a tremendous amount of research on the value of narrative in education and learning, not just information, but on values, beliefs, attitudes, and judgments in all areas of people's lives (Bandura, 1989; Bruner, 1986; Cole, 1997; Howard, 1991; Sarbin, 1986; Slater, 2002). Internalization of the narratives can persuade individuals to change their behaviors and perspectives. In fact, Vaught, Mallett, Brnich, Reinke, Kowalski-Trakofler, & Cole, (2006) assert that narratives are where humans get meaning in their lives. Fisher (1984) would likely agree. When this meaning is associated with attitude, values, and beliefs, then the learned meanings can be considered cultural meanings.

There are conditions on whether the narrative will be successful or be accepted for internalization. The conditions include perceived chance of success, having a choice in learning, if the learning is valuable, and if the individual is enjoying learning (Wlodowski, 1985). Having inspiring or admirable models also helps, and the host can be such a model. The rest of the aforementioned criteria can be met when tasting wine. If the narrative is told properly and with consideration for plausibility, coherence, reasonableness, and filtered for acceptance and credibility, customers can believe they will have success in recognizing the flavors noted by the host, tasters have a choice in the tasting, tasters can believe that wine and learning about wine is valuable, and tasting wine

can be enjoyable (Weick 1995). Furthermore, wine tastings are excellent opportunities

for learning in the manner believed to be the most influential for learning, in social

settings rather than alone (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Wine tastings are social events.

Wine education through indirect, narrative learning can affect the brand image in

the minds of potential consumers of Kentucky wine. The tasting setting must offer a

pleasing environment (not in an automotive shop as one winemaker warned), establish

the appropriate context for the wine, use the appropriate storytelling approach, and adhere

to the narrative-educational principles outlined in the previous paragraph. The qualitative

interviews revealed just how important an educated, outgoing, and eloquent winemaker

or server can be for potential consumers. Mastering this approach obviously requires

formal training and practice, individual wineries, the wine industry, and support

institutions could all develop training programs on narrative learning and storytelling.

The more a host can influence the attitudes, values, beliefs and emotions of potential

consumers concerning a specific Kentucky wine brand, the better the Kentucky wine

brand can be positioned.

A sub-aspect of modern brand management involves the establishment of a

relationship with the consumer. The relationship revolves around the offering of a

service in the consumer's life (Holt, 2002). Qualitative interviews referred to the creation

of a relationship with a potential consumer as "touching people". Hatch and Schultz

(2009) even used the term touch them when defining brands: "Brands are, and always

have been, interpreted and judged by all who touch them" (p. 118). Wine tastings, wine

and food service and pairings, leisure outlets, and agritourism events are all examples of

wines and wineries serving a customer, and these experiences do establish relationships,

but one overlooked area is the wine club. Only eleven wineries out of sixty-eight offered

wine club information and/or the opportunity to join a winery's wine club. Every winery

should offer a wine club and multiple ways to enroll. The wine club is a secondary, more

intimate option for serving consumers. Many wine clubs offer exclusive or rare wine

vintages and special winery events for members. The club also helps in organizing and

supplying the wines to the members, making the acquisition of the wine more efficient.

Wine clubs offer an excellent opportunity to meet the needs of passionate consumers. As

the participant observation revealed, these passionate members communicate information

and stories about the wines and advertise for the wineries. The wine club members are

much more likely to become unofficial ambassadors of wineries and wines. Because of

the relational value of the wine club and the potential for wine club members to promote

the brand, wine clubs are an essential element of brand management.

Websites are another brand management issue. As informational outlets and

symbols of the wineries and wines, the websites are valuable winery advertisements,

especially when there are few traditional advertising outlets or resources available for

most Kentucky wineries. What was disconcerting about the website analysis was how

many of the wineries created basic or poor websites. Almost half of the websites (n=32)

were average or lower when assessed. The assessment included multiple categories

including design, ease of use, and expected information or services. The large number is

surprising considering the improvements in template design and third party companies

willing to design quality websites. The secondary concern is the lack of updated websites

along with the inclusion of website sections that reveal the missing updates, sections such

as blogs and event calendars. Overall, the design of the website needs to be considered

carefully, what sections should be included, what information and content should be provided, and the actual layout. Since websites are the primary means of communication with potential consumers and winery stakeholders after interpersonal communication channels, and the primary mass communication channel, it is recommended that website development and maintenance be made a priority by Kentucky wineries. Again, academic internships are a great way to meet the needs of the wineries and offer opportunities for students to gain necessary skills and experiences needed in the workplace. Even if students cannot create a quality website, they can maintain a website, and such an experience is invaluable in the workplace.

Labels, logos, and slogans were often unclear on the websites. Oftentimes, the labels and logos were not uniform across the website, and the labels did not match the label on the winery's bottles. Clearer, uniform, and coherent labels allow consumers to visit a website, identify a desired wine, go to a retailer, and recognize the winery and wine at the store. Many wineries offer multiple wines with differing labels, so there will be some diversity and perhaps confusion, but recognizable symbols spread across the website and labels would improve brand image and consumer awareness.

The issue of how many wines are produced does affect Kentucky brands and terroirs (terroir will be discussed later). Some winemakers may love making wine and offer many choices in order to offer a wine for almost everyone, especially if drop-in visitors are a significant portion of consumers, but with every new wine produced, the possibility for confusion increases. For example, which wine is the winery's signature wine? Without an established terroir, it is more difficult for consumers to know which wine is the flagship wine. Also, the multitude of wines limits the amount of resources

allocated to any one wine. With limited resources available for many wineries, such business practices may be risky, and many wineries cannot afford to destroy poor batches of wine. These batches must be sold. Poor quality wine adversely affects the brand. As one interviewee noted, Kentucky wineries are not like wineries from established wine regions. Entire established wine regions are not discounted because of one bad wine, but that is because the wine region is known for good wines. Kentucky is not known for their good wines, therefore, when a low-quality wine is consumed, the potential for a customer to never consume another Kentucky wine is much higher. Why bother with poor quality wines from an unknown wine region when good wines exist in other regions? It may be beneficial for Kentucky wineries to review the optimum number of wines produced and how a bad wine experience might affect the brand's image.

Partnerships are another brand concern and an important aspect of brand management. Many brand benefits can emerge from productive partnerships. Unfortunately, the Kentucky wine industry will have to organize and work diligently to improve relations with its most likely partners. Findings highlighted the tension between the bourbon industry and the Kentucky wine industry. This conflict not only hinders the Kentucky wine industry, but the overall alcohol industry in the state. As the stakeholder perspective of brand management recognized, even ancillary or indirect individuals associated with the company or industry can affect a brand. As interviewees noted and the creation of Kentucky wine trails exemplify, the Kentucky wine industry has benefitted from the Bourbon trail and the agritourism efforts of the bourbon industry. The wineries offer increased options for tourists as women are more likely to be interested in wine than bourbon (this preference was personally observed and referenced

by a winery employee). Further partnerships, especially in regards to distillation

regulation, can benefit everyone involved. Clear regulations and a mutual understanding

of the positions of all the parties involved can lead to productive communication with

stakeholders and potential customers. What can actually be distilled under different

licenses could be worked out. Is the bourbon industry really concerned if Kentucky

wineries are only allowed to produce cognac, brandy, and port? Could a separate license

involving only certain agricultural materials (i.e., grapes) be designed? How can

wineries help to protect the bourbon industry, and conversely, the bourbon industry

protect the wine industry? An alcohol industry wide marketing campaign communicating

the value of the different distilled products could increase alcohol interest and sales. A

partnership between both industries would benefit the brands of the entire Kentucky

alcohol industry. Such a partnership would also free up more valuable resources for the

wineries.

Distribution concerns can also be resolved through productive partnerships. The

distribution issues identified in the findings indicated winemaker concern over the lack of

distribution options for smaller wineries, and even then, some of the smaller wineries

eventually found value in the salesmanship and established relationships of the

distributors. The three tiered system is not going away in Kentucky as evidenced by the

recent Kentucky legislative ruling on Anheuser-Busch's attempt to own two

distributorships ("Beer Bill Passes Kentucky Senate: 'Anheuser-Busch Wants a

Monopoly,'"; 2015). Instead, the wineries, in partnership with the state, may want to

look at the state distribution plan of Virginia. State support for small farm wineries can

help to establish the wineries until the wineries grow to the size where private distributors

will be interested in carrying the wine. Such a plan would benefit the distributors as well as the wineries. Communication efforts that explain the situation, plan, and benefits could encourage a partnership.

Finally, Kentucky wineries may look to improve their partnership with the University of Kentucky. First, and this position is entirely personal opinion, the University of Kentucky will get its winery. The university is a very powerful, profitable, and influential Kentucky institution. There is little point in opposing the construction of a UK winery. Moreover, the Kentucky wine industry will not be able to prevent changes in the goals and purpose of the UK winery as time passes. When new individuals replace the current faculty and administration, new priorities may be identified, including the growth of a University of Kentucky wine brand. What the Kentucky wine industry can do is create a productive foundation with the university as the winery is constructed. Efforts can be taken to emphasize the entire Kentucky wine region, distribute information on the entire industry, and educate consumers. A UK winery can host statewide competitions and festivals, UK stores can offer other state wines as well as UK wines, and direct Kentucky wine industry support provisions can be included during the planning and construction phases of a UK winery. Curriculum and internship opportunities have already been outlined in this chapter, and the creation of more viticulture and oenology curriculum, research, and support can also be instituted. There are many areas where the university can support the Kentucky wine industry, and if a UK winery encourages more investment in other areas of grape and wine research, education, and infrastructure, a more sophisticated (and commercial) UK winery and curriculum may benefit the whole industry. As evidenced by the lack of a concerted effort to inform

the University of Kentucky of the concern over the dismissal of the long-serving

oenologist on faculty staff, there has not been a clear line of communication or a strong

relationship between a significant section of the Kentucky wine industry and the

university. Such evidence is troublesome for the industry as there is no documentation of

an established wine region gaining international recognition without support from the

government and the institutions that house viticulture and oenology research and

development. Strong partnerships are key to improving brands and successful brand

management.

Terroir. Bourdieu (1984) argued that "social identity is defined and asserted

through difference" (p. 167). Nothing differentiates wine more than a distinct terroir. A

Kentucky terroir is a form of brand management. A terroir helps to differentiate a brand

by presenting a definable and singular personality of a wine by referencing unique

characteristics linked to the geography, wine maker practices, and grape varietal chosen.

These three categories of characteristics can arguably be detected in a wine, provide

enough variety to distinguish a wine from a certain region from a wine from a different

wine region, and even between wines originating from the same terroir. The terroir also

offers increased brand awareness, as wine brands are easier to recognize when associated

with specific regions and grape varietals, and a terroir provides rules or an ideal by which

to evaluate a wine, improving brand awareness. In effect, a terroir reinforces a brand's

identity.

After much deliberation, it is highly recommended that the Kentucky wine region

establish a terroir. Without a terroir, the ability to establish a clear position in the

international wine community is difficult if not impossible, and the lack of a terroir may

limit local market growth. As Bourdieu (1993, 1984) continually reminds his readers, difference, absence, and negation in relationship to other individuals, groups, and products establishes positions, schemas, and communicates meaning to audiences and consumers. In agreement with the winemakers interviewed, a Kentucky terroir has the best chance of developing organically as the industry matures.

However, the entire sub-field of the Kentucky wine industry (producers, stakeholders, and support institutions) must work together to ensure the industry progresses towards the establishment of a terroir. The terroir may develop organically, but working towards a terroir will need to be openly encouraged as there are significant challenges to its development, including lack of consumer education about terroirs and wine, lack of familiarity with certain grape varieties, a diverse variety of grapes grown and wine types currently produced in Kentucky, and the lack of Kentucky grape acreage in production.

This last issue is of the most concern to the industry. The Kentucky wine industry is in jeopardy as the importation of grapes does weaken the industry's credibility and legitimacy. The crux of this concern involves the industry's original growth as an offshoot of the local food movement, the assumption that Kentucky wine is a local product, and the expectation within the international wine community that wine earns its legitimacy and authenticity from being produced by grapes that originated from its geographic wine region. As the qualitative interviews revealed, consumers are assuming the grapes used in Kentucky wines are from Kentucky. They are not familiar with the distinctions on the labels that communicate where the grapes are actually grown. Consumers do not know why America is on the bottom of some labels and Kentucky on

others. They do not know that it is difficult if not impossible to grow grapes for Merlots and Cabernet Sauvignons in Kentucky. However, interest and consumption of wine is growing in the United States, and consumers are becoming more educated as a result. The physical connection of the grape to the land influences the expectations of the consumer. The development of geographic wine regions reinforces this expectation, and the local food movement only strengthens this position. While some winemakers are benefitting from the importation of grapes, and others are forced to import because of the lack of availability, more than likely, the long term viability of the Kentucky wine industry depends on the development of enough acreage of a grape variety or varieties than can contribute to a distinctive wine terroir.

Encouraging increased grape production is a difficult undertaking. Currently, the available resources for supporting increased grape production do not exist. There is not enough money to subsidize vineyard expansion. Without identified grape varieties, grape growers grow multiple varieties in too few numbers. Since the establishment of a terroir is not a priority for the industry, there is not a lot of communication, education, or instruction for grape growers when deciding what and how many grape varietals to grow. The recent string of harsh winters are also hampering the expansion of acreage, especially for vinifera grape varieties.

Grape growing for wine production is extremely difficult in Kentucky. With a lack of a grape supply for winemakers, official attempts to establish a terroir, state wine, or grape would end up hurting the Kentucky wine industry as the few wineries with the most capital would purchase all of the locally produced grapes and the smaller wineries would suffer. These infrastructure issues are impeding the establishment of a terroir and

will need to be addressed before a specific terroir is established. Potential paths to overcoming these grape growing issues could involve establishing a grape growers union or organization, an industry push for a designated terroir, state encouragement for establishing a terroir, and/or support and educational efforts from the industry's support institutions and organizations.

If and when the grape growing issues are addressed, the most likely model for the identification and establishment of a terroir will follow the Virginia model. The terroir will be established by the wine grapes that grow well in Kentucky and can be used to produce a quality wine. The universities may support the industry by identifying the most likely grapes that produce the highest quality wines and disseminate material on how to produce the highest quality grape yields and wines. Such grapes will be recognized, demanded, and rewarded by consumers and wine critics. In response, winemakers will demand, and pay more, for these grapes which will help stabilize Kentucky's grape growing industry. With a few grape varieties in demand, more acreage of the identified grapes will be planted, and more wineries will produce the state's terroir/s wines. This model has been the most likely model for success throughout the United States. The designation of a state grape or wine, especially if there are issues with the amount of acreage in production and the ability to grow the grape successfully, make an official endorsement less likely to succeed and too vulnerable to failure. More than likely, a Kentucky wine terroir will evolve out of private industry practice.

As for the choice of grape based on European/vinifera, hybrid, or American/Eastern grape varietal, the findings of this study did not result in a more likely choice out of the grape varietal options.   Personally, the researcher would prefer a hybrid

or American/Eastern grape varietal, but that reasoning is based on a bias towards the surprising and different taste of these wines. These wines can be marketed as specialty wines, and the increased differentiation from the established regions could be valuable. Excepting one winery, all of the Kentucky wines mimicking established wine region wines, particularly Californian or French wines, were, as one interviewee put it, "boring." The interviewees were split on the choice of European or American grape varietals, and the eventual grape varietal/s chosen may be European. Climate change (if a warmer climate includes dryer weather) and/or advances in viticulture research may make Kentucky a suitable location for European varieties. Some of the grapes grown in colder European climes may already be suitable for Kentucky. In the end, it may be a combination of European and American varieties, as a blended wine, or as different Kentucky terroirs, emerge. What is clear, as Bourdieu (1993, 1984) asserted and an interviewee did express as well, the Kentucky wine industry will have to establish a terroir that stands-out *through difference* rather than in imitation of already established wine regions.

As a Kentucky wine terroir is identified and cultivated, interaction with the international wine media will become more likely and necessary for continued growth of the Kentucky wine region. All interviewees recognized the importance of acknowledgment and praise from the international wine media. There are a handful of influential wine publications including *Wine Advocate* (until recently, the home of wine critic Robert Parker), *Wine Spectator*, *Wine Enthusiast*, and *Decanter* (not as important for the U.S. wine market). These wine magazines are so influential that one interviewee argued it would only take one major article in one of these magazines claiming that

"Kentucky wine has arrived" for the international market to visit, invest, and embrace Kentucky wine. This hierarchy is supported by the major American retail chains (which sell the most wine) as it simplifies the decision-making process for its customers (Gray, 2013). The major retail chains also support the 100 point system in this regard as it mimics the scoring system for education, a scoring system familiar for most of the big retail chain's customers. The influence of these wine media publications cannot be understated.

The challenge involves convincing the wine critic for one of these magazines (more than likely a very well-known wine critic) to taste the region's wines and stake his or her reputation on the wine from the new region. For this reason, embracing a new wine region is a risky endeavor. Usually, the promotion of a new region coincides with international competitions where the judges are pleasantly surprised by the new wines from the new wine region. The awards and media praise happen one right after the other. Some wine makers try to gain coverage by sending their wines to critics directly. However, this act can be considered questionable as the wine industry, especially in the United States, has a history of bribery practices (in the form of cases of wine in the trunk of the critic's car) in return for a positive review (Lukacs, 2012). The rise of Robert Parker was in response to this practice; his reputation and reviews were considered impeccable as he was an enthusiast that grew up outside of the wine industry. The positive review is also complicated as many travel, food, and drink magazines will write positive reviews in the return for the purchase of ad-space. Because of these obstacles, it remains difficult for new wine regions to gain international recognition from respected

critics. So the question becomes, how does the Kentucky wine region gain the attention of the respected international wine critic and wine publication?

The overly vague and simple answer is, make as much noise as possible. The most direct route is to enter into international (not American) wine competitions. Winning one or two of these competitions will attract the wine press. However, winning these competitions is difficult, and the fee for entering an international competition is high. Still, throughout history, it has been forward-thinking, talented, ambitious, (and wealthy) winemakers that have made new wine regions (Lukacs, 2012). I do not know if Kentucky has produced this winemaker yet, especially the wealthy-enough winemaker to take the international risk. The industry will also need support from a state marketing campaign and recognition from political elites boasting of the state's quality wineries and wines. Such support has helped the New York, Virginia, and Missouri wine industries. Lastly, continuing to grow the local customer base and agritourism interest creates popular momentum that also attracts media attention, especially with social media, which helps to spread the word through grassroots campaigns.

The approach described in the previous paragraph is outlining a perspective and attitude towards wine that considers the macro-level organization and expectations of the international wine community. As one qualitative interviewee explained, the Kentucky wine industry has to take itself seriously before the international wine community will, and that means being aware of, joining, and participating in the international wine community. A few of the interviewed winemakers have considered engaging more directly with the international wine community, but the interviewees expressed reticence for a number of reasons, most importantly, because the quality of grape and the

development of an excellent Kentucky wine (in the eyes of Kentucky winemakers) has not happened yet. Still, for the long term viability of the Kentucky wine industry, the industry will need to develop a plan for engaging with the international wine community and international wine media.

The issue with lack of Kentucky grape acreage, of clear consumer communication on what a Kentucky wine is, and the lack of terroir development—issues the affect the legitimacy and authenticity of the Kentucky wine region—are issues that arose, at least in part, by not considering the long term consequences of these decisions and not in relationship to the international wine community. Having a long term vision for a brand, understanding the expectations of multiple stakeholder communities, and recognizing the position of the brand within the market and in relationship to other producers are all important concerns when making brand management decisions.

The complexity of terroir and establishing a wine terroir should not discount its importance to a wine brand. The benefits of an internationally recognized wine terroir cannot be overstated. Wine regions benefit when the wine consumer knows that great Malbec wines originate from Argentina, that California makes an internationally appreciated Cabernet Sauvignon, and that wines from Burgundy are highly prized. Being known for a certain type of wine is a form of brand awareness and brand management. A terroir also establishes an ideal, a cultural ideal which allows consumers to orient the cultural product within a cultural schema. The schema allows the consumer to position the cultural product in his or her life and within his or her overall lifestyle. Terroirs assist consumers in defining the cultural use of wine. As discussed throughout this chapter and this dissertation, having a cultural use encourages cultural desire for the consumption of

the cultural product which is another way of saying the product now serves a purpose in the brand stakeholder's life, which is a goal of brand management.

Postmodern Organizational Communication

Wine is a postmodern cultural product. Featherstone (2007) warned that researchers needed to be clear on whether they were using a postmodern perspective to analyze a phenomenon or if the researcher was using a different theory or perspective to analyze a postmodern phenomenon. Based on this study's conceptual framework, the two approaches were combined. Part of the framework adopted postmodern interpretations of communication phenomena, and wine is postmodern.

The re-appropriation of history and tradition in the wine community, including the Kentucky wine industry, demonstrates wine's postmodern characteristics. Modern wine has no relationship to the wines of the past (Lukacs, 2012). Any reference of a long and storied, coherent and linear history of a wine or wine region is an attempt of re-writing wine history. The claim that Kentucky has a long history in American wine making is misleading, and is really much more of a marketing tool used to integrate Kentucky wine into the local culture than it is a record of what transpired over time. The grapes grown in Kentucky before Prohibition are not the same grapes that are grown in Kentucky today. The winery at the site of the first winery in Kentucky is trying to grow the same grape variety that was originally used, but it is not one of the major grape varietals in Kentucky production today. The techniques and technologies used to grow grapes in Kentucky are not representative of the historical practices of Kentucky's early grape and wine cultivation. These issues are not exclusive to Kentucky, all the wine regions have the same contradiction in their storied and checkered pasts.

The use of a historical through-line of wine is an attempt to position wine in a people's culture. This purpose is derived from wine; humans have used wine in service of culture and society throughout history. Sometimes, wine was used as part of ceremonies, at other times to increase enjoyment of social gatherings, and on even more occasions, wine was used as the only safe drink to consume and as a source of calories. The role of wine in human society has changed throughout history, but what has not changed is that wine has served a purpose in human culture throughout history.

Because wine serves a cultural purpose, and the coherent line of interpreting wine is its cultural role and therefore its cultural meaning, wine's value or meaning is removed from its physical characteristics. Its value is symbolic, cultural, and societal. Wine is a cultural symbol. This separation of meaning from the physical thing is a postmodern phenomenon (Baudrillard, 1988). This separation is not the same as the Nike symbol having a meaning independent of a shoe which is more in-line with Baudrillard's (1988) premise of simulacra and simulation. Wine can inhabit the role of simulacra if society chooses which is exemplified by the stock image of wine pouring into a wine glass (see Figure 18). What is more important is that wine's meaning is entirely separate from any connection to the physical product. It can be changed as needed. Wine as a cultural product is not wine as a liquid.

Figure 19: Pouring wine, evidence of simulacra

Wine's chameleon cultural meaning has to do with the intertextuality of its definition (Kristeva, 1980). Wine is only understood based on its comparison to other wines and to ideals established through the foundation of a terroir, and terroirs are created based on the production of a wine type over time by winemakers in a region comparing their wines against one another and on an overall ideal of palatable taste and a set criteria of what the wine should taste like based on past vintages and evolving characteristics that have never been established from a core example. The core example is constantly recreated by the next winemaker from the region, the previous vintage, and the current vintage. As Lukacs (2012) consistently described wine, wine is self-referential. It references what is already in front of the consumer; a particular wine should taste like itself, but what itself is, is in front of the customer. The definition of a wine is a continual circle and cycle. Instead, quality is determined based on the relationship of one wine in the region compared to another from the same region and to past vintages in a relational process practically applying Bourdieu's (1993) field of cultural production framework. The relation of one wine to the next determines not only the field, but the wine, its meaning and position. This lack of a center is a postmodern obsession (Derrida, 1972; Taylor, 2005).

Holt (2002) recognized this lack of a concrete cultural meaning and center as postmodern brand management. Instead of a center, the brand or industry stakeholder community appropriates the brand in service of the individual's life. The cultural product only takes on meaning in the role it serves for the stakeholder. This approach aligns with Rothenbuhler's (1998) ritual communication. Texts and material objects do not take on meaning until they are used by humans.

The role tradition and history play in Kentucky wine is set against the modern production of wine, and this opposition creates a paradox. How can wine be old and new at the same time? To be clear, a large amount of wine could not be produced in Kentucky without modern technology. Wine grapes struggle to grow in Kentucky without the use of modern pesticides. In Kentucky, organic wine has not been successful, at least at the commercial level. Kentucky's first commercial winery failed. Taylor (2005) listed this tension as evidence of postmodern communication. Lukacs (2012) acknowledged the irony of this tension in his book. Wine, winemakers, the industry, and industry stakeholders would like wine to be historic and traditional, but the modern production methods nullify the desire. Wine is fermented in steel tanks, the temperature is highly controlled and monitored, the glass wine bottle is a modern invention, and the sugar and acidity content are constantly measured and tested. For this reason, the bulk of winemakers interviewed stated that the making of wine was the easiest aspect of working in the industry. The characteristics of modern winemaker are not highly publicized as a result of the tension with the historical image of wine and its cultural role. This tension is an ongoing struggle, and balancing the two sides of wine is a wine industry consideration whenever discussing wine. The next sub-sections will summaries Taylor's (2005) characteristics of postmodern organizational communication.

Organizations are (inter-)texts. Intertextuality has already been discussed, but when applied to organizations, Taylor (2005) interprets intertextuality to be the use of discourses, and competing discourses, to define and manage a stakeholder's life. The norms and beliefs of the industry may also help create a stakeholder's identity. This characteristic was best revealed through the qualitative interviews. The influence of the

wine industry on the winemakers defined their identity. Winemakers make wine and that is the expectation and definition of a winemaker, so the discourse is related to the actual work of winemakers. It also pushed one winemaker to make multiple wines. However, the language and/or discourse clarify the actual work. For example, one winemaker's specific interpretation of what a quality winemaker does is use particular grapes that produce a certain quality (dry, bold). The acceptance of a definition of a quality winemaker as a person that produced dry and bold red wines influenced his choices on what specific wine he chose to make. The intertextuality of this definition affected the identities these winemakers could exhibit.

Organizational cultures and identities are fragmented and de-centered. This characteristic summarizes the tension between traditional organizational roles and the human will to define one's identity without the preset labels of history or tradition. The multiple positions taken by the different winemakers hints at this characteristic. For example, these winemakers may be Kentucky winemakers with certain stakeholders, but with individuals completely unfamiliar with wine and wine culture, they may represent the overall international wine community. These multiple identities may then influence the discourse and communication. With certain customers, the winemaker may emphasize being a Kentucky winemaker and what that means, and with another customer, the winemaker may choose to emphasize what it means to make wine in the world. The qualitative interviews cemented this characteristic. The winemakers were constantly considering different contexts that demanded different approaches to the industry, be it an audience of local stakeholders, other winemakers, winemakers from different wine regions, state officials or department of agriculture representatives (then

the approach of grapes and wine as an agricultural product), or even in the case of one winemaker, potential Chinese distributors and retailers. The choice to import grapes and the choice to mimic the processes, inputs, and wines of other regions reveals that Kentucky winemakers may have fragmented identities based on whether they identify as an international winemaker and part of a long tradition, or as a trailblazer making Kentucky wine, or the winemaker may be both, depending on the context. There is no one definition or ideal for a winemaker. This choice, as expected, causes problems for the industry, but it is evidence of the postmodern life of an organizational worker.

Organizational knowledge, power, and discourse are inseparable and that their relationship should be deconstructed. Hopefully, this dissertation has accomplished this feat. The need for education demonstrates the importance and role of knowledge in the Kentucky wine industry. This knowledge is power both for the winemaker in knowing how to produce a quality wine and for the Kentucky wine stakeholder in order to enter the wine community. Because of the cultural origin of meaning, the knowledge and power is tied to the discourse used to describe wines, especially the discourse demonstrated by international wine media publications and critics. The importance of this discourse was demonstrated on the Kentucky winery websites. The power of this discourse does not lie in the actors but in the mastery of the discourse used by the field. This process is evidenced throughout the Kentucky wine industry. Mastering the discourse can turn the casual consumer into an enthusiast, the enthusiast into a critic (the most influential wine critic of the 20th century, Robert Parker, is evidence of this phenomenon), and even in the power of the winemaker. The winemaker or host that can master the narrative of the wine can influence the purchasing

choices of the potential customer. The enthusiast with more knowledge of the specific wine than the casual wine consumer can inhabit a position of higher status and power. Control and mastery of the discourse is central to power in the Kentucky and the international wine industry.

      The communication and discourse involves complex relations of power and resistance. The issue over the importation of grapes, the regulation concerns, and distribution challenges are all examples of complex relations of power and resistance. The largest wineries in Kentucky are small when compared to the wineries of California or in other established wine regions. The acreage in grape production is also lower. The experience of winemakers and an organization's time in existence pales in comparison to other Eastern wine states such as Missouri, New York, and Virginia, let alone the vineyards of California and France[4]. Still, the experience of certain winemakers and winemaker families from other parts of the world would dwarf the experience of Kentucky winemakers with ten to twenty years of experience, and there are many winemakers in Kentucky with less than five years of experience. These relations can also fluctuate when one takes into account grape growing, with an eight to ten year timeline before most growers gain enough experience to grow quality grapes, and again, family agricultural land, and family familiarity to the land may also affect the knowledge, discourse, and power of one individual in one wine region to the next. Moreover, since agricultural knowledge, in part, is localized and directly connected to the land, a

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[4] This statement might seem to contradict the earlier claim that the worldwide wine industry is modern. Family vineyards may have been in a family's ownership for generations. Certain villages and towns may have grown grapes for centuries. The vines and grapes used now, especially in Europe, were planted in the late 1800's. California's wine industry started to truly develop in the 1950's. Kentucky wine industry experts estimate that Eastern wine states may be anywhere from 20-50 years ahead of Kentucky, and the Kentucky industry's first experimental plots were developed in the 1990's. Again, wine production is old and new at the same time.

Kentucky family that was once involved in tobacco may be more knowledgeable about an acre of land and suitability for grape growing than an expert from the California wine region. Kentucky grape growers find themselves in constantly fluctuating positions of power. In many cases, equivalent quality grapes can be bought out-of-state at a cheaper price, but at the same time, the local moniker possesses power (again, power of the discourse), and most grape growers find a home for their grapes. At the same time, there are not enough grape growers in the state, they are not organized, and that lack of alternative in-state distillation options limits their potential revenue. The power relations all depend on the context, perhaps the most frustrating words uttered when discussing findings and conclusions.

Resistance can be found throughout the Kentucky wine industry, the resistance of the winemakers to form a terroir for example. Numerous examples of resistance exist: the resistance of one winemaker to embrace the practice of using a wine region's grapes, the resistance of the Kentucky winemakers to the bourbon industry, to the University of Kentucky, to Kentucky grape growers (which is a constant negotiation), to distributors, to regulators, to the wine regions of the surrounding states (in regional competition), and to each other. At the same time, Kentucky winemakers find themselves meeting on a very large scale for the first time in order to submit bills and make plans for lobbying the state government. Finally, the desire to produce a Kentucky terroir without the help of the state and support institutions is not only an act of resistance against the institutions, but also resistance against the norms of the international wine industry and resistance against wine's history.

Of all the aforementioned examples, no other situation reveals the complexity of resistance than the Kentucky wine industry's relationship to the bourbon industry. The Kentucky wine industry has benefitted from the bourbon trail through increased tourism interest in the alcohol industries of Kentucky, and as an alternative when a visitor has had enough bourbon and would like a different product. Strengthening this partnership would seem like a goal for both industries, but instead the two industries are at odds of distillation regulations, and the issue may have more to do with misunderstanding and lack of communication than irreconcilable positions and goals.

Knowledge of organizational communication is representational, and in response, the research studies should be reflexive of the symbols, metaphors, and power of the communication. This study has analyzed the primary symbols of the Kentucky wine industry, especially the geographically generated symbols. The connection of modern Kentucky wine to a history of wine in Kentucky is, if not a metaphor, an allegory or a myth. The connection is more a representation of Kentucky wine stakeholders to view Kentucky as an agricultural state and to link Kentucky wine to Kentucky agriculture. Since Kentucky agriculture is connected to the land, then the connection can link Kentucky wine to local Kentucky communities, residents, and their culture. The earlier section on wine's cultural rather than physical origin of meaning addresses the representational nature of the organizational communication. Organizations do not communicate the meaning of Kentucky wine with an emphasis on the physical flavors of the wine, but rather the symbolic meaning of the wine including Southern hospitality and the importance of wine's history in Kentucky.

The power of communication is evident in the importance of interpersonal communication. Not only does the interpersonal communication generate interest in Kentucky wine, the communication of information, education, and narrative can increase a consumer's enjoyment of the wine. The importance of the communicative act to the consumptive enjoyment of wine demonstrates the power of communication. The ritual communication observed during this study reinforces a number of these characteristics in one communicative act. Ritual communication recognizes the representational value found in the performance (ritual represents voluntary participation in a communal act connected to the serious life), the symbols used in the ritual infer the symbol's importance to society, and the ritual has the power to communicate value, role, perspective, and societal importance.

Finally, agency and context were key characteristics in establishing a conceptual framework that included postmodern elements. Traditional critical/cultural perspectives were too deterministic and communally focused on the construction of power, too binary in dominant and dominated, and too obsessed with hegemonic positions. The individual Kentucky wine agents made choices, within the realm of possible choices, that affected the outcomes, relationships, and contexts by which interactions were evaluated. A Kentucky wine stakeholder could be both dominant and dominated depending on the choices made. For example, potential Kentucky wine male enthusiasts face a dominant or dominated decision. If a male enthusiast decides that wine is a woman's drink, then the woman that desires to consume Kentucky wine determines the outcome of a winery visit (this occurrence was observed by the researcher), or a male enthusiast can embrace Kentucky wine as an excellent choice for interest and enthusiasm and become a wine

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club member and advocate (again directly observed). A third position (thereby reducing the importance of a binary) could be chosen where the specific winery and wine determines the dominant, dominated, shared, or shifting positions of a male and female couple (also directly observed). The introduction of third and fourth individuals such as the host and another wine taster can also shift power positions (and this situation was also observed). The position is determined by the choice of the stakeholder, and as a result, the context and environment continually shift.

There are economic limits of course. One has to have the economic means to purchase and consume wine, but an approach that shifts the emphasis to these concerns runs the risk of minimizing the agency, power, and contextual elements found in the communicative acts of the Kentucky wine industry. A deterministic approach would not have allowed for the "deep description" of the Kentucky wine industry desired by the researcher. Personally, I feel the findings, discussion, and answers to the research questions are much more valuable as a result. The irony (history vs. modern), play (what is a Kentucky wine?), contradictions (imported grapes can be used in a wine, and the wine can still be considered a Kentucky wine), and the power of discourse are better evaluated with a postmodern aspect included in the conceptual framework.

Field of Cultural Production

Initial assessment of Bourdieu's (1993) field of cultural production leads to a definitive similarity between his description of aesthetic fields, how they organize, create products, and ascribe value to the products. The importance of an aesthetically based system for ascribing wine value challenges the alternative pricing model available for wine: pricing wine as a commodity. Instead of an aesthetically based pricing system,

wine pricing could be based solely on the supply and demand value of a grape, of grape juice, and the add-on labor and shipping costs of processing the grape and getting the wine to market. Winemakers have the means to price wine based on the cost of purchasing the grapes, the expenses associated with the crushing and fermenting of the grapes, and the cost of inputs and energy used in these processes. Winemakers can price wine based on these costs, the local, regional, national, and international markets for economic labor, resource, distribution, and retail costs, and as a result, establish a relative price point. Some wineries that mass produce wine in volumes well above the 50,000 gallon limit set for Kentucky small farm wineries set price points based on this criteria, but these wines are not wines that are normally consumed by wine drinkers that consider the wine a significant cultural product with a cultural position and value in their societies.

There is evidence of some cost/benefit analysis and pricing decisions by cultural winemakers, but according to the qualitative interviews, the primary concerns during these deliberations are the mark-up costs of getting the wine to market (distributor and retail markups), and the price points that local consumers will tolerate. The local-level tolerable price point is not based on the economic supply, demand, and process chain of the wine. The price point is based on what local consumers believe is an appropriate price to pay for cultural, specialty, or quality wines. Scholars have found similar pricing issues. Price points above $20.00 have been found to be absent of reasons for economic differentiation beyond what a consumer is willing to pay for the product (Beckert, Rössel, and Schenk, 2014). The present study revealed that the Kentucky wine industry is governed by rules similar to other cultural industries.

Bourdieu's (1993) framework makes it difficult to directly investigate all of the aspects of the field. In order to document the entire field, first, one would have to stop time as anytime a new stakeholder enters the field the entire field must be re-adjusted. Secondly, every stakeholder would need to be identified. Identifying every audience member or consumer may not be necessary, but the identification of every producer, influential critic or judge, every consecrating institution, and benefactor would have to be identified. The nature of the field and the impossibility of identifying every stakeholder reinforced the choice to use Ellingson's (2009) crystallization. Most studies of a cultural field will be incomplete. Because of the specifics involved in understanding the nature of the field, Bourdieu's (1993) framework is better interpreted as a heuristic.

Bourdieu's (1993) framework asks how and why positions are taken within the field and how and why capital is allocated to and within the field in order to understand the distribution of power, access to resources, and prestige (i.e., value). In combination with the more micro-level perspectives and theories and with the qualitative methods employed, these questions could be partially answered. Winemaker experience and personal history significantly influenced the position of wine producers. For most winemakers, experience directed the approach to winemaking. Even amongst experienced winemakers, one winemaker may be more interested in creating as many different wines as possible, in love with the process of making wine and fermenting juices, whereas another winemaker may be more interested in producing one wine as best as possible. In the latter example, the choice to produce one wine is more likely to be influenced by experience at a winery or in a region where one type of wine is produced to perfection. Again, personal experience will dictate the choice, and each winemaker will

differentiate his or her position and approach with the other winemakers in the field and how they choose to produce wine. This phenomenon was observed during this study.

Access to resources as a result of past experiences was observed as well. As noted through website analysis, the Kentucky wine industry has an influx of outside winemakers and owners that believe the Kentucky wine industry has potential. Many of these outside members were former doctors or other upper middle class professionals that became interested in wine. The other predominant winemaker types were family owned farmers that transferred agricultural production to grape and wine production from other agricultural sectors, tobacco production being the originally targeted group. The last group, amateur winemakers that turned to commercial production after cultivating enough consumer demand was identified. The order of the groups represents the expected amount of capital each group of winemakers had free to allocate to grape growing and wine production. Naturally, there could be combinations within these groups. A doctor could also be an amateur winemaker that finally decided to turn commercial. There was evidence that the size of the facilities and amount of wine produced correlated to the amount of capital brought into the industry rather than revenue produced within the industry that was reinvested in the company (quantitative research would need to be conducted to determine the correlation with statistical support). Available capital is necessary as the facilities desired in order to obtain the optimum position the winemakers desire are quite expensive. Acres of land must be purchased, vineyards established, equipment acquired, and employees hired. A number of winemakers had to expand or add-on in stages, and these choices affect the potential positions available to winemakers, and these positions were influenced by access to

resources which were partly based on previous, professional histories and employment before entering the Kentucky wine field.

With concerns for the field of power, insight into the functioning of the consecrating bodies revealed the lack of power of awards and wine awarding bodies within the United States. Since the awarding bodies distribute so many awards, the specific capital of the field is diffused amongst a large number of stakeholders thereby limiting the awards' power. In response, wine media publications have inherited the consecrating power. In part, consecrating power found in alternate places derives from the lack of cultural power held by the normal institutions in other cultural fields. Oftentimes, academic institutions possess consecrating power. However, since academic institutions tend to focus on the technical aspects of the wine industry, the cultural power has been acquired by other stakeholders. Also, the focus on technical subjects rather than cultural issue demonstrates how the cultural wine field has moved away from the field of power and the rules for consecration within the field of power and class, creating separate, wine industry centered rules. The emergence of respected critics from the population of wine enthusiasts assumed the responsibility of consecrating wines. The relationships have shifted as a result. Awards competitions offer up new wines for potential recognition, and a handful of critics decide the outcome. As a result, wine regions must consider creative approaches to media contact and communication in order to gain attention from this cultural field's structure.

The study also revealed the influence of the University of Kentucky and state government support through access to capital and marketing resources. The study supported Bourdieu's (1993) assertion that cultural products are not "pure creations"

forged by one creator. They are social products created by multiple stakeholders. The

grape to wine process commonly involves the input of multiple stakeholders along the

production chain, and the support institutions supply knowledge and research in order to

improve products. The state government offers subsidies (until recently) that alleviate

resource demands and marketing support needed for consumer communication. The state

also has the potential to influence policy, especially regulations, space available for

interpersonal communication with consumers at appropriate third-party sites such as fairs

and festivals, and create new channels of communication and interaction with consumers,

the primary example entailing the alternative distribution company created by the

Virginia state government. Elite, political support can also reinforce the prestige and

cultural value of an industry. The role of the state has a significant impact on the

sustainability and growth of the industry. Bourdieu's (1993) framework reiterates the

reality that a wine region cannot gain fame without the help of its local support

institutions.

The University of Kentucky was also identified as an important stakeholder with

significant influence within the industry. The school supplies the information, research,

and training for individuals that would like to enter the field. The study revealed that

Kentucky wine stakeholders desire even more support from the university, including

increased skills training and partnerships through internships and co-op opportunities for

students. The controversy over the university winery and the university label reinforce

the potential power and position the institution has within the industry.

The call for more training and more opportunities for potential entrants into the

Kentucky wine field implies the power and positions available for indirect supporters of

Kentucky wine. Bourdieu (1993) recognized such indirect supporters as influencers on the field and positions of other individuals. He also argued that these supporters reinforce the cultural meanings of the products. Advertisers, marketers, distributors, and retailers all influence the value of Kentucky wine. As one interviewee explained, an advertising company helped to develop the irreverent approach of the winery. In this example, the advertising company has direct influence on the meaning inherent in the wine. If a retailer chooses to shelve two or ten shelves with Kentucky wine informs the importance or position the retailer places on Kentucky wine and the Kentucky wineries it chooses to carry.

Boundaries are important areas of investigation for the identification and understanding of fields of cultural production. Boundaries were a key concern for the Kentucky wine industry. Importation or local grape production, European or American varietals, the creation of a Kentucky terroir, and the arguments of distillation options are all examples of boundary negotiations. International wine community recognition is a boundary that must be crossed in order to gain international terroir consecration, increased prestige and power, continued industry growth and expansion, and increased cultural meaning. Bourdieu (1993) believed these boundaries would be areas of action and negotiation that demonstrate the inter-workings of the field.

Education has already been discussed at length throughout this study. Education is essential for any field of cultural production. Education is essential for entrance into the field of cultural wine production, for appreciation of the cultural product, for learning the cultural codes of the field, for the appropriation of a position and power, to expand the field, and for the continuance of the field through the field's reproduction. The

Kentucky wine industry and the international field of cultural wine production need to continually educate in order to exist. Bourdieu (1993) predicted the importance of education to the cultural fields and this study reaffirmed its importance. By identifying the educational characteristic of the field, another characteristic of the field of cultural production has been identified, corroborating the field's existence.

Finally, history has also influenced the industry. America's three tiered system was created as a result of Prohibition and influences the positions available to producers. The distribution option affects the available positions of certain winemakers. The importance and position of the bourbon industry affects the position and interactions amongst the bourbon industry, the state government, and the Kentucky wine industry. At an even broader level, the importance of a terroir to brand management is influenced by the history of poor wine and poor grape production in Europe. The choices made by stakeholders in the French wine industry in the early part of the twentieth century continue to influence the choices made by individuals in the Kentucky wine industry. Bourdieu (1993) argued all of these phenomena are evident of and influential to a field of cultural production, and this study's findings support Bourdieu's assertion.

Essentially, by investigating the field of the cultural production of Kentucky wine, the researcher has explicated aspects of the habitus of the Kentucky wine industry. In Bourdieu's (1984) definition of habitus, habitus "is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgments and the system of classification (*principium divisionis*) of these practices" (p. 166). The habitus is both the production of classifiable practices and works as well as the principles by which the products are differentiated, judged, and appreciated. This study has investigated the production of cultural Kentucky wine, the

practices surrounding how the product is classified (its meaning) in the social world, and how it is to be evaluated, appreciated, and differentiated. Taste is the propensity and capacity to appropriate, both materially and symbolically, the class and the class objects by an individual (Bourdieu, 1984). This taste creates a lifestyle which is a specific logic that guides the individual. By applying Bourdieu's (1993) field of cultural production framework and employing multiple communication theories (of lower level investigation), the Kentucky wine habitus could be partially examined and explicated. Of note are the guiding principles of terroir and the particular practices of wine producers.

The findings of this study contribute to the use of ritual communication as an approach for analyzing the cultural meaning of communicative acts to individuals and communities. With few studies directly employing Rothenbuhler's (1998) definition, the study adds to the limited literature, and hopefully, provides an outline for producing future ritual communication studies. The website analysis demonstrated the applicability of Oriard's (1998) textual analysis. Oriard is quite right that secondary texts can reveal, partially in the case of Kentucky winery websites, the cultural position of a community and product. The brand management analysis added to the scholarship on stakeholder communities. The research identified the various individuals and organizations that influence brand images and identities. Not only are Kentucky wine industry stakeholders influential in their effect on particular Kentucky wine businesses, but the international community, specifically, the international wine media and international wine competitions are important stakeholders influencing Kentucky wine brands. Such network connections and their influence on the Kentucky wine industry draw connections between brand management and the field of cultural production. The field of cultural

production offers a network or industry structure that can then be analyzed for its brand management implications.

An emphasis on brand management assisted in the postmodern analysis of wine. The impact of brand messages on the choice to manipulate cultural associations and to balance different categories of cultural associations emphasized the postmodern characteristics of the communication, for example, the appropriation of Kentucky's history for the service of modern Kentucky wine. Brand management connected the macro-framework provided through the field of cultural production to the micro-level theories used for investigating interpersonal and mass communication data. Also, a brand management approach offered a mid-level perspective that connected corporate communication to the culture of a community, encompassing public relations, organizational communication, and cultural/societal/community-centered interpersonal and mass communication[5]. Within the realm of producer—consumer communication, a brand management perspective, especially with the recent advances in stakeholder scholarship, embraces the network influences that create context and affect the producer—consumer communication. On a more applied communication note, brand management helped to understand and recognize the importance of terroir in brand awareness, image, and identity.

The study identified wine as a postmodern product and the Kentucky wine industry as exemplifying characteristics of postmodernism. The former of the two findings may be more substantial as, if as postmodern scholars have asserted, we live in a postmodern time, then an industry should exemplify the characteristics of the era, even if

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[5] I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Lindlof for the conceptual recommendations provided in order to bridge the gaps in the approach I took for this study.

the characteristics are the way we understand the world (which affects the position of the researcher but also the behaviors of the actors) or the behaviors of a postmodern world resulting from the society we have constructed. In future studies, the postmodern characteristics of wine will need to be accounted for in order to truly understand the product's cultural importance.

Finally, wine can be studied as a cultural product, and the industry can be studied as a cultural industry, just like any the aesthetic (art and literature) industries Bourdieu (1993) analyzed in his explication of the field of cultural production. Bourdieu (1984) hinted at the aesthetic value of food and wine in *Distinctions*, but he did not continue to elaborate on the similarities in *The Field of Cultural Production*. Instead, his primary examples came from French literary industries. The findings of this study lead to a complication in Bourdieu's cultural framework. Wine is an extension of food which is used in culture, to serve culture, and is representative of culture; therefore, it has cultural meanings. As a result, a cultural industry has developed around wine. Given a long enough timeline, could the same statement be made of any material item? For example, could computer products be considered cultural products? There are communities surrounding the products, there are aesthetic qualities to these products, and owning an Apple instead of a PC has cultural consequences which hints at value. Through this reasoning, are all products cultural products, and are all industries cultural industries? How valuable is Bourdieu's (1993) field of cultural production other than providing an explanation as to why an alternative pricing model (cultural meaning and value) has been chosen rather than a more commodity-value driven economic pricing scheme (based on standardization of the product which also accounts for labor costs, supply and demand)?

Limitations

The most prominent limitation is the incomplete nature of the study. While an incomplete study was always the expected result, it does not mean that the alternative perspectives and missing data could affect the interpretation presented here. Could another interviewee change the understanding of terroir or of the relationship with the University of Kentucky? There is the possibility. The only way to avoid such doubts and study vulnerability would be to have interviewed every Kentucky wine producer which was impossible based on the time allotted for the research and the resources available. The same limitations apply to the participant observation. Without visiting every Kentucky winery, there could be a winery out there where the logos are plastered on all of the walls, or a winery with a clientele that mixes a number of socio-economic class visitors. Would such findings affect the researcher's interpretation? Yes and no. An exception does not make the rule, however, the existence of such a winery would affect the relationships in the field of Kentucky cultural wine production, and the shifting relationships would affect the overall perception and presentation of the field. The cultural associations of a hypothetical winery that caters to multiple socio-class groups would present new insights into the appropriation of cultural symbols and complicate Bourdieu's (1993) assertions about the class recognition through negation and difference. The uncertainty of the unknown could not be accounted for in this study.

Time could not be stopped either. It cannot be stressed enough that the study depicts the Kentucky wine industry at a particular place, time, and from a certain perspective of a researcher with a specific collection of life-experiences and influences. Already, a number of the Kentucky winery websites have been updated, altered, or taken

down. One winery has burnt down, so the interpretation of the website would take on new meanings now. The changes to the websites affect the positions of the wineries and winemakers which would change, maybe not drastically, but the positions would still change, and the research and analysis would be altered as well. If the research began now, almost a year later, the data, findings, and analysis would be different.

The lack of distributors included in the study as well as a consumer perspective makes this study producer-focused research. More specifically, the inclusion of distributors could have given a different perspective on the concerns over the three tiered system and the potential positions and resolutions. Interviews with distributors could also provide insight into the concerns over carrying small farm wineries with limited and uncertain case productions. The consumer perspective could add an entirely new perspective to all aspects of the study. However, the inclusion of a consumer focused study as well as a producer focused study (and all stakeholders in between) would have been an unrealistic structure for the research.

As far as researcher bias is concerned, as always, researcher bias is a limitation, at least to some. Researcher bias can corrupt findings and interpretations, but the researcher's interpretation of the phenomena was the chosen perspective for the study. The researcher's perspective could invalidate the study if the findings and interpretations were not derived from the data or if the data was not recorded properly, but the multiple methods, multiple samples, and reflective discussion with stakeholders and with other researchers were all attempts at ensuring a valid perspective and analysis. In chapter three, I argued that the validity of this study would depend on the truthfulness of the findings and the researcher's interpretation of the findings. Truthfulness was attempted

throughout the study, but that does not mean other individuals will agree with the interpretation presented here. A different researcher with more expertise or a different perspective could come up with a different interpretation. This study should be judged based on adherence to the conceptual framework, production of results reasonably produced through the methods employed, the inferences made from the findings, the interpretation crafted, and the "tradition of inquiry" (Mishler, 1990, p. 419). This study is an argument presenting one way to understand the Kentucky wine industry. It is up to the reader to decide whether or not the argument presented here is a persuasive perspective. If the study is persuasive and believable, then the argument presented is credible. The limitation related to researcher bias for this qualitative, interpretive research should be based on the credibility of the argument presented which is most in question when opposing, alternative arguments appear more attractive. If there are more attractive, opposing arguments, they will most likely appear when the study is peer reviewed.

For the researcher, generalizability is not a primary concern. The study design, especially the conceptual framework is not concerned with the generalizability of the findings, but in the specific description, identification, and analysis of communicative phenomena as it occurs in the field in a localized context and environment. The findings from the methods employed are all accurate representations of the data collected and filtered through the perspective of the researcher.   The argument crafted, its credibility, legitimacy, authority, and persuasiveness will determine the reliability and validity of the researcher as human instrument. Instead, the generalizability should be left to the usefulness of the conceptual framework for future studies, the usefulness of the methods

for the same reason, and the conclusions that can be drawn by comparing the Kentucky wine industry and the interpretation of the industry found in this study to other wine regions.

Future Research

The most likely future research involves the expansion of the study, visiting more Kentucky wineries and conducting more qualitative interviews. Even with the lower number of interviews, the researcher experienced data saturation. Before a number of the interviewees responded to some of the questions, the answer was predictable and expected. Still, for comprehensiveness' sake, along with the potential for surprising and new responses, more interviews would be interesting and noteworthy. Of course, the same limitation listed earlier, time, applies to the interviews. Already, a number of updated correspondences have been conducted in order to assess changes in the industry and to discern the current status of wineries. Therefore, instead of a continuance of this study, it may be more fruitful to revisit the field in five or ten years as part of a longitudinal study that assesses the progress and changes experienced by the Kentucky wine industry.

Quantitative studies should also be undertaken. Kentucky wine producers requested information on the impact of certain brand management changes, specifically, differences in label information, in numerical form. The American wine industry does not have the same strict and clear standards related to quality and terroir, not that many Americans that are not French wine enthusiasts understand the categories assigned to the French system. The American system is much freer, and as a result, more value is placed on the grape varietal used and the region in which the wine was produced. Thus, less

value is placed on the label. Empirical data on the value of certain information, such as Kentucky or American at the bottom of the bottle, especially for local stakeholders and consumers, could help to inform and direct decisions in the Kentucky wine industry related to labels and brand management. The KyP symbol should also be included in such research, and this information could carry over into the use of these symbols or information in all areas of brand management including websites, at the wineries, and during narrative presentations and education. The research could also include a mixed method or qualitative analysis of other aspects of the wine label and their effects on brand management.

As for education, studies involving the best construction and content inclusion in narrative presentation and narrative education would add to the understanding, importance, and success of narrative and educational training. Likewise, research into the most successful training campaigns, be it by the wineries, by the state government, or by the university would also be valuable research. The narrative and educational research would also further our understanding of the relationship between wine, story, and education, all important aspects of cultural production. Such studies could also contribute to the scholarship on narrative learning, communication, and behavioral change.

Comparative studies are also important aspects of this research. Direct comparisons to other Eastern-American wine regions, especially to Missouri, Indiana, Virginia, and New York, would expand the scholarship on the cultivation of Eastern-American wine terroirs. Cross-industry comparisons can highlight which initiatives are most successful and which wine region development paths and predicted outcomes are

most likely and/or most desirable for the Kentucky wine region. The roadmap for international wine recognition is not a mystery. The blueprint has worked for most wine regions, slight changes must be made for Eastern-American states with specific challenges. Understanding how other Eastern-American states are handling these challenges can inform decisions for the future of the industry. Cross-industry comparisons can also extend our understanding of the relationship between terroir, culture, and brand management.

Consumer focused research is the most obvious addition to this study. A consumer perspective can expand the analysis of communication negotiation over cultural associations, brand management strategies, and the balancing of local stakeholders and the pressures of an international industry community. Consumer research can offer insights into the way fragmented or multiple wine perspectives are negotiated by consumers. Also, socio-economic divisions, their wine interests, and motivations for specific Kentucky wine and winery selections can be better understood. The importance of the local food movement, of wine legitimacy and authenticity based on local grape use, and the reactions to international wine community opinions of Kentucky wine could all be better understood. If these consumer perspectives are better understood, then future industry decisions can be made to better balance the multiple stakeholder groups and increase brand loyalty.

A more socially concerned direction to consumer research can also be conducted. State support for the Kentucky wine industry was planned in order to offset revenue loss as a result of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.   The hope was that the support would benefit small farms, especially former family-owned, tobacco farms. While some

of the family farms have benefitted by the support, a significant portion of the wineries were founded by outsiders. How do consumers and Kentucky stakeholders feel about these developments? Even more importantly, the industry is not expanding the amount of acreage allotted for grape production. Are local consumers aware of these issues? How do such issues affect the purchase of Kentucky wine? Along the same lines, how do consumers view Kentucky wine? Is it a novel or specialty purpose, or are consumers purchasing Kentucky wine in lieu of other wines? Or, is Kentucky wine being purchased in addition to other wines? The answers to these questions will influence the choices made by Kentucky winemakers. Overall, a research study could be constructed that asks what role Kentucky wine play in the cultural lives of local Kentucky consumers.

On a more theoretical level, Bourdieu's (1993) field of cultural production possesses elements of network research. Network research has looked at the importance of support institutions to the establishment of a wine region (McDermott, Correoira, & Kruse, 2009). There has also been research calls for considering the organizational network ecology, organizations, and the effects of public relations campaigns on the relationships in the network (Yang & Taylor, 2015). The scholars have looked at the importance of communication in altering organizational relationships. From the network ecology approach, the changes in relationships are considered from a holistic or entire network standpoint rather than from the central position of the organization. This approach seems similar to Bourdieu's (1993) field of cultural production, and this study represents the analysis of the communication attempts that affect the relationships. Future research can examine the relationship of organizational network ecology and the

field of cultural production, how they differ, how they are similar, what one approach adds to the other, and if they only differ in name only.

Closing Remarks

This study on the Kentucky wine industry was an extraordinary experience. Whenever I met with a Kentucky wine industry stakeholder, especially the winemakers, the interaction was always enjoyable and informative. The individuals involved in the Kentucky wine industry are generous, kind, and loquacious. The last characteristic should not come as a surprise as wine is fun and there is so much to talk about on the subject. The willingness, forthrightness, and openness with which I was invited into the industry was humbling. The personality and actions of Kentucky wine stakeholders made the study exciting, and rarely was it necessary to generate extra enthusiasm for the research. Because of these qualities, one cannot help but root for the future of the industry.

The broad impact and aspects of everyday life encompassed by the Kentucky wine industry was a fantastic benefit to the study. The large network of individuals, organizations, and communities impacted by the production of Kentucky wine made this industry a profound site of study. The comprehensiveness of the industry, the demands it placed on theoretical application, methodological approaches, data collection and analysis, and technical understanding of wine were all difficult challenges.

Communication research on the Kentucky wine demanded exploratory research, technical understanding of grape and wine production, network analysis, cultural construction and negotiation of meaning, behavioral analysis, and consumer research. I now understand the shrug, sigh, and comment of one of my co-dissertation chairs when

he said, "I haven't seen a study like this in a long time." Such comprehensive studies are, to paraphrase a later comment by the co-chair, "a different beast," the undertaking and completion of such projects can be overwhelming. If it was not for the Kentucky wine stakeholders I met during this study, this research could have been extraordinarily difficult to complete. Within academia, the common complaint is the lack of interest, importance, and readership of potentially valuable research. For the Kentucky wine stakeholders that made this study possible and enjoyable, I hope that outcome is not the case (however unlikely that may be), and that value can be found in the findings and interpretation found in this study. I also hope to return to this site in ten or twenty years, find the Kentucky wine industry an established wine terroir, that the industry has established itself in part by using American grape varietals, and I am once again surprised and pleased by the wine and the people involved in the cultural production of Kentucky wine.

Appendix

Invitation and Recruitment Script

[Subject's name inserted here]:

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Communication. I am conducting research on the Kentucky Wine Industry, and I was hoping I could interview you about your experience in the Kentucky wine industry. I believe your insights and observations will be beneficial to my research.

For my study, I would like to understand what Kentucky wine means to individuals involved in the Kentucky wine industry. I am interested in the responses of individuals involved in the making of Kentucky wine as well as potential Kentucky wine customers. I am especially interested in how communication relates to the entire process, from grape growing to the purchasing and consumption of the wine.

I have two guiding questions for my research:

R1: How do Kentucky wine industry businesses use brand management in order to position their brands and brand products in the wine market?

R2: How does the communication and interaction of Kentucky wine industry stakeholders and potential consumers affect the brand management of Kentucky wine brands?

In other words, these questions are concerned with what Kentucky wine is, what it means, how it is marketed, what communication and interactions are involved in how it is produced, and how the community communicates and interacts with the Kentucky wine industry.

You may not be able to answer all of these questions, but based on your experience, I am sure you have valuable insights and observations, and this is why I would like to interview you as part of my research.

As part of this research study, I would like to conduct a face-to-face interview with you that would take about an hour, and I can meet you at your convenience at a locale easiest for you. I would like to record the interview so that the information you provide can be analyzed at a later time unless you are uncomfortable with the process.

Even though your identity will remain confidential, I would like to quote directly from your comments in publications that will be written from this study. Your name will not be used, only your designation as an interviewee involved in the Kentucky wine industry. In certain cases the occupation or area of Kentucky where you reside may be included.

If you would not like such information to be shared, or if you do not wish for your comments to be quoted directly, I will comply with your wishes. If a face to face interview isn't possible, a phone or e-mail exchange is an alternative. You would have the option of amending or omitting any part of the interview if needed.   We can discuss the details of the interview process if you have any questions or concerns about the study. I appreciate any information and insight you can give.

Would be interested in participating in this study?

If you would like some time to decide, I can be reached at 617-416-3117 or at ben.triana0515@uky.edu.

Sincerely,

Ben Triana
Doctoral Student
Department of Communication
University of Kentucky

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Yang, A. & Taylor, M. (2015). Looking over, looking out, and moving forward:

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Zhao, W. (2005). Understanding classifications: Empirical evidence from the American

and French wine industries. *Poetics*, *33*(3), 179-200.

Vita

Benjamin J. Triana

Education
Doctoral Student, Communication, University of Kentucky,

Primary Areas: Writing & Online Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies

Secondary Areas: Brand Management, Game Studies, Environmental
            Communication, Participatory & Development Communication,
            Information Studies, Intercultural/International Communication

Advisor: Dr. Douglas Boyd & Dr. Chike Anyaegbunam

M.F.A., Creative Writing, Emerson College (July 2005)
        Advisor: Bernard Banks
        Committee: Kevin Miller
        Thesis: Firesession (Short Story Collection)

B.A. English & Theatre, University of South Carolina, (May 2001)

Academic Employment
Fall 2011-Present: University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Communication and Information

Fall 2006-Spring 2007: Coastal Carolina University, Conway, SC
Adjunct Instructor, Department of English

Fall 2005-Spring 2006,
Summer 2004: Horry-Georgetown Technical College, Conway, SC
Adjunct Instructor, Department of Communications

Other Academic Employment
Sept. 2007-June 2011: AC Flora High School, Columbia, SC
English Teacher, Department of English

Sept. 2002-June 2003, Waccamaw High School, Pawleys Island, SC.
Assistant/Substitute High School English Teacher

<div align="center">**Publications**</div>

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Triana, B. (2015). Ethnography of a sustainable agriculture program: A case study of a
      social movement's inception and growth on a university campus. *Environmental
      Education Research*, (ahead-of-print) 1-23. DOI:
       10.1080/13504622.2015.1015496

Manuscripts under Review

Triana, B. (in press). Cultural Demands of the Host-nation International Student
      Experience. *Journal of International Students*.

Triana, B. (under review). Red dead masculinity: The power of the masculine narrative
      found in Red Dead Redemption. Submitted March 2015 *Media, Culture &
      Society*.

Triana, B. (under review). The application of renewal and symbolic convergence theory
      to the Ivory Coast peace process. Submitted March 2015 to

Conference Presentations

Triana, B. (2014, May). Improving public diplomacy by improving the international
      student experience. Paper presented at the International Communication
      Association Conference, Seattle, WA.

Triana, B. (2013, June). Red dead masculinity: The power of the masculine narrative
      found in Red Dead Redemption. Paper presented at the International
      Communication Association Conference, London, GB. Top Paper, Game Studies
      Interest Group.

Triana, B. (2013, June). Ethnography of the sustainable agriculture program: A case
      study of social change rhetoric. Paper presented at the International
      Communication Association Conference, London, GB.

Triana, B. (2013, June). The application of renewal and symbolic convergence theory to
      the Ivory Coast peace process. Paper presented at the International
      Communication Association Conference, London, GB.

Panel Presentations

Triana, B., & Herovic, E. (2014, May). Conflict, communication, and sport:
      Transcending the Bosnian ethnic divide. Paper presented as part of the roundtable
      proposal: Ethnic conflict: Constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing ethnic
      divides.

Carver, M., Cruea, M., Gardner, R., Lucas, P., **Triana, B.**, & Wertley, C. (2013, Nov.). Video game linkages: Connecting across time and space. Panel presented at the National Communication Association Conference, Washington, D.C.

Invited Presentations

Gaur, R., & **Triana, B.** (2013, Aug.). What is culture? Division of Instructional Communication and Research Orientation, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.

Triana, B. (2013, March). Red dead symposium presentation. Presented at the University of Kentucky Department of Communication Graduate Symposium, Lexington, KY.

Professional Publications

Triana, B. (August 15, 2013). A system player: A look at Clint Dempsey's Game. American Soccer Now, http://americansoccernow.com/articles/the-system-player-a-look- at-clint-dempsey-s-game

2009-2011: **Featured Columnist** for the Bleacher Report (bleacherrepport.com), U.S. Men's National Team International Soccer, 1-3 columns per week, ten of the articles published on Foxsports.com in conjunction with a partnership covering the 2010 World Cup

Triana, B. (2002). On Masculinity. In P. L. Munhall, The Emergence of Man into the 21st Century. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

Manuscripts under Conference Consideration

Triana, B. (2015). Crossing wine boundaries: The Kentucky wine industry, the local food movement, and wine media gatekeepers.

Triana, B. (2015). From start to finish: Communication and cultural practices during Kentucky wine production.

Triana, B. (2015). Parallels in development between the Kentucky wine industry and the Global South.

Triana, B. (2015). Information overload on social networking sites.

Ongoing Research

Triana, B. Content analysis of climate change discourse on twenty-four hour news sites.

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Academic Support

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Sept. 2011-May 2013, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.
Assistant Director, Multimodal Communication Lab

Awards and Honors

2014   Graduate Student Dissertation Funding Award, Department of Communication, University of Kentucky

2014   Bruce H. Westley Memorial Scholarship (excellence in mass communication theory and research)

2013   Top Student Paper, Game Studies Interest Group, International Communication Association

2012   Graduate Teaching Award Nominee

Professional Experience

2009-2011: Bleacher Report (bleacherrepport.com)
Featured Columnist, U.S. Men's National Team International Soccer

June-Aug. 2002, Alternatives Magazine, Myrtle Beach, SC
Staff Writer

May 1997-Aug. 1997, Marvel Comics, Manhattan, NY
Editorial Intern

Professional Development

Fall 2011: University-wide TA orientation;
Fall 2011, 2012 & 2013: Departmental TA orientation
2010: Certified International Baccalaureate Secondary Education English Instructor
2010: Certified AP Language and Composition Instructor
2009: Highly Qualified Secondary Education Instructor in both English and Principles of Learning and Teaching

Service

College and Department Service
Spring 2013: Mentor, 8th Annual Undergraduate Showcase, UK Department of Comm.
2011-2012: Social Coordinator, Graduate Student Association, UK Department of Comm.

Academic and Professional Service
2014: Reviewer, Communication Yearbook
2014: Reviewer, Games Studies Interest Group, ICA
2014: Reviewer, Environmental Communication Division, ICA
2014: Reviewer, Philosophy, Theory, and Critique Division, ICA
2012-Present: Reviewer, Environmental Communication Division, NCA

Professional Memberships
2013-Present: Member, Game Studies Interest Group, ICA
2013-Present: Member, Environmental Communication Interest Group, ICA 2012-
Present: Member, Environmental Communication Division, NCA
2012-Present: Member, International and Intercultural Communication Division, NCA
2014-Present: Member, International Communication Division, AEJMC
2014-Present: Member, Mass Communication Division, AEJMC