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## **Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush*: A Female Contribution to the Creation of an Imagined Canadian Community**

### **Abstract**

Identities are increasingly perceived as constituted through representation, to be understood as a "coming-to-terms-with our 'routes'" (Hall). Hence not only should the routes be retaken by successive generations, but it is also imperative to stay attentive to the discursive conditionality of their production and reception. Therefore Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* is shown to reveal the regularities of the nineteenth-century colonial era: a woman writer not only struggling with the traditional masculine literary forms, but also discursively justifying its anomalous existence for which she is marginalized, yet also a woman writer very much implicated in the discourses of imperialism. It is working within those discourses that Moodie is able to progress from an exiled English lady to a Canadian settler, and conceive of Canada as "home." Hence, once it was brought into cultural circulation *Roughing It in the Bush* began creating an imagined Canadian community.

### **Résumé**

Les identités sont de plus en plus perçues comme constituées par la représentation construite en tant que « coming-to-terms-with our 'routes' » (Hall), autrement dit comme un processus de découverte de « racines » perdues et comme la construction d'une forme nouvelle et fluide liée à nos relations sociales dans « le trajet » de notre vie. Ces trajets ne devraient pas seulement être refaits par les générations successives, mais il est aussi important de tenir compte de la conditionnalité discursive de leur production et réception. Donc, *Roughing It in the Bush* de Susanna Moodie révèle les régularités de l'ère coloniale du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle : une écrivaine ne se bat pas seulement avec les formes littéraires masculines traditionnelles, qui justifient discursivement leur existence anormale pour laquelle l'écrivaine est marginalisée, mais, en même temps, elle est très impliquée dans le discours d'impérialisme. Dans ce contexte, Moodie est en mesure d'avancer d'une dame anglaise exilée à un colon canadien et de faire du Canada un espace du « chez-soi ». Donc, dès son entrée dans la circulation culturelle, *Roughing It in the Bush* commence à créer une communauté canadienne imaginée.

... before a woman begins to write, she must take into account the 'stories' which have been constructed around women in her society.

Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference*

## A woman writer and the constraints in the production of her text

As Jennifer Chambers has suggested, in the present age of rising nationalisms which seem to be a consequence of new alliances, in Canada, as well as elsewhere, there are “attempts to enhance nation-building” (Chambers, 3), and within those, increased efforts to develop national literature. It is within these projects that we need to reconnect with our nation's early works of literature, since, as Stuart Hall has aptly formulated it “identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture” in the process of “a coming-to-terms-with our ‘routes’” (Hall, 4).

Being English-Canadian means rooting oneself in the colonial past (Chambers, 14). Therefore, travelling down the “routes” formulated by the literary texts of the period, such as Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*, not only creates but also helps us come to terms with the hi/story of us.

Susanna Moodie was born in 1803 at Bungay, England, into the literary family of Thomas Strickland and Elizabeth Homer. Like her older sister Catherine Parr Traill, Susanna Moodie began her career early, being a published novelist already at the age of nineteen. In 1831 she married John Dunbar Moodie, a retired army officer of the Orkneys, and emigrated to Canada with him the following year, settling near Cobourg in Upper Canada. *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) is her account of her journey to Canada and the first seven years of settlement and life in the Canadian bush.

Taking into account the accepted context of women's writing in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it is not surprising that *Roughing It in the Bush* 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. Hence, even its form betrays the difficulties of writing as a woman at that time: few forms available,<sup>1</sup> and even those available, such as those on the cusp of which Moodie's text is positioned, were alien forms which limited manoeuvring space for a women

1) The novel played an important role in 19<sup>th</sup> century nation-building, since the simultaneous consummation of fiction served to create an imaginary community (Anderson, 35). At that time the novel was identified with realism, which was considered new, serious art, or great literature, as the realist novel, often identified with the *Bildungsroman*, because “the organic development of the hero toward maturation and social integration reproduces in miniature the movement of ... literature towards its maturity, and this literature in turn, is to inspire the unification of the ... nation” (McWilliams, 6) achieved a high development in the works of master novelists such as Dickens, Eliot and Hardy, who form “a clearly identifiable sequence of development and influence in the *Bildungsroman* in English” as their preoccupation is “most compatible with the *Bildungsroman's* preoccupation with middle class progress, aspirations and frustrations” (Jerome H. Buckley in McWilliams, 12). The genre was placed in sharp opposition, in literary value and cultural importance, to the romance novel as well as different types of life writing, genres which, as opposed to the *Bildungsroman*, which was associated predominantly with male writers, became increasingly associated with women. Hence women writers were effectively silenced in the matter of national culture and the formulation of national identity.



travel writer, a transgressive creature *per se*, since Victorian mythology was able to conceive of a woman only as “confined to the home and the private sphere, chaperoned when outside, swaddled in clothes which restricted [her] movements and had little or not economic or political choice about [her] life” (Vicinus in Mills, 27). The stereotype found its example par excellence in Coventry Patmore’s narrative poem “Angel in the House” and Honoria, who displayed the virtues of “modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, civility, compliancy, reticence, chastity, affability, politeness” (Gilbert and Gubar, 23). She was a homemaker and a mother. Importantly, she was a woman without a story.

Hence a woman travel writer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is a singular anomaly: not only did she venture into the outside world, but she has stories to tell, thus indulging “an unwomanly preoccupation with the self” (Worley in Mills, 71). While, it is today generally accepted that the self cannot be faithfully transcribed into the text which is hence a “structure of discursive factors or pressures” (Mills, 37), a certain anxiety can be detected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century women’s narratives “in their compulsion to justify to the reader both the autobiographical elements of their book and the journey itself, an anxiety not shared by ... male travellers” (Worley in Mills, 71). Hence the texts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial women writers are as much a result of individual efforts and aspirations as they are a result of the conventions of the genres, and the Victorian mythologization of history.

Thus, analysis of Moodie’s *Roughing It in the Bush* reveals not only Susanna Moodie and her seven years as a wife on a bush farm, but also the epistemological strategies employed as dictated by the dominant modes of representation or the “regularities of discourse” (Mills, 73) on Victorian women and on Canada. These regularities are revealed in the instance of the narrator, the narrative structure and in the types of events (Mills, 73-94) employed.

Travel accounts essentially employ two types of narrator, as Mary Louise Pratt has shown in her study *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*: the Linnean emissary, a man of science, the one who observes and documents geography, flora and fauna, and the sentimental hero who writes of himself as of a protagonist of “an epic series of trials, challenges, and encounters with the unpredictable” (Pratt, 75). The first type tends to efface himself and “what is narrated is a sequence of sights or settings. Visual details are interspersed with technical and classificatory information” (Pratt, 59), and are usually associated with the panoramic gaze. The information given is “relevant (has value) in so far as it attaches to goals and systems of knowledge institutionalized outside the text” (Pratt, 77). The sentimental narrator, on the other hand, “explicitly anchors what is being expressed in the sensory experience, judgement, agency or desires of the human subjects. Authority lies in the authenticity of somebody’s felt experience” (Pratt, 76). Since women were within the Victorian mythology associated with the private sphere, it is hardly surprising that their travel writing employs the sentimental narrator. Or as Pratt clearly states:

If, as I suggested earlier, the landscanning, self-effacing producer of information is associated with the panoptic apparatuses of the bureaucratic state, then this sentimental, experiential subject inhabits that self-defined ‘other’ sector of the bourgeois world, the private sphere – home of desire, sex, spirituality, and the Individual. (Pratt, 78)

Accordingly, in *Roughing It in the Bush* the readers follow the trials of the young wife who landed in Canada after an exhausting nine-week voyage across the Atlantic, and through a number of settlements, disadvantages of the land grant system, partnership problems, failed boat venture, houses afire and freezing winters until they emerge from their trials victorious and hence deserving of a comfortable life in Belleville. It is the language of emotions – of enthusiasm, disgust, sympathy, consolation, hopes and gratitude – that “assigns value to events” (Pratt, 77).

While depicting Canada in line with the regularities of established discourse on the country, Moodie is also formulating her narrating self in line with the dominant discourses on Victorian women. She is very delicate: when the party landed on the sun-burned rocks of Grosse Isle she “could scarcely place [her] foot upon them. How the people without shoes bore it,” she could not imagine (Moodie, 29). She shrinks from the rudeness of the lower orders: “I shrank, with feelings almost akin to fear, from the hard-featured, sun-burnt harpies, as they elbowed rudely past me” (Moodie, 29). She is distressed when she has to tie up her bonnet “without the assistance of a glass” (Moodie, 128). She paints wild flowers (Moodie, 181). Not only can she not milk a cow, but she is utterly afraid of cows (Moodie, 183). She is afraid to stay alone at night, and stays up sleepless when her husband is deterred in the woods on cattle business (Moodie, 184-185).

Even though she eventually masters the art of milking cows and paddling a canoe, and bravely saves her children and house furniture from being burnt in a fire, she confines herself to her socially defined female role. This is most evident when she claims that her decision to emigrate was the result of her duty to her husband and children “performed at the expense of personal enjoyment, and at the sacrifice of all those local attachments which stamp the scenes in which our childhood grew” (Moodie, 525-526), and in *Roughing It in the Bush*, blaming the choice of emigration to Canada on the influence of lying propaganda, all of which stands in sharp contrast to documentary evidence – her letters to her friend James Bird which reveal careful reasoning and the subsequent informed decision not mentioned in her text.<sup>2</sup> Therein she is constructed as imprudent female, more ignorant and more credulous than Moodie actually was.

On the level of the narrative structure *Roughing It in the Bush* displays characteristics of adventure narrative and travel writing. However, as Moodie's writing does not share the original intent of the genres, or the types of events employed in similar discourse by her male counter-

2) In her letters to her friend James Bird wherein she admits that while she loves her husband, she has mixed feeling about emigrating to Canada. Namely, on October 19, 1830 she wrote the following letter:

In spite of the cold I am sure I should be happy with Dunbar anywhere if beneath the burning sun of Africa or building a nest among the eagles of the Storm encircled Orkneys. This is my Hero's native isle. Feelings which cling round the hearts of those who have been reared amid scenes of barren grandeur. The prospect of settling in that remote region instead Of frightening me called forth a burst of song commencing with O yes I will go to thy own rocky isle (Glickman in Moodie, 540).

Three months later, however, Susanna Moodie broke off the engagement writing to Bird: “I will neither marry a soldier nor leave my country for ever. On April 4, 1832 she married Dunbar Moodie and immediately started planning emigration to Canada (ibid.).



parts, her writing is increasingly revealed as double-voiced: Moodie is revealed writing from within the dominant literary tradition, and at the same time from the position of its other. Namely, the original intent of both, the adventure narrative and travel writing, is to celebrate the empire, and “imperialist discourse [is] ... a man-made discourse, expressing male fantasies, fears, anxieties” (Stott in Mills, 77). In the process they traditionally employ, among other things, the tropes of cannibalism and bloody atrocities. However, Moodie is revealed exhibiting unease with those, and attempts to adapt them to fit her circumstances and experience. Specifically, writing from within the dominant literary tradition which advises women against addressing certain types of events, in her narrative, Moodie, unlike many of her male counterparts, avoids discussing sex, does not divulge expertise in botany or zoology, is never shown discovering unknown mountain ranges, rivers or the like, nor does she describe the country visited in terms of female sexualized body. Finally, she does not write about the ever present fear of sexual harassment (Mills, 81-82).

Hence Moodie refers to the flowers she recognised from the home garden in England: “the fillagree, with its narrow, dark glossy-green leaves; the privet, with its modest white blossoms and purple berries” (Moodie, 30), but she is not granted a professional knowledge of botany. She only likes to paint “pretty flowers,” while the botanist who paid Brian to take him into the backwoods discards those with laughter collecting those that look “more like mould than plants” and calls them “specimens” (Moodie, 190). Similarly, when it comes to the surgical terminology that Layton employed in his description of his actions taken to save Brian, and especially where they involved blood and gore, Moodie the narrator, claims that those are “not necessary to repeat” (Moodie, 177).

Moodie’s descriptions of the landscape encountered do not construct it in terms of female body. Instead of describing it in terms of desire and possession, Moodie chooses to describe it as beauty which comforts, as a place that stands in opposition to culture, a place of thaumaturgic value, a place which heals the wounds inflicted by civilisation: “The location was beautiful and I was greatly consoled by this circumstance. The aspect of Nature ever did, and I hope ever will continue, “To shoot marvellous strength into my heart”” (Moodie, 134-135).

Paradoxically, precisely because Moodie and her fellow female writers wrote in line with the conventions outlined above, their writing was not considered to have high literary value; it was discounted as merely popular cultural capital.

## Discourses of Imperialism: “Home” as an Alternating Signifier

The mere fact that female travel writers faced the difficulty of working within the dominant discourses of the time does not mean that their discourse is not implicated in colonial practices, since these women travelled within the colonial context. Here, too, the double-voiced nature of their discourse is revealed as they enforce the codes of representation of the other as constructed within the Victorian mythology, at the same time, they themselves remaining on the margins of the imperial project or even criticising it.

Moodie’s involvement in the discourses of colonialism is evident in her reiteration of the codes of national identity which is, following the above argument, the symbolic of the nation

– colonial, imperial and dominantly phallogentric, and in the processes of othering of the land travelled through and the people inhabiting the land.

Hence in “The Visit to Grosse Isle” Moodie’s narrator on a few occasions exhibits a tendency toward a panoramic scope, such as her first sighting of the Grosse Isle, a narrative technique of the type commonly employed by the narrator defined above as the “Linnean emissary” (Pratt) demonstrating dominance over the landscape travelled through. Additionally, Moodie’s narrator displays instances of the “improving eye” (Pratt): she describes the virgin land before her that imagining it populated by the industrious British in some future time:

The pure beauty of the Canadian water, the somber but august grandeur of the vast forest that hemmed us in on every side shut us from the rest of the world, soon cast a magic spell upon our spirits, and we began to feel charmed with the freedom and solitude around us. ... [we] raised imaginary houses and bridges on every picturesque spot which we floated past...” (Moodie, 279).

Finally, both, the land and the people of Canada are othered (Spivak) through a series of discursive conventions. Spivak defines othering as “various ways in which colonial discourse produced its subjects” (Ashcroft 1999: 171). In her reading of Colonial Office dispatches in India Spivak gives three examples of othering. The first is the process of “worlding” whereby an English captain riding across the Indian countryside can be seen “consolidating the self of Europe, by obliging the native to cathect the space of the Other on his home ground” (Spivak, 253). The second is an example of debasement whereby the indigenous population is described as “possessing all the brutality and purfity [sic] of the rudest times without the courage and all the depravity and treachery of the modern days without the knowledge or refinement” (Spivak, 254-255). The third is an example of the distinction between the “native states” and “our colonial governments” (Spivak, 255).

All of the above described practices are present in Moodie’s text. However, Moodie’s participation in the process of worlding is somewhat different than that of her male colleagues. Her sex generally does disqualify her from being a namer of the geographical features of the land travelled through, as is expected. However, there are two instances of Moodie participating in spatial history through naming. It is not the naming of consequence for the country’s official cartography, instead it remains within the private sphere of the narrator, but it is indicative of the imperial impulse behind it. Thus during her trip to the Stony Lake Moodie attached a descriptive name<sup>3</sup> to an island “‘Oak Hill,’ from the abundance of oak-trees which clothed its steep sides” (Moodie, 339). Next, in her description of the surroundings of her backwoods farm Moodie and her family are so exhilarated that they “felt as if we were the first discoverers of every beautiful flower and stately tree that attracted our attention, we gave names to fantastic rocks and fairy isles ...” (Moodie, 279).

Furthermore, since Moodie was already a published poet in Britain and, equally important, the wife of a British colonial official, in addition to worlding through naming referred to above,

3) In his study of landscape and history *The Road to Botany Bay*, Paul Carter lists five types of naming in the process of worlding: there are names that are descriptive, those that refer to distinctive qualities or incidents associated with a place, names that allude to the history of the voyage itself, those that are personal names, and names attributed as a result of misunderstanding (Carter, 2).



her very description of the land and its people, once put into cultural circulation, brought Canada to the world; from a cluttered space of the unknown continent it began to formulate a place. Initially for British readers only and, in time (after 1871) for the local readership as well.

The presentation of the colonial other in tropes of debasement, too, even though existent in but a few instances, reveals Moodie writing from within the discourses of imperialism. Specifically, she starts off presenting the native population as kind, laborious, and sincere, and then takes it all away by adding that these “are the finest traits in characters otherwise dark and unlovely.” Moreover, the tribes occupying the shores of the nearby lakes are “perhaps the least attractive of all these wild people, both with regard to their physical and mental endowments” (Moodie, 279). Additionally, in a number of instances she does not depict them as full individuals, but as composed of several parts of their body, yet another way of othering people: “The forehead is low and retreating ... the eyes looking towards the temples, keen, snake-like, and far apart; the nose long and flat, the nostrils very round; ... the mouth expressing ferocity and sullen determination; the teeth large, even, and dazzlingly white” (Moodie, 280).

Finally, she identifies the natives with children as she depicts them as being endlessly fascinated by a Japanese sword she has received as a gift, which they, misunderstanding Moodie’s explanation of its original source mistake for God, hence regarding it “with a sort of mysterious awe” (Moodie, 282). The idea of a colonial subject as a child can on the one hand, be traced back to Locke’s metaphor of a child as a *tabula rasa*, and on the other to Rousseau’s thesis of a child possessing understanding, curiosity and spontaneity which needs to be preserved, as in childhood we are closest to nature. Both of these views get successfully incorporated in the imperial discourse as they “justify the paternal actions of imperial formation” (Ashcroft 2001: 41). Therefore, in spite of Moodie’s extensive declarative efforts,<sup>4</sup> her representation of the native population betrays the workings of the regularities of discourse on the colonial subject within the Empire.

Finally, Moodie begins her narrative clearly separating the native state and the colonial government: it is evident where she positions herself as she flinches from the filth and grossness of earlier immigrants and yearns for “a good slice of English bread and butter” (Moodie, 25). The closing of the narrative, however, finds her making a transition from “they” to “we” in her discussion of Canada, when she identifies with “our Canadian winters” (481).<sup>5</sup>

In the worlding of Canadian space a move from transposition of British geographical characteristics onto a new environment to the appreciation of native space can be detected. However, it should be made clear that Moodie’s text, written within the colonial Canadian literary tradition does not develop local rhetoric for the description of the local content, which will prove to be the task of the subsequent generation of writers establishing a distinctive national

4) She writes that the family was frequently visited “by the dark strangers; and as my husband never allowed them to eat with the servants ... but brought them to his own table, they soon grew friendly and communicative” (280). When the Moodies were leaving the woods for Belville, the natives “silently held out their hands, while the squaws kissed me and the little ones with tearful eyes” (Moodie, 481).

5) For a detailed analysis of this progression from “they” to “we” in Moodie’s poetry see Elizabeth Thompson: “‘Roughing It in the Bush’: Patterns of Emigration and Settlement in Susanna Moodie’s Poetry,” *Canadian Poetry*, 40 (1997), 58-73.

literature. Still, Moodie's text exhibits inklings towards the move from the imperial to the local rubric in her descriptions of Canadian landscape and its people. Thus her first descriptions, such as the one of her first farm-house, focus on the characteristics of landscape which Britain and Canada share:

Our new habitation, though small, had a decided advantage over the one we were leaving. It stood on a gentle slope; and a narrow but lovely stream, full of pretty speckled trout, ran murmuring under the little window; the house also, was surrounded by fine fruit-trees (Moodie, 134).

This, however, is not Canadian landscape yet. The "gentle slope," the "lovely stream," and the "pretty trout" betray Moodie's attempt to apply a British rhetorical apparatus onto a distinctly different space which, naturally, resists the move making Moodie's description seem mildly grotesque. However, the description of her last home in the backwoods before the final move to Belleville reveals Canada that is home:

I loved the lonely lake, with its magnificent belt of dark pines sighing in the breeze; the cedar-swamp, the summer home of my dark Indian friends; my own little garden, with its rugged snake-fence which I had helped Jenny to place with my own hands ... where I had so often braved the tormenting mosquitoes, black-flies, and intense heat... (Moodie, 482-483).

The river crossed on the way to town displays strength and ferocity unknown in European landscape: "The road lay through the bush, and along the banks of the grand, rushing, foaming Otanabee river, the wildest and the most beautiful of the forest streams" (Moodie, 483). Moodie has come a long way from the "pretty stream."

Corresponding with the above the same development can be detected in Moodie's description of immigrants to Canada. She starts off with a description of young Canadians which is not only bleak, but also very disheartening as it negates any possibility of the country's future. However, the end of her narrative finds Moodie writing about the rising Canadian generation as "riches in this country" (Moodie, 487).

Still, even though Moodie now grants the country the possibility of a future, as a Victorian she can conceive of this future only within the British cultural tradition, and Christian religious heritage.<sup>6</sup> Even while praising Canada for the majestic beauty of its landscape, for its abundance of natural resources, its freedom, industry, accomplishments in arts, science, and architecture, all detailed in the 1871 Preface, Moodie interprets those as advances of the British race reclaiming the country from wilderness, ending her exposé with a vision of an even brighter future for the Canadians, provided they remain faithful to the mother country.

6) In her 1871 Preface Moodie *verbatim* attaches the title of the mother to Britain in an attempt to commend Canada of no longer being a child "sleeping in the arms of nature, dependent for her very existence on the fostering care of her illustrious mother." Rather, "she has outstepped infancy, and is in the full enjoyment of a strong and vigorous youth" (529).



## An Imagined Canadian Community

Since the discourse of the colonial period constructed Canada as the narrator's other, the two could not be psychologically united easily. Eric Kaufmann has aptly described this period of Canadian culture as the "nationalisation of nature" (Kaufmann, 680), which stresses the "advance of civilization against nature while retaining a social distance between narrator and the subject matter" (New in Kaufmann, 680), as opposed to the "naturalization of the nation" (Kaufmann, 680) which refers to "praising the uncivilized, primeval quality of untamed nature and stressing the regenerative effect upon civilization" (ibid., 668). Naturalization of the nation is identified with the nationalist periods in the history of a nation.

Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*, stands on the cusp between the two periods formulated above – especially if one considers her 1871 Preface, as her narrative progresses from that of a tragically exiled English lady who claims that she does not like Canada and fears that she never will (Moodie, 141), to that of a settler beginning to identify with her adopted country.

As such it inevitably "told the history" (Moodie, 527) of thousands of 19<sup>th</sup> century Canadians living in the backwoods of the country: struggling, helping each other, and emerging victorious to meet again at different ends of the country years later. This "story of us" written by Susanna Moodie began to create an imagined Canadian community. These sketches from *Roughing It in the Bush* were published individually in the period between 1829 and 1851 in various magazines, including *The Canadian Literary Magazine*, *The North American Review* and *The Literary Garland*. Published in book form they were reprinted in several editions already during Moodie's lifetime (Bennett and Brown, 93).

This simultaneous consummation of fiction was instrumental in the formulation of an imaginary community in the process of 19<sup>th</sup> century nation-building (Anderson, 35). Hence, Moodie's narrative depicting common experiences of immigrants, and, equally important, its, above mentioned, wide circulation in spite of all the difficulties associated with it before the establishment of the nation-wide postal service,<sup>7</sup> made a significant contribution to the process of the creation of an imagined Canadian community.

## Conclusion

It is through discourses – struggling with those competing, contradictory or oppressing ones – that we gain both individual as well as collective identity. However, writing as a 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial woman meant writing within a whole range of conflicting parameters. Still, recognizing all these difficulties, we should not forget that Moodie's descriptions of people and places come from a particular position which has been "constructed mainly by colonial discourses and hence from the demands of colonial power" (Mills, 88) of whom Moodie the narrator is

7) For details on the difficulties of literary production and reception before the establishment of the nation-wide postal service see Kathryn Carter's article "Neither Here nor There: Mary Gapper O'Brien Writes 'Home,' 1828-1838" in Chambers, Jennifer (ed.): *Diversity and Change in Early Canadian Women's Writing*, Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.

a representative. Her text is thus revealed reiterating the codes of national identity rooted in the symbolic of the culture, initially formulating Canada and its people as the narrator's other.

While this may be seen as a psychological obstacle to some future union of the narrator and the new land, the obstacle is overcome by the very progression of Moodie's narrative which, alternating between "nationalisation of nature" and "naturalisation of the nation" (Kaufmann), opens a possibility of Canada becoming a home, thus contributing to the formulation of the imagined national community, a contribution acknowledged only relatively recently when the literary forms traditionally available to women were recognized as nation-building as much as the *Buildungsroman*, traditionally a male territory.

Finally, recognizing that "a national literature is an essential element in the formation of national character" (Woodcock in Kaufmann, 681), we can understand how Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* stands as an important element in the formulation of an imagined Canadian community.

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