

PRESENTATION OF WINE CONSUMPTION CULTURE IN WESTERN EUROPEAN CINEMA

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Background. The theme of alcohol consumption is deeply embedded in human life. Wine embodies cultural symbols, family traditions, and aspects of personal identity. Cinematic portrayals of alcohol undeniably shape individual perceptions, as film reflects societal sentiments while also shaping new realities that resonate with audiences. The way wine is romanticized or rejected in cinema can significantly impact people's attitudes toward it. This study does not advocate for abstinence or indulgence but rather uses alcohol as a lens to examine cultural phenomena, particularly within the realm of cinema.

Objective. Depiction of wine consumption culture in Western European cinema.

Methods. A systematic approach was employed to address the issue comprehensively. A systemic-functional method was applied to classify cinematic symbols of wine depiction based on the structure of Ortega y Gasset, highlighting common and distinctive features. Additionally, semiotic, comparative, axiological methods, and content analysis were used.

Results. Cinema, as a multifaceted medium, mirrors societal realities and shapes alternative ones. Its symbolic power transforms ordinary practices, such as wine consumption, into potent cultural and narrative tools. Wine, a universal symbol of luxury, pleasure, and social status, serves as both a plot device and a character in global cinema, reflecting attitudes toward alcohol across eras. Drawing from J. Ortega y Gasset's analysis of wine-themed art, wine's cinematic symbolism oscillates between human unity with nature, divine celebration, and moral degradation. European cinema often portrays wine with reverence, especially in French and Italian films, which link it to familial ties, heritage, and passion for craftsmanship. Wine's dual nature – symbolizing joy and disillusionment – makes it a compelling cinematic element. From fostering unity in idyllic settings to catalyzing conflicts and exposing existential truths, wine remains a reflection of human culture. Cinema, through its depictions of wine, not only captures but influences societal perceptions, offering a profound commentary on humanity's relationship with tradition, luxury, and morality.

Conclusions. Wine in Western European cinema symbolizes familial continuity, luxury, and celebration, serving as both a narrative tool and cultural commentary. Films romanticize wine's natural purity, explore its connection to human relationships, and highlight societal attitudes. Occasionally, wine represents moral decline, reflecting broader challenges and dilemmas within culture and human nature.

Key words: Cinema, symbolism in film, wine, culture, alcohol.

Relevance of the Research Topic. The theme of alcohol consumption is ubiquitous in human life. Wine carries cultural codes, familial practices, and reflects a person's character. Undoubtedly, cinematic depictions of alcohol influence individuals. Cinema mirrors societal moods and has the power to both replicate and create new realities that affect audiences. The romanticization or aversion to wine in cinema can directly influence people's attitudes toward it. This study is neither a promotion of temperance nor excessive alcohol consumption but serves as a tool for exploring various phenomena in culture, particularly in cinema.

State of Scientific Research on the Topic. In Ukrainian scientific discourse, this topic remains underexplored, although the culture of wine consumption and cinema's influence on society have significant scientific bases. This work utilizes studies such as «The Culture of Attractions and Resistance» by T. Liutyi (2020) and «Three Pictures of Wine» by J. Ortega y Gasset (2004). The intersection of cinema and wine is present in foreign research, particularly focusing on French, Italian, and numerous American cinematographies. Among these is «Representations of Drinking and Alcoholism in French Cinema» by F. Steudler (1987). The role of cultural practices in alcohol consumption is analyzed in the work of Finnish author A. Turunen (2019). Representations of social practices of alcohol consumption in Ukrainian cinema are examined in the article by A. Tormakhova and D. Tovmash (2024). Empirical material, specifically the authors' analysis of films mentioned in the study, played a major role in the research.

Object of Study. Depiction of wine consumption culture in Western European cinema.

Subject of Study. The symbolism of wine and winemaking in Western European cinema and its influence on societal attitudes through media narratives.

Purpose of the Study. To reveal the specifics of depicting wine and winemaking in cinema and determine its impacts on modern society.

Research Methods. A systematic approach was employed to address the issue comprehensively. A

systemic-functional method was applied to classify cinematic symbols of wine depiction based on the structure of Ortega y Gasset, highlighting common and distinctive features. Additionally, semiotic, comparative, axiological methods, and content analysis were used.

Main Content Presentation. Cinema possesses multiple levels of demonstration and influence and plays a significant role in modern human life. Symbols used in cinema can reflect societal life or independently create new meanings that impact viewers. Cinema creates alternative realities – worlds where people would like to be – or conversely, depict frightening scenarios of future events, allowing us to avoid them in the real world.

Simulation in cinema casts doubt on reality – it can be challenging to distinguish truth from falsehood, blatant farce from a mirror reflection. In cinema, nothing exists on its own; everything always means something more. This limitless symbolic backdrop allows ordinary daily practices to transform into signs and symbols, thus shaping the characteristics of the heroes and the events that occur or will occur. For example, cinema uses the act of consuming food and beverages as such an instrument. It is often said that the products and drinks a character consumes reflect their persona and often predict subsequent events in the film.

Wine is a symbol of luxury, pleasure, and social status, deeply rooted in the cultures of different peoples worldwide. Its consumption nuances are inevitably reflected in cinema, serving both as a critical plot element and as visual imagery and symbolism. Cinema, as an art form depicting reality, frequently uses wine to express characters' personalities, emotions, social status, and inner world. Moreover, it reflects the societal attitude toward alcohol during different eras.

J. Ortega y Gasset, in his cultural study «Three Pictures of Wine», compares paintings themed around wine in various epochs. He identifies three stages symbolizing the gradual degradation of human morality, illustrated by three paintings: Titian's «The Bacchanal of the Andrians», Poussin's «Bacchanal before a Statue of Pan», and Velázquez's «The Drinkers» («The Triumph of Bacchus»). These works share one theme, presenting three different interpretations of the tragicomic theme of wine.

J. Ortega y Gasset states that wine is a cosmic problem involving the formation of the world, its representation, and our interaction with it. «Previously, humanity faced a living and indivisible cosmos. The fundamental division separating the world into material and spiritual spheres did not exist. Wherever one looked, one saw the actions of creative and destructive forces. A stream of water was not perceived as mere droplets flowing one after another, but as a specific way of life of water deities. Day was an existence called upon to scatter light, while night was a force that revived and returned the dead to life» (Ortega y Gasset, 2004). Thus, wine became a mysterious force for people, granting relaxation and a form of blessing. It allowed people to dance, rejoice, swirl in celebration, and praise the gods.

Titian's «Bacchanal» represents the most optimistic stage of human unity with nature through wine: «Men and women chose this beautiful corner of the universe to enjoy life: they are people who drink, laugh, talk, dance, exchange caresses, or sleep. All biological functions are worthy and equal here... they represent a moment when the boundary between humans, animals, and gods is lost» (Ortega y Gasset, 2004).

Poussin's «Bacchanal» no longer portrays humans in their spiritual naturalness. Now, it depicts gods holding wine, emphasizing their right to eternity: «By the time Poussin painted his work, the Renaissance era had passed, much like the bacchanal itself. He lived in an age following Titian's revelry – an age of boredom and profound disillusionment. The optimistic promises of the Renaissance were unfulfilled. Life remained arduous and unpoetic... Beauty and happiness are attributes of gods, not humans, asserts Poussin» (Ortega y Gasset, 2004).

The third painting in Ortega y Gasset's sequence, Velázquez's «The Drinkers», depicts the most pessimistic and closest stage to modernity: «Velázquez, instead, gathered the dregs of urban life – vagrants and idlers, dirty, sly, and lazy – almost mocking the gods. He places a hefty, unhealthy-looking lad among the vineyard, crowning him with a few grape leaves. This is Bacchus. Others he places around a stone barrel, urging them to drink until their eyes pop out and their mouths twist into idiotic smiles. And that's it. The bacchanal turns into drunkenness. Bacchus is a mystification. Only what can be seen or touched exists. The gods are gone» (Ortega y Gasset, 2004).

Velázquez thus cleared the way for our era, an administrative age devoid of gods, one that no longer speaks of Dionysus but of alcoholism.

However, the aesthetic power of wine could not be entirely dismantled in the secular era, as such a potent cultural phenomenon is difficult to eradicate. It is frightening to imagine a society that forgets its roots; perhaps such a lineage would no longer remain human.

Adopting J. Ortega y Gasset's framework, the same problem can be observed in cinema. The culture of alcohol consumption, issues of alcoholism, and the representation of winemaking as sophistication are enduring themes in film. Cinema skillfully makes alcohol, if not the main character, then an important one in almost every production. Societal changes in attitudes toward alcohol are most clearly reflected in cinema today. Moreover, unlike Ortega's sequential stages, the depiction of wine as a symbol in cinema is extraordinarily chaotic. «The anthropology of daily life is unthinkable without the anthropology of cinema», writes Edgar Morin (Morin, 1994; 47).

F. Steudler, who researched issues related to drunkenness and alcoholism for several years, wrote that it is time for a large-scale study on how society visualizes the slide toward alcoholism using one of the primary mass media forms. Cinema not only reflects and expresses but also influences societal trends. (Steudler, 1987; 45)

T. Liutyi describes the phenomenon of ostentatious luxury. Wine has always been an attribute of wealth, unless associated with the evil of drunkenness, as depicted by Velázquez. Wealth attributes include well-aged, expensive wine: «...This results in the phenomenon of so-called demonstrative consumption. Many men and women, receiving enormous incomes from their households, begin to consume more goods and services, fostering a growing desire for prestige and emphasizing their social status. Initially, this is observed in specific ways: the arrangement of spaces for servants, food consumption, buying expensive clothing, or decorating homes. These practices extend to the consumption of costly alcoholic beverages and narcotics, as well as the maintenance of animals unnecessary for production purposes: cats, dogs, ornamental birds, and racehorses. In this way, the leisure class enthusiastically showcases life's advantages and opulence. At the same time, valuable items also acquire traits of respectability. To navigate the subtleties of all this consumer goods, one must cultivate a specific taste and learn to recognize things that symbolize wealth» (Liutyi, 2020; 296).

In general, any practice, whether positive or negative, is turned into art by cinema, aestheticizing it. Winemaking, in particular, is an extremely rich and colorful topic for plots and imagery in cinema.

In global cinema, wine most often serves as an attribute of ostentatious luxury, signifying the prestige and respectability of a character. However, in Western European cinema, particularly in French and Italian films, wine frequently becomes a backdrop against which human fates and family relationships unfold. Reverence and love for wine and winemaking are often depicted. This connection with the land and the winemaking process imbues cinema from these regions with a tender and touching quality when wine is portrayed.

For example, in the Italian film «*The Taming of the Scoundrel*» (*Il Bisbetico Domato*, 1980), we see Titian's representation in the consumption of wine. Here, wine and winemaking symbolize untamed beauty, free and strong, opposing the power of machines. In one of the film's opening scenes, the protagonist Elia competes with a grape press for juicing. The man dances and enjoys himself, ultimately triumphing, embodying nature's untouched beauty. Elia's complexity lies in his complete fusion with nature – he respects its integrity, condemns hunting, and adores animals. «You can reason with animals, unlike people», Elia says. He is proud and straightforward, uncomprehending of manipulation or veiled human emotions. He is as simple and honest as nature itself. The film vividly elevates wine to a divine level, with the protagonist embodying its spirit. He is afraid of experiencing human emotions, does not seek love, though eventually, emotions prevail. This movie is about the unification of culture and nature, humanity and divinity, and although the title hints at «taming», the protagonist remains a force of nature willing to reconcile with humanity.

In many films about winemaking, the attitude toward wine is depicted with reverence and great love.

People working in vineyards are portrayed as hardworking and deeply passionate about their craft. For instance, in the film «*A Good Year*» (2006), the protagonist's uncle calls wine «the drink of truth»: «We bottle the truth, and the taste reveals it to us». This quote conveys that winemaking and wine consumption are not mere industries but true rituals requiring a deep love for the process and a willingness to dedicate one's life to it. The film begins with a scene where the uncle teaches the young protagonist the simple truths of winemaking and the ability to accept failure. Years later, the protagonist inherits the vineyard estate. As an adult, wealthy man, the prospect of returning to winemaking initially does not appeal to him. However, upon returning to the plantations, he experiences a kind of reconnection with his roots. The film's motif emphasizes that once a person is connected to winemaking, it remains a lifelong bond, which the protagonist's transformation beautifully demonstrates.

The uninhibited spirit of Dionysian celebrations is vividly depicted in Bernardo Bertolucci's Italian film «*The Dreamers*» (2003). The plot unfolds in Paris during May 1968, against the backdrop of the European countercultural revolution, with students building barricades. A young American, Matthew, arrives in Paris and befriends siblings Isabelle and Theo. This trio of dreamers creates their own reality – world of cinema. They spend their days and nights watching films, enjoying themselves, and drinking wine.

The film contains significant erotic elements, symbolizing wine's dual nature – it encourages relaxation and indulging in bodily pleasures. The gods would not object to this, as this film aligns well with the first painting described by J. Ortega y Gasset. Humans are on par with gods, free to do whatever they wish without shame or judgment. The protagonists appear innocent, unembarrassed by nudity, and open to even taboo subjects. They resemble Adam and Eve before tasting the forbidden fruit, unaware of corruption. In this context, wine unites the physical and the spiritual, embodying sexuality intertwined with innocence.

The French film «*Champagne*»! (2022) is deeply social and, unlike the previous examples, focuses on human relationships. The events unfold in a vineyard where a group of friends and their families gather. Initially, the characters appear to have ideal relationships. However, as the story progresses, it becomes evident that perfection is an illusion. Over the course of the film, the friends learn uncomfortable truths about each other.

In this film, humans are no longer gods but flawed beings hiding secrets, half-truths, and manipulations. This clearly aligns with the second stage in J. Ortega y Gasset's classification, characterized by human imperfection, moral flaws, and the eventual hangover after indulgence. Only the gods remain perfect.

Throughout the film, winemaking serves as a constant, silent observer, present in the background of human drama. When the friends are euphoric, they drink wine and feel joy in each other's company, cherishing the vineyard, nurturing it with their attention and love. When they quarrel, they drink wine in pain and despair, finding it bitter in such moments. Ultimately, it is wine that reunites them. A sudden frost threatens the vineyard, and the group must come together to save the harvest. United by their shared adversity, the friends reconcile and drink wine once again.

However, the secrets revealed among them linger, and the wine they taste carries a bitter aftertaste of the past. The story does not reveal whether they will ever fully enjoy wine as before, but the element of unity persists. As long as the vineyards grow, human relationships have the potential to improve.

A film with a similar atmosphere and theme is the Italian-Spanish production *«Perfect Strangers»* (*Perfetti sconosciuti*, 2016). Over glasses of wine, a group of friends decides to play a game where they reveal hidden truths about one another. In this film, wine serves as a lens, bridging the visible world with hidden secrets. It acts as a passive observer while the lives of its characters unravel.

Quoting from the previously analyzed film *«A Good Year»*: «Wine is the drink of truth». This statement is vividly demonstrated in *«Perfect Strangers»*. Boredom and fine wine lead to a catastrophic unraveling of human relationships and fates. This film achieved global acclaim and won numerous international awards.

The great Spanish director and master of human drama, Pedro Almodóvar, in his film *«Parallel Mothers»* (*Madres paralelas*, 2022), depicts a grand story of human lives. In one of the opening scenes, the characters share a bottle of wine while the protagonist, Janis, recounts stories about her great-grandfather, who died in World War I. Janis, like her entire community, deeply respects her ancestors. Here, wine becomes a symbol of patriotism and historical continuity, connecting family and honoring the past.

Wine initiates relationships that lead to tragic events in the film. Despite the challenges faced by the characters, wine remains a neutral element, acting as a bridge between the present and the past. It is a circumstance, a narrative catalyst. In this film, wine does not serve as a background or a constant character but symbolically appears in moments emphasizing heritage, family, and history.

Not all European cinema portrays wine in an exclusively positive light. For Luchino Visconti, wine symbolizes the dangerous and hostile bourgeois culture responsible for global conflicts. Visconti, one of the most prominent representatives of Italian neorealism, saw the pursuit of aesthetic and cultural refinement as humanity's downfall. His film *«Death in Venice»* (1971), though an adaptation of Thomas Mann's novella, is a deeply personal and candid work by Visconti.

Set in 1911, the film captures Europe in its final carefree years, already sensing the impending catastrophe. The protagonist, too, feels that his days are numbered. *«Death in Venice»* is a requiem, a mournful farewell to life and beauty. The isolation of art in a world of beautiful forms, detached from life, is revealed here as a tragedy for both the artist and humanity – a chain of suffering that only death can end.

Visconti portrays the protagonist, played by Dirk Bogarde, as someone observing life from within a protective cocoon, cautious in his movements and interactions, symptomatic of a dying culture. The refined detachment of art from reality emerges as both its greatness and its curse. Venice itself, with its magnificent palaces, is depicted as slowly and inexorably sinking into the lagoon.

The film equates death with ultimate reality, and the artist's dignity is defined by how steadfastly they face this reality. Visconti scorns those who turn away in fear, feast amidst a plague, or degrade art into mere distraction from humanity's inevitable fate.

This theme is common in art from the interwar and postwar periods, reflecting disillusionment with the rationality and cultural traditions of the time, which, despite their intentions, led to devastating wars.

Conclusions. The trends of wine consumption in Western European cinema encompass many nuances. Primarily, wine is depicted as a symbol of familial continuity, evoking peaceful evenings and celebrations. It is used as a symbolic and narrative element in films of various genres and cultural contexts. Wine becomes an integral part of storytelling, helping viewers understand the inner worlds of characters and their relationships.

Additionally, wine is often associated with luxury and celebration, setting the tone and mood of scenes. The consumption of wine in cinema serves multiple functions, acting as a daily-life element and a powerful symbolic tool. Through the structure of J. Ortega y Gasset, the societal attitude toward wine can be evaluated through the lens of cinema.

French films frequently portray wine in its natural purity, embodying ancient natural forces. French cinema romanticizes and elevates wine, imbuing it with a strong, willful spirit. Similarly, many Italian and Spanish films use wine as a narrative tool against which human dramas unfold. However, there are also

examples of wine being depicted negatively, as a sign of moral degradation or catastrophe. These depictions reflect societal challenges and moral dilemmas tied to luxury, culture, and human imperfection.

This work does not aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the portrayal of wine consumption culture in cinema but highlights the potential of such cultural studies.

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ПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЯ КУЛЬТУРИ СПОЖИВАННЯ ВИНА В ЗАХІДНОЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОМУ КІНЕМАТОГРАФІ

Анастасія Барняк – здобувачка освітнього ступеня «Бакалавр» спеціальності 034 «Культурологія», Київський національний університет ім. Т. Шевченка, Київ

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Тема вживання алкоголю глибоко вкорінена в людському житті. Вино втілює культурні символи, сімейні традиції та аспекти особистої ідентичності. Кінематографічне зображення алкоголю, безперечно, формує індивідуальне сприйняття, оскільки кіно відображає суспільні настрої, а також формує нові реалії, які резонують з аудиторією. Кіно, як багатогранний медіум, віддзеркалює суспільні реалії та формує альтернативні. Його символічна сила перетворює звичайні практики, такі як споживання вина, на потужні культурні та наративні інструменти. Вино, універсальний символ розкоші, насолоди та соціального статусу, слугує як сюжетним засобом, так і персонажем світового кінематографу, відображаючи ставлення до алкоголю в різні епохи. Спираючись на аналіз праць Х. Ортеги-і-Гассета, кінематографічний символізм вина коливається між єднанням людини з природою, божественним святом і моральною деградацією. Двоїста природа вина, що символізує радість і розчарування, робить його переконливим кінематографічним елементом. Від сприяння єдності в ідилічних ситуаціях до каталізації конфліктів і викриття екзистенціальних істин, вино залишається відображенням людської культури.

Ключові слова: кіно, символізм у кіно, вино, культура, алкоголь.

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