

Biodynamic and Conventional Wine Cultures: Theoretical Implications from a Communication
Studies Perspective

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
<i>Personal Interests and Credentials</i>	3
<i>Defining Biodynamic and Conventional</i>	5
<i>The Caveat & Intentions</i>	6
Dialectical Approach	9
<i>Cultural—Individual Dialectic</i>	9
<i>Differences—Similarities Dialectic</i>	11
<i>History/Past—Present/Future Dialectic</i>	12
<i>Privileged—Disadvantaged Dialectic</i>	14
Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis	16
Value Orientations	18
<i>What is Human Nature?</i>	18
<i>What is the Relationship Between Humans and Nature?</i>	20
<i>Relationship Between Humans</i>	24
<i>Preferred Forms of Activity</i>	28
<i>Time Orientations</i>	32
Monochronic and Polychronic	33
Past, Present, and Future Value Orientations	36
The Notion of “Convenience” and “Control” as it Applies to Nature	39
Concluding Thoughts	41
Works Cited	43

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“By culture is meant the words, ritualized behaviors, and ceremonies that express—and shape—a people’s understanding of themselves and the world they live in . . . The words, behaviors, and ceremonies that express these ideas about life also have the ability to perpetuate them. That is, a culture provides individuals with patterned ways of thinking and acting, and, in this way, a culture structures a group’s experience with the world.”

- Robert Fuller

Introduction

The reason for providing a definition of culture is to refresh our understanding of the concept, since studying culture is at the forefront of this project. Through this general definition, we can begin to understand an abstract culture that is alive today: wine culture. I refer to wine culture as abstract because it is a complex subject to effortlessly comprehend without some taste of a theoretical framework. As discussed in Robert Fuller’s book, *Religion and Wine: A Cultural History of Wine Drinking in the United States*, there exists “overtly religious qualities” among wine cultures in America and regions around the world that makes them a fascinating site of study (103). In other words, Fuller describes the relationship between wine culture and religion by saying, “[cultural religion] has no distinct institutional or theological boundaries. It consists not of formal theology, but of a people’s spontaneous tendency to create new means of celebrating life, of treasuring things for their intrinsic significance rather than their instrumental value, and of pushing beyond the boundaries of daily routine to catch glimpses of the innate beauty of human existence” (103). Although the statement above is from a theological perspective, there is something noteworthy about this notion as it relates to wine culture.

To illustrate the significance, Fuller contends, “Wine enthusiasts employ their own language, advocate their own behavioral codes, and engage in ceremonies or festivals that celebrate the finer things in life” (Fuller 97). The fact that groups of two or more are able to bond and form a unity

together, thus creating a wine culture, is an unusual phenomena. Even the word choices made by these wine cultures to communicate and share opinions, insights, or feelings towards wine are worth venturing deeper into, for it is well understood that language and culture are interrelated (Fuller 99). That being said, the traditional or nontraditional means of communicating about not just wine tasting experiences but regarding grape growing and wine making as well, can provide a window into learning something more about a wine culture's values, common beliefs and perspectives.

Personal Interests and Credentials

Upon my exposure to the intriguing notions put forward by Robert Fuller's book, in addition to Dr. Stephen Lloyd Moffett's course, titled "Wine and Religion," and his upcoming book *The Soul of Wine*, I had a lingering interest in studying those who center their lives around wine. After all, wine possesses unique qualities that reserve a special place for it in the hearts of humankind, for as the world-renowned theologian Paul Tillich has once said, "Of all the drinks, wine alone recapitulates life" (Fuller Viii).

One may wonder about what grounds I have for embarking on a project that seeks to better understand two wine cultures through applying communication theories, and there are a few notable reasons for why I wanted to undertake this project. First, I want to display and apply the interesting theories and methods of critical thinking that I have been exposed to in Communication Studies, after four years of studying at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California. Moreover, I want to display that communication is complex and has endless possibilities of application. I am aware that many suppose they know what it means to "communicate" and, even more, that some claim that they have communication "figured out." Others might say they do not need to *study* communication on the ground that there is not much to know on the topic. I have heard my friends and family joke around by asking me, "how complicated can communication really

be?” While the study may sound easy and uncomplicated, I would like to beg to differ, having completed all of my undergraduate Communication Studies coursework.

There is a lot to be learned about the role that communication plays in a culture. By observing two cultures that do not fit the prevalent understandings of what “culture” means to many Americans today (based on my encounters with other Americans), I am unwrapping an abstract genre of culture that welcomes us to go outside what we, even myself, are familiar with. The reason for this is that communication has the same properties as a moving stream, in that that the concept is ever-changing because we as humans are constantly creating new meanings together. The way in which we conduct ourselves in the society in which we live is undoubtedly not stagnant like a swamp, although our behaviors can seem questionable and unclear at times. Another reason the topic of culture is complex is because: “Culture—our understandings of particular cultural groups—never remains static. . . [culture], by its very nature is something that moves through time with us, is always changing (Warren and Fasset 123). In this quote we are reminded, then, to recognize that by studying two wine cultures, through the lens of Communication Studies, I am embarking on studying something complex and fluid.

The second reason stems from my family history in the wine industry that has encouraged me to learn more about the various methods and styles of growing grapes and making wine—resulting in my creation of the two groupings: *biodynamic wine culture* and *conventional (traditional) wine culture*. What exactly these terms mean I will explain in a moment. Historically, I grew up on a conventionally managed vineyard and have been around this type of grape growing and winemaking ever since. Multiple summers of mine have been spent either on the wine business side, on the vineyard side, and/or on the winemaking side of corporate sized operations in the wine industry. Under these circumstances I knew more about conventional grape growing and winemaking practices and those people surrounding it from my hands on, personal experience coming into this

project and little knowledge of biodynamic practices. Over a short time, through researching and recalling interpersonal interactions with biodynamic farmers, I was brought up to speed on biodynamic practices, which brings me to the third reason for my project.

Since taking an intercultural communication course, I became interested in culture and how I can creatively apply what scholars have described it as in numerous ways. Culture is, after all, a dynamic site for both inclusion and exclusion. Altogether, by combining my study of communication, historical experience in the wine industry, and my fascination with culture, I have my quest to explore two unique wine cultures: biodynamic and conventional.

Defining Biodynamic and Conventional

To paint a more colorful picture of the way in which biodynamic agriculture is different from other methods, a biodynamic preparations apprentice of Josephine Porter, Hugh J. Courtney, provides a simple description in the introduction of the book *What is Biodynamics?*:

In the first place, biodynamic agriculture approaches the farm as an organism or individuality in and of itself. Biodynamics arrives at this concept because it starts from the premise that the Earth itself is a living being. Second, the biodynamic farmer or gardener also attempts to relate his efforts to the movements not only of the Sun and Moon but of the other members of the solar system as well, against a background of the entire cosmos. Finally, biodynamic agriculture also involves the use of nine very specially made herbal and mineral substances known as the biodynamic preparations. (3-4)

Comparing biodynamics with conventional and organic agricultural systems, biodynamic is *an ongoing path of knowledge rather than an assemblage of methods and techniques*” (King 117). Moreover, biodynamics is rooted in a spiritual philosophy known as anthroposophy; the philosophy essentially encompasses a freedom of the soul, while supporting the beneficial union that science and art can have together

(Mays and Nordwall). Another integral part of biodynamic practices are the nine preparations that Steiner has created and shared with others. These preparations are the main distinction between biodynamic and organic farming. Each preparation is numbered from 500-508 and have a specific purpose, design, and timing for application in a biodynamic farm. The ingredients are naturally occurring in nature and range from minerals to various flowers, herbs, and plants (e.g. chamomile, horsetail, quartz, oak bark, etc.) A perplexing aspect to these preparations is that they are prepared to temporarily exist in a body part of an animal; some animal parts include the horn of a cow, the bladder of a deer, and “the cranium of a sheep, pig, or horse. . .” (Karlsson 111-121). Being that the explanation of the nine biodynamic preparations is extensive, my description only covers the basic gist; one should seek further information on the subject to gain a more in depth understanding on the nine preparations used for biodynamic farming.

Now, what do I mean by the term “conventional” wine culture? It is easier to describe by what it is not. When I use the word “conventional” to describe a wine culture, I mean that this wine culture does not practice organic or biodynamic methods of growing grapes and winemaking. In other words, I am referring to those wineries and vineyards that apply inorganic substances to their vineyards and wines, which can include herbicides, pesticides, fungicides, fertilizers, and additives unapproved by organic and biodynamic certification systems (Karlsson 155-182). Conventional wine cultures have free range on how to grow grapes and make wine so long as it is FDA approved. Then again, conventional wine cultures may be sustainable, as many are today. Granted, even with these definitions, there are many conventional wineries and vineyards, biodynamic as well, so the variability of each culture is a natural limitation for any of my observations or explanations.

The Caveat & Intentions

The wine cultures I have categorized and selected are conventional and biodynamic wine cultures on the grounds that I have grown up among a conventional style of wine practices and have

recently been introduced to a biodynamic style of wine practices. In order to study these wine cultures in the most mindful and fair way, I need to clarify that these descriptions do not encompass *all* of the cultures that can be considered to be a conventional and/or biodynamic. Unfortunately, the reality is that oftentimes, when we attempt to explain and describe culture through the use of models and observation, an observer of the culture ends up reflecting more about themselves than that which is being observed. Most notably, Edward T. Hall asserts that “Beneath the clearly perceived, highly explicit surface culture, there lies a whole other world, which when understood will ultimately radically change our view of human nature” (14-15). Thus, the study of culture is equally difficult and rewarding.

My academic quest is not meant to be a persuasive message nor a critique of two cultures. My quest to utilize my Communication Studies coursework that has familiarized me with theories I would have perhaps never formally encountered in my lifetime. In particular, the concepts of dialectics, as elaborated by Thomas Martin and Judith Nakayama, and of cultural value orientations, as laid out by Hofstede and Strodbeck, coupled with notions that dig into culture and human nature brought forth by Hall, Slack and Wise, among others. Overall, the intention is to spark curiosity and a desire to study the communicative cultural phenomena that surround wine. I do not wish to form generalizations or limit the uniqueness of each culture by categorizing them into theories; rather, the goal is to use these theories and my knowledge as guides to enhancing the everyday person’s understanding of wine culture as it specifically pertains to conventional and biodynamic grape growing and winemaking practices. Essentially, there is a cross-cultural aspect to my project, meaning that it “[...] involves comparing and contrasting the communication patterns of people of one culture with the communication patterns observed in people from a different culture” (Levine, Park and Kim 208). Therefore, it is my duty to use the available information about

each wine culture in conjunction with my personal experience and knowledge to observe these two wine cultures through a Communications Studies lens.

One unique benefit of having studied Communication Studies is that we are more capable of translating communication patterns of various fields of study or realms of expertise and compiling a translation in such a way that there can be clear, cross-cultural understandings among diverse fields of study. To put this topic into a concrete form, I utilize the theories and concepts from the Communication Studies discipline to unpack the complexity of the two diverse wine cultures so as to better understand the similarities, differences, and some potential deeper communicative meanings behind each culture's wine practices. Finally, I want to observe the practices of the selected wine culture and see how they can be better understood—side by side, compared and contrasted—to see any overlap and insights to what they do and why they do it that way.

Ethnography and cross-cultural studies are useful models to exploring cultures. In the words of Yung Yun Kim, “directly or indirectly, ethnographic descriptions of cultural identities provided in studies tend to emphasize the enduring and communal nature of cultural identity— the shared life patterns, practices, and symbols connoting a common tradition and common future” (246). With this definition in mind, we can have a basis for how this project is structured to observe biodynamic and conventional wine cultures. By doing this cross-cultural observation that comprises some characteristics of an ethnographic study, we can derive a broad understanding that invites us to take a closer look at certain aspects of biodynamic or conventional wine culture in the future. My intention is that by the end of this project, you will have an open mind towards looking at the unfamiliar cultures, especially the biodynamic and conventional cultures, that exist behind and surround themselves around a well-known commodity such as wine.

Dialectical Approach

Scholars like Martin and Nakayama have extended our knowledge about dialectics by explaining the “six similar dialectics that seem to operate interdependently in intercultural interactions: cultural-individual, personal/social-contextual, differences-similarities, static-dynamic, present-future/history-past, and privilege-disadvantage dialectics.” I will be specifically discussing a few that fit best with these wine cultures. The reader should keep in mind that we are cautioned by Martin and Nakayama to use these dialectics to boost our degree of open-mindedness towards an entity or human communication, rather than using these dialectics to limit our comprehension of the subject at hand (“Thinking Dialectically” 15).

Martin and Nakayama assert that the dialectical perspective is not easy to grasp because “it requires holding two contrary ideas simultaneously, contrary to most formal education in the United States. Most of our assumptions about learning and knowledge assume dichotomy and mutual exclusivity.” That being said, we may be able to conceptualize the well-supported idea that conflicting realities exist in cultures around the world (14) and even in the two slightly abstract “wine cultures” I have selected for applying the Communication Studies discipline. By delving into a few of these six categories of intercultural dialectics, our mental ability to hold two seemingly exclusive ideas or phenomena may be improved so that we may not only understand dialectics as it pertains to wine cultures but also towards our own lives—that is, through applying dialectics to what we see in the complexity of the world and cultures that surround us from here on out.

Cultural—Individual Dialectic

While studying culture in my intercultural course in the winter of 2014 at Cal Poly—which complemented my recent, further research—I have learned more about the meanings and components of the word *culture*. As simply put by Janine Schall, author of the article *Cultural Exploration Through Mapping*,

Culture is not a set of objects and behaviors, but a context, specific to a particular time and place, in which meaning is made. This context includes foods, holidays, and clothing, but more importantly, it includes patterns, attitudes, and values such as language use and communication patterns, religious beliefs and rituals, the tools and artifacts of daily life, familiar relationships, gender roles, and many other characteristics . . . Within one cultural group there can be many and often conflicting cultural identities. (166-167)

Here, Schall familiarizes us with the complicated, contextual nature of culture. Considering this, there is an important caveat we must keep in mind, since the main motivation behind my project is to study two seemingly abstract cultures that interest me; the caveat being the dichotomous idea that we as humans are not only a part of a culture, but are sensibly individual beings as well, whose attitudes, beliefs, and values can be uniquely attributed to one individual.

Psychologist Erick Erickson described cultural identity as “[...] the process of identity development as one in which the two identities of the individual and of the group are merged into one” (Kim 240). We are not cut copies of each other, even though it may seem so at times when emulation, or similar acts, are occurring. Thus, I must be wary of observing each of these wine cultures, because of the complexity that we individuals cause in the making of a culture. A helpful way to look at this dialectic is to imagine that each wine culture, biodynamic and conventional wine culture, as two separate trees composed of many branches. In addition, these trees are in the same plant species, yet are not rooted in the same exact soil with the same history. Each of these trees have branches that are one of a kind, resembling no other branch than themselves, just like how each person who makes up these cultures holds a unique identity (a special flair, if you will) while simultaneously living *within* each of these wine cultures. Whether the culture is biodynamic or conventional, these cultures consists of individual human beings (the unique branches) that make up a collective system (the whole tree).

With this dialectic in mind, I am less inclined to assume that the wine practices I have personally observed and/or read about are not necessarily true for the culture in its entirety. There can be an infinite amount of variability across cultures and wine cultures are not exempt from this element of truth. Be that as it may, and for the purpose of my project, I seek to observe each wine culture in the most fair-minded manner by understanding that each culture is made up of individuals, which may reflect my observations of a wine culture in a particular way. Just because someone fits into a group does not mean they have to lose their individual identity, but may comprise a whole tree that functions as a result of those individual identities coming together to form a culture—namely, a wine culture.

Differences—Similarities Dialectic

Even though I am observing two wine cultures that, at first glance, exist on opposite ends of the wine industry spectrum, I want to be sure to highlight what makes each culture unique. It must be remembered that characteristics of human nature, or what Young Yun Kim categorize as “separatism,” are “ingroup” and “outgroup” mentalities. In other words, perceived differences in cultural identities may create distance between cultures (Kim 240). Understandably, it is easier to find what makes cultures different from each other, which is why I must break my cultural habit of only looking at the cultural differences; and this may be done by exerting an effort towards what makes these wine cultures similar.

In an era where we may face more dichotomies than not (Martin and Nakayama, “Thinking Dialectically” 16), I find it to be helpful for my to project highlight the differences and similarities of the biodynamic and conventional wine practices as they play out in today’s wine industry. I personally have witnessed instances where I am surrounded by those who have no idea what biodynamic is or what constitutes conventional grape growing and wine making. Likewise, some people do not know where these two wine cultures overlap and where they never cross paths. After

all, there are infinite ways to go about making wine, especially if one wanted to study how it varies from country to country.

History/Past—Present/Future Dialectic

How each culture finds their meaning is perceived by scholars to be based on history and present conditions, which leads to a future reality. “Many influential factors precede and succeed any intercultural interaction that gives meaning to that interaction” (Martin and Nakayama, “Thinking Dialectically” 17). Although Martin and Nakayama are specifically referring to intercultural interactions, it is safe to say that this notion can be applied to my cross-cultural observation between biodynamic and conventional wine cultures. Each wine culture has a past/history that lends itself to influencing each wine culture’s current practices.

In order to understand biodynamic and conventional wine cultures, as they exist today, it makes sense to look into where their path comes from; for this path is the building block that each culture has used to create the culture they have today. Even more, their recent practices, based on the world’s present condition(s), offer a site worthy of observation because present change implies a future change.

One example of this in many conventional wine cultures is the movement towards sustainability (Visconti 23-25), since historically, the “Green Revolution” was not founded on sustainable principles. Ironically, what is termed the “Green Revolution” is defined in the opposite way as we would understand the term “green” today. The revolution, as it was called, was a significant shift in how agricultural systems were structured. What sprang from this Green Revolution was the commercialization of agriculture going hand in hand with the initial use of chemicals (in the form of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides), mono cropping, and a significant amount of modern technology. “The Green Revolution at the time was seen as an alternative (and superior) way to reduce famine after the Second World War economic crisis, by increasing

agricultural production through the use of chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.” Luckily, the solution was recognized to be temporary, but that recognition did not stop biodiversity and stable ecosystems to be left hanging by a thread (King 112-113). Here, the history of conventional agriculture has prompted the current and future changes of the system as a whole. The best option is do no more harm.

Historically, biodynamic wine culture did not have as great a boom as the green revolution and lately, biodynamic grape growing and winemaking have progressively been gaining popularity over the years, due to the rise in ecological awareness and demand for quality in products not limited to the wine category. “[...] research shows that following a worldwide trend of pro-social behavior and green awareness, in recent years organic and biodynamic wines have been rising in popularity” (Visconti 3). A widely held position of values held by those practicing biodynamic grape growing and winemaking that connects history with the future is to be a counterculture to the model set forth by large corporations. Eric Pooler of DeLouch Vineyards by Radio-Coteau professed, “Homogenization is the worst possible thing for wine.” Moreover, “These farmers, vineyard managers, and winemakers practicing biodynamic farming and processing are part of a growing community that is slowly but steadily pushing back against big corporate tides of conventional, homogenous winemaking and as they do so, discovering the wonders of their own ‘terroir’” (McGill, “Biodynamic Comes” 36). With these comments in mind, we can understand where biodynamic wine culture is coming from and where it is heading—a counterculture that seeks authenticity. As shown above, it is wise to keep in mind the history behind *why* biodynamic or conventional wine culture is the way it is while also looking at the present practices of each wine culture and how this dialectic intertwines with itself.

Privileged—Disadvantaged Dialectic

When considering all of the previously stated dialectics as they pertain to culture and communication, the dialectic that holds the most value for understanding how each wine culture simultaneously has pros and cons is the privileged-disadvantaged dialectic. This is an important dialectic to keep at the front of our minds, especially in a world of complex realities. As Martin and Nakayama explain, “Individuals may be simultaneously privileged and disadvantaged, or privileged in some contexts and disadvantaged in others” (“Thinking Dialectically” 18). In other words, when we critically look into both wine cultures, we are able to see some advantages and disadvantages to the practices that makeup that culture. Admittedly, I thought that this dialectic would be difficult to wrap my head around. How could a culture have a combination of advantages and disadvantages? Should not a wine culture simply fit into just one category? Being that this is not the case of biodynamic and conventional wine culture, my goal for my observation is to understand how each culture may triumph and suffer in the wine industry that sits in a capitalist culture like that of the United States of America.

As a result of this capitalist culture, some cultures have to decide how to handle their disadvantageous reality; that reality being if they are successful enough to sink or swim in a competitive market. One harsh reality that may affect conventional wine cultures more than biodynamic wine cultures is the increasing energy prices dilemma, since “external production factors” (that include chemicals such a fertilizers) are used more often in conventional grape growing systems. Likewise, biodynamic wine cultures face the disadvantage of the inherent reality that their operations typically have lower yields when compared to conventional and organic grape production, which puts a limit on earnings (Tudorescu, C. Zaharia, and I. Zaharia 150). At the same time, biodynamic wine cultures are at an advantage when it comes to progressive consumer trends, since their practices are already align with and support these trends when compared to conventional

practices. For instance, a crucial piece of knowledge about what the public's desires and expectations, in places where I assume are economically stable, are for their food purchases are increasingly in favor of organic produce. This knowledge has been discovered years ago and that number still increases today. As outlined by Christine King, author of "Community Resilience and Contemporary Agri-ecological Systems: Reconnecting People and Food, and People with People":

A study by Woodward-Clyde (2000) highlights that there has been an overall decline in public confidence in modern farming and processing methods, and an increasing consumer awareness of food-borne hazards such as pesticides, antibiotics, hormones and artificial ingredients. The expansion of organic sales over the last two decades has increased worldwide to around US\$20 billion and growing 20-50% per annum.

(116)

While this specific piece of evidence pertains to organic agriculture more broadly, it can be applied to biodynamic agricultural methods, since biodynamic practices encompass all that organic does and more. Spiritual components aside, we see the same principles of biodiversity and natural input management practices. As time goes on, biodynamic farming is coming to be understood in areas that science can measure, such as "chemical and biological properties, crop growth, yield, processes in soils", which can be a contributor to the increasing attractiveness of biodynamic farming in a world that is seeking a "more resilient, diverse, and efficient system" (Turinek et al. 151-152).

On the other hand, one example of a conventional wine cultures' advantage involves sustainable practices. The Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing (CCSW-Certified) organization is a visible guarantee to consumers that either or both a winery and vineyard have opted to be translucent in their practices. This means that conventional wineries and grape growers can achieve a certification by a third party that publicizes their sustainable practices for all to see.

The advantage of this is that those who are part of this wine culture may measure their stewardship

towards the environment (“Sustainable Winegrowing” 7), while at the same time, can utilize modern technology that makes the operation efficient and profitable. All of these concepts and more we will revisit when I delve into Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s groupings of value orientations held by cultures.

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

Another renowned theory I want us to keep in mind when exploring these two wine cultures that deals with language—the symbols of our everyday communication—is known as the Sapir-Whorf Theory (hypothesis). I have encountered this theory a number of times in my communication studies coursework. The gist is that there is a relationship between the language one has and the way one sees the world. That is to say, the words we use plays a greater role than most would realize in how we perceive the world. The common example to explain this exertion is how many words one has to describe something such as snow. Many do not know that there are dozens of words to describe different kinds of snow in languages other than English, as those who live in snowy regions can attest (Warren and Fassett, 92). Therefore, the more words one has to describe something, the degree to which one’s reality of that something is made richer.

For instance, if someone (or some culture) has a keen understanding of herbal and mineral substances, they are more able to act on that knowledge—by believing it, sharing it, and implementing it. The same goes for knowing a wide array of products or chemicals that can solve a disease in a vineyard or an aromatic problem in the wine; each person or culture in these cases is inclined towards different actions and behaviors and, thus, possesses different values. Essentially, we have a toolbox, full of words that have meaning to us, that may determine our coceptions and plan(s) of action in life. Correspondingly, each wine culture has its own toolbox of words as well.

Among wine cultures, there exists similar language because both are essentially growing grapes and turning those grapes into wine. Still, the differences in commonly used words among

these cultures yields to varying understandings that can be the result of incomprehension. The difference in language use among biodynamic and conventional wine cultures is not as extreme as, say, Russian and English, for each culture may actually be somewhat familiar with the other culture's semantics. Nevertheless, how each wine culture communicates is different because their values, perspectives, and practices differ quite considerably. For example, "additives" are a fairly common term to discuss in conventional wine culture. There happens to be eighty additives that may be added to wine production "for stabilizing, fining (clarifying), filtering, preserving, aromatizing, acidifying, and de-acidifying. There are enzymes and products which help the yeast during fermentation, preserve the colour, make the wine softer and so on" (Karlsson 155). The word itself does not elicit negative connotations; "additives", as I may suggest, acts as a euphemism (a neutral term), which sounds like an aid to wine, and depending on who you talk to, would agree that additives do in fact aid the wine. As I mentioned earlier, each wine culture should be able to understand each other's semantics. When reading about a local biodynamic winery on their website, for example, I found that they use the term "additive" too; however, it is to describe what is *not* a part of their biodynamic winery practices ("Farming Principles").

On the other side of the spectrum, biodynamic wine cultures have terminology of their own that sounds like another language, too. Specifically, "cosmic forces" or a "planting calendar" are components of the biodynamic wine culture's language that may or may not cross over into a conventional wine culture's discourse. Both the "cosmic forces" and "planting calendar" are, in a sense, determinants of the customary practices that occur in biodynamic wine culture that include, but are not limited to, the reasons for applying the nine preparations to the grape picking decisions (Karlsson 122). As a result, those practices correlating to these terms are a part of a language that is unique to biodynamic wine culture and makes up the communication that bonds the culture together.

Value Orientations

In order to understand a culture, we must begin to understand their cultural values. What it is that a culture deems to be worthy of attention, what rituals a culture partakes in, and what attitude towards life in general are all indications of what a culture values. These observable cultural values allow what a culture believes to be core values to shine outwardly, and for these core values in turn to shape a culture's perception of the world. Anthropologists Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, came up with the notion of categories of value orientations in a culture, which help us understand how a culture communicates their values. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's idea regarding value orientations infers that all cultural groups are said to have a response to five questions that penetrate deeply into a culture. The five questions are : (1) what is human nature? (2) what is the relationship between humans and nature? (3) what is the relationship between humans? (4) what is the preferred personality? (5) what is the orientation toward time? In considering these questions, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck admit that one to two of the possible three responses could be true for a cultural society (Qtd. in Martin and Nakayama 95-97). For that reason, we must resort back to the previously discussed dialectical approaches to understanding cultures, because of the reality that some values in a single wine culture may conflict or possess multiple responses to each value orientation question. That being said, the first question to look into is the relationship between humans and nature as revealed by conventional and biodynamic wine cultures.

What is Human Nature?

At first, I was unsure how these wine cultures would answer the question regarding human nature—whether each believed human nature is mostly good, mostly evil, and/or a mixture of evil and good. Societies that believe human nature is mostly good are supporters of helping those who “misbehave” in the eyes of that society, so that those people may return to society and contribute to the greater good. Human nature deemed as mostly evil means that a cultural group is not concerned

with the rehabilitation of evil-doers; rather, “an eye for eye and tooth for tooth” is a justified form of punishment for the crime and that is all there is to it. The third orientation toward human nature, that it is a mixture of good and evil, is what my society is like in America, where violators of the laws are given chances to correct themselves up to a point and if they fail to do so, the penalty is imprisonment or maybe death (Martin and Nakayama 97-98). This is the value that I see in both biodynamic and conventional wine cultures in a more abstract way than the examples just given.

When I thought about this question more, while recalling what I know and have researched about biodynamic and conventional wine cultures’ practices, there are certain actions that show each culture’s feelings towards the nature of us human beings. Depending on whether a winery and/or vineyard is solely for wine business or a simply a hobby, both conventional and biodynamic cultures would agree that human nature is a mix of good and evil. If a winery or vineyard is just for a hobby, then there would be less concern for the nature of humans, because aggressively competing with other wineries and vineyards should not be a top priority. By contrast, if a winery or vineyard is in it for the business side, to make money (like almost all businesses), then the nature of humans is a greater concern. For example, if either type of wine culture’s main goal is to follow consumer trends and do whatever it takes to make a wine as cheaply as possible to maximize profits then both would view human nature as being a mix of good and evil; the reason being that the mentality is that some other winery and vineyard is out there as a competitor. By seeing another winery or vineyard as a competitor, the biodynamic or conventional perspectives would want to make their wine the best with the available means. Sometimes that means manipulating the wine, distinct to conventional practices, to make it more balanced than what the vineyard has naturally provided. With biodynamics, the action may be vetoing a few of the nine preparations (Karlsson 112) or dismiss some biodynamic rituals as purposeless (McGill, “Biodynamic Winemakers” 29) because the increased effort to do so distracts from the goal to keep up with market forces.

Another application of this value is the fact that authentic, biodynamic wine cultures are pursuing a way to *heal* the earth based on the history between humans and nature where the relationship was not mutually beneficial (King 119). “It was primarily the advent of artificial fertilizers in agriculture that Steiner objected to [. . .]. He feared that if the use of artificial fertilizers is allowed to continue, farmland would be utterly impoverished” (Karlsson 113). Therefore, knowing that humans have, could, and would exploit land to ultimately benefit the farmer more than the land, biodynamic farmers (and now many biodynamic wine cultures) see the evil of man to be combated through biodynamic practices. The degree of evil that humans have in the eyes of this culture should be somewhat minimized with the worldwide push, especially in California, towards participation in sustainable practices (Qtd. in Desta, 5; Visconti 3). There is potential that biodynamic wine cultures would see the sustainable efforts of conventional wine cultures is a step towards supporting that humans can be just as good as they are evil in certain instances.

Now that we have a better understanding of different types of biodynamic and conventional wine cultures’ orientations regarding human nature, it is wise to understand what each wine culture’s values towards nature are, since they spend a majority of their time with vineyards and grapes.

What is the Relationship Between Humans and Nature?

I see the “relationship between humans and nature” question as providing a particularly interesting and important avenue to digging into biodynamic and conventional wine cultures, since both undoubtedly have a relationship with nature. The ranges of values for this question about humans’ relationship to nature are: humans dominate, harmony exists between the two, and/or nature dominates (Martin and Nakayama 97). My initial classification about the value orientation of conventional and biodynamic grape growing and winemaking processes was that the latter culture allows nature to dominate over humans and the former culture allows humans to dominate over nature. I soon found that it was important to realize that whichever value orientation was more true

for a wine culture regarding the relationship between humans and nature question, neither can be deduced to superior or inferior to another. Rather, each response to these questions is to be seen as *different* to another value orientation.

What Martin and Nakayama proposed with these value orientations is that they are immensely complex. For instance, most conventional wine cultures have modern technology and practices at their forefront and possess more domination over nature. This domination over nature value orientation means that this culture has the means and ability to use technology to influence nature to achieve a desired outcome. Counterintuitively, Martin and Nakayama describe a country, Canada, with this orientation, yet describe Canada as having environmental concerns and actions (98-99). Similarly, the conventional wine culture has a significant number of wineries and vineyards making an effort to be sustainable and eco-friendly wherever possible. Efforts are widespread in California, especially in the northern areas such as Lake County, Sonoma County, Napa Valley, Lodi, and on the Central Coast in Paso Robles (“The Greening of California Wine Country”). Key resources being conserved in the vineyard and winery are water and energy. Reductions typically occur in the pesticide use and creation of waste (“Sustainable Winegrowing”). Whether this effort is due to societal pressure or pureness of heart, so to speak, is up for debate, for there exists internal and external pressures for environmental decisions: “external pressures to improve environmental performance can emanate from regulators, customers, communities, environmental groups, activists and competitors. Internal pressures stem from ethical motives, a perception of economic opportunities and concern for employees” (Silverman, Marshall, and Cordano 159).

Clearly, there are many factors that influence a conventional wine culture’s decisions to harmonize their relationship with the environment, and that is why this culture’s relationship to nature is in the midst of transforming itself before our eyes. A study in the *Journal of Wine Research* found that: “Internal pressures appear to play a very strong role in reducing inputs and outputs.

Success in reducing the use of chemicals in the vineyard (insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and synthetic fertili[z]ers) and reducing toxic chemicals, water use, energy use and solid waste in the winery were all associated with internal but not external pressures” (Silverman, Marshall, and Cordano 161).

Through these insights, I am led to utilize the theoretical framework of Icek Ajzen, commonly referred to as “the theory of planned behavior.” This theory, in its attempt to explain human behavior, “deals with the antecedents of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, antecedents which in the final analysis determine intentions and actions” (189). I am curious, then, as to how much of any wine culture’s practices are a result of this theory, especially when considering the study conducted by Silverman, Marshall, and Cordano (mentioned previously). Is the wine industry heading into the longstanding practice we lately have been calling “greenwashing”? How can anyone be sure of the intentions, conscious or not, in regards to growing grapes and making wine? Maybe I am more attuned to wines being marketed as eco-friendly and sustainable over the course of my research, but I do see wine labels making this message prominent to consumers in retail stores. Nevertheless, there are two sides to every story and it is important to know that there exist genuinely authentic conventional wine cultures that are striving for sustainability beyond compliance, and those who wind up piggy backing on the movements’ good intentions—or so I believe them to be.

As for biodynamic wine cultures, I see evidence that both “harmony exists between the two” and “nature dominates” ranges of values could be true for this wine culture. I find that harmony exists, due to little to no tension between the biodynamic farmer with their vines and the biodynamic winemaker with their wines. Specifically, it is not necessarily the biodynamic vineyard manager’s decision when to prune, pick or the biodynamic winemaker’s decision when to bottle because it is nature’s astronomical calendar and lunar cycles that dictate the decisions in the winery

and vineyard (“Biodynamic Principles”). For instance, “Cultivating root, leaf, flowering and fruiting crops using astronomical calendars guides the farmer on the best days to make use of moisture patterns in the field. Just as lunar cycles affect the tides, gravitational pull influences the movement of water in plants and soil” (McGill, “Biodynamic Winemakers” 27). Of course, the vineyard needed human intervention to create the “closed loop” system that sustains itself, yet once this sustainable system is setup, there is harmony between the grape grower and winemaker through these biodynamic practices. All of these descriptions show us the foundation of biodynamics, as originated by philosopher Rudolf Steiner, who “viewed the farm itself as an alive organism, self-contained and wholly individual. He staunchly advocated a prohibition of any external inputs. His vision of a farm, from manure to fertilizers, would be home-made, truly indigenous and as fully recyclable and self-sustainable as possible” (McGill, “Biodynamic Comes” 33). This is why I see that there is harmony between biodynamic practices and nature; however, I see biodynamic farmers’ values as going a step further.

Since the biodynamic system is a self-sustainable model, in that humans do not need to intervene with the natural processes they setup and simply need to observe and work alongside these processes, it looks as though “nature dominates.” The Demeter Association (certifier for biodynamic farming) describes the system as “a concise model of a living organism ideal would be a wilderness forest. In such a system there is a high degree of self-sufficiency in all realms of biological survival. Fertility and feed arise out of the recycling of the organic material the system generates” (“Biodynamic Principles”). This value orientation is easier to apply to conventional and biodynamic wine cultures. Certainly, the values that each of these wine cultures holds towards the relationship between humans and nature can be looked at more deeply and differently, depending on the angle that one takes.

Relationship Between Humans

Another value orientation question that can be applied to understanding these cultures is the “relationship between humans.” The most renowned societal comparison exists here: individualism and collectivism. The significance is that “individualistic and collectivistic value tendencies are manifested in everyday interpersonal, family, school, and workplace social interactions”; so why not apply these categories to wine cultures? (Ting-Toomey 173).

Most notably, Asia has cultures that are considered to be collectivist or group-oriented cultures, while European and/or Americans are considered to be more individualistic cultures. The best description I could find, by Levine, Park and Kim, is that collectivistic social patterns typically prioritize the communal objectives and ambitions before individual objectives and ambitions. In contrast, the social patterns of individualism emphasize the distance between individuals to prioritize their personal aspirations and have those guide their interactions with those surrounding them (215-216).

Although each vineyard and winery’s communication patterns appear to be a mix between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, there are instances where each wine culture fits better into one range of values. Once again, we must acknowledge that for cultures and individuals, collectivism and individualism emerge in a dialectical manner where both can co-exist to form a dynamic understanding of cultures. The reason is that different contexts constitute different behaviors that may resemble either individualism or collectivism at a given point in time. Another idea we must keep in mind is that individualism and collectivism can be understood to “exist on a spectrum.” Ting-Toomey describes this as having many benefits, one of which is that, “first, cultural systems are not static and individuals are not robots of a culture. By viewing individualism and collectivism as existing on a dynamic continuum and with multiple layers, cultural and ethnic diversity within a culture can be accounted for” (Ting-Toomey 175-176). If we keep this metaphor in mind, we will

not have to categorize each wine culture, but may hold a dialectical tension between the dichotomous categorization that individualism and collectivism create. Even so, the individualist and collectivist method of describing a culture's values aids in understanding that cultural values, especially the relationship between humans in these cultures. Not only that, but as we witness biodynamic wine culture, we can build ourselves a new understanding of the notion of collectivism.

Based on each wine culture's value orientation regarding the relationship between humans, one could see how a conventional wine culture can be better understood if we look at how an individualistic culture functions (Martin and Nakayama 99-100). While group efforts are needed to complete work orders and vineyard duties, emphasis is placed on the individual's work and achievements. After all, an individual's work reflects their level of job security and potential for promotion. In the end, it is one's own reputation that is on the line in an individualistic culture, since the underlying motivation in life favors self-achievement and autonomy. For instance, the structure of conventional grape growing and winemaking is organized in such a way that humans are an integral component in the decision-making processes.

That being the case, winemakers must decide which yeast to add to the wine, how much tartaric acid to add, and when to bottle the wine. Likewise, the grape grower must decide when to plant, prune, and pick, and which chemical application to apply to the vineyard. These are just a few examples of decision making situations. Nevertheless, all these decisions are reliant on one individual (or sometimes two or more assistants), based on their wisdom regarding science and nature. As one can imagine, this is a lot of pressure to uphold and that is what seems to drive individualistic cultures: the drive to succeed on one's own in challenging circumstances.

I am a member of an individualistic culture, being an American, and I contend that there is something special about the autonomous nature of individualistic culture, especially in the wine industry. For one, we essentially become limitless in our endeavors, without strings attached, and are

destined to grow into the individual identities of our choice, whatever that may be. Hofstede defined individualism as “a focus on rights above duties, a concern for oneself and immediate family, an emphasis on personal autonomy and self-fulfillment, and the basing of one’s identity on one’s personal accomplishments” (Oyserman, Coon, and Kimmelmeier 4-5). Hence, there is a significant amount of emphasis on the components that makeup an individual. The same is true in the wine industry for conventional grape growers and winemakers who can create a piece of art with wine by using the available tools that technological progress has bestowed to reflect personal goals and achievements.

When observing the biodynamic wine culture’s values regarding the relationship between humans, I see a trend that points towards a collectivistic style of interactions. I believe that the characteristic of “togetherness” is the most fitting. The reason is that collectivism involves the wellbeing of a whole organism in the same way that biodynamic wine cultures see their farm the people that surround it.

(Heading 3) Collectivism in a New Light

On a uniquely different note, biodynamic practices actually seem to consider and include more than just the farm and people. This culture invites us to see how a culture can actually look to nature and the astronomical forces as guidance for their collective decisions and actions. It is quite fascinating to stretch our understanding of collectivism in this way. Typically, we look at the influence that people in a culture or group pose on individuals belonging to a collective; what biodynamics does in addition to this is respecting nature’s wishes. Thus, biodynamic practices include the overlooked, existing entities of the universe: the nature on earth and beyond. In other words, biodynamic wine culture demonstrates a new notion for collectivism that is factoring in nature’s rhythms to make informed decisions and actions, instead of just humanistic concerns for the cultural group that one belongs to. We should keep this in mind the next time we are thinking

about what collectivism means, since it can mean more than what we originally and instinctively apply it to: humanistic phenomena. For now, we shall revisit collectivism as it applies to humans belonging to groups.

As mentioned earlier, collectivistic culture tends to be more thoughtful about the collective in their decisions and courses of actions as to how they will influence their close ties with others. Moreover, these actions and decisions tend to be done together, as a unit. The integral values are that the common goals held by members of a culture (Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier 5). The same is true for biodynamic grape growing and winemaking practices, because the structure is based around a certifiable system centered on rituals that affect the whole system. After all, the adopted holistic perspective is the cornerstone for biodynamic grape growing and winemaking practices. In the words of Robert Sinskey, owner of Eponymous Winery and one who believes in holistic approaches, “biodynamics is a process, not a religion, and a healthy dose of skepticism is appropriate as well.” Sinskey also warns, “don’t get so caught up in the dogma that you miss the message.” Sinskey brings up a valid point by saying, “the spirit is the key connection although some of the Biodynamic rituals may be unnecessary, when we do them it brings the team together” (McGill, “Biodynamic Winemakers” 29). In the end, *who* was behind the finished product of wine carries less weight than the entire group—humans, animals, and natural organic processes that are worthy of praise. Here, there is a sense of togetherness and stewardship towards nature to uphold a set of values held by those who make up the biodynamic wine culture; for the simple reason that there is an underlying standard of ethical commitment for wine and viticulture practices in a biodynamic winery. This commitment has led me to come to another realization about what a biodynamic culture may value in terms of their relationships between humans.

Of all the instances I have observed, there has not been competition on the inside of this type of culture, where differing viewpoints on how to go about the type or quantity of additions for

the wine exist as it does for conventional wineries. Instead, the humans in this culture have been granted an agreed upon system that dispels negative competition because “when the grapes are properly raised and handled, a wine can essentially make itself...” (McGill, “Biodynamic Comes” 34). The biodynamic system, then, is a self-sufficient system based on the existing principles of nature coupled with a strict certification system that creates a space for a collective effort to support, maintain, and bond through the process of grape growing and wine making. In an *Edible Marin and Wine County* article, journalist Christy McGill eloquently explained a handful of widely held biodynamic beliefs:

These biodynamic enthusiasts all talk like that—about the importance of keeping wine unadulterated, about a transparent process that disallows external influences, frowns on tinkering, and that bows to the essential work done in the vineyard and carried on in the winemaker’s facility. It’s a simple approach, unalloyed, a nod to the nobility of the soil, the vine and the grape. There’s no fining and no filtering, and no additives except the elective use of naturally occurring sulphur (allowed by biodynamic guidelines) (34)

As just described, the biodynamic principles are unique in that they seem to keep the invitation for debate at bay. Given these points, it seems that a valid way of understanding the relationship between humans in biodynamic and conventional wine culture is through applying the characteristics of both individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

Preferred Forms of Activity

The next value orientation that coincides with the relationship between humans is a culture’s preferred forms of activity, also called preferred personality. Included in the range of values are doing, growing, and being. Much can be said about how each wine culture’s actions point to what that culture may value more. When studying the meaning of being, I found it to mean that a person

puts passion into their experiences and actions as if there could be no division between the individual and the action. Martin and Nakayama use Central America, South America, Greece and Spain as places with this personality value (97, 101-102).

When I observed a few conventional wine cultures on the North Coast, Central Coast and in the Central Valley of California, I see a burning passion in the wine makers and grape growers, in that they are captivated in the position they hold. It did not matter if they were a viticulture technician, vineyard manager, grower relations, laboratory technician, assistant winemaker, or head winemaker. From what I observed, each person would be immersed in their job to a point that self-actualization was in the works. According to the humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow, self-actualization is at the topmost part of the hierarchical pyramid of human needs. Maslow defines self-actualization as “the need to grow, create, and understand” (Gass and Seiter 115-116). Those that comprise this kind of wine culture are able to learn more about grape growing and winemaking and become enabled to get creative with how to grow grapes and make wine. Due to the nature of the wine business and industry, many of those who are a part of a conventional wine culture have found their purpose—for the time being—and exist where they best fit into a winery or vineyard. In some cases, internal promotions happen as they are fairly common in large, conventional wine cultures. Otherwise, smaller wineries and vineyards tend to have fewer position turnover because of the limited positions and employees are inclined to hold their positions longer; from personal experience and observation I see that small businesses allocate more responsibility to the employees, and that in turn gives a greater employee satisfaction and pride to continue to work for that business. Clearly, there is some overlap with Maslow’s self-actualization and the value of doing, as outlined by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck.

In general, I propose that conventional wine cultures put an emphasis on doing, a value that is prominent in most European American cultures. After all, we are in a capitalist society where

business enterprises seek efficiency for the rewards of profit. In one form or another, that is the way it is. That being said, one reason behind a culture valuing the activity of doing is that the product and outcome(s) of doing seems to be more quantitative than qualitative; quantitative data being more satisfying to some. What makes it quantitative is the culture's preference to reward progress and measure this progress accordingly (typically with number scales) (Martin and Nakayama 101). When I worked at a conventional winery, I noticed that each employee's progress was thoroughly documented, especially when mistakes were made. Granted, any business resembles this model.

To return to the subject of conventional wine culture, I recall a time when I was conducting detailed crop estimates on a 600-acre ranch. The other interns and myself needed to adhere to a software program's randomization of sample spots, down to the "423rd vine". Next, we needed to weigh not just the clusters but the berry weight and the rachis weight as well. Then, we completed some multiplication and division problems and recorded the data for that specific block. Multiply this process by dozens of vineyard blocks and there you have an approximate prediction of the current year's crop yield. Among many incentives to predict the year's yield accurately, one incentive can be financial for a vineyard manager. The manager is being evaluated and so were we, the interns. Our success was based off of how accurate and timely we could complete the crop estimation task. The manager's success, since they hold the power to decide the final estimation, was based on how well they could predict the yield, report it, and then allocate the necessary resources for the harvest. The same was true for scouting for pests in the vineyard. We conducted random sampling, counting, and evaluating of insect populations in vineyard blocks to decide if and which chemical application was necessary. In the end, it was the vineyard manager's call, which would ultimately be one of the many actions being evaluated for productivity and rewards. Us interns were mainly evaluated on how much we could get done in the day. I also witnessed a time where an intern had an overwhelming amount of work to complete. The tension could be easily felt between the manager

and intern when discussing the time frame for completion. These personal examples are just a few of my experiences with conventional wine cultures that served me well in applying what I see as a value towards doing.

Among the three preferred forms of activity/personality, I observe the biodynamic wine culture to foster the “growing” value. Martin and Nakayma infer that this form of activity is uncommon compared to the other ranges of values (101-102). I will have to agree with them on the grounds that under a year ago, the number of biodynamic wineries and vineyards with Demeter USA certifications was just under seventy; however, this number is only the *officially* certified wineries and vineyards (Demeter Association Incorporated). There are plenty of cases where biodynamic (and organic) wineries and/or vineyards do not undergo the official certification process so it is difficult to keep track of how many more biodynamic wine cultures exist.

I had often heard of biodynamic practices as a spiritual endeavor, yet it was not until I cracked open the book, *What is Biodynamics?*, with the words of Rudolf Steiner himself, that I came to understand biodynamics to both a greater and lesser degree. My mind swelled with pursuits of application as well as questions to dispel my confusion from messages being conveyed. In particular, the biodynamic practices tell the tale that one’s spiritual connection with nature is welcomed, if not highly encouraged. Owing to the fact that this culture is a remnant of Rudolf Steiner’s lectures including spirituality and agriculture in the 1920’s, it is not a surprise that spirituality is the cornerstone of biodynamic agriculture, specifically biodynamic wine culture.

In Steiner’s lecture titled “Spiritual Being in the Heavenly Bodies and in the Kingdoms of Nature,” he explains that “[we should make it clear to ourselves how we can educate our feelings—by letting knowledge of the facts of a higher world influence us and by transforming our souls by means of this knowledge” (Steiner 49). This passage confirms why I see that the biodynamic wine culture’s grape growing and winemaking practices communicate for their preferred forms of

activity/personality—that value being “growing” in terms of spiritual growth. The attainment of a better understanding of a system like biodynamics is a growing process. From talking to members of biodynamic wine cultures, it seems that biodynamic wine cultures are practicing imagination towards understanding the hidden, inner-workings of nature before them, while appreciating the benefits towards their vines and wines, and while discovering more about themselves and their spiritual connections to nature and other human beings.

Another fascinating quote from Rudolf Steiner’s lecture is this: “The green mantle of plants works upon us such that we will and perceive in our inner being something spiritually bursting forth into bloom [. . .]. In this way, we come into contact with a deeper aspect of the world itself. The external veil of nature is drawn aside, as it were, and we enter a world that lies behind this external veil” (Steiner 53). As abstract as this passage seems, it gets a point across that nature can have a spiritual effect on humans. Remarkably, most biodynamic wine cultures have a sense of this in one way or another. It would be an intriguing mission to find out what causes biodynamic cultures to form and how those people that makeup these cultures have arrived at their convictions.

Time Orientations

The final question that deals with a culture’s values is its time orientation: future, present, and past time. What I understand a time orientation to be, with the help of Martin and Nakayama, is the structure of a culture’s mentality about how time passes and what it means for the planned actions that follow (102). What I mean is that a culture’s time orientation dictates how they behave on a daily basis. Whether that includes planning vacations years in advance, stopping to smell the roses, or fretting about past regrets,; all of this sheds light on that culture’s time orientation. While these examples are simplified, they may give us a better idea of what I mean to study regarding time orientations of these two wine cultures. While both wine cultures must keep an eye on the future if they want to survive among the current conditions—specifically Mother Nature’s state of being,

market trends, and/or consumer trends—each culture may hold activities that resemble past, present and/or future time orientations.

Monochronic and Polychronic

Time orientations can also incorporate what is known as “monochronic” and “polychronic” time orientations for an individual or group’s use of time. Edward T. Hall describes these two kinds of time as “solutions to the use of both time and space as organizing frames for activities.” For example, “[monochronic time] emphasizes schedules, segmentation, and prompt-ness,” whereas polychronic time “stress[es] involvement of people and completion of transactions rather than adherence to present schedules” (17). These time orientations are not innate, they are learned and as a matter of fact they exist on a continuum. Once again, I ask that we think of this concept dialectically because it seems that no person or culture can live with *both* a polychronic and monochronic time orientation. In reality, it can be true and this is why: someone, or a culture, can be monochronic in how they go to school (on time with scheduled days) and polychronic when they are on vacation (leisurely present, without a schedule). To me, these terms for different kinds and ways of handling time are fascinating because we can find profound insights to empathize with the activities and choices of others. Maybe we have wondered why a friend of ours is religiously late or why some cultures move at a slower pace. Understanding these time orientations more deeply and how they influence many aspects of a person or culture’s perspective in life may answer these questions. For now, we will observe how monochronic and polychronic help explain biodynamic and conventional wine culture.

Both conventional and biodynamic wine cultures feature characteristics of polychronic and monochronic time. Namely, they both follow a schedule for managing their vineyard and wines. These first examples explain how each wine culture resembles a monochronic style of time. To

begin with, each vineyard's duration of irrigation times, if the operation is not dry farmed, are strictly scheduled. Also, harvest time is crucial to have scheduling in place, especially for large wineries and vineyards because of the busy flow of transportation and tasks to complete are almost 24-7.

Furthermore, biodynamic agriculture's uses of the planting and astronomical calendar determine that day's permitted and not-permitted activities if one chooses to strictly follow that calendar. The calendar is specifically used "when planning activities such as pruning, cultivating, harvesting, and spraying the preparations" ("Biodynamic Agriculture at a Glance"). Surprisingly, there are two functions to this planting calendar as it pertains to time orientation, which I will explain below.

The downside to monochronic time is that "by scheduling, we compartmentalize; this makes it possible to concentrate on one thing at a time, but it also denies us context. Since scheduling by its very nature selects what will and will not be perceived and attended. . . what gets scheduled in or out constitutes a system for setting priorities for both people and functions" (Hall 18). Understandably, adhering to schedules in the wine industry is necessary for a successful business, but what if compartmentalizing is making these wine cultures miss out on certain interpersonal interactions inside or outside the culture's sphere of activities and operations? Or, what creativity is lost at the expense of focusing on schedules for every action? How is the overall context being blurred and/or ignored through the monochronic time orientation? Despite these points of consideration, I am sure there are cases where a polychronic time orientation can act as a remedy to the vortex that extreme monochronic time orientations invent.

The second set of examples explains how each wine culture can also be polychronic in their existence. Let us return to the biodynamic culture's use of the astronomical calendar. From hearing about this calendar explained by biodynamic wine cultures, I would like to reason that this calendar functions as a way to capture *more* context, and as a result, a polychronic time orientation can be said to take place. In essence, context means that a holistic perspective is being taken on an event, action,

or really anything in life. Context is special in that it carries the meaning for almost everything and determines the actions humans choose to take. In other words, “what man chooses to take in, either consciously or unconsciously, is what gives structure and meaning to his world. Furthermore, what he perceives is ‘what he intends to do about it’ ” (Hall 86-88). Now it is easier for me to explain how context relates to the biodynamic calendar.

The biodynamic planting calendar brings the culture to reality by having a system that straightforwardly illustrates distant rhythmic activity beyond the Earth’s atmosphere, because there is a belief that these distant activities play a role in the planet’s moisture levels, among other qualitative outcomes. When I toured a biodynamic winery, the owners and operators were very optimistically supportive of this system because they were content to allow what is naturally transpiring in the greater scheme of things to govern what they perform in their vines and wines. There was also a large amount of community involvement, specifically at this small biodynamic winery, to encourage volunteers to help with the operations—no experience necessary and creativity encouraged.

Comparatively, conventional wine cultures can be polychronically time oriented, too. From my perspective, the way conventional wine cultures prescribe daily and weekly activities resembles some polychronic time oriented qualities, due to the culture’s close relationship to Mother Nature’s behaviors. Similar to how nature’s rhythms decide what activities to do in biodynamic wine cultures, the basic, foreseeable happenings of nature (rain, sunshine, temperature, wind, and so on) are accepted as the *main* schedulers for conventional wine cultures (whereas biodynamic take this a step further, of course). The significance of these events performed by nature is that they may comprise a conventional wine culture’s values of patiently going with the flow and accepting present activities that they have no control over. Some may not fully, consciously know this, but with farming, what Mother Nature is up to has the power to delay or speed up processes, because if there is rain,

spraying the vines is delayed. If there is a heat wave, irrigation may need to be scheduled for a cooler time to have any effect on watering the vines.

As for human interaction, I have seen that the general activities and tasks that need to be done throughout the day or in the following days is sometimes subjective, in terms of *how* and *when* one goes about completing them; a characteristic of a polychronic time orientated culture. Granted, there are always more pertinent tasks that need to be done by a certain time and in a specific way, depending on the context, which would be a more monochronic time orientation. There are also “standard operational procedures” (SOP) that should be followed at all times, yet there are still many creative ways to keep SOP’s in mind while getting the task done differently than another employee or employer. Nevertheless, these are a few instances where conventional wine cultures exemplify polychronic time orientations.

Past, Present, and Future Value Orientations

In addition to observing the monochronic and polychronic aspects of these wine culture, we must return to Hofstede and Stodtbeck’s final question that explains how members of a culture conduct themselves in a world that has a past, present, and future. I realized that both cultures could not fit into a time orientation like a puzzle piece, nor could any other category of cultural value for that matter; nevertheless, this cultural value was unique, in that depending on which communicative act or practice I was aware of or researched, a different time orientation can be seen.

Specifically, I see that biodynamic wine culture’s practices, as a culture that generally values holistic perspectives, can be better understood by looking at how the cultures values the past, present *and* future; though each time orientation may be valued to varying degrees. Namely, biodynamic wine culture partially acknowledges *past* conditions of the Earth as an encouragement to heal the Earth by way of astronomical forces, which goes further than organic wine culture. Then,

the ritualistic nine biodynamic preparations for agriculture are a way of valuing the *present* condition(s) of the Earth, specifically the components that make up a vineyard (or a plant, as Steiner describes): “the organs of fruit and seed, flower, leaf and root.” In fact, as Steiner states, “the biodynamic farmer attempts to observe the physical reality of the heavens in a more exact and scientific way [. . .] [and not just the phases of the moon]” (4-17). Finally, the previously stated practices are connected to a value that the future is important for an agricultural system, to the type of system this wine culture is nurturing for a healthy future crop and plot of land. As mentioned, the nine preparations serve as a ritual that brings this wine culture to value present time orientation. Alternately, these nine preparations, as well as the natural remedies created from inside the closed loop agricultural system, exemplifies a biodynamic wine culture’s value towards the future time orientation. For instance, by making a remedy (by gathering the seeds of the weeds, burning them into an ash, and then scattering this ash in the fields) that forbids the lunar forces on weeds (lunar forces enables weeds to grow well, just like any other plant) is an action that takes patience because it is not until the second year of having done this remedy that the results become apparent; then, after the fourth year of this remedy to combat weeds will be successful in removing all of the weeds that were once present (Steiner 166). Therefore, if this wine culture did not believe in a future, these preparations would not be heeded as much as they are because these preparations take time to show the benefits to the land and the crop.

By the same token, conventional wine culture follows a similar pattern in having an array of values towards their time orientation. Initially, I thought that profit-seeking wine cultures, typically highly conventional ones, would automatically be concerned for the future, since a successful winery is one that has a competitive advantage—taking on new technology, ideas, and expansion opportunities. Unless a wine culture is making their finished product of wine just for themselves, friends or family, how the wine is selling is perhaps the central point of interest. Conversely, these

actions that have immediate results to fix what is valued as undesirable could mean that there is some element of a value towards the present time. Moreover, it may seem a little strange to hold a seemingly opposite view than the time orientation outlined above; however, dialectics asks us to be mindful of the fact that whichever idea(s) or situations that appear to be dichotomous or mutually exclusive is (are) not necessarily true. As complex as the universe is to us humans on planet Earth, so is the complexity of wine cultures.

That being said, some conventional wine cultures, alternatively, may communicate a value towards a present time orientation or living in the moment with the concern for immediate happenings. Most applications of inorganic substances (nitrogen, herbicides, and/or specific yeast for winemaking) in the vineyards and wine are quick fixes to the standard issues. Conventional grape growers are frequently and understandably opposed to losing significant amounts of their annual crop (Karlsson 186-187). Consequently, if the use of these products becomes a future dependency issue, then the value towards the present would have brought detriment on the future.

Now that the movement towards sustainability is more prevalent than ever before, and the communication surrounding it is more accessible and understandable, the value towards the future appears to be the most valued time orientation for conventional wine cultures. Spearheading the “Code of Sustainable Wine Practices” is the Californian wine industry, and improvements to wineries and vineyards are all over the board, with some going above and beyond and others simply meeting the baseline (Silverman, Marshall, and Cordano 159). Through becoming more aware of this sustainable movement by most Californian wineries, not just conventional, I infer that most would agree in the conventional wine cultures’ present motivations are for the future health of the farmland in which they make their living making wine. With these points in mind and my intention to better understand the basic practices performed by a conventional winery, it helps to use the frame of the future time orientation.

The goal seems to be overcoming the present conditions (pests, premature plantings, or infertile soil, etc.) so that the future will have the desired effect (a tailored, profitable crop in the shortest time possible). We must note that at the forefront of this brighter future orientation is technology, in that technology permits us to go beyond the limits we see in nature and even in our human selves. I have witnessed my own father's excitement about surmounting the perceived "limits" of nature in this way. He decided that instead of waiting for the standard amount of time for a vineyard to reach maturity to produce a crop (about 3 to 4 years), he would train the vines as quickly as possible while applying a significant amount of the proven nutrition that plants need—nitrogen, potassium, and calcium (known as "NPK") and would have a crop to sell by the second year. Beyond this small example, there are plenty of other conventional wine cultures that utilize the available technology—chemical pesticides, fungicides, and fertilizers, for instance, to conveniently overcome the present conditions of nature, in favor of what is believed to be a more promising future.

The Notion of "Convenience" and "Control" as it Applies to Nature

With this idea in mind, I discovered a connection between future time orientation and Jennifer Daryl Slack and J. Macgregor Wise's notions of "convenience" and "control," which can uncover what I observe in an agricultural system like that of a conventional vineyard and winery. Because of this likely attitude held by some conventional wineries and vineyards that modern or new technology should be embraced as it may make the business more efficient and more profitable, a value towards future progress is not a far-fetched idea. Some examples of efficiency, specifically in a large-scale vineyard, include more efficient harvesting machines that can pick more rapidly and accurately, new machines that can shoot thin a vineyard that is unmanageable by humans hands alone, developing methods for more vineyards per vine to have more tons per acre, and modern

chemicals to eliminate suckers (new vine growth at the base of the vine). As for the winery, some examples of investment practices for future efficiency are delicate presses that incorporate more gravity to handling grapes and making wine drinkable as early as possible by way of human influence in the form of additions that chemically balance the wine. Therefore, conventional wine cultures may fall on the “objective sciences” spectrum of supported winery practices—that is to say, what is quantifiable, proven, and clear-cut (Slack & Wise 53).

If this attitude and value towards technology is more true than not, then some conventional wineries and vineyards are inclined to look towards the future in order to adopt new technology; this behavior is considered to be “objectifying nature,” as Slack and Wise call it. Indeed, what the authors mean by “objectifying nature” can be seen in the fact that,

The task of objective science was to unlock the secret of nature—the nature of life, death, how things work, how things are related—by systematizing information and carrying out carefully planned and recorded experiments. Scientific observation requires that we set something at a physical distance (even if it is the distance in a microscope) and a psychological distance. By observing nature and other humans in this way, they become mere objects to be manipulated and understood, and not agents in their own right. (53)

Based on this quote, I now notice that context plays a huge role in what time orientation is valued in a culture, for it seems that “objectifying nature” is one effect of a culture’s act of survival—to satisfy basic needs of food, shelter and even wants. Essentially, the present decisions look to be planning for a secure and comfortable living future. Unfortunately, the tradeoff in using modern science to control nature may serve only the interest of humans, since it is evident that nature cannot officially speak for itself. In summary, no matter what time orientation each wine culture possesses, we can find new insights that may have gone unnoticed and unexplained. Both time orientations have their

advantageous and disadvantageous effects on wine cultures, and it is important to note that how a culture values time can help us explain as well as understand their behaviors and perspectives.

Concluding Thoughts

After this long journey through concrete and even abstract concepts, I am optimistic that at least a portion, if not all, of what has been discussed can be beneficial to our humanistic thirst for knowledge and thought-provoking ideas. Though both wine and the study of culture have been around for many years, wine culture is a phenomena that is comprehensible (with some explanation); however, it is not yet in common dialogue. Communication and wine can go together in a variety of ways, and it is an intersectional topic that has not been tapped into as much as it could be. I see that communication scholars could build strong insights into the phenomena of culture as it pertains to wine and viticulture. There is an infinite amount of theories and concepts in the communication studies discipline and room for more if the role that wine plays in societies is given serious thought and reflection.

My tentative belief is that there are many angles into studying wine and the cultures that surround this unique commodity. I say tentative because I am always open to fresh knowledge and insight into this topic. Specifically, areas of exploration could include how cultural identity is formed in different types of wineries, the interpersonal interactions with employees and superiors, and a deeper look into a wine culture's relationship to technology, especially how they choose to reject or accept it. Also, wine culture can be further observed and explained through an environmental communication perspective to unpack the wine communication of today as it relates to wider discourses of and about the environment and global climate change. These are just a few ideas for future research that I have conjectured. The point is that there is hard evidence that wine is becoming more popular in American culture, even in the younger generations.

My work here is meant, in part, to convey that this is a topic most worthy of study, especially for communication studies, since the discipline much to offer in terms of tools for unpacking the communicative phenomena that surround a living, breathing commodity such as wine.

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