later work such as *The Blue Castle* (1926) and final sequels to the *Anne*
and *Emily* series.

Located in Cavendish, Prince Edward Island, Lover’s Lane was a
touchstone for Montgomery throughout her life: she persistently
photographed it over time, and it contained the bends, curves, arches,
and keyholes of light that Montgomery adored and found comfort in.
Indeed, Epperly argues that Lover’s Lane offered a “landscape of desire”
to Montgomery, and that her appeal as an author can be attributed to
her ability to embrace the reader’s imagination in her way of seeing
through image and metaphor. Her love of the landscape is what
facilitated worldwide interest and identification with the Prince Ed-
ward Island of Montgomery’s books, according to Epperly, and the land
offered a metaphorical location to fix the “spirit’s home” and to locate
a “home for beauty.” The first half of the book deals with the role of
photography in Montgomery’s life, and contains thirty-five plates of her
photographs divided up into seven sections: Lover’s Lane, Seascapes and
Landscapes, Scrapbook Pages, Family and Friends, Self-Portraits, Inter-
riors, and Buildings. Montgomery’s photographs frame the scene with
the same patterns and shapes, and give us a sense of the meaning of
landscape and one’s surroundings for Montgomery as mirrors to the
soul and psychic life. Epperly claims that photographs come to function
for Montgomery as a means of transforming the sharpness of suffering
and loss into the blurred enjoyment of nostalgia.

The latter half of the study is an application of the theoretical work
on photography as practiced by Montgomery to her major works,
focusing less on the photographs themselves than on the impact of
Montgomery’s visual imagination on her texts. Epperly argues that
the *Anne* series employs the visual and almost mythological qualities of
Lover’s Lane to represent Anne’s con-
sciousness and dreamy interior world
that pivots itself around beauty. One
of Anne’s most endearing qualities
is her ability to visualize moments
in her life as bends in the road, and
it is in this series that Montgomery
begins to work with the idea that
one’s exterior landscape can reveal
the interior mind. The next chapter
introduces the ‘flash’ as a metaphor
central to the *Emily* series, using the
concrete image of the camera’s light
as an allegory for realizations of
beauty that appear to come suddenly
from without. The key to this series
is Emily’s ability to carefully survey
the landscape around her so as to
develop her interior gift of seeing
beyond the manifest and into the
supernatural (a contrast to Anne’s
close association with her surround-
ing landscapes). The penultimate
and final chapters of Epperly’s book
demonstrate how Montgomery’s
visual imagination ripened over
time. Her later works struggle
with questions that Montgomery
herself struggled with through her
husband’s mental illness, her retreat
to Toronto, and deaths of good
friends. These works wonder if it
is possible to allow beauty into the
soul when one’s heart is rigid, and
longing for home.

Elizabeth Rollins Epperly’s rig-
orous and erudite enquiry into L.
M. Montgomery’s photographic
and authorial practice offers a new
dimension to our understandings
and analyses of the well-loved works.
Surely this text will appeal to fans of
Montgomery, as well as those of us
who are interested in the profound
cultural role of photography in
shaping our imaginations, visual
and literary.

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**MISCONCEPTIONS:**
**UNMARRIED MOTHERHOOD**
**AND THE ONTARIO CHILDREN OF**
**UNMARRIED PARENTS ACT, 1921-**
**1969**

Lori Chambers
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007

**REVIEWED BY EMMA POSCA**

The foreword of this book appropriately begins with the following
statement: “the Law Society of Upper Canada seeks to stimulate the study of
legal history in Canada by supporting researchers, collecting oral histories,
and publishing volumes that contribute to legal-historical scholarship.”
Following this ideology, it is obvious that Lori Chambers has done exactly
what the statement has indicated in her book. As outlined by Chambers
in her opening pages, the main focus of this book is the Unmarried Parents
Act. Thus *Misconceptions* provides a critical analysis and discussion of
children in Ontario and the impact of the Unmarried Parents Act from
1921-1969. The critical analysis of the
disposition conducted by Chambers
makes this book a significant contribu-
tion to legal history in Canada, as
well as three other literary genres: in
the social, legal, and feminist schools
of thought.

Legally, this book deals with the ramifications of the act on women
and children due to social attitudes. The social stigma attached to being
a woman with a baby and no hus-
band, originating from patriarchal
attitudes, is discussed by Chambers throughout the book. She is precise in linking up and including in her discussion of patriarchy that women were ostracized from social realms if they had a baby out of wedlock. The examples used by Chambers, that came from Children's Aid Society and Ontario Law Reports, are an excellent indication that it was acceptable for men to have sexual intercourse before marriage but not women. Unmarried mothers were considered deviant and were given no sympathy by the legal system. Even those who were lied to by men with marriage promises or forced to have intercourse had no legal recourse. Men were not even forced to take care of the children that they created out of non-marital or cohabitation unions.

Chambers goes above and beyond her critical analysis by discussing the inherent contradictions and reforms of the act, which are initially made apparent by the title and expanded upon within the text of the book. Chambers’ use of the word “misconceptions” in the title suggests to the reader that although the act existed to help women who had children out of wedlock it in fact, accomplished the opposite.

The solutions to unwed pregnancy promoted under the Children of Unmarried Parents Act were themselves based upon misconceptions. Child welfare measures [that] sought to rescue children instead punished women and their children. It will not succeed in alleviating child poverty, social stigmas against women and or helping both women and children lead normal or blameless lives.

As indicated by both the CAS and Ontario Law Reports, the legislation was improperly enforced by the CAS case workers, lawyers, and judges due to the negative social beliefs towards women who became pregnant out of wedlock.

The controversial issues of birth control, abortion, and adoption are also discussed by Chambers in three chapters of her book. She has done well in linking these topics to each other as well as presenting information gathered from case studies. Socially, women should not have been engaging in intercourse and abstinence was to be their birth control or else they were labeled as promiscuous. Abortions were deemed socially unacceptable and women could be held criminally liable until after 1969. However, there was no indication by Chambers as to how many women actually had abortions nor does she present any evidence of what would happen to a woman who had an illegal/hidden abortion.

Chambers, however, does establish that the adoption mandate was clearly the reason why women were socially and legally discouraged from having abortions. Women were encouraged by CAS to give up their babies for adoption especially if their children were “white.” Racially and ethnically “white” babies were deemed perfect for many white middle-class families in order to continue with Anglo-Saxon traditions in Canada. Social workers could eliminate out-of-wedlock mothers who were deemed deviant and needed to be replaced with “good” mothers who were married. Chambers proves this point by using the following quote from the CAS report: “it is best for your baby to give it up for adoption. The lovely couple would be best for the baby and best for society.” She effectively argues that the adoption mandate perpetuated the ideology that society was to be pure and hegemonic which is why out-of-wedlock children had to be adopted and could not live with their biological mothers.

Chambers also does a good job of discussing the concept of power as developed by Foucault. The power issue that she refers to is the fact that women were at the mercy of society as a whole and the representatives of society—the CAS workers, lawyers, and judges—when it came to having and raising their children out of wedlock.

The mother should know that if she keeps her child she may be beset by many difficulties of which she can hardly be aware before experiencing them. She may be censured by relatives and neighbors; she will have difficulty supporting herself and her child; and jeopardize her chances of marriage later on.

Chambers uses the above quote from the CAS reports to indicate that women who did not adhere to the adoption mandate would suffer both economically and socially. Those who lacked familial support had to work to financially support their children, but lived in poverty. Although Chambers makes no mention of the term feminization of poverty, it is evident that it is what occurred to women who chose to keep their babies rather than give them up for adoption. Society rarely forgave women for having children out of wedlock and hardly gave them a fair chance when it came to seeking paid employment that was equal to that of men. Many women had to leave their children in the care of strangers or “board them out.” CAS investigated these women and often times forced them to give up their children instead of forcing the men to pay for their children.

In conclusion, the author has achieved the purpose indicated in the
foreword of the book. *Misconceptions* has certainly added to the study of legal history in Canada. Through her critical analysis Chambers has demonstrated that the *Unmarried Parents Act* did not help women and children who did not have a male presence in their lives. She has failed however, in providing solid examples of how words like “illegitimate” and “good and bad mother” were socially constructed and prevented women from getting help. Although the law reports alone were deemed by the author to be “inadequate historical sources,” when they were coupled with the CAS reports they provided appropriate examples for critical analysis. Overall, Chambers’ *Misconceptions* provides us with a valuable, and readable, sociological study.

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