

Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada
Le Journal de la Société pour l'étude de l'architecture au Canada



Conflicts of Care
Contesting Visions of Urban Reform in Toronto

Tara Bissett

Volume 47, numéro 1, 2022

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1095165ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1095165ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

SSAC-SEAC

ISSN

1486-0872 (imprimé)

2563-8696 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Bissett, T. (2022). Conflicts of Care : contesting Visions of Urban Reform in Toronto. *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada / Le Journal de la Société pour l'étude de l'architecture au Canada*, 47(1), 43–57.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1095165ar>

© SSAC-SEAC, 2022

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

CONFLICTS OF CARE

Contesting Visions of Urban Reform in Toronto¹

> TARA BISSETT

TARA BISSETT is an urban and architectural historian from Toronto. She is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Waterloo School of Architecture. Tara's recent research traces the complex and fractured histories of labour and care ethics in architectural history and practice, including the history of women working as architectural educators, architects, planners, and organizers, as well as the transnational histories of émigré women architects. More recently, her work encompasses histories of disability and access; she is leading a project on access and creative practice in architectural design with an Enabling Change grant at the University of Waterloo.

"Social advance depends as much upon the process through which it is secured as upon the result itself." —Jane Addams²

Care is a nebulous word, associated with the desire to ensure the wellbeing of another person. Other times the word is associated with emotional labour, and as such is sometimes neither understood nor respected due to its evocation of quotidian maintenance. The term itself is broad; in the words of political theorists Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto, care is "a species of activity that includes everything we do to maintain, contain, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible."³ In addition to the broad human endeavour of hands-on maintenance, Tronto further defines care as "the larger structural questions of thinking about which institutions, people, and practices should be used to accomplish concrete and real caring tasks."⁴ How care practices are best instituted, governed, and mandated on an urban scale is complex and often contentious. For the purposes of this study, care provides the lens for examining a discourse in early twentieth-century Toronto. From the point of view of the public health administration, care was depicted as an individual practice of household and personal maintenance that led to urban betterment. Contrarily, to several urban activists working within the inner city, care was conceived as a collective practice bounded by relational and reciprocal actions and sustained by the collaborative pursuit of preserving urban communities, particularly their networks of social relations.⁵

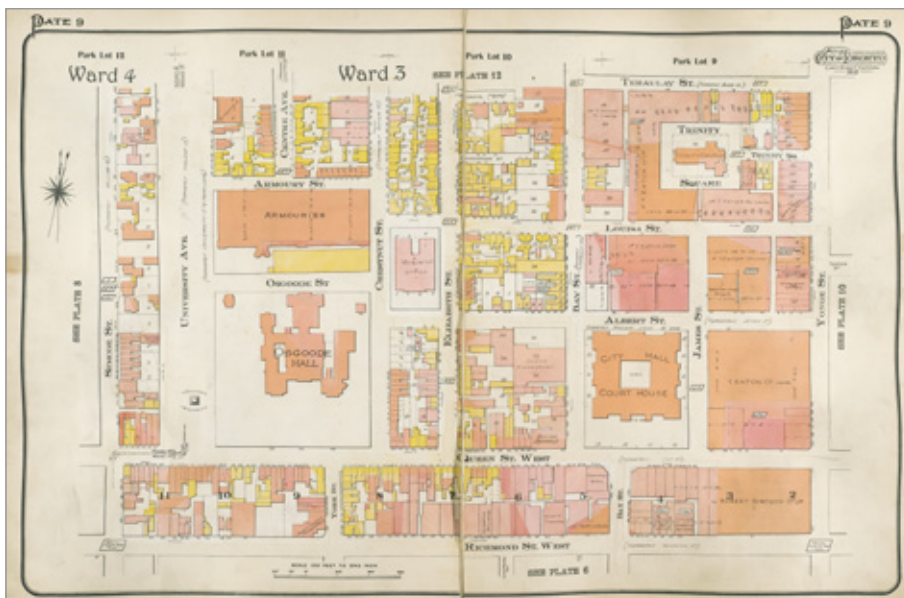


FIG. 1. GOAD'S ATLAS OF THE CITY OF TORONTO DEPICTING THE WARD NEIGHBOURHOOD. | COURTESY OF THE CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES.

The provision of care in North American urban settings changed dramatically in the early twentieth century, as public infrastructure (e.g., plumbing, heating, and garbage collection services) replaced individual household responsibilities (emptying water closets, gathering water, and disposing of waste).⁶ As with other examples of institutionalized services, such as childcare (daycare facilities), community safety (police services), shelter (housing), and community wellbeing (playground and sports facilities), these reforms generated debate about who should provide and finance such care, and who was entitled to receive it.

The need for institutionalized public care, including housing, was conspicuous in growing cities such as Toronto, which attracted many immigrants who settled in high-density, centralized neighbourhoods. Like many large Canadian cities in the early twentieth century, Toronto experienced rapid expansion with uneven urban settlement defined geographically by income and other disparities. Many of its inner-city neighbourhoods became “arrival cities,” a term coined by Doug Saunders to describe districts that emerge informally as hosts for recent immigrants who maintain strong social and economic ties to their homelands.⁷ Residents of these densely populated districts moved in and out with little or no guidance from any municipal agencies. These communities often resided in older wood-framed residences, with *ad hoc* additions, combined commercial and residential spaces, and makeshift public spaces that reflected the immediate needs of the residents.⁸ In the early 1900s, Toronto had no regulatory planning board. Although the *Ontario Planning and Development Act* was established in 1917, it focused mainly on the growth of the suburbs.⁹ Therefore, the distribution of urban care services,

housing, and social infrastructure became the responsibility of social workers, public health officials, missions, and other concerned citizen groups, which resulted in disparate efforts to address the needs of vulnerable populations. Debates proliferated around the vision of the city and the conflicting needs of its citizens, stakeholders, and trustees.

This article seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of Toronto’s planning discourse in the early twentieth century by introducing a debate about urban reform from two perspectives. I argue that two organizations filled the vacuum linking public care to housing reform in the City of Toronto: government institutions (the public health administration) and civic organizations (community and grassroots associations).¹⁰ Both entities developed their templates for healthful urban living: government officials sought to institutionalize household practices that encoded traditional values centred on individual reform, while community organizers worked closely at the neighbourhood scale to develop community infrastructure and bolster structures already in place. In examining the language used to describe poverty, housing, and the residents within Toronto’s most vulnerable neighbourhoods, I assert that the official language of urban care promoted by government institutions often reflected bias against poverty, particularly among public health officials, which led to discrimination against those most in need of institutional care, including housing and municipal services. Although both approaches focused on restructuring marginalized areas of the city, their ideologies were inflected by their perceptions about the character of the people living in these areas. Despite vocal opposition from grassroots organizers and social

reformers who advocated partnering *with* the residents to strengthen the community, the public health administration’s more punitive approach of reforming aberrant or undesirable behaviour in individuals prevailed.

ST. JOHN’S WARD AND THE IDEA OF THE SLUM

Many of these debates about city reform centred on one Toronto neighbourhood, St. John’s Ward, or simply the Ward, an area bounded by several main thoroughfares in the Toronto city centre (fig. 1).¹¹ In the 1850s, the Ward was established as a working-class and multicultural neighbourhood along the northern border of York (now the City of Toronto). Its residents included African Americans who had fled north to Canada on the underground railway, a substantial Chinatown, and one of the city’s largest Jewish communities.¹² By 1900, the Ward had evolved into a high-density residential and commercial district housing immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, China, Ireland, and other parts of the world, most of whom sought relatively inexpensive rents, a central location, and community services in familiar languages and faiths (fig. 2).¹³

Neighbourhoods such as the Ward and Moss Park (i.e., Cabbagetown) were distinctly urban in character, though characterized by a mix of housing, light industry, and commercial activity, but also by deep community links that often led to civic initiatives (fig. 3). For instance, in order to accommodate the flow of newcomers seeking refuge, residents began retrofitting the single-family wood-framed houses lining the streets into apartment suites and adding outbuildings to houses and alleyways. Neighbourhood committees improvised playgrounds for children and



FIG. 2. THE WARD WAS THE HOST TO TORONTO'S FIRST CHINATOWN. | COURTESY OF THE CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES, 1937.



FIG. 3. TORONTO'S CITY CENTRE SHOWING A MIX OF INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY. | COURTESY OF THE CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES.

services for refugees. By 1920, the Ward also attracted artists, musicians, and political activists seeking central and affordable accommodation and permitted creative and unorthodox ways of life that were shunned in most of Toronto's middle-class neighbourhoods. Until the incremental demolition and gentrification that began in the 1930s, the Ward's bright pink, yellow, and blue painted facades containing bookstores, art galleries, cafés, and underground music venues were vital cultural markers in the development of Toronto's art scene. Despite cultural and lingual diversity, the Ward's citizens often gathered around common interests and demands, such as the right to housing and cultural self-expression and identity, as well as the desire for local representation and governance that would link them to the city's legal and political apparatuses.¹⁴ Such bottom-up initiatives fomented the idea of the Ward as a vessel for artistic, political, and social change.

However, these community-formed aspirations provoked unease among some city officials, who feared that poorly housed citizens congregated together

might spawn unrest, even a Bolshevik uprising; but they also sparked public debates about overcrowding and burgeoning public health crises. In response, long-term plans were developed by various government offices and community members to institutionalize care by building housing, providing access to public services, creating safe places for children to play, engineering better plumbing, and establishing public washrooms and baths. In Toronto, such projects were especially important for those who lived in neighbourhoods like the Ward, particularly because there was no single governmental body providing social services at that time. An important figure in the restructuring of Toronto's inner-city neighbourhoods was Dr. Charles Hastings, who served as Toronto's medical officer of health from 1910 to 1929 and promoted a campaign of urban hygiene. Hastings' drive for urban reform involved the development of a safer and more hygienic city—reform prompted by his own daughter's death from drinking contaminated milk.¹⁵ Yet fear and prejudice often shadowed the discourses stemming from public health institutions. Hastings unequivocally

condemned the Ward and its informal urbanism as "slum" living. He maintained that overcrowded neighbourhoods with a disproportionate number of immigrants could spawn an epidemic *ex nihilo* that had the potential to "leak" out and infect the rest of the city.¹⁶ It was both problematic and common throughout North America that public health's foray into urban planning and housing was linked to the 1880s discovery of germ theory, which prompted the "sanitary police" movement to establish more hygienic cities.¹⁷

Perhaps due to this attention, the literature and photography of the time depicted the lifestyles of those in crowded homes within the downtown core, offering salacious details that sensationalized so-called slum living and led to reform movements. Hastings enlisted photographer Arthur Goss to capture the scenes of Toronto streets, exposing the city's outdoor bathrooms, depicting backyard shacks as garbage dumps, and focusing on other examples of neglected public infrastructure.¹⁸ Goss photographed children playing in the streets without supervision and showed dilapidated



FIG. 4. ARTHUR GOSS PHOTO OF A "SLUM" INTERIOR, 1913. | COURTESY OF THE CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES.

lodgings around outdoor spaces presumably used for domestic activity (fig. 4). City council members and public health officials drew upon these photographs as impetus to target areas for reform. Goss's photographs also helped convince concerned citizens that urban poverty was proliferating in the centre of the city and lead to the public perception of the Ward as a "slum."

INSTITUTIONALIZING "CARE": HOUSING, HOUSEWORK, AND REFORM OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The Housing Problem

In the first decades of the twentieth century, public and private initiatives to establish affordable housing were central to urban care reform. Disappointingly, however, many such efforts led to the establishment of middle-class suburbs, with little effect on areas like the Ward. Notably, across the ideological spectrum, the discourse took its shape around one

model—the Garden City, espoused by British social pioneer Ebenezer Howard—even if reformers did not agree on *how* the model should be realized as an urban template.¹⁹ Howard's model grew from the belief that overcrowded cities were detrimental to the working class, therefore it offered a concentric plan of alternating public parks, industry, and homes, all which are set within greenspace and connected by rail to other such cities. Yet when it was taken up in Canadian discourses, the Garden City model was often purged of its ideological restructuring of labour and social relationships, and instead was positioned as a plan for a housing suburb on the edge of a central city.

One of the first examples of the Garden City as a model for Canadian reform occurred in 1912, when a campaign was led by a committee of civic-minded urbanists endorsed by Hastings and established by Frank Beer, a prominent Toronto businessman turned Social Gospel reformer

who was later instrumental in passing the *Ontario Housing Act*. Beer launched the Toronto Co-partnership Garden Suburbs Limited (later the Toronto Housing Company) to establish an economic framework and architectural design of cooperative housing for low-income working people.²⁰ In the ensuing years, two cooperative housing communities were formed based loosely on the Garden City model: Spruce Court Housing Co-op and Bain Apartments Co-op, both designed by architect Eden Smith.²¹ However, due to high construction costs and a concession to profit-minded investors, the rents were higher than planned, necessitating a higher-paid tenant demographic.²² Consequently, the residents of the new cooperative housing were mostly office workers with few, if any, recent immigrants from the Ward.²³ Therefore the people most in need of housing, those Hastings described as living in "overcrowded, insufficiently lighted, badly ventilated" houses with unsanitary conditions and "filthy yards," were ignored; instead, the prime focus remained on building housing for relatively established white-collar office workers and labourers who could afford the inflated rents.²⁴

Notably, the ideas put forward by the Co-partnership Garden Suburbs Limited scarcely resembled the collectivist structure proposed in Howard's Garden City project, but nonetheless prompted dialogue around public health and housing. However, many Canadian reformers misunderstood the fundamental Garden City *idea*, defined by its self-sufficient nucleus containing housing, industries, and shops, and labelled it "Garden Suburb" instead, which emphasized less the role of a cohesive community structure and more the cleanliness and order afforded by the model's morphology, which promised greenery, low-density living arrangements, and

fresh suburban air—the ingredients of a healthful lifestyle.²⁵ Because the domain of public health dominated the official discourse on urban planning, it is unsurprising that in 1914 the National Conference on City Planning in Toronto showcased the ideas of public health doctor Emile Nadeau, who submitted the Garden City model as a “Canadian” solution to the problem of inner-city crowding.²⁶ His ideas were realized in a civic design titled “Confederation” that adopted Howard’s radial Garden City and incorporated diverse structures, including houses and commercial buildings, but centred the entire project around a monumental parliamentary-style building named “The Temple of Public Health” (fig. 5).²⁷ Nadeau’s proposal reveals a concept wherein the public health administration was both the dominant voice in city planning and the self-designated symbolic centre of Canadian community.

The People Problem and the Moral City

Another physician at the core of these nation-wide debates on hygienic city planning was Dr. Helen MacMurchy, a colleague of Hastings who had close ties to Toronto’s Women’s Branch of the Immigration and Colonization Department.²⁸ A first-wave feminist and influential pundit on public health matters, she was one of four female members on the Toronto Housing Company, but the only woman who assumed an active role in the proceedings.²⁹ Much like her colleagues (Hastings, Nadeau, and Beer), MacMurchy believed that modern cities like Toronto should be restructured and expanded along the lines of the Garden City model. She too showed little interest in the underlying social vision of the Garden City, which emphasized cooperative land

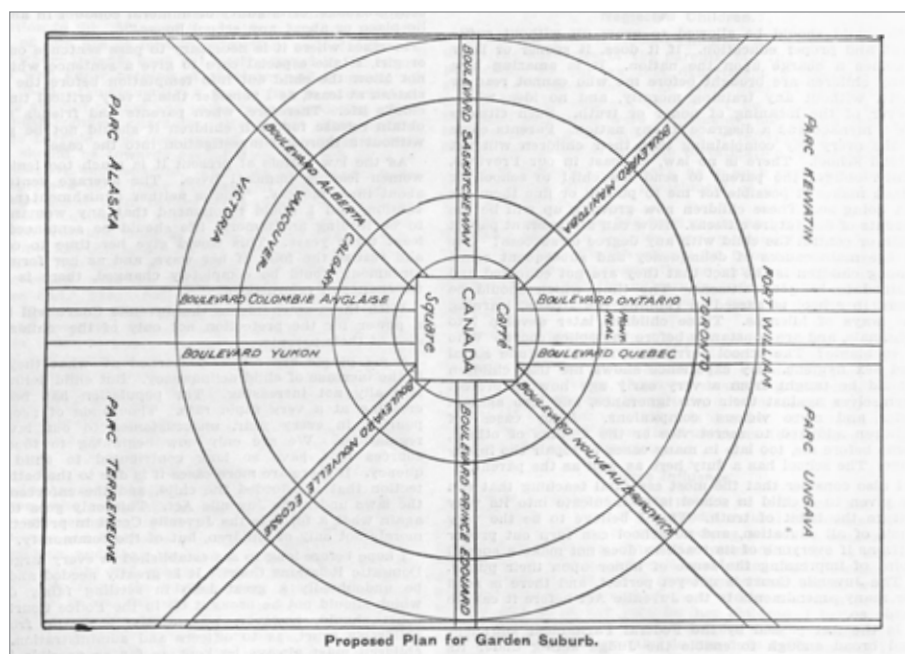


FIG. 5. EMILE NADEAU'S PROPOSAL FOR A GARDEN SUBURB "CONFEDERATION," 1914. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

ownership among a diverse socioeconomic population, but much enthusiasm for the model’s low-density framework allowing plenty of light, open space, and play areas.³⁰ MacMurchy was not an urban planner, but her views on housing, hygiene, education, and urban institutions of care dominated the reform era through her publications, which were distributed throughout North America.

MacMurchy publicly campaigned for a planning board to control and limit the *ad hoc* construction of informal housing in the city centre and periphery. Working with Hastings for over a decade, MacMurchy established methods to rid the City of Toronto of its “slums,” while recognizing that many inhabitants of these outbuildings, shacks, and multi-family homes were new immigrants to the country who were seeking a better life for themselves. Yet MacMurchy’s characterization of the occupants who crowded

these inner-city neighbourhoods suggests that she believed some of the lives of these dwellers could not be ameliorated through public welfare like housing. MacMurchy’s ideas about people aligned with those of some health officials of her period, who mistakenly assumed that cultural difference, morality, and public health were negatively correlated; thus, the Public Health Department concentrated on reforming the “character” of urban populations.³¹

The use of the term “slum” to describe neighbourhoods like the Ward was a strong indication that public health officials linked such areas to the moral character of the inhabitants. While the term has always been invoked to underscore the direness of urban poverty, until the mid-nineteenth century, it also denoted criminal activity. Throughout the early 1800s, in cities like London and Paris, areas designated as slums were closely associated with illegal labour practices.³² Conceptualization of the slum then

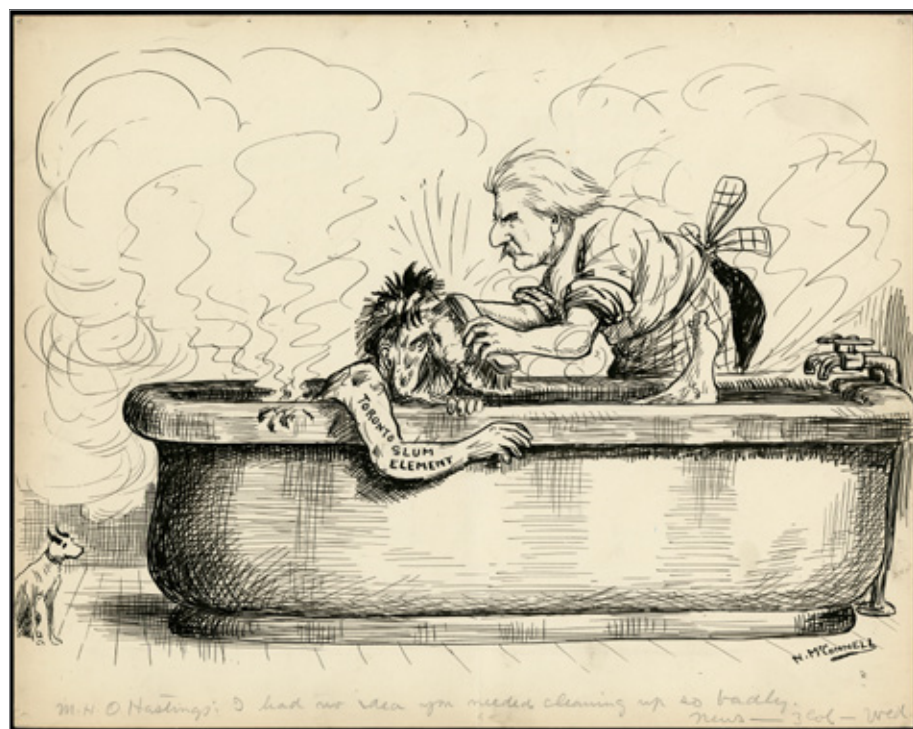


FIG. 6. CARTOON SHOWING THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF DR. CHARLES HASTINGS'S "CLEANING" UP THE CITY. HASTINGS IS SHOWN SCRUBBING A MAN IN THE BATHTUB. THE MAN'S ARM IS TATTOOED WITH "SLUM ELEMENT," 1910-1914. | COURTESY OF THE ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO.

evolved into a specific type of urban place, first as a subterranean district, then as single rooms, eventually encompassing entire inner-city neighbourhoods characterized by transient renters, high density, and older housing stock.³³ Alan Gilbert has argued that the slum has stronger historical links to the character of the people than to the character of a place.³⁴ Historically speaking, the idea of the slum signifies a certain type of urban place and social character that reinforces the misconception that these environments have negative causative effects on their inhabitants and vice versa. In the late nineteenth century, for example, a common assumption was that the people living in these densely packed inner-city areas led immoral, unconventional, and often unhygienic lifestyles. These and other assumptions about the innate character of inner-city neighbourhoods composed mainly of immigrant communities

fuelled racial prejudices, discursively linking such places (*i.e.*, dilapidated housing conditions) to the dubious character of its residents (criminals).

We can recognize these distorted conceptions in the writings of MacMurchy and Hastings, whose opinions were frequently publicized in local newspapers and magazines, propagating the idea that those living in Toronto's crowded low-income areas were unable or unwilling to care for themselves and thus posed a threat to Canadian society. Paradoxically and problematically, although both doctors expressed genuine concern for the wellbeing of all Canadian citizens, including new immigrants, they nonetheless associated the highest-density neighbourhoods like the Ward with urban depravity. In 1914, the *Globe* newspaper printed a quote from Hastings's lecture at the Royal Canadian

Institute in which he declared that "the slums of our cities are the very hotbeds of disease, vice, and crime."³⁵ Targeting immigrants, he urged his listeners to support eugenics, a form of scientific racism and enforcement of sexual sterilization, arguing that "we" spend "tens of thousands in examining immigrants in order to exclude undesirables such as feeble-minded, criminals, degenerates, and those suffering from communicable diseases, and have legislation to warrant our doing so."³⁶ He also believed that enforced sterilization of problematic citizens would eventually eradicate phenomena like "drunkenness" and "communicable diseases," which he thought were endemic to overcrowded urban areas.³⁷ Hastings frequently used divisive and didactic language, describing inner-city inhabitants as "worthless members of society," "good-for-nothing," and "sub-normal," language that would be drafted by popular culture (fig. 6).³⁸ He further expressed concern about the drain on public finances; indeed, a bulletin from a civic meeting on housing quoted him saying, "What we are doing today is spending more money on the various grades of mentally sub-normal idiots, imbeciles, morons, border-line cases than on those of normal mentality."³⁹ For her part, MacMurchy famously supported eugenic measures, writing extensively about how the human race was vulnerable at both the border and the birth canal, the two portals that permitted entry of the "feeble-minded" into Canadian society.⁴⁰ Because inner-city neighbourhoods like the Ward were more likely to house transient populations, their residents were presumptively stigmatized and associated with such derisive labels. These stigmas were particularly harmful when perpetuated by administrative authorities like the Department of Health, who collected photographs as "evidence" of

“feeble-minded” homes and formed an economy of fear that harmfully linked mental illness, disability, depravity, and “slum” interiors (fig. 7).⁴¹

Making Home: Canadianizing Housework and Reform of the Individual

MacMurchy believed that before the housing problem could be solved, protocols had to be in effect to amend wayward, or merely different, individuals.⁴² For her, these protocols focused on inculcating habits, by defining the habitus of the individual in the private home.⁴³ A home was more than a house in which to live, it was also a theatre of good ethics that was realized through the embodied practice of housework. She promoted housekeeping education to habituate and institutionalize a narrow standard of living informed by her Protestant Anglo-Saxon values.⁴⁴ She espoused that urban transformation happened from the inside out and that reform began with the individual in the single-family home, not the collective in the streets. MacMurchy published several booklets in the “Little Blue Books” series, circa 1920s, which aimed to educate women in the scientific management of domestic caretaking, childcare, and housecleaning, with titles such as *How to Manage Housework in Canada*, *How to Make our Canadian Home*, and *How to Take Care of Household Waste*. The series, targeted to women whom MacMurchy thought lacked knowledge of domestic hygiene, was translated into multiple languages, including indigenous Cree. These booklets aimed to instil into young mothers the colonially inherited ethics so that they could become—as she might have phrased it—“normal” Canadians. The various translations into multiple languages indicate that MacMurchy intended these manuals



FIG. 7. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DEPICTING AN APARTMENT OF THE “FEEBLEMINDED,” 1916. | COURTESY OF THE ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO.

for recent immigrants and indigenous peoples, those who she problematically believed required extra training to fully adopt the Canadian way of life.⁴⁵

MacMurchy’s ideas were in step with medical models of behavioural conditioning used to instill normative habits of caretaking and homemaking and to promote character reform in these individuals. For instance, institutions such as the Andrew Mercer Reformatory for Women offered similar “treatment” from 1880.⁴⁶ Situated in an industrial landscape nestled between the rail lines and away from the downtown core, the Mercer Reformatory building resembled a large mansion on the outside and a penitentiary on the inside. Though built by men, the facility was run by women, and the atmosphere was meant to be maternal, with “attendants” and “residents” rather than guards and prisoners. Nevertheless, most of its residents were plucked from Toronto’s downtown streets and incarcerated in

the reformatory for perceived aberrant, incorrigible behaviour.⁴⁷ If some inmates had committed crimes, they were never granted a trial.⁴⁸ The principles of the reformatory were similar to MacMurchy’s ideas about housework reform for regular citizens: undesirable behaviour could be “corrected” through vocational training that involved repetitive housework like cooking, sewing, and knitting on an institutional scale, including laundering for the city’s industrial sector.⁴⁹ Such work was meant to emulate normal domestic behaviour and thus produce good daughters of the state.⁵⁰

MacMurchy reserved the term “feeble-minded” to describe vulnerable populations, including same-sex and interracial couples, people experiencing homelessness, sex workers, and mentally ill people for whom she prescribed sterilization. In *The Alms: A Study of the Feeble-minded*, she argues that “the mental defective are those who cannot make, or help to make, a home,” who

are unsuitable to act as free citizens, and who should be considered as permanent children.⁵¹ MacMurchy also uses the word “defect,” which defies current scientific explanation, to describe a wide range of disabilities. Indeed, the term was ambiguous enough to include anyone who did not exemplify the social habits expected of middle-class society and was disproportionately applied to immigrant populations.⁵²

In her many books and articles, MacMurchy linked systemic conditions of poverty to immigration, human defection, and—ultimately—the inability to make a home. She held considerable power in fields of social work, housing, city planning, and child welfare, where her voice was dominant. Her outspoken and egregious support for the practice of eugenics influenced policy that eventually led to segregation, deportation, and institutionalization.⁵³ In 1920, MacMurchy was appointed to the newly established Canadian National Council on Child Welfare. The council comprised six committees: child hygiene, child workers, special needs children, education, recreation, and defective/dependent/neglected/delinquent children. As Marjorie Winnifred Johnstone has argued, this last hybrid category “reflected the assumption that disabilities and delinquency were outcomes of poor families who need relief and had inadequate parenting skills.”⁵⁴ Poverty and immigrant populations contributed to “mental defectiveness,” which was assumed to be hereditary and the main cause of “social problems such as illegitimacy, delinquency, criminality, and alcoholism.”⁵⁵ These issues were widely understood to be concentrated in inner-city neighbourhoods, such as the Ward.⁵⁶

By enlisting hygiene and cleanliness as a gauge of individual moral virtue, the Canadian public health administration

created a discourse around housing and public amenities that was bound by contradictions: there was broad agreement that light, greenery, and open space would benefit marginalized residents populating overcrowded areas. But because there were also stereotypes about the type of residents inhabiting such neighbourhoods and assumptions that they were unable to make and maintain a home, those perceived as having the most need were also labelled as defective. It is undeniable that the public health administration under Hastings and MacMurchy enacted important changes with the integration of public infrastructure, such as access to pasteurized milk and safe water systems, establishing inoculation and health clinics, and constructing public baths and toilets. At the same time, however, other civic care services were increasingly determined by hierarchical relationships: maps and directories of the period show that care services were increasingly “professionalized” and organized according to socio-demographics and race. “Chinese laundries” appeared in the centre of towns to take care of the clothing of the middle class and wealthy. Inside the home, middle-class families employed a live-in maid for services like cooking, cleaning, and childcare activities.⁵⁷ Institutions like mental health centres and women’s reformatories performed free and invisible reproductive labour at industrial scales.

CARE AS PRACTICE: A COMPASSIONATE VISION OF URBAN REFORM

The Idea of the Commons

MacMurchy and many of her contemporaries espoused the belief that upward mobility from poverty to the middle class was less rooted in one’s access to public

resources and more an individual responsibility related to good hygiene practice for which she provided manuals.⁵⁸ By overvaluing individualism and the idea of an ideal Anglo-Saxon Christian middle-class woman, MacMurchy fueled fears that communism would be ignited within collectives in working-class neighbourhoods, if not by the “emptying of the public purse,” then by the financialization of unions and the working class who were believed to be settled in the inner-city areas.⁵⁹ The idea that unhappy and unhealthy workers living in crowded situations would lead to Bolshevism was all too commonplace across Canada, as demonstrated in popular articles.⁶⁰ However, not everyone shared in these beliefs. An opposing faction of civic-minded people working toward urban reform and social justice believed that structures of societal care were more strongly rooted in the commons, specifically by strengthening the social and economic relationships already in place in the Ward neighbourhood (fig. 8). Many of these reformers opposed the biases held by public health and were led by women who sought to bolster social ties by establishing systems of self-governance and facilitating bottom-up structures of collective participation. Reforms as such took place outside of the government-led discourses on urban planning and better resembled later philosophies rooted in the ethics of care that emphasize reciprocal processes among those who, together, worked toward shaping a commons, albeit one composed of diverse people.⁶¹

These wholly dissimilar approaches to urban reform reveal a split-vision of the city. Contrary to the public health administration’s approach, the activists associated with the settlement Movement, who worked and lived in the neighbourhoods they served, fostered a collaborative, rather than authoritative, approach.



FIG. 8. PHOTOGRAPH DEPICTING AN INTERSTITIAL SPACE IN THE WARD THAT IS USED INFORMALLY BY THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AS A SPACE OF "COMMONS," 1914. | COURTESY OF THE CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES.

fighting on behalf of women for better wages.⁶⁶ Spain argues that this approach engendered more personalized and productive services that were tailored to the individuals and cultural backgrounds in each area, although it is important to note that almost all of the settlement workers came from white, middle-class backgrounds—a social phenomenon that has received much criticism in the last decade.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, Addams's immersive approach and the theoretical tack of the Chicago sociologists represent divergent perspectives on urbanism. Spain writes that the male sociologists "saw a dangerous urban world" in which fear of the unknown tainted the outlook of the Chicago School of Sociology, just as it did at the Department of Public Health in Toronto; in contrast, "Addams and Starr were fearless."⁶⁸ Addams wrote a popular collection of essays titled *Democracy and Social Ethics*, in which she promotes women's involvement in politics and the importance of community embeddedness in developing institutional care for residents, which she believed would enhance civic democracy.

Well-known among Toronto reformers, Addams lectured in the city and supported the expansion of settlement houses into areas in need of services that were independent and distinct from both the government's public health unit and the local religious missions. Between 1910 and 1911, the same year that Hastings produced his report on slum conditions, two settlement houses were established in the Ward district: University Settlement, which was originally connected to the University of Toronto's School of Social Work, and Central Neighbourhood House.⁶⁹ Social Gospel proponents, motivated by an ideological desire to expand public infrastructure in the name of the "common good," spearheaded this effort. Like Addams's settlements in Chicago, the Toronto

Mary Joplin Clarke, about whom we know little except that she was a social worker at Central Neighbourhood House, vigorously defended the Ward from its slum stigma. Joplin Clarke mocked officials who viewed the Ward as a dreadful Dickensian place that propagated crime and unhealthy and abnormal behaviour: "The danger that lurks in these crowded streets is not always clearly formulated in the minds of those who fear it . . . but at any rate the fear remains, and probably it could best be analyzed as Fear of the Unknown."⁶² She dispelled the myth of the slum, writing that "for those of us who know the Ward and its inhabitants it is the safest and friendliest place on earth," and argued for platforms to engender self-governance and democracy for immigrants.⁶³ Joplin Clarke echoes settlement worker Jane Addams, who wrote: "It is impossible that you should live in a neighbourhood, and constantly meet people with certain ideas and notions, without modifying your own."⁶⁴

Urban historian Daphne Spain has written about a similar split-city phenomenon in her article "The Chicago of Jane Addams and Ernest Burgess: Same City, Different Visions," which highlights contrasting reform efforts in early twentieth-century Chicago. Specifically, she compares the Chicago School of Urbanism, a group of mostly white men who conducted studies that drew disparaging conclusions about struggling socioeconomic neighbourhoods, with social reformers like Jane Addams, who co-founded Hull House in Chicago with fellow social worker Ellen Gates Starr in 1889.⁶⁵

The Hull House organization, centrally located in Chicago, provided social infrastructure to a community of mostly recent immigrants. Addams went on to establish more Chicago settlement houses in areas like the Ward, where she and others took a hands-on approach, working and living in the same areas as their clients and running public kitchens, securing housing, and

counterparts encouraged a collectivistic spirit with a direct-action approach, working with communities to facilitate practical education programs and flexible spaces for safe community organization. The buildings accommodating the Toronto-based settlements also provided physical space for community events like theatre and art exhibitions,⁷⁰ as well as supervised playgrounds, sports facilities, and camps.⁷¹

The Social Unit Plan

While working in a settlement house within the Ward, Joplin Clarke wrote about the importance of grassroots participation in urban democracy, proclaiming that successful neighbourhoods are built on platforms of collective democracy and self-governance.⁷² Residents with working-class backgrounds were their own best advocates, she argued, and should be granted access to civic platforms and consulted instead of being coerced into reform movements or ordered into institutions by “experts” from the missions or the Department of Public Health. In a 1918 article in *Public Health Journal*, Joplin Clarke outlines a concrete plan for integrating participatory democracy into the public realm, starting with the Ward.⁷³ The Social Unit Plan was based on cooperation and bottom-up democracy and involved collective action facilitated in part by the settlement houses. Derived from an experiment in social democracy and urbanism in a Cincinnati neighbourhood from 1916, the plan aimed “to promote a type of democratic organization through which citizenship as a whole can participate directly in the control of community affairs, while at the same time making constant use of the highest technical skill available.”⁷⁴

The Social Unit Plan was innovated by urban reformer Wilbur Phillips, who identified a broken link between skilled labour

and the demand for essential services in working-class neighbourhoods. Despite an abundance of skilled labourers, many were unemployed. These same labourers lived in areas with few accessible amenities or social services, such as childcare, and thus had difficulty finding good jobs. Phillips and others wanted to more effectively match this labour supply to the growing demand for services in urban areas by facilitating connections between the two. By strengthening community ties and empowering individuals, the plan made

social workers of every man, woman and child in the Mohawk-Brighton District. Not workers to go abroad and, with a patronizing manner, try to tell people how to live, but social workers who will meet together in their own neighbourhoods, and confer together, and tell themselves how to live in a better and more intelligent and more progressive manner. That is where the democracy of this plan comes in, exciting the social sense of the people of this community so that they become interested in improving conditions in their neighbourhood.⁷⁵

If it had been implemented in Toronto according to Joplin Clarke’s vision, the plan would have been maintained through a process of collective decision making and sustained by “block workers” representing all city blocks in neighbourhoods with large immigrant populations.⁷⁶ Block workers were trusted female members, elected by the community, usually with similar racial, linguistic, and cultural affiliations as their constituents. Ultimately, block workers comprised a network that was independent of existing socio-civic infrastructure but connected to established platforms, such as City Hall, news outlets, and public health. In this way, the community would have greater political influence as a collective unit. Joplin Clarke also believed that collaboration, organization, and community enabled by the

Social Unit Plan would connect the needs of the community to a supply of professional and skilled labourers drawn from within the represented neighbourhoods.⁷⁷

According to Joplin Clarke, the Social Unit Plan challenged stigmatizing attitudes toward urban residents as helpless, ignorant, and irredeemable. Joplin Clarke’s proposal centred around the idea that the wellbeing of each inhabitant in each geographical unit should be assessed by someone who also lived in the unit, not by outsiders. These outsiders (i.e., public health officials, missionaries), she argued, “invade the homes of the ‘poor’ in search of some sort of information” that promotes a body of unsympathetic and misunderstood statistics in the name of science.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, belief in the power of the commons as such could not be sustained by institutional contexts, leading to its failure in America and dismissal in Canada.

The Garden City as Ideology

Joplin Clarke was not the only voice advocating for structural change to benefit the inhabitants of the Ward; Alice Chown, one of her contemporaries, was a Toronto feminist, urban theorist, writer, and advocate for immigrants who also worked in the settlement houses in America before settling in Toronto.⁷⁹ As early as 1902, she wrote an article supporting the idea of women’s residences, collective houses that academic women could inhabit while attending university, which were controversial ideas at the time.⁸⁰ Like Joplin Clarke—and in opposition to Hastings and MacMurchy—Chown believed that the prevailing civic and social infrastructure privileged colonial inheritances and, therefore, it was one’s civic duty to innovate urban structures that were collective in spirit and motivated by an ethos of care.⁸¹

Like Hastings and MacMurchy, Chown was an early proponent of the Garden City movement. However, for Chown, the Garden City offered much more than a suburban ideal located in a hygienic and semi-rural landscape; it provided a spatial alternative to the socially conservative and racially prejudiced outposts of power in North American cities.⁸² She wrote a column on urbanism for the *Toronto Daily Star* and was a supporter of other collectivist movements, including trade unionism and cooperative living. Chown spent time in both Letchworth Garden City and Hampstead Garden Suburb in the United Kingdom and explored many innovative living practices in socialist, communal, and anarchist colonies across America.⁸³ In her later years, she established a rural community for artists, craftspeople, idealists, political reformers, and workers who were alienated by Toronto's conservatism.⁸⁴ Many of these residents were recent refugees, including Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who were involved in the union or labour movements.

Although Chown believed that working people fundamentally deserved better housing, she ultimately thought that the system by which people profited from the housing market itself required an overhaul.⁸⁵ In her 1921 memoir, *The Stairway*, she depicted the social attitudes perpetuated by those like Hastings and MacMurchy as rigid and dangerous positions yoked to tradition and institutional religion. She spoke out against racism throughout her life and suggested that her traditional-minded opponents would have institutionalized her for her ideas, which they considered heretical and communistic.⁸⁶ According to Chown, "custom was the great enslaver," but the Garden City movement and similar collectivist-minded urban reforms challenged the *status quo* by providing asylum for those

misunderstood by mainstream Canadian society.⁸⁷ "It is the personality of the citizens," she wrote,

that makes Garden City interesting. It goes without saying that each and all belong to some communistic faith. There are socialists, single taxers, syndicalists, communistic anarchists, Tolstoyans, people who believe it is wrong to own property and people who are seeking ways of assuaging their consciences because they do not know how to live without it.⁸⁸

Chown's vision of the Garden City movement as a collectively engineered social experiment contrasts sharply with the public health and Toronto Housing Company's vision of the Garden Suburb as a model of urban hygiene.⁸⁹ By building an urban network of cooperative labour, housing, and community care networks, Chown's vision of the Garden City movement challenged socially conservative notions of urban exclusion and promoted ideals of inclusivity that were ahead of their time.

Dismissal and Fear of Collectivist Values

Perhaps because of their innovative and forward-thinking ideas, Chown's and Joplin Clarke's proposals for urban and social amelioration were disregarded and sometimes attacked by city officials and urban historians. For example, one Toronto alderman claimed that the Ward's Central Neighbourhood Settlement House was "judaizing" the population instead of promoting Christian values.⁹⁰ Both Ward-based settlement houses—and many female activists associated with them—were disparaged for their socialist mandates. Chown herself was criticized for her anti-capitalist polemics and way of life that disavowed private property ownership.⁹¹

Many activists working at the University Settlement and Central Neighbourhood House, including Joplin Clarke, published articles on societal reform and collectivism. Olive Ziegler, a head worker at the University Settlement, promoted cooperative arts and labour movements. Ziegler also wrote the biography of James Shaver Woodsworth, founder of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (later the New Democratic Party), and became a well-known advocate for cooperative housing in Canada.⁹² But these social-minded efforts to bring about urban change were targeted by anti-Bolshevist pundits in North America, which was dominated by "Red-Scare" politics that celebrated capitalist ideals of individuality while fearing collective action.⁹³

Although whether they knew each other remains unknown, Joplin Clarke and Chown both laboured to build urban networks strengthened by a grassroots commonwealth. As Silvia Federici has written, "the commons are not things but social relations" shaped by direct democracy and developed as a challenge to capitalism.⁹⁴ Federici has argued that the commons is better understood as a verb, a practice of commoning, which inevitably "appears inefficient to capitalist eyes."⁹⁵ Activists like Chown, and likely Joplin Clarke, were denounced as communists at a time when popular opinion claimed that collectivist values would "doom civilization," much like "feeble-mindedness" and "mental defection."⁹⁶ By the late 1920s, many forms of collectivism became linked to communism in the public imagination. As reported in the *Globe*, "the deadliest enemy of all time to both Church and State," collectivism invites "lawlessness" from people who would "make their own laws to suit their own mode of living."⁹⁷

Furthermore the work, writings, and ideas about urbanism espoused by

women like Chown and Joplin Clarke were not considered integral to the planning discourses of their time.⁹⁸ Like other female professionals working in public care professions (nurses, teachers, social workers), their “familial styles of personal interaction” were seen as nurturant and maternal and linked to a form of “social motherhood.”⁹⁹ As Carol T. Baines has argued, these values were strongly associated with the domestic sphere instead of the public realm.¹⁰⁰ Paradoxically, while caregiving occupations allowed women to professionalize, they were stereotyped as “natural” extensions of feminine domestic habits. Furthermore, nurturant careers like social work tended to be less respected than male professions, which were understood to be based solely on expertise, rather than innate undertakings. That Chown’s and Joplin Clarke’s visions for the city were framed as domestic dilettantism prevented them from realizing the change they sought in Canadian society and from being accepted as legitimate voices in urban planning. Despite its importance, their work and that of many other women activists working to bring change to the urban realm were valued neither as authoritative nor professional.¹⁰¹

CONCLUSION

Throughout the early twentieth century, a range of visions of urban care produced different, often conflicting, social programs in Toronto. On the one hand, the public health administration focused on developing institutions to force individual rehabilitation through public and private hygiene practices—but these were often harmful and punitive. The public health approach reflected troubling notions about who was entitled to reside in the city and how they should exist through rigid classifications of psychological, physical, racial, and sexual normalcy.¹⁰²

Many residents were removed from the streets, institutionalized, rendered ineligible for housing developments, or displaced by gentrification. On the other hand, women activists linked to the settlements employed a definition of care that reflects the notion of “caring democracies” and creatively explored “larger structural questions of thinking about which institutions, people, and practices should be used to accomplish concrete and real caring tasks.”¹⁰³

By 1920, Toronto’s Ward neighbourhood began to disappear as land was expropriated for large-scale offices and retail ventures. In 1940, expansion of the Children’s Hospital further encroached upon the area. A decade later, the Ward’s Chinatown was demolished to make space for the new City Hall. Although activists like Joplin Clarke and Chown fought to preserve the neighbourhood and embolden its marginalized voices, they were ultimately unsupported by the public health authority and others with institutional power. If their vision of an urban commons had been supported, it would have challenged the conventional idea of the public sphere championed by Toronto’s public health officials. Chown, Joplin Clarke, and others in the Toronto settlements believed that the residents of the Ward were fundamental to the success of modern society but required support from social infrastructure.

The growth and preservation of urban communities depend on networks of social support and infrastructure. In the early twentieth century, Toronto tested two ideologically opposed systems of care: one that focused on individual rehabilitation and one that fostered community growth and support. For the former, the public health administration championed a form of urbanism that tended to the development of

punitive institutions aimed at enforcing normalcy, as inscribed by cultural biases and exclusionary politics. For the latter, civic-minded social workers, urban theorists, and activists promoted collaborative communities, such as settlement houses, urban self-governance, and Garden City societies, where care practices were central to the grassroots culture and where care predominated as “a species of activity that includes everything we do to maintain, contain, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible.”¹⁰⁴

NOTES

1. I’d like to thank the peer review committee for reading the first draft of this paper and making many incisive suggestions. Thank you to Indu Bose for the research we did together on Toronto’s reform movements. I also appreciate the many conversations with Mayuri Paranthahan and Brenda Reid, who have inspired and helped to shape my ideas around the topic of care. I greatly appreciate the discussions with Mary Lou Lobsinger and Amari Peliowski, whose insights around the complex intersections of feminism and care practices greatly influenced my edits of this paper. I’m grateful to all who read and edited versions of the work along the way.
2. Addams, Jane, *Peace and Bread in Times of War*, Boston, G. Hall, p. 132.
3. Fisher, Berenice and Joan C. Tronto, 1990, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring,” in Emily K. Abel and Margaret K. Nelson (eds.), *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women’s Lives*, Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, p. 40.
4. Tronto, Joan C., 2013, *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice*, New York, New York University Press, p. 139-140.
5. For a definition of the commons as it relates to the idea of the public sphere, see Federici’s formulation of the concept in Federici, Silvia, 2018, *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*, Oakland, PM Press, p. 85-98; for an incisive perspective on care and architectural practice, see her Master of Architecture thesis, Reid, Brenda Mabel, 2021. *Care as Architectural Practice*. UWSpace, University of Waterloo, [http://hdl.handle.net/10012/16934], accessed September 1, 2021.

6. Tronto, Joan C., 2015, *Who Cares? How to Reshape a Democratic Politics*, Ithaca, Cornell Selects, an imprint of Cornell University Press.
7. Saunders, Doug, 2010 [1st ed.], *Arrival City: The Final Migration and our Next World*, Toronto, Alfred A. Knopf Canada.
8. Lorinc, John, Michael McClelland, Ellen Scheinberg, and Tatum Taylor, 2015 [1st ed.], *The Ward: The Life and Loss of Toronto's First Immigrant Neighbourhood*, Toronto, Coach House Books.
9. For more on the history of Toronto's Planning Act, see the *Ontario Planning and Development Act* of 1917, which focused on suburban development rather than inner-city organization. Also see Hulchanski, John David, 1981, *The Origins of Urban Land Use Planning in Ontario, 1900-1946*, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, Ph.D. dissertation, p. 34-44, 76-77, 104-105, 123-126.
10. Religious missions and unions were also agents trying to ameliorate urban situations.
11. College Street West and Queen Street West to the north and south and Yonge Street and University Avenue at its eastern and western boundaries, respectively.
12. For more information, see Lorinc *et al.*, *The Ward*, *op. cit.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. Castells, Manuel, 1983, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*, Berkeley, University of California Press, p. 318.
15. Lorinc, John, 2015, "Fool's Paradise. Hastings' Anti-slum Crusade," in Lorinc, McClelland, Scheinberg, and Taylor (eds.), *The Ward: The Life and Loss of Toronto's First Immigrant Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, p. 91-94.
16. Gilbert, Alan, 2007, "The Return of the Slum. Does Language Matter?" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 31, no. 4, p. 697-713.
17. Spragge, Shirley, 1979, "A Confluence of Interests. Housing Reform in Toronto, 1900-1920," in Gilbert Stelter and Alan Artibise (eds.), *The Usable Urban Past: Planning and Politics in the Modern Canadian City*, Ontario, Macmillan of Canada, p. 250.
18. Russell, Victor and Linda Price, 1980, *Arthur S. Goss City Photographer: Works by Toronto's Official Photographer, 1911-1940*, Toronto, City of Toronto Archives and the Market Gallery; Bassnett, Sarah, 2016, *Picturing Toronto: Photography and the Making of a Modern City*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press; Bulger, Stephen, 2015, "Arthur Goss: Documenting Hardship," in Lorinc, McClelland, Scheinberg, and Taylor (eds.), *The Ward: The Life and Loss of Toronto's First Immigrant Neighbourhood*, *op. cit.*, p. 106-113.
19. Howard, Ebenezer and Frederic J. Osborn, 1965, *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
20. One year later, this became the Toronto Housing Company. Frank Beer continued his interests in housing reform. In 1917, he documented the housing experience in Toronto and called for decent housing for all. See Beer, G. Frank, 1917, "Housing Experience in Toronto, 1917," *Conservation of Life*, vol. 111, no. 2, n.p.
21. On Hastings's advocacy of the Garden City movement, see Hurl, Lorna F., 1984, "The Toronto Housing Company, 1912-1923: The Pitfalls of Painless Philanthropy," *The Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 65, no. 1, p. 33. Helen MacMurchy was on some of the committees of the Toronto Housing Company.
22. For more on the housing cooperative and its tenancy, see Hurl, *id.*, p. 52.
23. Purdy, Sean, 1993, "This Is Not a Company; It Is a Cause," *Urban History Review*, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 75-91. The Toronto Co-partnership Garden Suburbs Limited became the Toronto Housing Company a year later.
24. Hurl, "The Toronto Housing Company," *op. cit.*, p. 33.
25. Spragge, "A Confluence of Interests. Housing Reform in Toronto," *op. cit.*, p. 252. Other reasons that the Garden City model may have been subsumed by the Garden Suburb in both Britain and Canada, include that it was not always desirable for profit-oriented industries to locate within these garden developments, and when municipalities increased investment in transportation infrastructure the suburbs were easily linked to the larger cities they surround.
26. "Proposed Canadian Garden Suburb," 1914, *Canadian Municipal Journal*, vol. 10, no. 6, p. 234.
27. Spragge, "A Confluence of Interests. Housing Reform in Toronto," *op. cit.*, p. 253.
28. Female doctors were still relatively rare, though more prominent in mental health and social work areas associated with maternal ethics. For a discussion on the professionalization of care and its depiction as an extension of the feminine domestic sphere and the conceptualization of "cure" as a masculine phenomenon in North American society, see Baines, Carol T., 1991, "The Professions and an Ethic of Care," in Carol T. Baines, Patricia Evans, and Sheila Neysmith (eds.), *Women's Caring. Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare*, Michigan, McClelland & Stewart, p. 37.
29. Spragge, "A Confluence of Interests. Housing Reform in Toronto," *op. cit.*, p. 256.
30. "Better Houses on the Outskirts," *The Globe*, November 16, 1911, p. 9.
31. Toronto's Public Health Board undertook great efforts to institutionalize care for working-class and immigrant communities. It was also common at the time for middle-class citizens to establish committees, gather signatures, and develop plans and support for public health to create housing initiatives for the poor. Women's organizations, usually composed of white bourgeois women, often organized around various causes (e.g., women's rights, children's welfare). These efforts were bolstered by the Social Gospellers, a loosely organized Christian movement motivated by democratic altruism and Christian virtues.
32. Bruce, Herbert, 1934, *Report of the Lieutenant-Governor's Committee on Housing Conditions in Toronto*, Toronto, Government House, p. 702.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Id.*, p. 702-703.
35. "Dr. Hastings Pleads for Health Reforms," *The Globe*, April 20, 1914, p. 8.
36. *Id.*, p. 8.
37. *Ibid.*
38. "Visions of Malthus to Overcrowding May Become Truth. Dr. C.J. Hastings in Monthly Bulletin Discusses Birth Control," *The Globe*, October 18, 1924, p. 16.
39. *Id.*, p. 16.
40. MacMurchy's ideas about the relationship between heredity, race, immigration, and eugenics appear in several articles she wrote for *The Globe*. See for example: MacMurchy, Helen, 1918, "Two Problems of Life," *The Globe*, February 21, p. 4; and MacMurchy, Helen, 1911, "Better Houses on the Outskirts," *The Globe*, November 16, p. 9.
41. Ahmed, Sara, 2004, "Affective Economies," *Social Text*, vol. 22, no. 2, p. 117-139. I use Ahmed's phrase "economy of fear" to describe how emotions toward people, especially

- fear, work as a form of capital by establishing affective economies that lead to the desire to contain the bodies of others, whether through eugenics, prison, or household activities. Lukin, Josh, 2013 [4th ed.], "Disability and Blackness," in Lennard J. Davis (ed.), *The Disability Studies Reader*, London, Taylor and Francis, p. 313-320. Lukin records the account of a Black disabled activist who writes that due to dis-abling policy before the Civil Rights movement, some African Americans claimed that being Black felt like having a disability. These accounts and some of the reports by Dolmage, below, suggest that many non-white people identified as disabled (perhaps because they were labelled as such) but also that there were policies in the public realm that systemically disadvantaged non-white citizens to the effect of disability. MacMurchy and Hasting's merging of "slum" residents (disproportionately immigrants) with these labels "feeble-minded" and "worthless" suggests a similar pattern occurred in Canada as well.
42. MacMurchy published several other works on normative behaviour of urban and domestic life in Canada. For example, see MacMurchy, Helen, 1923, *How We Cook in Canada*, Ottawa, F.A. Acland, Printer to the King.
 43. In this section, the concept of habitus is informed by Fraser's assertion that capitalism shapes human subjects through activities circumscribed by household "care" practices and cemented through embodied habits in that sphere. See Fraser, Nancy, 2014, "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode: For an Expanded Conception of Capitalism," *New Left Review*, March-April, no. 86, p. 67.
 44. Ahmed uses the term "whiteness" to explain the incidences in society whereby the institutions of whiteness and colonialism are phenomenologically inscribed in embodied ways through habits and behaviours of quotidian life. See Ahmed, Sara, 2007, "A Phenomenology of Whiteness," *Feminist Theory*, vol. 8, no. 2, p. 149-168. For an excellent counter narrative to "whiteness" and homemaking, see Paranthahan, Mayuri, 2022, "Our Grand Domestic Revolution: (Re)making Home in Jaffna, Sri Lanka and the Greater Toronto Area," Master of Architecture thesis, University of Waterloo, ON; Paranthahan, Mayuri, 2022, "Our Grand Domestic Revolution: (Re)making Home in Jaffna, Sri Lanka and the Greater Toronto Area," *Australian Feminist Studies* [forthcoming].
 45. Undoubtedly, MacMurchy had hoped that her education campaign on garbage disposal, housewife duties, and scientific management of the kitchen would be an effective agent of sociological change.
 46. Demerson, Velma, 2004, *Incorrigible*, Waterloo, ON, Wilfred Laurier University Press. In her memoir depicting her experience in the Mercer Reformatory for Women, Demerson wrote about how easily the term "feeble-minded" was applied to women who publicly strayed from normative behaviours.
 47. Demerson, *id.*; and Berkovits, Joseph A.G., 2000, *"Us Poor Devils:" Prison Life and Culture in Ontario: 1874-1914*, Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, University of Toronto, p. 71.
 48. Berkovits, *ibid.*
 49. Berkovits, *id.*, p. 87; Demerson, *Incorrigible*, *op. cit.*
 50. Demerson, *id.*
 51. MacMurchy recommended that they receive permanent parenting as "children of the state." See MacMurchy, Helen, 1920, *The Alms: A Study of the Feeble-minded*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin; MacMurchy, Helen, 1912, "Care of Feeble-minded Problem for Canada," *The Globe*, May 28, p. 11.
 52. de la Cour, Lykke, 2017, "Eugenics, Race, and Canada's First-wave Feminists: Dis/Abling the Debates," *Atlantis*, vol. 38, no. 2, p. 176-190. Though MacMurchy has discussed the association between immigration, the weakening "Canadian stock," and the increase of feeble-mindedness, she rarely mentioned ethnicity or race as a direct cause for the disorder. de la Cour has shown, however, that there were associations between racialized people and mental deficiencies, particularly in the tacit approval amongst middle-class liberals of hegemonic whiteness, an agreed projection of an ideal and aspirational Canadian citizen as a white Anglo-Saxon.
 53. *Id.*
 54. Johnstone, Marjorie Winnifred, 2015, "Diverging and Contesting Feminisms in Early Social Work History in Ontario (1900-1950)," Ph.D. thesis, Department of Social Work, University of Toronto, p. 128.
 55. *Id.*, p. 154.
 56. *Ibid.*
 57. Hayden, Dolores, 1981, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
 58. MacMurchy's examples of good Canadian homes, whether rural or urban, would have been completely unattainable for the average recent immigrant.
 59. *The Globe and Mail*, 1937, May 11, p. 15. For example, in 1934, Canadian public health official Dr. Herbert Bruce conducted his own study on Toronto housing. His findings, published in the *Report of the Lieutenant Governors Committee on Housing Conditions in Toronto* (also known as *The Bruce Report*), indicated that most houses in the Ward and Cabbagetown still did not meet reasonable public health standards and that a city planning commission should be established to oversee urban growth and encourage a holistic vision of the city. A committee called the Toronto Housing Centre soon was formed. One of its campaigns aimed to build awareness about the Ward and similar neighbourhoods by establishing a nearby exhibition space showcasing a typical "slum room" that spectators could physically enter. Visitors to the exhibition had mixed reactions, with some scandalized that Toronto, "a city of homes," failed to provide equitable housing opportunities. Despite Dr. Bruce's good intentions, the exhibition concretized harmful stereotypes that linked poverty, community reform, and immigration with left politics and communist ideologies—stereotypes that ran deeply counter to many of the principles of reform stemming from public health authorities.
 60. See for example: Fraser, Thomas M., 1919, "Is Bolshevism Brewing in Canada?" *Macleans*, January 1, p. 1-25.
 61. Tronto, Joan C., 2013, "Democratic Caring," in *Caring Democracy*, New York, New York University Press, p. 139-140.
 62. Joplin Clarke, Mary, 1915, "Life in the Ward," *Saint Hilda's Chronicle*, vol. 7, no. 20, p. 6-9. Note that this publication has been incorrectly attributed to Elizabeth Neufeld.
 63. Joplin Clarke, *id.*, p. 7; Joplin Clarke, Mary, 1917, "Samaritan's Club Co-operative Work," *The Globe*, April 4, p. 10.
 64. Addams, Jane, 1897, "Social Settlements," *National Conference of Charities and Correction Proceedings*, The University Library, The University of Illinois at Chicago, p. 338-346.
 65. Eight years later, Jane Addams lectured in Toronto.
 66. Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 151-162.

67. Spain, Daphne, 2011, "The Chicago of Jane Addams and Ernest Burgess. Same City, Different Visions," in Dennis R. Judd and Dick Simpson (eds.), *The City Revisited. Urban Theory from Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 51-62.
68. *Ibid.*
69. James, Cathy, 2001, "Reforming Reform: Toronto's Settlement House Movement, 1900-1920," *The Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 82, no. 1, p. 1-20. The first settlement house in Toronto was Evangelista House, which was associated with religious institutions. Central Neighbourhood House and University Settlement were the firsts to operate without the framework of any type of mission setting.
70. John Dewey was a major influence on many who worked in and around the Ward in the settlements and in other arts organizations of the time.
71. James, "Reforming Reform: Toronto's Settlement House Movement," *op. cit.*, p. 8.
72. Joplin Clarke, Mary, 1918, "The Social Unit Plan and Public Health," *The Public Health Journal*, vol. 9, no. 3, p. 121-131.
73. *Ibid.*
74. Devine, Edward T., 1919, *The Social Unit: An Appraisal of the Cincinnati Experiment*, Cincinnati, Ohio, National Social Unit Organization Conference.
75. Blundo, Robert, 1997, "The Social Unit Plan (1916-1920). An Experiment in Democracy and Human Services Fails," *The Journal of Sociology and Human Welfare*, vol. 24, no. 3, p. 169-191, at p. 173.
76. Joplin Clarke, "The Social Unit Plan and Public Health," *op. cit.*, p. 128.
77. *Id.*, p. 124.
78. *Id.*, p. 130.
79. Chown, Alice, 1911, *The Toronto Daily Star*, October 20, p. 11. In 1911, Chown warned that many of the problems facing Toronto amounted to a lack of "social vision" and weak "public-minded" consciousness.
80. Chown, Alice, 1902, "The Women's Residence," *Queen's Quarterly*, Kingston, ON, vol. 10, p. 80.
81. Chown, Alice and Diana Chown, 1988, *The Stairway*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, p. v-lxxii. Note that this was first printed in 1921.
82. *Id.*, p. 61-65. The following articles are attributed to Alice Chown when she was a writer for the *Toronto Daily Star*: Chown, Alice, 1911, "Britain's Great Awakening to the Advantage of Co-operative Building," *The Toronto Daily Star*, November 10; Chown, Alice, 1911, "A Utopia Come True: England's Model Garden City an Example to the World," *The Toronto Daily Star*, October 27, p. 12.
83. Chown and Chown, *The Stairway*, *op. cit.*, p. 61, 164.
84. Alice Chown visited and lived in several colonies and communities and established some of her own at different scales throughout her life. See Chown and Chown, *ibid.*
85. Chown and Chown, *id.*, p. 252-253. In her later years, Chown critiqued the practice of owning property at all.
86. *Id.*, p. lxi.
87. *Id.*, 234.
88. *Id.*, 65.
89. It is worth noting, however, that Alice Chown was one of the occupants in the Toronto Housing Company Cooperative.
90. *Toronto Star*, 1912, November 5, p. 2, 5; James, "Reforming Reform: Toronto's Settlement House Movement," *op. cit.*, p. 128.
91. Chown and Chown, *The Stairway*, *op. cit.*, p. 252-253.
92. Ziegler was a head worker at the University Settlement, who was involved in important Toronto-based cooperative arts movements. She wrote the following book: Ziegler, Olive, 1935, *Woodsworth: Social Pioneer*, Toronto, Ontario Publishing Company.
93. Blundo, "The Social Unit Plan," *op. cit.*, p. 185-186.
94. Federici, Silvia, 2019, "Commons Against and Beyond Capitalism," in Federici and Linebaugh (eds.), *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*, *op. cit.*, p. 85-98.
95. *Id.*, p. 96.
96. C.C.F. Teachings Called Communism in House Debate," *The Globe*, 1934, February 6, 1934, p. 2. "Says Communism Taught in Toronto. Rev. T. Crawford Brown Says Atheism Is Inculcated. Secret Schools Exist?" *The Globe*, 1923, April 23, p. 13.
97. *The Globe*, 1929, August 21, 1929, p. 4.
98. Baines, "The Professions and an Ethic of Care," *op. cit.*, p. 37.
99. *Id.*, p. 32.
100. *Id.*, p. 55.
101. *Id.*, p. 37. According to Baines, the professionalization of services emerged largely in the late nineteenth century as "a process in which white, middle-class males carved out new roles and ultimately obtained a monopoly for their services." Women's roles in similar fields were commonly viewed as extensions of maternal labour.
102. Dolmage, Jay, 2013 [4th ed.], "Disabled Upon Arrival: The Rhetorical Construction of Disability and Race at Ellis Island," in Lennard J. Davis (ed.), *The Disability Studies Reader*, London, Taylor and Francis, p. 47-50. I borrow Dolmage's use of the word "tainted" to describe labels and perceptions of citizenship in this context.
103. Tronto, *Who Cares? How to Reshape a Democratic Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
104. Fisher and Tronto, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring," *op. cit.*, p. 40.