

Fermenting Place

Wine production and terroir in McLaren Vale, South Australia

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Abstract

This thesis provides an ethnographic exploration of McLaren Vale, a wine-producing region lying just south of the city of Adelaide, South Australia. As a near-urban agricultural area, McLaren Vale provides the setting for a number of complex debates about land use, landscape values, cultural heritage and regional identity. Contemporary perspectives on dwelling, place, and landscape contribute to the theoretical background of this study. In particular, this thesis is framed by notions of 'terroir', a term common in winegrowing and used to refer to the 'sense of place' that may be tasted in wine from particular locations. I contend that the particular terroir perspective taken by winegrowers in McLaren Vale is shaped by a globalised wine industry discourse as well as the locally-specific experiences of farming and winemaking in the region. Discourses of terroir describe the ways people and landscape, nature and culture, interrelate to produce geographically and socially-emplaced products. As an anthropological concept, terroir might also be used to explicate the ways by which the processes of production serve not only to produce agricultural products, but places and persons themselves. Terroir is significant not only in the way it is deployed discursively but as a tacit dimension of winegrowing and, indeed, being.

In the body of the thesis I explore different aspects of McLaren Vale's terroir, encompassing local as well as broader regional and global processes, and focusing on the way these are embodied by and in people and places. The six substantive chapters deal with the historical and political-economic construction of McLaren Vale as a region; understandings of 'locality' and being local entails; terroir as it is expressed in winegrowing; the significance of temporality and rhythm; the role of embodied, sensorial engagement in placemaking; and the relationship of 'city' and 'country' in the imagining of McLaren Vale and its boundaries.

Dominant approaches to terroir in McLaren Vale are relational and processual, emphasising an ongoing dynamism of relations between people, landscape, and production, and that this is

the way many people understand, experience and represent their own dwelling. This perspective encourages a view of McLaren Vale as a 'living landscape' imbued not only with productive power but productive potential, in which people, vines, animals, soil, microbes, and a host of other beings are mutually implicated. This, I argue, is reflected not only in regional wine production, but also in the orientations local people take to broader issues relating to landscape and land use.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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William Skinner

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Figure 1. Map of the areas surrounding Adelaide, showing location of McLaren Vale

Introduction

Just beyond the southern fringes of suburban Adelaide, south of the Onkaparinga River and flanked by the blue waters of the Gulf St Vincent to the west and the steep Willunga Scarp to the southeast, lies a broad triangle of rolling hills and plains, vineyards and townships, olive and almond groves, wineries, farmhouses, patches of scrubland, slate quarries and mineral sands mines, barley fields and beaches. This is McLaren Vale, and it is this region and its residents that are the subject of this thesis.¹

I undertook fieldwork in the area over twelve months from March 2012, with some follow-up visits and interviews. My working definition of 'the Vale' followed that defined by the late local winemaker and long-time champion of the district, Greg Trott:

Our chosen view of McLaren Vale begins at the mouth of the Onkaparinga River, follows it to Old Noarlunga, up through the gorge to Clarendon, then through to the little town of Kangarilla, along the Mt Lofty Ranges behind Willunga, down to Sellicks Beach, returning along the coast to the mouth of the river again. (Trott, Marsden & Campbell 2008: 7)

This delineation of McLaren Vale as a region bounded by certain geographical features (the river, the coastline and the hills) and encompassing a number of towns (including McLaren Flat, Willunga, Port Willunga, Aldinga, Kangarilla, and the township of McLaren Vale itself) is shared by many, residents and visitors alike.

Changes in land use and demographics over time have ensured that perceived boundaries are shifting and contested. This is particularly so with respect to the relationship between McLaren Vale (conceived primarily as a rural, agricultural area) and the suburbs and housing developments flanking the region to the north and along the coastline to the west. The Vale

¹ Informants' names used in this thesis are pseudonyms, except when referenced in existing published material.

lies within Adelaide's legally-defined metropolitan boundaries and falls under the administration of the City of Onkaparinga, South Australia's most populous local government area, which straddles suburban and farming areas.

From the earliest years of European settlement, the story of McLaren Vale has been entwined with that of Adelaide and South Australia more generally. South Australia was proclaimed a British colony in 1836. British settlement of the McLaren Vale area, the territory of the Kaurna people who also occupied the Adelaide Plains and areas to the north, took place from around 1839 onward. McLaren Vale was probably named after John McLaren,² the surveyor who from 1838 to 1840 surveyed the land south of Adelaide and partitioned it into 80 acre sections for sale to new settlers in accordance with the principles of 'systematic colonisation' espoused by the founders of South Australia.³ The region, with its fertile soils, good rainfall and relatively mild climate due to the Gulf's moderating influence, was immediately recognised as important farming land by the settlement; proximity to Adelaide and relative accessibility by sea and land further ensured the region's importance to the new colony.

Until relatively recently, most farms in the Vale had multiple uses: livestock, poultry, grain crops, vegetables and fruit including wine grapes were all noteworthy products of the region. Changing economic trends favoured certain agricultural land uses over others at particular times so that, for example, almonds and dried fruits like apricots, prunes and currants were produced in great volume through the mid-twentieth century. In recent decades, however, wine has emerged as by far the most important of McLaren Vale's agricultural products. Although it has always been locally significant, grape growing and winemaking has since the late 1960s come to dominate the Vale spatially, economically and socially. McLaren Vale is

² Although the most widely-accepted theory is that the region was named after John McLaren, it is also possible that the area was named for David McLaren (unrelated), then Colonial Manager of the South Australian Company (Burden 1976: 16; Santich 1998: 85).

³ As I will describe in Chapter 1, the planned 'systematic colonisation' of South Australia represented a significant social experiment, underpinned by the Utilitarianist theories of Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, and other members of the National Colonisation Society.

now regarded as one of the most significant wine regions in South Australia, and indeed Australia more generally. It is the most densely-planted winegrowing region in the country, and in 2013 encompassed nearly 7300 hectares of vineyards (Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of South Australia 2013). All in all, McLaren Vale contributes around 25% of South Australia's grape and wine production by value and about 10% nationally (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2011: 3). In addition, McLaren Vale is an important destination for day-trip tourism from Adelaide as well as interstate and international visitation, with over seventy winery 'cellar doors' providing wine tastings and sales (South Australian Tourism Commission 2015).

As a wine region, the boundaries of McLaren Vale are precisely delineated by the Geographical Indication (GI) awarded in 1997 (see Appendix 1). Under Australian law and, through trade agreements, in the European Union and elsewhere, "McLaren Vale" is a protected appellation. For a wine to be labelled as 'McLaren Vale' it must fulfil certain criteria, including that at least 85% of the grapes used in production must have been grown within the defined region. The McLaren Vale GI includes the area south of the Onkaparinga River to Sellicks Hill, but also encompasses the areas of Reynella, Morphett Vale and Happy Valley to the north. The latter were once significant farming and winegrowing districts but are now predominantly suburban, with a handful of remnant vineyards and wineries remaining. In the past, the area now covered by the McLaren Vale GI was more often referred to collectively as the 'Southern Vales' (see, for example, Burden 1976).

With these overlapping and sometimes conflicting definitions, it is not easy to categorise McLaren Vale. Straddling the borders of the rural and the urban, it is at once a wine region, a tourism region, a place of agricultural production and middle-class urban consumption, suburbia and rural idyll, a natural landscape and a cultural one, a local place and a space defined in different ways according to various bureaucratic configurations and riven with

imagined boundaries. It is, in part, this ambiguity and polysemy that attracted me to the Vale in the first place as a site for research. Tension and debate surrounding questions of local and regional representation and identity were highlighted during my fieldwork, and what the region 'stands for' and how it *should* be understood and represented was a subject about which many people in the area felt very strongly.



Figure 2. McLaren Vale vineyards, looking south

Framing the thesis

Once more, in the sepia light of a late afternoon, I traverse that sweep of bitumen with the V-shape cutting and the backdrop of the feminine folds of the Willunga escarpment that frames the township of McLaren Vale, returning me to my hometown, the centre of the universe. (Trott, Marsden & Campbell 2008: 7)

The original intent of my research was to examine local understandings of place and landscape in a near-urban agricultural area, and to explore the ways their region is conceived and represented. For this purpose McLaren Vale seemed an ideal field site, as it was small enough and well-defined enough geographically and socially by its residents to try to grasp as a whole. I already had some knowledge of the area through trips with family and friends, and it was close enough to the city that I could easily commute from home for research. While settling on

my research proposal, furthermore, I became aware of a number of local issues and debates that I felt might be interesting areas for investigation, because they related to differential constructions and understanding of the region in a variety of contexts. Briefly, these included—among numerous others—debates over changes to planning regimes and the preservation of land zoned for farming; concerns over the relative power of the wine industry versus other interest groups in shaping the area as a tourism region; a push to seek UNESCO World Heritage listing encompassing McLaren Vale and other parts of the southern Mount Lofty Ranges; attempts to map and define geological sub-districts that could be linked to the sensory properties of McLaren Vale wines; questions about appropriate approaches and techniques in viticulture and agriculture more broadly; and questions over the power of large corporate grape growers and winemakers and fears of acquisition of large areas of land by outside interests.

Wine production, distribution, and consumption (in the form of wine tourism) permeates McLaren Vale, and it is as a wine region that the Vale is perhaps best known in South Australia and beyond. I quickly became convinced of the critical importance of wine to social and political networks and community life in general, and nearly everybody I met seemed to have some link to its manufacture or trade. Given this, wine appeared to be an ideal focus of research, as a particular contextual lens through which to analyse the near-urban Australian agricultural landscape of McLaren Vale. As my fieldwork progressed, I began to sense that the significance of winegrowing in the district might run yet deeper than its social-economic function, or its importance as a cultural or symbolic marker of place. Spending time with the people who devoted themselves to working with grape vines and wine, I came to suspect that there was something intrinsic to winegrowing itself—in the rhythms of its tasks and activities,

in the embodied knowledge vital to the skilled practices of the vineyard and winery—that would help illuminate these processes.⁴

Investigating the ways people in McLaren Vale think and feel the way they do about their place, the emphasis of my research has thus shifted from questions of shared cultural representations towards the more primary experiences of dwelling in the world. Following Buttimer’s advice that “One must shrink from models inspired by physics, or the human mind, and consistently return to direct experience” (Buttimer 1976: 282), then, I purposefully take as a starting point the lived and embodied experiences of winegrowers in their practices. In doing so I do not want to de-emphasise the importance to people of shared views, norms and values, but simply highlight that this intersubjectivity cannot be separated from direct experience. What I became particularly interested in was the *relationships* between peoples’ lived experiences and shared constructions of place and region. This involves the processes by which the personal, embodied experiences of winegrowers might merge into commonly shared representations and notions of identity and the social and economic relationships and processes that can be seen in McLaren Vale. It also encompasses the processes by which individual experiences are shaped by, and themselves shape, a broader cultural milieu. Below, I will outline some key theoretical concepts—*dwelling*, *place* and *landscape*—and explore what I see as the crucial significance of a relational perspective for this analysis.

Dwelling, place and landscape

In his celebrated essay *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger (1993) questions what it is to *dwell*, that is, to be at home in the world. For him, to dwell is really to *build*, which can be

⁴ ‘Winegrowing’ is an umbrella term used to encompass the processes of grape growing (viticulture) and winemaking (viniculture), particularly with reference to small-scale, hands on (so-called ‘artisanal’) production. Many of my interlocutors who are directly involved with all aspects of wine production, from grape growing to harvesting, fermentation, and bottling prefer to call themselves winegrowers, vigneronns or simply farmers rather than ‘winemakers’.

understood in two ways: “the building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings” (Heidegger 1993: 350). The relationship between building and dwelling is found in the links between the modern German *bauen* ‘to build’ and the Old High German word for building, *buon*, meaning ‘to dwell’:

The old word *bauen*, which says that man *is* insofar as he *dwells*, this word *bauen*, however, *also* means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine. Such building only takes care—it tends the growth that ripens into fruit of its own accord. (Heidegger 1993: 349)

Winegrowing—as cultivation, bringing forth into being—is, for Heidegger, a form of building. This sense of building as nurturing and cultivating is clearly not the same as building as construction (such as of ships or temples, to use Heidegger’s examples), however, both “are comprised within genuine building, that is, dwelling” (Heidegger 1993: 349). As an examination of place, then, and of cultivation in place, this thesis is concerned with dwelling: “the rich intimate ongoing togetherness of beings and things which make up landscapes and places, and which bind together nature and culture over time” (Cloke & Jones 2001: 651). For Ingold (2000), a ‘dwelling perspective’ is key to overcoming the dualistic thinking that pervades modern thought, separating human beings from the worlds in which they live. He sees people and their worlds as fundamentally co-constitutive: people “grow up in environments furnished by the work of previous generations, and as they do so they come literally to carry the forms of their dwelling in their bodies – in specific skills, sensibilities and dispositions” (Ingold 2000: 186).

In some ways, however, as Cloke and Jones (2001) warn, a focus on the concept of ‘dwelling’ can run the risk of ignoring or underemphasising the cultural processes and relations of globalised modernity. Dwelling has connotations of locality, boundedness, and even rusticity, and so the rooted relations of agrarian communities with small socio-spatial horizons can tend to be viewed as somehow more ‘authentic’ than those disembodied, supra-local relations that mark and define the modern world. This, they argue, is unhelpful: “If dwelling is to be a

serviceable concept for contemporary landscapes, it needs to shed this reliance on idyllic local boundedness and instead reflect a view of space and place which is dynamic, overlapping and interpenetrating” (Cloe & Jones 2001: 661). Given its connotations, Ingold also finds the term ‘dwelling’ to be problematic, seeming “out of tune with an emphasis on the primacy of movement” that he sees as crucial (Ingold 2011: 12). A focus on tasks, activities, and movement over time is crucial. After all, we dwell through building, through participation in the processes of *making* (Ingold 2013). In this thesis, while emphasising the way winegrowers in McLaren Vale dwell by way of their tasks and interactions in place and in the landscape, I am committed to the notion that such dwelling necessarily takes place within, and is informed by, a broader context of global flows of people, information, things, ideas, and capital. Part of my aim is to explore the nuances of these processes: how McLaren Vale winegrowers’ dwelling (or building, or making) ‘in the world’ is not confined to the immediately local but extends out beyond the borders of the region and the nation, and how, simultaneously, their tasks and activities work to gather far-flung people and places around themselves.

Geographical terms like ‘place’, ‘space’ and ‘landscape’ cannot be used unproblematically. Modern assumptions about relationships between people and their worlds have stemmed largely from the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment, and particularly the works of thinkers like Descartes and Locke, who considered the mental world of thought, emotion and consciousness—the self—as fundamentally distinct from the physical world. In this model the realm of matter is mechanistic, operating according to various physical laws, and as such can be measured objectively, independently of the observer. Such an ontological dualism is implicit in what Ingold refers to as the ‘appeal to data’ of the scientific project:

In any appeal to data, whether quantitative or qualitative, this division between realms of knowing and being is presupposed. For it is already taken for granted that the world is given to science not as part of any offering or commitment but as a reserve or residue that is there for the taking. (Ingold 2013: 5)

This dichotomy draws a deep divide between the conscious person and places, which exist objectively in *space* and whose human significance is a figment of the mind. Thus, as Casey states, “the quintessential modernist view of the relation between place and self is that *there is no such relation*” (Casey 2001: 684).

Throughout the postmodern period, a significant trend in scholarship dealing with peoples’ relationships to their worlds—to space and place—has involved attempts to transcend these dichotomies of mind and body, self and world. In his *Poetics of Space*, Bachelard (1964) outlines a conception of space as qualitative, heterogeneous and poetic, rather than purely geometrical. Spaces are infused with time and inscribed with memories: spaces may be spaces of dwelling, spaces of home, and the example he uses to describe this deeply felt space is that of the house, “a privileged entity for a phenomenological study of the intimate values of inside space” (Bachelard 1964: 3). Likewise, according to Lefèbvre (1991), the mathematical or geometrical representations of ‘space’ that the modernist paradigm favours is insufficient, as space must always be considered *in relation* both to time and the deployment of energy, without which its existence is impossible (Lefèbvre 1991: 12). Instead, he defines space according to a conceptual triad consisting of: (1) *spatial practice*; (2) *representations of space*; and (3) *representational space* (Lefèbvre 1991: 33). Here, spatial practice and representations of space refer to the ordered knowledge and use of space in line with a society’s cohesive and collectively-understood system of relations, production and reproduction. Representational or ‘lived’ space is described as an imaginative, symbolic or clandestine space in which identities may be forged and the hegemony of orthodox spatial practice may be subverted (Lefèbvre 1991: 33). These three aspects of space should be seen inseparable from one another, and indeed each must presuppose and mutually underpin the others (Lefèbvre 1991: 14).

For some, however, the word ‘space’ retains its connotations of mental projection rather than immediate experience: “the location or setting that people experience as largely externally

produced and that acts as a medium or constraining setting for their everyday actions” (Gray 2000: 9). In this view, we dwell in *places*, not space as such. As Relph (1976: 11) puts it, “Through particular encounters and experiences perceptual space is richly differentiated into places, or centres of personal significance”. Places exist in an emotional sense, rather than simply as an intellectual category. Tuan (1977) makes the observation that an awareness of distinct places – “centers of felt value” (1977: 4) – develops in humans from infancy; sense of place is tied to the physiological development that allows us to distinguish, differentiate and classify our surroundings. For these scholars, the house described by Bachelard should be more properly thought of as a place—truly lived in, as the locus of dreams, hopes, and anxieties, as well as the habitat of the corporeal body. Casey (1996) argues that space is in the modern imagination quantifiable and objectively *knowable* from afar: “Once it is assumed (after Newton and Kant) that space is absolute and infinite as well as empty and *a priori* in status, places become the mere apportioning of space, its compartmentalizations” (Casey 1996: 14). In contrast, he shows that understandings of space and time must by necessity flow from a primary experience of place as lived through our sensing bodies. ‘Culture’, and our social relations, are likewise thoroughly emplaced: “Time and history, the diachronic media of culture, are so deeply inscribed in places as to be inseparable from them – as inseparable as the bodies that sustain these same places and carry the culture located in them” (1996: 44). Fundamentally, people are always emplaced:

The relationship between self and place is not just one of reciprocal influence (that much any ecologically sensitive account would maintain) but also, more radically, of constitutive coingredience: each is essential to the being of the other. In effect, there is *no place without self and no self without place*. (Casey 2001: 684)

The key to ‘place’, then, is its consubstantiality with the self. Searching for an appropriate term to bring together place and self, Casey settles on Bourdieu’s (1977) conception of *habitus*, which:

serves as a figure of the between, above all, between nature and culture, but also between consciousness and body, self and other, mechanism and technology, determinism and freedom, even memory and imagination. Habitus is not mere routine but something improvisational and open to innovation. (Casey 2001: 686)

The habitus, for Casey, is fundamentally 'placial' as people themselves are always spatially and temporally emplaced in their lifeworlds. A similar notion of the world *as lived* as a mediation between the subjective and objective realms is expounded by Soja (1996) in his concept of a 'thirdspace' of 'real-and-imagined places'. For him, the space of actual human habitation is flexible and heterogeneous, incorporating both the immediacy of experience and space in its abstract and representational forms. As he states, "Many cultural geographers, in particular, have persistently attempted to separate the concepts of place and space and to give place greater concreteness, immediacy, and cultural affect, while space is deemed to be abstract, distanced, ethereal"; however, he sees this as "an unnecessary and misleading separation/distinction that reduces the meaningfulness of both" (Soja 1996: 40n). The key message is not a theoretical separation of 'space' and 'place', but rather that the two are interwoven, representing aspects of being that are combined and mediated in human experience. Throughout this thesis, I take the general argument that senses of 'space' and 'place' inform one another in the lives of people in McLaren Vale. Nevertheless, following Casey (1996), I take place to represent the *primacy* of sensual/phenomenal experience, with space involving *a posteriori* social and cultural construction. Both, however, are given meaning by our dwelling in the world even as they shape it.

Another important concept that I engage with is that of *landscape*. Robertson and Richards (2003) point out that, in the social sciences at least, theorists of 'cultural landscapes' have largely fallen into two camps: those who see landscape as primarily a cultural product and those who consider it in terms of dynamic process. Árnason (2010) makes a similar division between primarily 'structural' approaches (e.g. Daniels & Cosgrove 1988) that "seek to unearth how landscape and the environment have been shaped by political, social, cultural,

economic and historical forces” (Árnason 2010: 80) and ‘phenomenological’ approaches (e.g. Ingold 1993) that “start from perception, people’s direct experiences of and engagement with the landscape” (Árnason 2010: 81). Several authors (for example Hirsch & O’Hanlon 1995; Tilley 1994) have sought furthermore to emphasise the dynamism of landscape as lived and experienced, while pointing out that landscapes also retain an important structural-symbolic dimension. Like place and space, then, landscape is a contested concept, and might be thought of as involving both the immediacy of sensory perceptions and the mediated, semiotic aspects inscribed upon them by human social and cultural relations.

In everyday usage—in the English language, at least—landscape “retains an unshakeable pictorial association” (Cosgrove 2006: 51). Here, it is landscape as a mediated, semiotic construct that seems to hold sway: landscape as “a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolising surroundings” (Daniels & Cosgrove 1988: 1). In this sense, landscape is often conceived in terms of a vista viewed (and known) as an object from the perspective of an external subject, for example, a landscape of vineyards and rolling hills, viewed from the position of a photographer standing at the side of the road. Landscape, in this reading, involves the application of ‘culture’ to a ‘nature’ thought of as pre-existing and somehow separated from the human realm. Landscapes are thus *made* by human agency acting upon nature’s passive canvas and, being human constructions, can be read as texts.

This understanding of landscape as a culturally-constructed image, however, is for some inadequate, as it neglects peoples’ experiences of landscapes as the worlds within which they dwell. This is landscape not as a collection of objects but as life-world, the “*homeland* of our thoughts” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 21). As Cloke and Jones state, “Dwelling cannot be happily represented or understood in terms of a fixed gaze upon a framed landscape. Rather, it should suggest an embodied, practiced, contextualized, melange of experience within that landscape” (Cloke & Jones 2001: 664). The visual connotations of ‘landscape’ that permeate its usage in

English may, in fact, be partly a result of a misinterpretation of the connotations of its suffix. The “superficial resemblance between *scape* and *scope*” as Ingold claims, is “entirely fortuitous and has no foundation in etymology” (2011: 126). Rather, the etymological roots of the suffix -scape come from the Old English *sceppan* or *scyppan*, meaning ‘to shape’. Landscape can thus be thought of, in Olwig’s words, as “the land ‘scaped’, ‘shaped’ or created as place and polity by people through their practices of dwelling—their ‘doing’ of landscape” (Olwig 2008: 82).

It is just this emphasis on ongoing, temporally dynamic ‘dwelling’ to which Ingold turns when formulating his definition of landscape in terms of a congealed ‘taskscape’ of activity: “Since ... the activities that comprise the taskscape are unending, the landscape is never complete: neither ‘built’ nor ‘unbuilt’, it is perpetually under construction” (Ingold 1993: 162). To illustrate this he focuses on Brughel the Elder’s painting, *The Harvesters*, depicting a sixteenth century Flemish agricultural scene of labourers cutting wheat in the fields, and resting and eating around a pear tree. Ingold’s emphasis is on the significance of the activities taking place, which he sees as crucial in the way they represent an ongoing shaping and commingling of the landscape and the people that dwell within it. As such, Ingold distances landscape from its conception as produced by the overlay of culture onto nature, a conception reflective of the broader dualistic tendency in modern Western thought which posits relations with the world as fundamentally dichotomous (in the ontological separation of—for example—nature and culture, mind and body, subject and object).

For Heidegger, the landscape is in no mere image or vista. Invoking the example of the bridge over a stream to demonstrate his conception of building as dwelling, he notes that the bridge “brings stream and bank and land into each other’s neighborhood. The bridge *gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream” (Heidegger 1993: 354). Gathering, Heidegger states, “by an ancient word of our language, is called *thing*” (1993: 355): the bridge is a thing in its

true essence by virtue of its gathering; the land becomes landscape in that it is gathered in relation to such things. The relationship between landscape and 'thing' is further illuminated by Olwig's (2005) discussion of mediaeval Scandinavia where the *thing* referred to a judicial and legislative court, made up of representatives who gathered together regularly in holy places to establish and uphold law (Olwig 2005: 265). As a gathering of people, the *thing* was also a gathering of landscape, through which "the legal community of a land or country, like Jutland or Iceland, was 'built' as a landscape of dwelling" (Olwig 2005: 265). Another key element of the Scandinavian *thing* identified by Olwig is its temporal dimension. Gatherings were periodic and seasonal, often involving pilgrimage-like movements of representatives of people and aligning with holy days and festivals (2005: 265-266). Here, then, we can see a clear relationship between place (the *thing*) and landscape as two facets of dwelling in the world: places gather landscapes around them, into relational correspondence.

Ingold (1993: 156) summarises the relationship between place and landscape thus: "In short, the landscape is the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them". This is the sense in which I use the terms, influenced by a dwelling perspective that sees relations between people, places and landscape in terms of an ongoing, dynamic and mutual interweaving. These are felt as elements of a geography of dwelling that, while influenced by the secondary constructions and representations that we attach to it, as well as the abstract ways by which we might conceive of and measure it, is ultimately experienced subjectively and individually. This is a relationship of correspondence—or even, in Benediktsson and Lund's (2010) metaphor, 'conversation'—between human and non-human entities. Rather than simply a pictorial image to be gazed upon, or an inert, static object of apprehension, we engage with landscapes, reacting to what the landscape *does* just as it reacts to our actions and activities. Landscapes are experienced not strictly sensorially, but are also emotionally affective, as repositories of powerful feelings linked both to memories of the past and the hopes and fears of possible futures. Unable to

close ourselves off from landscapes, they infiltrate us: “The lives of human beings are tangled up with the temporalities of constantly unfolding landscapes, in a never-ending journey” (Benediktsson & Lund 2010: 6). Thus irrevocably enmeshed with our own living, breathing, feeling selves, landscapes are profoundly dynamic, forever coming into being.

Notions of place and landscape that I have outlined above are useful in describing the intimate and interactive relationships between human beings and their lifeworlds. Each of these refers to different aspects of the geography of dwelling. I see them not as conflicting viewpoints but as interrelated, each offering its own emphasis: place as an intimately felt centre of dwelling, landscape as that which unfolds, is gathered and organised by the movement of the body and the scanning of the senses.



Figure 3. McLaren Vale landscape

Relationality

This thesis seeks to provide insight into the ways people dwell in McLaren Vale, a process involving mediation between deeply-felt and personal senses of place and the shared representational spaces that the Vale has come to occupy. Jackson observes that being in the

world “involves a *dynamic relationship between* how we are constituted and how we constitute ourselves, between what is already *there* in the world into which we are born and what emerges in the course of our lives within that world” (Jackson 2013: 8), and it is from this holistic and relational perspective on human experience that I begin. The human *being* is a person necessarily engaged with their world—a world of continuous becoming in which they themselves are implicated.

This being the case, the notion of ‘relationality’ I have in mind extends beyond a focus on people as they relate to one another to also encompass the places, landscapes and other non-human entities with which they interact. The most significant of these, for this particular study, might include grape vines, rocks, soil, farm machinery, grape presses and other winery equipment, yeasts and bacteria, and bottles of wine. As the ‘actor-network theory’ of Latour and others suggests, such things—nonhumans, like “microbes, scallops, rocks and ships” (2005: 10)—may themselves be *actors* exerting influence across relational networks (which also include human actors). Appadurai (1988) makes a similar point when he suggests that non-human things have a ‘social life’ as they circulate—a place in networks of social relations—though in this model the social significance of such things is a function of its (value-creating) exchange between people rather than as a node among others in an organism-like network. These approaches are helpful in conceptualising a world in which human social organisation is not set aside as distinct and discrete but, rather, fully implicated in the realm of things and places.

For some authors, however, merely drawing social *connections* between and among people and objects so as to imagine a network across which agency is exercised does not get at the heart of relationality. Ingold (2011), for example, questions the tendency to reify the ‘network’ as an object or entity in itself. In his light-hearted dialogue between ‘ANT’ (representing Latourian ‘Actor-Network Theory’) and ‘SPIDER’ (representing the proposition that ‘Skilled

Practice Involves Developmentally Embodied Responsiveness'), SPIDER holds that rather than the world being represented as a series of discrete actors linked together across a network, the very fabric of the world should be seen as a dynamic *meshwork*, "a living tissue of lines. It is as though my body were formed through knotting together threads of life that run out through my many legs into the web and thence to the wider environment" (Ingold 2011: 91). This perspective is a radical one, as it suggests that people may not only relate to one another and to certain things with which they interact, but rather that organisms are fundamentally implicated with one another as part of their ongoing growth and development within an all-encompassing environment. Interacting things, according to Ingold, are "immersed in a kind of force field set up by the currents of the media that surround them. Cut out from these currents—that is, reduced to objects—they would be *dead*" (Ingold 2011: 93).

For Gray (2014), actor-network theories are problematic because they imply that the agencies of actants "precede and constitute their network relations" (Gray 2014: 221), rather than that agency being forged in and through—and inseparable with—this relational context. In his work on the 'hefting' of sheep onto the landscape in the hill farms of the Scottish Borders, this process is shown to involve a fundamental *consubstantiality*: sheep, shepherds and family farms do not just exert influence upon one another along a network, but their very being is relational. Drawing upon the work of Haraway (2008), Gray holds that person, place and animal are in fact constituted by their relationality as they "become with" one another: "just as sheep are their relations to the landscape, ... shepherds are and become with their relations to sheep in their herding practices and ... a sheep farming family is and becomes with their relations to the landscape to form a family farm" (Gray 2014: 222).

As I found, such a perspective—in which people, animals, plants, machines and land are seen as constituted by their relationships to one another—is by no means alien to winegrowers in McLaren Vale. This perspective lies at the heart of notions of *terroir*, the special 'sense of

place' said to be embodied in wine from particular locations. Terroir is thus crucial to this thesis, both as a theoretical framework through which the Vale and its inhabitants might be analysed, and as a concept that is shared, understood and acknowledged (explicitly as well as tacitly, through lived, everyday practices) by the people themselves.



Figure 4. Relational correspondence: vines, sheep, soil, sky. Blewitt Springs

A terroir perspective

Thus far I have proposed that people's very being is contingent upon their relations with place and landscape. In a sense, people *are*, and become, their relations (Gray 2014). The perspective that I argue for is one that sees such relationality not simply in terms of links of influence between agentive actors but instead as constructive and productive in itself, as people, places, and things embody and are constituted by their relationships with one another. This is crucial in understanding the ways winegrowers in McLaren Vale relate to their

worlds. Among winegrowers, there is a belief that through the processes of production wine can come to embody the activities, labour and intentions of people as well as the agentive properties of grapes, vines, vineyard soil and other locational factors. That is to say, the wine of a particular producer in a particular place is seen to be intrinsically constituted by these specific relations of production - processes which might also be seen to produce places and people themselves. For winegrowers and wine consumers in the Vale, both a 'sense of place' and the 'expression' of the winemaker's personality are thought to be physically manifest in the substance of the wine, *sensible* in its taste. For them, too, particular vineyards, buildings and tracts of land are afforded special significance by the social processes that create them.

This sort of complex relationality that is embedded in wine production finds its expression in a term that is highly significant to winegrowing: *terroir*. Originally a French word, but increasingly common elsewhere in discourse about wine and other agricultural products, *terroir* is notoriously difficult to define in English, where it has no direct equivalent (Goode & Harrop 2011: 19; Trubek, Guy & Bowen 2010: 139). Even in its French context, as Demossier (2011) shows, the meanings and connotations of the term are numerous, overlapping, and changing due to influences from policymakers, social scientists and winegrowers themselves. In its simplest literal translation from French, the term *terroir* means 'ground' or 'soil', but its use in agriculture most often refers to the qualities of a specific location, "an area or terrain, usually rather small, whose soil and microclimate impart distinctive qualities to food products." (Barham 2003: 131)

The *terroir* of a place such as a field, vineyard or orchard is often taken to mean the sum of the 'natural' factors that influence its agricultural production: "In the limited, traditional sense, *terroir* encompasses all the innate, immutable features of the natural environment from sunshine, rainfall and temperature to the slope, orientation, altitude and soil composition" (Bohmrich 1996: 33). In this sense, the 'terroir' of an agricultural product like wine or cheese is

the totality of the natural forces and conditions that influence its production in a particular place, imbuing it with particular characteristics that render it distinct from similar products produced elsewhere.

More fully, however, terroir may refer not only to the sum of the 'natural' influences on agricultural production but can also incorporate 'cultural' factors, including a history of settlement patterns, crop selection, farming and processing techniques, social networks, and the use of particular technologies - everything that may constitute 'local tradition': "all the local features of environment and society that have an effect on wine. Many people believe that all the features of a place taken as a whole – its terroir – have a distinctive influence that you can taste in the wine" (Sommers 2008: 19). This is common to many references to terroir in a French or European context. In 'Old World' regions where agriculture has developed and evolved over a very long period of time, the 'natural' and 'cultural' are often regarded as inextricably linked in the formulation of a notion of terroir. In its French context, considerations of terroir also form the basis of a system of place-based labelling for wines, cheeses and other agricultural products (*appellations d'origine contrôlée* [AOC], or controlled designations of origin). This appellation system places the concept of terroir within a strictly-enforced legal framework that marries place to product, governing in many cases the geographical origin of a product but also techniques and methods that go into production.

Although the rules of particular AOCs may be changed by local and national committees, the system nevertheless serves to formalise production, permitting the expression of terroir only in accordance with certain clearly defined regulations that are tied to a consensus about local 'traditions'. In doing so, then, such a process serves to couple the concept of terroir not to the place itself and its lived traditions but, rather, through the application of formalised geographical boundaries and bureaucratic controls on techniques and practices, to an ossification of understandings of place and culture (Ulin 2013). By delineating and enforcing

rules of production in a particular place with reference to these putatively authentic cultural traditions (which are assumed to be fixed, 'natural', beyond time), the reification of terroir via the AOC and similar systems works to negate its dynamism.

For the filmmaker, writer and ex-sommelier Jonathan Nossiter, whose film *Mondovino* (2004) focused on the impact of globalisation in a number of wine-producing regions in France and elsewhere, "the defense of terroir is not a reactionary, unquestioning clinging to tradition" (Nossiter 2009: 12). Contrary to the view that sees terroir products as representative of a fixed and concrete 'authentic tradition', naturalising the links between nature and culture, landscape and technique, he states that "Terroir has never been fixed, in taste or in perception. It has always been an evolving expression of culture" (2009: 12). This orientation to temporality is, I believe, intrinsic to its understanding. Terroir should be considered as emergent, inhering in the fluid and ongoing relationships between people, place and production. This is certainly the case in McLaren Vale, where terroir is regarded as linked to the ongoing evolution of wine production, and where some winegrowers talk of making their own sense of place.

I have argued above that both 'place' and 'landscape' are very useful concepts in highlighting the relationship between people and their worlds in a way that transcends the problematic modernist divide between nature and culture. Anthropological theories of terroir, too, have the same aim. Paxson (2010) relates terroir to Ingold's (1993) notion of the landscape as a congealed 'taskscape' of activity; like the taskscape, "terroir offers a theory of how people and place, cultural tradition and landscape ecology, are mutually constituted over time" (Paxson 2010: 444). Here, terroir is thought of as being both relational and emergent. All this begs the question, however: why do we need to consider terroir at all, if other terms (such as 'taskscape') have the same holistic thrust and focus on dynamic relationality? To this I have four answers. Firstly, although the locally specific is at the heart of terroir (as in place and

landscape), its use in wine discourse increasingly recognises wider influences that impinge upon the local. These include global trade networks, flows of people, knowledge and capital, and changing consumer trends across markets, as well as decisive elements of climate, weather, seasonality and even geological processes that extend far beyond an individual vineyard or wine region. Terroir, more so than place or landscape in their usual understandings, thus takes critical account of the local in light of and in connection with broader translocal and global trends and currents.

Secondly, terroir is a particularly useful framework or lens for analysis in that it makes explicit the *productive* power of place. Terroir is frequently used to describe the ways people and landscape, nature and culture, interrelate to produce geographically and socially-emplaced products. Terroir is also sometimes employed to explicate the ways by which the processes of (agricultural) production serve to produce place itself. For phenomenologists, *place* is both a function of and necessary to our 'being-in-the-world' as perceiving, feeling beings. Places are 'places' because *we* perceive them as such, and landscapes are landscapes in the way we dwell within them and relate to them perceptually. Terroir shifts this perspective in a subtle but meaningful way: although people are integral to terroir, they are not its focus. Rather, terroir represents (in the words of a nineteenth-century French dictionary) "the earth considered from the point of view of agriculture" (Larousse, quoted in Trubek 2008: 73). What might be called a 'terroir perspective' foregrounds the inherent agency of place and landscape in their productive power. Terroir thus describes the generative processes that give rise not only to agricultural products but to the places from which they come, and also – implicitly but unavoidably – the *people* who are enmeshed in this relational matrix as integral and inalienable parties to these processes. Terroir describes a complex nexus of interwoven relationships between place, product and person, and may therefore be said to be both 'produced' and 'productive'.

Thirdly, unlike 'place', 'landscape', 'dwelling' and a host of other concepts surrounding the relationship of people with their worlds, terroir's key expression is through taste (the '*goût de terroir*') and smell. These are the senses that are very highly privileged in discussions of wine as well as those of food and other consumable agricultural products. Terroir thus directly addresses the relationships between places, production and consumption (in a literal, gustatory sense). As agricultural products are said to *embody* their terroir, so too do people upon consumption. This is a quite literal example of consubstantiation, as by drinking wine from a place the essence of that place becomes commingled with the body.

Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, terroir was used by my own winegrowing informants as a lens through which to interpret their own interactions with the world. For these people, wine production hinges on their relational engagements with a host of other-than-human elements including soil, rocks, vines, microbes, weather, machines, and innumerable other 'partners' in the bringing forth of a 'sense of place' in their wines. Here, wines that reflect terroir are said to offer a 'taste of place' that is usually (according to some views) missing in the sort of modern large-scale wine production that is common to much modern Australian wine, whose aim of production is to achieve consistent, homogeneous *quality* rather than a distinctive reflection of the *qualities* of a specific place.

To take a terroir perspective, a bottle of wine cannot be seen merely as an untethered, free-floating object to be traded as a commodity and drunk as a beverage, as this would be to obscure both the far-reaching social relations of production and consumption but also its physical relations. Wine is made in place: in a particular winery from grapes from a particular vineyard, planted with vines that draw their nutrients from layers of rocks that have been lying under the earth for millions of years. These vines are fed by rainfalls brought across thousands of kilometres by global weather cycles and nourished by the sun in the daily rotation of the earth on its axis and across the oscillations of the seasons. Wine is the product of a mutually

constitutive interrelation between people and an animate, agentive landscape, and by drinking it the consumer—irrespective of their physical location—comes to themselves embody these relations of terroir. Just like Heidegger’s bridge over the stream (1993) or the pear tree at the centre of Breughel’s *The Harvesters* (Ingold 1993), the bottle of wine sits modestly at the centre of its own universe, gathering upon itself a vast and complex relational meshwork. Not just a ‘product of place’, it is in some senses its own portable and comestible place.

Notions of terroir are a tacit, taken-for-granted fact of winegrowing in the Vale. Interestingly, although common in global wine discourse and a normal part of the vocabulary of many in the Vale, some winegrowers tend to shy away from using the word ‘terroir’ itself. This is because it carries with it notions of snobbery and pretension, presumably related both to its French origins and role in hierarchical vineyard classification systems as well as its current role as a fashionable wine-speak buzzword alongside terms like *artisanal*, *small-batch*, *biodynamic*, *sustainable* and others. Nevertheless, throughout this thesis I will argue that people in the Vale are attuned to this particular perspective through both their own direct experience and the ubiquity of a discourse of terroir shared throughout the wine world, and already see themselves, their products and their place in this sort of interwoven relationship. This terroir perspective is, I believe, crucial in informing people’s approaches to their place and region in McLaren Vale. It shapes local understandings of issues affecting the Vale and frames their representations, a process that may occur tacitly or through a strategic application of terroir discourse. Demossier (2011: 687) states that “very few studies have sought to explore the strategic deployments of *terroir* in a precise geographical location, through a specific historical period, and around a particular product”; in this thesis I will provide just such an examination.



Figure 5. Harvest, Noon vineyards

Learning from people and vines

Like most of my informants in McLaren Vale I am an English-speaking Australian. However, the ‘field’ of winegrowing, in the sense of a geographical area of ethnographic research, a Bourdieuan social framework for the interaction of agents and, literally, the vineyard, is one to which I am far from able to claim insider-ship. Nor could I claim any particular authority or special knowledge as a wine consumer. However, I had had some experience of wine production (albeit in a limited, amateur sense) prior to commencing my research. My father-in-law Nick grows Grenache vines on his suburban block of land in Reynella. He and his father-in-law Bepo, both Croatian immigrants, have since the late 1970s made their own rustic wine for home consumption. Ever since moving to Adelaide from Brisbane a decade ago I have helped out: picking and crushing the grapes during the (always precisely-timed) family harvest day, pressing the fermented must, transferring the wine into a barrel for maturation and siphoning it out into flagons when ready to drink, as well as helping prune the vines in winter and thin out the canopy as necessary in spring and summer. This introduced me to

winegrowing as task and process, the skilled practice of humans working with their environments that underlies and precedes the vast constellation of cultural meanings associated with wine.

Ingold tells us that “The geologist studies from rocks as well as professors; he learns from them, and they tell him things” (Ingold 2013: 2). Winegrowers in McLaren Vale, similarly, learn not only from their human teachers, mentors and peers but the vines, grapes, soil, rocks, wine presses, barrels, bottles, and microbes with which they engage: that is, the totality of their terroir. An attempt to describe and illuminate the social relations of winegrowing in McLaren Vale must therefore encompass not only the relations between people, but also relations that pertain to place, landscape, material objects, and other living creatures. This being the case, in my approach to research I sought to participate: to learn about the vines in the vineyard, to pick grapes, to stir must, operate basket presses, taste young wines at various stages of fermentation, and generally engage as much as possible with the universe of winegrowing. This was not just as a means of gaining access to informants in order to interview them but, more fundamentally, to gain insight into the activities of daily working life so as to better explicate the ways people relate to their worlds. As Ingold states, “Artisans or practitioners who follow the flow are, in effect, itinerants, wayfarers, whose task is to enter the grain of the world’s becoming and bend it to an evolving purpose” (Ingold 2013: 25). For me, fieldwork was as much about gaining an awareness and appreciation of this artisanship, the quotidian tasks, processes and rhythms of winegrowing in the Vale, as it was about gathering peoples’ stories. While the majority of my time gathering data was spent sitting with notepad or voice recorder in hand as I asked questions, I relished opportunities to meet with informants while they pruned their vines, plunged the cap on a ferment, pumped must between vats, tasted barrel samples, sold bottles at cellar doors, and went about their normal daily activities.

When making contacts during my research, I was steered towards prominent local people – people who, it was suggested, could provide me with rich local knowledge as well as networks of other contacts. Many of these were people directly involved with wine production and trade, locally known not only within the wine industry but outside it as well, as visible and active figures in various facets of community life in the district. Others included food producers, farmers, politicians, as well as various residents involved with local community, environmental, and other interest groups. With only a few exceptions, most were very willing to participate in my research as interviewees and informants and were happy to share their time with me.⁵ As I was given more names and recommendations for people to meet and interview I began to get a feel for those in McLaren Vale who were viewed with the greatest respect and whose views were thought of as reflective and representative of broader opinions, and by and large it was these people with whom I tried to spend the most time. No interviews were ‘structured’ as such and instead involved conversations around particular topics. While I would try to ensure the conversation stayed generally relevant to my research, by allowing interviews to flow as naturally as possible I was able to better understand the issues and topics that mattered most to my informants.

The range of people that I interviewed and who provided the bulk of the data for this thesis are not necessarily demographically representative of McLaren Vale, nor are the winegrowers necessarily representative of the McLaren Vale wine industry as a whole. Rather, the selection of informants has been shaped by my particular research interests, and this has, in turn, shaped the trajectory of my understandings of the issues discussed in this thesis. All in all, there is a greater focus on McLaren Vale’s small-scale wine producers than perhaps any other group. This is due to a number of reasons, including the engagement of many of these people across all phases of wine production through vineyard and winery to marketing and

⁵ Especially in the case of people associated with the wine and tourism industry, many of my informants were used to “talking about themselves”, as one winemaker put it, thanks to frequent interaction with journalists, writers, marketers and so on.

distribution, their own active interest in many of the issues I am exploring, and a general adherence to what I have labelled a 'terroir perspective'.



Figure 6. Home winemaking, Reynella

Chapter structure

I am concerned here with the lifeworlds of people in McLaren Vale as they confront a number of potential issues that affect themselves and their region, interpret their relationship with place and landscape, collectively remember their past and envision their future. In the chapters that follow I explore a number of intersecting themes that will, I hope, illuminate to some degree the intricacies of dwelling, making place and constructing identity in a region interpenetrated by the city and the country, the global and the local, technological modernity and historical tradition. To do this I will adopt the winegrowing concept of terroir as a linking theme, using this concept to reference both lived experience in place and the boundary-making, categorising representations of place. Terroir is significant both in the way it is

deployed discursively, in strategic, economic and political claims to territory and geographical distinctiveness but also as a tacit dimension of winegrowing, an implicit mode of being. These two orientations are not separate from one another but, rather, each feeds into the other; in McLaren Vale broad supra-local and global processes become embodied in peoples' own lived experience of their worlds.

In Chapter One, I position the Vale politically and economically within South Australia, Australia more broadly, and the rest of the world. From its colonial beginnings, South Australian wine production was linked directly into a global network of British trade. I argue that the founding of the new colony according to the philosophical principles of systematic colonisation also had important implications for the spatial and material relations of winegrowing, with vineyards in McLaren Vale and elsewhere primarily planted by 'small capitalist' emigres on their mixed-use farms. From here I chart various currents and trends that have affected wine production in McLaren Vale through history, including fluctuations in consumer demand, changes to legislation and taxation, and the significance of the global outbreak of phylloxera root louse from the late nineteenth century onwards. Finally, I explore some of the attitudes and approaches of winegrowers to various economic and social issues influencing presently influencing production in the region, including governmental schemes and policies, local economic factors, and the position of Australian wine in general within the global market, where it is by and large seen as 'placeless' and nondescript. People in McLaren Vale, I argue, construct and represent their region in relation to these outside influences, while simultaneously constructing the world beyond the Vale from the particular vantage point of their own terroir.

Chapter Two deals what it means to be 'local' in McLaren Vale, a farming (now chiefly winegrowing) district close to a city, and colonised by British settlers and later influxes of migrants from southern Europe and elsewhere. I identify several recurring themes associated

with notions of authentic locality in McLaren Vale: personal and familial history in the area, social and community participation and cooperation, and an emphasis on agricultural work. Through a study of Italian migration in the area I show how alignment with these themes may enable people to ‘become’ local. In another case, I show how the late winegrower Greg Trott—a highly-respected ‘figurehead’ in the region—came to embody these ideals of authentic McLaren Vale locality. In all, I argue that locality is enacted through a dynamic, ongoing process of becoming.

In Chapter Three I shift attention to the tasks and experiences of winegrowing in the Vale as they relate to sentiments of place and locality. Here the role of terroir in globalised wine discourse is addressed, and I show how the concept links notions of place to human activity and agricultural production in such a way that people, place and product are seen to be mutually-emergent and consubstantial. Through my ethnographic material I explore the way broad discourses of terroir are interpreted and shaped by people in McLaren Vale, influencing and themselves influenced by the ways winegrowers plant and maintain vineyards and otherwise engage with the land. Terroir is, importantly, also a political instrument. Using the example of the production of a regional Geology Map and the development of regimes of wine distinction and marketing based around terroir, I show how the concept legitimises particular stances on land use and production activities. I argue that terroir is best thought of as a way of understanding: a lens through which people may view the processes of production as inherently relational. With this in mind I show how terroir emphasises the dynamic relations of winegrowing, serving to ‘animate’ place and landscape.

Chapter Four engages with what I believe to be an important element of a terroir perspective, and one that is often neglected: the temporal nature of place and landscape. I address this through discussions of the interlinking rhythms inherent in winegrowing, including those of the earth and the celestial bodies, the climate, the days and the seasons, as well as the

rhythms of vines, wine, people, and other organisms. I examine the phenomenon of 'biodynamic' winegrowing, with its explicit emphasis on rhythmic dynamism as people undertake vineyard tasks in concert with numerous earthly and cosmic cycles. Following this I examine the social/seasonal rhythms of the harvest and vintage period in the Vale, a key point in the annual winegrowing cycle and a time of intensified community relations.

In Chapter Five I highlight the importance of sensory engagement to winegrowing in McLaren Vale, with a special focus on the ways small-scale producers must interact bodily with land, machinery and wine in the skilled performance of their tasks. These are processes of dwelling that may engender a deep love of place and invest the landscape with great meaning. I show how consumption and production are mutually entwined in the tasting of wine by tourists and producers: for tourists, knowledge of wine, place, and 'taste' is reproduced and transmitted through the rituals of wine tasting at cellar doors, while for producers taste and smell play significant roles in the guidance of wine through processes of fermentation and maturation. From here I explore the importance of the places of wine production, describing the way artisanal producers come to 'know' the vineyard and winery through the hands-on and multisensory engagement that their work involves. This is a process of consubstantiation, as people, places, and wines may come to be seen as refractions of one another.

In the final chapter, I reflect upon the 'sense of place' felt and understood in McLaren Vale, stemming both from the embodied experiences of people as they participate in their work as winegrowers and from broader translocal and global trends. I shift focus to the relationship between McLaren Vale and Adelaide, the suburbs of which now border the region. Here I explore the opposition of 'city' and 'country' as ideal forms, outlining the way people in McLaren Vale construct, bound and represent the region in relation to the nearby city and suburbs. While the Vale is usually presented in terms of its rurality in opposition to the city, I show that the presence of Adelaide is, and always has been, integral to the Vale. I explore the

ways the romanticised ‘gaze’ of settlers and tourists has helped to construct and define the region’s rurality according to English and Mediterranean countryside ideals, to which the nearby ‘suburban sprawl’ is seen as anathema. The deep perceived divide between rural and urban modes of being has given great weight to questions of boundaries: during my research, this included the negotiation of ‘character preservation’ legislation over the McLaren Vale region. I look at local attitudes and debates surrounding the proposed ‘Seaford Heights’ development at the northern edge of McLaren Vale, in which broad, romantic notions of a bucolic countryside are deployed alongside appeals to terroir and very specific qualities of ‘place’ by Vale residents opposed to the development. I argue that the ‘terroir perspective’ shared by many in McLaren Vale—through which the landscape is seen as variegated, heterogenic and alive—is a potent force in the idealistic and material shaping of the region.

McLaren Vale in the world

Throughout this thesis I will argue that the production of wine both reflects and shapes terroir, the 'sense of place' embodied in wine landscapes and their products at a local level. Yet terroir does not relate only to the productive interactions of farmers and landscape, as even the most seemingly place-bound processes must be seen in their context as dimensions of much broader currents of relational influence. In this chapter, then, I will provide some contextual background to wine production in McLaren Vale, outlining some of the more significant influences that have helped shape present experiences and understandings of winegrowing in the region.

The structure of this chapter is roughly chronological, and traces a history of winegrowing in McLaren Vale and South Australia from the earliest days of European settlement to the present day. Locally-felt senses of place and understandings of terroir are always positioned within and in relation to a wider world of influences, and local rhythms and practices of production and consumption in the Vale intersect with a number of wider processes. These processes include those of colonisation and patterns of settlement, shifting trade networks and alliances within the British Empire and beyond, and the political, legislative and technological milieu of wine production, distribution, and consumption. Special attention is paid to the importance of South Australia's avoidance of the destructive vineyard pest phylloxera, which I argue serves as an important boundary-marking phenomenon for winegrowing in the state. This chapter also charts the global valorisation of particular modes or aspects of winegrowing; as I argue here and in later chapters, McLaren Vale vignerons orient themselves and their region strategically and in line with certain discourses that privilege and highlight their own perceived strengths.

That the tasks and activities of dwelling are not bounded and isolated but extend out into the world (just as, simultaneously, they bring the world in) is understood by present-day winegrowers in McLaren Vale just as it was understood by the first European colonists in South Australia. The very settlement of agricultural areas including McLaren Vale, and the manner in which this occurred, was tied inextricably to the machinations of Britain's empire-building project and to its domestic social and political issues, as well as to events and processes in the other Antipodean colonies. It is with Britain's model of systematic colonisation in South Australia that I begin.

Colonisation and early winegrowing

South Australia's settlement is unique as an experiment in social engineering, marking a deliberate shift away from existing British models of colonies as peripheral to the Empire and significant in terms only of material benefits and burdens. The radical view expounded by the political economist Edward Gibbon Wakefield instead focused on the possibility of colonies as "sites of economic productivity, social amelioration, and civilizational potential", offering transformative prospects for society (Bell 2010: 38). In London in 1830 Wakefield and other progressive thinkers including Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill founded the National Colonisation Society to promote the idea that 'systematic colonisation' could alleviate pressures of overpopulation and land shortage in Britain and poverty and suffering of the working classes.⁶ The utilitarian perspective of the Colonisation Society's members gives such

⁶ Marx did not hold the same views: Chapter 33 of his 'Capital' is almost entirely devoted to a criticism of Wakefield's ideals, which he believes serve simply to reproduce the exploitative social conditions of labour in the 'mother country':

It is the great merit of E.G. Wakefield to have discovered, not anything new about the Colonies, but to have discovered in the Colonies the truth as to the conditions of capitalist production in the mother country. As the system of protection at its origin attempted to manufacture capitalists artificially in the mother-country, so Wakefield's colonization theory ... attempted to effect the manufacture of wage-workers in the Colonies. This he calls 'systematic colonization'. (Marx 2015 [1867]: 392)

colonisation a moral dimension: in Mill's words, "the planting of colonies should be conducted, not with an exclusive view to the private interests of the first founders, but with a deliberate regard to the permanent welfare of the nations afterwards to arise from these small beginnings" (J.S. Mill, quoted in Souffrant 2000: 107).

The South Australian Association formed in 1833 to campaign for the creation of the new colony according to these philosophical underpinnings. What became known as the 'Wakefield Scheme' of systematic colonisation sought to avoid problems that had afflicted the colonies of New South Wales and Western Australia, where rampant speculation had led to large swathes of land being bought up at low cost and a shortage of labour necessary to make the land productive (Whimpress 2008: 1-2). These other Australian colonies were founded as penal settlements and relied to a large extent on the availability of convict labour; in contrast, the South Australian system was designed to be economically self-sufficient, negating a need for indentured labour or for ongoing economic support from Britain. Under the Wakefield Scheme land was sold at a fixed price, high enough to limit speculation and low enough to allow 'small capitalist' émigrés to purchase agricultural holdings. These sales were centrally administered, with 'preliminary land orders' required to reach £35,000 before any settlement was to begin. Purchasers of these land orders were entitled to one town acre and one country section, to be chosen from the Land Office upon arrival in Adelaide and once surveying had been completed (Government of South Australia & Primary Industries and Regions SA 2013). Proceeds from land sales went into an Emigration Fund, to be used to finance the passage of young working-class people of "good character" for employment in the new colony: "chiefly agricultural labourers, shepherds, and female domestic and farm servants" (Wilkinson 1849: 89).

A key element of the social philosophy underlying South Australia's founding was a commitment to principles of religious equality and liberty that were not present in Britain. Many of the colony's boosters were members of Nonconformist sects, promoting freedom of

religious belief as well as the maintenance of a separation between church and state. In the early years, various denominations were represented: Anglican, Roman Catholic, Scottish Presbyterian, and German Lutheran, as well as Dissenters or Nonconformists, and a number of smaller Christian groups including Quakers, Unitarians and Swedenborgians, as well as Jews. For many, South Australia represented a “Paradise of Dissent” (Pike 1967).

From the outset, then, South Australia “was envisaged and established as a model, convict-free colony, founded on principles of democracy and freedom of religion” (Santich 1998: 32). Noble as this sentiment was, the utopian promises that underpinned South Australia’s formation were not enjoyed by all. As the agricultural areas surrounding Adelaide became populated by ‘small capitalists’ who bought 80-acre plots to farm, and the labourers under their employment, local Aboriginal people became displaced. Although the South Australian Colonisation Commission recognised Aborigines’ “proprietary right to the soil” (rather than officially treating the new colony as *terra nullius*, as had been the case in New South Wales), in practice the system of land selection and sale relied upon the Commission’s own judgement as to whether or not Aboriginal groups ‘possessed’ any of the land they occupied (Banner 2009: 36). Settlers often exhibited very little respect for the rights of local people over the land:

Authorities acting on behalf of the British Government believed in their wisdom that although Aborigines were camping in the Adelaide environs they were not actually putting the land to good use in the way Europeans would. This justification made it very easy for migrants to simply occupy and fence what land they secured. (McDougall & Vines Conservation and Heritage Consultants 2006: 5)

For the Kurna people, upon whose land McLaren’s surveys were superimposed and who became largely displaced from the region, white settlement—which took place through a totalising organisation of space that paid very little regard to the original inhabitants of the land—was experienced as a fundamentally disruptive process.

The agricultural areas of South Australia were surveyed with the intention, first and foremost, that they be brought into the service of Adelaide as the centre of the new colony. The

interrelationship of 'city' and 'country', as well as their inherent conceptual oppositions (for example, 'core'/'periphery' and 'consumption'/'production') was thus made explicit from the very beginning, a theme to which I will return in Chapter Six. The colony's early vineyard plantings, including those at McLaren Vale, supplied wine to consumers in the urban centre of Adelaide, and it was from Adelaide that South Australian wines were exported to the other colonies, to Britain, and ultimately to other markets around the world.

From its inception, the Australian wine industry has been thoroughly intertwined with a global trade in wine, as well as the ideas, expertise and technologies that accompany its production, distribution and consumption. The Australian colonies had been identified as an ideal source for the wine demanded by British consumers, and indeed the very development of wine industries in Britain's Southern Hemisphere colonies in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa was dependent upon the global needs of Empire and those of the home market in Britain. Australia had been identified from a very early stage as possessing growing conditions that could be on par with those of the wine regions of the Mediterranean basin. As an emissary of Napoleon's sent to examine the British settlement in New South Wales wrote in 1801, "In spite of the fact that Britain's consumption of wine, both at home and on her Fleets, is immense, she grows none of it herself. Australia must therefore become 'The Vineyard of Great Britain'." (M. Peron 1801, in Burden 1976: 18)

Indeed, Captain Arthur Phillip's 'First Fleet' of settlers, landing at Sydney in January 1788, had "carried wine grape vines, barrels and bottles of wine, and, crucially, British ideas about the cultural status and material profitability of wine growing" (McIntyre 2012: 5). In a letter to his superiors, Captain Phillip wrote that:

In a climate so favourable the cultivation of the vine may doubtless be carried to any degree of perfection, and should no other articles of commerce divert the attention of settlers from this part, the wines of New South Wales may perhaps here after be sought with civility and become an indispensable part of the luxury of European tables (quoted in Phillips 2001: 177).

Wine, with its connotations of 'civility' and 'luxury', was considered important not only for its potential economic value, but for the cultural capital that it engendered: the British hoped that their product could achieve the same status as a luxury good as the fine wines of France. Although plantings of vines procured *en route* by the First Fleet from the Cape Colony of South Africa initially failed to produce in the humid climate of the Sydney basin, it was not long before colonists in New South Wales began to achieve success with growing wine grapes (McIntyre 2012), an achievement repeated by settlers in other Australian colonies. In South Australia, early colonists noted the "peculiar adaptation of our climate" and suitability of soil and terrain to winegrowing (Stevenson 1840, quoted in Bishop 1977: 11). The first grapevines were planted very soon after Proclamation of the Colony by settlers such as John Barton Hack, George Stevenson, Richard Hamilton and John Reynell.⁷ These men saw a great future for winegrowing in the Colony; as Stevenson put it, "I cannot doubt that the grape will, at no distant period, become one of the staples of South Australia" (Stevenson 1840, quoted in Bishop 1977: 11).

A. C. Kelly, writing in 1862, highlighted the success of Australian agriculture at the Great Exhibition of London in 1851 as an indicator of the future potential of the colonies' fledgling wine industries:

The great Exhibition of 1851, showed the triumph of Australian agriculture; now the prospects of wine growing in the Australian colonies are much more hopeful than wheat growing ever was or perhaps is now; and when we compare our soil and climate with those of the wine countries of Europe, we are warranted in coming to the conclusion that the future of the wine growing interests in Australia is as promising as any of her permanent resources (Kelly 2008 [1861]: 3)

The planting of vineyards in the colonies and the import of colonial wine to Britain was influenced enormously by the shifting political and economic relationships between Britain and the wine-producing nations of continental Europe. As Kelly wrote, such evolution of

⁷ The vines first planted by John Reynell at Reynella (now part of the McLaren Vale GI) were "planted from cuttings obtained from the Macarthurs, of New South Wales ... of Verdeilho, Carbonet, Malbec, Pineau Gris and Gouais" ('Reynella Farm, the residence of Mr. John Reynell' 1862).

political allegiances sparked legislative changes which had the effect of changing the drinking *tastes* of the British wine-drinking public:

It has long been the policy of the British Government to suppress the importation of French wines. The strong coarse wines of Spain and Portugal were for many years admitted into Britain at a much lower duty than the light wholesome wines of France, and although the duties have since been equalized, the habit of drinking strong brandied wines and their counterfeits have so vitiated the tastes of the people that a pure wine would not be relished by the majority of the British. (Kelly 2008 [1861]: 1)

While the English had been drinking French claret for centuries, trade restrictions made this wine increasingly unavailable to all but the wealthy upper classes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; those below them in the social hierarchy usually drank port. However, a free-trade agreement between Britain and France in 1860, a cut in duties on table wines to 40% of that on fortified wines, and the passage of a law enabling grocers to sell wines by the bottle encouraged the resurgence in tastes for claret and other dry wines among the middle classes (The Economist 2009). At the same time, previously-existing import tariff preferences for South African wines were abolished, allowing Australian wine to gain a greater foothold in the British market. Despite this, exports made up a very small percentage of Australian wine production, and there was for the most part little demand for colonial wines in Britain (Anderson, K & Osmond 1998a: 5). Protectionist tariffs meant that very little trade occurred between Australian colonies, furthermore, a situation bemoaned by local winegrowers who found their growth stifled:

Mr Reynell ... is unwilling to increase his vineyards very largely until there is a prospect of our [South Australian] wines being admitted to the Melbourne markets without an import duty. We certainly hope the day is not far distant when our friends across the border will be wise and magnanimous enough to reduce very much, or altogether remove, the present impost. ('Reynella Farm, the residence of Mr. John Reynell' 1862)

The affordability of imported European wines, coupled with the fact that Australians were in general not yet great wine consumers, meant that producers struggled to find domestic markets for their products (Bleasdale 1867; Santich 1998: 133-134).

By the latter decades of the nineteenth century, local consumption of South Australian wine was growing. However, given the small population of Adelaide, South Australian producers (unlike their Victorian and New South Welsh counterparts) did not have access to a large home market, and as such had to invest significant effort into finding markets outside the colony. As Simpson notes, by the turn of the century “the South Australian industry had been transformed by a handful of winemakers to one where important economies of scale were achieved in production and the major markets were Britain and, after federation, the urban centres of Melbourne and Sydney” (Simpson 2011: 234-235). The rise in South Australian domestic wine consumption was thus accompanied by great increases in export volume. In response to this, more and more land in the colony was being planted to vines, including in the southern areas around McLaren Vale (Santich 1998: 135).

Australian table wines had seen some critical success at wine shows and exhibitions in Europe.

After the International Exhibition in Vienna in 1873, an official report stated that:

Some few [Australian wines] are especially fine in all that constitutes a high-class wine, and will bear comparison with the best European growths, while the average of the remainder, compared with the bulk of Continental wines, omitting the best, is higher in quality, strength and body, as also in character and flavour (quoted in Laffer 1949: 70).

At the famous Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889, judges were similarly impressed by the qualities of South Australian wines: “The judges on the wine juries at the Paris Exhibition have delivered their awards in connection with the South Australian wines exhibited there. They speak very highly of the character of the wines shown, and award three gold and four silver medals” (The Advertiser 1889).

Considerable competition existed between the wine industries of the Australian States before and after federation, and particularly between the two most significant wine producers, South

Australia and Victoria.⁸ A rivalry based on perceived differences marks the relationship between the two states in many spheres; for South Australian vignerons, a key point of distinction involves the state’s avoidance—unlike Victoria—of the phylloxera root louse epidemic.



Figure 7: 1835 British advertisement for land sales in South Australia. From <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/fh/passengerlists/1835%20Emigration%20Advertisement.jpg>

The phylloxera threat

One of the biggest factors in shaping the South Australian wine production landscape from the late nineteenth century onward – with ramifications that continue to be felt today – was the

⁸ Another newspaper article about Australian wines at the Paris Exposition stated that “The various colonial representatives are not pulling together very amicably”, with the representative of South Australian vignerons alleging that, in their exhibition display, the Victorians made misleading and exaggerated claims as to the nature of the prizes awarded to Victorian wines (‘The Paris Exhibition. An unpleasant dispute’ 1889).

spread of the destructive root louse originally known as *Phylloxera vastatrix*,⁹ or 'leaf-drying destroyer', which devastated vineyards across Europe following its accidental import from North America (Farmer 2013: 147). Phylloxera was first felt in wine regions of southern France in the early 1860s (though only confirmed as such in 1868), and soon spread across the rest of Europe and into grape-growing regions in other parts of the world. The best protection against phylloxera was found to be achieved by the grafting of European vines onto the rootstocks of native North American vines resistant to the pest; by the beginning of the twentieth century, therefore, "nearly all European vineyards had been uprooted and replanted with grafted vines, and most other wine producing areas of the world which had previously escaped infestation had begun to report the presence of phylloxera" (Unwin 1991: 292).

News spread quickly of the ruin that phylloxera was bringing to vineyards in Europe. While wary of the dangers that it posed should outbreaks occur in Australia, growers realised that the destruction of French and other European vineyards could have benefits to Australian exports:

South Australian winegrowers may to a slight extent profit by the presence of this malady in the wine-producing districts of Europe; but as there is no knowing how soon it may make its way to the antipodes, it is as well for vigneron to be forewarned as to its character, and be prepared as far as possible to counteract its ravages. ('A new vine disease' 1870)

Phylloxera did indeed soon reach the antipodes, and from the mid-1870s, outbreaks were identified in Geelong, Bendigo, and other parts of Victoria, prompting the Victorian colonial government to introduce subsidies to tear out diseased vineyards and replant them with phylloxera-resistant grafted vines (Anderson, K & Osmond 1998a: 6). In South Australia, a series of legislative moves aimed at restricting the movement of vines and vine material into South Australia were made, including the Vines Protection Act of 1874 and the Prevention and Eradication of Diseases of Vines Act of 1878 (Boehm & Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of

⁹ Now *Daktulosphaira vitifoliae*.

South Australia 1996). Vignerons, however, felt that these did not go far enough. Concerned about the dangers posed by phylloxera to the integrity of South Australian vines, a group led by Thomas Hardy lobbied the Government to introduce stringent quarantine measures to restrict the passage of all plant material into the Colony:

Mr. Hardy, after a careful inspection of some of the vineyards near Geelong affected by that dreadful scourge, phylloxera vastatrix, desired the Vignerons' Club to try to induce our Government to prevent the introduction of that plague into South Australia, not only by prohibiting the introduction of vines from Victoria, but of all kinds of fruit-trees from that colony, as such, having possibly been grown in the vicinity of diseased vines, might carry the ova of phylloxera. ('The Advertiser' 1878)

In 1899, by which time infection had spread to the colonies of New South Wales, Queensland and New Zealand, the Parliament of South Australia passed the Phylloxera Act. This Act legislated the formation of a Phylloxera Board made up of representatives from six South Australian districts, who collected levies from grape growers per acre of vines planted, and who were granted powers to impose quarantines around suspected phylloxera infestations (Boehm & Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of South Australia 1996: 37). South Australia has to date remained free of phylloxera, partly as a result of the strong legislative regime designed to keep it at bay (Unwin 1991: 292). As White puts it, "The sole reason the plague has not crossed into South Australia is the extremely rigid restriction on the movement of machinery, dirt and plant material from places where phylloxera lives to places where it doesn't" (White 2012c).

Phylloxera has had deep and wide-reaching impacts on the wine world. It precipitated a shift in the economic structures of wine production in Europe, forcing many small producers off their farms and allowing a greater dominance of the market by large enterprises with the ability to absorb increased production costs (Unwin 1991: 294). The decline in production volume also encouraged an increase in wine fraud, including chemical adulteration and misleading labelling, which prompted the introduction of *Appellations d'Origine Contrôlées* (AOC) legislation in France and similar laws elsewhere in Europe (Farmer 2013: 147; Unwin

1991: 313-316). These laws have more recently been incorporated into the Geographical Indications (GI) regime of the European Community. Geographical Indications law came into effect in Australia in 1993, when the *Wine and Brandy Corporation Act (cth)* (1980) was amended to ensure compliance with a bilateral trade agreement with the European Community, as well as the World Trade Organisation-administered Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of International Property Rights (Winetitles Media 2015). The destruction caused by phylloxera in Europe caused a significant reduction in area under vine and wine production volume as well as wine quality, as the increased costs of the new viticulture methods resulted in greater yields per hectare (Unwin 1991: 294). This had the effect of placing Australia in a much stronger position relative to European wine-producing countries than had been the case in the past. Production and exports rose accordingly, and by the turn of the twentieth century production was at three times the level of 1880 (Anderson, K & Osmond 1998a: 6).

Within Australia, the phylloxera outbreaks in Victoria and New South Wales gave South Australian wines a competitive advantage. From the end of the nineteenth century onwards South Australian production and export surged ahead of the other colonies, which became States of the Commonwealth of Australia after Federation in 1901. The phylloxera-free history of South Australia is the source of significant pride amongst winegrowers. During my fieldwork, the fact that South Australia has never been affected by the disease was often highlighted as a mark of distinction versus other states, and particularly Victoria, the 'other' against which South Australians like many of my informants construct their collective identities. Phylloxera has played an enormous role in shaping the South Australian viticultural imaginary as one of purity and cleanliness, a theme stressed by wineries themselves:

We are truly lucky here in South Australia and each of our vineyards are unique & beautiful. We cannot express strongly enough the importance of having fruit from old vines, on their own roots (not translated through rootstocks due to the presence of phylloxera). These vines are in harmony and balance with their environment which is

pretty unique in a world sense and so it becomes an easy task to make wine from such precious vines. (Noon Winery 2014)

At Clarendon Hills, we use an original species of pre-phylloxera vines – which are not genetically modified. In fact, pre-phylloxera vines are the dinosaurs of viticulture. They exhibit the entire wealth of their gene pool – unlike cloned varieties which have been pre-programmed to survive in cool regions, high salinity, arid conditions, or infected soils. (Clarendon Hills 2015)

Ulin argues that in France there exists a historical tendency to “anthropomorphize grape plants and wine by associating certain terrains and their wines with such noteworthy historical themes as French blood, soil, nationalism, and the cultural identity of the nation-state” (Ulin 2013: 69). As the totem-drink of the French nation (Barthes 1972), the threat to wine’s ‘purity’ that came with the grafting of vines onto the phylloxera-resistant rootstock imported from America stirred up fears in France analogous to the fears of ‘mixing of blood’ promoted by contemporary racist theories on social evolution (Ulin 2013: 69). For the French, *Vitis vinifera* was a marker of national identity; the stark ‘otherness’ of the new hybrid vines may have indeed “... provided a context within which French growers from diverse regions could imagine their relation to other French growers and the challenges they faced” (Ulin 2007: 49), thus further shaping the shared culture of the French nation.

In South Australia—the ‘Wine State’, where wine may also be considered a ‘totem-drink’ of sorts—phylloxera has likewise provided a framework within which to forge a collective identity among winegrowers, enabling them to imagine their relations to one another in the face of the shared threat posed by phylloxera ‘over the border’. Peter, a small producer who makes wine from his own eighty-year-old vines, makes clear the significance of the threat to vigneron in McLaren Vale:

If phylloxera were to arrive in South Australia, it’d be a disaster. We still have all these great old vines, on their own roots – we would have to replant them on phylloxera-resistant rootstock. That would be a huge shame, the rootstock’s not as good. The old vines here are so important. There are not many places that have them – the Barossa and McLaren Vale have some of the oldest vines in the world! There’s phylloxera in Victoria, in places like Rutherglen... The first place that would be affected in South Australia is likely to be the Riverland, but for whatever reason it hasn’t got there.

Maybe it doesn't like the dry, hot summer conditions. When phylloxera arrives it takes 5 or 6 years to kill the vines... McLaren Vale has a really good name in terms of its clean and green image. That's something that we should be building on. (Peter, 23 November 2012)

Without the removal and replanting of vines necessitated by phylloxera outbreak, old vineyards in South Australia are said to represent a *continuity* and *authenticity* which is lacking in many wine regions in other parts of Australia, and indeed in many 'Old World' regions of Europe. One well-known winemaker, aged in his eighties, identified the importance of maintaining the purity of old vines grown 'on their own roots' as it is one realm in which South Australian wines could be thought to be more *authentic* than even their most famous Old World counterparts:

An outbreak would be terrible here. Most of our vineyards are from old cuttings from a hundred years ago. Most of the Shiraz in France was grafted onto American rootstocks which are phylloxera-resistant: here the Grenache and Shiraz is all on its own roots... Now the French are importing some cuttings from hundred-year-old Australian vines! (Harry, 16 October 2012).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, industry and government have attempted to confer upon South Australian wine a sense of distinction through discourses of nature, purity and cleanliness; a key slogan presently employed by the State Government is 'Premium food and wine from our clean environment' (Primary Industries and Regions SA 2014). The regional emphasis on environmental sustainability and concepts that are often associated with it (such as organic and biodynamic viticulture and 'artisanal' or hands-on winemaking), promoted by individual producers as well as the McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association, may also be seen to reflect a broader desire to promote a viticultural 'purity' untainted by a history of phylloxera common to other regions.

During my fieldwork, it became apparent to just how seriously many winegrowers in McLaren Vale regarded the threat of phylloxera. This is not merely a historical issue, and is considered by those in the industry to be a current and real threat to South Australian winegrowing regions like McLaren Vale. On occasion, when visiting vineyards, I was required to clean the

soles of my shoes by dipping them in a sterilising solution, as well as to 'sign in' on forms that required me to specify whether I had travelled to any zones at risk of phylloxera infestation. MVGWTA has developed a 'Code of Conduct' targeting the wine industry as well as visitors to vineyards, with the aim of reducing the risk of introduction and spread of phylloxera through strategies including the use of "standard signage, fact sheets, visual and physical barriers, sign-in procedures for vineyard workers and clean in/clean out policies" (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2015b). Signs have been installed in vineyards throughout the region, warning visitors not to enter without approval and urging them to "keep SA phylloxera free" (see Figure 8).

The strength of the regulatory framework surrounding the phylloxera threat was an important issue among growers in McLaren Vale during my fieldwork. In 2009, it had been reported that the influential Vine Industry Nursery Association – the body representing nurseries who propagate and sell grape vines to growers – had been lobbying for relaxation of national protocols regarding the movement of vine material between Phylloxera Exclusions Zones by removing the requirement to sanitise roots with hot water to kill phylloxera. Many of the Vine Industry Nursery Association, furthermore, held positions with the Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of South Australia (PGIBSA), the statutory body funded by levies from South Australian grape growers, set up in 1899 for the express purpose of stopping the spread of the pest (White 2009). Phylloxera may remain dormant and undetected in a region for many years before becoming active, and can thus easily be transported to new areas unwittingly. Indeed, phylloxera infestation had been spreading into previously unaffected regions, with several recent new detections in central Victoria (Hook 2009).

In 2012 the issue again came into the spotlight in the region. Producers Drew and Raegan Noon (Raegan being a member of the PGIBSA) wrote to the then-Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Gail Gago, concerned about a perceived lack of transparency in decision-

making processes and a lack of input from growers themselves. In the letter they sought clarification about changes to the law that would apparently “allow entry of grape harvesters (and other machinery and equipment) from interstate through simple proof that they have come from a Phylloxera Exclusion Zone (PEZ) without even the requirement to clean the machine” (D. and R. Noon, quoted in White 2012b). Official responses failed to quell concerns, and the Noons, along with other prominent regional figures, including Phillip White, Dudley Brown and James Hook, sought to draw the attention of others in the region to decisions that were seemingly being made contrary to the interests of most producers. Fiery community meetings took place (White 2012a); and, for her part in the controversy, Raegan Noon was stripped of her position on the PGIBSA due to a perceived ‘conflict of interest’ as a small-scale vigneron. This was seen by many as a worrying move and an indication that the powerful Board—who are a primary source of advice to Government on grape and wine industry legislation—were acting not in the interests of all members but in the interests of the most powerful.

That’s scary shit, that is. And the history of it is that the Board was set up as a protection mechanism, to stop the carriage of equipment and plant material over the border – I remember as a kid, we were stopped at the border every single time! Phylloxera, and the fruit fly as well they were worried about. But now it’s just gotten more and more lax. The complexity of the big businesses has grown so they need to move more and more material across the border, there’s pressure from supermarkets that rely on being able to sell this wine cheaply... and of course there’s the [grapevine] nurseries, like the ones in the Yarra Valley, that would stand to gain if there were to be a phylloxera outbreak in South Australia. (Andrew, 16 October 2012)

According to many of my interlocutors, the most dangerous aspect of the threat posed to South Australian wine by phylloxera does not come from increased tourism or visitors to vineyards, but from within the wine industry itself – or, rather, segments of the industry for whom the risks of phylloxera are outweighed by benefits of relaxing controls (see Hook 2009). A regional outbreak in South Australia would be devastating for small producers, demanding the grubbing up of vineyards and replanting at great financial cost (to say nothing of the cost to the reputation and symbolic capital of previously phylloxera-free vineyards). The adoption

of relaxed protocols was seen by many to instead favour the interests of large wine corporations with assets across multiple regions and multiple states, by cutting 'red tape' and costs associated with moving vehicles, machinery, grapes and other material. The supermarket companies Coles and Woolworths, who between them control Australia's major liquor store chains as well as—increasingly—wineries and vineyards used to produce so-called 'private label' wines, were also seen to be major players in the push. Those with perhaps the most to gain in the event of an outbreak were thought to be the vine nurseries themselves, who would stand to gain direct financial benefits from the forced replanting with replacement phylloxera-resistant rootstocks.

Even though phylloxera has never been detected in South Australia, it nevertheless has a crucial and ongoing bearing upon the wine industry in the state and on individual growers in McLaren Vale. The tension and debate surrounding legislative and regulatory responses to its threat illustrates the extent to which local winegrowing activities are influenced by practices elsewhere and decisions made under different jurisdictions. Throughout the wine world, phylloxera represents a fundamental rupture in viticultural practices. Fearing economic ramifications and potential declines in wine quality that would come with losing established vineyards—not to mention the emotive aspects of destruction of treasured old vines—many winegrowers in McLaren Vale cherish the phylloxera-free status of South Australia. For their part, much is made of the 'purity' and historical continuity of old vineyards, as this is one way that the wineries of the Vale can position themselves favourably at a national and international level. Phylloxera, in this case, becomes a salient boundary marker against which the region can imagine itself.



Figure 8. Vineyard signs warning against spread of phylloxera

Booms and busts

The factors shaping winegrowing in the Vale are too diverse to enumerate fully, with the fortunes of grape growers and winemakers fluctuating greatly over time with cycles of economic supply and demand, 'boom and bust', government interventions, and the ever-shifting balance of power between growers and wineries. In McLaren Vale, for example, the vintages of 1896, 1903 and 1933 saw great surpluses of grapes, and merely being able to convert such volumes into wine was a difficult task for the overlaid wineries of the regions (Burden 1978). Grace, who owns and operates a small vineyard and winery near the township of McLaren Vale, told me that these fluctuations are inherent to the industry and governmental moves to curtail them are often misguided:

I've seen a lot of booms and busts. I remember when I was six, in 1966, watching a lot of Italian men pulling out vines in the Vale. No machines, they were doing it all manually. I asked Dad 'what are they doing'? He said—and I remember the cynicism in his voice very distinctly, even though I was only young—"The Australian public have now decided that they don't want to drink red wine again, only white." And then there was the vine pull scheme in the late '80s. It all goes in cycles. In the late nineteenth century Thomas Hardy had a grape glut, and he had to call on others to handle the excess of fruit and to make wine. They made 27,000 gallons. And these problems are always made worse by the decisions that are made by governments in different sorts of economic times. In 1861 the South Australian Government, trying to help the wine industry, proposed to give away 100,000 cuttings to encourage people to plant more land. Seppelt came down saying 'Don't do this! It'll cause a glut!' And of course, he was right.¹⁰ (Grace, 23 October 2012)

In 1924 the Australian Government introduced the Wine Export Bounty Act, enabling exporters of fortified wines to claim a bounty of four shillings per gallon (Commonwealth of Australia 1924). At that time the United Kingdom pursued a policy of 'Imperial Preference', involving tariff concessions between Britain and Commonwealth countries including Australia. These legislative changes had immediate impacts on winegrowing:

The Bounty applied to all wines exported from Australia that contained at least 34 per cent proof spirit (about 20 per cent alcohol), while Imperial Preference meant lower tariffs on Australian wines. These measures encouraged the production of fortified wines, and exports were predominantly of port-style wines that could now compete more favourably with Portuguese and Spanish wines. (Santich 1998: 146)

Changing political and economic conditions were matched by changes in the physical landscape. Around Adelaide, large swathes of land were planted to grape vine varieties like Doradillo, high-yielding and with high sugar levels ideal for the production of the sorts of strong, fortified wines eligible for the Wine Export Bounty (Bishop 1977). Vineyard area grew rapidly, often at the expense of other types of agriculture. With production oriented towards large-scale manufacture of highly alcoholic wines and brandies, primarily for export, the material relations of production also changed. This was an era of big commercial concerns in the wine industry as South Australian companies like Penfolds, Angove's and Hardy's grew rapidly, buying bulk wine from smaller wineries for export to the lucrative British market. In the 1930s the largest exporter was Emu Wines in Morphett Vale, a now-suburban area that

¹⁰ Joseph Seppelt was an influential Barossa Valley winegrowing pioneer.

sits within the current McLaren Vale GI region (Santich 1998: 146). As I was told by growers in the Vale, most of the existing old Shiraz and Grenache vines in the region were in the past employed in the mass-production of fortified wines for export by Emu and other big companies:

In the early twentieth century the taste was for fortified wines rather than table wines. So the vines that could most easily produce sherries and ports were the ones that were planted widely. By the 70s and 80s table wine was back in fashion but there wasn't the variety of plantings that there was in the previous century. Grenache was easily grown so it was popular for use in fortifieds – you don't need trellising or wires, it can just grow as a bush. A lot of wine was grown for medicinal purposes. And in the early part of the century there were big temperance movements. I'm from a long line of Methodist ministers and growing grapes was justified when it was for medicinal purposes! (Matthew, 5 December 2012)

The very same old vines that are currently celebrated as embodying quality and distinctiveness were, earlier in their lifespans, the source of grapes used in fortified wines and bulk blends, their productivity celebrated in terms of quantity of yield and sugar content (for conversion to alcohol) rather than any special or distinctive sensory properties. Many older growers remain ambivalent towards grape varieties like Grenache that were initially favoured for this bulk production; despite McLaren Vale's reputation for producing excellent Grenache, some of my informants maintained a lingering belief in the inferiority of these grapes for good quality table wines.

In Australia, the years following World War II saw the beginning of an upward trend in wine drinking. Table wines in particular underwent a revival, spurred by increasing migration from southern Europe, the emergence of a culture of restaurant dining (and drinking wine with meals), and, during the 1960s, changes to licensing regulations for hotels and restaurants (Santich 1998: 151). In McLaren Vale, such changes in domestic consumption patterns had deep impacts on the social, economic and spatial relations of winegrowing.

As table wines became more popular, so did the notion of visiting vineyards and wineries for pleasure. Alfie, an ex-winemaker and well-respected 'elder' of the Vale, recalled that much of

the early 'wine tourism' in the 1960s and 70s stemmed from the proximity of the Vale to the city of Adelaide and thus the ability for indulgent midweek day trips to the region:

That was a very interesting era - business in Adelaide was much more relaxed than it is now. And business people would invariably take a little bit of relaxation in the middle of the week, and they would go and have a game of golf, or have an extended lunch, or in our case they would come and visit their friendly winemaker at McLaren Vale and taste a few wines, and arrange to purchase a small barrel or a 44 gallon drum of wine to be taken back to Adelaide and bottled up. That was the era when home bottling was very, very much in vogue. (Alfie, 12 April 2012).

In the 1960s and 70s, a host of new winery enterprises began to operate in McLaren Vale. These were generally smaller than the 'old guard' of established wineries, and focused production largely on table wines for the Australian market. While many of these businesses were founded by people with family histories as grape growers, winemakers or other agriculturalists in the district, others were established through investment by city professionals and businesspeople. Yet others were founded by so-called 'new Australians', post-war immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who, having settled and worked in the Vale as agricultural labourers, were now in the financial position to own their own vineyards and winery businesses. Many of the new wineries of the 60s and 70s have grown to be part of the Vale's 'establishment', as this period of industry and growth is seen by some to mark the modern rebirth of the Vale as both a wine production and tourism district, and their founders are now counted among the elder statesmen of the region. The use of the masculine term is deliberate: while the numbers of female viticulturists, winemakers, and company executives is gradually growing, the wine establishment in McLaren Vale—as elsewhere—remains a largely masculine domain.

Despite increased domestic consumption of wine, fuelled both by the changing drinking culture of consumers and supply-side changes in winery ownership models, marketing and technological innovations like the introduction of the 'bag in a box' wine cask, by the mid-1980s the Australian wine industry was in poor shape. Overproduction was an issue, as

Australian wine struggled to find export markets – indeed, in the late 1970s and early 80s, Australia was a net importer of wine (Anderson, K & Osmond 1998a: 12). In South Australia, the State Government intervened to remedy this overproduction, and in late 1985 introduced a compensation scheme encouraging grape growers to grub up their vines and shift production to other crops (Barrett 1989). The Vine Pull Scheme operated from 1 January to 30 May 1986, clearing 2,350 ha of vines in South Australia and greatly reducing grape production. In the Southern Vales (now the McLaren Vale GI), 41 growers were compensated a total of \$900,000 for the removal of 310 ha of vines (Barrett 1989: 186). The vines that were targeted for removal were largely red varieties, and particularly Grenache and Shiraz which, at the time, fetched lower prices than white varieties like Riesling and Chardonnay (James Halliday Wine Companion 2015).

Through the scheme, the total vineyard area of Grenache and Shiraz in the Southern Vales was reduced by 24% and 20% respectively (Barrett 1989: 188). However, it is these varieties that are now considered most representative of the region. According to many of my informants, the vineyards that were grubbed up were often those containing the ‘less productive’ old vines which are now so revered as the source of high-quality red wines—though of course it is in part the greater rarity of these old vines which now serves to increase their prestige and commensurate exchange-value. The decimation of old vines is now seen by many growers as an act of officially-sanctioned vandalism against South Australia’s vineyard *heritage* as much as a poorly-conceived economic move. In the short term at least, the Vine Pull Scheme of the 1980s seemed to ease financial pressures on remaining growers, although Barrett concludes that the welfare impact of the scheme “appears to have been quite limited” (Barrett 1989: 189). In hindsight, my interviewees tended to regard the scheme as a prime example of interference by a government looking for a ‘quick fix’ to market fluctuations without proper consideration of potential ramifications. In particular, the scheme had failed to predict the

spectacular rise in the fortunes of Australian wine that was to take place from the mid-1980s onwards.

Mergers and acquisitions among Australian wine companies since the late 1970s led to a dominance of the industry by large firms and conglomerates who were able to invest heavily into technical research and development, brand promotion, and the creation of extensive networks of distribution (Anderson, K & Osmond 1998a: 13-14). These firms were able to source and blend large quantities of grapes from across various Australian wine regions; this meant that they were able to produce for export great volumes of wine at a consistent quality. As Osmond and Anderson note, “the production of large volumes of low-end premium wine that used grapes from several regions, so as to ensure little variation from year to year, suited perfectly the large UK supermarket customers” (Anderson, K & Osmond 1998a: 14); when in the mid-1980s this British demand for cheap wine of consistent quality aligned with a devaluing of the Australian dollar, Australian wine exports took off.

The rapid rise in overseas popularity for Australian wine in the late 1980s and early 1990s was accompanied by a rise in grape prices as growers struggled to keep up with demand, especially for the Chardonnay and Shiraz favoured by British consumers. In 1993 the Federal Government changed income tax laws to introduce an accelerated depreciation provision for vineyard developments, thus promoting vast new grape vine plantings to feed the booming export market (Anderson, K & Osmond 1998b). In McLaren Vale, large areas of land previously devoted to grain cropping and other types of farming was planted to wine grapes. But just as the Vine Pull Scheme’s short-term successes in the 1980s were soured by a turn in the market, so too was the federal taxation scheme to increase vineyard area, as an urgent demand for more grapes quickly turned into oversupply. As with the ‘boom’ period, several factors came together to create an extended ‘glut’ situation which has since 2004 forced many growers to sell their crops at low prices, sometimes below the cost of production. Alongside the

introduction of accelerated depreciation of vineyard assets, which prompted managed investment schemes to plant huge swathes of vines, a 2011 report by the Wine Grape Council of SA highlights a number of other factors that came together to trigger a “perfect storm” for the industry in 2004 (Wine Grape Council SA 2011: 3). These include growing competition from Chile, Argentina and South Africa, all countries with lower production costs; the strong grip on the UK market by supermarket chains Sainsbury’s and Tesco’s, “such that Australian producers were unable to increase prices to compensate for currency appreciation and annual increases in UK wine taxes”; negative media about Australian wine; and the soaring popularity of New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc (Wine Grape Council SA 2011: 3). During my fieldwork, winegrowers regularly expressed cynicism towards government intervention (or interference) in what they saw as the ‘natural’ boom-and-bust cycles of the market:

The wine industry is no different from any other industry – whenever a government gets involved, that’s the time to get out! I think the government should stick to hospitals and roads, keep their bureaucracy out of it. In the ‘90s they [the Federal Government] introduced the accelerated depreciation scheme—a tax write-off—which encouraged huge new plantings, and that’s what caused the current glut. There were all sorts of managed investment schemes set up that are now failing. When a government weighs in and tries to influence the market, it can have huge ramifications. In the wine industry people are used to being fairly stoical. Country people are like that. If you knew what my ancestors went through... We’re at the mercy of nature, and the boom-and-bust economic cycles. Governments don’t understand that. They say ‘This time it’s different!’ I think it’s hardwired into peoples’ brains to be overly optimistic. (Grace, 23 October 2012)

In McLaren Vale, producers generally accept that ‘feast and famine’ are unavoidable cycles of winegrowing; nevertheless, there are always concerns as to the fluctuating power imbalance between winemakers and grape growers. In an oversupplied market, growers become ‘price-takers’ rather than price setters; this is especially the case when growing grapes for low-cost, blended commodity wines that are largely undifferentiated by provenance, as large corporations can source fruit from across broad geographical areas, using technologically-advanced and cost efficient procedures to manufacture huge volumes of wine marked by a *consistency* of quality (i.e. homogeneity) rather than qualitative difference and distinctiveness.

The Australian wine boom beginning in the late 1980s was, to a large extent, driven by the ability of the industry to supply good wine of consistent quality at extremely low prices to its export markets; the subsequent downturn from 2004 onwards shows that this was simply not economically sustainable.



Figure 9. 1960s-era bottles of Hardy's McLaren Vale Hermitage, on display at Hardy's Tintara

Wine and globalisation

Australian wine has, through its export success, become synonymous internationally with good-value regional and multiregional blended wine, marketed by varietal (e.g. Shiraz, Chardonnay) rather than by specific geographical provenance as is traditionally the case with most European wines (e.g. Bordeaux, Chianti, Mosel). This has been a double-edged sword: although this image of Australian wine fuelled great export success in lower-priced wines, its hegemony has made it difficult for other representations of Australian wine to gain traction.

Australian wine is frequently invoked by European observers as the polar antithesis of 'authentic' wine—as a manifestation of place and community—that is often ascribed to 'Old World' wines. The English philosopher Roger Scruton, for example, describes his 'fall' into a lifelong love of wines - sparked by an encounter with a bottle of Château Trotanoy 1945 - in terms of an immediate connection to the place embodied in the French wine:

I was about to fall in love – not with a flavour or a plant or a drug but with a hallowed piece of France. That bottle ... contained a glinting, mahogany-coloured liquid, an intoxicating aroma, a subtle and many-layered flavour, but also something more precious than all of these, summarized in the ancient and inscrutable names of Trotanoy, the château, and Pomerol, the place. I was overwhelmed by the sense of this drink as a distillation of a place, a time and a culture. (Scruton 2009: 12)

In contrast to this highly romantic vision of French wine, Scruton views what he sees as the placelessness of Australian wine with a snobbish disdain, speaking of "the serried ranks of beefy Chardonnay and gay Shiraz ... the million-strong armies of bottles that clank their way to the city, on the first leg of their journey to nowhere, from the nowhere they have been made" (Scruton 2009: 82).

The 'nowhere' of these Australian wines to which Scruton refers is often the vast inland plantings of the Murray-Darling basin in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, where seemingly endless vineyards are spray-irrigated with water from the river system. Here thousands of hectares grapes ripen reliably in the relentless Australian sunshine before being harvested by tractor and processed in giant wineries with 'tank farms' resembling oil refineries. This wine is bottled and labelled,¹¹ or shipped in bulk for overseas bottling, and sold at low price in supermarkets and restaurants in the UK, USA and other markets where it competes with other cheap blended wines from Spain, Portugal, Chile, Argentina, South Africa and elsewhere.

¹¹ 'Critter wines', with labels featuring Australian animals, have proven to be very successful in branding Australian wines overseas; Yellow Tail wines, marketed with a stylised wallaby logo, are a well-known example.

Although slowly changing, the pervading foreign stereotype of Australian wine remains that of the 'cheap-and-cheerful' offerings of giant brands like Jacob's Creek (made by Orlando Wines, a subsidiary of Pernod Ricard) and Yellow Tail, rather than that of the small producer making locally-specific wines 'of place'. This is unsurprising, given the sheer success of such mass-produced wines in export markets like the UK and the USA since the beginning of the Australian wine boom in the 1980s. This success came partly as a result of the technological prowess of the Australian industry which, due to its embrace of new technologies and scientific advances, was able to manufacture good, eminently drinkable wine in large quantities for a low price. The success was also a result of clever marketing, which did away with the established hierarchies of knowledge and airs of elitism associated with French wine and did not demand of its consumers any special connoisseurship. Australian wine was approachable: "'Sunshine in a bottle' is what Australia offered Lovely, ripe, affordable grog, labelled simply according to its grape variety as you'd label an apple in the supermarket" (Clarke, O 2004: 9). These wines were often produced from grapes sourced across multiple regions and even multiple states, and labelled under the 'South Eastern Australia' appellation or simply as 'Wine of Australia'.¹² It is such wines that still make up the majority of Australia's exports. The archetypal Australian wine, then, unlike the French wine with its *terroir*, traditions, and complex classification systems does not represent 'place' but rather a placelessness that (depending on orientation) might represent either consistency of quality or soulless homogenisation; efficiency of production or the domination of large and impersonal corporate interests; a democratic lack of pretension or a 'dumbing down' and levelling out of that which is thought to make wine interesting and unique.

It is against this overarching image of Australian wine that individual regions such as McLaren Vale must be considered. Such a stereotyping of Australian wine in general has thus

¹² Wines produced under a 'South Eastern Australia' may be made from fruit sourced across a vast area – the grape-growing regions of South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory.

historically made it difficult for small producers aiming to make high-quality wines reflective of place and 'terroir' to achieve export success. This, according to many, has been detrimental to the overall status of regions like McLaren Vale. Tony, a State Member of Parliament, told me that:

It's hard to break into overseas markets, with the reputation Australian wine has of being 'cheap and cheerful', like Jacob's Creek or Yellowtail or whatever. All of this stuff being flogged off for next to nothing in UK supermarkets really does Australian wine a disservice. And a lot of it is labelled 'South-eastern Australia' – I mean, what does that mean? I hope that a focus on quality will help the wine industry in McLaren Vale absorb some of the pressures of market fluctuations that come with going after a lower price-point. The value of the region is really enhanced by the value of the wine. (Tony, 24 May 2012)

Australian wine's *Strategy 2025* document, published in 1996, set the industry a key target of attaining \$4.5 billion in annual sales by the year 2025 (Wine Australia 1996). This target was surpassed in 2005, 20 years early (Wine Australia 2007). Following this period of rapid worldwide growth, the industry in the mid-2000s began to suffer from the repercussions of a "dramatically altered market environment" (Wine Australia 2007: 2), experiencing a decline in value per litre of domestic and international wine sales. Citing greater global competition, an imbalance between supply and demand, and factors of climate change and water shortage (2007: 2), Wine Australia's strategic *Directions to 2025* document warns against the sustainability of an industry built upon the success of 'sunshine in a bottle':

The factors that drove Australia's success between 1985 and 2005 are no longer dominant nor exclusive. Indeed, many other wine producing countries are now producing consumer-friendly labelling and marketing, promoting the approachability of their winemakers and developing techniques to produce high volumes of affordable, good-quality, fruit-forward wines. (Wine Australia 2007: 10)

Other wine producing countries, in other words, began successfully taking on the Australian industry at its own game. Faced with stagnant export sales and grape oversupply from the mid-2000s onwards, Australian producers and marketers have attempted to reshape the global positioning of Australian wine, shifting their focus towards the top end of the market where qualitative distinction, uniqueness, and authenticity of provenance are prized qualities.

A shift in consumption fashions toward a greater emphasis on diversity in wine and orientation to terroir has allowed smaller producers to gain a greater foothold in this market as was previously the case. With their economies of scale larger winemaking companies have also been able to take advantage, with many of their high-end product lines focusing on single vineyard, small batch, and 'handcrafted' wines.

For the most part, my informants in McLaren Vale believed that the 'globalisation' of the wine industry and trade, involving a sharing of ideas, techniques, diversification of grape varieties, materials and people themselves, was generally a good thing for wine production.¹³ Rather than operating in relative isolation, producers were able to draw influence from (and compete against!) the entire wine world.

The world got much smaller in the nineties. Globalisation has really changed the wine industry. It has improved it, in Australia as well as in the 'Old World'. You have the flying winemakers who will spend time working in Bordeaux at big chateaux, or wherever, and at the same time the success of Australian wines has really forced the French to lift their game. Previously, a lot of the *vin ordinaire* really was very ordinary—they have had to follow the Australian wine industry in a lot of things, observing basic controls in winemaking: not too much water or fertilizer—and the quality has increased. (Harry, 16 October 2012)

There remains, however, a general insecurity within the Australian wine industry—which the economic boom of the 1990s failed to erase—resulting from the historical dominance of European and particularly French wines both in terms of production volume and perceptions of quality. In *Why The French Hate Us*, Mattinson (2007) highlights what is perceived as an ongoing lack of respect afforded to Australia and other 'New World' wine producing countries by a Eurocentric wine establishment seeking to maintain the status quo, that is, the dominance of European wines within global hierarchies of taste and distinction. Tim, a

¹³ Greater global interconnectedness has encouraged South Australian and other 'New World' winegrowers to plant and experiment with a wide number of varieties, developed in various parts of the world. For many 'Old World' producers, however, the globalisation of wine and emphasis on export to new markets has tended to encourage a shift away from traditional 'indigenous' grapes and a focus on so-called 'international' varieties, like Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, that have a very broad consumer appeal. In this respect, my informants often noted that European wines were shifting more towards a 'New World' model of production and marketing, while in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere a shift in the opposite direction was discernible.

viticulturist born and raised in the region but who met his French winemaker wife, Elise, while working abroad, knows that the globalisation of technologies, practices, ideas and people themselves in the wine industry has not necessarily equated to a shift in established hierarchies of value, even among winemakers themselves:

Australian wine is still more or less completely off the radar in France. The French winemakers know it, and know that we make world-class wines—and in many respects they're following us—but to the general population Australian wine isn't worth sneezing at. In Australia we still have a crisis of confidence when it comes to France, there's a culture of deference. I've been to dinners after wine shows and things, where there are international judges present: they've spent the past week tasting great Australian wine, talking about how amazing it is, and then at the end the Australian winemakers will pull out bottles of Burgundy, as though they're proving that they're cultured and educated and know good wine. It's ridiculous, it's madness! (Tim, 15 January 2013)

Decades of industry-driven emphasis on grape varieties (like Shiraz or Chardonnay) rather than on the uniqueness of place is reflected in a persistent insecurity about notions of terroir and quality as they apply to Australian wines. This self-consciousness is compounded by what many winegrowers believe to be a general ignorance among domestic consumers about the importance of terroir to wine. As McLaren Vale viticulturist Toby Bekkers argues, “the strength of large (and often multi-regional) blends, and a focus on grape variety as the hero, have meant that the depth of Australian understanding of regionality and terroir has been somewhat obscured” (Bekkers 2012: 61).

One important realm for the ‘education’ of wine consumers about the McLaren Vale wines, and the relationship of place to particular wine qualities, is wine tourism. The globalisation of the wine industry is closely related to the globalisation of wine tourism. Although each wine-producing region is unique in its own right, however, contemporary wine tourism is in many ways fairly standardised. The experience of the wine tourist involves visiting numerous winery ‘cellar doors’ across a region, participating in semi-structured and quasi-ritualistic ‘tastings’, purchasing bottles of wine to take away, eating at restaurants featuring local produce and dishes, and often staying at quaint bed and breakfasts or other appropriately cosy or rustic

lodgings (see Claridge 2010; Gmelch & Gmelch 2011: for discussion of wine tourism in South Australia and Napa, California, respectively). McLaren Vale is a popular destination for tourism of this kind, particularly as its proximity to Adelaide means that it is suitable for day trips for city residents. During my fieldwork I spoke to many tourists visiting from Adelaide, other parts of Australia, and abroad. It was clear that most of these visitors to the region conceptualised it *as* a wine region (as opposed to some other kind of space) and in doing so spoke about it with reference to other wine regions that they had visited or knew about (Barossa, Yarra Valley, Chianti, Sonoma). Rather than relating their experiences of McLaren Vale to nearby Victor Harbor, for example, these people would compare the region to others on the other side of the world that, sharing the 'wine region' category, were thought of as closer parallels.

MacCannell (1973: 597) suggests that "touristic consciousness is motivated by its desire for authentic experiences". What makes wine tasting in McLaren Vale an 'authentic' experience, then, given the relatively homogeneous nature of most of the activities associated with global wine tourism? For the winegrowers I worked with and the tourists I spoke to, these activities were authentic because they took place in an emplaced context, within the landscape of McLaren Vale itself. By standing amongst the vineyards, gazing upon the particular configuration of hills, vines and trees, old farm buildings and winery sheds, tourists came to 'consume' the place of McLaren Vale, in much the same way as other touristic places are consumed (Urry 1995).

There is another way that tourists in McLaren Vale consume place, however, and that is in a very literal sense, through consuming the wine of the region. At cellar doors, servers pour samples of wine for visitors, guiding them through the process of tasting by explaining where the grapes were grown, facts about the vineyard geology and vineyard management techniques (for example, organic, biodynamic or minimal-irrigation viticulture), processing and storage technologies, and flavour profiles that the consumer should expect to taste

themselves. A great emphasis is placed upon each wine's distinctiveness, often discussed in terms of terroir. The history of the winery and of the region, the particular soils and microclimate of the vineyard, and the specific approaches taken by winemakers are all described as contributing objectively to the 'sense of place' of the wine, and tasting rooms are often decorated with historical pictures, informative maps and vineyard diagrams providing further information about the local specificities of place. In this respect terroir is highlighted and foregrounded in the discourses of wine tourism, and many winegrowers and winery staff are explicit in a mission to educate tourists as to the intricacies of place as they relate to the wines of McLaren Vale.

In valorising the specificities of place that mark McLaren Vale wines and attempting to instil in consumers a terroir perspective, wineries actively attempt to counter the 'negative' associations of much modern Australian wines (those of placeless, mass-market globalisation) with a narrative of authenticity and emplacedness, even as this occurs through a process—modern wine tourism—which is itself globalised, translatable from region to region and even from country to country. The authenticity of wine tourism comes not from the outward performance of activities like cellar door wine tastings, but rather through the internalised consumption of terroir: by drinking wines 'of place' within the landscapes and places that produced them.



Figure 10. Winery tour, Fox Creek Wines

Conclusion

The ways people in McLaren Vale represent the region—and themselves—are shaped in part by their own emplaced experiences (as I explore in later chapters), but these experiences are also influenced by broad global trends. Grape growing and winemaking in McLaren Vale primarily a commercial activity directed towards the production of wine as a saleable commodity, and production practices (and changes to these practices) rely to a large extent on the existence of a receptive consumer market. Many or most of the changing trends in wine production throughout the history of McLaren Vale can be directly related to broader currents of influence. At a national level Australia's position in the pantheon of wine producing countries has seen undulating changes and fluctuations. It is within the context of a history of shifting circumstances—economic depressions, recessions and booms, export issues, climatic

cycles, production gluts, and the changing fashions and tastes of wine drinkers—that we must view current efforts to promote McLaren Vale as a ‘quality’ wine production region.

In discourses of regional distinctiveness, terroir, sustainable agriculture, etc., McLaren Vale has like many other regions recently attempted to distinguish itself from the ‘placelessness’ which has been said to exemplify Australian wines. But this has not always been so, as at various points in time the wine industry in McLaren Vale has oriented itself to service other consumer demands, including the British Empire’s desire for wine from its own colonies, tastes for strong fortified wines (including for medicinal purposes), demand for local table wines from new European migrants, and the more recent British, North American and Asian interest in reasonably-priced Australian wines. Local wine production in the Vale has always been embedded in broader global processes, from economic and trade cycles to the worldwide ruptures in grape growing and wine production caused by the vineyard pest phylloxera. South Australian vineyards have been untouched physically by phylloxera; I have argued that it is this very evasion of the pest that has worked to provide a significant point of distinction to the State’s wines. The activities of local winegrowers in McLaren Vale, their outlooks and philosophies, and the way they talk about their work, their wine and the region, is always shaped (to a greater or lesser degree) by an awareness of and interaction with the world beyond their local place, as well as the immediacy of direct experience. In the next chapter, I will address the ways ‘being local’ is constructed and understood by McLaren Vale residents themselves, at the nexus of these interwoven currents of activity and influence.

Being and becoming local

So far, we have investigated some of the regional and global processes and influences that have shaped the lived experiences of local people in McLaren Vale, and their shared imagining and construction of their region. But when we talk about local people in McLaren Vale, to whom are we referring? Over the course of my fieldwork people regularly gave me their own definitions of what it meant to be local, that is, to belong in the Vale. This was seen as a crucial part of defining the region itself. In this chapter I address questions of the construction and embodiment of locality in McLaren Vale: who is considered authentically local, who is not, and why?

Traditionally, anthropology has been concerned with illuminating the lives of and giving voice to the people local to a particular village or region, that is, those that dwell in that place and are regarded as *being of or belonging to* the place. Implicit in many studies—including most of the classic ethnographic texts of the discipline, with Evans-Pritchard's (1940) description of 'Nuerland' a frequently cited example—is the seemingly natural correlation of distinct cultures with clearly-delineated geographical territories or homelands. As Gupta and Ferguson put it,

Representations of space in the social sciences are remarkably dependent on images of break, rupture, and disjunction. The distinctiveness of societies, nations, and cultures is predicated on a seemingly unproblematic division of space, on the fact that they occupy "naturally" discontinuous spaces (Gupta & Ferguson 1992: 6).

Alongside other often taken-for-granted assumptions of anthropology, the assumption that separate cultures are able to be unproblematically 'mapped' onto groups of people in particular places has been criticised in much of the literature of the past few decades. Prompted by a great acceleration in the flows of people, goods, information, and capital that mark our present, globalised world (Inda & Rosaldo 2002), many authors have sought to problematise these ways of conceptualising culture. Those warning against the reification of

social forms and of the connections between people and place as fixed and natural speak instead of a 'dislocated' world in which "Modernity tears the spatial orbit of social life away from the confines of locality" (Inda & Rosaldo 2002: 8). The profound reorganisation of time and space that globalisation entails (see, for example, Giddens 1990; Harvey 1989), has led to a postmodernity (or 'supermodernity', to use Augé's terminology) in which the experience of a contained "society precisely located in time and space" (Augé 1995: 21)—what Augé refers to as 'anthropological place'—is no longer relevant, if it indeed ever was.

Place, however, persists. Despite ongoing documentation of highly accelerated spatial dislocation, the capitalist 'annihilation of space by time' originally predicted by Marx (Harvey 1989), and the increased flux and flow of a 'liquid modernity' (Bauman 2000), recent anthropological work has shown that the sense of place has lost none of its value to people, even in late modern, post-industrial societies that are spatially dominated by the *non*-places discussed by Augé (1995) – shopping malls, airports and motorways. Humans are place-making creatures, and through our being in the world, through the mundane day-to-day tasks of living and experience of the spaces and landscapes that we inhabit, we are in fact ever engaged in ongoing processes of emplacement (Relph 1976; Sack 1997; Tuan 1990). Trends toward spatial homogeneity and the liquidity of culture in the postmodern world appear to be at odds with such ongoing significance of place. These are not incompatible tendencies, however, and the argument has been made that "as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, *ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient" (Gupta & Ferguson 1992: 10).

It is perhaps a postmodern 'overabundance' of space and time that ensures that places retain importance for many people, as repositories for memories, emotions and values, loci of longing and belonging. As Casey argues, "The more places are leveled down, the *more*—not the less—may selves be led to seek out thick places which their own personal enrichment can

flourish” (Casey 2001: 685). In McLaren Vale, the continual flow of capital, people, goods, and information that marks diffuse processes of globalisation can be seen to coexist with an enduring salience of place among the people who dwell in the Vale. In this chapter I will explore the ways in which a shared sense of local identity is forged and negotiated among individuals within this complex and ever-shifting context. I will focus in particular on what I consider to be three important overlapping facets of local identity or ways by which people might be thought of as ‘local’ in the Vale: firstly, an entrenched history in place, especially over multiple generations; secondly, community participation and cooperation; and thirdly, involvement, and especially the intimate involvement of manual labour, in farming, winemaking and other agricultural work.

To illuminate the processes of being and becoming local in McLaren Vale, I will turn my attention to two case studies through which these three facets of locality can be seen. The first is that of the many Italians who have migrated to the region from the end of World War II onwards. For these migrants, many of whom were farmers and agricultural labourers in Italy, adapting existing knowledge and skills to work in the fields, vineyards and orchards of the new country enabled them to develop strong connections to place, quickly becoming entrenched in social networks that reached out into the broader local community. The second case is that of the well-known winemaker, Greg Trott, who died in 2005. As an outspoken ‘champion’ of the district he personified the Vale for many, and actively fostered a sense of community cohesion through his involvement in a number of projects, including the establishment of the Southern Vales Wine Co-operative for grape growers, and the McLaren Vale Bushing Festival, an ‘invented’ tradition marking the release of the new season’s wines and based on mediaeval European festivals. Firstly, however, I will provide a brief overview of the ways local identity is framed in McLaren Vale, that is, the ways people in the Vale deploy shared narratives of locality, which claim certain shared characteristics.

Defining locality

During my fieldwork I was often told that, as a region, McLaren Vale possessed certain social characteristics that differentiated it from neighbouring areas: Adelaide and its suburbs to the north, 'over the range' or 'down south' in the pastoral areas of the Fleurieu Peninsula, or other South Australian wine regions like the Barossa Valley and Clare Valley. For my informants there existed a particular collective identity in the Vale as against other regions, and this was described according to a shared narrative that privileges certain sets of values, dispositions and behaviour. These include, generally, a celebration of values that are held to be embodied in small, face-to-face agrarian communities (see, for example, Tonnies & Loomis 1957; Williams, R 1973): a strong sense of community solidarity, a focus on cooperation and mutual support, respect for history of the region and for its 'elders', and a respect for farming, agriculture and hands-on work. The 'real people' in McLaren Vale were romanticised as archetypal country folk: hard-working and honest, unpretentious, practical, laid-back and irreverent.

Being in such close proximity to the city, however, McLaren Vale's identity was often said to reflect the 'best of both worlds': the community-minded small town values operating in tandem with a cosmopolitan outlook and openness to the outside stemming from the influence of the city.¹⁴ Several people told me that McLaren Vale was a very 'progressive' region relative to others in its broad support of environmentally sustainable winegrowing and other agricultural practices, and openness to change. A self-assessment program designed to enable viticulturists to monitor environmental, social and economic sustainability of their practices (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2015d; Santiago-Brown 2014), a reclaimed water scheme servicing the Willunga Basin (Willunga Basin Water 2015), and the

¹⁴ The relationship between 'city' and 'country' is often a fraught one, a subject which I will explore in Chapter Six.

widespread popularity of organic, biodynamic and other forms of ‘more sustainable’ agriculture were often pointed to as examples of the Vale’s socially and environmentally progressive attitude relative to other wine regions.

Locals generally framed McLaren Vale’s shared ‘identity’ in a positive light, but some of my informants would highlight what they saw as negative social characteristics of the Vale: the NIMBYism of hobby farmers and ‘tree-changers’ from Adelaide and elsewhere who have moved to the region in search of a countryside idyll, as well as the political-economic dominance of certain large business interests.¹⁵ The somewhat ‘cliquey’ nature of the wine industry and the perceived self-importance and arrogance of ‘wine people’ was also often raised, even by growers and winemakers themselves. The following quote is from Josh, a winemaker who grew up and lives in the southern suburbs of Adelaide:

I’m not from McLaren Vale and I found that outsiders are not really made to feel very welcome—and that was the same for my boss, who came from the Hunter [Valley, in New South Wales]. Don’t get me wrong, McLaren Vale is a great place—it’s a really contained, dense wine community which we are very separated from in the suburbs. There’s all the stuff like everyone going around with purple hands at vintage. But the flipside of that is that there’s a cool clique there that is quite exclusive. There are a lot of people that are just full of themselves—knob ends. Wankers that think they’re rock stars. (Josh, 4 February 2013)

Mary, who works in Adelaide but remains involved with the management of a winery founded by her family, told me that “winemakers like to talk, it’s an industry with a lot of bullshit. You know, the wine wank thing... Because there’s so much mystery and mystique around wine, there can be a real cult of celebrity around winemakers” (11 December 2012). This view of some winemakers as elitist and unrepresentative of the community in the region as a whole was also, unsurprisingly, often expressed by locals not associated with the industry.

In a conversation about my research in the front bar of the Victory Hotel at Sellicks Hill with a group of tradesmen and fishermen, I was told that ‘wine people’ were not authentic locals at

¹⁵ NIMBY is an acronym for ‘Not In My Back Yard’, used as a pejorative against people who oppose development for selfish reasons as they believe it will diminish their own privileged ‘quality of life’.

all, contrary to the promotion of the area as a wine region: “Remember to talk about the real people... the real locals, the beer drinkers, not the yuppies!” (Shane, 13 April 2012). Here, wine as an elite ‘yuppie’ drink is set against beer, the drink of real, working-class locals. ‘Drinking cultures’ are often permeated with notions of class and distinction, and wine is often linked to ideas of cultural capital and privilege (Bourdieu 2010; Wilson, TM 2005). Acutely aware of this, many winegrowers in McLaren Vale were at pains to stress their own egalitarianism, unpretentiousness, and credentials as ordinary folk or ‘real people’: “it takes a lot of beer to make a good wine” was a phrase I heard on several occasions, and several of my informants told me that they were uncomfortable with the aspects of status, luxury, and hierarchies of knowledge and cultural capital associated with wine. Embedded in ideas of ‘authentic’ locality were a distaste of the snobbery seen as inherent to the world of wine.

Despite local claims of ‘openness’ and ‘inclusiveness’, McLaren Vale itself was often described as being threatened by various outside influences. These include (but are not limited to) the threat of suburban housing development on agricultural land; the associated incursion of people that are assumed to lack the necessary appreciation for farming and agriculture into the area; land buy-up and business predation by large wine companies and (especially) foreign interests; and externally-imposed tax regimes and economic trends. As Lovell (1998: 4) points out, to classify and define locality and belonging is also to construct boundaries, as “The ‘local’ is conditioned into being, and evoked into existence through the necessity of creating an ‘other’”. It is an act of exclusion of those who do not belong. The narrative of locality in McLaren Vale sets up a number of groups as ‘others’, including residents of suburban areas, transitory labourers such as the groups of new migrants and refugees who are employed in vine pruning and grape harvesting, doctors and lawyers from the city who invest in vineyards and wineries, ‘tree-changers’ seeking a lifestyle shift, and so on. While McLaren Vale people are said to have a lot in common with those in other wine regions in South Australia, these are also subject to ‘othering’. This is especially the case with respect to the Barossa Valley, another

warm-climate region known for quality red wine production and thought of—particularly due to its stronger profile outside South Australia—as in many ways a ‘big brother’ to McLaren Vale. While there are many social and economic links between McLaren Vale and the Barossa, during my fieldwork Barossa people were sometimes stereotyped as inward-looking, exclusionist, and resistant to change, traits often attributed to the Germanic social history of the region, settled as it was by Lutherans from Prussia and Silesia during the nineteenth century.



Figure 11. Grain cropping, Aldinga

Histories in place

Unsurprisingly, individual and family histories play a large part in perceptions of locality in McLaren Vale. Locality is not only being in place, but being in place over time. ‘Elders’ (as they are often called) like the late Greg Trott, as well as those still alive and active in the community, including Colin Kay, D’Arry Osborn, Alec Johnson, and others are held in great esteem for their embodiment of locality:

They are extremely well respected, because they seem to carry with them the history of the region. They are a ‘brains trust’, a reference point. They’ve lived through

droughts, natural cycles, hardship, different economic phases, and they have a wisdom that can only come through experience. (Peter, 17 April 2012).

Locality may also be generational, and those whose families can be traced over several generations in the region are often thought of as more authentically local due to this history. Kurna Aboriginal people—whose traditional homelands include the Adelaide Plains and northern Fleurieu Peninsula, encompassing McLaren Vale—are perhaps, by this metric, the most ‘local’ of all.

Traditionally, Kurna society was organised into smaller units called *yerta*, and further divided into individual family groups which occupied defined territories known as *pangkarra*. These tracts of land were inherited along patrilineal lines; while the Kurna people led a semi-nomadic life of firestick farming, hunting and fishing, it is important to note that a form of individual/family property ownership did in fact exist (Hemming 1990; Woerlee 2000). British colonisation resulted in significant displacement of Aboriginal people, who became resettled on various mission settlements and reserves around South Australia from 1850 onwards (Santich 1998: 24). This large-scale resettlement saw a depopulation of local Aboriginal people in the McLaren Vale area; more broadly, the language of the Kurna people became defunct.¹⁶ (Amery 2000; Edwards & South Australian Museum 1972; Kurna Warra Pintyanthi 2013) Santich notes that throughout the nineteenth century in the McLaren Vale area local Aboriginal people were employed for harvest work (Santich 1998: 24); older informants remember groups of Aboriginal workers from other areas—likely Ngarrindjeri from the Lower Lakes and Coorong areas—undertaking seasonal vineyard work in the 1940s: “There was a group of them who did picking at Tatachilla at vintage. When they came for vintage the kids went to school here as well” (Cedric, 14 December 2012).

¹⁶ However, language revival and reclamation work and education, based on vocabulary and grammar recorded by Lutheran missionaries Schürmann and Teichelmann in the mid-nineteen century, is currently being undertaken (Amery 2000; Kurna Warra Pintyanthi 2013)

Presently, relatively few Aboriginal Australians live in McLaren Vale, and through my fieldwork I did not meet anybody in the region who identified as a Kurna person. Aboriginal relationships to land, however, remain significant in the narratives of non-Indigenous locality. Informants frequently framed their own connection to the land with reference to a consubstantiality of person and place that marks Aboriginal conceptions of being (Ingold 2000: 113). As Lachlan, a viticulturalist and winemaker who operates a small organic winery, told me: "I was born into a grape growing family and grew up here. It's what I know, it's home. This place is in my veins. It's almost a blackfella thing" (Lachlan, 11 April 2012). Here, Lachlan compares his own deeply-felt relationship with place as mutually constituted—where he is *part* of the place and the place is part of him—with Aboriginal Australian relations to country, often invoked by my informants as an ideal model of authentic locality and belonging wherein the relationship of people to their landscapes of dwelling is viewed as mutual 'stewardship' rather than mastery.¹⁷ Other white South Australian vigneron have drawn upon Aboriginal concepts in their interpretation of notions of terroir. Allen, for example, reports that in a lecture to the NSW Wine Press Club Clare Valley winemaker Jeff Grossett drew explicit links between 'terroir' and the Kurna 'pangkarra':

Initially, Grosset attempted to explain this untranslatable French word in the frustratingly roundabout way that English-speaking winemakers have been doing for years - by talking about how climate, soil, seasonal and human influences on a vine's environment affect wine flavour, style and quality. But then he took his audience into some very new - or rather, very old - territory.

"Terroir is the French word for what some have known in Australia for thousands of years as pangkarra," said Grosset. "Pangkarra is an Aboriginal word used by the Kurna people who used to live on the Adelaide Plains. It is a word that [like terroir] represents a concept that has no English translation but encompasses the characteristics of a specific place... In essence, a wine has a certain taste not just because of the [grape] variety and vineyard management, but because of its place." (Allen 2003: 48, parentheses in original)

¹⁷ The idealised conception of Aboriginal relationship to place is one of several archetypes that are often invoked by informants to describe their own dwelling in the landscape; other notable tropes are those of the resourceful colonist working to shape the Australian bush, and the European peasant farmer or vigneron, rooted in place through generations of toil on the same land.

Although traditional Aboriginal cosmologies and conceptions of relationship between land and ancestry are ontologically quite different from those of Australians of European descent, it was clear that many of my informants possessed a deep and abiding sense of belonging that they ascribed to the embedding in the landscape of themselves or their families over time. Even winegrowers that had spent portions of their lives living and working abroad often mentioned an abiding connection to McLaren Vale that eventually drew them back 'home':

Although Australia doesn't have the thousands of years of tradition in wine that Europe has, there is still a lot of history here, and a lot of intergenerational knowledge in places like this. There are a lot of family businesses here, and a lot of people who have lived here all their lives and whose families have been here for generations. I mean, I grew up in Old Noarlunga, went fishing up the river, know the coast, know every nook and cranny of the place, every corner of it. (Tim, 15 January 2013)

Claims to an authentic 'locality' stemming from family history over multiple generations in a place are by no means unique to McLaren Vale, and indeed the tendency for people and communities to naturalise their emplacement by making reference to multigenerational connections with places and landscapes can be seen throughout the world.¹⁸ In the context of the European settlement of South Australia, however, family lineages 'in place' are not long ones, stretching to six or seven generations at most: the British colonisation of South Australia only commenced in 1836. Colonial settlement is often seen in terms of the imposition of a spatially decontextualised, alien culture upon a landscape to which it does not 'belong', especially the case when such settlement results in the massive social and cultural rupture and dislocation of the existing inhabitants of the land. Certainly, in South Australia, British colonists aimed to impose preconceived social and spatial systems upon the land with little regard either for the patterns of dwelling of existing Indigenous inhabitants. Viewing the landscape as a blank canvas, a placeless space, the approach taken by settlers was to treat it as material resource or "standing-reserve" (Heidegger 1977) to be shaped and created anew. In South Australia, the aim was to "re-create in one blow an economy and society that had taken at

¹⁸ See, for example, Anderson (1991) for discussion of this process in the construction of modern nationalisms.

least 2,000 years to evolve on the other side of the world. A new landscape was going to be made with startling rapidity” (Williams, MJ 1974: 5).

It is, I will argue, precisely this ‘making’ of the landscape on which many of the narratives of belonging expressed by my informants rely: the ‘locality’ of an old family in the district comes from the activities of the colonists in settling in a new land, clearing the scrub, founding farms and towns, building houses, tilling the land, planting new crops, grazing livestock, and so on. Locality is something that is *enacted* through the constituent tasks of dwelling, (Bender & Aitken 1998; Heidegger 1993; Ingold 1993; Tilley 1994), and built upon with every passing generation, a theme that I will return to later in this chapter.

There are families in the Vale who can trace their history in the region back six or seven generations to these early colonists who first effected what was seen through European eyes as the domestication of a previously ‘wild’ landscape which was until then home ‘only’ to bands of Aboriginal hunter-gatherers. For many of my informants, these old farming families constitute the bedrock upon which the McLaren Vale region is built, and certain family names continue to crop up time and time again in the Vale in conversation, and in the name of properties and roads throughout the district. The importance of family histories in concepts of authentic locality is clearly visible in the way various wineries in the region promote and represent themselves:

McLaren Vale has its roots from Oxenberry Farm; it was here in 1840 in this picturesque green lush valley where Devonshire farmers William Colton and Charles Hewett set up with their respective families to start new lives in Australia. (Oxenberry Farm n.d.)

In 2011, Oliver’s Taranga celebrates 170 years of continuous grape growing and family ownership. This milestone is testament to the people ... and to their stoic passion for the grape, for farming and for agriculture. The picture opposite displays a baby bush vine Grenache vineyard bearing fruit for the first time on the same property worked upon throughout time in the Olivers family history. (Oliver's Taranga Vineyards 2011)

Family histories, especially when linked tangibly to places like houses, wineries and vineyards, operate as reserves of powerful cultural capital that may be drawn upon to enhance claims of

'locality' and legitimacy in McLaren Vale. This sort of history is celebrated in winery marketing and promotional material, as it was in my conversations with informants, and is seen to lend a sense of authenticity to narratives of belonging. Narratives about family histories are especially interesting because they imply the existence of a consubstantial link between person and place that runs deeper than the lifespan of individual people, as though the individual's links to place can be transferred genetically across generations.¹⁹

For many in the district, the length of their family's connection to the landscape can be a source of great pride and a validation of their own sense of belonging:

I'm a fifth generation winemaker, with winemakers on both sides. And, funnily enough, women winemakers: my great great grandmother on my father's side near Port Elliott and my great grandmother on my mother's side at Glen Osmond. But as for McLaren Vale, my people are very new in the district – 1895! The earliest families are names like Ward, Siemens, Ellis, Fields, Aldersey. You still see those names around. Some of the very earliest graves were actually in front of the [Congregational] Church – so underneath where the road is now. I don't know who is there, but there are graves under the road. My mother told me that. You can't find out that information, that's just the sort of local stories that you have to actually know, you have to have been told, that are passed down through the generations. I'm glad we have historical plaques around the town, but we need to keep the folklore. That's the real history, passing down the stories from parents to children. (Grace, 23 October 2012)

We are one of the oldest families in McLaren Vale. It all started in 1839 when my ancestors came out from Scotland. Up there on that hill, where there's a stand of gum trees—that's the family cemetery. There's a marble crypt. There are members of the first, second and fourth generations buried there, from 1847 onwards. I'm fifth generation. (Bob, 23 November 2012)

The fact that the longest family connections to McLaren Vale are also seen as the most significant (the more generations, the more 'authentic' the connection) suggests that such a connection is seen not just to perpetuate through time but to *strengthen* with each passing generation of family members living and dying in the region and working on the land. As the tasks and activities undertaken by previous generations are seen to validate the locality of descendants like Grace and Bob, the emplacement of people in the landscape of McLaren Vale becomes 'naturalised'.

¹⁹ See Gray (2000) for a discussion of 'consubstantiality' of this kind with reference to family farms in the Scottish Borders region.



Figure 12. Slate headstones, Strout Road

Community and Cooperation

The second significant narrative theme in the construction of locality in McLaren Vale is the importance placed on *cooperation*, of the ‘community’ working together for the betterment of the region as a whole. For Peter, as for many others in the Vale, wineries are more than simply an economic force in the region but also markers of community values. Companies based in McLaren Vale, and with strong family and historical connections in the region, are often cherished:

Years ago, when Hardy’s was doing very well, the whole town loved them. They were still a family company and had that great connection to the area, we all felt a part of their success. Then they were sold to Constellation, and of course with those multinational corporations it’s all about the money. For me, actually living in the district and being part of the community is critical. I have an issue with absentee landlords, in all forms of farming – because they don’t have the connection with the land, they don’t have the personal investment in the community. The people that make all the decisions relating to a community should be the people that live here. (Peter, 15 August 2012)

According to most of my informants, despite its proximity to Adelaide, McLaren Vale retains a sense of country-town community that is said to be common to rural areas—the loci of society’s cherished values as opposed to the city and the suburbs (Williams, R 1973) (see Chapter Six)—wherein the residents know one another, help each other out in times of hardship, and generally ‘pitch in together’ to ensure that the needs of the town and the district are met. Interpersonal linkages within the community are very highly valued, and those who are seen to be focused on personal gains at the expense of the ‘best interests’ of the Vale—including some winery and vineyard owners and other businesspeople—are regarded with suspicion and distaste. These people, although they may have lived their entire lives in McLaren Vale, are thought not to reflect the values of community cohesion that are widely and publically expressed, particularly within the wine industry. The McLaren Vale community was often likened to a family, in that despite differences of opinion and personality there existed a deeper underlying bond:

There are lots of people with diverse points of view about a lot of things, but in many ways that doesn’t actually seem to matter. It’s all about how much a part of the community you are. If you’ve been around for a long time, people will tolerate you. There is competition, and there are people that get pissed off with each other, but in general it’s more like the way a family will squabble among itself: there is an overriding sense of cohesion and togetherness. (Peter, 17 April 2012)

People generally work very well together, and I often hear people from other regions saying that about McLaren Vale. There is a great sense of cooperation and cohesion, but still, people will bitch about each other – just like a family. (Lachlan, 11 April 2012)

This cohesion is felt most strongly during times of adversity, and several informants recounted stories of the McLaren Vale community banding together during tough vintages to help out those that were struggling. As one vineyard owner told me:

The community is extremely supportive of one another. They love to get together and celebrate, and also to help each other out. During the 2008 vintage there was an awful heatwave ... right in the middle of harvest, where all the wineries were running at full capacity. There was a mad panic to pick the grapes before they all died on the vine – everyone had to just get the fruit off, and put it somewhere! Everyone helped each other out, lending equipment, bins, everything. Even though we’re competitors we also cooperate. (Michelle, 19 April 12)

During that 2008 vintage, the Wirra Wirra winery was struck by a terrible accident as fifteen huge fermentation tanks collapsed under the weight of their contents, crushing and injuring a young cellar hand (Fewster 2010). In this accident, Wirra Wirra “lost a lot of their wine, and the community just rallied around, lending whatever equipment was needed, manpower, making sure Wirra had the wine to keep rolling along” (Ian, 31 October 2012). While themes of community and cooperation are common in discussions about McLaren Vale, acts of assistance between people who are normally business competitors – such as lending bins, pumps, fermenters and other equipment to ‘rival’ wineries - are particularly salient, especially during difficult times such as precarious vintage periods. It is stories like these that are often invoked by people wanting to highlight the cooperative and supportive nature of the wine industry in McLaren Vale.

Community-mindedness is seen to be a highly desirable trait among locals, and indeed those that move to the Vale from elsewhere are often judged in terms of their ability to ‘get involved’ and ‘become a part of the community’. Some arrivals to McLaren Vale from outside the region have been able to achieve great respect as adopted ‘locals’ due to their perceived social involvement and alignment with values deemed important to the region. When I asked one winegrower why he thought such a strong, shared atmosphere of cooperation existed in the Vale, he told me that it was:

partly historical, possibly because there are more smaller producers and less influence from the big corporates. There are a lot of established and well-respected winemaking families that remain involved in decision-making about the issues that affect the region. There haven’t been many ‘splitters.’ There is a lot of respect for the older generation of winemakers, and generational change has been very successful for the most part. (Lachlan, 11 April 2012)

A cooperative, group-focused orientation that links individual wellbeing to that of the community is often highlighted as a way of differentiating the Vale from other regions in South Australia, particularly other wine regions like the Barossa, where the population are said to be “less cooperative and far more cliquy” than in the Vale (Tom, 11 May 2012). According to one

well-known winemaker, the “sense of community in McLaren Vale is stronger than in any other [South Australian] wine region. Although, in the Riverland there are little enclaves which are really strong in a community sense. But in the Barossa, they have a more closed mentality.” (Andrew, 16 October 2012)

Ideas of community and a ‘country town mentality’ also, importantly, help to mark McLaren Vale as a fundamentally different space to the city and nearby suburban areas of Adelaide, which are said to be ‘impersonal’, alienating, and lacking the sense of social connection and interdependence found in McLaren Vale as an agricultural area. One cellar door worker told me that he was originally from Adelaide but loves the community-minded emphasis of McLaren Vale:

There's a real community and sense of cooperation. People here have the mentality that if something is good for the region as a whole, it's good for them. And as such people get very passionate about things like protecting the agricultural status of the region and the rural amenity, and stopping urban sprawl. (Ben, 28 March 2012)²⁰

Like stories about multigenerational family histories, discourses of community cooperation often form part of a bundle of regional narratives commonly deployed for purposes of branding and marketing. However, stories highlighting the cooperation and community spirit of the Vale were also commonplace in many of my casual conversations with those outside the wine industry. Such stories help to construct both personal and regional identity in the Vale, whether this process occurs at a conscious, reflexive level or rather more unconsciously.

²⁰ See Chapter Six for detailed discussion of the tension between urban and rural land uses and representations.



Figure 13. Winemakers in discussion

Working in place

The third aspect of shared identity that I will explore is the significance of work, and particularly farming work, to narratives of locality. These notions of locality are here closely linked to the activities and tasks of farming, food and wine production: a connection to the landscape is forged through picking and pruning, furrowing the earth, and tending to the vines. In this respect, status as a 'local' is not exclusive to those with particular family ancestries, but instead may be open to all who commit their lives to 'working the land'. Among my informants there was a sense that those who farmed or were otherwise associated with agricultural industries (like wine making) were more 'local' than those who simply resided in the Vale and worked elsewhere, or those who worked in non-agricultural occupations. Similarly, hobby-farmers and those who have bought vineyards as a 'lifestyle' choice or

primarily for investment purposes (the city 'doctors and lawyers' who are so often the focus of local indignation) were rarely considered local in the same sense as those who are seen as 'real' farmers or vigneron.

Working the land, it was suggested, involved a far more intimate connection to place and community than might be the case with respect to other ways of life. Chatting in the vineyard one afternoon with Peter, a winegrower from a local farming family, he told me that he saw the hands-on nature of farming work as particularly crucial to the way people relate to place and to community:

One thing that I think is very important for fostering community in agricultural areas like this is the manual nature of farm work. There used to be more time to do things, and much less mechanisation. People would be doing the work together, side by side, and talking. The bond in sharing a hard day's work is something that is very important to the sense of cohesion in rural communities, whether it's in wine or in the old days when the almond industry was big. There is shared hardship in physical toil. (Peter, 17 April 2012)

This relationship with place felt by farmers is held to be a very strong one. As Tuan (1990) holds, there is a special 'topophilia' or sense of attachment felt by a farmer to their land, relating to their physical labour (see Chapter Five). Although this special connection to place through agricultural work was often attributed to farmers in McLaren Vale, and used by them as a mark of locality, there were some who felt that this reflected a modern romanticisation of farming driven by urban middle classes, a theme to which I will return in Chapter Six. Scott, a winegrower and winery owner from a well-known local farming family, reflected on the importance of this perception of 'farming' in driving narratives of place for tourist consumption:

Three generations ago, everyone [in the city] would have had a cousin that was a farmer, or else they were a farmer themselves. That's not the case now. The perception of farming has changed a lot, and farming itself has been shaped by things like, in this district, the [twentieth century] Italian migration... Non-farmers have a really romantic notion of what farming is, and this is what shapes tourism. It's about being close to the land, having generational connections, respecting the soil, and this is the story that tourism has to sell. (Scott, 11 July 2012)

As well as being a crucial economic driver for the region and source of social cohesion, farming is an important element in narratives of locality. It is given weight by farmers themselves (who see the tasks of agricultural work as tying them to the land in McLaren Vale) and emphasised in representations of the region as a marker of its authenticity, as it is by working in place that local farmers truly dwell in the Vale.

Not all agricultural workers qualify as 'local' only by virtue of working the land, however. Important exceptions include those seasonal or itinerant labourers who visit and work in the Vale temporarily, such as backpackers working the harvest, or work gangs who prune the vineyards during the autumn and winter months, shaping dormant vines with hand-snips to encourage the best fruit development in the upcoming growing season. These pruning gangs are often made up of immigrant and refugee workers from countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Iraq, or Afghanistan organised under a compatriot 'gang boss' who divides the pay among the workers. Usually, they do not live locally but are transported by bus to the Vale from Adelaide in the morning and home again at the end of the day. While they have an economic presence, then, they are removed from the broader social life of McLaren Vale beyond their immediate co-workers and employers. Such people are visible to most locals only as distant figures among the vine rows, the South East Asian workers wearing conical coolie hats and swaddled in layers of clothing against the cold wind and rain. Despite their relegation to the margins of social participation in McLaren Vale, however, some of the farmers and winegrowers I spoke to acknowledged the crucial economic importance of these workers to the region. As Steve, a viticulturist and vineyard manager told me:

Wine regions just wouldn't exist in the way they do now without that immigrant labour. The Laotians work really hard, and I pay them award wage, \$20 an hour.²¹ They travel all the way from Salisbury West [in Adelaide's northern suburbs] and get here at 8 in the morning, work hard for a full day, then go all the way home, have dinner and go to bed. And for them, it's a good life, because there's nobody pointing guns at

²¹ During my fieldwork I heard several accounts of unscrupulous employers underpaying vineyard workers.

them. They're usually farmers themselves, from back home. Displaced persons are the backbone of regions like this. Vietnamese, Afghan.... This is work, sadly, that white Australians just won't do because they think they're above it. It's the same throughout the world. South African wine is run on the labour of the blacks, Californian wine on the Mexicans... (Steve, 14 November 2012)



Figure 14. A Cambodian pruning gang

Italians

Although the labourers described above are rarely considered to 'belong' in McLaren Vale in the same way as do multigenerational farming families, new immigrants moving to the region to work on the land have in some cases been able to *become* local through their involvement in farming and community life in the region. Twentieth-century Italian migrants and their descendants are the clearest example of this. During the nineteenth century, most of South Australia's new settlers came from the British Isles. A large number of German migrants, fleeing religious persecution in Europe, also settled in some parts of the colony, founding townships in the Mount Lofty Ranges, Adelaide Plains and the Barossa Valley (Ioannou 1997). Settlement in the area south of Adelaide, however, was overwhelmingly British. Around McLaren Vale, aside from the new English, Scottish and Irish migrants that settled to farm the land there was an influx of Cornish and Welsh quarrymen who arrived to mine Willunga slate, loaded at Port Willunga onto ships bound for Britain.

The years following World War II saw great demographic change as other Europeans—particularly from Italy, Greece, and Yugoslavia—migrated to South Australia. Many Italians, in particular, settled in the agricultural regions south of Adelaide as farmers, fruit pickers and vignerons, and these people have had a lasting impact on the social makeup of McLaren Vale (King 2004). The Southern European ‘flavour’ of McLaren Vale is often compared to the Germanic heritage of the Barossa Valley: “They’re all bloody Krauts up there! Then again, they probably say we’re bloody wogs down here” (Cameron, vine pruner, 20 December 2012).²²

McLaren Vale’s Italian population is notable not only due to the economic successes of individual Italian migrants and family businesses within the wine industry and the broader social context of the Vale, however; it is also seen by residents in McLaren Vale to be as a reasonably coherent and cohesive ‘community’ in its own right, with strong social links between members and a shared group identity. The Italian community, furthermore, maintains various clubs and associations with a visible presence in the Vale and which play an important symbolic function as markers of ethnic community identity. These include the well-patronised Bocce Club, whose monthly pasta nights were extremely popular with the Italians as well as more broadly amongst other residents. For most of my informants, Italian and non-Italian, displays and celebration of Italian heritage and strong business and personal associations linking Italian families were able to exist comfortably alongside a wider sense of community.

Similarities in climate and landscape between parts of South Australia and areas of Mediterranean Europe have been noted from the earliest days of European settlement.²³ Early settlers in the colony wasted little time in planting the countryside with crops native to the

²² ‘Wog’ is an often-derogatory slang term referring to “a foreigner or immigrant, especially one from southern Europe” (Oxford Dictionaries 2015)

²³ Under the Köppen-Geiger classification system, McLaren Vale’s climate is of type ‘Csb’, a subtropical climate characterised by warm, dry summers and cool, wet winter (Peel, Finlayson & McMahon 2007). This, along with type ‘Csa’, is often referred to as a ‘Mediterranean’ climate.

Mediterranean basin: “wheat, oats, barley, and other grain ... plums, peaches, nectarines, vines, olives, oranges and other fruits common to climates in which these flourish” (Sinnott 1862: 21). It seems to be no accident, then, that so many Italians would end up settling ‘on the land’ in McLaren Vale. The presence of these crops gave the agricultural landscape a degree of familiarity to new arrivals, a great number of whom came from farming backgrounds in Italy. In the words of Maria, a businesswoman born in the Molise region, “in Italy everyone has a garden, everyone’s got a little small vineyard!” (Maria, 7 March 2012).

The region’s sense of ‘familiarity’ in landscape, climate, proximity to the sea, and so on, might be felt most strongly by migrants from certain parts of Italy. This is hinted at by King (2004: 170), who says that, in contrast to the Italians who migrated to the hotter Riverland area of South Australia from other, hotter parts of Italy, “many of the Italians who settled in the Southern Vales come from the slightly cooler climates of Abruzzo and the hills of Frosinone in Lazio”. One Italian-Australian grower and winemaker told me that his father migrated from a fishing town in Abruzzo, on the Adriatic coast of central Italy:

It was a fishing town but at the same time everyone had vineyards, everyone grew vegetables – everyone did everything. In McLaren Vale, the beaches, the location between the hills and the sea, the climate is very similar to where he came from – that might be part of the reason he settled here. He fell in love with the area. (Leo, 16 January 2013)

The values and skills of the Italian migrants allowed many families to flourish economically. According to Cristina, a main-street business owner with close personal links to the Italian community in the Vale,

There are about 500 people, 124 families, who came from regions like Abruzzo, Campagna, Veneto. These people came over to Australia and basically wanted to keep doing what they were doing back home – farming, growing fruit, making wine – because it’s what they knew. They’re peasants. And because of the work ethic and knowing how to do everything from scratch they have become very successful here. People here call them the ‘McLaren Vale Mafia’ because the Italians basically own all the main street. (Cristina, 20 March 2012)

The 'peasant' background of many Italian migrants, their perceived ingenuity, self-reliance and business acumen, and orientation towards family and community, is widely and openly admired by many non-Italian residents in the Vale. Many Italians I spoke to, however, told me that they had experienced barriers to acceptance and racism in the past – particularly in the decades following World War II, when many Italians migrated to Australia:

Being an Italian in the Vale in the early days was very much an 'us and them' mentality. Racism was quite strong – I was at McLaren Vale Primary School and at that stage I was the only Italian in my class. There's a similar thing recently with the Vietnamese, but I think these days people are a bit more conscious about what's acceptable. It took a long time for the Italians to be accepted but it's happened, it's definitely a new world compared to how it was in the 50s and 60s. (Leo, 16 January 2013)

While the Italian community are now very much regarded as local in McLaren Vale, then, this was not always the case. Cristina's reference above to the McLaren Vale 'Mafia', although made in jest, is indicative of a certain historical ambivalence felt in Australia towards the close kinship networks, business dealings and perceived untrustworthiness of Italian immigrants, and resentment towards their successes (Cresciani 2003).

Greater acceptance of the Italians as insiders in the Vale has occurred alongside a popular romanticisation of 'Mediterranean' and 'peasant' ways of agricultural life that such migrants supposedly embody. Many of my non-Italian informants expressed an admiration for the virtues of such a 'lifestyle', emphasising small-scale mixed-use farming, family and communal celebrations, artisanship, and eating and drinking together. The links between wine, food, landscape and sea were given great weight:

McLaren is now starting to reflect this [Italian] heritage. People are really associating the area with a 'Mediterranean lifestyle' of eating, drinking, community events, and all of that... (Margie, 23 February 2012)

There is a real community ethos. You see that with the Italians, they've built the Piazza.... It is part of the food culture here as well, it's that real southern European thing about getting together and breaking bread. And being near the sea people go fishing, there's great fresh seafood. (David, 1 August 2012)

I'm old enough to remember calling them [the Italians] rude names behind their back, but really we all respected the way they maintained traditions. We would laugh at them walking down the road picking olives but now we all do that too. (Peter, 17 April 2012)

A greater idealisation of such ways of life might be seen to correlate with their broader diminishment due to a trend towards monoculture and mass production that mark a good deal of modern Western agriculture (Ihde 1990). Certainly, the romantic ideal of the Mediterranean agricultural lifestyle is frequently alluded to and utilised in the promotion of McLaren Vale, which often focuses on the supposedly Mediterranean qualities of the Vale's landscape, climate, and food and wine culture. These have become important features of discourse about McLaren Vale more broadly, part of the shared narrative of the region that presented to me in numerous conversations and interviews with a wide range of informants and bolstered by a strategic deployment of such themes in marketing and promotional material.

A significant focal point for the Italian community is a new public square on the main street of McLaren Vale, the Piazza della Valle, which opened in November 2011. This "Italian-style town square," jointly funded by the City of Onkaparinga and local fundraising by the Piazza della Valle Italian Heritage Association, emerged from a "desire to acknowledge the Italian contribution to McLaren Vale and to create a place for the entire community to enjoy" (City of Onkaparinga). All of the local residents that I spoke to, Italian or otherwise, believed that the Piazza was a good thing for the town of McLaren Vale, which previously had no real 'centre' and was generally regarded as lacking beauty.²⁴ As Margie put it, "Look at the main street – let's be honest, it's pretty daggy, pretty crappy. We need things like this to just brighten the place up a bit" (Margie, 23 February 2012).

²⁴ The town of McLaren Vale was formed by the growing together over time of two adjacent villages, Gloucester and Bellevue.

The Piazza is a rectilinear paved space built in a contemporary architectural style, shaded by a roof, and marked with flags and banners bearing the red, white and green of the Italian flag. The Piazza is reached by climbing a couple of short sets of stairs from the footpath, upon which a series of inscriptions describing the journeys of Italian immigrants to McLaren Vale:

We left home with empty suitcases and a dream in our hearts

We said goodbye to hardship, home and family in search of a better future

Fear and anxiety were mixed with the belief that through our toil, we would succeed

Our skills will help build prosperity in our adopted land

The reality of separation - we travelled across oceans from distant lands

This land, between the sea and hills ... just like home

Strangers in a new land, so much to learn and so much to offer

A new life, friends working together

Through adversity and uncertainty we made our dreams a reality

We worked hard for the horse and cart, now we can hand the reins to our children

See the wheat fields, vines, olive and almond trees ... and recognise that we belong

We acknowledge the first people of this land and all who contribute to this community

Our heritage – dreams fulfilled; our legacy – foundations laid; the journey continues

Along the northern edge of the Piazza are four glasswork murals, a series of agricultural, town and sea scenes depicting migrations from Italy to McLaren Vale. Under each of these is a plaque bearing the name of a local Italian family. The area also includes a decorative fountain: a sculpture named 'The Arrivals', depicting a group of people standing on a boat, gazing ahead. The twentieth-century migration stories highlighted by the Piazza Della Valle are an integral aspect to McLaren Vale's regional identity, and indeed echo narratives of earlier British settlement in the South Australian colony. The 'authenticity' of Italian-Australians' locality is not questioned; they are seen to 'belong' in the region every bit as much as residents of British ancestry. Previously, I outlined the importance of activities and tasks associated with settling

and dwelling in the landscape as crucial to a sense of local identity in McLaren Vale, where locality is something not naturally given but rather enacted. The narrative of Italian migration to McLaren Vale depicted at the Piazza and in my conversations with informants is overwhelmingly centred upon manual agricultural labour, and what is seen as its inherent authenticity. McLaren Vale, for the new arrivals, is framed in agricultural terms, with the “wheat fields, vines, olive and almond trees” providing the setting for the toil undertaken by new migrants who had to work hard and skilfully in order to not only survive but to recognise their own belonging; in short, to become local.

The inscriptions and murals at the Piazza make explicit many of the key themes associated with being local in McLaren Vale, including agricultural labour, the importance of family and maintenance of tradition across generations, and the value of cooperation and community solidarity in the face of adversity. The crucial theme here is not one of fixity in time and space, however: ‘belonging’ in McLaren Vale is represented in terms of an ongoing journey. This emphasis on place-making as a *process* is something that is also reflected in attitudes to winegrowing and notions of terroir, as I will explore in Chapter Three.



Figure 15. A public event at the Piazza della Valle

Greg Trott

Looming large in local narratives about McLaren Vale is the figure of Greg Trott, who died in March 2005 at the age of 70. Born into a farming family whose mixed-use farm included orcharding for dried fruit production, poultry farming, and grape vines, it was as a winegrower that ‘Trotty’ made his name. He is remembered with affection and respect as something of a local patriarch and a great champion of the district, especially with respect to the interests of grape growers and other farmers.²⁵ Trott played a key role in establishing the Southern Vales Wine Co-operative, which enabled around two hundred small growers in the region to process their grapes after the large wine company Penfolds withdrew operations from McLaren Vale (Lloyd 1974). In 1969 Greg Trott, along with his cousin Roger Trott, founded the new Wirra

²⁵ Some informants stressed that Greg Trott was in many respects a difficult and flawed character. In this section, however, I do not emphasise the person of Trott himself, but the ‘story’ told about him. I have thus chosen to focus on the positive images of Trott portrayed in shared narratives of the Vale, as a heroic figure emblematic of the modern development of the region.

Wirra winery,²⁶ and he became a leading figure in a great wave of expansion of the local wine industry that saw 26 new wineries established between 1966 and 1979 (Santich 1998: 154).

In the early 1970s Trott, along with a small group of other local wine people including Tony Brooks and David Hardy, instigated a new festival to coincide with the annual McLaren Vale wine show held in October to present the district's new wines and award prizes to the best. Drawing upon mediaeval English and French tradition of fixing ivy bushes over tavern and household doors to indicate that new wine was for sale, the McLaren Vale Wine Bushing Festival, featuring a huge Elizabethan-themed feast and culminating in the crowning of the Bushing King or Queen for the producer of the champion wine, was immediately embraced by the community (Santich 1998: 191-196). Although Bushing continues as a large lunch at which the Bushing King or Queen is crowned, there is great nostalgia for the early days of the Festival: outrageous parties that were completely community-driven events, not yet co-opted by local government or tourism authorities. They took place in the spring time, coinciding with the release of the new season's wine, and involved parades through the main street, Elizabethan-themed feasting, and lots of public drinking and merrymaking:

I think back to the old Bushing Festivals when I was a kid. They were huge events—there was a big parade on the main street, and the Elizabethan Feast—and everybody organised it together, there was no one body to organise it and put it together, like the Grape Wine and Tourism body does now. But things change. The place [McLaren Vale] gets bigger. It has to happen, it's inevitable, but I think it's really important to maintain some of the integrity from that era. You know, to think about what's best for the district as a whole? (Bernadette, 11 December 2012)

Trott believed that it was imperative that McLaren Vale maintain rituals around the annual cycles of viticulture and as such encouraged the initiation of other 'traditions', including the ringing of the 'Angelus bell' at Wirra Wirra to mark the start and end of the vintage period throughout the district (see Chapter Four). To him, such festivities and practices were crucial

²⁶ Wirra Wirra was rebuilt on the site of an earlier winery of the same name (meaning 'amongst the gum trees' in the Kurna language). It was originally built in 1893 by Robert Strangways Wrigley and fell into disuse from the 1930s until redevelopment by the Trotts.

in promoting sentiments of community cohesion and cooperation, and these were tied intimately to the cycles and rhythms of agriculture and to the virtues of agricultural labour.

The Angelus bell was also rung—seventy times—to mark Trott’s death in 2005, and his funeral was remembered by my informants as a moment that brought the entire McLaren Vale community together. The idea of Trott as *embodying* landscape and temporality in McLaren Vale was drawn on by many commentators, including his old friend Tony Brooks: “Trotty was a man of the soil and the seasons. He was born in the Spring, 25th September 1934, a season of new life, of excitement, wonder and adventure. And, like good fruit on the vine, he was taken in Autumn, 5th March during vintage 2005.” (Brooks, epilogue, in Trott, Marsden & Campbell 2008: 271)

A lifelong farmer, a “man of the soil and the seasons”, Trott was buried within his beloved McLaren Vale soil in the Strout Road cemetery, just down Strout road from Wirra Wirra and his family’s farm. Passages from the eulogy read at his funeral by Tony Brooks bear mention, referencing as they do the deep affinity between person and place that Greg Trott was said to personify. Brooks spoke of Trott’s:

passionate love of this beautiful valley, cosseted as it is between the renowned feminine folds of the range and the sea. As he wrote himself in a lovely letter to Tony Parkinson a few years ago: ‘As a small boy returning from boarding school once or twice a term, my young heart always took a leap when rounding the top of Stump Hill and seeing the village in the late afternoon sun with those hills as a backdrop. It was home.’

To Trotty, McLaren Vale became home to body, mind and spirit much as we now understand an aboriginal relationship to country. Maybe a bit more Anglican, because he always thought this bit of the morning Prayer referred specifically to McLaren Vale: In His hand are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of the hills are His also. The sea is His and He made it, and His hands prepared the dry land. (Brooks 2005)

Here, Greg Trott’s relationship to the landscape of his home is given a spiritual dimension, and likened to Aboriginal conceptions of place and being (Trott was a white Australian). Trott is portrayed as someone very much ‘of’ McLaren Vale: embodying and personifying it as a farmer with deep family roots in place, and “a man of great generosity” and community spirit

(AAP 2005). The consubstantiation of Trott's 'body, mind and spirit' with the Vale is emphasised in his stated love for the region, its landscape and community. This is a passion that is said to represent a truly authentic locality, as evidenced by Trott's family history in place, lifetime of work as a winemaker, and deep social engagement as a force for community cohesion. The 'authenticity' of Trott's belonging in McLaren Vale is highlighted in references to Aboriginal relationships to country, which represent an ideal trope of connection between person and place.



Figure 16. A painting by local artist Jen Wright, depicting five of the Vale's 'elders' ringing the Angelus bell

Conclusion

McLaren Vale is at once a localised 'country town', a peri-urban district at the fringes of a metropolis to which it is unavoidably connected in social, cultural, political and economic terms, and a part of the vast and interlinked currents of trade, tourism, migration, and so on

that mark globalised modernity. Local or regional 'identity' is thus not clearly definable, but multifarious and incomplete. While there may be no single determining or unifying factor in narratives of locality in McLaren Vale, however, there are several common themes in the way people in the Vale conceptualise this sense of locality. I have outlined some of the most common of these themes above, namely, family histories tying people to the region; an emphasis on community involvement and co-operation; and an involvement in agricultural activities like farming and winemaking.

In the examples of McLaren Vale's Italian community and the reverence afforded to Greg Trott as a famous local figure, we can identify an interlocking of these themes which, together, may converge to form a picture of an 'idealised' form of McLaren Vale locality. This is a locality that is both inclusive, as over time (such as was the case with Italian migrants) one might *become* local by embodying and expressing local values of community participation and farming work, and exclusive, as certain activities, opinions and perspectives are considered not to align with these norms and values. 'What it means to be local' affects the way people in the Vale think and talk about themselves and their region, framing their interactions with one another and with outsiders. These themes are often drawn upon in the promotion and marketing of businesses within the region, and the region itself, but they also manifest in a more subtle way, providing much of the conceptual framework and language used by people to reflect upon and describe their own identities as locals in the Vale.

Locality in McLaren Vale is, I have argued, constructed through a series of processes involving living in the region over time, participating and cooperating in social and community life, and maintaining an orientation towards agriculture and agricultural work (that is, acknowledging and respecting the Vale as a farming and winegrowing region). This sort of locality is continually being renewed and reinterpreted through ongoing social, economic and political changes. It is not something that *is* but rather something that is performed or enacted, so that

people may only *become* authentically local through the manner in which they dwell in the Vale. In the next chapter I will shift emphasis to examine local understandings of 'place' in winegrowing. Just as peoples' own locality in McLaren Vale is conceived of as processual and dynamic rather than essential and static, I will argue that the place and locality of wine is articulated through notions of terroir that owe more to dynamics of relationality among people, place and produce than to fixed and timeless properties of geographical location.

Placing produce, producing place

There are few agricultural crops whose products are as subtly diverse as those of the grape vine, *Vitis vinifera* This diversity is not only the outcome of differences in geology and climate, but it is also the result of the labour of countless generations of vine growers and wine makers, each set in their own distinctive human context. (Unwin 1991: 1)

The proximity of a vineyard to a forest, a river, a change in altitude, or a variation in wind patterns following the topography of the soil, are all specific factors which each vine expresses in its own way. Each site should manifest its own special qualities. To reinforce the special life of a place is to accentuate diversity and diminish uniformity. But our system of education for wine growers encourages uniformity, as well as to privilege quantity over quality. Yet especially for the vine, special and unique qualities should be enhanced, not destroyed for abstract, theoretical reasons. Each winegrower contains within himself or herself a “difference” which can be transmitted to the vines through his or her actions, presence and consciousness. (Joly 1999: 26, reproduced on a cardboard insert to Noon Wines' cartons)

In the previous chapter I described the special emphasis that is placed on farming and other agricultural work in the construction of a sense of local identity in McLaren Vale. Agricultural labour connects people to the land as well as to each other, a process of emplacement that, over time, binds people and communities to the landscape. The social relations of farming involve not only people and places, however, but also that which is farmed, the objects of production and consumption. This is broadly recognised in winegrowing, where concepts of ‘terroir’ denote the way wine becomes emplaced through the conditions of its production. In McLaren Vale, such ideas are embraced by grape growers, winemakers and consumers; for them, some wine can be thought of as ‘local’, possessing the qualities of specific places in the Vale even as it is exported far and wide beyond the geographical boundaries of the region.

In wine discourse, the notion of terroir has come into broad usage (well beyond its origins in the French language) to describe the relationship between wine and place, in terms of the way in which some wines are said to be invested with a particular ‘taste of place’ that can be linked to specific locales and even to individual vineyards. For wine, at least in the minds of many winegrowers and drinkers, place matters. The geographical location of vineyards and the

complex interplay of environmental processes impinging upon the vines are important elements in grape growing and wine production, as these can impart particular characteristics of flavour, aroma, and other sensory qualities upon the wine (Wilson, JE 1998).

Nearly all winegrowers and commentators agree that 'place', and the emplaced processes of wine production, impinge upon the product in ways that are both sensible to human taste and smell, and empirically observable in the chemical constitution of wines. The mechanisms by which this happens remain somewhat obscure, though, and there is no clear scientific consensus as to what terroir entails. One popular view holds terroir to be the literal taste of certain flavour-bearing chemicals and minerals transferred from underlying bedrock to soils through the vine root system and into the grape. However, some recent research suggests that this is mistaken and there is in fact no direct geochemical influence on wine flavours. As Maltman (2008: 12) puts it,

The notion of being able to actually taste the vineyard geology in the wine—a *goût de terroir*—arises partly through various misunderstandings of geological terminology [for example, 'earthy', 'slaty', 'minerality'] and, presumably, through the sheer romance of the idea ... the proposition is wholly fanciful for a number of reasons and in any literal way is scientifically impossible. (parentheses mine)

So, while the influences of underlying geology on flavour has been observed for centuries with respect to various European wines like Chablis, Moselle or Burgundy, some believe that it is likely that this is not a function of the direct transfer of certain minerals into the wine, but rather a host of other factors. These can include climate and the locally variable mesoclimate, topoclimate and microclimate, soil fertility and waterholding capacity, geological structures, pedology, the 'agronomic approach' or interaction between soil and vine, vine water uptake conditions and, importantly, "human factors" (Van Leeuwen & Seguin 2006). Some present research, moreover, points to the crucial influence of microbial, bacterial and fungal agents in constituting a taste of place (Masterton 2015).

Wine taste is not only constituted by the 'natural' world, however. As numerous authors remind us, landscapes are shaped by action, activity, and movement, and in our embodied entanglements with them we are party to their ongoing unfolding and becoming (Aldred 2010; Bender 2002; Ingold 1993). Winegrowing landscapes are no different: those who engage with them are agents in the continual production of landscape even as they put the land to task in service of production. The ongoing fluidity of terroir can thus never be disengaged from the cultural. It is linked to distinct practices, traditions and technologies of grape growing and wine making, and embedded within local networks of social connections and interactions.²⁷ This holistic perspective entails a transcendence of classic distinctions between 'nature' and 'culture', as production is seen as a process in which both are mutually and inextricably linked.

As prefaced in the Introduction, I believe that terroir also offers a valuable analytical perspective through which to examine the set of relations between place, products and people in the processes of production in McLaren Vale. Through this perspective, these individual elements are not seen as distinct but instead fundamentally interwoven and interdependent. Place, people and products are constituted by and in relation to one another, processually. Wine may be said to incorporate the very essence of a place; this consubstantiation also includes the humans that are complicit in the process, who invest their own labour ('blood, sweat and tears') in shaping the production of wine, and those who drink the 'final' product and partake of this wine-as-place, bringing it into their own bodies. As Scruton (2009: 13) puts it, "... with my nose rubbing the nose of [Château] Trotanoy I was

²⁷ Attempts to define terroir have often struggled to find balance between the need to emphasise holism while trying to ensure it remains workable as an organisational category. In France in 2005, a gathering under the auspices of UNESCO proposed the following definition:

A terroir is a delimited geographical space, defined from a human community which in the course of its history constructs an assemblage of distinctive cultural traits, knowledge and practices founded on a system of interaction between the natural environment and human factors. The skill set involved reveals originality, conferring a typicity and permitting recognition for the products or services originating from this space and thus for the men who live there. Terroirs are living and innovative spaces which cannot be assimilated into a single tradition. (Translated by Unwin 2012: 39, footnotes)

coming face to face with a vineyard. There in the glass was the soil of a place, and in that soil was a soul.”

While terroir is the subject of considerable scholarly discussion and debate, I will begin this chapter by describing the way the concept is understood and discursively employed by McLaren Vale winegrowers, showing the ways that it is thought to be both *productive* (as a ‘natural’ force or potentiality) and *produced* (via the actions of people working in the landscape). I will discuss the way concepts of terroir are employed by winegrowers in two specific contexts: one, the ongoing project to understand wine flavours in relation to specific geological formations in McLaren Vale; and two, the practices of growers in the vineyard as they seek to understand, engage with and even engineer terroir. Winegrowing is a form of agriculture that places great emphasis on notions of place, and throughout this chapter I will demonstrate that such growing / making / dwelling *in* place is also a production *of* place.

Although characteristic aromas and flavours may be perceived sensorially in wines from certain places, much of their meaning and value stems from the relationships that the wine is held to embody, and which are manifested in these properties. Given this, I contend that the terroir perspective taken by many of the wine producers and consumers in the Vale sees terroir implicitly as a function of relations between ‘things’ (vines, bottles of wine), places (vineyards, wineries, landscapes), and people (growers, winemakers, consumers) rather than locating it in the objects of production themselves. Terroir is, to borrow Bird-David’s (1999) terminology, a “relational epistemology” through which wine and wine places are understood in terms of their subjective position in networks of social interaction. Here, with Sternsdorff-Cisterna, “I do not use *terroir* as that which needs explaining, but rather as the lens through which to explain” (2013: 54); I thus refer to the viewpoint shared by many of my informants in the Vale—one oriented towards the *relational* and *processual* characteristics of production and consumption—as a ‘terroir perspective’. Whether or not they would describe it as such,

many McLaren Vale winegrowers and others could be said to hold such a perspective, seeing wine as fundamentally emplaced socially and geographically through the interactive processes of production and consumption.

Terroir and the relations of production

In contemporary wine lore (and wine law, originating in the French *appellation d'origine contrôlée* certifications), terroir is a significant concept. A belief in the links between particular places and wine quality is certainly in evidence among (so-called) 'educated' wine consumers just as it is among McLaren Vale producers. Notions of distinctiveness and uniqueness linked to terroir often relate closely to the value afforded to a particular wine. The perceived social value of a wine does not always correlate precisely to its monetary price as a commodity, however, as some wineries choose to keep prices relatively low despite demand greatly outstripping supply, even when the wine is subjectively 'worth' much more than it is sold for.²⁸

In wine talk, terroir is often assumed to be as some kind of static, pre-existing property or essence of a place, which can become *transferred* into the wine. This is a point of view often enhanced by the spatial regimes of classification and distinction (like geographical indications and other appellation systems) that regulate wine production, and that seek to naturalise links between certain wines, places and people. As Ulin notes, such appeals to terroir often neglect the historical contexts of winegrowing, obscuring the nuanced social/political/economic relations of production that may have led to the preferential classifications of some vineyard sites over others in the first place (Ulin 1996, 2013). This is a reification of terroir that is linked to the 'invention' of certain local, regional or—as in France—national traditions (Barham 2003;

²⁸ Conversely, some wineries are considered to overcharge for some wines. A common criticism is that some wine quality is incommensurate with the prices charged, the purported value of the wine being inflated by claims to terroir, artisanship, and so forth without the wine possessing the sensorial characteristics to justify high prices. See Appadurai (1988) for discussion of 'luxury' versus 'commodity' registers of consumption.

Demossier 2011; Guy 2003). However, as Ulin (2013) points out, the notion of terroir is multivocal and, in a way, paradoxical. Although terroir claims can indeed serve to conceal the historically-bound social relationships of production, the concept itself “offers a partial but nonetheless important corrective to the ubiquity of separating commodities totally from the social conditions of their production, circulation, and consumption” (Ulin 2013: 68-69), a separation often assumed to lie at the heart of modern capitalism. It is in its potential to reconnect commodities with these ‘social conditions’, i.e. the relations between commodities, people and places, that I believe the concept of terroir is most discursively powerful and analytically valuable.

Terroir is, of course, also an important discursive element in the romanticisation of wine, serving to idealise wines that are ‘of place’ or reflect culturally-emplaced practices and processes. It is a concept often deployed by writers, critics and marketing personnel to portray wine (or a specific wine) in a particular way: as a product with close, intimate links to the earth, to community, to tradition, to a rural way of life, to a place and its people. In reality, however, the global wine industry has, like other agricultural production under modern capitalism, seen significant standardisation, industrial mass-production, and homogenisation across space. A good deal of wine cannot be said to be ‘of place’ at all, being instead blended from grapes that may be sourced across multiple regions, and it is in the ‘New World’ countries of the Americas, Australia and New Zealand that multiregional wine blending is usually considered to have reached its apex (see Chapter One).

Terroir is a powerful conceptual tool in the way it grounds agricultural products in place-based practices and social relationships. “By linking wine to place and persons”, as Ulin states, “*terroir* avoids the issue of alienation that, as Marx argues, is at the heart of capitalist production” (Ulin 2013: 82). By maintaining the primacy of connections between product, place and person, terroir discourse serves in a way to de-alienate and defetishise certain wines

and other food items; rather than circulating as impersonal, free-floating commodities, a focus on terroir can serve to re-embed these items, returning them to the social orbit of their production.

Terroir discourse also has the potential to obscure the realities of production, however. It does this by neglecting the impersonal global economic, cultural and political trends and currents that influence even the most seemingly locally-emplaced traditions of production. The romanticised language of terroir, as Besky (2014) points out, can indeed serve to conceal highly exploitative conditions of labour. Ulin (2013: 82) thus speaks of *terroir* as multivocal in its operation: “this same concept of *terroir* also contributes to the mystification and fetish of wine by naturalizing that which is social”. That is, by positing certain products as manifestations of an *essential* or *natural* relationship between a particular place and a particular community, produced through a set of specific and place-bound practices and gestures, terroir obscures the social basis of production, which are – even in the most apparently ‘traditional’ of European wine regions – linked to the temporal and spatial flows of capital, people, and power. Rather than reflecting a ‘natural’ state of affairs, then, terroir is often linked to imagined or idealised concepts of community and territory and, in the case of France, to the ‘invented tradition’ of the modern nation-state itself (Demossier 2011; Guy 2003).

An invocation of terroir can serve not only to highlight a connection between person, place, and product, but to ossify that relationship, all the while privileging and romanticising certain aspects of the cycle of production and consumption while obscuring others, such as the influence of globalised capital and market forces, the use of migrant labour or exploitation of a local workforce, and so on. In her recent ethnography of tea plantations in Darjeeling, Besky (2014) notes how the globalised terroir discourse adopted and utilised by the Geographical Indication system and fair-trade organisations can indeed serve to reproduce the systemically

exploitative nature of the plantations by seeking economic solutions to inequality within, rather than outside, the existing plantation system – treating this system as natural and ‘given’. In McLaren Vale, this ‘plantation’ model of economic organisation does not exist. Nevertheless, terroir discourses privileging the ties between skilled viticulturists, a tradition of production, and the land itself may still work to conceal the importance of supra-local economic and cultural processes (discussed in the following chapter), the vital role played by seasonal and non-local labour such as migrant vine pruners and itinerant harvest workers, and the necessarily mechanised and ‘impersonal’ nature of larger-scale wine production operations.



Figure 17. Winemaker operating a basket press

Terroir discourse in the Vale

In McLaren Vale, terroir is very much part of the everyday vocabulary of people involved in winegrowing. Here, the concept plays a significant discursive role in that it highlights and foregrounds the relational processes of interaction with the land in wine production, offering a signifier for the myriad ways in which wine, people, and landscape may relate to one another. Nevertheless, definitions of terroir (among winegrowers as well as theorists) are contested and nebulous. This became very clear to me during fieldwork, where the notion of terroir was invoked in different ways by different people, often depending on context. It was also often used interchangeably with other terms, like the 'sense of place' or 'taste of place' present in wine. When various people in McLaren Vale talked to me about terroir, they were not always talking about the same thing.

Terroir, for some of my informants, represented that holistic ensemble of natural and cultural factors that impinge upon grape growing: "I think that it's all-encompassing. It's a natural resource, but it's the people as well, the history" (Tim, 15 January 2013). Others used the word *only* in relation to the 'natural', physical characteristics of a vineyard or small parcel of land, including soil type, underlying geology, microclimate, altitude, aspect, location relative to the Gulf, and so on: "It should be defined not just by the geology but by a combination of things. The soil, the altitude, the proximity to the sea.... You can't focus just on the geology aspect of terroir" (Bob, 23 November 2012). For some, moreover, terroir was limited to a discussion of soil and geology, as in statements like "the terroir here is red-brown loam over limestone..." Many people preferred instead to use English terms like 'sense of place' in wine discussion, feeling that the concept could be described more simply in English without the unnecessary mystique and pretention that they felt the French term carried with it.²⁹ Finally, some in the

²⁹ The term 'sense of place' was used to highlight not only the way wine may reflect 'place' empirically/sensorially, in particular smells and tastes, but also the more ineffable aspects of emotional

industry did not talk about terroir at all, or dismissed it altogether due to the quasi-spiritual connotations that have become associated with the word—to do with the ‘spirit’ or ‘soul’ of a place—which they found to be jarringly unscientific.

In McLaren Vale, opinions among winegrowers were split as to the significance of the various ‘components’ of terroir. For some, geology was highly significant, while others placed far more emphasis on other aspects of site selection and viticultural techniques. Many, like Sophie, believed that the scientific quest to pinpoint terroir in one or other of the constituent elements of winegrowing was misguided:

I had a bit of an argument with one of Peter’s old university lecturers once. He said ‘There is no scientific evidence for geology influencing flavours’. I said ‘Well, why is it that wines from Mosel taste flinty and minerally, when they come from slate vineyards?’ He had his reply ready: because of reductive winemaking. That’s bullshit. (Sophie, 2 August 2012)

For the great majority of my informants, terroir is something that they ‘believe in’ at least to the extent that different and unique places can produce different and unique wines, and that, furthermore, this distinctiveness renders some vineyard sites ‘better’ than others.³⁰ However, the ways in which these variations are understood differ. On one end of the epistemological spectrum terroir is represented in terms of the fundamental uniqueness and irreproducible spirit of a place, which can be captured in the wine that is grown there. Terroir, in this case, involves connections between wines and their places of origin that are ‘felt’ rather than known, as such: under this understanding a wine that is representative of terroir is more than the sum of its physical parts. On the other end of the spectrum, wine is ultimately *knowable* in an empirical sense. This perspective sees the diversity of wines solely as a product of their differing chemical and physical constitutions. Any wine is (theoretically) replicable, and places

connection with place. See Chapter Five for discussion of the interaction of senses, place and emotions in winegrowing and consumption.

³⁰ Some suggest that ‘terroir’ is all but meaningless except as a marketing tool, as ‘sense of place’ is highly overrated as an indicator of wine quality. This is evidenced by the fact that many excellent wines—Penfolds Grange being a frequently-cited example—are in fact blends of grapes sourced from various locations and indeed across regions.

are only significant to the extent that they influence these physical qualities. Under this interpretation, concepts of terroir have the potential to obfuscate scientific claims to distinctiveness; to some people, terroir represents a sort of wilful ignorance of the sorts of technological and scientific progresses that might result in wine of better quality irrespective of the patch of dirt in which the grapes were grown.

Many of my informants were ardent ‘terroirists’ (as some called themselves), believing firmly in the *value* of unique place in wine. They were committed to making wines that ‘embraced’ the specificity of individual blocks or vineyards, as they felt these wines to be more unique and interesting. These producers felt that a correlation existed between production techniques and a wine’s expression of terroir, believing that greater technological and chemical ‘intervention’ in winemaking diminished terroir qualities. As such, many deliberately pursued more ‘traditional’, simple and low-tech processing techniques and technologies, such as pruning vines and picking grapes manually, hand-stirring ferments, and pressing the wine ‘off the skins’ using simple slatted basket presses. These producers generally avoided what they saw as unnatural manipulation of the wine through additives, as well as the use of chemical treatments in the vineyard (aside from copper sulphate sprays, which are considered ‘organic’ and permitted as such by organic accreditation and certification bodies). Opinions differed as to the degree to which producers should intervene, however: that is, where an appropriate line should be drawn between the human inputs that were ‘in keeping’ with terroir and those that were not. Significantly, although terroir is thought of by many as a natural property of a place, for these winegrowers the mediating force of the human practitioner as they work in concert with the environments of the vineyard and the winery is crucial to terroir. Without the transformative influence of human effort, terroir—as a “latent possibility of the environment” (Sternsdorff Cisterna 2013: 55)—remains unfulfilled.

Even amongst those with a deep belief in the importance of terroir, however, 'science' was not seriously questioned as a framework through which to understand the world. Even those who were most deliberately rustic and low-tech in their production techniques, or who believed fervently that the significance of terroir lay in its intangible rather than measurable aspects, saw value in understanding the biological, chemical and microbial processes of vine growth and wine fermentation. Ed, a contract viticulturist, believed that such scientific knowledge was just one of many tools available to the winegrower, who should take a more holistic view to their craft:

Reality is infinitely complex and ever-changing, you can't manage a vineyard well according to a spreadsheet or a rigid spray schedule. I think—you're never going to work it all out, so just live! Science is necessary but people get caught up trying to explain everything on those terms, but reality is what's all around us—'there's a tree. Here's the ground. I've got the sun on my face. I'm drinking wine—isn't that enough?' (Ed, 2 August 2012)

For people like Ed, the subjectivities of terroir do not exist in opposition to scientific objectivity. Rather, terroir represents a complementary epistemological framework: one that recognises relationships that extend beyond the strictly instrumental properties of people, place and product and into the emotional and poetic realms of 'dwelling'. Knowledge about the world attained through direct, sensory participation in it—a 'feel' for the land and the vines that comes about from the embodiment of skills and cultural traditions—may be considered just as important as an accumulation of data *about* it (see Chapter Five). For most of my informants, then, terroir as the special property of place or landscape that can be sensed in wine is not limited to its interpretation by either 'techne' (craft or 'artisanship') or 'technoscience'.³¹ Both, according to viticulturist Michelle, are valuable for winegrowing:

I went to the vineyards in France, throughout Bordeaux and Burgundy – and didn't really learn much. Just because wine in France is based so much on tradition, there's not much in the way of new techniques, the research and development is nothing like what's going on here. In France, terroir is the crucial concept. People are now starting

³¹ See Heath and Meneley (2008) for a discussion of the ways techne and technoscience can mediate the production and consumption of agricultural goods.

to understand that a bit better in Australia, but we're still learning. (Michelle, 19 April 2012)



Figure 18. Road cutting showing red-brown loam overlying limestone, Field Street.

Place in McLaren Vale winegrowing

I just love the place. The culture and the landscape and the sense of community just resonates with me. I guess terroir is your own sense of place as well. There's the food, the wine and the sea, and everyone's pretty cruisy and relaxed but at the same time there's great energy around. (Fiona, 21 December 2012)

So far we have discussed the various ways winegrowers in McLaren Vale conceptualise and engage with notions of terroir, with relation to categories of nature, culture, science, and artisanship. But in what terms do they see the specific terroir of the places and landscapes of McLaren Vale? As I found, terroir in McLaren Vale was most often discussed in terms of diversity within the region. Particularly, this involved a diversity of physical attributes germane to winegrowing. McLaren Vale was often referred to as a 'patchwork quilt' of different and locally distinct patches of vineyard land, each of which could offer different qualities for winegrowing. In the words of viticulturist Tim, "I really think of it as an artist's palette – all the ingredients are there, and it's up to the skills and knowledge of the growers and winemakers to learn how to work with the specific conditions" (Tim, 20 March 2012)

There is a general belief that this micro-level physical variability within a generally benign broader climate allows experimentation with grape varieties and vineyard practices to flourish, and enhances a general atmosphere of creativity amongst producers of the region.

In the early days there was no science telling people where the best conditions were for growing - people took cues from nature. For example, the big gum trees grow in deep alluvial soils, around creek beds and river banks, whereas spindlier, scrubby trees are evidence of shallower soils. Blackboys and plants like that will grow on sandy, rocky soil. (Tim, 20 March 2012)

The expression of the landscape through the wines of McLaren Vale—their ‘sense of place’—is not only a function of the interrelation of the vine with the soil and other elements of physical geography, but also of the ongoing activities, practices and decisions of people operating within a particular social and cultural milieu. Experimentation with various vineyard and winemaking practices occurs within a general atmosphere of innovation and creativity in the Vale—something frequently mentioned by my interlocutors—which is thought to discourage complacency. This emphasis on ongoing experimentation permeates local approaches to winegrowing; terroir in McLaren Vale is subject to dynamic interpretation as it is creatively explored.

The human influence upon McLaren’s Vale’s terroir can be seen to emerge from a broad range of factors relating to the settlement of the area, the history of wine in the region and in South Australia more generally, and the social relationships that link people within and outside the Vale. Integral to the terroir of McLaren Vale is its broader positioning within South Australia, which possesses its own distinctive cultural landscape:

In South Australia there is a great heritage of creativity, openness to new ideas, and cultural expression. It’s always been the case – we grew up with it. You can see that in arts, politics, everything. And it’s the case in wine as well. There’s a history of progressive thought. At the moment this is really the hub of natural winemaking. But at the same time we are technocrats, we understand the value of science. On one hand we have great old brands and a strong history and tradition, but on the other hand people are curious about new things and broadening their horizons. There is real creativity happening, and I think it’s part of a big shift in the way people think about things. There is a difference between what I call ‘commodity wines’ – made to a

recipe, like Coca-Cola, and wines that are about individuality, expression of site, experimentation. And in wine, like in other fields, people are becoming much more aware of the importance of this stuff. We're moving away from mass homogenisation, although that will always have its place. I think it's a very deep-seated shift in peoples' mindsets. (Dan, 7 September 2012)

Here Dan, a winemaker who produces "natural, living wines", acknowledges the shifting nature of trends and approaches to winemaking. He links wine in South Australia to what he believes is a historically creative and 'progressive' thread running through the cultural fabric of the state, while at the same time acknowledging the ongoing importance of the "strong history and tradition" of the old wineries and the importance of a strong scientific knowledge base. For Dan, as for many of my informants (and as explored in the previous chapter), *terroir*—winegrowing *place*—is not just to be understood as a bounded microcosm of vine, soil, vineyard, vigneron and community, but extends into the relationships between people, places and production at a supralocal level.

According to locals, there is a connection between the social characteristics of McLaren Vale and the region's physical characteristics. As touched upon in Chapter Two, the 'Mediterranean' climate and landscape qualities are often discussed with relation to southern European social influences in the Vale. The proximity of McLaren Vale to the sea is another commonly highlighted example of the influence of the physical world upon the social. McLaren Vale Grape, Wine and Tourism Authority (MVGWTA) employee Tracey suggested that the 'spirit of adventure' and progressive mentality of McLaren Vale winegrowing could be linked in part to the sea: "We are unique and a lot of that is because we are next to the sea, we have that climate, the cooling sprays ... There is also a real spirit of adventure here that you don't find elsewhere. The region is so culturally fertile and I think being close to the sea helps" (Tracey, 7 February 2012).

Many of those involved in winegrowing in McLaren Vale are also keen fishers, surfers or boaters, or otherwise feel a particular connection to the sea, as Lachlan told me: "I've always

been attached to the sea. I studied viticulture in Wagga Wagga [in New South Wales' Riverina region] and it never felt right being so far inland" (Lachlan, 11 April 2012). In particular, the sea is said to provide an invigorating 'freshness' that permeates all aspects of life in the Vale:

The sea is addictive to me. Suddenly just smelling that freshness, the tang of the sea on the breeze - it's fantastic, invigorating. I think the ocean has a magnetic pull. Just being able to see it, to smell it on the wind I think the Barossa is beautiful, it's pretty, it's a lovely place, but it's different. It smells different and looks different to McLaren Vale, there's no sea. (Leonard, 14 November 2012)

Here, as Leonard highlights, proximity to the sea is seen as a crucial part of McLaren Vale's terroir, a factor that distinguishes the region from others in South Australia. It has an influence not only on the physical conditions of grapegrowing, but also on the Vale's shared cultural identity.



Figure 19. The sea at Port Willunga

Engineering terroir in the vineyard

Many of the decisions that are made in the course of grape growing and wine production are bound to emplaced traditions. This is most obviously the case in 'Old World' regions of Europe,

where wine has often been made in very specific ways from the fruit of particular local (and sometimes autochthonous) vine types for many centuries, and this production is often subject to rigid labelling laws that aim to preserve the integrity of these traditions. This is not the case in Australia, where there are no restrictions on varieties or production techniques in a wine labelled 'McLaren Vale', other than that at least 85% of the grapes used were grown in the region. This allows winegrowers greater latitude to explore the potential of different varieties, as well as to attempt to emulate wine styles found elsewhere. In McLaren Vale, winegrowers sometimes spoke of wanting to make a wine "like a Châteauneuf-du-Pape" or "like a traditional Sicilian Nero d'Avola", modifying practices in an effort to achieve these outcomes.

A concern with emulating the traditions of elsewhere in order to explore local possibilities is, it has been argued, emblematic of 'New World' approaches to agricultural production. In an article on artisanal cheesemaking in the U.S., Paxson (2010) suggests that New World producers approach terroir in a manner different from the essentialism of 'traditional' European (and especially French) conceptions. She speaks of U.S. cheesemakers 'reverse-engineering' terroir – that is, they "think backward from European ideal types" (Paxson 2010: 445), determining first which style of cheese might best 'fit' a particular geographical locale and then utilising the appropriate manufacturing techniques to best achieve the desired outcome. Terroir, in this case, is "not an a priori quality to be discovered through selective recuperation of the past; rather, it is something to do to make the future" (Paxson 2010: 445). In this case, in the absence of a strong local or regional terroir tradition, producers actively set out to create it. This is both a conscious and an idealistic enterprise, seeking to draw "meaningful lines of connection among people, culture, and landscapes to invest rural places anew with affective significance and material relevance" (Paxson 2010: 446).

The distinction between 'New' and 'Old' World practices and understandings of terroir is far from unproblematic, however, and it would be wrong to suggest that all French vigneronns or

cheesemakers hold such a static view of terroir. In her study of vigneron in the Médoc area of Bordeaux, for example, Daynes argues that “while physical *terroir* defines the possibilities for the wines they produce, it is human labour that makes the wine. They assert the importance of tradition yet do not understand it as static and neither do they view it as a prescription that cannot be navigated” (Daynes 2013: 28). Despite the rigidity of French AOC laws, terroir is not necessarily seen to be determinative of the final product; even where natural factors and cultural tradition are highly influential, opportunity still exists for creativity and innovation in production techniques and practices. Certainly, the idea of terroir, whether invoked in the context of a long, historically-embedded discursive tradition (as in the case of Bordeaux vigneron) or a recently-embraced idealistic category (as in the case of Vermont cheesemakers) always involves a degree of human intentionality and agency. In McLaren Vale, this agency is limited by physical constraints like the region’s soils, water availability, and temperature, as well as by economic conditions, but not by the sort of regulatory framework that seeks to strictly define the parameters of local terroir according to embedded tradition that is found in ‘Old World’ regions like Bordeaux.

In McLaren Vale, although some practices may be said to have become ‘tradition’ through local continuity over time, there has always existed an openness to new grape varieties, cultivation and fermentation methods, and technologies (see Chapter One for a discussion of the early development of winegrowing in the South Australian colony). Winegrowers have usually been able to make decisions as they see appropriate (and commercially viable). The selection of grape varieties and vineyard sites, and the techniques and methods they employ in planting and training the vines, are important ways that growers can exercise agency in shaping their own local terroir.

The spacing between vine rows and between individual vines on a trellis are considered important. So too is the angle of the row relative to the sun, prevailing winds, and the slope of

the land for air and water drainage. 'Contour' planting, where the vine rows are planted across slopes according to the natural contours of the hillsides, has been employed in some locations in the Vale, but straight, fairly widely-spaced rows – which provide better access for tractors and mechanical equipment - are usually preferred. Trellising systems vary, and although single-cordon trellises are most common, double cordons and other systems (including the 'lyre' and 'lazy ballerina') are also found. Some vines are not trellised at all, instead growing as unsupported 'bush vines' – this is most commonly the case for Grenache vines, with their upright growth and strong canopies.

Vine selection for vineyards in McLaren Vale has, since European settlement, been influenced by a number of factors. The environmental conditions of the region, of course, places certain limiting constraints on selection, as some grapes simply do not grow well (or as well as they might elsewhere) in the particular climate of this part of South Australia. A vivid example of the constraints placed on winegrowing by physical geography can be seen when comparing McLaren Vale to the neighbouring Adelaide Hills region: due to its higher elevation and much cooler mesoclimate, some of the most widely planted grapes in the Hills—including Chardonnay and Pinot Noir—are far less common in the warmer climes of the Vale. The 'matching' of grape to landscape has historically been partly a matter of trial and error, as it is only through experience and experimentation that the appropriateness of certain grapes to certain sites can be verified. The true 'terroir' of the site is only thought to come to the fore through the relational synergy of place and vine. Importantly, this process is also informed by historical factors including the backgrounds and prior knowledge of emigrant farmers and winegrowers from Europe and the influence of the global market upon wine production. Indeed, winegrowers often suggest that the grape varieties that have been planted in large numbers in certain places are not necessarily those that are 'best' for the location.

Even before the European settlement of South Australia, British pioneers in New South Wales like James Busby (often regarded as the 'father' of the Australian wine industry) and William Macarthur were experimenting with planting vines, having brought to the colony a wide range of cuttings of various varieties from different parts of Europe (Santich 1998: 122). A. C. Kelly, a key figure in the early South Australian wine industry, noted in 1862 that the system of trial and error employed by many of the first vignerons in the new colonies was not particularly efficient:

At first, little attention was paid to the varieties of the vine suited to the soil and climate of this Continent. Vines from all parts of Europe, and the most diverse climates, were indiscriminately mixed in the same vineyard There are many acres of vineyard in situations as warm as Adelaide, planted with vines of Northern Europe, which proved so utterly worthless that they have been rooted out after ten years trial, to be replaced by the more vigorous vines of the South of Europe. (Kelly 2008 [1861]: 11 [1862])

Kelly, who himself planted vineyards at Upper Tintara in McLaren Vale with varieties including Shiraz, Cabernet, Mataro, Grenache, and Sauvignon Blanc (Santich 1998: 127), believed that the most appropriate vines for planting in South Australia came from those parts of Europe with similar climatic characteristics: "Possessing a climate so much resembling Portugal and Spain, it is to those countries we should look for varieties of the vine suited to the warmer localities of Australia; but it is of the vines of the Iberian Peninsula that we know less than those of other countries of Europe" (Kelly 2008 [1861]: 17).

One of the earliest winegrowers in South Australia, John Reynell (after whom Reynella, where he settled in 1840, is named), experimented with growing a number of different Southern European vines. The *Official South Australian Gazetteer and Road Guide* of 1869 listed his twelve 'principal varieties' as "Verdeilho, Carbonet, Malbec, Pineau Gris, Gouais, Rousillon, Pedro Ximines, Doradillo, Temprano, Palo-mino-blanco, Shiraz and Frontignac" (Cited in Burden 1976: 29). Of these, Shiraz and 'Carbonet' (Cabernet Sauvignon) are now the two most widely planted varieties in the McLaren Vale GI area. Others have fallen out of favour for

various reasons, such as the Doradillo and Pedro Ximines which were used primarily for fortified wine and spirit production. Still others, like 'Verdeilo' (Verdelho) and 'Temprano' (Tempranillo) are again beginning to gain favour as varieties suited to South Australian climatic conditions similar to those of their Iberian origins.

Most of the early grape growers and winemakers in the Southern Vales were British farmers with little or no winegrowing experience, but who nevertheless "launched themselves into this new venture with rash enthusiasm" (Santich 1998: 126). While for most of these settlers vineyards were just one element in a mixed-use farm which might have also included grain crops, fruit trees, vegetables, poultry and livestock, there were some who saw opportunity in specialisation. Some of the new English settlers, furthermore, came to Australia with a wide knowledge and appreciation of European wines, possessing both a scientific approach to and a romantic idealism for the grape growing and wine making. As Matthew, the founder and owner of a winery known for its Italian varieties, told me:

Some English settlers were very well-educated and came with a scientific mindset and a broad vision. There were a lot of books written in the early days, and these were all erudite and well-considered. And the sorts of men that founded the wine industry were very innovative as well. In fact, I think it's likely that the approach was far more scientific in the mid-19th Century than it was in the early 20th Century People talk about the influence of the Germans and people like that on the wine industry in Australia but the biggest influences were these mostly English and Scottish people, highly educated, sophisticated, with scientific training – who came to the colonies having travelled extensively around Europe and the Mediterranean. These men would have seen South Australia and dreamed of it becoming like the Mediterranean, with vines, olives, figs (Matthew, 5 December 2012)

As in much of the rest of Australia, McLaren Vale plantings have in recent decades been dominated by the red Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon and the white Chardonnay grapes. These are all so-called "classic varieties" (MacNeil 2001), which are historically associated with particular regions of France (the Rhône, Bordeaux and Burgundy, respectively) but have become planted widely throughout the world and can now be thought of as globalised 'brands' in themselves. Shiraz is the most common variety planted in McLaren Vale, and it is

often promoted as emblematic of the region (through, for example, the 'Scarce Earth' single vineyard Shiraz program, and the 'Shiraz Trail' cycling route).

During my fieldwork, many winegrowers in McLaren Vale pointed out that the most popular varieties for drinkers are not necessarily those best suited to local conditions. As Dan put it, "Shiraz isn't the grape that's best suited to McLaren Vale. But it's everywhere. Why? Because of our cultural history" (Dan, 7 September 2012). This relationship of 'cultural history' to terroir is a complex one: while some speak of terroir only in relation to the expression of flavours in the wine itself, for others, like Dan, the weight of tradition is crucial. Many people I spoke to felt that the gnarly old Grenache bush vines, planted over wide areas in the past for the manufacture of fortified wines and brandy but also capable of making excellent and distinctive table wines, were more symbolically representative of the Vale than Shiraz. As Andrew, a highly-respected grower and winemaker from a well-known wine family, told me:

I like experimenting with different wines but I feel that it can steal from your heritage if you're too sporadic and chasing fashions. You should make wine in the style that suits the place. Grenache in McLaren Vale is the variety that probably stands out: it's lighter, quite complex, a bit more European, I guess you'd say. It suits the growing conditions in McLaren Vale perfectly, but it's not really the taste of many Australian drinkers. (Andrew, 16 October 2012)

Here, Andrew addresses one of the tensions inherent in conceptions of terroir: the tension between its physical/sensory expression (which grape 'best suits' the place or best represents the flavour of the place) and its cultural/historical expression (relating to heritage and the political economies of consumption). In his view, it is important to pursue a 'taste of place', but in a manner that respects extant traditions.

While varieties like Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay can and do produce excellent wines in the Vale, it is the view of many growers and winemakers that other southern European varieties less well-known to Australian consumers may perform equally well or better in McLaren Vale. Many of these varieties have been present in the Vale since the very

beginning of the grape wine industry in the region, and as such are seen as legitimate and authentic parts of local terroir: “Grenache and Mataro are really exciting to me. They’ve been here for a really long time—real old-school varieties. Around Clarendon, those original plantings were Grenache, Mataro, Malbec.³² Those guys knew what they were doing” (Leonard, 14 November 2012). For both Leonard and Matthew, the observational understanding that some of the early winegrowers demonstrated in their matching of vines to landscape in South Australia validates some of the grape selection decisions (away from dominant varieties like Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon) that growers are currently making:

The Shiraz here is distinctive, and it’s the most widely-planted grape. But there’s also Grenache—in recent years McLaren Vale is often being written up as *the* place for high-quality Grenache, as good as anywhere in the world. I think some of the southern Mediterranean grapes that are tough and resilient, that do really well in this sort of climate, will become very important in future. Grenache, Mourvèdre, Graciano, and some that are being experimented with like Aglianico, that’s really late ripening, it’s going through flower while other grapes are ripe! To introduce these wines to people we need to take the public along with us, I think we’ll see more blends. Like the case in the southern Rhone, where there are blends of Mourvèdre, Grenache, Cinsault, Carignan, Syrah [Shiraz]. And funnily enough the history of most of those varieties in Australia goes right back to the earliest days. (Matthew, 5 December 2012)



Figure 20. Ripe Grenache grapes

³² Mataro and Mourvèdre are, respectively, Spanish and French names for the same grape variety.

The politics of geology

Locally, McLaren Vale is celebrated for its diversity of micro-environments in which wine grapes are grown. This is demonstrated particularly with respect to the region's geological diversity, a result of the folding and faulting of the landscape over hundreds of millions of years.

No other vignoble in the world has this geological complexity. This complexity exists elsewhere, but not in a wine region. I think of the geology of the Willunga Embayment like a crumpled blanket that's being pushed in on either side, and with the top sliced off, so all the different layers are exposed. (Philip White, 28 May 2012)

In this context, the matching of grape variety to vineyard site takes on great significance. There has long been a broad local acknowledgement that different geological terranes within the Vale create different growing conditions which might ensure that certain types of grapes grow better than others, or which influence the sensory characteristics of wine in different ways. The deep, sandy and nutrient-poor soils of Blewitt Springs in the north-east corner of the McLaren Vale region, for example, are thought to produce excellent Grenache wines with subtle and lifted flavours, while the undulating limestone ridges topped with red-brown loam that characterise the Seaview district are home to some of the most prized Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard land, with pronounced minerality, 'gutsiness' and tannins (Woodhouse, Osborn & Osborn 2012: 194-195). The mixed talus slopes along the Willunga faultline are said to produce wines with juicy, floral and fragrant character, great intensity and complexity. Other soils and geologies, however, are less known for producing quality wines and are considered by some to be better suited to high-yielding production. These include the heavy, black clay soils that make up much of the plains land inland from Aldinga, planted heavily during the wine boom of the 1990s when the Federal Government offered tax

concessions to growers in order to increase the production of Australian wine to satisfy burgeoning demand in export markets (see Chapter One).

I'm right at the bottom of the piedmont [of the Willunga scarp] here, go another 40 metres north, down the hill, and it goes to the black Biscay soil. The changes in geology are very defined. Pike's place [on the other side of Willunga] is just unique, it's crazy stuff – it must have really been belted and then washed down the range there, just a tiny little patch completely different to what's around it... There are still people that say 'Rocks have nothing to do with it' when it comes to wine, but that's bullshit. I'm a full believer in terroir. It's everything. (Mark, 22 August 2012)

Local knowledge of the Vale's districts and hierarchies of value with regards to their suitability for grape growing (in general, and with respect to particular varieties or styles) remains strictly informal, and there are no officially-mandated boundaries between subregions or classifications of wines at a finer level than that of the regional Geographical Indication in McLaren Vale.³³ There is, nevertheless, some degree of consensus among local winegrowers as to the differing qualities of different parts of the Vale, dependent on factors including aspect, elevation, distance from sea level and, particularly, geology and soils. Most winegrowers that I encountered considered it essential to celebrate the diversity of the landscape in the Vale, as an 'antidote' to the tendency toward homogenisation of much modern winemaking:

Look at Rosemount [winery], it looks like a factory – and that's the majority of the industry in most parts of the country. In Langhorne Creek, certainly in the Riverland ... McLaren Vale is different, it's like a patchwork quilt of smaller producers and small blocks. That's where terroir and sense of place is able to come to the fore, you can't have a wine 'of place' in those big blends where the fruit comes from everywhere – but there's room for all of those different approaches, of course. (Sophie, 1 August 2012)

Links between particular geological structures and wine flavours have long been observed in the 'old' winegrowing regions of Europe, although as discussed above the direct geochemical influence of underlying rocks on wine is highly disputed. In Australia, however, where many vineyard plantings are relatively new, there was not always the same intricate and nuanced

³³ In conversation the term 'subregion' is often used interchangeably with 'district', 'area' and so on, but in Australian wine it is a legally-defined type of appellation recognised by the Geographical Indications Committee, which nests within a broader 'region' and a yet broader 'zone', State, and at a supra-state level, the 'South Eastern Australia' appellation (Wine Australia 2014)

understanding built up over many generations of the comparative qualities of particular vineyard sites. Furthermore, economic and market realities meant that the vast majority of Australia's wine production during the twentieth century was aimed towards supplying large amounts of wine blended across districts, regions and even states (see Chapter One). Many believed that Australian wine regions possessed the same potential for expression of terroir as did European regions. The only thing lacking, in most cases, was a thoroughly detailed understanding of the relationship between specific winegrowing landscapes and wine flavours. Winegrowers experimented with their own vineyard plantings to achieve the best results, and some believed that a more detailed geological knowledge of wine regions would be an important step in an exploration of the diversity of wine in Australia.

In the 1970s a group of geologists involved with the South Australian Department of Mines and Energy's Geological Survey Division, with other interested parties, had formulated a plan to map in detail the geologies of the State's wine regions. According to wine journalist Philip White, one of the chief architects of the plan and an employee of the Department of Mines and Energy during the 1970s, the project did not come to fruition at the time because "it was only about wine, it didn't have gold or uranium in it, so they couldn't see the value in it" (22 March 2012). In 2008, however, when MVGWTA decided that they wanted to pursue mapping of the viticultural region: "I said, 'I've got a fucking map for you! It's a geology map, we've been fucking around with it for 35 years, and it's nearly finished'" (Philip White, 22 March 2012). With funding from MVGWTA and the coordinated support of key Government ministers and the agencies controlling the geospatial data needed, the project's instigators—White, Wolfgang Priess, Bill Fairburn and Jeff Olliver—were able to proceed with production of the map (White 2010a).

The *Geology of the McLaren Vale Wine Region* map (Fairburn et al. 2010) (see Figure 48, Appendix 1), hereafter the Geology Map, was published in July 2010 and launched in McLaren

Vale at a large function at the Bocce Club. It has since been broadly embraced by the region's winegrowing community. As the "result of decades of diligent investigation by curious geological scholars," the map is said to provide a key to the "complex, constantly unfolding links between geology and modern wine flavours" (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2015a). During my field research wineries throughout the Vale proudly displayed copies of the map, showing the position of their vineyards relative to various underlying geological boundaries, often in conjunction with aerial photographs, soil samples, and other appropriate information. Winemakers, growers and cellar door staff frequently made reference to the map when discussing the growing conditions of vines or the sensory properties of wines with other local 'wine people', tourists, or myself.

Although based upon the empirical data gathered by geoscientists, the Geology Map—like all maps—cannot be seen as a politically-neutral artefact. Part of the impetus for its development lies in its potential promotional value for the McLaren Vale region: MVGWTA could see great benefits in highlighting the geological diversity of the region in a way that had not been attempted to such a degree elsewhere. The Geology Map presents a diversity of geological types as a key factor in McLaren Vale's distinctiveness and interest as a wine region.

The Map draws upon the links between geology and terrain with historical experimentation with grape varieties in McLaren Vale, to provide validation for the region's claims to quality wine production:

Typical of the cycles of history, after nearly two centuries of curious experimentation with many newly fashionable grape varieties, local vignerons often find their best results are with varieties that were wisely selected by the first settlers. The visionary John Reynell, for example, by 1862, was making respected wines from Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Tempranillo and Pinot gris, from vineyards established in the late 1830's. At the same time, Edward John Peake was growing Shiraz, Mourvedre, Carignan, Grenache, and other Mediterranean coast varieties.

This document will assist viticulturists to match the many grape varieties, old and new to the various terranes of this uniquely beautiful, bountiful wine region.

(Fairburn et al. 2010)

Here, the Geology Map is said to link local winegrowing history to notions of a ‘correct’ fit between different types of vines and different sites, and in doing so forges a powerful connection between local understandings of terroir to a purported scientific objectivity based in geological distinction. It is this link—a scientific legitimisation of the stories that local winegrowers had already been telling about their wines’ flavours—that gives the map such value.

In outlining McLaren Vale’s geological terroir, the Geology Map identifies seven winegrowing ‘terrane’s: the ancient rocks; sand and sandstone; limestone country; clay plains of Aldinga; the piedmont; talus slope; and alluvial flats (Fairburn et al. 2010). Following the publication of the Map a committee of viticulturists and winegrowers, along with geologist Jeff Olliver, formed the ‘Districts of McLaren Vale Working Group’, in a long-term exercise to analyse the relationship of this geological diversity to wine flavours. A total of nineteen ‘districts’ have been identified, “each unique in their terroir ... the boundaries of these districts have been defined using geological, soil, climate and topographical indicators” (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2013). Part of this project is to develop ‘tasting notes’ for each of these districts in order to describe their differences, and it is thought that this will aid wineries and growers in promotion of their products.

Speaking at a public tasting of Shiraz wines from each of the nineteen districts identified from the Map, winegrower and Districts of McLaren Vale Working Group member Drew Noon highlighted what he saw as an important role of the Map, not only as a tool for winegrowers hoping to ‘understand’ the region better, but as a means through which the special qualities of McLaren Vale can be communicated ‘to the world’.

Even though it’s difficult to make any definite claims after only three years, it does seem that there are some trends that are clearly coming through. Wines are generally a bit more structured off the old rocks. District 9 in particular is quite distinctive – tight and compact If we can understand the geologies better, we can explain the region to the world a lot better. It’s not about trying to distinguish and rank the best

geologies from the not-so-good geologies, it's about being able to distinguish the styles that are evident in wines from the different types of geological structures (Drew Noon, 15 February 2013).

The Geology Map and District Tastings feed into the 'Scarce Earth' program, a regional certification and appellation system administered by the McLaren Vale Grape, Wine and Tourism Association. The Scarce Earth program is restricted to wines made from Shiraz grapes sourced from single vineyard blocks planted with vines at least ten years in age - "... a small plot of land with a unique flavour profile and personality" (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2015c). Its regulations stipulate that the grapes used must be "100% McLaren Vale", "100% Shiraz", and "95% of the nominated block from the [year of] vintage" (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2014: 3). The nominated block must be registered as a participant in the McLaren Vale Sustainable Winegrowing Program, a program which involves growers self-reporting on environmentally sustainable vineyard practices by maintaining a workbook of activity (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2014, 2015d).³⁴

Wines entered for Scarce Earth consideration are judged by a "panel consisting of three local winemakers and three independent experts," who "assess each wine to ensure that site is expressed in the glass and the wine free of overt winemaking influences" (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2015c). Here, 'overt winemaking influences' refers to the use of 'too much' oak, as well as other additives which impart their own flavours and may conceal the wine's 'natural' characteristics. However, the inherent subjectivity of the judging process—despite the fact that it involves 'blind tasting' with wines presented according only to the 'district' from which they originate—is a matter of some contention among entrants. Some of my informants, indeed, suggested that many Scarce Earth wines selected were over-oaked

³⁴ As we saw earlier, notions of terroir are often linked to a pursuit of 'natural' techniques and technologies in grape growing and winemaking. In this case, the Sustainable Australia Winegrowing and Scarce Earth programs work to validate one another: sustainability is an important currency in discussions of terroir.

or otherwise not adequately “free of overt winemaking influences”. Others, like Lance, who makes ‘single vineyard’ wines from his own Shiraz grapes, felt that the program itself was an example of terroir being co-opted for financial purposes: “It’s a cynical marketing exercise. There are a bunch of people that can’t make a value-for-money \$40 wine, but they all want to jump on the bandwagon to sell a \$100 wine”(Lance, 16 August 2012).

The wines eventually granted Scarce Earth status are labelled and marketed to highlight the uniqueness of their specific places of provenance. These wines command much higher prices than their non-Scarce Earth counterparts, having been designated as distinctive products of the region and ‘of place’ through this process of official validation. As MVGWTA claims, “All wines come from a single block, a small plot of land with a unique flavour profile and personality. [Through the Scarce Earth program] our local winemakers and grape growers ... strive to gain an unparalleled understanding of Shiraz, Australia’s most significant variety” (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2015c). The program can thus be seen to fit within a broader narrative which fuses notions of environmental endowment with cultural tradition and skilled practice, the aim of which is to paint McLaren Vale as a region of high-quality and distinctive wine production.



Figure 21. The Geology Map on display at a tasting of Scarce Earth wines, D'Arenberg winery.



Figure 22. 'District tasting' of single-vineyard Shiraz wines

Mediating terroir through skilled work

Terroir, importantly, is intimately linked to the processes of production. Although terroir references the physical characteristics of the land in a particular place, in the absence of human mediation (in the processes of farming the land and vinifying the grapes, for example) these characteristics remain hidden or unfulfilled. Without peoples' input, terroir is a latent potentiality: it must be *enacted* through the tasks and activities of people working in concert with the rhythms and cycles of the world. For winegrowers in McLaren Vale who speak of 'discovering' their terroir through years of careful practice and observation, and 'enacting' or 'working with' terroir through certain grape growing and winemaking techniques, it is clear that in this usage of the term the processes of human interaction with the world are highlighted and foregrounded. This conception of terroir involves, in the words of Sternsdorff

Cisterna (2013: 53), a “tension between the physical properties of a given location and the human efforts to coax certain aspects ... out of the land and into the bottle”.

Indeed, all wine production might be seen to involve a mediation or negotiation between the categories of nature and culture, based on skill and labour: “The tension between nature and society is a constant feature of the history of wine, and it begins with the substance itself, the fermented juice of grapes” (Phillips 2001: xvi). Winegrowers in McLaren Vale who are conscious of this inherent tension are particularly attentive to their own relationship with the land, vines and the grapes. The activities that are thought to best promote the expression of terroir are those seen as person and place ‘working together’ in concert. The health and quality of the grapes is seen as inextricably tied to the health of the soil, and many growers believe a close and attentive relationship to the land, the vines and the grapes is crucial to this. It is through ongoing tasks and practices, especially those of manual labour, that an intimate sense of place is built up.

The relational perspective implied by terroir highlights the ecological context of winegrowing and the importance of “treating the vineyard as a whole”. Winegrowers seeking to coax (rather than force) the characteristics of place into the wine must therefore closely attend to their own relationship with the land, vines and the grapes, as their activities in the vineyard or the winery directly impinge not only upon the subjective ‘quality’ of the wine, but on its overall authenticity as a terroir product. Here it is worth repeating that only *some* wines are thought to be animated by terroir, and most—such as the mass-produced, blended offerings of large corporations—are better thought of as merely manufactured beverages, generally lacking the relationships between place, producer, and consumer that give so-called real wines their authenticity and vitality. It is the deep relationality involved in terroir wines’ production that grants them such *life*.

Many growers referred to the ecosystem of the vineyard as a living thing, as an organism in its own right. The overall health of the vineyard is enhanced by the presence of bees, earthworms, and beneficial microbes, the co-presence of other plants, even the presence of kangaroos and, during the winter months, livestock grazing in the mid-rows. This being the case, these winegrowers often adhere to or support principles of organic agriculture, including an avoidance of chemical sprays and fertilisers. ‘Biodynamic’ techniques and approaches to agriculture are also popular in McLaren Vale, with an emphasis on ideas of complex relationships of interrelatedness between certain cosmic and terrestrial forces and rhythms in plant growth, as well as the rhythms located within the human body of the biodynamic practitioner (see Chapter Four). Minimal vineyard irrigation is often favoured in the Vale, although unlike many other South Australian regions McLaren Vale is not reliant on water from the Murray-Darling river system, having its own groundwater supply augmented by the Christies Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant, which supplies recycled suburban ‘grey water’.

Of course, there are practical, material benefits to the close relationship of farmer and vineyard. Those that know their vines intimately are more attuned to issues of pests, disease and heat stress that may be affecting their crop, more care can be taken of the vines when hand-pruning rather than machine-pruning, and manual harvesting means a better ability to select good grapes and leave poor or damaged bunches behind. These farmers— who know their land through the praxical knowledge of *doing*, rather than the ‘farming-by-numbers’ that many believe is representative of modern commercial agriculture—also understand the tiny differences in soil structure, subsurface geology and microclimate within the vineyard that relate to different characteristics in the grapes. It is no coincidence that many small producers take a deliberately hands-on approach to vineyard work, or that a lot of large companies will hand-prune and harvest their best vineyard plots while processing the rest mechanically.

These trends are replicated in wineries, with hand-plunging of the ferment and basket-pressing of the skins usually performed on better-quality parcels of grapes. Other processing techniques such as carbonic maceration, involving whole-bunch fermentation where the juice largely ferments while still inside the grape, or fermentation in earthenware pots rather than metal or plastic vessels, are further means by which winemakers may engage with the grapes to achieve different results. As is the case in the vineyard, a philosophy of ‘minimal input’ is often celebrated by winemakers seeking to produce wines reflective of terroir, with the notion that the winemaking process should be more about responsively ‘guiding’ and ‘nurturing’ the so-called natural processes of fermentation and maturation, than about controlling and subjugating the grapes, making wine to a pre-conceived recipe. Taking these principles to their logical conclusion are the producers of so-called ‘natural’ wine, who stress minimal winemaker intervention, the use of indigenous yeasts rather than commercial strains, no adulteration of wine with new oak or additives such as tannins and acids, and no preservatives other than a minimal use of sulphur dioxide. For these people, true terroir is obscured by the ‘artifice’ of modern scientific winemaking.³⁵

A good number of my informants emphasised the production of wines that reflected the qualities of place, and embraced winegrowing technologies and practices that were thought to align with or enhance terroir (particularly ‘sustainable’ farming and artisanal and traditional vinification processes). Most of these people were, I believe, genuine in their intentions to produce high-quality, *authentic* terroir-driven wine, often at the expense of financial stability: operating a vineyard and winery as a small producer was not, I was often told, an easy way to make money. It is important, however, to highlight the fact that a terroir perspective is not independent of market forces. Terroir sells, and the number of wine labels boasting of a wine’s

³⁵ There is some controversy around the use of the term ‘natural wine’, given the absence of agreement over definitions and the lack of systems of certification (as exist for ‘organic’ and ‘biodynamic’ wine). Like so many other products, all wine can be thought of as to a degree both natural and ‘artificial’, and so attempts to clearly delineate the two are problematic.

unique provenance is evidence of this. For small producers, the authenticity of their wine as a product of place, and of the skilled mediation of human labour in place, is a crucial means of distinguishing themselves from the large winemaking enterprises that dominate much of the industry.



Figure 23. Vine pruning, winter

Animating place and product

Gell (1998) convincingly argues that all sorts of *things* (like dolls, cars, religious icons or works of art) may possess a powerful social agency, not because of any inherent physical or biological properties but rather because of their position and movement vis-à-vis other actors. This agency “is relational - it does not matter, in ascribing ‘social agent’ status, what a thing (or a person) ‘is’ in itself; what matters is where it stands in a network of social relations” (1998:

123). In wine, this tendency is clear: certain wines hold deeper social meanings and wield more social power than others by virtue of the relationships that they embody, an uneven distribution of values that often operates quite independently of the wine's physically inherent and measurable qualities. A terroir perspective foregrounds the wine's relational links with the vines and soil of the vineyard in which the grapes were grown, with the winemaker and his or her equipment, and with local networks of production. Further relationships become engendered in distribution and consumption, as bottles of wine are bought and sold at cellar doors in the region, wine stores throughout the country, or through networks of international trade. Some are given as gifts, others consumed socially with friends or family, or served in restaurants and bars. The processes of exchange gives things a 'social life' (Appadurai 1988), which means they can never be thought to exist completely independently of their social relations, despite moving between various phases of greater or lesser commoditisation or singularity over time. As Kopytoff states, "no thing ever quite reaches the ultimate commodity end of the continuum between them. There are no perfect commodities" (Kopytoff 1988: 87).

The terroir perspective that may be seen to be common to winegrowers of McLaren Vale—as well as many consumers, critics, and others—draws a divide between mass commodity wines and the sorts of wines that are regarded as 'singular', which possess agency by virtue of the intimate and emplaced processes surrounding their positioning as actors in social networks. This tendency to ascribe certain power, life, and weight of meanings to particular wines and wine places is, fundamentally, I argue, an animic one. 'Animism' is a worldview that has in the anthropological tradition usually been attributed to indigenous and so-called pre-modern populations (Bird-David 1999). Popularly, it has often been treated as a 'primitive' form of religiosity seemingly incommensurate with a modern, Western epistemology, the object of which is, in Bird-David's words, "a totalizing scheme of separated essences, approached ideally from a separated viewpoint" (Bird-David 1999: 577). However, even the most 'modern' can be seen at times to exercise relations with things that are animic in nature. Following Hornborg's

(2006) argument that animism and objectivism are, along with fetishism, strategies that are used in different contexts and at different times to make sense of the world, Sillar (2009) states that “in practice we can accommodate diverse perceptions and explanations, and choose to highlight different aspects at different times” (Sillar 2009: 375).

Wine is often approached as an object of scientific knowledge, and its production a matter of understanding and mastering the chemical and biological processes that serve to impart particular qualities to the wine. Even those scientifically trained in viticulture and oenology, however, will approach certain bottles of wine or vineyards with a special reverence based in their particular relational configurations. Wine production and consumption thus provides rich opportunities to observe the side-by-side existence of modern objectivism with animic and fetishistic beliefs and practices, although these apparent ontological inconsistencies are by no means limited to wine: “To say that modern Western societies might express *both* a hard-headed materialism (in which things are reduced to mere lifeless objects) *as well as* a kind of enchanted animism (in which things are accepted as having an immanent power) is to acknowledge that societies can simultaneously maintain multiple contradictory ontologies” (Fowles 2010: 8; cited in Harrison-Buck 2012: 65). The objectivism and materialism of modern viticultural and vinicultural knowledge nestles in McLaren Vale alongside a more relational perspective epitomised in concepts of terroir. In wine, as in art and elsewhere, the valorisation of the handmade, unique product of a skilled practitioner – more *special* and more valuable than the mechanically-reproduced version identical in every other respect – demonstrates just such an animic, relational perspective. For wine, this perspective is made explicit by the commonly-expressed belief in terroir, which emphasises not only the relational and substantial links between people and product but also, perhaps even more significantly, with *place*.



Figure 24. 'Vintage in the Vale', by local artist Peg Miller-King

Conclusion

I have argued that terroir is best considered as a relational worldview or an epistemology, which I call a 'terroir perspective', that acknowledges the *relational and processual* characteristics of production. It is precisely in these interwoven relationships that terroir may be thought to reside and by which it is shaped and reproduced. By nature such relationships are temporal and emergent, and so the terroir of a particular place might be thought of less as a fixed, underlying 'reality', but as a potentiality that must be enacted and mediated through the agency of people working in place. This belief is tacit in many winegrowers' understandings of their work and their place in the world, even when it exists alongside a modernist tendency to categorise and dichotomise. Whether or not they would describe it as

such, I argue that many of those involved in wine production and trade in McLaren Vale may be said to hold (to varying degrees) a terroir perspective, reflected in their lived practice and the ways they speak about the world and particularly the relations between wine, people and landscape, perceiving wine as fundamentally emplaced socially and geographically through the interactive processes of production and consumption. The relational orientation that lies at the heart of a terroir perspective can be seen to play a very important role in the way people perceive and relate to wine and other agricultural products, and to place itself.

In McLaren Vale, terroir is significant as a discursive tool through which certain wines, places, and the region itself are valorised. The production of the Geology Map and the ongoing project to link wine tastes to geological structures is intended to provide objective, scientific legitimisation for terroir claims (at least those relating to vineyard geology), and supports the assertion of many that the Vale is an important winegrowing region partly by virtue of its complex geology. The Geology Map also provides a basis for marketing the 'uniqueness' of terroir wines, through the Scarce Earth wine labelling program. The terroir perspective shared by many of my informants celebrates unique places rather than homogeneous and homogenising spaces of production, and finds power in complex emplaced relationships between certain landscapes, the people that dwell there, and the products that emerge from their interactions and circulate far and wide. Within a terroir perspective these bonds are not severed by the commodity status of products like wine, and indeed these products may remain infused and enlivened with these social relations.

In this chapter, we have also seen some of the ways that terroir is actively mediated and engineered by winegrowers who, guided by local traditions, scientific knowledge and their own 'feel' for their work, make numerous decisions that impinge upon the overall terroir of place and wine. Through these decisions, relating to varietal selection, planting and vineyard maintenance techniques, processing and fermentation techniques and technologies,

winegrowers in the Vale are therefore not only exploring and utilising their terroir, but are actively creating it, aware of their conscious agency in producing place through their engagement with the landscape. From this we might also suggest that places are not only ensembles of past processes, activities and memories of the past, but also hold within them potential directions and projections for the future. Terroir is not only historically-constructed but aspirational, and through a terroir perspective landscape may be seen not only as a product of temporal processes but also as pregnant with future possibilities and potentials. This perspective allows us to view the landscape as variegated, alive, and infused with innumerable overlapping temporal rhythms, and it is to the implicit temporality of terroir that we turn in the following chapter.

Temporality and rhythm in the Vale

Imagine a film of the landscape, shot over years, centuries, even millennia. Slightly speeded up, plants appear to engage in very animal-like movements, trees flex their limbs without any prompting from the winds. Speeded up rather more, glaciers flow like rivers and even the earth begins to move. At yet greater speeds solid rock bends, buckles, and flows like molten metal. The world itself begins to breathe. Thus the rhythmic pattern of human activities nests within the wider pattern of activity for all animal life, which in turn nests within the pattern of activity for all so-called living things, which nests within the life-process of the world. (Ingold 1993: 164)

I trust in Nature for the stable laws of beauty and utility. Spring shall plant and Autumn garner to the end of time. (Robert Browning, *A Soul's Tragedy*. Reproduced in Dyson Wines 2014)

In the last chapter I outlined the importance of concepts of terroir for winegrowers in McLaren Vale, arguing that these reflect a worldview that sees people, place and wine as interconnected and—fundamentally—consubstantial. Here, I will explore an important implication of this perspective: that if the trajectories of peoples' lives are enmeshed with those of places and landscapes and of material things like wine, then these things cannot be thought of as static entities but rather as profoundly temporal. Terroir does not represent a fixed 'property' of a place that may become transferred into agricultural products (in this case, wine) but can instead be said to reside in the dynamic relationships within which these things are positioned. A terroir perspective is one that recognises the sharing of material substance but also, necessarily, an interweaving of temporal processes and cycles, which I will address through a discussion of *rhythms*.

McLaren Vale pulses to an infinitely complex ensemble of interwoven rhythms: rhythms embodied in the physical processes of humans; rhythms that mark, measure and determine their social lives and the cultural and economic patterns of organisation; and rhythms that are embedded and manifested in the landscape itself. These rhythms may be complementary, harmonising eurhythmically with one another (to use Lefèbvre's (2004) terminology), or they may be arrhythmically jarring. Below I will describe some of the rhythms that penetrate the

Vale, with a special focus on those cycles of agriculture that are so significant to the region, and in particular the grape harvest and vintage period. In doing so, I will attempt to overcome the assumed notion that landscapes and places are somehow docile, static entities that people merely *act upon* and bend to their own wills. Instead, I wish to bring to the fore the inherently processual and rhythmic interrelation of people with places and landscapes, which are perpetually in the process of *becoming*. It is my aim to describe how these rhythms animate McLaren Vale, and in doing so help to ‘reanimate’ concepts of place and terroir (after Mels 2004).

A polyrhythmic ensemble

“Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time, and an expenditure of energy, there is **rhythm**.” (Lefèbvre 2004: 15)

For Lefèbvre, a radical openness to the nuances of rhythm is crucial in overcoming the objectification/reification that permeates modern thought (and the structuralist theories of many of his contemporaries), which “imprison(s) itself in the ideology of the *thing*” (Lefèbvre 2004: 23, p. 23). His *rhythm analyst* is one who ‘listens’ to the world in order to discern the hidden and interwoven rhythms that bring all things to life. Thus, “The rhythm analyst calls on all his senses. He draws on his breathing, the circulation of his blood, the beatings of his heart and the delivery of his speech as landmarks He thinks with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality” (Lefèbvre 2004: 21). An analysis of the rhythms of the world must begin with a recognition of the primacy of one’s lived and embodied emplacement in the world. A person who is attuned to the inherent temporality of the body-as-lived and to the world around them is able to recognise that what normally appear to us as mere material objects are actually interlinked “in a dramatic becoming, in an ensemble full of meaning” (Lefèbvre 2004: 23).

It is this 'becoming'—an ongoing *emergence* as opposed to a static 'being'—that I wish to highlight. In this chapter I will describe the ways people in McLaren Vale are attuned to an understanding of farming and winegrowing as processual and contingent on numerous temporal rhythms and cycles come, also, to see their material worlds as fundamentally processual. This ongoing process of becoming relates to the objects of their production (namely, wine) as well as to the very landscape of McLaren Vale. By discussing this "polyrhythmic ensemble" (Crang 2000) as it is experienced and understood by winegrowers in the Vale, I aim to overcome the "conception of place as static, for rhythms are essentially dynamic, part of the multiplicity of flows that emanate from, pass through and centre upon place, and contribute to its situated dynamics" (Edensor 2010: 3).

Examining the relationship between rhythm and 'place', Edensor finds it helpful to divide rhythms into four categories: the rhythms of people, bodily rhythms, rhythms of mobility, and non-human rhythms (Edensor 2010: 4-7). Firstly, *rhythms of people* include those routines and patterns of everyday life, the regular and repetitive flows and surges of peoples' social activities and cultural practices, particularly in an 'urban' setting. These rhythms include "normative rhythms of place, often supported and promoted by officials and commercial enterprises," (Edensor 2010: 4) as well as those rhythms which contest and disrupt such normative patterns. In 'Walking in the City', de Certeau (1984: 91-130) explores the importance of motion in the embodied experiences of a practitioner walking through New York City or Paris. In their footsteps, turns and detours, the reading of street signs whose "ability to signify outlives its first definition" (1984: 104), and so on, the movement of the walker produces a creative, imaginative and personal space—habitable space—within the city's symbolic order. This 'totalitarian' order becomes subverted by everyday practices, "the function of articulating a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning" (1984: 105)

Secondly, *bodily rhythms* are those rhythms located within and regulating the functions of the human body: in Sack's words, "the cyclical beats of our hearts, the cycles of respiration, of growth and decay, of birth and death" (Sack 2004: 249). Such corporeal rhythms are usually experienced unreflexively, unless out of alignment, yet it is only through the rhythms of the body that other rhythms can be sensed. Thirdly, *rhythms of mobility* relate to the variegated movements and flows of people, vehicles, material goods, etc. These are similarly crucial in understanding the nature of places, "whether dynamic or placid, fast or slow" (Edensor 2010: 5); it is an essential characteristic of places that they are "ceaselessly (re)constituted by flows and never reified or bounded" (2010: 5). Finally, *non-human rhythms* include the "usually cyclical rhythms of nature: processes of growth and decay, the surgings of rivers, the changes in the weather and the activities of animals and birds which breed, nest and migrate..." (Edensor 2010: 7), as well as the grander rhythms of climate and geology, the cosmic cycles of night and day, the phases of the moon, the progression of the seasons as the earth makes its annual passage around the sun, and so on. Winegrowers in McLaren Vale are particularly conscious of rhythms of this type, with their direct influence on the processes of agriculture.

A division of rhythms along Edensor's lines is a useful conceptual tool, but it bears remembering that in the world-as-lived there are no such clean delineations, and this is certainly the case in the Vale. References I make to 'natural' or 'social' rhythms, for example, are not intended to set these apart from one another categorically, but instead draw attention or emphasise one or other particular aspect of the 'polyrhythmic ensemble'. Such rhythms are interrelated, converging, diverging, and giving rise to one another. Rhythms in one realm meld with those in another as, for example, cycles of day and night moderate and modulate bodily rhythms of breathing, heartbeat, sleep and wakefulness; or as the cycles of the days and the seasons relate to divisions of social time. Divisions between these types of rhythms (the rhythms of the so-called 'natural' world and those of its human inhabitants) have become ossified via the advent of clock- and calendar-time, which have served to detach these

temporalities from their lived foundations, giving them the appearance of naturalised ‘things’ in themselves. However, I argue that there is no such pre-existing division, as these rhythms—whereby social time organises itself around the cycles of the seasons and of plant growth as well as the flows of contemporary global capitalism, for example—emerge and are modulated through relations of mutual embeddedness of people in their worlds. Below I explore some of the elements of the complex polyrhythmic ensemble that permeates and constitutes McLaren Vale, in which different ‘types’ of rhythm align or intersect with one another in important ways.



Figure 25. Interrelated rhythms, vintage work

The rhythms of old rocks

Lefèbvre (2004: 20) argues that nothing is inert or immobile, and that even rocks have a slowly rhythmic presence, an “interminable rhythm”. What we see in the landscape are not static and timeless forms but rather congealed rhythmic temporality, nearly imperceptible from a human temporal scale. In the last chapter I described the great emphasis placed on rocks and geological formations by many in the Vale, with a focus on the development of a regional

Geology Map (Fairburn et al. 2010) and the relationship of these scientific understandings to wine production, marketing, and consumption. Most winegrowers in the Vale are familiar, to an extent, with the vast and ancient earthly processes that have shaped the geological landscape of the Vale.

These rhythms are manifested in outcrops of calcrete and limestone, ironstone and slate, undulating hills, and the Willunga Scarp which, to me, resembles a giant ocean wave looming behind the Vale. The McLaren Vale region is dominated by the geological structure of the Willunga Embayment, between the Ochre Cove-Clarendon Fault and the Willunga Fault. The landscape has been shaped over time by the folding and faulting of sedimentary layers over many millions of years: the oldest rocks to surface in the region are palaeoproterozoic gneiss and schist, dated to 1.6 billion years old (Fairburn et al. 2010).

As discussed in Chapter Three, part of the ‘uniqueness’ that many winegrowers attribute to McLaren Vale lies in the sheer diversity and geological complexity of the region, where intense geomorphic processes have resulted in the co-presence of extremely ancient rock structures alongside far more recent geologies. Taking me on a tour around sites of local geological interest, the wine writer Philip White, a co-author of the Geology Map (Fairburn et al. 2010) explained the scale of some of the vast terrestrial rhythms and processes that have influenced the shaping of the region:

The faultlines are very ancient and were dormant when Australia was part of [the supercontinent] Gondwana, but reactivated about 56 million years ago. The old Neoproterozoic rocks between the faults subsided forming the embayment, and new sediments washed down from the eroding mountain range from the east and from the ocean. The icecaps have grown and melted many times, there has been glaciation and all sorts of geological upheavals. Those hills [the southern Mount Lofty Ranges, including the Willunga Scarp] used to be the height of the Alps; twice they rose and were eroded down again. The Maslin sand is full of alluvial pebbles but some of the best vineyards in the Vale are grown on what’s called the Kurrajong formation, which is a rubbly mixture of rounded pebbles and sharper ones, all sorts – that must have been deposited in a huge effluvium. There must have been some really violent stuff going on. I’m glad I wasn’t there! (Philip White, 28 May 2012)

Winegrowers believe that considerable influence may be exerted upon wine production by the rocks that lie beneath their vineyard soil. However immobile geological formations may appear, they hold within them the productive agency of the deep, slow rhythms that have shaped and continue to shape them. These are deep-seated rhythms of movement along faultlines, erosion, glaciation, volcanism, and the rise and fall of sea levels, influencing the formation of the rocks themselves as well as the topographical shape of the land in its fluctuating relief and positioning of landforms. Harry told me that he was humbled by the timeframe of the geophysical and geological formation of the Vale, by the rhythmic processes by which organic material can itself transform into rock:³⁶

The bore we drilled up over that way – it was rocky on top of the soil, then under that was white bentonite clay. Further down was Blanche aquitard, then more clays. Down 30 to 40 metres was black lignite - old trees! Isn't that incredible, 40 metres underground! It's almost beyond comprehension. The world works in vast cycles that are much longer than anything we could comprehend. When you think about the fact that there were once trees that have been covered with hundreds of millions of years of geology... (Harry, 16 October 2012)

Although the rhythms congealed in the rocks and geological structures of McLaren Vale reflect a temporality imperceptible in a bodily sense by humans, they nevertheless exert a powerful influence upon the lives of people and other organisms. The movements and activities of people have always occurred in correspondence with landscape, and the geology and topology of the Mount Lofty Ranges has been crucial to both Aboriginal and European settlement patterns. The elevation of the ranges, running north-south from the Fleurieu Peninsula into the mid-North of the state, acts to condense moist air borne by winter weather systems into the rains that water the windward side. This regular rainfall and the alluvial soil washed off the eroding ranges ensured fertile soils and a diverse wildlife population: Aboriginal people moved across the land seasonally to take advantage of available resources, generally occupying open coastal plains during the summer months and moving into wooded and sheltered areas in the

³⁶ Some conceptions of terroir claim precisely the reverse of this: that rocks may impart their substance or essence into wine via the mediation of the living vine.

colder parts of the year (Clarke, PA 1998: 16). This confluence of topography, geology and climate has also allowed agriculture to flourish, and as the geological spine of the South Australian colony the Mount Lofty Ranges provided European settlers with the conditions to plant grains, fruit trees, grape vines and numerous other crops, as well as pasturelands for stock rearing. The significance of the ranges to wine in South Australia is clear, with the crinkled hills cradling a number of significant winegrowing regions – from south to north, McLaren Vale, the Adelaide Hills, the Barossa Valley and the Clare Valley – as well as other historical vineyard sites that have since been built over by the Adelaide suburbs.³⁷ The deep rhythms congealed in the geological landscape are vitally relevant to the lives of those who dwell in the Vale, then, and just as important to our description of an ‘animate’ landscape as those more aligned to a human temporal scale.



Figure 26. A geological unconformity in sedimentary layers, Chapel Hill Road. The upper layer is around 50 million years old, while the rocks beneath it are around 550 million years old

³⁷ See (Bishop 1977) for an overview of the history of Adelaide’s metropolitan vineyards.

Returning and becoming: the days, the months and the seasons

I'm sitting here looking down across the Vale looking at the orange autumn vines, and the almond trees are about to bud and blossom, the grass is green, and the Gulf is so still and flat and blue you could water-ski over to Edithburgh [on the Yorke Peninsula] ... and when a cold front comes across from the west, the clouds come in and just burst when they hit the hills. We feel the seasons down here, that's for sure! (Albert, 5 June 2012)

It might seem an obvious statement, but the cyclical rhythms of the 'natural world'—inextricably linked to the movements of the earth, the sun and the moon, relative to one another—are of enormous importance to people like the sheep farmer Albert, who make their livings through agriculture, pastoralism, or other forms of work 'on the land'. The people of McLaren Vale, a region in which agriculture (and particularly, in recent decades, viticulture and viniculture) plays a significant role in economic and social organisation, are no exception.

As Lefèbvre (2004: 90) suggests, "Cyclical rhythms, each having a determined period or frequency, are also the rhythms of beginning again: of the 'returning' which does not oppose itself to the 'becoming' The dawn is always new." The cycles of the days and the seasons repeat, but not without subtle modulation - not mechanical repetition, but organic rhythm. In the morning the sun appears over the scarp to the east, flooding the Vale with light as it climbs into the sky. The sunlight that shines onto the earth is photosynthesised by trees and vines and absorbed by the skins of animals and people. Its heat turns the grass dry and brown in summer, and sucks the water from creeks and dams, vaporising it into the atmosphere. The sun ripens the grapes on the vine, and in summer heatwaves may shrivel bunches faster than they can be picked. Lowering into the Gulf St Vincent, its last red-orange rays catch the west-facing hillsides of the range before it slips completely out of sight beyond the sea, followed by the darkening night. This cycle is repeated throughout the year, with imperceptible changes from one day to the next: as summer turns to autumn and then winter, the days become gradually shorter as the sun skirts lower across the sky to the north, and colder, as less of its radiant energy reaches the earth. After the winter solstice in late June, the days again begin to

lengthen, and in spring the temperatures once more begin to rise and the vines and fruit trees awaken from their winter slumber.

The moon, too, exercises its rhythmic influence through its waxing and waning: the dark new moon which allows the stars to emerge at their brightest (despite the glow of Adelaide's city lights beyond the hills to the north, the nights are still dark) and the full moon which bathes the Vale in light. As well as the phases of the moon, the power of lunar rhythms is felt in the ebb and flow of the tides in the Gulf St Vincent. Tides draw the sea water out and back in twice a day, influencing the movements of snapper, whiting, mullet, and squid—and thus, also, the daily habits of the local fishermen who follow them. The cyclical rhythms of tides are often used as measures of time; as Olwig points out, “The English word ‘tide’ once meant time” (Olwig 2005: 261).³⁸ The practices of some McLaren Vale winegrowers, too, are explicitly linked to lunar cycles which they believe alter the flow of sap and other aspects of plant growth: this is a key feature of ‘biodynamic’ agriculture, to which I will return later in this chapter.

At night, as the temperature of the land cools down, cold air drains off the range and flows rapidly towards the sea. These are the famed ‘gully winds’ beloved by grape growers from McLaren Vale to the Barossa, as they help to dry out vineyard canopies during wet growing seasons (making the plants less susceptible to disease) and ensure that damaging frosts do not settle overnight in the spring time, when vines are budding (Hook 2012). When the land warms up again during the day, the winds reverse: an afternoon sea breeze blows in off the Gulf. The summer interplay between Australia's hot interior and the cool ocean is crucial. As well-known South Australian winegrower Brian Croser states, most of the State's winegrowing regions are “jammed between the Southern Ocean, which acts as a buffer to keep

³⁸ See also Jones (2010) for a discussion of tidal rhythms in the Severn Estuary, Wales; here, he argues that temporality in certain coastal locations is of a hybrid form relating to interlocking solar and lunar rhythms.

temperatures down, and the inland desert which occasionally gets released like dragon's breath back on to the vineyards. The Southern Ocean is the wizard which keeps the dragon in its lair" (Brian Croser, quoted in Jefford 2004: 81).

The summer battle between the hot, dry dragons' breath of the northerly wind off the desert and the cool wind off the ocean plays out differently in different seasons. In some years, like 2008, the desert gains the upper hand at vintage time. That March, there were 15 days in a row above 35 degrees Celsius in McLaren Vale, creating panic as vineyard workers tried to get the fruit off the vine before it ripened too much. 2011, on the other hand, was dominated by cold, wet weather from the southwest, with summer rain and low temperatures leading to problems of disease and under-ripe fruit. Through winter and early spring, weather in the Vale is dominated by the rhythms of the regular cold fronts that sweep across the southern Australian coastline from west to east, bringing with them the vital rain that moistens the soils ahead of the next hot, dry summer. Proximity to the ocean is important in winter and spring, too: due to its moderating influence, coastal regions like McLaren Vale are not prone to the sorts of frosts that can damage vines at bud-burst as are regions further inland.

The cyclical passing of the seasons correlates in important ways with *social* rhythms in McLaren Vale, too. An obvious example, as I will describe later in this chapter, is the 'vintage' period at the end of the summer months, when the grape harvest occurs. This entails a shift in rhythms of work and upending of normal social routines, as well as an intensified sense of community cohesion. McLaren Vale is also deeply influenced by fluctuations in tourist visitation across the seasons. Tourist numbers are heightened during holiday periods and are highest during summer (particularly along the coastal beaches), and warm, sunny weekend days in other months see many people take day trips to the Vale from Adelaide. Spring is locally regarded as 'wedding season', with many wineries providing picturesque locations for wedding ceremonies and receptions. Special events like the Sea and Vines food and wine

festival in June and the Tour Down Under bicycle race in January provide recurring focal points for tourism in the Vale.

The annual cycle of the seasons is crucially important in McLaren Vale, yet winegrowers also acknowledge much longer-term climatic cycles. Although each winegrowing vintage is unique, older members of the wine growing community in McLaren Vale are able to identify similarities between vintages decades apart, a result of the climatic rhythms that operate along much longer intervals than the annual cycle of the seasons. Many of the ‘elders’ of McLaren Vale—as an older generation of winegrowers are often referred to—spoke about vintages in terms of these longer cycles, likening periods of specific climate (heat waves, drought years, wet vintages) to similar periods that they have lived through previously. The rain-affected vintage of 2011, for example, was likened to a similar vintage in 1974, with similar parallels between the good seasons to follow, 1975 and 2012.

The temporal scale of wine means that winegrowers, in general, take a much longer-term outlook towards their work than most modern city-dwellers. There is no certainty involved in each annual cycle: “you do it once a year and you get one shot at it. There are good years and bad years – you’re at the mercy of the gods, battling the elements, there could be a really hot summer, or rain at vintage. And you don’t get an immediate return, it’s a long-term proposition” (Dave, 19 October 2012). Mark, who owns and operates his own small vineyard and winery, told me that it was only through close attention and interaction over many years that the winegrower could become truly familiar with their vineyard:

Every vintage teaches you new things, each year I get a bit more of an understanding about what the vineyard can do and its particular characteristics. It takes a lifetime of learning to perfect, and in fact you can’t perfect it, because vintage conditions change every year. That diversity, year after year, is part of what makes it so interesting, and it’s why you have to have a passion for it, to keep trying to improve. It’s never ending what you can learn, the variables that affect just one vineyard, that constant change. (Mark, 22 August 2012)

Here, Mark touches upon something that other informants also highlighted. Many of those involved in the wine industry (but particularly those that see themselves primarily as ‘farmers’ or ‘vignerons’) perceived their work less as a ‘job’ distinct and separate from other aspects of their lives but as something fundamentally intertwined with their lives (and, often, with the lives of their antecedents and their descendants).

Winegrowing thus requires a long-term commitment and emotional involvement and an ongoing attention to the subtly changing rhythms of the world, the weather, and the vineyard. For Mark, ‘learning’ about the terroir of his vineyard involves an ongoing relationship and emotional investment, as his skill and embedded knowledge is forged through direct practice alongside the soils and the plants. This is a relationship of correspondence: Mark’s actions are guided by the properties and actions of the vines and the wine as they, in turn respond to his own movements and actions and those of the world around (Benediktsson & Lund 2010). For a winegrower seeking to produce wines of place, an embodied attentiveness to the interanimating rhythms and cycles of the place is essential; as such, I believe that this temporal, rhythmic dimension is crucial to an understanding of terroir.



Figure 27. Untrellised 'bush vines', late autumn and early spring

Rhythms of vine and wine

The lives of the people that tend to grapevines and work with their fruit in a region like McLaren Vale are thoroughly intertwined with the lives of the vines themselves. There are parallels, furthermore, in the phases of life and lifespan of human beings and of *Vitis vinifera*, the common grape vine. Unlike some crops, vines are not productive immediately. They require much care and maintenance when very young, and only begin to produce fruit after three years or so. With shallow root system and slender trunks, young vines can be finicky and inconsistent and mature gradually, although they may still produce excellent wine. After about twenty years, following this period of ‘adolescence’ (in the words of viticulturist Bob), vines mature into adulthood. At this stage “they’re well-established and the roots are tapping deeply into the earth, and they’re not as susceptible to fluctuation” (Bob, 23 November 2012). As vines age further, they produce smaller yields, but often with a prized intensity and complexity of flavour.

Some vines can grow to be very old and South Australia, which has avoided the devastation of phylloxera (see Chapter One), is home to some of the oldest productive Shiraz, Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon vines in the world.³⁹ In McLaren Vale, several wineries lay claim to vines of over a hundred years old, with the most venerable dating from 1880 (Conte Estate Wines 2015). Such vines are treasured in McLaren Vale, not only for the quality of the wine they produce but as tangible, concrete links to history in the region. Vines, rooted in and drawing their nourishment from the earth, were seen by my informants as particularly valuable elements of place. Old vines are considered to be reliable conduits for the ‘place’ that can be

³⁹ Langmeil in the Barossa Valley still produces from Shiraz vines planted in 1843, seven years after the proclamation of the Colony of South Australia.

tasted in terroir wines, as “Only the deepest-rooting vines can say: ‘This is where I am from and you can taste this in my grapes’” (Waldin 2004: 37).⁴⁰

Different grape vine varieties have different physical characteristics (for example, of leaf shape, canopy structure, and bunch formation), and my interlocutors often expressed preferences for one particular type of vine over others. Cellar-door manager Fiona pointed out some of the characteristics of different varieties as we walked around the vineyard:

I love the look of the Grenache—really gnarly old vines. They’ve got a great structure, the canopy is upright because they shoot up vertically. Grenache is harvested late, the grapes are happy to just sit there on the vine ripening slowly. The quintessential McLaren Vale grenache has what’s sometimes called barnyard characteristics—earthy, musty, savoury. I just love them. As soon as they’re picked the leaves go orange and the vines die off. It’s almost like their job is done, their lifespan is over. (Fiona, 5 February 2013)

The temporal rhythms of vine growth and fruit production are informed and enforced by the cycles of the seasons: the cold rains of winter, when the vines slumber; the lengthening days of spring, as new growth emerges; the hot sunshine of summer which ripens the grapes, and the onset of autumn after the harvest, when leaves turn brown and fall from the vine, and the plant slips back into dormancy. Human concerns of mortality and rebirth are embodied in the annual growing cycle of the vine as the vines are said to ‘die’ after harvest and ‘come to life’ again in spring; wherever the vine has been cultivated its symbolically important phases have been celebrated through ritual and communal festivities (Unwin 1991).

The ‘death’ of the vine following the grape harvest is accompanied by another highly symbolic transitional process: the phenomenon of fermentation, which transforms and *enlivens* the harvested grapes. Mere grape juice undergoes a metamorphosis to be reborn as wine, an intoxicating potion which has for millennia been associated with the liminal realm between humans and the gods, the profane and the sacred (Unwin 1991). The annual cycle of the vine and of winemaking is important here: “the products of the vine came to take on symbolic and

⁴⁰ In Chapter Five I will provide further discussion of the way vines, and particularly old vines, may be personified.

ritual significance, holding within them the secret of rebirth, since they could survive beyond the autumnal and winter 'death' of the parent vine" (Unwin 1991: 60). Wine emerges from the agricultural cycles of life, death and rebirth, and is both of the earth as a product of the vine rooted in the soil, and of the heavens, granted its spiritual essence through the divine process of fermentation. It possesses a temporality that links it with a very human experience of the life process; wine gestates and is born, slowly matures and flourishes, and eventually fades and dies.

Recognising these commonalities, ancient people afforded a powerful symbolic link between wine and blood, that universal emblem of life and vitality. Unwin (1991: 78-79) notes that from the earliest days of viticulture, "the deities of wine and the vine gradually came to the forefront of religious consciousness, as symbols concerned with rebirth and the life hereafter". In a vivid example of the metaphoric connections between wine, blood and life-force, Christianity—the dominant religion in most wine-growing regions of the Old and New Worlds—relates red wine to the blood of Jesus Christ in ritual use. According to Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, by the priestly consecration of bread and wine in the sacrament of the Eucharist there "takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood" (Waterworth 1848). This ritualised anthropophagy equates wine with blood in a quite literal sense. Wine *is* the blood of Jesus, and through drinking it in an appropriate ritual setting believers incorporate the deity into their own physical bodies: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (John 6:53, *The Gospel according to John : authorised King James version*).

My interlocutors often alluded to a dimension of wine that placed it in the realm of the sacred, and certainly the reverence with which they treated 'special' bottles of wine reflects this.

During my fieldwork I met with a visiting Californian academic, Stephen Lloyd-Moffett, who was undertaking research for a book about the religious aspects of wine production and consumption (Lloyd-Moffett 2014, unpublished draft). For him, some winegrowers were monastic and studied in their solemn dedication to their work whereas others were more 'intuitive' and 'spiritual', or else embraced the chaos, vitality and creativity of winemaking. As Sophie told me, "it's true, wine is a modern-day religion – and a lot of people worship at the altar in their own ways." (Sophie, 7 March 2012).

Wine holds a special cultural position in Western traditions from ancient Egypt and Sumeria onward (Unwin 1991). In the contemporary era it is reified and fetishised as a commodity; it holds connotations of status and class, of cultural and symbolic capital that set it aside from other food products. The symbolic power that wine possesses has been inherited from ancient times in its links with notions of sacred community and to secular 'civilisation'. Throughout history people have identified in wine parallels with the human condition. There is a tendency to anthropomorphise or personify wine, and discourses of wine journalism and criticism, marketing, and so on are replete with metaphorical references to human personalities, characteristics or bodily forms that wines are said to embody. In a conversation with Sophie and Peter, owner-operators of their own family winery and vineyard, they told me that they see wine as a living entity, with a lifespan and character that might be comparable to that of a person:

I think about it this way: young wines have a lot of 'liveliness', they're energetic. Then they go through a 'teenage' phase at about 5 years when the flavours are slightly unbalanced, before they can really mature and their more settled characteristics. Different varietals have different human characteristics as well; I think of Grenache as being feminine, soft, voluptuous. Cabernet is regal and upstanding, and Shiraz is more masculine, strong, muscular. (Sophie, 24 April 2012)

A common observation of wine is that it possesses a temporal dimension that most other alcoholic beverages do not. Wine is not able to be manufactured continuously throughout the year. It is dependent on an annual grape harvest, with fermentation only occurring for a fairly

short period of time after the fruit is picked from the vine. Other alcoholic drinks do not face the same seasonal imperatives; the grain crops used in beer brewing and spirit distillation, for example, keep for long periods of time and thus fermentation and other processes associated with manufacture can be undertaken at any time during the year.

As most wine is the product of grapes harvested only in a specific year, its characteristics and qualities are dependent to a large extent on the vagaries of the growing season. The 'vintage' of a wine is part of its identity, with different years imparting different qualities to the wine in the same way as do differences in vineyard, grape varietal and winemaking techniques. The vintage year is usually recorded on the label of a wine bottle, and some vintages across particular regions are widely regarded as better than others, for numerous reasons. No two years are exactly alike, and winemakers—unlike the manufacturers of other beverages, who strive for consistency in the taste and other characteristics of their products—usually embrace this vintage diversity:

I find nature very interesting. The seasons changing, winter and spring rains... Every vintage is different. Vintage is vintage, that sort of variation is crucial. I'm not about trying to bring grapes up to a particular 'standard', I rely on nature and therefore keeping the diversity of vintage is really important. (Dennis, 15 August 2012)

Such diversity is celebrated as a fundamental aspect of wine's being, as something that sets it apart from other drinks. As such, the multi-regional blends produced by big wineries aiming to create a consistent product are often regarded by smaller producers as mere *beverage manufacture* as opposed to *real* winemaking. Real winemaking, in this understanding, demands a 'feel' for the wine, an ability to work within the unique parameters of each vineyard, each parcel of fruit, and each vintage season to 'draw out' their best characteristics. Wine is in this sense a product of nearly-infinite diversity, reflecting the specificity of place in its fullest sense, as the complex interplay of innumerable elements *through time*. These encompass so-called 'natural' and 'cultural' factors, though these dichotomous labels tend to obscure the interrelationship of the two. We might, then, see wine as a crucial conduit linking

its drinker to place not only in the sense of a particular geographical location but to its temporal rhythms: the ebbs and flows of enmeshed geological, climatic, vegetal, and human activity, captured in a bottle.



Figure 28. New vine growth, spring

Biodynamics in winegrowing

One particular stream of agricultural practice and philosophy that appears to be gaining in popularity in McLaren Vale is that of ‘biodynamics’, a system developed by the Austrian esotericist Rudolf Steiner during the 1920s.⁴¹ Followers of biodynamics conceive of agriculture as fundamentally holistic, tying plant growth to broader ecologically-interrelated processes of soil fertility, plant, animal and microbial biodiversity, and the tasks and activities of people. Biodynamics, the aim of which is “to influence organic life on earth through cosmic and terrestrial forces” (Kirchmann 1994: 175) has a strongly spiritual dimension, and many producers (and consumers) are highly sceptical or dismissive about some of the elements of

⁴¹ Steiner also founded the esoteric spiritual movement ‘anthroposophy’, a form of expressive bodily movement art called ‘eurythmy’, and a pedagogical movement known as ‘Waldorf education’.

magical thinking that biodynamic philosophies contain. Nevertheless, the influence of biodynamics in McLaren Vale—including among some of the region’s larger and more well-known wineries—is relatively strong.

As well as the notion that the landscape is imbued with ‘earthly’ and ‘cosmic’ forces, biodynamics proposes that there is a ‘consciousness’ inherent in the world, with which humans interact (Steiner & Adams 2004). Biodynamics relies on the application of various organic preparations (often in homeopathic doses) to the soil and the plants in order to channel vital energies, thus ‘potentising’ the land. These most commonly involve a cow manure compost packed into cow horns and buried in the vineyard for months before excavation and preparation, but which may also involve, for various purposes, stags’ bladders, fish emulsion, yarrow, valerium and other herbs, and powdered silica from ground quartz crystals. There is a significant element of sympathetic magic at play in many biodynamic techniques:

Weeds are combated by collecting seeds from the weeds and burning them above a wooden flame. The ashes from the seeds is then spread on the fields, which will according to biodynamic philosophy block the influence from the full moon on the particular weed and make it infertile. (Desai 2007: 233)

The ‘Preparation 500’ horn manure compost, said to promote vitality in the soil, is a very common feature of biodynamic practice among McLaren Vale winegrowers. This preparation is made by filling cow (not bull) horns with the manure of lactating cows, and burying them in the ground for six months over winter, “in the season when the earth is most alive” (Steiner & Adams 2004: 74). During this time, the horns act as antennae for ‘ethereal’ and ‘astral’ forces thought to invest the manure with a great potency, and the “entire content of the horn becomes inwardly alive” (Steiner & Adams 2004: 74). In preparation for spraying, the manure is stirred in a manner which creates a vortex, “drawing in energy forces”, then changing direction to introduce ‘chaos’, which is “the moment the liquid is said to receive the imprint of

the cosmos The water then becomes the dynamic carrier of the life energy present in the Biodynamic preparation” (Waldin 2004: 35).

Planetary and cosmic rhythms are central to biodynamics, and the movements of the moon (in particular) and other celestial bodies are vitally important to local biodynamic agriculturalists in McLaren Vale. Cosmic rhythms are thought to be vital to the growing cycles of vines and other plants, and biodynamic farmers seek to undertake tasks in the vineyard and the garden (like spraying, pruning, or composting) in accordance with particular lunar and planetary phases. These phases are said to affect the flow of the sap, the absorption of moisture, and many other processes within the plant. Michelle, the manager of a large biodynamic vineyard, told me that the timing of these activities was very important: “We time biodynamic sprays before the moon’s opposition to Saturn. We’ll usually do sulphur spraying on a full moon, when there are intense water forces – that’s when the likelihood of rain is greater, and when the vines are more susceptible to fungal infections” (Michelle, April 19 2012). Tim, a contract viticulturist, emphasised that biodynamics involves the interlocking of a number of different rhythms, to do with the moon and planets, earthly seasonal and diurnal cycles, as well as the life-cycles of plants and animals, including the cows that provide the horns used in many biodynamic preparations:

Horn manure and horn silica should be made in the horns [taken from] a cow that is lactating – the reason being that there is more calcium. Preparation 500 [horn manure] should be made over winter time, when there is an earthly influence, and sprayed in the late afternoon when the earth is breathing in. 501 [horn silica] is done over summer, when there is an influence from air and light, and sprayed in the early morning when the earth is breathing out. (Tim, 15 May 2012)

Although larger vineyards often use a ‘flow form’ apparatus of interlinked basins to allow preparations to mix as required, many biodynamicists hold that it is important for the practitioner to do things by hand, and particularly to focus attentively to the task. A biodynamic perspective stresses that it is not only the *actions* of people that counts, but also *intent*:

You should do it by hand, yeah, it's all about intent – that's what puts the energy into the preparation by the mixing. There is a lot of scepticism about biodynamics but all I can say is that I've observed the changes in the soil and the fruit quality, and the guys in the winery have noticed the difference, in the 6 years I've been doing it. Obviously there's seasonal variations every year, but the difference is noticeable. (Tim, 15 May 2012)

As Tim explains, it is not only the physical rhythms of the practitioner in stirring biodynamic preparations and applying them to the soil and the plants that matters, but also their internal psychic and emotional rhythms as they come into synchronisation with the material world. Steve, another biodynamic viticulturist and a vineyard manager at a well-known winery, told me that biodynamic activities should relate to social as well as individual human rhythms. Showing me his mixtures, including valerian flowers, basalt dust and eggshells, as well as a series of barrels containing preparations of fish emulsion, stinging nettle, casuarina, porcelain clay and seaweed, Steve explained that these should be heated over a fire—"to blood temperature"—and mixed by hand. For his staff, mixing the biodynamic preparations was a social event: "We do the prep together, out there under the big gum tree – and that's the way it should be. People love to do it, and everyone shows up to help" (Steve, 15 May 2012).

Although biodynamic production remains a 'niche' element in McLaren Vale, it is growing. In 2014, biodynamic producers (both certified and uncertified) represented 11.2% of the 116 growers participating in the Sustainable Winegrowing program (Sustainable Australia Winegrowing 2014), and many larger wineries have moved to managing at least some of their vineyards biodynamically. There are undoubtedly marketing benefits for this shift, as wineries attempt to position themselves as environmentally aware and 'sustainable'. It was suggested to me that wines produced using environmentally-friendly organic and biodynamic practices were particularly marketable among some fashionable young urban consumers, but also in overseas markets like China, Japan and parts of Europe where people harbour deep concerns about pollution throughout the food-chain. Despite the cynicism with which non-biodynamicists often regarded the practice (as scientifically suspect and/or as principally a

marketing tool), most of the biodynamic viticulturists and other practitioners I spoke to appeared genuine in their embrace of its principles and techniques.⁴²

Biodynamic viticulture relies upon the human mediation, through hands-on and intensive work, of a host of interwoven processes taking place within the soil, plant, atmosphere, and cosmos. Biodynamic work is done 'in place', and biodynamic wine is very much considered wine *of* place. This is partly because the growth of the vine relies on the coming together of numerous forces in a unique and non-replicable way. As Waldin (2004: 37) claims, there is a direct relationship of biodynamic practices to a taste of place: "The horn manure will stimulate the vine to find a sense of self ... It does this by encouraging the vine to force its roots into the earth. If Biodynamic wines do have a marked taste of place, terroir, soil, then horn manure is a key contributor". For biodynamic wines to be certified as such they must be made purely from biodynamically-grown fruit, furthermore, and as such are far more likely to be the product of grapes grown in one vineyard.

Biodynamics aligns very closely with what I have referred to as the 'terroir perspective' held by many people in McLaren Vale, and is one avenue through which winegrowers may choose to craft distinctive wine that is representative of their place in the landscape. In its focus on ideas of dynamic energies and rhythms which must be 'harnessed' or 'channelled' by vineyard activities, it also brings to the fore the temporal aspect of terroir. Biodynamics begins with an emphasis on what Steiner calls 'living forces', "far more important for the plant than mere substance-forces or substances" (Steiner & Adams 2004: 90); this *liveliness* permeates not only the vine and the vineyard, but also the wine that is produced by biodynamic methods. Wine is in biodynamic thought seen as animate, *given life* through the intersection and interactions of various dynamic forces and rhythms.

⁴² Though often only to a certain degree: many were themselves sceptical of some of what they considered the more outlandish and 'magical' claims of biodynamics, preferring to highlight its practical credentials as an organic and sustainable form of agriculture.



Figure 29. Unearthing manure-filled horns, Paxton vineyard

Vintage

In the reverence of old vines and the adoption of biodynamic techniques and philosophies in the Vale we may see how the human rhythms of agricultural work may be seen to correspond with the rhythms of plants and with those of vineyard ecosystems as a whole. These are very specific cases in point, however, as very old vines make up only a small fraction of total

vineyard plantings and biodynamic practices are often regarded as existing on the 'fringe' of mainstream winegrowing. Another, broader example of the interanimating confluence of 'human' and 'natural' rhythms in the Vale can be seen in the seasonal cycle of winegrowing activities. I will focus here on the 'vintage' period, when ripe grapes are harvested and the primary fermentation of wine takes place, elemental for wine production of all kinds and at all scales.

Olwig (2005: 261-262) suggests that transitions between seasons (winter and spring, for example, or summer and autumn) are best understood as liminal thresholds between two qualitatively different times, marked through history by holidays such as midwinter or midsummer feasts, and autumn harvest festivals. Moving between seasons is a movement between different configurations of social time and space, and are often marked by festivals and activities that are of a liminal nature, marking this threshold between one cycle and the next.⁴³ Harvest periods, representing the apex of the agricultural year and spanning the transition from a period of growth to a period of dormancy, can be especially significant as liminal times. In McLaren Vale, as in other winegrowing regions, this is certainly true.⁴⁴

The vintage, the short period of time during which grapes are harvested and crushed and fermentation begins to transform their juice into young wine, is a special time in McLaren Vale. During late summer and early autumn in the Vale the sights, smells and sounds of vintage are ubiquitous. In vineyards, tractors tow mechanical harvesters along the rows, straddling the vines, noisily stripping ripe bunches and spitting out stalks and leaves as they go. Some vineyards are harvested by teams of hand-pickers: groups of itinerant workers, locals and travelling backpackers paid by the bucket load. Caravan parks fill up with young

⁴³ Olwig (2005: 262) gives special attention to Yule and Midsummer as key liminal rituals. Yule/Christmas is particularly important given the link between seasonal change and the "threshold in the life of a person" exemplified by the birth of Jesus.

⁴⁴ As we saw in Chapter Two, the death of Greg Trott was given added symbolic weight by its occurrence in the middle of the vintage period in 2005.

foreigners, mostly Europeans, who are working the harvest to help fund their travels around Australia. On the roads, trucks transporting grapes from vineyard to winery criss-cross the Vale. And in cafes, pubs and shops along the main street of the town of McLaren Vale, sunburned vineyard workers and cellarhands in dirty work clothes, hands stained purple from handling grapes, are a constant presence. Near wineries the thick, sweet smell of fermentation fills the air, along with the myriad mechanical and human sounds of vintage work: forklifts moving equipment around, must pumps pumping grapes between fermentation tanks, crushers and destemmers processing the newly-arrived berries, metal clanking, men and women shouting.

In McLaren Vale, the cycles of winegrowing deeply interpenetrate the rhythms of social life, and it's frequently said that everyone in the region is connected to wine in some way. Even if they are not themselves directly involved in the wine industry, they have links to it in the form of friends, family and work relationships. The seasonal tasks and processes of wine production become significant for communal life in the region as a whole, and at no time is this more evident than during vintage. As the crucial culmination of the agricultural year and focus of the year's labour, the harvest period is also a time of transition: the vintage represents a threshold between one growing season and the next, as after the grapes are picked the vines return to dormancy, deep green leaves turning russet and yellow before falling off altogether, with new shoots only to reappear on the naked limbs in the springtime.

For growers and winemakers, the vintage is a time of hard work and intense focus. Human input into the vinification process must be skilfully timed in coordination with a number of natural and technological imperatives. Firstly, the fruit must be picked at precisely the right ripeness, in the hope of achieving optimum quality in the finished wine. The ripeness of grapes is defined scientifically in terms of Baumé, a measurement of the specific gravity of liquids which is used to give an estimate of alcohol levels in the finished wine, although many

winegrowers prefer to trust their own senses by tasting the grapes off the vine. Different grape varieties ripen and are harvested at different times, but gradual, steady ripening conditions are almost always preferred. Heatwave conditions as were seen during the 2008 vintage greatly accelerate ripening, which can lead to an imbalance between the sugar levels and natural acidity in the grape. Left too long, the grapes can shrivel and die on the vine. A cool and wet summer on the other hand, such as the 2011 vintage, can also be very problematic, with wet conditions and slow ripening allowing vine diseases like powdery mildew and botrytis infection to flourish.

Secondly, the harvest must be coordinated according to the availability of labour, as well as material items like tractors, harvesters, pumps, fermentation tanks, presses, and so on. This poses particular logistical issues when a sudden burst of very hot or wet weather affects the harvest and the grapes must be picked as quickly as possible. In these cases the harvest may be condensed into a much shorter period of time, with a commensurate increase in the intensity of the work that needs to be done to ensure success. Thirdly, in the winery itself, winemakers will often be processing many different parcels of fruit at once, of different grape varieties and from different vineyards, each of which require different approaches and inputs. The timing of the harvest cannot be predetermined and is dependent rather on many climatic and human factors, and so a great degree of flexibility and ability to adapt to changing circumstances is required on the part of winery workers. Good coordination of tasks, proper storage and temperature control of the grapes as the fermentation takes place is critical to avoid the many faults or flaws that can result from problems with fermentation or microbial infection.

Given that winegrowers must coordinate numerous tasks within tight timeframes, vintage is often a period of heightened pressure — “weeks and weeks of hard work, stress, no sleep”, according to one informant (Carrie, 23 May 2012). Harry, now in his eighties, and with more

than seventy vintages under his belt, told me that “At vintage everyone’s busy ... [working] twelve hour shifts, all hands on deck” (Harry, 16 October 2012). Although the harvest is awaited with anticipation and excitement, these sentiments are always accompanied by a degree of trepidation. The long hours of hard work ahead, and the accompanying worries about weather, harvest quality and quantity, organisation of labour, and availability of machinery and tank space for the harvested grapes means that vintage can also be a daunting prospect.

The turbulent, intense period of work spanning harvest and the grape crush is felt not only by vineyard and winery workers as individuals, or even as workers for a particular company, but is a shared experience for the entire community in McLaren Vale. It is crucially important for social life in the region as a whole; there is a palpable sense of activity, a ‘buzz’ in the air, as the tasks and activities of vintage take over the Vale. It is a period of intensified social relations, where the imperative to get everything done quickly and efficiently, and the feeling that everyone is ‘in the same boat’, brings about a sense of solidarity (see Chapter Two). Winery owners, winemakers, growers, and pickers alike must all pitch in together to ensure a successful vintage. This cohesion is felt even in mundane ways:

Back in Port Macquarie [in New South Wales, where she used to work for a winery], I couldn’t go to the shops in my daggy, dirty wine-stained work clothes without getting lots of strange looks. But here I’ll be at the supermarket or at the shops with black and purple stained hands and people will come up to me and say, ‘Hey, how are you, how’s vintage going’, because they’re all going through the same thing ... It’s just life here. (Sophie, 17 April 2012)

The ‘social’ aspects of the annual harvest and vintage period are linked inextricably to the rhythmic cycles of the seasons, the weather, topography and geology, the life of the vine, and the processes of fermentation. Feelings of community and social cohesion and solidarity, important to the distinct sense of locality felt by people in the Vale, are periodically regenerated through the ongoing unfolding of these rhythms.

The McLaren Vale grape harvest is said to begin officially with the ringing of the Angelus bell in the corrugated metal belltower at Wirra Wirra winery, although depending on weather conditions picking of some varieties often starts earlier. The old church bell, found in a wrecker's yard, was incorporated into the 'new' Wirra Wirra during its redevelopment in 1969 by the Trott cousins. I attended the bell-ringing ceremony to open the 2013 event, held on a Friday in mid-February and emceed by Tony Brooks, an old friend of Greg Trott's and (in his words) an 'ancient of the tribe' in McLaren Vale. As Brooks stated in his speech, Trott saw vintage as a very important event for the district, and thought that "the importance and impact of the vintage on the community really needed to be acknowledged" (Tony Brooks, 15 February 2013), hence the decision to begin marking the start of the vintage period by ringing the bell. Trott's ambition had been for all of the wineries within McLaren Vale to have a bell of their own. These could be rung simultaneously, with peals echoing all around the Vale to signal important events such as the start and finish of the vintage period. By linking newly 'invented' ceremonial events to the rhythms of winegrowing cycle, people like Greg Trott aimed to emphasise and make overt the mutually-implicated rhythms of the 'social' and 'natural' worlds. The special time of the vintage, the upending of 'normal' work routines and social interactions that it entails, and its importance as a period of heightened feelings of community and conviviality, emerges in rhythmic interrelation with the particular harmonisations of seasons, weather, the cycles of plant growth, and so on that are crucial to agricultural work in McLaren Vale. Thus, Tony Brooks asked people to raise their glasses and toast in the "true Elizabethan manner", in the spirit of the old Bushing festivals, with the word 'Wassail' – "To the Vale, and to the Vintage, wassail!" Surrounded by a crowd of photographers in the belltower doorway, the current Bushing Kings Matt Koch and Andrew Locke pulled the rope to toll the Angelus bell, opening the 2013 vintage.



Figure 30. Tony Brooks introducing Bushing Kings Matt Koch and Andrew Locke during the ceremony opening the 2013 vintage

Conclusion

The ceremonies and rituals of vintage mark and celebrate the great influence that winegrowing has upon social rhythms, the ebbs and flows of work and community life in the Vale. In this, however, they also speak to the countless array of more-than-human forces and processes that come together in the vast polyrhythmic ensemble of the world. During vintage, social organisation of space and time is shaped by the seasonal imperative of the grape harvest and crush; in McLaren Vale the activities of people, the vegetative processes of the vineyard and the microbial processes of fermentation are interwoven with rhythms of the seasons, geology, weather, climate and the movement of celestial bodies, contingent upon one another and indeed springing from this very mutuality.

An awareness of and orientation to these rhythms is crucial to the work of winegrowers, and many come to view both their wine and the land from which it comes as animate. In McLaren Vale, this is demonstrated explicitly in the philosophies and practices of biodynamic viticulture, where the human practitioner attempts to align a number of dynamic natural ‘forces’ in the vineyard. More generally, however, I believe that the acknowledgement of the animating rhythmic temporalities of the landscape is inherent to a terroir perspective, in which people, place and produce are seen as constituted through their dynamic relationality. Winegrowers in the Vale acknowledge and align their work with a variety of rhythms taking place over vastly different timescales that serve to animate vineyard and landscape; I believe that an orientation to terroir necessarily involves an attentive temporal attunement to these. In this chapter I have therefore argued for the importance of an emphasis on temporality and rhythm in understanding the relations and interactions of winegrowing. In the next chapter I will discuss the ways people come to internalise and embody such rhythms in place, via the deep sensory and emotional engagements that entailed in the artisanal—rather than ‘industrial’—production of wine.

Trust your senses

Too many people sit in air conditioned cabins in their tractors, with a charcoal filter so they can't smell anything and a CD player so they can't hear anything, driving up and down the [vine] rows, and they're not connecting to the land ... As a farmer, I think that you need to be really sensitive to the land – to feel the soil, touch the plants, take care and do things by hand. That's why we use basket presses as well. You could do it just as well with mechanised techniques but to actually do it by hand, to feel the grapes and work with them gently, you learn a lot more about what you're doing. (Peter, 17 April 2012)

If you're going to be a vigneron, growing those grapes and using them yourself to make wine, I think it's really important to do things by hand. You have a sense of achievement, but also that you are a part of the vineyard, that living being out there ... I am definitely a part of this place, and it's a part of who I am. (Mark, 25 June 2014)

McLaren Vale is home to around a hundred different wineries. These operate at very different scales of production, from tiny one- or two-person operations to large winery and vineyard concerns owned by corporate agglomerations. This diversity of scale is matched by a diversity in the techniques and attitudes towards winegrowing, from the hi-tech, highly mechanised industrial production of large wineries to the avowedly rustic, low-tech, 'craft' or 'artisanal' approach taken by many small producers like Peter and Mark. These producers opt to prune and maintain their vines and harvest their grapes manually, and also utilise non-automated processing techniques in the winery, including stirring ferments by hand and pressing the grape must in wooden slatted basket-presses. Important winemaking decisions are, for these artisanal producers, often guided by the senses—particularly smell and taste—rather than laboratory analysis.

Producers in McLaren Vale who pursue a low-tech, artisanal approach to winegrowing felt that hands-on, sensorially engaged work in the vineyard and the winery was important in imbuing wine with a 'sense of place'. In this chapter I examine the way the sensorial, bodily engagement of artisanal winegrowers with the land, the vines, grapes and wines in their day-to-day tasks and activities forges and reinforces powerful relational bonds between people,

place and product. This sort of labour is seen as integral to terroir: it is productive *of* places themselves, and is also significant as the mechanism by which the smells and tastes of place become transferred into wine. I have previously explored some of the spatial and temporal implications of terroir in McLaren Vale, in the relationships of wine production to places and to the rhythms and cycles of the world. Here, I will turn attention inward, to the embodied experiences of people as they engage sensually and emotionally with their tasks. I show how the ‘artisanal’ production techniques employed by some McLaren Vale winegrowers serve to invest certain places of wine production—and the wine itself—with deep meanings and emotions. These connections allow us to view wines, the places of their production and the people involved in their manufacture as sharing a mutual essence born of their dynamic interrelationship.



Figure 31. Winemakers tasting the ferment

Living wine and the love of place

According to Ingold, the rhythmically-interwoven activities of people working and dwelling 'in the world' inhere in what he sees as a continuously-becoming landscape or "taskscape" (Ingold 1993). In this chapter, I hope to show that dynamic landscapes may also be seen to be teeming with complex currents and knots of *emotion* generated through the ongoing sensorial interaction of people with the world. It is through the sensing body's direct, lived experience of the world that spaces and places can become imbued with specific feelings and emotional attachments: "After all, our first and foremost, most immediate and intimately *felt* geography is the body, the site of emotional experience and expression *par excellence*" (Davidson & Milligan 2004: 523). Places and landscapes are animated not only by movement and physical activity but by the meanings and memories that they come to embody. As Jones states, "Life is inherently spatial, and inherently emotional" (2007: 205). As loci of belonging, peace, loss, anxiety, love, and so on, we may see such places and landscapes as features of what have been termed "emotional geographies" (Davidson & Milligan 2004; Davidson, Smith & Bondi 2007).

The emotional attachment to place that is borne from sensory experience is summed up by Tuan (1990) as *topophilia*, literally, the 'love of place' - "the affective bond between people and place or setting" (1990: 4). Topophilia is used to describe a very broad category of emotion, from simple tactile and sensory pleasures and aesthetic responses to far deeper connections: "More permanent and less easy to express are feelings that one has toward a place because it is home, the locus of memories, and the means of gaining a livelihood" (1990: 93). In particular, Tuan holds there is a special sense of attachment felt by a farmer to their land, which relates directly to the physicality of their work and the interweaving of their own life's trajectory with that of their land, animals and crops: "The farmer's topophilia is

compounded of this physical intimacy, of material dependence and the fact that the land is a repository of memory and sustains hope” (1990: 97).

Such emotive, affective links not only position people and geographical places in relation to one another, but may encompass a broad range of animal, vegetable, or other non-human entities. *Things* may be said to have a social life, engaging with people and other things along relational networks of movement, trade and influence (Appadurai 1988; Gell 1998), but they are also animated by emotions. Things, then, may come to manifest deeply-felt emotions in the same way that certain places do. In his discussion of sheep farming in the Scottish Borders, Gray (1999, 2014) highlights the powerful ways that the interwoven activities of farmers and their flocks in the harsh outbye landscapes of the Borders serves to bind people, sheep and family farms together in such a way that the three may be seen as consubstantial, as refractions of one another. The ‘hefting’ of flocks onto the land is a mutual act of emplacement; “it is an intertwining of lives that transforms the very being of sheep and people so that attachment to the land is ‘in the blood’ or as the people of Teviothead say, ‘bred into you’” (Gray 2014: 2).

In the sensorial/emotional interrelationship of winegrowers in McLaren Vale with their worlds we can see a similar consubstantiation at work. People, land, vines, and wines are felt to partake of the same ‘essence of place’ through the mutuality of their interrelation and involvement in the cycles and processes of production. Examining the significance of microbial communities to artisanal cheesemaking, Paxson and Helmreich (2013) point out that even the ‘wildest’, most apparently natural and autochthonous elements of such production—the yeasts, bacteria and microorganisms that combine to add complexity to flavours—are inseparable from human cultivation. “In constituting the particular materiality of a cheese, nature and culture are fully implicated in one another; neither may be said to ground the other” (Paxson & Helmreich 2013: 20). In McLaren Vale, grape vines, soil and rocks, and the

various animal, vegetable and microbial life forms of the vineyard similarly exist within a sphere of relational influence, with people, place and product being both materially and emotionally enmeshed.

Heath and Meneley (2008: 593) note that “What we eat and drink, and how we do so, indexes both the corporeality of our habitus and the processes of distinction that embody relations of power/knowledge”. Eating and drinking are cultural and social processes as well as bodily ones, shaping and positioning our social selves just as they physically nourish, fulfil or intoxicate us. Wine is indisputably a cultural artefact, mired (in the modern, Western-inspired tradition at least) in a world of complex symbolic meanings, social and religious traditions, notions of cultural competency, hierarchies of knowledge and class distinctions (see, for example, Bourdieu 2010). This symbolic, cultural significance is not *immaterial*, however, and the sensually-perceived materiality of wine—its substance—is not to be overlooked. It is in the diverse sensorial properties of wine upon consumption that much value is thought to be held: the depth, complexity and deliciousness of aromas and flavours, viscosity, ability to refresh or quench thirst, brightness of colour, and the ability to alter mood and mind.⁴⁵ Wine thus appears to be an ideal location for an examination of interrelations between the sensing body, emotions, and feelings of space and place. Wine critics, writers and marketers are well aware of such circuits of connection, and popular wine discourse is replete with language that, explicitly or implicitly, draws upon these associations. Anthropomorphic metaphor is ubiquitous in wine description, with terms like ‘body’, ‘backbone’, ‘flabby’ and ‘sinewy’ pointing to an anatomical schema and others, like ‘brooding’, ‘sexy’, ‘boisterous’ and ‘shy’ used to draw attention to the ‘personality’ of the wine (Suárez Toste 2007: 58-59). This is certainly the case in McLaren Vale, where different personified characteristics were often

⁴⁵ Here, wine is not only perceived sensually but itself, through its alcohol content, affects sensory perceptions.

attributed to particular wine varieties – Grenache wines are ‘rounded’ and ‘feminine’, Shiraz ‘brawny’ and ‘masculine’, Cabernet Sauvignon ‘noble’ and ‘upstanding’.

Wine writer Andrew Jefford argues that wine lends itself well to a perception of anthropomorphism. In his view, “wine is quietly unique in human experience: a creation in which human beings and the natural world have almost equal roles; a creation which is experienced sensually, intellectually and emotionally, and at its best has a spiritual force, too” (Jefford 2012: unpaginated). Wine is both ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’; in this it is not unique, but it is certainly the case that the way the product encompasses human and worldly processes is emphasised more in wine discourse (such as that surrounding terroir) than elsewhere. Wine possesses temporalities and rhythms that render it familiar to the mortal human experience and help us to conceive of it and relate to it in human terms: it is born in fermentation, comes to maturity in the barrel, ages in the bottle, and finally dies. For Peter, the social and ritual importance of wine is tied to its temporality and animacy:

Wine has a religious, societal, historic, sensory value of all sorts that is lovely and unique, and I suppose that’s why that [emphasis on] handmade, authentic wine is so strong. I think it’s the fact that it is alive, this is something that somehow people connect to it like the lifetime of a person. Like they see it as something that matures—we use the same word for wine as for people!—that matures, eventually declines, and that is better for the passing of the time, at least for a while. So it’s kind of like almost as though we relate to it on a living level, like a horse or a dog. (Peter, 17 June 2014)

The *living qualities* perceived in wine thus lend a greater significance to the close, manual techniques of artisanal producers. The hands-on work undertaken by these small-scale winegrowers is considered in relational terms, as a process of interactive negotiation between the agencies of the human practitioner and the wine itself.

“Part of the affection we feel for wine”, according to Jefford, “is that it mimics our own trajectory towards non-being” (Jefford 2012: unpaginated). As a living entity, affective upon and expressive of human emotions and personalities, wine also embodies the substance of the person. This is a connection frequently made in myth, where “blood re-created by the wine-

press” is taken to correspond to life, light, fecundity and cyclical renewal (Durand 1999: 252). Metaphorically, my informants often equated wine with blood, whether human or animal. Prior to the introduction of appellation legislation, as I was told by winemaker Simon, Shiraz from McLaren Vale was known as ‘boar’s blood’ for the injection of vigour it could provide: “You could blend it with average-quality Hunter Valley or Riverland wine and give it more body, more life” (Simon, 6 November 2012). This web of mythic significance linking wine as blood to person is extended to place: vineyards are powerful as the productive source of wine, and themselves play an important symbolic role in Western religious tradition (Unwin 1991: 139-140). While the deep-seated mythic-religious significance of vineyards was not explicitly drawn upon by my informants in McLaren Vale, I believe that this remains a general factor in orientations towards vineyards (over and above other agricultural land uses) that influences their sentiments around land zoning and development that I describe in Chapter Six.



Figure 32. Fermenting Cabernet Sauvignon

Wine tasting

In this thesis I focus primarily on wine producers in McLaren Vale. However, the Vale is also, significantly, a place of wine consumption as visitors from around Australia and abroad converge on winery cellar doors and restaurants in the region to taste and drink local wine. In consumption the processes of production come full circle. The embodied experiences of wine drinkers in the Vale are important not only to an understanding of the region and its produce as it currently *is* but also to future activities of wine and place production, as feedback from consumers feeds into decisions about future winemaking and marketing strategies.

Wine tasting in McLaren Vale is not a uniform experience across wineries, but it generally follows an established procedure: customers stand at a counter in the tasting room, where an employee (or sometimes, in the case of small wineries, the owner or winemaker themselves) progressively pours a selection of wines for tasting. Often, in wineries with a wide range of wines, customers will choose those they are most interested in from a list, but in almost all cases the wines are poured in order of 'heaviness'.⁴⁶ As an example, a winery might begin tasting with a sparkling white wine, moving on to a dry white Chardonnay, a rosé, light red like Grenache, heavier reds like Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon, then finish with a 'sticky' dessert wine or a fortified, Port-style wine. Wines for sale at various price-points might be offered for tasting, as well as 'museum releases' of older vintages, but often the most expensive wines are not available to taste. At most (but not all) wineries in McLaren Vale, tastings are conducted free of charge, and customers are not obligated to make any purchases. In my observations, however, most tasters did end up buying wine at cellar doors they visited: anywhere from one

⁴⁶ Heaviness here describes the way a wine feels in the mouth—its viscosity and density—rather than alcohol content, although this is also sometimes described in terms of heaviness. Generally, the intensity of taste of heavier wines is thought to damage the ability to appreciate lighter, subtler wines tasted afterwards.

bottle to several cartons. Some made the purchase because they particularly liked a specific wine, others to “support the winery” or because they felt it was the “right thing to do”.

The process of wine ‘tasting’ at cellar doors is, in actuality, a multisensory one. In McLaren Vale, most of the cellar-door customers I observed followed a fairly standard procedure of sensorial engagement with the wines. This involves looking at the wine sample in the glass, observing colour and viscosity, swirling it and smelling the aromas released, putting the wine in the mouth and ‘swishing’ it around so as to pick up nuances in flavour, and finally either swallowing it or spitting into a provided spittoon. Such a process is common to wine tasting across internationally, and numerous books and websites provide consumers with instructions on how to ‘properly’ taste wine (see, for example, Iland et al. 2009; Robinson & Baldwin 2000). As the visitor tastes the wines, the cellar door host will often provide some information about winemaking practices (“it was aged for twelve months in French oak barriques”), location and qualities of the vineyard, and describe the characteristics of the wine in terms of what the consumer might be tasting:

[On a Pinot Grigio] It’s citrusy and fresh, very easy to drink, it goes with everything ...

[On a ‘reserve’ Shiraz] It’s a delicious wine, but you can put it aside for a few years and it will get even more gorgeous. The ‘entry level’ Shiraz has the softness and smoothness from French oak, but this one is much bolder in flavour from the American oak. There’s some vanilla, I also get some spices, black pepper, nutmeg, really complex. (Carmel, 29 June 2012)

Many tasters were happy to let others describe the wines to them, while others who felt more confident in their ability to describe wine flavours and aromas engaged cellar door hosts in conversation with their own observations of the wine. The skill to ‘properly’ taste, appreciate and describe wine is a cultural competence that many consumers feel they lack; my own field notes at times reflected my lack of confidence in accurately appraising tasting experiences:

There are spittoons built into the bench, water provided, and some bread/oil/dips. Bottles lined up on the bench in tasting order from light whites to heavy reds. Kim gives me a short description as she pours each wine. At one point I say that I think one

of the whites tastes dry – she makes a face and says “Really? It should be really zesty, fresh” ... (Field notes, 6 March 2012)

Well aware of the potentially discomfoting experience that wine tasting can bring, cellar door hosts in McLaren Vale often told tasters that “everybody’s tastes are different”, “there is no right way to taste wine”, and “people taste different things in each wine”. Nevertheless, through the guidance of cellar door staff and the ‘tasting notes’ that often accompany the wine list (and sometimes reproduced on bottle labels), drinkers are encouraged to identify particular organoleptic characteristics in each wine.

Despite the claims of tasting room staff that the subjectivity of taste means there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ preferences, in private conversations with these staff, winemakers, and tourists themselves, it became clear that some tastes are privileged above others. The ability of some experienced tasters to discern subtle differences between wines—and to identify these with particular variables of terroir or technique—is afforded great respect. As Jane, a cellar door host, told me:

There’s a wine tasting club with a lot of McLaren Vale winemakers, people like Mark Lloyd, Diana Genders, Chester Osborn. I’ve been there a couple of times. It’s quite intimidating, the depth of knowledge these people have. It’s all blind tastings and they could tell you not just what part of the Vale each wine is from, but which side of the hill—it’s amazing. (Jane, 28 September 2012)

The obverse to this is, of course, that some others are seen to *lack* the ability to properly taste wine. Customers are often portrayed as being ‘unsophisticated’ if they favour particular styles of wine—which might include cheaper offerings that are seen as uncomplicated and easy-drinking, or sweeter wines—over others that may be more complex or savoury. According to one cellar door host, “our customers are mostly CUBs—cashed-up bogans. They love the sweet red and the sparkling Shiraz (Rachel, 7 August 2012).⁴⁷ CUBs are often disparaged for their purported desire to simply get drunk rather than ‘appreciate’ what they are tasting, and

⁴⁷ ‘Bogan’ is a derisive term for a boorish, uncultured person, usually from a low socio-economic background. The figure of the ‘cashed-up bogan’ is that of the wealthy working-class person—personified by the mine worker made rich during Australia’s recent ‘resources boom’—who possesses significant financial capital but lacks cultural capital (Pini & Previte 2013).

their perceived deficiency of existing knowledge about wine. As another cellar door host told me, sarcastically, “My favourite [tourists] are the ones that come in on bus tours and ask: ‘Can I try your ‘Ganache’? And the ones who just taste ask to taste the three most expensive wines, over and over, and they’re not going to buy anything (Elizabeth, 12 August 2012). Customers are also seen to lack sophistication if they claim to only like certain varieties—those with mass-market appeal, like Shiraz, Chardonnay, or Merlot—rather than showing a willingness to ‘challenge’ their tastes and try unfamiliar wines. Customers that neglect or are ignorant of normal tasting etiquette are also seen as lacking; on one occasion a cellar door host complained to me about two Chinese-speaking tasters who insisted on trying red wines before white and wandered away to look at the view from the tasting room window while she was trying to pour their next sample. Despite wineries’ claims that wine tasting is accessible to all and that there is no ‘right or wrong’ opinion when it comes to taste, it is clear that the process requires a high level of tacit cultural knowledge and competency, the lack of which may prompt (private) derision by winery staff.

As I have suggested, the processes of production and consumption of wine are mutually implicated. It is not only the case that wine consumption patterns and consumer feedback influences production decisions, however; wine producers are, themselves, also consumers. They drink wine for pleasure and socially, and engage with it closely throughout the winemaking process through frequent smelling and tasting. As well as drinking their own wines and those of other producers in the Vale, they are often very familiar with the wines of other regions around the world. Many have a broad knowledge of wine and a great sensitivity and depth of understanding of minute flavour nuances, yet, even so, winemakers still find tasting—particularly the transmission of sensory experience to intellectual *knowledge* about the wine—to be a challenging experience:

Wine tasting is very difficult, wine judging even more so, because your taste buds and olfactory organs are hit so hard by so much of the wine – and the alcohol affects you

as well. When you tell people you're spending the day tasting wine, they think it's just a big party. But it's not, it's very hard work. You need so much concentration, and it's just impossible to enjoy it when you're analysing everything so carefully. I find it really hard to enjoy my own wines, because I'm constantly trying to pick holes in them. But taste is such a fleeting thing, and wines taste differently every time you taste them. I've been served one of my own wines, at a friend's place or something, and I'll think "Fuck, I can't remember it tasting like this at all!" (Peter, 10 January 2013)

For Peter, as for other winegrowers, taste is not an 'exact science' but rather an approximation based on the attunement of the sensory organs and a gradual building-up of knowledge, stemming from experience over time. Taste is an embodied skill, relying not just on internalised sensory abilities but on the ongoing engagement of the sensing body with the world, and in this it is vital to wine production.



Figure 33. Judges tasting for the Adelaide Review Hot 100 wine competition



Figure 34. Tourists tasting, Wirra Wirra

Hands on – wine production

Being hands-on is really important, and I think it's something that is being lost My wine is grown in that vineyard, and made right here in this shed. I planted the vineyard with my father-in-law, and do the whole works myself—picking, crushing, fermenting, bottling. I know I'm lucky to be able to do that. I couldn't work for a big corporation just making wine as a product, as a beverage, according to a recipe, that goes against everything that I love about wine. You have to do it properly, have a feel for it and an awareness of what you're doing. (Mark, 22 August 2012)

Intense sensory-emotional bonds become forged in the physical tasks of winegrowing in McLaren Vale: from the planting and maintenance of vineyards, to the harvest of grapes, to their fermentation and maturation as wine. This close engagement of winegrowers with the 'material world'—and particularly those engaged in small-scale, hands-on production—is a crucial element in their development of a sense of place and terroir. For many, such physical interaction with the vine, grapes and wine (hands-on *doing*) is crucial to the production of 'authentic' wine, where authenticity is said to relate to a close and concerted interaction and working together of people and place (Goode & Harrop 2011). In this view, authentic wines

and wine places are products of a sensuous, physical engagement of winegrowers with the material world in production, as it is through this engaged relationship that places and products become imbued with a depth of meaning beyond the materially objective.

While there are in McLaren Vale a number of small-scale winegrowers who use 'hands-on' techniques in the vineyard and who perform all the tasks of the winery themselves, the vast amount of wine is made in larger production facilities where this is not the case. Nearly all of my informants acknowledged that it is economically necessary for larger wineries seeking to manufacture large quantities of wine of *consistent* quality to embrace more impersonal and high-tech production techniques.⁴⁸ Most, however, including many of those employed in such large-scale 'industrial' winemaking, considered wine produced manually to be more real or authentic than that made by teams of workers at big, impersonal wineries. This view aligns broadly with discourses of terroir that value local specificities over what is seen as the homogenising tendency of modern, mass-produced winemaking. Frequently, my interlocutors bemoaned the fact that most modern wine was made 'to a recipe'. Whether or not craft production practices are actually sensible or discernible in the wine for consumers, they feature heavily in discourses of terroir and authenticity. Those who do make wine in this way are both intensely proud of it and intent on *telling* the story to consumers, and in doing so reproducing the discursive links between authenticity, artisanship, terroir, distinction and quality.

As previously discussed, a distinction was often made between 'authentic' winemaking undertaken by small producers and the industrial 'beverage manufacture' of many larger wineries. Key to this distinction was the close, hands-on engagement with land, vines, and wines across various phases of production that the small-scale winegrower was able to

⁴⁸ Common practices include the mechanisation of vineyard tasks like spraying, pruning and harvesting, the measurement and chemical analysis of various properties of grapes and wine throughout the processes of production, automated temperature control, and the addition of cultured yeast strains, acids, tannins and other agents to the wine.

maintain. While this is usually spoken of in positive terms, there is another side to the story: for many producers, the scale of their operations means that hands-on engagement with all phases of the production process is a necessity, not a choice. Grace, the owner and operator of a small winery founded by her father in the 1960s, told me that for producers like her “the only way to succeed is to do it all yourself. I’m in the vineyard, I drive the tractor, I make the wine with these hands here. You have to be multi-skilled as a small producer.” (Grace, 23 October 2012). Economies of scale mean that small producers simply cannot make wine in the same way as large operations. The reverse is also true, however. Due to the scale involved big wineries are unable to achieve the same intimacy between winemaker and wine that is seen by many as desirable, and it is because of this that small producers are able to maintain an important niche in the industry.



Figure 35. Hand-stirring the ferment

Knowing the vineyard, knowing the vines

For the small winegrowers of McLaren Vale the vineyards and wineries that are formed by, and that frame, the quotidian activities of wine production are places of deep sensual engagement with the world. As important repositories of memory and emotion, they are powerful centres of dwelling, felt as places of physical work and material interdependence, encompassing individual and socially shared memories and senses of belonging, and often tied to lines of descent across generations. Here, the praxical knowledge of the winegrower may be profoundly emplaced.

Among winegrowers, the assertion is frequently made that “good wine is made in the vineyard”. If the grapes grown are of high quality, it is thought, the job of the vintner in the winery becomes not to *manufacture* the wine through clever manipulation, but rather to guide the wine through the processes of fermentation and maturation with a light touch. As such, vineyard work becomes of crucial importance. In the words of Ed, a contract viticulturist and consultant with a special interest in biodynamic winegrowing,⁴⁹

A good farmer pays attention to what’s going on in the vineyard, and has an awareness of the big picture, how something might have an effect on something else. It’s about being flexible and responsive to everything that’s happening. That includes the bugs, funguses, the weeds that are sprouting up – it’s all connected in one way or another, nothing happens in isolation and you need to have an awareness of the signs that the vineyard is giving you. (Ed, 2 August 2012)

Winegrowers come to *know* their vineyards emotionally as well as intellectually, as they, the vines, the land, and the other plants, animals and microorganisms become relationally intertwined and interdependent. The interaction between person and vineyard becomes one not of mastery but of dialogue, of the grower ‘working together’ with the land across the changing seasons and annual vintage cycles in order that the grapes produced are of optimal

⁴⁹ See Chapter Four for discussion of biodynamic winegrowing.

quality.⁵⁰ Many producers harvest grapes according to a carefully-measured balance of sugar ripeness and acidity confirmed by chemical testing; others prefer to trust their own palates and determine the time of harvest by taste: “When the grape is sweet, but the seeds are still crunchy and taste nutty, biscuity – that’s when we’ll pick” (Karen, 2 March 2014). The sense of smell is also important in the vineyard: as one vine pruner told me, “If you’ve got a good nose, you can smell if there’s any mildew around” (Eric, 15 August 2012).

Since antiquity, vineyards have in Western cultural traditions been potent symbols of human civilisation and settlement, rootedness and belonging, a cultivation of the wild. Like wines, vines are themselves also often anthropomorphised, with different types of vine said to display different human characteristics. While, for example, Grenache and Mataro are said to be hardy, pessimistic misers who can survive in poor soils without much need for irrigation, an employee at one winery told me that “Cabernet Sauvignon is the ‘princess’ of the vines: it really spreads out its root system, and likes very luxurious soil – thick and rich, and it doesn’t mind moisture” (Fiona, 5 February 2013).

The tendency towards personification is particularly true of old vines. Vigneron Peter told me that he loves the wizened, gnarled old Grenache bush vines that can be found around the Vale. The stability provided by their deep root structure and years of ‘experience’ mean they produce consistently good grapes, even if it’s only a “couple of handfuls” per vine: “they’re like old people, full of wisdom” (Peter, 24 April 2012). The passing of the years also gives older vines, rooted in place, a certain maturity. As suggested in the last chapter, young vines are often likened to unpredictable teenagers, while the old vines are depicted as wise elders, treasured and respected in McLaren Vale for the way they have borne witness to the ongoing

⁵⁰ Here it must be pointed out that notions of ‘quality’ vary greatly between producers. There is often some degree of ‘reverse-engineering’ (Paxson 2010) to try to achieve a particular style, such as undertaking particular canopy management practices with an aim towards slower ripening and higher acid levels for a more savoury, ‘French’-style wine. The quality of the grapes is in these cases judged in relation to the pre-formed image.

passage of the seasons, longer-term oscillations in climate, and the ongoing march of human activity over their life spans. Very old vines of a century or more still bear upon their gnarled trunks the scars of generations of vine-pruners, whose past decisions (to trellis in a certain way, to snip off new growth in a particular fashion, to lop off certain limbs, and so on) still influence the sensory qualities of the grapes that hang from each season's new canes. Old vines are said to possess a stability and depth of character that young vines lack, and, although the quantities of grapes they yield are often much smaller than vigorous young vines, the quality of the wine is usually thought to be superior, with more intense, complex flavours and aromas. The vines themselves also hold an emotive power beyond their productive capacity. They are seen as repositories for memories—of a long succession of vintages, of cold, wet and disease-ridden years and the hot, dusty years of drought—and are thus integral to both the physical and emotional fabric of the landscape.

A poem by the twelve-year-old Indi Noon, printed in the mailing list newsletter of her parents' winery, highlights the intimately personal connection that may be felt with old vines, as well as their deeply rhythmic temporality as their lives are interwoven with the ongoing cycle of the seasons and the years:

*Outside my window they stand there strong,
Arms held high for eighty years long,
Proud as they are they're gnarled and old,
They'll struggle again through winter's stone cold,
Exposed to the rain they welcome it well,
The water they need for the coming hot spell,
The wind hits them hard but what do they care?
The roots they are strong and anchor them there,
They'll do it again as the years roll around,
The soldiers they are shall stand their ground.*

(Noon 2014)

For small-scale growers, vineyard work with an aim to the production of high-quality, unique or interesting wines often entails a very close and personal relationship with the vineyard and a 'communication' of sorts with the vines. This involves close and focused observation of the conditions and the "signs that the vineyard is giving you", an awareness stemming from accumulated knowledge and familiarity. While this is usually described simply as "good farming", such attention also engenders an emotional link, borne of familiarity, between person and the place of the vineyard. This was overwhelmingly defined as a positive emotion, despite the occasional hardships of vineyard work. The rhythm of familiar tasks and activities is comforting; the winegrower feels *at home* in the vineyard. The exposure to the ever-changing elements of the weather – the cold winter rain, hot summer sun, the gully winds of the morning and the sea breezes of the afternoon – is cherished by farmers who contrast it to the *inauthenticity* of a working life spent indoors.

One winemaker told me that his father—an Italian immigrant—believed strongly that real knowledge and skill in the vineyard stemmed from ongoing work in place: "He kept working the same land up until his death four years ago. He always said 'Young people don't have the feel for the vines...'" (Claudio, 14 December 2012). Indeed, some vigneroni in McLaren Vale have spent their entire lives attending to the same land. For some, it is land that has been farmed by their family over five or six generations and which they know 'like the back of their hand'. Such winegrowers can, by smell and taste alone, immediately discern in which of their vineyard blocks a particular bunch of grapes was grown. To those so attuned, the very particular soil, geology and growing conditions of the site are rendered *sensible* in the fruit. As Basso (1996) notes, "wisdom sits in places"; the occupation of the small-scale farmer or winegrower in McLaren Vale is perhaps best thought of as a mutual sharing in this emplaced wisdom through the performance of ordinary, everyday tasks.

The vineyard, as an anchoring point for emplaced memories and knowledge, may be embedded with deep feelings of belonging and loyalty, but may also serve as a reminder of past tensions and hardships: years of drought, disease-ridden wet seasons, and economic downturns. As winegrowers plant, manage and maintain their vines with an eye to future cycles of weather, climate, culture and economy, the vineyard is also a locus for hopes and aspirations, and anxieties and uncertainty about the times to come. The main senses expressed by small winegrowers, however—as people who have chosen to spend a good proportion of their lives engaging in the often-solitary tasks of the vineyard—was that it is primarily a place of positive emotions. The attentive observation and focus required when dealing with this world of plants, weather, insects and soils, and the repetitiveness of tasks like pruning, can bring about a meditative state of mind:

You can clear your mind of anything else you really don't need to be thinking about, and concentrate on the task directly in front of you, because you're constantly thinking about the next cut you're going to make, the next plant in front of you. That just zones a lot of things out. (Mark, 25 June 2014)

Many of my informants told me that they often looked forward to the time of year when they could leave the majority of their winery tasks behind and get back into the vineyard, to “reconnect with the land” in a way that is peaceful and contemplative yet—as it involves an interaction with the dynamic rhythms of the ‘natural world’—quietly energising.



Figure 36. Shiraz harvest

Fermenting places

I remember as a young boy, laying in my bed at vintage time—listening to the crusher, and the clicking of the ratchet on the basket press, and the air was just thick with the smell of the fermenting grapes—I got the hype. The lights at night during vintage. It was very exciting. (Paolo, 31 October 2012)

Wineries, as well as vineyards, are places of dwelling, and may be marked with similarly deep contours and currents of emotion. But these are emotions of a different sort: as Paolo highlights, these are the locations of a powerful melding of the focused energies of human labour (particularly during the heightened intensity of the harvest and ‘vintage’ period) and those of the wine itself in the microbial processes of fermentation and maturation. For small

winemakers who can avoid many of the technological and chemical interventions that become necessary in large-scale wine production, their wineries are not mere ‘factories’ for a beverage manufacture that seeks a mastery of nature and replication of results. Instead, these wineries are better thought of as places of artisanship, wherein the skilled processing of the grapes and wine (hand-plunging a ferment, pressing new wine off skins, ‘racking’ wine between barrels, and so on) requires a deep perceptual engagement with the tasks. Here, winemakers take into account and work with the physical properties of their materials in response to dynamic environmental conditions.⁵¹

I don't like winemaking when it's just pressing buttons to add different ingredients, doing the process according to a strict set of rules – how can you make wine without touching and tasting it? You can make wine that's technically correct, but it doesn't have any life or personality, it's boring! I like hand making wine. I enjoy the history and tradition of winemaking. It's a craft. (Margie, 5 April 2012)

The engagement of winemakers with their work in the winery is multisensory. Response to visual cues is crucial, as the practitioner keeps an eye on the activity of the bubbling ferment and carefully observes changes in the brightness of colour of wine maturing in barrels. But other senses are just as important. ‘Hands-on’ winemaking techniques are just that: during primary fermentation, as yeasts convert the sugars in the grape must to alcohol and carbon dioxide, the vintner must ensure that the ‘cap’ of grape skins carried to the surface of the ferment by the gas does not dry out, as this risks bacterial infection and undesirable flavours. This may be done in various ways, (for example, by using an electric pump), but many small producers prefer to manually push the cap down and stir the ferment using implements like rakes, paddles, or, if the fermentation vessel is small enough, bare arms and hands. The energy created by microbial action during fermentation gives off significant heat, and although thermometers are usually used to monitor temperature, winemakers will often also use their

⁵¹ As Ingold notes, even processes that require a high degree of mechanisation (bottling being the most obvious example in the winery) require such skilled human attention, a “conjunction of rhythmicity and concentration” (2011: 61). The fleshly, living practitioner is not separated from these machines but “is *among* them, working with machines that work with him” (62).

own hands to stir the ferment and feel the warmth of the must in different parts of the vessel. The tangible warmth of the must as it is transformed into wine is significant as yet another way in which the liquid may be thought of as a living entity. One of my informants told me that she likes to think of the winery as a 'nursery' where wines, like human babies, grow and mature before being turned out into the world: "I don't really like thinking of myself as a wine maker. More of a babysitter, looking after the wine while it does its thing" (Margie, 5 April 2012).

To walk into a winery is to walk into a rich world of olfactory stimulation. The microbial and chemical world of winemaking is one of smells, ranging from the fresh, sweet, sticky smells of a new ferment to the dark, earthy, musty aromas of red wine maturing in oak barrels in the cellar. The sense of smell can have a very direct link to emotions and memories: it is a sense that may, bypassing conscious thought, immediately conjure up a suite of linked sensory experiences, evoking "vivid, emotionally-charged memories of past events and scenes" (Tuan 1990: 10). The recollection of past odours and the emotional transportation that the experience of winery smells can bring on is significant. For most of my interlocutors, the smells of the winery and the barrel room were generally seen as pleasant, comforting and familiar. Some, moreover, described very specific, emotion-laden smell-memories. For Dennis, now sixty, smelling a particular barrel of maturing wine while working as a cellarhand at the age of fifteen was a moment of epiphany. "There was a puncheon of wine at the back of the barrel room, in the dark—it was Cabernet Sauvignon—I took the bung out and the smell just hit me. I'll never forget it. I can still smell that wine right now, sitting here. And that set me on this course, on this journey" (Dennis, 15 August 2012). Although he was not yet a wine drinker at that stage, the powerfully affective aroma that he encountered sparked a lifelong 'passion' for wine, now fulfilled via his work as a vigneron in his own small vineyard and winery. The thrill

he felt in that moment was forever linked to the particular smell of the wine, the memory of which still excites him.⁵²

More than simply experiencing the smells of the winery, the winemaker must pay close attention to them, as the particular aromas transmit important information about the state of the wine much more immediately—and accurately, in the opinion of some—than laboratory chemical analysis can provide. People sensually attuned to the material processes of winemaking may identify potentially unwelcome odours, such as those associated with chemical compounds like hydrogen sulphide or ethyl acetate or microbial organisms like the *brettanomyces* yeast or various spoilage bacteria at very low levels. Taste, too, is critical for the winemaker as it conveys important information about the state and qualities of the wine at different stages of production. Vintners will taste their wine frequently throughout the processes of fermentation and maturation: such practice brings about a deep familiarity with the wine that enables them to quickly identify any potential problems and shapes their ongoing methods. A familiarity with certain parcels of grapes from certain vineyards over numerous vintages furthermore enables producers to gradually develop their own ‘styles’; for many, this evolution over time of a relationship between winemaker(s) and vineyard is a key element of terroir. The “cellar palate” of artisanal winemakers attuned to the specific conditions of their own winery is not always regarded in a positive light, however, as winemakers’ senses of smell and taste may become conditioned to the presence of particular yeasts or bacteria that produce flavours and odours which other tasters might regard as undesirable. Nevertheless, the diversity of winemaking styles among artisan producers (compared to the ‘homogenising’ tendencies of mass production) forms a large part of these wines’ consumer appeal: handmade wines with ‘individuality’ and ‘uniqueness’ are often celebrated and valorised within the world of wine critics and consumers.

⁵² Nossiter (2009: 13-14) believes that wine is itself an “animate vessel of memory”, holding within it a memory of terroir and communal identity.

The sensations of smell and taste are fleeting and ephemeral, yet memories of them may be powerfully present and emotionally charged. For winegrowers, part of the pleasure of their work comes from chasing and attempting to recapture certain elusive sensorial experiences, like Dennis's remembered smell of a Cabernet Sauvignon barrel in the back of the cellar. As we can see, these people are simultaneously producers and consumers, continually reacting to and reflecting upon their interactions with the wine, modifying and adjusting their actions in order to bring their wine and themselves into closer alignment. This is truly working *with* the wine rather than acting *upon* it. West notes with respect to artisanal cheesemakers that "Working with the curd, they learned from the curd itself" (2013: 332): craft winemakers similarly learn from the actions of the wine "as it move(s) through time and space, *doing* one thing or another" (West 2013: 332). In some cases, this learning is completely accidental, as in the case of a barrel of Chardonnay that Mark neglected during his busy 2006 vintage:

At the end of vintage I thought 'let's have a look at that stuff'. There was a lot of airspace in the barrel, and the wine had grown this flor [a layer of yeast cells on top of the wine] which was sort of protecting the wine from the air. It looked weird, but it wasn't totally oxidised and stuffed. It had an interest to it, a nutty character. It's very sherry-like, like a Fino. Now it's holding itself in this state, from '06 to 2014 it hasn't changed much at all. It's got more complexity, there's a little bit more in the mouth, more flavour and character. (Mark, 25 June 2014)

A frequently-heard maxim among artisanal winegrowers is to "trust your senses". For skilled practitioners, trusting and giving priority to the human senses and to *instincts* developed over years of attentive engagement with the processes of winemaking rids them of what they see as the artificial constraints of production 'by numbers'. As Danny, an assistant winemaker, told me as he stirred a ferment: "I've learned everything by doing it, hands on and tasting a lot of wines—not by going to Uni and reading books about how to do it" (Danny, 5 April 2012).

Some of the best wines, as several producers told me, come from happy accidents or creative experimentation. While many of these winegrowers have formal qualifications in oenology, agricultural science or other disciplines, large-scale winemaking is often viewed as restrictively

scientific, a form of manufacture further removed from the primacy of sense-experience than that undertaken by the artisan. For the artisanal producer, improvisation is not only accepted but necessary for the processual relationship between human and liquid to run smoothly. The skill of practitioners, as Ingold puts it, lies not in their ability to impose onto matter a pre-conceived form, but rather “in their ability to find the grain of the world’s becoming and to follow its course while bending it to their evolving purpose” (Ingold 2011: 211). Through the senses, wine and person work together in production. By smelling, touching, tasting and drinking wine, artisanal winegrowers bring its substance into themselves, literally embodying it. This fits well with relational theories of terroir that claim wine to embody an essence of place, and seeing the wines, people and places of artisanal production as consubstantial.

Artisanal winegrowers in McLaren Vale may be considered to engage with processes of production not as separated, external actors, but rather as participants in a ‘bringing-forth’ or ‘unconcealment’ (to use Heidegger’s terminology)—a process that involves the “arising of something from out of itself” (1977: 10). Heidegger positions these two modes of production—the artisanal *techne* of the peasant and modern agriculture—against one another:

The work of the peasant does not challenge the soil of the field. In the sowing of the grain it places the seed in the keeping of the forces of growth and watches over its increase. But meanwhile even the cultivation of the field has come under the grip of another kind of setting-in-order, which *sets upon* nature. It sets upon it in the sense of challenging it. Agriculture is now the mechanized food industry. (1977: 15)

Modern Western technoscientific agriculture, according to Heidegger, ‘sets upon’ nature in a way that does not “uncover the thing in question in its essence. Only at the point where such an uncovering happens does the true come to pass. For that reason the merely correct is not yet the true” (Heidegger 1977: 6). This is a view held tacitly by many small-scale producers in McLaren Vale, and evidenced in many of their remarks to me: while good and ‘technically correct’ wine has become very easy to make on an industrial scale due to technological

advances,⁵³ these wines are often said to be lacking in the individuality and so-called ‘authenticity’ of artisanal production. Artisanal producers see themselves, on the other hand, as involved in a quest to bring forth in wine its supposedly ‘true’ essence: for many, this is linked intimately to the relationship of wine to unique places emphasised by notions of terroir. Terroir usually refers specifically to the vineyard, the land in which grapes are grown. Yet, as we can see in the emphasis that winegrowers with a ‘terroir perspective’ place on particular processing techniques and technologies, wineries themselves are a significant element in wine’s ‘sense of place’. Between wineries, there can be great differences not only in the machinery used in processing, but also in a number of other variables: ambient temperature, light and humidity, and the presence of particular yeast or bacterial colonies. The sensory-emotional topography of wineries are varied. In most wineries, for example, the areas where grapes are crushed and loaded into large primary fermentation vessels can be seen as places of energy and liveliness, noise and activity. This is where all the action takes place during the hectic vintage period, as winemakers must perform numerous tasks very quickly as various parcels of harvested grapes arrive for crushing, juice must be pumped between storage vessels, fermentation times and temperatures must be monitored and adjusted, and decisions must be made as to when wines are to be pressed. The wine itself is active while fermenting: bubbling and swirling vigorously, and filling the winery with a thick, sweet aroma. The melange of smells and sounds coming from the vats adds to the general ambience of activity and energy.

In contrast to the noise and activity of the fermentation room – the “engine room” of their winery, informants Peter and Sophie see the barrel room of their family winery as a qualitatively different space: “meditative and contemplative” (Sophie, 24 April 2012). It is quiet, dark and cool, and filled with the close and heavy smell of maturing wine. Although the

⁵³ In wine judging and reviewing, a wine that is ‘technically correct’ is free of wine ‘flaws’ and winemaking ‘faults’ (Forrest 2003; Iland et al. 2009).

wines are not as obviously active as in the early stages of fermentation, they are not inert: Peter tells me that he often listens to the subtle, almost inaudible crackling sounds of malolactic fermentation as bacteria slowly convert malic acid into the smoother lactic acid. Bachelard believes that a cellar “is first and foremost the *dark entity* of the house, the one that partakes of subterranean forces” (Bachelard 1964: 18). This description might also be applied to the cellars of a winery, where barrels of wine solemnly slumber for months or years before bottling. In some older wineries the cellar is literally an underground chamber: a cave or tunnel carved from the rock, where the wines may quietly mature in the dark, cool subterranean air. For most newer wineries in McLaren Vale, a devoted ‘barrel room’ is more likely to be simply a well-insulated shed or other storage space, or else the maturing wines are stored in the same room that primary fermentations take place. Nevertheless, as Peter and Sophie highlighted, places where the wine ‘rests’ and matures are felt to be connected to slower, deeper and more grounded rhythms than are the energetic places of primary fermentation.



Figure 37. Winemaker in his winery shed

Conclusion

In the skilled performance of their tasks, winegrowers in McLaren Vale engage intimately with the world around them at a sensorial level – including touching the soil and the vines, feeling the sun, wind and rain in the vineyard, smelling and feeling the warmth of the fermenting grapes, and tasting the wine at different stages of its production. It is this sort of deep and attentive engagement of people with their environmental surrounds over time that produces not only practical and intellectual ‘knowledge’ but also a rich topography of feelings and emotions of belonging, love, loss, nostalgia, tranquillity, and struggle. The emotional depth fostered by the hands-on tasks and activities and direct sensorial experiences of small-scale wine production is, I believe, an important aspect of the ontological perspective shared by many of my interlocutors, which sees people, land, vines, and wines as fundamentally interrelated and co-dependent, partaking of and manifesting a sort of shared *essence*. The mutual engagement of people and ‘nature’ in this production means that a wine may be said to embody both the intent, love and care of the winegrowers, and the ineffable ‘sense of place’ of the particular vineyard from which it originated. Similarly, a vineyard or winery may be seen to be indivisible from the unique and specific wines it has produced and the people who farm it, especially in cases where several generations of the same family have worked the same land.

For winegrowers, the vineyards and wineries into which they pour so much of their time, labour and attention may lie at the very centre of their emotional lives, shaping their ongoing experiences of the world. They are places of activity and excitement, of peace and refuge; over time, they can become ‘places of dwelling’. This sort of intense and deeply embedded emotional connection to places, forged through particular sensual experiences and interactions, is by no means limited to winegrowers or farmers. However, these relationships are given material form by artisanal producers, whose products spring directly from their

concerted physical, intellectual and emotional interactions with the soil, vines, grapes, presses, vats and barrels of their places of production. The wine itself is seen to be embedded not only with the physical traces of the geographic location (as a result of the particular geology, rainfall, aspect, and microclimate of the vineyard) – but also emotional rhythms and currents which give it its life and vitality, a unique value and depth of meaning.

Processes of production can serve to imbue material objects with a sort of agency, enmeshing them in relational networks with the people who produce and consume them (Appadurai 1988; Gell 1998). Their interactions with humans in the processes of production, circulation and consumption works in some cases to animate these items, granting them social meaning and thus de-objectifying them. However, these things are not just agents of action, but rather come to embody feelings, emotions and memories. Consumers are brought into this relational and meaningful meshwork with wine and place in the Vale as participants themselves, linked to the world of production through the physical incorporation brought about by smelling, tasting and drinking. The processes of consubstantiation that lie at the heart of artisanal winegrowing in McLaren Vale involve the sharing of a physical essence – the specific tastes and smells of a vineyard and winery coaxed “out of the land and into the bottle” (Sternsdorff Cisterna 2013: 53) by human efforts and action. But there is also a deep emotional resonance at play. The tasks and activities of dwelling in the world invest places and landscapes with currents of meaning, and it is through the committed and personal engagement of artisanal producers with their worlds that these meanings come to reverberate throughout the places and products with which they are intimately connected. Emotions are not disembodied. In McLaren Vale they may find a home in vineyards, fermenting vats and oak barrels, and in other, mobile and consumable places: the bottles of wine that flow from the wineries of the district to store shelves and cellars all over the world.

The Vale, between city and country

For winegrowers in McLaren Vale, I have argued, their 'sense of place' involves the intimately-felt, intensely local experiences of manual work in the vineyard and winery and the face-to-face interactions of small-scale 'community' life, but this is sense of place also shaped by and contingent upon much broader—even global—currents and trends. The shared identity of McLaren Vale is that of a region which is distinct from surrounding areas, yet open to and fundamentally interwoven with the world beyond its borders. In this chapter, I focus particularly on the relationship between McLaren Vale and the nearby city of Adelaide. The proximity of Adelaide is significant, being formative in the economic and social development of the region as well, I argue, as providing an ongoing point of distinction as an urban centre against which McLaren Vale can imagine itself as a rural and agricultural district.

Well, maybe being close to the city has an influence, it makes it a little more 'cosmopolitan', I guess you could say. There's an outreach beyond our borders. We're bigger than the village. Whereas in the Barossa, Tanunda, Nuriootpa, Angaston are like little villages, very inward-looking and bounded off. Here, we're so close to Adelaide, some winemakers will even live in the city and commute down here. It's so accessible. Adelaide has always been part of the region, it's always been there on the edges, so I guess the city's always had an influence. It's just that now it's getting closer. In the past it was vines and farmland from Marion all the way south. Even in my lifetime, I can remember there being farmland all through Reynella, Morphett Vale, Woodcroft, interspersed with housing. There were huge amounts of open land around Chateau Reynella. Now, it's when you drive up the hill off South Road, that's when you're in the country. And that's where it always felt as though McLaren Vale starts. (Steve, 14 November 2012)

In fact, as an area of agricultural production but dominated by social, economic and political linkages to Adelaide, McLaren Vale might be thought of as straddling both 'city' and 'country' in some respects, neither wholly one nor the other: indeed, McLaren Vale actually lies within Adelaide's legislatively-defined Metropolitan Area (South Australian Government Gazette 1993). The production of space (Lefèbvre 1991) of McLaren Vale is heavily influenced by the proximity of the city, and representations of McLaren Vale's rurality are very much in line with

dominant (primarily urban and middle-class) values and ideals relating to the countryside and agriculture. This influence does not necessarily only entail an imposition or colonisation of rural space by the urban; rather, the relationship of McLaren Vale and regions like it with the city should be seen in terms of a mutual evolution and symbiosis. From the very beginning of European settlement, Adelaide and its surrounding agricultural areas have relied upon one another socially and materially. Such a relationship was intended by the initial planners of the city and the colony, and was consciously fostered thereafter: as Hirst (1973: 218) notes, during the early twentieth century “the city’s boosters claimed that all Adelaide’s citizens could enjoy the pleasures of both town and country, as the gentry had done. Adelaide was described as a Garden City in which all the people were close to parkland and public squares, or farms, orchards and vineyards.”

Adelaide looms large in the way people in McLaren Vale think about themselves and their district, and as such the nearby presence of the city can be considered integral to the McLaren Vale region. Similarly, McLaren Vale is present in the imaginings of people from Adelaide as an extension of their own region, as a place for weekend jaunts and country escapes. Adelaide’s proximity to McLaren Vale, along with the other rural or quasi-rural regions around the suburban periphery, to some extent defines and characterises the city. There is, however, significant tension between competing conceptualisations of city and country in McLaren Vale. In one sense they are ideal opposites, and this dichotomy is often called upon in the construction of the Vale as a country region vis-à-vis urban Adelaide. In many ways, though, the two are mutually dependent, and in McLaren Vale the ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ might be thought to inform one another, interpenetrate and overlap to a great extent. In this chapter I will explore various attempts to define and bound McLaren Vale, including the introduction of ‘character preservation’ legislation to maintain the region’s rural amenity, and community division over a newly-announced housing subdivision at Seaford Heights.

Shifting boundaries

In common with many other Australian cities, Adelaide is characterised by sprawl. Its suburbs presently stretch ninety kilometres from Gawler in the north to Sellicks Beach in the south, over a strip of land approximately twenty kilometres wide between the Gulf St Vincent and the Mount Lofty Ranges. The perception that Australia is a land of vast and untrammelled *space*—of “boundless plains to share,” according to the lyrics of the National Anthem—is reflected in the fact that Australian cities have seen a continual outward expansion of suburban housing in line with population increases, further boosted by increased car ownership, road and other infrastructure developments, and government policies favourable to such growth. There has been a tendency for the land at the fringes of the city to be treated as insignificant except as space to be divided, sold and developed whenever its commodity value as housing land overtakes its value as farming land. There are thus no real limits to the outward growth of the suburbs: there is always more land—more space—a bit further out.⁵⁴

For my informants, the spread of the suburbs is the source of significant angst. Although some admit that, to a degree, this is necessary given ongoing population growth (“well, people have to live somewhere” was a common sentiment), there is widespread agreement within McLaren Vale that suburban growth has not occurred with due respect for agriculture or environmental concerns. Tim, a viticulturist, told me that it pains him to see productive agricultural land ‘buried’ by suburbia:

Adelaide is built right on top of some of the best grape growing land in the State. If I’m driving through Marion and I see earthworks going on, I’ll just look at the soil and think ‘what a waste’ ... all that fantastic agricultural land, covered up by suburbs. And there used to be market gardens all the way up the coast: Brighton, West Beach, Henley Beach. My grandmother grew up on a mixed farm in Reynella, it was really diverse—there were chooks, cows, veggies, everything—and it was all agricultural land until the ‘70s when the suburbs spread out again. (Tim, 19 March 2012)

⁵⁴ This treatment of land in the Colony as empty, practically homogeneous space, devoid of all ‘emplaced’ meaning, is vividly illustrated by the way land was surveyed, divided and sold in eighty-acre sections according to a “predetermined grid pattern [which] was not responsive to variations in the terrain” (Williams, MJ 1974: 24).

Shaping current perspectives in the Vale is a memory of nearby places where productive agricultural areas has been consumed by suburban housing. In the years following World War II, well within the living memories of many of my informants, much of the area around Marion on the banks of the Sturt River south of Adelaide remained farmland, planted with fruit orchards, market gardens, almond trees and grape vines. This gave way to housing and industrial development in the 1950s as the region became enveloped by Adelaide's suburbs. Further south, the productive farming and grape growing areas around small townships like Noarlunga, Hackham, Morphett Vale and Reynella have become 'suburbanised' only over the past few decades. Arthur, a long-time winemaker, remembers great changes over his lifetime:

The flat land of the Adelaide Plains and the Southern Vales is such productive and important agricultural land ... In the 1950s the Marion-Warradale area held vineyards that were as productive, in terms of yield per acre, as those [currently] in the Riverland. I can remember those vineyards being there. And Wynns had great vineyards at Modbury Estate. Urban sprawl has destroyed so much great land. (Arthur, 29 March 2012)

Given this loss of significant areas of high-quality agricultural land in the Adelaide area in the recent past, people in McLaren Vale are wary of what they see as a threat posed by 'the suburbs', looming ever-closer. Despite a trend by which political decisions around planning, zoning and land use have been made largely according to current market values of land and a perceived 'need' to spatially appropriate more farming and vineyard land for suburban development, resistance to suburban sprawl has long been voiced. In *The Vineyards of Adelaide*, Bishop (1977: 13) bemoaned the planning decisions that had by the late 1970s already led to the near-total suburbanisation of the Adelaide Plains: "With a deal more foresight and planning, both 20 years ago and even at the present time, Adelaide could have become the city of market gardens, orchards and vineyards, instead of just another sprawling mass of houses and factories." It was apparent that the 'encroachment' of suburbia then posed an ongoing threat to agricultural regions further out, such as McLaren Vale (included in Bishop's broader designation of the 'Southern Vales'), and the Barossa Valley:

It is to be hoped that something has been learned from the destruction of the Adelaide wine area. Now is the time to protect the Southern Vales, Angle Vale and the Barossa Valley from the encroachment of residential land use. The problem is already apparent in the grape growing areas to the south of Adelaide. The historically interesting areas of Morphett Vale, Reynella and Happy Valley are fast disappearing under a sea of houses and sealed roads ... Hopefully, the realisation that South Australia cannot afford to alienate any more prime horticultural and non-irrigated viticultural land is near at hand. (Bishop 1977: 14)

Despite the usual perception of land in South Australia (and Australia more generally) as unbounded and almost limitless space, in reality topography, climate, geology and water supply have conspired to ensure that very little of this land is appropriate for highly intensive agricultural uses like fruit, vegetable and wine grape growing. This sort of highly productive land is in fact in relative scarcity, limited to the areas of good rainfall in and around the Mount Lofty Ranges themselves, where the north-south hills harness the moisture of weather systems moving from west to east across South Australia. It is, of course, exactly this sort of land which was most appealing to early settlers:

Particularly attractive to the pioneer farmer was the upraised block of land that extends northwards through the centre of South Australia like a spine. From the Fleurieu Peninsula, the Mount Lofty Ranges rise to over 1,500 feet, but many broad upper-valley reaches and some fault-formed coastal basins and plains provided suitable locations for settlement. (Williams, MJ 1974: 6-7)

The City of Adelaide was located on the plains at the base of the ranges precisely because of the proximity of this well-watered site to land adjudged appropriate for farming. With the growth of the city and the spread of its suburbs across the plains and into the surrounding hills and valleys, a significant amount of this highly productive agricultural land has already been lost. Many of my interlocutors did not support notions that the market should dictate planning and zoning regulations (and thus land use), on the basis that land on the fringes of a growing city will always achieve a higher price for housing development over agriculture. As population increases, the short-term profit imperative of landholders will thus always result in the transition of farmland to suburbia around the urban fringe. This is seen by many in McLaren Vale as a great loss, as agricultural land is thought of as crucially important both for its

importance to local economies and 'ways of life' but also, ultimately, to South Australia and the city of Adelaide itself.

Even when land is not directly claimed by suburban sprawl, the increased economic 'value' of farmland close to the city has important ramifications for land use. With prices for the small plots of agricultural land close to the city rising, certain types of farming have emerged as far more economically viable than others. Throughout McLaren Vale, for example, the historically significant industries producing almonds and dried fruit such as apricots and prunes now occupy very small niches; at a big commercial scale most such growers 'moved out' to the Riverland in the 1960s and 70s, where the large tracts of irrigated farmland near the Murray River meant that growers could achieve much better economies of scale for these crops. Similarly, rising land prices meant that grain cropping was no longer an economically sustainable land use in much of the region, and in the 1990s (thanks also to government tax breaks for vineyard planting) much of the land that was previously dedicated to wheat and barley cropping in the McLaren Vale area became planted with grape vines. Another previously important local industry, poultry farming, has also broadly disappeared. On farms throughout the region, large empty chicken sheds and slatted timber structures and brick kilns for drying fruit still remain, testament to the changing agricultural focus of McLaren Vale.

A number of my informants, especially older people who had seen significant changes over their own lifetimes, bemoaned the loss of agricultural diversity in the region, and particularly the 'mixed farms' of fruit trees, vegetable gardens, livestock, grapes, and chickens, that play an important role in memories of the Southern Vales "as they used to be". Taking the place of this remembered diversity of farming is a near monoculture of neatly-planted rows of wine grape vines, which seem now to take up almost all available land. Table grapes and currants for drying have largely moved away from McLaren Vale to other regions like the Riverland, as have wine-grapes grown for maximum yield and intended for bulk blends of cheap

‘commodity’ wine. Increasingly, the Vale grows grapes intended for the production of quality wines. Firstly, this is because growing conditions, soil and geology make high quality grapes consistently possible, and secondly, because elevated land prices—skewed by the proximity of McLaren Vale to Adelaide and its desirability as a place for ‘city people’ to buy ‘lifestyle’ or hobby-farming properties—mean that it is only financially sustainable to grow grapes that will fetch a high price per tonne.

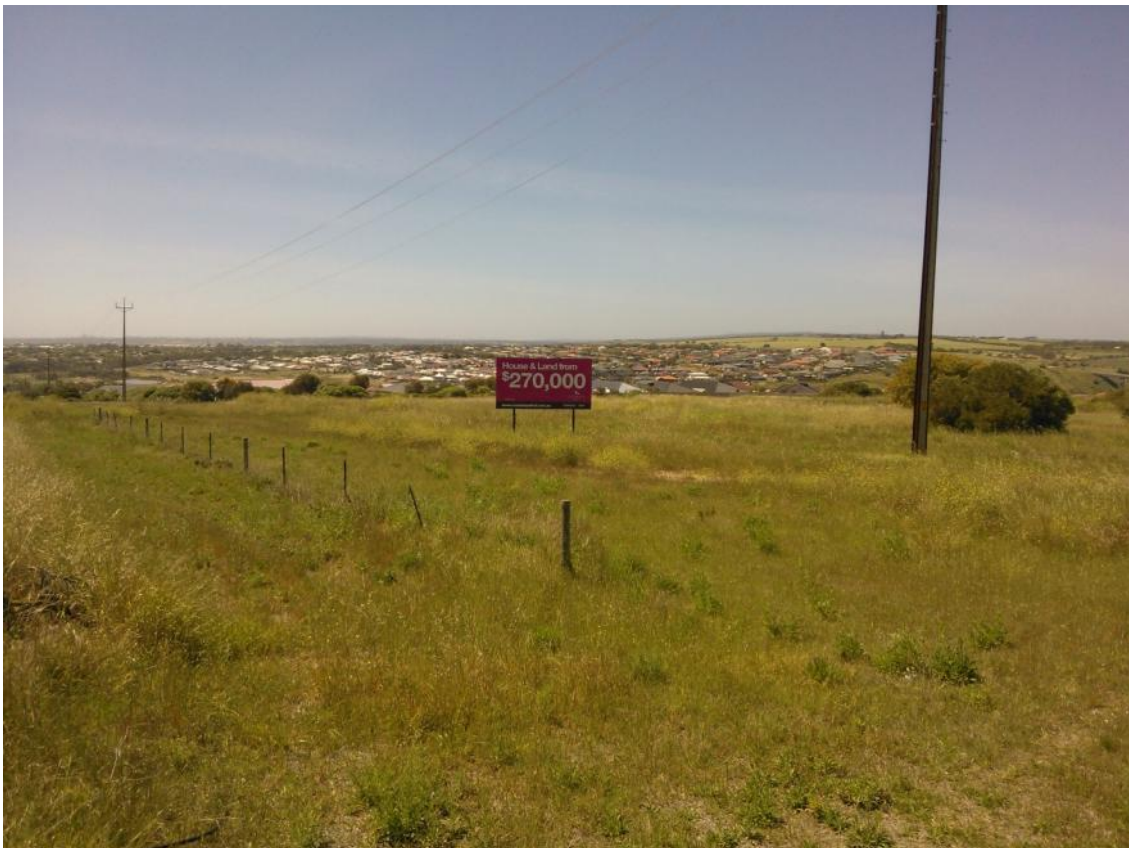


Figure 38. House and land packages for sale, Main South Road

Terroir and the city

I have suggested in previous chapters that the concept of terroir in winegrowing is crucial in understanding peoples’ relationship to McLaren Vale and its places. In this chapter, I argue that the relationship between city and countryside—Adelaide and its surrounding agricultural areas—is a critical element of the ‘terroir’ of wine production in McLaren Vale. Much of the

process of winegrowing that affects the material substance of the wines themselves—their sensory qualities, their *taste*—is shaped by human practices and decisions, which are in turn influenced by the particular flows of money and ideas (and people themselves) which comes with proximity to Adelaide. This has parallels elsewhere in the world; as others have noted, Bordeaux’s rise to prominence as a fine wine producing region came in no small part due to its favourable location for trade, with the tastes of consumers in urban centres like Paris and London significant in shaping production techniques and leading to the hierarchical classifications of winegrowing estates for which Bordeaux is famous (Farmer 2013; Sommers 2008). With vineyards situated around the port city of Bordeaux, at the mouth of two major rivers, wine merchants were ideally placed to export to other parts of France and to Britain, where ‘claret’ became a favoured drink of wealthy urbanites (The Economist 2009). Similarly, the proximity of the city of Porto in Portugal to the vineyards of the Douro Valley is crucial to the history of Port wine production and export; as an important port city, wines from the area could be exported far and wide along Portuguese trade routes (Unwin 1991).

The shift in direction away from generic and ‘placeless’ wines towards the production of ‘high quality’ and geographically distinctive wines in McLaren Vale may be viewed, partly, in light of the dominant values and orientations of those people who have a stake in the cycle of production and consumption: growers, winemakers, drinkers, critics, sommeliers, and others. Writing of the exponential increase in wine production in Australia over the past fifty years, Swinburn (2013: 33-34) points out that “much of the momentum has come as city-based professionals have moved from cities to rural fringes to engage in small-scale premium wine production”. His own ethnographic research around winegrowing in the Australian region of Geelong, near Melbourne, highlights the way that the new wave of émigrés from the city—highly educated and moneyed professionals like judges and doctors who have decided to forge a new life in the country as vigneron—have brought with them particular discourses and orientations towards wine production that celebrate concepts of terroir, artisanship, and

distinctiveness. These winegrowers are part of a broader trend of the adaptation of (upper-) middle-class city values to a country way of life, transforming the Geelong region into “one of tidy hobby farms, vineyards, and dressage arenas ... Rural coffee shops serving light lunch to local mothers during the week and Lycra-wearing cyclists and four-wheel-drive tourists on the weekend” (Swinburn 2013: 39).

The processes of rural change that Swinburn sees in Geelong are similarly visible in McLaren Vale, and indeed the ‘gentrification’ caused by the movement of city people to the countryside as residents and tourists has been the destiny of many near-urban agricultural areas. I believe that these processes of social change and greater social interaction between producers and consumers are, in McLaren Vale as elsewhere, partly responsible for tying local experiences of winegrowing and other food production to broader, globalised discourses of terroir. Although terroir highlights the very local manifestations of agricultural production, it is through a globalised language of terroir, shared and re-emphasised through social interactions that local particularities are valorised and communicated. Terroir is often employed strategically in order to highlight the uniqueness of particular rural places and the connections between people, places and productions that are present there: in this understanding, places are set aside as *special* over and against (a) urban and other non-agriculturally productive areas; and (b) the spaces of non-distinctive agricultural production, of large scale industrial agriculture, generic and ‘placeless’ products. Terroir talk thus fits neatly with an overall romanticisation of the countryside and its supposedly timeless agrarian and pastoral rhythms that strikes a chord with ‘lifestyle’ émigrés from the city and the suburbs, as well as with short-term visitors wanting to gaze upon vistas of vineyards, hills, orchards and fields; it should be of little surprise, then, that such ideas have gained salience in regions like McLaren Vale or Geelong, both of which are so heavily influenced by their proximity to the city.

I argue, moreover, that this very proximity, the looming presence of the city, provides a political imperative for discourses of terroir that aim to highlight the uniqueness and qualitative *value* of places in McLaren Vale. For most of my informants, the nearby suburbs of Adelaide are seen as a threat to the rural character of the region, and the invocation of terroir—through which agricultural places in the Vale can be seen as special, unique and irreplaceable—becomes an important political weapon. While the proximity of the suburbs is thus a threat to the Vale, this fact has also been a key driver in the pursuit of wine quality and distinctiveness that many feel is critical to the survival of agriculture in the area.

Imagining the countryside

In the history of Western thought, according to Raymond Williams (1973: 1), “‘Country’ and ‘city’ are very powerful words, and this is not surprising when we remember how much they seem to stand for in the experience of human communities”. Tracing images of the city and country through a history of English literature, he shows how our imagining of these concepts is a fundamentally dichotomous one, placing them in polar opposition to one another:

On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue. On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication, light. Powerful hostile associations have also developed: on the city as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition; on the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation. A contrast between country and city, as fundamental ways of life, reaches back into classical times. (Williams, R 1973: 1)

The ‘country’ represents not only spatial distance from the ‘city’, but also, significantly, temporal distance: the country conjures up nostalgic images of a golden past era of timeless agricultural and pastoral rhythms, virtuous labour, and simple, knowable social structures. Yet, as Williams states, there is no historical period to which this image is an accurate depiction. As he points out, such a time always seems to have just slipped away; the further back in time one goes, so too does the elusive ‘golden era’ recede, always slightly out of view, “over the

next hill” (Williams, R 1973: 10). Indeed, the representations of city and country constructed and re-produced through traditions of literature and art are for the most part invented. The fiction of a marked dichotomy between rural and urban modes of life serve to obscure the realities of lived history, as on closer inspection society has in all ages been riven with inequalities of power and capital.

Williams’ own account of country life in Britain is personal and evocative, but it is not a romantic vision of wild nature unsullied by the ravages of modernity. Rather, it is a countryside shaped above all by social relationships and flows of power and capital which are enmeshed with the landscape itself:

Thus at once, for me, before the argument starts, country life has many meanings. It is the elms, the may, the white horse, in the field beyond the window where I am writing. It is the men in the November evening, walking back from pruning, with their hands in the pockets of their khaki coats; and the women in headscarves, outside their cottages, waiting for the blue bus that will take them, inside school hours, to work in the harvest. It is the tractor on the road, leaving its tracks of serrated pressed mud; the light in the small hours, in the pig-farm across the road, in the crisis of a litter; the slow brown van met at the difficult corner, with the crowded sheep jammed to its slatted sides; the heavy smell, on still evenings, of the silage ricks fed with molasses. It is also the sour land, on the thick boulder clay, not far up the road, that is selling for housing, for a speculative development, at twelve thousand pounds an acre (Williams, R 1973: 3).

The notion of ‘countryside’, for him, involves an inherent tension that is often ignored. There is “deep contrast in which so much feeling is held: between what seems an unmediated nature—a physical awareness of trees, birds, the moving shapes of land—and a working agriculture, in which much of the nature is in fact being produced” (Williams, R 1973: 3). Agricultural landscapes are themselves produced by the same processes of interaction between people and place that are productive of goods for consumption (including immaterial things, like tourist experiences and images); their apparent ‘naturalness’ thus conceals the social relations that underpin their production. To consider country landscapes as wholly ‘natural’ and separate from these relations, in diametric opposition to the city (commonly thought of as a denatured ‘culture’), is to perpetuate a theoretical division that is not borne

out by the living interplay of people, other organisms and materials in an ongoing process of becoming, of which so-called ‘production’ and ‘consumption’ are integral and indivisible components.

McLaren Vale was frequently described and defined by my interlocutors—visitors and locals—as a ‘country’ area boasting picturesque ‘natural’ landscapes. However, ever since European colonisation, McLaren Vale has been inextricably linked with the social-economic relations of the city of Adelaide. Early settlers purchasing a town acre in Adelaide were also afforded the opportunity to choose a country section of 80 acres for a combined price of £80; priority of choice for these land parcels were given to those who secured land orders while still in England, even prior to Proclamation of the Colony (Hodder 1893). Such close ties between Adelaide and rural districts were thus deliberately forged by the architects of South Australia’s system of planned colonisation, and many members of McLaren Vale’s old families were also important figures in the history of Adelaide.

In South Australia, the promotion of a gentle and virtuous ideal of rurality is visible in references to the countryside from the earliest days of British settlement; indeed, it might be argued that the planned colonisation of South Australia was reliant on such a perspective. *Capper’s South Australia*, a handbook providing information to British citizens intending to emigrate, gave the following hints for the “middle-class small farmer” wishing to purchase a land allotment in South Australia:

By ‘small farmer’ is meant any one possessed of a small capital (an absolute requisite), and having some knowledge of agriculture ... A previous acquaintance with agricultural affairs, the breeding and rearing of cattle, &c. would certainly be desirable, but the principal requisite to a settler is a taste and fondness for country life and occupations. (Capper & South Australian Company 1839: 53)

Here, an orientation towards ‘country life’ as a particular mode of being is identified as being even more valuable to the prospective South Australian landholder than expertise and technical knowledge of farming.

For early settlers, according to Williams (1974: 4) “the South Australian landscape looked dreary and hostile; it was a hard land to love, and to their minds it needed to be ‘rescued from a state of nature’, civilised and tamed to conform, as far as possible, to the landscape with which they were familiar”: that of the English countryside. Those hoping to emphasise the desirability of the South Australian landscape emphasised those qualities that resonated with familiar aesthetics of English rural beauty, as in this passage from a handbook designed to attract potential emigres:

The country from Cape Jervis, up the Gulf St. Vincent, viewed from the sea, is exceedingly picturesque, resembling, for the most part, the finest parks in England – a resemblance which is made the more striking, from being similarly interspersed with magnificent trees, just numerous enough to add beauty to the land, without encumbering it. (Capper & South Australian Company 1839: 15)

In making categorical connections between the ‘beautiful’ country on the shores of the Gulf St. Vincent and the familiar parklands of Britain, a visual landscape not yet physically ‘shaped’ by Europeans becomes encumbered with a thick layer of cultural meaning. Colonial engagement with the land in South Australian has thus been, from the beginning, an exercise in ‘imagining landscapes’ (Janowski & Ingold 2012). Settlers aiming to “remove the barrenness and monotony of the [South Australian] landscape” (Hirst 1973: 219) produced this landscape not only through their physical clearing, ploughing and building of it, but also—taking “the English and European countryside as their ideal” (Hirst 1973: 219)—by imagining it in relation to familiar, shared notions of how agricultural land *should* be.



Figure 39. The view from the Salopian Inn restaurant



Figure 40. Rural scenery in McLaren Vale, winter

Gazing and consuming

In previous chapters I have addressed the way wine tasting and drinking in McLaren Vale enables people to consume 'place' in a literal, gustatory way. Places, however, may also be consumed through other senses. For Urry (1995, 2002), vision is extraordinarily important to the production and consumption of places and landscapes: the gaze of the culturally-situated subject is directed to particular visual features in a semiotic practice that objectifies and reproduces values that they are thought to hold (2002: 2-3). This process is discernible in the way early British settlers constructed and represented the South Australian landscape, as described above; it is also a key aspect of the present production and consumption of McLaren Vale as an agricultural, viticultural and tourism region.

The visual consumption of landscape through the "tourist gaze" (Urry 2002) is often an aesthetic one, with an emphasis on beauty and cohesiveness. In McLaren Vale, the objects of

this visual consumption are the 'picturesque' hills, sea, vineyards, olive and almond groves, as well as historic buildings and other built structures. The processes of touristic consumption, by which sites and landscapes become themselves commodified objects is, according to many observers, nearly ubiquitous under the conditions of late capitalism (see also, for example, MacCannell 1999). Tourism as we currently understand it has been described as a product of a capitalist modernity in which 'work' and 'leisure' time is sharply divided. As it is in the realm of 'leisure' that much modern identity formation takes place, the places associated with leisure time become particularly important as these places are thought to embody ideal characteristics or values that make them worthy of touristic consumption. From the eighteenth century onwards, representations of the countryside had been recast in urban European imaginations from a peripheral region of hardship and toil (as well as backwardness) towards a valorisation of rural aesthetics and a simpler way of life: country areas thus became reimagined as places for city dwellers to visit in their 'leisure time' (Gallent & Andersson 2007; Woods 2005).

Agricultural regions are an especially interesting field for the study of touristic consumption of place, because these are visited principally as places and landscapes of production. Although these landscapes may be pleasing to the eye, what is being consumed is not merely an aesthetically agreeable picture but an idealised mode of life, a 'countryside' with its connotations of an agrarian 'golden age' spatially and temporally removed from the city, the source of nostalgic longing for many urban dwellers. The reproduction of this Arcadian vision—whether directly (for example, through deliberate promotion and marketing undertaken by regional tourism boards) or indirectly (through the flow of stories or images which reinforce such ideals)—frames the countryside as an 'experience' for consumption. This is both a general trend and one which may be employed in service of particular country regions and places. Storey (2006: unpaginated) states that "landscapes, local individuals or families, events, traditions, building styles are amongst the 'resources' put into the service of

place promotion". In McLaren Vale, wine is an example of such a resource. Both the substance itself, and local evocations of its production, are valorised as part of a local heritage which highlight the uniqueness and specificity of place. Such local place promotion, however, often tends to index broader themes and notions (countryside, rurality, community, terroir, artisanship), as it is these themes that people use to interpret and categorise local specificities:

Our region's stunning coastline and ranges define McLaren Vale's boundaries, and the distinct landscapes and environment within. McLaren Vale's collaborative generosity and unique combination of exceptional wine and produce – both on the farm and on the plate – with a beach lifestyle, ensures that our region truly offers a welcoming experience for every visitor. Enjoy! (City of Onkaparinga & McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2015: 3)

Importantly, notions of a beautiful landscape encompass not only the 'natural' forms of hills, forest, sea and so on, but also some elements that are *shaped* by human agency, including vineyards, orchards, farms, as well as buildings. The overtly-human landscape elements that are acceptable or desirable to the gaze of the visitor are those that are congruent with the dominant narratives of place-promotion, which are in McLaren Vale linked to ideals of rustic agricultural life rooted in European traditions.

McLaren Vale's shared narratives of place and region relate not only to British countryside ideals but also to those of southern Europe. British settlers quickly drew parallels between South Australian landscape and climate and those with which they were familiar in southern France, Italy and the Iberian Peninsula; early farmers in McLaren Vale consciously drew upon existing knowledge of these areas in their selection of crops and grape cultivars (see Chapter Three). The emphasis on 'Mediterraneanness' as a categorising feature of the region increased during the twentieth century with an influx of migrants from Italy and other southern European countries (Chapter Two), and is perpetuated by wine and tourism promotional discourse:

The first British colonists were fully aware of the similarities between McLaren Vale and the coast of the north-west Mediterranean ... Today McLaren Vale folks like to

think that their region on the Gulf St Vincent, patron of viticulturists, has 'the best Mediterranean climate on Earth.' (Yangarra Estate Vineyard 2015)

In the Introduction to her history of McLaren Vale, Santich (1998) makes it clear that she sees the Vale's Mediterranean characteristics as important and affective elements of the region:

Perhaps it is the coastline and beaches and clear, turquoise water that attract me to this area, that teasing flash of blue as I turn a corner or crest a hill. But I also love its Mediterranean qualities, the impossibly high summer sky, the parched brown summer landscape, the olives and vines and almond blossoms. (Santich 1998: vii)

The gaze of tourists as well as residents is conditioned by discourses favouring the elements of landscape that are evocative of 'Mediterraneanness' — yellow hills, blue skies, clear seas, grapes, olives, figs, almonds. As chef and tourism figure Kate told me, "walking in between the vineyards, catching a glimpse of an old farmhouse here or there, the rolling hills, the blue skies... you could be in Tuscany!" (Kate, 28 March 2012). Aside from vineyards, hills and orchards, the old farmhouses, winery buildings and barns that dot the region become naturalised by this gaze as legitimate parts of the landscape: they 'fit' with a European-derived aesthetic of intimate rurality in a way that big industrial winery 'tank farms', shopping centres and suburban housing developments do not. The latter are usually suppressed or glossed over by tourism literature, and viewed by tourists and residents alike as illegitimate impositions, often described as "eyesores" or "blights on the landscape".

It is often the case that modalities of consumption are combined, and in McLaren Vale the visual is often linked with consumption of a gustatory kind. Wineries and restaurants are often spatially organised to enable customers to gaze upon the surrounding landscape as they drink or eat. Gmelch and Gmelch (2011: 2) claim that "More people today are interested in actively engaging with the places they visit and in supplementing the tourist gaze ... with other sensory or bodily experiences". Just as they find in Napa, wine tourism in McLaren Vale satisfies these criteria; along with the consumption of wine, food, and visual scenery, tourists I spoke to mentioned other sensory experiences including sounds (birdsong, animals, or the 'quietness'

of the countryside), smells (wine fermentation, soil, eucalyptus or wattle trees) or simply feelings of 'fresh air' and sunshine.

Here, the complexity of the relationship between the city and the countryside again comes to the fore: McLaren Vale is positioned as a place of quiet rurality and a slow-paced 'good life', but it is one that is highly accessible to city-dwellers. Advances in transportation and communications have ensured that the temporal and spatial distance between Adelaide and the Vale has been significantly reduced. While in the era of horse-powered travel the trip by coach along the dirt roads between Adelaide and the McLaren Vale region took a full day (Linn 1991; Towler 1986), modern transport infrastructure and technology have reduced the journey time significantly. By car, via the Southern Expressway, the trip between the City and the Vale now only takes around forty-five minutes; a metropolitan rail line also connects to Seaford, on the edge of McLaren Vale, with a planned extension further south to Aldinga. The ease of travel between the city and the Vale means that a good proportion of residents of the Vale commute to Adelaide daily for work and other purposes.

The convenience of proximity to the city is not lost on those wishing to highlight the tourism credentials of McLaren Vale. Brochures and pamphlets published by tourism bodies, wineries and other businesses portray the Vale as an idyllic rural area where people can escape from city life, breathe fresh air, and reconnect with the rhythms of nature, but one which lies only forty-five minutes from the centre of a city of over a million people, serviced by an international airport. As we saw in Chapter One, the ability for city dwellers and workers to take a day or weekend trip to the Vale was an important factor in the emergence from the 1960s onwards of wineries and their 'cellar doors' as tourism destinations in themselves. This trend has gradually transformed the Vale into a place of consumption as well as of production. McLaren Vale has become a place for city people to go to eat and drink: at the wineries, at the cafes and restaurants of the townships, and at the famous Willunga Farmers' Market.



Figure 41. The gaze

Exclusions and inclusions

Although McLaren Vale to a large extent relies on an interplay of 'city' and 'country', a strong dichotomy between these categories is frequently drawn upon by locals and visitors in their characterisations of the area, and my interviewees often referred to what they saw as a clear divide between the McLaren Vale district as a 'country' area and the nearby suburbs of Adelaide. For most, the boundary is one of differentiation in terms of landscape and land use, as well as one of 'mindset': a perceived distinction in values and orientations between country people and suburbanites.

Back then [in the 1960s] there were vines growing in Morphett Vale and Marion. And now they're all swallowed up by bloody housing. Now, I'm not anti-things happening, but a lot of the land around here just should not be being built on. If it was up to me I'd build an electric fence at Morphett Vale and only let through the right sorts of people, that aren't going to fuck it all up. (Dennis, 15 August 2012)

Dennis, a farmer and winemaker, reflects the views of several of my informants: while there are close social links with the city, and many in the Vale rely economically on the tourist trade, there is a sense that they do not 'belong' in McLaren Vale in the same way that real farmers and 'country people' do.

Travelling south from Adelaide, most place the geographical boundary between the 'suburbs' and the 'countryside' at or just south of the Onkaparinga River, where to get to McLaren Vale you turn off Main South Road onto the Victor Harbor Road. As the road climbs a hill, houses on small suburban blocks give way to farm paddocks, and the first vineyards can be seen on the ridge. Further on, cresting the hill, a vista opens up across the whole region, with the hills of the Range visible to the south and the Gulf St Vincent to the southwest. This area is known locally as the 'Gateway', and is an important spatial threshold for people in the region: "When I come back [from Adelaide], as soon as I drive over the hill and see McLaren Vale I can feel myself escaping from the city. It's really important to be able to do that, for a rural area like this" (Jason, 26 March 2012). During my fieldwork this area was a great focus of community

attention, due to the approval of a new housing subdivision (see Seaford Heights section below).

Another important boundary is formed by the Main South Road: most agricultural and viticultural land lies to the east, while to the west along the coast are a series of towns including Moana, Port Willunga and Aldinga which have largely grown together in an extension of Adelaide's suburban area. Partly, this division is based on government policies relating to land use and development. From the 1960s onwards, faced with a growing population and the consequent need for expansion of areas for housing, State Governments pursued land capability studies south of Adelaide "with the idea that the best land would be reserved for agriculture and that housing should be put elsewhere" (Wendy, planning expert, 31 May 2012). The greater salinity of the land west of Main South Road—and the fact that it was closer to the coast—made it ideal for housing, and policies from the 1970s sought to develop this land and retain the area to the east for agriculture. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Mayor of Willunga and the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations in 1993 and again in 1994 with the election of a new State Government. This limited future development west of Main South Road, committing the Government to "a planning process which would determine the extent and form of urban development ... and ensure that the special environmental, agriculture and heritage character of the Willunga Basin be preserved" (Georga, Brokenshire & University of Adelaide 1996; quoted in Johnston 2009: 35).

As suggested by several informants, the physical boundary formed by the road is also a broadly-accepted division between 'suburbia' and the agriculturally productive countryside. It divides the land not only according to government-level approaches to planning and development, but also at a social level, where the distinction is made between suburban and

country people themselves. Barry, a member of a local community interest group in Willunga who campaigned against suburbanisation in the region, told me that:

There was another less official agreement between local government and interests in the Vale that Main South Road constitutes a de facto boundary to suburban development ... Main South Road really is a significant divide. To the west is more or less ordinary suburbia - people live there essentially because there's cheap housing. (Barry, 27 March 2012)

As the distance between McLaren Vale and Adelaide's 'suburbia' diminished, the perceived need to maintain clear boundaries grew. This meant that defining the Vale's regional identity took on great importance. Cameron, whose father was 'good mates' with Greg Trott, told me that Trott had been a strong advocate for retaining the sense of separation between the suburbs and the countryside in McLaren Vale during his lifetime:

Trotty had a really strong sense of what was right for the district. He was very outspoken. He recognised that with a growing population you had to build houses somewhere, but he was adamant that this should all stay on the western side of Main South Road. That way there's a boundary, there's a clear delineation... (Cameron, 13 November 2012)

At the heart of the division between the countryside and the suburbs in the McLaren Vale region is a social demarcation of space according to modes of livelihood and values. Defining and maintaining a sense of 'community' is an exercise in exclusion as well as inclusion, as particular spatial and social forms become either accepted or rejected. The residents of suburban areas are held to be qualitatively different to country people in their values, orientations, and practices, and in this sense they are often considered outsiders in the Vale. They are said to have a different mentality, with little or no awareness of agriculture or 'sense of community'; although they might enjoy the beauty of the countryside they do not have the right attitudes, skills or understanding for living in a country area. While acknowledging that suburban sprawl may be difficult to avoid, some of my informants were particularly scathing about the lack of understanding and awareness of farming among suburbanites:

The worst thing is, I'm a farmer, I know that there are places around the district that are shit for agriculture, like down around Aldinga. Why not build there, and make it a

decent development? You know, something that will attract people who might have the sort of mindset that ties in to an agricultural district, where they respect the idea that it's a community and it's a primary production region.... Instead you'll get people with that suburban mentality, who aren't going to care about fresh food, or the land, or anything – they want their life packaged up and that's that. You get these bloody AV Jennings houses that will look like every other subdivision on the planet. It's so prescriptive, and so obvious that there's just been zero thought going into it... (Steve, viticulturist, 14 November 2012)

For farmers, the perceived ignorance of 'the wider community'—that is, urban and suburban Australians—with respect to the importance of agriculture and its challenges and uncertainties is a dangerous thing for the region. Although grape growing and winemaking has become the dominant form of agricultural production in McLaren Vale, having largely displaced cropping, orcharding and other industries, people in the wine industry often expressed strong views about the importance of diverse agricultural land uses in terms of food production:

Even though I'm a viticulturist I don't like a monoculture of grapes, and there should be greater focus on vegies, orchards and everything, depending on suitable soils. It's a huge shame that houses have been built all over the land near the coast, that area produces the best malting barley in the country. I like to think of the area as a food bowl. And closer to the end of the Fleurieu, there's fantastic sheep and cattle grazing land, blueberries and things like that. I really respect all of this diverse food production – that's where my passions lie. But unfortunately I think the community at large is all about Woolworths and Coles [supermarket chains]. And unfortunately when you start talking about how the land needs to be preserved, like with Seaford Heights, there's a backlash – 'oh, the rich winemakers don't like it!' – when really it's all about food! But of course people take a very short-term view – you can make a quick buck from housing. It's the 'want it all and want it now' mentality. (Carrie, 23 May 2012)

Although some farmers see the growth of winegrowing in the Vale into the dominant agricultural industry as a negative trend in its diminishing of the mixed-farming tradition of the region, a common ground is found in the resistance of both groups to suburban sprawl. Agricultural land uses can shift and change according to current market forces, it was explained, but housing development would spell the end altogether of agriculture: "Housing is the final crop; once you build houses on farmland there's nothing else you will be able to do there" (Barry, 27 March 2012). Farmers and winegrowers, furthermore, found themselves in alliance with environmentalist and residents' interest groups in campaigns for a halt to housing subdivisions in the area:

We have a very strong agricultural sector in South Australia, and the winemakers are particularly strong. It's really essential that they are on board with community groups to fight the property developers. With Bowering Hill [near Port Willunga, where a large housing subdivision had previously been proposed], it took the winemakers coming on board for the Government to listen, you know, with their 'Sea and Vines' slogan. So now they're already galvanised, Grape Wine & Tourism are on board to fight Seaford Heights. (Wendy, 31 May 2012)

While winemakers, farmers, environmentalists and resident groups in the region might have very different aims and objectives, the perceived threat of expanding suburban development gave them a certain unity of purpose. In particular, the economic and political clout of the wine industry became instrumental in the development of formal legislation to preserve agricultural land use zoning in McLaren Vale.



Figure 42. Vineyards and housing

Character preservation

I love this area. I've seen it grow and develop, but in my lifetime I've seen the suburbs get closer and closer. We're really very close to the suburbs here. The district, for me, really starts at the Onkaparinga, at the river—it's sort of a natural line—but already there's suburbs all around there. The new development up on that hill, Seaford Heights, I think shouldn't be happening. (Cameron, winemaker and viticulturist at his family's winery) 13 November 2012)

I don't like the development, but I can't stop it. I don't get involved because there's nothing I can do. It's great soil, but that doesn't mean anything if you can't sell the grapes, and the fact is we have a glut at the moment. Costs of growing, and the cost of vineyard land, is rising dramatically ... We need to have a balance between vineyards and housing, and we haven't found that balance yet. Who knows what will happen in 50 years' time? I'm not confident that it won't be all ruined. I love the Fleurieu, it's beautiful, but these problems aren't just limited to this area. The same things are happening around Mt Barker, Nairne, up north. It's not just wine land, it's all sorts of productive agricultural land – the land around Adelaide grows fantastic broccoli, cauliflowers, other vegetables and fruit... (Dennis, sole owner and operator of winery and vineyard, 15 August 2012)

While the uneasy and shifting relationship between the suburbs and the countryside is a matter for significant local debates around the fringes of most cities, the issue was especially contentious during my fieldwork in McLaren Vale. Local residents' groups had for a long time opposed a number of proposed developments and subdivisions around the area, including a marina complex at Sellicks Beach and a large housing development at Bowering Hill (Johnston 2009). As the perceived threat to the region grew, the Southern Community Coalition joined forces with the McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association to lobby the South Australian Government to provide protection for agricultural land in the region.⁵⁵ The issue of protection of farming land in periurban areas 'under threat' from the spread of the city was also taken up in the Barossa Valley, and in 2011 the Minister for Urban Development, Planning and the City of Adelaide released a draft discussion paper for consultation, entitled *Protecting the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale* (South Australia Department of Planning and Local Government 2011). This paper proposed the introduction of two 'protection districts',

⁵⁵ The Southern Community Coalition is an alliance of smaller residents' interest groups including the Friends of Willunga Basin and the Friends of Port Willunga. In 2011 it representing a total of around 4,000 'paid up' members (City of Onkaparinga 2010). Membership of the MVGWTA at the time totalled over 600 members (McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association 2011).

encompassing the Barossa and McLaren Vale, within which land uses and types of development would be limited to those which support the “rural amenity”, “rural character” and “scenic vistas” of the region, and do not “detract from the dominant land uses in these areas – wine, food, agriculture and tourism” (South Australia Department of Planning and Local Government 2011: 4).

We want development in these areas that will maintain their fundamental values – productive agriculture and viticulture, a strong sense of heritage and culture, scenic beauty and healthy environments. The best way to protect these regions is to enact legislation that will determine the kind of development that we want to see in the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale. (John Rau MP, in South Australia Department of Planning and Local Government 2011: 2)

Agricultural protection zones of this type have not been enacted anywhere else in Australia, but have been implemented elsewhere; as Leon Bignell (State Member for Mawson, and a key player in the formulation of the character preservation legislation) told me, the bid for character preservation in McLaren Vale and South Australia is based upon the successful precedent set by the Napa Valley wine region in California, USA. In Napa, a series of protective measures, starting in the late 1960s with a ban on subdivisions for land parcels under 40 acres, effectively ‘saved’ the region from the outward sprawl of the Bay Area suburbs (Leon Bignell MP, 24 May 2012).

With the introduction of the *State Character Preservation (McLaren Vale) Bill 2011* in September 2011, an interim Development Plan Amendment was activated, effectively placing a moratorium on all development in the region, pending the passage of the Bill through Parliament. This was the source of some community division. One major landholder, a winery owner, told me that he was very upset that parcels of land over 40 acres in size could not be subdivided and that the temporary moratorium meant no new structures could be built: “I have four hundred acres, and I can’t even build a house on it!” (Richard, 5 April 2012). Protection legislation was seen as potentially devastating financially in that it had the potential to ‘devalue’ the land and make it difficult to borrow against. In this respect, Richard told me

that he saw the proximity to the city as a 'double-edged sword', because it makes rural property very expensive and attracts people that simply want "a nice view of trees and hills from their house. I have a vineyard manager who is a real country boy, who says that city people just shouldn't be allowed in, because they know nothing about rural living, how to deal with things like bushfires" (Richard, 5 April 2012). Here, too, we can see evidence of the perceived gulf that exists between urban and rural orientations towards the world. Country people, according to my informants, have a practical knowledge of agriculture and pragmatic approach to living 'on the land', while city people are more concerned with things like the aesthetic appeal of country scenery: gazing upon the landscape rather than dwelling with it. Interestingly, it is the urban 'interlopers' who are some of the most vocal supporters of character preservation legislation, and many influential figures from long-standing farming families in the district had voiced their opposition to the Bill and the interim DPA. For these people, some of whom are holders of significant areas of agricultural land in the Vale, such measures would remove their 'rights' to do what they want with their land. As Grace, owner-operator of a small winery and vineyards adjacent to the township of McLaren Vale, told me:

In general, I think we have a real problem in Australia with bureaucracy. Fundamentally, I think too much control over what you can and can't do is wrong. It's not democratic. And it's decreasing the value of the land. Farming gets less and less sustainable because the costs are so high, and wealthy professionals buy land as a 'lifestyle property'. I may feel differently in 20 years' time, but now I don't feel that these new laws are sustainable. They will be overturned. They have to be. Land valuations have dropped off tremendously – at the moment it should be possible to buy a vineyard for less than the cost of establishing one. (Grace, 23 October 2012)

Bob, although broadly supportive of measures to preserve agricultural land, suggested that the Government's approach was one of overkill, and placed unnecessary constraints on developments that *were* in keeping with the present agricultural land use:

I don't think it was done well, the way they put a stop to all development on agricultural land – building a house on a 40 acre farm block is very different from subdividing the land and turning it into a suburb. My daughter wanted to build a house to live on the property here, and now she can't. Like everything, it was something that needed to be fixed with a gentle touch but the Government hit it with

a sledgehammer. It wouldn't make a huge difference if you could build a house or a building on each title. (Bob, 23 November 2012)

On the evening of 21st of August 2012, nearly a hundred people, including local MP Leon Bignell and representatives of the City of Onkaparinga as well as farmers, landholders, business owners and other local residents, attended a public meeting at a function room at Serafino winery in order to discuss the interim DPA. Many of the speakers present were critical of the Government's handling of the situation, and a few spoke emotively about what they considered to be the removal of their 'right' to develop their land as they see fit, a view seemingly at odds with the prevalent opinion that *some* sort of measures should be imposed to limit subdivision and development in the region:

It's a bloody train coming through the tunnel at us! This is going to devalue our land dramatically I've got land that we should be developing, we should be creating more jobs, but we can't invest on this basis ... It's un-Australian to suddenly devalue our properties, to take away my livelihood, to take away our future, the kids' future ... (Richard, 21 August 2012)

Others highlighted the importance of preventing unconstrained urban sprawl while making clear the necessity to continue to allow people to build a residence on an existing block:

Death by a thousand cuts happens all the time, and you can see with [the newly-approved suburban development] Seaford Heights, you can think something's very secure and all of a sudden you've got new development But it's critical that we move forward and recognize that virtual prohibition of residential development is too savage and that we need a sensitive, careful way of making sure that the building of a home on an existing rural title is possible. (Barry, 21 August 2012)

Fears of the removal of the 'right' for people to build a dwelling on their own existing block were ultimately unfounded, as the passage of the *Character Preservation (McLaren Vale) Act 2012* put an end to the more restrictive limitations set by the interim DPA. Primarily, this legislation works to set in place a boundary around the region to 'lock down' current land use zoning, meaning agricultural land cannot be rezoned for the purposes of residential development (outside the defined boundaries of the 'townships' of McLaren Vale, McLaren Flat, Willunga, Kangarilla and Clarendon, where subdivision and development is permitted). This would ensure that powerful property developers would no longer be able to lobby

governments for changes to zoning that would allow them to buy up farmland for housing development. As Brett, a planner with the City of Onkaparinga told me, “Historically, in the south of Adelaide the developers have a lot of sway—a lot of land has just been flogged off to developers. In the past the [State] Government has released a whole lot of land for a quick buck, not for long-term strategic reasons” (Brett, 26 June 2012).

Many people, furthermore, saw legislation constraining the ability of rural landholders to subdivide and sell their land for housing development as absolutely necessary, as without it the destruction of farming land would be inevitable. Leaving the fate of periurban land to the vagaries of the market would mean an eventual and economically unavoidable conversion from agriculture to suburbia. Many, like the viticulturist Tom, felt that government intervention was necessary to ensure agricultural continuity in the region:

Look, if I had lots of land I probably would be tempted to subdivide and sell. But a line needs to be drawn — to save you from yourself. People might complain that this sort of legislation will put a stop to their ability to profit from their land, but what if there’s nothing you could do to make the land profitable anyway? The challenge for McLaren Vale is to make sure that farming itself is a profitable enterprise. (Tom, 11 May 2012)



Figure 43. Preparation for development underway at Seaford Heights

Seaford Heights

Vista will include over 1,100 allotments set on 88 hectares of gently sloping land. It will be a master-planned community that embraces diversity, functionality and environmental sustainability. Located near the superb south vales wine district [*sic*], and a short drive from beautiful beaches, Vista will be a highly sought master address. (Fairmont Group 2014)

The developers don't care what's under the ground, talking about geology and terroir and things means nothing to them. Seaford Heights grows fantastic malting barley, but it was all sold off to a developer years ago, 80 acre lots at \$300 an acre. I don't think that's progress. It's ignorance. It is what inevitably comes with 'civilisation'. (Dennis, 15 August 2012)

At Seaford Heights, on the right-hand side of the Victor Harbor road as it climbs Stump Hill after splitting from Main South Road, a new suburb is being built. The Vista development is, in the words of John Rau (then Minister for Urban Development, Planning and the City of Adelaide) when announcing the project's approval in 2011, "ideally positioned as a gateway to

McLaren Vale” (Urbanalyst 2011). The hill on which the development is taking place is, indeed, precisely the location identified by many of my informants as the main northern entrance to the Vale and the location of the view over the township fondly reminisced upon by Greg Trott as a sign that he had arrived home (Trott, Marsden & Campbell 2008: inside cover). The location is special not only as a marker of ‘homecoming’ for McLaren Vale residents, furthermore, but as a threshold spanning the boundary between the suburbs and the countryside, “the point where suburbia fades away and the holiday experience begins for more people than any other region in South Australia” (Dudley Brown, in White 2010b). Maintaining a sense of boundedness and separation between city and country was very important to many of my informants: “I am totally against the [Seaford Heights] development. When people go to McLaren Vale and the Fleurieu they want to feel like they are leaving the city – there needs to be space to unwind, even if it’s only ten kilometres of open road.” (Katherine, winery sales manager, 14 March 2012). As George, a local Willunga architect and designer, told me:

An entrance door as well is very powerful, it is a threshold that prompts you to change your behaviour and your mindset as you approach it and go through. Coming over the hill into McLaren Vale is a similar sort of threshold, absolutely. It’s often referred to as the ‘Gateway to the Fleurieu’. You go over that hill and it gives you a long glimpse of the Fleurieu. You’re coming out of the suburbs and into a different space. (George, 5 June 2012)

With 1,180 new houses to be constructed on this site as well as shops and a large supermarket, the Seaford Heights development has been the source of considerable local consternation for existing residents. In anticipation of future suburban expansion, this land was in 1989 brought into Adelaide’s ‘Urban Zone’, a fact most McLaren Vale residents were unaware of until the release in 2010 of a draft Development Plan Amendment flagging the proposed sale of the land by the State Government’s Land Management Corporation (City of Onkaparinga 2010). Feeling that the Government had reneged on prior commitments not to

convert more farming land to housing east of Main South Road, McLaren Vale residents made their opposition to the project known at community meetings, through letter-writing campaigns and on online social media platforms. Gaining most attention, however, was the 'tractor rally' that took place on October 31, 2010. In this protest, organised by the viticulturist James Hook and a number of other local people, a large convoy of tractors and cars drove slowly from the oval at McLaren Vale along the main street and onto the Victor Harbor Road, blocking traffic for a period of time. The convoy culminated at Paxton Wines, immediately adjacent to the Seaford Heights development site, where a number of local farmers, politicians, and others addressed the gathered crowd. The use of tractors here was particularly significant: the key point of the protest was that McLaren Vale is farming land, with the spread of suburbs (and their residents) at the region's 'gateway' an unwelcome incursion.

In Australia, people generally just accept most things that the government do, without really kicking up any sort of opposition. But with the Seaford Heights thing, everyone got involved. We blocked the streets. The community was mobilised. And I think it scared the shit out of them, the politicians were all ducking and hiding – they weren't expecting that level of resistance. And it wasn't a good look. (Scott, viticulturist, 23 January 2013)

A significant thread to the argument in opposition to development at Seaford Heights focuses on the specific productive qualities of that particular hillside. While most are anxious to preserve agricultural land *in general*, many also make claims that Seaford Heights is land of special and unique quality for farming. Up until the commencement of the development, this land has been used for grain cropping. Although conditions for growing barley and wheat are excellent along most the coastal strip south of Adelaide, informants including local brewer Sam told me that the fields at Seaford Heights have long been considered exceptionally good land for barley production, producing grain of the highest quality and with the highest sugar yield in the state (Sam, 26 September 2012). Although commercial vineyards have never been planted on this land, there are many who claim that the new development is being built on land capable of growing wine grapes of an extremely high standard. Evidence of this takes two

forms: firstly, that the extant vineyards nearest to the development site produce excellent fruit that is made into high-quality (and expensive) wines, and secondly, that the extensive recent mapping of McLaren Vale's subsurface demonstrates that the hill possesses geological characteristics that make it quite unique.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the geological diversity of McLaren Vale is celebrated within the wine region, with winegrowers' claims to distinct geological influence over their wines valorised by the production of the Geology Map (Fairburn et al. 2010), associated 'district tasting' of single-site Shiraz wines, and the 'Scarce Earth' appellation system. According to the Geology Map, underlying Seaford Heights are a series of folded sedimentary layers which surface as narrow bands of ancient sandstone and siltstone, with the Umberatna Group formations dating to 650 million years old (Fairburn et al. 2010). The age and rarity of these rocks is afforded great importance when discussing the significance of the site. These formations 'surface' again in only a few other locations along the Mount Lofty Ranges: in Morphett Vale (now a suburban area, but where high-quality grapes used to be grown); a small patch in the Barossa; and the Polish Hill area of the Clare Valley. The winegrower and then-Chairman of the McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association Dudley Brown highlighted this in a speech to the City of Onkaparinga Council when arguing for the significance of the land at Seaford Heights:

There is no undeveloped site of this quality and age that exists in any other wine region in the world. It truly is an asset of international significance. Another fact is that we know this geology will grow world beating wine grapes because there is another pocket of these soils in the Barossa Valley called the GSM triangle⁵⁶ that has produced more perfect wine scores than any other sub-region in the world. This is where Grange, Greenock Creek and Torbreck are grown. This is a very big deal. Another fact is that Seaford Heights is actually superior to the GSM triangle in the Barossa because of its proximity to the cooling breezes of the sea. (Dudley Brown, speech to Onkaparinga Council, 7 December 2010. From White 2010b)

⁵⁶ 'GSM' is a common abbreviation for the wine blend of Grenache, Shiraz and Mataro/Mourvèdre, popular in the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale.

According to this argument, and unlike most appeals to terroir, it is not the established, directly observable productive qualities of this land that makes it special. Although there is a history of high-grade barley production at Seaford Heights, in terms of wine grape growing the hillside is essentially virgin territory. It is the productive *potential*, the yet-unrealised promise of future fertility that endows it with such value in the eyes of many: “The fact that it is still unplanted land makes it priceless, possibly the best unplanted wine country remaining in the world.” (Paul, 28 May 2012). Some landowners believe that a current ‘oversupply’ of wine grapes means that suburban development is a more appropriate land use. For Paul, a wine writer and local resident, these appeals to market economics are short-sighted, given the geological qualities of Seaford Heights highlighted in the Geology Map:

Those people [developers] who don't like vineyards have been really happy in the past few years because they've seen the wine industry in disarray, saying "how dare you stop this suburb – there's too many grapes!" But they just don't understand that maybe that piece of ground is exceptional, which I think it is. Seaford Heights - that geology is very special, and the powers-that-be can't get their head around it. (Paul, 22 March 2012)

The Geology Map, presented as evidence for the uniqueness and productive potential of this land in an objective and ‘scientific’ form, has been a key weapon in the arsenal of those opposed to the Seaford Heights development. Nevertheless, some are sceptical that the *real* potential of the land matches that which is claimed. Brett, a local government official, told me that he believes that an appeal to terroir is a strategic one that has arrived too late for Seaford Heights: “It doesn’t matter now, the money has been spent, the horse has bolted... It’s funny that now they’re all talking about terroir, suddenly that hill has become the best bit of grape growing land in the world...” (Brett, 26 June 2012). Harry, a retired winemaker, believed that it was impossible to truly judge the winegrowing potential of the hill:

It might be really good soil, but I think there mightn’t be enough rain on that hill. It has a north-western aspect so it might be too hot to be really good land for planting grapes. It’s all guesswork anyway, at the moment it’s just potential terroir. It hasn’t been planted before – that might say something! There’s not much use for the land.

There's only a bit of barley being grown on it. It might be OK for vines but nobody's ever tried. (Harry, 13 July 2012)

Ultimately, the importance of Seaford Heights for many local farmers hinges not only on the diminishment of agricultural land *in general* versus suburbia, but on their interpretation of the particular productive qualities that the hill is said to hold for grain cropping and (potentially) winegrowing – that is, its terroir.

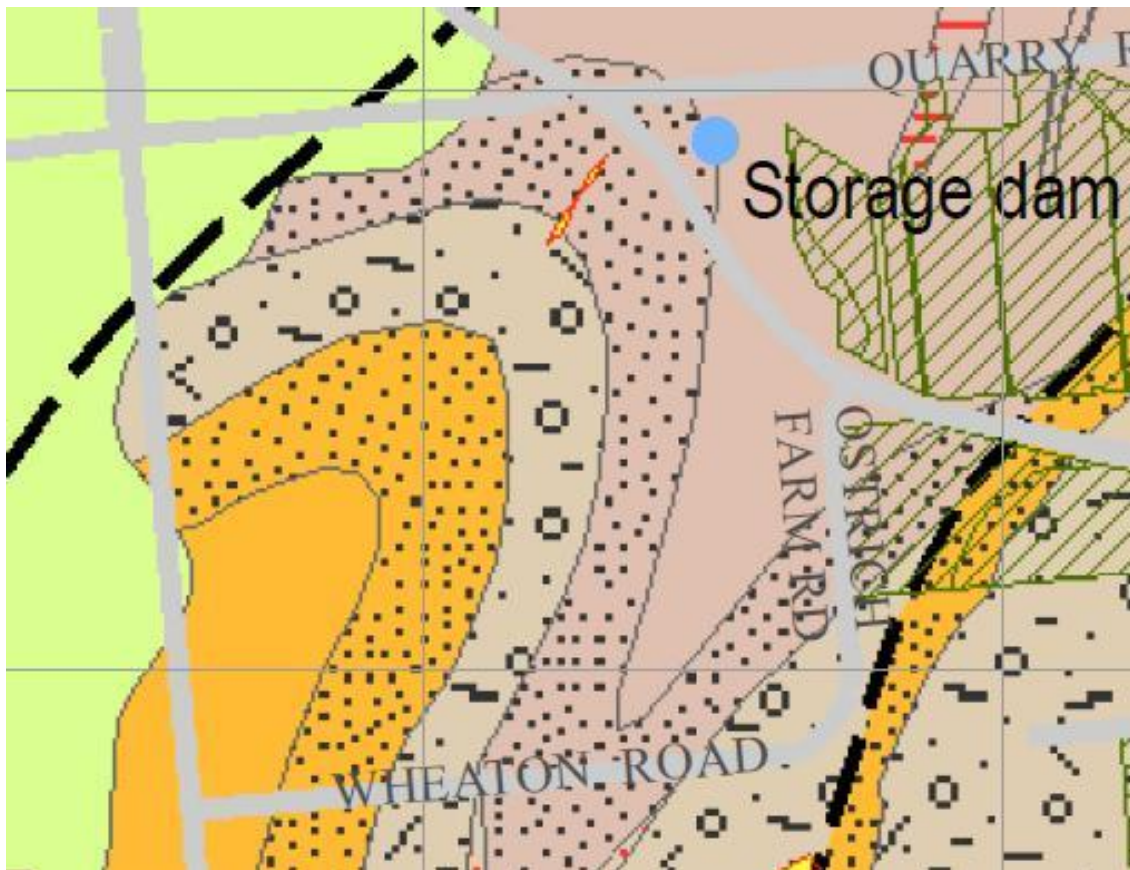


Figure 44. Geology Map detail of Seaford Heights area. From Fairburn et al. (2010)

Conclusion

For those who take a terroir perspective, landscape is held to be both qualitatively differentiated (made up of meaningful 'places' rather than homogeneous 'space') and temporally dynamic. Arguments for the preservation of agricultural land against suburban development in McLaren Vale often relate to the vitality and fertility that animate the soil and

which may be harnessed by future generations of farmers. Some places, furthermore, are considered particularly important by virtue of their specific agricultural qualities, their symbolic significance as boundary-markers of place and community, or their aesthetic properties as objects of the gaze of locals and visitors — or, as in the case of Seaford Heights, a combination of these factors. As well as a diminishment of the total *area* of agricultural land, measured quantitatively in acres or hectares, many in the Vale see the spread of suburban development in terms of a burying or destroying of unique *places*.

In contrast to the life and productivity that is represented by ideas of the countryside, the construction of a new suburb signifies death, ossification, a final quieting of the dynamism inherent in the land. As David Paxton, owner of adjacent vineyards, puts it: “Every time you go and put another 40 hectares of concrete slabs on your best soil, it's gone forever” (quoted in Royal 2010). For those opposed to development, it is the fact that the future potential of the land can never be attained that is the most concerning.

For my informants in McLaren Vale, the potential threat to agricultural productivity posed by the spread of suburban housing has prompted a great deal of reflection about the region's identity. Questions about the appropriateness of certain land uses and practices and the adequacy of bureaucratic and legislative controls over space are highly salient, and ideas of terroir—which not only seek to qualitatively differentiate agricultural space but to privilege some places as unique and irreplaceable—become critical discursive tools. In the case of the Seaford Heights development, a particular spot where grapes have never been grown, the terroir of wine (but not barley) exists only theoretically: it cannot be ‘grounded’ in the observable qualities of wine already in existence, but must be extrapolated from what is currently known about geology, soil, aspect, rainfall and other factors particular to the site. What is debated is the *future* terroir of the site, the potential of the land to impart its unique qualities at some unspecified later time. In the Seaford Heights example, furthermore, the site

is given great symbolic power by its geographical location at the imagined boundary of the region, lying between the suburbs and the countryside and an important place in narratives of dwelling and homecoming in the Vale.

In confronting issues surrounding the future of McLaren Vale, residents engage in debates over the ongoing potential for the region in terms of agricultural productivity, amenities for residents, and ability to attract investment and job growth. Understandings of the Vale are shaped to a large degree by the relationship between Adelaide and the agricultural countryside. With McLaren Vale lying at the shifting and contested boundary between the 'urban' and the 'rural', and (it may be said) interwoven socially and materially with both, the way this dichotomy is constructed and imagined is crucial to perceptions and representations of the region. To this end, the Character Preservation legislation has significant ramifications both for the actual use of space in McLaren Vale (in terms of what can or cannot be built, how properties may be subdivided, etc.) and the symbolic values that adhere to it. Seaford Heights is now 'suburbia', but outside the township boundaries McLaren Vale's claim to 'countryside' status has been officially validated: such 'countryside-ness' has been deemed so significant as to deserve legislative protection from the ongoing spread of the suburbs. In this process we can identify the way the country is constituted specifically in relation to other social-spatial configurations (the city and the suburbs); greater proximity and contact thus makes definition of these ideals more important. McLaren Vale demonstrates this paradox well: although people in the Vale think of and wish to define their region as a 'country area' *as opposed to* the city, they rely commercially, economically and socially upon linkages with Adelaide manifested in patterns of settlement and trade, and movement of workers, tourists and money. The necessity felt by local people to oppose and contrast 'country' and 'city' as "fundamental ways of life" (Williams, R 1973: 1) is keenly felt in McLaren Vale precisely because it is here that the two are seen to converge.

Conclusion: Fermenting place

At its root, the argument that I take in this thesis is a simple one. It is that the material form, shared identity, and representations of McLaren Vale are shaped to a large degree by the perspectives, ideals and values of those who dwell there. Here I have placed a special emphasis on the winegrowers that plant and maintain vineyards, harvest grapes and produce the wine for which the region is famous: as the wine industry dominates the Vale spatially and economically, it is likewise the wine producers who are frequently seen as the most deeply engaged in its social and political life.

A number of issues affect wine production in the Vale and the lives of winegrowers themselves. These include debates about appropriate land uses, techniques and technologies, and conceptualisations and representations of the region. As I have shown, the orientations and attitudes of people in McLaren Vale to these issues is shaped by their own 'dwelling' in the landscape—that is, their lived, embodied and emplaced engagements with the world around them, the vines they tend, the wines they make and consume, the people with whom they interact. Importantly, however, the world in which they dwell is not just a local one, and the broad currents of global influence that extend well beyond the boundaries of the Vale must be afforded equal attention. This being the case, I have also explored the historical-spatial context of winegrowing in the Vale, which includes the systematic and planned European colonisation of South Australia, the British Empire's globalised networks of trade, commerce and cultural exchange, patterns of migration, and changes in domestic and global wine consumption trends. At once a farming area, wine production region, a destination for food and wine tourists, and an outer-suburban area of the city of Adelaide, McLaren Vale also lies at the shifting, blurred yet locally significant interface between the 'countryside' and the

'suburbs'. Although the region is geographically small, I hope to have conveyed in this thesis something of the Vale's nuanced and multifaceted nature.

McLaren Vale's social history is similarly multi-layered. Once the country of the Kurna people, the land south of Adelaide to the Sellicks Hill range was surveyed and partitioned by British colonists from 1836 onward. As an agricultural region, it served the colonial capital, Adelaide, and by extension the needs of the British Empire. Farms were founded by small capitalists and supported by the labour of working-class emigres hoping to make a new life in South Australia, in accordance with the principles of 'systematic colonisation' developed and promoted by British social theorists. In addition to these British farming families, a wave of twentieth-century migration from Europe, and particularly Italy, brought great changes to the social character of McLaren Vale. Since then, the Vale and nearby coastal areas have also seen an influx of people moving from suburbia for 'lifestyle' reasons.

In recent decades, the suburbs of Adelaide have spread to occupy much of the area known locally as the 'Southern Vales', including the previously productive farmland around Reynella, Morphett Vale, Hackham and Noarlunga. New residential subdivisions now seemingly place McLaren Vale at the very boundary of urban and rural. I have argued that such a divide is by no means clear, as in many ways McLaren Vale and other places like it are fundamentally constituted by the interaction and interpenetration of these idealised categories, the opposition of which informs but does not define lived realities. These ideas take on great significance as people in McLaren Vale attempt to conceptualise and define their region: in particular, they are invoked in the discursive processes of boundary-making that seek to distinguish the regional 'identity' of the Vale from that of neighbouring areas, especially the suburbs of Adelaide. Debates about the identity of McLaren Vale and its relationship to the city and the countryside have been foregrounded recently, as we can see in examples like the mobilisation of local opposition to suburban development at Seaford Heights and elsewhere.

Such debates have important 'real' spatial and material ramifications for the region. In response to the feared loss of further productive farmland and with the support of influential local businesspeople and politicians, for example, State Parliament recently passed legislation putting a stop to future changes in land use zoning in the regions of McLaren Vale and the Barossa Valley.

The preservation of agricultural land uses near Adelaide is supported by various economic arguments. While land subdivision and sale to developers may provide short-term benefits, wine production in near-urban areas including McLaren Vale, the Barossa and the Adelaide Hills is a vital part of South Australia's economy. An increased emphasis on the production of high-end wine renders these regions even more valuable. They are enormously important areas of consumption as well as production, key destinations for tourist visitation in South Australia due to their reputation for good wines and food, beautiful scenery, and proximity to the city.

I believe, however, that there is another reason for the degree of importance attached locally to the maintenance of McLaren Vale as an agricultural area. This relates to a deep and abiding 'sense of place' felt by local people; indeed, nearly all of my informants reported an affective connection with the place and landscapes of the Vale. Tuan (1990) reports that farmers, perhaps above others, are moved by an acute topophilia connected to their physical work in and with the landscape, and my own conversations and interactions with farmers and those that 'work the land' highlight this. In McLaren Vale, the winegrowers and other farmers who maintain a close and 'hands-on' relationship with their land are usually those who express the deepest emotional attachment. The Vale is home to a greater ratio of small-scale producers than most well-known Australian wine regions, and more of the pruning and picking work is done by hand than is the case in regions more thoroughly dominated by large corporate wineries. Many of my informants were intimately involved in this sort of manual work, either

on their own properties or as viticulturists or labourers working for others. For these people, the agrarian landscapes of McLaren Vale are significant as far more than an economic or aesthetic resource but as places of dwelling, where the tasks and activities through which people forge their place in the world occur. In their skilled engagements with the processes and rhythms of the land, plants, materials and other elements of the world around them, farmers are themselves agents in *making* place. People and landscape are inextricably entwined in what Ingold (1993) refers to as the 'taskscape', emphasising a mutual, co-creative and processual relationality.

The terroir perspective

I have argued throughout this thesis that winegrowers are perhaps particularly attuned to the importance of 'place' in agricultural production in areas like McLaren Vale. This is so for two main reasons. Firstly, wine production places specific demands on practitioners' bodily engagement with their work in place. It is sensorially immersive: as well as sight, touch and hearing, winegrowers' senses of smell and taste are brought into service. These latter two senses are particularly important in winegrowing, involving the production of a drink that is celebrated, differentiated, and assessed (by critics, enthusiasts and 'ordinary' consumers)—and often priced accordingly—on the basis of what may be very subtle differences and modulations of flavour. 'Quality' in wine production is often related to the depth of producers' understanding of the specific qualities of their land, vines and grapes and their skill in shaping the product to bring forth these positive attributes. Such knowledge and skill is based largely in embodied, sensorial experience. This is experience *in place* and *over time*: an orientation to wine's temporality, the cyclical and processual rhythms in which it is embedded, is essential.

Secondly, while this relationship of sensed, embodied experience to the places of dwelling is tacitly understood by many farmers and others, in winegrowing it takes on a far more explicit,

discursive dimension. The deep and interdependent relationships that tie together wine, place, and the people implicated in the processes of production are highlighted in notions of terroir, a concept originating in French wine and spreading to become part of a hegemonic, globalised wine discourse. Terroir and 'taste of place' are accepted aspects of wine production and are ideas that many consumers are also broadly familiar with; in McLaren Vale these concepts are disseminated through wine labels, magazine articles, promotional pamphlets, and direct communications between winemakers, cellar door staff and tourists participating in wine tastings.

It has become clear to me that terroir is a crucial concept in understanding and describing the relationships of producers to place and landscape in McLaren Vale. Perhaps paradoxically, however, there is no clearly-articulated and agreed-upon definition among winegrowers as to what terroir is—and, in fact, many avoid using the term for this very reason. Terroir, I have argued, is best considered not as a 'thing' at all, but rather as a perspective on the world that takes into account and foregrounds the constellation of relations that pertain between places, people, and product in the processes of agricultural production. The relationship of producers in McLaren Vale to place and to the wine they produce—their 'terroir perspective'—is shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. It is a function of their direct, phenomenological interactions with the world around them, but, crucially, is also bound to their enculturation in existing shared *concepts* of terroir in wine discourse. Knowledge of the way *other producers elsewhere* relate to their work, awareness of the significance of place in legislating wine production regions around the world and in Australia, and an understanding of wine consumers' attitudes to ideas of terroir, to use just a few examples, influence their own views and experiences. Armed with their own perspectives on their relationship to their work in place, furthermore, winegrowers do not just passively 'experience' the terroir of their vineyards, but actively and deliberately cultivate it as they engage with the world around

them. Terroir is not just 'cultural' in that it reflects embedded tradition, then, but is dynamically shaped and cultivated by people as reflexive agents.

To see terroir as relational, rather than an essential property of place, is to accept that the concept is nebulous and imprecise, connected in intangible ways to a host of other, related concepts like 'sense of place' and 'local tradition'. For this reason, it remains extraordinarily frustrating to those wishing to use it for purposes of classification and categorisation: those that do so must distil it further so as to speak of, for example, 'geological terroir' or 'microbial terroir'. It is just this imprecision and inability to *quantify*, however, that I believe gives terroir such political power. Through it, places are conceived as ultimately unique and irreproducible. Each vineyard is, in some way, different from the next, and a terroir perspective places enormous value on these differences. If a place is considered to be both unique and (in the opinions of 'experts' and consumers) yields produce of excellent quality, then that place is felt to be exceptionally valuable.



Figure 45. Vineyards and olive tree, summer

The living landscape and the final crop

At its core, a terroir perspective is a worldview that recognises that the winegrower's agency is dependent upon, and interwoven with, the intrinsic agency of the rocks as they disseminate their unique flavours, the vines as they climb, twist, and push flavour into the grapes, the weather, the movements of the earth, sun and moon, and the myriad microorganisms of the vineyard and the winery. In this understanding, "human beings do not so much transform the material world as play their part, along with other creatures, in the world's transformation of itself" (Ingold 2000: 87). It is for this reason that I have chosen the winemaking metaphor of 'fermentation' to describe the active making of place in McLaren Vale. Like fermenting grape must, place is an ongoing process *shaped* by the influence of human involvement, but never *determined* by it, and contingent on the activity of innumerable other influences.

The landscape of wine production is not separate from human life; the two are mutually implicated. Such a world cannot be represented as abstract 'space', an empty container in which organisms go about their independent paths, but rather a world inseparable from the organisms that dwell with it: "No matter how capacious a landscape may be, it remains a composition of places, their intertangled skein. It may constitute a *cosmos*—that is, a place-world—but never a *universum*, space as an endless, infinitized totality" (Casey 2001: 689-690). The landscape as terroir or 'place-world' is variegated, infused with innumerable overlapping rhythms that grant it animacy.

Winegrowers that take a terroir perspective thus engage with the land as a living entity in its own right – one with which they share a relationship based on interdependence. The vineyard is often spoken of ecologically, as a dynamic and living system. These winegrowers are concerned with the holistic health of the vineyard, encompassing the soil as well as the grapes and vines, and use various pruning techniques, sprays and irrigation regimes to ensure the plants stay disease-free and produce high-quality grapes. Some treatments, like chemical

pesticide and herbicide, are shunned by many winegrowers and avoided outright by those striving for 'organic' or 'biodynamic' vineyards as they kill microorganisms in the soil and are thought to decrease the overall vitality of the land. In the winery, fermentation and maturation is carefully guided to avoid infection and spoilage, and to promote the development of desirable flavours and other characteristics.

For such producers, the land is 'alive' in that it possesses an active agency—through its productive force, it *does things*, influencing and responding to the actions of people, plants and other entities. Some followers of biodynamic philosophies take this further, believing that the land is not only permeated with 'earthly' and 'cosmic' forces but there is a 'consciousness' inherent in the world, with which people interact (Steiner & Gardner 1993). In almost all cases, however—irrespective of their preferred methods of farming—my informants saw the landscape not as inert and passive but rather imbued with a productive vitality. The landscape of winegrowers in McLaren Vale is a living landscape, and it is against this that the suburbs are positioned:

For both selfish and self-evident reasons the lava of houses that is oozing its way towards our northern boundary, the Onkaparinga River, must be halted, or this whole rural rump of the Onkaparinga region will have houses as headstones, the great wines that are waiting to be made, bottled and drunk will never be, and this lovely landscape will have disappeared forever. (Trott, in Trott, Marsden & Campbell 2008: inside cover)

Greg Trott's quote highlights the crux of the issue for many of my informants. Not only is 'suburban sprawl' thought to disfigure the landscape's visual amenity, put a stop to the agricultural economy and way of life, and diminish the uniqueness of place, but it is thought to do so in perpetuity. Paradoxically, housing (which provides a place for people 'to live'), represents the death of the land, an irreversible denial of the fecundity of the earth. Rather than dwelling within a living world, suburban inhabitants are painted as living somehow inauthentically, separated from the dynamic, changeable milieu of weather and seasonal cycles with which farmers interact daily. For farmers attuned to living with the land, to silence

the productive, living tissue of the earth is a tragedy. The landscape is deadened, ossified by the spreading suburbs. Time and again I heard the phrase ‘the final crop’ used to describe suburban housing, the message being that although agricultural land uses can always change in accordance with shifting trends and market fluctuations, once housing tracts, roads, shopping centres and the other elements of suburbia are built there is no hope of return, of bringing the land back from the dead.



Figure 46. Vineyard soil at the foot of the Willunga Scarp

Terroir and the future

As I have shown, a terroir perspective plays a crucial role in the way people—producers and consumers—perceive and relate to wine and other agricultural products, and in the way they relate to places themselves. Terroir celebrates unique places rather than homogeneous and homogenising spaces of production, offering an alternative to hegemonic modernist approaches to space and spatiality. It highlights a fundamental relationality between places and landscapes, the people that dwell there, and the products that emerge from their interactions. These products circulate far and wide as commodities, yet through the lens of a

terroir perspective we can see them as animated by powerful relational bonds. As animate and socially-positioned, wine and wine places exercise agency through their constitutive social relationships. A consumer in London or Beijing may drink a bottle of McLaren Vale wine and imagine themselves as *participants* in the life of the Vale, in communication with the soil and stones of the vineyard, the grape vines, and the people who work the land and make the wine.

The principles of terroir—that enliven and give value to wines and other products by virtue of their unique providence—serve also to enliven and give value to places by virtue of their produce. Such a system of understanding has far-reaching ramifications for the ways people engage with regions like McLaren Vale. For McLaren Vale wine producers, who seek to qualitatively differentiate their wines from others, appeals to terroir are very powerful ways to do this. These appeals are only effective, however, when the concept is broadly understood and accepted. As I have shown, specificity of place is something that has, historically, not been considered particularly important in Australian wine. This has changed somewhat in recent years, however, partly as a result of changes to the legislative landscape in Australia and partly due to shifting trends in consumption both domestically and globally. A burgeoning literature on terroir shows that the concept has in fact spread throughout the wine world, and is now used in relation to a host of other agricultural products, from fruit, vegetables and mushrooms to cheese, cigars, maple syrup and cured meats.

Notions of terroir in wine are spread through wine label blurbs, promotional material, magazine and newspaper articles, and popular films like the documentary *Mondovino* (2004) and the comedy-drama *Sideways* (2004). The globalised nature of wine trade ensures that concepts like terroir are easily disseminated to consumers in far-flung parts of the world. A terroir perspective may also be communicated through face-to-face interactions. In McLaren Vale, visitors that engage in wine tasting at wineries and restaurants in the region are often ‘educated’ in the importance of terroir and the particularities of its local manifestation by the

serving staff and others with whom they come into contact. The presence of vineyard or geology maps, soil samples, and other informational material in many cellar doors reinforces a terroir perspective as normative, and many of the wines that visitors taste are explicitly promoted in terms of their place-bound qualities.

In McLaren Vale, members of the wine industry and trade—including many of the winegrowers with whom I worked—consciously promote the significance of terroir, as they feel that broader awareness and understanding of the concept adds value to individual products and to the region as a whole. This trend has important implications for wine production, but also more generally for the Vale and for similar regions. Given the great economic and social-cultural significance of wine in the state, winegrowers occupy something of a privileged position as agricultural producers in South Australia. Through marketing, promotion, and direct communication with consumers and policymakers, they are able to shape broader opinions on agricultural ‘place’. Their power has enabled them to exert great influence on opinion and policy regarding appropriate land uses. The Character Preservation Acts which were passed to ‘preserve’ agricultural land uses in McLaren Vale and the Barossa are a case in point: although there is significant and valuable farming land of other types in other near-urban areas around Adelaide, it is only in McLaren Vale and the Barossa that wine production is dominant.

Broadly, principles of terroir might be seen to provide ideological legitimation to the efforts of some winegrowers to protect agricultural land threatened by development, as the places of production are seen as uniquely valuable beyond their immediate economic significance. Terroir enhances the economic and political clout of winegrowers in their efforts to set aside wine production in certain places as ‘special’. Certainly, discourses of terroir—relating both to peoples’ own engagements with the land locally and to similar situations elsewhere in the

world—are extraordinarily powerful in McLaren Vale in solidifying community cohesion and support for efforts to preserve agricultural land use.

In highlighting the relations between specific wines, places, and people, a terroir perspective celebrates small-scale production, winegrowers who are involved in a hands-on and sensorially-engaged way with their work, and the wines that emerge from and ‘reflect’ these interactions. In contrast, however, it also qualitatively devalues other forms of winemaking, such as those that involve larger scales of production, greater mechanisation and technological input, and product standardisation. As the latter modes of production are those that are usually associated with cheaper wines, ideas of terroir are also linked to notions of elitism in wine. Wines that are celebrated for the qualities of their unique provenance, and for the highly personalised labour that goes into their production—and these are the wines that many of my informants make, or want to make—are both more expensive and less ‘accessible’ to consumers that are thought to lack an appreciation for their nuances. While valorising certain practices and places, then, discourses of terroir also perpetuate hierarchies of class, status and distinction that have long been associated with wine. Furthermore, in the promotion of romantic ideals in wine production, conceptions of terroir also frequently distort or obscure the ‘true’ relations involved.

While discourses of terroir have the potential to conceal power relations, they are rooted in appeals to uniqueness of phenomenological experience. This resonates with many, for whom the promise of terroir is one of meaningful differences: a celebration of heterogeneity of places, technologies, and social relations in wine production and consumption. Orientations toward terroir in wine production might be seen to relate to broader shifts in (Western, middle-class) social values away from paradigmatic ‘modernist’ understandings of space and time as quantifiable and divisible resources. At the same time, terroir offers an alternative to the paradigmatic ‘post-modern’ conceptualisation of a globalised world of disconnection and

alienation, in which place and temporality as human experiences are diminished. A terroir perspective highlights a dwelling in the world in which people relate to places in an active and ongoing way—in a *productive* way. In winegrowing, terroir is an ensemble of relations—between the productivity of people and plants, the fertile liveliness of the earth, the processes of fermentation and maturation, the movements of knowledge, skills, wine, and equipment.

I have identified in this thesis the significance of terroir to the ways people approach places and landscapes in McLaren Vale, even beyond the immediate scope of winegrowing, and with reference to the social and spatial position of the Vale as an agricultural region on the fringes of Adelaide. I have used what I refer to as my informants' 'terroir perspective' as an anthropological position in its own right, according to which we might conceive of the world as fundamentally relational, dynamic and productive. The winegrowers who experience the world in these terms have been active in sharing their perspectives, in the hope that some of their own reverence of place in the Vale is passed on. Through this process, additional value is bestowed upon the wines that are produced there, the livelihoods of those who dwell there, and, more broadly, the region itself.



Figure 47. Empty bottle, Samuel's Gorge

Appendix 1: Maps

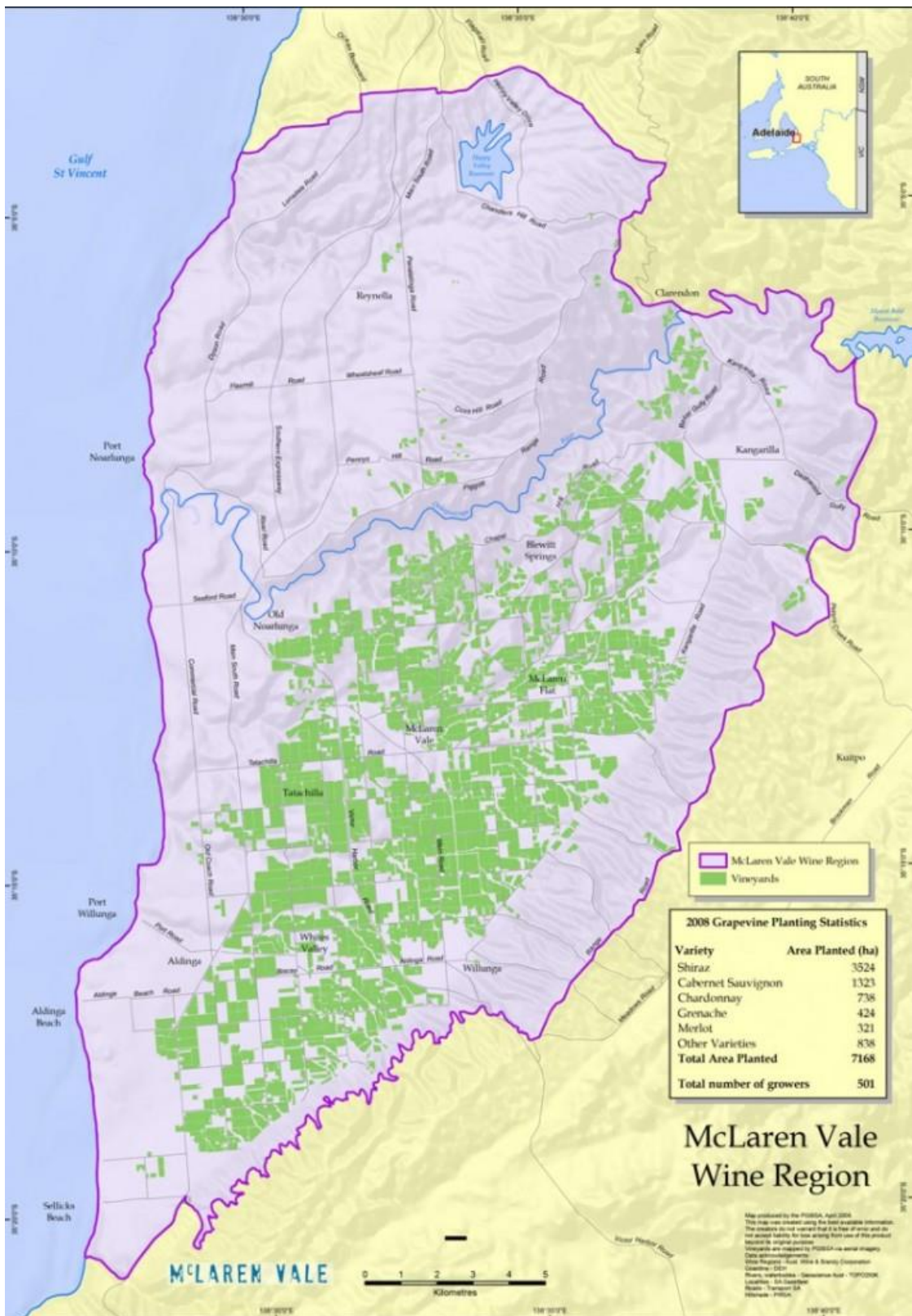


Figure 48. Map of McLaren Vale wine region, showing Geographical Indication boundary and location of vineyard plantings. From http://mclarenvale.info/media/2014/03/McLarenValeGI_Maps2008-with-MV-logo-blue-for-web-707x1024.jpg

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