

IMAGINING EXURBIA:  
NARRATIVES OF LAND USE IN THE RESIDENTIAL COUNTRYSIDE

by

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This thesis examines the relationship between exurban residential land use, narratives exurban residents use to describe their land use, and attitudes and motivations implicated in their land uses. The study is predicated on an interest in the ways in which manifestations of the ideals of exurban living shape the aesthetic of the residential countryside and the functions of ecological systems desirable for their amenity value, such as agricultural and pastoral lands and forests. The study is situated in the residential countryside of Toronto, in exurban places which appear to be rural, but which have assumed functions more urban than rural, mostly through increased residence by urbanites. Stories and attitudes about the relationship of exurbanites with their land have been examined along with interpretation of patterns in the landscape. Interpretive, psychological, and ecological frameworks are used to generate a mosaic view of the relationships between exurbanites and their land.

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