

**B@ck-to-the-L@nd: Analyzing Rural Anarchist Practice in Relation to
Anarchist Theories of Community-Building Through a Case Study of the
Dragonfly and Black Fly Land Collectives**

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Abstract

This dissertation problematizes the idea of the rural as a backwards and reactionary place and addresses the theoretical and practical contributions of anarchism to reconsidering the rural as a site of revolutionary community-building and an alternative to capitalism and state formations. I argue that anarchist theories offer a sophisticated vision of rural space because they think more concretely about the rural as an inhabited or inhabitable place informing more radical understanding of alternative community and political structures. I explore the history of intentional communities in North America and Ontario, specifically, to demonstrate the persistence of community-building experiments in rural settings and to document their alternative history. Using an empirical case study of two anarchist intentional communities located in Hastings County, Ontario, this dissertation examines how specific experiments of alternative community-building have operated in practice in relation to their anarchist principles. I situate the two collectives in the colonial history and the history of alternative communities in the area. The goals of creating anti-capitalist and decolonized communities are confronted with the geographic and political realities of land ownership. Some themes that emerged in this dissertation are private property relationships, settler relations, and ecological stewardship. While participants demonstrate a desire to move beyond private property relationships, they continue to see their responsibilities to Indigenous peoples and the environment in property terms. The anarchist ethical commitment to self-reflection opens up the importance of continually working to unlearn property and colonial relationships.

Dedication

In loving memory of Babcia Czesława Adamiak (1933-2017), who taught me rural ethics through her loving, dynamic practice.

Acknowledgements

As I began to write these acknowledgments in the summer of 2013 my Babcia Adamiak (grandmother) was preparing lunch (though it is really dinner but served during lunch time in the Canadian context) in her summer kitchen in the room beside me. It was fitting to begin to write my acknowledgements there, where my desire for rootedness is strongest and where my Babcia, the person with whom I first developed friendship as a chosen relationship, lived. It is also the place where I learned to love the countryside. My grandmother moved to that house, on a ten-hectare farm in Ignasin, in the southeastern corner of Poland (in the Lubelskie region), in 1950, at the age of sixteen.

My Babcia is the first person I want to thank for this dissertation project, though I will not have the opportunity to share (in translated form) my written thanks with her but tried in my way to thank her through our relationship over the years. Babcia was my earliest example of rural life and she troubled my own romantic notions of the rural while simultaneously feeding into them. Further on in my life, I dreamt of leaving my urban Canadian life to live with her on this piece of land beside the forest until I myself grew to be her age. I continued to dream of this, despite doing nothing to make it happen and despite her ailing health forcing her to leave this piece of land to live with my Aunt in a town nearby a year before her death in August 2017. This might be caused by my diasporic intimacy, that Boym describes as being “suspicious of a single home:”

Diasporic intimacy can be approached only through indirection and intimation, through stories and secrets. It is spoken of in a foreign language that reveals the inadequacies of translation. Diasporic intimacy does not promise an unmediated emotional fusion, but only a precarious affection - no less deep, yet aware of its transience. In contrast to the utopian images of intimacy as transparency, authenticity, and ultimate belonging, diasporic intimacy is dystopic by definition; it is rooted in the suspicion of a single home.¹

Living on the farm with my grandmother would require a rooting to which I was not prepared to commit.

Decades after developing a close relationship with my Babcia, my emotional and historical interest in rural life became informed academically when I met Catriona Sandilands as I entered the doctoral program in 2007. Cate is the kind of supervisor about which every PhD student dreams. Cate is challenging and supportive, writes encouraging and challenging emails, reads less-than-finished work. When a letter needs to be written for a job, library access, or to a Crown Attorney to get her student out of house arrest for a few hours per week, Cate writes on point and perfectly poetic professional letters. She shows up on picket lines with dietary-restriction appropriate cookies (homemade, of course) and sits in court rooms, if needed. Cate told me in a first meeting, that I could take a year off to farm if I wanted to and then return to the doctorate. I took a few years off, never officially, and never to farm. However, Cate celebrated, accepted, or understood each delay. Cate was committed to seeing me finish this work even when I doubted myself that it could be finished. I can say with all certainty that this project would not have been completed if Cate had not been my supervisor. Cate’s love for the rural and her excitement about

¹ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*. (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 251.

the community with which I was engaging helped remind me of my own excitement about the project when I could not recall why I had chosen it. I am grateful for her. My deepest gratitude is to Cate. Her continued faith in me and my project carried me through the most incapacitating moments of self-doubt; she believed in me when I did not believe in myself. I am in debt to Cate in a way that I am not sure I will ever have the opportunity to repay.

I had the privilege of working with a committee that was very supportive and engaged; it brought such important and different academic experiences to my work. I worked with Gerda Wekerle on the Course work, comprehensive examination, and proposal phases of my doctorate and benefited from her knowledge of communes and rural life. She welcomed me into her home, made supportive comments on drafts of the chapters of the dissertation, and supported my writing with generosity, humour, and creativity. J.J. McMurtry was my anarchist cheerleader and advocate for a dissertation whose central focus was anarchism. His help in my initial stages of the program, useful feedback, and reminder that academics can be anarchists, but more importantly, that anarchists can be academics kept me in the program when I was not certain that it was the place for me. The three committee members were very supportive and engaged throughout the decade that I have been working on this project and I appreciate their willingness to work with me.

I started this degree with a lot of rage and anger about the world. I was committed to burning it down and criticizing anything that was not a project for the total overthrow of society. I wrote dogmatic papers about the fact that anarchism is the only philosophy that doesn't prescribe and I shared in that vision with a lot of like-minded people. I had the misfortune and the great honour of spending a few years of my life fighting incarceration after being involved in organizing a mass mobilization against the G20 meetings in Toronto in June 2010. The year preceding that summer was one of the most beautiful community experiences of which I have been a part. I met people who shared the visions of the books I was reading and the theories I was trying to make sense of in my doctoral work. I put my doctorate aside to dedicate my life to the best anti-G20 party we could throw...I believe that this sense of community, however brief and however violently broken by arrests and state sanctions, has sat in my heart and fed my desire to complete this project in some way. I finish this doctorate with many more wrinkles and with rage and anger that has been softened by time and fear of the state. I am much less committed to a dogma and far less idealistic. I long for the fiery person I was when I started. I have a deep commitment to working to create community and a society that does not reward privilege but I have been much more cautious about how that is accomplished. I hope the fire returns.

I have had many wonderful friends in my life and all of them contributed to the completion of this dissertation. Fellow PhD students, who became close friends, support me emotionally and intellectually throughout this process. Hilton Bertalan, Megan Hillman, Irina Cerić, Heather Hax, Matthew Hayter, Jennifer Cypher, Bruce Erickson, Lauren Corman, Tom Malleon, Griffin Epstein, Jen Preston, Deirdre Wilcock -are my hope for the academy – that it can still be saved and that new generations of smart, radical, awesome students will learn from them and want to find different ways of engaging in society and changing it for the better. Irina Cerić supported me with brains and laughs. She edited my work, was my companion in getting ready for the defence, and reminded me to breath and snack. Hilton Bertalan's daily friendship, humour, and love was instrumental to me finishing and me being a much happier person. Lauren Corman, in her

beautiful way helped me return to the dissertation when even the thought of opening the file on my computer caused the worst anxiety. Her steadfast belief that I could do it and that it was going to be good helped me overcome two years of avoidance and writer's block. Terrance Luscombe asked me hard questions about my project that made my project better, though the manner in which they were asked weakened our relationship. With years of time having passed, I can say thank you for those questions and for the effects of your academic challenges on my work. I have also had the wonderful support of so many dear friends some who simply knew that I had a weird side project that seemed like some sort of endless term paper. Doris Włodarczyk, Olga Parysek, Ainsley Naylor, Jan Braun, Julia Kerr, Kat Lapointe, Aidan McDonald, Mel Willson, Ryan Newell, Lizz Aston, Nicholas Smith, Jacob Willow, Lily Hart, Dortje Klatte, Kuba Borowiec, Adek Żelazowski, Leah Henderson, Daniella Moss, Marika Heinricks, Billie, Bamboo, and Einstein: all of you sustained me and reminded me of all of the wonders of life beyond academia. Your wit, generosity, love, and politics have made me who I am. Sarah Lemay somehow made sense of my disjointed sentences and hanging modifiers. She read every single word of this project and edited it so as to be readable and flowing.

My gratitude to my nuclear biological family –my mother, my father, and my sister– is deep and long. I have felt at times that I am finishing this project despite my dad's sometimes critical questions about why it is taking so long and also because he taught me to be an independent and self-motivated person in the world. My mom reminded me to remain grounded, to eat healthy food, and that I would finish when I finished. I am grateful to both of my parents for instilling a sense of wonder, an interest in the world, and for their strong modelling of feminism and to work for something larger than oneself –despite their continued assertion that feminism is a four-letter word. They were my first models of feminist partnership, generosity, and social justice. My sister has been a cheerleader. In my undergrad she would regularly and patiently remind me that I have thought I would fail every paper and exam and that had yet to happen. She would take me out for snack brakes when an all-nighter was necessary (and, let's be honest, an all-nighter was necessary for almost every paper I wrote in that four-year period). She would send me pictures of bananas and recipes that included bananas when I was writing my Masters on the fair-trade banana economy. She would gently urge me along and always remind me that it could be done. I see that support and love passing to my nibblings: Andrzej, Madzia, and Kasia. On a much deeper level, I am grateful to my family for the love and support that I took for granted for most of my life. Until I was in my early twenties, because of a lot of privilege in my life, I did not know and could not imagine that a family home could be absent of love or nurturing care. Only when I met friends and loved ones who had not experienced the unconditional love with which I grew up did I realize the depth of my fortune. My family has always been my core. We left Poland in 1986 together and I always felt like we are the only sure thing we had around us. At times of hardship I have always felt like the luckiest person because even if I have nothing else, I have a family that loves me. While at times that love has come with sadness over my life choices, that love has never been withheld. I have a family that accepts that I am not exactly who they anticipated, but surely who they love; they are always certain that I can accomplish whatever I put my mind to.

I am developing a new relationship to the rural with someone who has been a more recent addition to my family. After questioning my desire for rural life for years, I met someone who celebrated that desire and shared it. My partner, Davie Parsons has planned and schemed a move

from the city with me that we are working towards in slow and thoughtful ways. It is from him that I have gained the most recent significant perspective shifts. I have always thought myself a hopeless and idealistic romantic, but only when I met Davie did I realize that I had not been nearly idealistic enough, for my heart could not imagine the kind of love, support, humour, generosity, and patience that a relationship could hold until I saw those things in my relationship with Davie. I attribute my renewed interest and passion for completing this dissertation to Davie's calm, measured, and emphatic reminders that I didn't owe anyone this document and that it did not define me. I have had the privilege of complete support and celebration from my partner. I recognize the unique nature of this position and I attribute this gift to the kind and nurturing person that Davie is. He had no conditions for me and whatever I decided to do would be the best decision, in his mind. By chipping away at the guilt and pressure I had put on myself and perceived from others, Davie helped me connect with my own (buried) commitment to the thing. More fundamentally, Davie has helped me remember what it is to be inquisitive, curious, and excited about life, ideas, the world, being outside, and about leaving the city. In our imaginings of rural life he has helped me think differently about the stories of my research participants and about what it means to be in community. I have been very privileged in my life already to be surrounded by love, kindness, and joy. Davie has forever changed my world. My heart and my brain cannot express the profound growth and love that I have experienced in relation with Davie. The angry and rage-filled twenty-six-year-old who started this doctorate could not imagine the strength and potential for community change that can come out of joyous love. When I first became enamoured of anarchism it was the celebratory, playful, and experimental nature of the ideology that swept me off my feet. It is only now, after meeting Davie, that I fully understand how one must engage with others and with themselves to create that joyful, playful, and beautiful experiment of anarchism and how enjoyable the journey can be if you remain committed to it.

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Participant Descriptions

Black Fly

Adrian – original purchaser of Black Fly (returns a few weekends per year)

Sky – original purchaser of Black Fly (returns a few weekends per year)

Brett – original purchaser of Black Fly (lives half the year in Maynooth, in a collective house)

Dragonfly

Devin – deed holder (resides just outside of Dragonfly)

Eli – deed holder (returns for a few weeks per year)

Frankie -non-resident (resides at Dragonfly)

Gray -resident (lived at Dragonfly for one year; partnered to Hayden)

Hayden – resident (lived at Dragonfly for first five years of their life and recently for one year; child of deed holder)

Lea – resident (has lived at Dragonfly for periods of a few months a few times since 2000)

Pat – resident (lived at Dragonfly as a child and intermittently for a few months at a time)

The Hill

Ira - owns plot near Middle Earth

Julian - deed holder and resident at Middle Earth; past long-time resident of Dragonfly

Maynooth and Lake Saint Peter Residents

Kelly – owns restaurant in Maynooth

Matti – has chocolate business in Maynooth

Taylor –resides just outside of Dragonfly with Devin

Val – local Maynooth resident, produces honey

Quinn -runs only local farm in Maynooth

Riley – local Maynooth resident

Sam – local Indigenous member of the Maynooth Community

Introduction: Searching for Anarchist Community Futures in the Rural

In 2008, I attended the First Anarchist Studies Network Conference in Loughborough, United Kingdom, where I would bring my initial thoughts about anarchism and rurality to anarchist peers.¹ At the opening plenary, the keynote speaker made the distinction between rural and urban revolts, stating that revolutions that came from rural spaces are necessarily reactionary, because they simply attempt to hold on to “how things were.” Really revolutionary movements, the speaker argued, to many nods in the crowd, come from cities. My initial interest in examining rural anarchism stemmed from an interest in the possibilities of creating alternative community futures to capitalism and oppressive state structures that emerge within the cleavages of poverty and economic decline that capitalism has caused in rural areas. The speaker addressed anarchism and rurality without consideration of the assumptions that went into his assertion.

I attended this conference because I viewed anarchist organizing as an entry point into creating anti-capitalist and stateless societies and because the mechanisms of building up community to take the place of capitalism and the state that anarchist theory proposed seemed tangible. I had found theoretical threads about small-scale community revolution amongst anarchists, however my personal interest in moving to a rural space to seek out this small-scale revolution seemed in opposition to the dominant narratives of anarchist revolution as comprising a tearing down of capitalist and state systems as a whole. The conference speaker perpetuated this narrative. Attending this conference early in the process of my doctorate created worry that I had grossly overlooked something in my research that this learned speaker knew too well; that to centre rural spaces as the site of revolution would be viewed as laughable among anarchist thinkers. I worried that my personal interest in a rural project had biased my research.

¹ Joanna Adamiak, “Conceptualising Rurality: An Anarchist Perspective on Rural Spaces and the Role of Small-Scale Agricultural Producers in the Social Revolution” paper presented at the *First Anarchist Studies Network Conference*, Loughborough University, Loughborough, United Kingdom, September 4-6, 2008.

However, it was also at this conference that I realized the importance of examining rural anarchism for the sake of rethinking capitalism in light of the ways that rural economies have been affected by global capitalism in particular. I was reminded of how many people continue to see rural spaces as backwards, yet I met many anarchists for whom rural spaces were the site of inspiration and hope for better environmental and community futures. When I presented my initial research many people in the room mentioned anarchist texts that bring up the subject of rural life and rural revolution. There seemed to be a gap between the anarchist goals of community-building and a history of anarchist consideration of rural spaces as sites of struggle, from the general consensus that moving to the country was equivalent to leaving the struggle for a better world behind. It became clear that anarchists have many ideas about rural community life and that many have been inspired by these ideas to create alternatives to capitalism and to the state, located in the countryside. I intend here to address this gap in anarchist theory and bring into conversation the visions of the future of disparate anarchists.

My dissertation project calls to question the idea of the rural as a backwards and reactionary place and addresses the theoretical and practical contributions of anarchism to reconsidering the rural as a site of revolutionary community-building and an alternative to capitalism and state formations. I explore how anarchist theory offers a more sophisticated vision of rural space through the principle of prefiguration, the belief that one must enact the kind of social relationships they anticipate and wish to see, drives anarchists to practice relationships where means and ends are the same.² I examine histories of intentional communities and link those histories to anarchist theories. I then use an empirical case study of two anarchist collectives to examine how these specific experiments of alternative community-building have operated in practice in relation to their anarchist principles.

² Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive: Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*, (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2008), 34-40.

Context

The keynote conference speaker did not explain why he believed that rural people had a desire to keep things as they were. In general I have observed a bias in scholarship about the rural that sees rural people and rural spaces as socially, politically, and economically conservative.³ As Raymond Williams pointed out in his famous work on the history of the romantic neo-pastoral, *The Country and the City*, idyllic rural life is often used as a reference point for a “restoration” of this idealized society in the future, even if the historical moment of an “end of the rustic simplicity” has no fixed date and is simply ambiguously years before the time of the author who addresses it.⁴ In the 1960s and 1970s academics became concretely focused on the effects of urbanization on rural areas and critical of life in cities. A growing literature on community change emerged that examined the shifting nature of rural areas in relation to cities; many concluded that the study of local communities was not as important as understanding larger urbanization phenomena perpetuating the view of rural spaces as anachronistic.⁵ I demonstrate this bias against the rural in my dissertation and then turn to a discussion of the political economy of rural spaces in North America.

Although the development of capitalism has had an impact on both city and country, it has not been uniform. The fact that capitalism produces spatial inequalities, as Ted Trainer suggests, is seen most overtly in the fact that the majority of the poorest inhabitants of the earth live in rural spaces.⁶ Proponents of global capitalism have celebrated the system for bringing

³ The view of rural space as the source of traditional values has the consequence of perpetuating the image of the rural as backwards. At the worst of times, the view of rural people is depicted in television and movies, as uncultured, crude, hillbillies. A slightly less pejorative depiction of rural folks has suggested that rural people are “simply more culturally conservative.” See Daniel T. Lichter and David L. Brown, “Rural America In Urban Societies: Changing Spatial and Social Boundaries,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 37, (2011)

⁴ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 9-17.

⁵ The most influential of these studies was Ronald Warren’s 1963 study that argued that a “great change” had occurred in rural communities because they were increasingly linked to larger society and urban spaces. See Ronald L. Warren, *The Community in America*, (Washington: University Press America, 1987).

⁶ Ted Trainer, *The Conserver Society: Alternatives for Sustainability*. (London: Zed Books, 1995), 75.

humanity to the “end of history” and for compressing space and time.⁷ Critics have also argued that time and space have been reduced due to the fragmentation and alienation caused by neoliberal globalization.⁸ As neoliberal global capitalism continues to develop and change, we see that space and place are far from irrelevant.⁹ As we learn from feminist and environmentalist scholars, place-based, grounded and local responses to capitalism are arguably the best way to undo the trajectory of globalization.¹⁰ Land and property cannot be overlooked when trying to create sustainable, long-term anti-capitalist and anti-colonial communities.

The keynote speaker also did not explain what he meant by revolution. This dissertation defines revolution as *social* revolution. Alexander Berkman best explained the idea of social revolution saying:

some revolutions change only the governmental form by putting a new set of rulers in place of the old. These are political revolutions. But a revolution that aims to abolish the entire system of wage slavery must also do away with the power of one class to oppress another. That is, it is not any more a mere change of rulers, of government, not a political revolution, but one that seeks to alter the whole character of society. That would be a *social* revolution.¹¹

In a social revolution, change and the end to oppression permeates every aspect of life, including economic, social, and interpersonal relationships. This form of revolution requires changing perspectives and dynamics as much as changing material conditions and institutions. As a result, anarchists focus on *the way* to eliminate exploitative and oppressive relationships and societies, prioritizing processes that are prefigurative.

Anarchist theories offer a more complex opportunity to examine rural spaces as sites of revolutionary change than other socialists. Marxists have been known for their rather

⁷ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York: Perennial, 1992).

⁸ Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*. (London: McMillan, 2000).

⁹ Doreen Massey, *For Space*, (Washington: Sage, 2005), 5.

¹⁰ Gerda Wekerle speaks of the importance of “holistic, locally-based, and decentralized communities” in “Reframing Urban Sustainability: Women’s Movement Organizing and the Local State,” R. Keil, G. Wekerle, and D. Bell (eds.), *Local Places in the Age of the Global City*, (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1996). See also, Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, (Malden: Polity Press, 1994); Carla Freeman, “Is Local: Global as Feminine: Masculine? Rethinking Gender of Globalisation.” *Signs* 26 (2001): 1008.

¹¹ Alexander Berkman, *ABC of Anarchism*, (London: Freedom Press, 1977), 34.

instrumental relationship with rural dwellers, especially in how they will serve the political revolution.¹² Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels argued that the tension between town and country has existed throughout all human societies but the development of capitalism made the countryside subservient to cities. They problematically conclude that this domination of the rural by urbanization “has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life.”¹³ David Mitrany argues that “[The German socialists] misunderstood and mistrusted everything rural and believed that the backward countryside would be a drag rather than a help on the triumphant socialist march.”¹⁴ Marx and Engels renounced rural spaces as backwards and uncomplicated in relation to cities because rural folk did not have wider social and economic interests like urban workers because they often owned land privately.¹⁵

Conversely, anarchists direct us to the possibilities of decentralization and localization and help us to look at rural spaces as possible sites of small-scale revolutionary responses to capitalism. George Woodcock points out that anarchism’s beginnings are rooted in rural space as the movement in its classical phase had more appeal to those outside of industrial work, like artisans, clergy, aristocracy and the *déclassé*, than it did to urban industrial workers.¹⁶ Radosław Antonów argues that in the pre-World War II period anarchist movements, the highest membership was in unindustrialized regions, especially attracting the rural agricultural producers and artisans who made up more of the membership than urban workers.¹⁷ Anarchist philosophy can help to examine rurality and these rural experiments specifically because anarchism offers a critique of the state as well as a celebration of distance from the state. According to anarchists,

¹² David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant: A Study in Social Dogmatism*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 85-86. Lenin’s revolutionary policy wanted to “neutralize” the peasants to prevent a counter-revolution and the revolutionaries wanted to ensure access to the peasants’ products for urban proletariats.

¹³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, (New York: Cosimo Press: 2006 [1848]), 46.

¹⁴ Mitrany, 48.

¹⁵ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, (New York: International Publishers, [1852], 1963).

¹⁶ George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, (Peterborough: Broadview, 2004), 414.

¹⁷ Radosław Antonów, *Pod Czarnym Sztandarem: Anarchizm w Polsce Po 1980 Roku* (Under the Black Flag: Anarchism in Poland After 1980), (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2004), 10.

self-organized communities can (and do) emerge anywhere, regardless of, and possibly because of, their seeming isolation from centres of power.

Intentional Communities (ICs) have also offered alternative social and economic forms to capitalism and globalization.¹⁸ Robert Lynd reminds us that if one looks to many historical rural communities in Canada one sees enduring and remaining commitments to cooperation, socialism, and community self-sufficiency as resistance to uniform urbanized society.¹⁹ My dissertation offers an empirical study of two anarchist ICs in order to examine practical experiments of anarchist rural community building. The fact that rural spaces drawn in anarchists leads to important questions: What parts of anarchist practices and theories speak to rural community building from anarchists' discussions of community, ecology, and property? How have anarchist ideas about non-hierarchical community organizing informed that practice of community building in rural spaces specifically? This dissertation will bring together literatures that do not often speak to one another, specifically about how small, alternative, rural communities respond to rural political economic changes within a specific settler colonial and capitalist context. By examining two anarchist rural ICs, I can investigate the specificity and complexity of how anarchists contribute to and interrupt notions of rurality as backwards as well as how decentralization and alternatives to capitalism in a rural context unfold, practically.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter One I contextualize the dominant perspectives on rural Canada and United States which suggest that rural spaces are conservative and backwards. I provide an overview of

¹⁸ My main focus will be on Intentional Community (IC) experiments, though I will provide a brief introduction to cooperatives in Chapter One. My reason for focusing on ICs over cooperatives is because of the ways in which ICs have envisioned a detachment from mainstream society that centres on acquisition of land is more pronounced than cooperatives with respect to self-sufficiency.

¹⁹ Robert Lynd, "Forward," in Seymour Martin Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan*, Revised and Expanded Edition, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 5.

scholarly literature about the political, economic, and ecological organization of rural spaces. Due to shifts in rural economic activities away from primary industries to service industries, scholars and governments treat rural areas as depopulated and empty. Feminist scholarship provides an alternative narrative about local spaces that proposes a different vision of rural communities as spaces of possibility. Following this overview of rurality as possibility, I describe how experiments of rural ICs both challenge and reinforce some of the narrow understandings of rural space and provide alternatives and options for challenging global capitalism and neoliberal state structures through the acquisition of land. I provide a history of ICs in North America and outline how ICs have responded to the political ecological context outlined in the first section and how they provide counter-narratives to the dominant perception of the countryside as empty. A short history of rural intentional communities situates my case study in the wider historical context and demonstrates how ICs have created alternative rural movements and narratives to the idea that the rural is backwards and apolitical. These examples of small-scale community building inform visions of the rural as a site of revolutionary change.

In Chapter Two, I present an anarchist intervention to the political, economic, and environmental conversation about rurality, demonstrating how anarchists have thought and written about returning to the land. While anarchists have at times contributed to the vision of the rural as backward, they have also created new visioning of rural space. Utopian and contemporary anarchists have opened up an understanding of rural life as a site of revolution, in part because they view rural life as a site of struggle within the system it opposes, not outside of it.²⁰ I then focus on some experiments of self-consciously anarchist rural movements in relation to that broader history. Last, I situate my research in anarcho-feminist methodologies and will describe both my research process and how it follows anarchist ethical commitments.

²⁰ Gustav Landauer, *For Socialism*, (New York: Telos, 1978).

Chapter Three contextualizes my case studies geographically and historically in Hastings County. I begin with a brief history of the Algonquin people who continue to use the land there seasonally as well as the systemic way that they and other Indigenous peoples were displaced from and dispossessed of those lands through colonization roads, industrialization, and mass immigration from Europe. Hastings County was perceived as harsher land from those colonial beginnings; the perception of difficult terrain meant that it was settled later than areas in what is today southwestern Ontario. Nonetheless, alternative community forms have been present in the area for some time; I give a history of anarchist organizing in Ontario to map out how interconnected anarchists are in the province and because of the relationships that began in the anarchist community in Ontario which led to the start of Dragonfly and later Black Fly. Last, I introduce Dragonfly, which began in 1978, Black Fly, which started in 2003, and the community in Lake Saint Peter which is referred to as “the Hill.”

My results are organized into three chapters. Chapter Four focuses on the narrative of what brought people to Maynooth, the community they founded there, and what belonging to community looks like in a rural setting. I explore the motivations of participants for moving to Hastings Highlands. Then, I discuss themes of community and belonging demonstrated by the othering of “locals” vis-à-vis alternative community members and how participants and members of the two ICs have created alternative community forms in Hastings Highlands that work to take care of people that include economic and anti-property supports.

In Chapter Five, I explore how rural anarchists contend with property relationships. Investigating how participants navigate the incompatibility between desiring an end to all private property and seeing private land ownership as a way to ensure a stable place in which to build alternative communities, the chapter outlines how the two ICs both recreate and unravel the power that comes with being a property owner through their by-laws, structures, and rules of engagement. Both collectives have created entrenched social economic relationships that have

positive material consequences of changing the power that comes with property ownership toward more anarchist ways of sharing space.

Chapter Six will examine how the perception of uninhabited rural land, or waste land, is a bridging point that perpetuates and reinforces environmental domination in ICs in Ontario and how an anarchist land ethic can move beyond this romanticization of the rural. I explore the correlation between ecology and colonialism through participants conversations about stewardship of the land. I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of the centrality and importance of grounded relationships with the environment and one's community in order to build relational anti-colonial and environmental ethics.

Anarchists have been portrayed in the media and throughout mainstream history as dangerous figures, clad in black clothing, setting off bombs, attempting to assassinate state heads, and bringing chaos and crime to an otherwise safe, calm, and secure society. These mainstream perceptions of anarchism erase all of the community-building work that most anarchists participate in on a daily basis (whether or not they also take part in black bloc action at global summits) and perpetuates the gendered division of labour with respect to what kind of work is valid, important, and revolutionary. The work of feeding people through programs like Food Not Bombs and ensuring that refugees and people with status can find refuge in cities is also the work of anarchism. As the dish towels of many of my friends aptly point out, "everyone wants a revolution, but no one wants to do the dishes!" The focus on urban anarchist experiences and experiments oversimplifies the view of anarchists and ignores a part of anarchist experiences and histories of community building that exist in rural spaces that follows the same line as the erasure of feminism. The chapters that follow aim to show that keynote speaker that there is important revolutionary work taking place in rural settings.

Chapter One: Dominant Discourses of Rural Political Economy and Intentional Community Counter-Narratives

In this chapter, I will discuss how the development of global capitalism and the entrenchment of private property relationships were fundamental to creating visions of depopulated and unoccupied rural areas which also contributed to ecological destruction.¹ Further, global analysis of rural spaces has erased the local specificities of rural ecologies, economies, and communities and have perpetuated the false vision of rural space as vacant or underdeveloped. Inaccurate perceptions of rural space provided an ongoing frontierism that legitimized exploitation and displacement of land deemed to be uninhabited for the purposes of private land accumulation. Since my case studies are located in Ontario and my interest is in showing the specificity of that rural space, I will aim to contextualize the Ontario rural landscape as much as possible. I aim to show that political economic, colonial, and ecological factors cannot be separated from each other in understanding how rural Ontario was established, specifically, and how rural communities are perceived in general.² First, I will explore the dominant discourses about rural political economy in the North American context to demonstrate how false perceptions of rural spaces in the United States and Canada were formed by academic studies of rural change. I will discuss both the United States and Canada because many of the changes that affected rural economies are similar; however, I prioritize data from Canada.

Second, I will show how rural communal forms have persisted throughout these economic

¹ I share Nicholas Blomley's perspective that private property is not simply the act of owning an inanimate object. Instead, I see it as a social relationship of power and control of those who own property over those who do not; it is enacted. Private property rights have a guarantee of protection from state encroachment in a way that few things do. The state is expected not only to protect an individual's private property, but also to compensate that individual should the state need to take or use the land. Further, private property in my use of it means land ownership, specifically. See, Nicholas Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property*. (New York: Routledge, 2004).

² I do not use the language of political ecology despite writing a dissertation that speaks to the indivisible relationship between politics, economics, and ecology. I have not engaged with the field of research that explicitly calls itself "political ecology" in any substantive ways. My research departs from mainstream understandings of political ecology as Paul Robbins defines it, that political ecology is the study of globally interconnected series of forces that, in Robbins words, "any tug on the strands of the global web of human-environmental linkages reverberates throughout the system as a whole." (13) Instead, I focus on specific, local, practices and relationships and how they constitute an alternative to global forces. For an overview of political ecology see Paul Robbins, *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction* (2nd Edition), (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

changes as an alternative to private property and capitalism that also require land and property. I will show how Intentional Community (IC) experiments offered local and small-scale counter-narratives to mainstream communities that are subsumed by capitalism, but that they also contributed to the perception of the rural as vacant because of entrenched settler colonial values and the settlement on land. There have not been nearly as many studies of Canadian ICs as American ones, especially those with anarchist roots, which is why I have focused on ICs in the United States more than Canada in the latter part of the chapter.

The Changing Economic, Environmental, and Cultural Landscape of Rural Spaces

The fact that capitalism is both an economic and social system is well documented.³ Scholars have been interested in the question of how the industrialization, urbanization, and modernization that came with the development of capitalism have affected local communities and social relationships since the mid-nineteenth century.⁴ Many Western scholars have suggested that in the years following the Second World War, cultural, economic, social, and technological changes “radically reshaped life at the local level.”⁵ I will describe how rural environments were altered socio-economically by these changes to show how the specificities of rural communities were flattened by this analysis and thus perpetuated generalizations about what the countryside looked like, namely an empty landscape that was dependent on urban areas.

³ Karl Marx, *Capital: An Abridged Edition*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into The Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations*, (London: Methuen and Co., 1776), Accessed 10 Aug 2017. <<http://www.econlib.org/library/Smith/smWN.html>>; Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. 2nd Ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001); David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Werner Bonefield and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds.). *Human Dignity: Social Autonomy and the Critique of Capitalism*. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005).

⁴ Within sociological research the interest in the effects of urbanization on society emerges from Ferdinand Tönnies and Emile Durkheim. See, F. Tönnies, *Community and Association*, Transl. C.P. Loomis, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955); Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, Transl. G. Simpson, (New York: Free Press, 1964). For pre-Second World War research see L. Wirth, “Urbanism as Way of Life,” *American Journal of Sociology* 44, (1938): 3-24. Of course, Marxist and anarchist thinkers were also very interested in the changes that were taking place with the Industrial Revolution and romantic and utopian thinkers, especially, have been preoccupied with the rural.

⁵ Jeffrey C. Bridger, A.E. Luloff and Richard S. Krannich, “Community Change and Community Theory,” *Persistence and Change in Rural Communities: A 50-year Follow-up to Six Classic Studies*, ed. A.E. Luloff and Richard S. Krannich, (New York: CABI Publishing, 2002), 9-10.

Demographic studies of rural change worldwide focus on the fact that rural spaces are becoming “depopulated.”⁶ However, this is only true in the Global North, since the worldwide population of rural people has been increasing steadily and is not expected to depopulate until 2050.⁷ In Canada, the majority of the population lived in rural areas until 1921.⁸ The rural population made up 39 percent of the whole Canadian population in 1950 and has since decreased. Rural populations currently comprise 19.3 percent of the overall population.⁹

Moving beyond demographic indicators of rural presence, how these communities changed with respect to economic and social factors became the focus of academic study in Europe and North America. In 1958 an influential study by A.J. Vidich and J. Bensman, *Small Town in Mass Society*, argued that the increasing influence of “mass society” from outside small communities was speeding up the rate of change in local communities.¹⁰ The study contributed to a shift in attention from the previously central themes of persistence and the “stable and predictable aspects of local life” in small communities, to the changes taking place in rural communities.¹¹ In the 1960s and 1970s sociologists became more concretely focused on the effects of urbanization on rural areas, and also more critical of life in cities. A growing literature on community change emerged, the most influential of which was

⁶ According to the United Nations Population Division, worldwide, rural people made up 3.4 billion inhabitants (46 percent of the population) in 2014, a drop from having a slight majority (51.3 percent of the population) in 2005. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division: *World Urbanization Prospects, the 2014 Revision: Highlights*. New York, 2015. Accessed 12 August 2017. <<https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf>>

The language of “depopulation” or “exodus” is often conjured when discussing rural demographics. For example, see: Stephen G. Perz, “The Rural Exodus in the Context of Economic Crisis, Globalization and Reform,” *The International Migration Review* 34, No. 3 (Autumn, 2000), 842-881. See also,

⁷ The fact that rural populations are not actually declining in numbers was a surprise to many people with whom I spoke while conducting research. The assumption that rural folks are migrating in large numbers to the city has altered perceptions of how populated rural areas actually are.

⁸ Statistics Canada, “The Long-term Trends: Census Rural Population,” Accessed 8 August 2017, <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/21-006-x/2007007/6000461-eng.htm>>

⁹ United Nations, <<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/unup/p2k0data.asp>>

¹⁰ A.J. Vidich and J. Bensman, *Small Town in Mass Society*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958).

¹¹ Bridger, et al., 9.

Ronald Warren's 1963 study that argued that a "great change" had occurred in rural communities because they were increasingly linked to larger societies and urban spaces.¹²

A.E. Luloff and Richard Krannich note that as the twentieth century came to a close, there was renewed interest in the importance of rural communities.¹³ Furthermore, they argue that Warren's, and others' findings of massive changes to community structures may have been premature and overstated.¹⁴ These studies focused on the social and cultural effects of capitalism, however they did not explain the political economic reasons for those changes nor the colonial roots of that development. I believe that understanding the economic and colonial context is necessary for understanding this social context. The argument that rural communities experienced cultural and social change are overstated, while the economic reasons for rural integration with urban areas were underdeveloped and failed to name the development of capitalism in a settler colonial context as the main cause of change to rural areas. For this reason, I will address the political economic history of Canada and Ontario from the period of the entrenchment of settler colonialism in the late 1800s to the present to demonstrate the effects that colonization and industrial development had on the development of the North American countryside, especially in Ontario.¹⁵ Urban industrial expansion is closely connected to rural economic changes. Using the agricultural sector as the main, but not sole example, I will demonstrate how the rural economy has changed in Canada since colonization from the beginning of the eighteenth century to present day.¹⁶

¹² Ronald L. Warren, *The Community in America*, (Washington: University Press America, 1987).

¹³ A.E. Luloff and Richard S. Krannich, "Introduction," *Persistence and Change in Rural Communities: A 50-year Follow-up to Six Classic Studies*, ed. A.E. Luloff and Richard S. Krannich, (New York: CABI Publishing, 2002), 2.

¹⁴ Bridger, et al., 17.

¹⁵ Helen Cowan. *British Emigration to British North America: The First Hundred Years*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 15. Cowan explains that until the 1800s there was no interests on the part of Britain to set up a market in land. When that did happen, settlement grew exponentially

¹⁶ Extractive and manufacturing industries shaped the landscape of rural Ontario. Recently, the service economy has impacted rural spaces most significantly as this industry accounts for an increasing proportion of rural work.

The Rural Economy: Industry, Labour, Consumption, and Tourism

I aim to draw the reader's attention to the fact that rural does not equal agricultural, despite the persistent assumption that rural spaces are areas of just one, specific, kind of economic activity, where the rural inhabitant is a farmer and nothing else —something Matt Reed refers to as “farmer exceptionalism.”¹⁷ In fact, jobs in extractive industries, manufacturing, and service have been increasingly central industries in the Canadian countryside.¹⁸ In Ontario, farming accounted for a larger portion of labour in rural areas from the 1800s, by design. The farmer exceptionalism found in discourses of rurality emerges out of a history of dispossession of Indigenous people of their land that is tied to ecological relationships.

Alfred Crosby and Tom Griffiths et al. offer insight into the intersection between ecological domination and colonization of the Americas. Crosby in a book by the same title, describes how Europeans were able to colonize through “ecological imperialism,” not military warfare.¹⁹ In their edited book, *Ecology and Empire*, Griffiths and Libby Robin take Crosby's thesis to demonstrate examples of settler colonialism in the world that show how ecological imperialism was part of the success of European colonization worldwide.²⁰ Colonizers, who came with animals, plants, and diseases that impacted the whole ecosystem of colonies, ensured that colonizers were successful.²¹ Furthermore, Robin explains that the introduction of “ecology” as a science was one of the tools of colonizers in their efforts to make the natural world an economic resource for the new imperial powers, giving them control and ownership over these natural places.²²

¹⁷ Matt Reed, “The Mobilisation of Rural Identities and the Failure of the Rural Protest Movement in the UK, 1996-2001,” *Space and Polity* 8, no. 1 (April, 2004): 33.

¹⁸ Phillip Hansen and Alicja Muszynski, “Crisis in Rural Life and Crisis in Thinking: Directions for Critical Research,” *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 27, no. 1 (1990): 1-22.

¹⁹ Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²⁰ Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

²¹ Griffiths, “Introduction,” *Ecology and Empire*, 3.

²² Robin, “Ecology: A Science of Empire?” *Ecology and Empire*, 63-75.

Tony Fuller documents how resource extraction, logging specifically, was a tool of colonial forces. Ontario was woodland when Governor Simcoe began soliciting settlement in Ontario in the late 1700s to ensure the development of a British colony. Whole tracts of forest were cut down for new agricultural settlements and, by 1881, not a full hundred years later, the newly appointed Ontario Agriculture Commission was “shocked by the disappearance of the forests.”²³ Harold Innis details the centrality of the logging industry to the development of the Canadian economy, especially in developing an export market aiding the development of a national economy for Canada.²⁴ Meanwhile, Henry Nelles’ history of resource extraction in Canada shows how the use of crown propriety over resources found in the ground helped to establish a colonial hold on the land.²⁵ In Ontario, iron ore was one of the first minerals extracted from the earth by settlers, as early as 1800.²⁶ Gypsum, petroleum, copper, silver, and other minerals were also found in rural Ontario.

In Canada, and Ontario specifically, the clearing of forests made way for the expansion of agriculture as well as mining and factories. Family farms became the mainstay of agriculture and rural life in Ontario until recent decades, with a sharp decline occurring in the 1950s.²⁷ Most settlers in Ontario were from the United States, some United Empire Loyalists, but mostly poor migrants from Europe who could not pass up the offer of free land to anyone who was willing to settle in the new Canadian “wilderness,” or the drive to write a new history of the “settled” nation.²⁸ Settlers were given free land grants in Upper Canada and the Maritimes as early as 1624, but the majority of settlers did not

²³ Tony Fuller, “The Development of Farm Life and Farming in Ontario,” in Tony Fuller (ed.). *Farming and the Rural Community in Ontario: An Introduction*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 8.

²⁴ See Harold Innis’ famous work on the specific development of the Canadian economy, which he calls the “staples economy,” in *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, (Toronto: U of T Press, 1927).

²⁵ Henry V. Nelles, *Politics of Development: Forests, Mines, and Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941*, 2nd Edition (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, [1974] 2005)

²⁶ Donald Cranston, *A History of Mining and Mineral Exploration in Canada and Outlook for the Future*, (Ottawa: Natural Resources Canada, 2002), 1.

²⁷ Fuller, 2.

²⁸ Howard Palmer, *Land of the Second Chance: A history of ethnic groups in Southern Alberta*, (Lethbridge: The Lethbridge Herald, 1972), 14.

arrive until well over a hundred years later when the West also became available for settlement.²⁹

By the 1830s much of the colonial settlement of Southern Ontario was complete.³⁰ The landscape of rural Ontario farms was a mix of wild areas and cleared land; many farms were situated amongst remaining woodlots, which continued to make logging and producing wheat amongst the tree stumps viable.³¹ Ontario farmers' export products were made up of 50 percent wheat and flour until the 1860s.³² A dairy industry also developed between the 1870s and 1900.³³ J. McCallum suggests that "the agricultural sector was the fundamental force behind industrial development in non-metropolitan Ontario," making a link between rural development and the impact it had on economic development in urban areas as well.³⁴ Until the late 1870s, wheat was the main export commodity for all of Ontario.³⁵

Tobacco production has also had an important history in Ontario. Indigenous to the area, and grown by Indigenous communities, especially the Iroquois, for centuries serving as a staple of trade, it was not brought into production by settler agriculturalists until the mid-1800s.³⁶ In the 1920s tobacco production became a major cash crop in Southwestern Ontario and grew to account for 90 percent of Canadian tobacco production.³⁷ Reaching its highest production point between 1950 and 1960, tobacco

²⁹ The Doukhobors, a religious sect originally from Russia, were one group of Europeans whose settlement was aggressively sought because they made perfect settlers. The sect travelled in large groups and sought refuge from centuries of persecution all throughout Europe. Over seven thousand of them settled in the Canadian prairies in 1899. See Paul Avrich, "The Sons of Freedom and the Promised Land," *Russian Review* 21, no. 3 (1962): 264-276.

³⁰ Fuller, 4-7. Fuller argues that Ontario agriculture was almost entirely made up of farming that mixed subsistence with commodity production, of wheat mostly. Commercial farming in Ontario was largely a family business, with the whole family working along with a few hired workers and has been described to as having gone through its "golden age" from the late 1860s to 1910s.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2-6.

³² J. MacCallum, *Unequal Beginnings: Agriculture and Economic Development in Quebec and Ontario until 1870*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 4.

³³ Fuller, 9.

³⁴ McCallum. 9.

³⁵ Fuller, 11. Corn and canola began to take on a larger percentage of the Ontario production market in the 1970s. Today, 61 per cent of Canadian corn is produced in Ontario. Marie-Andrée Hamel and Erik Dorff, "Corn: Canada's Third Most Valuable Crop." *Statistics Canada*. 30 November 2015. Accessed 15 March 2018 <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/96-325-x/2014001/article/11913-eng.htm>> Soybeans are the most produced grain in Ontario, accounting for over three million acres of production in comparison to two million acres of corn and less than one million acres of wheat. Siva Mailvaganam, "Area, Yield, Production and Farm Value of Specified Field Crops, Ontario, 2012 - 2017 (Imperial and Metric Units)," *Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs*, 20 December 2017. Accessed 15 March 2018 <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/crops/estimate_new.htm>

³⁶ Peter Hessel, *The Algonkin Nation*, (Arnprior: Kichesippi Books, 1993), 39.

³⁷ Doug Ramsey and Barry Smit. "Rural Community Well-being: Models and Application to Changes in the Tobacco-belt

was a crop that employed thousands of people and, unlike many other agricultural products, promised high returns.³⁸ The production of tobacco is very resource-intensive and the tobacco belt, located in Norfolk County and eastern Elgin County in Southwestern Ontario, has experienced desertification since the early 2000s as a result. Furthermore, unpredictable temperature patterns that result from climate change have also caused many crops to fail from year to year. Finally, the control of tobacco production by the government forced many farmers to accept a buy-out in exchange for ceasing production, and the number of tobacco producing farms in Ontario is now fewer than 1000.³⁹

Major changes to rural agriculture and economy in Canada began to occur at the start of the twentieth century, when agriculture was directed towards export. Fuller suggests, “to this end farming has been nurtured from a ‘way of life’ toward the production of food as a business and has undergone some major structural changes in the transition.”⁴⁰ The quickly decreasing number of small farms in Ontario revealed the changing economic landscape of rural Ontario. Between 1911 and 2011 the number of farms in Ontario dropped from 212,108 to 49,600 in 2016.⁴¹ In Fuller’s words “the major trends have been towards bigger, more capital intensive, technologically oriented units of production.”⁴² A shift in economic production to Fordism changed the national landscape of production, agricultural and industrial.⁴³

Many rural areas in Ontario were treated as centres of raw materials by design, according to Nelles, who argues that “from the outset the region of what was to become Ontario had been thought of in proprietary terms. These ‘waste lands of the crown’ existed to be administered in the interests of the

in Ontario, Canada." *Geoforum* 33, no. 3 (2002): 367-384.

³⁸ A. Loughton, A. 1988. “Alternatives to Tobacco: there is No Magic Answer.” *Agrologist* 17 (1988): 15-16

³⁹ Ramsey and Smit, 379.

⁴⁰ Fuller, 12.

⁴¹ Siva Mailvaganam. *Ontario Farm Data*. Census, Last revised: 10 May 2017. Accessed 16 August 2017.

<<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/census/summary.htm>>.

In 1981, Fuller points out that there were just over 82,000 family farms in Ontario. (Fuller, 14.)

⁴² Fuller, 18.

⁴³ Terry Marsden, “Exploring A Rural Sociology for the Fordist Transition: Incorporating Social Relations into Economic Restructuring,” *Sociologia Ruralis* 32, no. 2-3 (1992): 226.

state, either as a source of war material, revenue, or as a repository for settlers.”⁴⁴ In the 1960s farmers were encouraged to transfer their land to other uses and take jobs in cities in a “people to jobs” initiative.⁴⁵ Daniel Lichter and David Brown argue that since the 1960s, the rural economy “has been offset by new jobs commonly associated with urban economies, especially manufacturing employment, in which rural workers account for a larger percentage than urban workers.”⁴⁶ Anthony Winson and Belinda Leach, in their account of the effects of economic change in rural areas on community, document how the decline in manufacturing work in rural areas saw a short increase in the 1990s with the development of auto parts factories and meat-packing plants in rural areas, but in Ontario, that increase was short-lived.⁴⁷ More recently, jobs in manufacturing and resource extraction in rural Canada have been largely replaced by more precarious and lesser-paying service jobs as the primary labour industry. Service and other precarious jobs tend to be performed by women more often.⁴⁸ Winson and Leach document how the service economy has been almost the sole sector in Canada in which jobs have been created since 1967, accounting for 90 percent of job growth.⁴⁹

Neoliberal globalization came with revolutionary speed in the Global North in the 1980s.⁵⁰ The impact of these changes was to further “disembed” the economy from government and societal structures.⁵¹ David Harvey argues that the impact of neoliberalism has been to increase the amount of work that is done through market transactions and the “commodification of everything.”⁵² This

⁴⁴ Nelles, 2.

⁴⁵ Fuller, 36.

⁴⁶ Daniel T. Lichter and David L. Brown, “Rural America In Urban Societies: Changing Spatial and Social Boundaries,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 37, (2011): 580.

⁴⁷ Anthony Winson and Belinda Leach, *Contingent Work, Disrupted Lives: Labour and Community in the New Rural Economy*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 38-40.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵⁰ Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Regan used their interpretation of Adam Smith to defend national and global economic policy changes that would create a “free market.”

⁵¹ The idea of a “disembedded” economy came from Karl Polanyi who was writing about the disembedding of the economy from societal and cultural checks under capitalism that moves away from pre-capitalist economies in which the economy was embedded in the fabric of society. See, Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. 2nd Ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001)

⁵² David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 165-172.

disembedding has disproportionately affected women as they continue to carry the burden of social reproduction and care work in society.⁵³ The work of providing services to meet commodified social needs in the informal market have shifted from white wives, who are now employed in the formal economy, to lower-class female migrants of colour.⁵⁴ This gendered division of labour under neoliberalism has been increasingly “hidden” in the economy.⁵⁵

In the rural context, Crosato and Leipert have documented the gendering effects of decreasing government services and of globalization.⁵⁶ They show that informal caregiving has increased in rural Canada due to government changes to healthcare and an aging rural population, and that this work continues to be done predominantly by women. Further, rural women work more often in precarious, part-time service jobs.⁵⁷ While job options in rural areas are becoming less permanent and lower-paid overall, women are more likely to be passed over for better paying jobs. Winson and Leach also point out that rural women are more likely to start small one-person businesses in an effort to create work for themselves.⁵⁸ The fact is that despite a sense that neoliberalism has forced all relationships to take place via the market, there continue to be social networks and economies that do not use the market. This informal and unpaid work is not prestigious and often not a choice but persists nonetheless and

⁵³ In speaking about the impact of neoliberal policies and changes to social services, through a political economy perspective this paper will address the reality that despite a lack of innate characteristics between men and women, there remains a discrepancy and a gendered division of labour in the world. It is outside the scope of this dissertation to discuss problems with the gender binary system. I use “women” and “men” here to include those who were not assigned those roles at birth. For a deeper discussion of gender see, Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*, (Vancouver: Psychology Press, 2004)

⁵⁴ Anne Marie Goetz, “Feminism and the Claim to Know: Contradictions in Feminist Approaches to Women in Development” in Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland (eds.), *Gender and International Relations*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 133-134. Goetz underlines that the process of incorporating certain (white, European) women into the market has made reproductive work more invisible, both because many women who are hired to do the work are often undocumented workers and because the work is often done through the informal economy.

⁵⁵ Brigitte Young, “The Mistress and the Maid in the Globalized Economy.” in Leo Panitch (ed.) *Socialist Register 2001*. (London: Merlin Press, 2001), 323-327. Young suggests that social reproduction under global capitalism intersects with race and class, since the jobs that have been viewed as “women's work” are increasingly done by poor women of colour.

⁵⁶ K.E. Crosato and B. Leipert “Rural Women Caregivers in Canada,” *Rural and Remote Health* 6, (2006): 520. Accessed 19 August 2017, <<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/subviewnew.asp?ArticleID=520>>

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather, “The Double Bind: Being Female and Being rural: A Comparative Study of Australia, New Zealand and Canada.” *Rural Society* 8, no. 3 (1998): 209-221.

⁵⁸ Winson and Leach, 29-30. Canada has the second highest incidents of low-paid work that is done by women of all Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries with 34 percent of low-paying work being done by women.

demonstrates that other social relations take place. Rural areas continue to be the sites of work and economic activity in Ontario even if formal economic activity is shifting away from manufacturing, yet rural areas continue to be identified as spaces of consumption and unaltered natural areas.

Due to the persistence of rural idyllic imagery, consumption is not understood as the other half of an economic exchange. As opposed to seeing tourism and the services associated with tourism as economic activities for local people, they are seen as activities for urban folk in rather uninhabited spaces.⁵⁹ Gary Green argues that it is those rural areas that cater to consumption lifestyles that fare best economically.⁶⁰ As manufacturing industries moved from rural areas to suburban areas, the focus of “development” policies for socioeconomically depressed areas, found largely in the rural, has been on encouraging amenity-migration of urban populations for tourist consumption as “landscapes of consumption,” history, or natural beauty.⁶¹ For example, in 2005 the Ontario government set the Greenbelt Act and Greenbelt Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) in motion, which aimed to protect rural-urban fringe areas from residential and commercial development in order to preserve ecological spaces as well as rural economic and social interests around the Toronto area.⁶² The creation of greenbelt areas draws our attention to the instrumental use of rural and non-urban space, but also to the environmental consequences of traditional rural economic activity.

In more recent history, due to concerns about the end of the availability of petroleum and other sources of energy, rural areas have again become the sites of energy extraction, both sustainable and

⁵⁹ The idea that rural spaces are sites of urban leisure and pleasure and not of economic production were identified by Michael Bunce in, *The Countryside Ideal: Anglo-American Images of Landscape*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 111-140. For a more recent discussion of the leisure culture in Ontario and Quebec see, Nik Luka, "Contested Periurban Amenity Landscapes: Changing Waterfront 'Countryside Ideals' in Central Canada." *Landscape Research* 42, no. 3 (2017): 256-276.

⁶⁰ Gary Green, “Amenities and Community Economic Development: Strategies for Sustainability,” *Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy* 31, no. 2 (2001): 62.

⁶¹ See G. Ritzer, *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption*, (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge, 2005).

⁶² Hugh J. Gayler, “Ontario’s Greenbelt and Places to Grow Legislation: Impacts on the Future of the Countryside and the Rural Economy,” in Greg Halseth, Sean Markey, and David Bruce (eds.), *The Next Rural Economies: Constructing Rural Place in Global Economies*, (Cambridge MA: CABI Publishing, 2010), 75-88.

not. Lichter and Brown argue that “most solutions to national energy problems reside in rural areas.”⁶³ Energy sources are most often found and extracted from rural land. For example, ethanol, wind power, and hydraulic fracturing have expanded significantly in rural areas. The development of tar sands in Canada as well as pipelines to transport petroleum have altered the landscape of rural space and raised further environmental and environmental justice concerns.

Government policies contribute to this specific image of the rural with their use of the rural to establish what I will call “undesirable infrastructures.” Mega-prisons, Indigenous reserves, and industrial developments are often constructed in extremely remote rural areas to keep people and industries that are not wanted by some people in society out of desirable areas or, the “dumping ground” of cities, sometimes called “locally undesirable land use (LULUs).”⁶⁴ Treating the rural as a dump and turning it into a waste land has the consequence of increased environmental racism in rural areas.⁶⁵ Lichter and Brown call these sites “environmental disamenities.”⁶⁶ According to one study, the creation of prisons and hazardous waste storage sites has not caused out-migration from some rural areas.⁶⁷ This perception of the rural as a dump connects directly with themes of environmentalism and colonialism in rural spaces, which I will address in greater detail in the next chapter.

Breakdown of Autonomy and Community: Infrastructure, Government Services, and Local Power

Treating the rural as a site of consumption, tourism, and recreation has a political impact on residents who reside and work in these areas. In the 1980s Jackie Wolf studied the fears of local communities of loss of local power in relation to the provincial government, in Ontario specifically.⁶⁸ Wolf notes that

⁶³ Lichter and Brown, 581.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 582.

⁶⁵ R.D. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*, (Boulder: Westview, 2000)

⁶⁶ Lichter and Brown, 583.

⁶⁷ Lori M. Hunter and Jeannette Sutton. "Examining the Association Between Hazardous Waste Facilities and Rural "Brain Drain"." *Rural Sociology* 69, no. 2 (2004): 197-212.

⁶⁸ Jackie Wolfe, "Community Participation in Rural Land Use Planning," in Fuller (Ed) *Farming and the Rural Community*

political power of rural people in Ontario has dwindled because of the decreasing proportion of the provincial population residing in rural areas. The consequence of the percentage of the population shifting to urban areas when we look at democratic representation in a first-past-the-post electoral system is that rural votes count for less.⁶⁹ Krannich and Luloff suggest that rural communities that have persisted are ones that have either received government funding to provide incentives for financial investment in the area, offering urban tourists something to visit, or an in-migration of new, mostly urban, residents to revive the community.⁷⁰

Limiting government services in rural areas has impacted the physical landscape of rural space. Post offices, schools, and other state institutions are slowly being closed down in many North American and European rural towns. In Ontario, Fuller argues that these closures have been coupled with an active provincial policy to develop farming as a business, especially after the 1950s, which contributed to a depopulation of these rural spaces.⁷¹ In some villages in Canada, the post office is the last governmental office in the community.⁷² As a general trend, Lichter and Brown point out that there is a shortage of transportation in rural areas, little daycare, and very few government employment services for locals.⁷³ The fact that social services such as health care, education, and childcare have been reduced has disproportionately affected women who, because they are still disproportionately expected to care for children and aging or sick family members, have to meet these needs themselves. Young argues that as “long as most welfare states are reluctant to provide, and are in the process of scaling back, the support structure for working women, the conditions upon which women enter ‘male work structures’ are still gendered.”⁷⁴ The rationale offered for dwindling government resources is that

in Ontario: An Introduction, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 269-295.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁷⁰ Krannich and Luloff, 175.

⁷¹ Fuller, 21.

⁷² John R. Parkins and Maureen G. Reed (eds.), *Social Transformation in Rural Canada: Community, Cultures, and Collective Action*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013).

⁷³ Lichter and Brown, 578.

⁷⁴ Young, 316.

many people who live in these rural areas are amenity migrants who sometimes work from their cottage but have jobs or other homes in the city, traveling between the two often, contributing to the perception that rural spaces are not sites of economic activity and simply recreational places for urbanites.⁷⁵

Warren's "Great Change" thesis argues that local community autonomy and self-reliance are eroded by communities' increased interaction with outside institutions and economies, specifically through extra-local governments and corporations.⁷⁶ Lichter and Brown, in a recent review of the literature on the relationship between urban and rural life, suggest that many scholars conducting research about the changing nature of rural spaces contribute to a current theoretical paradigm, which argues that the greatest change within rural spaces is the loss of community and autonomy.⁷⁷

An interesting counter-narrative to the political economic realities in rural North America has been to see rural areas as a protected area of traditional values articulated through the argument that economic shifts do not affect rural areas as centrally as they affect urban areas.⁷⁸ Paul Cloke has critiqued this vision of the rural and argued that it perpetuates a "deterritorialized rural," constructing a perspective of rurality that neglects "the material dimensions of the rural condition that have a real impact on the experiences of people living, working and playing in rural space."⁷⁹ In a 1996 study, Logan found that Americans were increasingly looking to rural areas as the holders of American values "precisely because of what may have been lost in the city as a result of massive urbanization."⁸⁰ The pervasive view that rural residents live simpler, more family-oriented lives is rooted in the perception

⁷⁵ Hannah Gosnell and Jesse Abrams, "Amenity Migration: Diverse Conceptualizations of Drivers, Socioeconomic Dimensions, and Emerging Challenges," *GeoJournal* 76 (2011): 303-322.

⁷⁶ Bridger et. al, 10.

⁷⁷ Lichter and Brown, 567. Others see this loss of autonomy because of the introduction of corporate agriculture and transnational investment. See: D.E. Albrecht, "The Industrial Transformation of Farm Communities: Implications for Family Structure and Socioeconomic Conditions," *Rural Sociology* 63, (1998): 51-64; L.M. Lobao and K. Meyer, "The Great Agricultural Transition: Crisis, Change, and Social Consequences of Twentieth Century US Farming," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, (2001): 103-124; A.C. Vias, "Bigger Stores, More Stores, or No Stores: Paths of Retail Restructuring in Rural America," *Journal of Rural Studies* 20, (2004): 303-318.

⁷⁸ Lichter and Brown, 568. m

⁷⁹ Paul Cloke, *Handbook of Rural Studies*, cited in Woods, "Rural Geography," 851.

⁸⁰ J.R. Logan, "Rural America as a Symbol of American Values," *Rural Development Perspectives* 12, no.1 (1996): 19-21.

that most rural dwellers continue to work on small, family-run farms and that rural spaces thus have “insulation from economic assaults.”⁸¹

I strongly disagree with this assessment. There were and continue to be material consequences of economic changes on rural areas that may impact the political and cultural practices of rural inhabitants; these consequences are not dissimilar from the impact of these political and economic changes on urban areas. The fact that many of the economic changes that Warren’s Great Change thesis alludes to were already in full swing in the early eighteenth century and suggests that the romantic vision of idyllic rural community life has held deep sway in academic circles as much as elsewhere.⁸² However, to argue that the lack of a rural idyll means that no differences exist between rural and urban communities is to give too much credence to the positive discourses of the hegemony of urban globalization and global capitalism. Instead, we might look to the specificities of local places and spaces in their attempts at undoing capitalism and oppressive state structures to understand how communities are working to dismantle them, especially the work of feminist and anarchist economists who have worked to demonstrate how local alternatives to global capitalism have persisted.

Feminist and Community Responses

Feminist and environmental scholars have drawn our attention to the fact that fixating on the global impacts of economic change and describing areas, such as the rural as one uniform space can perpetuate and support the hegemonic power of capitalism and nation state structures.⁸³ As J.K.

Gibson-Graham points out, the current economic system needs both a material body and an ideology to

⁸¹ Lichter and Brown, 569.

⁸² Bridger et al., 15. Bridger et al suggest that Warren’s thesis might have lacked a historical context and thus leaving readers to believe that the Great Change only happened in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when economic change occurred much earlier.

⁸³ Stefan Kipfer looks at global sustainability in his article, but his argument can be understood more widely as global standards tend to perpetuate global capitalism. See Stefan Kipfer, “Whose Sustainability? Ecology, Hegemonic Politics, and the Future of the City,” *Local Places in the Age of the Global City*, 117-124.

keep it going. The language of the “economy” has been infiltrated by a particular discourse that naturalizes neoliberalism, especially, as the only way to run an economy.⁸⁴ For Gibson-Graham, the importance of breaking from a perspective of capitalism as a “large, durable, and self-sustaining formation, relatively impervious to ordinary political and cultural intervention,” would mean that “some Herculean and coordinated struggle” would no longer be necessary to replace it.⁸⁵ The global level of analysis not only makes the problem of changing capitalism insurmountable, it also overlooks the very local effects of such a system, which normally must be addressed by women and racialized people. Richard White and Colin Williams argue that based on their research with hundreds of British participants, “the economic landscape of the western world should be more properly understood as a largely non-capitalist landscape composed of economic plurality, wherein relations are often embedded in non-commodified practices such as mutual aid, reciprocity, co-operation and inclusion” because less than half of the time spent by westerners is part of the formal economy and paid.⁸⁶ Gibson-Graham calls for a break in the global-local hierarchy and calls for the potential to bring change at the local level, where they argue it must fundamentally begin.⁸⁷ To challenge capitalism as something partial at local and proximate instances empowers individuals and local communities to contest it and constitute alternatives on a daily basis.⁸⁸

Luloff and Krannich argue that not enough attention has been paid to the local community cohesion that remains in rural communities. In their study of six rural communities, fifty years after they were originally part of a case study in 1940, they found that despite economic, social, and demographic changes to the areas, there has been a sustained and persistent presence of political and

⁸⁴ J.K. Gibson-Graham. *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*. (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996) xi.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁸⁶ Richard J. White and Colin Williams, "The Pervasive Nature of Heterodox Economic Spaces at a Time of Neoliberal Crisis: Towards a “Postneoliberal” Anarchist Future." *Antipode* 44, no. 5 (2012): 1625-1644.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, xxvi-xxvii.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 260-264.

social organization and community action.⁸⁹ Bridger et al. point out that “it is one thing to have increased access to the outside world; it is quite another to argue that the mere fact of this access has reduced the level and quality of interaction at the local level.”⁹⁰ It is the local experiments of community that show practical alternatives to neoliberal globalization and where I will now turn. By providing a wider overview of Intentional Communities in Canada and the United States, I will demonstrate how many alternative communal forms perpetuated simplistic visions of a depopulated rural. Further, a wider history will contextualize my case studies and Ontario ICs, both which will be discussed in the next chapter.

A Short History of Cooperatives and Rural Intentional Communities

Cooperatives have offered alternative political economic spaces in which to address economic needs outside of corporate and state power. It is not possible to give a detailed history of cooperatives here, but they merit mention because they demonstrate a manner in which anarchists and others have created alternate political economic forms to capitalism and the state and they are closely aligned with or were also ICs. Tom Cahill, in his article “Cooperatives and Anarchism: A Contemporary Perspective,” explains that cooperatives were always, “local and community-based” in their orientation and he defines them as self-regulating organizations that mobilized to meet basic economic, social, and cultural needs with the community through democratic and self-sufficient means.⁹¹ Seymour Martin Lipset documents the history of cooperatives by looking at the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the political party that would later become the New Democratic Party, in his book *Agrarian Socialism*.⁹² The party’s origins were agrarian, cooperative, and socialist, first winning power in

⁸⁹ Krannich and Luloff, 173.

⁹⁰ Bridger et al., 16.

⁹¹ Tom Cahill, “Cooperatives and Anarchism: A Contemporary Perspective,” in David Goodway (ed.), *For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice*, (New York: Routledge, 1989), 237.

⁹² Seymour Martin Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan*, Revised and Expanded Edition, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 17.

The CCF would join forces with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) to create the National Committee for the New Party (NCNP), which would become the New Democratic Party (NDP), a social-democratic federal party.

Saskatchewan. Lipset argues that high levels of “community and occupational organization” among rural people were an important factor in their active involvement in political work.⁹³ Cooperatives are usually governed by common principles of each member having one vote, membership being accessible to employees, a sharing of profits among members, and the cooperative being autonomous.⁹⁴ Robert Owen, a well-known secular communitarian visionary, has been noted as the influential figure in the early development of cooperatives. Owen believed in the inherent goodness of human nature and that society simply had to be reshaped to recreate the goodness of people. As a result, Owen and his followers were much more interested in creating whole communities of cooperation.⁹⁵ Owenites believed that they could serve as “exemplary communities to model larger society,” but often distanced themselves from mainstream society to allow for the development and application of environments conducive to conditioning interpersonal relationships and behaviours that would create an example for larger society.⁹⁶ Owenite philosophy centered on “perfectly planned and organized communities of equality that would shape the character and behavior of residents.”⁹⁷ The Rochdale Pioneers, a British consumer cooperative, has been celebrated as the group who started the modern phase of the cooperative movement in the late 1800s in Britain.⁹⁸

Ontario has one of the largest cooperative sectors in the country, but also a persistence of the sector.⁹⁹ Ian MacPherson offers a history of the cooperative movement in English speaking Canada from 1900-1945 in his book, *Each For All*, documenting that the movement has persisted throughout those years.¹⁰⁰ He identifies that the beginnings of the cooperative movement in Canada started with

⁹³ Ibid., 18.

⁹⁴ Cahill, 247.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 238.

⁹⁶ Roberts, 14.

⁹⁷ Gutek and Gutek, 114-116.

⁹⁸ Cahill, 248.

⁹⁹ Jen Heneberry and Rachel Laforest, "Cooperatives and the state: The case of Ontario." *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research* 2, no. 2 (2011): 57-70.

¹⁰⁰ Ian MacPherson, *Each for All: A History of the Co-operative Movement in English Canada, 1900-1945*. (Toronto: Macmillan Press, 1979).

mutual insurance companies to the 1840s and in the 1850s in Ontario with cooperative creameries.¹⁰¹ Cooperative structures did not become widely established in Ontario until the early 1900s as marketing and purchasing organizations of agricultural producers. Province and nation-wide cooperatives emerged in the 1910s, with farming organizations such as the United Farmers of Ontario and the United Farmers' Cooperative; they remained a predominantly rural phenomenon until the 1950s, however agricultural cooperatives still numbered in the 1,000 in 2008.¹⁰² Finance cooperatives in the form of credit unions and Consumer cooperatives in the form of cooperative stores and wholesalers were also somewhat successful with the former developing in the 1910s and the latter in the 1920s. Worker and housing cooperatives became a force in Canada in the 1930s, first predominantly for mining families in the Maritimes and then for student housing in Ontario.¹⁰³ Health and energy cooperatives are some of the most recent additions to the movement and cooperatives in general have seen an increase since their decline in the 1990s.¹⁰⁴ Despite Lipset's conclusions, cooperatives continue to provide an avenue for local development of alternative economic relationships and jobs, like in agriculture for example. In Ontario, 6 percent of cooperative businesses are agricultural.¹⁰⁵

I agree with Cahill that cooperatives are important alternatives within the capitalist system that allow for anarchist economic activity to take place, but that they mostly offer only partial community alternatives in the sense that they do not offer an opportunity to disengage from capitalism and state structures in all aspects of life.¹⁰⁶ Lipset points out that increased political and economic interrelationship with cities that came with urbanization in the late 1940s and 1950s altered the social

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰² Ibid., 8-9; 18-20.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 25-33.

¹⁰⁴ Ian MacPherson, "The History of the Canadian Co-operative Movement: A Summary, a Little Historiography, and Some Issues," Presentation at the Annual General Historical Meeting, Stockholm, Sweden, November 2008, <https://www.socialeconomyhub.ca/sites/2Fsocialeconomyhub.ca/files/2FCdian%2520Co-op%2520History.doc&usg=AOvVaw2X4eIWQ4pHPlj8Ni_fiC56>

¹⁰⁵ George Karaphillis, Fiona Duguid, and Alicia Lake, *Economic Impact of the Cooperative Sector in Ontario*, 2010, Accessed 13 June 2018. <http://www.ontario.coop/cms/documents/1158/Ontario_Study_Text_Final_Nov_2015.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Cahill, 243-245.

cohesion and cooperativism of some rural areas.¹⁰⁷ Fuller points out that by the 1960s cooperatives had largely disappeared in Ontario, leaving only two cooperative agri-businesses on the scene: United Cooperatives of Ontario, and the Cooperators Insurance Company. These two businesses amalgamated in the 1970s to create a national insurance company.¹⁰⁸ My reason for focusing on intentional communities rather than cooperatives lays in the fact that cooperatives have offered less of a perceived all-encompassing alternative than intentional communities in two ways. First, cooperatives do not necessarily acquire land or property on which to practice alternative economic models. For my purposes the relationship between acquiring land and trying to create anti-capitalist futures is of central importance.¹⁰⁹ Second, as Uri Gordon suggests, intentional communities “are the most ambitious variant of anarchist economics,” because they allow for anarchist economies to be “practiced comprehensively, in all aspects of daily life, rather than as a specialized activity.”¹¹⁰ It is for the reason that ICs sought to encompass “all aspects of daily life” that I will focus on them more centrally in this dissertation, because of their promise to create whole communities outside of capitalism (whether or not that was achieved). I will now turn to a history of rural ICs. However, I will mention cooperatives when they involve land and holistic community-building.

Rural ICs have persisted historically throughout the world. Allan Butcher suggests that there have been examples of intentional communities since fifth century BC.¹¹¹ However, my mapping of

¹⁰⁷ Lipset, 364-365.

¹⁰⁸ Fuller, 22.

Today, most workers in mega-farms are likely to be underpaid, precariously employed migrants with precarious immigration status and often little documentation to allow them to stay in the country legally. The effect of such employment is that there is a shortage of sustainable employment opportunities in rural areas as workers are hired on temporary permits with little job security.

¹⁰⁹ Mikhail Bakunin also believed that acquiring land was necessary for cooperation to flourish. Although, of course, Bakunin also did not support decentralized hopes for revolution. He believed revolution would have to be all-encompassing and all land would have to be made common for capitalism to be brought down. See, Mikhail Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1873), 200-217.

¹¹⁰ See, Uri Gordon, “Anarchist Economics in Practice,” in Deric Shannon et al. (eds.), *The Accumulation of Freedom: Writings on Anarchist Economics*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2012), 209.

¹¹¹ Allan Butcher, “International and Historical Overview of Intentional Community,” (1989): 2. Accessed 30 June 2013. <<http://www.culturemagic.org/PDF/c2ICHHistory.pdf>>

Butcher writes about village ashrams in India prior to 500 B.C., self-sufficient Taoist communes in China.

this history will focus on a specific type of IC, mostly migrants to rural settlement in Canada and the United States. The history of settler colonialism in North America opens up an important framework for understanding the development of intentional community projects. The history I summarize here will address ICs in Canada and the United States since the late seventeenth century, which shows a specific moment in the two nations' settler colonial projects. I document American ICs for two related reasons. First, due to the more aggressive colonization that occurred in the United States with the eradication of higher populations of Indigenous people and more concerted efforts to displace them, I want to show how the perception of vacant and uninhabited land was entrenched in the minds of American settlers. Further, with land being more quickly emptied of Indigenous populations, I believe that the United States had a stronger presence of ICs. As a result, especially in instances when there are few historical accounts of Canadian ICs from that period in order to show the reader that ICs have been an active community form throughout history. Further, I will emphasize communities that emerged after 1968 out of the specificity and scale of that historical moment with respect to IC development, and the influence it had on my case study ICs.

I would like to quickly contextualize and address the term rural "intentional community" and show how it is related to other terms, such as the commune or the utopian community. ICs can loosely be grouped by their practical manifestation of a desire for different futures. Anarchists would call this attempt at manifesting what one wishes to see in the future "prefiguration."¹¹² Shukaitis explains the logic of prefiguration: "The social relations we create every day prefigure the world to come, not just in a metaphorical sense, but also quite literally: they truly are the emergence of that other world embodied in the constant motion and interaction of bodies."¹¹³ I would take the use of "present" to include a

¹¹² There is a heated and long-standing argument between anarchists about the importance of prefiguration in everyday life outlined as the difference between "lifestylism," and "social," anarchism. For a crude explanation of this argument see, Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*, (San Francisco: AK Press, 1995).

¹¹³ Shukaitis, Stephen. *Imaginal Machines: Autonomy & Self-Organization in the Revolutions of Everyday Life*. (London: Minor Compositions, 2009), 143.

spatial orientation and not just a temporal one. The pursuit of a different life can either be a desire to be free to live a communal life, or desire born of one's feeling that one is not in the proper environment in which to pursue the kind of community life one wants.¹¹⁴

Communes and ICs are interchangeable terms, according to Ronald Roberts, who proposes that ICs can be defined as groups that are a subclass of utopias, which reject current society and accept social experimentation as the means through which to change society.¹¹⁵ While this describes some of the anti-authoritarian communities that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century, as well as many of the hippie communes of the 1960s and later, the definition does not leave room for many ICs, especially long-established religious ones, like the Doukhobors and the Hutterites. For these communities no "experimentation" is involved, but commitment to community life is central to their lifestyle, beliefs, and established social practices. Religious ICs should be included in the definition.

Roberts suggests that communes attempt to change the social structure in which they find themselves.¹¹⁶ McLaughlin and Davidson use the term "conscious community" to delineate a group of people living near one another or living together with a common purpose and sharing resources.¹¹⁷ The Fellowship of Intentional Communities (FIC) defines intentional communities as those that allow members to leave the community at any time, to differentiate them from cults, and identify as non-violent.¹¹⁸ An ecological component to the community is often present in identified ICs, at least those

¹¹⁴ Rosabeth Kanter's distinction between retreat and service communes might be useful to helping us understand the diverse communities that can be found in rural areas. Kanter describes retreat communes as those that are less driven by common ideals and more centralized around a rejection of society at large. Service communes, according to Kanter, are those, which see themselves as being a part of a bigger society and having "something valuable to offer society." Abrams and McCulloch suggest that there are four types of communal projects: quasi-commune, utopian community, purposive commune, and the secular family commune. Of interest is the quasi-commune type, which the authors suggest is impermanent *by design*, because its purpose is to allow people to gather for a time in order to have a space to brainstorm and think together. See: Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 191-192; Phillip Abrams and Andrew McCulloch, *Communes, Sociology, and Society*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 35-40; Gilbert Zicklin, *Countercultural Communes: A Sociological Perspective*, (Westport: Praeger Publications, 1983), 32.

¹¹⁵ Ronald E. Roberts, *The New Communes: Coming Together in America*. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 10.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹⁷ Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson, *Builders of the Dawn: Community Lifestyles in a Changing World*, (Summertown: Book Publishing Company, 1995), 12.

¹¹⁸ Fellowship of Intentional Communities, "Mission and Vision," (undated), Accessed 2 October 2013,

acknowledged by FIC. Since the term “intentional community” has been accepted by some social scientists as an umbrella term for other “utopian experiments involving communal or non-communal groups or social movements aimed at preserving a unique collective purpose,” I will use that term here.¹¹⁹ For my purposes, the term IC will be used for any group of people who establish a commitment to each other, whether by living together, or sharing land together that they use in common, with a common purpose.

There are a number of thorough histories of ICs in North America, especially the history of the migration of urban radicals to the countryside to begin rural intentional communities in North America and parts of Europe.¹²⁰ French rural ICs have even been depicted in graphic novels.¹²¹ My purpose in providing an overview of them here is to examine specifically how founders and participants in rural ICs engaged with the notion that rural spaces are temporally displaced – either seen as stuck in a historical past, or as unclaimed tracts of land that have not been touched by modern society – as well as alternatives to mainstream society. I will focus on exploring the different ideological and religious beliefs of these ICs, as well as aspects of social organization within them, rather than giving an exhaustive history of ICs.

Early American ICs have two streams, according to Gerald and Patricia Gutek: secular and religious. However, as the distinction is not always clear, there are sometimes spiritual aspects to ICs that are identified as secular.¹²² Religious ICs have had a tendency to endure longer than secular ones. Many religious ICs held the belief that their members “were separate and consecrated people who were

<<https://www.ic.org/the-fellowship-for-intentional-community/>>

¹¹⁹ John Friesen and Virginia Lyons Friesen, *The Palgrave Companion to North American Utopias*, (New York: Palgrave, 2016), 15.

¹²⁰ Timothy Miller, “The Roots of the 1960s Communal Revival,” *American Studies* 33, no. 2 (1992): 73-93. and John Davis and Anette Warring, “Living Utopia: Communal Living in Denmark and Britain,” *Cultural and Social History* 8, no. 4, (2011): 513–530.

¹²¹ A two-part graphic novel called *La Communauté* was popularly read in France. See Benoît Tanquerelle, *La Communauté, Vol 1 and 2*, (Paris: Futuropolis, 2008).

¹²² Gerald Gutek and Patricia Gutek, *Visiting Utopian Communities: A Guide to the Shakers, Moravians, and Others*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998) 1-3.

to live apart from a sinful world.”¹²³ These communities were often socially isolated, economically self-sufficient, and deeply indoctrinated with their religion.

Friesen and Friesen trouble the notion that religious ICs purposefully isolate themselves. In their sociological survey of ICs in North America, they argue “there is a tendency to conceive of enclaves as self-styled utopias of sorts when in effect many of them evolve due to socioeconomic pressures.”¹²⁴ Many religious ICs established in North America are said to have moved to and settled in Canada and the United States because they endured religious persecution in Europe, predominantly.¹²⁵ We saw in the previous section that part of the colonial project of settlement and justification for displacement of Indigenous populations relied on bringing in communities to inhabit rural tracts of land. From as early as the 1700s religious groups and other marginalized communities came to North America in search of freedom or as missionaries from Europe.¹²⁶ However, many of the new settler communities continued to face persecution once arriving on the North American continent; the cause was most often the IC’s moral opposition to pledging allegiance to the new government or refusing to participate in military service. Some communities, like Mennonites—a group emerging out of the Anabaptists—fled to Canada after facing discrimination in their new United States homes.¹²⁷ The Doukhobors, for example, fled to British Columbia after being displaced from Alberta.¹²⁸ Some communities were victimized for their community focus. Mennonites were pacifists who were displaced across Europe for their refusal to participate in conscription.¹²⁹ Canada welcomed

¹²³ Ibid., 2.

¹²⁴ Friesen and Friesen, 14.

¹²⁵ For example, Hutterite, Mennonite, Doukhobor, and Anabaptist religious groups more generally, fled Russia and Germany and found an invitation to settle rural Northern United States and the Canadian Prairies in late eighteenth century.

¹²⁶ Gutek and Gutek, 160. For example, the Swedish community of ex-Lutherans lead by Erik Jansson is one example of an IC that escaped persecution for their perceived heretical beliefs and built a community of over 1,500 members in Illinois.

¹²⁷ Roberts, 23-25. Others, like the Doukhobors faced challenges in maintaining their land in common and were forced to hold individual deeds if they wanted to hold onto the land that was promised to them.

¹²⁸ Miller, *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond*. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 30.

¹²⁹ Friesen and Friesen, 15. They fled to Canada and other parts of North America, almost a hundred years later for similar conflicts over their non-violent stance and refusal to participate in military service in Russia between 1870 and 1880.

approximately 7,500 people (over 1,300 families) into Manitoba in 1873.¹³⁰ Mennonites were not specifically seeking isolation and did not explicitly call for it in their teachings but moved to Canada to pursue their rural way of life without discrimination and, because they were farmers, were often placed in remote settlements by Canadian authorities.¹³¹

The diverse approaches of early religious ICs reveal a complex history of ICs in rural areas that diverge in perspective from modern mainstream ideas of what rural space contains. An Episcopalian IC called Fruitlands that was started in Massachusetts in 1840 was inspired by Quaker communities and sought to create an IC that overcame “the material world” and worked to reform society to be free from sexism and slavery. They believed that they could be self-sufficient by living off of the land.¹³² This IC saw the rural as a place to live a different kind of life, one that moved beyond the sexist and racist social structures they encountered in mainstream society. For those like the Doukhobors and Anabaptists, it was not a romantic notion of the past but a romantic notion of unused land and freedom to settle without discrimination that brought them. The lack of a backwards looking idyllic fantasy, however, did not mean that escape to isolated areas came without naïve or colonial perceptions of virgin land for the taking. For many ICs their retreat to rural areas was an attempt to withdraw from the world as though rural spaces were not part of the world.

Similar to religious ICs, secular communities have sometimes had to move to escape mistreatment for being perceived as deviants or breaking from local societal norms. For example, Koinonia Farm was an interracial community started in 1942 that attempted to respond to segregation of white and black populations.¹³³ This IC tried to address the economic disparity between black and white people in Georgia by creating a partnership IC that farmed and provided land and housing loans

¹³⁰ Roberts, 25

¹³¹ Private communication, Jan Gunther Braun, July 2013.

¹³² Gutek and Gutek, 143-146.

¹³³ Miller, *60s Communes* 171.

to members based on need. Koinonia was often the target of Ku Klux Klan attacks.¹³⁴ With the support of ICs from the Northern United States, Koinonia survived and continues today.¹³⁵ Other secular ICs simply fled what they believed were morally questionable or undesirable societal norms, and the pressures and values of mainstream society that persisted despite their attempt to remove themselves from it. One IC member said that, “to be left alone in this or any other country, one must seek a certain degree of political influence.”¹³⁶

Some ICs continued to view rural North America, especially the Western United States, as uninhabited space that was free for settlement and experimentation. Experimental ICs formed in the early nineteenth century took to the United States frontier, moving west “for land, freedom, and seclusion.”¹³⁷ Thomas Hughes, a British man, saw the Western United States as “an ideal location to settle talented young Englishmen who were unable to realize their career potential in England.”¹³⁸ He started the Historic Rugby community in 1880 in Tennessee for “educated younger sons of England’s landed gentry” to provide them with an open uncontrolled environment in which to start a new life. Perhaps not surprisingly, the community did not survive for long, as most of the migrants did not have farming skills and were not living on good farmland. Furthermore, Hughes’ debts kept the community underfunded.¹³⁹ While the project lasted only a few years, many similar projects would follow.

The Inter-IC Period

Generally believed to have died out between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1960s, ICs in North America dwindled in this period but did not disappear; most scholarship about ICs tends to overstate the level of decline in this period.¹⁴⁰ Miller argues that ICs continue to survive even with

¹³⁴ Roberts, 69

¹³⁵ Miller, *60s Communes*, 172.

¹³⁶ Cited in Roberts, 113.

¹³⁷ Melville, 35-36.

¹³⁸ Gutek and Gutek, 194.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Miller, *60s Communes*, xi.

drastic drops in their numbers because they are adaptive institutions by nature. The continuation of ICs, and the increase in their numbers during difficult economic times, suggests that they were an important component of community support in times of societal difficulty, as well as a current of community organization that persisted throughout various historical moments. Miller's study of inter-period ICs indicates that they have seen significant changes in form, ideology, and numbers since the first migrant communes of the 1800s, but communal forms have continued to exist throughout North America.¹⁴¹

Most notable of the ICs that persevered were the communities that actually grew in numbers like the Hutterite and Latter-Day Saints communities.¹⁴² Their numbers expanded so quickly in Alberta that the provincial government tried to limit their access to land purchase because they were perceived as expanding so quickly that independent and unaffiliated farmers were being squeezed out.¹⁴³ As I mentioned above, a number of economic cooperatives also emerged in this "inter-IC period," especially in the late 1890s and early 1900s, both rural and urban, emerged in response to economic hardships in the United States, chiefly following the Great Depression.¹⁴⁴

The boom of ICs in 1968

In the late 1960s the number of intentional communities exploded. Timothy Miller argues that these ICs took on a different form from those seen in the 1800s, with later ICs having a tendency "to be smaller, more democratically governed, and less rigid in structure, including economic structure."¹⁴⁵ Keith Melville also describes ICs of the late 1960s as smaller and "more anarchic" than their predecessors, valuing anarchist principles of decentralization, prefiguration, and self-determination and generally

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., 6-7. Hutterite ICs gained 350 colonies in the period of 1880 to 1930.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴⁴ Miller, *60s Communes*, 31. Two interesting non-rural anarchist-influenced IC that emerged in the inter-IC period, are the Catholic Worker and the Reba Place Fellowship. The latter was an ex-Anabaptist group that was started in Chicago in the 1950s that explicitly stayed in the city with the stated purpose of wanting to work where the social problems, especially poverty, were found. The connotation of this is that poverty is a problem that exists in cities, which most demographic reports would disprove. The Catholic Workers, an IC movement that worked to build community support in economically hard times, also made claims of anti-escapism and isolationism. Roberts, 65-80

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., xiv-xvi.

being comprised of younger people.¹⁴⁶ However, many ICs in the earlier period also valued these principles. According to Gilbert Zicklin, communal life in the 1960s did not, as earlier ICs did, have goals of transforming society or showing others that the harmonious living of the IC was desirable but simply “out of a need to find places where they could be at peace with themselves.”¹⁴⁷ Both Timothy Miller and Laurence Veysey’s studies on the subject indicate a different perspective to Zicklin’s, both arguing that goals of transforming society, and the priority given to moving to rural land, were central to 1960s ICs.¹⁴⁸ I argue that the imagery of rural space as unoccupied and depopulating, a consequence of changing rural economies in North America, was also influential in encouraging disenchanting urban hippies to move to remote rural communities.

Amidst the red scare in the United States, a consequence of the Cold War, many ICs were less publicly visible and developed a more diverse membership base out of a greater fear of repression for their communitarian or socialist ideology than their 1800s predecessors.¹⁴⁹ Veysey believes that the 1960s ICs were more interested in nature worship and physical remoteness from civilization, with a “secessionist impulse.”¹⁵⁰ Melville believes that North American ICs in the 1960s were the heart of the counterculture movement. He defines “counterculture” as “a refusal to share the dominant assumptions that are the ideological underpinnings of Western society...an attempt to move *beyond* affluence,” which was quite specific to Western society.¹⁵¹

Many 1960s ICs in Canada and the United States chose remote locations outside of cities, in

¹⁴⁶ Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life*, (New York: Morrow, 1972), 52.

¹⁴⁷ Zicklin, 1.

¹⁴⁸ Miller, *60s Communes*, 27; Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth-Century America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

¹⁴⁹ Not all ICs were progressive. The countryside in the United States has been known for serving as a space for right wing radicals to live their kinds of communities as well. Furthermore, some of the freethinking hippies of the 1960s would go on to build libertarian and conservative communities or even cults. For example, Charles Manson, who is famed for his cult and mass murder in Waco, Texas was well known in the 1960s IC circles as a back-to-the-land hippie before his IC project turned to a non-consensual and coercive cult. See Catherine McNicol Stock, *Rural Radicals, Righteous Rage in the American Grain*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1996).

¹⁵⁰ Veysey, 441.

¹⁵¹ Melville, 19.

line with the naturalist beliefs of many IC founders and members at the time, who felt that being in remote or unpopulated areas would protect them from the intervention of authorities as well as from the pull of mainstream society. Zicklin states plainly that, “communes were, at least at first, mainly a rural phenomenon.”¹⁵² Veysey shares this perspective and goes on to point out that the ICs that emerged in the 1960s idealized a simple life, “especially as lived in the wilderness, taking much of its tone from the effort to recapture an earlier reality.”¹⁵³ The troubling imagery of the rural as uninhabited wilderness and the perspective that rural settings are stuck in a previous historical past is palpable in this description that demonstrates how deeply entrenched colonial beliefs are among North American settlers.

Research shows that ICs have often not considered how the act of seeking out unused land might recreate the colonial project and act as a reassertion of some of the oppressive and exclusionary societal values of accumulation and colonization that ICs seek to escape.¹⁵⁴ In his description of the hippie ICs that emerged in the 1960s, Melville points out that “the American colonies held the hope of an earthly paradise. On virgin land they would return to the essentials, make new beginnings, and generate society.”¹⁵⁵

Henry David Thoreau, a champion of pioneering, continues to be the guru for back to the land projects that do not question frontierist visions of rural North America. Websites like “The Simplicity Collective,” problematically proclaim, “let us be pioneers once more.”¹⁵⁶ Thoreau moved alone to a rural tract of land claiming he had “private business” to attend to.¹⁵⁷ The private business he referred to has often been the basis of libertarians’ arguments for their right to private property. Timothy Miller, in his history of counter cultural ICs from the United States, argues that “the youth of the 1960s were not

¹⁵² Zicklin, 35.

¹⁵³ Veysey, 465.

¹⁵⁴ Roberts, 141.

¹⁵⁵ Melville, 34.

¹⁵⁶ The Simplicity Collective, “Thoreau,” (no date), Accessed 22 May 2017, <<http://simplicitycollective.com/thoreau>>

¹⁵⁷ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, (New York: Cosimo, [1854] 2009), 12.

the first American communitarians to be infected with back-to-the-land romanticism; in fact, that has been a major American communal staple.”¹⁵⁸

Melville suggests that escapism amongst hippies and intentional community participants is particular to American mentality and culture (and colonial beginnings, I would add). He argues that the move to create communes in rural spaces is “a quintessentially American trait, when conditions of communal life become intolerable the residents simply move elsewhere...with a rapid rate of turnover.”¹⁵⁹ The foundation of this belief lies in the understanding that there is land to move to that is uninhabited or, better yet, uninhabitable.

Morning Star Ranch, an IC started in 1966, in Sonoma County, California called for members to “get into nature.”¹⁶⁰ Feeding the perception that these ICs were started on land that had never been touched before, Zicklin describes ICs of the 1960s as removing themselves from the polluted environments of the cities for areas where “no habitation or structure of any kind had existed before the group’s arrival.”¹⁶¹ The desire to live in harmony with nature came with the desire to simplify life, including not using electricity. For example, Wheeler Ranch, started in Northern California in 1967, was committed to principles of voluntary primitivism. Gutek and Gutek argue that this kind of primitivism “could only evolve within an economy of abundance, such as the United States of America today.”¹⁶² Nancy Nesbit, in her book *Modern Utopia*, echoes this primitivist, romanticized idea of transitioning to living away from the unnecessary luxuries of mainstream society: “Although it seems hard to imagine, we can survive without electricity, central air conditioning, and modern plumbing facilities. We can move to the woods with nothing but a few basic supplies.”¹⁶³ Timothy Miller saw a close relationship between the environmentalism and voluntary primitivism of many 1960s ICs as an

¹⁵⁸ Miller, *60s Communes*, 7.

¹⁵⁹ Melville, 184

¹⁶⁰ Roberts, 48.

¹⁶¹ Zicklin, 35.

¹⁶² Roberts, 50-51.

¹⁶³ Nancy Nesbit, *Modern Utopia*, quoted in Miller, *60s Communes*, 152.

“attempt to step backwards from modernity into a primitive past.”¹⁶⁴ Technology was seen as a symptom of affluent modern culture and rejecting it was common among hippie ICs. Often a refusal to use technology was not explored in urban communities but was a regular feature in rural ICs.

According to Melville, there were two dominant camps in the counterculture: “the hippies” and “the activists.” Activists were focused on changing power in the current society, while hippies were “leaving culture behind” to start a new society.¹⁶⁵ There has been a tension between activists, or radicals, and hippies or bohemians, in counter cultural movements as well as feminist circles and socialist groupings; the crude division was between the former group’s interest in the overthrow of society through large-scale revolution and the latter group’s focus on creating an alternative society, thus bringing change to society slowly by starting anew. Georgy Katsifiacas also points out this tension in European counter cultural movements in the 1970s and 1980s, calling the two camps Mueslis and molis (mueslis being rural peacenik hippies and molis – as in Molotov cocktails – being Molotov-throwing urban militants).¹⁶⁶ For Zicklin, in line with critiques of rural ICs within radical movements, rural ICs were “cutting themselves off from political life” while ICs engaged in political struggle were mostly located in urban areas.¹⁶⁷ The dichotomization of the drive for freedom and a different society is a simplistic view of the creative tension, or dual power, in radical communities, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

In describing one rural political IC, Zicklin downplays the political engagement of its members and offers quite a narrow understanding of what political activity looks like. He describes these ICs as “a kind of rural auxiliary to the city-based political counterculture,” because some of the work of this IC was to produce food for their friends and comrades in the city. It is no stretch to argue that

¹⁶⁴ Miller, *60s Communes*, 157.

¹⁶⁵ Melville, 20.

¹⁶⁶ Georgy Katsifiacas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2006), 91.

¹⁶⁷ Zicklin, 53.

materially supporting a political movement is part of political activism. Further, these rural people were involved in political life, saw themselves as political people, with many participating in direct action at large protests in urban centres.¹⁶⁸ Veysey proposes that this critique of rural radicals by urban ones for “abandoning their commitment to the cause of revolutionary change” was lobbed in 1915 as well as the 1960s.¹⁶⁹ He seems to agree with the urban critique, suggesting that rural radicals were “forced to cope with all of the everyday tasks of sustained human existence” in the countryside, and therefore had to leave the “political battle” of the city behind.¹⁷⁰ Though it is not clear how urban folk are free from the “task of sustained human existence,” the implication of such a claim is that politics is a luxury left to those who are free from the daily toil of life in rural areas. From a feminist perspective, downplaying the importance of reproductive labour perpetuates gendered divides and patriarchy, placing feminized work outside of the realm of politics.

In 1968 the “Yippies,” a radical group that emerged in the United States, drew attention to what they perceived as the meeting point of these peaceful/violent and rural/urban dichotomies. Yippies attempted to bridge and synthesize the energy of these two poles by creating an intention and process wherein the revolutionary goal of creating a better society was not separate from the revolutionary process itself, bringing ideas of prefiguration to the fore. However, the movement quickly grew frustrated and many wanted to simply withdraw from “the awful things [they’d] been deliberately and systematically taught to want and need.”¹⁷¹ According to Melville, these groups of youth—born into affluent families with political privilege who saw nothing redeemable in their current political system and sought a community without troubled politics—were “moving *beyond politics* to rural isolation.”¹⁷² Those who believed in the need to move out of current society, to leave politics behind, as well as those

¹⁶⁸ Zicklin, 54-55.

¹⁶⁹ Veysey, 7-10.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹⁷¹ Melville, 78.

¹⁷² Ibid., 82 (emphasis mine).

who condemned fellow radicals for “abandoning their commitment to the cause of revolutionary change,” shared the perception that politics only happened in the city centre.¹⁷³

Feminist communities were also engaging in debate about whether moving to rural spaces meant stepping away from political engagement and complicated the discussion. Feminists show us that rural and wilderness spaces offer a space for political freedom and environmental justice. Catriona Sandilands and Bruce Erickson point out that gay and lesbian ICs were emerging in the 1970s and used rural space to create “different spatial-political relationships to natural environments.”¹⁷⁴ Lesbian separatists often saw rural space as a superior place within which to heal from and undo heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and environmental destruction because the rural allowed them the space to create different societal models away from dominant cultures and oppressions showing the “importance of particular landscapes for the formation and organization of particular queer cultures and experiences.”¹⁷⁵ A number of lesbian ICs started in southern Oregon, some of which are still active today.¹⁷⁶ These feminist and lesbian ICs engaged and troubled the debate about escapism. Arlene Stein outlines the conflict among lesbian separatists as one of commitment to ideology versus authentic lesbianism, where the former group saw separatism as an end itself and an important choice and commitment which saw feminist isolation from patriarchy as the revolutionary goal. Meanwhile, the latter group of lesbians who identified with this sexual orientation and not just lesbianism as a political project argued that they were authentically lesbian and that their orientation was not a choice and it was an identity they could not give up.¹⁷⁷ A critique of the separatist movement identifies that the community was escapist, extreme, and essentializing.¹⁷⁸ However, Sandilands’ study of lesbian ICs that

¹⁷³ Veysey, 7.

¹⁷⁴ Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (eds.), *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 23-28.

¹⁷⁵ Catriona Sandilands, “Lesbian Separatist Communities and the Experience of Nature: Toward a Queer Ecology,” *Organization and Environment* 15, no. 2 (June 2002): 134.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Arlene Stein, *Sex and Sensibility: Stories of a Lesbian Generation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 115-118.

¹⁷⁸ See, Sally Rowena Munt, *Heroic Desire: Lesbian Identity and Cultural Space*, (New York: New York University Press,

still function demonstrates that lesbian ICs have political importance and longevity because of how they have politicized rural space and lesbian identity.¹⁷⁹

Of course, the politics that ICs were enacting were not always clear, nor were all ICs politically engaged. For example, Drop City, the now-famous IC in Colorado, had “absolute nothingness” as its policy.¹⁸⁰ This call, and the name of the IC, point to a changing framework of the many people joining the fad of moving to rural areas in the late 1960s. The idea of dropping out, from which Drop City got its name, was a concept that emerged in a time of nuclear development and war in Vietnam. For many disenfranchised youth, the push to be a productive member of society and a soldier for the United States created a desire to “drop out” of society and what was being asked of them within the society in which they were raised.¹⁸¹ The historical moment of impending nuclear war and the political reality of conscription in the United States directly impacted the IC and rural landscape in Canada. As draft dodgers looked for places to settle away from the US, many migrated north and helped build the culture and infrastructure of hippie ICs in rural Canada. These IC creators wanted a “community that serves basic human needs more efficiently than does the mainstream society.”¹⁸²

One group of ICs that reveals the tensions between needing to own property and wanting to disavow private property was the “open land” movement. The idea behind “open land” was that as ICs faced harassment by authorities and locals, more land needed to be opened up for these ICs to move to, without limit of access.¹⁸³ Tracts of land would be free and accessible to anyone, and new participants were neither asked to make commitments nor to fulfil any responsibilities to the collective or the land.¹⁸⁴ The community was considered “an instant community” from the moment people arrived.

1999), 148.

¹⁷⁹ Sandilands, 152-154.

¹⁸⁰ Roberts, 55.

¹⁸¹ Zicklin, 27.

¹⁸² Melville, 26-27; 137. Drop City became famous for its resourceful repurposing of societal artifacts. The IC made geodesic domes from car tops and members have been known to dismantle a whole bridge overnight to use the parts for building materials.

¹⁸³ Miller, *60s Communes*, 78.

¹⁸⁴ Miller describes Gorda Mountain, a piece of land owned by an art gallery owner who decided to open her land up to

Unfortunately, many residents of “open land” communities found that they did not know how to close their doors when situations became untenable. Neighbours of these transient communities were hostile to the changing makeup of membership. These ICs rarely met their own survival needs, often failed to develop economically viable infrastructures, and were perceived as a place to drop in on rather than a sustainable community.¹⁸⁵ This movement’s desire to create more unowned land was paired with the belief that finding land elsewhere, and further away from cities, would solve the issue of undesirable interactions with government authorities and harassing neighbours.

For example, Morning Star East arrived in the Taos, New Mexico area in 1969, after the original Morning Star, in California, was abandoned after enduring too much harassment. The newly relocated IC identified as “open land” and built adobe structures and lived without electricity, running water, or a clean and regular water supply. The members regularly invited local Indigenous people to come and hold Peyote meetings on their land.¹⁸⁶

Living on the same land as Morning Star East, approximately 100 metres away, another group took advantage of the open land being offered and started a militant IC called Reality Construction Company. Despite benefitting from the philosophy of open land, Reality maintained a closed membership and closely guarded the territory with guns, allowing only twenty-five members into the fold because of their stated goal of preparing new revolutionaries. However, Reality was not successful in its pursuits and, along with Morning Star East, did not last; the owner closed the project in 1972.¹⁸⁷

Open land ICs were not the only ones on a geographical trajectory moving farther and farther from large city centres. Some ICs tried to establish themselves in places where they were also removed from the growing countercultural societies. Some IC seekers went to more rugged parts of Northern

anyone who wanted to live on it as one good example of how open land projects operated. The spot was located in between Los Angeles and San Francisco, California. This particular open land project reached a membership of 200 people but began to dwindle five years later.

¹⁸⁵ Roberts, 60-62

¹⁸⁶ Miller, *60s Communes*, 79-80.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 80-81.

California, but Taos County, New Mexico was championed as the “ultimate back to the land survivalist dream,” with a rugged terrain and low population.¹⁸⁸ Many were drawn to the cheap land, some taking the fact that the land was agriculturally hard to work as a positive challenge, some drawn to it because of its rich Indigenous history.

Miller explains, “the lure of the countryside meshed well with counter cultural fascination with Native Americans, who were frequently seen as embodying a profound nature wisdom long lost to non-native peoples.”¹⁸⁹ Some non-Indigenous IC seekers moved to the area specifically in search of becoming Indigenous themselves. For example, New Buffalo IC, started in 1967 in Taos, New Mexico had a membership that was so enamoured of Indigenous culture that the whole community tried to live in teepees, create peyote ceremonies, and saw itself as a new tribe. Miller describes how he saw the IC when he visited it: “The new tribe wanted their commune to be what the buffalo had been to the Indians [sic], provider of everything to its people.” The IC survived in its culturally appropriative ethos until the owner of the land evicted the last members in 1990.¹⁹⁰

Black Bear Ranch, another IC that took pride in its remote location, located in Northern California, was several hours drive from any major city by rough road, and surrounded by national protected forest, thus at least sixteen kilometres from the nearest possible neighbours. This IC was snowed in for months at a time in the winter and celebrated its ability to live in isolation. The initial and primary goal of Black Bear Ranch was to serve as a training and weapons storage site for revolutionary purposes away from authorities. However, most of the people who arrived had little interest in revolutionary training and the plan was abandoned.¹⁹¹

Despite its remote location Black Bear IC’s eighty-acre property was not untouched land, and the property was known for having been located near a thriving gold mining town in the 1860s. The

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 65.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 153.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 63-65.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 72-73.

property was bought by a few members for 22,500 dollars, with one titleholder. In order to ensure that the land was not sold in the future, the owner established the IC as a Land Trust in 1987.¹⁹² Black Bear Ranch has survived and had as many as forty members in 2013.¹⁹³

Melville believed that utopian hippie communes were “an attempt to make imaginatively concrete the possibilities of the future.”¹⁹⁴ McLaughlin and Davidson contend that the newer ICs of the late 1980s and early 1990s were a “conscious response to the ills of society, to societal problems and working to restore a sense of community in our neighbourhoods and homes,” as opposed to the drop out sense of the 1960s.¹⁹⁵ The authors equate solving the ills of present day society with a return to a past time, suggesting that these communes are “*preserving* a spark of culture and human caring during dark days of modern society.”¹⁹⁶ From the experiences of some of the ICs described here we can see that many succeeded at producing new communities with different economic and governance structures. Their history shows the context within which the Collectives in my case study —Dragonfly especially— came to exist.

ICs Relationships with Indigenous Populations

There has been very little work done on how ICs interacted with Indigenous populations while settling in North America. However, in the histories of ICs, there is some mention of them having relationships with First Nations groups. Some IC experiments had a more explicitly colonial goal and effect in settling in rural North America while others were more nuanced, but few ICs did any real anti-colonial

¹⁹² Black Bear Ranch, “Declaration of Black Bear Family Trust,” 21 June 1987, Accessed 19 October 2016, <<http://blackbearranch.org/about/black-bear-family-trust-document/>>

Timothy Miller tells of how some IC members, due to how remote they were, found novel response to address their fears of being attacked by wild animals living nearby. There was a timer set every hour at times when parents feared their children might be at risk of bear, lynx, or cougar attacks. When the timer went off every member would run around the property making as much noise as possible to scare away any potential predators and then would go back to work or the activity that had been suspended. Miller, *60s Communes*, 73.

¹⁹³ Black Bear Ranch, “Contacts,” (July 2015), Accessed 25 October 2016, < <http://blackbearranch.org/contacts/>>

¹⁹⁴ Melville, 28-29

¹⁹⁵ McLaughlin and Davidson, 12.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. (emphasis mine).

work in support of Indigenous communities. For example, the Moravians, a German migrant group that migrated to the United States in the 1760s, initially came to do missionary work with the local Indigenous population, later forming community with Indigenous groups that was not as starkly missionary. The Moravians were persecuted for refusing to swear allegiance to King George but felt entitled to stay on the land that had belonged to the Indigenous nation they had incorporated.¹⁹⁷ On the other hand, the Shaker community worked with the Mahican First Nation in Albany, New York, an alliance that reports suggest brought attacks from local mobs.¹⁹⁸

The preoccupation by settlers with Indigenous knowledge allowed some Indigenous people to gain economically from it. For example, Beaver Tribe was an IC started by Sun Bear, a Chippewan, in 1971. He invited non-natives who wished to live like Indigenous people to live at Bear Tribe for a fee, causing much controversy. Many Indigenous traditionalists criticized Sun Bear for taking advantage of white people and for exploiting Indigenous culture and teachings for his own gain.¹⁹⁹ This IC played into settler adoption fantasies, which Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang explain as “those narratives in the settler colonial imagination in which the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land, his claim to the land, his very Indian-ness to the settler for safe-keeping.”²⁰⁰

This brief overview of IC history indicates a few tendencies within the movement: a desire for community and to move away from mainstream society, a pervading romanticization of the rural as a place that is depopulated, a rather incoherent and inconsistent relationship with private property, and a lack of clarity about what they were working to create. However, ICs have opened up possibilities for alternative communities in the rural that provide examples of the manner in which rural spaces and responses to capitalism and mainstream society can take shape.

¹⁹⁷ Gutek and Gutek, 24.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 36.

¹⁹⁹ Veysey, 170.

²⁰⁰ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 1*, no. 1, (2012): 14.

Chapter Two: Anarchist Interventions into Rural Community-Building, Private Property, and Ecology

In the previous chapter I provided an overview of North American rural political economy and the role that Intentional Communities (ICs) have played in revisioning rural space away from mainstream economic and political models and demonstrate the importance of bringing political economic, ecological, and anarchist literatures into conversation with each other. This is especially important because of the dilemmas about private ownership of land that have mired intentional communities. In this chapter I discuss how anarchists view the rural, specifically how they envision it as the location of future revolutionary possibilities.¹ I argue that these visions are a good starting point for reconceptualizing the rural. First, I provide an overview of the ways anarchists have addressed rural space and how anarchist theories of community and resistance more generally can offer new ways to contest mainstream understandings of the countryside, turning the notion of the rural-as-backwards on its head. My goal here is to outline the anarchist theoretical and practical contributions to the topic of rural community building, ecology, and a move away from private property, which has not been done comprehensively elsewhere. I hope to begin to document how anarchists are trying to live ethically within a system of property relationships in spatial ways within the specific political ecological context of rural Ontario. Anarchist theories have inspired people to build new community life in rural spaces with other similarly oriented people in intentional communities. Thus, I will give a brief history of anarchist intentional community experiments especially as they relate to property and ecology. Finally, I will describe my research design and interview process, discuss some of the practical issues that arose when I was in the field, and describe how I analyzed my results.

¹ Since anarchism is a diverse group of ideologies, it is necessary to point out that this paper will focus on socialist anarchist conceptions and ideas of rurality, since social anarchism is more prevalent and more overtly deals with ideas of community organizing.

Anarchist Theories of Rurality

Anarchists address the rural in terms of the economic relationships common to that of urban settings, the capability of decentralized cooperation possible in all social settings, and the revolutionary potential of rural dwellers. Often visions of future anarchist communities tend towards a marriage of city and countryside, especially the visions of “factories among fields” of Peter Kropotkin, “eco-communities” of Murray Bookchin, and garden cities of the anarchist-inspired urban planner, Ebenezer Howard.² Projecting their hopes for the future on a romantic vision of a rural past, some anarchists look (back) to rural spaces as the locus of a more wholesome and natural way of life.

As I noted in the Introduction, the keynote speaker at the Anarchist Studies Network (ASN) Conference demonstrated that some anarchists have perpetuated the commonly held perception that social and political organization in rural communities was established over many generations in a fixed location, existing as a commune-like society connected through kinship.³ Rural space is painted as a static and historically frozen geographical and cultural space, but one that anarchists should aspire to recreate. Peter Kropotkin demarcates the rural as more fertile for anarchism, stating that the communal land of villages preserves the customs and habits of mutual aid, while “in the cities, on the contrary, the absence of common interest nurtures indifference.”⁴ Kropotkin assumes a specific set of social relations common to a pre-modern period in rural villages, which he proposes is more anarchic. By the same token, if with a different focus, Bookchin argues that only in the city could one could develop common interests that moved beyond kinship ties, thus allowing political engagement to flourish.⁵

² Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories, and Workshops: or Industry Combined with Agriculture and Brain Work with Manual Work*. (London: Thomas, Nelson & Sons, 1912); Murray Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. (Oakland: AK Press, 2004); Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965.)

³ Henry Bernstein, “Farewells to the Peasantry.” *Transformation* 52 (2003): 9. Henry Bernstein explains that there is a tendency in academic circles to contribute to “peasant essentialism,” meaning that one sees subsistence and egalitarian community and kin-based social interaction as the necessary qualities of rural small-scale agriculturalists.

⁴ Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1976), 277.

⁵ Murray Bookchin, *Urbanization without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1992), 30. Bookchin creates a firm binary between the progressive city and the backwards countryside with respect to social relations. In his description of rural space, he is quick to equate rural space with nature, while arguing that society emerged in cities.

Capitalism and the industrialization of agriculture have not only had an economic impact on communities and individuals, but also a spatial and cultural one. As a result, the displacement and migration of individuals has meant that rural communities are far from the historically rooted societies we envision them to be. Bookchin's analysis of the urbanization phenomenon is instructive, even if his conclusions are problematic. He suggests that global capitalism has had an urbanizing effect on town and country and that we have misconceived the city as the force behind urbanization.⁶ His defence of the city as a viable place for community and democracy is valuable in the sense that he clarifies the difference between city and urbanization, since cities are also important loci for sustainable communities. His defence is a critical reaction to the nostalgic call for a return to the romantic countryside that he argues anarchists have made.⁷

However, Bookchin has contributed to the urban-centric vision of revolutionary mobilization, even suggesting that radical *ideas* and self-organizational tendencies emerged out of a particular (urban) milieu, created by cultural, economic, and geographical convergences in European communities.⁸ Bookchin suggests that revolutionary mobilization emerged from a very particular state of having one foot rooted in the traditional countryside and another in the new towns and urban areas to which agrarian workers were migrating. He argues, "it was this kind of 'proletariat' that turned to revolution, if only to recover a sense of social rootedness, coherence, and meaning that was increasingly denied to [them] in the dismal shops and congested neighbourhoods of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."⁹ However, he then suggests a linear evolution of urban movements and social

⁶ Bookchin, *Urbanization Without Cities*, xxiv.

⁷ Bookchin, *The Limits of the City*, 6

⁸ Ibid., 30. For discussion of the search for freedom in the Middle Ages, see Raoul Vaneigem, *Movement of the Free Spirit: General Considerations and Firsthand Testimony Concerning Some Brief Flowerings of Life in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and, Incidentally, Our Own Time*. (New York: Zone Books, 1994). For discussion of social movement origins, see Steven M. Buechler, *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism: The Political Economy and Cultural Construction of Social Activism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). For discussions of modern revolutionary thinking see Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*. (London: Penguin, 1991); Murray Bookchin, *The Third Revolution, Volume I*. (New York: Continuum, 1998).

⁹ Bookchin, *Third Revolution*, 14.

struggles in general, saying, “each of the classical revolutions followed the others toward a more radically sophisticated historical level in which an almost utopian internationalist outlook and a broader definition of freedom superseded any earlier nationalistic or “patriotic” claims.”¹⁰

The tendency to marginalize rural struggles as ephemeral or limited is clear in Bookchin's assertion that “the chronic riots and small-scale insurrections that exploded repeatedly throughout the seventeenth century were more redolent of the limited peasant jacqueries of the late Middle Ages – albeit now carried by new migrants from the countryside into towns – than of the great revolutions into which these uprisings eventually flowed.”¹¹ I believe that Bookchin is again mistaken in his analysis of the two sets of movements. He biases these movements, assuming that having to make demands to a centralized state, and later a centralized system of states, makes them more sophisticated, evidenced by his assertion that European revolutions, which were urban and within established nations-states, “spoke for oppressed humanity as a whole” while “Third World revolutions,” which took place in rural areas and were directed against colonial rule were “deeply self-oriented.”¹² Bookchin is not alone in his dismissal of small-scale resistance to authority, but his stance on the ineffectiveness of decentralized revolutionary organizing is quite rare among contemporary anarchists. However, we can use his affirmation of the organizing capabilities of small country towns in his defence of cities to complement the understanding that anarchist communities can (and do) emerge anywhere, regardless of, and possibly because of, their seeming isolation from centres of power, including in rural spaces. It is this revolution through community-building that I will interrogate next.

Community-building and Revolution

Socialist anarchists see community as the source of enrichment for individuals. Errico Malatesta writes

¹⁰ Bookchin, *Third Revolution*, 18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹² *Ibid.*, 17.

that an anarchist conception of freedom necessitates a consideration of others. He says “aspirations towards unlimited freedom, if not tempered by a love of [hu]mankind and by the desire that all should enjoy equal freedom, may well create rebels who, if they are strong enough, soon become exploiters and tyrants but never anarchists.”¹³ Mikhail Bakunin believes that individuals gain freedom in the liberty of others.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Gustav Landauer argues that communal interaction revitalizes the individual: that commitment to transforming society is also a commitment to positively transforming oneself.¹⁵ In their thriving for community, anarchists believe that capitalism and the state must be eliminated, through revolution, to make way for healthy, non-hierarchical communities.

Anarchists have a two-pronged vision of revolution that prioritizes anti-oppressive community created by: a) opposing the existing oppressive order as it is, and b) creating and building new orders and spaces at the same time. This has been understood as “counter” or “dual” power.¹⁶ In his propagandistic pamphlet, *Between Peasants*, Malatesta attempts to convince rural agricultural producers and workers that they share many struggles with industrial workers, trying to teach them about their shared exploitation and mobilize them to insurrection.¹⁷ In *To My Brother the Peasant (A*

¹³ Errico Malatesta, *Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas*. ed. Vernon Richards, (London: Freedom Press, 1965), 24.

¹⁴ Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, (London: Harper, 2008), 273.

¹⁵ Landauer, *For Socialism*, 42.

¹⁶ Classical anarchists did not use the term “dual” or “counter” power explicitly, as many were opposed to all power but believed in the importance of the two forces in the creation of alternative communities. For example, Bakunin focused on the importance of destruction in order to create new society, famously saying, “the passion for destructive is a creative passion, too!” Mikhail Bakunin, “The Reaction in Germany: A Fragment of a Frenchman,” (1842) cited in Robert Graham (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 2005), 44. Bakunin demonstrates his commitment to the dual force I mention saying, “the masses must conquer freedom by force and to do so they must organize their own spontaneous forces outside of the state and against it.” See, Mikhail Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1873), 171.

I thank Chris Dixon for pointing out that the term “dual power” comes from Lenin’s discussion of the Bolshevik Revolution, in his essay by the same name. Anarchists have used the exact term since the late 1990s. Most notably, Christopher Day and James Mumm. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “The Dual Power,” *The Lenin Anthology*, Robert C. Tucker (ed.), (New York: Norton and Company, 1975), 301-304; Christopher Day, “Dual Power in the Selva Lacandon,” *A New World in Our Hearts*, Roy San Filippo (ed.), (Oakland: AK Press, 2003); James Mumm, “Active Revolution: New Directions in Revolutionary Social Change,” *Common Struggle*, Posted 18 November 2002, Accessed 24 July 2017. <<http://www.nefac.net/node/120>>; On counterpower, see David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, (Chicago: Paradigm, 2004).

¹⁷ Errico Malatesta, *Between Peasants: A Dialogue on Anarchy*. Johannesburg: Zabalaza Books, (1883) 1981. Accessed 1 February 2013. <http://zinelibrary.info/files/between_peasants_em.pdf>

Mon Frère Le Paysan), Reclus argues that “nothing is as sacred as your labour.”¹⁸ Reclus, like Malatesta, warns that if not united in their struggle for land from the property owners, agriculturalists will end up as factory workers.¹⁹

For Bakunin —an advocate of a violent revolution that would emerge from a highly organized and unified strike— the revolution would emerge from three sections of society that would form the revolutionary vanguard: young people, peasants, and city dwellers. Bakunin argued that anarchism “arises out of the depths of people's existence” and that the peasantry had experienced a life that would naturally lead them to have interest in and willingness to support the revolution.²⁰ As a result of the common reality of exploitation under capitalism, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Bakunin, and Reclus maintain that workers and peasants cannot be disconnected from each other when attempting a revolution to change their social relationships. Bakunin believed that the common ideal that would move people to revolution was part of their consciousness (and yet the separate communes of revolutionary peasants required an external body to coordinate them!) and that rural people must be pulled out of their isolation to bring about large-scale revolution. Reclus believed that isolation was the greatest impediment to rural workers fighting against landlords and government forces.²¹ In attempting to ensure that revolution occurs at the same moment; the goal of self-organization is put on the back burner to facilitate coordination.²² These visions of revolution have the most in common with other socialist revolutionary projects.

What anarchists uniquely bring to the discussion of revolution is a developed understanding of an incremental revolutionary process, either temporally or spatially escalating, that prioritizes the work of building new communities to replace oppressive societies and economies. In a temporal sense,

¹⁸ Elisée Reclus. “A Mon Frère Le Paysan.” *Temps Nouveaux* 1899. Accessed 1 May 2013. <<http://kropot.free.fr/Reclus-paysan.htm>>, 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 6.

²⁰ Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, 133.

²¹ Reclus, “A Mon Frère Le Paysan,” 10.

²² Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, 214.

people would shift their thinking to reorganizing society as a whole over time, a perspective advocated by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.²³ Spatially, the revolution might emerge in parts of the societal fabric and eventually spread throughout it, an idea promoted strongly by Gustav Landauer, and more recently by contemporary anarchists like David Graeber and Richard Day.²⁴ These spatially and temporally disparate revolutions are deemed possible because of the anarchist commitment to decentralization.

Most anarchists believe that all individuals are capable of organizing themselves into functional societies without overarching centralized authority, institutions, or external bodies—which tend towards abuse and exploitation—to coordinate them.²⁵ This self-organization can emerge within any community, and anarchist community can occur in many forms simultaneously, so that a diversity of experiences as well as experimentations in anarchist organizations will occur. Regardless of the level of connection of that community to other communities, the understanding is that the collective will be able to organize and coordinate itself to meet its needs. This is not to argue that all problems will best be solved in an isolated community, however it can be understood that no external force is required to teach or enlighten the community about how best to solve issues of need, justice, or order; they can be solved by discussions among the community members who will be affected by the decisions made and that this would be enough to organize society. Graeber explains:

the nineteenth-century thinkers generally credited with inventing anarchism didn't consider themselves to have invented anything particularly new. They saw anarchism more as a kind of moral faith, a rejection of all forms of structural violence, inequality, or domination (anarchism literally means “without rulers”), and a belief that humans would be perfectly capable of getting on without them.²⁶

With these conditions, outlined by Graeber, anarchist communities can, in theory, emerge anywhere.

²³ Pierre Joseph Proudhon, *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government*, (Trans) Benjamin Tucker, (New York: Dover, 1970), 319. Proudhon argued that universal reason would bring about slow progress towards “equality of rights and fortunes.”

²⁴ Richard Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*. (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005). Day's ideas are quite deeply rooted in Landauer's philosophy and vision of the future. See also, Graeber, *Fragments of An Anarchist Anthropology*.

²⁵ Marshall, xiii.

²⁶ Graeber, “Anarchism, Academia, and the Avant-Garde,” in Randall Amster et al. (eds.), *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*. (London: Routledge, 2009) 105-106.

Conceptualizing certain community-oriented relations as ones that are sought out and not simply the prevailing static condition of “natural humanity” offers an empowering perspective for future anarchist communities, suggesting the possibility for everyone to build communities where they are, regardless of how that community was established.

Landauer is unequivocal in his belief that the rural village is the starting point and future of revolutionary social change: “The socialist village, with fields and meadows and gardens – you proletarians of the big cities, accustom yourselves to this thought, strange and odd as it may seem at first, for that is the only beginning of true socialism, the only one that is left to us.”²⁷ Moving to the countryside is the necessary first step to begin the revolution that will “set up society 'outside' and 'alongside' the State” because there is nothing salvageable in the current system.²⁸ Landauer explains that humanity could not wait for everyone to unite in the struggle for new societies and says that “the first priority of socialism” is for people to organize themselves and form new communities to provide for everyone’s needs as they see the opportunity to do so.²⁹ People would live the spirit of mutuality and convince others to join by example, showing others that communities can function outside of capitalist society.

Despite this opening within anarchist theories for rural community-building that supports the goals of creating an anti-oppressive society and the celebration of small-scale alternatives, especially among contemporary anarchists, moving to live in the countryside as a way to escape from the state raises a tension within anarchist thought around ethical questions of how widely obligations of mutual aid and solidarity against domination extend, as noted in Reclus’ and Bakunin’s call for large-scale revolt.³⁰

²⁷ Gustav Landauer, *Anarchism in Germany and Other Essays*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Landauer, *For Socialism*, 133.

³⁰ Anarcho-syndicalists are one of the only contemporary anarchist strain that consistently rejects small-scale autonomist movements. However, rural IC projects experience more critique by other anarchists. For an example of the controversial politics of anarcho-syndicalism, see Michael Schmidt et al., *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism, Counter-Power*, (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009).

Namely, moving to the rural has been heavily critiqued as turning one's back on global struggles for freedom and liberation from oppression in a way that building autonomous and decentralized struggles that are not specifically rural have not.³¹ As I pointed out above, Bakunin, Reclus, and Malatesta believed rural individuals could not organize themselves and were isolated. Contemporary anarchists have also critiqued rural decentralization as a move which ensures that rural areas are coopted by the state because "rural communities are more conforming to the demands of the state."³² Another example of this anti-rural bias emerges in Bookchin's discussion of Spain in 1936 where he argues that the experiment failed because it was isolated within Spain. He also denounces the actions of peasant groups in that time as insignificant, stating that "the peasant villages turned inward toward their local concerns, and were apathetic about national problems" despite peasant communities at the time contributing to the anarchist revolution.³³ Bookchin regularly calls rural isolated communities "parochial" and makes the universalist assertion that "the success of the revolutionary project must now rest on the emergence of a general human interest."³⁴

Further, he draws crude boundaries between anarchists who create community and alternative society outside of mainstream society and anarchists who attempt to create alternative society within a municipal structure.³⁵ His critique was between prefigurative anarchists, or "lifestyle anarchists" as he called them, and social anarchists. Bookchin suggests that if social relations do not change, then no new community can be created.³⁶ Bookchin argues that this fragmentation, rather than building toward revolutionary anarchist communal ties that can bring about a total downfall of the whole system, keeps

³¹ I will further demonstrate this critique in the conflicts of urban and rural anarchists in the next section. David Dellinger, "Problems of the Communal Group," *Resistance* 12, no. 4 (December 1954), Accessed 10 April 2018, <<https://libcom.org/library/resistance-vol-12-no-4-december-1954>>

³² Alex Comfort, *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State: A Criminological Approach to the Problem of Power*, (New York: Routledge: 1950), 36-40.

³³ Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 93. For a history of the important contributions of rural anarchists to the Spanish Revolution, see Jerome Mintz, *Anarchists of Casas Viejas*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

³⁴ Bookchin, *Remaking Society*, 169.

³⁵ Bookchin, *The Limits of the City*, 183.

³⁶ Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*, 66-76.

social revolution isolated and weak.³⁷ However, it is clear that often the accusation of “escapism” emerges out of dismissal or discrimination against groups of their particular goals or priorities, as we saw in the conflicts between ICs in the late 1960s.

The wider implication of this critique, at least according to Bookchin, is that anarchists should be focused on reorganizing the contemporary world into “ecocommunities” coordinated in ways that combine rural areas with cities that must be federated with other ecocommunities.³⁸ Bookchin and other “scientific” anarchists, like Kropotkin, have argued that society is moving towards more civilization, rationality, and complexity. The scientific camp has had different understandings of the socio-spatial organization of society. Bookchin argued that the development of cities was a “civilizing force of history and that cities “established a uniquely political universe of their own, a distinctly *human* and *cultural* terrain.”³⁹ Bookchin explains that “to restore urbanity as a meaningful terrain for sociation, culture, and community, the megalopolis must be ruthlessly dissolved and replaced by new decentralized eco-communities, each carefully tailored to the natural ecosystem in which it will be located. The ecocommunity, supported by rational ecotechnology, would be an organic urban entity respirationized by a new sensibility and reinforced by a new security in material life.”⁴⁰ This assertion rests on the modernist belief that we are moving from simple to complicated and therefore progressive societies.

Bookchin's analysis of the urbanization phenomenon is instructive, even if his conclusions are problematic. In the *Limits of Cities* as well as *Urbanization without Cities* he suggests that global capitalism has had an urbanizing effect on town and country and that we have misconceived the city as the force behind urbanization.⁴¹ His interest in defending the city as a viable place for community and

³⁷ Bookchin, “Communalism: The Democratic Dimensions of Social Anarchism,” in *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998*, (Oakland: AK Press, 1999), 155-159

³⁸ Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, (Palo Alto: Cheshire Books, 1982), 343-345.

³⁹ Ibid. 6 (emphasis added).

⁴⁰ Bookchin, *The Limits of the City*, 161-162.

⁴¹ Bookchin, *Urbanization Without Cities*, xxiv.

democracy is valuable in the sense that he clarifies the difference between city and urbanization, since cities are also important loci for sustainable communities. His defence of the city comes as a critical reaction to the nostalgic call for a return to the romantic countryside that he argues anarchists have made but also serves to perpetuate a vision of the rural as open for use for anything that the complicated urban society might need it for. For example, in defending technology as potentially liberating, Bookchin argues that “*if urban communities are reduced in size and widely dispersed over the land*, there is no reason why these devices cannot be combined to provide us with all the amenities of an industrialised civilisation.”⁴² From an anti-colonial perspective, this conclusion could be troubling, but if one reaffirms the positive organizing capabilities of country towns, Bookchin's arguments in defence of cities can complement the understanding that anarchist communities can (and do) really emerge anywhere, regardless of, and possibly because of, their seeming isolation from centres of power.

Landauer's definition of a community is not focused on specific geographic or population size. He simply states that a community is “a multiplicity of real, small affinities that grow out of the binding qualities of individuals, a structure of communities, and a union.”⁴³ Even if Landauer also points to the countryside as a starting point for these revolutionary communities, we see that his concept of community goes beyond geographic groupings. Bookchin's conception of affinity groups also describes how small groups of people work together and offers a window into how community might be reconsidered. He suggests that while taking all of the good qualities of tribes of the past, like Athenians, affinity groups or social units can transcend exclusive race, place-based, and hereditary affiliations.⁴⁴ Kropotkin also sees the commune as a basic social unit that goes beyond territory, since individuals have affinities and are part of associations outside of their immediate geographic

⁴² Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 34 (emphasis added).

⁴³ Landauer, *For Socialism*, 72.

⁴⁴ Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 144.

communities.⁴⁵ Each of these non-geographical visions of community opens up the possibility of reconceptualising revolution through a rethinking of community in relation to the State.

Landauer argues that the State is not simply an entity to be smashed. He argues, “the State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships... One day it will be realized that socialism is not the invention of anything new, but the discovery of something actually present.”⁴⁶ Landauer’s rethinking of the state as a relationship mirrors the idea that community is also a relationship. The understanding of dual power, as both an emancipatory and a repressive force, helps to envision how a social revolution could occur slowly: by individuals simultaneously not legitimizing government power and positively expressing their own power to create other social organizations in their communities. In his work on stateless hill-people in Southeast Asia, James C. Scott gives us an important understanding of the unfolding of the territorial and “symbolic reach of the state.”⁴⁷ Scott points out that the “hard” power of the state is often not as vast as its cosmological and ideological reach, but that ideological reach must be established for it to ensure domination over the population found in the territory it seeks to lay claim over.⁴⁸ This is in no way to argue that revolution is as easy as coming to the conscious realization that one has agency to realize in action what one desires. The physical and structural reality of accumulation, dispossession, repression, systematic racism, heteronormativity, patriarchy, ableism, and classism cannot be ignored. However, multifarious processes are required to bring about social change

⁴⁵ Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, 154.

⁴⁶ Landauer, *Anarchism in Germany*, iii.

⁴⁷ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 35.

⁴⁸ Historically, political philosophers have argued that the emergence of the state has been beneficial to people, because the state negotiated an exchange for provided security and safety in order to obtain its subjects. For example, see: John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), and Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1958), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2006). In a much more critical reading of the history of state-making, we see the state building required an ideology as well as physically forcing subjects under its rule through forced migration, taxation, forced labour, and conscription. Of course, it serves the ideological purposes of the state; the narratives of state building necessarily over-reported the consent to power and cohesion of the people who became state-people. These are the narratives we have most often seen. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 34.

and some of them will require more consistent interventions than one act of violence, especially with respect to changing oppressive worldviews.

Martha Ackelsberg argues that because anarchists primarily focus their critique on hierarchy and domination, anarchism offers an analysis “that could accommodate multiple relationships of domination and subordination without necessarily insisting that one is more fundamental than the others, acknowledg[ing] the multidimensional character of subordination.”⁴⁹ This is especially important for questions of gender, since the struggle against sexism and patriarchy within an anarchist discourse must not become a secondary struggle to be added on to a more “central” struggle against economic exploitation for example. Prefiguration forces community members to create those non-patriarchal relationships now, not after other economic and governance structures are reorganized.

In rethinking the state (and ending the structures of the state), we can begin social revolution over time, not simply by one violent act of destroying the government as a physical place, but in a creative collection of acts that would make the government increasingly obsolete and continue to open space for the voluntary organization of communities into creative, mutually supportive, and radically democratic societies.⁵⁰ For Emma Goldman, the revolution must be in the mind as well as in society, attained through economic independence and the “transvaluation” of societal and human values.⁵¹ At times she argues that we must return to the values we have suppressed (like Landauer), and at others that we must learn new ethics. In both cases, the revolution must occur in how we interact and not in a particular space.

Understanding and theorizing the economic sphere is clearly important to the establishment of a new society. However, Ackelsberg reminds us that non-economic factors must also be accounted for if

⁴⁹ Martha Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 34.

⁵⁰ Graeber, *Fragments*, 33. Graeber suggests that a revolution is “a matter of people resisting some form of power identified as oppressive, identifying some key aspect of that power as the source of what is fundamentally objectionable about it, and then trying to get rid of one's oppressors in such a way as to try to eliminate that sort of power completely from daily life.”

⁵¹ Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1969), 14.

a community is to be created and maintained, since culture, rules, politics, and identity are also integral components of community.⁵² An anarchist society must treat reproductive and home work as valuable in a way that the capitalist system does not. However, Ackelsberg's statement draws attention to the fact that a community cannot be built by changing economic inputs and outputs alone, nor can it simply reformulate the administration of needs and goods. While economic questions were primary to many classical anarchists, like Proudhon, Goldman, and Kropotkin, contemporary anarchists have, for the most part, agreed that economic questions cannot be examined in a vacuum.⁵³

Richard Day suggests that instead of seeking to create anarchist communities everywhere at once, we should find spaces more conducive to practicing freedom, mutual aid, and love, and that more opportunities will emerge the more we create those spaces.⁵⁴ Rural communities can serve as those places of community building because they allow for people to “build other social relationships” as Landauer suggests. However, the complicating factor is where that space is located when capitalism is predicated on the privatization of space. Furthermore, since private property is one of the only ways to gain access to space within capitalism, the unsolvable dilemma of how to build self-organized radical communities without private property remains unanswered.

Private Property and Land

Anarchists have been against private property since the beginning of their self-conscious existence.⁵⁵

⁵² Ackelsberg, 42.

⁵³ Proudhon saw economic questions as primary to changing society, arguing that society needed equal economic conditions if it wanted equal political rights. Goldman argues that anarchism “stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth; an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life.” She felt that an anarchist society should be based on voluntary production and distributive associations that would eventually turn into “free communism”, meaning that the individual rights would still be recognized. Anarchist ideas about the economy are quite divergent. Proudhon argued for mutualism and did not see distributive justice as a goal of society. Kropotkin, meanwhile, argued for communism and saw distributive equality as a central goal for communities. See: Proudhon, 329; Goldman, 56-62; Marshall 255, 327.

⁵⁴ Richard Day, “Walking Away from Failure,” *Upping the Anti: Journal of Theory and Action*, no. 4 (2007). Accessed 2 September 2008. <<http://uppingtheanti.org/node/2787>>.

⁵⁵ Proudhon is said to be the first theorist to willingly describe himself as an anarchist and was well known for his arguments against private property.

Proudhon repudiated large-scale land ownership in the form of private property as a means of making profit, arguing that it was “the principal cause of misery and crime.”⁵⁶ He believed that the only property (or possession, a word he preferred as not to confuse it with private property) one is entitled to is that which came from one's own labour, renouncing exploitation, the wealth individuals gained from the labour of others. He further argued that the time put into labour was what gave value to the good produced.⁵⁷ Proudhon was perceived as unique in his socialist surroundings for defending peasant livelihood and denouncing large economic units and organizations. He believed that peasants should own their own land and farms, seeing this relationship as “consummating the marriage of man with nature.”⁵⁸ Reclus explains that the anarchist rejection of private property is connected to the desire to ensure that freedom is enjoyed by everyone, that “it pleases us not to live if the enjoyments of life are to be for us alone; we protest against our good fortune if we may not share it with others... We are weary of these inequalities which make us the enemies of each other... After so much hatred we long to love each other, and for this reason are we enemies of private property and despisers of the law.”⁵⁹

Proudhon also argues that all property should be collective. Instead of competing with each other, individuals should “associate their interests” and exchange directly instead of using money.⁶⁰ The producer associations that would emerge and interact with other producer associations would acknowledge the value of work.⁶¹ Bakunin also believed that associations would be created according to one's trade and that labour needed to be organized collectively, with all means of production being owned by the workers themselves.⁶²

Proudhon and Bakunin's understanding of labour as a collective force would mean that goods

⁵⁶ Proudhon, 315.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 372-380.

⁵⁸ Quoted without citation in David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant: A Study in Social Dogmatism*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 35.

⁵⁹ Reclus, “Anarchy: By an Anarchist,” *The Contemporary Review* 45 (1881): 641.

⁶⁰ Proudhon, 404-406.

⁶¹ Marshall, 243.

⁶² Marshall, 285.

are shared between those that produce. Kropotkin's anarchist communist economic principles are more suitable to ensure that all community members be equal, since distribution would be according to need, not work done. Kropotkin argued for the sharing and rotation of work; he argued that agriculture needs urban dwellers to help with the harvest.⁶³ Landauer also saw work sharing in a favourable way.⁶⁴ By sharing essential tasks throughout the year, work would be completed more quickly and there would be less demarcation between who did what specifically. The effort of producing something becomes collective and thus there can be no claim over the value of a product or over who has produced it.⁶⁵ Landauer argued that in socialist communities the link between production and consumption must be restored to ensure that communities are self-sufficient.⁶⁶ Similarly, Kropotkin saw the merits of combining different tasks and rotating them, arguing that by sharing work individuals would have more time to develop art and creative expression.⁶⁷ From a gender perspective, if one takes this division of tasks outside of the strict understanding of labour, this would help to eliminate gender stereotypes and divisions of labour. Child rearing and caring for the elderly or sick, for example, would not only cease to be tasks reserved, for the most part, for women, but would involve the whole community.⁶⁸ Moreover, sharing work could also make certain survival tasks much less burdensome, leaving more time for everyone to engage in enjoyment activities, or “living” as Vaneigem called it.⁶⁹

For communities to be autonomous, many anarchists argue that they require a level of self-sufficiency that can only come from holding land, without fear of it being taken away, and having a

⁶³ Peter Kropotkin, *Fields*, 181-182.

⁶⁴ Landauer, *For Socialism*, 137.

⁶⁵ Keeping in mind the goal of a social revolution that occurs slowly over time, Landauer is informative to an understanding of anarchist economics for two reasons. First, he argues that people will be organized in autonomous communities where individuals produce goods that they then exchange for what they need, excluding intermediaries from outside of the community from gaining a profit from the exchange without contributing anything themselves and slowly cutting off economic dependence on oppressive market structures. Second, Landauer sees reconnection with land as vitally important because it will create a space for the production of goods and the extraction of some basic resources with less interaction with the capitalist society.

⁶⁶ Landauer, *For Socialism*, 137.

⁶⁷ Kropotkin, *Fields*, 219.

⁶⁸ This is a good example of why economic questions cannot be taken out of the social context. If invisible labour has a gendered nature both patriarchy and economic inequities must be addressed in tandem.

⁶⁹ Raoul Vaneigem, Donald Nicholson-Smith (trans.), *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, London: Rebel Press, 1993).

diverse economy to provide for most, if not all, of the community's needs. Proudhon argued that land was a “place of one's activity and rest” given to us by nature; our first possession.⁷⁰ He called for the “labouring masses” to conquer property and ruin the ruling classes.⁷¹ Kropotkin argues that historically peasants have fought many battles to defend holding their land in common, even when there were laws created against it.⁷² Meanwhile, Landauer believes that “the struggle for socialism is a struggle for land.”⁷³ He argues that land is the only objective reality necessary to start a new society and that regaining control of it will ensure that everyone is able to produce for their own and their community's consumption. He states that at first the few who decide to exit the capitalist system must pool their money in order to buy land to begin their new communities, arguing that this will be the only link to the society being left behind. “Men [sic] seized by the spirit will first look around for land as the only external condition which they need for society.”⁷⁴

Landauer, unfortunately, does not explain how possessing land can occur outside of the capitalist system. Furthermore, there is not a lot of consideration in his work about the specific details of how the land will be acquired, and how those who take on the work of stewardship will manage it. And yet, Kerry Mogg reminds us that “space, is the most serious matter facing any anarchist. Land, geography, borders – they all mean the same thing for those without capital, those who, in pre-modern terms, remain ‘landless.’ The dialogue that controls issues of space and land, after all, stems from authoritarian rule.”⁷⁵ Landauer does vaguely address what will happen when enough people have joined the autonomous communities, suggesting that the land will be redistributed and held in common, but offers no more clarity on how to protect against state encroachment. This issue of how to abolish

⁷⁰ Proudhon, 300.

⁷¹ Ibid., 445.

⁷² Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, 230-236.

⁷³ Landauer, *For Socialism*, 134.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 133.

⁷⁵ Kerry Mogg, “Autonomous Zones,” in Alan Antliff (ed.), *Only A Beginning: An Anarchist Anthology*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004), 328.

property relationships continues to be a sticking point for anarchists. However, there is a broad consensus that having space allows for the creation of something different, no matter how temporary.⁷⁶

Anarchist Understandings of Ecology

Environmental considerations have, to a greater or lesser extent, been central to anarchist philosophy since before the emergence of the self-conscious stream of ecological anarchism. Kropotkin and William Morris wrote about the impact that industrialization had on people and nature, advocating for a return to a more balanced life of work and leisure in more “natural” settings.⁷⁷ Élisée Reclus wrote about ecology and the relationship of non-humans and their environment from a geographical perspective, showing us a connection between colonialism and environmental degradation ahead of his time:

Causes similar to those that led to the weakening and death of the Roman Empire are at work in the New World, leading to the loss of a considerable part of its arable land —such as Carolina and Alabama— cultivated at the expense of virgin forests. In less than a half a century the plantations of Carolina and Alabama had become unproductive and are now the domain of deer. In Brazil and Columbia, once among the most fertile countries in the world, it has taken only a few years to exhaust the soil. That is a real plunder.⁷⁸

Murray Bookchin and John Zerzan represent the most recent debate between two tendencies within ecological anarchism. According to Mick Smith’s book *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, both depart from a more instrumental understanding of nature, but both require some nuance to form a true anarchist ecological ethic.⁷⁹ We can attribute to Bookchin a resurgence of interest in anarchism, thanks to his social ecology writings in the late 1960s that put anarchist theory and organizing back on the map

⁷⁶ Andrej Grubačić argues that temporary or “partial” measures might be the only option available in under capitalist hegemony but that these partial struggles are very important. See, Andrej Grubačić, “Exit and Territory: A World-Systems Analysis of Non-State Spaces,” in Alexander Reid Ross (ed.), *Grabbing Back: Essays Against the Global Land Grab*, (Oakland, AK Press, 2014), 159-175.

⁷⁷ Peter Kropotkin, *Fields*; William Morris, *News from Nowhere, or, An Epoch of Rest: Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance*, (Mineola: Dover, 2004).

⁷⁸ Élisée Reclus, *On Vegetarianism: The Great Kinship of Humans and Fauna*, (London: Oriole Press, 1992).

⁷⁹ Mick Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty: Ethics, Biopolitics, and Saving the Natural World*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press: 2011). See also, “Wild-life: Anarchy, Ecology, and Ethics.” *Environmental Politics* 16, no. 3 (2007).

in North America.⁸⁰ Bookchin's social ecology is a sub-field of anarchist theory that argues that the domination humans enact over nature is rooted in the dominating relationships we have with each other.⁸¹ Bookchin names modern capitalism as the culprit in aggravating the domination of nature by humans and humans by humans, especially because of the imperative within capitalism to interact via the market. One is forced to extract resources at a heightened rate to be able to compete and to turn resources into commodities.⁸² As a result, Bookchin argues that we cannot address environmental crises using current political structures and must instead engage in concerted revolutionary action to change the domination of nature as well our social relationships.⁸³

A much-disputed stream of eco-anarchism, one that Bookchin heavily critiques, is anarcho-primitivism.⁸⁴ Many anarchists see primitivism as outside the canon of anarchist theories because of its overly romantic notions of nature and historical social relationships as well as its simplistic criticism of agriculture. However, primitivism shows a commitment to ecology that is important to note. Broadly, primitivists are against civilization and technology and see these as inherently destructive to life and freedom.⁸⁵ John Zerzan, one of the leading proponents of primitivism, renounces modern society and any society that emerged out of the use of agricultural production arguing, "civilization, very fundamentally, is the history of the domination of nature and of women. Agriculture is a conquest that

⁸⁰ For more writings on anarchist ecology, see: Graham Purchase, *Anarchism and Ecology*, (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1997); Seaweed, *Land and Freedom: An Open Invitation*, (Portland: Black Power Press, 2013).

⁸¹ He made these arguments in his 1964 manifesto, "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought." Cited in Janet Biehl (ed.), *The Murray Bookchin Reader*, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1999), 4-6. The text was reprinted in *Anarchy* 69, no. 6 (1966): 18.

⁸² Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 25.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ See Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*, and Brian Oliver Sheppard, *Anarchism versus Primitivism*, (London: Active Distribution, 2008). The term "anarcho-primitivist" is itself highly contested as some like, Sheppard, argue that primitivism has no valid claim of being part of the anarchist tradition. Sheppard argues that the anarchist movement has, throughout the movement's history, been "overrun with flakes, parasites, and outright crazies", and that primitivists are simply part of that group, 4. Peter Marshall, in a less crude critique of primitivism, simply points out that while the arguments of Zerzan et al. against Western Civilization are persuasive, the romantic view of hunter-gather societies lacks depth and oversimplifies the often difficult and unequal relationships within these societies. Moreover, there are few suggestions for bringing about the social change that primitivists feel is necessary and these suggestions would require extreme destruction of life. These radical calls for luddism and return to the wilderness are so extreme that they are not practiced by most of its advocates. See Marshall, 685-687.

⁸⁵ Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, 71-74.

fulfils what began with gender formation and development.”⁸⁶ Favoring a romantic and nostalgic view of the distant past he hangs hopes for the future of free people on a utopian vision of “primitive” beings, who seem to have lived egalitarian communal lives, free from domination, and calls for a return to hunter-gatherer communities.⁸⁷

In denouncing Western enlightenment thinking and “progress,” primitivist Robert Thaxton suggests that the societies that defend themselves against European ideas of progress are simply trying to protect their unwavering centuries-old societal practices.⁸⁸ Primitivists overlook the greatly hierarchical organization of some primitive societies in favor of others, grouping them into one simplified and romantic category.⁸⁹ However, primitivists offer a counternarrative to modern progressivist views of society that assume human societies are always improving. If we accept the primitivist view as an *image* of a different societal trajectory rather than a *program* for society to be implemented, primitivists can open up a sense of nature that is not simply a resource for people. Unfortunately, primitivists, in arguing that living in a “state of nature” is the way to attain free communities, place nature in some ahistorical past, disconnected from the present and from humans, and do not consider the effects of getting rid of technologies and infrastructures on differently abled people. Primitivism misses a fundamental element of anarchist thinking: that one does not find a moment of perfection, either in the past or in the present, which primitivists argue is possible.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ John Zerzan, “Patriarchy, Civilisation, and the Origins of Gender.” *Insurgent Desire Online*. Accessed 8 September 2008. <http://www.insurgentdesire.org.uk/patriarchy.htm>

⁸⁷ John Zerzan argues, “the general crisis of modernity has its roots in the imposition of gender. Separation and inequality begin here at the period when symbolic culture itself emerges, soon becoming definitive as domestication and civilization: patriarchy. The hierarchy of gender can no more be reformed than the class system or globalization. Without a deeply radical women’s liberation we are consigned to the deadly swindle and mutilation now dealing out a fearful toll everywhere. The wholeness of original genderlessness may be a prescription for our redemption,” (Ibid).

Brian Oliver Sheppard, in criticizing Zerzan, argues that primitivists “confla[te] millennia of various cultures and societies into one entity – primitive man, as though there was one common and wiser way of life that all humans once shared.” Brian Oliver Sheppard, *Anarchism versus Primitivism*, (London: Active Distribution, 2008), 10.

⁸⁸ Robert Thaxton, “The Lies of Progress” in S. Best and A. Nocella (eds.), *Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defence of the Earth*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2006), 192.

⁸⁹ By seeing hunter-gatherer societies as uniform, primitivists contribute to the false and romantic idealization of the past as a static point on a linear path of development and modernization.

⁹⁰ Within eco-anarchism, there is a major debate around the use of technology. While primitivists argue that technology is inherently oppressive and exploitative, other eco-anarchists see it as being potentially “liberatory.” Bookchin, especially

However, as Smith reminds us, social ecologists are also guilty of romanticizing the past, if a different one than primitivists.⁹¹ Primitivism can help anarchism to be more considerate about ecology but cannot be a program for changing society.

Disagreements about what role technology plays in societal and ecological sustainability as well the location of revolutionary practice emerge out of this ecological tension. Bookchin argued that technology can be “liberatory” and will help provide for abundance in society.⁹² The simple tension within modern environmental anarchism sits between Bookchin's social ecology, which focuses on a more technophilic approach to ending domination in modern society, and Zerzan's primitivism, which focuses on anti-civilization and a return to wildness as a goal.⁹³ However, there are also anti-colonial, feminist, and anti-racist critiques of these two camps that deepen the sphere of environmental anarchism into something more grounded.

Chaia Heller, a proponent of social ecology, includes a more overtly feminist perspective into eco-anarchism that is useful to the critique of primitivism.⁹⁴ She problematizes the way that “nature” has been conceptualized and explains how it has been commodified and treated as if it is something of which humans do not make up a part. A border is drawn between human society and the rest of nature, as though humans were not natural beings and as though nature were somewhere else, not everywhere. She gives the example of “the myth of the romantic hero strutting off into the 'wilds of nature' turning away from the society he as left behind.”⁹⁵ Heller’s contribution makes clear that to repair dominant relationships we must redefine and recreate the relationships we have with each other, engage in reconstructing our social institutions and create a “life long process of politicized critical self-reflection

takes the argument of technology quite seriously in, “Towards a Liberatory Technology.” See Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 41-84.

⁹¹ Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, 74-75. Smith points out that Bookchin often spoke about prehistoric societies that were more egalitarian, especially Neolithic farmers and believed that prehistoric communities were building on rationality and progress.

⁹² Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 105-165.

⁹³ Smith, “Wild-life,” 478.

⁹⁴ Chaia Heller, *Ecology of Everyday Life: Rethinking the Desire for Nature*. (Montreal: Black Rose, 1999).

⁹⁵ Heller, 2.

and action,” if we want to change our relationship to each other within nature, which necessarily has a gender and sex lens.⁹⁶ Heller’s feminist contributions help to address some of the critiques of the initial work of the social ecology camp. Others have critiqued social ecology for failing to address specific kinds of domination and oppression.⁹⁷

Anarchist Ecology as it Relates to Land and Colonialism

Mick Smith, in his article about eco-politics in the writing of Edward Hymans, engages two concepts that I believe help structure the ecological consideration of returning to the land as they relate to private property: “natural order” and “waste land.”⁹⁸ Smith examines the relationship between two male conservationists with very different political beliefs.⁹⁹ In looking at the relationship, Smith unpacks some of the tensions between conservation and radical politics.¹⁰⁰ In addressing natural order, Smith argues that, “for Hymans, ecologically balanced past societies offer sources of ideas, but society is to be re-made and created, not recovered intact... This requires an imaginative reconfiguration of future possibilities that draws from the past but also recognizes history is not teleological.”¹⁰¹ For Hymans neither a return to the past nor a movement towards the future in unbridled progress is desirable. Hymans sees no natural order, instead envisioning a mixture of lessons from the past and present to

⁹⁶ Ibid., 37.

⁹⁷ Frederico Venturini has taken social ecology out of the Western context to examine how relevant it is to the Rojava movement in Syria. See, “Social Ecology and the Non-Western World,” *Challenging Capitalist Modernity II: Dissecting Capitalist Modernity—Building Democratic Confederalism*, 3–5 April 2015, Hamburg. 23 June 2017, <<http://networkaq.net/2015/2015/speeches/pdf/2.5%20ENGLISH%20-%20Federico%20Venturini%20-%20Social%20Ecology%20Non-Western%20World.pdf>>

Val Plumwood’s chapter in *The Socialist Feminist Project: A Contemporary Reader in Theory and Politics*, “The Eco-Politics Debate and the Politics of Nature,” critiques social ecology for continuing to create a hierarchy of oppressions and a continued insistence on Western notions of reason as necessary for undoing ecological and human domination. See also, Karl Hardy, “Social Ecology Needs Development, Dissent, and Dynamism” *Institute for Social Ecology*, sourced 23 June 2017. <<http://social-ecology.org/wp/2011/01/social-ecology-needs-development-dissent-dynamism/>>

⁹⁸ I will describe waste land in more detail, below.

⁹⁹ Mick Smith, “Edward Hymans: Ecology and Politics 'Under the Vine,’” *Environmental Values* 20, (2011): 95-119. One man is Edward Hymans, an anarchist and agriculturalist, and the other is H.J. Massingham, a conservative writer.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 95.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 109.

“open all kinds of unexpected possibilities.”¹⁰² This imagination of a refusal to accept a natural order opens up new ways of thinking about our ethical obligations in relation to simplified and romanticized visions of a perfect ecological past, which may also help us to re-imagine our geographical relationship with the state.

In *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, Smith reconsiders the main theoretical underpinnings of primitivism and separates them from the more troubling conclusions of primitivists like Zerzan who offers little clarity on how the end of civilization can be attained and makes troubling suggestions like, “an existence without constraints is an immediate, central objective, unfettered pleasure.”¹⁰³ Smith acknowledges and shares the critiques of primitivism’s apoliticism, amorality, and anti-ethics, especially the belief by primitivists that a return to a state of nature will create a “utopian condition” and a return to amoral “innocence” with no clear discussion of power.¹⁰⁴ However, he concludes that there is a philosophical and political usefulness of primitivism:

Anarcho-primitivism rejects not only the commodification of nature but also the very idea of a specifically human form of labour that automatically stamps nature with a seal of proprietorship. It encourages us to ask why the mixture of human labour should, after all, be regarded as justifying a hierarchical, one-directional expropriation of any aspect of nature deemed necessary and as simultaneously compromising the sole active element in eliciting nature’s value.¹⁰⁵

Unfortunately, in calling for a more radical understanding of ecology’s autonomy and agency, Smith does not address the complication of these theoretical conversations about nature as a resource with respect to the colonial history of some natural areas, and his critique fails to show the complication of nature as intrinsically valuable outside of a European worldview. However, he tries to overcome issues

¹⁰² Ibid., 110.

¹⁰³ It is troubling to imagine “existence without constraints” in community settings without rules about respecting others’ boundaries, for example. What is most troubling about primitivism is that there is little consideration of the domination of those in society by those who have more strength or power, especially able-bodied, white, cis-gendered men. Zerzan, *On the Transition: Postscript to Future Primitive* (n.d.) accessed 10 March 2018, < <http://www.primitivism.com/transition.htm> >

¹⁰⁴ Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, 80-87. “To take the idea of innocence associated with the state of nature literally and use it to deny all ethical responsibilities is to espouse a form of amoral absolutism. That is, it advocates a political principle of theological antiauthoritarianism that awards sovereign individuals the authority to grant themselves absolution from their damaging effects on others, to wipe clean the slate of their souls,” (87).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 77.

of possession of land and nature by stating that sovereignty over nature is a construct that legitimizes domination.¹⁰⁶

Smith's positing that ecological sovereignty is another tool of the state, used to dominate nature and treat it as a resource, is an important counter narrative to state control of the environment. His call for an expanded ethics of ecology to follow a Levinasian ethics of "irreducibility" could be taken to support the irreducibility of nature and land as something that itself requires decolonization and giving agency to ecology itself.¹⁰⁷ In this way, the irreducibility of Indigenous people in separation from the land from which they originated can also, arguably, be included even if it has not been made explicit. Smith's ethics have the potential to unsettle colonial domination of nature and Indigenous people, but they do not fully question the colonial undertones of a rigid ethics of irreducibility, since many Indigenous nations see themselves as part of nature in a way that includes taking what is needed from the land in a balanced and reciprocal manner.¹⁰⁸

Leanne Simpson explains how Nishnaabeg creation stories constitute the relationship between humans and their environments:

Nishnaabeg thought comes from the land... This recognition of the inherent emergence of nature developed thought systems that were process- and context-oriented rather than content-driven. In this way of thinking, *the way* in which something is done becomes very important because it carried with it all of the meaning. The meaning is derived from context, including the depth of relationships with the spiritual world, elders, family, clans, and the natural world.¹⁰⁹

Paula Sherman, of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, describes the Anishinaabe philosophy of *Pimaadiziwin*, which "situates human beings within a collective that includes the Natural World and all other parts of Creation."¹¹⁰ This theory outlines how Anishinaabeg people should relate to ecology and

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., xiii.

¹⁰⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), cited in Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, xviii

¹⁰⁸ Paula Sherman, *Dishonour of the Crown: The Ontario Resource Regime in the Valley of the Kiji Sibi*, (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2008). See also, Enda Manitowabi cited in Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*, Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2011), 36-39.

¹⁰⁹ Simpson, 91. (emphasis in original)

¹¹⁰ Sherman, 16-17. There are many different spellings and ways of referring to the Nishnaabeg Nation, which includes Algonquin, Ojibwe, Odawa, Mississauga, and Chippewa people. I use the spellings or references to specific people as they are used by the authors throughout the dissertation. For more on different spellings of Nishnaabeg see, Simpson, 25.

what their responsibilities are to the land and life around them, seeing “the creatures with whom we share this valley [as] our closest relatives.”¹¹¹ Sherman, in her critique of environmental assessments of mining companies stating that exploration will have “no impact” on the land, demonstrates how the Algonquin believe that everything and everyone has an impact on the environment. Simply meeting one’s survival needs has an impact on other living organisms. However, keeping with the understanding that human beings have a responsibility to all living organisms and are part of them, Algonquin people know that they have a duty to interact with the natural world in responsible and respectful way, working to maintain balance.¹¹²

There are a number of critiques of an environmentalism that does not explicitly call for decolonization. Tuck and Yang point out that “the postcolonial pursuit of resources is fundamentally an anthropocentric model, as land, water, air, animals, and plants are never able to become postcolonial; they remain objects to be exploited by the empowered postcolonial subject.”¹¹³ A blog series on *Engagement*, a blog of the Anthropology and Environment Society entitled “Life on the Frontier: The Environmental Anthropology of Settler Colonialism,” speaks to the inseparable relationship between ecology and colonialism. In the introductory article, Zoe Todd speaks specifically to the impact of colonialism on the environment and, taking Patrick Wolfe’s argument that colonialism is a structure, explains how the structure of colonialism impacts ecology and ecological ethics.¹¹⁴ Todd argues, “our ability to refuse settler colonialism depends on our ability to insist on relationships that center and attend to myriad human responsibilities to more-than-human beings and worlds, and to manifest

¹¹¹ Ibid., 18.

¹¹² Simpson, 91.

¹¹³ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 1*, no. 1, (2012): 19.

¹¹⁴ Zoe Todd, “The Environmental Anthropology of Settler Colonialism: Part I,” *Life on the Frontiers: The Environmental Anthropology of Settler Colonialism. Engagement Blog*, posted 11 April 2017, Sourced 10 June 2017, <<https://aesengagement.wordpress.com/2017/04/11/commentary-the-environmental-anthropology-of-settler-colonialism-part-i/>>, citing Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999). Wolf also argues that land acquisition is the key tool for settler colonial states in enacting colonization. See, Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research 8*(4) 2006: 387-409.

relationships which acknowledge land, water, plants, animals and other more-than-human beings as *political agents* in their own right.”¹¹⁵ As Simpson and other Indigenous thinkers and elders have already articulated: Indigenous people are a part of the land from which they come.¹¹⁶

Smith’s critiques of hierarchical relationships with nature, and his point that in creating an anarchist ecological ethic we must “ask why the mixture of human labour should, after all, be regarded as justifying a hierarchical, one-directional *expropriation* of any aspect of nature deemed necessary and as simultaneously compromising the sole active element in eliciting nature’s value,” indicates that Smith fills a gap within anarchist thinking about ecology that addresses and finds common ground with primitivism and other eco-anarchist ideas.¹¹⁷ His arguments align with critiques of colonialism, even if he does not explicitly state them, drawing anarchist ecological theory closer to a decolonizing land practice, or ethic, in the sense that he provides ideas about ecology that can be applied to life, that can be taken out of abstraction to inform daily practice of life within one’s environment through prefiguration. Smith has set a path for ethical, radical ecology that can be taken further.

The term “land ethic” provides some insight. The history of the term comes from post-Second World War environmentalism with Aldo Leopold defining the term in *A Sand County Almanac*.¹¹⁸ In the text, Leopold calls for a responsibility to the natural world, of a mutual relationship of respect between land and people.¹¹⁹ Ethical responsibility to the land does not come with a list of rigid rules of right and wrong, but simply expands the definition of community to include the natural world. An ethics between the land and community necessarily means cooperation between them.¹²⁰

The vision of land as a part of the community that Leopold espoused connects with decolonial

¹¹⁵ Todd, “The Environmental Anthropology of Settler Colonialism: Part I.”

¹¹⁶ Simpson, 91; See also, Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012). Sherman;

¹¹⁷ Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, 77. (emphasis in original)

¹¹⁸ Aldo, Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac, With Essays on Conservation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 167-189.

¹²⁰ Leopold, 169.

visions of ecology. If we take Smith's irreducibility of ecology and land and combine it with Todd's and the Nishnaabeg understanding that the environment and people as part of each other, we can see the beginning of an ethical anarchist land practice, or an ethics of inhabitation. At the centre of this practice is an account of relationships and histories of the *specific* place being inhabited, infused with a feminist framing of the particularity of place.¹²¹ While this practice has not been made explicit among anarchists, the political projects that anarchists support show a commitment to it. For example, the struggle of self-determination is not perceived as a contradiction in terms for anarchists, even when the people seeking self-determination want a nation, despite a disavowal of national projects, in general, by anarchists.¹²² Anarchist ethics are aligned with flexibility and fluidity in response to rigid rules that often miss the nuances in one's chosen course of action because of anarchists' equal commitment to both personal and collective freedom. The effect of this complex commitment is the necessity of dynamism and constant negotiation which is at the heart of an anarchist ethic. As Cindy Milstein explains, "Becoming an anarchist is a process – without end – of applying an ethical compass to the whole of what one (and everyone) is and could be individually and socially" that is "at the forefront" of everything anarchists do.¹²³ She further explains that anarchist ethics is "not some fixed entity but rather the continual questioning of what it means to be a good person" in the specific context within which one finds themselves and then "apply these ethics in different ways."¹²⁴ Nathan Jun explains that anarchist ethics prioritize life over norms, they focus on the "concreteness and particularity" of life.¹²⁵ For Jun, experimentation and creating new possibilities are core tenets of an anarchist ethic. Milstein and Jun show that anarchist ethics are a process of figuring out what is needed in a particular place and community and understanding that what is needed may change. Contrary to Smith's philosophical and

¹²¹ Doreen Massey, *For Space*, (Washington: Sage, 2005).

¹²² For a discussion of anarchist commitments to the Palestinian struggle against colonialism see, Steven Salaita, *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

¹²³ Cindy Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*, (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), 41;48.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*,50.

¹²⁵ Nathan Jun, *Anarchism and Political Modernity*, (New York: Continuum, 2012), 181-182.

ungrounded arguments for radical ecological ethics, anarchist ethics must be rooted where they take place, and must be decided by the people affected by them.

Turning to the second concept raised in Hymans' work, Smith addresses the concept of "waste land."¹²⁶ While Hymans denounced private property and ownership of land, according to Smith he still treated the land and nature as resources, treating "nature entirely instrumentally" by arguing that every bit of waste land should be drained by farmers and farmed to expand agriculture and provide for human needs.¹²⁷ In this concept we see intersections between colonial practices of dispossession and the potential tensions between intensive agricultural production and stewardship of the land with the goal of protecting biodiversity.¹²⁸ The term "waste land" has been used historically and recently to justify the appropriation of "unused" land from colonized and poor populations, similar to the concept of "primitive accumulation" by Marxists.¹²⁹

Waste Land as an Alternative to Private Property?

Subjects of state-enforced displacement have also used the concept of useless or waste land. For example, on Indigenous communities whose land has been taken up by the tar sands in Alberta and who reclaim useful materials from abandoned tar sands work camps, Janelle Marie Baker writes, "this new form of harvesting makes sense of postcolonial extractions and landscapes: the settlers impose and take

¹²⁶ Smith, "Edward Hymans," 112.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Waste itself has been identified as a colonial force. Myra Hind also writes about how the construction of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line in the Arctic, to protect North America from Soviet attack, was also a waste remediation project and directly impacted Inuit self-determination. See, Myra J. Hind, "Waste Legacies: Land, Waste, and Canada's DEW Line," *Northern Research* 42 (2016): 173-195, Accessed 5 November 2017, <<http://journals.sfu.ca/nr/index.php/nr/arti/567>>

¹²⁹ See Karl Marx, *Capital: An Abridged Edition, Vol I, Chapter 26*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Marx argued that it was primitive accumulation that began the division between classes, as the "original sin" that started capitalism (363). Land dispossession from free peasants was one form of accumulation. Marx argues, "the expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process" (365). Furthermore, Marx draws the colonial roots of capitalism by showing how primitive accumulation dispossessed aboriginal populations of gold and silver in the Americas (*Vol I, Chapter 31*, 376). While some Marxists argue that there was one original instance of primitive accumulation, others, like David Harvey, argue that Marx was speaking about primitive accumulation as a cyclical relationship of ongoing dispossession, if in different forms for example "accumulation by dispossession." See David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 178.

from the land briefly, but *Nehiwayak* (Crees) are there to stay and so they recover, reclaim, repurpose, and wait for life to rewild in their ancestral territories.”¹³⁰ The boundary between appropriated land and reclaimed place shifts when the land is treated as waste land, and the redefinition of space opens up possibilities for alternative relationships with the land. As Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing states, “the frontier is made in the shifting terrain between legality and illegality, public and private ownership, brutal rape and passionate charisma, ethnic collaboration and hostility, violence and law, restoration and extermination.”¹³¹ The term “waste land” is being reclaimed by marginalized populations as a place from which to gain resiliency and build up survival tactics and resistance.¹³² The use of waste land as a form of refusal of state power is one way in which anarchists have conceived of alternative communities taking place without private property.

In an attempt to overcome the unsolvable dilemma of private property within the capitalist system, anarchists have tried to document how people have overcome property relationships historically. Pointing to capitalism’s creation of certain spatial cleavages, David Graeber, Andrej Grubačić, Denis O’Hearn, and James C. Scott try to show how statelessness can and has happened without private property.¹³³ In this vein, James C. Scott takes up the reclamation of waste land in his book, *The Art of Not Being Governed*. Scott suggests that populations that have sought to remain outside of the control of the state, who desire to remain stateless, often escape to peripheral (and often geographically rugged) terrain.¹³⁴ I noted earlier that rural areas have often lost vital infrastructure and

¹³⁰ Janelle Marie Baker, “Harvesting Ruins: The Im/Permanence of Work Camps and Reclaiming Colonized Landscapes in the Northern Alberta Oil Sands,” *Life on the Frontiers: Engagement Blog*, 23 October 2016, Accessed 30 June 2017, <<https://aesengagement.wordpress.com/2016/10/23/harvesting-ruins-the-impermanence-of-work-camps-and-reclaiming-colonized-landscapes-in-the-northern-alberta-oil-sands/>>

¹³¹ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 33. (cited by Baker, “Harvesting Ruins.”)

¹³² Erica Violet Lee, “In Defence of Wastelands: A Survival Guide.” *GUTS Blog*, Issue 7 (November 2016). Accessed 30 June 2017. <<http://gutsmagazine.ca/wastelands/>>

¹³³ Andrej Grubačić and Denis O’Hearn, *Living on the Edges of Capitalism: Adventures in Exile and Mutual Aid*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).

¹³⁴ Scott. See citation 47 in this chapter.

support from governments. In some areas, this loss has opened up reclamation opportunities.¹³⁵

Graeber suggests that “it is precisely from these invisible [or ignored] spaces – invisible, most of all, to power – whence the potential for insurrection, and the extraordinary social creativity that seems to emerge out of nowhere in revolutionary moments, actually comes.”¹³⁶ In his study of rural Malagasy people, Graeber asserts that “provisional autonomous zones” might be an option for self-sufficiency and the freedom to run one’s affairs with the least intervention from the state.¹³⁷ Graeber's work moves away from the idea of a highly orchestrated social upheaval and suggests a very different narrative of existing outside of the state. By making themselves insignificant, non-threatening, and easily uprootable, these communities have potentially become extremely effective at avoiding being subsumed into a governed people, as a political act that may be perceived by the state as simply an innocuous backwards culture that ensures a political separation from the state. Day is instructive:

Given the sociological-historical fact that the construction of radical alternatives seems to occur in places and at times, where there is a failure of the dominant order to ‘provide’, can we not speculate that new forms of systems failure will open up new possibilities and necessities for the creation of alternatives? The beast is dying, and in a way that has at least the appearance of novelty, it is coming to know this itself. Perhaps ‘our’ task then, is to help lower the beast into the ground, gently, carefully, so that it does as little damage as possible in its death throes, and so that there is something left after it is gone.¹³⁸

Rural space might make it more conducive for self-sufficient communities to organize themselves in relative isolation from the state because they are protected by the perception that they are undesirable places to live. Further, the size of land that can be acquired in rural areas is greater than in urban areas. These examples of reclamation on waste land are useful for reimagining how a decentralized revolution could take place. However, questions about private property relationships in the settler colonial context

¹³⁵ Aasim Sajjad Aktar, “The State as Landlord in Pakistani Punjab: Peasant Struggles on the Okara Military Farms.” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 33, no. 3 (2006): 479-501. In the Punjab there have been examples of rural inhabitants taking back their ability to produce food for their own subsistence. See other examples in Ross (ed.), *Grabbing Back*.

¹³⁶ Graeber, *Fragments*, 34.

¹³⁷ David Graeber, “Provisional Autonomous Zone: Or, The Ghost-State in Madagascar.” in *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire*. (Oakland: AK Press, 2007).

¹³⁸ Day, “Walking Away from Failure,” <<http://uppingtheanti.org/node/2787>>

remain.

Landauer acknowledged that “no more unoccupied land invites the densely crowded people to settle.”¹³⁹ However, there are no suggestions for how to address questions of settler acquisition of land in a settler colonial context. Writing in Germany, Landauer imagined different socio-economic realities from those in a settler colonial context. Adam Barker and Jenny Pickerill, citing Glen Coulthard, show how anarchists might undo the colonial vision of life on the land: “for Indigenous people place is central to understandings of life, whereas most Western societies . . . derive meaning from the world in historical/developmental terms, thereby placing *time* as the narrative of central importance.”¹⁴⁰ The particular relationships of dispossession and colonialism are central to how anarchists and Indigenous sovereigntists in Canada think about property relationships. Tuck and Yang’s explanation of settler colonialism is useful here too: “In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his [sic] property. Epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land are interred, indeed made pre-modern and backward. Made savage.”¹⁴¹ The history of displacing Indigenous people from their territories and the reparations for that dispossession by the settler state have been reduced to various kinds of property relationships (public, private, and collectively owned). As a result, Coulthard and Simpson believe that looking to the state to atone for past wrongs is in many ways counter to the goal of decolonization because the traditional relationship of Indigenous people with their territory and land is not about ownership.¹⁴² Anarchists have tried to make decolonization an essential part of anarchist theories, however few have considered the spatial implications of decolonization in any tangible

¹³⁹ Landauer, *For Socialism*, 114.

¹⁴⁰ Adam J. Barker and Jenny Pickerill. "Radicalizing Relationships to and Through Shared Geographies: Why Anarchists Need to Understand Indigenous Connections to Land and Place." *Antipode* 44, no. 5 (2012): 1711; citing Glen Sean Coulthard, "Place against empire: Understanding Indigenous anti-colonialism." *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action* 4 no. 2 (2010): 79–83

¹⁴¹ Tuck and Yang, 127.

¹⁴² Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 8; Simpson, 21-22.

way.¹⁴³ The conclusion has been to renounce private property and yet this has served to perpetuate issues of colonization as simply an issue of who owns the land. Some geographers have begun to address the question of territory and space with respect to anarchist settlers, but have not addressed property relationships.¹⁴⁴ As Todd reminds us, “It is important to bring the careful and detailed labor of politically-informed ethnographic work to bear on the environmental specificities of settler colonialism, as this gives us the capacity to see the paradoxical ways in which settler colonialism, as a structure, manages to reproduce itself faithfully across many different spaces and times.”¹⁴⁵ The same can be said about environmental stewardship. The work of thinking through more practical ethical property and environmental relationships has not been done.¹⁴⁶ Looking to the historical examples of other ICs is one important means by which to gain insights into how anarchist community-building praxis does and does not work. I will now turn to those experiments.

Rural Anarchist Community Experiences¹⁴⁷

The goal of moving to rural areas has been present in anarchist theories and fictional writings from the early days of anarchism.¹⁴⁸ Anarchists have engaged with rural communities as places to migrate to and

¹⁴³ Adam Gary Lewis, "Decolonizing Anarchism: Expanding Anarcha-Indigenism in Theory and Practice." Masters Thesis, Queen's University (Canada), 2012. See also, Mia Ramnath. *Decolonizing Anarchism: An Anti-Authoritarian History of India's Liberation Struggle* (Oakland, AK Press, 2012) and David Porter, *Eyes to the South: French Anarchists and Algeria*, (Oakland, AK Press, 2011). One exception is Barker and Pickerill.

¹⁴⁴ See Anthony Ince "In the Shell of the Old: Anarchist Geographies of Territorialisation." *Antipode* 44, no. 5 (2012): 1645-66; Myrna Margulies Breitbart. "Looking Backward/Acting Forward." *Antipode* 44, no. 5 (2012): 1579-90

¹⁴⁵ Todd, "The Environmental Anthropology of Settler Colonialism: Part I."

¹⁴⁶ In conversations with many anarchist colleagues, many are most excited about my dissertation in hopes that it will give them an answer to the question of how to survive in the capitalist colonial system without owning property and how to be good stewards, or how to own property without being a bad settler.

¹⁴⁷ My overview of the anarchist IC experiments demonstrates an enduring commitment to rural community building in the anarchist tradition. I use examples from the United States and Canada predominantly because they are the closest examples and they demonstrate the relationship between the need for private property to establish a community in a settler colonial context. Further, I could not focus on Canada exclusively because of the deeper available history of the anarchist experiment found in the United States and a lack of a documented history in Canada.

¹⁴⁸ J William Lloyd's two fictional novels about anarchist back to the land movements, *The Natural Man*, and the sequel, *The Dwellers in the Vale Sunrise*, were widely read by anarchists in the United States at the turn of the 20th century. In the second book, the protagonist of the first novel, Westwood, is seen imitating Indigenous people and likening himself to Thoreau and eventually gaining a following of people who want to live in community with him in tune with nature. At one point Westwood asserts, "the hope that, as the new way of life spreads, the old order will peacefully crumble." quoted in Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth-*

from which to learn. In 1874, Bakunin called on educated radical youth to go to the countryside of Russia to learn from peasants, to live with them and “immerse themselves in the[ir] life,” and over a thousand educated Russian revolutionaries answered the call.¹⁴⁹ Their attempt was generally understood to be a failure, and the peasants were, at best, unresponsive to the propaganda.¹⁵⁰

In the United States and Canada, the anarchist movement shifted significantly in the late 1880s, from a predominantly individualist anarchist ethos of settler anarchists to a socialist anarchist ideology influenced by the arrival of large numbers of anarchist immigrants from German and Eastern Europe.¹⁵¹ In that time a number of ICs emerged with a vision of reconnecting to the land.¹⁵² For example, the Mutual Home Association was an anarchist IC started in 1897 in Washington State that worked on a premise of mutual aid, but not fully communal practices. Each member was given two acres of land to live off in a subsistence manner, but they did not own the land. The community had a school, built homes for each member collectively, and produced an anarchist publication called *Discontent*. The publication brought the Mutual Home Association out of relative isolation and obscurity and drew in many members, especially from Russian Jewish socialist communities around the United States. Mutual Home was visited by Emma Goldman and for a brief time served as a site of pilgrimage for many anarchists until the community disintegrated in 1919.¹⁵³

Equality IC followed a vision much like Landauer’s, wherein the fifteen anarchists who started the IC became frustrated by the lack of interest in socialism by people in mainstream political institutions and in 1896 decided to realize the socialist ideal one colony at a time, quickly growing to 300 members.¹⁵⁴ The community focused on earning money through lumbering, milling, tailor work,

Century America, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 23.

¹⁴⁹ Daniel Field, “Peasants and Propagandists in the Russian Movement to the People of 1874,” *Journal of Modern History* 59, no. 3 (1987): 415.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Some peasants were quite unhappy and angry with the propagandists.

¹⁵¹ Veysey, 35.

¹⁵² Jeff Shantz, *Living Anarchy: Theory and Practice in Anarchist Movements*, (Palo Alto, Academica, 2009), 20.

¹⁵³ Timothy Miller, *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond*. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 32-34.

¹⁵⁴ Robert P. Sutton, *Modern American Communes: A Dictionary*, (Westport: Firewood Press, 2005), 50-51.

agriculture, as well as a periodical called *Industrial Freedom*, which was seen as the leading radical periodical in its day. Due to ideological and political disagreements, a number of other ICs, including Burley and Freeland, were started in the area by discontented exiles from Equality.¹⁵⁵ In 1906 a devastating fire destroyed most of Equality and the project ended in 1907.¹⁵⁶

In the period of 1900 to 1930 a number of anarchist communities sprung up in the United States, creating a great deal of political debate on the subject of moving out of the city as a revolutionary. Goldman, defending the city from blame for the problems of the world, argued that cities were the sites of change, while self-sufficient rural towns were stagnant. She believed that leaving the city was equal to leaving the struggle behind.¹⁵⁷ Another anarchist intellectual of the time, E.C. Walker, in an article called “Should Radicals Colonize?” shared Goldman’s sentiments: “the city is hell, but the fires of this hell drive the motors of intellectual and moral revolt. Men [sic] cannot stagnate here as in the country. Always there is more interference, more despotism in the country.”¹⁵⁸ The debate about what moving to the country meant for one’s revolutionary politics played itself out explicitly in one prominent IC, started by New York City based anarchists, who moved an hour and a half out of the city to found Ferrer Colony.

Named for the Catalan anarchist and educator Francesco Ferrer, the Ferrer Colony started as an IC in New York City in 1911, moving to rural New Jersey four years later. Despite Goldman’s critiques, at her insistence the project moved out of the city to avoid being destroyed by “political events that threatened its survival.”¹⁵⁹ The ICs decision to move to a rural area was reached in the context of increasing clashes within the anarchist movement between calls for violent actions from some and requests for non-violence in the face of the crackdown on anarchists at the time. Ferrer IC

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 22; 62.

¹⁵⁶ Miller, 34-35.

¹⁵⁷ Goldman, *Mother Earth VI*, (1911): 152-153.

¹⁵⁸ E.C. Walker, “Should Radicals Colonize?” *Free Society*, (May 15 1904), 2

¹⁵⁹ Veysey, 103.

members showed continued commitment to struggles in the city and most commuted daily to New York, a hub of anarchist organizing at the time, to participate in the increasingly policed movement.¹⁶⁰ Despite their commitment, many urban comrades critiqued IC members for being retreatist and for having “opted out of the class struggle.”¹⁶¹ Most members of the IC were recent European émigrés. At the time, much of the critique of these migrants was due to the extensive surveillance, detention, and deportation of radical immigrants occurring at the time, especially in New York City. Members of the Ferrer Colony did not avoid interrogation and visits from the Federal District Attorney, however, because Ferrer Colony was co-owned it was impossible for the FDA to enact a mass deportation campaign of these radicals because they owned property. Meanwhile, urban anarchists who had recently immigrated who did not have property were deported in large numbers. Veysey, in describing this tension, sides with the urban critics who surmise that rural immigrants had “gained freedom from persecution at the price of diluting their radicalism.”¹⁶²

Ferrer was run as a business, wherein the IC purchased land for ten dollars per acre and sold it to members for 150 dollars per acre. The surplus was used to build vital infrastructure on the land. Each member had their own acreage to build a home and the rest of the land was held in common. There were ninety houses and over 200 residents at its peak in 1920. In contrast to the perception that residents had escaped political tension, the community struggled with internal and external threats. Many vigilante neighbours destroyed their property at night. Internal conflict between communists and anarchists created tension in the 1930s, but the colony survived for another twenty years.¹⁶³ The Ferrer project’s legacy was its educational model, often called the Modern School, which promoted unstructured learning environments.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 77.

¹⁶¹ Miller, 109 and 111.

¹⁶² Veysey., 131.

¹⁶³ Miller, 104-105.

¹⁶⁴ Sutton, 61.

Some Western rural religious movements, such as the Doukhobors and other Anabaptists, had anarchist tendencies but did not identify as anarchists, although a combination of anarchist inspiration and religiosity also existed.¹⁶⁵ In 1917 a group of over six thousand peasants taking up the philosophy of Tolstoy formed an IC called “Free Christians,” which continued until the 1930s, when their numbers were just under a thousand. Tolstoyans followed an anarchist Christianity, refusing Orthodox Christian teaching and believing in revelation.¹⁶⁶ Some American Jews were also inspired by the Russian utopianism they had read about and began Jewish rural communal life in New Jersey.¹⁶⁷

The boom of ICs after May 1968 is sometimes self-consciously identified with the anarchist call for radical community building.¹⁶⁸ The debate about retreatism from the urban political struggle rematerialized at this time. After almost thirty years of anarchist decline in the United States, anarchists grew in numbers in the 1960s and some renewed the called for violent revolution. One anarchist IC that emerged out of that period called itself the Motherfuckers and set up an IC in rural Vermont called Cold Mountain Farm. They described their decision to move to the country as one emerging out of feeling tired of an “extreme politicization of everyday life,” espousing the perception that political life does not occur in the countryside.¹⁶⁹ At the time Bookchin, under the pen name Lewis Herber, advocated that radicals leave the city to return to the land.¹⁷⁰ Other prominent anarchists of the time also chimed in on the debate about urban migration to rural ICs. Alan Hoffman was one of many anarchists who defended rural ICs. His argument was similar to that of Landauer:

For us the future is in the groups of people who establish more profoundly human relations with each other and their environment. Those who return to the land and to communal forms of living together...those who scavenge the endless waste of decaying society for the raw

¹⁶⁵ George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 12.

¹⁶⁶ Cory Bushman, “A Brief History of Peasant Tolstoyans,” *The Mormon Worker*, (no date), Accessed 19 March 2009. <http://www.themormonworker.org/articles/issue2/a_brief_history_of_peasant_tolstoyants.php>

¹⁶⁷ Veysey, 112. Veysey remarks that most of the Jews who were interested in this rural project were immigrants from urban backgrounds, while those who had come from rural Europe were not as keen to leave urban America.

¹⁶⁸ Judson Jerome, *Families of Eden: Communes and the New Anarchism*, (New York: Seabury Press), 1974.

¹⁶⁹ Veysey, 180.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 184. Bookchin’s views on rural life changed over time. In the 1970s, echoing Kropotkin, Bookchin advocated for the blending of city and countryside, where each would be “accessible by foot to the other.” Later still, as we already saw, Bookchin would critique rural ICs for working against revolutionary goals. See, Bookchin, *The Limits of the City*, 67.

materials of a new culture...Let there be thousands of communes so that a few survive.¹⁷¹

The debate over whether leaving the city meant leaving the revolution persisted. However, in the late 1960s anarchists continued to leave the city in hopes of finding community in the rural.¹⁷²

Cold Mountain Farm, one of many anarchist IC projects located in rural Vermont, lost most of its members during the first winter, with many of them retreating back to the city after difficulties with crops due to late planting, and a broken tractor.¹⁷³ Another rural Vermont IC, Montague Farm, also struggled with membership as communards felt isolated and ostracized by their neighbours (some of them attempted a naturalist lifestyle in the country and worked on the land naked). Moreover, there was a growing feeling of isolation from radical communities in the city. Few New Yorkers visited or stayed in touch with the Vermont migrants, partly because of the feeling that the rural IC members were abandoning the struggle. Cold Mountain Farm lacked a set of membership guidelines or shared system of beliefs and saw many new members arriving and looking to find a plot of land for themselves, rather than living collectively. After some tensions over using the farm as a guerrilla training area or a peaceful site of practicing Tao, the original members of Cold Mountain Farm as a whole packed up and moved to start Bryn Athyn in 1968. In 1969 the group moved again to an even more remote area after confrontations with the FBI about having armed members. The IC believed that “the Southwest [United States] would be vast enough to end all their fears of busts and harassment,” moving outside of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and renaming their IC Sun Farm.¹⁷⁴

The anarchist IC also used frontierist language, describing their move to an even more remote and rugged terrain as proof of “their ability at pioneering under really severe conditions.”¹⁷⁵ Veysey seems surprised to learn that the land about which he writes is not actually at the edge of the world, and

¹⁷¹ Alan Hoffman, untitled, unnamed broadsheet published by San Francisco paper, *Good Times* in 1967.

¹⁷² Veysey, 7.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 191.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 185-191.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

says about the area after visiting that “it is not entirely uninhabited, ranching and dry farming, low flying airplanes, gas wells, and road work occur, but [the IC] has protection of trees.”¹⁷⁶

Tolstoy Farm, an open land community established in Washington in the image of Leo Tolstoy’s anarchist experiment in Russia, was deeply committed to communal property ownership. It identified itself “not so much as a community as it is a place that is not owned by anyone so anybody can live here if they find room and the means.”¹⁷⁷ Started in 1962, the Farm attempted to create a pacifist community with no regulations and was committed to poverty and simplicity.¹⁷⁸ By 1965, the IC had divided its settlement into private portions, but continued to practice economic sharing and consensus decision-making. The Farm continues today.¹⁷⁹

Despite a refusal of private property in theory, many anarchist ICs were still privately owned. As was the case with some anarchist theorists, anarchists who migrate to rural spaces to form intentional communities have also sometimes exemplified a lack of critical reflection about instrumental uses of nature, private property, land, or people. It is this complex relationship that I will address in the chapters discussing my primary research findings, which will emerge out of narratives of members of the Hastings Highlands community and the two ICs located there, Black Fly and Dragonfly. First, however, I will outline the complex relationship between researcher and research. Emerging out of an anarchy-feminist commitment to prefigurative politics, I seek to challenge power dynamics and sites of oppression where I stand.¹⁸⁰ Situating myself as an insider/outsider—a researcher as well as a friend to some participants in this study—I will explain the ethical considerations that went into my chosen methods.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ Veysey, 193.

¹⁷⁷ Ronald E. Roberts, *The New Communes: Coming Together in America*. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 47.

¹⁷⁸ Miller, 199.

¹⁷⁹ Sutton, 167.

¹⁸⁰ Tim Luchies, “Anti-Oppression as Pedagogy; Prefiguration as Praxis,” *Interface* 6, No. 1 (May 2014): 110-120. Accessed 15 October 2017, < <http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Interface-6-1-Luchies.pdf>>

¹⁸¹ See, Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L. Buckle, “The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no.1 (March 2009): 54-63

Research Methods, Design, and Analysis

Anarcha-Feminism and Prefigurative Methodology

As an anarchist and feminist, I have an ethical commitment to research that is useful to explaining power relationships and supporting social change. Choosing a research project about intentional communities to which I was politically and socially tied made it even more important to consider ethical, relational, political, and epistemological factors in my methods. I wanted the research to be useful to participants and other anarchists to help us rethink property and colonial relationships. As a result, I made the choice to do a qualitative, interview-based research project to give voice to participants as much as possible, so they could be the agents of communicating their experiences and their perspectives and so that nuances had room to emerge.

The ethical obligation to create in the present what one wishes to see in the future—to ensure that means and ends are not at odds with respect to organization, methods, and daily practice—is the simplest meaning of “prefiguration.” Uri Gordon elaborates:

Prefigurative politics thus represents...a commitment to define and realize anarchist social relations within activities and collective structures. The effort to create and develop horizontal functioning and to maintain a constant awareness of interpersonal dynamics and the way in which they might reflect social patterns of exclusion, are accorded as much importance as planning and carrying out campaigns, projects, and actions.¹⁸²

This commitment to prefiguration is rooted in feminist and decolonizing practices. In the 1970s anarcha-feminists (sometimes called anarcho-feminists and anarchist feminists) were saying that “feminism practices what anarchism preaches.”¹⁸³ Anarcha-feminists have worked to show that anarchism has not always been feminist in practice and to infuse anarchism with anti-oppressive praxis, which includes intersectionality.¹⁸⁴

Prefigurative research methods have in common the aim of not simply seeking a particular

¹⁸² Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*. (London: Pluto Press, 2008),35.

¹⁸³ Lynne Farrow, “Feminism as Anarchism,” *Aurora* (1974). Accessed 16 October 2017
<<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/lynne-farrow-feminism-as-anarchism>>

¹⁸⁴ Lara Messersmith-Glavin et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory 29*, (May 2016). See also, Luchies, 102-110.

outcome and working to challenge oppression through the research itself. The process of research is as important as the subject of research, questioning the power relationship that develops from so-called expert knowledge and seeing participants as experts of their own experience. These research methodologies fall within a framework of social justice and decolonization methodologies, which, to borrow the words of Colectivo Situaciones, "...carry out theoretical and practical work oriented towards coproducing the knowledges and modes of an alternative sociability, beginning with the *potencia* (power) of those subaltern knowledges."¹⁸⁵ This idea is deeply linked to the methodology used to gain this knowledge.

David Graeber suggests that anarchist methodology is rooted in an "ethical discourse about revolutionary practice," in contrast to "theoretical or analytical discourse about revolutionary strategy."¹⁸⁶ Anarchist research works to break down power imbalances and claims to objectivity in the course of research, and to create space within the research project for discovery and change. Dave Neal posits that anarchism should be used as a "toolkit not as a roadmap" in research, meaning that the research should not have preconceived ideas about outcomes or how the world works.¹⁸⁷ However, I would argue that the toolkit necessarily holds understandings of structures of oppression and ethics within it. Anarcha-feminist methodologies must work to ensure that the data collected is not only directed toward an ideological end but also a practical one. At the heart of this kind of research is the understanding that no clear answers can be assumed and neither can a researcher propose fixed solutions. An anarcha-feminist methodology of informed, hopeful, sometimes uncomfortable, attempts at creating societies and communities that decentralize power and break down oppression within the research process is paired with the realization that it is not for the researcher to dictate policy change to

¹⁸⁵ Colectivo Situaciones. "On the Researcher-Militant," Mark Coté et al. (eds.), *Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments against Neoliberal Globalization*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 187.

¹⁸⁶ David Graeber, "Anarchism, Academia, and the Avant-garde," Randall Amster et al. (eds.), *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 106.

¹⁸⁷ Dave Neal, "Anarchism: Ideology or Methodology?" *The Anarchist Library*, 17 September 1997, Accessed 30 January 2013, <<http://www.spunk.org/texts/intro/practice/sp001689.html>>, 12.

the participants; instead, the researcher may challenge ideas of the participants. Tuck and Yang make a similar point about research that aims toward decolonization, pointing out that “the answers are not fully in view,” will be uncomfortable, and may not be friendly.¹⁸⁸

Qualitative methods offer scholars the opportunity to root research in specific cultural and social meanings, spaces, and practices.¹⁸⁹ Feminist qualitative research in particular has shown how much knowledge can be gained from the precise details that emerge out of specific narratives and stories of individual research participants instead of synthesized statistics. Since my research is in rural Ontario, and rural spaces have been studied with an urban bias, as discussed in Chapter One, it is important to focus on these methods, which aim to uncover the stories and specificities of the lived experience of people in rural spaces. Therefore, my methods of data collection are rooted in a praxis-oriented method of anarchy-feminism that seeks to understand what the practice of anarchist ecology and decolonization looks like to those who claim its importance to their life and work, and to learn from the experiences that have been attempted in order to make informed suggestions about how to move toward a more ecological, anti-colonial, and feminist anarchist ethic of return to the land. This interrogation requires an anarchist approach without rigid prescriptions, as Emma Goldman referred to anarchist theory, which necessarily accepts feminism, decolonization, and ecology to be central to any understanding of anarchism.¹⁹⁰ For some, this has meant pointing to anarchy-feminism and anarchy-indigenism to show that anarchism has not always been feminist or decolonizing.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Tuck and Yang, 35.

¹⁸⁹ Damaris Rose, “The “Insider/Outsider” Conundrum in Feminist Interviewing,” in *Revisiting Feminist Research Methodologies: A Working Paper*, (Quebec: Status of Women Canada, Research Division, 2001): 3-12. Rose describes how the dichotomous distinction between qualitative and quantitative research has become more blurred in feminist research recently. She suggests that many feminist scholars today use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods in their research. Calling this “experimental” methodological pluralism,” Rose suggests that many feminist researchers use qualitative methodology and quantitative techniques (12). For example, she suggests that a closed questionnaire can be useful in the context of intake at a shelter for abused women because it offers women a list of experiences that they may never have perceived as “abuse,” or that they would not have mentioned in an open-ended interview, which can give them a wider context for their experience. Rose suggests a quantitative method used in this way can serve to raise consciousness with participants (7).

¹⁹⁰ Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1969), 63.

¹⁹¹ Peggy Kornegger, “Anarchism: The Feminist Connection,” in Howard Ehrlich (ed.) *Reinventing Anarchy: What Are Anarchists Thinking These Days?* (Routledge and Kegan Paul Books, 1979). Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways*

My research does not seek to infuse participants' practices with ecological or decolonizing sentiments, but instead to examine how their self-described theories of these are enacted. The practices of ecology and decolonization that are already understood to be part of the ethics of those who were interviewed and of the larger community to which participants belong, are taken on their own terms because of my position as a researcher and anarchist.

Researcher Positionality

This dissertation is the product of an intersection between my political and scholarly work and is grounded in both my organizing and my theorizing experiences. There are positive and negative dimensions of being so close to one's research topic; in particular, in conducting my research with anarchist land projects – those I am familiar with in my social, political, and academic life – I contended with what Rose and others call “the insider/outsider conundrum.”¹⁹² According to Bartunek and Reis Luis, an insider “needs to understand their setting in order to be effective as actors and action takers,” who experience more consequence from the settings they are researching.¹⁹³ Outsiders, on the other hand, have consequential relationships elsewhere and see the setting they are researching as a “visitor would.”¹⁹⁴

Right before I began to design my dissertation topic and methods, I put my doctorate aside to dedicate my time to organize a mass mobilization with other anarchists against the G20 Summit in Toronto in 2010 and to build the foundation of a connected anarchist community across Ontario that would remain after the Summit was over. That year was one of the most beautiful community experiences of which I have been a part. I met people who shared visions and theories I was trying to

of Action and Freedom, (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2005). See also, Adam Gary Lewis, "Decolonizing Anarchism: Expanding Anarcha-Indigenism in Theory and Practice." Masters Thesis, Queen's University (Canada), 2012. Accessed 10 September 2017,

<https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/bitstream/handle/1974/7563/Lewis_Adam_G_201209_MA.pdf?sequence=1>

¹⁹² Rose, 4.

¹⁹³ Jean M. Bartunek and Meryl Reis Luis, *Insider/Outsider Research*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), 2.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

make sense of in my doctoral work. I had finally found the kind of anarchist community I had been seeking. In June 2010, I was arrested and charged with criminal conspiracy charges with sixteen other anarchists for our involvement in the anti-G20 mobilization, specifically for the work we did to create infrastructures for out-of-town protestors to sleep, eat, rest, and regroup as well as for organizing a march to the fence built up around the site of the summit. We were detained and then released on bail with strict house arrest conditions. We were told the trial would be years in the future, that we had been watched for over a year, and that the bail conditions might not change. That sense of community, however brief and violently broken by arrests and state sanctions, fundamentally changed my life and how I understand the state, specifically that although the state is a powerful material force, there are ways to build up relationships that make its power less effective. The experience also changed my research and my dissertation for practical and theoretical reasons.

On a practical note, after being under house arrest for over half a year and assuming that the court process would take years, I moved away from plans for earlier plans for a European empirical dissertation to one set in Canada. Then, unexpectedly, a collective plea deal was struck in November 2011, where six of my friends accepted jail terms and I along with ten others was cleared of charges. I then tried to change gears and return to the program and begin my research with new perspectives on the relationship between anarchist community-building and colonialism.

In conversations with friends in my community about my research interest, a few people with whom I had become friends through organizing in Toronto told me they belonged to an anarchist collective in Central Ontario and that their land was across the road from a second collective. These collectives interested me because they identified explicitly with anarchist politics, had decided to seek out an intentional community project in the countryside, and had been involved in anti-capitalist and anti-colonial political organizing. In their example, I saw the opportunity to examine the specificity of anarchist rural praxis while living in a settler colonial state. I spent a lot of time discussing the

dilemma of owning property with anarchist friends and comrades and we discussed the particular responsibilities of anarchists to support Indigenous sovereignty in the Canadian context I realized how the crucial question of property relationships for settler anarchists in Canada in particular had not been addressed in any tangible way and that the question is more complicated than the general belief that owning property contributes to capitalism. Dragonfly and Black Fly would be a good site of study to interrogate these important and complex daily inhabited questions of private property, withdrawal from the state, and colonialism in the anarchist visions of anti-capitalist futures.

After establishing my site of research, key questions that drove my project became clear. What were the strengths and weaknesses of anarchist anti-capitalist, ecological, and anti-colonial praxis in intentional rural community building? What did they tell us about the possibility of reimagining the rural as a site of social revolution? What would an interdisciplinary space-based and feminist examination of rurality and anarchism offer to an understanding of what an anarchist ethic of inhabitation looks like? My initial interest in examining rural space as the site of small-scale revolution turned to a focus on how anarchists build community and negotiate their principles within the realities of capitalism and settler colonialism.

A further distinction between outsiders and insiders is that most often research is conducted by an outsider and therefore the setting is interpreted by someone who is not fully aware of the context they are researching.¹⁹⁵ It became clear that as both an insider of the anarchist communities in Toronto from which the members of Dragonfly and Black Fly collectives come, and as an outsider to these two communities because of my position as a researcher and not being a member of the Collective, I had to be careful to navigate the particular relationship I had with both the research site and the interview participants. From the onset of my research, I carefully considered ways to avoid the unusual power dynamics that could emerge from the particular relationship of being both a comrade and an academic

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

researcher from Toronto, how to avoid a projection of my ideology on participants or creating a perception of desirable responses from “like-minded” colleagues.¹⁹⁶ A curious outcome of my insider/outsider position emerged in the methods I used, finding research participants, as well as in the interviews themselves.

Before starting my interviews, my perception was that participants would be unlikely to want to discuss their ideologies and practices with someone who might scrutinize them from the position of anarchist dogma. In my description of the risks involved in participating I suggested that some of the questions asked may cause some minimal emotional disruption for participants. Asking questions about how one lives their ideology can trigger some emotional discomfort, such as defensiveness or dissonance, especially if participants are asked to consider ideas they have not thought about before. It turns out that most potential participants were much more turned off by the academic purpose of my research.¹⁹⁷ I had not only assumed that because I do not primarily identify as a researcher and am critical of academia that others would not treat me as one, but I had also assumed that because I am critical of life in the city that others would automatically feel affinity to my project. Finding participants to agree to an interview was the most difficult part of bridging the anti-academic, outsider issue. Once the interviews were confirmed and underway they were quite informal and conversational, to the surprise of not a few participants.¹⁹⁸

One issue to arise from my research, which I did not foresee in ethical considerations of holding power, was the potential for participants to carry interpersonal power in their relationship with me, the researcher. Feminist lenses help one to think through how identity might affect the power of

¹⁹⁶ The fact that I came from “the biggest city” in Canada held significance for some participants. A number of participants referred to Maynooth as “not like Toronto” in a derogatory way, either with respect to their assumption that I viewed Maynooth as extremely parochial in relation to a large city, or to articulate how unliveable Toronto was for them (and others). As a point of comparison, these same interviewees had less criticism or saw less starkly the contrast between Maynooth and Peterborough. Some even pointed out that while they could never live in Toronto, Peterborough was still a possibility.

¹⁹⁷ One potential participant referred to me as “the researcher” and addressed me via Devin when she encountered us.

¹⁹⁸ One participant explained that he didn’t even realize we had done the interview when I thanked him for his time at the end of our one-hour conversation.

participants over the researcher, especially systematic gendered socialization. My experience of conducting this research was deeply altered by my position as a young woman (and looking younger than I was at the time) and having deeply internalized the socialization of gendered politeness and deference. For example, I had an uncomfortable experience with one participant who did not respect the boundaries I sought to create in order to maintain a research relationship, and made more than a few flirtatious comments, even asking me to return to his home to drink with him another night. My deference, complicated by my feelings of guilt for asking people to give of themselves in an interview, meant that I was even less likely to question inappropriate behaviour.

Graeber, in his discussion of being an anarchist within the academy, says, “Anarchism, Academia, and the Avant-Garde,” reminds us also of the shift in power dynamic once a researcher leaves the field and returns to the academy to write up the results. While the researcher might hold power while collecting data, once analysis and writing begins the researcher is bound by the structure of the academy and their precarious position within it, especially as a doctoral student.¹⁹⁹ I take issue with his suggestion that the researcher would hold all of the power in that dynamic. However, his article reminds us that there are still tensions between the will to be accountable to one’s participants and what is required of a researcher within their department, Faculty, and University. The most difficult conflict that might emerge within an anarchist engagement, according to Graeber, is the general tendency of anarchists to operate under the assumption that they are not interested in swaying or converting someone to one’s own point of view. Graeber suggests that the work of academic discourse often requires a committing oneself to a particular point of view and working to prove it.²⁰⁰ Graeber helps to imagine what a useful group of methods would entail by suggesting that “unalienated production” of knowledge can help to create social alternatives to the current structures of power. He proposes that anarchist research requires a “direct link between the experience of first imagining things

¹⁹⁹ Graeber, 103.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 105.

and then bringing them into being (individually or collectively).”²⁰¹ Graeber’s posits that thinking through what one wants to create is best done by those who want to create it, or better yet, who are already in the process of creating it; he calls this an “ethics of practice.”²⁰² My methods of analysis aimed to draw this anarchist principle of engaging those who are implicated in the effects of a project into the discussion of how it should be theorized and processed.

Methods

My project is a qualitative study of particular social relationships —people living in intentional communities— that critically analyzes their practices. The case study allows for an in-depth engagement with two communities, while also rooting these two collectives in a wider historical consideration of intentional communities. The goal of conducting this research was to ground the theory of local, radical, ecological, and anti-colonial community building in rural areas within the specific praxis of case studies of Maynooth, Ontario, and to learn how theories of practice are actually enacted. The primary data for this project were collected using semi-structured interviews.

The dissertation, like most empirical research projects, is the product of both constraints and possibilities. I faced funding constraints, which limited how much time I could take to complete my research as well as limited opportunity to leave my house while under house arrest, limiting the opportunity to travel to do research limiting the possibility of ethnographic study. I had also intended to engage with the archives I had been told about, located in the attic of the main house at Dragonfly. I wanted to examine the theoretical basis for the collectives’ practices, policies, and structures. However, it became impossible to use the archives because they were not organized and had not been examined. They were simply boxes of different members’ textual possessions, journals and reading materials (some of it damaged by water). The project to organize and make sense of this material would have

²⁰¹ Ibid., 110.

²⁰² Ibid., 106-107

been too onerous given the distance of Dragonfly from my home and job, so I decided not to pursue a document analysis and focused solely on interviews.

Each participant signed a written informed consent form before any data was collected and was given a verbal explanation of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.²⁰³ As an insider and outsider of my research topic, I had intended to keep both the research site and participants confidential in order to limit identifying the work of these anarchist collectives for political and ethical reasons, so as not to expose them in any way to unwanted attention from the state, especially given my experience of having befriended an undercover police officer and having conversations I had for a year recorded by the police. I also wanted to avoid critique from people who were not part of our movement, lest they use this research to discredit the important work that many of my participants were doing. Confidentiality was important to many of the participants, so it was decided that names of participants would be changed in the final written submission.²⁰⁴ Unfortunately, full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because of the nature of the research. The anarchist community in Ontario is very small and many people became aware of my research. There are a number of identifying facts in this case study that might make the participants known to a reader who is familiar with the communities. Ultimately, my analysis about the specific geographic and historical details about Hastings Highlands required that I identify the research site. I reminded participants that confidentiality was limited based on the fact that the community is small and a person's identity might be discerned even if their name was changed. However, the discrepancy between those who might possibly read this dissertation and those who could identify the informants and site seemed large enough that the concern over breaking this shallow confidentiality was not great.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ See Appendix A for Informed Consent Form.

²⁰⁴ Many participants of the Dragonfly Collective, who have had a number of interpersonal conflicts with other members of the Collective, worried that something they said during the interview might get back to members of the Collective or wider community and reignite past conflicts; these fears were put to rest when they were assured that their names would be changed.

²⁰⁵ Interestingly, in doing research on ICs in Ontario, I came across a master's thesis that, despite changing the names and

I did not collect demographic data from my participants outside of political affiliations and identification along a settler-indigenous spectrum. However, keeping in mind a feminist interest in including marginalized voices, I did remark when participants self-identified as women, trans, queer, indigenous, or a person of colour, explicitly. The fact that non-white, heterosexual, cis-gendered settler men are often overrepresented in research was an important consideration in seeking out participants.²⁰⁶ Identifying information was noted in an interview log and identifying names of places and people are used in the interviews themselves. However, these items are kept on an encrypted hard drive and locked in a storage drawer. While I transcribed the interviews, I changed the names used to further ensure confidentiality. However, I still struggled with the possibility of them being identified. Participants felt fine with this thin confidentiality. I changed participants' names. I also intended to keep their gender identities unknown as a layer of anonymity, but as I began to interpret the interviews I realized that there were important gendered dynamics at play and that analysis would be lost if I did not clarify the gender of participants. The importance of gender in the work being done in the community played out in an interesting way; not only were women central to the wider community's establishment, but women did the majority of work-reproductive and otherwise.

Most participants did self-identify along a gender binary. The two land collectives have a rather balanced representation of men and women, as well as a couple of members who do not identify with a binary gender. I aimed to hear from individuals who were from systemically oppressed identities. However, the difficulty of gaining participants at all and a general lack of interest in speaking to me meant that I was not in a position to be selective.

location of the collective, was also about Dragonfly. Identifying information was minimal, but having become familiar with the site and participants it was easy to decipher the disguised participants. Esterberg addresses this issue of studying people in small communities and points out that it is ethically important to address the lack of full confidentiality with participants (50-51).

²⁰⁶ See Watts, 87.

Semi-Structured Interviews

My primary method of data collection was semi-structured, open-ended interviews with current and past members of the two collectives as well as members of the wider township community where these collectives are located. I conducted interviews with nineteen people who are members, residents, friends, neighbours, those living on one of the two collectives or who have a relationship with the town of Maynooth. Each interview lasted between one and three hours. There were two follow up interviews that also followed an unstructured format.²⁰⁷

As Kristin Esterberg points out, interviews are a coming together of “two individuals to try to create meaning about a particular topic.”²⁰⁸ She further explains that semi-structured interviews “allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words...because their responses shape the order and structure of the interview.”²⁰⁹ Since my research is grounded in anarcha-feminist and decolonizing methodologies that prioritize narrative as a source of data, semi-structured interviews were the best suited method of data collection. Semi-structured interviews allowed these participants of rural intentional communities to give insights about their own experiences; they allowed participants to create their own meaning and to explain the meaning of what they see and what they perceive.

Interview questions were presented to participants prior to the interview to allow them to enter the interview process with informed consent.²¹⁰ Participants were asked to share their experiences of living in intentional communities as well as their thoughts and opinions about rural intentional communities more generally. The interviews mostly took place in Toronto or Maynooth, with two taking place via Skype. All interviews were audio-recorded.

²⁰⁷ The two unstructured follow up interviews were with my primary informant, Devin, who first took me on a walk around the perimeter of the Dragonfly Collective’s land and told me stories about the collective, the trees and animals around us, and personal life stories. The second interview occurred when Devin saw me in the coffee shop in town and told more stories about Maynooth in the 1980s.

²⁰⁸ Esterberg, 85.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

²¹⁰ See, Appendix B for a list of interview questions

The interviews asked two sets of questions. First, I asked participants to describe their relationships to and beliefs around rurality, private property, ecology, colonialism, and community dynamics, to learn how they would assess important ethical relationships to the land on which they live or work and how these values and beliefs are practiced. In asking questions of practice as well as political ideologies of the participants, the aim was to uphold the anarchist methodological ethic of ensuring that the articulation of values and practices is done by those involved in the community affected by those actions and theories.²¹¹ I wanted to document how people wanted to live and how they have lived up to those goals; how people who engage in rural intentional communities analyze their own participation. The research done in Maynooth sought to uncover whether or not participants lived up to their own criteria of anarchist rural intentional community life, which left room for learning how to create an ethic of anarchist living that emerges out of the space in between intentions and lived experience.

In designing my research, I hoped to find a way of engaging ethically with the land and with others that held anarchist practices as a starting point, but that did not force dogmatic views of those relationships and did not take the ethical goals of participants to be fixed or rigid. I specified to participants that I wanted to learn more about what motivated them to become a member of a rural intentional community, how they think about their experience of being part of this community, and what theories or ideologies (if any) they brought into their participation.

Second, I asked participants to discuss how they would assess people who participate in ICs in general and how they live up to their stated principles. The goal was to see both how those interviewed participated in community and how they viewed what participation in community should look like, in order to measure their values and stated ethical commitments. I asked how participants saw their *own* relationships with property, colonialism, and ecology in addition to what they thought about *other*

²¹¹ Graeber, "Anarchism, Academia, and the Avant-garde," 113.

peoples' relationships to these themes. The interviews, thus, provided a set of ethics and theories against which the participants measure community practices of rural anarchist life. I asked general questions about participants' perceptions of rural life and the chronological story of how they came to live in Maynooth. Since the interviews were semi-structured, I did not always ask all of the questions in my interview guide, especially if the conversation flowed naturally around the same topics.

However, simply taking the participant at their word raises issues, as feminist scholars have argued recently,

allowing the data (e.g., life histories) to “speak for themselves” is something of an abdication of responsibility on the part of the researcher, to the extent that individuals may not have a full awareness of the systems that surround and constrain them, and as researchers, we have a responsibility to illuminate those systems using their experiences, and illuminate their experiences using these systems.²¹²

Therefore, the findings of my research were analyzed within the wider context of anarchist ecological theories, outlined above. Furthermore, I kept two relationships in mind: the power relationship between researcher and participants; and of the methods of analysis participants had about their own experiences, or experiments.

Snowball Sampling

Due to the nature of my social and political relationships with a small handful of collective members, it seemed obvious that I should seek participants using the snowball sampling technique. In this process, once an initial interview is conducted with a key informant, often already known to the researcher, that participant is asked to refer the researcher to others who would be useful to the research.²¹³ Out of nineteen interviews, only three came out of unsolicited initiative by prospective participants who had heard about my project. The vast majority came from my sending multiple requests after receiving email, telephone, and Facebook contact information from participants who had completed

²¹² Rose, 35.

²¹³ Esterberg, 93.

interviews.²¹⁴ The majority of interviews occurred thanks to a very slow snowball technique, in the sense that prospective participants who had been emailed or contacted by me previously in a “cold-call” attempt only agreed to do the interview once one of my participants had contacted them to ask on my behalf, or introduced them to me, vouching for me as a worthwhile person with whom to speak.

As I finished interviewing the three participants who were known to me via close social and political friendships, and with no confirmed future prospects for interviews because of a failure of cold-calling, and even asking my friends to ask others on my behalf, I was introduced to a participant who would become my primary gatekeeper. Devin is known around Maynooth and the IC community as the “archivist” of the IC. He was very interested to speak with me about the Collective, the area, and anarchist organizing in Ontario. After meeting and interviewing him, he became my primary source of information about the area and unpublished writings by present and past members of Dragonfly; he was also my introduction to many future participants. Because of his status as a warm, generous, thoughtful, long-standing member of the alternative IC community in the area, my requests for interviews started to be answered. However, in the case of the Dragonfly Collective, significant breakdown in communication among many of the members left ongoing conflict and mutual distrust. Asking one member for contact info or a lead on how to find another proved difficult. Devin, while generally liked in the community, was hesitant to suggest some participants to me because of a breakdown in his personal relationships with other members. Furthermore, he sometimes suggested that these people had nothing of interest to tell me and failed to provide me with contact information for those individuals.

In the case of the Black Fly Collective, there is cohesive contact between all of the members. However, many feel overburdened by their membership work in the Collective in relation to the rest of their lives and few (only three members) responded to my request for an interview despite numerous

²¹⁴ Perhaps an interesting aside for scholars of communications and technology, multiple methods of contacting prospective participants, such as Facebook, email, and the telephone, made it easier to get a response. For example, one participant, with whom I had emailed five times (after learning from multiple participants who know him personally it would take at least five emails before getting a response), I heard back from him finally by sending a message via Facebook.

attempts at contact. While some suggested a lack of time, many in the Black Fly Collective felt that they did not have anything to say that could not be addressed by a supposedly more knowledgeable member, usually meaning one of the three members that I had already interviewed. In the case of the Black Fly Collective, I met many members in a social setting at one of the annual Labour Day events in Maynooth who were very willing to share their stories of joining the Black Fly Collective but were not willing to be recorded while doing so in any formal way. With respect to participants who were part of the wider community of Maynooth, many suggested they did not have time to meet or agreed initially but did not reply to various forms of communication when I attempted to set a time to meet or backed out close to the time of the interview. I could not get access to some community participants for interviews because they are no longer in touch with members or did not respond to requests to speak.

The interviews were a source of history of the area of Maynooth, as well as histories of anarchist organizing and ICs in Ontario. Part of the importance of documenting the voices of fringe members of a small community like Maynooth relates to the feminist and decolonizing arguments outlined above. The documented histories of rural Canada are often histories of white heterosexual settlers. By engaging with members of the community who identify with an alternative sub-culture and community, the importance of these people, their networks, and the infrastructures they have built in the area begin to show the complexity of rural life in Ontario.

Interview Analysis

In order to allow people's stories to emerge in context, I opted not to use data management software to organize my results. Instead, I analyzed my interviews using a contextualized and rudimentary pen/marker and paper method of highlighting themes within my detailed interview notes in order to keep information embedded within the whole story participants told. I took notes while conducting interviews and incorporated them into notes I made while I listened to the interviews. The first time I

listened, I noted an outline of the interview, documented the topics participants addressed, and the time at which the topics were brought up in the recording. I then listened to the interviews a second time to take substantive notes, including selective transcription of the parts of the interviews that addressed questions of community, identity, property, settler-indigenous relations, economy, rural expectations and experiences, ecology, narratives of arriving in Hastings Highlands, IC structures, and any other narratives that addressed the experience of rural life in opposition to parts that were tangential and about their personal life. The notes served as the basis for creating a separate list of each theme and topic raised by all participants. I looked for connections between topics in addition to creating common names for themes that participants referred to by different names. For example, some referred to “alternative” community and others called it “non-mainstream.”

There was an overwhelming amount of information within my notes and deciding what to focus on in my dissertation was a difficult task. I wanted to honour all the complex stories of my participants but it was clear that there would be groupings of data that would not be included in the dissertation. I used the exhaustive list of themes to create a shorter list of larger themes, which I used to code my notes with respect to who was speaking (each participant had a different band of colour across their interview notes) and what themes they spoke to (each separate theme was marked within the text in red pen). My supervisor helped me to map out a plan for three chapters that would limit my discussion to community, property, and ecology. I then made a master document of interview themes by those topics and their sub-topics, using this document to outline and draft my results chapters.

While writing the next four chapters, I listened to the recordings a final time to ensure that the narratives I was quoting or paraphrasing were accurately transcribed and that they expressed the sentiments participants shared. I included long quotes where it was useful to show the way in which stories were told in addition to the connections participants made between different themes. Hoping to give participants and readers the opportunity to draw some of their own conclusions about the findings

was one way that I wanted to maintain an “ethics of practice,” to allow readers to learn from the data for themselves and not just from my analysis. In the chapter that follows I will introduce my participants and engage their narratives while situating Black Fly and Dragonfly in the context of Hastings County, Ontario, as well as Ontario anarchist histories.

Chapter Three: Algonquin History, Rural Communities, and Ecology in Hastings County

In this chapter I will contextualize my case study in the specific Indigenous and settlement histories of Hastings County (See Figure 1 and 2), the history of anarchism in Ontario, and the Intentional Communities (ICs) around which Dragonfly and Black Fly emerged. This chapter will further examine to what extent colonization and private property development are tied to ecological changes in the region. First, I will investigate the question, of how Indigenous settlement and treaty processes intersect with the development of settler communities in the rugged terrain of the area. Second, I will summarize the settlement of the area through economic development in the form of resource extraction which advanced due to perceptions that the area was a waste land. Third, a short history of ICs in the area will be explored. Fourth, I will briefly explain the history of anarchism in Ontario in order to contextualize the attempt at creating alternative community forms within the specific context. Last, I will describe Dragonfly and Black Fly as well as the properties beside them on Mink Lake Road, in Lake Saint Peter.

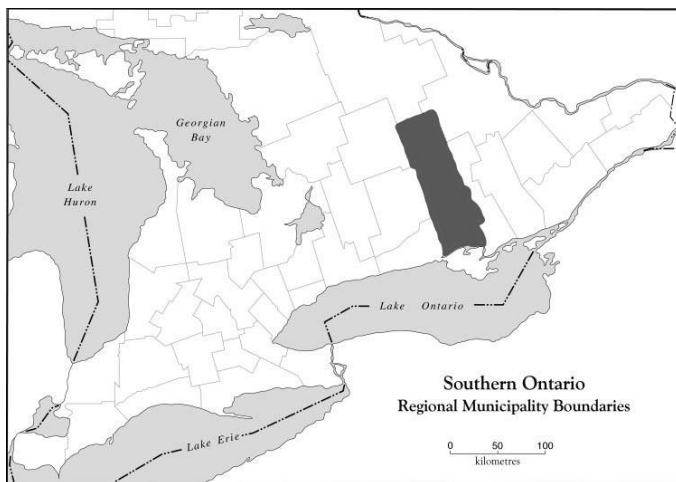


Figure 1 - Hastings County's location in Southern Ontario
Contains data from the Brock University Map Library, (no date).

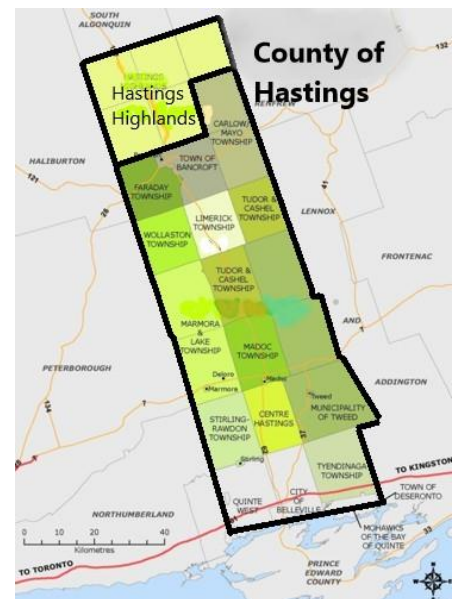


Figure 2 - Hastings County
Hastings County, *About Our County*, September 2017.
Accessed 10 September, 2017,
<<http://www.hastingscounty.com/discover/about-our-county>>

Ontario's population shifted dramatically, as it did all over the Global North, from the late 1800s to the late 1900s. In the 100 years between 1871 and 1971, Ontario's rural population decreased from 78 percent of the total provincial population to only 18 percent.¹ After 1971, the percentage of the overall population represented in rural population began to increase slightly. For example, rural population increased by 3.5 percent from 2001 to 2006.² Hastings Highlands, the municipality where the two Collective projects I studied are located, is centred administratively in the town of Maynooth. Amalgamated in 2001, Hastings Highlands brought together five townships: Bangor, Wicklow and McClure, Herschel, and Monteagle (Figure 3). The population of this area was 4,078 in 2016. Between the 2006 and the 2016 census, the population increased roughly one percent.³ Hastings Highlands is one municipality within Hastings County, with almost 135,000 inhabitants and covering 6,105 square kilometres; it is the second largest county in Ontario.⁴ According to the Intentional Community Directory, the County of Hastings has five registered intentional communities.⁵

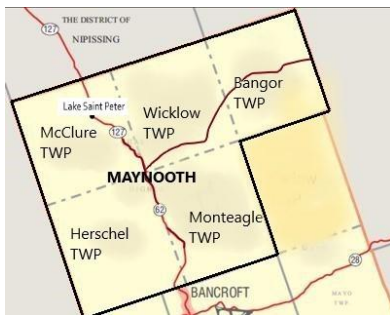


Figure 3 - Townships of Hastings Highlands
 Data from: Ontario Rural Routes, *Municipality of Hastings Highlands*, last updated December 2014, Accessed 3 October 2017, <<http://www.ruralroutes.com/7153.html>>

North Hastings, the northern half of Hastings County, is separated from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands mostly by a landscape division.⁶ This northern area is highlands, located within

¹ Tony Fuller, *Farming and the Rural Community in Ontario: An Introduction*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1985), 13.

² Statistics Canada. *2016 Census by Municipality*. Accessed 15 September 2017 <<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dppd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Tab=1&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3512076&Geo2=CD&Code2=3512&Data=Count&SearchText=Hastings&SearchType=Contains&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Hastings County, *About Our County*, September 2017. Accessed 10 September, 2017 <<http://www.hastingscounty.com/discover/about-our-county>>

⁵ Fellowship of Intentional Community, *Interactive Map of Ontario Intentional Communities*. Accessed January 24, 2013. <<http://directory.ic.org/maps/>>. all of Ontario has approximately twenty-eight.

⁶ North Hastings, "Full Profile: Regional Data Profile." Accessed 7 September 2017. <<http://www.northhastings.com/index.php/Regional-Data-Profile/full-profile.html#d1.>>

the Canadian Shield and Boreal hardwood Forest (Boreal Shield Ecozone), meaning that the terrain is rocky, mixed wood, and covered by many small and medium-sized lakes and rivers.⁷ The area sits between 400 and 560 metres elevation.⁸ Hastings Highlands is also located in the western most part of the lower Ottawa River watershed, with over 145,000 square kilometres of drainage area, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry Conservation Authority (Figure 4).⁹



Figure 4 - Ottawa River Watershed
 Data from: Ottawa River Institute. *Our Watershed* (2017), Accessed 28 September 2017.
 <<http://www.ottawariverinstitute.ca/resources/our-watershed>>

There are dozens of lakes in North Hastings. Baptiste Lake and Lake Saint Peter are two of the largest lakes in the area of the Dragonfly and Black Fly collectives. Today, the area is 65 percent (second growth) forest-covered with mostly maple and paper birch trees, and a mix of conifers (such as white and red pine, hemlock, balsam fir, and white cedar) and deciduous trees (such as basswood, oak, beech, and black cherry).¹⁰ The territory is home to diverse animal and bird populations and includes white-tailed deer, black bears, moose, wolves, beavers, otters, red-shouldered hawks, great blue heron, and many migratory birds.¹¹ In the early twentieth century, the municipality was identified as a unique

⁷ County of Hastings. "About Our County," County of Hastings. 2016. Accessed 7 September 2017.

<<http://www.hastingscounty.com/discover/about-our-county>> For details about the Boreal Shield Ecozone, see Ecological Stratification Working Group, *A National Ecological Framework for Canada*, Environment Canada, 1996. Accessed online 2 October 2017 <http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/publications/ecostrat/cad_report.pdf>

⁸ County of Hastings, "Topographic Hastings County." County of Hastings GIC. 2015. Accessed 23 September 2017.

<<http://en-ca.topographic-map.com/places/Hastings-County-9472847/>>

⁹ Hastings Stewardship Council, "Forest Management in Hastings County and Forest Service Directory," 2007, Accessed 13 August 2017 <<https://www.harvesthastings.ca/sites/www.harvesthastings.ca/files/Hastings%20Forest%20Directory.pdf>>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. Elk were reintroduced to the area in the late 1990s after their population was wiped out in the early 1900s.

area geologically, since over 90 percent of all of the world's minerals are represented there.¹² Because of the rugged terrain and extensive waterways, the area was home to many Algonquin nations and families who primarily hunted and foraged in the forests, using the Ottawa River to travel, communicate, and trade with other Algonquins and First Nations.¹³ This eastern part of Ontario, because of its location on what would become the boundary between French and English colonial settlement and thus a strategic trade route, was the centre of development of Canada as a nation.¹⁴

Indigenous Histories, Settlement, and Treaties

Before 1603, the lower Ottawa watershed, which now includes Hastings County, was under the control of Algonquin nations, specifically the Omamiwininiwak (downriver) people.¹⁵ According to Bonita Lawrence, “the extreme longevity of Algonquin presence” in Hastings Highlands can be observed by the existence of “kettles,” impressions worn away into the bedrock of the area from decades of seed and grain grinding.¹⁶ At the beginning of the seventeenth century, European missionaries and explorers were the first to attempt control over this Nation.¹⁷ The Algonquin were generally hunter-gatherers with three levels of governance organization that met seasonally in different geographic locations within the wider watershed territory.¹⁸ The family was the first level of organization, with families managing hunting territories and staying in these groupings over the winter.¹⁹ Next, bands would meet in the

¹² North Hastings, <<http://www.northhastings.com/index.php/Regional-Data-Profile/full-profile.html#d1>>

¹³ Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 303. Algonquin were nations who call the Ottawa River Watershed home, including Abenaki, Cree, Delaware, Malicite, Mi'kmaq, Montagnais, Anishinabeg, and Algonquians. Algonquins are part of a larger group of Anishinabeg peoples who include Ojibays, Pottawatomis, and Odawas.

¹⁴ Peter Hessel, *The Algonkin Nation: The Algonkins of the Ottawa Valley, an Historical Outline*, (Arnprior: Kichesippi Books, 1993), 5.

¹⁵ Algonquins of Ontario, “Our Proud History”, 2013. Accessed 2 September 2017 <<http://www.tanakiwin.com/algonquins-of-ontario/our-proud-history/>>

¹⁶ Lawrence, 242. Baptiste Lake, located some 20 kilometres from the two collectives was one of many sacred sites for the Algonquin in the area. Lee Yateman, “About Us”, *Anishinaabe Baptiste*. 2017. Accessed 15 September 2017 <<http://anishinaabe-baptiste.info/about-us/>>

¹⁷ Hessel, 6.

¹⁸ Lawrence remarks on the fact that because the Algonquin were hunter-gatherers, they were perceived by colonizers as less civilized than more settled Indigenous nations, like the Iroquoians, who had permanent villages.

¹⁹ In 1915, Frank G. Specks erroneously concluded that these family territories constituted private property. This hypothesis has been the source of great debate in anthropological circles, but recent conclusions by Harvey Feit show that the

spring to share news and work to support ecological practices in larger shared territories. Finally, in mid-summer, the Algonquin would converge at the nation level, where they would hold ceremonies and make plans for the coming year. Lawrence explains that Algonquin nationhood emerged out of resilience to the difficult and rugged territory, using “various modes of subsistence at differing times of the year” and making the nation “function temporally rather than spatially.”²⁰

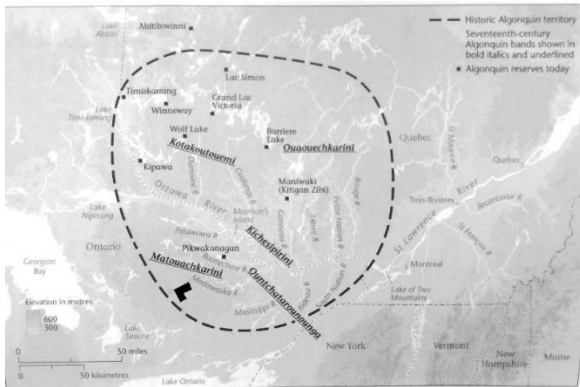


Figure 5 - Seventeenth Century Algonquin Settlements
Source: Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 20. [black square indicates Hastings Highland]

The territory of the Algonquin is the site of great biodiversity, which provides them with a rich source of food, medicines, and materials.²¹ For food, the Algonquin hunted, fished, collected maple sap, berries, wild roots, and maintained wild rice beds. The wild rice beds served both as a source of rice for food as well as geese, which were drawn to the fields for their own sustenance. Algonquins also depended on the woodland —mostly ash, birch, and cedar— to build canoes and baskets. Lawrence asserts that Algonquin people adapted and were adapted by their environment and as a result of relying “on the land for their livelihood, connections to place are profound and tied to specific sites.”²² The histories and practices of the Algonquin were changed drastically with the arrival of European explorers and the establishment of treaties.

assumption of private property relations amongst the Algonquin are simply revisionist. See, Harvey A. Feit, “Algonquin Hunting Territories: Private Property as Moral Lesson,” in George W. Stocking (ed.) *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 109-130. For Specks research see, Frank G. Speck, *Family Hunting Territories and Social Life of Various Algonkian Bands of the Ottawa Valley*, *Department of Mines Geological Survey No. 8*, (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1915).

²⁰ Lawrence, 25-27.

²¹ Bob Lovelace, “Prologue – Notes from Prison: Protecting Algonquin Lands from Uranium Mining,” in Julian Agyeman et al. (eds), *Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada*, (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2009), x.

²² Lawrence, 31.

Two legal documents in particular shaped the course of colonization in Ontario. First, the Two Row Wampum was the first treaty between Indigenous people and European settlers in North America. The treaty was first made between the five Nations of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) and Dutch settlers in 1613 as the settlers moved up the Hudson River into Mohawk Territory and was brought into other treaty agreements in Ontario.²³ Made between two equals, who were on:

two vessels, travelling down the same river together. One will be for the Indian People, their laws, their customs, and their ways. The other will be for the white people and their laws, their customs, and their ways. We shall each travel the river together, side by side, but in our own boat. Neither of us will make compulsory laws nor interfere in the internal affairs of the other.²⁴

The meaning of the Two Row Wampum is that settlers and Indigenous people could live side-by-side and would not impose their way of life on each other. This agreement was not only ignored at many points in the history of the colonization of Canada but was also interpreted through a European framework of property ownership, similar to other treaties that allowed settlers to claim property when Indigenous nations did not use the language of property.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was the most important legal decree to set the course of expansion of settler colonization in Canada. Issued by Britain to command territory to which the French lay claim, the Proclamation granted immense tracts of land to British subjects. Although it did acknowledge Indigenous possession of land, the decree allowed for land to be purchased or claimed if its owners ceded the land.²⁵ This agreement was often intentionally interpreted to mean that the Europeans who had arrived could settle on any area on which they did not perceive settlement and especially on land that was not occupied in a permanent way. This settlement occurred on most of the land of the Algonquin people, as they used land seasonally. Further, British authorities would sometimes intentionally misrecognize the land as belonging to another Indigenous nation so that the

²³ Tom Keefer, "A Short Introduction to the Two Row Wampum," *Briarpatch Magazine* (Online), 10 March 2014, Accessed 10 April 2017 < <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/a-short-introduction-to-the-two-row-wampum>>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Kenneth M. Narvey, *The Royal Proclamation of 7 October 1763: The Common Law and Native Rights to Land Within the Territory Granted to the Hudson's Bay Company*, (Regina: University of Saskatchewan Press, 1974).

rightful titleholders could be bypassed. The land of the Algonquin was misrecognized intentionally as Odawa land, argues Lawrence, which allowed the British to quickly begin to use forest resources from the area for British shipbuilding.²⁶

In 1791 the land of the Algonquin nation was divided into two political territories, Upper and Lower Canada, which would become Ontario and Quebec, respectively. Parts of Algonquin land in Upper Canada were taken over through treaties with Mohawk and Mississauga First Nations and not with Algonquins, beginning the fragmentation of the Algonquin nation and identity. By 1829 Britain fully commanded legal jurisdiction over the territory and continued to deplete the forest for ships. Between 1791 and 1850 the Algonquin people claiming the territory as theirs brought over twenty-eight petitions; none of the petitions received a response.²⁷ In 1923, the Williams Treaty, signed with the Mississauga First Nation, allowed for all land on the Ontario side of the Ottawa watershed to be claimed by the province of Ontario in exchange for a payment of 700,000 dollars for the land which was a fraction of the land's worth (estimated at 300 million dollars at the time).²⁸ Most of the land was developed with only a few marginal parts kept as "wilderness" and only after being logged.²⁹ Without access to hunting some Algonquins moved to reservations or were moved there. Other Algonquin people continued to hunt illegally on the territories that were kept "wild" and faced criminalization for hunting and trapping.³⁰

Algonquin history in Ontario has not only been a history of dispossession of their lands and splintering their communities via political boundaries, but also a refusal by colonial forces to recognize some of them as Algonquin, including the Algonquin Nation Kijicho Manito, who are located

²⁶ Lawrence, 18-20.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 33-36.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 305.

²⁹ Algonquin Park was fully logged before it was established as a response to the fact that the township had been totally cleared. In 1983 a plan was made to create a forest and animal reserve. The Park was expanded into territories of some Algonquin communities who had used the area to hunt. These communities were now banned from the area, being told that their practices were detrimental to the area. Lawrence, 234.

³⁰ Paula Sherman, *Dishonour of the Crown: The Ontario Resource Regime in the Valley of the Kiji Sibi*, (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2008), 26-27.

southwest of Bancroft and Maynooth.³¹ As a result, the area that is demarcated as Hastings Highlands has no recognized First Nations reservations on it. Lawrence explains, “those whose lands were too quickly consumed by the juggernaut of colonial settlement were frequently not assigned reserves; from then on, they were no longer recognized as Indians;” this is the reality for the majority of Algonquins in Ontario.³² Within the whole territory of the Ontario portion of the Ottawa watershed there are only two reservations, and only one has Indian status. Located at Golden Lake, Ontario, the Pikwakanagan Algonquin Nation is represented at that reservation.³³ Large portions of the Algonquin population not only lack state recognition, but also are not organized into identifiable communities.

A 1973 Supreme Court decision that acknowledged Indigenous peoples’ pre-existing title to their traditional land opened up an opportunity for a few status Algonquin bands to begin a formal land claim with the province of Ontario.³⁴ In 1976, the Chief of the Golden Lake Pikwakanagan Band demonstrated that no evidence exists to show that the Algonquin ceded their territory and began a petition to Ottawa demanding a return of all Crown Land to the Algonquin people. Nine years later, the Canadian government replied to the petition and the land claim negotiations began. However, many unrecognized Algonquin communities were not brought into the negotiation until the 1990s, if at all.³⁵ This claim is still being negotiated with a dispute over a 36,000 kilometre piece of land by the Algonquin to the Canadian and Ontario governments in the area of Hastings County (Figure 6), which includes the land which the Black Fly and Dragonfly Collectives occupy, but does not request repatriation of that land (Figure 7).³⁶ An Agreement-in-Principle was signed in October 2016 between

³¹ Yateman, <<http://anishinaabe-baptiste.info/about-us/>>

³² Lawrence, 5.

³³ The other reserve is the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, located in Ardoch, Ontario. See, Ardoch Algonquin First Nation. *Overview of Omàmiwinini History*. 2017. Accessed 24 Sep. 2017. <<http://www.aafna.ca/overview-ofomamiwinini-history/>>

³⁴ Lawrence, 54.

³⁵ Ibid., 88-90. One of the first meetings of unrecognized communities about the claim took place in Bancroft and Lake Saint Peter in 1990.

³⁶ Algonquin Treaty Negotiation Funding Trust, "Overview of Treaty Negotiations." *Algonquins of Ontario*. 20 October 2016. Accessed 30 September 2017. <<http://www.tanakiwin.com/>>. See the signed Agreement-in-Principle, here: Accessed 30 September 2017. <https://files.ontario.ca/algonquins_of_ontario_agreement_in_principle.pdf>

the negotiating Algonquin Nations and the Ontario and Canadian governments.³⁷ Final negotiations are still under way and must be formally approved by a ratification vote by interested parties before the Treaty becomes law.³⁸

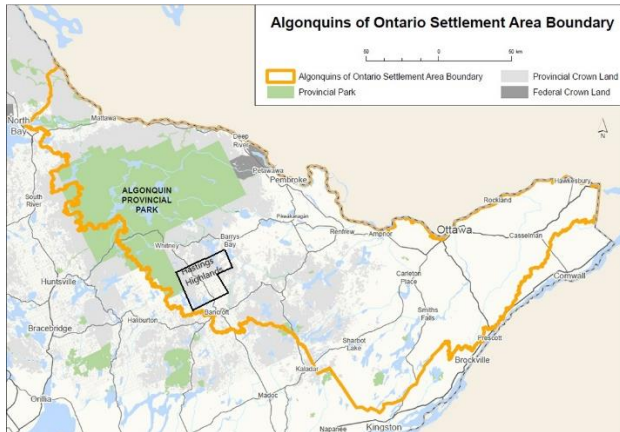


Figure 6 – Algonquin Land Claim Area (Agreement-in-Principle)

Data: Algonquin Treaty Negotiation Funding Trust, "Agreement-In-Principle," Algonquins of Ontario. 20 October 2016. Accessed 30 September 2017. <<http://www.tanakiwin.com/our-treaty-negotiations/agreement-in-principle/>>

Lawrence points out that the experience of rural Indigenous people from territories that lie in what is now Ontario has been different than that of urban Indigenous communities in the province; she notes there is “a different kind of non-status experience, one that is rural and associated with a land base... These communities today are descended from the families who managed to remain within their traditional territories, even as their lands were overrun by settlers.”³⁹ Lawrence explains that these rural Algonquin are the least connected to an Algonquin community and because they do not live on reserves, they do not have Aboriginal status. The fact that many Algonquin people in Ontario are not recognized by the Canadian Government has been one of the reasons that some have tried to become part of the Algonquin Land Claim. They have responded to dispossession by using the language of property title to regain land on which to maintain their cultural practice and from which they have been kept.⁴⁰ Similar to Landauer’s suggestion that the purchase of land to create another society is a

³⁷ An Agreement-in-Principle is not legally binding, but is an act of good faith between negotiating parties to outline mutually agreed upon terms for settlement.

³⁸ Algonquin Treaty Negotiation Funding Trust, "Agreement-In-Principle," *Algonquins of Ontario*. 20 October 2016. Accessed 30 September 2017. <<http://www.tanakiwin.com/our-treaty-negotiations/agreement-in-principle/>>

³⁹ Lawrence, x-xi.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

necessary step to carving out a space on which to practice that society, Indigenous communities are using the logic of private property ownership, as opposed to land as something which cannot be owned, to negotiate their own use of the land.⁴¹

A lack of unity among Algonquin people can partly be attributed to the fact that some more strongly connected Algonquin communities that had been self-organized and negotiated their needs more locally were not invited to the table to negotiate with the government, while other Algonquin have. Further, there is disagreement about whether a land claim to the federal government is useful or what the parameters of the agreement should be.⁴² For example, some Algonquin who see merit in making a land claim to the government are outraged that hunting rights have been included in the negotiation, since they believe their “rights to harvest are non-negotiable.”⁴³ The argument is that allowing a negotiation is equal to giving power and legitimacy to colonial governments.⁴⁴ However, Lawrence’s documentation of how non-status Algonquin people were subsumed into a tax system by the Canadian state under threat of being pushed off the land, then being dispossessed because of the inability to pay those taxes also indicates that maintaining one’s cultural practices and epistemologies can be a losing battle when there is threat of removal or death.⁴⁵ Further, Sherman shows that engaging with the state can be a gesture of good will to finding a solution, and one can walk away at any time.⁴⁶

The use of property language to gain legitimacy is a way to access what has been taken away yet engaging in that language can also serve to further legitimize the authority of the dispossessors,

⁴¹ Gustav Landauer, *For Socialism*, (New York: Telos Press, 1978), 134.

⁴² Sherman, 40-42.

⁴³ Lawrence, 240.

⁴⁴ The critique of negotiating certain rights with government forces brings to mind a famous speech by Emma Goldman wherein she reminds the crowd that we should take what is not given to us. Emma Goldman, “Union Square Protests Speech,” New York City, 1893. Like Landauer’s argument that the state is a social relationship that is undone by looking to create other relationships, Goldman points to the idea that acknowledging the state helps legitimize it. Quoted in, *Ragtime at Duke*, 20 February 2012, Accessed 5 April, 2018. <<https://sites.duke.edu/ragtime/2012/02/20/lawrence-ma-and-union-square/>>. Gustav Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*. Gabriel Kuhn (ed), (Oakland, PM Press, 2010), x.

⁴⁵ Lawrence, 51.

⁴⁶ Sherman, 23. Sherman documents how the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation engaged in a court process to stop extractive exploration for uranium on their traditional territory, but then stopped attending when it became clear that it was not respectful of their title to the land.

according to Glen Coulthard and Leanne Simpson.⁴⁷ For Indigenous populations who do not want to engage colonial narratives of property ownership or recognition, land claims similarly to private property entrench colonial ideologies. As I noted in Chapter Two, Simpson shows that Indigenous philosophy is in tune with a practice of not being an owner of the land.⁴⁸ Coulthard calls this practice *grounded normativity*, defined as “the modalities of Indigenous land connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time” that do not resonate with ownership.⁴⁹ A conflict exists between those who choose to work with the government and those who do not see a need to negotiate with an illegitimate power. However, what we learn from Lawrence is that the lack of a cohesive Algonquin community actively struggling for sovereignty had not emerged in the area until the land claim was launched; that the land claim “was the vehicle that formally organized informal networks of communities” because of the struggle by many Algonquin for recognition and status.⁵⁰ In the case of the Algonquin nations, many argue that it has been useful to them to engage with a formal negotiation process, both with respect to gaining an identity and land title, but not all of them agree. While the land claim has brought some of these fragmented communities together, they are still not visibly coordinated and others have felt more alienated by the treaty process.⁵¹ The decision to participate in a land claim, while contentious, has proven important to the internal work of reconnection for many Algonquin communities that have been divided for centuries by displacement, dispossession, and the denial of their identity by settler colonialism.

⁴⁷ Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 26; Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*, Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2011).

⁴⁸ Simpson, 21-22.

⁴⁹ Coulthard, 13.

⁵⁰ Lawrence, 6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 92 and 247. Lawrence notes that very few Algonquin from the Bancroft area replied to her request for interviews and that despite there being many of them in the area, they are not active in local political issues.

Settler Histories and Economic Development

The hamlet of Maynooth, home to about 300 residents and the political hub of Hastings Highlands, was celebrated by government officials and locals as turning 150 years old in 2011.⁵² The area of Hastings Highlands was mostly settled in the late 1860s through colonial government free land programs, the Free Grants Act of 1869, twenty years after less rugged parts of Ontario had already been settled.⁵³ Unlike southwestern Ontario, the area of Hastings and northern Ontario was perceived by settler government and business as a site of extraction rather than land for settlement because it was less suitable than the southern part of the province for farmable land. As Henry Nelles documents in his history of industrial development in Ontario, northern Ontario was to serve as a source of “raw materials for the growth of a whole new generation of modern industries. The barren north soon became New Ontario.”⁵⁴ However, as resources were extracted and depleted, the province began to also promote the land as farmable despite protest from the lumber industry who believed the land was too harsh for farming and would best serve lumber interests.⁵⁵ Waves of immigrants came first from Ireland during the potato famine and then Poland seeking seasonal work in resource extraction industries such as logging, milling, and mineral mining, as well as factory work in the area.⁵⁶ In general, the Free Grants Acts allowed for up to fifty acres to be settled as long as settlers “improved” at least twelve acres with cultivation or clearing, but in Hastings the parcels offered were 200 acres in size with only fifteen having to be cultivated or cleared because of the difficult terrain.⁵⁷ Gaining access to the

⁵² Jody Didlier, *Maynooth History 101*, 2011, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<http://blog.getrealinontario.com/index.php/maynooth_history_101>

⁵³ Helen Cowan, *British Emigration to British North America: The First Hundred Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 9-15.

⁵⁴ Henry V. Nelles, *Politics of Development: Forests, Mines, and Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941*, 2nd Edition (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, [1974] 2005), 52.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 53-55.

⁵⁶ Maynooth and Hastings Highlands Business Association, *History*, 2012. Accessed 4 October 2013, <<http://www.Maynooth.on.ca/history/>>

⁵⁷ Nila Reynolds, *Bancroft: A Bonanza of Memories*, (Bancroft: Bancroft Centennial Committee, 1979), 27-33. Reynolds points out that after receiving a free land parcel and clearing it for agriculture, many settlers abandoned their plots because the growing conditions were not favourable.

colonial government's land program was made difficult for the Algonquin because the Act stipulated that one had to stay on the land continuously for five years and could not leave for more than six months. These rules would have impeded the seasonal movements of Algonquin people and thus made the Public Land program inaccessible to them.⁵⁸

Often lumber companies were allowed to clear the land before parcels were handed out, which was favourable to many settlers.⁵⁹ First logged as squared timber for British shipbuilding, the forests of Hastings then became the source of saw lumber for the American market in the 1870s. From an ecological perspective, saw lumber was much less destructive for the environment and less wasteful, since squared timber often left a third of the tree behind as waste, which in turn caused erosion by blocking waterways.⁶⁰ From a colonial perspective, lumber production for American markets allowed for exponential expansion of industry and settlement because it created the need for transport and the development of railroad infrastructure which in turn allowed logging access deeper into the territories of the Algonquins.⁶¹ The rugged topography of the area delayed settlement but because logging cleared paths through the forests, colonization roads could be built to facilitate settlement along with the railroad systems which allowed for resources to be taken out of the area to large centres like Toronto.⁶²

Two of the main colonial roads linked in Maynooth and Lake Saint Peter and travelled directly between two Algonquin communities: Kijicho Manito to the southwest and WHIMASAB (Whitney, Madawaska, and Sabine) to the northeast. The former requested that they be allowed to settle in Maynooth in 1888, where many were settling already after being displaced from their lands in the north, but their request was not granted.⁶³ In 1983, as the Algonquin Land Claim was first being acknowledged by the Canadian government, the area was booming with resource extraction. Lumber

⁵⁸ Lawrence, 51-52

⁵⁹ George Woodcock, *The Canadians* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1979), 150.

⁶⁰ Lawrence, 232-234.

⁶¹ Nelles, 110.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 118.

⁶³ Lawrence, 230-234.

alone brought in over 500 million dollars per year, while pulp and paper and hydro dams also generated over one million dollars per day in revenues.⁶⁴

Following the decline of the lumber market, British direct investment began to focus on mining and manufacturing companies and financial services, such as banking and insurance in the early 1900s.⁶⁵ The town of Maynooth was a centre of economic activity, mostly through extractive and manufacturing industries, especially when it had a functional train station on the Canadian National Railway built in 1907.⁶⁶ As Nelles points out, the history of using the land in the area was one of depleting one resource and moving on to the next.⁶⁷ Between 1880 and 1920, mining became the primary economic activity for settlers in the Hastings area, starting with the first discovery of iron ore in 1882 and then in early 1900 in nearby locations. Maynooth, specifically, was known for its wealth of copper resources which were first extracted in 1900.⁶⁸ The iron ore and copper mines were depleted by 1912.⁶⁹ Marble was the next resource to be extracted from the land in the area starting in about 1902. There were five quarries within a one-mile radius located just outside of Bancroft. The quarries drew many people to settle in the area and provided marble for many government buildings in Ottawa among other uses. The last marble quarry closed in the late 1970s.⁷⁰ Uranium became the next industry in the area, although it was already discovered in 1922 in Hastings, the first mine, Centre Lake Uranium Mines Limited, opened in Bancroft in 1953 with three others opening within the next four years.⁷¹ Uranium production also brought many settlers to the area and new homes “sprung up like mushrooms” according to Nila Reynolds.⁷² The demand for uranium declined quickly and three of the

⁶⁴ Ibid., 86. Hydro dams have flooded a lot of sacred Algonquin land and have made surviving and travelling on the river impossible.

⁶⁵ Douglas McCalla. “Economy and Empire: Britain and Canadian Development 1783-1971,” In *Canada and the British Empire*, Phillip Buckner (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 249.

⁶⁶ Lea, interview by Joanna Adamiak, at Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

⁶⁷ Nelles, 2.

⁶⁸ Reynolds, 187.

⁶⁹ Nelles, 90.

⁷⁰ Reynolds, 189-190.

⁷¹ Ibid., 192.

⁷² Ibid.

four mines closed in 1964; the last mine, Faraday, closed thirteen years later.⁷³

Along with extraction of natural resources, settler companies established manufacturing of steel rails and pulp to ensure that these raw materials were not simply traveling to the United States to gain value by being transformed into commercial goods.⁷⁴ The town also had a mill on the outskirts of town that offered employment to many residents until closing in the 1970s. The closure of Faraday Uranium Mine occurred at the same time that part of the rail line that traveled through Maynooth and Hastings Highlands stopped running trains. These two closures significantly changed the availability of work for residents of the area.⁷⁵

The most recent statistics for Hastings Highlands suggest that almost half of the population (49 percent) is not in the official labour force, while the unemployment rate in the area is slightly lower than the average for Ontario, about 3.6 percent.⁷⁶ The forest industry still employs approximately 65,000 people in Hastings County, but industries related to tourism, mainly service and retail, are the primary economic activities of the area today. In winter tourists come for snowmobile trails; in summer vacationers are attracted by the dozens of lakes in the area.⁷⁷ In the early 2000s, the area was called the “Mineral Capital of Canada” for the large amount of semi-precious gemstone found there, including apatite, titanite, hornblende, beryl, tourmaline, sodalite and other microminerals, but these materials did not offer significant employment options.⁷⁸ In North Hastings, retail, health care, social services, accommodation and food services employ almost half of working people.⁷⁹ Further, a 2016 article in

⁷³ Ibid., 193. Reynolds mentions that the closed mines became favourite hunting grounds for locals.

⁷⁴ Nelles, 50-51.

⁷⁵ Lea, interview.

⁷⁶ City Data, *Hastings Highlands Labour Force Data*, 2013. Accessed 4 October 2013. <<http://www.city-data.com/canada/Hastings-Highlands-Municipality-work.html>>

⁷⁷ Municipality of Hastings Highlands, “Services Department: Recreation Summary,” 1 January 2017. Accessed 3 September 2017. <http://www.hastingsheights.ca/services_departments.php>

⁷⁸ Mitch Potter, “Digging up the Secrets of Maynooth: Hard to define area has back to the land vacation appeal,” *Toronto Star*, 29 July 2000 A22. Accessed 3 October 2013.

<<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/docview/438149233/F70/31?accountid=15182>>

⁷⁹ North Hastings Economic Development Committee, *Regional Data Profile*. North Hastings, 2015. Accessed 1 October 2017, <<http://www.northhastings.com/index.php/Regional-Data-Profile/full-profile.html#d1>>

the Bancroft weekly, *Bancroft This Week*, celebrates the fact that “business is booming” in Maynooth, citing the fact that every storefront in Maynooth is occupied with a local, small business and operating successfully.⁸⁰ A lot of the land in Hastings Highlands is crown land, with only a few parts being owned privately (Figure 7). The town is a point of reference and community for the two collectives that I will describe, below. The two collectives in this dissertation were not the only Intentional Communities in the area. I will situate them in the wider history of Ontario ICs.

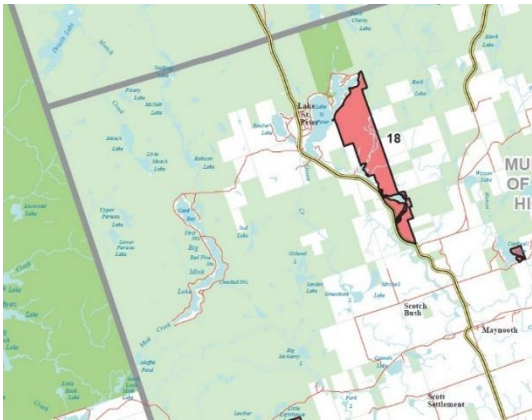


Figure 7 – Crown Land and Algonquin Sites of Repatriation in McClure Township (light grey area is Crown land; white area is privately owned; dark grey mass east of Lake Saint Peter is one site of repatriation by the Algonquin Land Claim; black area is Dragonfly and Black Fly)
Data content: Algonquin Treaty Negotiation Funding Trust, "Agreement-In-Principle," Algonquins of Ontario. 20 October 2016. Accessed 30 September 2017. < <http://www.tanakiwin.com/our-treaty-negotiations/agreement-in-principle/>>

Situating Dragonfly and Black Fly in the History of Ontario Intentional Communities (ICs)

Unfortunately, no comprehensive work on ICs in Ontario exists and their histories are often only held by individual accounts or a patchwork of self-written histories of the collectives themselves or country magazines such as *Harrowsmith*.⁸¹ Most academic histories of ICs in Ontario - and there are not that many - emerge out of Masters theses or only address one specific IC at a time.⁸² This section does not aim to exhaustively fill the gap in literature on Ontario IC history and is intended as a short accompaniment to the wider history of rural intentional communities outlined in Chapter One, to

⁸⁰ Sarah Vance, “Business Booming in the Highlands,” *Bancroft This Week*, 14 July 2016, Accessed online 18 September 2017 <<http://www.bancroftthisweek.com/?p=6720>>

⁸¹ *Harrowsmith*, was published initially out of Camden, Ontario from 1976 until it took on a different name and publication location. *Harrowsmith Country Life* in 1988, where it remained until 2011 when it ceased production completely.

⁸² Brian M.C. McCosh, “Can Nature Ever Really Be Our Home? Ecovillage Realities in British Columbia and Ontario.” MA Thesis, Queen’s University, School of Regional and Urban Planning, July 2001. See also, Riisa Walden, “Altered States of Rurality: Cultural Forays into Southern Ontario Country.” PhD Thesis, McMaster University, School of Graduate Studies. September 2011.

situate my two case studies.

Ontario has been the site of migration for a number of religious ICs from the time that parcels of land were being offered to settlers by the colonial government. For example, Robynne Healey documents the history of the Yonge Street Quaker community.⁸³ The Yonge Street Friends, as they called themselves, settled just north of Toronto in Gwillimbury, Uxbridge, Pickering, King, and Whitchurch between 1801 and 1816; they were made up of forty families who migrated there from Vermont and Pennsylvania. Identified as a peaceful and hard-working community, and particularly because they were part of a larger community that drew members quickly from other Quaker settlements, their arrival was welcomed by the colonial government. By 1820 their numbers had reached over 2,500.⁸⁴ Their peaceful and secluded existence and coexistence with the colonial state did not last long, however, because many Quaker beliefs did not align with those of the government of Upper Canada. While Quakers accepted that they were subjects of Britain and were willing to pay taxes, they wanted independence from the political and institutional power of Upper Canada and especially any pressure to conform to the Anglican values of the government of the day. Quakers also refused to participate in the militia and did not want to pay taxes in lieu of military service. Many Yonge Street Friends participated in the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837; many more were drawn out of their secluded community life into mainstream society after the Rebellion was quashed and have mostly taken on a Canadian identity.⁸⁵

Mennonite communities have had a presence in Ontario since the late 1770s. Arriving from the United States, Swiss Mennonites travelled to Upper Canada from Pennsylvania in 1776, settling along the Grand River and around Waterloo County. A Mennonite named Benjamin Eby established present day Kitchener, then called Ebytown. By 1820 over 2,000 Mennonites had migrated from the United

⁸³ Robynne Rogers Healey, *From Quaker to Upper Canadian: Faith and Community Among Yonge Street Friends, 1801-1850*, (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-6.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

States to settle in Ontario and there are over twenty settlements around Ontario today.⁸⁶ Migrating from France as well as the United States, Amish Mennonite communities began settlement in Ontario, west of Waterloo County, in the 1820s.⁸⁷ Many Mennonites, unlike Quakers, see their national identity as Mennonite.⁸⁸ ICs continued into the twentieth century with secular and religious intentional communities existed in both urban and rural Ontario.

The North Hastings Region website celebrates the history of alternative communities within its boundaries, saying, “prompted by availability of land and the opportunity for a peaceful way of living, North Hastings has long attracted diverse groups of individuals seeking alternative lifestyles.”⁸⁹ Novia Carter, in her 1974 study of Canadian communes, shows that the well-documented hippie communes of the United States have a relationship with a similar IC explosion in Canada, as many counter-culture members and draft dodgers crossed the border into Canada to avoid being sent to war in Vietnam.⁹⁰ Many would participate in and start ICs in Canada. For example, the sister colony of Twin Oaks, Virginia, located in Enterprise, Ontario has been functioning since 1975.⁹¹ Roberts points out that many non-religious ICs in Canada intentionally did not have a coherent ideology because it was yet another way to be in opposition to the dominant “straight world” they had moved away from.⁹² According to Harry Rudolfs, commune-seekers identified three areas in Ontario, mostly in the Ottawa watershed, where ICs looked to settle because of the abundance of affordable land for sale. The Perth-Lanark, Bancroft, and Killaloe areas were all celebrated by the author as places where one could get 100 acres

⁸⁶ Derek Suderman, “Our History,” *Mennonite Historical Society of Canada*, 1998. Accessed 25 September 2017 <<http://www.mhsc.ca/index.php?content=http://www.mhsc.ca/mennos/hcanada.html>>

⁸⁷ Ann Hilty and Lorraine Roth, “The Settlement of the German Block in Wilmot Township, Upper Canada,” *Ontario Mennonite History XIV*, No. 2 (September 1996): 17-23.

⁸⁸ John F. Peters, “The Ontario Old Order Mennonites as Canadian Citizens,” *Ontario Mennonite History XX*, No. 1 (May 2002): 2-8.

⁸⁹ North Hastings Economic Development Committee, “Regional Data Profile,” Accessed 16 September 2017, <<http://www.northhastings.com/index.php/Regional-Data-Profile/full-profile.html#d1>>

⁹⁰ Novia Carter, *Something of Promise: The Canadian Commune*, (Ottawa: The Canadian Council on Social Development, 1974), 1.

⁹¹ Harry Rudolfs, “Searching for Community,” *The Citizen’s Weekly*, 15 October 2000, Accessed 13 March 2013, <<http://web.ncf.ca/di760/PDFs/SearchingForCommunity.pdf>>, 4.

⁹² Roberts, 60.

for 5,000 dollars in the 1970s.⁹³ Two of these areas straddle land on which the Dragonfly and Black Fly Collectives are located.

Fairview Collective was an anarchist IC in Waterloo, Ontario that lived in two adjacent houses within the student housing area of the city between 1973 and 1978. Made up of University of Waterloo students, the two collective houses worked to build a self-sufficient anarchist community that adhered to ecological principles. The Collective grew food and shared resources.⁹⁴ Deciding collectively to purchase land and wholly move to what is now known as the Dragonfly Collective, members of Fairview closed up their urban collective and moved to the rural area of Maynooth. Their purpose in moving was to have more time and space to continue the political work in which they were already engaging in Waterloo, mostly environmental, anti-nuclear, and gender work. In so doing, they sought to problematize the usual perception that people go back to the land to escape from the political struggle around them.⁹⁵ One of the original members had this to say about their experience from Fairview: “I had learned that a utopian world would consist of communities freely associating with each other in federations. By the end of the decade, I was living an attempt at that dream with a dozen others.”⁹⁶

One of the longest standing ICs in Ontario started in one of the cheap areas Rudolfs mentions. Morning Glory Farm, a farm located in Renfrew County, one county east of Hastings, is known for being one of the first collective projects to emerge in Ontario during the communalist revival of the 1960s.⁹⁷ Morning Glory has thus been called the first “hip commune in Ontario.”⁹⁸ Morning Glory Farm is well known to members of Dragonfly and was started with loose goals of returning to the land,

⁹³ Rudolfs, 5.

⁹⁴ Eli, interview by Joanna Adamiak at Toronto, Ontario, January 2013.

⁹⁵ Rudolfs, 7-11.

⁹⁶ Eli, “Dragonfly is 25 This Year,” *Kick it Over*, (January 24, 2003), 3.

⁹⁷ Fellowship of Intentional Communities, “Morninglory,” 13 February 2013. Accessed 25 May 2013. <<http://directory.ic.org/797/Morninglory>>

⁹⁸ Rod MacDougall, “The Morning Glory Farm Goes Back to the Land,” *Mother Earth News* (January/February 1970), Accessed 1 May 2013. <<http://www.motherearthnews.com/homesteading-and-livestock/back-to-the-land/zmaz70jfglo.aspx?PageId=1#ArticleContent>>

becoming self-sufficient and rejecting bourgeois consumption patterns.⁹⁹ The IC started at Rochdale College, an alternative college, in Toronto in 1967, when two friends, one of whom arrived as a draft-dodger and who remains a member of Morning Glory, decided to move to the country and start a commune.¹⁰⁰ The farm is located on forty hectares of treed and cleared land used for individual family homes and organic agricultural production. Purchased for less than 4,500 dollars the IC drew others in after establishing itself as a viable community. Four other collective land projects followed closely after due mostly to the availability of cheap land and the desire to settle near like-minded people or members of the alternative community.¹⁰¹ The community houses families and single people in seven individual homes.¹⁰² Committed to ecological living, members use solar energy and grow food without chemical pesticides and herbicides. Today, the land provides for almost half of the members' food needs.¹⁰³ Unlike many of the ICs that emerged in the area around them, Morning Glory continues to function as a collective farm community, with twenty permanent residents of whom some are third generation.¹⁰⁴

About a year after Morning Glory was founded another IC, Dandelion IC, was founded in Enterprise, Ontario, near Kingston.¹⁰⁵ With a decrease in membership from the mid-1980s until the early 1990s, Dandelion saw a resurgence of membership in 1993 and continued to function until the early 2000s.¹⁰⁶ Housing around twenty residents at any point in time, Dandelion members shared living

⁹⁹ Ronald E. Roberts, *The New Communes: Coming Together in America*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 56.

¹⁰⁰ Douglas Gloin, "Living Green Before Their Time," *The Toronto Star*, 20 May 2007. Accessed 15 April 2013. <http://www.thestar.com/news/2007/05/20/living_green_before_their_time.html>. I will describe Rochdale in detail in the next section.

¹⁰¹ "Like-minded" is a term often used by participants to describe anyone with whom they shared political affinity, but the specificities of that like-mindedness were never described. The interviewees also refer to their community, which includes like-minded people and who are not identified as the locals as the alternative or "alt" community. Sometimes they also refer to this community as the artistic, queer, back-to-the-land, hippie, radical, and lefty community. The general sense of respondents about this community is that it is different from the mainstream community which is more conservative, white, and straight. I have decided to use "alternative" or "alt" as the main term for this community in this chapter, since many times the term captures the expanse of the whole community, although I will also refer to the specific parts of this community at times as well. Alt is used to describe the community in general, while like-minded is used to describe individuals within this community. I use like-minded when it is used by participants.

¹⁰² Rudolfs, 10.

¹⁰³ Gloin, <http://www.thestar.com/news/2007/05/20/living_green_before_their_time.html>

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Rudolfs, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Connexions Library, "Dandelion Community," (1983), Accessed 30 January 2013.

space as well as expenses on a fifty acre piece of land, attempting to recreate a kibbutz-inspired communal living arrangement of children living in one space and adults in another.¹⁰⁷ “Dedicated to the ideals of co-operation, non-violence, egalitarianism, and harmony with the natural environment,” its members believed that “problems of injustice, exploitation, and aggression are the result of social and environmental conditions, not an unchangeable ‘human nature.’”¹⁰⁸ Members of Dandelion maintained their IC by creating crafts out of recycled tin cans, weaving chairs and hammocks out of rope, offering auto repair to the surrounding community, woodworking, as well as growing food.¹⁰⁹

There is also a (difficult to find) history of lesbian separatism in Ontario. For example, living on the outskirts of Thunder Bay are two “bush dyke” communities which are connected to the queer community in the city, but also offer a place to go for queer folks who need to leave the city.¹¹⁰ The feminist Herschel Collective, located between Maynooth and Bancroft, is an IC that impacted the Black Fly and Dragonfly Collectives.¹¹¹ Herschel specifically was the entry point for some original members of the Dragonfly Collective into the area of Maynooth and some original members of Dragonfly lived on Herschel as residents.¹¹² The first midwife in the area was one of the founding members of the Herschel Collective, who not only helped to deliver many IC children but also motivated many other women in the area to pursue midwifery and other careers.¹¹³ A small collective that has existed since 1972, Herschel has had very little formal structure over the years. Historically most decisions were made in an ad hoc fashion as issues arose.¹¹⁴ In the last five years, Herschel has undergone some

<<http://www.connexions.org/CxLibrary/CX2809.htm>>

¹⁰⁷ Rudolfs, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Connexions Library, <<http://www.connexions.org/CxLibrary/CX2809.htm>>

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ R. E. Sullivan, “Between Lake, Rocks and Trees: Exploring How Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women Access Rural Space in Thunder Bay, Ontario.” MA Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto (2005), 81-83. Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (305378347). Accessed 27 September 2017,

<<http://ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/305378?accountid=15182>>

¹¹¹ Rudolfs, 3.

¹¹² Hayden, interview by Joanna Adamiak, via Skype (Toronto, Ontario), February 2013.

¹¹³ Eli, interview.

¹¹⁴ Black Fly Collective. *Land Co-operative Survey*, 2010 (unpublished).

structural changes and is now working to create more formal land agreements in the hopes of resolving internal conflicts that have arisen over the past few years over how the land is used, animals on the property, and cutting trees for firewood.¹¹⁵

Despite decreased participation in these ICs in the late 1980s, another wave of migration to the land occurred in the mid-1990s. One IC to emerge from this re-genesis is Whole Village, an ecovillage in Caledon, formed in 1995.¹¹⁶ Whole Village's focus is on education and health; members aim to live as stewards of the land on which they find themselves. Most of the land, except for a few housing clusters, is maintained as farmland, managed forest, or natural area and this was made official through a comprehensive conservation agreement. Members work on a Community Supported Agricultural venture and aim to pay each participant a living wage.¹¹⁷ A year after it opened, Whole Village was relocated from King, Ontario to a larger property in Caledon; it continues as an IC.¹¹⁸

In Western Ontario another somewhat successful IC called Twin Valleys survived long after many of the ICs that exploded in 1968 had disappeared. Twin Valleys was started by 100 people who together bought a 400-acre property near Wardsville, Ontario.¹¹⁹ Soon after opening, a "gentle reform school" was started in the IC, taking in wards of the state and who the Children's Aid Society had labelled "hard-to-serve."¹²⁰ Over twelve years, Twin Valleys School offered the youth who were sent there an education in farming and self-sufficiency. The school was funded by the government who paid for the care of each young person who stayed at the IC. Some members believe that this extra income was what kept the IC going when many failed. It was forced to close when the school stopped receiving government funds in 1983. The children who came to Twin Valleys were not there by choice and were

¹¹⁵ Eli, interview.

¹¹⁶ McCosh, 121.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹¹⁸ Whole Village Community. *Founding Principles*. 20 May 2015. Accessed 30 September 2017.

<<http://www.wholevillage.org/wvpages/vision.html>>

¹¹⁹ Mary Simpson, "Archived: Twin Valleys Community and School." Wardsville. 7 August 2010. Accessed 16 October 2015. <<https://wardsville.wordpress.com/category/education/twin-valleys-community-school-education/>>

¹²⁰ Geoff Turner, "Bicentennial Bash Includes Reunion for Unusual School," *London Free Press*, 18 June 2010, Accessed 16 October 2015. <<http://www.lfpress.com/news/london/2010/06/18/14443171.html>>

taken from their communities to a juvenile detention of sorts. However, from the reports and testimonials of many of the youth that lived at Twin Valleys, it seems that the IC took a radical approach to supporting the young people sent there in gaining useful skills, and the teaching method was anti-authoritarian.¹²¹ One of the residents and Directors of Twin Valleys, David Pasikov, attributes the ICs survival amidst so many failed IC projects to shared vision and goals among members. The decision to “build our own community where we could live almost independently instead of getting a large home and big colour television” was what Pasikov believed held the community together. Along with working to meet needs rather than wants, Pasikov attributed the success of Twin Valleys to frugal living.¹²²

A Brief History of Anarchism in Ontario

Outside of the commonly known fact that Emma Goldman spent part of her life in Toronto and died here, and the less commonly known fact that Peter Kropotkin visited Ontario on a cross-Canada tour in the late 1800s, the anarchist history of the geographical area of Ontario is neither comprehensively known nor centrally recorded.¹²³ Many anarchist histories, organizations, and projects have not been memorialized or centralized beyond a buried pamphlet in someone’s private scrapbook, an undated callout for an event found marking a page, or a fragment of information in an otherwise unrelated text.¹²⁴ The exception is the Anarchist Archive in Victoria, BC, maintained by Alan Antliff, which includes some content from Ontario, but focuses mostly on urban experiences.¹²⁵ Antliff is also the

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Elaine Cary, “The ‘Last Commune’ is Still Prospering,” *Toronto Star*, Section D, 4 December 1979, D25-26, 16 October 2015. <<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/thestar/6author%3D%26pub%3DToronto%2BStar%2B%25281971-2014%2529%26desc%3DPage%2BD25>>

¹²³ Goldman lived in Kensington Market in the 1920s as well as 1930s while exiled from the United States. She died there May 14, 1940. John Warkentin, “Prince Peter Kropotkin, Winker and Mennonite Villages, 1897” (unpublished).

¹²⁴ Thanks to the work of some researchers, a minimal textual anarchist history has been preserved. For example, a Quebec anarchist history from the 1960s. Ann Hansen’s account of her participation in the militant, armed, anarchist group Direct Action that existed in British Columbia in the early 1980s is another example. See Mathieu Houle-Courcelles, *Sur Les Traces De L’Anarchisme Au Québec (1860-1960)*, (Montréal: Lux Editeur, 2008) ; Ann Hansen, *Direct Action: Memoirs of an Urban Guerrilla*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2001).

¹²⁵ Some archiving work has been done by members of the Dragonfly Collective over the years, they have an ad hoc archive

author of a book about anarchism in Canada, *Only A Beginning: An Anarchist Anthology*, which outlines a contemporary history of anarchism in Canada, presented through a documentation of various anarchist journals, other media, events, and organizations in which anarchists participated.¹²⁶

In his preface, Antliff points out that “anarchism in Canada lacked a history, or, more accurately, that neglect had driven that history underground.”¹²⁷ Antliff reminds us that the history of anarchism in Canada is not only about working-class struggle, but also shows a commitment to feminism, environmentalism, and anti-colonialism, with a lot of support shown to Indigenous resistance. He shows that there were attempts made to create anarchist spaces and to infuse anarchist politics into culture and social justice organizing in Canada without necessarily carving out an exclusively anarchist space.¹²⁸ Here, I will focus mostly on the attempts made to create anarchist spaces.

Rochdale College in Toronto has a prominent place in oral histories of anarchism in Ontario. The College was initially a University of Toronto funded co-housing unit for students located on Bloor Street near St. George Street that opened in 1964.¹²⁹ The housing complex transformed into a free anarchist educational space and radical intentional community four years later and was celebrated as the first and largest of dozens of free universities in the country and in North America.¹³⁰ Housing over 850 residents, the experiment provided free classes and an opportunity to live collectively to anyone who wanted to move there. The project survived until 1975, when it was closed down due to failure to make mortgage payments and high rates of illegal drug use.¹³¹ It was at this hub of radical organizing

in the attic of the main house at the Collective that holds boxes of (currently disorganized) articles, zines, flyers, callouts, and other paraphernalia from anarchist activities in and near Ontario. The Dragonfly Collective has discussed sending these boxes to the Victoria Anarchist Archive in hopes of making the material more accessible to people outside of the immediate collective; however, no movement has been made towards this end at the time of writing.

¹²⁶ Alan Antliff (ed.), *Only A Beginning: An Anarchist Anthology*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹²⁹ Kelli Korducki, "Remembering Rochdale College, Toronto's hippie heart." *The Globe and Mail*. March 25, 2017. Accessed September 29, 2017. <<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/remembering-rochdale-college-torontos-hippie-heart/article15357582/?ref=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.theglobeandmail.com&.>>

¹³⁰ Scott Sorli. "Concrete Toronto: Rochdale College." *Spacing Toronto*. August 23, 2013. Accessed 29 September 2017. <<http://spacing.ca/toronto/2013/08/23/concrete-toronto-rochdale-college/>>

¹³¹ Sorli, <<http://spacing.ca/toronto/2013/08/23/concrete-toronto-rochdale-college/>>

and community building that the founders of Morning Glory Farm met. The legacy of Rochdale College continues in progressive institutions that were started at the College and continue in Toronto, namely Coach House Press, the Hassle-Free Clinic, and the Huron Playschool Cooperative (originally the Rochdale Nursery School).¹³²

Rochdale Farm was another rural project to emerge out of the College. Purchased as a satellite campus, Rochdale Farm was a 360-acre property in Renfrew County where members of the College could live and learn about alternative energy. In 1973, the farm was sold to fifteen residents who happened to be living there at that time to service Rochdale's debts to the city of Toronto. The Rochdale Farm Website suggests that there are no members currently living on the farm, but past members post photos, stories, and tributes to the Farm regularly.¹³³

Jeff Shantz's recent work on contemporary anarchist theory and practice covers projects he was part of during his time in Toronto, which show the hidden history of anarchist contributions to political and social struggles, projects, and spaces in Canada.¹³⁴ He describes an anarchist presence within the anti-capitalist anti-poverty work of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) as well as the migrant justice work of No One Is Illegal (NOII) and its intersection with anti-colonial work in the Ontario area.¹³⁵ Later he focuses on alternative media as well as union organizing as important anarchist political work in Ontario.¹³⁶

Shantz tells the history of two anarchist spaces in Toronto, Who's Emma? and The Anarchist Free Space and Free Skool (AFS), which he believed were prefigurative in creating, even if

¹³² Korducki, <<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/remembering-rochdale-college-torontos-hippie-heart/article15357582/?ref=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.theglobeandmail.com&.>>

¹³³ Jenifer McVaug, "History: Background on the Commune," Rochdale Farm, (no date) Accessed 28 September 2017 <<http://www.rochdalefarm.ca/jenifer-history.htm>>

¹³⁴ See Jeff Shantz, *Living Anarchy: Theory and Practice in Anarchist Movements* (Palo Alto: Academica Press, 2009); Jeff Shantz, *Constructive Anarchy: Building Infrastructures of Resistance*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Jeff Shantz, *Active Anarchy: Political Practice in Contemporary Movements*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011).

¹³⁵ Shantz, *Constructive Anarchy*, 65-90; 105-152. Many members of OCAP and NOII took part in solidarity work with Mohawk resistance in Tyendinaga and Six Nations land reclamations in Caledonia.

¹³⁶ Shantz, *Constructive Anarchy*. 39-64; 91-112.

temporarily, the kind of community within them that anarchists wanted to see everywhere.¹³⁷ Who's Emma? was a punk concert, record, and zine collective space that functioned in Kensington Market from 1996 until 2000.¹³⁸ It was a volunteer-run space also used for political organizing and workshops. The space was fraught with tensions between a punk subculture and anarchist politics throughout its existence, which ultimately led to its closing.¹³⁹

The AFS, which opened in 1999 and functioned until 2001, was another historical space of anarchist organizing in Kensington Market that opened as Who's Emma? was unravelling. The space channeled the visions of free education started by spaces like Rochdale College and was intended for engaged discussion and strategizing for "new anti-authoritarian social relations" and housed a lending library.¹⁴⁰ The Toronto Anarchist Free Skool functioned from 1998 to 2001 in the AFS, "with a commitment to explicitly anarchist educational projects."¹⁴¹ After the Anarchist Free Skool closed, many people re-ignited the tradition with the Anarchist Free University in 2003, which functioned until about 2008, but not in a centralized place. Instead people offered courses in collective houses or other anarchist-friendly spaces in the city.¹⁴²

Shantz suggests that both Who's Emma? and the AFS served as a space for anarchist groups to meet and successfully brought in community members who did not necessarily identify with anarchist politics to introduce them to the ideology. He suggests that both of these spaces fell apart because of a lack of clear direction and purpose, mostly due to conflicts within the anarchist community around how they should be organizing as anarchists: in an insular but principled way, or with an eye to engaging more people, even those with less radical politics.¹⁴³ The main outcome of the lack of cohesion and

¹³⁷ Shantz, *Active Anarchy*, 92-103.

¹³⁸ A past member of the collective memorialize Who's Emma? through a short documentary film, *Remembering Who's Emma?* as well as a website of artifacts and a zine. Accessed 23 September 2013. <<http://rememberwhosemma.wordpress.com/about/>>

¹³⁹ Alan O'Connor, "Who's Emma" in *Only A Beginning*, 334.

¹⁴⁰ Shantz, *Active Anarchy*, 94-96.

¹⁴¹ Antliff, 341.

¹⁴² Rob Connell, "Free Speech, High Rent: The Past and the Future of Toronto Info Shops," *The Molotov Rag* (2008): 5-12.

¹⁴³ Shantz, *Active Anarchy*, 99.

vision in the two anarchist spaces just mentioned, according to Shantz, led many people to move on to specific organizing work at more “established” organizations such as OCAP and NOII, and also Anti-Racist Action (ARA), an anti-fascist organization that directly fought with racists and fascists in the street, believing that direct and violent confrontation was the most effective way to combat racism.¹⁴⁴

Uprising Books and Bike Pirates were the last two permanent self-consciously anarchist spaces in Toronto. Uprising was a bookstore in Kensington Market that also offered meeting space for anarchist groups.¹⁴⁵ Eventually, Uprising would face the same fate as the AFS and Who’s Emma?¹⁴⁶ Bike Pirates, which still functions successfully today, moved away from explicitly stated anarchist politics and ethics, by ceasing to use the language of anarchism; this helped it to survive, according to one founding member. However, similarly to organizations like OCAP and NOII in Toronto, many volunteers and members of Bike Pirates identify as anarchists and use anarchist principles to govern their participation and how decisions are made within the project without explicitly using the language of anarchism.¹⁴⁷

In general, the experience of anarchist organizers has been that anarchist spaces have short lifespans, while anarchist organizing principles seem to last longer. Toronto anarchists have generally focused on infusing organizing spaces with anarchist practice or creating temporary spaces, rather than permanent ones.¹⁴⁸ Two permanent anarchist spaces currently exist in Hamilton and Kingston.

Hamilton is home to the Tower, a printshop and anarchist social space that has been functioning since 2013.¹⁴⁹ Kingston has hosted events and had a collective living project at the AKA Autonomous Social

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 94.

¹⁴⁵ I participated in meetings for Food Not Bombs there in 2005.

¹⁴⁶ Uprising was informally taken over by a group of street-involved people and officially closed in 2007.

¹⁴⁷ Ainsley Naylor, private communication, 30 August 2013.

¹⁴⁸ The focus on anarchist organizing over anarchist space is demonstrated in the number of applications to the anarchist granting body Freedonia Cooperation for Economic Self-Reliance every year. Most applications focus on short-term events or on supporting organizations which are not explicitly anarchist. Since I joined the Board of Directors of Freedonia in 2012, fewer and fewer projects focus on building up anarchist infrastructure. See, Freedonia, *Mission Statement*, Freedonia Cooperation for Economic Self-Reliance, 2016. Accessed 8 October 2017 <<http://freedonia.ca/mission>>

¹⁴⁹ The Tower. *Hamilton’s Anarchist Social Space*. 2017. Accessed 5 October 2017. <<http://the-tower.ca/about/>>

Centre since 2008.

Outside of these more permanent anarchist spaces, of note are the virtual community of Tao Communications and Anarchist Bookfairs. Tao is a workers' cooperative made up of regional anarchists that offers open source technical services to various anarchist organizations in the Ontario area.¹⁵⁰ Tao was started in Toronto by the OAT (Organizing for Autonomous Telecommunication) Collective and currently offers web, email, and list hosting for radical organizations around the world.¹⁵¹ Anarchist Bookfairs take place throughout Ontario, with irregular events happening in Toronto, Hamilton, and Kitchener-Waterloo.¹⁵² The "Bookfair" is usually a weekend event that brings together radical book vendors, curated workshops, child programming, social events like dance parties, and affordable or free community meals. The goal of these urban spaces is to create a temporary prefigurative spaces of anarchist community and to meet with comrades.

These fragments of Ontario anarchist history found in anecdotes and oral histories of anarchists who have lived in the area often connect with Ontario histories of ICs.¹⁵³ Many anarchist spaces and organizations in Toronto also have a connection with the Black Fly Collective, as many of its members participated in or were members of the Collectives that ran these spaces, showing that IC and anarchist communities in Ontario are a close-knit group. The fact that anarchist spaces are not as common in Ontario as they are in other countries and areas shows the importance of examining how my two case studies have contributed to the creation of a physical space of anarchism in Ontario, especially with a lifespan that has surpassed that of most spaces in the province. With anarchist space in mind, I turn now

¹⁵⁰ Antliff, 363.

¹⁵¹ Their Website is <<http://tao.ca/>> (last accessed 30 September 2017). Two of the founders of the Tao Technology Collective live in Maynooth and half of the web support offered by Tao Toronto is offered from there. One member became part of the Black Fly Collective. Previously, they worked from Toronto, but the nature of web-based work allowed them to move more permanently to Maynooth.

¹⁵² The last Bookfair in Toronto occurred in 2016. See <<https://torontoanarchistbookfair.wordpress.com/>>. Hamilton last hosted a fair in 2018, and Kitchener-Waterloo last hosted one in 2014. The Montreal Anarchist Bookfair is the best attended in Canada, and most Ontario anarchists travel there. See <<http://www.anarchistbookfair.ca/>>

¹⁵³ This work notwithstanding, the vastly important work of bringing together a concrete archive or the substantive history of anarchism in Ontario, especially a less contemporary history and a less urban-centric one has not yet been done. This leaves room for future research for anyone who would be interested in that project.

to a description of The Hill and the Dragonfly and Black Fly Collectives (Figure 8). I bring in narratives of participants as much as possible to allow for the story of these places to unfold as they are understood by those who create them.



Figure 8 – “The Hill”
Data: Algonquin Treaty Negotiation Funding Trust, "Agreement-In-Principle," Algonquins of Ontario. 20 October 2016. Accessed 30 September 2017. < <http://www.tanakiwin.com/our-treaty-negotiations/agreement-in-principle/>>

The Dragonfly Collective

In 2008, Eli, a founding member of Dragonfly wrote in an article looking back over thirty years of the Collective’s existence: “In 1978, enough people with enough money came together at Fairview to buy 250 acres of Canadian Shield in Eastern Ontario.”¹⁵⁴ Fairview collective members purchased the property, now know as Dragonfly, at a Crown auction at a very affordable price. The land was located in close proximity to other ICs that started a little before Dragonfly. Eli explains:

we were the last of a number of groups that had moved to the Bancroft area in that decade, we had joined a cluster of back-to-the-land folks like many that still dot the landscape throughout North America. Over the next twenty-five years, we maintained a collective identity whereas the previous communes had devolved to families and individuals sharing the land as neighbours or else everyone moved away and the land went back on the market.¹⁵⁵

The land on which the Dragonfly Collective sits, despite being located on rocky terrain with little topsoil, had been used as a farm since the 1940s, according to Devin. The last family to live on the land was a single-parent family that included twelve children. The property had a two-storey house, a

¹⁵⁴ Eli. “Dragonfly is 25 This Year” *Kick it Over*, (January 24, 2003), 2
 For a map of who participants are, see Appendix C.

¹⁵⁵ Eli, 3.

chicken coop, and a barn on it when it was purchased by the Collective. The land across the road that would become the Black Fly Collective over twenty years later was also used as a farm before it was sold to Black Fly, with a barn and cleared land. Currently, the property has the following buildings: the main house, the coop - which has been converted to a cabin and is inhabited year-round by Frankie, - the barn, a wood shed, three small cabins (each around 100 square feet), and an outdoor “conference centre” which consists of a covered outdoor kitchen and a stage.



Figure 9 – Dragonfly’s main house and wood shed (on the left). Author’s photograph, February 2013.



Figure 10 – Frankie’s Cabin converted from a chicken coop (on the right). Author’s photograph, February 2013.

Members of the Collective describe the property as “250 acres of gorgeous cottage country surrounded by hundreds of acreage [sic] of similar properties. All together, there is so much wilderness to enjoy.”¹⁵⁶ The land is partially cleared and mixed hardwood, with mostly maple, poplar, and cedar trees. Partly a bog, the land touches on a small lake called Pat Lake but is referred to as Beaver Lake by members of Dragonfly, to the Northeast. The growing season in this area is never longer than ninety days according to one participant, and there is not a lot of soil or soil depth for proper agricultural production.¹⁵⁷

Most agricultural production in the collective centres on harvesting sap for maple syrup; in the past, members also grew tree and shrub seedlings in greenhouses to sell. In the initial days of the collective, from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, the Collective engaged in rebuilding the soil and

¹⁵⁶ Gray. “About Us.” *Dragonfly: News from This Intentional Community*, last updated 28 August 2012, Accessed 22 January 2013. <http://blog.digitalgrub.ca/?page_id=2>

¹⁵⁷ Sam, interview by Joanna Adamiak, via Skype (Toronto, Ontario), March, 2013.

growing vegetables on the land, and housed a horse, some chickens, and other livestock.¹⁵⁸

Unfortunately, the harsh climate and lack of cohesion among people in the Collective led to the decision to get rid of their farm animals in the late 1980s.¹⁵⁹ Most members sought employment in logging and the tourism industry in the area to supplement their attempt at self-sufficiency. Some members even worked seasonally in nearby cities, like Peterborough (which is approximately 150 kilometres away), while others collected provincial social assistance which they used to support the Collective. There was a decrease in residents or residential members from the late 1980s until the mid-1990s. With the arrival of two residents on Dragonfly in the late 1980s —Frankie, being one of them who stayed there and is one of a few to live there year-round— the Collective moved away from gardening to self-sufficiently meet their food needs towards growing non-edible plants as a business.

When Frankie and his partner arrived, they spearheaded some structural and economic changes to the Collective. The major change was the construction of greenhouses used to produce tree and shrub seedlings for commercial sale, as well as organic seeds of plants that survived well in colder climates, like vegetable plants as well as decorative plants.¹⁶⁰ By the mid-1990s, very little food was grown for Collective consumption. Members engaged in seasonal labour around the area, logging, service work, carpentry and construction skills, and web design.¹⁶¹ The change to economic work in the Collective, as well as a shift in membership, caused some tensions within the Collective, which operated on a consensus-based decision-making structure, but one complicated by different levels of membership and a lack of documentation of decisions.

The process of decision-making of the Collective is complicated by the discrepancy between internal structures, legal access to the land, and different levels of membership. I will discuss these categories and the tensions between these categories in Chapter Five.

¹⁵⁸ Rudolfs, 9.

¹⁵⁹ Devin, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, December 2012.

¹⁶⁰ Frankie, by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

¹⁶¹ Devin, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

One of the anarchist publications documented in Antliff's anthology, *Bulldozer/Prison News Service*, is also worth discussing here, specifically because one of the founders and greatest contributors to the publication was one of the original members of the Dragonfly Collective.¹⁶² As Jim Campbell explains, *Bulldozer – The Only Vehicle for Prison Reform*, was an anti-prison newsletter that started in February 1980:

rooted in the counterculture going back to a student house begun in the fall of 1971...which developed into one of the first anarchist collectives in Canada...in 1979 we moved to the country and set up a communal farm with the expectation that it would be a viable rural community from which we could maintain political practice...the first issue of *Bulldozer* came out while I was still living on the farm.¹⁶³

The rural community he refers to is the Dragonfly Collective. Many articles and whole issues of *Bulldozer* were written, published, and distributed from Dragonfly. *Bulldozer* published its eighth and final issue in 1985. However, two years later it was revitalized by some Ottawa students under the name *Prison News Service*.¹⁶⁴

An important part of Ontario IC history is an event that took place at the conference site of the Dragonfly Collective in 2008. "Back to the Land 2.0" was an event to celebrate the Dragonfly Collective's thirtieth birthday as well as a conference to theorize and think through back-to-the-land experiences and IC goals in Ontario.¹⁶⁵ This event brought together members of the Black Fly and Dragonfly Collectives as well as other ICs in the area. Some of the workshops offered at the event included a discussion with an Algonquin elder about the history of the land on which the Collectives are located, skill sharing about ecological housing construction, as well as a historical overview of intentional communities in North America.¹⁶⁶ The event occurred on the weekend of Labour Day to coincide with an annual weekend camping trip, potluck dinner, and festival held in Maynooth by

¹⁶² Antliff, 74-81.

¹⁶³ Jim Campbell, in Antliff, 74.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Back to the Land 2.0, 22 August 2008. Accessed 3 October 2013. <<http://www.backtotheland20.ca/>>

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

members of Dragonfly and Black Fly Collective that brings many visitors from Toronto, Peterborough, as well as local residents of Maynooth and the surrounding municipality around shared alternative values. These events demonstrated the relationship between urban radicals and IC members in the area and shows the existence of a close-knit community of anarchists in Ontario that brought people to create Black Fly across the road from Dragonfly.

The Black Fly Collective

The Black Fly Collective is made up of “Toronto-based activists, cultural workers and trades-people” who came together in 2003 to purchase 100 acres of land between Dragonfly and thousands of acres of unpatented crown land.¹⁶⁷ The property was purchased in a very similar manner to the Dragonfly Collective, namely through a government auction of land that had been sold for back taxes.¹⁶⁸ When the auction was announced, members of Dragonfly contacted friends and comrades in Toronto who had expressed interest or capacity for land purchase in an effort to keep a culture of radical politics in the area.¹⁶⁹ Within two weeks sixteen people, most of whom had never been to the land or surrounding area, committed to purchasing it for 21,000 dollars.¹⁷⁰

Members of the Black Fly Collective call it “a beaver-swampy, moose-trodden, sugar bushy, kilometre-off-the-road never-on-the-grid old homestead and logging camp —pretty and hung with the thick air of a long history. We're adjacent to three other landholdings of like-minded people, in a part of the country heavily settled by our back-to-the-land predecessors, depressed by (primary) industrial flight, and rarely touched by the yuppies that plague our urban lives.”¹⁷¹ From the beginning of Black Fly’s history, because of the close ties of many members with the Dragonfly Collective, discussions

¹⁶⁷ Frequently Asked Questions. 22 August 2008, Accessed 24 January 2013. <http://www.backtotheland20.ca/faq>

¹⁶⁸ Sky, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, November, 2012.

¹⁶⁹ Julian, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February, 2013.

¹⁷⁰ Adrian, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, November, 2012.

¹⁷¹ FAQ. Accessed January 24, 2013. <http://www.backtotheland20.ca/faq>

about how to make Black Fly work concentrated on taking lessons from Dragonfly and other ICs in the area to avoid some of the breakdowns they saw occur over the years across the road.¹⁷² Due to the fact that the land had to be purchased quickly, many decisions about collective process and goals had to be made after the land was acquired. Black Fly members named the kinds of work they wanted to focus on based on their political backgrounds:

While many of us have worked with and appreciate environmental movements, organic farmers, and sustainable living practices, our backgrounds and activist schooling for the most part comes from an anti-racist, anti-poverty, and anti-capitalist focus which we are keen to keep present as we build things, grow things, and make use of this land.¹⁷³

Outside of the desire to live according to guiding principles that are identified as anarchist, anti-oppressive, ecological, and anti-colonial, the long-term goals of how the land will be used have not yet been formalized.¹⁷⁴

Black Fly has incorporated their land which now belongs to the entity that is the “Black Fly Collective.” What this means in practice is that no individual has legal claim to the land. The land simply remains the property of the Collective. Current and new members become part of the Collective, but if one leaves the Collective, one also leaves any claim to the land. In order to become a member of The Black Fly Collective, 4,000 dollars buy-in is required, with the recognition that this money will never be returned and that membership status cannot be passed down to children, family, partners, or friends. This method of ownership was chosen by Black Fly Collective members in response to the tensions they saw emerge at the Dragonfly Collective over deed and access.

According to Adrian, having a combination of no individual owners of the land and a policy of no long-term residence on the land means that there is little difference with respect to use between members and non-members. The difference between use and membership emerges in decision-making and changes to the built environment, since the land is available for short-term use to anyone who

¹⁷² Brett, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, December 2012.

¹⁷³ Brett, interview.

¹⁷⁴ Adrian, interview; Brett, interview; Sky, interview.

wishes to use it. The fact that so many different pieces of land stand in close proximity to each other—owned mostly by people who question private property—has created a rather fluid relationship between the pieces of land that make up what is referred to as “the Hill” with people visiting Dragonfly, Black Fly, or Middle Earth with no clear understanding of where property boundaries are.

“The Hill:” Members of the Wider Community and Maynooth

There have been land acquisitions of smaller parcels of land that are individually owned by friends, family, or past members of Dragonfly, next to Dragonfly and Black Fly, which are referred to by members of the Collectives and the surrounding community as “the Hill” the series of seven properties adjacent to and including Dragonfly and Black Fly on Mink Lake Road (Figure 8) that has anarchists and like-minded people from southwestern Ontario living or vacationing on it. Middle Earth is a small collective house that started in 1996 down the road from Dragonfly and Black Fly that is also home to members of the alternative community. The relationship between ownership, delineation of property lines, and land use is somewhat fluid on “the Hill.” For example, in the case of Middle Earth, the primary resident on the property, Julian, is one of the members of Dragonfly Collective and has been put on the deed at Middle Earth (his partner purchased it) and has lived there for over thirty years.

On the day that I interviewed Julian, a family of six, two parents in their mid-twenties and their four children, all under the age of six, came into the house to announce that they had successfully purchased about two acres of land right beside Middle Earth. This family had been living in the area on various parts of “the Hill,” in their trailer, for almost six months but wanted to settle on their own more permanently. In general, friends, acquaintances and visitors from the alternative community can freely travel among these parcels of land with little question about which or whose piece of land they are on and can stay there temporarily (which is loosely defined) with only informal conversations with

whomever happens to be around at the time.¹⁷⁵

The community of “the Hill” has had ebbs and flows in terms of numbers of people living there. While more and more parcels of land are being purchased by friends and comrades, there are seasons and years when some parts are not inhabited at all. Despite the number of inhabitants, “the Hill” has come to be known in the area as the place that alternative community members in the area go to meet. This land, approximately fifteen kilometres from the town of Maynooth, in the village of Lake Saint Peter, is known to locals as the hub for hippies and radicals. However, over the last ten years the town of Maynooth itself has also experienced an influx of people who do not fit a definition of “mainstream,” according to one participant who has been living in the area for twenty years.¹⁷⁶ Riley explains that the “narrow mindedness” of the town of Maynooth has been challenged especially over the last decade, but the area has always contended with tensions emerging among “anarchists, queers, hippies, artists, locals, and red-necks.”¹⁷⁷ The town has had a larger than average population of artists, radicals, and hippies since the late 1970s when Herschel and Rochdale and other ICs started to emerge in the area. Despite its rather small size, the town has also had an annual queer pride event since the mid-1990s.¹⁷⁸ The expansion of alternative community over the last ten years has been attributed to a number of young people who have moved to the town with economic projects that keep them rooted in the community.

¹⁷⁵ Julian, interview.

¹⁷⁶ Riley, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February, 2013.

“Mainstream” means anyone who is local, of European settler origin, straight, and has conservative or unidentifiable political affiliations. More importantly, “mainstream” is identified as “not alternative.”

¹⁷⁷ Riley, interview.

¹⁷⁸ Riley started this event when they moved to Maynooth with their partner. To the dismay of the mayor at the town’s inaugural Pride event, Riley continued to hold the annual event even after being told that the town of Maynooth “did not want their kind.” Interestingly, that same past mayor awarded Riley with a Community Service Award this past winter. Riley is now somewhat of a local celebrity and has been accepted by some of the most homophobic locals. Furthermore, he suggests that since moving here almost twenty years ago, some of these people have changed their attitudes about queerness in general.



**Figure 11 – Main street of Maynooth, Arlington Hotel and Pub
Author’s photograph, March 2013.**

Three main businesses have brought a significant surge of alternative folks to Maynooth. The first is a café and restaurant that focuses on offering local and organic food. Kelly, the owner of this café, having moved to Maynooth to start an organic farm with her then partner and opened the café to have a place in which to serve the produce they grew. When the couple broke up, Kelly focused solely on the café. She suggests that the café is now a second place, in town to serve as a meeting place for members of the community, after the Arlington Hotel. She, along with a few other participants, also claims that it is one of the few places where people from different political and cultural spheres can share space in town.¹⁷⁹

The Arlington Hotel and Pub is a second project that has brought a new dynamic to the town. Functioning for decades as a loggers’ motel and bar that had been closed down in the late 1990s, the Arlington Hotel and Pub rebranded in 2009 as a hostel for tourists.¹⁸⁰ Three friends from Toronto, all friends of members of the Black Fly Collective and part of the anarchist and the radical queer community in Toronto who had been to Maynooth on a number of occasions to visit the Collectives, bought the Arlington and reopened the bar. The Hotel still functions as a hostel: although there are only shared bathrooms, one can rent just a bed in a dorm-style room or book a private room, and there is a kitchen and living space for collective use. The cost of staying at the Arlington is quite affordable.¹⁸¹

The re-opening of the bar created nightly activities for locals, including community dinners and

¹⁷⁹ Kelly, interview; Lea, interview.

¹⁸⁰ The Arlington Hotel and Pub. 2017, Accessed 3 October 2013. <<https://www.hearlington.ca>>

¹⁸¹ The Hotel is part of the Hosteling International affiliation, meaning that it is part of a global network of hostels. It is where I stayed for one of the weeks that I conducted interviews.

events that allow locals to perform music and spoken word at open mic nights.¹⁸² The three owners of the Arlington have also tried to organize explicitly queer and trans-friendly events, and the annual queer pride event now holds its events there.¹⁸³ The Arlington also serves as an unofficial resource for Black Fly Collective members and visitors to the land (it has running water and plumbing). Many visitors stop at the Arlington on their way to and from the land to take a shower, fill their water bottles, or warm up after a few nights in the yurt in colder months.¹⁸⁴ Pat, who has lived in Hastings Highlands since her childhood, suggests that the Arlington is perceived as the alternative hangout in the town.¹⁸⁵

The Arlington has served as a half-permanent home for a couple of members of the Dragonfly Collective over the last two years since the Hotel changed ownership. Lea, one of the only participants from the area who was born and raised in Maynooth, was a resident at the Dragonfly Collective off and on for a number of years before moving to the Arlington in early 2011. They suggest that since the 1970s there has been a vibrant alternative culture in the town that has created space for young people and alternative people to be part of a community of “weirdos” and find belonging among them thanks to the ICs that were started here.¹⁸⁶

Lastly, and related to the suggestion that Maynooth has always had alternative culture, there are two pottery workshops and stores found in the centre of town. Both of these art shops are run by women who grew up in the area as children of original members of Herschel. These two women have offered art space to young women creating art from within the area, as well as other parts of the province. One of the art shops is owned by a lesbian couple known in the area for offering queer teens a welcoming place to live and create art when they felt excluded from the community around them. Lea stayed with this couple for some time in their youth.

¹⁸² Lea, interview.

¹⁸³ Kelly, interview. Unfortunately, in 2013 one of the owners of the Hotel pushed the other two owners out and caused a rift in the community with some people supporting the owners who were pushed out and some supporting the current owner.

¹⁸⁴ Ira, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, March, 2013.

¹⁸⁵ Pat, by Joanna Adamiak in Peterborough, Ontario, March 2013.

¹⁸⁶ Lea, interview.

The Black Fly and Dragonfly Collectives emerged and constituted this context of other ICs and anarchist organizing in Ontario. Visiting Hastings Highlands, Maynooth, and “the Hill,” revealed that the presence of people from alternative sub-cultures and political communities influenced the rural community there, and also impacted urban communities to which many of them have ties. For example, many Toronto and Peterborough residents now make a point of travelling to Maynooth annually because of the networks they have created.

This chapter contextualized the settlement of Black Fly and Dragonfly in Hastings Highlands. The land on which the two collectives emerged was traditionally used by Algonquin people. Identified as a waste land from early in the development of settler colonialism, the area of Hastings Highlands was settled later than other parts of Ontario. The region became the site of resource extraction and railroad development which, then, facilitated settlement. The label of waste land remained when it was recognized that soil was not very conducive to agricultural production. In this way, waste land imagery helped delay settlement by Europeans and also created a rationale for intensive extraction of minerals, trees, and other resources. Provincial government settlement initiatives and the classification of the area as waste land made land cheap or free, which attracted ICs to establish themselves there. Dragonfly and Black Fly settled in an area that had a notable alternative community presence. The two collectives also emerged out of an abundant history of anarchist organizing and community development in Ontario. Some of that anarchist work continued in Hastings Highlands and the anarchist community in Toronto, especially, has developed ties to Maynooth and Lake Saint Peter as a result. Having provided the theoretical, historical, and geographic context of my research, the next three chapters will discuss my research findings around themes of community, private property, ecology, and colonialism.

Chapter Four: Narratives of Community and Belonging in Hastings Highlands

Moving to the land just for the sake of the land: don't do it. You move to relationships, not to land. If you just move for the land you are fooling yourself. You need community, people, a corner store, other things around. - Ira, participant

This chapter is the first of three that discuss my findings. Three main themes emerged from my interviews and indicate the necessary components of anarchist land ethics: 1) community building and connections with other rural communities - building anarchist communities that interact and contribute to the diverse people who live in those spaces; 2) challenging and transforming reliance on private property, which includes recognizing social systems and working in cooperation with both indigenous and colonizing people to change the roles that private property perpetuates and; 3) expanding an understanding of ecology that includes valuing and experiencing the environment in ways that place intrinsic value on nature but also do not see it as territory to be pristine, unused, and wholly protected to the detriment of sustainable communities that rely on it.

I will discuss how these elements of an anarchist rural land ethic are engaged and enacted at Dragonfly and Blackfly in the specificity of the place in which these Intentional Communities (ICs) are found. Although these ethics are general and comprised of a necessary tactical list of challenges for any rural anarchist, the ways that they are elaborated will always be specific to the situation and location where they are enacted. Therefore, I pay close attention to the details of Dragonfly and Blackfly as a practical study, a way to elaborate more specific questions and problems for anarchist rural activism that is somewhat specific to Hastings Highlands and the collectives found on the Hill. This and the following two chapters focus on three key components of an anarchist rural land ethic, respectively: community-building, property relationships, and ecology.

Anarchist ICs prioritize a land ethic that maintains responsibility to others, and connection to those outside the alternative culture, as a way to build bridges and bonds that can expand social transformation.¹ An anarchist IC requires a community of others with whom to live, and this chapter will address who is perceived as part of that community and what belonging means in rural spaces through the stories of the members of the Dragonfly and Black Fly ICs, as well as the wider alternative community within which the two ICs are situated.²

I will discuss the childhood dreams that inspired many people to seek rural life, their need for space and withdrawal, affordable land and relative urban proximity, cultural lines drawn between the alternative community and “locals,” and family and alternative community connections, as motivations for people choosing to live in Maynooth. Following this I will explore themes of community and belonging, two foundational motivations of people who move to rural areas to join ICs. These themes emerge from stories of how these community members came to live in Hastings Highlands. In Maynooth, these motivations are coupled with a specific sense of what a rural community entails, as well as the sense that Maynooth is a unique rural space providing an encompassing and meaningful alternative community.

The themes of community and belonging follow a similar trajectory throughout the narratives of participants, from members of Dragonfly, Black Fly, and the wider alt community. For this reason, this chapter is organized around articulated themes and not by affiliation of participants to an IC or area. With respect to why the IC took shape in Hastings Highlands, I focus on the ways that Dragonfly and Blackfly members in particular conceived of these themes for there are marked differences between how each IC tells their story, what they value, and how

¹ Both Dragonfly and Black Fly explicitly identify as anarchist collectives. I asked participants to describe their anarchist principles but none gave concrete descriptions of the collectives' anarchist philosophy.

² As noted in Chapter Two, the term alternative or “alt” community also refer to the artistic, queer, back to the land, hippie, radical, and lefty community which is different from the mainstream community like-minded is used to describe individuals within this community. Like-minded is a term that is used to refer to people who are part of this alt community.

they understand the ethics of their settlement. In further chapters I group narratives by theme or participant affiliation to demonstrate agreement or diverging views.

Country Dreams

A common theme in interview narratives is a lifelong desire to live in the country, or simply to leave the city, that began in childhood. Stories of childhoods spent in the wilderness, camping and attending camps or visiting family who lived on farms and in rural areas were shared by many participants. Many did not have direct experience living in a rural area but developed an early image of rural life and the desire for “a cabin in the woods,” as Ira suggests.³ Many participants who described a childhood love of rural areas held on to the very romantic imagery discussed in Chapter One. While some spoke of drawing pictures of themselves in a home among forests, others described fantasizing about tree houses and running through wild fields. For some of the founders of Dragonfly and Black Fly, these childhood images significantly influenced their decision to seek communal land hundreds of kilometers from the cities in which they lived, such as Peterborough, Ottawa, Toronto, and Waterloo. Present in these childhood dreams is an abiding image of magical and idyllic utopian land. Interestingly, for many participants this imagery was not informed by disconnected stories of the rural but by their personal childhood experiences. Quinn for instance grew up in Maynooth, with a desire to be in rural spaces that was strengthened when he lived in the city. He regularly traveled to Maynooth to camp and hike even when living some distance away.

The simple prototype of rurality is complicated by specific interactions with rural spaces in early years, yet the perception that rural space is temporally displaced, as Raymond Williams

³ Ira, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, March 2013. All participant names used are pseudonyms.

discusses, is enduring and persistent, even in real experiences of the country.⁴ A shift from life in the city to life in the country seems to come with the impression that a line is drawn around these two spaces and to enter each is to travel to a different temporal dimension.

Informed by growing up in the country until he was ten years old, Ira's desire for rural life was solidified by a specific childhood experience of city life. He grew up in downtown Toronto after moving there from rural Northern Manitoba and describes being "totally fascinated by rural life" and wanting to live in a log cabin:

I had a hard life as a child in Toronto —single mom, four kids. We were underground. Mothers couldn't be single moms in the city, we couldn't tell my dad where we were because he was violent, so, we were kind of underground, it was kind of a mess. [The country] just seemed like a place to go and I just sort of fell into this piece of land.

Here the desire for country life is related to a desire to be "away from," geographically removed from authority or sources of power, whether state authority or, in Ira's case, his violent father.

The relationship between a desire for country life and a desire for being "away" are deeply connected in these cases, as the country as a place seems farther removed from the city than the literal distance required to travel there. More importantly, as Ira suggests, the rural becomes a place of safety, where one need not be in hiding. Ira identifies the country as a place where one is not findable, similar to Pat's story of being hidden at a nearby IC at the age of three by her father. Pat explains that her father hid her so he could ensure that he could win a custody case with Pat's mom by keeping Pat in Ontario:

My dad took me back to Ontario so that he could fight for custody on friendlier geographic grounds. He hid me at a commune that was one tiny cottage with a wood stove. I lived in the cabin with three adults, for five months. I was there until the court case ended and he won custody. My dad didn't live there he would visit once a day making sure he wasn't followed. He was afraid if my mom knew where I was, that she would take me back. He had to hide me and the IC was a good place for that.⁵

⁴ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 9-17.

⁵ Pat, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Peterborough, Ontario, March 2013.

Interestingly, while many, like Pat's father, see the countryside as a place to hide, Ira's story suggests the rural can be a place to be out in the open, expressing that the country "just seemed like a place to go." Ira did not seek to hide from all of society but from a particular relationship.

Another participant, Riley, was clear on having had no interest in leaving city life to live in Maynooth but maintains that "Maynooth chose us." His statement reflects another theme of people's trajectory towards living in the community. A number of participants addressed the choice as a process of "just ending up" in Maynooth. They often described an almost mystical feeling of being pulled to the area, such as with Quinn, who felt "positive energy" when he returned to Maynooth.⁶ Others describe simply wandering into the community and not leaving. Julian, for example, arrived at Dragonfly on horseback a few months after it was created, coming from another IC after interest rates rose significantly on the IC's mortgage and members had to sell a third of their property, mostly farm land. Julian simply stayed at Dragonfly from then on.

Riley explains ending up in Maynooth after his partner contracted AIDS and expected to have a year left to live. They sought settlement in a rural area to provide Riley's partner a place to die. "Where could we get a dog and have a nice year, was the question. Well, we found it and then didn't die, so we opened a guest house and here we are, nineteen years later."⁷ While Riley did not have a general desire for country life, he developed a desire to get away from his usual life for the specific encounter with the death of his partner. Implicit in Riley's story is a desire to leave regular community and life behind. This desire for the rural as a place in which to die suggests that rural space is perceived as a space of retreat, taking oneself out of society, similar to the common desire of many people to move to the country to retire.

⁶ Quinn, interview with Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

⁷ Riley, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

Taylor describes a lifelong desire to live in the country and the negotiation of that desire with a perception that she should wait until her children were grown before pursuing it, explaining how she and (partner) Devin talked about their rural plans:

When the kids are old enough, we are out of [the city]. Because that was when [Devin] had started bringing me up to Dragonfly and I started finding out about the community of people that existed. Actually, back then there were not that many people, just a few. The commune had dwindled down to a few people but I still thought that it was so cool because I had always wanted to build a place and live in the woods and be closer to nature and not be so reliant on money and to get out of the system a bit, be more self-sufficient, grow my own food. That whole thing. We shared that whole vision of living off the grid, in nature. Maynooth was a starting point because [Devin] is part-owner of Dragonfly. We moved here when my kids finished high school, we thought it was a good time to leave.⁸

Taylor's lifelong aspiration to live in the country came with a sense of it being a big step that was not possible until her children had grown up. Her connection to Maynooth had continued for years but joining did not feel possible for a long time. Despite knowing of and membership in a community in Maynooth in which children lived, Taylor did not feel it possible to move to the area with her kids. The existence of community in Maynooth attracted Taylor to settling there but her desire for a house in the country preceded the draw of a precise community and her dream was not lessened when she saw Dragonfly's community grow smaller. Taylor and Devin waited until their children left home before moving to Lake Saint Peter.

Val shares the opinion that one needs time to reach a place where rural dreams could be realized, stating:

the dream was always to live in the country. In Toronto that was always the dream *but we knew that we would have to work for a while in the city to get there*. We bought a condo in Toronto as an investment for the future. We lived and worked there for eight years, working for an insurance company, boring stuff. Not the kind of stuff we liked but it was just a means to an end. We decided that it was time to start looking. We used to come camping up here and so we decided we could buy a few acres to camp on in 1980. It was too small and not conducive to farming, it was too wild. We built a log cabin on that place. We needed something bigger, we needed a proper farm. We looked and found our place a year after we started looking and then moved here about a year after that.⁹

⁸ Taylor, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

⁹ Val, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, March 2013.

Val and Taylor's stories have in common that moving to the country would not be as simple as the act of moving from one city to another. Economic concerns kept Val and her partner from just packing up and moving, feeling they needed to earn and save a lot of money first. For Taylor, it was the perception that a move to the country was not possible with children. Val's and Taylor's narratives underline the belief that a move to rural areas is a move to a significantly different geography and culture, which requires special economic and cultural preparation. Romantic imagery and childhood memories of the rural informed many participants' desires to live in the country, coupled with the belief that by moving participants were withdrawing from society and the state.¹⁰

Space and Withdrawal

Rosabeth Kanter's distinction between two kinds of communities —service and retreat— illuminates the different reasons for joining ICs and informs the motivations of some participants who looked to settle in Hastings Highlands.¹¹ Members of Black Fly, Dragonfly, and the alt community were arriving in the rural area of Maynooth partly as a retreat from the city, mainstream society, and the state, in the sense of wanting to geographically withdraw. Many people chose to join Dragonfly or Black Fly, or to move to the area, out of a desire to be far from cities, which are full of people and obligations.

¹⁰ When asked about what she had expected of rural life and how it compared to what she experienced when she decided to move to Maynooth, Sam said that she had expected more agriculture, because her childhood experience of foster care was that of being extra hands for farmers and that rural life was equal to agricultural labour. "However, in Maynooth, there are few people who are involved in agricultural business, outside of a personal garden, farming is not common here. There are few farmers here." Sam, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth Ontario, March 2013.

¹¹ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 191-192. Kanter describes retreat communes as those that are less driven by common ideals and more centralized around a rejection of society at large. Service communes, according to Kanter, are those, which see themselves as being a part of a bigger society and having "something valuable to offer society."

Pat, who grew up rurally, says “going to rural places has always made it possible for me to open up and get rid of overstimulation.”¹² Kelly explains how the pace of life in Maynooth is different from the city:

It took some time to get used to not having a city nearby, so I adjusted less to life in the rural and more to life away from a city. At six o’clock in the evening everything is closed, you can’t order pizza. There are no things “to do” after. *You have to socially adjust; have more people over.* The bar is now my living room. I get anxious around so many people in the city and have to get adjusted to that pace. It is a sensory overload.¹³

Preferring the rhythm of life she found away from the city, Kelly points to the ways in which her daily routine is less busy in Maynooth, with engagement in fewer activities. Pat’s and Kelly’s narratives of finding a community with less stimulation indicate that retreat is not synonymous with isolation—rather it is about different types of interactions. Very few participants spoke of a desire or need to be free from socializing but did speak to a need to retreat from the business of life in the city, especially for those who do not live in Hastings Highlands full-time. Kelly also notes that on moving to Maynooth she had to adapt to being far from the city more than having to get used to rural life. The search for leveling needs for both proximity and remoteness is best understood in Sky’s description of balancing time at Black Fly and time in Toronto. “We go up [to Black Fly] about three times a year, about six to ten days per year. There is competition for time. I work in Toronto and my work only allows for me to get away so much. Sure, I would like to live up there when I retire.”¹⁴

Sky describes the countryside as perceived as a space of retreat—an important component of political work—but states that there are tensions in the desire for retreat:

Our goals are to see Black Fly work as a space that social movements can use to build capacity and rejuvenate, for retreats or for trainings, for people that are part of movements to have a chance to get away from the city. A retreat space is the goal. The problem is that it

¹² Pat, interview.

¹³ Kelly, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013. (emphasis mine)

¹⁴ Sam, interview.

is so far that when I tried to organize a No One Is Illegal Toronto retreat up there a couple of years ago, it was just too far for people; they couldn't get there. We have only had one conference up there since we got the land because it is just too far for people.¹⁵

People desire a place removed enough that retreat participants truly feel they are away from their daily lives but physical distance (often hundreds of kilometers) and an inability to take time away from their usual lives means that many cannot commit to a multiple-day trip and going for a shorter stretch does not make the drive worthwhile.

Even with telecommunications tools like Internet and cellular telephones people still feel a geographical limit on their time and space, a need to be physically far from the site of their daily life to feel truly away from it. Conversely, the need to be physically in the place where daily life takes place indicates that technology does not change the sense that one cannot be away from the site of daily life for very long. Amidst such complications, participants continue to hold the pervasive belief that being in the country offers remoteness from life, people, governments, and obligations because they are away from their communities, not fully acknowledging that communities also already exist in rural spaces.

Sam highlights the political and community-focused character of the desire to withdraw from a city lifestyle in her story:

I moved to a rural area because I wanted to step away from the city lifestyle. I was also the mother of the drum and had four or five Native kids living with me. We needed space for a sweat lodge. Coming up here gave us some privacy and some land to reconnect; to find out what that was all about in terms of our culture and our heritage and what it meant to us...it was time to raise the kids in a different lifestyle.¹⁶

Sam wanted a different lifestyle and a culturally different group of people than existed in the city where she lived. More importantly, Sam expresses a desire for space and reprieve from colonial indicators in the city, which required access to a piece of land large enough for her to reconnect

¹⁵ Sam, interview.

¹⁶ Ibid.

with the soil and build cultural practices in response to colonialism. Thus, the motivation to move to a rural space can be a political one. Connected to the wish to be far from the city is the implication that to have a large piece of land requires leaving the city for economic reasons and because there are far fewer pieces of expansive land in the city. Similar to the examples of lesbian separatists from the last chapter there is a political impetus behind leaving mainstream society, and an important cultural assertion is made by seeking space in which to create or practice cultures that are invisibilized or erased in urban spaces.

Devin also references the importance of gaining distance from the city. He says:

moving out of the city was important because we were moving away from what civilization had done. Living in cities is a mistake of nature and we want to correct what civilization had done. Part of the conversation we were having when we started Dragonfly was about creating peace and love, ending sexism and classism, and enacting a better society than the one we were in. We had intense discussions and read a lot about anarchist theory and other ICs. We were aware of other ICs and what was happening at the time...I came out of a background and childhood of conservationism it just seemed like going there was the best solution to the problems; to be in touch with other communities and to start something.¹⁷

Devin's and Sam's visions remind us of the anarchist principle of prefiguration—a realizable future lived in the present—and the century-long conflict among anarchists over whether leaving the city is a radical act. Evoking Landauer's utopic anarchist vision from *For Socialism*, Devin suggests that the best solution to the problems of the world was to lead by example and create the culture and ethic they wanted to see. Landauer advocated that anarchists “first look around for land as the only external condition which they need for society.”¹⁸ While Landauer's advice has often been criticized as an escapist dream, many others have continued to defend the dream of community-building as a tangible and revolutionary goal. For example, in his work *Paths in Utopia*, Martin Buber, a friend of Landauer, tried to rationalize the usefulness of community-

¹⁷ Devin, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, December 2012.

¹⁸ Gustav Landauer, *For Socialism*, (New York: Telos, 1978), 133.

building to those who criticized Landauer and other communitarian socialists.¹⁹ Buber argued, “the most intimate of all resistances is resistance to mass or collective loneliness.”²⁰ His argument supports the notion that by creating communities outside of the alienated urban centres of capitalism one is enacting radical change.

Dragonfly’s vision was similar to that of many back-to-the-land hippies of the late 1960s as well as the visions of earlier ICs. Keith Miller, writing about the communes of the late nineteenth century, argues, “Intentional Communities were a means of reform particularly relevant to the times. It promised radical and immediate change, if only within the confines of a small community, without the costs of revolution.”²¹ However, Ira cautions that getting away from the state, especially government surveillance, is not as simple as just joining an anarchist IC. He explains, “if you want to get away from the state, you don’t move to Dragonfly. That is the last place you should go. There was a study of Dragonfly in the 1980s by the state, they were a place on the list of possible terrorist groups for [Canadian Security Intelligence Service] CSIS.” The Anarchist Gathering was held at Dragonfly in 1988 and Ira points out that hundreds of people drove up there for an after party to a Toronto Anarchist Gathering a few years later. He points out that Dragonfly is known by anarchists internationally because people have visited from different countries around the world.²² Ira reminds us that the perception of being far away from cities and the government is often simply a perception, especially given the history of state surveillance of radical groups in urban and rural areas alike described in Chapter Two. Anarchists who moved away from cities maintained relationships with their community and extended their community and Dragonfly’s relationship with the Toronto anarchist community made it

¹⁹ Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*. (London: Kegan Paul, 1949).

²⁰ Martin Buber, quoted in Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life*, (New York: Morrow, 1972), 171.

²¹ Miller, 38.

²² Ira, interview.

susceptible to investigation. The narratives of withdrawal and the stated desire to leave the city are complicated by the fact that living in a remote area, in practice, is often coupled with seeking out life in an area that is familiar due to family or community ties. Gaining space away from mainstream society and governments does not mean seclusion or isolation.

Cheap Land, Relative Urban Proximity, and City Connections

Land in the Maynooth area is very affordable relative to land in Southwestern Ontario and Maynooth is also proximate to other cities (for example Peterborough is less than two hours away). These facts are commonly stated by most participants as reasons for moving to Hastings Highlands, and why so many ICs started in the area even before Dragonfly and Black Fly. For Matti, the cost of land and building a house are prohibitively expensive, even in Maynooth where land prices are very low. For her, building on a piece of land owned by her parents was the only option for owning her own home. “A lot of people couldn’t make a go of living here but a lot of kids are returning because their families have property here. People have family land here which makes it more accessible, since property taxes are low here.”²³ This practice of returning to land owned by family was common during the hippie exodus to the countryside in the United States and Canada in the late 1960s. For some IC-builders at the time, as for the people I interviewed, there was a sense that moving to family-owned land was the only practicable option for leaving city life and acquiring land.²⁴

On why Devin proposed a move to Dragonfly from the collective house he was part of in Waterloo to Lake Saint Peter, he said, “cheap land! We looked at other places in Ontario and Quebec, as far as North Bay and the piece at Lake Saint Peter was the piece we could agree on, it

²³ Matti, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

²⁴ Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth-Century America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 120.

was in the right price range...it was just the way the economy goes that the closer you are to the city the more expensive the land.” Devin’s explanation of the reasons behind his move departs from the vision of moving to Maynooth out of the specificity of roots in family history or a sense of belonging. For Devin, founders of Dragonfly moved to Hastings Highlands not for a piece of land specifically or the area specifically, but for the affordability and availability of land, the perception of good soil for farming, and the possibility of living without connection to the outside world. The goal of Dragonfly was to become more self-sufficient, according to Devin. He says, “I liked the idea of putting a dome around Dragonfly and being able to survive. I knew we could never reach that but that was my metaphor for our goal.” The original members of the Collective felt confident that they could achieve their goal because they already had gardening experience at their collective house in Waterloo. When they arrived at Lake Saint Peter they began to develop the garden and grow food. Devin identifies that the land was good for growing because “there had been a farm up there fifty years before we got there; the soil was quite well fertilized back then. There were fields that had been used, fifteen to twenty acres total that were still rather cleared when we got there.”²⁵ Unfortunately, members of Dragonfly would soon learn that the land was not actually suited for farming, and that this was likely why the land was so affordable in the first place, feeding into waste land imagery. Unlike some participant’s narratives, Devin is less focused on a mystical understanding of the area as unique. The perception of the area as some magical place drawing radicals in is buffered by pragmatic decisions around the economic feasibility of living there.

Eli’s story of arriving at Dragonfly as one of a dozen original members ties together the themes of cheap land, proximity to other cities, and proximity to like-minded community. She suggests that a few people got together and drove around areas picked out on a map in a group of

²⁵ Devin, interview.

two or three cars. “We wanted to be in between Toronto and Ottawa, so that people could still work and commute. But, we wanted to be far enough away that it wasn’t just going to be a commuter thing. Plus, we couldn’t afford anything closer.”²⁶ Her narrative demonstrates the complicated geographic desire both for distance from cities, to ensure that there is stability in community membership, and proximity to urban areas, to facilitate connection to work opportunities. Affordability of land was a major factor in the group’s decision to explore Hastings and allowed them to bridge their goal to be in an alternative community while being close to other cities for the potential to commute indicating that Hastings Highlands was one of many options to which they could locate.

Eli further identifies that there were also specific reasons for choosing the area. “We chose the Bancroft area because there was a food cooperative and a very organized back-to-the-land community. Also, I was pregnant and there was a midwife in the area, and we met the midwife while we were there, so it was like, ‘yeah, we will buy land here.’ The community that was preexisting was very attractive to us.”²⁷ The infrastructure of alternative community was already present, according to Eli, when Dragonfly was settling in, with a cooperative food store, other ICs, and midwives in the area. For Eli, the sense of alternative community in the area showed a potential for successfully starting and sustaining a new IC. Eli pointedly explains that despite her best hopes of success many of Dragonfly’s goals have not been realized to date, indicating a sense that despite perceived ideal conditions for a successful IC, their project failed. However, other alt folk continued to be attracted to Hastings Highlands and bought land on the Hill. Notions of community and the allure of cheap land have continued to draw ICs to the area, including the Black Fly collective.

²⁶ Eli, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, January 2013.

²⁷ Ibid.

When the land that would become Black Fly came up for sale, radical folks from Toronto bought it not solely based on affordability, though that was certainly a leading factor in how they could mobilize to make the purchase quickly. Adrian, a member of Black Fly, makes clear that price was a main reason for purchasing land at Lake Saint Peter. She explains that they found out from Devin in 2003 that a piece of land was being auctioned for back taxes by the provincial government:

Devin wanted to make sure that there were people [on the land] who they liked. They suggested that we get people together to put in a bid. It was super, sort of, random in some ways. The conversation [amongst folks in the Toronto radical community] was, “who can put money in to put in a bid and wants to be a part of this thing?” And, it was pretty undefined as to what this thing was because we had two weeks to pull it all together. It was based on networks of trust and friendship networks of who wanted to do it and we borrowed money. We each put in about 1,500 dollars, made an offer of 21,000 dollars, and we won it.²⁸

The fact that the land across the road from Dragonfly was affordable made it more possible for members of the wider radical community to come together to purchase it and create a hub of like-minded people in the area. However, the specific choice of location was more intentional for Black Fly than Dragonfly because now there was a specific and existing community across the road. Unlike Dragonfly, the Black Fly Collective was created because the land was available, rather than as an existing IC seeking land on which to pursue community life. Thus, affordable and available land in a desirable location with existing community connections was the main impetus behind creating a land collective. The quick coming-together of alternative folks from Toronto was timely, according to Adrien, because the cost of land has grown quickly over the ten years since Black Fly was purchased:

The taxes keep going up because the land keeps getting re-evaluated as being worth more money. We got the land for really cheap but it is now evaluated at 60,000 dollars, a lot more money than we put into it...The whole area has increased in value because the Muskokas have filled up and Haliburton has filled up, now cottage country is four hours north of [Toronto].

²⁸Adrian, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, November 2012.

Like Adrian, Taylor differentiates Maynooth from more commonly known areas of Ontario known as “cottage country” like Muskoka and Haliburton. These areas are highly developed and affluent, while Maynooth is described as more rustic, less developed, and less valuable in relation to “cottage country,” which is offered as an explanation for the cheaper land in the area. While land is becoming more expensive in Hastings Highlands, “it is more affordable to live [there],” suggests Taylor:

People with money build these castles in the Muskokas, they impose their lawns and screw up the shorelines so they can have their fancy boats. Here, in Maynooth, people tend to respect the environment more, they leave it more natural. We prefer to be here for that reason, it is less developed. Not every piece of land is a piece of real estate. It is relatively underpopulated. There are lots of bears and moose and deer, we respect that it is their environment as well. There is a possibility of coexistence here.²⁹

The general opinion of Maynooth is that it is more natural and less developed because it is more geographically remote than the Muskokas. Taylor claims that the area has people living there whose values align more with environmentalism than the Muskokas and that this is what draws people to settle here. Sky agrees, speaking to the remoteness and distinction from “cottage country” as one of the reasons Black Fly purchased there. “We like to be in the bush but it is a tough toss up, because you want to be close enough that you can get there on the weekend, for better or for worst but it is still kind of wild. It is a little bit further from the city, keeping it from becoming a Muskoka or Haliburton hipster cottage country which we don’t want to have happen here.”³⁰ Hastings Highlands has a different character, according to Sky and Taylor, and this different character draws like-minded people to the area. Their narratives indicate that along with interest in geographical distance from cities, they also want to be around people who share their values; the community they are joining is an important factor in their decision.

²⁹Taylor, interview.

³⁰ Sky, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, November 2012.

Sam outlines a similar sentiment: “We didn’t want to be too, too far. We wanted something rural but didn’t want to be stuck in the middle of nowhere, especially with pubescent teenagers. Bancroft was right in the middle, a few hours from Toronto, a few hours from Ottawa. Then, I saw the bulk food store, Harvest Moon and decided.”³¹ Sam’s mention of the importance of the health food store addresses that there is more to choosing a rural life than proximity to other cities or distance from them. However, for many alternative folks the initial draw to Hastings Highlands was the affordability of the area and its relative proximity to other cities, rather than a cosmic connection that brought alternative folks together. However, as more non-mainstream people settled there, the draw of an alternative community itself was also a selling feature.

Established alternative communities often had long-standing relationships with radical, anarchist, and alternative communities in cities. Many folks on “the Hill” were connected to the Toronto anarchist community and identity politics. For all three participants from Black Fly, the main reason they were keen to buy land near Maynooth was because of the connection the area had to their friendship circles in Toronto. Adrian calls it a “network of trust” that made it easy to decide to buy 150 acres with fifteen other people, many of whom had not even been to the land before agreeing to buy it. She points out that the people who bought the land together had long term relationships, both political and social, with the people who would make up Black Fly. Many of them also had long standing relationships with members of Dragonfly. Having Dragonfly as a neighbour was an invaluable resource for Brett, as he felt that Black Fly could learn from Dragonfly’s mistakes and benefit from living near parent-figures. However, aware of the tensions at Dragonfly, Brett also had reservations about being so close, not wanting to be pulled into the conflict. He explains that Maynooth has a community of mostly anarchist diaspora from Toronto, very close-knit, and that Toronto and Hastings have increased contact as

³¹ Sam, interview.

a result. Kelly, who moved to Maynooth from Peterborough, explains that despite living there for a few years she feels less connected than others, because “the folks who came from Toronto have known each other longer from there.”³² Nonetheless, Kelly has found a strong community in Maynooth, saying, “I don’t know everyone but the people who are around keep me here.”³³

Sky identifies the close ties between Dragonfly and the Toronto anarchist community, pointing out that many of the people he saw at anarchist gatherings in Toronto also regularly came up to Dragonfly. As a result, the decision to buy land to create Black Fly was made with the wider-Toronto anarchist community in mind. One of the stated purposes of Black Fly is to create a space for respite and retreat for anarchists living in the city, to meet and discuss and organize, or “to rejuvenate and help build capacity” to return to political work in Toronto. “Political affinity and proximity to four other anarchist-owned” pieces of land were the main motivations for Sky’s participation in the purchase of what would become Black Fly, as there were already a lot of other anarchists around.³⁴ For many participants, an existing anarchist community and relative distance from urban centres drew them to Hastings Highlands, however the community they were pulled to was not representative of the wider community. Narratives about how participants came to become members of the Maynooth and “the Hill” community in Lake Saint Peter, often hinge on a feeling of not being a member of the local community.

Locals, Family Connections, and Community Connections

Of nineteen participants, only Lea identified as a “local,” although other participants’ families had been settled in the area for multiple generations. Lea distinguishes between local community

³² Kelly, interview.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Sky self-consciously pointed out how anarchist-owned was a contradiction in terms and yet is the reality of Dragonfly, Black Fly, Middle Earth, and Ira’s land, all of which constitutes, “The Hill.”

and alternative community and expresses their uniqueness as the only individual in the area to join the “alt” community from the local community. They tell the story of joining the alternative community and the sense of belonging that came with it. Lea explains that locals looked down on the alt community and Dragonfly when it started but Lea felt drawn to the alt and creative crowd because they already felt different from locals:

When I returned to the area in the 1990s after living in the city, I met a number of hippies at a wedding and asked them if I could move to Dragonfly. Dragonfly opened me up to the bigger picture and is the place that I started to learn about anarchist thought and the idea of seeking different ways of interacting that are consensual and based on mutuality. I went through the literature and submerged myself in the culture. It was not acceptable - when I was growing up - to be gay. The alt community helped me come out, I first came out to folks in the hippie community...I went to college with folks I grew up with, from small towns, so when I was outed [as queer] it was not a pleasant experience. Being in the city helped me tap into the queer community but I never felt comfortable there; it was too consumerist. I wanted to date folks who were more like the rural folks I grew up with, not muscular city folks. Now there is a queer community growing in Maynooth.³⁵

We learn from Lea about the complexity of being a “local” and not feeling connected to the culture of local community.³⁶ Although never explicitly, the term “local” is used to refer to a particular worldview and culture synonymous with “redneck.” Local identity has been described in many academic articles about rural communities and is often the stereotype of a rural inhabitant: uneducated, crude, racist, and simple-minded person who drives a truck, hunts, and rides a skidoo in the winter. Participants reserved the term “local” for exactly that demographic, perceived as conservative, white, uncultured (in the artistic sense), and close-minded.

Lea identifies with local culture but also sees themselves as separate from it.³⁷ They trouble the rural local stereotype on which that identity is founded by describing the complexity of local or

³⁵ Lea, interview by Joanna Adamiak, in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

³⁶ Matt Reed, "The Mobilisation of Rural Identities and the Failure of the Rural Protest Movement in the UK, 1996-2001," *Space and Polity* 8, no. 1 (April, 2004): 25-42.

³⁷ Throughout this dissertation, the use of “they” and “them” will be used in place of “he/she” as a gender-neutral pronoun. The use of “themselves” has become widely accepted. See John Kelly, “Meet Themselves, Our New Gender-Neutral Singular Pronoun,” *Lexicon Valley*. May 30, 2016. Accessed 9 June 2018.

<http://www.slate.com/blogs/lexicon_valley/2016/05/30/meet_themselves_our_next_gender_neutral_singular_p.html>

redneck culture. First, the rural, “local” identity is reserved for those who fall under participants’ definitions of the stereotypical rural identity. Consistent with literature about rural identity, the local is an elusive description often used as an identifier of others rather than as a self-identity by those who fit the description. Lea troubles this perspective in their identity as a local (which no other participant did), despite many participants having lived in the area for decades, having family roots, or both. Second, Lea’s story of joining the alt community outlines the deep importance of belonging. Lea feels they belong in the alt community and describe becoming aware of a history of people who resisted the mainstream, and how supported they felt by the alt community when they came out. Belonging seems synonymous here with familiarity, inclusion, and commonality.

Lea exemplifies a local identity far more multifaceted than stereotypes suggest, not easily falling into the prototype of a local in many ways. Lea is creative, queer, educated, has radical politics, and associates with a community of which locals do not generally approve. They describe themselves as a local who joined the alt community, and identify as an alternative person, a queer, and a lefty. Local identity is not just a list of demographic attributes but also a culture. When Lea describes the kind of people they want to date, they point out that there is something about the kind of people they grew up around that they continue to seek out, and that they did not find in the queer community in the city.³⁸ Lea sees the local identity as a part of, but not fully, who they are. When explaining their entry into alt community life, Lea emphasizes an affinity based on “already feeling like I was different.”³⁹ The sense of belonging in the alt community

³⁸ A close friend of mine sometimes talks about the fact that when she was growing up in rural Saskatchewan she would play a game called “Rural, Queer, or Mennonite.” The game was simply looking at someone and deciding based on outward appearance if they were one of those three. The underlying commentary of this game is that there are aesthetic and cultural markers and ways of being that overlapped those three identities blurring any clear distinction to the untrained eye. For my friend, who was rural, queer, and Mennonite, the game was a source of endless entertainment. Jan Guenther Braun, private communication, October 2015.

³⁹ Lea, interview.

and their inclination to join it is grounded in a common experience of having been an outsider in their mainstream community. The willingness of members of the alternative community to welcome Lea, demonstrated by their simply asking Dragonfly if they could move there, indicates that the shared experience of outsider created a desire to be open and informal in the face of exclusion. Of course, belonging is not simple, demonstrated by Lea's desire to belong to a community which resembles their local culture and feeling attracted to "the rural folks I grew up with," while living in an alt community in the city was as alienating for Lea as living in the local culture had been. The desire for belonging and community is specific to a community that is rural *and* alternative.

The diverse racial identity of people who culturally resemble local rednecks in Maynooth sheds light on the multidimensional nature of local identity and points to the pervasive white supremacy in rural imagery, even for those who live in rural areas. Lea explains:

The alt community draws a lot on Indigenous community and cultural practices but, there is no history of a relationship between the alt community and the Native community; there are now tentative connections being made. The local Native community tends to be culturally redneck and "fearful of" and rightfully so. And also [they] are very different in lifestyle. So, the overlaps [between alt and Indigenous folks in the area] are becoming more and more but there are cultural differences. [Indigenous folks] are different in lifestyle from the alt community. For example, the redneck [Indigenous] community prefers instant coffee and white bread and mostly eats hunted meat. They are finding it difficult to connect with the different food that the hippies eat. The culture of the hippies is very different but there is certainly an openness between them in other ways.⁴⁰

In showing how a great proportion of the Indigenous community in Maynooth also fit the cultural description of "redneck," Lea problematizes the perception that redneck locals are simply white bigots, thus showing the assumption of whiteness in the local culture. The fact that even people who live in the rural area being stereotyped continue to misrepresent who is part of the redneck culture uncovers the internalized white supremacy that perseveres in the alternative

⁴⁰ Ibid.

community, despite a commitment to undoing it. To see undesirable cultural characteristics, such as being culinarily unrefined, as belonging to community members who are even more white and racist than oneself, exposes the way that cultural othering can exclude potential political and social allies and limit who belongs in a community. For members of the alt community there is a desire to support and respect indigeneity and Indigenous livelihood and culture, yet some cultural aspects of the hippie, lefty, and ex-urban community do not resonate with local Indigenous people and vice-versa, which perpetuates an exclusion of Indigenous people.⁴¹ Lea suggests that the political affinity between alt folks and Indigenous communities has been useful in bridging cultural divides and also shows that these divides conceal an opportunity for solidarity relationships between settlers and Indigenous people and invisibilizes Indigenous people.

While the alternative community identifies with and ideologically supports Indigenous livelihood and culture, the practices of hippie, lefty, and ex-urban folks might continue to exclude Indigenous people. Ira, a landowner on the Hill, but not a member of Dragonfly or Black Fly, elaborates on how some rednecks in the area break from white bigot stereotypes, and how insular the alt community in the area has been in relation to these cultural rednecks:

Trying not to come into the community as outsiders is important but hard around here. It tends to be the non-white and non-hippie folks, the people who are most discriminated against who were the most into connecting with the local community. They are the ones who did the most work. And the hippie types were the ones who were kind of snobby. Political people would come up to Maynooth and talk about “rednecks” and they wouldn’t know that actually, all of their neighbours are all Native and they are rednecks. One artist in the area who is Native calls his work Redneck Art to underline that point.⁴²

Ira shows how hippie and urban émigré assumptions about the whiteness of the local community have made them insular and exclusive, despite the perception of the alternative as an open and welcoming culture. Further, he indicates how the identity of redneck is something that some

⁴¹ Adam J. Barker and Jenny Pickerill. "Radicalizing Relationships to and Through Shared Geographies: Why Anarchists Need to Understand Indigenous Connections to Land and Place." *Antipode* 44, no. 5 (2012): 1711

⁴² Ira, interview.

people claim for themselves, thus ceasing to be a pejorative name for rural folk and instead assumed as an identity, especially some of Ira's Indigenous neighbours. The culture that is most attributed to white settlers in rural areas is also a culture with which many Indigenous people identify and is thus a source of missed opportunity for community building with Indigenous people in the area.

Lea's and Ira's analysis complicates the perception that the term "local" refers to settlers who have lived in the area for a long time, framing it also as cultural. Taylor, a participant who has lived in Lake Saint Peter for fifteen years, suggests that one is not accepted as a "local" unless they have lived in the area for at least fifteen years. "It takes local people a long time to accept new people but this is more of the older generation. Local people tend to be more conservative. People like us, who are our age [fifties] are more accepting and bringing in more culturally diverse influences that they are not used to."⁴³ Although Taylor has lived in the area for over a decade, she does not see herself as a local because of political and cultural differences. As with Lea, Taylor celebrates the alternative community's inclusivity and acceptance.

In the narratives of how people came to join ICs and the alt community in the area many participants indicate a familial relationship to Maynooth and Hastings Highlands despite stating that they are not locals, which further indicates that being a local has little to do with whether someone is from the area and much more to do with their community affinities. A few of the participants with family ties to the area now live on land that belonged to their parents or grandparents. Matti spent two years looking all over Canada for a piece of land on which to settle before returning to Maynooth and the land on which she grew up and which her parents own. Matti sees her parents as "the first wave" of people to move to Hastings Highlands, speaking specifically about the first hippies and alt folk to settle in the area in the 1970s. When asked if

⁴³ Taylor, interview.

she was from the area, she clarified, “Do you mean the first wave?”⁴⁴ She explains how the first wave is not the same as, “the real locals who have been here for over twenty generations. The first generation [of alt folks] have a different understanding of living on the land that the old school locals wouldn’t get, the [alt folks] see it differently.” Matti’s statement brings two points to the fore: She distinguishes herself from a group of people who have longer ties to the community, and she distinguishes between the two groups in cultural terms. In stating that the older locals would not understand the land as her parents did, she suggests a lack of interest and knowledge of locals in the ecology and sustainability of the land. Identifying her parents as “first wave” attempts to draw a line between progressive and environmentally-conscious people like her parents and those who are considered local. Matti was born in Hastings Highlands and lived there until she was almost five years old. After moving to the outskirts of Ottawa, Matti and her family returned to the land to camp and she speaks of her time in Maynooth with nostalgia. Her parents’ decision to move back to the city was based on a “realization that it was pointless to live [in the country]; that they weren’t getting away from anything environmentally [by living outside of the city].”⁴⁵ Matti suggests that her family moved to the rural to get away from pollution and environmentally destructive life in the city only to realize that climate change did not stop at the boundaries between the city and the country. Her description indicates her parents’ romantic and unrealistic assumptions about rural life.

In giving her parents the identity of “first wavers,” Matti problematically suggests that this group, who arrived in the late 1960s and 1970s, was the first of its kind in the area, a notion contributing to the erasure of peoples who lived in the area before European settlers but also of anyone who has lived in the area with progressive politics, or not of European ancestry.

⁴⁴ Matti, interview.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Interestingly, Matti differentiates between two different groups of white settlers of European origin. In describing her neighbours, she draws a distinction between “one family that is originally from here, for generations, and everyone else who are imports, who have lived here for thirty years or less,” even when talking about friends who have moved to the area as a second generation of settlers to parents who were part of the hippie community:

A lot of the young people that are here have a connection to the back-to-the-land movement and their families have property here, which is what gives them the opportunity to make a go of it here, otherwise people couldn't make it. It is beautiful here and inexpensive. It was important for me to live in a place that had all kinds of people.⁴⁶

Matti continues to distinguish these people as “imports,” despite an indication of generational ties. She underlines that many of the people are in Maynooth because they could not afford to live elsewhere, and because they benefited from family-owned land on which to build or live. Matti's mention of diversity in the community seems a nod to the hippie community and queer community. She says, “I have never actually been to Dragonfly but it is important that these places are here, just like the Pride parade,”⁴⁷ speaking to the fact that the area is increasingly recognized as welcoming of queer communities.

Maynooth: Mecca for Alt Folks

Many people sought a life in rural Central Ontario because of the specificity of the Hastings Highlands area. Before Dragonfly IC was started in 1978, a number of alternative folks were already living in the area and it had a history of radical politics. Ira explains the rich local art community as well as the history of political community in telling the story of a recent local theatre production, *The Fence*, a historical play about Maynooth written by a woman who was a

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

member of the alternative community. The play documents a double hanging that occurred in 1863. Lea explains:

The story tells the history of how Maynooth was home to Irish immigrants but not from Ireland, from New York. They were all people who were opposed to the Civil War. Irish Immigrants who did not want to fight in the American Civil War. They were the first war resisters to settle in this area. They came to Canada to get away from the war and where do you come when you come to Canada to resist the war, Maynooth! Since the play is written by someone from our community it isn't just telling the story of Irish immigration but immigration in general and it is also including the aboriginal experience at the time.⁴⁸

The active and artistic radical community in Maynooth is now doing the work of uncovering its radical history to show that there have always been people in the community with different political and cultural affinities than fit the stereotype of mainstream, local rural culture. In periods before the wave of 1960s hippies arrived in the area, migrants sought out a place in which to build community together, often with political motivations, like opposition to the American Civil War. Sam explains how the more recent radical history of Maynooth is tied to a longer history of marginalized people spending time there:

The area was blown open during the Vietnam War. That is when a lot of Americans came up here, avoiding the draft. The whole social dynamics of the community started to change quite dramatically. There was much more coop development, we had our first food coop. The churches in the area would preach that the Food Coop was run by witches, "the hippies." It became somewhat of a MECCA for that and still the people around here, the Ranch, the new owners of the hotel, the folks on the Hill, people are quite intrigued that they are here. It is really, different here than a lot of other rural areas. *We have a connectedness in this community...* The locals had a hard time at the beginning.⁴⁹

Sam makes clear that Maynooth has a vibrant alternative community that draws people with the alternative infrastructures in the area, like a food cooperative, the Arlington Hotel and Pub, and the ICs. She notes that the local community has struggled with the presence of such active alternative people but has had to come to terms with them since they comprise a significant portion of the town's infrastructure and constituents. There were a few known ICs a few dozen

⁴⁸ Ira, interview.

⁴⁹ Sam, interview.

kilometres away and there is a vibrant art community in downtown Maynooth, with four storefront art studios belonging to alternative community members located on the main street, which only has twelve storefronts in total. Most significantly, there were many midwives living in the area and organizing community around their services. Eli points to the midwives as the first IC-builders in the area. Eli was one of the original Dragonfly members and came to the land pregnant. Her interaction with midwives there helped her settle and feel like she was part of a community, as we read earlier. Julian, a member of Dragonfly but a full-time resident of Middle Earth (a piece of land on the Hill beside Dragonfly and Black Fly) is a well-known character in the community. He explains that the main connection between these area ICs were the midwives in the area helping with births at the different communes, building communication and community between them. “A lot of people and communes are connected far back because of those midwives.”⁵⁰

These narratives indicate that elements of the alternative community have existed in the area for some time. However, despite the fact that a hippie community has been in the area for generations, hippie cultural practices are still treated or understood by members of the alternative community as imports to the countryside. It might be that for alt folks a narrative of less rootedness and disavowal of local culture is a way to distance themselves from implication in the role of settlers. However, the culture of openness and political support for Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous culture has the potential to build bridges across specific cultural differences even if it has not yet happened in any remarkable way. There are many signs of the alt community taking Indigenous solidarity seriously, working to improve relationships with Indigenous people and to honouring a commitment to anti-colonization. I will continue to explore the theme of colonization in Chapter Six. For the present discussion, it is important to

⁵⁰ Julian, interview by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

note that the bridging between communities is not a given, and that markers of belonging sometimes separate would-be allies like Indigenous and alternative communities because of different cultural markers, as Ira and Lea pointed out.

Quinn's story illustrates a distinction made between taking on the local or alternative identity and being identified with it. Quinn purchased a severed piece of land from a larger plot belonging to his parents, after they purchased it from his grandparents in 1984. Quinn had left the area to pursue a college education and worked in the city before deciding to farm in the country and returning to Maynooth. Quinn's grandparents purchased the land in the 1970s, which had one of the first homesteads in the area, built in 1884. Quinn's parents still live in the original house and run an auto repair shop there. Meanwhile, Quinn has taken up the work of farming the land, the only local farm in the municipality, and shares the land with others so they can grow small gardens for their own use. He has built up two acres of soil and has a greenhouse, from which he manages a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project. Quinn explains his relationship with the town:

Because I grew up here, coming back here felt pretty good. When you come up that hill before the farm there is an energy there that attracts me and that attracts people... We opened the café as an outlet and a space for people to come and relax. Like, none of those back-to-the-landers came in here before; or they did once and never came back. Now, you'll get the older locals on that side and this side is the freaks and it gave them an outlet and a social place... I'm not too involved in politics around here. People are more open now, there used to be a lot of talk of Dragonfly as "those people," but now they are more open. However, I heard a bad comment recently at the gas station [where I work], a guy pulled up and said that 'the gays' are taking over the community and had I heard that some gays had bought the hotel. He said that someone was going to die here. I told him what he said doesn't make any sense. So, there are still some troubling things being passed on to the next generation. I don't go to Dragonfly that often but meet folks at the Arlington and at other social events.⁵¹

Quinn is from Maynooth and is treated like a local in the community by other locals, illustrated by the comfort of local community members in sharing with him their bigoted

⁵¹ Quinn, interview.

opinions about Dragonfly or the queer community. However, his friends and interests tend to be in step with the alternative members of the community. When discussing the two community identities he never claims one for himself, indicating that he is not involved in any politics and that the activities he engages in are supra-political, at least in the sense that they are centered on providing local and organic food to the whole community, which he does not see as political. His desire not to be categorized is clear, and his desire to create spaces where these communities can interact is remarkable. Quinn celebrates the fact that when he helped Kelly open the restaurant, it created an unprecedented space of community for both locals and alternative people, even if they remained separate while there; previously the restaurant had only felt welcoming to locals. With a new owner, the restaurant has expanded the options in town for alt folks to gather, including anarchists, queers, and alternative folks who visit from Toronto, Peterborough, and Ottawa.

Gaynooth

The connection to wider radical, queer, back-to-the-land, and art communities in Toronto and Peterborough is a part of what makes Hastings Highlands so ripe a site for alternative community, according to many participants. The sense of an established community of progressive thinkers, a history of intentional communities in the Maynooth area, and the ongoing work of community members to work against oppression—like homophobia and transphobia—play a key role in creating a more hospitable place for queer and alternative folks to live. Taylor, in speaking about Maynooth becoming a more accepting community, tells the story of “Gaynooth,” an annual Pride party started by Riley and his partner and hosted at their home in Maynooth since 1990. The term Gaynooth refers to a year in which someone changed the city signs by sticking a rainbow-coloured “G” over the “M” to read Gaynooth on the weekend of the

Maynooth Pride event.⁵² According to Riley, the sign remained in that state for only a few minutes but the influence of that one event has impacted how the community responded to subsequent queer, anarchist, and other alternative events:

There is such an influx of people, there is a huge queer community here and it is amazing how it has influenced the community. The Pride party hosts hundreds of people for the weekend, it is the second biggest gay pride event in Ontario, after Toronto. People are drawn here, because they hear that there are a lot of gay people here or anarchists, so it draws like-minded people to town.⁵³

Riley believes that the presence of like-minded people has influenced how the greater community responds to alternative folks and to events like Pride but that the ongoing work done to change the culture in very overt ways, like the Pride event, were also central to bringing change. To the dismay of the mayor at the town's inaugural Pride event, Riley continued to hold the annual event even after being told that the town of Maynooth "did not want their kind."⁵⁴ Fifteen years later that former mayor awarded Riley with a Community Service Award. Riley is now something of a local celebrity for his positive political and economic development work in the town, even befriending some of the most homophobic locals. He suggests that since moving there almost twenty years ago, some of these people have changed their attitudes about queerness in general. He describes that when he and his partner moved to Maynooth:

there were a lot of queer-positive people and there were a lot of lesbians. When my partner and I arrived, we were perceived as being too out and too loud and political for the culture at the time. There are people who are now coming out, who we have known for years, they are just coming out now.⁵⁵

Not only were there already people who identified as queer in the area, there were also people like Riley who challenged the mainstream culture and politically pushed the community to change their treatment of queers and members of the alternative community. It is clear from

⁵² Taylor, interview.

⁵³ Riley, interview.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Quinn's story that people in the Maynooth community continue to have bigoted perspectives, however Riley sees marked differences in how the general community responds to non-mainstream members of the community.

Speaking to the fact that Maynooth does not always feel safe for queer-identified people, Ira notes that the Hill have provided a much-needed space of safety in the community:

In Maynooth, you know if you are queer or whatever that you can go [to the Hill]. Dragonfly used to have a campsite for people behind the conference site, for who wanted to go there to be there. It is a place to feel safe and there are a lot of people who would like to feel safe. There are stereotypes in the country about who is native and who is white, all of that stuff and it is really difficult and we have to figure it out but we have to create these spaces of safety.⁵⁶

Ira acknowledges the complexity of creating safe spaces and identifies that the political work of fighting against homophobia in Maynooth is as important as the political work of creating spaces for people to feel safe away from homophobia, which happens on the Hill. Diverse tactics are engaged: Riley and others work to make the town as a whole more inclusive, while ICs like Dragonfly and Black Fly ensure that there are spaces of safety for people who do not feel they belong or are safe in mainstream communities.

Community Connections

For many participants, their connection to Maynooth is mostly about the community of people they have found there but the feeling of belonging, or of being in the right place, can also be read in many of their narratives. For example, Quinn's telling of his return to Maynooth is associated with a sense of good, an energy that is almost spiritual in nature that is specific to the land that he farms, and a feeling and energy that he describes out of the change from city work to outdoor farm work. A feeling of connection to the land does not seem to be related to Quinn's family ties

⁵⁶ Ira, interview.

to Maynooth and appears more rooted in a desire for rural community. Taylor also notes that she now lives in a place that has a deeply connected rural community unlike previous places she has lived:

I have more of a social life here than I did living in the suburbs. When I moved out here my social life just bloomed. I have made more connections with people here because there are more people here that share my view of life *than in the city*. Here people are seeking community life and recognize the power in that. My whole social being is nourished here.⁵⁷

Contrary to critiques of rural areas as places of escape and isolation, Taylor's and other participants' experiences involve feeling connected and belonging to an active community. Not only have places like the Hill offered political spaces of separation and safety for alternative community building but Maynooth has also served as a space of changing cultural norms and practices with respect to building more accepting community.

The fact that an alternative community has long been present in the area has created an opportunity for multi-generational community, both in a narrow biological and legal familial sense as well as in terms of generations of friends. For example, two participants, Hayden and Pat, had been raised in various ICs in the area since they were young and continue to have relationships with the area. Hayden spent the first 8 years of her life living at Dragonfly and as her children grow up, she hopes they will also take an interest in the land. Living on Dragonfly with her family for a couple of years and leaving a short time before I interviewed her and her partner, Gray, Hayden has a desire to offer her children a childhood like the one she had at Dragonfly, which she felt was richer than in the city.

At least one participant, Iris, has severed a piece of his land on "The Hill" to give his child a plot to use for their own purposes as they become more independent. Unlike Iris' ability to sever a piece of land for his child, members and residents at Dragonfly have a less direct opportunity to

⁵⁷ Taylor, interview.

pass land onto their children as there is no single owner of the land. Hayden has been able to return to Dragonfly with her family as a resident but not simply because her parent is a deed holder. Familial ties and relationships with the land underscore how private property creates the opportunity to pass land by inheritance, and how it can also be complicated by a structure of community like Dragonfly, which allows members to live on the land even if they do not have a biological or legal family relationship with the deed holders. Similarly, at Black Fly there is absolutely no right to pass on membership or ownership. Multi-generational land transfer is a practice that relates to private property, which is an overarching theme of the research and will be addressed in detail in Chapter Five. We see that the ability to purchase land in the first place, either as an individual or a group, often follows traditional family relationships but this tradition is muddied by the shifting culture of the area owing to a large community of alternative folks.

To acquire land in an area that has a history of radical and alternative community is a political intention. According to Ira, living in rural spaces is not a radical act in and of itself. Community connections must be as much at the centre of rural life as they are in city life: “Moving to the land just for the sake of the land: don’t do it. You move to relationships, not to land. If you just move for the land, you are fooling yourself. You need community, people, a corner store, other things around. You have to be extremely hardcore to live on your own.”⁵⁸ Ira’s statement shows a critique of romantic notions of living outside cities and leaving civilization or people behind, and underscores what is often left out of romantic rural images: an inhabited landscape, the need for community, and the need to survive. In his comments, we see a response to the dominant narrative in which there is a sense of leaving one world and entering another when one moves from the city to the country. Ira calls into question that narrative, and attempts to show that life in rural spaces, while different in some ways, is not a different life all

⁵⁸ Ira, interview.

together—one cannot simply escape the kinds of people or the cultural elements of society that they do not want to be around. The interesting thing about Maynooth and the Hill is that the presence of so many alternative people can give the illusion both of a distance from mainstream culture and a physical space in which to belong and engage in community without risking safety; Life in the countryside does not have to mean solitary life. Dragonfly and Black Fly have contributed to building an infrastructure, a physical space, where community-building and changing the meaning of belonging can take place in more stable ways. Lea explains that the ICs are:

creating physical long-term spaces; not just for the people who live there but in seeing what they can do that the people around them can witness. That is why this place makes me so excited. Creating community intimacy can help bridge those gaps where people can be pulled into spaces where they can feel accepted, connected, and part of something. The creative process helps to facilitate bringing the community together but it takes time to build trust and so it takes time to build that community but if you have something that is around for a long time then the space is there all of the time and it can build into something. That is why there is such a thriving creative community around here. The creative community is linked to the hippie community in the way that there have always been people from both of these communities here. We have all done things together. We put on this small play in a cabin here, up on top of the Hill, it is a Kafka story. The cabin only has seating for twenty-five people but we ran it for four nights and it was packed every night and we really awed people. People really supported it. Maynooth has always had art shops, since I was a little kid. To me it always felt normal, of course there are a bunch of art galleries in town... Locally grown culture is all the more nourishing, just like when you are eating something that is from where you live it has a lot more beneficial effect. Culture is exactly the same way. I am seeing that hippie commitment to culture and food is happening here; that and art are creators of space.⁵⁹

The political work of building community occurs on two levels. First, there is the cultural work of like-minded people who feel they belong to a wider alternative community to build cultures of belonging in the area. The cultural work influences the wider community, including locals, and helps to shift notions of who belongs and who does not. Second, there is work done on an infrastructural level to build up physical spaces where inclusive, alternative culture can be fostered and where people can belong. Building community not only necessitates being in

⁵⁹ Lea, interview.

relationship with people but also requires building particular (non-mainstream) spaces of belonging, which the Hill has helped to foster. Lea explains the elements of community-building that have taken place in Hastings Highlands, identifying creative outlets such as theatre productions as means of building alternative cultures of belonging among alt folks and also the wider community. They describe how art has offered spaces of cultural change and further shows a desire from the community for such spaces, as demonstrated by the sold-out play. Additionally, as a local member of the alternative community, Lea offers a unique perspective on how the community has historically offered spaces of belonging for alternative people. Lea's narrative, and their own role in creating art in Maynooth, underscores the rich culture and community that has been actively built by artists, anarchists, queers, and alternative folks.

In describing their motivations for moving to Hastings Highlands, participants identify that despite dreams and visions of depopulated rural life, community was of vital importance to them. Their narratives expose the need for space to build alternative community that is both far enough away from the mainstream to foster new cultures and new relationships and close enough so as not to become isolated. The ICs on the Hill have created spaces of safety and community for alternative people, with many alternative folks demonstrating alternative community norms, and have also worked to make the wider community safer and more hospitable for alternative people. Maintaining an interaction with the wider mainstream communities gives locals the opportunity to adapt their relationships with alt folks. In the example of the Pride party, we see a political shift from exclusion to acceptance by mainstream community members because of the work of the queer and anarchist community in town. The community has adapted and built a unique cultural character of inclusion through these relationships.

Rural anarchism aspires to be a practice of building transformative connections and living up to one's established ethics, even if they have not been achieved. In order to avoid being simply

an escapist retreat from contributing to anarchist transformation in greater society, anarchist rural ICs stay connected and build connections with rural people where they live. The rural IC is not built on the romantic vision of “living alone in a cabin in the woods” (even if that vision is part of what brings anarchists to rural spaces to begin with) but by building new social relationships, as Landauer reminds us.⁶⁰ The anarchists I interviewed demonstrate the centrality of social relationships to an anarchist rural land ethic, showing that a deep and rich sense of community with other alternative people and with locals has been built. Community building has been facilitated by family connections, proximity to alternative community elsewhere, affordable land, and spaces where that culture can be built. However, within capitalism, creating a permanent physical space where new relationships can be fostered has required access to land in the form of private property, which complicates the anarchist critique of private property relationships. In the next chapter, I will discuss how participants challenge and uphold property relationships.

⁶⁰ Gustav Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*. Gabriel Kuhn (ed), (Oakland, PM Press, 2010), x.

Chapter Five: Property Relationships, Collective Policies, and their Contradictions

Space, the autonomous zone reminds us, is the most serious matter facing any anarchist. Land, geography, borders—they all mean the same thing for those without capital, those who, in pre-modern terms, remain ‘landless.’ The dialogue that controls issues of space and land, after all, stems from authoritarian rule. The nation state begins and ends with ‘space.’ Kerry Mogg, “Autonomous Zones,” in Alan Antliff (ed.), *Only A Beginning: An Anarchist Anthology*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004), 328.

The stories of how and why people came to Hastings Highlands are deeply connected to the establishment of those communities and their residents’/inhabitants’ commitment to radical and anarchist relationships. In the previous chapter, I discussed how community and a search for belonging were important reasons for moving to Maynooth. Many participants sought a rural life with no specific place in mind, while some respondents cited their reason for moving to Maynooth and the Hill, specifically. For others, the presence of an alternative community was just one of many reasons to choose Hastings Highlands as the site of rural community building. As noted in the previous chapter, there is agreement among participants that the presence of a larger than average alternative community in Hastings Highlands gave many community members the sense that a different kind of space and relationship to land had been established there as a result.

Not surprisingly, most participants also brought up property ownership, affordable land, and proximity to other cities when explaining the purchase of land and community building in Hastings Highlands. For anarchists, private property is a difficult and fundamental problem. In Chapter Two, I discussed the centrality of property ownership to capitalism and as a tool of colonialism, how the importance of owning property privately maintains control over land use, and the contradictions that emerge when anarchists—people who generally hold that private property should be abolished—own property. In this chapter I will investigate how participants

practically manage the incongruity between wanting to eliminate private property and recognizing that owning land can serve as a starting point for building alternative communities.

Anarchists like Gustav Landauer, Mikhail Bakunin, and political ecologists like Gerda Wekerle, and Michael Classens have pointed to the fact that property is more than an object; it is also a social relation.¹ For participants, the discord between owning property and needing property to create other social relations is partly addressed by changing how property is used, owned, and accessed in the Collectives.² However, there remain internal and interpersonal conflicts about the power of being an owner in relation to being a resident with no title.

As Matthew Turner delineates in his recent article about common land and enclosure, there is a tendency to create rules in order to ensure that created commons are managed properly. He explains “there is a common tendency to seek to improve the management of resources by *formalizing* rules of access and clearly *circumscribing* commonly-held resources and the social groups using them.”³ The outcome of this rule making, in Turner’s opinion, is a different way of

¹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government*, (Trans) Benjamin Tucker, (New York: Dover, 1970); Mikhail Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism*, Gregori Maximoff (ed.), (London: Collier-MacMillan, 1953); Gustav Landauer, *For Socialism*, (London: Telos Press, 1978); Gerda R. Wekerle and Michael Classens, “Challenging Property Relations and Access to Land for Urban Food Production,” in Chiara Certoma and Chiara Tornaghi (eds.), *Urban Gardening Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2018); See also, Nicholas Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property*, (New York: Routledge, 2004); CB McPherson, *Property, Mainstream and Critical Positions*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).

² Use is tied to the concept of usufruct, which is the right to actively take from land for one’s own purposes. Usufruct is a more conducive right to land for populations that do not settle permanently because it provides for use rather than ownership. Usufruct rights are often seen in contrast to exclusionary private property rights which are not tied to active use. Private property rights create the opportunity to make a profit from others’ use if the owner of the land allow someone to use their land. Proudhon explains that “when the usufructuary converted his right to personally use the thing into the right to use it by his neighbour’s labour —then property changed its nature.” Proudhon, *A Letter to M. Blanqui*, 431. Karl Marx also discussed usufruct and use value. For more by Marx on use value see Karl Marx, *Capital: An Abridged Edition*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). See also David Harvey, *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2014). Commoning is another term which relates to usufruct. For more on commoning, see Nicholas Blomley, “Making Private Property: Enclosure, Common Right and the Work of Hedges,” *Rural History* 18, no. 1 (2007): 1-21. Unfortunately, a full discussion of usufruct and common land will not be possible in any extensive way, here. It will have to wait for another time and place.

³ Matthew D. Turner, “Political Ecology III: The Commons and Commoning,” *Progress in Human Geography* 41, no. 6 (2017): 797 (emphasis in original).

privatizing the land. Turner speaks about common land, which has been won from government institutions, but his argument is applicable here because it describes the way participants have navigated sharing the use of land with each other. Following Turner, I will show how rules can serve as a way to privatize land but also as a way to break from privatization and, as Bakunin argues, to weaken the system of private property.⁴

That the impact of property relationships on ICs emerged as an important theme in the interviews is an especially important issue given the centrality of critiques of property within anarchist ethics. A similar question within an anarchist ethic of anti-colonialism is to what extent private property relationships in rural Ontario affected Indigenous sovereignty and solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty for IC members.⁵ The communities of Dragonfly and Black Fly, located across the road from each other in Lake Saint Peter, emerged out of anarchist communities in Toronto and Waterloo, Ontario, but are very different from each other. Black Fly has intentionally made choices about ownership and membership structures that differ from Dragonfly's because of what they learned from watching Dragonfly. I will address the differences between the two ICs with respect to property relationships, membership structures, and community guidelines and by-laws in order to demonstrate how these anarchist ICs address the challenge of overcoming private property in practice. I will explain how the two ICs studied saw private property and their relationship to land within the context of settler colonialism and their stated commitment to Indigenous sovereignty in the form of repatriating Indigenous land. It is interesting that the cheap lands that both Dragonfly and Butterfly bought were purchased from

⁴ Bakunin, 179-182.

⁵ A wider treatment of Indigenous rights and sovereignty in relation to settler colonialism is beyond the scope of this project. However, it is commonly held among anarchists that the ethics of supporting and defending Indigenous sovereignty is a necessary component of anarchist ethics, especially those anarchists living in the Americas. I take as given that Canada is a settler colonial nation that continues. For a discussion of settler colonialism, see: Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409.

the government at Crown auction. Sky explains that both pieces of land were “crown land deeded to a poor family as a form of welfare workfare, then sold for back taxes at a Sherriff’s auction.”⁶ The fact that land was purchased from the state indicates that there is complexity in acquiring property for anarchist purposes that participants have continued to struggle to resolve. However, their efforts have also changed what property relationships look like.

This chapter will address property relationships and will illustrate the complexity and contradiction of how property relationships play out in the two ICs. While anarchist ethics have created a desire for an end to private property, the alternative property and economic systems that seek to replace them are neither straightforward nor fully removed from private property because, as Landauer aptly noted, owning land is a relationship one has with the state, and with current financial and political systems.⁷ This property relationship cannot easily be terminated because of the necessity of surviving within it, survival which requires interactions with the state. Further, the relationship is difficult to break away from because of internalized colonialism, private property socialization, and the perceived value and necessity of building equity in the capitalist system. Nonetheless, there is a willingness among Collective members to work through these contradictions. The relationships on the Hill go beyond the usual private property relationships that often exist around ownership, renting, and land use. I believe that these efforts are in large part a result of the anarchist ethos of the original members of both collectives, as they have made an effort to change what they can within the confines of the property itself. In this chapter I will look at the complexity and contradiction of how these property relationships have played out in the Black Fly and Dragonfly ICs.

⁶ My research found no evidence of the workfare program that Sky (and others) refer to when describing the land’s use before it was sold to them. Other participants identify the program with Mike Harris, but my research suggests that the last time land was offered as workfare was in the early 1900s and then only informally.

⁷ Gustav Landauer, *Anarchism in Germany and Other Essays*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), iii.

I begin this discussion of how collectives were established with respect to the material substance of the ICs, namely property and policies, by looking at how the people I interviewed approach private property as well as how the land is used. Second, I address their procedures of membership, ownership, by-laws, and policies of the two ICs. I then investigate participants' roles as settlers or as people indigenous to the land and how colonial questions trouble private property relationships. Finally, I will discuss how social relations have come to alter how property relations are enacted. In this chapter, there is a clear distinction between how Black Fly has built their governance system in relation to Dragonfly, and the ICs will thus be discussed separately. Eli, one of the deed holders and original members of Dragonfly, explains that even with a commitment to eliminating private property, the relationship between owners and non-owners around the property they find themselves on cannot easily be undone. In her discussion of Ontario settlers' treaty obligations Eli explains that living out one's principles and commitments to anti-colonialism and creating commons is not a simple act because of the realities of living in a capitalist system. Despite an anarchist disavowal of private property,

[People at Dragonfly] still have to function within the legalistic framework that everyone has to function within. Dragonfly is as uneven as it is because people don't know how to work themselves through that contradiction of not wanting private property, wanting to have lands in common, and to have this supra-relationship to the state. We don't want to give the state that power over incorporating and being in the system. You either have your name on the deed or you don't have your name on the deed, but you are still in the system either way.⁸

The desire to end property relationships is not enough to eliminate them when political and economic systems are based on accumulation of property as a means of acquiring and accruing wealth. Eli's story shows the complicated relationships that emerge when negotiating the use of private property and multiple stakeholders. In her narrative about ownership and membership we see a complicated web of relationships, agreements, practices, conflicts, and contradictions.

⁸ Eli, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, January 2013.

Eli argues that being an owner does not necessarily make a person more tied to the system of private property than a person who pays rent to live on that property, but I will demonstrate how ownership relationships have played out at Dragonfly in a way that changes how property relationships are enacted. I will also look at how relationships between people on the land become a place to begin to undo the dynamics of ownership and accumulation that Bakunin supported, including the elimination of inheritance and for a system of co-ownership.⁹ In particular, I will look at how the Collectives have tried to unsettle dynamics of accumulation through by-laws and membership policies. It is with this idea of land as a *resource* separate from the land as *property* that we see IC members engage with the land.¹⁰

“Entitlement” at Dragonfly: Property Ownership, Land Use, Equity, and Relationships

As outlined in Chapter Three, twelve members of the Fairview Collective started Dragonfly in 1978. The deed for the 250-acre property, which is zoned as rural residential, “has six original names on it,” and as Eli points out, “except for some who got bought out, passed it on to partners, or have died. There was talk of incorporating, but we couldn’t get our shit together to make it happen, so changing the deed continues to be a lot of work. Many of the deed holders don’t ever come and haven’t been here for years, but also don’t want to give up their deed.”¹¹ The Collective differentiates among *deed holders*: six people named on the deed; *members* who at this point number about sixteen; *residents* who are welcomed to live on the land; and *non-residents*, two people who were residents at first, but are now considered neither members nor residents and whom members do not want on the land, but still live there.¹²

⁹ Bakunin, 182.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the use of land as a resource in relation to ownership see, Wekerle and Classens, 10.

¹¹ Eli, interview.

¹² The category of non-resident was created for Jo and Frankie – two of only three people who live on the land currently and who have lived their year-round for the last ten to thirty years – because they are not well-liked by most of the deed holders. Nat is the third person to live there and is a member.

Deed holders are the six people, most of them original purchasers, who privately own the land on which Dragonfly is situated. Of the six deed holders, one has died, one has not been on the land since 1984, and another has not visited in over ten years. Two of the absent owners built small cabins on the land, which have been left empty for many years. Eli, and Devin are deed holders. One of them lives in the immediate surrounding area of Dragonfly (within five kilometres) on separate privately purchased land. Officially, deed holders are also members, but in recent years they have only referred to themselves as deed holders and have exclusive legal title to the land. Deed holders also have a right to residency and could be considered residents. However, the title of resident is reserved for those who do not have deed holder or member status.

Members are part of the wider decision-making process and pay an initial membership fee of 2,000 dollars and an annual maintenance fee of 400 dollars. Members have also committed to making decisions about how the collective is organized and have shown their commitment by living at Dragonfly for at least a year. Arguably, members have to be consulted before any changes are made to the land, buildings, or membership structure. Currently, no members live on the land, partly due to conflict with Frankie and partly because many members never intended to live at the IC permanently. In Gray's experience, the rules of membership are fluid:

Depending on who you talk to, it is a 2,000 or 3,000 dollar buy-in to become a member. So, you live there for a year and pay the money and you are a member. They also have to be able to live with you for you to become a member, but no one lives there anymore because of conflicts between Jo and others. There is some civility with the other owners, but they don't want to live with Jo. There is also flexible idea that you can put in 1,500 dollars of sweat equity at 200 dollars per day of work instead of paying the full amount. They use tradespeople hourly rates. It is always very flexible.¹³

¹³ Gray, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak via Skype (Toronto, Ontario), February, 2013.

If someone withdraws their membership, the membership investment is not returned. Currently, there are sixteen members, according to Devin (including Julian, Nat, Bae, and several others could not be fully recalled). There is a moratorium on new members.

Residents are not members but they can live at Dragonfly. They have joined the Collective but not paid the initial membership fee although they do pay monthly maintenance fees of sixty dollars per month. The number of residents over the past three decades is unknown, since becoming a resident sometimes simply meant spending some time on the land and having a member call you a resident; it is not clearly defined. Two of the three people who live on the Dragonfly land full time are considered non-residents and have been there since 1989, including Frankie, who I will describe below. Residency, like other decisions, is haphazardly granted as Gray describes:

I was a resident, not a member, when I lived at Dragonfly. The land is affected by the laws of private ownership. There is no inheritable ownership here, Hayden isn't even a member even though her mom is on the deed. Labeling is important here, deed holder, resident, member. This was also how some meetings happen, so for a long time it was meetings for deed holders only. There are also impromptu meetings of whomever is there.¹⁴

The residents of Dragonfly have an interesting relationship with private property. The only year-round residents on the property are neither members of the Collective, nor deed holders. In contrast, the original members and six deed holders do not live there and do not stay there for any substantial length of time.

Tensions between those who own the property and those who live on it seem to have emerged very early in the life of the Collective. For example, Frankie came to Dragonfly in 1984 and has lived there ever since. He renovated the old chicken coop on the property to make it

¹⁴ Ibid. Gray is correct in identifying that his partner cannot inherit her parents' share of the land but it is inheritable. Dragonfly is a joint ownership property with right of survivorship, which means that the six deed holders each own an equal part of the land and their portion is distributed to the remaining deed holders when one dies. The land can only be inherited by the family of the last living deed holder.

livable throughout the year and has lived in it since moving to Dragonfly. His relationship with other people who live on the land and with the deed holders is quite tense, and some participants blame him for the breakdown of the Collective, or at least for the departure of many residents. Frankie's narrative is defensive because he feels entitled to living on the land and feels pushed out by conflict with those who have legal title to the land. He says:

All of the people who don't live here had opinions on what it was like to be here. They said, "you can stay here as long as you want." As a Native, the land is the land. I live in this house and whatever the hippies think about me being here, I'm here. This is my house, I live here; they invited me. How can you be not invited? We want you here for our purposes, but... like we invited the white people to be here and took care of them. I welcome the younger generation to come here and start something. I can even help, but don't depend on me. Don't suck my energy. It's not a conscious decision to be here, it is my Native heritage, a subconscious need to be one with the land and take care of it.¹⁵

Frankie, who is part Cherokee, claims his right to live at Dragonfly because he was invited to stay when he first arrived—he built his home there and contributed to upkeep and development of buildings, such as the gazebo and greenhouses: "the hippies told me that I could stay here because I knew how to do stuff."¹⁶ His sense of entitlement is made most clear by his assertion that he welcomes other people to move to and work on the land. Extending invitations to potential residents is, arguably, especially in a capitalist society, reserved for those who have legal title to the land, but Frankie feels entitled to the land because he was invited to stay and has lived there longer than any owner. He treats the land as his own. Frankie is willing to share the land but ultimately asserts that there is no room for discussion about his right to be there.

Frankie's invitation might also be in response to critiques of him by other participants, such as Eli, who suggested that Frankie has caused people to leave Dragonfly, even sabotaging the use of some of the infrastructure, according to Hayden, which caused other

¹⁵ Frankie, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

¹⁶ Ibid.

residents to leave.¹⁷ Frankie knows he is not liked by some of the deed holders and members and he expresses bitterness and resentment toward the Collective as his recollection of his time at Dragonfly is of working hard to help build up the Collective's infrastructure. He feels that he has not received the respect he earned by sharing his carpentry skills. His assertion that anyone who comes to Dragonfly should not "suck [his] energy" demonstrates his deep frustration with the Collective's failure to accept him, saying, "I don't get recognition because I am a controversial figure."¹⁸ Frankie reveals his belief that by putting work into the land, he has earned a right to live on it; his anger is directed at members of the Collective who do not feel the same as him even though they do not live there.

Eli discusses Jo and Frankie, who have been living at Dragonfly for many years but according to Eli, "don't want to be on the deed; they aren't deeded. Essentially, they are tenants and there have been problems with each of them which has prevented folks from wanting to add them to the deed."¹⁹ Eli demonstrates how the distinctions between stakeholders have caused conflict, believing that the issue of having people on the land who do not have legal responsibility for the land could be addressed by incorporating as a legal entity, like a cooperative, and creating a membership structure that would delineate "member rights and responsibilities and would protect the group."²⁰ Eli does not explain what the group would be protected from, but alludes to the fact that a lot of the conversation among members about incorporating is a direct response to Jo and Frankie living on the land, damaging relationships, and restricting access to the land as a result of their troubling behaviour. For Eli, codified and

¹⁷ Eli, interview; Hayden, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak via Skype (Toronto, Ontario), February 2013.

¹⁸ Frankie, interview.

¹⁹ Eli, interview.

²⁰ Ibid.

clear rules are the key to facilitating asking Frankie and Jo to leave or to ensuring membership could be vetted, and conflicts would have clear resolution procedures.

Eli outlines how Dragonfly addresses its structure and property relationships. There is a complex mix of membership relationships, tenant and landlord relationships, interpersonal relationships, land use, and policy relationships. These different relationships hinge on two main tensions: legal relationships with the state, and the structures/relationships established between IC members themselves. According to Eli, Dragonfly deed holders are landlords, and Jo and Frankie are squatters (she also calls them tenants), demonstrating a property relationship between deed holders and non-members that the anarchist IC neither wanted nor expected. She says:

Jo and Frankie pay rent. We don't call it rent, we call it a maintenance fee. But, technically we are landlords and could be responsible for any issue brought to the tenant board. For example, the roof is our responsibility... The deed holders became so upset because of vitriol and abuse at meetings. So, they started having only legal meetings about land, legal obligations, taxes, land use, etc. without other members. *Membership at Dragonfly is a right of residency, but the problem is enacting that right when the tenants take up space.* The question is how do you use the resources that are already on the land to develop new homesteads so that people who want to be there who are on the deed, can be there, when they don't want to share space with tenants? Dragonfly is the cheapest rent in Ontario, sixty dollars per month. We, essentially, have squatters. If we raised the rent, we could invest in running water. We granted access but did not send the message that access came with responsibilities.²¹

Eli illuminates her understanding of the contradiction that emerges in the treatment of (private) property depending on the specific people being addressed. She asserts that members have a right to live on the land, and that this right is being limited by the people who currently live on the land. Residents and non-residents are not treated differently because of ownership or even payment, since residents and non-residents both have no ownership claim to the land and pay the same maintenance fees. Residents and non-residents are treated differently

²¹ Ibid.

because of interpersonal relationships and the belief that non-residents limit access to the land for others. Eli asserts that her property rights should give her a say in who can be on the land.

Self-reflexively, Eli has an understanding of the contradiction of being an anarchist collective with a hierarchical stakeholder structure on a privately-owned piece of land. She suggests that there is a stark difference between being against private property in principle and the effect property ownership has on owners in practice:

Ownership ties people to a place in a way that leasing would not. You can't cut the experiment when you own the land it is on, you don't want to see it go and there is no way to make a clear break. We wanted to make the land a trust because we didn't want private property. A land trust would ensure that the land, all of the hill, was never developed after we leave it, we could make a joint trust to protect from development.²²

Looking back on the Collective's history, Eli believes she would have felt less ownership had there been a different structure with non-owners, like in a land trust.

Gray, a recent resident at Dragonfly who lived there for a few months, has a different understanding of private property. He moved to the main house to live with his partner, Hayden, and their two children. Hayden had grown up on the land and her parent is one of the deed holders, who has not been back in over a decade. Gray's political views are neither radical nor anarchist. He says the following about private property:

My view of property is different than others at Dragonfly, I am torn between investment in the land because it is not inheritable and investment in the use of Dragonfly, in terms of being part of the community. There is a sense that you inherit the land in principle, in a community sense, *it is about use rather than a legal paperwork sense*. It is not perfect, but it is as good as it gets, it is the best system we have at the moment - full of problems, but I don't know if anything else can be realized at this point.²³

Gray's observations underscore Eli's cognitive dissonance about legal ownership and how property relationships work at Dragonfly and indicate a similar underlying belief about

²² Ibid.

²³ Gray, interview.

entitlement to land like the one Frankie espouses. Gray points out that members follow principles of *use* rather than *title* since he and his family were allowed to live and work at Dragonfly without concern about not having legal title to the land. *Use* is understood to mean working and living on the land and contributing to its upkeep, which grants the user access to the land. On the other hand, *title* is simply the person or people who the state identifies as the rightful owner.

Gray and Hayden's experiences of living at Dragonfly are not materially different from Frankie's in the sense that they arrived at the IC without any claim to the land and did not financially contribute to the purchase of the land. However, Hayden and Gray's interpersonal relationship with deed holders and members is very different than those of Frankie and Jo. Eli and Devin welcomed Hayden and Gray and encouraged them to return when they left. While Hayden and Gray cannot become members because of a current moratorium on membership, they are called residents by Eli and Devin, unlike Frankie and Jo, who Eli called squatters and non-residents. This differential treatment points to the way that power is reorganized within the Collective: one's relationship with people who have sway is more important than formal status.

Hayden sees that the deed holders are gatekeepers to the Collective and to the land that follow legal title. She believes that these gatekeepers have invested more financially into the land and thus want to have a firmer hand on who can access it.²⁴ Further, gatekeepers also have a say about who can develop on the land. Hayden says, "the belief is that the land should not be owned, but the house you build on it should be."²⁵ Eli agrees with this sentiment, stating that, "the shared house represents shared equity, so no one wants to let go of it, it also hinders the development of the rest of land as a group."²⁶ The deed holders interviewed share a concern that nothing can be done at Dragonfly with the current people living there and with so many absentee

²⁴ Hayden, interview.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Eli, interview.

deed holders. The land, because it is the legal title of six people, none of whom live there, has been stuck in a limbo of development as a result.

Conflict over property and rights have emerged despite the stated belief that owning the land is separate from living on the land, and ultimately a more mainstream understanding of private property has permeated the relationships at Dragonfly. As we read in Eli's narrative, the stakeholders have reached an impasse because of this disconnect that the Collective has not been able to bridge in over a decade. The people who live on Dragonfly are not treated as people who belong on the land, while those who own it but do not live there feel entitled to the land. The feeling of entitlement is troubled by their anarchist ethics of being against private property, which leaves them angry and resentful of those who live on the land but does not lead them to act on that anger by asking Frankie and Jo to leave. Since Frankie and Jo did the work of building or repairing the cabins in which they live, there is a tacit honouring of the belief that the home one builds is not part of the collective. These conflicts over entitlement strike at the root of the very concept.

Blackfly: Cooperative Ownership, Land Use, Membership, and Access

The Black Fly Collective was purchased in 2003 by a group of nineteen people, almost all from Toronto, when members of Dragonfly informed them of the opportunity to buy the land at a Sherriff's auction. The Collective created a number of rules right away about how the land would be used, attempting to address some of the issues that the Dragonfly Collective experienced before they could become a problem. Black Fly has practically approached the question of private property differently than has Dragonfly, although their ideological perspective about private property is similar. The Collective has taken much more time to formalize decision-making about land use and membership than the Dragonfly Collective and have registered as a

formal not for profit cooperative with the Ontario Government. They have agreed on what processes and policies must be respected in decision-making about the land and membership.

Brett, one of the original purchasers, explains:

There is no equity in Black Fly, because of the structure. We have state-recognized coop status, which requires a board of directors and by-laws that we must follow. We are a legal entity. No single person owns the land and can't sell it because it is not privately owned - which addresses the deed issue that Dragonfly experiences. A coop can have as many members as it wants because it is just a bureaucracy. There is no limit to membership because there is nothing to divide up. The only limit is land use capacity.²⁷

The Black Fly Collective is incorporated to ensure that no person owns the land and no inheritance rights exist. The land belongs to the Black Fly Collective as an entity, which means that anyone who becomes a member cannot claim ownership as an individual and every individual must become a member to have a vote (families cannot share membership). Sky explains that cooperative structure gives power to all members, with each having one vote and all members being equal. There is only one level of membership. "There is a board of directors that has created committees, but members have all of the power, committees just enact what the members decide. We follow a business model that follows the official rules of cooperative structure."²⁸ Each member is part of one of three committees: The Land Committee, the People Committee, and the Work Committee. Each committee does research, makes proposals, and manages land use, membership, and work to be done on the land.²⁹

Membership in Black Fly is open and has involved the same process from the beginning, meaning that anyone who wants to join can and will have the same rights and responsibilities as the original purchasers of the land. Adrian explains further:

To buy a membership costs 2,000 dollars plus annual fees and is not transferable. That gives you a vote -we use consensus decision-making - and a right to build, and whereas in the past when you used to leave the collective we would give people their money back, but we no

²⁷ Brett, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, December 2012

²⁸ Sky, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, November 2012.

²⁹ Ibid.

longer do that because we do not keep that money laying around. It is needed for upkeep of the land. We have our own rules about how we want to manage the place.³⁰

Members of the IC perceive their structure to be sound and unoppressive because all members have consented to it and everyone is treated equally within it. As Brett rationalizes:

Before we became incorporated, legally, we put four people on the deed, of nineteen of us, when we first bought it. A share at the time was 2,000 dollars and got you one vote. So, some people shared a share, like a lot of couples did that. Everyone is expected to pay 100 dollars in upkeep costs annually. However, we agreed early on that any extra contribution does not count toward equity. So, if someone puts more resources into it, whether it is labour, resources, or money, it is just seen as a gift. No one was keeping track of those contributions and no one was getting that contribution back. If you wanted to help build, it is just a gift.

Adrian, another original purchaser, points out that “Black Fly is no longer private property because it is a registered Not-For-Profit Cooperative, which means that the land can only be sold to another Non-Profit. Private property is an illusion; ownership is the source of problems in society. We can’t seem to get out of the relationship. Our identities are rooted in owning. We do not own land; thinking that we do is just a need to feel control.”³¹ Sky, an original purchaser, shares that sentiment, saying,

attachment to property is about time spent there, not because it is owned. To ensure that we maintain a healthy perspective on property Black Fly is not privately owned. In fact, our agreement is quite clear about that. I can’t even pass my share on to my child. Really, the Coop can live forever, but none of us will ever gain any equity out of it or have land after. Which is at least part ways towards our vision as anarchists.³²

Sky believes that the only way to ensure that problematic private property relationships are not perpetuated is by eliminating the possibility of having a property relationship. Black Fly has attempted to explicitly reject private property by codifying it in the Collective’s by-laws and in the Canadian legal framework in the form of incorporation.

³⁰ Adrian, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, November 2012.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Sky, interview.

Permanent residency is not permitted; the land it is not intended to be a permanent home in order to avoid the possibility of members developing a sense of entitlement and ownership over the land. Moreover, not allowing permanent residency intends to ensure that the land can sustain as many visitors as are interested in visiting. By eliminating an individual's right to own the land, and thus to pass the land down to heirs, there is an assurance from the beginning that no member will feel entitled to the land as an owner. Sky explains, "people who are part of the project are okay with this because it has been like that from the beginning."³³ Sky identifies the steps taken by Black Fly as necessary to uphold the anarchist ethic of renouncing private property, even if it relies on state recognition and structure as a cooperative because the economic relationship is undone. In this way, Black Fly has tried to end the private property relationship, both at the moment of purchasing it as well as in creating laws to ensure it remains a collectively owned piece of land. Sky supports the Collective's decisions about property because he identifies with the anarchist critique of private property, saying, "I am opposed to private property because it objectifies our relationship to each other."³⁴ This codification of the vision of an alternative relationship to private property and equity has thus far been accepted and embraced by members of Black Fly. However, conversations about development on the land and who might be excluded from the IC because of this policy continue, regularly. Members of Black Fly have an understanding that disavowing themselves of private property relationships is not a simple act and is an ongoing process.

Sky points out that becoming a member, which happens when one buys a share, gives one "access to the land, a vote, and the right to build a ten-foot by ten-foot structure on the property; that is all you get. This structure is kind of a private structure to the extent that you

³³ Sky, interview.

³⁴ Ibid.

would be asked permission if someone was going to use your structure or want to stay there, but it doesn't mean that people can't be near the structure or walk by it, it is just going inside that requires permission."³⁵ Since no one can live there permanently, the presumption is that people will have permission to access the personal cabins when the owner is not there. Similar to how participants from Dragonfly wanted to treat the land as collective and houses as individually owned, Black Fly has made this vision a rule but with the extra precaution of additional rules about residency to ensure no one settles on the land permanently.

Members of Black Fly have two stated goals behind acquiring property: to create a space for city folk—who are engaged in social justice work and who do not otherwise have the economic means—to have access to rural space and a retreat from the city, and to build sustainable cabins for personal use. As Sky explains, “the purpose of Black Fly is for use by our movements, to be supportive of social justice movements to give them an opportunity to rejuvenate and help build capacity; a retreat space of sorts.”³⁶ These goals were set by the Collective to ensure that they lived up to their political commitments of supporting and taking part in social justice organizing, to challenge private property and capitalism, and to have a place on which to rest. Anarchist principles of inclusion and openness motivate these goals.

However, members do encounter a sense of ownership over the land, as with Dragonfly, and the goal of building personal cabins whilst creating limitless access sometimes seem incongruous. According to Adrian, the two goals address the differing desires of the members:

I have access to my partner's parents' cottage that is an hour away from Black Fly, so we don't need to build a cabin or use the land in that way. For others, Black Fly is the only way that they can get out of the city. However, the tensions between those two goals are real. We have not had major conflicts about it, but people who didn't agree left.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Adrian, interview.

Sky believes that the most central tension at Black Fly is the tension about how regularly or permanently members can be on the land in relation to making space for innumerable non-members to spend time there. Until now, the tension has been addressed in a healthy way. Although current members have agreed that no one can live on the land permanently, Brett states that, “the agreement not to live there permanently is not a formal by-law, but just an agreement among members right *now*. It has just never been the case that someone has wanted to live there full time. We use the question of permanent life on the land as a way to process what we need to set up in terms of policies to ensure we continue to meet our goals [of making the land accessible to anyone who wants to spend time there.]”³⁸ Brett, the first member to start building a cabin on the land, believes that the agreement could change, and along with other members of Black Fly believes that they have avoided the issue of denying access to the land because non-members are welcome to visit. It is clear that for Adrian and Sky the agreement is quite fixed and conflict could emerge in the future. For now, there are no conflicts because no private dwelling has been completed. Membership is not required to visit or use the structures that currently exist on the land – a barn and a yurt. Many people who are connected to members of Black Fly by political community in Toronto and Ontario have used the land as a place to rest and camp over the years.

Adrian and Brett both address the unexpected negative consequences of building a membership structure in a land project that does not provide equity for members. They both explain that the initial call for members to the wider radical community in Toronto and Southwestern Ontario saw many people of colour, new immigrants, and poor people show interest in joining the IC. As Adrian explains, a collective purchase of land at such a low price was the only opportunity for many of these people to engage in property purchase. The desire for equity and transferability of ownership is tied to a sense of security that results from an economic

³⁸ Brett, interview.

system based on property privatization and dispossession, which also equates private ownership with wealth generation. Joining Black Fly was the only way low-income and systemically marginalized people felt that they could access land from which they could not be displaced.

Adrian and other members were concerned about the inaccessibility of membership in Black Fly to communities that are often marginalized because of its attempt to undo private property structures. However, those members took comfort in the fact that people could access the land as any member could without joining the collective or paying a share of the cost of the land. Adrian says, “if our goal is to make [the land] accessible - which sort of has a natural limit of how many people the land can hold - then, arguably, anyone can just access it anyways. So, why would you join?”³⁹ Adrian’s point is that membership within Black Fly does not grant additional benefits compared to non-member usage because of the cooperative status of the land, however there is concern about how many people could use it at the same time. Arguably, members would be the first to have access, followed by others who want to use the land.

Interestingly, despite the goal of making Black Fly openly accessible, there is some anger toward locals who cross the land to hunt and snowmobile. The invitation to use the land is limited to people who have asked to use it and is therefore also limited to people who are known by members of the collective. For example, Adrian says that there are no “barriers erected to intruders, we do lock a trailer with a key, but otherwise we do not have a boundary. There is a gate on the road, but it is not locked.”⁴⁰ She explains that the gate simply serves the purpose of demarcating where the boundary of the property is, not to keep people out. Yet she also says that because a concession road runs through the property, “we cannot really stop anyone from using it.”⁴¹ She admits that she does wish to keep some people from entering the land, like snowmobile

³⁹Adrian, interview.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

riders. Finally, she articulates that members “are not present and are not really there all that much, so we cannot stop anyone from using it.”⁴² Despite an ethical commitment to the land being accessible, Adrian reveals a sense of ownership and desire to keep the property private:

There have been interesting conversations about people coming to our land to collect firewood. Folks from Dragonfly had seen that we had starting cutting away some trees to clear the road and then they just continued to cut along the road and we had to have an awkward conversation about them taking that liberty. Please don’t cut those trees down. But, they needed fire wood, so they just took it... I think we ultimately feel like they should ask and we should have a conversation about it not to just have people take from the land. We want to be included in the conversation.⁴³

The trees and firewood are treated as property of Black Fly, evidenced by the desire to keep the land in a particular state and the trees uncut. Nevertheless, there is a different quality to the feeling of ownership in her expression that the Collective would like to be consulted on tree removal. While Adrian feels entitled to the trees and to having some control over who enters the land and what is removed from the land, she suggests that the Collective would potentially be open to sharing the land and useful parts of it if they were asked first. Further complicating her relationship with ownership, Adrian explains that because the Collective members “are absentees” they feel less entitled to asking people to stay off their land when they are not there. She says, “we don’t want to be the people in the city telling the people in the country, “don’t touch my stuff” but you also don’t want them to touch it.”⁴⁴ Ultimately, Adrian accepts that a lack of permanent presence of people on the land makes negotiation with neighbours about how they might use Black Fly’s land and resources less possible and that Black Fly has less entitlement to this kind of negotiation.

An understanding of responsibility or stewardship in relation to property that demonstrates the difference between owning property and having responsibility for a

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

particular place in the world is evident here. Adrian's story shows that if one collectively stewards the land, one still has responsibility, and thus a kind of control over the land and what happens to it to some extent. In communities that feel responsible for their community or land, the same sense of "ownership" would apply. Because the Black Fly Collective is responsible for the land and control it and want to care for their environment and their space, they do not want others using it in ways that adversely affects it. Asking someone to refrain from cutting trees without asking is a reasonable request that is not necessarily about "ownership" or "property", since the attitude is born of a responsibility for the land.

However, Adrian articulates a different goal than keeping the land's resources intact; she describes a desire to not see activities/behaviours of which she disapproves. Adrian talks about two kinds of activities: crossing over the land (snowmobiling) and taking from the land (cutting trees for wood and hunting). There is a temporary nature to both of these activities and yet one of them is less invasive, with snowmobiles possibly leaving tracks and damaging the land, but not removing anything from it. There is a sense that snowmobiling and hunting in particular are at least partly troubling for Adrian because she does not approve of or like that kind of activity and does not want to see it on the land. However, she also identifies that she is not doing anything to stop this activity from happening on the land. Adrian's criticism touches on a common conflict in rural communities between environmentalists and hunters and the cultural and sometimes class-based disagreement about how rural and common nature spaces should be used.⁴⁵ This criticism is similar to the cultural critique of rednecks discussed in Chapter Four.

This contradiction of wanting to allow people to access the land but not to alter it is not unique to the Black Fly community. We also see a conflict like this in Dragonfly concerning

⁴⁵ Matt Reed, "The Mobilisation of Rural Identities and the Failure of the Rural Protest Movement in the UK, 1996-2001," *Space and Polity* 8, no. 1 (April, 2004): 25-42.

Frankie's residency on the land, although here the problem is to a more permanent degree. What makes the experiences of Dragonfly and Black Fly different is the fact that Dragonfly has already had a number of developments on the land, including Frankie's cabin, which makes access to the land more complicated because he has built a structure that gives him permanent access to the land. In Black Fly's case, current complaints are around people passing over the land or taking from it, but there is not yet a person who has taken to developing a dwelling on the land or staying in a more permanent way that would lead to a sense of ownership. Within this conversation about passing through land lies an interesting outcome of a number of anarchists buying land in the same area, namely, there are rather fluid understandings of land boundaries.

Fluid Land Borders

Collective participants have rather fluid understandings of land borders, which have emerged as a result of inchoate theoretical and principled critiques of private property by most IC members. This is one way they demonstrate a commitment to eliminate private property. Eli explains, "there is confusion about where the other pieces of land start and stop."⁴⁶ In general, the whole of "the Hill" has quite informal boundaries around plots of land. Gray describes these informal borders between pieces of land that are owned by members of the community:

The different pieces owned by Ira and Julian are attached to Dragonfly. The conference site is actually part of Middle Earth, on paper, but in practice the lines are blurred and it has been used by Dragonfly for decades. A new spot called Dragon Hill has just been purchased by Jo's son, Rain just east of Middle Earth. Ira once owned it, but then divided it to give a piece to his ex and a piece to his child. All of the land together is known as "the Hill", it is one large informal collective, beyond it is crown land and other land is private.

From Gray's narrative, we see that the culture of land use is quite different for people who are considered part of the community. In contrast to Adrian and Eli's stories about unwanted people

⁴⁶ Eli, interview.

on the land, Gray tells a story of how informal the land use is by those who are tied to one of the pieces of land on the Hill. Community members cross onto each other's land and a main collective space used by Dragonfly, the conference site, is actually built on land that does not belong to Dragonfly, demonstrating a fracture in the practice of property relationships. Hayden articulates that despite conflict among people about who should live at Dragonfly, and her fear that the property will be divided, "it would not change that much, just that when we would walk on the land we would notice, ok, now we are walking on this part."⁴⁷ She believes that ownership and changed boundaries would not change how people use the land. While imperfect, this approach to how property is used and shared shows a material change in what property means within the loose borders of the Hill. There are conflicts about who belongs on the land and there is a hierarchy about who is welcome to invite others to use the land, but there continues to be an informal openness of access for members of the anarchist and alternative community.

The link between the blurred property lines and an impasse around development is an ideological commitment to unspecified and unclarified anarchist principles of openness and collective good that have left these IC members without clear guidelines of how to move forward as anarchists, as collective members, and as property owners. Eli says:

I want to develop other sites and expand the potential [of the land], but it is still not happening over three decades later, for example should we increase sugar bush for maple syrup production. There is [sic] the commons, for example the conference site is part of the commons, no one can take it for private use, because it has been accepted that it is collective, though the last time it was used was 2008, no one can get it together enough to organize it.⁴⁸

Eli wants to uphold an anarchist ethos and yet there is a struggle to move forward with decision-making that might go against that anarchist ethos, but which would close some of the conflicts that Dragonfly has fought for years and break the deadlock. Many of the original members of

⁴⁷ Hayden, interview.

⁴⁸ Eli, interview. During this part of the interview, Eli attempted to draw a map of the other properties on "The Hill" and could not recall where the property lines were.

Dragonfly are not actively participating in Dragonfly because they do not get along with the people who currently live on the land. As a result, these original members are resistant to putting any more work, money, and time into the land because they do not want to live there. It seems that the anarchist principles of openness and denial of private property do not sit well with those who hold the deed, while the open access has been quite useful for those who do not have any state-recognized economic obligations to the land.

Related to the question of private property is the question of how (or whether) to develop buildings, infrastructure, and alter the natural environment on the land on which the two ICs are located. A central discussion for both ICs, and a source of conflict for Dragonfly, concerns whether building on the land should be a collective endeavor or possible for individuals for personal use. Further, there is disagreement about who is in charge of organizing these developments resulting from the ideological conflict around individual and collective responsibility that has left Dragonfly at an impasse for the last dozen years. The effect of this has been that no extensive developments or improvements have been made by the collective to existing structures or potential structures since the mid-1980s. Some small work has been done, but most of it has happened from individual endeavour and not always with permission of the IC. The way that decisions are made has profoundly affected how and when development happens.

Development and Proprietary Relationships at Dragonfly

Fluid land borders have created the illusion of open access to the land, but when discussion and action move to settlement—building permanent dwellings—participants have divergent perspectives and difficulty negotiating development. Fluid borders allow for principled stances on access and common land, but property development forces participants to contend with desires of controlling who can access the land. Participants hold varied opinions on if and how

development could happen. Hayden thinks collective ownership is a positive thing because of the freedom it affords co-owners, which becomes more complicated when infrastructure is developed, saying, “a shared home means you can leave it for thirty years and come back when you want, it is home base, but you can travel. Development would make it more of a burden. Without running water, you can go away and return when you want. With infrastructure, you have to maintain it more regularly.”⁴⁹ Hayden’s vision for Dragonfly is for it to serve as a place for many people to live on a temporary basis and as a “home base,” but she recognizes that it makes the work of upkeep and further development on the land more difficult. She believes that this is not the main reason for a lack of development, instead citing the conflict created by Frankie and Jo living at Dragonfly as a main reason development has not taken place. Since Frankie and Jo live within the shared spaces at Dragonfly, interacting with them cannot be avoided, leading to a “fear of investing money into Dragonfly” by other residents, members, and deed holders.⁵⁰ Hayden points to Taylor, who bought her own house near Dragonfly so she could make her own decisions and get back any money she puts into it, as an example of how some community members have responded to conflict with Frankie and Jo by moving elsewhere. Despite having access to living on Dragonfly because Devin is on the deed, Taylor chose to spend money on a private piece of land a few kilometres away. Hayden is critical of Taylor’s decision and believes that if others were willing to “invest” in Dragonfly, it would thrive. Her understanding of investment demonstrates how she and others in the community are altering their relationship with private property. Hayden says, “I want to invest in Dragonfly, like for example Dragonfly pays for supplies to fix things, so Gray and I did the work of fixing the roof, siding, and windows.”⁵¹ Hayden is not a member and has not paid into the Collective, but is

⁴⁹ Hayden, interview.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Hayden, interview.

willing to invest her time and work into Dragonfly's infrastructure to ensure the community space will continue even if she does not gain title or equity. Hayden says:

Dragonfly feels for Devin and Eli like it has been taken over by Frankie and Jo and that *our land* now has squatters on it. Instead of kicking them out, because they have been there for a really long time, since 1981, they can't use the land themselves because they don't like the squatters. Frankie and Jo are not on the deed, they were told that this was just a formality until the relationships broke down and they were not put on the deed... Part of the issue is that this community is conflict averse. If there are difficult people they are not asked to leave and everyone else stops coming. Recently there were young people who came to Dragonfly but they left because when they tried to restart the greenhouse business they got a note from Frankie asking them not to use the greenhouses because he was using them.⁵²

Hayden also experienced conflict with Frankie but felt it a bearable conflict and did not dissuade her from staying at Dragonfly, but it did dissuade new residents from staying there. The legal and state obligations of deed holders and the equity that ties them to the land makes them more deeply implicated in and connected to the land than those who have moved there without title. And yet, for people like Frankie, who renovated the chicken coop that has served as his home for the last thirty-four years, one could argue that he is even more tied to the land in practical terms than those who have legal title to it. Especially if one takes into consideration the tacit acceptance of "use" as entitlement that we heard in some participants' theoretical understandings of property as well as how they perceive their relationship to the land.⁵³

Frankie showed me a video made at Dragonfly in 1992, pointing to a wooden structure and explaining that he built the firewood shed being shown without any help from anyone and that he does not get the "acknowledgement I deserve."⁵⁴ Frankie has lived at Dragonfly since he "just showed up" in 1984 and proudly claims that he has lived here through every winter since

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Clearly, the discussion of entitlement and use of land in Ontario between settlers who purchased the land and those who simply live on it, on land that is part of the Algonquin Land Treaty raises flags about who can claim title to land that was not freely passed on for use by settlers. The story is complicated here because Frankie is Indigenous, though not Algonquin.

⁵⁴ Frankie, interview.

then. Identifying himself as both a “controversial figure” and a useful person, Frankie tells the story of being invited to live at Dragonfly:

At that time, there would be over fifty people here in the summer every day, just camping out or staying in the house. When I got here the hippies came out and said, ‘oh, we need our roof fixed’ and I had all of my tools here, because I am a journeyperson carpenter, so I fixed the roof and they were like ‘well, you know how to do stuff.’ So, they told me that I could stay here as long as I want and I was like, ‘uh, say that again, can you confirm that.’⁵⁵

The invitation to live at Dragonfly was informal according to Frankie, who could not believe his luck at the time. Frankie believes that the IC’s motivation for offering him a place to live was due to the skills he possessed that no other member had before he arrived. Frankie feels entitled to stay on the land because he is the only person who knows how to get needed carpentry work done and who has consistently lived on the land throughout the year.⁵⁶ It is clear to Frankie that most members of the IC would like to see him leave, but he feels taken advantage of and believes he has earned a right to stay. In many ways, he believes that his right surpasses others’ rights because others have not been on the land as permanently or as long and have not contributed as much infrastructural development. Yet Frankie actively pushes newcomers away, as we heard in Hayden’s story about the two people who wanted to work in the greenhouses on Dragonfly. The sense of entitlement and proprietary actions demonstrated in Frankie’s refusal to share the space have left a stalemate between members and those who live on the land. Adrian’s analysis that property relationships emerge out of a need for control seem applicable here. The conflict between Eli, Devin, and Frankie is explicit and well known throughout the community. Eli and Devin do not explain this conflict, simply

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Frankie mentions having wintered at Dragonfly since 1984, which he uses as a marker of having committed to living there. Among members of the ICs there is a distinction made between spending time in Hastings Highlands and wintering there. The ability of participants, like Frankie, survive the winter brings a feeling of pride in having the skills needed to withstand winter conditions. I will explore survival in Chapter Six.

alluding to it, and indicate that neither has the energy to discuss the decades-long impasse perhaps, as Hayden suggests, because there is a desire to avoid conflict.

Frankie believes a lack of formal membership structure is what has allowed him to stay:

I am not an official member; there is nothing official about this place. They all seem to think there is; they claim to be an anarchist community. That is what they have been trying to figure out but to this day they have never figured it out. *That is why I am able to be here, because they haven't figured it out...* I am kind of a loner. I watch people fight and fuss about stuff, it is not for me. No one listens to me.⁵⁷

Frankie understands that he was allowed to stay at Dragonfly because the Collective was not properly organized. With great clarity, Frankie explains that he has accessed and lived at Dragonfly for as long as he has because of the lack of organization and clear rules for the IC. Frankie is aware that if Dragonfly was better organized, he would have been asked to leave.

By-Laws and Decision-making at Dragonfly

The conflict over development at Dragonfly centres on two sets of rules: external municipal by-laws and a lack of clear internal rules of the Collective. Gray explains that Dragonfly is most affected by municipal by-laws with respect to how many freestanding structures can be built on the land. Conflict emerges because members feel that more buildings cannot be developed, because the maximum allowed number of buildings already exist.

Bound by municipal by-laws, the land on “the Hill” is zoned as “rural residential” which means each property can only have one permanent structure larger than 100 square feet.⁵⁸ What this means in practice is that each Collective is entitled to a single large and permanent freestanding dwelling. The Collective interprets the by-laws to allow further permanent dwelling development, in unlimited numbers, as long as these dwellings are no larger than ten feet by ten

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Vivian Bloom and Pat Pilgrim, Municipality of Hastings Highlands, “Amendment to Zoning By-Law,” 6 April 2016, Accessed 24 September 2017 <<http://www.hastingshighlands.ca/deptdocs/DOC.pdf>>

feet. While some have understood this to mean a total of 100 square feet, others have followed the by-laws to the letter and have ensured that their cabins are exactly ten foot by ten-foot squares.⁵⁹ The community on “the Hill” often speaks of this practice of building cabins as the “myth of the ten by ten,” referring to the fact that they have not found conclusive information from the municipality about this reading of the by-laws and it is not clear if erecting unlimited small cabins would be considered a breach of the zoning by-laws.

Municipal by-laws state that any building over 107 square feet or that is connected to municipal services requires a permit. Buildings that are smaller than 107 square feet are considered accessory buildings, of which there can be as many as cover five per cent of the total land area.⁶⁰ However, the municipality also states that accessory buildings cannot be used as a place of habitation for humans, stating that the minimum area of a dwelling unit is 384 square feet (three times larger than the accessory buildings).⁶¹ It would seem that both the number of cabins and what they can be used for are, indeed, a myth. Nonetheless, these laws apply to both the Dragonfly and Black Fly Collectives. While many members of the two Collectives are not concerned with following municipal by-laws, others argue that not following them will bring unwanted attention.

At Dragonfly, it is understood that one of the allowed structures is Frankie’s cabin, and the other is the main house, in which Jo lives. There are also two ten-by-ten cabins constructed by two deed holders and which are not used behind the main houses, as well as two cabins across the road beside the conference site. Additionally, there are two broken trailers, a shipping

⁵⁹ One particularly beautiful “ten by ten” cabin at Dragonfly is built on a 100 square foot foundation, in keeping with the by-laws. However, the walls are built in an octahedron shape, making for more overall floor space.

⁶⁰ Ainley Graham and Associates, “Municipality of Hastings Highlands Comprehensive Zoning By-Law 2004-035,” 18 November 2003, Accessed 24 September 2017 <http://www.hastingshighlands.ca/deptdocs/ZBL_2004-035.pdf>

⁶¹ Ainley Graham and Associates, <http://www.hastingshighlands.ca/deptdocs/ZBL_2004-035.pdf>. The By-Law was amended in April 2016 to decrease the total land area from ten per cent to five. Vivian Bloom and Pat Pilgrim, Municipality of Hastings Highlands, “Amendment to Zoning By-Law,” 6 April 2016, Accessed 24 September 2017 <<http://www.hastingshighlands.ca/deptdocs/DOC.pdf>>

container, and approximately eight inoperative cars on the land along with what Devin calls, “a bit of a junk yard” from decades of people collecting items to repair.⁶² Despite a belief that no more structures can be built, Eli and her partner constructed a ten-foot by ten-foot sauna five years ago, which they intend to also use as winter accommodations. Despite the building of more cabins, deed holders believe Frankie and Jo are limiting members’ access to Dragonfly via the by-law limit, which has augmented the deed holders’ sense of resentment towards the two full time non-member residents on the land. Gray says, “the by-laws stop progress of some ideas and of development.”⁶³ Lea agrees with Gray: “Dragonfly is at loggerheads because the legality and regulatory structures limit what they can do on the land because they can’t build as much as they would like and they cannot agree between them what building should happen.”⁶⁴

Dragonfly’s structure of decision-making and following by-laws is haphazard, according to Gray. He notes that the organizing structure of Dragonfly and any decisions made over its forty-year existence are mostly passed down orally. Members rely on their memories of meetings and conversations when asserting rules and regulations of use of the land. In practical terms, Gray’s understanding of how these conflicts have played out over the years concerns the informal decision-making structure of the IC. He compares the structure to that of a clubhouse:

The rules are made up and they can change and be tweak as you go and they can change and be tweaked as relationships change. There is this general sense of how things are done, but it isn’t really written down anywhere. Nothing has really gone through a formal process or been verified. Very little has been recorded. There is no one policing that rules are being followed...[Membership] is always just worked out with whomever is in the room. You just figure it out as you go along.⁶⁵

Gray’s image of Dragonfly is one with a fluid and unstructured set of decision-making practices.

Gray’s explanation of the membership structure, above, demonstrates that there are no clearly

⁶²Devin, interview.

⁶³ Gray, interview.

⁶⁴ Lea, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

⁶⁵Gray, interview.

codified rules of membership. For example, Gray's explanation of the rules of membership, if applied to Frankie, would mean that Frankie is arguably a member, since he has lived on the land for over a year and has put in sweat equity and pays an annual maintenance fee. However, because he does not get along with the deed holders, membership has been kept from Frankie. Devin has tried to address some of this unsystematic structure by recordkeeping. He has some copies of meeting minutes and has tried to coordinate and archive documents in order to bring order to the collective. Devin points out that many meeting minutes are actually recorded in a logbook, but few people look to it to find out what decisions were made, preferring to rely on memory. Unfortunately, many decisions were not noted and members disagree on whether the minutes are accurate. Further, many meetings have occurred and continue to occur in an ad hoc manner, often without all members present and mostly made up of residents or "whoever happens to be there at the time," according to Devin; those meetings are often not recorded.⁶⁶ This lack of comprehensive documentation and process has caused many conflicts in the course of the Collective's existence, including significant communication breakdowns.

Despite these conflicts, the Collective holds an unwavering commitment to a consensus decision-making model, proven by the fact that many decisions have been at a stalemate for decades from a lack of consensus. Eli argues that some members are not committed to the spirit of consensus in the sense that they are not looking for a collective solution, and a war of attrition has been waged between members who hope that the intended process will occur once the dissenting party leaves the Collective.⁶⁷ The lack of clear structure has left many gaps in the collective institutional memory at Dragonfly. This lack of institutional memory, among other things, has motivated the Black Fly Collective to work more procedurally.

⁶⁶ Devin, interview.

⁶⁷ Eli, interview.

Taylor did not want to join Dragonfly when she moved to Hastings Highlands to be with Devin, a deed holder, because of the IC's chaotic structure. She decided instead to buy a separate property, privately, three kilometres from Dragonfly. She is very comfortable with owning private property and defends the responsibilities that landowners have, explaining:

In principle, I think that it is great to share and be part of a collective but at the same time there is so much work that needs to be done to make that work, seeing Dragonfly and the frustration of it shows how hard it is to do that because people are not actively participating. They are trying to do everything with consensus, but with nobody participating, it is pretty hard to get anything done at all. I have resisted being a part of Dragonfly, Devin is still an owner there but I don't want to be part of it... it has been very frustrating just because only Julian and Devin still live in the area and everyone else lives somewhere else. Even just to get the money that people are supposed to be paying, for their property tax portion, a few people are years behind in making their payments. Hello, you have responsibilities as a landowner! I have resisted being part of that to keep my sanity... This house [that Devin and I live in] is in my name because it was bought with my money. Devin has been resistant to having his name on the deed because he is on the deed at Dragonfly. We originally moved up here with another couple, but since I owned the house it was a lot easier to part ways when it didn't work out. They moved out because they had just been paying shared costs.⁶⁸

Taylor cites the conflict and frustration at Dragonfly as a reason to defend purchasing property privately. The conflictual experience at Dragonfly has been used as a cautionary tale for Black Fly about what to avoid in their own land project. However, members of Dragonfly have been clear that Dragonfly failed because the right policies and procedures were not established and because of the changing needs of people as they age. Eli says, "the land isn't going anywhere. Black Fly is going to run into the same problems as us when they reach retirement age, they will think about investing in property and developing it so they can live there to retire on."⁶⁹ Hayden echoes this sentiment, saying "land is security especially when we think about the apocalypse. Property is like old age security. Now as they get older they will want property they can settle down on. They started seeing it as property."⁷⁰ Some of the conversations about what is shared

⁶⁸ Taylor, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

⁶⁹ Eli, interview.

⁷⁰ Hayden, interview.

and how land should be developed have already resulted in minimal conflict at Black Fly, but thus far has been generative conflict that has helped the IC resolve questions about the purpose of the land and has led to by-law development.

Decision-making, By-laws, and Development at Black Fly

As noted earlier, very few collective decisions have been made about how the land on which Black Fly is situated will ultimately be used. However, Collective members have agreed in principle that no one is to live permanently on the land, and that each member can offer the space to anyone who might benefit from its use for short periods of time.⁷¹ Part of the informal vision for the land is to offer a place for people to go who might not have access to green spaces outside of cities due to financial or other barriers. It is also an informal goal to offer the land as a retreat space for any social justice group that needs a secluded and affordable space for their political organizing work.⁷² The land is not currently hospitable to long-term residence because there is no running water, no sanitation for any large or long-term use, and no electricity on the property.

The discussion at Black Fly about land development has, until very recently, been mostly speculative, because no developments had taken place. However, Brett has received approval from the Collective to develop a small eight-foot by twelve-foot cabin on the land and has constructed its foundation. The Collective is currently working on developing a protocol for how members might make proposals for the development and building of new structures for personal use. The possibility of other members wanting to follow suit worries some members of the Black Fly Collective, who want to ensure that the land does not become a series of cottages and that it

⁷¹ At least according to two of three participants I interviewed. When I verified this information with the third member they were surprised by this assertion and suggested that this was not a formal policy. Apparently, my question spurred this issue being raised at a following meeting and it was agreed that this was the current practice, but open to change in the future.

⁷² Adrian, interview.

continues to be used sustainably. This worry has led some to push the Collective to settle on a more concrete vision for the land sooner rather than later.

How Brett's development project unfolds could affect future cabin developments and what the Collective approves; Black Fly is using this approval as an experiment to see how the process unfolds and what will need to change in the process in the future. Members of Black Fly see that there are potentially competing interests of wanting to make the space accessible for the movement and not wanting to leave an environmental footprint by building too many cabins. The current process of membership is that anyone who is a member can build a ten-foot by ten-foot structure on the land, as long as the collective approves the project. Sky explains:

The reason that the buildings can be ten by ten is because of zoning. A structure that small meets the current zoning of the land as it is without getting building permits. It is also the size that people accept because every building proposal has to go through the membership for approval and something much larger just wouldn't pass because we want less development on the land. *We want the land to be as undisturbed as possible*, which is an illusion because the land has all been logged.⁷³

The Collective has a commitment to minimal development because of its desire to maintain a 'natural environment', which is understood to be an untouched environment. However, they also have a desire to minimize engagement with the municipality and to have distance from the state. Sky is aware that their desire for this natural untouched environment is tied to fantasies about what the rural landscape and the environment should be, but it has real implications for how the collective will use the land. There also seems to be some disagreement about an emphasis on conservation or on development. Sky suggests more of a desire for conservation, while Adrian describes a commitment to development. Adrian points out that the potential conflict between the goal of access and development is more felt by those who have a desire to develop the land than those who want to conserve it. She explains that some members wish to focus on building up

⁷³ Sky, interview.

collective infrastructure, or a central building, where people can come and stay. The Collective is interested in using sustainable building methods and being off the grid, but the cost of such a project was estimated at a couple hundred thousand dollars. Adrian explains:

Well, we don't have any money. So, the project [of building a central house] got put aside for the moment. But I know that there are still people who dream about building that building... There is the barn and we wonder if we can transform that into something useable. I think this is where we have roughly set our sights now. We have no real way of raising money other than grant writing and fundraisers. I think that for those of us who are the more "buildy" kind, they are probably more frustrated by the delays and that we aren't developing the land very quickly. I am not upset by it, but *I can see that this could become the source of a lot of tension. It is a bit irresponsible to just leave it and not figure it out.*⁷⁴

Adrian identifies the financial difficulties of developing a shared building on the land and recognizes the potential conflict that could result from a lack of progress in building one, since the building would help to meet one of Black Fly's goals of providing space for anyone to come and stay on the property. Having seen the conflict at Dragonfly, Adrian and many original members of Black Fly tried to participate in visioning for the Collective that would ensure that conflict about how the land would be used would be addressed and codified. However, Adrian explains that some major issues have not completely been unpacked, including rectifying competing interests of private development and land conservation.

Adrian then points out that private cabin development has begun, indicating that there are two processes of development at Black Fly: collective and private. The Collective came together to make a decision about Brett's private cabin, but the cost is carried by the individual member, allowing the project to move forward faster than the collective building:

Brett put in a proposal, a site, the amount [sic] of trees that will be cut down, all that stuff. I find it alarming how much space will be used, how much water is needed, where waste will go. So, this is our test case, to see how we figure out allowing someone to build a private cabin on the land; what our process is going to be. We often figure out the principles through discussions and through the processes of discussing the different options. There is an understanding that the land can only take so many people, so we make it explicit in the collective that not everyone can build a personal cabin on the land. We make it clear to new

⁷⁴ Sky, interview.

members that if they want to build, they have to do it sooner rather than later, because we will run out of land. This works because we have people who have no interest in building.⁷⁵

Adrian feels apprehensive about allowing private cabin construction and worries about the land's capacity to house multiple cabins. She indicates that, to some extent, the details and specificities of building and ecological protection have been left unclear by design because the commonly held anarchist principle of experimentation has been the mainstay of Black Fly's decision-making model, or that anarchism is more about finding an equitable process than a specific outcome, as Dave Neal argues.⁷⁶ By not making rigid decisions and rules, the Collective reserves the right changing the process in the future. However, as Adrian notes, this creates the possibility for conflict to emerge. This model of experimentation is also understood as different from the methods used by Dragonfly. As Adrian states, they used the process of negotiating a cabin development proposal to create and codify rules about how cabin development can happen in the future. Instead of creating rules based on theoretical principles, the Collective creates practical procedures that are turned into rules once they have been tested through experience. This commitment to process and record keeping is identified as the basis for a more realistic, and thus effective, system of rules about development and decision-making. Moreover, the main structural difference between Black Fly and Dragonfly, in trying to harness who has power over developments and decisions, is the cooperative structure of ownership adopted by Black Fly.

Adrian identifies the contradiction of using municipal by-laws to address tensions about what kind of development can happen on the land:

It is convenient that we use the by-laws about property development to uphold our own rules about what can be built. We limit the size of the cabins based on the official by-laws and land use laws. *We use the rules of the state to enforce our own rules*, even though obviously,

⁷⁵ Brett, interview.

⁷⁶ As mentioned in Chapter Two, experimentation is a part of prefiguration in as much as it demonstrates a commitment to the process of a fair outcome. Dave Neal and David Graeber (Chapter Two page 8 and 39)

no one is going to come and inspect our land to see if we are breaking building codes or if we have our building permits. We use the language of law more than I imagine Dragonfly did. They had no process, nothing to hold them back. We are sort of process queens at Black Fly, so we really follow what the rules are about building on the land.⁷⁷

Remarkably for an anarchist IC, Adrian points out that Black Fly's structure is based on legal rules of the state, both in their cooperative status and their building rules. She recognizes that Black Fly relies on these rules to maintain order in the structure of the Collective and defends this decision based on a comparison with Dragonfly. Irrespective of whether the municipality or neighbours who might complain are paying attention, its by-laws have served as a useful tool for Black Fly to limit development and to justify that limit.

Property and the Algonquin Land Claim

The predicament radicals face between owning property and living up to their political commitments of eliminating private property on the Hill is made more complicated by the location of the Collectives in a settler colonial context, especially because the active Algonquin Land Claim encompasses Lake Saint Peter and other parts of Hastings Highlands. Radical settler folks share the sentiment that owning property in a settler colonial context is more troubling than owning property in general.⁷⁸ During the interview process, many participants spoke about their

⁷⁷ Adrian, interview.

⁷⁸ I will limit my discussion of property and colonialism to how participants relate to the Algonquin Land Claim for two reasons. First, the wider discussion of how property relationships are created by and perpetuate colonialism is too large to be addressed here. Second, and indicative of how colonialism is often reduced to property relationships, participants only talked about their relationship as settlers with regards to the Land Claim specifically. The discussion with participants about how they practically relate to Indigenous people usually resulted in their simply outlining that they were "in solidarity with indigenous people" and had participated in the Idle No More demonstrations when they occurred. I thank J.J. McMurtry for warning me of this eventuality when I began my research and making the sound strategic suggestion that I interrogate private property relationships alongside colonial questions, because the former might be more fruitful to learning how people treat the material relationship with the land, as settlers and getting less defensive responses about how they negotiate the tenuous relationship with anti-colonialism and property ownership on colonized land (purchased from the state, nonetheless). It must be said, that many participants were also very self-reflexive and critical about their troubled and sometimes contradictory relationship as settlers with land purchase in Canada from both a private property and colonial perspective. However, participants were better able to discuss their relationship to colonialism through the tangible and particular example of the Algonquin Land Claim.

relationship to the land and to property as settlers or Indigenous people. In this section, I will address responsibilities participants perceive as a result of their position as inhabitants on the land that is included in the Land Claim.

No formal conversations have occurred at Dragonfly on the theoretical question of owning property as settlers within the Collective. Nor has there been a practical consideration of a response to the potential effects of the Algonquin Land Claim on Dragonfly's land. Devin, when asked about the Algonquin Land Claim, defensively explains that the Algonquin people are not interested in Dragonfly's land so the Claim is not of concern. Devin also states that he does not know any Indigenous people and has only met one Algonquin person in the area, as they do not have much of a presence in the area. The conversation about Indigenous title to the land remained hypothetical and theoretical. Eli, who identifies as a settler, says the Land Claim has neither made specific mention of wanting the plot on which Dragonfly is located to be returned nor asks settlers to leave the land. When asked what she thinks about owning land within the territory of the Land Claim she explains:

Dragonfly is on Algonquin Territory. The waterways were the highways, so I know that Mink Lake was settled by Indigenous folks. I am not certain about Lake Saint Peter. I am not sure if it was a village that would be reclaimed. I am not aware of anything on The Hill that is sacred burial sites or anything like that, from our understanding. We are not aware of them and no one has come to tell us that there are.⁷⁹

Eli demonstrates a limited sense of responsibility to Algonquin people as a deed holder, suggesting that the only ethical considerations that she needs to make as a landowner is about repatriating land that is sacred to the Algonquin, or that the Algonquin ask for directly. She admits that her consideration of what it means to be a settler and what access Indigenous people might want to the land on which Dragonfly is located did not occur to her until speaking with some Indigenous people a few months previously, explaining:

⁷⁹ Eli, interview.

I think we are settlers and we behave like settlers. It was not until this year, after thirty-four years on the land that I put it together that we are always posting “no hunting” signs on the land and it never occurred to me that *people could be exercising their treaty rights to hunt on our land*. I was not even putting it together that you can have all of the politics in the world and you can camp out at the Parliament and support Oka and all of that and yet not put it together that we were acting like settlers by posting those signs. It took me so long to understand that and I am somebody who thinks about these things; I have the politics. How long will it take other people to realize... We need to honour our part of treaty relationships wherever you are in Ontario, whether in Toronto or Maynooth. There is a treaty that should dictate how we behave. The Two Row Wampum is applicable here and in Toronto. Maybe one day we can actually repair that relationship. We just don't think of it as land in Toronto because it is all developed.⁸⁰

Eli has a state-based understanding of her responsibilities to Indigenous people and looks to the treaty as a marker of what she should be expected to do as a settler. Eli does not identify property ownership as something that would contradict her commitment to Indigenous sovereignty even though there is evidence that owning land makes owners feel greater entitlement to property. She is self-conscious about her lack of thought about how she perpetuates colonialism as a property owner. In the hunting example, she identifies that people may be legally entitled to hunt on the land through a treaty but does not speak to the possibility that some Indigenous hunters may not have sought legal recognition to hunt. Her understanding of entitlement to hunt is not an inalienable right as Simpson and Sherman suggest, but a treaty obligation.⁸¹ When asked if her responsibility is different as a deed holder of Dragonfly in contrast to renting property in Toronto, Eli responds:

[the relationship] isn't different because the treaties such as they are is [sic] that they are an agreement to share, so whether I am a renter or I have a title I don't think my responsibility to share is different. We are just stuck with this European legal system. We can't just decide that because we are in solidarity with Indigenous people, we don't have to follow the legal framework. We have to continue to function in the European legal framework. I think that *you are just a bit more invested because you own*, but the responsibility to honour the treaties is the same. We are on the land one way or the other. A land trust could address this.⁸²

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*, Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2011); Paula Sherman, *Dishonour of the Crown: The Ontario Resource Regime in the Valley of the Kiji Sibi*, (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2008), 27.

⁸² Eli, interview.

Mentioned by Eli as a side note, feeling invested in the land because one owns it is a central concern in how property relationships are bolstered. While the philosophical commitment to living alongside Indigenous people with respect for their autonomy and sovereignty is valuable, the concern that property ownership will make that commitment more difficult to uphold is demonstrated in Eli's lack of deep consideration about what putting up a "no hunting" notice means. When renting land or property, one may feel entitled to make requests about how others interact with that property, however there is less legal entitlement to it. Ownership gives settlers rights and privileges over their property that complicate how treaty responsibilities are negotiated. In a social context where property relationships dictate other relationships and one must work against the logic of possession, the desire to uphold treaty responsibilities vis-à-vis owning property cannot be a second thought and must come with practicable changes.

Other members demonstrate that even if anti-colonization is an afterthought in Eli's story, her practice is more complicated than her thoughts about it in the sense that her inaction around non-residents like Frankie staying at Dragonfly may be aligned with anarchist principles of common land and decolonization. Eli shows a detached theoretical commitment to Indigenous sovereignty that is different from the practice of existing side-by-side with Indigenous people. Hayden offers a different perspective on Frankie still being at Dragonfly to describe the lack of commitment to decolonization. When talking about Frankie, Hayden identifies them as, "our token Aboriginal person, he makes us contend with Aboriginal issues. He doesn't own the land, but no one will ask him to leave, even though everyone in the community has felt like they want to. There isn't a strong enough sense of ownership to ask him to leave. They are not emotionally willing to let go of their views."⁸³ While many Dragonfly members have been in conflict with Frankie for over twenty years, no one has asked him to leave, in alignment with the principles of

⁸³ Hayden, interview.

openness and accommodation. There is contradiction in the way that the specificities of Dragonfly's operations are *spoken about* rather than in the way that participants *acted* toward these specificities. Put another way, participants have ideologically committed to propertylessness and anti-colonialism. They have *spoken about* their specific experiences of property and relationships with Indigenous people in ways that are contrary to these ideologies (like calling Frankie a squatter). But they have *acted* in ways that are commensurate with their ideologies (not asking Frankie to leave despite him impeding their use of that land). There are few property consequences to Collective members' discussions and opinions. It is not clear if the correspondence between ideology and action is purely the effect of inertia and lack of clarity on how to enact their stated desire to remove people from the land, or if members are self-conscious about how a decolonial perspective on access to land may look different, as in Frankie's case.

The history of Algonquins in Ontario has not only been a history of dispossession of their lands, but also a state refusal to recognize some of them as Algonquin, especially those who are located near Bancroft and Maynooth.⁸⁴ Sam, an Ojibway person living in Maynooth proper, is critical of the Algonquin Land Claim, "I think that the land is the land and I don't think any group, native or other, has any more right to it than those who were there. A lot of native people don't even have language for land ownership, so why fight for land title? No one owns the land, it should just be stewarded."⁸⁵ Sam's opinion on the matter of Algonquin land title is indicative of a different epistemological relationship with property as well as an ideologically different perspective on accepting ownership and title as a means by which to gain access to stewardship,

⁸⁴ Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 6.

⁸⁵ Sam, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, March 2013.

which demonstrates Coulthard's and Simpson's arguments that simply looking to the state to atone for past wrongs is in many ways counter to the goal of decolonization.⁸⁶

Tuck and Yang's explanation of how settler colonialism turns land into property and "human relationships to land," in combination with Landauer's assertion that the purchase of land to create another society is a necessary step to carve out a space on which to practice that society, is useful for understanding how radicals on the Hill have responded to the conflicted relationship between being landowners and anti-colonialists.⁸⁷ The fact that they have been part of a system of private property has reinforced their narrow understanding of their responsibilities as settlers as being related to land and property. Members of Black Fly have made an effort to develop relationships with the First Nations who are located in the area, who have historically used the land, and who are part of the land claim now. For example, just after the land was purchased Brett and other purchasers reached out to the Bancroft Algonquin band and tried to research other band offices in the area (to no avail). The Collective also invited an Algonquin Elder to their conference, Back to the Land 2.0, in 2008. The broad ideological commitment to Indigenous sovereignty is there, but it is grounded in local efforts at building relationships with recognizable First Nations groups. None of the members spoke about reaching out to individual indigenous people in the community and none of them mention Frankie when talking about building relationships with Indigenous people.

Black Fly has taken a more intentional approach to addressing its relationship to settler colonialism than Dragonfly, though still within the narrow framework of property relationships. Because Black Fly has become a legal cooperative, no members have an individual claim to the

⁸⁶ Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 8; Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*, Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2011).

⁸⁷ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 1*, no. 1, (2012): 127; Landauer, *For Socialism*, 129-134.

land. It is owned by the corporation rather than individual members. Black Fly has tried to address concerns about contributing to settler colonialism with shared ownership by becoming a corporate entity. They see the change in ownership from private ownership to cooperative ownership as a way to ensure that property relationships do not continue to dispossess Indigenous people of their rightful title to land. The rationale is that since no one gains equity or inheritance rights to the land, there will be less entitlement to staying on the land if there is an Algonquin request for repatriation. Black Fly has discussed the possibility of Algonquin people requesting the rightful return of the land. Brett explains how this settler position was addressed:

One of the first things we did was we wrote a mission statement that talks about respecting the land, the fact that it is First Nations land – because it is part of the Algonquin Land Claim. It was a general statement about our feelings and commitments. We have not solidly made a policy about what would happen if there was a land claim on Black Fly asking for the land back. It is a possibility, for sure. I think it would be really contextual based [sic]. We had someone who is a Chief from the Whitney Algonquin Band and the question came up about whether they would want the land back. They said that they get asked that question all of the time. They said, “we are not after your land. We mostly want compensation and some land.” I imagine that they are doing a lot of management because people constantly fear that they will want the land back, but it doesn’t sound like it would happen, that they would ask for the land back. There is definitely a willingness in the Collective to respect and work with First Nations in the area and to have conversations about what might be needed from us.⁸⁸

Black Fly members have an obligation to Indigenous populations that rests on a simple property relationship, indicated by their sole focus on returning the land or making payments for its use as a responsibility, and in Brett’s understanding of this responsibility as stemming from the Land Claim. Brett’s analysis of the Collective’s responsibility as a settler organization is rooted in an expectation that repatriation of the land might be a request made as a part of the Land Claim. Based on conversations and research, Black Fly has made more tangible propositions to Algonquin Bands in the area about how to address colonial histories and about how to make reparations that focus on property. Adrian explains:

⁸⁸ Brett, interview.

There was a conversation that we had way back about paying double taxes, paying one set of taxes to the state and one set of taxes to an Indigenous group, which is what got us to contact the Métis group and they thought we were ridiculous [for suggesting it.] Now the costs of the property tax have gone up, so paying double taxes might not really be an option since many of our members couldn't afford to pay double what they pay now and membership dues are static.⁸⁹

There are complications in wanting to make financial reparations for colonial legacies on a non-systemic level, especially for Black Fly, which has attempted to equalize access to land in their community to people with little money. The concern over honouring the reparations is only hypothetical, since no Indigenous group has claimed or requested these reparations.

Adrian identifies that the deliberate engagement of Black Fly members with their role as a settler community in Ontario comes from prioritizing their political commitment to Indigenous sovereignty more than Dragonfly had, saying, "I think we are more conscious because we are in a different political movement period now [than Dragonfly was when they started]. We are more aware of the importance of Indigenous justice."⁹⁰ Adrian believes that a land claim is more likely to succeed in Hastings County than in Toronto, identifying that Black Fly may have to return the land. She then says, "However, if there is a successful land claim in Toronto, then we have succeeded on such a deep level. Then, I am not worried about ownership, I hope that that happens!"⁹¹ She identifies her ideological commitment to Indigenous sovereignty but the conversation about being asked to leave is abstract, even more so than the proposition that taxes be paid to the rightful stewards of the land. Adrian acknowledges that Black Fly's ideological commitment may be tested if they develop the land, saying:

I would assume that if we are asked to return it to those who have Indigenous title to it, we will return it. My general understanding of land claims is that it [sic] does not generally mean that people have to give it all back and leave, but you wonder if that consciousness would

⁸⁹ Adrian, interview.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

change if you did build that 200,000-dollar house on the land. I think philosophically it wouldn't change, but how would it change in practice?⁹²

Adrian's reflection about the tangible negotiation of property reparations indicates that if a request was made to Black Fly about restitution of the land the Collective's position could change after many members build semi-private dwellings on the land, as Brett has now undertaken. In developing rules of limited residency, however, part of this concern could be addressed. Black Fly has only abstractly discussed settler responsibilities. Unlike Dragonfly, which has been in conflict with Frankie, Black Fly has not had to address specific individual relationships and negotiations about their land.

Sky is critical of Black Fly's efforts to address their implication in settler colonialism. He believes that they should engage in local efforts to seek out relationships with the Indigenous communities who live there and build community with them. Sky feels that these more localized conversations are being had and there have been more material considerations of how to address and counter settler behaviours. However, he feels that the Collective has not succeeded in finding the communities it seeks, saying:

Our relationship with Indigenous people has been pretty shoddy. We invited Algonquin people to speak to us about their sovereignty of their land. We don't know if they have a sovereigntist movement. We haven't done any real solidarity work with them. We agree in principle about returning the land and paying taxes, but we haven't done the real work of developing that relationship with local bands.⁹³

Sky and the two other Black Fly participants focus on relationships with governance organizations when talking about building local Indigenous solidarity relationships; they do not consider individual relationships with Indigenous people in the area. But, as noted in Chapter Three, the particular experience of colonization and erasure of Algonquin people who remained

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Sky, interview.

in rural Ontario was that an active and identifiable Algonquin community was not available to them, suggesting it is unlikely that Black Fly will find an Algonquin community in the area.⁹⁴

Following his experience of Indigenous solidarity work in Toronto, Sky defaults to a property understanding of settler responsibility, saying “There is no contested claim over our land where we are at Black Fly and there is not a huge Algonquin population there. It isn’t an active Algonquin area.”⁹⁵ The action required of settlers continues to be perceived as repatriation of land and then only when there is a clearly mobilized Indigenous community. Sky explains that he is “more likely to do active solidarity work where there is an active population who is struggling [for sovereignty],” because then the direction for solidarity comes from the Indigenous community.⁹⁶ Ethically and ideologically, however, Sky believes settlers have a responsibility to acknowledge the ownership of the land and to be “in solidarity with those who are struggling to rebuild Indigenous nations and sovereignty. The impacts of colonization are everywhere.”⁹⁷ He explains why he has not engaged in active decolonization work in Hastings and also acknowledges that his responsibilities do not end just because he has not found a group to support. Sky demonstrates an ideological commitment to Indigenous sovereignty and admits that he does not know how to enact that ideological commitment because he has not found a clear role for himself to do solidarity work with the Algonquin in the area. Black Fly and Dragonfly have not found ways to address their perceived obligations to Indigenous communities as settlers. Although they defer to narrow property responsibilities when considering how to decolonize their relationships, other economic relationships have started to change.

⁹⁴ Lawrence, 6, 92, and 247.

⁹⁵ Sky, interview.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Building Alternatives to Property Relationships

Sam, a community-member in Maynooth, explains that her Indigenous philosophy is in tune with her practices of not being an owner of the land and does not seek to have land. She says:

Life is anywhere that I can hang my hat. I don't own anything, as soon as [my late spouse] passed away, I sold the house. I have returned to the life that I had before I had children, except that now I have kids and grandkids, so I have more people to stay with. I stay with people in the community especially with anyone who needs help at various times. I am nomadic. No one really owns property, we are just the caretakers. I go back to my Native philosophies. I don't have to have a piece of paper for me to feel secure.⁹⁸

Sam describes property ownership as a construct that gives those who choose to believe in it a false sense of security, a sentiment that members of Black Fly and Dragonfly also espouse. Sam, like Simpson, explains that Indigenous understanding of the land is that it cannot be owned.⁹⁹

Sam identifies that a better security can be found by being part of a community as close-knit as the one she has found in Maynooth rather than owning property, saying, "I don't think I would ever be turfed out onto the road at two o'clock in the morning. We have a very strong community here."¹⁰⁰ While the reality of state-enforced property boundaries cannot be ignored by simply disagreeing with them, Landauer's assertion that state and property relationships "can be destroyed by creating new social relationships i.e. by people relating to each other differently" is applicable here.¹⁰¹ Different social relationships are what Sam uses to gain and build security for herself and others in the community:

We don't have any homeless people here. This is one of the great things about Maynooth and even with the government cutbacks, without even thinking about it I have my five women that I call every morning to make sure they are around, present, and accounted for. Within the community with people around us, we check in on them and make sure they come out to functions and make them accessible for them. We pre-record all of the church sermons, we do a lot of home visits, we cut toenails, we read the newspaper aloud and make tapes. We drive the recordings around town. That kind of support just costs us our time, but when the government agencies aren't there and the funding isn't there then you have got to take

⁹⁸ Sam, interview.

⁹⁹ Simpson, 21-22.

¹⁰⁰ Sam, interview.

¹⁰¹ Landauer, iii.

care of your own. You get your kids to go and shovel other people's driveways or stack firewood. We just sort of pick it up, we just support each other.¹⁰²

The community of which Sam is a part in Maynooth provides a network of care and support that ensures people can function without government and capitalist supports. Their description of the relationships that functions outside of the realm of government and profit-making services is understood as “informal economies” or “social economies.”¹⁰³ There are other and new “social relationships” being created in Maynooth as well as at Dragonfly and Black Fly that prioritize the needs of the community over profit and that do not engage the state.¹⁰⁴ The interactions between owners and the people who live at Dragonfly are not always generative or chosen, but I see a layer of social relationships under the formal property and government relationships that show possibilities for disrupting shallow, economically-driven property relationships.

The members of Black Fly and Dragonfly show a different way of engaging with community; each offers an imperfect, though ever-present, shift away from traditional property relationships towards a mix of social and property relationships and economies. Property relationships are understood by participants as anything between a necessary evil and security, but they are part of owning a piece of land: there are by-laws that must be followed and that connect the communities to unavoidable state power apparatuses. However, the property relationships are made different by an infusion of social relationships—or social economies—in the form of economic and social interactions that do not prioritize profit, do not engage the state, and are often informal, however strained, that inform the mechanisms and procedures of Black Fly and Dragonfly members. There is a stated desire among participants to build community in a

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew it): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*. (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1996); John-Justin McMurtry, *Living Economics: Canadian Perspectives on the Social Economy, Co-operatives, and Community Economic Development*, (Toronto: Emond Publications, 2010).

¹⁰⁴ Landauer, *Anarchism in Germany*, iii.

way that includes economic and political collaboration and builds up material engagement that will alter property relationships so they alone do not dictate who belongs and has access to the community. The property lines must be drawn in some ways, since they are a requirement of ownership within the state and capitalism. However, we see a blurring of the practice of these boundaries, as witnessed in the confusion of members and residents of “The Hill”, who could not clearly outline where their land ends and where others’ land begins.

There is a demonstrated fluidity in how access to properties on the Hill is granted. The Dragonfly Collective has allowed people to live on the land for years. Many participants do not have title and are not members but feel entitled to access and stay at Dragonfly when they need or wish to. However, the tense situation at Dragonfly between the current inhabitants, who have no legal or procedural right to the land on which they live, and the members and owners of Dragonfly, is the most indicative of the complexity of the relationships being enacted on the land that subsume property relationships under political and social commitments. To some extent the personal relationships between owners and non-residents has deteriorated beyond repair, but the material consequences of that deterioration have not had the effect of enforcing property entitlement along legal lines. For example, Lea says, “Dragonfly is family, but I do not know if I will live there again.”¹⁰⁵ Ownership has not been wielded as a tool to remove Jo and Frankie. I believe that this different relationship and economic practice is the result of the political commitments against ownership and power that emerges out of the anarchist ethics upheld by deed holders and members of Dragonfly, even if the stated opinions of these stakeholders have not been commensurate with their actions.

I in no way want to romanticize the situation and I recognize that the deed holders’ motivations for not removing Frankie and Jo are unclear and complicated. While the reason for

¹⁰⁵ Lea, interview.

inaction could simply be inertia, it could also be a fear of not living up to anarchist principles or being judged by the community. Ultimately, I do not know the reason. However, I believe that a new level of social and ethical responsibilities has been weaved into the community fabric. The deed holders have a legal right to the land and could seek police or government support in removing Frankie and Jo but have not chosen this route in spite of feeling like the land is inaccessible to them and despite decades of conflict.

The complicated vision of private property vis-a-vis the use of property is a linking thread in the way property relationships are understood. One example of the divergent vision of private property that exists at Dragonfly is seen in how Taylor explains working on a gardening business with Julian. Taylor explains that when she and Julian had a greenhouse business together, which they ran from Dragonfly, she stopped working at it when Julian backed off because she “didn’t even live there and shouldn’t have had to do the work [her]self.”¹⁰⁶ There is a sense that even though she had access to land on which to gain economically, by growing plants for sale, Taylor did not want to contribute to the business alone since she did not own the land. There is an interesting relationship with a feeling of ownership when labour is mixed with the land similar to the one Locke espoused.¹⁰⁷ Taylor didn’t want to put effort into the business alone, as though Julian, a deed holder, owed something to Taylor.

Social economies are also at the forefront of consciousness for members of Black Fly when they address their desire to make Black Fly accessible to anyone who wants to use it. Community access is a core goal of Black Fly. When they make rules and policies about the Collective’s goals and membership structure members of Black Fly are conscious of poverty and other barriers to property ownership and try to make membership affordable. Giving people who

¹⁰⁶ Taylor, interview.

¹⁰⁷ John Locke, *Second Treaties of Government*. Ed. C.B. MacPherson, (London: Hackett, 1980 [1690]).

might not otherwise have access to a rural place at which they can rest, recuperate, and vacation continues to be important to members, as does creating space for the radical and anarchist community to build capacity by having a space in which to hold retreats and trainings.

However, there are competing interests such as not wanting to have deed holders. The effect of incorporating as a Not-For Profit has meant that those who seek equity, like low-income individuals and new immigrants, have felt that membership is not a viable option. Further, the goal of altering private property relationships has forced the group to gain cooperative status from the government, which for some anarchists in the collective and in the wider community is perceived as inconsistent with their anarchist ideology. Their experience of trying to live in a prefigurative manner is complicated by the reality of owning property within a capitalist system and the fact that in owning property one is forced to interact with the authority that created and polices of private property in the first place. The feeling of entitlement to the property has not been disrupted. Those who sought to purchase collective property in hopes of removing themselves from title are finding that they still desire security, equity, or assurance that they will be able to continue to use the land. The desire is rooted in an internalization of private property logic. The effects of that desire have been anger and severed social ties, but the entitlement of property ownership has not manifested in the form of removing people from the land.

These two collectives have created the conditions for experimentation and working on building relationships that are more meaningful and follow different (not simply profit-driven) logics than simple property relationships, but they have not overcome the entitlement and security of owning property. The contradictions inherent in anarchists owning property are further complicated by that property being located on land that was settled, colonized, and remains the site of centuries of active erasure of Indigenous peoples by the same authorities that now police property relationships. Dragonfly and Black Fly have worked to deepen the

relationships they have with people who use the land and who lay claim to the land, though have not overcome a sense of property relationships when addressing settler responsibilities. The system is not ideal but aligns with anarchist principles nonetheless. The journey, as we heard from Adrian, is more important than the outcome. We will examine how this complicated property relationship influences environmental consciousness and ecological stewardship in the next Chapter.

Chapter Six: Waste Land and Settler Colonial Politics of Inhabitation

In Chapter Five I discussed how property relationships are both difficult to disrupt among anarchists and are somewhat being loosened, if imperfectly, at Black Fly and Dragonfly. The ways in which anarchists engage private property reveals how other oppressive relationships could be undone. In Chapter Three I described how the territory of Hastings Highlands was logged and redistributed to settlers and what economic activities have taken place there, including mining and tourism and how it is perceived as a waste land. In this chapter, I explore how participants inhabit the land and how their enactment of inhabitation and economic survival challenges their perceptions of themselves as stewards and settlers.

A number of participants in Maynooth and on the Hill share the perspective that the land on which they find themselves is useless, especially with respect to their perspectives on how the land has been historically treated and what can be extracted from it now. Many of the conversations and conflicts in the two collectives have been about differing perspectives on what activities are acceptable on the land (e.g., cutting down trees, logging).¹ The Collectives' approaches to survival on the land are also informed by the image of undesirable land in the way they describe the rugged terrain as a place that only those with the skills and resilience can survive, especially at Dragonfly. Colonial aspirations associated with waste land were also noticeable. In many ways, the designation given to land as "waste land" is one of a number of methods used to overcome feelings of what Tuck and Yang call "settler anxiety" which they argue can emerge with the mere "presence of Indigenous peoples who make *a priori* claims to land and ways of being - [this] is a constant reminder that the settler colonial project is

¹ For a discussion of how waste land has been conjured by the Alberta government in "reclaiming" the territory of the tar sands, see Tara Joly, "Reclaiming Nature? Indigenous Homeland and Oil Sands Territory," Posted March 7, 2017, Accessed 23 July 2017 <<https://aesengagement.wordpress.com/2017/03/07/reclaiming-nature-Indigenous-homeland-and-oil-sands-territory/>>

incomplete.”² I will explore how this settler anxiety surfaces in understandings of waste land, the difficulty of survival in the area, and how colonialism is challenged and upheld in environmental stewardship perspectives of participants. I explore how property, ecology, and colonialism intersect through images of “waste land” that have permeated the imaginations of the residents of Hastings Highlands.

Expansive Waste land

Participants understand the geography of Hastings Highlands in relation to the usability of land and the general perception is that the land is “inhospitable” and a “waste land.” For many participants environmental protection has meant “leaving the natural environment as untouched as possible.”³ However, some participants who have spent more time on the land have changed their views of environmentalism, partly as we learn from Sky, because this environmental commitment emerges in relation to a fantasy about what the rural landscape should be. Inhabitation of the space has led to changes in environmental perspective. Participants’ narratives about Hastings Highlands suggest that it has never been land that is hospitable. Sam supports this claim saying that the land was traditionally used by Indigenous Nations as a place to travel through, converge, and continue moving cyclically in the summer months into the fall:

This area was always Algonquin, but it was never really settled because the area is so inhospitable. This whole area was just an area you travelled through. We would travel north and south and we would all meet in Odawa, in Ottawa. That was what was called the Summer Hoop. We would all figure out where you were going to go as a group that winter. In the fall, everyone would go on their way and this whole area would be travelled through, but no one ever really settled here. This is really hard land. It was the floor of Ontario and it wasn’t really good land at all. That is why the timber started. We knew that. We were not really agricultural people, we were hunters and gatherers, and foragers. For that it was pretty good, but not for spending any length of time on.⁴

² Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 1*, no. 1, (2012):9.

³ Sky, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, November 2012.

⁴ Sam, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

According to Sam, the land was fine for foraging and hunting, but it was not agricultural land.⁵ Sam's was the only Indigenous narrative that I heard during the interviews about the history of the land. However, members of Black Fly and Dragonfly, and residents of Maynooth often made reference to the land as second grade.⁶ For example, Lea explains their understanding of how productive the land was before they were born and their perception of it growing up:

At one point this area was fairly highly developed when the trains were going through here. There was [sic] also a lot more mills, too. But growing up here in the 1970s everything felt like a *waste land* like there was a lot of stuff that used to go on. The only thing that was really left was lumber. The only jobs left was [sic] lumber. The uranium mine had closed down and it had been the primary economy here, the Madawaska Mines. The only thing left from that now is the radioactivity.⁷

Lea paints a picture of Hastings Highlands as a waste land for two reasons: first, because the uranium mines, mills, and manufacturing industries had left the area, yet the toxic waste from those industries remained; and second, that the area is a waste land because there is no more mining industry here to fuel the economy. The usefulness of the land in economic terms is one criterion used to describe the area, and the environmental effects of this long-gone industry is the second. Both the economic and environmental understanding of waste land is measured by the possibility of agricultural production for participants. For example, Pat connects the fact that land is cheap and not highly populated with it being, "terrible farm land. You really have to work at it to grow a decent garden. Farming is not even an option. People gave up farming, because it is too rocky, too hilly, and not good soil around here. It is only a tourist destination,

⁵ Sam makes a joke about how many rocks there are everywhere, saying, "We were not interested in harvesting rocks from the ground every year. If you ever drive around here, you see the miles and miles of stone fences. Some of them are ten feet tall." Ibid.

⁶ According to the *Soil Survey of Hastings County*, the area of Lake Saint Peter is rock land, which means that more than a quarter of the surface of the land consists of exposed bedrock or the area has less than ten centimetres of soil over the bedrock. Ontario Soil Survey, *Soil Survey of Hastings County*, Report 27. no date. Accessed 12 May 2018 <<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/publications/surveys/on/on27/index.html>>

⁷ Lea, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

no one has interest in being there full time.”⁸ The usability of the land for sedentary productive purposes (farming and settlement) are the measures used to define its value.

Sky hesitates to call the land on which Black Fly is located rural or even wild, calling it:

a swamp, maybe a wild space. It has been logged at least once. It has been farmed before it was set up. It has been surveyed and it has been logged. There are piles of machinery on the land that are rotting into the ground. The area is very interesting because it is not cottage country. It has not been turned into a playground for middle class people. It is actually a poor, working-class rural area. It is not wilderness, though it backs onto Algonquin Park, which is debatable if that is even wild. The land has a falling down farmhouse with a barn full of mold, but it is beautiful in spots. It isn't breathtaking Algonquin Park, that is for sure.⁹

There is no debate of course, that Algonquin Park is not wild, since it was fully logged before it was turned into a nature park. Sky's tone in the description is defensive as is Adrian's view of Black Fly; she says, “now, Black Fly is more overgrown than it was [before we bought it] because when we bought it there was evidence of human habitation and it had only been a year since it had been homesteaded. It was very much in use.”¹⁰ Devaluing the land and showing that it has been inhabited prior to the collective's ownership is a defence for being on the land now.

There are two aspects worth noting about the source of this defensiveness. First, the justification seems to emerge out of a desire to undo some of the colonialism and settler capitalism associated with being in natural areas. If the land has had prior use and abuse, then being self-conscious about that fact serves to acknowledge the complex history of dispossession and environmental degradation that has taken place on these lands and to make it difficult to maintain the settler fantasy of discovering untouched land. It seems that this knowledge is used to question the culture of rootedness and entitlement that is so insidious in the settler experience.

Second, Sky suggests that because the land is not desired by affluent people and does not have the same value as land in Muskoka that ownership of it contributes less to the dispossession

⁸ Pat, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Peterborough, Ontario, March 2013

⁹ Sky, interview.

¹⁰ Adrian, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, November 2012.

inherent in private property acquisition than it might in other places. Brett underscores this reasoning by asserting that the waste land is quite expansive. He says, “There is a lot of space, the northern half of the municipality is crown land, and most plots are over 100 acres. Most people up there don’t get building permits because there is so much space. We in the collective are sort of the opinion that it doesn’t matter what you build out there, as long as you don’t build anything that is too big and imposing.”¹¹ The impression of a particular kind of abundance, that of unwanted land, helps to defend development and settlement.

James C. Scott’s work about unwanted land as a source of escape from state regulation and power comes to mind when hearing Brett and others’ invocation of abundant land and flexible municipal by-law enforcement.¹² There are unintended benefits that come from the state considering an area as a waste land.¹³ Possessing little environmental and economic resources of interest to the state, the area of Hastings does not currently face the possibility of having land re-appropriated by the state and has been left relatively unmonitored. Not only does it assuage settler fears, but the invocation of waste land can also be a protective measure against the encroachment of state power and observation.¹⁴

¹¹ Brett, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, December 2012.

¹² James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

¹³ As Gerda Wekerle pointed out to me, the possible future usability of the land is exactly how land use planning ascribes value to a piece of land and how governments decide whether land is waste land or productive. It is interesting that participants demonstrate a similar point of view. A discussion of planning scholarship is beyond the scope of this dissertation. See, Nicholas Blomley “Land Use, Planning, and the “Difficult Character of Property”, *Planning Theory & Practice* 18, no. 3 (2017): 351-364.

¹⁴ Of course, in the Canadian context and in the settler colonial context in general, this protection is neither permanent nor assured. When the state sees the opportunity for resource extraction for waste land, the usefulness of the land changes. We see this in the example of the ‘Ring of Fire’ which was initially Indigenous land because it was not useful, then it was celebrated as a promise of a second oil sands in Canada, and most recently has been sold to a mining company for mineral extraction. See, Sunny Freeman, “Ontario's Ring of Fire, Formerly 'The Next Oilsands,' Sold For Peanuts” Huffington Post Online, Published 23 March 2015, Accessed 27 July, 2017, <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/03/23/ring-of-fire-ontario-noront-cliffs_n_6923110.html> and Daniel Tencer, “Clement: Ontario’s ‘Ring of Fire’ Will Be Canada’s Next Oil Sands,” Huffington Post Online, 26 April, 2016. Accessed 26 July, 2017. <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/04/26/ring-of-fire-ontario-tony-clement_n_3159644.html>

The two collectives describe a commitment to treating the land differently than cottagers, industries, and affluent tourists, with an eye to stewarding the land and at the very least making a commitment to ecological practices that suggests they have a different relationship to environmental protection as inhabitants of the land. Both collectives have a rather shallow sense of what that ecological commitment looks like. With respect to Black Fly, Sky explains:

[Collective members] have a fairly abusive relationship with the environment, we drive a car for three to four hours one way to get to our piece of land. We really have a dedication not to tamper with the land, like not to cause damage to the land. Our yurt that is built there is designed to rot right into the soil and not cause any damage. We have had a lot of debates about not cutting down trees and about building the road and how building the road would bring more people to the area. So, our project is designed to be a sustainable project environmentally, but also to sustain our movements.¹⁵

Devin says that Dragonfly, “to some extent, tried to reduce our impact on the environment. For example, we recycled. We were committed to undoing the damage that had been done to the earth.”¹⁶ Their sense of commitment includes internalizing all of the impacts that living on the land would have, including taking responsibility for their waste. Devin explains that Dragonfly “is a bit of a dump with a bunch of abandoned cars, trailers, containers; we have a big junk yard around. We have divided it, so part of the junk yard is Frankie’s, Jo’s, and Nat’s and the other part is the rest of our junk pile.”¹⁷ In their desire to contribute less to dumping garbage in landfills, they have held on to anything that cannot easily go back into the earth but they have not done the work of cleaning it up or recycling it. In a similar vein, Brett describes Black Fly’s work on developing a garbage policy:

There was an idea to truck stuff off to a dump, but now there is a conversation about putting our own dump on the land, to deal with the issue ourselves. It makes sense to just leave it, we have all of this space, it would be easy to bulldoze a pit, it is no different to take it somewhere else than to leave it here. If we are putting it into the earth ourselves, then we

¹⁵ Sky, interview.

¹⁶ Devin, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, December 2012.

¹⁷ Devin, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

have to think about how it will affect the earth, we don't just externalize the problem. For now, no one wants to dig the big hole, but it is in the works.¹⁸

Brett draws on the perception of expansive waste land to defend dumping garbage at Black Fly. He and Collective members have thought more about how garbage would be managed and considers creating a dump rather than simply leaving garbage on the land. Further, he identifies a responsibility to thinking about what waste is generated and to working to create less. In a way there is an ecological component to the policy and yet the goals of stewardship are not addressed by creating a dump and the know-how needed to manage waste is not there. Both Black Fly and Dragonfly have very limited policies about environmental stewardship; participants' thoughts about how to care for the land are quite shallow. Building a dump is not an act of stewardship, but it does remove participation from the state's infrastructure for waste removal. Drawing on the idea that there is abundant expansive land and because participants perceive the land as less valuable, the idea of self-sufficient waste management is confused with stewardship and demonstrates how inhabiting the land as settlers has changed participants' sense of what ecology means. The perception of the land as harder to settle in a permanent way and less productive helps make the land seem uninhabited in the same logic used by colonizers.

Eli distinguishes between the land as rural, meaning agricultural, and the land as wilderness, when describing Dragonfly and holds the bias that rural (agricultural) land is more valuable than wilderness. Eli says, "we didn't farm too much when we moved up there, we did more gardening. The fields never really got to a place where they could be cultivated. Dragonfly is on the edge of rural and wild because it has such poor soil. The forest is more of a resource than the fields."¹⁹ Eli sees Dragonfly as waste land that could not provide for all of the collective's needs and desires for self-sufficiency, especially with respect to self-sufficient food

¹⁸ Brett, interview.

¹⁹ Eli, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, January 2013.

production. She equates self-sufficiency with ecology, saying “we had moved up there to participate in ecology and self-sustainability and the reality is so much more work than you ever imagined and for folks who are not mechanical and can’t keep a tractor operating, then those are the barriers. The folks who have those skills get tired and leave. Especially if they have the financial resources, then they just get out.”²⁰ Eli’s narrative underlines the relationship between a perception of what stewardship looks like and Dragonfly’s practice of surviving in a climate that is harsher than expected.²¹ Eli demonstrates the cognitive link she makes that land on which it is more difficult to survive than other parts of Ontario, especially in the winter, is waste land. She and other participants see that inhabiting waste land may not simply be a choice to meet political and ideological goals, like Scott and Graeber suggest, but it might also come out of economic need.²² Moving to Hastings Highlands is possibly the only option that some participants had to find a place to live on relatively little income. Eli suggests that once some people moved to Dragonfly, they did not have the financial means to leave; others, who had more money, could make the choice to move to an area that was perceived as less harsh after experiencing the inhospitable weather and economic climate. For participants, surviving in Hastings Highlands has been a narrative of seeking skills as well as resources to successfully live there, but also to leave.

Survival (and) Skills

Many factors affected how members of the Collectives survived (or did not) in this supposed waste land. Participants made reference to needing skills, or know-how, to live in the area.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Noteworthy is the fact that Eli overlooks Frankie when describing people who had skills. Frankie has the skills and has survived at Dragonfly for three decades.

²² Scott, op. cit.; David Graeber, “Provisional Autonomous Zone: Or, The Ghost-State in Madagascar.” in *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire*. (Oakland: AK Press, 2007).

These skills can be further delineated to: the technical skills needed to survive in more difficult environmental conditions; the economic skills to gain resources and access work that would allow for a continued life in the area; and the interpersonal skills needed to negotiate shared space with multiple others. Moving to an area with soil that was not ready for growing food, and with a lack of skills to work the land or make a living, affected the relationships between members and residents at Dragonfly. According to Eli, there have been decades of conflict and “the project fostered a sense of entitlement without a proper acknowledgement of the responsibilities of having to work together to get there.”²³ Survival together became central because of the harsher winters and the difficulty of living self-sufficiently on the land.

Speaking to technical skills, I described earlier that Frankie believed his carpentry skills separated him from the hippies who had started Dragonfly, arguing that his specific skillset was deeply needed at Dragonfly when he arrived. Frankie’s deep resentment and a sentiment of having earned the right to stay comes from having the skills that many of the original members did not that helped them to survive, but also that he out-survived all of the members. There is also a class dynamic to Frankie’s opinion. They say:

When you come to live in this North country, you can’t just show up out of University and expect to do it. Where is your chainsaw? How are you going to stay warm in the winter? What are you going to grow this summer to feed you? How are you going to make money? No one was here in the winter, it was just me, my partner at the time, and Julian.²⁴

The deed holders and original members of Dragonfly were all University-educated, while Frankie was a tradesperson, indicating a class tension between the educated members and owners and the non-member who did not have the same kind of education. This tension should not be overstated, however. Frankie’s experience does not seem to align with that of Devin and Eli, both of whom had moved to Dragonfly five years before Frankie and lived there year-round for

²³ Eli, interview.

²⁴ Frankie, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

over fourteen years. Some of the owners did not finish their undergraduate degrees and came as poor, pregnant teenagers.

Devin, self-consciously recounts his experience of the groups first winter at Dragonfly, identifying that their collective lack of skill was known to them. “I remember that when we first moved here we couldn’t find any dry wood, so we burned green wood. I have images of members huddled in the house with their coats on near the stove. We had lived in the city so we were just learning these things for the first time.”²⁵ In his assessment, however, he describes learning how to take what was needed from the land and working to be as self-sufficient as possible and how they eventually learned the skills that were needed to live there:

I think there was one point when we reached about 25 percent of meeting our own dietary requirements [from our efforts on the land] which was better than what we managed in the city, which was maybe 5 percent. We had a cow and a horse and the gardens were quite large. We did canning and freezing. We had chickens as well. We collected our own wood at first, but then people didn’t want to cut trees so we started to buy it, which I was against. Now, I collect firewood for my home [that isn’t on Dragonfly] from Dragonfly. I collect it myself. It is a few trees for the winter.²⁶

Devin was able to learn the needed skills to survive, year-round, in the harsh climate and difficult terrain of Lake Saint Peter. There was a steep learning curve, but with regards to technical skills, he and a few others at Dragonfly learned them because it was necessary. This narrative draws on waste land imagery with respect to a rugged terrain within which one must survive, and not just live.

Pat, a past resident at Dragonfly also believes that there are technical skills needed to live in Hastings County sayings:

there are things that you don’t like doing, but it is a matter of survival and so you have to do it and it helps you get through the hurdle of not wanting to do it. When I lived at Dragonfly, there was no running water and an outhouse, so it was a bit of a learning curve from my childhood where I had stoked fires and stuff but going to the outhouse in the winter is something I had to get used to. I always really gelled with that. It makes you strong and feel

²⁵ Devin, interview.

²⁶ Ibid.

like you have a connection and it is not so heady. It is good for the mind and the body to do manual labour. You need your body less in the city.²⁷

Pat's experience suggests that the skills needed to live at Dragonfly are not the essential list of skills needed to live in the country in general and further underscore the different experiences one can have in purported waste land. Many rural areas have indoor plumbing and are connected to municipal sources of power and sewage. Conversely, highly technical mechanisms for electricity, heating, and sewage that are "off the grid" are also available, though expensive. The descriptions that participants gave of the skills needed to survive in the countryside are actually more specific to the climate and geography of Hastings Highlands and to the economic resources available to make technology available to them at Dragonfly. Wintering in the climate of central Ontario is especially resource-heavy, especially when one's dwelling is poorly insulated. The cost of making improvements at Dragonfly as well as the difficulty of getting the collective to agree to and to collectively pay for improvements impedes the development of technologies that could make survival less taxing and could make living in the area more accessible to those who do not have all of the technical skills and ability currently needed to winter there.²⁸ Technical skills, social skills, and economic skills intersect in this issue and affect survival.²⁹

²⁷ Pat, interview.

²⁸ Technology plays into narratives of a backwards rural that would be interesting to examine but is beyond the scope of this dissertation. It is important to point out how natural the lack of some technologies seems to some respondents about life in the rural. One can see that to some extent the wood stove and outhouse fulfil the perception of the rural as stuck in a past to the point that this old technologies' existence is not questioned and it is assumed to be the reality of life in the rural, in general. However, there is also some material basis to these assumptions. The cost of making improvements to outdated technology in rural settings can be much more prohibitive than in the city, because of the proximity of materials, municipal connections, and the economic means to pay for these technologies. The reality in many rural homes is that they are heated with wood. The question of technology as it intersects with skills and financial means still appears here, however. The kind of stove used and the skill with which fires are stocked can impact how much wood is needed and how long a home can remain heated. Further, when cheap or free firewood is available, as is the case in the so-called waste land of Hastings Highlands, there can be less concern about finding ways to use less wood. We are brought full-circle to the question of how the environment is perceived in a waste land.

²⁹ The lack of economic resources should not be overstated. Dragonfly members' low-tech existence is also attributable to a vision of simplicity as well as consideration of environmental protection that many members of the

Devin discussed having successfully gardened in his collective house in the Waterloo and bringing those skills with them to Dragonfly. However, there was a desire to be more self-sufficient than the Collective had been in the city and there were different resources available to them at the house at Dragonfly, which necessitated the development of new skills, like collecting firewood and taking care of livestock. Finding work to supplement their efforts at self-sufficiency proved more difficult. With respect to accessing these economic resources, there was some forethought about the different economic climate in Maynooth than in the city. Devin explains that when Dragonfly started, he stayed back in Kitchener to earn money to make it more possible to survive on the land while the others went to set up life in Lake Saint Peter. Devin came to learn that,

logging and snow removal are what keep people going with respect to work in the winter... We often got jobs in forestry or construction in the summer time in the area and, in the winter, there were always a few of us on welfare. Fueling with wood lowered our costs and taxes were lower than rent was in the city, so the cost of living was a bit lower, too. We also often commuted for jobs. Some of the forestry jobs, cutting trees or tree planting, were ones where we would camp out while we worked there and then we would come back. Nowadays, if you have work that you can do over the internet, it is a bit easier because we have internet.³⁰

Devin demonstrates the economic realities of rural life, and the ongoing relocation and concentration of work to city centres, bringing to the fore, a message from members of Black Bear Ranch in the United States about how they see their role as a rural collective. They write, “as it turns out, sending us mail is sort of a radical direct action. Our local post office, being so rural and remote, struggles and sending mail helps it keep standing. They measure incoming mail by the inch, so the more inches of mail you send, the better our post office survives!”³¹ While I

two collectives have about rural space. For example, Devin, with whom I stayed for a few days when I came up to the area to conduct interviews, told me that they were planning on purchasing a new cast iron stove for their kitchen to replace their gas oven and stove because they preferred to use wood and that this system would allow them to also heat their home when it was being used to cook, decreasing their need for heating sources.

³⁰ Devin, interview.

³¹ Black Bear Ranch, “Contact” Accessed 7 March 2016, <<http://blackbearranch.org/contacts/>>

disagree with their assessment that sending mail is radical, their statement points to the de-servicing of rural areas and the difficulty of finding economic resources to survive without seasonal migration or commuting to make ends meet. These economic realities contribute to a vision of some rural areas as a waste land.

At Dragonfly, the members opened a greenhouse business in order to address the shortage of employment options and as a response to a very short growing season on the land. According to Julian, “the greenhouse was the centre of providing an economic base for Dragonfly.”³² While the original intention had been to farm for their own consumption, members found that selling seedlings, and growing some food in the greenhouse, was a better adapted venture for them economically and geographically. The business required the development of two large greenhouses and started in 1984 when Bae, Frankie’s ex-partner, arrived at Dragonfly; it functioned until she left in the mid-1990s. Since then, the greenhouses have fallen into disrepair and are often used by full time dwellers as a place to hang laundry and store materials. I already described some people’s interest in using the greenhouses, with mixed success.

Community support work is often gendered in nature, as discussed in Chapter One. Sam’s discussion of community support, discussed in Chapter Five demonstrates that a lot of the informal and social economic work is done by women and feminized individuals. The greenhouse business is an important marker of how a lot of the work done at Dragonfly, especially around the greenhouse business, was gendered. Women were said to have done the majority of the work and with a traditional gendered division of labour in the different tasks. The gendered nature of work at Dragonfly was discussed extensively by Eli in her interview and also mentioned by Ira and Lea. The common narrative amongst participants is that the Hastings Highlands area alternative community was mostly built up by a few midwives who settled in the

³² Julian, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

area and drew other like-minded people who were pregnant at the time, Eli included. According to Eli, there was a desire and intention from the first days of the Collective to challenge the arbitrary allocation of tasks between the members along gendered lines. The gendered division of labour was not passively accepted at Dragonfly, according to Eli:

Throughout Dragonfly's strong period we had these high functioning women who were running things. One of the first dynamics that became clear to us, was that in all of these hippie spaces the women were doing all of the cooking and raising children and the guys were fixing cars and the building. At Dragonfly, we had enough gender politics that we just wanted to fucking shake it up. 'No, I am going to learn how to fix cars and my partner will take care of the child.' So, we rocked the boat in the community. We had women's meetings and women's businesses. Women started coming out and leaving their husbands and it caused quite an uproar in our community. That was one of those contradictions that you ran into really quickly, because women didn't know how to fix cars. They wanted to learn, but they didn't have shop in high school, so there was a steep learning curve. However, that strong women's community, women coming out, that feminism, set the stage for the queer-positive community and deconstruction of gender that we have today in the area.³³

Taylor's story about recently attempting to revive the greenhouse business with Julian supports Eli's suggestion about the common experience that some women had in working on the garden business and the role that women played in doing a lot of the work. Taylor says,

Julian slacked off and it was too much for me to do on my own. We had tried for two years and then, half-way through the second season they told me that they didn't want to do it anymore. I would get up in the middle of the night to stoke the fire at the greenhouse and I would pass Julian's house and it never occurred to them to stoke the fire. I always had to do it. I felt like I couldn't put energy into it and I needed to work with someone who would be less disorganized...I have my own gardens to attend to and I could make more money working as a gardener for other people. It has not been very functional since Bae left, she made the greenhouse business successful and no one has been able to revive it since.³⁴

The gendered division of labour continues at Dragonfly and reinforces Eli's narrative about "high functioning women", and that there is a resistance to it. Taylor lives almost five kilometres away from Dragonfly, while Julian lives a few hundred metres away. However, Julian did not do

³³ Eli, interview. This very brief discussion of gender is obviously not sufficient. However, the lack of space in the dissertation and a lack of responses on the subject from respondents did not allow for a thorough discussion of gender and work in this dissertation. However, there are points of departure for future research on the subject from the interview with Eli.

³⁴ Taylor, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Lake Saint Peter, Ontario, February 2013.

the important work of keeping the fires going in the night to keep the plants alive during cold temperatures. Once again, a deepened emphasis on the difficulty of surviving at Dragonfly because of the characteristics of the apparent waste land are detectable but also an enduring gender division of labour which is made stark in the harsh climate. The colder temperatures, shorter growing season, and low-tech production methods contribute to a need for greater effort to succeed economically in the area and uphold gender dynamics that leave most of the work to female-identified participants.

An important theme related to economic survival is the tension between needing money to move to the country and also needing money to leave the country. Participants had differing perspectives on rural survival with respects to finances. For example, Ira believes that the opportunity for people in rural spaces is that they can work less to survive and therefore have more time for social relationships and personal projects that do not hinge on making money. He speaks about the relationship between rural life and anarchist ideals:

You are not dependent on the system as much in the rural. Moving to a log cabin won't change the world, but not working everyday will change your social relationships. Living in rural areas is more conducive to anarchist relationships because you have more time to do things and you don't have to work as much. In the country, you can find options to live without paying rent. You aren't working as much. In the country, if you aren't paying rent you can do well. If you pay rent, especially high rent, it is hard to survive.³⁵

Meanwhile, Val, like Devin, worked in the city for a few years to save up for the purchase of land in the countryside. It took her over five years from when she and her partner decided to move to a rural area to the point where they could afford to do it, according to Val. She describes how she and her partner made money once they moved to Maynooth,

We grew vegetables and fruit, to save money and be self-sustaining. All we needed to buy was tea, coffee, rice, and flour. Then, we started a business. We started a nursery of fruit trees. We wanted to produce fruit trees that would survive in this northern climate. Then, a few years later we bought beehives. It was sustainable, but just. A lot of it was also traded

³⁵ Ira, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, March 2013.

in the community. Trading went on between families, especially with other folks who grew their own food. I have had to work from time to time to subsidize my income but it was also enjoyable to get work at a health food store, it gave me the opportunity to help people with their health problems in a natural way. It is an issue that is close to my heart, so I also did it for enjoyment.³⁶

Val and Taylor's narratives show that making money in Hastings Highlands is more difficult, but there are also different opportunities for a variety of jobs to make that money. When Taylor explained her experiment at reviving the greenhouse business, we see that she gave it up when it got to be too much work, suggesting that she had other options for making ends meet partly because she had land on which to be somewhat self-sufficient. Similarly, Hayden explains that the expansive size of Dragonfly seemed like a luxury only afforded to rich people, and yet was available to her as a child growing up there. The larger footprint of land that participants have access to has given them some options for using their land to meet economic ends.

Taylor believes that, "[Hastings Highlands] is still affordable and prices are going up, but it is affordable for people to move here."³⁷ Hayden sees the area as being more affordable with respect to having access to wild areas. She explains feeling like a "rich kid growing up at Dragonfly. We had horses and dogs. I got to go horseback riding and I could run around the forest and the garden... When you are low-income in the city you don't have the same access to forests and natural space. Being able to go out of the city to is a privilege."³⁸ Opportunities should not be confused with an ease of finding work or money. However, there is some flexibility to the kind of work one needs to do to survive. For example, Kelly explains that she had to create work for herself:

Financially it is not easy to survive up here. I essentially bought myself a job and I also teach at a College to support myself in the Winter and it is a lot of work. I bought the restaurant

³⁶ Val, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, March 2013.

³⁷ Taylor, interview.

³⁸ Hayden, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak via Skype (Toronto, Ontario), February 2013.

here to make money for myself by running the restaurant and I can pay myself a salary in the summer, but it is harder to survive in the winter. There is not a lot of work, even for a cook. However, I am an employer now, I employ six part-time employees in the summer. I also live on the second floor of the building, even though it doesn't have a bathroom and probably is not completely legal, but it is hard to make money. However, it was only 3000 dollars that I needed to make a down payment on the restaurant building.³⁹

Kelly and Matti both speak to a "rural price," meaning that they cannot charge local rural folk the same price that they charge out of towners and tourists for the goods they produce.⁴⁰ They also identify that the price they have charged in the city for their products are just not prices that people in the community can afford. One of the reasons that Kelly needs to subsidize her income in the winter is because there are fewer patrons then. She opens the restaurant less frequently in the winter. Kelly says, "I want to make food that is appreciated, but the difficult thing is keeping it at a price point that the community can afford that is also made from quality ingredients. So, I don't make a lot of money, which is ok for me. I don't want to make a lot of money, but I do want to survive."⁴¹ Kelly prioritizes enjoyment and quality in her work over simple economic gain that is similar to Val's sentiments about working at the health food store. This enjoyment might come from living in an area that is affordable and where one does not have to work as much to survive and to spend time with others, as Ira suggested.

Matti explains her experience of finding a way to make money in Maynooth:

I work part-time at the restaurant. The whole first year that I lived here I also made chocolate and sold it at farmer's markets. I had experience making chocolate, it was self-taught. It is organic chocolate because that is important to me. It is a thing, but people who come from Toronto kept telling me that I wasn't charging enough and I was like, 'I cannot charge people four dollars per truffle up here.' The first year I didn't make any money up because I wasn't charging enough. I like that I live in a community here where people do care about the cost of things. People appreciate high quality things here, they understand organic and fair-trade chocolate, so the business is working out alright, but people cannot pay high prices.⁴²

³⁹ Kelly, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

⁴⁰ Ibid; Matti, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

⁴¹ Kelly, interview.

⁴² Matti, interview.

As some participants demonstrate, amongst the difficult economic climate, there might be opportunities for other kinds of work as long as participants are willing to be precarious and to live under conditions that are less comfortable than owning or renting an apartment or house, like Kelly who lives in her restaurant's attic, and Matti who lives in a converted school bus. This kind of life also requires drawing on more complex sets of skills. For example, Frankie believes that he has skills that made it possible for him to survive in the area for years, because he worked with wood and had a sawmill. However, with a shifting rural economy, this could not keep him going. He explains that he had the kind of skills that make it possible to make money. "I think I am the only licenced carpenter in the area, so people come and find me here."⁴³ Frankie suggests that working as a carpenter was conducive to living in this area until the economic crisis of the mid-1980s, "If you want to move here make sure that you develop skills. Like anything that you can do to make money or something that you can sell to tourists. I used to be able to make a living with my furniture and my handicrafts and we used to sell flowers. We had a good life here. Then, the economy took a turn for the worst and it started to go downhill from here."⁴⁴

It was not just the economy that took a turn for the worse, according to Devin, Eli, Julian, and Frankie. Devin suggests that the conflicts that took place between those who moved to Dragonfly were more complex than the conflicts that they had at the collective house in Kitchener, "You know, there were always interpersonal problems in the city and at Dragonfly. There were interpersonal conflicts between couples, but those conflicts were harder when there are a lot of people around."⁴⁵ Frankie and Devin both tell me about an article written by a now deceased deedholder called, "Who Will Feed the Chickens?" to illustrate the point that having

⁴³ Frankie, interview.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Devin, interview.

the skills to survive was not enough to guarantee survival at Dragonfly.⁴⁶ The article points out that there were many discussions and plans made at the Collective, but there was conflict over who should do some of the tangible and daily chores needed to keep the project functioning. Frankie explains that many of the members ultimately never completed the daily chores and just debated whose turn it was, bringing to mind Eli's point about women doing most of the work.⁴⁷

Julian's theory about surviving in collective projects is that it takes a particular kind of person to live with others who can live communally in the countryside and that this is often complicated by economic realities. He speaks to the reality of shared space in the house he lives in on Middle Earth that isolates the importance of having social skills, describing the house as "a really solid house, it is warm, it is cool, and well-insulated. It is the best house in this area. However," he points out,

we will be six people in a few months with the baby coming, but we will make it work. Once another piece of land is bought next door some folks can move there and it will relieve the pressure a little bit. We are all here because not everyone has the money to go somewhere else. You have all of these people, many of whom are not on the same wavelength at all and yet living at the same house and getting things done. We still use consensus and we get through things. The brutality of the actual environment and mentally make it hard to live up here. Living in the country is not for everyone. It takes a particular person to live with others here. There are things that you have to be able to love doing to live in the country and one of those things is sharing space with people.⁴⁸

Julian believes that many members of Dragonfly possess the needed skills to work together in cooperative ways, but that not everyone who is part of the Collective is someone who can share space. We can begin to understand how social, economic, and technical skills intersect and how they are required to survive at Lake Saint Peter. Similarly, Hayden eludes to the same fact in

⁴⁶ This article was written by J. Campbell and shared with members of the Collective. It was also published in a local newspaper at Mink Lake, to which Campbell regularly contributed, called *Northwood Review*, published from the mid-1990s until the early 2000s.

⁴⁷ It is not uncommon for these issues to come up in collective spaces, everywhere, rural or not. I lived in collective houses for a decade and somehow the fight over whose turn it is to do the dishes is never settled. What I aim to point out in suggesting that the conflicts were different, is simply to point out that they were different because they were connected to survival and tied up with the difficulty of surviving in the area, in general.

⁴⁸ Julian, interview.

telling the story of a few young people who attempted to settle at Dragonfly a few years ago. She explains that this couple had the skills needed to survive on the land as well as a way to make money when it was needed, but:

they left because they couldn't get through the politics, the interpersonal conflicts. They wanted to get the greenhouse going, but they were told that they were not welcome to work there. So, they decided to build a house and greenhouse elsewhere. They could have done something awesome at Dragonfly and revived it. They are the kind of people who had the skills needed to be there, but they were kept from doing it on Dragonfly. Jo has been living in the main house and he doesn't have the disposition of a host, he closes down more and is not excited about visitors and treated the main house as a private home instead of making it open to new people. He is not as welcoming or open as is needed and didn't see the house as a communal space. Him being there makes it feel like folks like Devin, who is in conflict with Jo, can't stop by. When we were living there, Devin said he felt like he could start coming around because we made the house more open. Jo fears that if more people come there will be even less space. I feel like the house needs more of a host to welcome people.⁴⁹

Having the skill and desire to live and work with other people can be complicated when people who settle in a collective space do not share those same interpersonal skills. A shortage of resources is complicated by tense interpersonal dynamics. Perceived scarcity is coupled with differing personalities and different social skills. Some people find being in community easier and create collective space more intentionally; this social skill can open up space for more people to feel included and welcome. The perceived scarcity of space that can come with trying to survive economically can make sharing that space much more difficult. Economic struggle does not necessarily mean that people will close off. For example, Julian and Sam's stories of their community demonstrate that social relationships can strengthen amidst economic insecurity. However, economic scarcity can manifest as fear of losing access to space when one does not feel that they have the security of property ownership that Frankie and Jo both share. Julian is on the deed at Middle Earth but has also spent time living at Dragonfly. His narrative is

⁴⁹ Hayden, interview.

not one of scarcity, but of abundance. He shares the space he occupies and also feels entitled to common spaces.

More interesting is the fact that Hayden and Jo have the same status at Dragonfly, officially. They are both the children of deed holders, which technically means that they have no official claim to the land. However, Hayden sees Dragonfly as one of many community spaces that they can access, while for Jo, Dragonfly has been a permanent home for many years.⁵⁰ We can only speculate as to the reasons behind Jo and Hayden's differing approach to the openness of the communal space. What is interesting to observe is how Julian and Hayden describe these differences as personality traits, while Devin sees them as skills that are learned. The intersection between economic scarcity and lack of technical and interpersonal skills can create more challenging circumstances for survival. Economic scarcity opens opportunity for survival in some ways and can exacerbate social tensions and diminish community survival in others.

Taylor and Quinn, both of whom own their own property and do not have to navigate the social dynamics of surviving on a shared piece of land, tell their stories of working to bridge the difficulty of enduring on a rugged terrain, both explaining about their work of building up the soil on their land in order to have a soil that is nutrient rich and useable for food production. The two participants demonstrate the settler belief that land must be made productive to be valuable. Taylor says, "Dragonfly is not farmland, it is not a developed soil and not really farmland. I am building up the soil here and feeding it with compost and am happy to keep building it up, but it only really serves as a garden because it takes so much to build it up."⁵¹ Taylor, when they

⁵⁰ It is possible that Jo perceives space at Dragonfly as scarce because he does not necessarily have other places that he could live if he lost his place at Dragonfly. We see here a culmination of factors that could lead to a sense of entitlement based on defensiveness rather than ownership, almost a reverse entitlement to the socialization associated with private property. However, it is not for us to speculate on the intention behind his behaviour. I merely mention it to show the complication of property relationships at the Collective as discussed in Chapter Five.

⁵¹ Taylor, interview.

decided to move to Lake Saint Peter, worked for a period of time to save up money so that finding work would not be instantly necessary. She says,

I knew it was an economically depressed area, but I also figured I would be able to eventually find something because I have a bunch of skills, I also have a pension, and figured that if Devin found some work we would be okay. Devin has a lot of connections here and could find the odd job helping people. You have to be flexible and self-sufficient in the country. I had to learn a lot like lighting a fire in a wood stove, chop wood, and bring it in, but being around people that know how to do it, I have picked up the skills and the confidence to do it. It has been a great opportunity to develop my gardening, growing, canning, pickling, and survival skills. Having some of those skills also saves us money.⁵²

Taylor found moving to the rural to be a combination of a learning experience as well as an opportunity to use skills she already possessed. She focuses on making the land more productive. It seems clear from her decision not to join the collective, but instead to buy her own piece of land, that avoiding the difficult interpersonal dynamics of Dragonfly and having her home for herself made her feel like she has the needed skills to survive in Lake Saint Peter.

Quinn, a member of the Maynooth alternative community who owns the only functioning farm in the Maynooth area, has made a keen effort to make agriculture a viable option for local food security. He committed to developing the soil of half an acre of land in his first year as the owner of the land and started a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) project that did not make a profit, partly because there are few people in the area who could afford a whole share, but did give Quinn a portion of the money needed to continue to feed the soil with nutrient-rich materials to make it productive.⁵³ In the years since he started, he has continued to expand the farmable piece of land and to provide vegetables for sale in the community and to members of

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Community Supported Agriculture is an economic model designed to bring the producer and customer into a more proximate relationship and to distribute some of the risk involved in farming by having customers pre-pay for their annual supply of produce from the farmer, to ensure that the farmer has the economic means with which to produce. The customers receive a share of whatever is grown, without specifying the quantities. They receive a portion of what is grown, again ensuring that the farmer is not at a loss if the harvest is not as fruitful in a given year.

the CSA. He believes that the soil was productive at an earlier point in time and is trying to return the soil to that state. He says:

I am trying to rebuild the soil and heal the earth, not for myself, but for future generations so they can provide for food security for their local community. Not my own children, I don't want kids. I don't feel like I am here to repopulate the earth. I am against that. The soil is depleted here, you can't really grow anything other than blueberries without building the soil up. When my grandparents bought the land they only had a house garden and some livestock. The land could not sustain the pasture so they had to sell off the livestock because it wasn't sustainable. There was nothing happening farming-wise up here when I was growing up. I am the only farm close to Maynooth, but there are organic potatoes a bit further out. The land is hard though, the stones that you find along the trees, that you have to pull out with machines. I always wonder how people did it out here with horses.⁵⁴

Working to make the fields productive is a project that Quinn has embraced to address food insecurity in the area as well as to earn a living. We see in these narratives a commitment to reviving the environment as well as a view of the environment as a tool of survival, both feeding a waste land imagery. Taylor and Quinn both share a concern for environmental sustainability, growing organically, but they do not see the land on which they live as a place with its own agency, but one which requires human intervention to be useful. This perspective on the environment is identified by some of the participants as a shift in ecological consideration away from an uncomplicated sense of environmentalism as total protection and preservation of natural areas without any human intervention whatsoever.⁵⁵ The new ecology - attributed to a rural sense of the environment, by Sam, Taylor, Brett, Devin, and Sky - involves human management and use of that which is found on the land, understood as stewardship; it suggests that humans are needed within the natural environment in order to make the environment thrive and even survive,

⁵⁴ Quinn, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013. Interestingly, in meeting a friend of my partners' a few weeks ago, they told me that they were farming in Maynooth since I had seen them last about five years ago. When I asked if that makes them the second farm in Maynooth after Quinn's, they laughed and explained that they are actually farming on a piece of Quinn's farm and that there is little chance that anyone could build the soil up in the area anywhere else.

⁵⁵ As Gerda Wekerle pointed out to me, leaving land on its own can sometimes mean that land that has been taken over by invasive species will continue to push out biodiversity and a monoculture would continue to expand.

in some instances. We will explore these shifts in environmentalism through a discussion of how trees and forests are considered and treated by Black Fly and Dragonfly.

Wood, Trees, and Forest Management

Brett elucidates the tensions and shift in environmental thinking at Black Fly, sharing stories of how members of the collective feel like in Maynooth the whole forest needs to be protected, instead of thinking about each individual tree and seeing what might need to happen in a given context. He explains that he has always been part of the environmental movement and concerned about ecological issues, but that now that he lives on the land in Maynooth for almost half the year, he owns a chainsaw, and that the small issue of recycling are not the central environmental issues he now thinks about. We hear that he experienced a shift in how he thinks about the environment, further explaining:

To some extent moving to Maynooth was about appreciating nature and wanting to be in a more ecological space to be part of a piece of land, to have some influence over it, and see it change over time, to be involved in the stewardship of it. In this way, I get to be a part of it and I have gotten to know the trees that are there. I have a better understanding of it. We control the space a little more. The city is also an ecological space, but I didn't have as much of a relationship with it.⁵⁶

For Brett, the relationship he has with the environment is very important and it hinges on having influence over the specific piece of land to which he has attachment. This influence is described as stewardship and caretaking and takes on a flavour of altering the environment to make it thrive.

Brett explains what environmental considerations have taken place in the Collective, specifically around tree cutting:

We have a Wood Use and Cutting Policy... I can look at the trees or weeds, what grows quickly and what doesn't, and it comes from having spent time up there and to learn what I

⁵⁶ Brett, interview.

am looking at. It helps me to make informed decisions about which tree needs to be cut and what isn't a good one to cut...When you want to build a cabin, according to the Black Fly structure, you have to do a sort of environmental assessment of the property and the impact it would have on the land, all of the bureaucratic processes that the municipality would make us do, but now we are doing it to ourselves.⁵⁷

Brett's vision of nature is based on his sense of relationship with the land and the forest that centres on having learned what the environment needs. His is a stewardship rooted in property ownership and inhabitation as well as studying forest management. The fact that any building project at Black Fly requires an environmental assessment is noteworthy both because it shows that the Collective has prioritized environmental considerations as well as a procedure which is somewhat bureaucratic. Brett likens it to something that one would have to do through official state structures. As an anarchist, indicating that the process of approval is similar to that required by the state is meant to show the irony felt about creating an anarchist collective in the countryside that enforces rules that some people might have wanted to get away from in the city. Within this explanation, we can see that there are differing perspectives about what ecological considerations look like for different members of the Collective. Sky's perspective corresponds with Brett's. He explains:

There are environmental tensions. We had a debate about whether or not we should be cutting down trees at all. Personally, I think we should be cutting down trees but we should do it preferably with a management plan that is an eco-forest management plan, which we don't have. I think it is better to get wood from the land than to bring it from outside because it is much more ecologically sound. While we have a principle of ecology and sustainability, we haven't sussed out what exactly that means, we haven't figured out a nuanced definition of what that means exactly.⁵⁸

The commitment that Sky feels to environmental protection, similarly to Brett, draws on the codified environmental protection that is dictated by the state in the form of a forest management plan. The plan allows for selected logging of the land to diversify the tree species by a party

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Sky, interview.

chosen by the Collective in exchange for lower property taxes. However, the way that this stewardship would be enacted by the Collective rests on a more nuanced understanding of what the Collective and the land, specifically, need. Sky is clear that there are differing opinions within Black Fly as to what exactly stewardship should look like and underlines that there is a need for creating an approach that will work for the whole Collective.

At Dragonfly, there is a similarly unspecified commitment to the environment as well as a shift in what environmentalism means to members as they moved from the city to Hastings Highlands, and acquired the skills needed to live in the area, according to Devin:

When we first moved people didn't want to cut down trees. People have different visions of nature as something that you don't touch. I see it as I am here and nature is here and we agree to help each other. Cutting some trees down helps others to grow and it increases the carbon input they have rather than stagnating. It is okay to cut down trees *if you know what you are doing*. You have to learn how to do that...Because we are owners, we have a responsibility to the land that is greater than it is in the city. We are more involved in the environmental protection of that land, while in the city there is involvement from everyone.⁵⁹

I detect a similar logic to Brett's with respect to a changing environmental commitment based on ownership and because of settlement in a rural area. Devin's explanation of forest management also seems tied to having the know-how or skill to take care of the land so that it will become more biodiverse that we can relate back to our discussion of survival skills. Nature becomes perceived as something to maintain rather than something of which one is a part when one has to survive on land that is rugged and difficult.

Taking the discussion of tree cutting and forest use one step further, both collectives have considered managed logging. Unlike at Black Fly, the Dragonfly Collective has successfully negotiated and signed on to a provincial forest management program, called the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP).⁶⁰ Eli makes it clear that for her, this has been a positive move

⁵⁹ Devin, interview.

⁶⁰ MFTIP is an Ontario tax incentive program for Canadian residents and citizens who own four or more hectares of rural forested land. The program offers a 75% discount on property tax to those who sign up for the program. Goals

and one tangible way that the Collective has shown its commitment to ecology where they have otherwise only paid lip service to their environmentalism. She explains:

One thing that we always had in common was a commitment to the environment. What that looked like in practice is another thing, like having a car junk yard on the property, but by and large people love the bush and don't want to do anything bad to it. There is common ground there. So, *no one was into cutting it down and selling it*, but it made for a difficult discussion when we decided to do the MFTIP, and we had to produce a farm plan, which was a really good process. Me, Devin, and Julian agreed and we all had to agree to get everybody else to agree and it worked. We moved that through and got everybody to agree, which lowers our taxes, so everyone gains from it. So, now we have a farm plan, which means we will log along the road and produce maple syrup, which is considered a farm product. We only agreed because we knew who would be doing the logging and because it is selective logging so it will be sustainable, that was the only way everyone agreed to it.⁶¹

Eli seems centrally concerned with successfully following a decision-making process to the end with positive results; finding consensus amongst people at Dragonfly despite years of stagnation and disagreement. The agreement to sign on to MFTIP appears counter to the general principles of ecology that members of the Collective had in Eli's words. We read in the emphasized section of her narrative that many people did not want to participate in logging on the land. Yet, the agreement to log also coalesces with the new rural ecology that many folks in the collective have taken on of forest stewardship, which MFTIP supports and encourages.

There are clear contradictions in the principles that many collective members espouse and in how they have defined them in practice. We see a shift from something more akin to Smith's vision of ecological sovereignty, with nature as an agent that is not diminishable to the needs of humans towards a management model that sees nature as an entity that requires human

of the program can vary anywhere from wanting to increase economic gains from the land by increasing productivity, using it for recreational purposes, protecting wildlife habitat, nature appreciation, or environmental protection. It is clear that the program is generally understood to be a mechanism for keeping rural areas with a lot of tree cover as sources of forest products. There are critiques of the system, namely that it is nothing but a government program that encourages logging to those who would otherwise not engage in it by offering incentives and making people feel like logging is a good way to be environmentally-conscious. As we hear Eli's description, one can imagine that the financial incentive was the driving force behind the decision. See, Ontario Government, "Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program," Updated 20 January 2017, Accessed 17 July 2017, <<https://www.ontario.ca/page/managed-forest-tax-incentive-program>>

⁶¹ Eli, interview.

intervention because of the specific relationship with the particular piece of land.⁶² On the one hand, we can argue that this former vision is troubling from an anti-colonial perspective, since we see that a purely conservationist approach has led to arguments in support of limiting Indigenous peoples from access to their traditional land to ensure that no one take anything from the land. However, the latter model has also served as a justification for colonization especially when Indigenous people are grouped into the land which requires management or are displaced in order to allow for resource extraction. This tension within environmental stewardship practices is noticeable in the way participants speak about ecology and colonialism.

Intersections between Colonialism and Ecological Stewardship

I will demonstrate how participants' ecological understandings relate to the perception of Hastings Highlands as a waste land. There are differing perspectives amongst participants about their settler responsibilities on rural land vis-à-vis a settler responsibility in cities. The intersection between colonial relationships and ecological relationships emerges in discussion of private property within the narratives of members of Black Fly and Dragonfly. Gaining an understanding of the logic of colonialism within property relationships as well as environmental considerations becomes pivotal within this context, especially as Ontario finalizes the negotiation of the Algonquin Land Claim.

There are two sides of a settler stewardship or of trying to uphold an anti-colonial commitment. First, to protect the ecology of the land knowing ownership cannot be claimed. Eli believes a settler property owner's ecological responsibility is, "to help protect the land and not to stand in the way of the treaty rights of First Nations. I think that is the same in Toronto as our

⁶² Mick Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty: Ethics, Biopolitics, and Saving the Natural World*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press: 2011).

land, we just don't think of Toronto as land because it is small parcels and all paved."⁶³ She agrees in principle to the work of respecting any treaty decisions that are made and see that responsibility as one that all people have in Ontario, not just in Hastings Highlands. Seeing this responsibility differently at Black Fly, Sky demonstrates the second side of settler stewardship and the contradiction that exists within it, that of developing a relationship with the land one is protecting leading to an attachment and a feeling of belonging or ownership over the land. Sky says, "In setting up a land collective we have established some stewardship over the land, over 100 acres. We have more of an acknowledged responsibility up there than we do over our small plot of land in Toronto. I also think that *the wilder the area is the deeper the relationship is that you develop with it; you develop a higher sensitivity to protecting it.*"⁶⁴ The desire to steward and be responsible for the land within capitalism often leads to proprietary assertions.

Some participants in the Collective understand ecological responsibility in a rather essentializing understanding of Indigenous people. There are a number of examples of participants equating indigeneity with leaving the environment untouched. For example, Quinn says, "my understanding is that Indigenous people lived with nature and didn't alter it much and we have to work to get back to that, to heal the earth and make less of a footprint."⁶⁵ Taylor's view of the Algonquin Land Claim also assumes that it will leave those areas protected and untouched, "I would be okay with the park getting extended into this territory [due to the Land Claim] to protect more nature areas especially with the buildings going up here, so now there are more people, more dogs, and less wildlife."⁶⁶

⁶³ Eli, interview.

⁶⁴ Sky, interview.

⁶⁵ Quinn, interview.

⁶⁶ Taylor, interview.

Clearly, there are reasons to believe that Indigenous people have a sense of ecological stewardship from which settlers can learn. We hear from Frankie, “I am Native, so I follow the Native American belief that we should tread lightly on the earth. I am not into exploiting the earth at all. I am a product of the 60s. We tried to warn everybody back then, but they didn’t listen.”⁶⁷ Frankie underscores that there is a wide basis for the assumption that Indigenous people all have an inherent ecological knowledge. However, it is not the case that being Indigenous means that one cannot have an impact on the natural environment nor that Indigenous people did and do not impact it. There were and continue to be stewardship models that involve managing the environment. Furthermore, there are many Indigenous people who have not had the opportunity to learn their ancestral models of stewardship because of a long history of colonization in the form of residential schools, dispossession, and displacement. We heard from Sam, for example, about how her connection to the environment was revived when she moved out of the city. It is the nuance in understanding what ecological stewardship means and having a place-based perspective on Indigenous environmentalism that helps to counteract racist overgeneralizations about Indigenous people.

Brett’s narrative shows the importance of a grounded understanding of ecology and Indigenous sovereignty as well as the difficulty of letting go of a project that is fixed and established; of the propriety felt when owning property or dedicating time to it. There is a perceived contradiction between having grounded understanding and not feeling rooted in a place and we hear the tension between those two things here:

Experiential knowledge of the trees comes from living there and learning from the land. You need to learn what is a good tree to cut and which isn’t. Before I moved up to the land I would have been thinking about my relationships differently and I would think, ‘this is all Algonquin land and should not be touched at all. We can’t touch any of the trees.’ There are Algonquin Bands in the Maynooth area. Killaloe is the only official reserve, but there are a number of bands up in Whitney and the Baptiste Lake Algonquins also have a presence in

⁶⁷ Frankie, interview.

the area. The Métis Centre moved to Bancroft from Maynooth...I respect the treaty process and hope it goes well and would also want to be part of that piece of land [where Black Fly is situated] and I think I could negotiate that with the band council and would be open to new systems of governance around it. I wouldn't necessarily just pick up and leave, I would try to negotiate to be able to stay. The feeling comes from having a connection to the land, my time and energy. I have carried multiple bags of cement into the woods. I have put energy and intention into the space. So, anything that you build is hard to let go of but is also wanting to continue to be a part of it.⁶⁸

By taking the time to learn about what the Indigenous communities in the area of Hastings Highlands look like, Brett has done the work to find out the specific role he has as a settler in that area and what his responsibilities are to the Nations that are the original stewards of the land. Having had an overarching commitment to decolonization when he lived in Toronto, he did not have clear perspective about what might be expected of him and his commitments were theoretical and intangible. He says elsewhere that he had participated in support work for Indigenous sovereignty, but the situation he is in at Black Fly is the first one where he has had to consider his own role and responsibility in honouring that sovereignty. We hear in Brett's stated desire to stay at Black Fly, even if there was a treaty claim made on it, shows a respect for Indigenous governance and a willingness to honour the treaty. However, he also shows that this respect and honouring would not mean walking away without first having a conversation about what options might exist for maintaining a relationship with the land.

The commitment to relationship-building that Brett demonstrates shows us the steps involved in enacting a decolonizing ethics, that is relational.⁶⁹ As Cindy Milstein points out, the spirit of anarchism is of accepting that there will be differing and competing desires, it is "honest

⁶⁸ Brett, interview.

⁶⁹ Tara Joly's work on Métis refusal of reclaimed land is instructive in showing us why it is integral to seek out discussion with Indigenous elders in the specific place that one finds themselves. Joly draws on Audra Simpson's work to show that for some Indigenous communities, refusing to accept restored land is an act of denying the legitimacy of settler colonialism. Joly says, "As a response to the lack of consideration for healing and reclaiming Indigenous homeland, some Métis community members I work with enact refusals of reclamation sites. They argue that the spirit in the land cannot be replaced once it is disturbed." Tara Joly, "Reclaiming Nature? Indigenous Homeland and Oil Sands Territory." Joly cites Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

about the fact that there will always be uneasiness,” and having a commitment to “figuring out ways to coexist and thrive in our differentiation.”⁷⁰ Returning to Lea’s description of what Indigenous culture looks like in Maynooth from Chapter Four, by developing connected social relationships, stereotypes and essentializing narratives can be unsettled. It becomes important to understand the specificities of the negotiations, needs, and desires that take place in a given space. Evidently, these negotiations must be embedded in understandings of systemic barriers and histories of oppression, but for an anarchist ethics to be free of dogmatism and rigidity, there must be space for nuance and particularity.⁷¹

Adrian demonstrates how complicated it is to base practices on specific experiences as she recounts a conversation with an Algonquin forest ranger:

He walked the land with a few folks and checked it out. He encouraged us, as one person, not a representative of the Algonquin people or all Indigenous people, that we should not be too urban and precious about the land, this might be coming from his forestry background, but he said you know this has all already been cut, logged, so you have to cut it and manage the forest. It hasn’t been replanted, but plants just sprung up, so we need to manage it for different species to come up and pay attention to what animals we can get onto the land and he also encouraged us to hunt on it. He said that we have a role in this, don’t pretend it is just untouched wilderness because it is not. He said, ‘You guys are hippies, you are ok, we understand that hippies are onside.’ When I spoke to Eli, she said, ‘we have never had that conversation [about our responsibility to Indigenous populations] at Dragonfly.’⁷²

There are four important observations to be made about Adrian’s story. First, she shows that there is quite an extensive assumption that urban dwellers have a different relationship with ecology than people who live in rural spaces. Second, having only one representative’s opinion on how the land should be used from an Indigenous perspective can lead to

⁷⁰ Cindy Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*, (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), 15.

⁷¹ Brett has a commitment to avoid dogmatic prescription for the future and to work towards a society free of oppressive structures in the now that is undefined and leaves room for lived experimentation and negotiation. See, Uri Gordon, “Anarchism Reloaded,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12, no. 1 (2007): 39-42. There can be overarching absolute prescriptions for the future, since the understanding is that people and the communities in which they live will always change, evolve and grow. It would be counterintuitive to pursue a perfect end as it would to assume that a certain social form will be maintained throughout the years, opening the possibility of dogmatism and excluding the experimentation which is an important aspect of anarchism. See, Milstein, 15-16.

⁷² Adrian, interview.

tokenizing behaviour and false assumptions about what is the acceptable way to use the land without perpetuating colonizing behaviour. However, getting a local, Indigenous opinion is also vital to making informed decisions about what the best practices are for settlers in relation to the Nations with whom they interact by having land in Hastings Highlands. Third, having directed conversations about tangible land with individuals who have a direct interest in the land in question can offer more nuance to how some Indigenous people tread on the land and want that particular land to be used. With the example of the forest ranger, we are reminded to avoid gross generalizations about what stewardship and environmental protection might look like; this too is necessarily rooted in specific places.

These observations demonstrate that participants continue to hold settler-specific and urban logics of inhabitation and land use in their ecological relationships with the land on which their collectives are located. The belief that land must be made productive, year-round, is an internalized colonialism that is further entrenched by the private property imperatives of capitalism. The need to survive on land and to make it useful for a sedentary lifestyle makes different demands of the landscape than the traditional use of the land that Sam described. For people who used the area in migratory ways, the land was useful, but not in the same ways that my participants perceive usefulness, like agriculture. The need to survive complicates participants' desires to interact with the land as stewards when they use the land as a resource.

The variance between how Dragonfly and Black Fly have responded to survival on their respective pieces of land is suggestive of settler colonial ideas being challenged. For example, Eli identified to Adrian that Dragonfly had not had conversations about settler responsibilities, showing that there are changes in perception, priorities, and commitments in the responsibilities and considerations of the newer generation of Black Fly that respond to what has been missing for the older generation at Dragonfly and what they have not

considered. The move to make anti-colonialism more central brings to mind the concept of critical self-reflection, a central tenet of anarchism that Chaia Heller among others espouses. Critical self-reflection emphasizes the need to engage critically with anarchist theories, to know the histories and structures of oppression in the places one inhabits, and to challenge internalized practices that are reproduced within one's social relationships.⁷³ I will now turn to a discussion of critical self-reflection and prefiguration and wrap up the findings of this dissertation in my concluding chapter, below.

⁷³ Chaia Heller, *Ecology of Everyday Life: Rethinking the Desire for Nature*. (Montreal: Black Rose, 1999).

Conclusion: Building Ethical Anarchist Rural Practices

This dissertation documented two examples of the specific work of two collectives which aspire to small-scale rural revolutionary community building that Landauer, among others, espouses.¹ In this final chapter, I draw general conclusions about my case studies and their experiments. Participants in the Dragonfly and Black Fly Collectives have tried to create alternative community relationships in Lake Saint Peter, Maynooth and Hastings Highlands. In Chapter Four, I showed how members of those collectives and the wider alternative community have made a commitment to create deeper community in Hastings Highlands and have created a sense of belonging by intentionally seeking out community with those with whom they share cultural and political values. Chapter Five unpacked the complication of collective members opposing and also upholding private property relationships. Participants showed their desire to move away from strict property relationships and to create a mix of social and property relations. Economic concerns seem to be at the centre of the desire to own property. The attempts of Collective members to undo property relationships are imperfect but shown some movement away from capitalist and colonial logics toward a prioritization of social relationships in the form of informal economic relationships and changed views of who can stay on collective land. Members of the Dragonfly Collective, and to a lesser extent the Black Fly Collective, continue to make colonial justifications in their interactions with the land they occupy in Hastings Highlands. Chapter Six demonstrated the cognitive dissonance amongst anarchists about contributing to colonization by acquiring land and the fact that this dissonance seems greater in rural spaces and about rural land.² Their ecological practices seem to follow different logics in the rural than they

¹ Gustav Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*. Gabriel Kuhn (ed), (Oakland, PM Press, 2010); See also, Richard Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*. (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005); and David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, (Chicago: Paradigm, 2004).

² This is to say that many anarchists who either own property in the city or live in rental properties in the city are

do in the city. In the city participants continue to see the environment as something which requires protection, while in rural spaces they see land more as a resource. These practices point to an enduring differentiation made by participants between rural and urban space that places the rural at the service of urban need.

My case studies show that rural space is a place of radical possibility and also a place of difficult relationships and incomplete attempts at creating prefigurative, radical community. Further, the spaces of waste land provide opportunity for new ecological relationships and justifications for colonial ties to land. Rural communities demonstrate opportunities for creating avenues for building alternatives which are as important as fighting oppression and must exist alongside those fights while they struggle to live up to those ideals. The suggestion that alternatives and practical and specific experiments of anarchist principles are better developed in the countryside because of the specificity of place bring to mind Landauer's call for a move there.³ For example, in Chapter Six, Brett explained that his understanding of Indigenous sovereignty and environmental stewardship became better contextualized when he moved to Maynooth.⁴

Building communities in rural settings has opened up the possibility of reimagining relationships with property and with colonialism especially when taking ecological thought and ethics into account even if the two collectives have not met their goals of decolonizing and ending property relationships. Rural ICs also offer an entry points into an anti-colonial ecological ethic that is place-based and shows a deep commitment to process which I believe

critical of people who buy land in the countryside. The critique seems to be tied to the critiques we discussed in Chapters Two and Three, which suggest that to move to the country is to turn one's back on radical political struggles. Similarly, the suggestion made by anarchists about purchasing land in rural spaces is that it comes out of a lack of consideration of settler responsibilities. This dissertation research came largely out of a desire to question this critique, or at least to see if it has a basis.

³ Gustav Landauer, *For Socialism*, (London: Telos Press, 1919).

⁴ Brett, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Toronto, Ontario, December 2012.

must serve as the basis of any anarchist ethics because within anarchist theories and practices, there is both a desire for and a necessity for critical self-reflection and an attempt to incorporate that critical reflection into practice. From the understanding that there can be no firm prescriptions of what our social relationships should look like emerges the understanding that the process of negotiating with each other is the only ethical form of co-existing.

Anarchism requires a process of checking-in and reconsidering ethics, ideology, and rules. There is a need for flexibility and a commitment to process. For some, this can be perceived as a failure to institutionalize or codify rules and procedures and yet, this failure to institutionalize could be the exact mechanism which allows the participants and residents of The Hill to reconsider and improve on their ethical practices and social commitments. It is this flexible and dynamic spirit within anarchism that informs anarchist ethics.

There is a lot of work to be done in the realm of rural intentional community development for these Collectives. While participants demonstrate a desire to move beyond private property relationships, they continue to see their responsibilities to Indigenous peoples in property terms. However, the folks on ‘the Hill’ have set in motion a set of practices that follow the ethical commitments of situated anarchist principles and have committed to doing the work of scrutinizing their actions through ongoing discussions. While imperfect, Dragonfly has offered many people access to community and land for over thirty-five years; it was also instrumental to the development of Black Fly, which has taken steps to address concerns with private property and colonialism. The failure, to some extent, of many participants to create the ethical utopic intentional community they espouse in their ideology, does not translate to a failure of anarchist theories of ethics or anarchist intentional communities, but reminds us that we need to continue to do the work of critically engaging

with decolonizing theories and alternative economic models.⁵ This failure gives us road signs about where we need to work harder, to explore better ethical relationships with the environment, with an eye to undoing capitalism and private property, and with an attempt to reconciling the colonial history of Canada. According to Lea, the fact that many original members of Dragonfly believe that the Collective failed is not so much an indication that the goals of living intentionally were not successful, but evidence of the flexibility required to practice anti-authoritarian, intentional living in the context of neoliberalism.⁶

Despite a deep commitment to critical-self reflection, and a stated commitment to decolonization, ending capitalist and property relationships, and to ecological stewardship, in the complex context of rural settler colonial and Northern Ontario, there are many instances where their practices and logics do not satisfy the goals of decolonization. It seems as though the group of anarchists and participants in the Collectives have made sense of their ethical obligations to the land, to Indigenous peoples, and to the environment through settler logics by having a sense of entitlement to the land as owners of property. Participants' stated goals of decolonization was not addressed, show the need to build up rural allyship, and that more theoretical and practical work needs to be done with respect to fully meeting anarchist principles of anti-colonialism, decolonization, and ecological stewardship.

The next steps for anarchist theories and practices is to look more deeply at Indigenous environmental teaching and practices to deepen relational understandings of stewardship without a proprietary relationship. Tuck and Yang suggest that extended ethics are necessary to redress colonial legacies. They say, "inherent assumptions about land, including: land is property; the

⁵ I am grateful to Bruce Erickson for his thoughts about failure, specifically with respect to Canadian nationalism and the canoe, which made me consider the possibilities that failure can provide. See, Bruce Erickson, *Canoe Nation: Nature, Race, and the Making of a Canadian Icon*, (Toronto: UBC Press, 2013), 186-191.

⁶ Lea, interviewed by Joanna Adamiak in Maynooth, Ontario, February 2013.

beliefs that land can be owned by people, and that occupation is a right, reflect a profoundly settling, anthropocentric, colonial view of the world.”⁷ The expansion of considerations beyond humans closes up the ease with which we might use imagery of waste land as an excuse for oppressive behaviour. We see measures of liberation in the collectives on the Hill *and* we need to continue to do the work of freeing ourselves from possession and dispossession and move further towards even more radical ethical relationships. Sky reminds us that although the possibility for creating alternatives is greater in Hastings Highlands, that there is always a need to be more accessible. Although anarchist theories can build critical responses to anarchists' oversights with respect to race, ecology, and colonialism they require a rooted, dynamic, self-critical, adaptive, and especially relational practice they must be put into action. In the words of David Graeber and Stephen Shukaitis in the introduction to their edited book dedicated to radical theorization,

Constituent Imagination:

it is a question of forging a space, ethic, and practice appropriate to where we find ourselves. There is no pure social space in which new practices and ideas will emerge from an ideal revolutionary subject that we only need to listen to. Our lives are constantly distributed across a variety of compromises with institutions and arrangements of power that are far from ideal. The question is not to bemoan that fate but rather to find methods and strategies of how to most effectively use the space we find ourselves in to find higher positions of subversiveness in struggle.⁸

From the understanding that there can be no firm prescriptions of what our social relationships should look like emerges the understanding that the process of negotiating with each other is central to an anarchist ethic as is a space in which that ethic is practiced. The goal of mutual self-interest –meaning, that both individual and collective fulfilment is achieved through voluntary association– drives anarchists to theorize and create relationships that aim

⁷ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 1*, no. 1, (2012): 24.

⁸ Stephen Shukaitis and David Graeber (eds), *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations, Collective Theorization*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2007), 31.

towards equity but requires material grounding to be effective.⁹ The principle of prefiguration, the belief that one must enact the kind of social relationships they anticipate and wish to see, drives anarchists to practice relationships where means and ends are the same and that lead anarchists to construct structures, institutions, and relationships that help to make anarchism happen, where they stand, right now.¹⁰ Within the broad ethic of negotiation between all interested parties, the sphere of respect expands to address ecological, anti-colonial, and anti-oppressive considerations. Shukaitis and Uri Gordon's definitions of prefiguration have made explaining the ethical necessity of redressing oppression and working towards societies that do not perpetuate unjust social relations central goals of the philosophy. The focus on good process as ethics is at the heart of that goal but also requires tangible moves away from dominant narratives of ownership and entitlement.¹¹ The Dragonfly and Black Fly Collectives have not created the conditions of decolonization, they have the ethical tools to continue to work toward those goals and need to dig deeper into Indigenous theories and histories to improve their efforts.

This dissertation documents how anarchist principles are enacted in rural settings and helps interrogate the geographic difficulties of prefiguration within the confines of state and capitalist structures. My hope is that by theorizing new ethical considerations in a specific context I might help anarchist practices become more nuanced to put decolonial and ecological considerations more centrally into anti-authoritarian work. This last potential impact will also,

⁹ Voluntary association has been used interchangeable with mutual aid and free association. Richard Day credits William Godwin with the idea of voluntary association; see Richard Day, *Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 103. Peter Marshall credits Elisée Reclus; see Peter Marshall *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, (London: Harper, 2008), 344. Meanwhile, Wayne Price gives credit to Kropotkin for the term in "The Anarchist Method: An Experimental Approach to Post-Capitalist Economies," in Deric Shannon et al. (eds.), *The Accumulation of Freedom: Writings on Anarchist Economics*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2012), 316.

¹⁰ Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive: Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*, (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2008), 34-40.

¹¹ Ibid.; Stevphen Shukaitis, *Imaginal Machines: Autonomy & Self-Organization in the Revolutions of Everyday Life*, (London: Minor Compositions, 2009), 143.

hopefully, affect wider political relationships and theories, especially in terms of emphasizing the need to redress colonial legacies and address ecological concerns more concretely if we hope to bring about the wide, difficult political project of emancipation.

Errico Malatesta argues that anarchism is "a spirit, a deeply held human sentiment, which aims at the good of all, freedom and justice for all, solidarity and love among the people" and therefore is "not an exclusive characteristic only of self-declared anarchists, but inspires all people who have a generous heart and an open mind."¹² The suggestion is that society will only be free when every member can voluntarily associate with others and participate in its organization. Envisioning a dynamic process of creating different sets of voluntarily established relationships and communities that are different from the ones that have been imposed on people by oppressive institutions and individuals was what attracted me to anarchism and what I witnessed in the anarchist communities of which I was a part. Peter Marshall, author of, arguably, the most complete overview of anarchism, *Demanding the Impossible*, says that "the condition of anarchy" is the creation of "a free society which allows all human beings to realize their full potential."¹³ Others, like Uri Gordon, argue from less of an institutional and structural standpoint, suggesting that anarchism is culture —changing by nature— more than sets of rigid political beliefs, because anarchists practice their beliefs in the present as much as possible with vague ideas for how these beliefs might work out in the future."¹⁴ It is this dynamism that provides an entry point for us to consider the place of rural intentional communities in the larger context of anarchist goals of social change through the creation of new social relationships, institutions, and structures that mirror the views and ideologies that they see as necessary in the practice of bringing that social change and that are, necessarily, situationally specific.

¹² Errico Malatesta, *Umanita Nova*, April 13, 1922.

¹³ Marshall, 3.

¹⁴ Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive: Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*, (Ann Arbor: Pluto, 2008), 42.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Study name:

Analyzing Rural Anarchist Practices in Relation to Anarchist Theories of Community Building: A Case Study of the Harmony and Beet Collectives in Relation to the Town of Chadsbea

Researcher:

Joanna Adamiak, Doctoral Candidate

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Purpose of the research:

The purpose of this research project is to learn about how those who live in anarchist rural intentional communities in Canada think about their practices and what ideologies brought them to live this way as well as how they relate to and are engaged in the wider community around them. The research will seek to ask how the participants in these communities understand their practices as well as the theories they may be routed in. The research will seek to uncover the relationship of rural intentional collective members with geographical distance from the state, issues of colonialism, and ecology. The research will be conducted through recorded interviews.

What you will be asked to do in the research:

You will be asked questions in an open-ended interview. You will be asked to share any literature, films, or audio recordings that have inspired you to live in an intentional community, or move to the country in general. You will be asked questions about your experience as a member of or friend of the Harmony or Beet Collective and about your ideological and philosophical reasons for moving to the countryside, and how you evaluate experiences of intentional community living. The interviews will take approximately 1 hour and will be recorded. You may also be asked to read short passages of theory and watch short parts of documentary films about intentional communities and to write your thoughts about what you watched, read, or heard. You will not be offered any incentives to participate in the study. Please note that you have the right not to answer questions and to withdraw from the study at any time.

Risks and Discomforts:

There are risks involved in participating. You will be asked questions about how you live your life and your ideology and you may experience some slightly negative emotions as a result. Asking questions about how one lives their ideology can trigger some emotional discomfort, such as dissonance. I hope to minimize this potential distress by engaging you in open discussion, lead just as much by you as me. I will also work to ensure that the questions asked are not biased or judgmental.

Benefits of the research and benefits to you:

Hopefully, the research will benefit you because it will give you the opportunity to reflect on and gain insight into your experience of living in a rural community and how this experience relates to a broader anarchist ethic of living off of the land. You will have an opportunity to offer an analysis of community building in rural areas. This study is part of my doctoral research at York University. The findings will be presented in my dissertation. It is my hope that this research will positively impact anarchist practices of rural intentional community building by making anti-colonial and ecological considerations more central to anti-authoritarian work.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the relationship you may have with the researcher, study staff, or York University either now, or in the future.

Withdrawal from the study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be protected and any information you provide will be confidential. The name of your community as well as the geographic location will be changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. While some demographic and identifying information will be collected initially, that information will be kept separately from the information you provide in the interview. The data will be kept on an encrypted and password protected hard drive which will be kept in a locked drawer in a filing cabinet in my home office until the project is completed. Upon completion of the write up of the study, in the form of a dissertation that will be submitted as a component of my doctoral studies at York University, any identifying personal information about you will be destroyed. All other data will remain in a locked drawer. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions about the research?

If you have any questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please contact me, the researcher (contact information can be found on page 1 of this form), or my supervisor. My supervisor, Catriona Sandilands, can be contacted by telephone: 416-736-2100 x 70178, or by email:

essandi@yorku.ca. You may also contact the Office of the Faculty of Environmental Studies, HNES 109, York University, telephone 416-736-5252.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, you may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____, consent to participate in *Analyzing Rural Anarchist Practices in Relation to Anarchist Theories of Community Building: A Case Study of the Harmony and Beet Collectives in Relation to the Town of Chadsbea*, conducted by Joanna Adamiak. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature _____ Date

Participant

Signature _____ Date

Principle Investigator

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. My goal is to learn more about what motivated you to become a member of a rural intentional community, how you think about your experience of being part of this community, and what theories or ideologies (if any) you bring into your participation in the community. Please feel free to flag any questions which you do not want to answer and I will skip over them. Remember that you can decide not to answer any questions and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

I will ask you about your experience of living in the X (Harmony or Beet) collective and about your thoughts about intentional communities, in general.

First, I would like to get to know you a little bit better, how you came to join the X (Harmony or Beet) Collective, and your experience of being part of the Collective.

Do you feel like you identify with a particular political identity?

How would you describe your political identity?

Do you consider yourself to be an anarchist?

How do you see yourself (your position) in relation to Indigenous People and the land on which we find ourselves?

How would you describe your relationship with the environment?

What are your thoughts about land ownership or private property?

Now, for some questions about you and X Collective(s)/Maynooth:

Are you a member of one of the Collectives? [if no, skip to 9]

How long have you been a member of the X (Harmony or Beet) Collective?

Do you live near/on the collectives?

Do you live here year-round? [if yes, move to 11]

How much time do you spend there in a year? How often do you go up there?

What would contribute to your going up there more often? Is the goal to spend more time up there?

Can you tell me a little bit about how you came to become familiar with (a member of) X/Maynooth?
[if not a member, skip to 14]

Can you tell me about how the Collective is organized/how you came to exist?

Can you speak to the goals of the collective?

Can you talk a little about what kind of a geographical space you moved from?

To what extent was geographical remoteness from major urban areas a factor in your decision to move to the country?

How would you categorize the location of X? [Do you consider the location of X to be “rural”]?

Was moving to the countryside (or living in a collective) something you had done before?

What about the country enticed you?

What were your visions of it? Did they match reality? What was different from urban space?

How do you relate to the larger community that surrounds X, like other intentional communities nearby? Or the towns nearby (Maynooth, specifically)?

What made you decide to write a blog about it?

Can you tell me a little bit about what political considerations, if any, influenced your decision to (join this collective) move there?

Would you consider X to be an intentional community?

Please tell me about anything that you've read, listened to, or watched about intentional communities, if anything.

How did these materials affect your view of intentional communities or your experience of being part of one?

Do members of X Collective explicitly discuss ethics and principles of the Collective?

Are there any shared political beliefs among Collective members?

Are there any implicit principles or ethics?

Can you tell me about some of those principles/ethics?

Can you tell me about your or other Collective members' thoughts about ecology and the relationship that your Collective has with the environment it is in?

Can you tell me about your or other Collective members' thoughts about colonialism and Indigenous people?

What is your relationship to private property?

How do you deal with disagreements about visions for the space or principles?

Do you feel that there are any contradictions between your ethics and practices in relation to those principles?

Second, I would like to ask you about your thoughts about the practice of creating and living in intentional communities in general:

1. This question will be 4 questions: In your opinion, can you tell me what 1. political; 2. social; 3. personal; 4. and other reasons people have for starting rural intentional communities or move to the country, in general?
2. In your opinion, what are the benefits of living in a rural area, if any?
3. To what extent is being somewhat isolated a goal for you in your life here?
4. Do you feel removed from authority? Police? The state? (more or less than in the city)?
5. What is your opinion of other intentional communities that you are familiar with, what do you think of them?
6. To what extent do you think that intentional communities live up to their desired principles?
7. What is your opinion of the kinds of people that make up intentional communities?
8. Are there ecological responsibilities that come with living in rural? Is this different from urban?
9. What are your thoughts about the relationship of people who start intentional communities to indigenous populations of that place?
10. What are your thoughts about the relationship of ICs and private property relationships?
11. Do you see a different responsibility/relationship of people towards indigenous populations, decolonization, refusal of private property in a rural/wild setting in comparison to urban one?
12. Do you see a different responsibility/relationship towards nature/the environment in a rural/wild setting in comparison to an urban one?
13. Do you believe that participation in the collective, or the community around it is revolutionary? Why or why not?
14. Do you perceive the rural to lend itself more to anarchism? Or anarchist practices?