

12. BOXED WINE FEMINISMS: THE RHETORIC OF WOMEN'S WINE DRINKING IN *THE GOOD WIFE*

Tammie M. Kennedy

Alcohol is not a women's issue.

—Gloria Steinem, *Ms. Magazine* fortieth anniversary party

Alcohol is a socially acceptable, legal way to muscle through the postfeminist, breadwinning, or stay-at-home life women lead.

—Gabrielle Glaser, *Her Best-Kept Secret*

Two contending narratives about the drinking culture of women in the twenty-first century are represented by these opening quotations. On one hand, many feminists have distanced themselves from temperance rhetorics, opting instead to disrupt a traditional gender role associated with abstinence. On the other hand, the myriad of choices afforded by feminism and the increase in alcohol consumption among women have suggested that drinking practices are a reflection of the complexities of women's roles in the new millennium.¹ Some other critics go as far as blaming feminism for the increase in drinking. Regardless, drinking practices² function rhetorically, pointing to “questions about who drinks, when and where drinking occurs, what beverages are consumed,” and how drinkers create and negotiate their identities in relation to their motives and relationships with others within social and ideological contexts (Rotskoff 11). Furthermore, drinking practices are inflected by gender ideologies that shape representations in popular culture.

By every quantitative measure during the first two decades of the twenty-first century, women are drinking more. In 2012, Gallup pollsters reported that nearly 66 percent of all American women drank regularly, a higher percentage than any other time in twenty-five years, and more than 52 percent of the women who drink prefer wine (“Majority”). More specifically, women purchase nearly two-thirds of the 856 million gallons sold and drink more than 70 percent of what they buy (“Wine Consumption”). Furthermore, women are more likely to drink wine to relax at home after work than men (Thach 139). Women's wine drinking shows no signs of slowing down. Between 2009 and 2013, women's wine consumption has continued to grow (Glaser 21).

The prevalence of women's wine drinking isn't just increasing because of college women's partying and binge-drinking practices. Instead, researchers reveal that it is “women in their thirties, forties, and fifties who are getting through their days of work, and nights with teething toddlers, trying teenagers, or sick parents,” by consuming their beverage of choice—wine (Glaser 18). In fact, the middle-class female predilection for wine has become a hobby and socially endorsed identity for many educated and “successful” women who may or may not identify as feminists.³ In addition, drinking habits correlate directly with socioeconomic status.

The more educated and well-off a woman is, the more likely she is to imbibe (Johnston 51). If temperance was *the* women's issue of the nineteenth century, as Carol Mattingly argues in *Well-Tempered Women*, then the documented ubiquity of women's wine drinking in the twenty-first century presents an important artifact for feminist rhetoricians to study.

In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of women's wine-drinking practices in the last decade. Then, I perform a close reading of the wine-drinking habits depicted in *The Good Wife* (TGW). Although Olivia Pope's wine drinking in *Scandal* has been highlighted by mainstream media like the *New York Times*, TGW is one of the few prime-time series that passes the Bechdel test⁴ and features a variety of strong women protagonists with a range of feminist philosophies, including the main character, Alicia Florrick (Julianna Margulies). In order to understand the rhetorical nature of women drinking wine in media representations, I ground my analysis in Jacqueline Royster and Gesa Kirsch's notion of "social circulation," which examines how "traditions are carried on, changed, reinvented, and reused when they pass from one generation to the next" and are "expressed via new genres and new media" (101). Contemplating the social circulation of wine drinking as a rhetorical activity also disrupts the public/private binaries often associated with gender. This disruption is critical, especially when considering how wine drinking is equated with what sociologist Arlie Hochschild calls "emotion work," which "requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (7). Representations of wine-drinking practices on television shows, such as TGW, reflect how many women perform emotion work while navigating and managing their various roles.

Examining representations of women's wine-drinking practices, the spaces where these drinking rituals take place, and the politics of emotion inherent in these actions, reveals new ways of understanding how women "experience, negotiate, and perform shifting emotions, . . . including subjectivities that are multiple, emergent, diverse, and complex" (Jayne, Valentine, and Holloway 553). I argue that representations of women's wine-drinking habits in TGW dramatize the conflicts that emerge from women's changing roles in both the private and public spheres. More specifically, while wine drinking is equated with success (college education, independence, middle-class affluence and privilege, and "having it all"), it also functions as reward and respite from the emotional complexities of performing women's many roles. Kathryn Kueny calls wine an "ambiguous substance," evoking associations with religion, romance, health, pleasure, and affluence, as well as conjuring images of addiction and its effects on the idealized personal and professional life. This same ambiguity is exposed by TGW's protagonist Alicia Florrick, who drinks wine as a means to navigate the freedoms and pressures gained from feminist and women's movements, as well as to manage her emotions and modulate her identity within these changing roles.

WOMEN'S WINE-DRINKING PRACTICES

Within the last ten years, wine as an ambiguous substance for women has foregrounded both the pleasure and harm in women's drinking practices and traced these issues to feminism and the need for women to self-medicate to deal with stress. The question of whether or not drinking is feminist has been discussed in a variety of publications. In "Libation as Liberation?," Barbara

Ehrenreich argues that “going toe to toe with men is a feminist act; going drink for drink with them isn’t.” Although she focuses on the prevalence of binge drinking in her 2002 *Time* magazine article, Ehrenreich also examines the relationship between the women’s liberation movement and alcohol consumption, arguing that feminist foremothers would not have believed that drinking was a form of female self-assertion. Later in 2008, *New York Magazine* published “Gender Bender,” which profiles the increase in prominence and amount of women’s social-drinking practices and argues that women’s “drinking has become entwined with progressive feminism.” Author Alex Morris supports the argument by describing an incident that happened with two editors of feminist website Jezebel, a website that Morris labels as “pro-alcohol”:

A well-respected media personality invited two of its writers onto her Internet show “Thinking and Drinking”—a typically classy, semi-Socratic affair—and the younger women got so visibly shitfaced and the conversation so disturbing that some critics referred to it as “the Night Feminism Died.” (qtd. in Morris)

After the onslaught of reaction to the “Thinking and Drinking” show, as well as to the way the editors acted, Jezebel editor, Jessica Grose, tried to address the link between social drinking and feminism:

I don’t think that drinking in and of itself is feminist, but I do think that it comes from a feminist place, that it can bolster one’s sense of herself as liberated . . . the whole point of Third Wave feminism is that individual choice should not be judged. (qtd. in Morris)

While many women rejected the charge that feminism is to blame for current drinking practices, they also recognized the need for more discussion about women’s drinking in more nuanced, progressive ways. For example, in “Ladies! Liquor! Ladies and Liquor!” blogger Christen McCurdy examines “women’s attitudes about drinking—and society’s attitudes about women who drink” for *Bitch Magazine*, focusing particularly on third-wave feminism. She asserts that there needs to be more balanced discussions about the relationship between drinking practices and gender, as well as an understanding of how alcohol has fueled social justice efforts like the gay rights movement. In 2013, Ann Dowsett Johnston and Gabrielle Glaser, two highly respected journalists, both published books (*Drink* and *Her Best-Kept Secret*, respectively); the books focus on the dangers of women’s drinking, especially how the normalization of women’s wine drinking has made alcohol dependence a struggle for growing numbers of well-educated women. Their books were profiled in a wide variety of mainstream media outlets throughout 2013–14, raising new concerns about the pervasiveness of women’s wine drinking. Certainly, many of these media discussions reflect gendered attitudes about sexuality and femininity that have circulated throughout history. However, these discussions also point to the importance of examining how the media’s interest in and representations of women’s wine-drinking practices in the twenty-first century expose the recapitulation of patriarchal ideologies in popular culture.

EMOTION WORK, FEMINISM, AND WINE DRINKING IN *THE GOOD WIFE*

Over the past decade, television programs featuring women in leading roles drinking wine in almost every episode have become part of the media landscape. Winemaker Stephanie Gallo, for example, credits the increase in wine consumption not only to the fact that the United States is making better wine but also that wine drinking has become a part of popular culture: “You can’t turn on the TV, or look through a magazine without seeing wine” (qtd. in Schmitt). *New York Times* critic Alessandra Stanley even declares that “television has a drinking problem.” From *Today*’s cohosts Hoda Kotb and Kathy Lee Gifford drinking wine at 10 A.M. to Bravo’s *Real Housewives* franchise drinking wine as a part of every activity depicted on the series, to Jules and her suburban Cul-de-Sac Crew guzzling wine in *Cougar Town* to Olivia Pope downing lots and lots of red wine in *Scandal*, wine drinking in popular shows geared toward women is ubiquitous.

Royster and Kirsch’s notion of social circulation draws attention to wine drinking as a rhetorical activity, which enables scholars to “account for how identities and ideas form and become rhetorical,” as well as how “language and ideas travel, create multiple circles of meaning, and engage multiple mechanisms for creating impact and consequence” (102). Royster and Kirsch’s feminist rhetorical practices also point to the importance of examining what Hochschild calls the emotion work that women perform in these representations. Hochschild argues that all of us manage emotion; however, women in particular are required to perform more emotional work, which creates a “commercialization of feeling” that is required in public and private positions (14). Emotion work is grounded in “feeling rules” that prescribe what to feel, when to feel, where to feel, how long to feel, and how strong our emotions can be, which are dictated by gender-based notions of normality (56–57). Feeling rules also establish expectations about emotional exchanges in various situations—both what a woman thinks she *should* feel and what others expect her to feel and how she should act on those emotions. Furthermore, as Sara Ahmed argues, emotions are part of larger material and discursive structures. It is important to understand “how emotions work, in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective” (119). An analysis of the wine-drinking practices on *TGW* dramatizes how drinking practices intersect with gendered emotion work.

CBS’s drama premiered in 2009 and offers one of the most feminist programs on broadcast television. The show appeals to a cross section of women—more than ten million viewers for season 5—and evokes much discussion, ranging from the *New York Times* to *Glamour* to *Feminist Spectator* to other blogs and fan fiction sites (O’Connell). The series focuses on Alicia Florrick, an educated, middle-aged white woman with two teenaged children and a husband who has been jailed following a very public sex and corruption scandal. While her husband sits in jail, Alicia returns to work as a lawyer after thirteen years of staying at home with the children and a last name that draws mixed attention to her. Viewers watch Alicia navigate the challenges of a hectic professional career, two teenagers, a meddling mother-in-law, a boss she has feelings for, a law firm in bankruptcy, and a husband who betrayed her but wants her back, all while successfully managing a difficult caseload. Although at first glance the program may seem to be a typical legal drama filled with romance and intrigue, it actually depicts the emancipation of its main character from gender stereotypes and tired tropes about women “having it all” or “love conquers all”: Alicia is

fascinating because we're witnessing a shift in her life that echoes the major social changes of the last decades, a shift from her *bourgeois* identity to an independent lifestyle she would've never taken on her own—and that she wouldn't give up for anything anymore. (Morin 45)

Furthermore, the complexity of the character illuminates the conflicts and contradictions that still exist for many women who endure harsh scrutiny and internal turmoil in whatever roles they perform in their homes and workplaces.

Alicia is portrayed as not only intellectual and brave but also as empathetic, a skill that is put to good use with her clients who she keeps calm and listens to in ways that often help her win cases. But beneath this calm, self-contained composure, viewers often witness Alicia doing the emotion work that keeps her effective in both her personal and professional lives. As Hochschild argues, “women often do extra emotion work—especially emotion work that affirms, enhances, and celebrates the well-being and status of others” (165). Alcohol infuses this emotion work and signifies what Ahmed calls “an object of feeling,” which both shapes and is shaped by emotion (4). Drinking practices involve an interweaving of the personal with the social and allow for interactions with others and self-reflection in a way that might not happen if one was not drinking (28). The interaction between emotion work and drinking practices is pivotal to the depiction of Alicia's character in *TGW*.

In *TGW*, wine serves as one “object of feeling” that symbolizes the emotion work Alicia performs in various spaces. Although Alicia drinks with colleagues and clients—beer with her boss and Georgetown friend, Will (Josh Charles); tequila with the firm's investigator and friend, Kalinda (Archie Panjabi); martinis with her other boss, Diane (Christine Baranski); champagne to celebrate court victories with her colleagues; and wine at political functions with her husband, Peter (Chris Noth), it is Alicia's wine drinking at home, alone or with her immediate family, that best demonstrates the rhetorical function of wine drinking and how it shapes emotion work and its circulation.⁵ In the pilot episode, after a long, stressful day at her new job, viewers see Alicia pour herself a large glass of red wine (“Pilot”). Just as movies often reveal the themes of the film in the first five minutes, the series establishes red wine as an important object of feeling for Alicia. Red wine provides Alicia respite from the stresses of her professional life; it also offers her the lubricant needed to do the emotion work that helps her critically self-reflect about her values and actions, as well as find a way to her more authentic self, the “Alicia” out of the public eye and beholden to her family and colleagues.

Alicia's wine drinking at home during the first season is meager until her husband is released from prison on electronic monitoring and returns home (“Hi”). Once Peter is home, Alicia's emotion work shifts. While he was incarcerated, Alicia could maintain both her anger at Peter's affair and her focus on succeeding at work as a new associate in a law firm. However, once he returns home, Alicia is confronted by the realities of her transition from housewife to attorney and the fallout involving her previous friends and lifestyle. Peter often uses red wine as a token of their past marriage that he wants to reestablish, offering her wine when she gets home from work (“Bang”; “Heart”), during family dinners (“Hybristophilia”), or later in the series when they make amends and Alicia joins him on the campaign bus (“A More Perfect Union”). Drinking wine with Peter in these situations represents the tension between Alicia's past when she sacrificed her career for Peter's political aspirations and an evolving

sense of self that questions those choices and what she wants for her life going forward. However, no matter how much pressure she gets from her family, Alicia inevitably can't feel what Peter wants her to feel. For example, in "Heart," Alicia is torn between her feelings for her boss Will and her duties as a "good wife" to Peter. When she returns home from work after allowing herself to act on her attraction to Will by kissing him, she and Peter have sex in his bedroom. While Peter interprets the act as hopeful for their relationship, the viewer senses that it was a mere act of sublimation and guilt on Alicia's part. Before their sexual encounter, Peter had offered Alicia a large glass of red wine. However, once they are finished having sex, the viewer witnesses Alicia's confusion underneath her cool reserve. She leaves the red wine on the counter and goes to bed alone in her room. Leaving the wine is symbolic of her ongoing transformation in which she questions what a good mother and wife means to her rather than how others define it. She can no longer perform her previous role of wife. But she has yet to assert what she does feel and how those feelings fit with both her professional and personal life.

Although Alicia is represented as a fairly typical social drinker in public, Alicia and her family members comment on her domestic wine-drinking practices throughout the various seasons. Her daughter, Grace (Makenzie Vega), who has been exploring religion and comes out as a Christian, an identity that Alicia finds very surprising given her views on religion, comments on Alicia's drinking. In "Silver Bullet," Grace worries about her mother's *need* to have wine when she gets home, especially when discussing religion. Alicia coolly replies: "I don't need wine. I like wine. I like a glass of wine after work." When Grace presses the point—"You talk to me all the time about drugs. Wine is a drug."—Alicia chugs down the whole glass. And when Grace goes into a rant about science not taking prayer seriously, Alicia pours another glass. "Just taking another hit off the crack pipe," she tells her daughter, ending the contentious conversation. Later, in "Ham Sandwich," Alicia confesses to Kalinda that Grace thinks she drinks too much wine. Kalinda comforts Alicia's concern by replying, "This is tequila." The two continue drinking together, the scene reinforcing the intimate friendship they are developing. In a later episode, Kalinda, knowing her friend's basic needs, brings Alicia provisions because she's been stuck in a remote hotel in Minnesota for two days to complete a deposition. In addition to clean clothes, Kalinda brings a bottle of red wine. As the two women share the wine and chat, Alicia admits what she misses about being an "opt-out" wife and mother:

You know what I miss about my old life, before the glamour of the law? The quiet. At home in the afternoons, I would drink every day at three o'clock a glass of red wine, waiting for the kids to come home. I miss the silence in the house at three. ("Boom De Yah Da")

At the end of season 5, Alicia's mother, Veronica (Stockard Channing), and mother-in-law, Jackie (Mary Beth Peil), prepare lasagna for Zach's (Graham Phillips) graduation while Alicia is at work because they didn't think Alicia should serve catered food for such an important event. As the two women cook, they drink red wine and bicker about whose fault it is that Alicia and Peter's marriage has crumbled into a union of convenience. As Alicia's mom guzzles red wine, Jackie says, "I see where Alicia's drinking comes from" ("A Weird Year").

The comments about Alicia's drinking focus on her wine-drinking practices at home. Like

so many of the women profiled in Johnston's and Glaser's books, wine drinking denotes the shift from work to home—a much-needed break, reward, and way to relax, which Johnston describes based on her personal experience: “[When I was drinking wine,] my first instinct was to shed some stress as quickly as I shed my coat. . . . Alcohol smoothed that switch from one role to the other. It seemed to make life purr” (160). Peter notes this same habit, pointing out that Alicia has poured herself a glass of wine before she has even taken off her coat (“Great Firewall”). Although Alicia's wine-drinking habits fit Johnston's observation on a couple of occasions, mostly she appears to drink red wine at home as a way to transition between her work life and family life. She even changes into a beige cardigan, her “wine cardigan,” when she's at home. The cardigan, like the wine, denotes a space change (think Mr. Rogers) but also symbolizes her emotional state. She wraps it tightly around her body as she curls up with a glass of wine, reflective, angst-ridden, and trying to unwind from the stresses that threaten to engulf her. When she's not alone at home, viewers see Alicia drink wine with her arm around her daughter while watching television (“A New Day”; “Two Girls, One Code”). She also drinks wine at home when she is working, such as conducting Internet searches (“Unorthodox”) or paying bills (“Unplugged”).

While the wine drinking appears to be her way of soothing her stress, viewers also see that it serves as an object of emotion, which signifies self-doubt. For example, Alicia laments her failings to her daughter with a wineglass in hand: “I wish I was a better mom. I was, but things are out of control” (“Pants on Fire”). Psychologist Pamela Stewart explains the gendered nature of the emotion work behind some women's wine drinking: “Typically, men drink to heighten positive feelings or socialize. Women are more likely than men to drink to get rid of negative feelings” (qtd. in Johnston 108). Furthermore, these “negative emotions” often stem from what Jan Bauer calls the “perversion of feminism,” which is rooted in the need to be perfect in all aspects of one's life (qtd. in Johnston 162). Viewers see Alicia drink when she feels jealous of Will's new relationship even though she's still married to Peter (“Blue Ribbon Panel”), when she might not be winning a case (“Parenting Made Easy”), when she's not sure how to talk to her son about interracial dating (“Bitcoin for Dummies”), when she doesn't know what to write to the owner of her old house, which is now up for sale (“Blue Ribbon Panel”), or when she doesn't understand one of her kids' favorite television shows (“The Seven Day Rule”). The heart of Alicia's wine drinking in these circumstances is her entanglement in the feeling rules by which she has been indoctrinated and recognizing on some level that these rules stunt her from honoring what she truly wants and feels is right for her present life.

Navigating feelings of insecurity and self-estrangement are apparent when Alicia drinks wine in more intimate settings with her family. The viewer witnesses Alicia's fatigue from working so many hours at the firm and at home and trying to do both jobs perfectly, creating more stress. Hochschild considers the complexity of such self-estrangement:

Estrangement from aspects of oneself are, in one light, a means of defense between the “real self” [and the work self]. . . . But this solution also poses serious problems. For in dividing up our sense of self, in order to save the “real” self from unwelcome intrusions, we necessarily relinquish a healthy sense of wholeness. We come to accept as normal the tension we feel between our “real” and our “on-stage” selves. (183–84)

Often, when Alicia reaches an uncomfortable level of estrangement from her most authentic needs, she and her brother, Owen (Dallas Roberts), process her life so that she can gain a more realistic perspective. Although Owen is mischievous, he also loves Alicia and functions as her truth-teller because he's not afraid to say what needs to be said. This emotional processing, however, is always accompanied by wine ("Breaking Fast"; "Poisoned Pill"; "Net Worth"; "Tying the Knot"). These conversations often reveal a more poignant truth about Alicia's more genuine self, the one not so bound up in prescriptions about how she should feel about her husband, lover, work, or children. These emotional talks also disrupt what Owen calls Alicia's "facade of perfectionism," which is often steeped in tamped-down anger or overly intellectual rationalizations of her unsettled feelings ("Tying the Knot").

The show argues that drinking wine helps Alicia to drill down to the truth of what she really needs and what action she should take to secure this goal. The excavation process is evident when Alicia drinks wine with her mother. Although Alicia rebelled against her free-spirited mother when she was younger by being "perfect," maintaining a steely exterior that hides her fears, disappointments, and anger and shackled her to the "curse of competence," drinking wine with her mother allows Alicia to let down her guard and embrace some of the qualities in her mother that might serve her better now. In "The Deep Web," for example, Alicia is no longer able to maintain her poise after the death of her boss and former lover, Will. Alicia's new legal partner, Cary (Matt Czuchry), demands that she take a day off. Alicia, now unaccustomed to being at home, is hobbled by depression that keeps her hidden under the covers and by anxiety that makes being awake and in the world almost unbearable. Her mother comes to check on her. As they drink their red wine, Alicia confesses that she's not handling Will's death well even though she and Peter are "engaged" to renew their marital vows—a choice that was more pragmatic than romantic on Alicia's part. Alicia admits that she's always tried to be the "good" one, but she's lost: "I don't know what I am anymore. I'm spinning, Mom, and I can't stop." While earlier Alicia had worried that she made a mistake by being a lawyer, a deeper truth emerges during her wine consumption: "I shouldn't have stopped working."

Wine-soaked chats with Owen and Veronica and cardigan-wrapped wine drinking alone at home help Alicia excavate her emotions in more productive ways. As Ahmed argues, "emotions are the very 'flesh' of time. They show us the time it takes to move, or to move on, is a time that exceeds the time of an individual life" (202). Once Alicia's emotions materialize through her wine-drinking practices, she is empowered to make the kinds of deep-seated changes that gird her ongoing transformation. Although she and Peter stay together, Alicia refuses to play the "good wife" in the ways she did before she returned to work. As Peter celebrates his gubernatorial victory, Alicia quietly leaves the celebration and goes home. She pours a large glass of red wine, waiting for her colleague Cary to meet her at her apartment. When Cary arrives, Alicia agrees to start a firm with him, thereby embarking on a major professional and personal risk. She will leave Lockhart and Gardner, the one firm willing to hire her after a thirteen-year absence from the workplace, to start her own firm with Cary. Such a move certainly obliterates any semblance of a relationship she might maintain with Will before his character is killed ("What's in the Box?"). However, Alicia has been transformed; she is no longer defined by her love interests or beholden to Will who advocated on her behalf.

This transformation comes to fruition in “The One Percent,” the penultimate show of season 5. Peter’s campaign manager, Eli Gold (Alan Cumming), meets with Alicia to try to figure out the state of Peter and Alicia’s marriage, which is a question that haunts Peter’s political career. Alicia pours the red wine and makes her most honest confession: “I’m tired. I’m just done. We are staying together, but that is it.” The last season ends with Alicia drinking red wine after her son leaves home after his high school graduation, marking another major shift for her.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing the wine-drinking practices of women on television shows such as *TGW* helps feminist scholars to investigate how gendered ideologies are recapitulated, recognized, and managed in women’s lives. These powerful television representations normalize drinking wine as a way for women to navigate the tensions of their personal and professional choices, and this message is reinforced as it circulates throughout various spaces—social media, television/film, gender-based social activities, and domestic drinking practices. Since the emotions connected with women’s wine-drinking habits “should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices” (Ahmed 9), it is imperative to critically examine how emotions “stick” (11) in terms of the effect on women and their ways of navigating gendered ideologies. While gender equality correlates with parity in drinking practices, it is also important to understand what this link contends about personal and professional success and happiness for many women. As Caroline Knapp chronicles in her book *Appetites*, freedom is not the same as power: “The ability to make choices can feel unsettling and impermanent and thin if it’s not girded somehow with the heft of real economic and political strength” (35). Representations of women on television shows like *TGW* draw from the liminal space between choice and power, depicting high-functioning professional women who drink wine to “fend off the discomfort, to dilute inhibition, and wash away anxiety.” A woman may experience these issues when

teased with freedom—to define herself as she sees fit, to attend to her own needs and wishes, and to fully explore her own desires . . . she may not quite feel . . . in her bones or believe will last. (Knapp 33)

Just as the temperance movement promised women more agency by abstaining from drinking, many twenty-first-century women seek empowerment and balance through their wine-drinking practices. However, the history of women’s drinking habits has shown that the freedom to choose and the power to transform oneself and others is modulated by gendered ideologies often constrained by the emotion work assumed by many women. Analyzing how wine-drinking practices are represented in popular culture offers a tangible object of emotion that helps feminist rhetoricians better locate both potential spaces of transformation and potentially dangerous consequences for women who drink wine as a way to navigate the pressures they feel when performing various roles at home and in the workplace.

Notes

1. Noted alcohol researchers Richard Wilsnack and Sharon Wilsnack point out that increased drinking among females might be a result of the women’s movement and changes in women’s roles, especially changes that involve exposure to formerly

masculine environments and roles. They suggest that changes in sex roles might increase women's exposure to alcohol and opportunities to drink; might modify traditional norms against female drinking, thereby making drinking more permissible; and might offer females new goals and aspirations, thus causing stress that alcohol might be used to reduce.

2. For the purposes of this chapter, I will be looking at "social drinking" or "moderate drinking" rather than alcoholism or binge drinking. The Betty Ford Center defines "social drinking" as follows:

Social drinking may be that drink or two that soften the harsh events of the day or release one to relaxed sociability or just allow you to see the humor of it all. How many drinks do social drinkers drink? It probably varies. Whatever they do . . . , social drinkers do not chase after good feelings by drinking more and more until they lose control. To social drinkers, alcohol is not important. Some wise person said, "If you have to drink to be social, that's not social drinking." ("How")

According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, moderate alcohol consumption is defined as having up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men. Five ounces of wine (12 percent alcohol content) is equivalent to one drink (US Department of Agriculture). Furthermore, this chapter and many of the statistics cited focus on what Karen MacNeil calls "beverage wine," wine purchased at the supermarket (typically less than fourteen dollars per bottle) for daily consumption instead of more expensive, collectible wines.

3. The prevalence of wine drinking is apparent in a variety of media and social activities. Clothing designer Kate Spade created a necklace that spells out "Pop the Cork." More than 650,000 women follow "Moms Who Need Wine" on Facebook. Another 131,000 women are fans of "OMG I So Need a Glass of Wine" or "I'm Gonna Sell My Kids." "OMG I Need a Glass of Wine" has more than 180,000 likes. "Wine Sisterhood" puts out daily "wine notes" that endorse drinking wine and has more than 371,000 followers. Newly conceived "paint-bars" pair wine drinking and painting instruction as a social event for women.

4. The Bechdel test was created by American cartoonist Alison Bechdel. The test was originally used to judge the feminist qualities of films. Now the test is used to assess a variety of media for gender bias: (1) It has to have at least two women in it; (2) who talk to each other; and (3) about something besides a man. Despite the simplicity of the test, very few television shows or films meet these minimum requirements.

5. The women's drinking practices on *TGW* are significant. Bisexual investigator Kalinda is never shown drinking at home or when she is with her lovers in a domestic space; instead, she drinks hard liquor with both men and women at bars. She and Alicia usually do shots of tequila. Diane, senior partner and comanager at the Lockhart and Gardner Firm, drinks bourbon with her legal partner, Will, often in the office at the end of the day as they confer about case strategy or office politics. When Cary and Alicia leave Lockhart and Gardner to start their own firm, they swear not to drink bourbon like Diane and Will. Diane often drinks white wine when she is on a date or in the company of women outside of the office. Viewers don't see her drinking at home. After Will's death, Alicia and Diane get drunk on martinis after the funeral, which is symbolic of their attempt to distance themselves from Will's memory. Jackie, Alicia's mother-in-law, often judges Alicia and her mother Veronica's wine drinking. An exchange between the mothers represents this difference—Jackie: "You should drink less." Veronica: "You should drink more to get that bug out of your ass" ("Battle of the Proxies"). However, after Jackie admits that her husband, too, carried on a long-term affair with a staff member, she starts to "loosen up," enjoying wine at family dinners and during social occasions. Alicia's mom, Veronica, mostly drinks wine and asks if Zach can have wine on his eighteenth birthday because she allowed Alicia to drink at sixteen years old. While Veronica also drinks margaritas, she only drinks red wine with Alicia.

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