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FRITZ ALLHOFF, ed. *Wine & Philosophy: A Symposium on Thinking and Drinking*. Oxford, England and Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

Fritz Allhoff's edited volume contains nineteen engaging essays that continue the recent spate of academic interest in wine. The title plays on the idea of a *symposia* at which the ancient Greeks consumed vast quantities of wine thus giving rise to waxing philosophical discourse. However, Allhoff hopes to show that while wine may have an important role as a social lubricant, it is far more interesting and worthy of academic study as an object in and of itself.

The bulk of the essays attempt to tackle the philosophical questions of wine consumption and discourse. John Dilworth explores the differences between analytical and imaginative experiences of wine. He argues that while it is common to regard wine appreciation as an analytical or quasi-scientific kind of activity, it is actually a highly imaginative, individualistic, and improvisatory act. Keith and Adrienne Lehrer's coauthored essay and Kent Bach's essay both focus on the theme of "winespeak" as a language form. Bach's informative approach dispels the notion that a wine's pleasure is purely sensory and rather argues that the pleasure, for many, relies on the backbone of experiential and cognitive processes.

Students of American history may find Jonathan Alsop's essay on wine's problematic existence in the United States of particular interest. Alsop traces the role of the grape in America from Jefferson's failed attempt to make wine in the late eighteenth century, through the merciless temperance movements of Carry A. Nation and Prohibition, all the way to NASCAR's current push to market driver-branded wines. It is no wonder, as Alsop points out, that the United States ranks thirty-something in per capita consumption, comfortably snuggled between Azerbaijan and Slovakia. Other historically-focused essays include Harold Tarrant's piece on wine in Ancient Greece and Kirsten Ditterich-Shilakes's tract on world drinking vessels including those of ancient Greece, the Chinese Shang Dynasty, and twentieth-century Sake bottles.

John Bender and Jamie Goode both use their space to unpack the role of the wine critic. Bender follows in the footsteps of David Hume in arguing that, against many persistent claims to the contrary, the educated and experienced wine critic can present an objective and universal interpretation of a wine's characteristics. This argument counters the more generally accepted claim of Kantian subjectivity that an individual experiences a wine's characteristics in unique ways. The well-respected contemporary wine writer Jamie Goode follows this line of thinking by arguing that taste is a more individual-to-individual sense than sight or hearing. As a result, we must use our multi-sensory experiences of wine to help create contexts for the wines we drink. Goode implies that we must take the reviews of critics such as Robert Parker's with a grain of salt because their contextual experiences are so different from our own.

Aesthetics, consumerism, and taste provide useful theoretical approaches to the study of wine. Douglas Burnham and Ole Martin Skilleås assert that wine appreciation is an aesthetic act much in the same way that music and art appreciation are. In Justin Weinberg's intriguing essay, we see how wines often function as "Veblen goods." Meaning, we desire wines more strongly as their prices increase. Matt Kramer's essay on *terroir* underestimates wine's geographic and historical nature, but it is still useful in helping to understand the difficult term.

Taken together, these essays are less successful in introducing new questions and paving new directions but they do add significantly to the already existing debates surrounding Bacchic philosophy. Allhoff succeeds in showing that wine and academia are natural partners, but much of the material remains static and enmeshed in the problems of subjectivity versus objectivity that have dominated wine discourse for decades. It is well past time to uncork a new set of historical approaches and questions to the study of wine.

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