

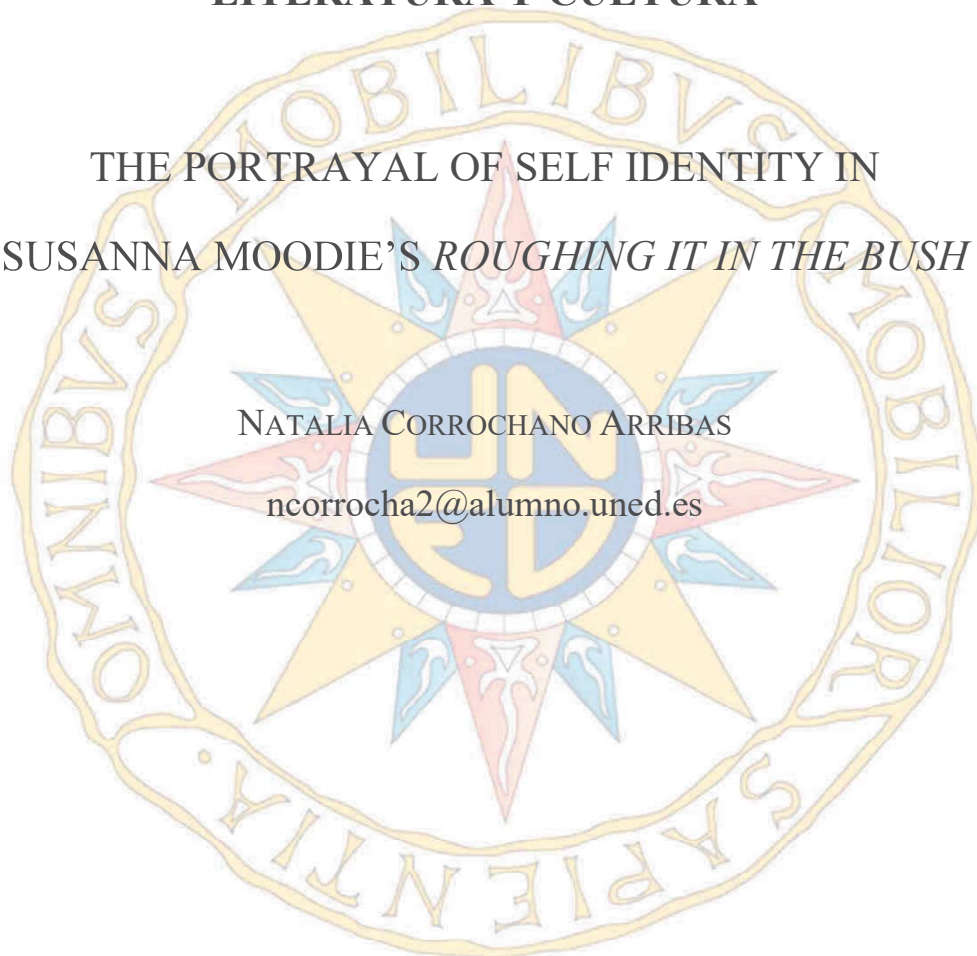


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THE PORTRAYAL OF SELF IDENTITY IN
SUSANNA MOODIE'S ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the relevance of Susanna Moodie as a literary figure in the 19th-century Canadian canon, as well as the purpose of her narrative *Roughing It in the Bush*, which is a great example of Canadian pioneer memoirs. The author's personality traits and feelings regarding her identity show through the piece. The main themes of her work are discussed, focusing on her perspective, visible in her narrative voice. Moodie's notion of identity will be discussed, involving aspects such as national, class, gender or religious identities, as well as how it evolves through the book.

KEYWORDS: Susanna Moodie, pioneer memoirs, Canadian Literature, Identity

To my family and friends, with thanks, for having supported me and understood that the time I have dedicated to researching and writing, as pleasuring as it has been, would have much more gratefully been spent in their company.

To my partner, too, for encouraging me to start and being by my side until the end.

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“Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)”

Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself”

1. INTRODUCTION

This end of degree paper aims to explore in depth Susanna Moodie’s relationship with Canada as reflected in her work, specifically in *Roughing It in the Bush*. An immigrant to Canada before its Confederation, she refused to acknowledge herself as Canadian, but she is now considered an important 19th-century Canadian writer.

Themes for literature are varied. Authors can choose to explore identity in their writings, and often may do so without having intended to. Identity can be constructed on different pillars such as gender, social class or nationality, to name a few. Thus, this paper will focus on analysing Moodie’s feelings regarding England, where she grew, and Canada, where she spent most of her life, as well as her sense of belonging to one country rather than the other. Through a close reading of *Roughing It in the Bush*, her personal identity will be explored. Her portrayal of herself as a woman will also be analysed, as well as her portrayal of the otherness, regarding how she viewed both members of other social classes and the Natives.

The topic of how identities are portrayed in different ways in literature is of great interest to me, and in the same way, it is of great academic relevance, being as it is that Susanna Moodie has been widely studied as a greatly influential 19th-century writer in Canada. Her work has been explored from many different perspectives, and it has inspired a famous collection of poems by a great contemporary Canadian writer, Margaret Atwood, who published *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970).

Regarding the subjects studied in this degree, this paper is closely related to all of the literary subjects, and more specifically to those that share the same time period studied here, such as ‘Literatura Inglesa II: Ilustración, Romanticismo y Época Victoriana’ or ‘Literatura Norteamericana I: Siglos XVII-XIX’. It is also

closely linked to 'Literatura Canadiense', an elective course that I have not been able to take, but whose main contents I have gone through in order to adequately choose the general ideas presented in this paper.

Other courses such as 'Comentarios de Textos Literarios en Lengua Inglesa' and 'Género y Literatura en los Países de Habla Inglesa' are also related to the topic studied, as they encourage students to engage in deep analysis of literary texts. 'Pragmática' and 'Análisis del discurso' seem to be relevant, too, when doing a close reading of a text. Finally, this paper is also linked to 'Literatura Irlandesa' to some degree, since there many texts related to national, gender and class identity are also studied.

1.1. Topic justification and statement of purpose

Pioneer memories are, according to Gibert, "realistic settlement narratives about the pioneer's struggle against the natural environment in Canada, with particular emphasis on the hardships of life in the colony" (1). It is in this context where *Roughing It in the Bush* should be analysed, as it tells of Moodie's first years in the backwoods of Canada, where together with her husband and their offspring, she tried to make profit of the land they were granted. It is because of their nature of first-hand accounts that pioneer memoirs have a great interest, as according to Lorraine McMullen, they "express a different vision of Canada and Canadian experience than is conventionally held" (qtd. in Matthews 11).

As stated above, the topic of identity in literature has been widely discussed through the years. Specifically, the development of personal identity in 19th-century writing by women poses an interesting subject matter to develop. Bearing in mind the challenging experiences Moodie went through, it is undeniable that her character must have evolved, to become strong enough to face the difficulties that kept coming her way. One of the aims of this paper is to find evidence of this evolution of her identity through the text. It will focus in Moodie's representation of herself, and how her nature shows through the portrayal of the Canada she lived in, and the roughness she had to go through to survive. It will also analyse the purpose of *Roughing It in the Bush*, and ponder

on her reliability through the text, considering some incongruences that appear in her narrative.

Moodie intended her work to be a truthful account of the events that happened to her during her life in Canada, a portrayal of the reality of everyday life and its miseries and hard work. Her introduction to the 1857 edition of the book states that the scenes shown in the book aim to show what the “Backwoods of Canada” truly are, “drawn principally from my own experience” (Moodie viii).

Written in first person, as it is characteristic of pioneer memoirs, the narrator tells of life and events as they were, through lengthy descriptions. Report and description are, in fact, the narrative modes that prevail in *Roughing It in the Bush*. Moodie also includes speech in her work, making it a more natural read, as well as comment, which is the narrative mode to which most attention should be given when trying to analyse the narrator’s representation of her own identity.

1.2. Methodology and resources

The methodology to be used for this research paper will be, on the one hand, the close reading of the chosen primary text, the above-mentioned *Roughing It in the Bush* by Susanna Moodie. The 1857 London edition will be used, in a digitalised copy made available to the public by the Open Library.

On the other hand, a qualitative methodology will be followed, researching an extensive literature of secondary sources related to the topic. These sources range in a variety of publishing years, most of them spanning through the second half of the 20th-century. This apparent absence of more recent scholar articles on Susanna Moodie might suggest that interest in her figure has been declining. However, her relevance in the Canadian literary canon is still great, as it will be discussed below.

Roughing It in the Bush deals with a variety of themes that are explored through the twenty-seven chapters in which it is divided. Being a narration of Moodie’s early years as a settler in Canada, it is a piece which clearly represents pioneer life, and the struggles it involved for a person of Moodie’s position. This implies that through her portrayal of herself, her self-identity can change,

reflecting how she evolved as she faced the difficulties she tells about. Moreover, it is an especially good choice for trying to learn about her self-identity. As Shields explains, “The revelation of Mrs. Moodie’s own personality appears only occasionally in her fiction [...] But in her Canadian books that personality moves to the foreground, making an insistent cry for recognition” (88).

1.3. State of the art

Discussion on the portrayal of the self through literature has given way to substantial body of criticism. A good starting point could be to try to understand the evolution process through which identity is constructed in narration, as Bamberg does:

Claims to identity begin with the continuity/change dilemma and from there venture into issues of uniqueness and agency; self and sense of self begin by constructing agency and differentiating self from others and then go on to navigate the waters of continuity and change.

The key to linking this to Moodie’s work is that certain development can be seen in the narrative voice through her *Roughing it in the Bush*, and yet, as pointed out by Tihana Klepač, it still does not qualify as a *Bildungsroman*. She states that Moodie’s work “is neither an adventure novel, which would presume some kind of plot and purpose, nor is it strictly travel writing or autobiography, as it is too heavily narrated”, and it instead struggles to find a category of its own (65-66). In other words, *Roughing It in the Bush* does not qualify as a *Bildungsroman*, which was associated with male writers.

The idea of the self is more clearly portrayed when compared to one’s own views of others, or, as Bamberg puts it, the sense of otherness is one of the dilemmas the building of an identity faces. Moodie establishes these comparisons amply in her work, starting first with the lower-class immigrants that shared her voyage to Canada and continuing later on with the Indians.

In this particular aspect, the relations with the Natives, it is of interest to read the work of Carole Gerson, who in her article on the “Nobler Savages” ponders on Moodie’s representation of Native women. She states that

Powerful as white but disempowered as female, Moodie and Traill share with Native women some marginal space on the outskirts of frontier culture. [...] they present anecdotally rather than analytically the subjection of women in their own social class. (10)

But aside from reading *Roughing It in the Bush* under a perspective of gender representation, other themes may be extracted from it, as shown in Carol Shield's Master thesis, *Major Themes in Prose Works of Susanna Moodie*. There, she explores themes such as "the complexity and variability of human personality" (8), analysing Moodie's own personality through that of her characters. Carol Shields' work has been of great importance to keep Susanna Moodie present in the Canadian literary panorama. Aside from the Master thesis consulted for this paper, she has also co-authored a graphic novel version of *Roughing It in the Bush*, as well as an hour-long documentary, 'The Enduring Enigma of Susanna Moodie', aiming to bring both the author and her most famous work closer to 21st-century readers. Together with Atwood's *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*, published in 1970, it exemplifies "false influence", which is the way a transformation of an earlier text by a later one is called. This is quite probably far from what Moodie herself imagined her book could achieve.

In her MA thesis, Shields also goes through the reasons to immigrate, which are also further analysed in Michael Dorland's article, where he states that Moodie's negative feelings towards Canada come even before she has set foot on the new world (147). Dorland develops his explanation going through the idea of resentment, which is, in his view, a major characteristic of Moodie's. This would be greatly important in building her personality, an important part of her identity as an immigrant to Canada.

This idea that Moodie's work is full with "disillusionment" is also clear to MacDonald. He comments on the unevenness of her style, and how this clearly shows that the contradictory aspects in the book prove a movement in her feelings "from romantic anticipation to disillusionment, from nature as beautiful and benevolent to nature as a dangerous taskmaster" (30).

Nature is indeed a great protagonist in *Roughing It in the Bush*. It serves to show that oppositions exist, as nature is both seen as a provider of resources

and as an enemy to the young gentlewomen unaccustomed to work. But it is thanks to the dangers her family confronts in nature that she evolves and becomes a resourceful woman, who can successfully survive in the bush. However, the sketches are told from the distance of a Moodie who is no longer roughing it in the bush, but living comfortably away from the woods, in Belleville.

MacDonald also points out how Moodie's aim for writing changes through the text, as she begins with the purpose of realistically depicting life in the wilderness of what is now known as Ontario, but the general message by the end of the book is that of warning: she tells the emigrant gentlemen that they should avoid to settle in the bush (27).

This way, contradiction may be seen as another, greater protagonist than nature. In the introduction to the above-mentioned graphic novel, Atwood draws attention to binary oppositions:

Moodie's feelings about Canada were always mixed. On the one hand, striking beauty; on the other, intense physical suffering. She had many experiences she would never have had otherwise; she also had a good many experiences she could well have done without.

Binary oppositions are seen in the portrayal of women's and men's roles, but also in that of life in England and life in Canada. But it is through the compilation of these contrasts that Moodie has reached, together with her sister Catherine Parr-Traill, a great repercussion in the development of Canadian literature. This is widely discussed in Leigh Matthews' *Looking Back: Canadian Women's Prairie Memoirs and Intersections of Culture, History and Identity*. This author also agrees with MacDonald's view, stating that "Moodie's text runs precisely counter to the linear model. Illustrating as it does an endless cycle of hopes followed by disappointments" (Matthews 193).

Further secondary sources will be discussed in the development of this paper, as it moves on to the rest of the topics pointed out in the table of contents.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Background information. Narrator and style

Daughter to Thomas and Elizabeth Strickland, Susanna Moodie was born in Suffolk, England, in 1803. Out of their eight offspring, six turned out to be published authors. In fact, Susanna Moodie had already published children's stories in England before she emigrated to Canada. She was not the only one who tried pioneer life either, as her brother Samuel Strickland had already emigrated to Canada in 1825, and her sister Catharine Parr-Traill followed in 1834.

These brief biographical details seem relevant to have a basic picture of the background information available on Moodie. As Carol Shields puts it, the figure of Susanna Moodie is in itself “an interesting literary subject and an indispensable figure in the study of Canadian literature” (92). The Moodies set off to Canada in 1832. Their first years in the New World are narrated in the book, first published in 1852, which was followed by *Life in the Clearings Versus the Bush*, published for the first time in 1853, where she told of her experience away from the woods, describing Canadian society in a more optimistic way. Both books were written from the comfort of her life in Belleville, away from the difficulties she had gone through in the backwoods.

Susanna Moodie was already a professional writer before emigrating to Canada. During her first years as a settler, her literary career came to a halt; but her writings became a source of income for the family a few years later. This has been a source for criticism: as Shields puts it, “Mrs. Moodie was a commercial writer; she wrote for money. [...] and because she was paid by the foolscap page, her work is often stretched out of shape, padded with philosophical asides, and larded with stories within stories [...]” (3).

Moodie referred to her *Roughing It in the Bush* as a collection of “sketches” that were supposed to truthfully depict what it had been to live in the “bush” as an English gentlewoman. Twenty-seven chapters -or “sketches”- compound the book, and many of them include poems or even song lyrics. These chapters are not necessarily linearly organised in time; for example, chapter iv, in which Moodie introduces her friend Tom Wilson and how his idea to emigrate to Canada

inspired her husband to emigrate, too. However, this chapter comes after she has already described the latest days of their voyage and her first impressions of Canada.

The book is, thus, formed out of these miscellaneous elements which are all written in an eclectic style that brings together descriptive narrative and speech; report and comment. After those twenty-seven chapters, a sort of afterword is added, entitled “Canadian Sketches”, where the author herself acknowledges that:

THE preceding sketches of Canadian life, as the reader may well suppose, are necessarily tinged with somewhat sombre hues, imparted by the difficulties and privations with which, for so many years the writer had to struggle; [...]. (248)

This shows that she was aware that her pretension of neutrality and objectivity when representing settler’s life was not easy to achieve, as her own perspective necessarily perspires through what she wrote. However, this last chapter is quite different from the others, and shows much more objectivity. She even includes data on the population of the major cities in Canada, as well as the duties paid on the importation of goods from Britain, in page 256.

Apart from that last chapter, though, the main part of the book is the narrative of her experience in the bush. It is relevant to point out that, being a memoir, the narrative voice is a homodiegetic first person narrator, who coincides with the author. As stated above, the narrative mode of comment takes a big part of the book, and it is in this way how Moodie clearly portrays her true feelings. The way Mathews puts it, “Moodie does not hide her anger and deep sense of betrayal” (126).

Mathews adds an interesting reflection on the genre of pioneer memoirs:

For many readers, then, memoir texts appear to suffer from a lack of critical depth; they contain neither the fully developed and central Selfconsciousness traditionally desired in autobiographical texts nor the objective distance traditionally assumed to be the priority of the professional historian, with the inevitable result that neither discipline wants to lay claim to such a field of works. In fact, the truth of memoir lies somewhere at the intersection of history and autobiography; somewhere between disciplinary misunderstandings of the form as being either too personal or not personal enough. (14)

Finally, when considering the style in which the book is written, it is important to note Shields' words:

Her most frequently employed style is an uneasy rotation of Old World florid romantic and a New World how-to-survive handbook prose [...] Mrs. Moodie alternates one style with the other, writing a lyrical aside to moonlight in one paragraph, then plunging immediately into a technical discussion of logging in the next. (3)

MacDonald seems to agree with her, stating that "Romantic anticipation and disenchantment, high style and low, continue to alternate" (23), and further adds that "[this alternation] may lead the reader to assert that Susanna Moodie's vision was contradictory, her style uneven" (24).

Both critics seem to be right in their perception of Moodie as an author who mixed styles together for no apparent reason. Moodie shows little interest to categorise her book into a certain genre, aside from it being a memoir, as she adds different elements to it in an apparently random way. For example, at the end of chapter vii, Moodie is waiting for the return of her husband, so she wrote the lyrics to a song called "The Sleigh Bells", where she celebrated with anticipation the bells that signalled the return of her husband (72). These lyrics do not seem to be directly related with what has been said right before or right after in the book.

Another example of an unprompted poem can be found in chapter i, which is an element that illustrates the duality of life in the bush: there was not only hardship but also pleasure, for instance in the beauty of the scenery often described in the book. The poem, untitled, gives a dreamy description of Moodie's view on her first sight of Canada, in Grosse Island; however, the prevailing mood is that of melancholy and sadness for having abandoned her home country forever. In that episode, Moodie seems to be scared of the perspective of the loneliness she will find in the woods: "A sense of desolation reigns/ O'er these unpeopled forest plains" (12).

2.2 Identity in writing

According to Bamberg, narration allows the writer to explore their identity. He states that "self-narration [...] springs to the fore as the basic practice-ground for

marking the self off from 'I' as speaker/agent and 'me' as character/actor". He brings forward views of other critics, to establish that "What further comes to light in this process is an increasing differentiation between (and integration of) 'I' and 'me', and simultaneously between 'I-we-us' and 'them-other'". He continues to explain that "self, apparently, is the product of an 'I' that manages three processes of differentiation and integration", where he discusses the "I" against the "me", the "I-me" against the "we", and finally the "we-us" against "them-other".

In *Roughing It in the Bush*, Moodie explores this "otherness" under various different aspects. Namely, these "others" can be men as opposed to women, lower-classes as opposed to gentry, Natives as opposed to whites, Canadian-born whites as opposed to immigrants, and protestants as opposed to Catholics. In the following chapter, some of these criteria of otherness will be analysed, as it is considered that by exposing what was different to her, Moodie gives a true vision of herself and her identity.

Gerson points out that this analysis should be done with care, as

While discussion of *Roughing It in the Bush* must distinguish the historic personage of Susanna Moodie from her constructed self-representation as the naïve settler whose journey from innocence to experience provides the narrative framework of the book, the narrated figure may also be read as the reflection of the historic. (13)

Moodie seems conscious of how her choice of words would portray herself in a certain way. Without losing sight of the fact that she was writing for money, as stated above, Thomas reflects that "Moodie the professional writer uses certain conventions and strategies in her self-representation [...] in order to appeal to her readership" (106).

It seems that pioneer memoirs, belonging to a category of self-narration, clearly show how the experience of contrast between the self and the "others" must be done through the choice of elements narrated being done through the lens, or bias, or the author herself. As an example of this, Gerson argues that "linking [Moodie's] individual position as mature middle-class British mothers to their representation of Native women in [her] travel writing and [her] fiction yields important insights into [her] experiences of selfhood and Otherness" (11).

Continuing with this reflection of the bias of the author because of her personal background, Matthews points out that “Helen M. Buss suggests that these two women authors consciously and adeptly manage to negotiate the narratives and discourses of Anglo culture as a means to represent their own stories/their own selves” (13), while analysing and comparing Susanna Moodie’s work with Anna Jameson’s, writer of another pioneer memoir in 1838.

Lastly, Bamberg states that

When considering the emergence of identity, the narrating subject must be regarded: (a) as neither locked into stability nor drifting through constant change, but rather as something that is multiple, contradictory, and distributed over time and place, held together contextually and locally; (b) in terms of membership positions vis-à-vis others that help to trace the narrator’s identity within the context of social relationships, groups, and institutions; and (c) as the active and agentive locus of control, though simultaneously attributing agency to outside forces that are situated in a broader socio-historical context.

This points out to the direction this paper should follow: analysis of Moodie’s representation of herself should be done by paying attention to the evolution her persona does through the text, as well as in regards to the opposition between her and the “otherness” and the trials she has to go through, meaning that the dangers of nature and the challenges that it imposes on Moodie should be read as Bamberg’s “outside forces”.

3. PURPOSE IN MOODIE'S *ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH*

Moodie states the purpose of her work from the introduction of her book. It is there, too, where she makes it clear that these sketches “are drawn principally from my own experience, during a sojourn of nineteen years in the colony” (viii). This way, she directly gives up any claims to impartiality or objectivity on what she narrates.

This is very important, because, as Shields says, “her book about life in the Canadian woods was, [Moodie] says, written for the practical purpose of enlightening other would-be immigrants” (3-4). This “enlightening” would be done through Moodie’s own perspective, that is, one of a British gentlewoman who was reluctant to immigration to Canada in the first place. Moodie thus starts the book with a clear purpose of practicality in mind, which sets the criteria chosen for her way of portraying what life in the backwoods was like, via sketches.

As of her reason to try to deter others from immigrating, or at least, from trying to make a living in the backwoods, Moodie is quite clear: her own experience is, in her view, example enough of how it is not a good idea. She writes *Roughing It in the Bush* as a way to warn other people who may have been deceived -as she had been- by the dominating narrative of Canada and its backwoods as a wonderful destination for emigrants. As soon as she starts narrating her own experience, she shows how her perception of Canada changed: “[...] the myth of a Paradise on Earth [...] is subverted by harsh realities”, as Párraga puts it (325).

She is given a warning, before having set a foot in Canada, as the “sailor-captain” tells her: “Don’t be too sanguine, Mrs. Moodie; many things look well at a distance which are bad enough when near” (13). This is a starting point for her tone in the following pages: she uses nature to contrast its purity with the many problems she has to face. She gives plentiful descriptions of the land that surrounds her, marvelled at its beauty, only to follow them with a pessimistic narrative: the lower-class immigrants are boisterous and lack manners (14), someone drowns (24) or the city of Quebec is plagued with cholera, and “death was everywhere – perhaps lurking in our very path” (26). It seems as if Moodie is trying to convey that the picturesque landscape she witnesses in her voyage

through Ontario river does not accurately represent the reality the immigrants are -or are going to- face, as MacDonald explains (22).

Nature serves two purposes though the book. In this first stage, its beauty is a synonym to the great promises, hopes and expectations she has of her new life in Canada; but later on, nature shows its dangerous side, representing this way the challenges she had to face. This, however, is criticised by MacDonald, who states that “I have had to admit that Mrs. Moodie herself seems oblivious of her own purpose or of the pattern developing within her work” (20). The way she sees it, it is as if Moodie at times forgot the point she was trying to make:

[...] the very last paragraph of the book follows illogically from the previous paragraphs. Mrs. Moodie warns the emigrant gentleman to avoid settling in the bush, yet just before this, she has been describing the beauty of the winter sleigh ride, the pleasant leavetaking from their neighbours, and the warm hospitality of the innkeepers who shelter the Moodies on their trip to Belleville. Thus though the reader is perhaps prepared for the closing of a circular plot, he is startled at the sudden and contradictory warning which ends the book. (28)

On the other hand, it could be argued that Moodie shows a clever planning for her work in the early pages of *Roughing It in the Bush*: keeping her purpose of “enlightening” in mind, further failures can be anticipated from the early mishappenings she narrates, as Thomas says:

Arrival in a time of cholera and death throws doubts on the venture from its start, and the uncertain nature of the undertaking is further emphasized by the gloomy imagery of the first few chapters. [...] The literal deaths and the morbidity of the opening sketches of *Roughing It* cast the Moodie’s emigration in terms of a doomed scheme. The landing sequence as the first unsuccessful arrival anticipates their later failures, most especially further failures of homecoming. (107)

In any case, by her choice of narrating through sketches, Moodie succeeds in her purpose of putting forward a pessimistic view of immigration. As MacDonald puts it,

[...] the arrangement of chapters, especially the alternation of episodic chapters and chapters of character sketch, again suggest a single significant pattern within *Roughing It in the Bush*: the character sketches may seem at first to have no function, beyond merely presenting interesting personalities, but these chapters act as watersheds between flows of action, and more importantly imply failure, if the Moodies stay in the bush. (24)

To give a further justification to these “character sketches”, Moodie herself gives an explanation, when talking about her “Indian friends” in chapter fifteen:

“The real character of a people can be more truly gathered from such seemingly trifling incidents than from any ideas we may form of them from the great facts in their history” (149).

Shields, however, sees most of these pages simply as digression. She states that “these devices, occasionally charming, almost always detract from the design of her work” (3). It is true that a present-day reader could feel that this apparently chaotic order of “sketches” goes against her purpose of, as she defines it, giving “a faithful picture of a life in the backwoods of Canada” (247).

Opposing this idea, and sustaining Moodie’s own perception that the “trifling incidents” are the best way to openly express her experience, Matthews brings forward Alec Lucas’ opinion, who states that *Roughing It in the Bush* “has seldom received the credit it merits as a work in which themes, characters, and narrative form a coherent whole” (qtd. in Matthews 130). Lucas goes further, implying that “critics fail to recognize [that] the autobiographical sketch was the only way, other than the essay, open to Moodie to write realistically and imaginatively of her experiences in the backwoods” (qtd. in Matthews 130).

Having in mind that Moodie admits that she is writing about her own vision of reality, certain unreliability can be discussed in her work. Not necessarily going to the extent of MacDonald, who refers to *Roughing It in the Bush* as “contradictory work” (21), some incongruences may be pointed out, that will add to the impression of this narrative not being completely reliable.

A clear example of this can be seen in the dates she gives. When telling about Tom Wilson’s emigration, she states that he departed on the 1st of May; and that they followed on the 1st of July (37). However, the lecture on emigration John Moodie and Tom Wilson attended had been “About a month previous to our emigration” (30), which would be in June. It is clear that dates do not match. Of course, the events took place in 1832, and she wrote about them 20 years later, so a certain confusion on the exact dates is admissible; however, this may lead readers to view the author as not totally trustworthy.

It is important to mention the difference of purpose of the book as opposed to Moodie’s purpose of writing it. As it has been mentioned in section 2.1, Moodie did not choose a single style and followed an eclectic one instead. This may show

that she rather centred her attention in the message she had to give to other gentlemen. However, Shields believes that the fact that Moodie was being paid for her words may be the reason why there is so much digression in the book (3).

Nonetheless, it must be remembered that Moodie was not only a professional writer, but also a married woman and mother. As such, she was busy with domestic work, as she herself repeatedly explains in her book: “as I was busy baking bread for tea” (187). This probably gave her little spare time to write, not allowing her to concentrate on the task as she could have done if writing had been her only occupation. Writing with such interruptions may be the reason why the style in *Roughing It in the Bush* is so uneven.

4. SELF-REPRESENTATION IN *ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH*

4.1. Gender

Gender is one of the aspects regarding Moodie's self-representation that has most widely been discussed. There are many aspects in which Moodie chose to portray herself as a woman who fulfilled the characteristics that, in her time, were ascribed to females.

One of these aspects is the frequency with which Moodie admits to cry through *Roughing It in the Bush*. "The tears were in my eyes" (69), "my tears flowed unchecked" (67), "the tears rushed to my eyes" (66), "my eyes swimming in tears" (44), are but few examples of how often she resorted to crying. The reasons for it were varied, but most notably it was her continuous feeling of nostalgia: "The home-sickness was sore upon me, and all my solitary hours were spent in tears" (43).

There are points in which she seems ashamed of crying, of showing her real feelings, because she feels she should endure the situation and not complain so much:

the rigour of the climate subdued my proud, independent English spirit, and I actually shamed my womanhood, and cried with the cold. Yes, I ought to blush at evincing such unpardonable weakness; but I was foolish and inexperienced, and unaccustomed to the yoke. (73)

She deems it an "unpardonable weakness", as if she could not be entitled to the feelings of unhappiness because the situation is bad, because she feels tricked that immigrating to Canada has not turned out as expected, fear for her life and her future, and perhaps even anger towards her husband for having made the decision to emigrate. She "shamed her womanhood" because she was not supposed to complain about all of this, but still she was brave enough to bring her complaints to the public, as in her book she expressed her feelings as openly as she could; she told her truth without hiding any negative aspects.

And yet, she explains that

Tears are the best balm that can be applied to the anguish of the heart. Religion teaches man to bear his sorrows with becoming fortitude, but tears contribute largely both to soften and to heal the wounds from whence they flow. (29)

Moodie's self-identity as a woman, and thus, secondary to her husband, is exposed through the text. She uses her narration to explore her feelings regarding her powerlessness in the big decisions. For example, when referring to how she did not want to emigrate, but it was her husband who decided for both of them, she says: "I had bowed to a superior mandate, the command of duty" (97). However, by letting her readers know what she thought about it, she was rebelling against what was expected of her, which was to simply endure all of these situations without complaint. As Matthews puts it, "Moodie appears to be unable to perform the adaptation of the 'British gentlewoman' image or the 'dutiful Ruth' image to the physical reality of life 'in the bush'" (134).

Regarding her duty to subdue to her husband and refrain from complaining, Helen Buss proposes that, when writing about Tom Wilson, Moodie is really trying to suggest that her husband made a mistake by deciding to move the family to Canada: "Moodie's narrative of Tom's story becomes a strategy by which she may say things, realize things about her husband that cannot be said, cannot even be thought, inside the wife's discourse" (89).

However, according to Thomas, it is the moment in which Moodie explains their problems when farming in shares with a dishonest couple of settlers that "This is as close to open criticism of her husband as Susanna comes" (111). Moodie makes it clear that her husband's decision to emigrate was a mistake; nonetheless, she could not criticise him openly as she wanted to keep the stability of their marriage. Interestingly, she does not criticise herself for not being able to stand up against him: her rebellion does not reach as far as to admit she could have a say in the family decisions. Regarding farming in shares, Moodie explains how "when any division was made, it was always when [Mr.] Moodie was absent from home, and there was no person present to see fair play" (85). It could be further argued that she is not only criticising her husband, but also her lack of power, as a female, in the business area.

The previous quote also helps to illustrate the above-mentioned self-identity as a woman. Through her book, Moodie uses "Moodie" to refer to her husband. She does not use that surname to refer to herself, even if it is her married surname; and she does not refer to him by his first name either. Moreover, the footnote that explains that chapter xii was written by him just reads

“An intermediate chapter, by J. W. D. Moodie” (110). Chapter xiii, although it does not have a footnote like the preceding one, seems to also have been written by him, which is clear from statements like “I wished to purchase a farm” (117), as Moodie, being a woman, would not be purchasing any farms; her husband, on the contrary, would. Moodie’s voice can only be perceived again in chapter xiv, when she makes it clear that it is herself, by an introductory line that highlights her motherhood: “IT was a bright frosty morning when I bade adieu to the farm, the birthplace of my little Agnes [...]” (132).

This leads to another important perspective to consider in *Roughing It in the Bush*: the maternal perspective, as Gerson points out. As she explains, Bina Freiwald believes that how Moodie represents herself is closely linked to her identity in motherhood, observing that “There is always a child at Susanna’s side” (qtd. in Gerson 11). All through *Roughing It in the Bush*, Moodie is preoccupied for her offspring: in fact, her narration starts with her being mother to her first daughter, Katie, who shared their voyage to Canada. Her worries are patent in episodes like the one which occurred while Moodie and the maid, Bell, were gathering berries. Katie, who was sitting in the grass, “tried to clutch between her white hands [...] a large garter-snake”, and Moodie, terrified of the danger this could suppose for the child, “snatched the child up in my arms, and ran with her home, never stopping until I gained the house, and saw her safely seated in the cradle” (84).

However, at points her maternal role falls to the background, showing how much her position as a gentlewoman encouraged her to rely in others to help her care for the baby. For example, in chapter ii, the ship *Horsley Hill* struck the *Anne*, aboard of which Moodie was just getting ready to sleep: “I had just settled down my baby in her berth, when the vessel struck, with a sudden crash [...]” (19). In the “scene of confusion” that followed, Moodie went back to the deck to see what was happening, and then decided to gather the women and persuade them to accompany her below the deck, were they “were left in total darkness to await the result” (20). She then took it upon herself to try to calm them down, but for the rest of the episode, Katie is not mentioned again. It raises the question of what mother would leave her baby alone when the ship they are in has been

crashed, which seems a potentially very dangerous situation. Unless, of course, Moodie was sure of the care her maid would provide for little Katie.

Thomas, on the other hand, chooses to see in *Roughing It in the Bush* “a narrative of home as family” (110). According to her, when arriving to their first settlement, Moodie’s first impression of the hut where they are to live is “made worse because Susanna cannot immediately fall back onto her discourse of home as family” (108), as her husband has not arrived yet.

The episode in which John Moodie “had bought a very fine cow” from a man who “lived twenty miles back in the woods” (92) helps sustain this view. Mr. Moodie and their help, John Monaghan, left to go get the cow, leaving Mrs. Moodie alone at home at a time in which she “was without a servant” (92). All the time she spent alone, she was scared. For example, she “was terribly afraid of cattle”. Safety, for Moodie, was closely linked to being with her husband. She then managed to do things on her own, like milking the cow they had, but was still utterly scared, worried for her husband’s absence.

Gender is, according to Gerson, an important perspective through which to examine Moodie’s accounts of the Native people. As she explains it, “women receive her affection, admiration and respect”, while Native men are “disadvantaged by cultural differences and misunderstandings” (12) in her narrative. This is because Moodie identifies herself easily with the women, based on her “own gender-based fears and concerns, arising in part from their shared maternal perspective” (12).

Finally, it is worth noting that, as the narration progresses and Moodie’s persona evolves, a subversion of roles can be seen: Moodie becomes a provider for her family, by writing and painting to earn money. Gerson says that *Roughing It in the Bush* can be read “as a narrative of female self-empowerment” (13). Matthews suggests that, despite of all her open complaints about the situation, it was Moodie’s will, and her ability to resist and adapt, what kept the family alive: “it was inevitably Susanna’s psychological strength, often fuelled by her anger at the reality of an emigrant’s life in the backwoods, which ensured her family’s survival” (129).

4.2. Nationality

All through *Roughing It in the Bush*, Moodie makes it clear that she never wanted to emigrate to Canada in the first place, and that she would gladly go back to England: “Home! Oh, that I could return, if only to die at home!” (43). She finds it difficult to regard Canada as her home, even if she knows that her chances of going back are slim:

Keenly, for the first time, I felt that I was a stranger in a strange land; my heart yearned intensely for my absent home. Home! the word had ceased to belong to my *present* – it was doomed to live forever in the *past*; for what emigrant ever regarded the country of his exile as his *home*? To the land he has left, that name belongs for ever, and in no instance does he bestow it upon another. [...] to prove that the heart acknowledges no other home than the land of its birth. (22)

By defining home as the country of her birth, Moodie was stating her refusal to accept Canada as a home for her: she would never consider herself as Canadian, but rather a displaced English. This, however, does not deter her from praising Canada, and she does this praise by means of her reflections on nature and landscape. As Dorland puts it, “[...] the depopulated Canadian landscape was for Moodie, an instance of sublimity” (150). He goes further, to explain how, for Moodie, the problem in Canada was not in the country, but in the people: “Moodie’s vision offers an unvexed natural landscape, but a vexed social landscape” (151). In praising the landscape, Moodie sees Canada as a land with great potential, or, in MacDonald’s words, “Mrs. Moodie chauvinistically prophesies that only a great nation could rise from such a great landscape” (22).

In regarding herself as a displaced British, she addresses other “British mothers of Canadian sons!”, exhorting them to “Teach them to love Canada – to look upon her as the first, the happiest, the most independent country in the world!” (17); and still, when referring to Katie, her first daughter who was not born in Canada, she again laments for her lost home:

Was she not purely British? Did not her soft blue eyes, and sunny curls, and bright rosy cheeks for ever remind me of her Saxon origin, and bring before me dear forms and faces I could never hope to behold again? (84)

Yet, she herself sees that is not fair to establish comparisons between the two countries, as “you cannot exalt the one at the expense of the other without committing an act of treason against both” (17).

Dorland highlights how “In Moodie, resentment becomes the basis of a vision of Canadian nationalism” (149). He refers to how she urges Canadians, addressing them directly:

Canadians! – as long as you remain true to yourselves and her, what foreign invader could ever dare to plant a hostile flag upon that rock-defended height, or set his foot upon a fortress rendered impregnable by the hand of Nature? United in friendship, loyalty, and love, what wonders may you not achieve? [...] Never yield up these solid advantages to become an humble dependent on the great republic – wait patiently, loyally, lovingly, upon the illustrious parent from whom you sprang, [...] in the fulness of time she will proclaim your childhood past, and bid you stand up in your own strength, a free Canadian people! (17)

Dorland continues to remind that:

It is perhaps appropriate that Moodie’s book aroused resentment in Canada – as she put it, “a most unjust prejudice...because I dared give my opinion freely” – and would not be reprinted in Canada until 1871, or almost twenty years after its first edition. (149)

Returning to the parallelisms Moodie draws between nature and landscape and her situation, it is interesting to point out that by means of her detailed descriptions of the scenery, Moodie shows not only the great potential of the country, but also how impossible it is for her to find herself at “home” there. When first seeing the cabin where they were supposed to live, in their first settlement, she refers to it as “a cattle-shed, or a pigsty” (44), and this way “The figure of home in Canada as defective, as no more than a diminished version of human dwelling, is thus literalized in the Moodies’ hut” (Thomas 108): what was to be her “home” in Canada was not suitable to her standards, thus making the whole of Canada not suitable to her as a “home”.

Another important aspect to consider while pondering on Moodie’s sense of nationality is the distinction made between herself and other, non-English immigrants to Canada. Her views on the Irish immigrants will be discussed below, as these are more closely related to a sense of Otherness because of class and religion. Little importance is given in the book to French immigration, with some references here and there. An example of this is the charivari chapter, “a custom that the Canadians got from the French” (105), which Moodie does not seem to approve of very much.

However, the most important sense of Otherness regarding other immigrants is found in relation to the USA born white immigrants. A very relevant example of this is the episode in which, after first arriving to the shed that was to be their home in their first settlement, “a girl of seventeen or eighteen” (46) came to visit them. Moodie mistook her for someone looking for employment, refusing her, but the girl replied “I’d have you know that I’m as good a lady as yourself” (46). At seeing Moodie’s surprise, she went on to explain that her family and her were “[...] *genu-ine* Yankees, and think ourselves as good – yes, a great deal better, than you. I am a young lady” (46).

Moodie’s astonishment grew with this assertion. She excused herself, stating that “I am a stranger in the country, and my acquaintance with Canadian ladies and gentlemen is very small” (46). For Moodie, it was difficult to believe that someone who spoke in such a blunt way, with little manners, could be so bold as to call herself a lady. This can be seen in how she transcribes her utterances, using vulgar contractions such as in “that ‘ere decanter” (47) or “Cum, fill the bottle, and don’t be stingy” (48).

It is relevant to point out how the young girl used the word Yankee with pride. However, after having met her family and being abused by their customs in their peculiar sense of “borrowing”, Moodie employs the term “Yankee” if not in a derisive way, at least to refer to people who she deemed reprobate or rogue. This is clearly illustrated in the description she gives of Uncle Joe, the girl’s father:

No thin, weasel-faced Yankee was he, looking as if he had lived upon ‘cute ideas and speculations all his life; yet Yankee he was by birth, ay, and in mind, too; for a more knowing fellow at a bargain never crossed the lakes to abuse British institutions and locate himself comfortably among the despised Britishers. (61-62)

The double-faced nature of her Yankee neighbours is further explained, as Moodie tells how “Uncle Joe’s father had been a New England loyalist” who had a “doubtful attachment to the British government” (62). Moodie puts in Uncle Joe’s words that ““he thought he could not do better than turn loyal, and get one [farm] here for nothing. He did not care a cent, not he, for the King of England”” (62).

This way Moodie exposes how Yankee immigrants to Canada emigrated there to get grants of land from the British government in exchange of staying loyal to the crown. However, she highlights how, if the first generation’s loyalty

was doubtful, the second generation of Yankees, born in the New World, cared even less for the British cause. This is explained with more detail in the last sketch of the book: “After the American Revolution, considerable numbers of loyalists in the United States voluntarily relinquished their homesteads and property, and came to Canada” (250-251).

Interestingly, Mr. Moodie does not seem to judge all Yankees the same way. In the chapter xiii, “The land-jobber”, which as stated above is presumable written by him, he stayed “at the tavern of our worthy Yankee friend, Mr. S----” (120-121). He tells about the taverner’s wife and daughter in an approving way:

Humble as the calling of a tavern-keeper may be considered in England, it is looked upon in the United States, where Mrs. S----- was ‘raised’, as extremely respectable; and I have never met with women, in any class of society elsewhere, who possessed more of the good-feeling and unobtrusive manners which should belong to ladies than in the family of this worthy tavern-keeper. (121)

It is in the final chapter, “Canadian Sketches”, where Moodie speaks about politics more overtly and explains the circumstances of the Local Government. She tells about how those loyalists were also called *tories*, even if they were certainly not as the *tories* in Britain. The atmosphere at the time was not calm, and as she explains, “Such a state of things could not last long”, which resulted “in actual rebellion” (252), which her own husband was called to suppress.

This rebellion is alluded to often in the book: “While my husband was absent on the frontier during the rebellion” (55), “when my dear husband was away from me during the rebellion” (93), however, not much importance is given in the narration to the political implications of it, and the rebellion is perceived as something that created in her just another inconvenience, that of not having her husband by her side:

The year of the Canadian rebellion came, and brought with it sorrow into many a bush dwelling. Old Jenny and I were left alone with the little children, in the depths of the dark forest, to help ourselves in the best way we could. (226)

All this serves to reflect how Moodie’s sentiment of nationality stayed with Britain. In explaining how her husband attended the rebellion, even if he was ill when the letter calling for him arrived, she highlights the sense of duty they felt towards their country. However, it could be argued that the sentiment of British

nationality in Moodie was not prompted by any reflection made on politics, but rather her feeling of nostalgia for the land of her birth and for the loss of the class system that, much to her dismay, was no longer sustained in the New World.

4.3. Class and ethnicity

Moodie's sense of Otherness regarding both class and ethnicity are clear through her work. Both aspects are to be studied together, since, as Gerson puts it:

It is important to recognize the degree to which ideology of class overrides racial difference in Moodie's writing, as in her first reference to Native peoples in *Roughing It in the Bush*, where she constructs an image of the Noble Savage specifically to critique European culture. [She is] Distressed by the rowdiness of Irish and Scottish steerage passengers finally released at the quarantine section at Grosse Ile, [...]. (12)

The moment Gerson refers to is in the first sketch of *Roughing It in the Bush*. Thus, Moodie's disgust for the lower classes of white people is apparent from the beginning of the book, as she refers to them as "The vicious, uneducated barbarians who form the surplus of over-populous European counties, [who] are far behind the wild man in delicacy of feeling or natural courtesy" (13). She goes further on, to say that they were "filthy beings who were sullyng the purity of the air and water with contaminating sights and sounds" (14). Dorland finds it interesting to point out that "the fact that the same shores produce a radically different cultural response" promote her feeling of resentment, "in which cultural and class differences are fused into the landscape" (148).

These statements in the first chapter of the book already set the mood for the tone Moodie uses through the rest of the text: she complains about other people's behaviour, making it clear that she is superior to them. This can be seen as somewhat striking, as she comes across as someone extremely proud of her higher class, but who has nonetheless been forced to emigrate out of England for economic reasons, just as the lower-class immigrants that shared her voyage in the ship.

Moodie seems surprised to see that "The sight of the Canadian shores had changed [the steerage passengers] into persons of great consequence" (18). She is amused that they "exhibited most disgusting traits of self-importance" (18),

making it clear that she owns a birth right to feel that same self-importance, as she tells how “[...] the captain collected all the ship’s flags for our accommodation, of which we formed a tolerably comfortable bed; [...]” (26) as if it were the least that could be done for them.

This episode helps understand one of the main causes of her suffering in the bush: the difficulties she goes through are not inherent to the land, but to her class. She is not prepared to work for herself. This is evident as she talks with disdain of “Girls, who were scarcely able to wash a floor decently, talked of service with contempt, unless tempted to change their resolution by the offer of twelve dollars a month” (18), but she is unable to do basic work for herself, as she explains later on, when her maid is away for a week: “Some small baby-articles were needed to be washed, and after making a great preparation, I determined to try my unskilled hand upon the operation. The fact is, I knew nothing about the task I had imposed upon myself” (68).

It is laudable that she talks about her failures without any sense of shame, but that is, after all, the purpose of her book: to show how life in the woods is unsuitable for people of higher upbringing. Aside for washing clothes, she freely explains how wrong her first attempt at making bread went, as well as her first trial at milking -and how she was scared of cows.

The reason for showing her failures in such a frank way is that it gives plenty of room to show her improvement. Portraying herself as someone unable to do menial tasks, she leaves space to show her evolution while living in the bush, how she endured the difficulties and was able to overcome them by learning to do things she had never dreamt of doing. As Thomas summarises it, “Over time, however, she develops a range of useful skills” (112). If she talks of failures openly, she also celebrates her own successes candidly: “my vegetables did great credit to my skill and care” (85).

The clear distinction Moodie makes between the poor and the gentry is repeated on many occasions. Relevantly, both the beginning and the ending reflect this: “To the poor, industrious working man [immigration to Canada] presents many advantages; to the poor gentleman, *none!*” (247), as well as “What the backwoods of Canada are to the industrious and ever-to-be-honoured sons

of honest poverty, and what they are to the refined and accomplished gentleman, these simple sketches will endeavour to portray” (viii). It seems somewhat ironical, however, how she identifies herself with the “accomplished gentleman”, yet, at the beginning of her ordeal, she cannot wash, milk, nor bake bread.

The prejudices Moodie explores are not, however, limited to her feeling of superiority regarding class. Her first Scottish maid Bell, for example, has a clear prejudice towards John Monaghan, the Irish boy that came into Moodie’s cabin for shelter and whom they hired as a help. Bell’s prejudices persist even after he repeatedly states that he too is a protestant. “But mistress Bell thought fit to rebel” (75), disobeying Moodie’s command and repeatedly refusing to give food to a “papist”. This anecdote serves to show how rebellious lower classes were, in Moodie’s eyes, once they got to the New World. Bell does not doubt about what to do next: she leaves the morning following to Monaghan’s appearance, proving that there was no lack of job opportunities for her. Soon, Moodie hires another Scottish maid, who is also named Bell, proving that, as much as they are “roughing it in the bush”, there is no short supply of maids.

Aside from Moodie’s representation of other, non-English immigrants, her sense of otherness is surprisingly of a lower magnitude when dealing with Natives. A Gerson puts it, “To a gentlewoman like Moodie, Indians, as ‘Nature’s gentlemen’, can be perceived as less Other than the lower classes of Great Britain (especially the Irish)” (12). She identifies with them more as equals than with her own white neighbours. However, Gerson explains that there is a difference between the narration Moodie does of Native men opposed to that she does of Native women. Moodie sees herself reflected in the Native women’s preoccupations, principally in those dealing with their role as mothers and caretakers, probably due to “the uncertain position of colonial women within normative patriarchal power relations” (10).

Regarding, again, American immigrants to Canada, it is of relevance to point out how little reference is made to black people in *Roughing It in the Bush*. A mention to “a black man, named Mollineux” (92), for example, references how the Moodies did encounter black people and did business with them, like buying cattle from them, which may hint that Moodie saw in them less Otherness than

the people from the USA did, and, moreover, she saw them as less other to her than the Yankees.

4.1. Mental health

A fourth aspect to consider when analysing Moodie's representation of herself is that of mental health. This aspect is addressed in quite a direct way in one of her sketches, more specifically in the tenth chapter, where she deals with "Brian, the still-hunter" (86). She refers to him as a "harmless maniac", after exposing, by ways of the information she got from Layton, whom she describes as "a perfect reprobate" (87), the details of Brian's attempts to commit suicide. This chapter shows perfectly how Moodie saw herself compared with other people.

Brian is, as Matthews puts it, "an explicit example of the madness" (175); it could be said, as Helen Buss states, that he "represents the terror of being 'bushed'" (91). This shows how Moodie could feel in herself the fear of ending up like Brian if she stayed long enough in the uncomfortable harsh conditions she was living in in the bush, a very plausible possibility, since she was, as Párraga phrases it, "haunted by a debilitating melancholy" (325).

However, it is not only in her fear of ending up like Brian that Moodie sees herself similar to him. As she herself explains through that sketch, Brian had a good nature, and proved not only amiable to the Moodies, but also a helpful neighbour, who offered Moodie milk for the baby out of fondness of her. It is interesting to see how Moodie identified herself more as an equal with someone whose mental health was not good, instead of with any other of the people who lived in the neighbourhood of their first settlement. Their relationship was so good that Moodie stated that "We parted with the hunter as with an old friend" (97). Of course, all those other neighbours were constantly trying to take advantage of her, and they were also mostly natives to the land, so she saw in them people with no manners at all, absolutely different from her.

Interestingly, in dealing with those feelings of otherness, Brian himself explored the idea of how different people can be from each other, by means of an anecdote he told Moodie, about the time he guided a botanist through the bush.

Brian was amazed of the fact that the botanist did not seem interested in the beauty of the diverse flowers to be found in the bush, but rather in “lichens” or “specimens” (96).

Another character that is described as odd or peculiar is Tom Wilson, who does not seem to have any mental health problems, but whose ability to think in an expected way is put into doubt. In chapter four, when explaining the circumstances of their decision to emigrate, Moodie goes into a lengthy description of Wilson, through a series of anecdotes (30). Her intention is to portray him as an absurd person who makes poor decisions, and yet it is him the first one to point out to the Moodies that emigrating might not be as great an idea in their case. He prophesies the outcome of their adventure farming in the bush:

‘You go with the intention of clearing land, and working for yourself, and doing a great deal. I have tried that before in New South Wales, and I know that it won’t answer. Gentlemen can’t work like labourers, and if they could, they won’t: it is not in them, and that you will find out. You expect, by going to Canada, to make your fortune, or at least secure a comfortable independence. I anticipate no such results; yet I mean to go, [...] as I have neither wife nor child to involve in my failure, I think, without much self-flattery, that my prospects are better than yours.’ (34)

but they still decide to emigrate, instead of taking his advice. This episode could be read as a critique to her husband: after all, Wilson, someone whose intelligence has been put into doubt, one who “was the very prose of prose, a man in a mist” (30), proves out to be, in this case, cleverer than the Moodies.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Considering all of the topics discussed in this end of degree paper, a first important conclusion is that *Roughing It in the Bush* comprises an interesting example of pioneer memoirs. By combining different stylistic elements, Moodie managed to produce a literary piece that stands out in its genre.

As it has been discussed, this blended work helps to bring forward Moodie's self-identity, and to understand how the author saw herself, by analysing how she chose to portray herself. This way, her narration can be seen as contradictory at some points. The first impression readers get of Moodie is that of a proud woman who complains about the difficulties she went through. Due to the fragmentariness of her writing and the heterogeneity of her style, Moodie can be seen as a moody gentlewoman who is unable to adapt to new realities.

However, after analysing *Roughing It in the Bush* under different perspectives, a more complex Moodie is found. By reading it while keeping gender and family into account, it can be seen how despite of the social conventions of the time, she spoke her mind as freely as she could, reaching to a subtle but forthright criticism to her husband for having decided to emigrate. However, she did not go as far as to criticise the society that left her so devoid of choice for being a woman.

In regard to nationality, Moodie made it clear that she saw herself as a displaced Englishwoman, and never as a Canadian. Her lengthy descriptions of the beauty of the landscape point to a somewhat confusing appreciation of the possibilities of the land in the future, but she never truly abandons her sense of betrayal, as she makes it clear she believed their prospects there would be much better than what they turned up to be when they arrived.

With respect to class, Moodie portrays herself as a proud gentlewoman, clearly superior to those who had to work. However, it is here where most of the evolution can be seen in her character. She moves from disdainning the workers and doubting their abilities, to humbleness at trying (without success) to do those tasks others used to do for her before. Then, she is proud of her own process of learning and her little successes in cooking and growing vegetables, among

others. Still, the division between her and the members of other classes is not forgotten through the book.

That feeling of otherness Moodie exemplified in relation to class can similarly be identified in relation to religion and ethnicity. In the way she portrays characters of different religions, she makes it clear that hers, Protestantism, is the valid one, its followers being much more civilised and educated than Catholics, for example. Regarding ethnicity, Moodie proves to have a modern mindset that allows her to see what makes her equal to the Natives, which is surprising considering how unfairly other settlers treated them in that time.

In researching and writing for this end of degree paper, Moodie's personality has come to light, proving that an author's identity shows through the choices made in the written pieces. In *Roughing It in the Bush*, Moodie shows herself as a character who is able to evolve from a passive lady who complained about the circumstances in which she found herself to a strong woman capable of finding her own resources to sustain herself and her family.

All things considered, the book comprises a great testimonial not only about emigration and life in the backwoods of Canada, but also of an era. With its unique and mixed style, *Roughing It in the Bush* will forever keep the memory of Susanna Moodie's feelings and recollections, and, through them, her truest identity.

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