

Brewing Authenticity: Production, Consumption, and Middle-class work within the  
Ontario Craft Beer Community

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## Abstract

This thesis is an ethnographic study of the Ontario craft beer community that looks at how middle-class craft beer workers and community members create authenticity through their involvement within the industry. Working within this community brewers, servers, and other workers attempt to find self fulfillment within the work they perform. I will also argue that the work done by craft brewery workers and community members attempt to build up the Ontario craft beer industry as an important region for craft beer in North America. Through their involvement in various forms of work within the community, craft beer workers hope to challenge both the growing commercialization and homogeneity of beer and the perceived norms of beer culture.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction:**

Driving down a picturesque concession road, the maple tree canopy, shrouded in vibrant fall colours, is periodically interspersed with farms with field stone fences, then we arrive. As we get out on either side, we are surrounded by lengthy hydro-like poles sticking out of the ground. These poles are used for the cultivation of hop varieties. In the centre there is a barn which is large and appears to be quite old but recently renovated. While we walk towards the entrance, we pass a bike rack and a small garden which is growing some hop vines. As we put on our Covid face masks and sanitize our hands, we walk into the barn where we are met with the noise of people ordering beer, the radio playing, and the sounds of people operating machines in the back. As we pass the bar counter where servers are busy pouring beer from taps, we make our way to a table on the other side of the barn patio. While we sit, we debate and discuss the various styles of beer this establishment makes, eventually deciding and making our way back into the barn to order. I order and pay for a farmer's style saison, made with hops that are grown onsite. The yellowish colour of the beer radiates in the waning fall sun. As the sun shines on our table, I spot the other side of the barn full of brewing equipment and people moving bags of malt to be put into the mash of the beer. Sipping my beer, it occurs to me that people drive hours to this remote rural brewery to drink the beer and take in the countryside of Oro-Medonte. Reflecting on this I spend the rest of my time thinking about who gets to do these kinds of activities.

In recent years, the popularity of craft beer has soared throughout the province of Ontario, resulting in 270 breweries opening throughout the province. Big and small craft breweries attract consumers to sample, as well as consume their various beers in growing quantities. From gentrified neighbourhoods, like the Kensington Market in downtown Toronto, to the Ottawa Valley's rural areas, craft breweries can now be found in most Ontario

communities. Often their products include quirky names, and can art which emphasises their local providence, whimsical and experimental nature. Craft beer has long presented itself as an alternative to industrial domestic and imported beers, which are often associated with sporting events or nationalistic television advertisements. Using words like "hoppy," "fruity," "malty," "chewy," or "aromatic", craft beer is associated with experimentation of flavours. Like numerous other cultural consumer products like artisanal cheese, heritage breed livestock, coffee, chocolate, and cocktails, craft beer has become an "elite" upscale iteration of beer.

Reconfiguring new forms of taste and new conceptualizations of work, craft beer has become an alternative for those unsatisfied with the large macro beer world. Through the construction of meaning by serving "good" beer, craft brewers and servers articulate their knowledges and perform their services to customers. Within the craft beer community, the sense of localness and quality play an important role in developing authenticity. Incorporating ideas of sustainability, community, quality ingredients and small-batches, craft breweries hope to show their skill and knowledge to the consumer. For the middle-class, craft beer represents a way to gain and pursue a sense of authenticity and maintain a sense of good omnivorous taste. Seeking creativity and uniqueness, the middle-class sees craft beer as a form of creative expression that offers more than traditional middle-class work. Unlike many traditional forms of middle-class labour, artisanal and craftwork offer people a way to perform a sense of "coolness" in what they do. Through a romanticized return to manufacturing work, these middle-class workers articulate a sense of morality and emotional labour into the meanings of the work they do.

This Master of Arts thesis is an ethnographic study of the Ontario craft beer community conducted primarily, through semi structured interviews with five informants, previous on-site experiences, and online research. I aim to create an account for the regional rise of craftwork



within the province of Ontario. Highlighting the rise of craftwork, I will critically examine current workers within the industry who work in jobs like craft brewers, servers, other brewery workers, and consumers focusing on understanding what craft is and what it represents for them. Incorporating their knowledges of beer these people express their identity, work, world view, and activism through the work they perform. These community members' daily lives consist of reflection, self-construction, and finding meaning in the work they perform. Through working within the craft beer industry, these predominantly middle-class workers express and perform a sense of dissatisfaction with traditional forms of middle-class work. For craft workers, the work they perform is articulated as a sense of moral goodness as they believe what they are doing creates quality tasting beer, creates community, and performs good environmentally sound, quality work.

My thesis explores how craft and artisanal work within the "new urban economy" as well as the development of cultural omnivorousness have redefined work for the middle-class.<sup>1</sup> Much like local food movements, craft beer has become a shift away from certain forms of industrial work through the incorporation of activism rooted in terroir as well as place. These factors have contributed to craft beer becoming an industry incorporating a romanticized version of the past to create a product without the concerns of industrial agriculture or the corporate food industry. Through doing "good work," these workers believe they develop and maintain a sense of authenticity. Value, taste, and place are important ways craft beer workers and consumers look at beer. By documenting the experiences of people involved with craft beer in Ontario, I hope to

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<sup>1</sup> In Richard E. Ocejo's *Masters of Craft: Old Jobs in the New Urban Economic*, Ocejo outlines that the rise of craft and artisanal work has resulted in developing a new urban economy within the post-industrial landscape of cities in North America.

demonstrate fundamental shifts within middle-class life within North America and the various aspirations and anxieties of daily life.

Within the interviews and digital ethnographic research, I conducted with members of the Ontario craft beer/ brewing community, I looked at their day-to-day interactions with craft beer and the various meanings associated with it. For these people, craft beer represents a mindset of community building and attention to the minute details of making beer to taste authentic. Within the following chapters, I will begin in Chapter Two with a brief history of beer, an account of the middle-class in North America. This chapter will show both the craft beer industry within Ontario, in terms of its early creation, and how it has grown to be a major consumer good for middle-class people. Chapter Three will focus on how middle-class people find themselves working in the craft beer industry. The narratives of how the middle-class find themselves within craft beer show the various anxieties around doing traditional work and how people use craft brewing as an alternative. Chapter Four examines the day-to-day work of craft beer workers in Ontario and how they interpret what they do and their motivation for working in the industry. Through the work they perform, craft beer workers believe that they contribute towards something larger and meaningful. Chapter Five looks at the reimagining, world-making, consumption, and futures of Ontario's craft beer movement. This chapter will explore how craft beer workers create community and propose a world view that sees breweries as neighbourhood community centres and will unpack the craft brewing community within this moment in history. This chapter will also highlight the anxieties around selling-out to larger breweries. Chapter six will discuss the future(s) of craft beer in Ontario. Chapter Seven is the conclusion and future directions for this research.

Within the later 2010s, I began to be aware of the growing craft beer movement as many of my friends began to express interest in it. As someone who grew up within the middle-class my exposure to craft goods was that it was something, while expensive, was something that provided different unique experiences through their enjoyment. As my friends became more interested in craft beer, especially craft beer produced within Ontario, I soon realized it was a growing industry in North America that was challenging what beer could be.<sup>2</sup> While at first, I felt that craft beer was for "hipsters" or was not as good as cider, I soon grew an interest when a friend began working for a craft brewery. As more of my friends began to acquire the "taste" for craft beer, we would begin to go to places like craft beer bars. At craft beer bars, where the menu serves hundreds of different craft beers, I started to see how much this industry was beginning to expand past a few breweries in Ontario.

During my undergrad, I developed a growing interest in understanding the North American middle-class and middle-class life. I was particularly interested in the experiences of both upward and downward mobility. As a result of my interest, my Honours research paper explored how young middle-class people around the Toronto area experienced fragility, anxieties, inability to find affordable housing and downward mobility. During my first year in my Master's program, I became interested in craft beer due to reflection of my previous relationships with going to breweries, consuming their products and through reading the ethnography *Masters of Craft: Old Jobs in the New Urban Economy* by Richard E. Ocejo. Upon reading *Master's of Craft*, I became aware that there was little to no mention of the craft brewing industry. Upon further reading on Heather Paxson and Brad Weiss's work, I realized that more

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<sup>2</sup> In 2021 there is about 315 total craft breweries across the Province of Ontario. This accounts for about 110 ten communities which have breweries within them. There are for 4,600 full time workers and 9,000 additional support or related businesses workers.

recent ethnography has begun to look at local food movements and the rise of craft in North America. With more interest in understanding this phenomenon, I became further aware of the connection to middle-classness and craft beer culture. With more scholars looking at local food movements and the artisanal craft industry, I hope my research builds upon this scholarship.

In *Master's of Craft: Old Jobs in the New Urban Economy*, Ocejó explores various craft workplaces in New York City such as craft distilling, craft bartending/ mixology, barbershops, and whole animal artisanal butchery. Throughout Ocejó's ethnography in the Chelsea market of New York City, he looks at how authenticity, masculinity, and identity are formed within these jobs (Ocejó 2017: xx-xxi). Further exploring how people find themselves within these forms of work, Ocejó shows that both middle-class and working-class people enter these jobs differently. While middle-class people find themselves in these jobs as a way to find engaging and fun work, working-class workers often work their way up through various jobs acquiring the technical skill as well as knowledge (Ocejó 2017: 7-13). Ocejó further explores how these workers not only perform their work but use their skills to educate consumers on how to enjoy the products and services they provide. While Ocejó explores craft work in a different context than craft brewing in Ontario, there are some similarities that can be made in regard to the motivations for why people begin to do these forms of work. In Ontario craft brewing is not only part of new forms of urban work it also has connections to smaller rural communities. In Ontario, some people learn these skills and are creating an identity as "hip" urban workers, for others it is also a way to connect to local agriculture and local food and farm to table movements.

### **Expectations: "killing-time" in the Craft Beer Industry:**

Within North America, restaurant and service work has often become a place in which young middle-class people become forced to work as a means to get by. Due to the lasting impacts of neoliberalism, the competitiveness of finding careers, and generational stratification, young middle-class people often provide manual labour and service work.<sup>3</sup> For many younger middle-class people, service work like bartending or restaurant work becomes a way to gain income while waiting for career opportunities to develop (Hill 2015: 4). Through the act of "killing time," these very often post-secondary educated people, use manual labour and service work as a way to get by.<sup>4</sup> They fear that they will become stuck in-service work, forced to take on multiple sources of employment to economically survive (Hill 2015: 5). Young people hope to "hang out" until better opportunities arise. While many of the occupations these peoples' parents choose as their professions have become unattainable, young people seek work that involves all their sense of capacities, and the belief that they will benefit the world (Rosenblatt 2013: 600). Often preceding generations have filled the labour force and have occupied the jobs that young people have trained for. They are waiting for this stratification to solve itself through time and seek what opportunities that they can find. During my interviews, I became aware that servers and craft brewers working within this industry believe that this industry allows them to perform work that is meaningful and engaging rather than a space to kill "time" before they begin a career. The craft beer industry also helps to facilitate the idea that the work done is

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<sup>3</sup> Both Ortner (2016) and Hill (2015) highlight the lasting impacts of neoliberalism in North America has resulted in the middle-class and working classes experience downsizing, offshoring, as well as lay offs within many jobs. As a result of neoliberal policies, the middle-class have experienced declining fortunes and insecurity around finding meaningful employment as well as success.

<sup>4</sup> Hill suggests the term "killing time" reflects the language used to describe the conditions of underemployment and precarity which exists within United States. Furthermore, the use of killing time for Hill shows the process of working in precarious or unmeaningful work as a meaningful choice which structures or neoliberalism which create inequality.

meaningful and contributing to positive change within society. Working within the craft beer industry allows these people to share what they believe to be good with "everyone" within their community while also being an engaging place.

### **Methodology:**

This project was conducted in various ways due to the COVID-19 pandemic altering how ethnographic fieldwork is done. As in-person fieldwork posed ethical and safety concerns, this research was conducted through auto-ethnography, digital ethnography, and semi-structured interviews, which took place through Zoom. Zoom is a video software application similar to other platforms like Skype. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Zoom became one of the popular software used by post-secondary institutions and by workplaces working from home. This ethnographic work also incorporates review of media and public discussion around craft beer. Before conducting five semi-structured interviews of people involved in various aspects of the craft beer community within Ontario, I began looking at how digital technology was being used during a time of social distancing. I looked at craft beer community groups, craft beer social media pages, blogs, websites, and videos posted on YouTube through digital ethnography. In addition, I also looked at things like online events online such as virtual craft beer tastings. Within many of these digital events, community members hope to teach or inform people about not only the processes of how craft beer is made but on ways to taste and how to pair it with food. Due to the pandemic limiting in-person experiences, the craft beer community has been active in creating "a scene" online. As people become involved in using these technologies to communicate with the world around them, there is a creation of an audience through generating, sharing, and creating content virtually. Through this, people engage in the creation of knowledge and information between creators and participants (Marwick 2015: 140). In late October 2020, I

participated in the Ontario Craft Brewers Association conference. As a public event, this conference was conducted both in an online app and on Zoom. At this event, I attended the keynote, diversity and craft beer workshop, and the general meeting.

My semi-structured interviews took place from January 1st, 2021, to March 1st. Due to the onset of a province-wide lockdown in late December 2020, there were challenges in recruitment. During this time, three of my participants were out of work temporarily due to the inability to serve craft beer. During my interviews, I asked questions regarding their experiences working within the craft beer community. I first began to explore how these people found themselves working within the industry, then asking questions around their day-to-day experience, then later asking larger questions on how they view craft beer and where they see craft beer in Ontario at this moment in history. In the effort to protect the identities of my participant's, pseudonyms were used for both the names and a few of the breweries where they worked.

During the course of my five semi structured interviews there was diversity in the various jobs performed by my informants. While all five informants spent time working in larger breweries, four also worked in smaller breweries across the province of Ontario. All five of my informants entered the craft beer industry, and community, at different times in their lives as well as for different reasons. For four of my informants, working at a craft brewery began as something “fun” to do while in school. Throughout the interviews my informants spoke on macro beer, and imported beer, carefully often avoiding calling it “unauthentic” or speaking about the kinds of people who drink it. As my informant Jackson made clear during my interview with him, Labatt’s, Molson, and Coors are still being purchased often being the same beer which their parents drank. Treading carefully on the discussion on macro and imported beer

my informants feared becoming the middle-class “craft beer snob” and performing snobbery. Linguist L. Konnelly suggests that the jargon and language used to discuss the qualities of craft beer a form of fanciness towards craft beer (Konnelly 2020: 79-80). In their discussion of craft beer my informants suggested at various times that both craft beer and working within the community was a way of doing “good work” or work that was significant in developing “local communities”. Throughout these interviews my informants stated that craft meant something different often describing personal reasons for why their work was meaningful. My informants also discussed how they saw the industry, and community, at this time discussing things like exclusion within the community as well as the anxieties around working in the pandemic. Two of my informants, who identified as female, discussed their experiences of gender and racial discrimination within the industry, as well as on how the dynamics of the community are changing. Towards the end of my interviews my informants put forth their ideas around where they believed craft beer is going in the future.



## **Chapter Two: How Craft Beer Came to Be**

Before exploring how my participants found themselves within the Ontario craft brewing community, I will first examine both the history of brewing in Ontario, secondly, create an account for the middle-class in North America, and thirdly begin to look at the middle-class's connection to craft brewing. The food and beverages we consume do not simply appear from nowhere, but through time and place develop to what they are now. People consume an anchoring of identity through food and drink (Paxson 2017: 4). As a substance of production and livelihood, food/ beverages act as a medium for sociocultural exchange. As a transformative substance, food and beverage help to enact power as well as manipulate social relations (Paxson 2017: 7). Understanding what craft beer means, one must first understand the various processes that led to its creation. For many, the idea of craft beer connotes an idea of a small hole-in-the-wall brewery where a white, bearded male "hipster" brews graciously hoppy beer with fancy names and flavours.

Often these same people inter-changeably define craft beer as "micro-brewing" however, these associations have become increasingly challenged by those who work and consume beer.<sup>5</sup> By invoking European folk traditional practices of brewing beer, craft brewing is a practice that anchors itself within local communities, through time honoured practices and ingredients (Konnolly 2020: 77). Connecting "old world" styles and techniques of brewing with

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<sup>5</sup> The term micro-brewing is often used to describe smaller craft beer production. Many of the early microbrewing operations have grown with the demand for craft beer. Most would define this as craft beer instead focusing on the production methods instead of the scale of the production. As Papazian (2014) points out, the growth of microbreweries becoming commercially successful craft breweries is largely due to the efforts of breweries and their customers.

experimentation, new flavours, local ingredients, and experiences, craft beer challenges and redefines people's experience with beer.

### **A History of Brewing:**

As a beverage associated with "low brow culture" and the working-class, beer was seen to have little to no prestige. The brewing of beer was often associated with women artisans or brewed within monasteries. Brewed for both religious purposes and caloric intake, at-home beer became an inexpensive way to consume as well as preserve grains (Brooks 2021). For working-class families, producing beer at home became a normal domestic task for women. However, during times of strict religious fundamentalism there were stricter gender norms and accusations of witchcraft (Brooks 2021). As a result, many women who brewed beer domestically were accused of witchcraft as religious fundamentalists believed that women's work was not to brew beer. Gender bias would develop within the industry around brewing beer. With the development of the industrial revolution and later, the digital revolution, beer became mass-produced (Matthews & Picton 2014: 340-341). The industrial revolution saw the advancement of brewing on a massive scale, as new forms of machinery and brewing practices were used to produce beer for the wider masses. In *Culture & Consumption*, Grant McCracken states that with the development of the Industrial Revolution in the Nineteenth Century, there was more accessibility for consumer practices amongst the proletariat classes (McCracken 1990: 22-23). During the Post-war era to the 1980s, the Canadian beer industry would become homogenized, capitalized, and shifted from craft production methods to large-scale industrialization. Industrial large-scale companies such as Molson and Labatt's, aggressively bought up smaller breweries (Matthews & Picton 2013: 342). As consumers experienced little choice in their selections of beer, standardized low-alcohol percentage lagers and ales were labelled as "ice," "cold," or "dry."

Many of the consumers of beer at this time who would later become involved with craft beer believed that the labelling of beer to simply be cold or dry also meant that there was less flavour and made beer “bad.”

Beer brands would focus on creating an image, or idealized lifestyle, through advertisement rather than the taste of the beer itself (Matthews & Picton 2013: 342). Brands such as Molson's and Labatt's produced similarly tasting products such as light lagers or pale ales. These beer styles would prove to be inexpensive and efficient to make in large quantities (Appleton 2016: 11). As beer advertisement became centred on masculinity as their primary consumers, the advertisement often revolved around sports, heavily sexualized depictions of women, and nationalism. With men who fought in the Second World War developing the taste for cheap lager styles of beers, the masculinization of beer would continue in consumer culture (Darwin 2017). During this time, brewers who ran these breweries had little say over recipes or the styles of beer to be made. Marketing became more important than anything else (Appleton 2016: 13). Like other consumer goods during this time, there was a standardization taking place. Larger breweries would continue to grow through the processes of globalization and neoliberalism (Matthews & Picton 2014: 342). Through their monopoly on the beer market, larger globalized beer brands would lobby Federal and Provincial governments to impose fees and restrictions on smaller beer brands. They would have preferential and often exclusive access to distribution networks through places like the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) and the Ontario Beer Store, a monopoly owned by the larger beer companies that had a monopoly on beer sales for decades.

### **An Account for the North American Middle-Class:**

The middle-class fascination with the rise of craft and artisanal goods has been a phenomenon that has risen out of the material conditions which formed the middle-class in North America. During the Twentieth Century, growing Post-War prosperity would lead to the development of the North American middle-class. During this time, many people emerged in society known as the Professional Managerial Class (PMC). As a group of people, the PMC emerged as those who elevated social status through education rather than property (Ehrenreich 1979: 12). The PMC became those whose work was often around management or the reproduction of society. Within this group, lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, and managers were popular professions related to it. This group would also include cultural workers such as journalists, artists, and writers who played a role in shaping culture (Rosenblatt 2013: 596). During this time the middle-class where predominantly white people who began to leave cities to establish suburban neighbourhoods. Ranging from knowledge workers to service workers, this group became the tastemakers as well as the consumer-class. During the later half of the Twentieth Century, the "new" middle-class's growing prosperity began to fracture.

The 1960s-70s countercultural movement would result in many young people raised within the middle-class life becoming disenchanted, alienated, and dissatisfied with modern middle-class consumer life. Ecotourism and alternative middle-class lifestyles emerged as a way for young people, raised by middle-class parents, to "tune in" and "drop out" from the "rat race" of modern life (Fletcher 2014: 91-93). Leisure hobbies, alternative forms of travelling, and activities became ways in which young people would cope with a hyper consumer society's reality. Instead of the pursuit of material gain through hard work, people looked for self-expression and a focus on the quality of life (Fletcher 2014: 103). The pursuit of leisure would

become a productive pursuit for middle-class life, as a way for people to pursue many of the same life goals their parents did through work. While some people would continue to pursue a countercultural way of life, many young people would begin to pursue a bourgeois path later in life (Fletcher 2014: 107). With the growing popularity of outdoor living and counter cultural ways of life there were growing interest in health food as a way to challenge homogeneity as well as industrialization happening in food. Participation in things like the health food movement was a way to protest the establishment (Dubisch 1981: 312). These movements had concerns over the environment and consumer culture. Towards the end of the 1970s to the 1990s, middle-class life was faced with numerous challenges due to the lasting impacts of neoliberalism and globalization.

As class reproduction is a central part of middle-class life, the structural changes faced during this time meant that young people faced declining opportunities and wages; access to junior career jobs and the success that their parents had was not probable for them (Ortner 1998:424-425). As a result of the "failure" and anxieties for younger people to reproduce the same way of life as their parents, these members of Generation X faced guilt, anxiety, and self-doubt over their futures. At the same time, upper-middle-class children could be financially supported by their parents to maintain the "good life" (Ortner 1998: 429). For lower-middle-class people, the "good life" could not be reproduced the same way, and they often had to work in retail and service jobs to financially survive. Within North America, neoliberal policies meant active processes of corporate downsizing and offshoring industry to maximize profitability (Ortner 2016: 53-54). While the working classes' processes of downsizing were felt, the middle-class felt a sense of decline, pessimism, and insecurity.

## **The Development of Craft Beer:**

Emerging in the 1970s and 1980s, the craft beer movement began as a form of resistance to the homogenization, fees, and structures put in place by larger beer brands designed to make it difficult for smaller breweries. For many people influenced by local food movements, 1960s countercultural movements, and bohemianism, the craft beer movement culminated in a fascination for creating "old-style" small-batch beers as well as local fresh community markets (Matthews & Picton 2014: 341). Dissatisfied by the industrialization and lack of "authentic" taste in beer, people first began to brew beer at home. Influenced by experiences abroad in Europe sampling the variety of local beer styles, many middle-class travellers began to dream about the possibility of creating "exotic" varieties of beer in North America (Konelly 2020:72). The quest for "authenticity" was marked by the idea that the alternative for industrialized consumer products were ones romanticized as being healthier, or simpler.<sup>6</sup> Within the middle-class in North America, many people began to develop new forms of activities as hobbies. Through activities and hobbies associated with leisure, middle-class people believed this to be productive (Fletcher 2014: 106). For many, who worked within traditional middle-class careers, and felt alienated by their work, the ability to pursue activities such as homebrewing allowed them to experience a similar feeling of achievement that work did. What would begin would be the push to create a new beer market. Homebrewing allowed people to explore the possibilities of beer through new tastes and experimentation.

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<sup>6</sup> Around the same time in North America local and health food movements would begin to become more popular. These movements encouraged local consumption patterns and the "naturalness" as well as healthiness of foods (Dubish 1981: 313).



Figure 1. Within craft beer there are a variety of ingredients used within the process of brewing beer. This image depicts various hops including dried and pellet hops as well as various types of different malts used. These materials make up the basic list of ingredients in beer along with water and yeast. Some beer styles incorporate different ingredients to change the flavour, colour, and texture of the beverage.

Homebrewing introduced the idea that anyone could brew beer from the ease of their home. While originally considered illegal, it was not until 1978, and the Home Brew Act in the United States that it became legal (Papazian 1983:7). For home brewers, equipment was often scarce or hard to find. Equipment such as dairy tools became used as DIY tools for home brewers. Through home brewing, early brewers learned the process of making beer through trial and error. Craft beer pioneer Carlie Papazian has suggested the success, efforts, passion, and quality of homebrewing to be the origins of the craft beer movement (Papazian 1983: 8). While originally considered more of a hobby for middle-class people through developing homemade recipes and learning how to use certain ingredients, home brewers began to attract followers.

As more home brewers began to establish small commercial "microbreweries," the craft beer movement would begin to grow. Within Ontario the first "micro brewery was open in Waterloo Region in 1984 with more breweries opening up soon after (Ontario Craft Brewers 2021). Though for early consumers familiarized with mass-produced domestic and imported beer, craft beer was often mocked as "pretentious" (Konnolly 2020: 72). As a DIY and grassroots movement, early craft brewers emphasized small-scale businesses, often with a sense of quirkiness within their image (Matthews & Picton 2014: 340). Craft brewing would come to emphasize community engagement and environmental sustainability as core business practices. In the province of Ontario, craft beer has seen a steady rise in popularity. As the craft beer movement continues to grow during the 1980s-1990s, various microbreweries in both United States and Canada, such as the Sierra Nevada or Samuel Adams, would see so much growth that the idea of being a microbrewery would no longer describe them.

Craft beer emerged during deindustrialization in North America due to the impacts of neoliberalism and globalization. As the industry began to leave cities, craft breweries, along with middle-class people, began to play an active role in the gentrification and development of former industrial neighbourhoods (Ocejo 2017: 5). Before being bought out by Labatt's and owned by Anheuser-Busch, InBev Mill Street, which was founded in 2002, opened in the former Gooderham and Worts industrial complex in Toronto, now known as the Distillery District. As a former industrial area of Eastern Downtown Toronto, this area was gutted and changed into a gentrified area that combined history as well as art (Matthews & Picton 2014: 345). As Mill Street began its operations within this location, their buildings offered a way for consumers to satisfy their "cravings for the olfactory past" through a romanization which distances consumers from the complexities of the industrialized past of Toronto. The use of gentrification and creating



capital through producing “authentic” forms of beer is used to attract upscale consumers using the past to market their product without the historical baggage (Matthews & Picton 2014: 352). Throughout Ontario, numerous other breweries would follow this model of business.

Through the 2000s into the 2010s, craft beer would explode with more people becoming familiar and interested in it. In 2003 the Ontario Craft Brewers Association formed as the Ontario Small Brewers Association. This association was formed as an organization to promote and collectively market Ontario craft beer (Ontario Craft Brewers 2021). As an organization the Ontario Craft brewers Association has become a unified voice for the various breweries throughout the province. Within their vision this organization has promoted sustainability, readily available beer, and Ontario beer becoming more popular to consumers (Ontario Craft Brewers 2021). As craft beer developed, its status has become a “prestige commodity” like artisanal cheese or coffee. Emphasizing artisanal labour, terroir, and locality, craft beer has developed itself to be the “authentic” or “elite” version of brewing (Konnolly 2020)<sup>7</sup>. Throughout the 2010s, craft and artisanal work were often looked at as “hipster work,” which created a persona of young, red flannel, rimmed glasses-wearing millennials whose discerning tastes for things became subject for social commentary as well as mockery. Popular media such as television shows like *Portlandia* depicted the rise of craft industries in cities like Portland, Oregon or New York to be a return to a hipsterized 1890s past (*Portlandia* - Dream of the 1890s). While associated with hipsters or urban bohemians, craft beer would become more normalized in

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<sup>7</sup> Terroir is used to describe how conditions of a vineyard have sensorial qualities into the wine produced. These include soil properties, climate, and the production methods used which add character. It is described as an intersection of culture and nature (Weiss 2011) (Konnolly 2020).

society.



Figure 2. An early 2000s map of the craft breweries located within the south and eastern parts of Ontario. The Ontario Craft Brewing Association used this map to encourage people to tour the province's various breweries. At this time, there are only 31 breweries located on the map.

Becoming the fastest growing manufacturing industry in Ontario within the 2010s, craft breweries are present within the neighbourhoods of post-industrial cities and seen in smaller towns and rural areas.<sup>8</sup> New lifestyle consumption patterns have allowed people to develop new tastes that do not compromise their social status (Ocejo 2017: 6). With the growing "artisan economy," manual labour jobs no longer seem unrewarding as they thrive on the ability to teach

<sup>8</sup> While most craft breweries in Ontario are prominently seen in urban areas, some breweries have begun to be established in smaller communities along with other craft businesses which take a role in the act of gentrification.

and articulate forms of authenticity, share cultural knowledge, quality, and localness. Industries like craft beer use consumers' undiscerning tastes to connect people to the product they produce (Ocejo 2017: 20). Within this environment, consumers can connect directly to the people who make the things they consume. Craft and artisanal work have become restructured by the developing tastes of the middle-class in North America.

The process of eliminating discriminating tastes and upscaling beer to become a more "elite" and status giving consumer good, is the process known as cultural omnivorousness. The processes of cultural omnivorousness, act as a configuration which ignores traditional elite/low cultural divides to allow people to develop discerning beliefs and attitudes to things (Maguire et al 2018: 3). While middle-class consumers became interested in beer during the Twentieth Century, their interest in creating and brewing better-tasting beer has also created "elitism" around it.<sup>9</sup> Through craft beer, consumers use the knowledge they learn about the taste, styles, flavour profiles, and how to pair it with food as a way to display a form of status (Bourdieu 1984). As a marker for class taste, consumption acts as a communicative tool that gives particular social meanings for people. Through the acquired taste and knowledge for craft beer, consumers use this as way to reinforce particular social positionings (Mathews & Picton 2014: 340). Within the craft beer industry, specialized terminology and taste have allowed a historically working-class beverage to become a commodity for elite consumption. As Konnelly suggests, the appropriation of wine terminology has allowed craft beer to become a material symbol for the white middle-class (Konnelly 2020: 70). Michael Silverstein in *Old Wine, New Ethnographic Lexicography* suggests that the language and terminology used within wine culture

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<sup>9</sup> With the growing elitism around craft beer there has also been a higher price point which can create barriers around its consumption.

acts as interlocking organizational structures at the site of consumption. The special lexical registers used to describe the wine such as the geography, production, and history become invoked on the bottle which knowledgeable connoisseurs engage with. The use of language used within wine such as body and character invoke certain aesthetics and experiences associated with its consumption (Silverstein 2006: 492-493). The new prestige within beer relies on using locality and terroir to educate consumers on the value of place and the taste of place.

Borrowing on the ideas of wine connoisseurship, craft beer attempts to evoke complex tasting profiles, especially in how breweries describe their beer. While brewers and workers within the craft beer industry try to reject some sense of 'fanciness' through marketing that beer is for everyone, they also identify as local and authentic (Konnolly 2020: 76-79). Though craft beer and wine share some characteristics, craft beer tries to invoke other characteristics different from wine. As Konnelly suggests, beer connoisseurship is much newer than wine connoisseurship and borrows heavily from its vocabulary as a means to develop itself as a “serious vocation.” “Brutoglossia,” as Konnelly suggests has also been used as trying to emblemize certain lifestyles and create an “creative power” to be indexed in the speaker (Konnolly 2020: 73). Through using and incorporating these terminologies on how people describe beer craft beer consumers hope to be seen as educated connoisseurs. The language used to describe beer is also used to describe the connection to location, making “folksy” connections as well as uses parts of beer’s past to invoke a sense of continuing tradition (Konnolly 2020: 77). While craft beer roots were to create an alternative towards large-scale industrialization of beer, it has also offered middle-class people a place to perform their sense of authenticity and selfhood.

### **Chapter Three: The Narratives of Getting into Craft Beer**

During my research, I became aware of the narratives of how predominantly middle-class people find themselves within the craft beer community. Within this chapter, I will explore the stories and narratives people tell to describe how they became interested in craft beer, as well as how they ended up working within the industry. These narratives highlight the anxieties that traditional middle-class work has on people and how people value craftwork as a meaningful alternative. Using both digital ethnographic research and interviews with my informants, this chapter will explore why people value craft brewing as more than a job. I will make connections to the larger discussions of romanticized stories about finding careers within the middle-class.

Prior to my digital fieldwork and interviews, I had friendships with people who began to work within the craft beer industry. From these past conversations and experiences of touring the breweries they worked in, I became aware that the culture of these workplaces was different from most other establishments. Unlike other bartending or serving positions at restaurants, these people not only had understanding about the product they were serving, but it became clear that for them, it was more of a passion. In the summer of 2019, before the beginning of my Master's, I shadowed my friend and his colleagues while they provided a tour of the brewery they worked at. As we toured the brewery, which was located in a renovated train roundhouse, we went through the various rooms and labs used in brewing beer.

As we toured the rooms, the smell reminded me of farms due to the grain being put into the mash of the beer. Each tour guide provided different information, stories, and context about the brewery. While on the tour, each guide also provided information on how they found themselves working at the brewery. While it was loud and difficult to hear due to the brewery's machines operating to produce beer, what became evident was that this was not just "work" but

something more complex for these people. After the tour, while the servers were cleaning up for the day, I became aware that most of the staff were predominantly students who were also involved in various "creative" pursuits, such as music, visual arts, and the performing arts. In the brief conversations I had, while they were cleaning up for the day, they discussed craft beer as a hobby and a “fun” job while attending post-secondary school. From this experience, I began to think about craft brewing as more complex than simply making beer.

### **The anxieties of work and the promise of craftwork:**

The promise of obtaining meaningful, fun, and purposeful work like craft brewing is an ability of privilege within craft and artisanal work. Through the freedom of choosing any career path they want; these middle-class people choose to engage with the cultural streams of their society (Ocejo 2017: 134). Craft brewers, servers, and other workers in the craft beer community have a variety of different ways in which they find themselves working in this industry. Often these workers work to evolve their job into a career. For the middle-class part of the value of the work they do, they believe in the form of autonomy in which helps in a commitment for professional ethics that help to serve the public (Rosenblatt 2013: 596). Brad Weiss, in his discussion of why heritage-breed pig farmers in North Carolina decided to become farmers, discusses how many of his informants realized that pursuing farming would allow them to work with their hands as well as be profitable. Seeing it as creative expertise, some of these people who already had jobs decided that being a farmer would be a better, more fulfilling pursuit (Weiss 2016). For the middle-class, the belief that work must be somehow personally rewarding is a privilege based on economic flexibility and personal fulfillment.

While some forms of work offer people good wages and stability, many also see these forms of jobs as unfulfilling or dull. In Ortner's ethnography of young adults who belonged to

Generation X, some adults who were born within the upper-middle-class had the affordances to develop creative pursuits while also being financially secure (Ortner 1998: 429). For children of the lower-middle-class, many young adults performed certain kinds of work just to get by. Though raised middle-class due to declining wages and downsizing, these young adults became locked into specific forms of blue-collar work just to stay afloat (Ortner 1998: 424). For the middle-class, the pursuit of authenticity of the self is also tied with lifestyle. In the pursuit of success, T.J Lears argues that the development of authenticity of the self was something developed in the 20th century with the middle-class. Lears argues that the pursuit of success led to the "crisis of the self," which led to the development of a therapeutic ethos that encouraged authenticity, experiences, having leisure, and entertainment (Lears 1983: 4-5). Through the pursuit of work that combines one's interests, the work can become fulfilling and rewarding to the self.

Before beginning my interviews with my informants, I first began to conduct research at the 2020 Ontario Craft Brewers Conference, which was held online. At the beginning of the conference, which was held in October, the keynote address was given by Charlie Papazian. He is a pioneer in the craft beer movement and writer of one of the first cookbooks for home brewing, *The Joys of Home Brewing*, which was published in 1978. Throughout his talk, Papazian not only discussed how craft beer came to be but predicted where craft beer would go. During the talk, Papazian posed a question to everyone as a tool for reflection. "What were you running away from when you ended up brewing beer?" Papazian discussed that he got into beer because of the lack of flavour in mass-produced beer in the 1970s. Working as a teacher, Papazian went on to mention how while he worked as a teacher, he would also teach beer-making classes. On the side of the Zoom conference, through the chat option, seminar

participants began to mention how they became interested in craft beer. Some people mentioned the lack of community, or craft options within their area of Ontario, and hoped to develop a scene. However, for others, they reflected an uneasiness of doing traditional middle-class work within an office. All reflected how becoming a craft brewer or owning a craft brewery would allow them to feel like they were doing something more meaningful, or authentic in the work they do. For those who enter the craft beer industry, the stories and narratives displayed how they became interested in craft and showed not only middle-class anxieties but how they search for authenticity. On online platforms such as YouTube, craft brewers often reflect on the narratives in which they end up craft brewing. For the owner of the Bellwood's brewery Luke Pestl in Toronto, entering into the craft beer industry was due to his dissatisfaction with becoming a chemical engineer.

"I always enjoyed craft beer. As a kid, I would collect bottle caps from the beer my dad drank. He would pick up the ones that I thought looked cool because of the bottle caps... From that, I really began to enjoy the culture of beer. It always seemed cool to me. In university, I studied chemical engineering, and I thought brewing could be an interesting way to use that degree. To be honest, I never wanted to be an engineer. After university, I tried to apply to Amsterdam, Steam Whistle, and Mill Street, but I never got a callback. So, I went into grad school for chemical engineering and eventually, I heard back from Amsterdam. I got in in 2007 as an assistant brewer. I started brewing there for four years and would meet my future business partner. I also started to homebrew. I got the job at Amsterdam because of my scientific background and because they needed to fill the position. I decided to leave in 2011, and in 2012, I would start a brewpub. Committing myself full time to the Bellwood's brewing project (BAOS Podcast 2021: 0:00-4:21)."



Here a prominent Ontario craft brewer Luke Pestl describes his dissatisfaction in becoming a chemical engineer. While jobs like engineering are prominent middle-class professions, for Pestl becoming a craft brewer offers a chance to combine both the skills of an engineer while also expressing creative culinary skills. Drifting from job to job, many discover craft beer while in school as a means to economically survive.

### **Drifters:**

In his discussion of the various people who end up within craft and artisanal industries, Richard E. Ocejo suggests the patterns to which these workers enter the craft industry include the "drifters," and "career changers," while others enter these jobs through the lifestyles of their parents and peers (Ocejo 2017: 138-142). Drifters are people who begin in lower-status jobs similar to the craft ones they acquire. By developing a skill set, these people then begin to enter these higher cultural capital jobs through experience (Ocejo 2017: 136). Through entry-level work, often due to the struggle to find work in a constrained economy, these people work their way up. They learn the "cool" knowledge in which they can perform at their workplace (Ocejo 2017: 137). Drifters discover their career almost by accident, and some people make craft beer the career they chose.

For my informant, Hailey, working at a craft brewery was something that happened as she drifted from restaurant work, serving beer to becoming involved with brewing beer.

Author: How did you become involved with craft beer? What was your background previous to working in the Ontario craft beer industry?

Hailey: I started when I moved to Toronto and worked for a catering company that did events like weddings. I was serving a lot at this one brewery downtown Toronto because they often

hosted events. I ended up getting a kitchen job at the brewery then I eventually moved to the retail/ bartending position. I am hoping to learn to be trained doing the back of the brewery stuff like brewing and canning.

Moving from catering to preparing food then later working as a server, Hailey would begin to acquire new skills for the various positions she held at the brewery. Through each position, she acquired more knowledge about craft beer. Drifting from catering work, to serving and now helping with the brewing Hailey has acquired skills in which have come with the different forms of work. For many drifters who enter the craft beer industry, they enter the industry as a "fun" student job. Discovering the industry, these people begin to work their way to find their "passions." As Ocejio suggests, drifters often discover their passion in what they do, through learning on the job, and combine it with the skill and knowledge in the hopes that it leads to a career (Ocejio 2017: 139). While for many students, working within craft beer will not be their career, the work they do is something more engaging than a simple restaurant or retail work. Drifters are the opposite in many ways to the next group of workers. While these people begin in jobs that are not always craft related, through working their way up, they begin entering what they believe to be more elite level jobs acquired through their on-the-job training as well as skill.

### **Career Changers:**

Career changers are the people who were working within other career paths who became disillusioned, alienated, or bored and decided to take on the risk of moving careers. These people will often go to university, and once they are working, they find they hate the idea of working in places like an office from 9-5. They were likely told that a post-secondary education promised a "good life" of stability but discovered it was not for them (Ocejo 2017: 148-149). These people believe that through working in a career in craft-artisanal work that they will be able to work their hands and minds. Career changers exercise choice and have the economic ability to change jobs. While drifters begin to enter by moving their way up learning and acquiring new skills, career changers make what they believe to be a dramatic change in their lives in order to find more meaning. For my informant, Jackson, working at a craft brewery was something that was an alternative to the job he was about to do.

Author: So, how did you get into the craft beer industry, and how did you become interested in craft beer?

Jackson: I started working in the craft beer industry in my second year of university. I attended Ryerson University, and I got a notification from my mom that Steam Whistle was hiring. I had a full-time job lined up, but I went to the interview. It was a group-style interview which seemed interesting, so I showed up. We were doing skits and games and there was beer. So, I scrapped the other job and went to work for Steam Whistle. I was giving tours and bartending; it was especially busy before ball games. Before the interview, I did not know anything about beer, or about Steam Whistle. I was only twenty and did not have too many experiences even going out before I was working for them. I was used to getting whatever was in my parents' fridge.

Author: what is your position now?

Jackson: After graduation, I had the opportunity to come out to Edmonton and be a sales rep.

The official title is a Retail Territory manager for Northern Alberta. There is about four of us out here.

While having the opportunity to have a full-time job elsewhere, for Jackson, working within craft beer offered a more fulfilling and rewarding job. Working within the craft beer industry offered Jackson a community of like-minded creative people.

Author: What do you enjoy most about craft beer?

Jackson: Honestly, just that. I am a big creative guy, and my main thing is music. For some people, their main thing is beer and some people; it is marketing. Those two things go well together. Most people in craft beer are musicians or into acting. Anyone in the art scene is always down to drink some beers. The creative aspect, and people in the scene, make it great as well as contribute to it being undefined.

For Jackson, the ability to find like-minded people made him realize the work was more fulfilling than any office work he would acquire. Through acquiring "hip" senses of taste, career changers see craft as an innovative, more engaging way of doing work. Career changers articulate that the lure of combining knowledge work with manual labour creates a combination of different skills (Ocejo 2017: 150). It is through honing these skills that they interact with the material world. Some people change careers, but the next group are raised in this developing

industry.

**Acquiring the taste of craft early:**

Another group of people who end up within the craft beer community are those who become exposed to craft beer early, often by their friends and family. Some people do not exercise choice, but it is part of the family economy, or it is a familiar job they grew up with. Ocejio, in his discussion of craft distillers, states that some workers can become exposed to these industries early on and can develop the philosophy which is reinforced within this form of work (Ocejio 2017: 142). people's values, political leanings, and tastes become influenced by their social relations with other people in society. Many middle-class people are taught that their work should benefit themselves as well as the lives of the people they serve (Rosenblatt 2013: 597-598). Through the development of tastes, these people articulate that through working in the craft industry, they can have a greater sense of autonomy and creativity that many other careers do not have. For the promise of obtaining a fulfilling job, many workers articulate passion for the work environment, as well as romanticize the stories which led them to find these jobs (Ocejio 2017: 152). For other people, the promise of working in craft beer means that they can create learning environments between other workers and the consumers who buy the beer they make.

During my first interview, my informant Harrison described getting into the craft brewing industry, while working for his family business. Growing up outside Ontario during his teenage years, his stepfather decided to run a small craft beer company. As Harrison states, getting into craft beer began for him as supporting the family business but would open up other opportunities. Eventually, working at a craft brewery while in school, serving beer was something Harrison acquired from his friends and family. Taught that craft beer was something

highly valued, working within the craft beer industry was something promising, although he expressed hesitancy in it leading to a permanent career.

Author: So, what was your background before working in the craft beer industry? How did you become involved with craft beer in Ontario?

Harrison: My background in craft beer began in 2015, when my stepdad opened a craft beer company out of Oro-Medonte, outside of Barrie. At that point in time, I came to help out working at craft beer festivals and deliveries. It started out as a family business. Then when I moved to Toronto for school, I started to work at Steam Whistle brewing company in the retail and promotions department. I did things like give tours, bartend at the brewery, and pour beer at events throughout the province.

Author: Were most of the people interested in craft beer and the community?

Harrison: For a few people, it was a student job, and a few of my colleagues were not interested in beer or the beer industry. I would say at least the majority were interested in beer. Some of my colleagues took part in the Prud' Homme beer tasting class after hours.<sup>10</sup> It was something people did for interest in their personal time. I would say a few people whom I worked with were trying to move on in the craft beer industry, but it was not the majority of the people I was working with. Especially a lot of the people who were managing the bar were looking for sales jobs in the craft beer world.

Author: What are your thoughts on craft beer?

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<sup>10</sup> Prud'Homme is a beer certification for beer sommeliers and enthusiasts. There are about four certifications where participants not only learn about how to taste different beers but learn about food pairings and how to distinguish certain tastes. The price point for the courses ranges from a few hundred dollars to \$ 1,300.00. See Prud' Homme website.

Harrison: As a consumer, I like craft beer because I know more about it and can make an informed choice as a consumer. It is cool that some beers (European beer) have been around for hundreds of years, and this shows the quality of the product to consumers. Craft beer is made on the shoulders with improvements on traditional beer styles. I think it's an experimental form of beer.

For Harrison, craft beer was something he grew up enjoying due to his parent's taste for it. Being exposed to craft beer, Harrison not only enjoyed the taste for it but ended up working in it as part of the "family business."

Harrison, through knowing firsthand about the processes of brewing and where the ingredients came from, including the use of local ingredients, made him feel a closer relationship to the beer. As demonstrated, there are many paths' workers take to become part of the industry.



Figure 3. (Prud' Homme 2021): This is an image of a food pairing course from Prud' Homme. Here participants learn about what kind of food goes with the taste pallet of the various different styles of beer. Craft beer often borrows certain aspects of wine culture such as the language used to describe its taste, production, and things like pairing artisanal cheese with the beverage.

### **The Multiplicity of these paths:**

While there are multiple other categories in which Ocejó describes those who enter the craft- artisanal world, there is also a multiplicity of these categories, which these workers use to describe how they entered the craft beer industry. Ocejó discusses how both working-class professionals and “hip” middle-class find their ways into the same career paths. Throughout the stories, people tell how they end up working in craft beer with narratives which show it as a more complex personal story. During my fourth interview, my informant Jeff described how he eventually found himself working as a head brew master at a newly created brewery in central Ontario. Drifting through different jobs and career paths, he would eventually find himself as an assistant brewer, where he would gain the skills needed to brew beer. Learning from others on the job, Jeff began the slow process of acquiring the skills needed to become a brew master.

Author: How did you come to work in the craft beer industry?

Jeff: That is a long winding road all on its own. I realized that I wanted to do this about seven or eight years ago. My first career was that I wanted to be a musician, and I bought a recording studio, but there was no way to make a living out of that. I was already married and had a kid on the way, so I started working at a job that could make money at a chemical factory. I was into craft beer for a long time already, but I met a brewer out of Waterloo and would hang out with him after they closed up, we would chat. He asked me if I brewed and then told me that I really should. So, I dabbled with bottle brew stuff, and it did not take me long to realize that I had a knack for figuring things out, and it was really a lot of fun. While I was working at this chemical factory, we supplied cleaning chemicals for a few craft breweries. I took some of the contacts from that, and when I moved to Orangeville, I begged for a job at Valley Brewing Company for eight months and became a sales representative for Aashi brewing company. It did not go terribly



well because Orangeville at the time was not into craft beer. So, I started at the bottom at Valley Brewing Company starting on November 30th, 2013. Started at the bottom doing the canning line and sweeping floors, driving, cleaning the filter, mashing up the beer, and all the crappy work.

Author: So, what was the training like to get into craft beer and this industry?

Jeff: At Valley, where I did not actually brew. The head brewer at the time knew I was very interested in brewing, so while I was working would teach me and ask questions like, "why am I doing this or what I should be doing next." We would have these conversations while I was working on the canning line beside him. So, I did not actually brew there, but I knew the recipes and helped put the ingredients together weeks in advance. We would get together and discuss what to brew next, like dark beers or sours. I would ask questions like, "If you are using this caramel malt, why do you not use this one that crystallizes like this?" He would be like, "Let's give it a shot." I started getting an understanding of what was going on there.

After that, I became the assistant cider maker at Pommies and worked there for a year. After a year, I got laid off because they were automating everything in my position. When I got laid off, I got offered this brewer position at Stone Hill, and they had a training process of walking me through what their process was. Each time I would get a little more freedom and control of what I was doing. Then one day, the head brewer told me he was going to leave me alone, and he let me brew. I brewed a little at home, but the first time you are left alone at a brewery, it is a little bit daunting. You become responsible for the brews. At Stone Hill, the head brewer did the Sierra Nevada thing of piecing together equipment from converted dairy equipment. So, everything was painstakingly manual to use. Every step of the process was manual. So, you mash the beer by hand, then move over the pump, then move back to the kettle

and hook it up to the heat exchange. It was great to learn this way because you got to learn the process. You are figuring out where everything goes and why it goes there. For me, it is cool. Although I do not recommend running a brewery like this. To learn it was brilliant, and kudos to the owner for creating that place on a shoestring. Ken Grossman did it and look at him now.

Within Jeff's narrative of how he found himself working within the craft beer industry there was a multiplicity of career paths. He moved from being a musician, a chemical factory worker, cider brewer to many jobs in the craft beer brewing industry. Through entering at the bottom and working his way up into becoming a brew master, Jeff learned "the dirty work" around producing beer on his own. Drifting from one side of working in the craft beer industry to another throughout the various jobs, he acquired new important skills and experience. Jeff evolved his career path, through a more traditional movement from unskilled worker to a master craftsperson, by hard work and a keen interest in the industry. Jeff drifted from music, studio recording, and the chemical industry into the craft beer industry. The movement in his career path was dictated by the labour market and economic forces as well as personal interest.

### **What do middle-class work narratives mean:**

For those who work within the Ontario craft beer industry, the stories told often reflect not only the anxieties of work that is not engaging but a desire for more meaningful work. While some people come to believe craft beer will offer them a "sense of coolness" through the performance of brewing or serving beer, others do not. As Ocejio states: "Most often the coolness and hipness of the work, the job's image and the historical references do not factor into the initial choice to pursue it" (Ocejio 2017: 134). For those who enter the craft beer industry, the common social mechanism which influences people's decision to work often are social influences, friends, and familial connections. Through working within this industry, people begin to believe that the

work they are doing reproduces "hipness" through the performances they do in front of consumers as well as other workers. By finding meaningful work, they hope that it will result in them having a more fulfilling purpose (Ocejo 2017: 134). For my informants, and others who work within the community, the ability to find like minded people who share creative values is an important form of connection. Ocejo states that "hip" and "cool" jobs hold a glow of specialness in which or glamour in which offers people the ability to "make culture" with those who share similar tastes (Ocejo 2017: 132-133). Through the ability to engaging with creative work with people who have similar tastes for leisure as they do for work these people believe craft beer can offer something that can reflect part of their identity. The finding of more meaning in work is a common phenomenon within the middle-class.

Within the work stories of the middle-class, there are connections to the places in which people cultivate their selfhood. Work and life stories become ways in which people develop a moral vision of their selfhood as well as attempt to create a positive self-image (Mccollum 2002: 114-116). It is through these stories that middle-class people make sense of the events or forces which shape their decisions within life. Within the narratives of work, there are reflections of self-fulfillment and actualization. For those who work in craft beer, the paths that lead them there revolve around anxieties of not having meaningful and engaging work, finding work that can be done while pursuing school, an opportunity to create and perform their knowledge and skills to consumers, and develop an image of selfhood. Like other stories of work and finding larger meaning in one's life, these workers attempt to find themselves using culturally constructed narratives in order to do so (Mccollum 2002: 117). Through depicting the various hardships or obstacles in finding larger meaning, people within craft beer reflect not only the various "bad jobs" which lead them to discover craft beer, but also the importance one's hobbies or interests

can have on finding meaning in everyday life. Through creating a coherent storyline of one's life, decisions which people create show the paths one uses to find a form of freedom one can have through doing what they believe is engaging. For those within craft beer, the work can also be a pathway into finding other pursuits just as creative and engaging.

The narratives that people use to talk about how they find “their” work reveal how the middle-class attempt to make meaning, and attempt to show their work as well as passions to be important avenues of self development. While traditional forms of middle-class work allow people to achieve financial success, the narratives of people within the craft beer community in Ontario show the anxieties of finding and working within these career paths. The narratives told often romanticize tales of drifting or people who change careers in order to combine the skills of performing and knowledge of beer with the physical aspect. For the workers who work within this community, the narratives told show how they believe this work will bring self fulfillment, fun, or allow for one to use creativity.

## **Chapter Four: Eyes on the Whole Process- Working with “Craft” Beer**

Within this chapter, I will explore the ways in which workers, and community members, in the craft beer industry use their work as a way to find meaning and authenticity. While the narratives told by these workers and community members often discuss alienation or rejection from traditional forms of work, the work they do with craft beer reflects both their aesthetic creativity as well as their knowledge of how beer is made. For brewers, servers, and other people who work and participate within the craft beer community, craft work is something significant and meaningful. Within this industry craft work becomes defined as something which ordinary work is not.

Many people believe that “creative” work or work that engages with complex problem solving, or independent judgement has value. The act of craft brewing and serving requires workers to be knowledgeable about the product, ingredients, and the process of making it in order to produce and handle it. From using the various equipment to make mash and create the beer, to operating a keg, the work also requires the use of specialised knowledge. Artisanal and craft production often favours “quality”, working with hands, and the ability to work directly with the product rather than producing a large quantity of the good (Paxson 2013: 21). Craft beer making can be a hobby that does not provide a livelihood. As Paxson notes “the artisan, like the independent farmer, is neither a quintessential capitalist, living off the labour of others, nor an alienated wage-worker” (Paxson 2013: 21). For craft brewers and servers there are a multitude of characterizations of who these workers are and what their everyday experience entails. These various workers, or community members, articulate different understandings of what craft means to them. In the discussion of craft distilling, Ocejo suggests that for many working within that industry, the promise of working with their hands, stepping away from the corporate work, and

away from mass consumption means that workers believe they have a hand at making sustainable products that they believe to be quality made (Ocejo 2017: 63). Through performing the work which they believe to be authentic, craft brewers, servers, and other community members articulate craft beer as a more sustainable consumption practice.

### **Understanding “Craft”:**

During my interviews one important question I asked was how my informants would define craft and craft work. Throughout the course of my semi-structured interviews craft work became something defined differently. It appeared to be shaped by the backgrounds of my participants, their experience, and their influences. My informants reflected that craft work is a personal experience, one that people take pride in both its production and its products. In *the Life of Cheese: Crafting Food and Value in America*, Heather Paxson states that craft work is work that believes in a return of values in North American life such as self-determination, doing “honest work”, autonomy, and ability to be “closer to nature” (Paxson 2013: 6-7). Craft work, while emphasizing working with hands, also maintains that imperfection as an aspect of craft. According to Ocejo, as a form of light manufacturing, craft work like brewing and distilling articulates that authenticity comes from having a sense of truth, integrity, as well as a sense of realness which act as markers of “quality” (Ocejo 2017: 54).

During my interview with Harrison, he stated that with craft beer it was a setting in which all workers, even the servers, could see the beer being produced. In many craft breweries, the bar and restaurant areas for the customers have a backdrop or viewing area of the brewery floor. An example of this is at Flying Monkey Brewery in Barrie, Ontario. While conducting tours, and serving beer, Harrison would demonstrate and discuss the processes of brewing beer with

consumers. Through performing their knowledge by informing the consumer, Harrison, like other servers, articulates craft work as something genuine.

Author: What does craft mean for you?

Harrison: Craft means that you have eyes on the whole process in creating the product of beer. Bigger companies like the old Molson factory, which was off the 400 Highway in Barrie, was a huge building. In the old building people worked there for like ten years and likely never saw much of the factory. If I were to go to a craft brewery, I would expect after a few days that I would know where everything takes place, the names of the other workers, and the owners. The owners would make themselves known, because there is a direct relationship between them, and the people working on the ground floor, and because of the smaller scale of a craft brewery. This might be less true at the brewery where I worked at, which was a larger craft brewery in Ontario, but is more embodied then in the larger big-name brands.

Author: Do you think there is a form of authenticity with craft beer that is evident in the production methods and relationships with owners versus mass produced beer?

Harrison: This the popular attitude within the craft beer industry, and I tend to agree with it. With any capitalistic venture you are responding to the desires of the consumers as well as market demands. I think in the craft context, there is an artistic component with it, and people take more pride in their product. People put themselves into their work. It is not always a massive operation like in macro beer.

As Harrison states craft beer uses an intimate relationship between the production of the product and the consumer. Within this space brewers and servers take pride in the performances they conduct in order to brew as well as serve “good” beer. The work performed allows for both

workers and consumers to have eyes on the process of brewing beer. As my informant Alison articulated, within craft beer there are few corners to cut within its production, because the standards are higher, and the ingredients are believed to be superior.

Author: How do you come to see the work you do in the industry? Would you consider craft brewing an art form?

Alison: When I think about the things I am interested in with visual arts, craft is something I am very interested in. Craft like textiles, and ceramics, share elements with craft brewing, but I know the craft beer industry may have a different understanding of what craft is. I think there is more to it culturally because it is very personal, and the brewing teams know one another. Craft brewing is more intimate and claims not to take short cuts just like craft art.<sup>11</sup> It is like a super old drink that people keep experimenting with, and trying new things with, which reminds me of the other ways art has been developing. Through creative expression, brewers articulate taste through the various ingredients they use. More modern technology has become incorporated into craft work in helping to assist people.

During my interview with Jackson, he made connections that while craft and craft beer is a unique thing, he believes that it could be for everyone.

Jackson: For me craft and craft beer are the steps one does to make it properly. It is like having homemade fresh bread instead of Wonder Bread. Wonder Bread may last longer but the homemade bread is fresher, made with care, and overall a better product. It is more about

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<sup>11</sup> There is a distinction between craft work and artwork. Heather Paxson (2011) states that craft and artisanal work requires the use of artistic skill but also the use of tools, scientific knowledge, and empirical observation. Paxson further suggests that the distinction between craft and art is that craft work creates objects which have a purpose or a practical use. Craft work is further defined by Paxson is the creation of objects to which has both aesthetic, practical, evaluative standards to their origins, and a logical justification for its creation (Paxson 2011: 122-123).



following the traditional processes, and recipes, so that you put an emphasis on quality to make “true beer”. There is more authenticity in that kind of beer. You see cool names and wild beers with fun colours, themes, which shows creativity as well as raw genuineness. These beers are made by the guy who loves beer and wants to share it with everyone.

Through asking my informants how they would define, and come to see craft beer, one commonality was the emphasis of having creative control. Allowing consumers to see these brewers, and servers, perform their work meant that they had a sense of openness as well as genuineness which they believe is not seen in larger commercial brewing. Working with beer, brewers interact with flavours and taste, recreating traditional as well as new taste sensations.

### **Taste:**

While early craft brewers and home brewers did not have the tools and ingredients to make different styles of craft beer; today within Ontario more styles have been created or experimented with. Learning to deal with natural variations of ingredients, craft brewers observe both material and environmental conditions to develop particular tastes. In dealing with taste there is an aspect which brewers must allow for nature to be respected, and follow procedures to ensure safety, while adding their own creativity through their personal input (Ocejo 2017: 162). In working with natural products like hops, malts, yeasts, and other key ingredients, there are many variables which determine how the beer will turn out. Often each batch of beer brewed has its own characteristics turning out slightly differently each time (Ocejo 2017: 165).

Understanding how certain ingredients will work in brewing beers comes with careful observation and skill. During my interview with Jeff, he discussed not only the use of certain ingredients but an understanding of how ingredients work together to make flavours, targeted towards a group of consumers palette.

Author: So, what kinds of beer are you making?

Jeff: The brewery I am currently at has two flagship beers. Our first is a dry hopped pale lager. Technically it is not really a lager because I am using Kveik yeast, instead of taking six to eight weeks to brew, it can be turned around in two weeks. But it is light, crispy, hoppy, and not too bitter. The other beer we brew is an India Pale Ale (IPA) which is a mid-coast style. It is not quite as “chewy” as an east coast New England style IPA.<sup>12</sup> It is more bitter, and malt flavoured but not a west coast IPA either. Kveik yeast was used again too. I am very interested in using this yeast because beers can be turned around quick. You can turn around a lager in two weeks and it tastes exactly like a lager. We are currently working on a golden lager as a community fundraiser beer. We hope local charities or teams can put their logo on the can or case then sell it for proceeds. Going forward we are talking about doing a porter and a sour. I am trying to decide on if the sour will be a Carolina sour or a dry hopped thing. I am hoping that once we get going, we will have six core brands and a seasonal rotating as well as a one off once a month. I think they will all be more standard fare beers. As much as I like Belgian styles of beers, those do not do well in Orangeville so it will be more lagers or pale ales. One thing about being a brewer is knowing your audience.

Navigating different tastes and flavours, craft brewers often attempt to create the beers which certain audiences of people can either be taught to enjoy or have the means to recognize the ingredients in the beer. Within the language used to describe the beers, there are specialized

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<sup>12</sup> In the North American craft beer community, there are multiple styles of India Pale Ale to which have social importance. Within the Eastern Coast of United States, the creation of the New England IPA was a result of local breweries within the region attempting to create a distinct scene for brewing. Within New England the rise of distinct styles has been a result of growing interests with the slow food movement, using local producers, and environmental concerns. The creation of the East Coast IPA was created through wanting to create something different and other social forces (Jones & Harvey 2017: 133-134).

languages which connote knowledge for the consumer to understand the methods to enjoy as well as how it is brewed (Konnolly 2020: 79). Ingredients like certain hops and yeasts play an essential role in the experimentation of beers. The use of terroir and locality have played important roles not only in the prestige, or elitism, of craft beer, but in the experimentation done by Ontarian craft brewers.

Craft breweries, influenced by local and slow food movements, often attempt to incorporate local ingredients within their beer. With more breweries looking to produce farm to table beer, often certain key ingredients such as hops, or malts from certain regions have particular value as well as terroir (Jones & Harvey 2017: 126-127). Numerous breweries in Ontario have created beers which use provincial ingredients, such as Dominion City's "Provincial IPA." While more breweries are attempting to brew similar beers, as a means to create an image of being local institutions, which include farmers and food producers, other craft breweries use certain ingredients that are not local due to the terroir and social value they have. Certain key ingredients, such as various hop varieties, have particular value and social significance due to the flavour profiles they provide. The value of hops is based upon the natural growing conditions which produces particular taste profiles. These taste profiles work on a system of local and larger global mediations which assigns value to them (Demossier 2011: 687). Through terroir, particular hop varieties are sold due to their heritage, tradition, authenticity, and nostalgic taste they create.

During my interview with Jeff, I asked about the importance of incorporating local ingredients in craft beer. While many of the ingredients he uses come from Ontario, some ingredients, like Kveik yeast, still come from Europe.

Jeff: All of our yeast is from Escarpment Labs, which is as local as you can be while using Norwegian yeast. A lot of our ingredients come from Escarpment Labs. They are contributing to the Ontario craft beer community. When the pandemic hit, another lab in the US that supplies craft beer ingredients had many lay offs. Escarpment Labs helped to fundraise to help them out. Many of these labs do educational stuff with brewers to brew better tasting beer. In Europe, places in Belgium or Germany have a very classical understandings of what local means for their beers. In places in the US, like Vermont and Portland, there are localized beer scenes in which everyone in the scene is lifting up the beer. That is what Escarpment Labs is doing with their ingredients and supplies here. Through doing research into how to use certain ingredients, they are lifting everyone's game so that we can make better beer. Once everyone's quality in the region of Ontario goes up, we can become better known for the beer we make.

When I interviewed Harrison, I asked if craft brewers have an ethical responsibility to use local, or socially valued ingredients in order to brew beer "ethically." In our discussion of ethics, Harrison suggests the incorporation of local ingredients to be an important way to showcase a region of Ontario, in the flavour of the beer, he also articulates how the brewery he worked at believed in maintaining certain traditions like German Beer Purity laws.<sup>13</sup>

Author: Do you think there is an ethical responsibility with the sourcing of ingredients of craft beer?

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<sup>13</sup> The German Beer Purity Law or the Reinheitsgebot was a Bavarian law created in 1516 which governed what ingredients are used in the production of beer. Within this law, "pure" beer restricted beer recipes to having only four main ingredients including: Barley, water, yeast, and hops (Lederman 2016). Some breweries outside of Germany like Steam Whistle believe that they can follow this law through importing ingredients from Europe such as hops and yeast.

Harrison: Yes, I think there is an ethical responsibility on the part of the brewers to source local places for ingredients. As a craft beer consumer, you are giving to local producers when you are purchasing craft beer. It is an ethical way to pay it forward, for brewers to use local ingredients and is something to be celebrated and expected. With a lot of hop varieties however, it is not possible to source locally. At Steam Whistle the hops come from Europe, as they make traditional style pilsner, and could not have the same flavours with hops from anywhere else. Some regions do not have all the ingredients needed for beer. It is a tough economic industry, with a narrow profit margin, and is difficult to expect those brewers to always be sourcing local ingredients.

Harrison suggests that while brewing beer with local ingredients often means better tasting beers, he also suggests that for some breweries this is not always economically feasible. For other breweries, the incorporation of experimental, or exotic ingredients, often marks a way to connect with locality depicting direct relationships with local agrarian economies (Konnolly 2020: 76). Through taste, breweries hope to connect ingredients from different regions together.



Figure 4. (Dominion City Instagram 2020): This is an advertisement for the Provincial IPA from Dominion City. The can uses “HOMEGROWN” to help describe how the beer connects to the region of the Ottawa Valley incorporating local ingredients within its production. The can also describes the importance of land and terroir onto the “quality” of the beer’s flavour.

Taste is an important marker of past experiences. During the Ontario Craft Brewers Conference, Charlie Papzian discussed how he came to develop certain beers, or flavour profiles. He stated, that often-early home brewers would include random spices from their pantry, in the hopes that the beer would taste different from the macro beer at the time. He also discussed how many of the beers he would come to brew were a result of travel. By having the wealth to travel both domestically, and internationally, many middle-class people have the means to experience new flavours of beer. Beer styles, names, and even the packaging artwork, often reflect the stories, or experiences, which lead to the creation of the particular beer (Smith-Maguire et al. 2017: 27). In the documentary for Great Lakes Brewery, one of Ontario’s oldest craft breweries, many of their stories and experiences have become reflected in the beers they make. Within the documentary the brewers and operators of the brewery reflected the importance personal experience has with brewing (Great Lakes Brewery 2018). The development of taste reflects access, power, and social status within society.

By developing “good tastes,” in which one is able to perform or learn about the beer, is an act of affluence. This knowledge is based in the ability to afford the beer experiences in which to develop taste and the language of beer. It is through economic and social affordances that one “knows” what kind of beer is seen as “authentic” and what does not (Konnolly 2020: 71). During my interview with Jackson, he reflected some hesitancy around the idea of becoming a craft beer snob.

Author: Do you think there is an ethical responsibility to have certain ingredients in craft beer?

Jackson: That is what everyone in the craft beer industry thinks. But at the same time Labatt’s and Molson are still getting purchased as well as making a ton of money from it. Their consumers do not care. Those who believe in it are those already exposed to craft or making craft. So, yes, I do personally believe that, but I do not know how widely accepted it is. I think the craft beer industry has a bit of snobbery. I think we are getting away from it, but it is like when people are just having a good time, but someone shows up with a six pack of some craft beer and starts lecturing why their beer is superior to the rest of the party. That is something no one wants to hear, and those people have given craft beer a bad name.

Taste is an important part of not only how craft brewers create craft beer but is a way in which people enact what is “good.” During the everyday work of people in the industry, not only do people learn about beer but become exposed to its tastes.

### **Working at the brewery:**

Servers, and brewers often work side by side at craft breweries in order to sell their products to consumers. For my informants, the work often changes from day to day, especially in the summer months with craft beer festivals. From conducting tours for tourists, to mashing, and

canning beer these workers take on numerous jobs. It is through these various tasks these people find meaning. Due to COVID-19, my informants have experienced periods in which they were out of work or doing work that they would not normally do. For Jeff, due to the pandemic there has been great difficulty in being able to brew beer.

Author: So, what does a normal day of brewing beer looks like?

Jeff: Right now, I am kind of laid off due to COVID and the lockdown. We have been contracting out our beer production to a brewery out near Port Credit. We have been doing a few batches of various beers. I could not even be there for the release of the IPA because they got COVID, and they were in the grey zone. I was just able to drop off some malt for them to use. So right now, my typical days are not so typical, in the last few months I have been doing more managing of the bar instead of brewing beer. That said, we do want to get some on site location brewing happening, hopefully by late spring. It will look entirely different by then. I have not been doing much of the brewing stuff as I have been spending 60-70 hours managing the bar. I have also been assisting doing some of the kitchen stuff, and deliveries. That being said I brewed a test batch last week. I brewed a golden ale which will be in the pipeline to be released soon. I am really excited about this beer. It will be the kind of beer that probably will not interest any beer geek but could hopefully convert some macro beer drinkers to craft.





Figure 5. This image shows some of the various ingredients, machinery, and kegs ready to be filled with beer. While many early and do it yourself craft brewers use various dairy equipment to brew beer, today there are modern equipment designed to brew beer.

For my other informant Harrison, the effects of COVID meant that he went from serving beer at the brewery tap room, to packaging beer, to eventually being laid off. Harrison, like many other servers have had to navigate restrictions due to limiting face to face interactions.

Harrison: The tap rooms and servers have been laid off which has been a huge hit. It has impacted me, my entire department ceased to exist overnight. The long-term effects remain to be seen but I think more of these jobs are now vulnerable. I think more people might jump out of this industry, for a while, fearing what is happening.

Both Jeff and Harrison show how COVID-19 has impacted the ways in which people work in a brewery. With servers being unable to work in tap rooms, they have been used from everything from packaging to doing deliveries of online orders of beer. Before the pandemic began, my informants discussed not only their everyday work experiences but also working at beer festivals which under Covid have disappeared.

Using the technical skill to operate machinery, to working with kegs and freezer systems with the artistic side of taste craft breweries incorporate various skills in order to operate. During the processes of training, Hailey like her other co-workers would learn not only about the beer that they are selling but were instructed on how to do technical stuff like moving a keg into a tap. Throughout their workday they would also be constantly on their feet.

Author: Can you describe what a typical day would look like working at a craft brewery?

Hailey: At the brewery I first worked at, I was primarily serving beer to customers. Where I am now is packaging beer, and food. Usually, I would try to get to the brewery early to help in putting the bar together. You would usually put the chairs down, have a morning meeting, and get all the glasses ready. When you get going you serve beer all day and chat with the customers often about the beer. Throughout the day you make runs back to where the beer and kegs are being stored to restock the beer supply. The whole day you are on your feet serving beer.

Servers, tour guides, and bar tenders do not brew the beer being made at craft breweries, they are instructed on the knowledge about the beer in order to educate, as well as inform the customer on what they are purchasing. People within craft and artisanal forms of work use education as an important way to create customers who develop their own discerning taste. Heather Paxson argues, that through creating connoisseurship with customers, and people who consume craft goods, people are able to cultivate taste preferences which allow people to see or understand the symbolic capital of these goods (Paxson 2013: 191). Through things like live demonstrations, or tours, consumers begin to learn about the processes that create the beer they drink. When consumers enter the brewery, servers attempt to find out what they want through their experience. Discussing the various kinds of beers, or their flavours, the server guides the consumer not only through the various tastes but what to look for in the beer (Ocejo 2017: 192).

For people new to craft beer, servers will often recommend doing flights of beer, which provide a small sample of the various beers produced so they can find a taste they like. A major part of working in the craft beer industry is the participation within events such as craft beer festivals. Throughout the summers in Ontario these events are popular places where new consumers explore craft beer.

### **Craft Beer Events:**

Craft beer events are important places in which consumers become exposed to craft beer. While craft beer festivals can be places for new consumers to become exposed to craft beer, my informants discuss that they can also be very rowdy places. As places where the craft beer community comes together, major festivals like the Toronto Craft Beer festival, attract thousands of new consumers to try the beer produced across the province. Describing his experience working at a craft beer festival, Harrison articulates that these events often attract a mixture of people.

Harrison: My experiences at craft beer festivals are that you get a mixture of crowds with both avid craft beer fans and others who just want to party as well as have a good time. At beer festivals you find more affluent people, then the people who you pour beer for at the brewery. They tend to attract the people who would attend an expensive music festival, or concert, who are spending a sizeable amount of money. Food at these events is always expensive. As it is a good venue to try new beers in the same location, I think a wealthier spectrum of people are coming to try the product.

Working at the festival, servers often work longer days than they would at the brewery with a different audience. With consumers drinking more than they would at the bar, these workers also described doing more cleaning up often in the summer heat.

Alison: Working at a craft beer festival, or event, are long days with a lot of socializing with customers. At times I felt they were more stressful than working at the brewery, with more people attending, so I felt out of my element. With the days longer, and the clientele drinking more there is like a different vibe overall than normal. Summer festivals are especially hot, but overall, they are a fun experience.

At the Steam Whistle festival hosted at the brewery in August, my informants also describe doing activities with the attendees, which they would not normally do in a “normal” workday at the brewery. Jackson described these activities as both a way of advertisement and as a way to gain new customers.

Jackson: Festivals are very cool and show off the creative side of craft beer. They can get rowdy especially later in the evening. No one really enjoys the rowdy part, especially working all day in the sun. During craft beer festivals, breweries from all over blow up their branding to life sized advertisements. There are fun activities like games that the vendors bring for consumers. Steam Whistle brings old vintage vehicles which are painted in the company’s colours. We do fun activities like making hats from beer boxes, which we cut as well as fold into fun shapes. At festivals you meet cool people from other breweries and meet interesting consumers. Overall, everyone is having fun and it is a great time.

At other events, craft brewers compete with each other for the “best beer” in a given style. At these events, judges rank and rate how the beer tastes. In Ontario there is the Ontario

Brewing Awards and the Canadian Brewing Awards. At these events, a panel of judge's sample flights of certain styles of beers often through blind tasting (Canadian Brewing Awards 2021). At the Canadian Brewing Awards there are fifty-five categories in which breweries from across Canada compete. While these forms of events have prestige, beer festival where consumers come to sample the beer are more popular. Other events such as the Ontario Craft Brewers Conference serve as a way for brewers to come together and learn about various production methods, tools, and ways of fostering community engagement. At events such as this, there are demonstrations, workshops, and tastings for attendees.

Events play an important role in the development of community in Ontario. While these events are not an "ordinary" workday they serve as an important way in which consumers and community members engage with craft beer. From awards to conferences, these spaces become hubs for people to come together and discuss aspects of the industry. Through these spaces, people become exposed to the breweries as well as the brewing community. During COVID, things like virtual tastings, or events, become places for people to connect when going to a brewery is prohibited, due to lock downs and safety precautions. Through online events like virtual tastings, people who would normally go to the brewery can learn about various beers as the brewers offer guides on how the beer is produced, and how to "taste" it.

People within the Ontario craft beer community believe creating "good" tasting beer is the goal, for the region to be recognized as a beer destination. By incorporating local, and high-quality ingredients from other regions, and sharing research on what works, craft brewers believe Ontario will be a hub for craft beer. While my informants describe why they believe craftwork to be important in developing quality beer, they also describe the fears around performing a form of elitism around beer. As Jackson describes the processes of snobbery in craft beer, he also

describes the tension between advocating for one's tastes and devaluing mass-produced beers. Through elitism, middle-class consumers form their understanding of authenticity that often reproduces particular class distinctions around economic and cultural capital (Konnolly 2020: 78). Craft beer can offer different meanings for people, and though while the work and the consumption for some offer an array of skills for others, it is a marker of elitism.

Working with craft beer offers people within the community new online and creative outlets to help find authenticity. Conducting creative work, brewers not only incorporate taste and creativity but navigate science as well as ensuring the beer is brewed in a safe manner. For my informants, craft beer offers different understandings of quality, work, and interactions with others. Through the incorporation of particular ingredients, often including local agricultural producers, or ingredients that have a higher social value due to the place in which they are produced, breweries articulate that their product has better flavours as well as morality around it. Through the use of events like festivals, people from different avenues of the community come together to engage with craft beer. The work conducted offers people an understanding, or world building, which sees craft and artisanal work as a way to navigate what work in traditional middle-class careers looks like. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the work done at craft breweries has drastically changed due to the lack of face-to-face interactions. Through the use of the internet, both the work done, and the events people participate in looks significantly different.

## **Chapter Five: Community Making in Craft Beer**

Within chapter five I will explore how community is forming and changing within the craft beer industry in Ontario. A central part of craft beer is the various ways in which people contribute to the formation of community. Through the formation of a craft beer community, brewers, servers, consumers, and others attempt to use the industry as a way to reconceptualize not only the idea of Ontario being a distinct craft beer location, within North America, but also a distinct group of people. Through the building of community craft brewers assert their vision of an economic system in which they work. While still operating within a capitalist system, craft brewers, through mutual aid, collaboration, and by emphasizing their region's agricultural production, attempt to build a community away from the "profit" focused approach that macro brewing emphasizes.

While the community attempts to create a new conceptualization of manufacturing in Ontario, some people within the community have criticized it for its lack of diversity and gender related issues. While there are efforts to develop and change the community of craft beer, there are fears and anxieties around corporate selling-out. During COVID-19, and lock downs, the craft beer community has adapted and become more virtual, seeking ways to survive economically as well as socially. As more people, such as politicians and local producers, have advocated for supporting local businesses more people have become engaged with drinking craft beer. While people have previously engaged with craft beer in person, now people have become engaged with the community through online spheres.

### **Cooperation and the Development of a Localized Scene:**

In Ontario it is common to see beer collaborations between different breweries throughout the province. Creating bonds and companionship, these workers believe that they are creating something which they believe to be ethically good. While at first, I thought this phenomenon was different from what I expected competing businesses would do, my informant Jeff told me breweries within Ontario often see each other as doing different things within their location.

Throughout my interview with Jeff, he stated that one of the most important aspects of what craft both represents and is trying to do with beer is create community. With breweries and other important parts of the craft beer industry working together, Jeff believed that what they are doing is bringing up the quality of craft beer in Ontario to be world class.

Jeff: For me craft beer is more of a mindset where you have the big companies gobbling up the competition and those who might outsell them. Sure, this happens because you want to sell your product. It is a business, and you want to provide for your employees as well as make some money for yourself. But craft is like when Sierra Nevada opened a brewery in North Carolina, and before they established themselves, they met with the local breweries to make sure they were not stepping on anyone's toes. They knew that coming to town meant that they could pull away from the local guy's success. They wanted to make sure that they were not disrupting the local breweries, and so they used their purchasing power as a larger craft beer company to help the local brewers on their malt pricing. So, they contributed to the community as they were moving ingredients in by the train load at massive volumes. Instead of seeing the smaller breweries as competition they wanted to support and help each other. Craft as a mindset is more community focussed and it is not what you see a company do that is located in Belgium or Europe. Anhus-



Busch is not community focused, and their primary goal is to make money. Real craft are people contributing to their community, people not putting preservatives and poor-quality ingredients into their beer, and not taking advantage of their employees. Another good example I have of craft is what the owner of the Alchemist is doing in Vermont. He really drives home the community aspect as well as the mindset of quality ingredients. I believe he recently bought acreage of hop farmland in Washington State where he is growing Simcoe and Citra hops with a unique terroir.

In Ontario there is also a small brewery that grows, harvests and uses its own hops and several that only use natural spring water in their craft beer. The emphasis on quality, locally produced ingredients is essential to the craft beer community. For Jeff, the idea of community was not only a central ethos in the identity of craft beer but was the ways in which craft brewing elevates and innovates their beer. Weiss (2016) in his discussion of pork production in North Carolina points out that the production of local food is one that it created through taste as well as place. The cultivation of terroir and the recognition of certain foods have taste and place embodied within their production, circulation, as well as consumption (Weiss 2016). As a process of not only the land, but terroir is also created and maintained by processes of discernment as well as knowing. Through developing discernment on what is good producers and consumers have relationships with each other grounding particular tastes within a region through shifting perspectives as well as places (Weiss 2016). In the construction of an “authentic” beer experience, community members develop what they believe to be important such as incorporating regional ingredients while also developing an ideological commitment of

working together.<sup>14</sup> During my interview with Jeff, I asked why collaboration was common amongst brewers.

Author: Is the community aspect in craft beer why so many breweries in the region collaborate a lot with each other?

Jeff: It sure is. It is funny because when I was working for Pommies Cider, I was doing a lot of deliveries. With cider companies you very often delivery to craft breweries so that they can have a cider option on their menu. I remember this one brewery called Roadway Brewery down in Toronto. They had a tiny pub basement and when I delivered cider, I would go talk to the head brewer. I remember asking him about their flag ship beer, which was a Californian Common which uses a very specific form of yeast, that only a few labs have so it is very expensive. I asked how he could afford the yeast and he told me that he does not actually pay for a lot of his ingredients. When he needed a yeast or any other ingredient, he would go down the road to other breweries in the area and they would just give him what he needs. Believe me when I say there is no industry quite like craft beer. Sure, it might just be a yeast, but that is an essential ingredient and without it there is no beer. Your competition is literally handing you these things for free. This is what is so hard to describe to people about craft beer. I use the analogy that it is like takeout. When you are in the mood for take out are you going Chinese food or Greek food? Breweries see themselves doing things differently from each other. Collaboration happens because we do not see each other competing with one another but doing different things together.

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<sup>14</sup> The production and authentic “taste” for beer is not a singular idea but one in which the producers are constantly remaking and requalifying through social, material, and other understandings which reflect the local ingredients used. Working together local producers attempt use certain ingredients to reflect their region (Weiss 2016).

Craft breweries are a cooperative rather than competitive form of capitalism. They have a common purpose, means of production, market but they chose to cooperate to promote quality, and community over profits and market share. While many larger craft breweries still see profit as more important, smaller breweries articulate a different ethos into their work. Working with each other, craft breweries within Ontario believe that through mutual assistance they are contributing to building a community which highlights the diversity of the beer being made. Through things like sharing ingredients or even recipes, craft brewers articulate that their identity is less about profits then it is about making “quality” beer through mutual cooperation with other local breweries. Jeff points out that for brewers the creation of community is essential in staying afloat within the industry.

Jeff: When I think about my favourite aspects of craft beer it is flavour and community. In my phone I have contacts with my friends from other breweries in my area who will answer my brewing or life related question. The brewers, I know will give me the time of day to help me out, and you just do not see anything else like this in any other industry.

Currently, within Ontario, numerous breweries have made changes to the structure of their business. Breweries such as Beaus, in Vankleek Hill in Eastern Ontario, have given their employees ownership of the brewery (Beaus Brewery 2021). Some breweries articulate that through remaining “independent,” and community focused that they could become a force for positive change. Other breweries in the Southern part of Ontario, such as Left Field, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic have mandated that their operations will provide a living wage to their employees. This brewery stated that their push for a living wage in regard to their business was to help develop the community and allow for their employees to continue to live in Toronto (Left Field Brewery 2021). Paxson (2013) suggests that within the American cheese’ making

community there is a hope for producers to create a brighter future through remaking as well as recreating new traditions with cheese. Within this future, producers create a tradition away from simply industrialization but one of experimentation, creativity, naturalness, and local production available for local consumers (Paxson 2013). Artisanal production often considers its relationships of local communities and its dependencies on them.

For numerous craft brewers in Ontario believe, like artisanal cheese producers in the United States, what they are doing is not about finding large scale financial success. It is more important to create “good” beer while also considering the livelihoods and ability for employees to have a “good” life then just work for profits and market share. Working together with other breweries who might otherwise be seen as their “competitors”, for various brewers, they have an understanding through mutual assistance, as well as sharing knowledges, that they are contributing for a better community around craft beer.

While craft breweries articulate that they are creating community through their work and collaboration with other local food producers, there is an added dimension of a higher price point on their products. During my interview with Harrison, he suggested that despite its higher price point that it is “fair.”

Harrison: I think there is a class barrier in craft beer but also some class solidarity in it too. While there is a higher price point to the beer you know that the money is going to the community and local producers who share similar values to mine. There is a strong sense that you are supporting your community. The extra dollar can be difficult for some people but at the end of the day drinking beer is not a mandatory thing, so I think its completely fair to ask for the extra dollar.

During the 2018 provincial election in Ontario, the Conservative candidate and later Premier Doug Ford, ran on the promise of “Buck a beer” decreasing the amount of price of beer. Stores such as the LCBO, and the Beer Store believed that this law would decrease the price for beer, while cider, as well as mixed distilled drinks could remain at their current price point. While this campaign promise did not come into fruition, many breweries felt that this promise was an attack and put their very survival in question (McLaughlin 2018). For craft breweries, the cost of beer not only reflects the quality of ingredients and the manufacturing process but reflects the effort and specialised knowledge put into the product. Within the community some people reflected that the Buck a Beer campaign would only further contribute to more people thinking the industry to be elitist. The community reflected that though affording craft beer is a privilege the politicizing of the price would only reflect craft beer to be seen as a drink for only “certain people” and not everyone (Duignan 2020). Harrison elaborated on the failure of buck a beer.

Harrison: To my knowledge this particular election promise never came true. The last time I was at the LCBO I did see a No Name brand lager being sold for nine dollars. If No Name brand can not even sell their beer for a dollar, then what beer company can? Most brewers had to laugh at that promise. Beer costs more to produce then just a dollar. With the current taxation and production costs it is not possible in Ontario. The whole promise just did not make any sense.



Figure 6. This image depicts the growing of hops within Ontario. Hops are grown on vines vertically. While many breweries within the province will import hops from areas which have a high terroir and social status to their taste other breweries have begun to use provincially grown hops or hops that the breweries grows themselves.

For many people, the high price point for craft beer does not really matter as they believe it helps to support local producers. The push for local food alternatives by middle-class and cosmopolitan consumers has been suggested as an alternative pathway to larger scale consumerism. People associated with promoting local and slow food alternatives to industrial production believe that it helps support local economies as well as producers (Nonni 2013: 271). For these consumers, the distrust of large-scale industrialization within food and beer has been created due to a lack of information around particular consumer goods. As a result, many have pushed for more information to be present so that people can know how the product has been made and by whom (Nonni 2013: 272). On the cans and labels of craft beer, brewers discuss the various ingredients and hop varieties within the beer. The craft beer community within the province of Ontario has attempted to help create an alternative pathway in Ontario in order to develop a “scene”. As important gathering places within local communities, many craft

breweries use their position as local businesses to support their communities. After the Buck a Beer campaign, many Ontario Craft Breweries used the moment as a way to contribute to their local communities. In Ottawa, the Dominion City Brewery created a beer called Buck a Beer which used its proceeds to fundraise and help Syrian refugees become settled in the city. As regional institutions, many Ontario craft breweries believe that as well as bringing up the quality of the beer, they must also help to become community institutions that aid their communities. Some breweries have offered things like scholarships for students, community kitchens, and donating to local initiatives (Duignan 2020). Another aspect of community making has taken place through digital spaces. Within the craft beer community online spaces have grown as an important part of the community. Though while there are affordances related to who has access to these spaces, they have offered people a way to connect throughout the province and digitalized world.

### **Craft Beer and Online Groups:**

A newer phenomenon, within the craft beer community in Ontario, has been the introduction and use of online groups as well as social media. Brewers and other community members use social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram to help engage with craft beer. Active members of groups post pictures of cans or what they are home brewing to reflect on their tastes and ideas on craft beer. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of online space has been utilized not only as a means to survive the pandemic but a place for people to come together. Through selling and utilizing web resources, having a robust online presence has become an important means of finding new people to engage, and enjoy craft beer, as well as maintaining regular consumers. Jackson during his interview described the transition of using the internet to sell beer in the pandemic as a fundamental way of finding success.

Jackson: With bars and restaurants closing down, retail went up because everyone was buying beer online at home. Our company really plateaued in that home sales made up for our loss. I think home deliveries will stay but will look different after the pandemic. Using social media and web sales really saved us. Though in Alberta, where I am the retail sales rep, it is illegal because it is an imported product.

Through technology, craft beer companies in Ontario attempted to stay afloat while many bars and restaurants lost their business. During my interview with Alison, she put forth the idea that the “friendliness” of a craft brewery’s online presence, is often telling of their overall image.

Author: What are the roles of social media in creating a community with craft beer?

Alison: I think it is super important especially with COVID with everything being closed. Many people are having their first interactions with craft breweries through their social media. Often you can pick up on the personality and vibe of the brewery through their website as well as social media. Social media is a great way for breweries to introduce themselves and their products to the public, however, it should be used carefully. My favourite part of how breweries are using social media is to discuss about the various beers they are making. Talking about how it was made, or tasting notes within the beer’s flavour, allow for people to learn as well as educate themselves on the beer. I think it has this open door feel that people can discover what they like. It can be very difficult, especially when you feel the pretentiousness coming from the brewery and you have to become a beer expert at the door, when entering certain breweries. Some breweries online presences are very uninviting. They require their customers to know everything about beer, when engaging with them, making the whole experience intimidating.



Through the internet, craft breweries often try to reach their products to a broader audience beyond their local community. During my interview with Harrison, he discussed how younger middle-class people becoming more interested in craft beer has also contributed to larger social media presence.

Harrison: I think the push for using more social media with craft beer has to do with demographics. I think a lot of the demographic of people who appreciate craft beer will use social media. I think in a crowded field like craft beer it helps to stand out amongst the other breweries. Social media and craft beer is so important now.

Along with the growing use of breweries in Ontario creating an internet presence, groups devoted to craft beer within the province have emerged. While provincial law prohibits the trading of beer, online members share their knowledge as well as interest in craft beer. Through the internet, networked communication, and the growing availability of middle-class consumers having devices like smart phones, there are now greater affordances for people to consume information (Castells 2004). Through the creation of the craft beer community online, both breweries and consumers can engage in taste, consumption, and the articulation of their experiences.

Within these social media groups, participants communicate with an audience they imagine. Participants imagine the audience to be fans of craft beer and label their audience to “share” these common connections (Marwick 2011:117). Through sharing images of certain beers to be consumed, or reflections about beer, these participants engage in the creation of taste performance through their posting. Through the performance of taste, these participants hope to enact “markers of coolness” and authenticity through their act of posting (Marwick 2011: 117). Within craft beer, social media groups become places where “fans” of craft beer can participate.

However, though these groups encourage all to participate, it is mostly middle-class men who openly discuss beer in these groups. Through their self-presentation, through the images of beer and themselves drinking beer, the goal is to present oneself as a beer expert. Social media as an important way in which people create community but it has also allowed people to express their concerns with some aspects of the community.

### **Diversity and Craft Beer:**

While the Ontario craft beer community is trying to create a more localized, progressive, and friendlier community one issue it has is creating and accepting more diversity within its community. Beer has been associated with masculinity, often through the use of heavily sexualized depictions of women in the advertisement. As Konnelly points out, beer cans often depict images of certain identities such as a lumber jack to evoke elements of Canadian nationalism along with heavily gendered connotations of masculinity (Konnelly 76: 2020). Progressively many breweries, and craft breweries, have begun to move away from things like sexualized can art and beer advertisements. While craft beer and beer culture has long been associated, since industrialization, as a masculine beverage, today many have challenged this association.

In 2013, an online group emerged known as the Society of Beer Drinking Ladies. It is an Ontario based organization which was a “safe” place for women to discuss and educate themselves about craft beer without being harassed. This particular group also became a resource for women within the craft beer community in Ontario (Society of Beer Drinking Ladies: 2021). Through this online community, its creators intended it to bring women within the industry and others who enjoy a beer to meet, communicate and connect. This online community began to create events to foster a safe, welcoming, and diverse space for women-identifying as beer fans

(Society of Beer Drinking Ladies 2017). Establishing itself as a large online, and off-line community, the Society of Beer Drinking Ladies both uses online platforms like Instagram and offline events such as its own craft beer festival. It focuses on being a safe place for people identifying as women (Society of Beer Drinking Ladies 2021). Other groups such as the Pink Boots Society have become internationally recognized, to help encourage more women to work within the craft beer industry. Through online and offline workshops as well as seminars this society helps women brewers (Pink Boots Society 2021). The Society of Beer Drinking Ladies has posts on their Instagram page often showing resources regarding education around “intersectional feminism,” combating racism, and the inclusion of LGBT+ People in the beer community. Throughout these groups, inclusion and representation of people are a central focus (Society of Beer Drinking Ladies 2020). As other groups like Canada Beer Society are predominantly white middle-class men, the Society of Beer Drinking Ladies and other “diverse craft beer social media groups” discuss craft beer and take on political acts through online activism and the emphasis on inclusion.

Through the creation of space, and new perspectives on craft beer, these groups hope to diversify the community, as well as show new perspectives as well as experience in all aspects of beer tasting, manufacturing and appreciation (Duignan 2020). Community activists also highlight craft beer as a vehicle to tell stories and the experiences of others. Online platforms have become important places in which people have spoken out on the lack of diversity within the craft beer community.

Groups such as the Society for Beer Drinking Ladies create space that allows for greater diversity of people who have an interest in craft beer and generates content for more followers. Through digital content, online groups and communities intend to broadcast their information,

messaging, as well as influence beyond “niche audiences.” In *Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy*, Alice E. Marwick argues that the creation of networked communication technologies act as tools which have opened up greater visibility for people to influence traditional media outlets (Marwick 2015: 139-140). As people use and engage social media, people within a particular community or outside of it can help to generate “likes”, helping to create an audience for groups and pages. The success of content creators allows people, fans, and participants to always have a steady stream of knowledge and information at their disposal (Marwick 2015: 140). Through the creation of content, resources and information, women-focused craft beer groups and pages use their presence as a tool to help facilitate a new perspective within the community.

In 2020 - 2021, more people have spoken out on gender issues and a lack of diversity and representation within the craft beer community in Ontario. As craft beer has rapidly grown within the 2010s, many within the community believe that some owners of breweries do not have the experience of dealing with large groups of employees and often staff become unprotected (Zeschky 2021). Women and people of colour have come forward in regard to aspects of the work environment, as well as the community being toxic. As beer became more masculinized in the Twentieth Century, advertisement and can labels helped to reinforce the culture around beer (Brantley 2021). Though while craft beer in Ontario and throughout North America emerged as a progressive localized community, many issues of harassment as well as discrimination have persisted in the community. More community organizations and diversity committees have been created to deal with the “toxic” aspects of the community. During my interview with Alison, who is now working for a craft brewery in Nova Scotia, she acknowledged the problem of diversity in craft beer.

Alison: I think there are issues with a lack of diversity within craft beer and it is a big problem. I know where I am living now there is more awareness around both gender and racial diversity in craft beer. There are organizations here which are trying to put a foot in the door for women, and people of colour within the industry. Back in Ontario there was a lot of men especially in the back of the breweries and in management. In the taproom, and with the serving staff, there was more gender diversity.

Some breweries within the Ontario community have begun some collective action in diversifying the community working with groups such as the Society of Beer Drinking Ladies. From zero harassment policies, creating a safe place for families to go to the breweries, collaborative beers, creating scholarships, and apprenticeships some craft breweries are trying to change the image of craft beer (Duignan 2020). During my interview with Harrison, he discussed how the management at the brewery he was working at began to change its policies in maintaining an environment of zero harassment. As Harrison points out during his interview, management in craft breweries are becoming more aware of the lack of diversity and concerns of abuse within the community.

Harrison: I do think at this point in time, the management of these breweries are realizing the barriers for women and people of colour within the industry. As a result, we try to handle situations respectfully. When a customer is behaving poorly and harassment happens, we are trained to make sure that everyone steps up regardless of level to resolve the matter. The male staff who do things like lead tours sometimes take certain tour groups if they are things like bachelor parties so that the female staff members are not put in a position which might not be safe. At events, if harassment occurs, management will immediately get involved to stop the harassment.

In the wake of people voicing their concerns about the craft beer community, more breweries have begun to learn about ways to better educate themselves on being more diverse as well as inclusive. The Canadian Craft Brewers Association, a national craft brewing organization, has begun a process in order to prevent discrimination within the industry through creating a committee (Zeschky 2021). Working with organizations and groups such as Society for Beer Drinking Ladies, some community members are helping to facilitate spaces safe for everyone. On a smaller scale, some breweries have begun to put into place diversity, inclusion, and equity groups composed of owners, managers, brewers, and servers in order to help create “a culture of inclusion” as well as eliminating barriers within the community (Dominion City 2021). Through creating change within the community there is a goal in hoping to push beer and inclusivity into the “mainstream,” the goal for many people to attract more to craft beer, especially regionally, and to show a larger, more diverse audience. Breweries have now been putting more effort into developing human resources infrastructure to help contribute towards their employees having “meaningful and engaging work.” Through popularizing the image of beer, groups hopes their efforts also show that people can come from various lifestyles and enjoy the taste of craft beer (Johnson 2019). As craft beer and craft beer groups have become larger, images and troupes of who are the “tastemakers” will change.

The problem of inclusiveness and diversity is partly a product of an industry that has experienced rapid growth and often lacks the human resource skills and policies found in businesses that have been around longer. Its willingness to change and adapt has become part of the community. Within Ontario the craft beer community has emerged and worked together to bring up the quality of the beer. Through collaboration and mutual assistance, brewers and community members work together develop a regional terroir. The community around craft beer

has also emerged online as a way to bring people together throughout the globalized world. Online space has also become a way in which the community discusses the problems within the craft beer community, such as the lack of diversity. Groups like the Society for Ladies who Drink beer and other craft beer diversity groups have advocated not only greater diversity within the community but have also mandated the need for safe spaces for women and people of colour in craft beer. While the issues of lack of diversity, sexism, and racism are ongoing issues within the beer world, more breweries as well as community members are becoming more aware of the problems.

## **Chapter Six: Where Craft is Going- Future(s) of Craft Beer in Ontario**

During my interviews, one of the major questions I asked focused on how my informants saw craft beer at this time in North America and where they believed craft was heading. For my informants, the diversity of ideas reflected different aspects of what is happening in craft, such as over expansion, selling-out, lack of importance, and the development of breweries as local “community centres”. As the craft beer industry in Ontario continues to grow due to rising popularity, many within the community believe that the growth will begin to slow down and stagnate.

During my interview with Harrison, he suggests that the growth of craft beer will be affected by the growing popularity of craft distilling, and ready-made beverages.

Harrison: Right now, I do not think it is the continuation of what the hipsters did in the 2010s with leaning away from corporations and technology to make consumer goods. I think elements come from that lineage, but craft beer is increasingly mainstream. My suspicion is that the consumer base is drastically shrinking due to the rise of new seltzer-based drinks. I think craft beer is going to have issues in their continuation into the 2020s. More and more breweries are getting started in the industry and it is getting overgrown as the market is narrowing. I think the market will still grow but many of the smaller breweries will get bought out by larger corporations like Anheuser-Busch, and all the big players like Molson and Coors. There is a sense that these players can purchase a sense of the authenticity that the Ontario craft brewing community has developed. However, if that tactic works out remains to be seen, as breweries like Mill Street who got bought out has not bounced back since the buy out and does not feel the same.



With more breweries developing in Ontario, some of those within the community believe that the market and industry will splinter. Within the act of selling-out many within the community begin to not treat the brewery the same if it had remained independent. Within the craft beer community, the fears of being bought out is felt as a loss of identity, and personal control over what is being produced.

During my interview with Jackson, he stated how he thinks the market for craft beer will only get more challenging.

Author: So where do you think craft beer is going?

Jackson: This is a tough question, but I think ready made drink cocktails like White Claws started to take a massive hit on craft beer. In twenty years, I think there will be fewer craft breweries developing in Ontario, but the ones still left will be making incredible beer that is much better than today's beer. No one knows what the larger breweries will cook up and if they will try to kill more smaller breweries. I think in some ways there are endless possibilities which will happen. As Canadian beer is often behind American craft beer by a few years, we can observe what is happening in the United States now with craft cocktails and the buy outs will continue to happen.

For brewers, the feeling of success and scaling up production to meet the needs of demand for the beer can lead to “selling-out”. As Heather Paxson (2013) notes with artisanal cheese in the New England region, the processes of ecology of production slow down production and scale down. While upping production could lead to success it could also lead to losing a sense of authenticity as local regional breweries (Jones & Harvey 2017: 127-128). As macro beer brands begin to buy out and purchase smaller breweries, they have also begun to produce similar

styles of beers as craft. Some within the craft community call this phenomenon as “macro posers” and becomes heavily critiqued as well as policed by those within the community who believe that these beers to be inauthentic (Jones & Harvey 2017: 128-129). While both Harrison and Jackson believed that the future of craft beer would become impacted by the emergence of craft alternatives and by the processes of buy outs by larger companies, Jeff saw a different trend happening.

Jeff: Well, I see there is a trend, and the pandemic made a shift more prominent with people buying more local goods. I think this shift has been happening with the 100-mile diet things. There is certainly a return to supporting your local producer and it is going back to what there was in Europe one hundred years ago. This is where every community has their local brewery and pub where everyone hangs out at, and the tavern is also the brewery. This was the beer people would drink in their community. I really predict a return to this model in Ontario. I feel like the future of the brewing industry is that the brewery becomes the community hub. The breweries we see in Ontario today that have a big audience, like Amsterdam brewery or Muskoka brewery is because of how they developed. These places had time to grow and fill the niche that was not there. Now that these niches have been filled you are going to see small local breweries just servicing their community. I think they are going to become social clubs where you do things like beer and yoga or go down on Saturday nights to see local bands play. Things like local chefs doing things totally different in their communities coming to the brewery to cook food will become common. I think there will be an integration of culture, art, and beer. The community aspect will become even more ingrained with craft breweries.

Author: So, do you see more of the larger breweries continuing to buy out smaller breweries in the future?

Jeff: I think this is going to continue as a trend with the larger breweries like what happened with Mill Street and Creemore Springs brewery. The larger craft breweries in Ontario are big targets because they have the infrastructure already in place to have the same capacity as a larger macro brewery. They will need money however, to retire the people from these breweries offices so that they have full control. I predict that it will take a long time for these buy outs to hit the smaller breweries like the brewery I work at. These big corporations are interested in the big game and not peanuts.

Becoming small community institutions, craft breweries may become focused on showcasing local producers rather than seeking profit. As local institutions, these small breweries would be focussed on developing the uniqueness of Ontario's beer developing as what they believe to be "ethical" rather than profit seeking. Towards the end of my interview with Alison, she saw the future to be a big moment in craft beer production.

Alison: I think the industry is growing and there will be more experimentation, collaboration with different communities of people coming together to enjoy the beer. I think there will be more breweries looking after their community doing things like raising money for causes. With organizations like the Society for Beer Drinking Ladies and in Nova Scotia Collective Change is Brewing, there will be a bigger push for diversity as well as collaboration with the community. Craft breweries will begin to collaborate more with communities and organizations, as well as outside craft beer. I really think this will be a big moment for craft beer. I think with things like COVID things like beer deliveries will be here to stay and now it will be more accessible for those who live outside urban areas to get beer.

During all my interviews with my informants, they all suggested that craft beer would continue to play a role within society. While the impacts of overgrowth, corporate buyouts and

the rise of craft distilling will alter how people see, as well as access craft beer, some see hope for the future. As more smaller breweries within the province develop as small community hubs focused on their community rather than expansion and profit, some believe that this will further develop craft beer innovation. With more communities of people becoming interested in diversifying, the craft beers made will reflect the changing tastes and experiences of those who produce the beer.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

Sitting on a patio enjoying the late spring sun I browse the beer menu through my phone. Looking at the carefully written descriptions of the beers, I reflect that almost all of them are distinctively different and are all from Ontario craft breweries. As I decide on my order, I watch as the masked servers move about the tables carrying pints and flights of beers for eager post lockdown customers. I decide on the barrel aged Belgian tripel styled beer from a local brewery. I question, in my head, if the beer were truly “Belgian” and if a beer in Ontario could even claim that. After I finish my drink, I walk over to the pubs bottle shop where from end to end I see only Ontario craft beer. Full of different styles, cans, colours, and artwork, each beer reflected not only the various stories of those who brewed them but were also a reflection of the communities from which they emerged. Deciding to bring home sour beers from a smaller Hamilton brewery, I pull out my phone to research the beers and how best to enjoy them.

Emerging from counter cultural movements, craft beer began as an alternative to the industrialization of beer. Developing into what it is today, craft beer within Ontario, has been incrementally creating a scene which rivals other regions famous for their beer. Working within the movement, people associated with the community believe that through their labour they are contributing not only to personal fulfilment but building the scene. Within the middle-class in North America, the growing anxieties of success both inter, and intrapersonal, have made people search for alternative paths in life. As I noted in chapter three, the paths in which people find themselves, within the craft beer community in Ontario, are varied and often complex. Finding fulfillment has allowed for middle-class people who work within the craft beer community to believe that work they perform has larger meaning and is ethically good.

Working with craft beer is a process in which taste, personal experience, artistic ability, and scientific knowledge comes into play. In building the Ontario craft beer community, brewers throughout the province work together to create beers which often incorporate locally sourced ingredients, and ingredients believed to have a high level of social status. When creating and manufacturing, brewers navigate taste through ingredients such as yeast, and hops to create unique flavours in the beer. Unlike the beers which are created by macro level corporate breweries, local craft breweries in Ontario believe that experimentation is a necessary tool to create authenticity. Like other counter cultural movements, like the health food movement, home brewers are inspired to create beer in small batches, with more complex flavour profiles and ingredients that were both local and exotic in the 1960s-1970s. Craft brewers today, believe that authenticity is not creating a large for-profit business, but rather creating “good” tasting beer often by incorporating local producers in the process. Currently in Ontario, and within North America, beer has become transformed from something seen as low brow, to something in which people believe to be an upscale and ethically good consumer beverage. Within the community, people like my informants believe that craft beer is a more authentic product, made with passionate people, who care about the quality of the beer. They also feel the anxieties around snobbery as well as how gate keeping happens within the community.

In this thesis I have explored how people within the Ontario craft beer community find themselves working within the craft beer industry. Often it is a way to find a sense of authenticity, and meaning making in the work they do, but also how through collaboration they are hoping to create a movement within Ontario. Through online and offline spaces, the Ontario craft beer community attempts to build an increasingly large and diverse community. Their goal is to be recognized as a place, like Vermont or Belgium, as a beer destination. Authenticity is

being enacted, as a way in which people hope to find self fulfillment, and genuineness in the beers they produce within the community. Others have highlighted the need to create space for more diversity in terms of race, gender and sexuality within the community. Groups such as the Society of Beer Drinking Ladies and the Pink Boots society are just some of the various groups that believe that creating a safer, more inclusive space, will also create more voices in the community, as well as a new sense of authenticity.

Within this moment of time the craft beer community within Ontario has experienced a great sense of change. Due to COVID-19, and larger social movements happening within society, how people interact with beer has become different. As a result of the pandemic, jobs once thought to be safe have transformed into precarious forms of work. It is because of the pandemic that the craft beer community within Ontario has become more involved online. With the interaction of consumers buying craft beer at home, the life and death of craft breweries have become dependent on the use of social media. Through online activities like conferences, or virtual events like craft beer tastings, people engage with craft beer in newer ways rather than simply going into the brewery.

During this time, people within the community, including my informants, feel the growth of craft beer is leading to a pathway which might lose part of the authenticity, which they believe helped create craft beer. From the anxiety surrounding the rapid growth of the industry, to the fears that larger global brewing corporations will buyout smaller Ontario craft breweries, many predict that craft beer will lose out on what made it unique. With the rise of ready-made cocktails, to the growing demand for craft distilling, more craft breweries have begun to explore new artisanal goods as a way to survive.

While some people predict that the future of craft beer in Ontario is bleak due to the rapid rise in the number of new breweries. Others, such as my participant Jeff, believe in a future where smaller local breweries remain exclusively local institutions. As local “community hubs” these breweries would become places in which people can collaborate and hold space for people. As community centres, the beer sold would reflect not only the tastes of the brewers but the community’s taste. Within this vision of the future of craft beer in Ontario, authenticity is produced through remaining local, and by incorporating local voices in the production of the beer. While an important place for consumption the craft beer community within Ontario also represents for some a sense of uneasiness around the reproduction of snobbery and elitism. While brewer, servers, and community members hope to show why Ontario beer is an important location for brewing they are also becoming aware of tensions around craft beer. Within this thesis, I explored questions around middle-class identity, the production of authenticity, the work in which people within the community perform, and explored where these people think craft beer is in North American history, as well as explored the possible futures of craft beer. Exploring these topics, I believe, shows how taste, meaning, and the things people consume remain important aspects of the middle-class lifestyle.

### **Further Research:**

Within this nexus of transition, within the craft beer community, and the middle-class in Ontario, I believe further research is necessary. Working with community members who are primary workers in the industry, as well as exploring how secondary groups like the Society for Beer Drinking Ladies are impacting change has many possibilities. Looking at how a rapidly growing artisanal industry deals with diversity, human resource management, and the anxieties around authenticity in a post pandemic economy is intriguing. Exploring how people enact



change within the community would highlight how identity and authenticity are becoming challenged. Within this moment of transition, the craft beer community in Ontario has been impacted in 2020-2021 by the COVID-19 pandemic and by social change happening within North American society. I believe further research could discuss how craft beer community becomes changed by these external forces. As a place in which involves the senses to brew beer, conducting research work within the brewery could further explore how brewers, servers, and other workers integrate artistic creativity and scientific and other technical skills to produce beer.

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