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The Follies Incident To Human Nature: Susanna Moodie's Life Story As Spiritual Autobiography In "rachel Wilde," "flora Lyndsay," "roughing It In The Bush" And "life In The Clearings"

Susan Yvonne Greenfield

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THE FOLLIES INCIDENT TO HUMAN NATURE:
SUSANNA MOODIE'S LIFE STORY AS SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN
"RACHEL WILDE," FLORA LYNSAY,
ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH AND LIFE IN THE CLEARINGS

by

Susan Y. Greenfield

Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Graduate Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario
December, 1989

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ABSTRACT

Most critics of Moodie's work have assumed that her response to emigrating remained a negative one. They generally seem to agree that the reactions she shows herself as experiencing in 1832-33, still hold valid for the woman she was when she published her autobiographical stories. Moreover, it is generally held that Moodie's portrayal of herself is naive.

This thesis suggests that it is actually interesting to see in Moodie a woman who viewed herself as flawed and who portrayed herself as such throughout her four exercises in life writing -- "Rachel Wilde" (1847-48), Flora Lyndsay (1854), Roughing It in the Bush (1852) and Life in the Clearings (1853). Drawing upon all four works, as well as upon some of her other writing, the thesis shows that these books may be read as a spiritual, autobiographical account.

Chapters I and II delineate the reasoning behind the view that Moodie's works may be read primarily as autobiography. The first chapter addresses the problem of whether "Rachel Wilde" and Flora Lyndsay -- both published as fiction -- can reasonably be read this way and, having

determined that they can, goes on to discuss the secular impetus behind life writing. Chapter II lays out the typical form and content of spiritual autobiography and shows that Moodie's works fit the pattern in many ways. Chapter III examines the early blessings bestowed upon the protagonist and shows that, despite these blessings, the protagonist suffers from several types of error which must be overcome. Chapter IV adds weight to the argument by suggesting that the emigrant guidebooks of Moodie's sister, Catherine Traill, bolster the reasoning of Chapter III. Chapter V suggests that in Volume II of Roughing It in the Bush Moodie shows herself to have overcome her errors, while the final chapter suggests that Life in the Clearings shows Moodie preaching the "gospel" to which she has been converted through her own trials. Finally, the afterword addresses the rather narrow focus through which criticism has viewed Moodie's writing and suggests that, in light of the argument of the thesis, this focus may be inadequate.

DEDICATION

This thesis is for many of the teachers I have been privileged to have over my years as a student of English literature. They have endowed my life with a richness and depth it would not otherwise have attained. They have given me a gift that has never failed me.

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Professors Jean-Louis Schaan, Jane Fulton, George Abonyi, Bill Bindman and David Zussman, in the Faculty of Administration at the University of Ottawa, provided me with continuous part-time work over the past two and a half years, thus enabling me to alleviate financial worries which might otherwise have made finishing the thesis impossible.

Finally, I am grateful to my family -- to my parents, Lavergne and Leita Greenfield, who provided moral and, sometimes, financial support, and to my sister, Nancy Greenfield, who typed every word. More than anyone else, I

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Through what a magnifying glass we view
The faults of others! -- with half shut eyes behold
The follies incident to human nature,
When pictured in ourselves.

Epigraph to Susanna Moodie's
Profession and Principle; or,
The Vicar's Tales

Where high moral excellence is represented as struggling
with the faults and follies common to humanity, sometimes
yielding to temptation, and reaping the bitter fruits, and
at other times successfully resisting the allurements of
vice, all our sympathies are engaged in the contest; it
becomes our own....

Life in the Clearings, 211

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Introduction

A considerable number of articles have been written on Susanna Moodie in the last several decades, especially in the last two. A perusal of these shows that many critics, while differing in some particulars, seem to have espoused one general attitude towards Moodie. The consensus appears to be that her initial response to emigration was largely a negative, defensive one and that it remained that way. That is, critics generally agree that the opinions she describes herself as holding and the reactions she portrays herself as experiencing in 1832-33 still hold valid for the person she was in 1852, when Roughing It in the Bush was published. Moreover, for these critics, Moodie's portrayal of herself is naive and to be taken at face value.

Though this viewpoint is seldom explicitly stated, it is very much held. In fact, it seems to be so rarely expressed for the precise reason that it is taken as given and, therefore, acts only as a kind of backdrop for other ideas which these critics put forward. In many, though not all, of the earlier articles, Moodie appears as intelligent and educated, but also as an aristocratic, rather pompous, unlikable and definitely static figure who is never truly open to the positive possibilities of life in the new world.

Since a negative attitude is what she portrays -- presumably unwittingly -- in herself, critics usually assume that this attitude embodies the way she was.

She is variously described, for instance, as "suffering from a strong sense of social superiority" (McCourt 80) and as constantly undercutting the positive statements about emigration which she feels it her duty to make, with her true, heart-felt, ironic observations (R.D. MacDonald). For example, MacDonald sees Moodie's real response to class questions in Roughing It in the Bush to be a satire on "the vainglorious expectations of the working class" (23). He also says that, throughout the book, "romantic anticipation and disenchantment [continually]...alternate." Ultimately, he claims, anticipation is entirely deadened by experience and Moodie retreats into "nostalgia for the idyllic British countryside" (23). He goes through several chapters of the book and explains how each is to be read as a sign of foreboding and doom for all the Moodies' expectations. He admits that the ending of the book, with its positive aspects, seems contradictory, but chooses to ignore the direction in which that observation might lead him.

Janet Giltrow, writing on Roughing It in the Bush as a travel narrative, sees Moodie as always remaining firmly anchored in England and rejecting her new life in Canada. The written work, describing the new milieu in detached and usually unflattering ways and intended for consumption by audiences at "home," simulates "face-to-face connections

that have been...ruptured" and thereby ensures that the writer does not have to assimilate into the new community (132); effectively, the writing allows her to remain a part of the old. Giltrow says that even though "some travel narrators never get home again [and she numbers Moodie among these]...the idea of getting home" determines their attitudes. This "circularity," she continues, makes travel literature different from quest literature, for with travel literature "its goal is its point of departure" (132).

T. D. MacLulich contends that Moodie sees herself as alone in the world. Her book, Roughing It in the Bush, is not directed towards the building up of community. While he accepts that Catharine Parr Traill may have found freedom and a sense of belonging in Canada, MacLulich says that, for Moodie, the journey is to a "prison house," a phrase he takes literally (124). While Traill's story is one of success, Moodie experienced only failure (125-26).

David Stouck writes that Roughing It in the Bush is really opposed to "our learned cultural expectations" since it "denies the myths of renaissance and individual power in a new land" (463-64). Following the same basic line of argument as R. D. MacDonald, Stouck says that Mrs. Moodie has a public voice with which "she attempts to affirm the myths of pioneer experience and lauds Canada as the land of future promise." However, "with her private voice, she inadvertently expresses negative, inadmissible feelings which invalidate the patriotic rhetoric" (464). He sees her

4

portrayal of herself in Roughing It in the Bush as the dramatization of a "martyr figure" (467).

According to Lloyd M. Scott, while the genteel settlers in Upper Canada, among whom he numbers the Moodies, laud poverty and work, they really, in their hearts, reject these qualities and are merely rationalizing. They are poor and have to work, he says and so espouse virtues their class in England would normally reject (58-59).

Clara Thomas, a critic who has studied Moodie rather extensively, does see her strong points but also claims that her portrayal of herself is "self-pitying, sentimental [and] snobbish" ("Heroism, Feminism and Humanism: Anna Jameson to Margaret Laurence" 25). She, too, assumes that the presentation of self is naive and unwitting and should be taken at face value.

Audrey Morris states explicitly that Moodie was a naive writer. Moodie's "own story," she says, "is revealed as an amazing tragicomedy, more amusing and more preposterous than the subjects of her caricatures. Obviously Susanna did not intend this," Morris states flatly, "but she lacked the subtlety to hide the reality" (xiv).

Finally, Clara Thomas, again, writing on Moodie in Mary Innis' The Clear Spirit, sees Moodie's ultimate purpose in writing as a negative one. While her sister, Catharine, may have genuinely wanted to "give information regarding the domestic economy of a settler's life" and, thereby,

facilitate emigration, Moodie's book, Thomas says, was written to prevent settlers from coming (50).

As the reader can see, the general import of these articles is that Moodie did not like Canada, especially from a socio-cultural point of view, did not fit in, did not want to fit in, and made scant apology for her attitude. Moreover, the critics do not usually seem to consider the time span between the issuing of Roughing It in the Bush and the experiences it records, but talk of Moodie as if the person of 1832 were the person writing. As mentioned above, a few commentators -- Carl Ballstadt, Michael A. Peterman, John Moss, G. Noonan and, in at least one instance, Clara Thomas -- intimate, more than argue, that this may not necessarily have been the case. Susanna Moodie may not have been a static character, nor is it impossible that she was aware of the negative way she was making herself look to readers. Nevertheless, with the exception of Carl Ballstadt, these critics do not make their claims at length, and their tentative dissenting voices are loudly drowned out by the majority opinion.

Perhaps because of the largely unanimous nature of critical thought on the subject matter of Roughing It in the Bush, students of Moodie's work have sometimes turned their attention to genre, one area of examination which seems, so far, to have been less definitively staked out. Clara Thomas hazards the opinion that Roughing It in the Bush is "a bewildering, contradictory amalgam of personal moods and

literary modes -- sentimental, tragic, comic, didactic" ("Journeys to Freedom" 18). She also suggests that, at some level, the book is "a dismal elegy" (16). Carl Klinck, R.D. MacDonald and Janet Giltrow mention that Moodie's work relies to some degree on travel narratives for its form; this is especially the case with Giltrow, as is shown by excerpts from her article quoted above. Carl Klinck and Carl Ballstadt have also noted the affinity of Moodie's work with the popular English sketch. And Moodie herself claims that her book is, to at least some degree, a sort of emigrant guide book -- a rather strange sort, admittedly, with dissuasion rather than the offering of facilitating advice as its purported aim. Finally, many critics mention, at least in passing, that Moodie's work is autobiographical. Most recently, Michael A. Peterman has suggested at greater length in "Roughing It in the Bush as Autobiography" that there may be good reasons to look at Roughing It In the Bush in this light.

It is this last observation with which this thesis concerns itself. It suggests that Moodie's key life writings -- that is, "Rachel Wilde, Flora Lyndsay, Roughing It In the Bush and Life in the Clearings -- may profitably be read as autobiography. Much of the theoretical grounding for this assumption is presented in the first two chapters. There are many reasons for writing autobiography, both secular and religious, and both sets of reasons have relevance to Moodie. The first chapter presents the secular

context while the second concentrates on the religious aspects. These religious or spiritual aspects turn out to be the more interesting, and encompass ideas which form a basis for the following chapters. The thesis goes on to suggest, at some length, that Moodie's life stories may be read, not simply as developmental autobiography, but as a spiritual account. Moreover, looking at Moodie's work from this perspective also sheds light on the subject matter of the writing and at least suggests that, at one level, what she is doing in her work may not be as definitively understood as has previously been thought.

One problem which must be considered before pursuing such a line of reasoning is that, until recently, women were thought not to write genuine developmental autobiography. That is, it was thought that they did not write stories showing progression and change in their own characters but tended to confine themselves to simpler, surface level memoirs, reminiscences and anecdotes -- what autobiography scholars call "res gestae." It was thought that there was little purpose or artistic shape to their writings.

Linda H. Peterson, for example, makes this claim in her book on Victorian autobiography, altering her position only slightly in order to take into consideration the writing of Harriet Martineau. In her unpublished doctoral thesis, Helen Buss, too, notes this long-held point of view in her discussion of Canadian women writers in particular. Quoting Mary G. Mason, Buss suggests that "nowhere in women's

autobiography do we find the patterns established by the... prototypical male autobiographers" (3). Chief among these prototypes is Augustine, whose model is "a dramatic structure of conversion...where the self is presented as a stage for the battle of opposing forces and where a climactic victory for one force -- spirit defeating flesh -- completes the drama of the self" (3).

A corollary of this thinking is that male autobiographers produce life histories in which "others," though they may have some temporary effect for good or ill on the chief character's life, are not integral to his self development. They remain on the periphery and so the forward movement of the account is not side-tracked by the writer's involvement with them. Women, however, exist primarily through the medium of "others." The "real presences of women's autobiographies," Buss says, "much more fully demonstrate in their recorded works and deeds, in the qualities they represent, the image of selfhood that the autobiographer is exploring" (4).

The importance of this fact manifests itself primarily in style. Quoting Jan Zlotnik Schmidt, Buss observes that "the expression of fragmented nature by women autobiographers, a nature attempting to complete itself through the exploration of others" requires a less tight structure than traditional male autobiography (5). Socio-cultural factors cannot be ignored either. Often, women were not expected to learn and develop in the same way as

men and, therefore, there was no reason for them carefully to detail that development. Their accounts were allowed to be disjointed and unruly.

Susanna Moodie's work seems to fall somewhere between these two extremes. On the one hand, Buss's observations are enlightening to anyone considering Moodie's structure. The autobiographical works do seem to jump randomly from sketch to sketch. Also, as the thesis suggests, the "real presences" or "others" who show up in the works may be seen as the impetus for Moodie's development as well as the means of mirroring it. Finally, the social/spiritual turmoil in Moodie's life is difficult to plot out in black and white. It is not as clearly defined as in traditional spiritual autobiographies and there is not really a climactic victory of any sort, at least not one that occurs at a definable point in time. On the other hand, there is an underlying pattern in Moodie's works which accords fairly closely with the more traditionally male modes of viewing life.

I do not suggest that the books can be "nailed down," in D. H. Lawrence's terms, or made to conform exactly to the autobiographical schematic. They are not identical in form or content to Augustine's Confessions or Bunyan's Grace Abounding or to any of the other myriad seventeenth and eighteenth-century religious confessions which provide the genre of spiritual autobiography with its basic material and form. However, they do share many of the characteristics of these works, enough to make it worthwhile to attempt reading

them in this way in order to derive the insights that can be gained from undertaking such an exercise.

Another of the problems with such a reading is that Roughing It in the Bush -- almost the only one of Moodie's works ever read -- seems to be only one segment of a larger whole. Approaching it in isolation, as readers usually do, obscures its place in this larger autobiographical unit. A reading of "Rachel Wilde," Flora Lyndsay and, of course, Life in the Clearings, Moodie's other autobiographical stories, is necessary to give the complete picture. When read in order, with Roughing It in the Bush as the third book, these works can be seen as a thematically linked set. Though Moodie may not have written them, especially Life in the Clearings, as parts of one continuous autobiography or intended, necessarily, that her audience view them as such, together they constitute an account of her life which shows a continuous spiritual and social progression from childhood through to middle age.

To go through the four books while accepting this point of view and thereby to open him or herself to the suggestions this thesis makes, a reader must agree to see the central character of each work as a version of Susanna Moodie. However, because some of the characters are disguised -- albeit very thinly -- some readers may object to this leap. In order to address such reservations, the first chapter lays out several good reasons for agreeing that Rachel, Flora and the Moodie of the early parts of

Roughing It in the Bush are earlier versions of the Moodie who has progressed to the stage where she can look back on her life and produce a true, developmental autobiography out of her attempts to integrate and understand it. The chapter then goes on to suggest that even those areas of uncertainty in the books -- areas where Moodie might be fictionalizing events -- do not prevent us from reading the works as autobiography.

The developmental, spiritual autobiography must be a record of moral and emotional change. The four books with which the thesis primarily concerns itself do show that change take place. Many of Moodie's other works, as well as socio-historical commentary on the nineteenth century, have been called upon to substantiate this line of thought. The argument also relies fairly heavily on the best known books of Moodie's favorite sister, Catharine Parr Traill. It is suggested in the fourth chapter that Traill's The Backwoods of Canada and The Canadian Settler's Guide may be seen both as feeding Moodie's autobiographical work and as commenting upon it. Since the developmental autobiography must plot a process of change -- change which, in the case of spiritual autobiography, is from sin to repentance and grace -- and since Moodie's works show such change, it stands to reason that, when viewed from this perspective, much of what she wrote cannot be taken at face value. The person she portrays herself as being at various stages cannot be the person she still is as she writes.

Critics and students of literature, even in Moodie's own day and in such far-flung outposts as Canada, knew how the protagonist in a successful autobiography should be portrayed. He or she must be presented honestly, even baldly, without deliberate, softening camouflage or special pleading, even of an implicit nature. An article entitled "Autobiography" in the November 1840 issue of The Literary Garland (538-42) gives advice to such writers. The article's author is discussing the value of personal accounts produced by those who have fallen into some type of error and then deluded themselves about their courses of action:

But to have the origin of this hallucination placed vividly before our minds, to know its deleterious influence, to observe the total destruction of all generous impulses, all god-like qualities, and this, too, described by one who has openly felt the folly of the course pursued, and who, at the same time holds himself up as a warning to others is of exceeding interest, as well as incalculable benefit. (os 2, 540)

The writer of this piece asserts that no detached, third-party observer could do the moral work necessary as well as the autobiographer. His or her observations would be cold and lacking in force. They would make no impact on the reader. But, the writer continues,

in the narration of one who places his own heart open before us, and shows us the misery caused by wrong feeling or the anguish produced by the remembrances of vicious sentiments inculcated, will fully explain the reasonableness of his demands for attention, and benefit to be derived, as well as from his warning example, as from his counsel. (os 2, 540)

The epigraph preceding this article is a quotation from the British journal, The Expositor. It encapsulates what an autobiographer should attempt to offer his or her readers:

_____ a minute narrative of his sentiments and pursuits -- not with study and labour, -- not with affected frankness -- but with a genuine confession of his little foibles and peculiarities, and a good humoured and natural display of his own conduct and opinions. (os 2, 538)

While there is absolutely no basis for suggesting that Moodie, in any of her phases, exhibits the kind of depravity these commentators seem to be referring to, the critical observations they make are still valid with respect to her work. It is interesting to note the insistence, in all three excerpts, on the need for honesty and frankness in the "display of [one's] own conduct." What more honest offering up of herself could Moodie have made than by means

of an unbuffered, often uncommented-upon, dramatic portrayal of the person she had been but from whom she had at last, through change, achieved enough objective distance to see clearly.

Such a conclusion leads one to surmise that, in her portrayal of herself, Moodie was sometimes quite brave. She had the courage to show herself negatively, and knew that she did so. To say, as Audrey Morris does, that she lacked the subtlety to hide the reality, is to do her a disservice. Many critics have noted Moodie's dramatic tendencies. In a late letter she, herself, claims that her true talent always lay in writing drama (Letters 164). Also obvious and often noted is her ironic, even satiric viewpoint. Why, then, should she not have turned her satiric, dramatic vision on herself? Indeed, it is my suggestion that Moodie, in retrospect, "holds [herself] up as a warning to others," as The Literary Garland critic advises, but that this warning has little to do with emigrating in its own right and much to do with the writer's moral and social nature which was challenged by emigration.

Arrival at such conclusions goes a fair way towards clarifying something which may strike us as odd about Roughing It in the Bush -- the problem, in fact, which Audrey Morris tries to dismiss by accusing Moodie of want of talent. In many of the early sketches, Moodie comes off looking rather badly. The descriptions of people and places are often peevish and ill-humoured and the character

presented through dialogue and deeds is incompetent, groundlessly arrogant and rude to the point that readers begin to side with the "odious squatters." How can Moodie have let these portrayals slide by? It is unlikely that she can have been so smug as to have been totally oblivious to the way she often appears in Volume I. Even if she had been blind to the nature of her own self-characterization in early versions of the sketches, time, as many writers of literary criticism are aware, is a great awakener to one's own faux pas, for it allows for a degree of objectivity originally lacking. In subsequent editions of Roughing It in the Bush, then, could she not have softened the treatment? Even if she had lost the copyright did she, in 1871, have actively and enthusiastically to participate in putting out a Canadian edition with these early portrayals unchanged? Moreover, the original sketches were first published in The Literary Garland and The Victoria Magazine, publications aimed at Canadians. In these magazines, especially her own Victoria Magazine, which was specifically intended for the working class, could Moodie have been so obtuse and callous as deliberately to deride the expectations of the poorer emigrants and working class people? One conclusion which suggests itself is that these portrayals were allowed because she wanted them there. They are central to a work which has a serious purpose.

In pursuing these types of reasoning, one may seem to leave oneself open to some serious objections. One of these

is that Roughing It in the Bush is not the product of one single author. Both Susanna Moodie's husband, John, and her brother, Samuel Strickland, contributed. Furthermore, much of the material had been offered earlier in other publications, and not in the order in which it appears in Roughing It in the Bush. These facts, we might surmise, negate or at least do damage to the contention that there can be any purpose or theme running through that work, at least. However, there are reasonable answers to these objections. Samuel Strickland did contribute part of the text and a poem in "The Whirlwind" chapter but none of the suggestions that make up the basic argument rely on them for substantiation. Moreover, Susanna Moodie wrote the major part of this chapter herself and so it was she who choose the subject matter. John's chapters, too, fit nicely into the overall themes of the book, as subsequent discussions show, so it is not necessarily detrimental to the thesis that he wrote them.

If this is the case, however, one might reasonably ask why John's chapters would have been cut from the 1871 Canadian edition, the one Susanna Moodie edited. It is quite likely that the reason for their omission was because the American edition had been so popular and lucrative. At one point shortly after the original work came out and she had learned of its unauthorized publication in the United States, Moodie laments the fact that the book's popularity there does neither herself nor Bentley any financial good.

Since only the amusing sketches full of human interest material had been retained in those editions, including John Moodie's sketch of the old dragoon in Volume II, she may have thought it wise to follow suit. One thing made very obvious in Moodie's published letters is that she saw writing as virtually her only acceptable means of making money. Therefore, she often wrote whatever the public showed itself to want and may have felt that, by 1871, the public needed and wanted less hard detail on emigration. It is also very possible that by 1871 the personal, emotional and psychological need to write a reintegrative autobiography had been dissipated. Moodie could now re-issue the book simply for the sake of ego gratification and financial remuneration. These facts, however, do not indicate that a book offered to the public for the first time had no object but to make money.

Furthermore, the fact that the Moodies gathered the sketches from scattered sources is irrelevant. The experiences the Moodies describe in the sketches and the things they learned from those experiences occurred in order, and it is their occurrence which is important to the argument, not when the account of them happens to have been written down.

Moreover, it is not even certain that the sketches were not originally written in the order in which the events happened. John Moodie offered a work on their emigrating to Canada to Richard Bentley in 1834 -- that is, he offered him

a whole book. It is, then, within the realm of possibility that Susanna Moodie had already written some of this book -- the sketches of Volume I, perhaps -- or at least laid it out mentally at that time. Moodie herself says that the major part of Roughing It in the Bush was written before she was acquainted with town life in Canada (original introduction to Life in the Clearings xxxi). This means that the book was written before January 1840 when she moved to Belleville.

Readers must, at least, seriously suspect that the basic manuscript was complete long before the sporadic and chronologically inaccurate publication of various sketches occurred in the colonial magazines. They also definitely know from the published letters that the autobiographical parts of the work now known as Flora Lyndsay were originally written as the first segment of Roughing It in the Bush. The fact that the thinly disguised "novel" was published two years later does not change the fact that the occurrences described in the two works were first recorded in order and that there is obvious continuity.

Last minute changes were also made in the original manuscript; some chapters were suppressed. These are "Jeanie Burns," "Lost Children" and "Michael Macbride," all of which appear, very awkwardly, in Life in the Clearings. However, neither their omission from Roughing It in the Bush, nor their inclusion, had it been managed, alters the

reasoning presented. The case which is made is argued on the basis of what is there.

A related objection arises from the realization that, even during Moodie's lifetime, Roughing It in the Bush underwent several subsequent editions which also saw considerable revision. It should be noted in passing, then, that the thesis relies on first editions for its primary material. The one exception is Flora Lyndsay; since the 1854 British edition was unavailable to me, I used the American DeWitt edition of the same year. Nevertheless, even if Roughing It in the Bush experienced changes in subsequent editions, made for whatever considerations of space, practicality or -- in the case of American editions -- politics, these cuts do not negate a line of reasoning based on the first edition where the aims and ideas of John and Susanna Moodie might be supposed to find their most unadulterated expression.

The fact that Bentley, not Susanna Moodie, titled the book also strengthens my suggestions. The titles of Moodie's first two autobiographical works make obvious the fact that the books deal with "lives;" they give the chief character's name and then subtitle the work as a "life." Roughing It in the Bush, too, bears a subtitle which includes the word "life" but there the context is somewhat different. In the other subtitles, "life" means personal history whereas in Roughing It in the Bush "life" means mode of existence. Perhaps all of Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It

in the Bush, if published as one unit, would have been called Rachel Macgregor's Emigration, as Moodie at one time called Flora Lyndsay or Rachel Macgregor or, the Emigrants, as Bentley first intended to title it, or even "Trifles from the Burthen of a Life," as the Literary Garland version of Flora Lyndsay is titled, to show its continuity with "Rachel Wilde." At any rate, it is probably safe to assume that its title would have introduced a particular character and presented the work as her personal story. It is not Moodie's title but Bentley's, adopted because a similar title had been successful for an Australian work, which throws readers off track.

Finally, though it is possible to discount certain objections to seeing Moodie's autobiographical works as having connecting themes, it is also important to make certain candid admissions about her talent that should be kept in mind when reading both her works themselves and this thesis. She is not a brilliant writer. In many cases, she is quite bad, though she is at her best in the autobiographical works under consideration. However, I believe that she had an aim in writing "Rachel Wilde," Flora Lyndsay, Roughing It in the Bush and Life in the Clearings other than pleasing the public and other than making money and readers can still discern this aim today. That line of thought which binds the books together may sometimes be obscured, but it is possible to perceive it running beneath and through other aspects of the works.

To read these works as spiritual autobiography is, admittedly, not always easy. The pattern is irregular with discontinuities and confusions. As noted above, these flaws are, in part, due to the fact that Moodie probably did not write the autobiographical stories as one work or intend, necessarily, that they be read that way. Moreover, in other, practical ways as well, she seems to have been unable to decide exactly what she was doing. She desperately needed money and, much of the time, wrote what she thought the audience wanted to hear as long as she could do so within the boundaries of her own value system. Moreover, Bentley was expecting a sort of emigrant handbook and she was quite possibly trying to make something which was essentially a chunk of her personal history and which she had written years before, meet his requirements. She was trying, too, to write amusing sketches for which the reading public was showing a gargantuan appetite. She was also, no doubt -- though probably more as a sideline and an after-thought -- trying to persuade the gently nurtured to avoid the bush. Finally, in addition to doing all of these other things, she was trying to make up enough chapters for a volume, sometimes even two, and so often included material which is really extraneous to the main ideas.

Probably most important of all is the fact that literature and life usually cannot be too closely equated. One's life seldom falls into a pattern that appears as clear as the pattern in, for instance, autobiography. The

function of art -- or at least one of its functions -- is, rather, to distill and purify reality of its clutter so that it can be endowed with some meaning and point. Therefore, it is unlikely that Moodie is merely writing down things that happened to her. She is, more likely, shaping her experience, selecting and arranging incidents to suit both personal needs and formal requirements. However, it takes a great deal of time, effort and talent to carry out this shaping and Moodie may not always have been able to manage it smoothly. It may be, therefore, reality, breaking through the more traditional form and content with which Moodie was familiar, which causes some of the contradiction and confusion.

An example of such a lapse can be found in the chapter entitled "Tom Wilson's Emigration." Moodie here embarks on a long lamentation for England, decrying her loss of the beloved mother country and hoping to return to die there. Moreover, she is speaking in the present rather than the past tense and is implying the future as well. Usually, when these occurrences are recorded in Roughing It in the Bush, it is obvious that they describe feelings the newcomer was experiencing. Nevertheless, here it would appear that, because she is using the present tense, Moodie remained essentially the same from 1832 to 1852. Then, however, she abruptly draws herself up short:

Ah, these are vain outbursts of feeling --
melancholy relapses of the spring home-sickness!

Canada! thou art a noble, free and rising country -- the great fostering mother of the orphans of civilisation. The offspring of Britain, thou must be great, and I will and do love thee, land of my adoption, and of my children's birth; and oh -- dearer still to a mother's heart -- land of their graves. (62)

There are several such affirmations in Roughing It in the Bush and the thesis tries to show that this love of Canada is something Moodie really did, for the most part, achieve. Reaching this point was part of her process of change and, moreover, was necessary if her life were to approximate the pattern of a developmental, spiritual autobiography. But old feelings did sometimes break through. That is why she can talk of homesickness in the present tense and, in the next breath, affirm her love for Canada, also in the present tense. As she explicitly indicates, she is prone to "melancholy relapses" which temporarily make the difficult past a felt part of the present.

Furthermore, these relapses occur at many points in Roughing It in the Bush. And, because it is not always as obvious as it is in the passage quoted above that they are relapses, they may cause readers considerable confusion. In the scene describing the ramming of the Anne by the Horsley Hill, for instance, Moodie, the writer, is thinking back many years. Yet, she still speaks of the lower class

emigrant women in derogatory, proud tones. It is likely that, though she has largely overcome her arrogance and pride by the time of writing, in recalling scenes such as these, she suffers a "relapse." She portrays people and events and her own reactions as they were to her twenty years ago and as, to some small degree, they still occasionally are. Scenes such as this, read at face value, confuse the reader greatly if he or she tries to square them with, for example, the praise of the working class which Moodie applies lavishly in Life in the Clearings.

There are, then, problems in reading Moodie's autobiographical works as a four-volume spiritual autobiography if one expects to find a strict confirmation to the genre, but thinking of the pattern of spiritual autobiography as at the least, an analogy for the development over four volumes of a composite heroine, has certain benefits. It provides a new perspective on Moodie criticism for one thing, since there often seem to be in it errors or omissions caused by the consideration of Roughing It in the Bush in isolation, or at least with too little sense that it may be part of an autobiographical progression. Moodie's secularized spiritual autobiography also provides a sort of core or stance from which the rest of her writing looks somewhat different than it has to many critics. "Rachel Wilde" and Flora Lyndsay come to look more interesting as part of a unit, than do much of Moodie's poetry and fiction. Roughing It in the Bush has become a

Canadian classic, of course. It is an important book and any study which throws light on it has something to contribute to Canadian literary studies. Furthermore, as my Afterword shows, a reassessment of Roughing It in the Bush has interesting implications for the reconsideration of ingrained patterns of thinking about Canadian culture and literary tradition.

I. **General Theories of Autobiography and Their
 Application to the Work of Susanna Moodie**

As the introduction has suggested, this thesis proceeds under the assumption that "Rachel Wilde," Flora Lyndsay, Roughing It in the Bush and Life in the Clearings may profitably be read as one autobiographical set of stories. Most of the discussion which follows makes the case for reading these works as a spiritual account. Nevertheless, it is also true that Moodie had several good, more secular reasons for telling her life history. This first chapter, then, which is somewhat preliminary to the main part of the thesis, addresses what may have been the more secular aspects of Moodie's urge to engage in life writing.

To begin, however, the very concept of "autobiography" should, perhaps, be investigated as it may present some problem when applied to Moodie's writing. It is evident that these books are all, in some way, about the life of Susanna Strickland Moodie. This is not to say, however, that there do not remain many unanswerable questions about the amount of factual data they present. Students and teachers of Canadian literature are in the habit of accepting Roughing It in the Bush and Life in the Clearings

as "true" to a large extent. Certainly, in these works Moodie speaks in her own voice, calls her friends and members of her family by their real names and recounts events which seem to have occurred.

In "Rachel Wilde" and Flora Lyndsay, however, the chief characters do not bear the names of Moodie or her acquaintances. Nevertheless, there are many solid reasons for seeing these two books as accounts of Moodie's life as well. The protagonists are strikingly similar to Moodie and to people she knew and many of the events have near identical counterparts in her own life. Other critical readers have noted the autobiographical nature of her works. In his article in Canadian Writers and Their works, Michael A. Peterman says that "Flora Lyndsay...should be read as autobiography rather than fiction" (92) and notes that, even at the time of its publication, British reviewers castigated it as autobiography "ineffectively transformed into fiction" (73). Marian Fowler, observing the continuity between Flora Lyndsay -- a supposed novel -- and Roughing It in the Bush, says that the two books "read like volume one and two" of the same work (102).

Moreover, much of the doubt which may have existed with respect to the factual validity of Flora Lyndsay has now been reduced by the publication of some of Moodie's letters. In them she states emphatically that the key events narrated in the tale did, indeed, take place. Writing to her British publisher, Richard Bentley, Moodie says:

I do not think I will send you another sober tale like Mark, but a bundle of droll sketches of our adventures out to Canada and our preparations for our emigration and all we met and saw on our voyage. This should have been the commencement of Roughing It, for it was written for it, and I took a freak of cutting it out of the MS. and beginning the book at Grosse Isle. This would make a volume and might be termed "Trifles from the Burthen of a Life." Laughable as some of them are they proved to us sober realities. (Letters 30)

The story which Moodie did sub-title -- in fact, had already sub-titled -- "Trifles from the Burthen of a Life," is "Rachel Wilde," though it is interesting to note that the 1851 publication of the story of Flora Lyndsay in The Literary Garland, where the chief character is called Rachel M____, was also given this title, an indication, perhaps, that the two stories were originally part of one whole tale. The fact that the Christian name first given to Flora was Rachel and that Flora's mother is named Mrs. W____ also suggests some continuity between the two accounts. Nevertheless, since it is the work eventually published as Flora Lyndsay which deals with the details of preparing for emigration and with the trip out to Canada, it is obviously that book to which Moodie is referring in the passage quoted above.

In a letter written to Bentley several months later, Moodie enclosed the tale Rachel Macgregor's Emigration -- the last name, perhaps, chosen to reflect the highland Scots heritage of the heroine's husband, a heritage shared by John Moodie. It was this book which was later published as Flora Lyndsay. In the letter, she assures Bentley that "the characters and incidents are drawn from life. The book is no fiction" (Letters 131). Certainly, Carl Ballstadt, the chief editor of the published letters, does not seem to doubt that Flora Lyndsay is part of Moodie's "trilogy of emigration and settlement" (editorial comment, Letters 116).

"Rachel Wilde," the tale of a young girl growing up in rural England in the early decades of the nineteenth century, is a story which also begs to be read as an account of Moodie's life. Hence, it may be seen as the story beginning the autobiographical narrative, which thus stretches throughout a four, rather than a three book set. The family situation appears identical. The Wilde children are easily identifiable as the young Stricklands and the family's station in life is the same. The rural isolation in genteel poverty is the same circumstance in which Moodie and her sisters and brothers grew up. The enmity which seems to have existed between the older children and their younger siblings, especially Susanna, is also portrayed in "Rachel Wilde." Mr. Wilde is an unbending disciplinarian as was Thomas Strickland Senior, a fact to which Moodie attests in "Perhaps or Honesty, The Best Policy," one of the papers

in the recently donated Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection housed in the rare book room at the National Library (F. 31, Series II). In one of the later, published letters, Moodie verifies that she suffered "the sorrows of a very unhappy home" and "Rachel Wilde" does, indeed, portray such a situation in some detail (Letters 147). Moreover, Moodie admits that, as a young girl, she had "a childish admiration of the great Emperor," Napoleon, an admiration she takes considerable care to attribute to Rachel as well (Letters 340).

The raptures which Moodie has Rachel experience when alone with nature -- those very ecstasies which will be shown to have separated her from the human community -- also seem to be a description of feelings Moodie herself experienced. In a letter to Mary Russell Mitford, Moodie says:

I have been one of Fancy's spoiled and wayward children, and from the age of twelve years have roamed through the beautiful but delusive regions of Romance, to entirely gratify my restless imagination, to cull all that was bright and lovely, and to strew with flowers the desert path of life. I have studied no other volume than Nature, have followed no other dictates but those of my own heart, and at the age of womanhood I find myself totally unfitted to mingle with the world. (Letters 38)

Probably because of such similarities and connections, students of Moodie's writing have chosen to read "Rachel Wilde" primarily as a life history as well. Michael A. Peterman says that, like Flora Lyndsay, "Rachel Wilde" is an "autobiographical story" ("Susanna Moodie" 64) and in an article on the tale in Essays on Canadian Writing, Margot Northey writes totally under the assumption that the work is about Moodie's childhood.

Moreover, Moodie herself, in her epigraph to this story, seems to be saying that it is not, at base, fiction:

Fiction, however wild and fanciful,
Is but the copy memory draws from truth;
'Tis not in human genius to create;
The mind is but a mirror, which reflects
Realities that are; or the dim shadows
Left by the past upon its placid surface,
Recalled again to life.

Finally, perhaps the best reason for believing that these four works, including "Rachel Wilde" and Flora Lyndsay, can profitably be read as autobiography, is that they have few of the literary characteristics of fictional narratives. Moodie knew how to write fiction though there is justifiable doubt as to whether she was very good at it. Novels such as Mark Hurdlestone, Geoffrey Moncton and The World Before Them show, for example, her understanding of the need for a strong plot, with a central protagonist and suitable antagonists against whom the central character can

work out his or her development. Admittedly, her attempts at complication are so confusing that they often border on the ridiculous. The same is true of her resolutions, which could never be brought about without a truly amazing set of coincidences helped along by much suspension of disbelief on the part of her readers. Nevertheless, she obviously understands very well that complication and then resolution should take place, and it is proof of her understanding that she so often forces them.

However, none of the four main works under discussion here shows these elements. There is a central character who, at times, will be called the protagonist for lack of a better term. Nevertheless, there are no real antagonists. There is no action in the sense in which that term is usually meant when discussing fiction; that is, there is no true plot. Because of this absence, there can be no rising or falling action, no complication, no crisis and no resolution. All four works consist of episodes linked primarily by the fact that they are important to the life and personal development of the central character.

This is not to say that there are no fictional elements in Moodie's life stories and, indeed, it is probably unreasonable to suppose that any account which purports to be about an individual's life can remain totally factually accurate. Moodie herself, in her Literary Garland sketch of Old Woodruff, says that "there are no histories so graphic as those people tell of themselves, for self love is sure to

embellish the most common-place occurrences with a tinge of the marvelous, and everyday events become quite romantic in the mouths of some narrators" (ns 5, 13). There are numerous incidents -- in Roughing It in the Bush, for instance -- where Moodie probably invented the dialogue in order to better convey the wider truth about the nature of the situation in which she found herself or, sometimes, simply to make the sketches more lively and interesting. For example, it is questionable that she would have been privy to the conversation between the ship's captain and the health officers on board the Anne, or that she could so accurately have seen and heard the marriage proposal of Jacob, the Moodies' backwoods servant, through an upper window. It will also be noted in passing, throughout the thesis, that Moodie made frequent use of dramatic or situational irony, rather than making direct narrative comment when she wanted to convey a point. Still, despite the use of these elements of fictional technique, it is correct to say that, in the main, it would be difficult to read Moodie's life stories as traditional novels; they do not have the normally expected structure.

Even from the point of view of chronology, it is not too difficult to read these four works as a continuous life history. "Rachel Wilde" was first published in 1848 and the Canadian sketches series which makes up the basis of Roughing It in the Bush was published in 1847-48 as well. The complete, fleshed-out version of Roughing It in the Bush

was published in 1852 and, as noted above, Moodie said that she had written Flora Lyndsay to be the first part of Roughing It. She had published the basics of the story in The Literary Garland between March and July of 1851. Life in the Clearings was published in 1853 and so there is a chronological progression. Each work appears to have been written -- or at least published -- in the order in which the events in it occurred. Even if the bulk of Roughing It in the Bush were written earlier, as Moodie herself claims, she could surely have written "Rachel Wilde" with a view to providing a suitable background for her other works.

Nevertheless, despite these indicators that both "Rachel Wilde" and Flora Lyndsay recount events from Moodie's own life, the literal veracity of much of the detail in these books -- or, indeed, in Roughing It in the Bush or Life in the Clearings, for that matter -- cannot now be estimated with any degree of certainty. Of course, this inability is not necessarily damaging to a view that the four works in question can be read as an autobiographical account.

Both writers and students of autobiography have come to realize that "fact" and "truth" are not always synonymous terms. Indeed, numerous books and articles have been written suggesting that truth may be faithfully conveyed by metaphor. Thus, fictionalization of a life account will often illuminate the reality of a central character or the

relevance of a situation more accurately than any mere recitation of actual events could do.

In previous centuries -- which often claimed to prefer facts to "lies," as is shown by the early Victorian preference for sermons and biographies over fiction -- life writing was generally supposed to be a relation of events. According to William Spengeman,

back in the days when very few people even thought about this question [the nature of autobiography], those who did might quarrel over the admissibility of letters, journals, memoirs, and verse-narratives, but they generally agreed that an autobiography had to offer at least an ostensibly factual account of the writer's own life -- that it had to be, in short, a self-written biography. (The Forms of Autobiography xi)

Indeed, well into the twentieth century, some students and critics of the genre still tended to prefer the factual data, considering it more representative and revealing.

However, there has long been a strain of thought opposed to this view though, until recently, it was voiced by only a small minority. In the nineteenth century, Anthony Trollope observed that "there are two kinds of confidence which a reader may have in his author -- a confidence in facts, and a confidence in vision (qtd. in Howard Helsing 147-48). In 1935, Arthur Melville Clark,

one of the modern pioneering critics of autobiography, noted the creativity that was involved in life writing. The personality, he argued, has no solid core to be revealed. A man's sense of character must, therefore, be created. The autobiographer, he says, "is not the mere annalist of his life, but its philosophical historian. The result is not a scientific record but a work of art; an expression of personality, not an objective narrative" (15, 16). As Spengeman also points out, autobiographical criticism is now defined by two polarized schools of thought and the one carrying the greatest weight in recent studies holds that autobiographers may present themselves in whatever forms they find necessary or appropriate (The Forms of Autobiography xii).

Some critics are going so far as severely to downplay the importance of historical facts at all. Avrom Fleishman, for one, claims that "to discuss correlation of facts to the details of autobiography is fruitless. The autobiographer gives an order to the facts of his history, an order of his own devising and, therefore, a reflection of the truth about himself more informative than the facts he manipulates" (215). Spengeman and Lundquist have said that

the term 'autobiography' implies only that the author is writing specifically about himself; it has nothing to do with factual truth.

Autobiography does not communicate raw experience,

for that is incommunicable. It presents, rather, a metaphor for the raw experience. (501-02)

From views such as these, it is but a small step to the possibility that most good autobiography is fictionalized to some degree, that, indeed, metaphor is absolutely necessary to this form of communication. Hence, the question of whether Susanna Moodie's four narratives convey actual events from her life becomes a much less pressing one. For all intents and purposes, these books are autobiography. Even though some of the events and dialogues may be factually inaccurate, the books do tell the wider truth about Moodie's life.

More important, perhaps, than this body of theory and possibly more interesting as well, is the fact that Moodie herself was at least familiar with the view that fact and fiction could be successfully combined. Indeed, either she or her husband -- or perhaps both, since it is not possible to say exactly who wrote the editorials where the opinions are expressed -- believed that such a combination would work. In Volume I, in the February and March 1848 issues of The Victoria Magazine, one of the Moodies reviewed The Memoirs of an American Lady by one Mrs. Grant. The reviewer quotes a long passage on this very subject. Mrs. Grant says that, in attempting to produce morally valuable works, a writer must avoid certain pitfalls:

Of these, the first and greatest is the dread of being inaccurate [sic]. Embellished facts, a

mixture of truth and fiction; or what we sometimes meet with, a fictitious superstructure, built on a foundation of reality, would be detestable, on the score of bad taste; though no moral sense were concerned or consulted. 'Tis walking on a river half frozen, that betrays your footing every moment. By these repulsive artifices, no person of real discernment, is for a moment imposed upon. You do not know exactly, which part of the narrative is false; but you are sure it is not all true, and therefore distrust what is genuine, where it occurs. (165)

The reviewer, however, takes issue with Mrs. Grant's opinion. "We cannot entirely agree with our author," the reviewer says, "in thinking such 'fictitious superstructures, built on a foundation of reality' detestable in all cases" (166). It is clear from the excerpted passages that Mrs. Grant equates facts with truth and fiction with lies, at least when the two are mixed and, therefore, believes that the included fiction will detract from a work's moral purpose. Not so, says the reviewer; it is works "obviously written to inculcate some moral principle" which cause readers to "feel a kind of loathing" (166).

Perhaps, then, Moodie would have felt totally justified in fictionalizing some aspects of her autobiographical writing had she seen the need arising, because all aspects

of it, both fact and fiction, were chosen or created to further a moral aim. Her main concern may have been simply to avoid preaching, a pitfall she sidesteps -- in Roughing It in the Bush at least -- through use of dramatic irony.

As the introduction has also made clear, one of the assumptions underpinning this thesis is that the central character of each of the four autobiographical works -- that is, Rachel, Flora, the Moodie presented in Roughing It in the Bush and the narrator of Life in the Clearings -- is the same character throughout. As suggested above, there are good reasons for believing that this character may be seen as Moodie herself at various stages in her life. At the very least she is, in the first three works anyway, a kind of composite protagonist or, sometimes, persona through whom Moodie speaks. George Landow has pointed out that "since autobiography, unlike everyday life, does not allow direct interaction, it must rely upon literary devices such as a persona to control the audience reactions" (xxv).

Some such function may have been in Moodie's mind when she created the Rachel, Flora and Susanna Moodie of the books. As will be seen, she did, indeed, have specific ideas she wanted to get across to her readers. Moreover, the term "persona" would seem to be a good one for the reason that, with the exception of the Moodie of Life in the Clearings, the characters are frequently quite far removed in thought, word and deed from the Moodie who is narrating, though they probably represent her past selves fairly

accurately. Hence together they become a kind of mask for the Moodie who is writing.

The characterization of this protagonist is consistent throughout the first three books and is one of the chief creative techniques which readers can identify as linking the works thematically. The protagonist -- who will be called by the name Moodie gives her in the particular work under discussion -- goes, over the course of the first three books, through the learning process experienced by the central figure in a developmental autobiography. Thus, in order more clearly to understand Moodie's reasons for the kind of self portrait she paints in these works, it becomes helpful to distinguish between developmental autobiography and other related types of life writing. The distinction lies in what happens to the central character over the course of his or her life. Throughout all such narratives, the focus is on the individual self as a plastic entity and on the changes it undergoes.

As early as 1805, John Foster, in his article, "On A Man's Writing Memoirs of Himself," pointed out the usefulness of autobiography to the writer "endeavouring not so much to enumerate the mere facts and events of life, as to discriminate the successive states of the mind and the progress of character. It is in this progress," he continues, "that we acknowledge the chief importance in life to exist." Because one of the autobiographer's two chief aims in conducting an examination of his life is to chart

the changes in his own character and thereby be enabled to improve it, there is more value in composing retrospective than daily accounts. Life writing, Foster says, should be done after a long enough period has elapsed for "some definable alteration to have taken place in the character or attainments" (qtd. in Rinehart 179).

Carlyle, too, in his essay "Biography," originally published in 1832, indicates that the value in reading life histories lies in the perception of successive states of being and the progression from one to the next:

How did the world and man's life, from [the subject's] particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did co-existing circumstances modify him from without, how did he modify those from within? With what endeavours and what efficacy rule over them? With what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; and how produced was his effect on society...? (qtd. in Shumaker 89)

This concern with moral, spiritual and psychological change and growth was one which preoccupied many nineteenth-century writers, novelists and poets as well as biographers and autobiographers and might, therefore, have had considerable influence on Moodie. To a large extent, this preoccupation was encouraged -- or, really, brought to the fore again -- by the Romantic movement's concern with

the self, and as students of Moodie's work know, she was certainly romantic in her temperament:

Though it did not invent subjectivity (neither the word nor the condition it connotes), the nineteenth century was certainly the first period to speak self-consciously of the self as a major source of literary material, and the first, beginning with the Romantics, to write a great deal subjectively -- that is, as Coleridge suggested, either of the self directly or of psychological states and values understood by self contemplation. (Buckley, The Turning Key 3)

To go into the large and complex issue of the nineteenth-century exploration of self in poetry would be too great a task here and would detract from the main thrust of the discussion. However, a brief look at the period's concern with self as it is reflected in prose fiction is relevant because of that fiction's similarity to prose autobiography. As students of literature are aware, the novel began as supposed autobiography in the eighteenth century. However, it would be difficult to show that characters such as Moll Flanders or Tom Jones actually learn anything, in a very deep, psychological or moral way, from all their adventures. Patricia Meyer Spacks, for instance, in Imagining A Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England, talks about the difference in the learning processes undergone by such fictional characters as Tom

Jones and Dorothea Brooke. The difference, Spacks says, is one of "outer knowledge versus inner, change in action versus change in feeling. It is more important to point to Dorothea's change than to her consistency but more meaningful to insist on Tom's essential lack of alteration, the distinction a matter of emphasis" (9).

But, by the nineteenth century, a concern with spiritual, moral and even social progress -- frequently they were all linked -- was becoming central to much fiction. The Bildungsroman, thus, became a kind of purely fictional counterpart to developmental autobiography -- that is, to autobiography showing the central character's progression or retrogression from one state to another. Jerome Buckley describes the fictional sub-genre in his book, Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding:

Wilhelm Meister has established itself in literary history as the prototype of the Bildungsroman. Though that term was not in common usage until quite late in the nineteenth century, the genre was already popular in Germany among the Romantics and in England by the time of the early Victorians. The Bildungsroman in its pure form has been defined as the "novel of all-round development or self-culture" with a more or less conscious attempt on the part of the hero to integrate his powers, to cultivate himself by his experience. (12-13)

Moodie's autobiographical narratives, taken together, fall into this pattern. Moreover, further in Buckley's book one encounters a second itemizing of the characteristics of the typical Bildungsroman protagonist which fits Moodie's work very well. If the words "he" and "city" are changed to "she" and "Canada," and the section on the love affairs omitted, the passage describes very closely the progression of Moodie's composite character:

A child of some sensibility, grows up in the country or in a provincial town, where he finds constraints, social and intellectual, placed upon the free imagination. His family, especially his father, proves doggedly hostile to his creative instincts or flights of fancy, antagonistic to his ambitions, and quite impervious to the new ideas he has gained from unprescribed reading. His first schooling, even if not totally inadequate, may be frustrating insofar as it may suggest options not available to him in his present setting. He therefore, sometimes at a quite early age, leaves the repressive atmosphere of home (and also the relative innocence), to make his way independently in the city.... There, his real "education" begins, not only his preparation for a career but also -- and often more importantly -- his direct experience of urban life. The latter involves at least two love affairs or sexual

encounters, one debasing, one exalting, and demands that in this respect and others the hero reappraise his values. By the time he has decided, after painful soul-searching, the sort of accommodation to the modern world he can honestly make, he has left his adolescence behind and entered upon his maturity. (17)

This kind of fiction, popular for some years by the time Moodie wrote her autobiographical tales, then, may well have influenced the form she chose. Indeed, the subtitle of Flora Lyndsay, which is Passages in an Eventful Life, may convey, among other things, the sense of rites of passage, a central concern of the Bildungsroman. Developmental autobiography, as Wayne Shumaker calls the related form which embodies the life histories of real people, came to be the dominant autobiographical mode in the nineteenth century as well, as opposed to the more psychologically simple, "non-subjective" reminiscences and res gestae (54). The emphasis in these works, he says, is upon "successive states of being and the progression from one to the next" (89).

Deriving their initial impetus from the great conversion accounts of seventeenth-century life writers, accounts which were almost totally spiritual in their focus, and encouraged by the romantic faith in the value of the self and by the popularity in fiction of the Bildungsroman, nineteenth-century autobiographers, then, came to see life as an educative process:

How to attain an education was the Sphinx query to the Oedipus of modern times.

It is not strange, therefore, to find the query echoed in [Victorians'] individual lives. The need that was disturbing all thoughtful men when they looked at the world around them made itself felt in their personal struggles for adjustment.

(Edgar Johnson 358-59)

Johnson goes on to point out that some earlier life writers -- for instance, those such as Herbert of Cherbury and Edward Gibbon, who fall outside the strictly religious tradition -- saw themselves as "givens" and the world more as a stage for their achievements than as a school where they could learn through application. As later discussions will show, this assumption had never been held by religious writers. And, in even the secular arena, this view changed during the nineteenth century. "Increasingly," Johnson says, "autobiographers [came] to feel themselves explorers, successive or thwarted, in worlds but gradually realized" (357).

As intimated, though this preoccupation with self definition and individual worth did come to flower in the nineteenth century, the seed from which it grew had been planted earlier. It has, in fact, been suggested that the contemporaneous rise of autobiography in literature, of self portraiture in painting and of the European manufacture of glass mirrors during the Renaissance are not merely

coincidental occurrences. Some time during these centuries, human kind seems to have become concerned with itself as a set of separate and distinct entities and has, since then, been wrestling with the ramifications of that discovered individuality. According to Paul Delaney, quoting Jacob Burckhardt's The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, the second great achievement of this historical period -- an achievement paralleling its scientific discovery of the outside world -- was the "first discerning and bringing to light of the full, whole, nature of man" (11). Again, according to Karl Weintraub, "autobiography took its full dimension and richness when Western Man acquired a thoroughly historical understanding of his existence." This understanding came about as part of the "intellectual revolution" that was the Renaissance (821).

The relevance of this observation to Moodie is that the nineteenth century, too, was a kind of renaissance period. Ideas about the natural world and about man as part of that world were changing rapidly from what they had been in the previous century. Moreover, part of these ideas on man included a renewed preoccupation with the individual self, as Jerome Buckley's statement has indicated. Finally, the nineteenth century was a period of scientific discovery, religious change and political upheaval as was the Renaissance. Consequently, the idea of where the individual might fit into all this change once again came to occupy more of man's attention.

Many autobiographies are written in later life and, therefore, one suggestion as to the origin of this preoccupation with self definition is that it stems from the human need to order existence. In later years, an individual may realize that the life he or she looks back on does not necessarily make a great deal of sense. John N. Morris, in Versions of the Self, points out that "in a world where all is chance, accident, absurdity, the notion of a continuous personality which is identical with itself through all the changes it suffers in time is an illusion.... Experience offers...only a flux of impressions" (11).

In order to make sense of this flux of impressions and thereby define his essential "self," an autobiographer imposes meaning from without. By retracing the path of his life, and especially by dwelling on certain incidents, excluding others and by reinterpreting or creatively remembering the focal events, the writer either finds or devises the pattern which makes his life whole. James Olney quotes Roy Pascal to the effect that the "autobiographer half discovers, half creates a deeper design and truth than adherence to historical and factual truth could ever make claim to" (11). The writer, as Herman Melville Clark has noted, "creates after the event, the feelings or the ideas which might have been the cause of the event, but which in fact are invented by us after it has occurred" (20).

What the recollecting mind creates has been widely noted, though defined in different ways by various critics. Avrom Fleischman says that the versions of one's life, which he calls "metaphors of self," combine to make up a "myth of self;" "in writing his autobiography the author is writing himself, transposing himself into verbal form and the discovery of the appropriate terms in which to portray himself goes hand in hand with a discovery of his own nature" (217). Discussing the autobiographical writing of Edmund Gosse, Howard Helsing points out the uses of what he calls the self-created "veil of illusion," the "lie that makes life bearable." Gosse, he concludes, would have avoided complete honesty in his work even if it were possible, for he wanted "to preserve the privacy of his hard-won inner world" (61). On one point, at least, almost all critics considering the genre are in agreement: this myth of self, this veil of illusion or inner world, is of utmost importance to the writer's peace of mind. In the introduction to his Design and Truth in Autobiography, Roy Pascal points out that one error critics and students "generally make [is to underestimate] the importance in a man's life of his 'life illusion'" (vii).

The reason for briefly recounting these theories on the importance of defining and protecting the sense of self, is that they prove useful in understanding Moodie's work, for Moodie was a woman who, over the course of her life, suffered considerable attacks on her sense of who and what

she was and where she might fit into her world. Though she did her autobiographical writing when she was still fairly young, it should be remembered that average life expectancy was considerably less over a century ago than it is now. The letters of both Moodie and her correspondents give voice to a constant concern with physical health. Moodie, herself, appears to have been frequently ill and several times throughout the letters expresses the fear that she may die. It is also likely that, as she encountered both assaults on her cultural biases, as well as physical hardship, she may have felt a need to take stock of her experiences. The sense of self fragmentation and questioning that may often be consequent upon passage through difficulty demands a period of reintegration. It is just such a period that Moodie may have entered with her writing of "Rachel Wilde" and the "Canadian Sketches."

Moreover, Moodie's life, perhaps more than most, was fraught with "chance, accident and absurdity." By her own account, her childhood was unhappy; her forced emigration reft from her life both its psychological and physical comfort; her attempt to settle in the backwoods with John was a practical failure and the decades in Belleville were, to some extent, ruined by political rancour and harassment. Two of her children died very young and at least one other was a severe disappointment. Only in her old age and as a widow, did Moodie find some measure of peace.

It is not surprising, then, that she should try to create some kind of coherent whole out of the disorder of her life by writing a series of autobiographical stories. Perhaps, if she could discover her intact self and show, both to herself and others, that the tempering process she had undergone had proven valid, she could see her life as making sense. Having encountered many unforeseen difficulties and having failed to achieve -- in conjunction with her husband -- some of the goals she had set for herself, Moodie might easily have slipped into despair and bitterness. In fact, many of the letters from the middle and later periods show this tendency. Making sense of her life through autobiographical writing was one means of attempting to avoid this fate. Wayne Shumaker sums up the recourse:

the memory is a fallible instrument. It has its own preferences and dislikes, drops veils over humiliations too racking to be tolerable, rearranges confused recollections in more probable form, reinterprets embarrassments in ways which soothe and support the ego. If, by sanity, is meant a full acceptance of the world on its own terms, we are all partly insane; we adjust and reject constantly. (36)

This adjustment and rejection may well have been part of Moodie's intention in writing though much of it was, no doubt, unconscious as well.

Though the central aim of developmental autobiography is usually to define the self and its changes and progression, this concern often arranges itself into related subsets and an understanding of some of these also helps to shed light on Moodie's work. One such subset is the preoccupation with sexual identity. Critics writing on female autobiographers assert that, traditionally, men have defined themselves in terms of their worldly accomplishments but, until quite recently, such modes of definition have been unavailable to women. The existence of most of the women who have ever lived has been seen as peripheral to the affairs of the world. Their function was to act as supporters, facilitators, catalysts and enhancers, sometimes in only the most basic of ways. Since women were rarely central to what their societies considered important, it is not surprising that the female sense of self-worth should have needed bolstering. Defining themselves in autobiography might indeed have been one way women had of developing the needed support. In writing of their lives, women have attempted to define themselves and their worth. As Estelle C. Jelinek notes,

what their life stories reveal is a self-consciousness and a need to sift through their lives for explanation and understanding. The autobiographical intention is often powered by the motive to convince readers of their self-worth, to

clarify, to affirm and to authenticate their self-image. (15)

A look at Moodie's own life as embodied in her autobiographical writing substantiates the view that she, too, may have had reason to doubt her own worth as a person. As both Blanche Hume and Audrey Morris have noted, the young Susanna was constantly in trouble as a child, whereas Catharine or "the Katie" was the pet of the family, especially of Thomas Strickland Senior. In "Thoughts on May Day" from The Literary Garland of 1846, Traill herself says that she was the favourite child (ns 4, 212). If the episodes recounted in "Rachel Wilde" are accurate descriptions of the sorrowful childhood Moodie claims to have had, then she appears to have been both emotionally and physically abused, though it is necessary to keep in mind here that the nineteenth century's views on disciplining children were greatly different from those popular now.

Rachel is considered vain and intractable, and means are taken to break her of these vices. This observation comes as part of the discussion of women's need to write autobiography because, in the nineteenth century, these vices would have been viewed with concern as much because of Rachel's sex as for their own innate undesirability. As a girl, her behaviour would have been quite rigidly prescribed. Dorothea who, in the story, represents the mild, gentle and controlled Katie, was the ideal daughter; her younger sister was not. According to Deborah Gorham in

The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal, the nineteenth-century girl showed her true character and worth mainly in relation to the males in her family, and especially, of course, to her father. As a later, unpublished autobiographical story shows, Thomas Strickland Senior was not impressed with the behaviour of his youngest daughter. In "Perhaps, or Honesty, the Best Policy," from The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection, Moodie recounts her father's view of "Susy [as] an obstinate, willful child..." (F. 31, Series II). Gorham describes the ideal girl and her relationship to her father:

In such a family, it was suggested that the most important qualities a good daughter could provide for her father were gentleness and cheerfulness. As one writer put it, the...father of a family has a right to expect "smiling faces, cheerful voices and a quietly happy welcome which will fall like balm on his harassed spirit" when he returns home from the outside world. Within the household, his daughters should be "sunbeams that make everything glad," creatures whose self-forgetfulness, whose willingness to help others, would create a harmonious environment. (38)

Obviously the chief character Moodie portrays in "Rachel Wilde" falls far short of this ideal.

Moreover, in both the autobiographical works and in the letters, certain passages indicate that, as a young woman,

Moodie was looking for a surrogate father, perhaps as a substitute for the revered real father who had so obviously preferred the sunny Katie over her dark and difficult younger sister. A final indication of the young Moodie's difficulties as a daughter may be the fact that her fiction is filled with characters who have been ruined by the bad management of their parents.

Moodie does not always seem to have been taken seriously by her husband either, though it must be admitted that several letters in The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection indicate that he did sometimes ask her advice on financial matters or at least inform her before acting. It is known that Susanna once broke their engagement, at least partly because she was having second thoughts about emigration. She also shows that her character, Flora, objects to emigration but her objections are over-ridden. Flora avows that she would rather live in a poor cottage in England than in a palace in America. Her husband, John, however, is not so romantic. He informs her that, having thought "long and painfully on the subject," he has "come to the resolution to emigrate" in the spring (7). The point to be made here is not whether either person is wrong about the benefits of emigration, but that John Lyndsay has come to this decision on his own. He simply tells Flora when and where they will emigrate and, to add insult to injury, informs her that he is going to finance the expedition with her money.

In fact, several episodes of Flora Lyndsay address the question of sex roles and the sharing of power between the sexes. When the Lyndsays arrive back at their cottage after the first, disastrous attempt to intercept the steamer to Leith, Flora is told to "be a good girl" and go instantly off to bed -- for the good of her health, of course (101). Despite her protestations and her plea that her husband not "keep all the fun to himself -- the bright cheery fire and all the good things," she is banished.

Again, Flora's dislike of the brig bearing her name, with its filthy quarters and criminal-looking captain -- a dislike which later proves justified -- means nothing to John Lyndsay. Under no circumstances will he give in to her "fancies." When the owner of the Anne -- another man, of course -- convinces Lyndsay of his error, he comments, "But let me assure you my dear wife, you owe it entirely to the mean conduct of Mr. Peterson [owner of the Flora]. I tell you frankly, that I would not have yielded my better judgement to a mere prejudice, even to please you" (145). When she questions him about the expense of transporting a servant, Lyndsay refuses even to discuss the issue. She begs him to consider the expense but his curt reply is, "Nonsense, that is my affair," despite the fact that this trip is to be financed by Flora (67).

Similar examples exist in Roughing It in the Bush. There, Moodie recounts how she had opposed the move from the first cleared farm near Cobourg, but was ignored:

It was not without regret that I left Melsetter, for so my husband had called the place, after his father's estate in Orkney. It was a beautiful, picturesque spot; and, in spite of the evil neighbours, I had learned to love it; indeed, it was much against my wish that it was sold. I had a great dislike to removing, which involved a necessary loss, and is apt to give the emigrant roving and unsettled habits. But all regrets were now useless.... (II: 2)

Other scattered incidents which definitely make up part of Moodie's real life also seem to show that John Moodie was not always moved by his wife's remonstrances. After one of the couple's "sharp , mental conflicts" on the subject of spiritualism, John Moodie left his wife to go to the home of "another spiritual friend," whereupon Susanna Moodie "went upstairs and wept very bitterly, over what [she] considered the unpardonable credulity of a man of his strong good sense"(Letters 179). Finally, Letter 35 from Series I of The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection shows that John and his wife had some disagreement as to the proper manner of church government under Presbyterianism and that he felt that it was up to him to direct her on this issue. The way she could think on the question does not appear to have been totally up to her. Obviously, such lack of consequence in the matters affecting one's everyday life is likely to cause self doubt for women -- the kind of doubt that

autobiographical self-recreation and definition may help to alleviate.

Another subset of the concern for self which gives autobiography its impetus and which sheds light on Moodie's writing of autobiography is the need for self justification and the assuaging of guilt. As LuAnn Walther points out in an essay entitled, "The Invention of Childhood in Victorian Autobiography," the author of a life account "is able, through the recounting of troubled times, to relieve his own sense of guilt, to reassure himself of his worth, and to implicate without actually accusing, those who may have persecuted him or failed to help him" (80).

It has already been suggested that "Rachel Wilde" is very much autobiographical in its intent. Though we may not now be able to ascertain the degree to which individual incidents record events occurring in the author's life, we do know that Moodie's youth and home life were unhappy and that this tale, portraying, among other things, a sorrow-filled girlhood is, therefore, the vehicle whereby Moodie expresses a wider truth about herself. Though the members of Rachel's family are not overtly criticized, except mildly, by the narrator, the censure which arises as a natural consequence of the situations Moodie depicts is severe. These situations, in fact, constitute some of the first instances in the autobiographical narratives where Moodie uses dramatic irony to make her points.

It is possible, then, that Moodie is accomplishing several things through a somewhat removed treatment of her early life. To some degree, she is probably giving vent to pent up frustration and anger toward her family. These troubling relations, begun in her childhood and described in both "Rachel Wilde" and the personal reminiscences which accompany Catharine Parr Traill's Pearls and Pebbles, are epitomized by her continuing difficulties with her elder sister, Agnes. Agnes Strickland and Moodie quarrelled over the dedication to Roughing It in the Bush. Moodie had dedicated the book to Agnes -- probably to gain the advantage of her fame as a popular historian -- and, as a letter to Moodie's daughter, Katie, from Sarah Strickland Gwillym indicates, the family, anxious to keep up a facade of gentility in the face of their poverty, were furious that Moodie should have tarnished them by dedicating to Agnes a book in which poverty and physical labour are extolled:

the publication of that disgusting book the "Roughing it in the Bush" made the very name of Canada hateful to us all. I think it must have given as much harm to her children as to us. We had always striven hard to keep up the respectability of the family in spite of loss of property and it was very mortifying to have a book like that going the round of [some?] vulgar upstarts. I was [word undecipherable] mortified often -- but I was greatly pleased when some one

requested Mrs. Macauley, the mother of Lord Macauley, who was the manager of our book society to order "Roughing It in the Bush" into the [two words undecipherable] Library; he said he "would not allow such a blackguard book to come into the library." You cannot imagine how vexed and mortified my dear sister Agnes was, and at a time when she was at the very height of her fame.

(Letter 34, Series I of The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection)

As late as 1874, Moodie is still feeling Agnes' anger. To Katie Vickers, she says that even Catharine Parr Traill "seemed quite astonished, that Agnes had written such letters to [her]. The elder sister, comes out very strong at times, and the sense of superiority in every way" (Letters 309). The opportunity to express anger at this consistent unfairness, manifested towards Moodie from her childhood onwards, may have been seized in the act of writing "Rachel Wilde."

Writing the work may also have allowed her to trace in her own life what the narrator of "Rachel Wilde" calls the girl's "own faulty temper." It was this faulty temper which lay at the root of the vices for which the child in the narrative is castigated. As discussed earlier, such self-analysis had long been a hallmark of autobiography. Paul Delaney claims, of seventeenth-century life writing, that "the Calvinist obsession with the enemy within

exemplifies the Renaissance tendency to internalize the struggle of conflicting mental forces instead of allegorizing and externalizing it as the medieval psychomachia did" (35). This internal struggle was something with which Moodie, in her fiction, shows herself to have been familiar. In "The First Debt," from the November 1841 Literary Garland, she portrays Sophia struggling with herself over the morality of stealing money (os 3, 541) and in Mark Hurdlestone, both Anthony and Godfrey have scenes in which the sensual side of the character struggles with the spiritual side (122, 205-06). As succeeding chapters show, Moodie, too, had a many-faceted "enemy within." She accepted that she was a person of extremes, capable of being rapturously enthralled by a scenic view one moment and peevishly irritable the next.

Since an understanding of her temperament and its relevance to her spiritual life as revealed in her autobiographical work is central to this thesis, a lengthy discussion of it will be important, but at this point, it suffices to realize that her own faulty temper was something with which Moodie constantly struggled. By discovering its basis in her upbringing, she could place some of the blame on others and, thus, partly justify herself; she could appeal for audience sympathy. Moreover, she could also show that, even if she had once been unteachable and of sullen temperament, she has overcome such character flaws. The

portrayal of this successful struggle constitutes the second part of her self justification.

A third subset of the concern with self addresses the problem of external, socio-cultural upheaval and its effect on the individual psyche. Many commentators have pointed out that autobiography tends to flourish during times of transition. The nineteenth century was just such a time and the nature of the era will later be shown to have had considerable effect on Moodie's personal development. Arthur Melville Clark has set out many of the characteristics of the century and the reasons for its being a time of intense autobiographical activity. The impulse to define oneself, he says, arose from a clash of beliefs characteristic of the age:

On the one side stands the natural man, backed by democracy, liberalism, internationalism, humanitarianism and sentiment; on the other, stands the artificial man relying on aristocratic vis inertiae, the philosophy of the status quo, conservatism and nationalism. The French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Sturm und Drang, the Romantic Revival, and the various readjustments in politics, art, letters, philosophy, and religion were some of the phases of the struggle. Such conditions produced a need in some people for orientation and self-understanding, and accentuated

self-consciousness, because they divorced certain progressive and unconventional persons from their conservative fellows and provided them with an isolation, a kind of private eddy in which autobiography naturally results. (38)

Moodie, herself, was caught up in some of these movements. With one part of her character -- the part which led her to campaign vigorously in England on behalf of West Indian slaves -- she was a reformer and iconoclast. With another part, however, she was sometimes conservative and monarchist, upholding the status quo. Then, again, with one part of her mind, Moodie could hope for a time when there would be no more kings while with another she could argue that human society must inevitably be hierarchically structured. One part of her venerated nature above all else while another could rhapsodize on the beauty of machines. With one aspect of her personality she could laud the burning of the American ship, the Caroline, while at the same time she and her husband were considering emigrating to Texas to escape the drudgery and poverty of bush life (as expressed, for example, in Letter 87, Series I of The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection).

Because the nineteenth century was one of great change and upheaval, it became difficult for people to define themselves in terms of comfortable, accepted norms, not least of all because these very norms were undergoing metamorphosis. According to George Landow, writing to

introduce the collection of essays on Victorian autobiography which he edited, the sense of self is, perhaps paradoxically, strongest when one historical period leads into another. The breakdown of cultural norms sets people adrift and they see themselves, not as society has always defined them, but as they are:

When communal bonds dissolve, when a shared sense-of-being fails, the individual finds himself cast adrift and, becoming more self-aware, he may also come to believe that he has something to say that could help others in the same difficulties. Scholars have observed that in the ancient world, the Renaissance and seventeenth-century England such destruction of cultural assumptions and social dislocation produced a new sense of selfhood, and it seems clear that the political, economic and spiritual crises of the nineteenth century had the same effect. (viii)

Later in the same essay Landow quotes Francis R. Hart's comment on modern autobiography; "effective access to a recollected self or its 'versions,'" Hart says, "begins in a discontinuity of identity or being which permits past selves to be seen as distinct realities" (xxx). This discontinuity of identity causes varying degrees of distress and out of this distress grows the need to engage in the recreation of a whole, unified self.

In many cases, much of this distress is social in nature. Upheaval in systems and institutions which were previously stable often means that man's relations to his fellows are no longer well demarcated. Paul Delaney is one critic who discusses the consequences of disarray in the social hierarchy and its effect on the individual. He quotes Zevedai Barbu's view, originally expressed in Problems of Historical Psychology, that "a period of rapid social change arouses anxieties about status even among people whose own position is fairly secure" (21). "In an autobiographer's choice of role or stylistic convention," Delaney continues, "we can often discern the influence of a move from one social class to another, or of a perceived change in status of the class to which he belongs" (23).

It has already been intimated that Moodie, like most thinking people of her age, was caught in the flux of systems. As later chapters also show, she was a private, solitary person by nature in an age which touted the value of community, and a strong, determined and well-educated woman in an age which lauded feminine docility and intuition.

Aside from the upheaval consequent upon being a woman of her time, however, Moodie also had to cope with the severe psychological, physical and especially social dislocation caused by her emigration. This transition further challenged her notions of class structure, a challenge already thrown down before her by the anti-slavery

movement in Britain. And, if cultural norms were becoming unstable in Britain, they were, for an upper middle-class Victorian Englishwoman, doubly so in Canada. As Michael A. Peterman points out,

the tensions of Moodie's imagination are many and there are several contradictory patterns at work, some explicitly and some implicitly. New World potentiality vies constantly with Old World nostalgia and felt loss. Hope and disappointment, adaptation and alienation, courage and fear, independence and imprisonment oscillate from event to event. ("Susanna Moodie" 89)

In their book on autobiography, Roger J. Porter and H. R. Wolf argue that this upheaval in value systems frequently seen in life writing may be resolved in various ways. "We will find," they say, "that the individuals are forced to make a choice in the face of crisis: either to reaffirm the values by which they have lived or to make significant changes in values when the old ones no longer seem right or possible...." (196). Along the same lines, they continue,

we can differentiate between two kinds of crises. In the first the individual faces a clash between a well defined conception of himself and the opposing forces of, say, a social, political, religious or moral nature. This crisis mobilizes the need for self preservation in the face of external threats to one's identity -- to "the real

me." The other kind of crisis describes a conflict between the conscious and unconscious mind, the need to understand, accept and integrate material we might wish to reject -- to say, that is also "me," even though the acknowledgement of unexpected, strange or unwanted sides of the self may be difficult and painful. (196)

To some extent, it is correct to argue that Moodie's situation is aptly described by the first part of this quotation. Certainly, emigration to Canada necessitated some adjustment of her cultural and social views. Scholars writing on Moodie have often made this argument and have said that she defended herself against the onslaught by clinging to what she knew. It seems reasonable to contend that this tendency to cling to the old and familiar is the reason for the elegiac lamentations which frequently intrude in the earlier pages of Roughing It in the Bush. And, no doubt Moodie did often feel the sense of loss she expresses in these passages. Even after decades in Canada she still, in some ways, longed for Britain as her cultural home. However, feelings of sadness and loss may not have arisen totally from the fact that she was living in the colony. According to nineteenth-century scholars, the socio-cultural, political and religious changes occurring in the age gave rise to a pervasive sense of the elegiac. In "Rachel Wilde," for instance, Moodie portrays the young Rachel longing for death in order that she may obtain

answers to her questions about the immanent spirit manifested in nature. Rachel's age at this time is approximately ten and it might, therefore, be strongly suspected that such an attitude, rather than having grown out of genuine experience, is artificially learned. David De Laura notes that "inexhaustible discontent, languor, homesickness and endless regret" are typical of much that was written during the period:

Though the theme of loss and the elegiac emotions is pervasive in Greek and Roman literature, it is especially the new Victorian experience, a newly intensified and reorganized set of emotion derived from a sense of cultural crisis, which a great many people, following the lead of their literary betters, learned to regard as their own "essential" and personal emotions. (335)

"The elegiac," he continues, "lies very close to the heart of what was considered essentially 'poetic' in all the forms employed by the Victorians" (335). Certainly, almost all of Moodie's poems embody feelings of regret and loss. Hence, much of her mourning in Roughing It in the Bush may be as much stylistic convention as it is overwhelming regret for her former life. It may be partly that autobiography is an obvious and ideal place to express these learned and adopted elegiac emotions.

There are also other reasons for questioning the view that Moodie adhered quite defensively to all the values of

her past; this is where the second part of Porter and Wolf's statement becomes relevant. This view misses some of the truth about her, and the part it misses is of central importance. Moodie was not merely interested in preserving a view of herself or her way of life in the face of hostility; she was a stronger, more resilient individual than such a motive would indicate. She was, rather, interested in finding out what she truly was as a person and her search, recorded in the autobiographical narratives, entails acknowledging those "unexpected, strange or unwanted sides of the self" which Porter and Wolf describe. As St. Augustine had noted fifteen centuries earlier, "self is a piece of difficult ground not to be worked over without much sweat." Moodie does expend genuine effort in her own work of self-discovery and, it turns out, does make changes in her value system.

These subsets of the concern with self-discovery are all useful in reading Moodie's work and all help to explain some of her reasons for writing as well as some of the content of her books. However, they pale in importance when compared with the most interesting body of theory relevant to her writing. The discussion so far, especially in the latter paragraphs on value changes, leads to a consideration of autobiography as a record of spiritual growth. It is this type of record which is the most important form of developmental autobiography and it is the type with which the rest of this thesis will be primarily concerned.

II. Susanna Moodie and Spiritual Autobiography

A spiritual autobiography is one which embodies and discusses the central character's spiritual or religious progression from a state of sin to a state of grace. It is an old form, generally agreed to have been born as a distinct genre in the writing of St. Augustine of Hippo. According to Roy Pascal, before Augustine, "never is the unique, personal story, in its private as well as public aspect, considered worthy of the single-minded devotion of the author" (21).

Augustine's Confessions, the account of his sinful youth, struggles with religious questions, eventual conversion and subsequent life in Christ, defined both the form and content of Christian spiritual self-revelations which were to follow him. In general terms, this form consists of four parts, each delineating a different phase of spiritual experience. In earlier, typical accounts, these parts make up distinct sections, and their content often falls into more or less set patterns. In Moodie's work, these four categories still exist but they are altered and overlapping. In the more traditional autobiographies, the first part gives an account of early providential

mercies and opportunities offered by God to the protagonist, the second recounts the unregenerate life in sin and the protagonist's resistance to God, the third describes conversion and the fourth reveals the protagonist's calling to go forth, himself, and preach the gospel to which he has been converted.

According to Linda H. Peterson, writing in Landow's collection of essays, this four-phase form was widely adopted by later writers and was characteristic of spiritual autobiography from the end of the seventeenth century onwards, reappearing first in Bunyan's Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners ("Biblical Typology and the Self Portrait of the Poet in Robert Browning" 238). Other critics have suggested other -- usually expanded -- categories but, in general, they turn out to be variations of the same definition. The conversion stage, Peterson says, includes much detail on backsliding and despair, psychological states which must be experienced in order to shatter the complacency enjoyed by sinful men. Dean Ebner, too, emphasizes the importance of failure and despair in the central character's ultimate salvation (40-42).

Nevertheless, though Augustine began the autobiographical tradition, there was a gap of many centuries between his ground-breaking work and the age when spiritual autobiography truly came into its own. This age was, of course, the period of the Reformation and especially of the Puritan movements in England. Though there were

scattered works in the intervening centuries, it was only with the Renaissance and with the ultimately resulting reform movements within religion, as well as with increasing levels of literacy, that the average man received the impetus and means to produce accounts of his own life.

It is true that medieval Christianity had also demanded self-examination. However, under Catholicism, the confession of one's sins was something which took place between the sinner and the appointed, earthly representative of the church. Without that intermediary, no forgiveness could be attained and no spiritual progress made. The enhanced view of man's rational powers and responsibilities which was the legacy of Renaissance humanism contributed to the view of reformist Christians that man was responsible for his soul to God alone. Paul Delaney explains this change in attitude:

Luther's dominant concern with the "inner man," rather than with man in his external and social roles gradually made itself felt [in England]. His emphasis on the personal dialogue between man and God, and his basing of Christian life on the rock of individual conscience instead of the rock of Papal dogma, had the effect of internalizing many religious observations [confession and penance] which formerly had been acted out publicly in sacraments and ceremonies. (34)

Because of this internalization, self-examination became a religious duty in the English Puritan tradition and among the sects which had their roots in the Reformation. In the eighteenth century, for example, John Wesley "urged the itinerant preachers who were employed under his sanction to give him in writing an account of their personal history, including a record of conversion to God" (Morris 89).

In some sects, it became common practice for those applying to join a religious community to present accounts of their spiritual struggles to that point. Since the path to true conversion and certainty of election was a tedious and desperate one -- a fact to which any reader of John Bunyan can attest -- church leaders also frequently encouraged members to circulate or even to publish the written accounts of their spiritual victories and defeats. Thus, these writers began to fulfill what came to be the second great aim of composing developmental, especially spiritual, autobiography. Not only did such endeavors aid a writer's own self-understanding and progress, but they provided the same help to others. By showing that people mired in sin could be delivered from death and damnation, these accounts aimed to strengthen those brethren fainting by the wayside. Again, according to Paul Delaney,

in the Protestant autobiographer's use of the exemplum, the emphasis has shifted away from the article of doctrine which the medieval preacher sought to make more vivid by means of an

illustration. Now the stress is laid, not on dogma, but on the autobiographer's search for salvation, and on the vital relevance of this search to the reader's own struggles -- the autobiographer himself incarnates the example. In the Protestant community, now that there is no authoritarian priest to lay down the law for everyone, each member should, ideally, be an example of the devout life to his fellows; instruction is given by deeds and testimony instead of by parables. (33)

Some understanding of these practices and the reasons behind them is useful in approaching the works of Susanna Moodie because they make up a large part of the tradition out of which she is writing. In Roughing It in the Bush Moodie states her own aim. It is not primarily to prevent settlers from coming to Canada or even to the backwoods. The statements to this effect often seem, rather, to be artificially superimposed on the text, almost as if they were tacked on as an after-thought to satisfy Bentley's request for a travel/guidebook for emigrants. Other critics, too, have noted this artificiality. In Mary Innis' The Clear Spirit, Clara Thomas says that "Susanna was...not a writer of calm, expository prose, certainly not an inst stress of prospective emigrants, but a gifted recorder of character, dialogue and incident..." (58). In his unpublished doctoral thesis, Carl Ballstadt too notes that

the sketches which make up the core of Roughing It in the Bush were certainly not published as advice to emigrants. Moodie's aim is, rather, to "more fully illustrate the necessity of a childlike reliance upon the mercies of God...." (II: 117). In the conclusion to Flora Lyndsay the writer makes the same kind of claim: "for those who doubt the agency of an over-ruling Providence in the ordinary affairs of life," she says, "these trifling reminiscences have been chiefly penned" (343). When coming across such statements, it is useful to recall that Moodie had the story of her emigration written before 1840, and some of it possibly as early as 1835, long before Bentley asked her for a book on Canada. Obviously, Moodie believes that hearing of her own experiences will strengthen others in both their faith and their daily endeavours as they undergo trial. This is the aspect of writing autobiography which she chooses to emphasize overtly, though, as suggested earlier, she may well have also been attempting to achieve self understanding and self justification as well. The aim which she admits complements nineteenth-century thought on writing fiction. Indeed, Moodie's novels and stories also portray character after character who tells his or her life history to another in order that that other may learn from the trials described.

It is possible, of course, to claim that making statements of intent such as those appearing in Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It in the Bush may be deemed simple

necessity since, in the nineteenth century, women were still uneasy about writing for the public. Moodie felt this uncertainty herself as her quips about blue-stockings and her other disclaimers, especially in Life in the Clearings, show. Hence, she may simply have been justifying her work by giving it a seemingly moral raison d'etre. However, George Landow observes that, until the modern era and the wide acceptance of psychological theory, it was usual for people to be uncertain about their individual worth in any sense other than the religious. For reasons already noted, this observation is even more valid for women than for men. Therefore, writers relied heavily on religious reasons as justification for their endeavours. This reasoning was most prominent in the seventeenth century but was certainly still common, though perhaps in modified form, in the nineteenth.

Some of the secular impetus for autobiographical writing in the nineteenth century has been discussed. This impetus, however, also melded with a religious tradition which was still strong. In her book on Victorian autobiography, Linda H. Peterson talks of how the English tradition of "self interpretation" -- as opposed to the more simple, French "self presentation" -- had come down to the Victorians from the seventeenth century:

Bunyan's autobiographical mode was not easily avoided...by...Victorians who attempted to write autobiography, whether in its spiritual or newly secular form. Victorian autobiographers had to

contend with a generic tradition that had developed from the spiritual autobiographies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and with the methods of imagining and interpreting the self that that tradition had shaped. (2)

According to Peterson, this line of descent from Bunyan to the writers of the Victorian period "passes through a series of minor but popular practitioners of the spiritual autobiography in the eighteenth century -- writers like William Cowper, John Newton, George Whitefield and Thomas Scott." Peterson discusses and agrees with John N. Morris's view that these spiritual autobiographers

transmitted a sensibility that "[valued] the private and the inward more highly than the public and the outward," a sensibility that we now call Romantic but that Morris argues is at root religious. The gradual ascendance of this sensibility in social and literary realms allowed the spiritual autobiography, rather than the res gestae form, to become the dominant mode of autobiography in the English tradition by the beginning of the nineteenth century. "Self," as Morris puts it, "became the modern word for soul."

(3)

Moreover, as Phyllis Grosskurth points out in an essay entitled "Where was Rousseau?" the writing and reading of spiritual autobiography were often overtly urged during the

nineteenth century for much the same reasons as had been given two centuries earlier. During this period, "when the foundations of orthodox Christianity were revealing alarming cracks, religious leaders constantly urged their flocks to study the lives and works of good men as illustrations of the active virtues" (29). Hence, it would detract from a full appreciation of Moodie's works to assume that her claims to be writing for those suffering from doubt are mere convention. The spiritual autobiographical form was very much alive and well in Moodie's day and served the same moral purposes as it had two hundred years before.

A further substantiation of the view that her works may be read as spiritual autobiography is provided by Moodie's own profoundly religious nature. That nature may not always have expressed itself in ways approved of by her family or by society but she was, throughout her whole life, concerned with the spiritual nature of the world around her.

The search for higher meanings described at some length in "Rachel Wilde" led Moodie, in her own life, to join the ranks of Dissent. While certain comments from John Moodie's correspondence in The Patrick Hamilton Collection (Letter 35, Series I) and from Moodie's own statements in Life in the Clearings (16) make it seem extremely unlikely that she ever embraced Calvinist theology, she seems to have been very impressed with the personal, inspirational element of Dissent that made it, in some ways, similar to romanticism.

Moodie needed a personal, individual, felt experience of God.

It was this need which probably led her, for a very short period, to Congregationalism. She joined the community in the village of Wrentham near her home in Suffolk in April of 1830. It is not known exactly why Moodie left this sect, though letters recently donated with the Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection, from John Moodie to Susanna Strickland, strongly suggest that the community's leader opposed the choice of John as a mate -- probably because he was not a member of that sect himself. What is known is that in April of 1831 Susanna and John Moodie were married in the Anglican church in London.

Nevertheless, despite the brief nature of her alliance, this association with Dissent makes it more likely that the tradition of spiritual autobiography coming up through various Christian reformist movements had even more relevance to Moodie's view of her life and her recounting of it than it might otherwise have done. The various British dissenting sects had many of their roots in the Puritan movements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the group to which Moodie was drawn was no exception. As in other such sects, in-depth soul searching and then public profession of one's conversion experience were mandatory. In a letter to her friend, James Bird, she recounts her induction at some length. It is clear from her letter that her conversion account must have been fairly detailed since

it took a full fifteen minutes to read. Obviously, considerable self-examination would have been required to compose such a document:

The service was beautiful, the sermon most touching, and so deeply was I interested that I never thought of my admission till Mr. Ritchie came to the pew door, and led me to the vestry. He left me alone for about a quarter of an hour whilst he read to the congregation my reasons for dissent from the establishment and proposed me for a member. (Letters 44)

Given both her attraction to dissenting Christianity, and this induction experience in particular, it is likely that Moodie had more than a passing familiarity with the tradition of spiritual watchfulness, self-examination and constant correction that had proved so valuable to the individual Christian as well as to his struggling brethren. Moreover, it seems reasonable to assume that such a familiarity might have well have been useful in the writing of her own autobiographical stories. Indeed, the four works which constitute Moodie's life writing fall generally into the pattern outlined above. It is this pattern which provides the infrastructure for the discussions of the work which follow. "Rachel Wilde" and Flora Lyndsay describe providential mercies and opportunities available to the protagonist. The same two, and Volume I of Roughing It in the Bush, show the unregenerate life in "sin." Roughing It

in the Bush, especially Volume II, may be seen as recording evidence of conversion, replete with backsliding and despair, while in Life in the Clearings Moodie is preaching the gospel, albeit a modified and secularized one, as she has come to see it.

It might be objected that, despite this general pattern, Moodie's works do not deal obviously enough in their particulars with the life of the soul to allow them to be classed as spiritual autobiography. However, further attention to the development of the genre shows that it is not mandatory that they do so. It is obvious to modern readers that any life writing relies for its value largely on the experiences of the writer. Paradoxically, however, experience was not considered of great importance, in theory at least, in the early history of spiritual autobiography. William Spengeman describes the first part of Augustine's Confessions as just such an early autobiography in that it shows truth as a revealed given, a fait accompli of sorts, rather than as discovered. In these accounts, he says, conversion does not occur in time. Truth does not exist at one fixed point which the protagonist must meet but conversion is an awakening to truth which has always been present; "the primary cause of all things is the eternal will of God working through temporal causes, to which the unredeemed intelligence mistakenly ascribes prime causality" (The Forms of Autobiography 12). At a later point in the

same essay, he elaborates further. The purpose of early [historical] autobiograpny is

to reconcile the autobiographer's past life with what he takes to be the absolute truth by showing how the apparently peculiar events of that life actually participated in the eternal plan of reality and how that divine scheme actually informed each event in his original career.... As [the] narrator recounts each biographical event, he explains its place in the total pattern described by previous and subsequent events and hence, its particular relation to the 'arger truth which informs that pattern. (34)

This truth which has always been present was eternal and immutable for Augustine. It lay outside the individual life, in God. In such autobiographies, spiritual concerns were, at all times, obvious.

To some degree, this observation on historical autobiography has relevance to Moodie's work. As the following chapters will illustrate, when she wrote her life stories, Moodie probably had in mind an immutable truth -- the same truth, indeed, which informed the work of Augustine. It is a Judeo-Christian truth and is embodied in the pattern which Christianity uses to interpret human activity. It is the myth of the Fall, expulsion from Eden, wandering and eventual re-entry into Paradise. It is the myth of captivity in Egypt, travels through the desert and

final, victorious advent into Canaan. Moodie's life, too, can be seen as encompassing a fall from grace, a period of wandering, exile and trial and a final time of salvation and rest. Other critics, too, have noted the pattern though it has not been specifically related to autobiography. R. D. MacDonald, for example, says that the plot of Roughing It in the Bush "moves in circular fashion from British village, to the lower St. Lawrence, to Lake Ontario, to the deep bush, and finally back to the Canadian counterpart of British civilization, the village" (24). In Life in the Clearings, Moodie herself says that Belleville is the final "haven of rest to which Providence has conducted [her] after the storms and trials of many years" (3).

Nor is it surprising that Moodie should view her experiences in this manner. According to Linda H. Peterson, typology and typological habits of mind were an important influence on the structure of nineteenth-century autobiography. Queen Victoria's personal chaplain, Henry Melville, is quoted as saying that the history of Israel was "a figurative history, sketching as in parable, much that befalls the Christian church in general, and its members in particular." "It was," he added, "a prophecy which would find its accomplishment in the experience of the true disciples of Christ in every nation and age" ("Biblical Typology and the Self Portrait of the Poet in Robert Browning" 236-37).

More generally, the external "truth" moulding Moodie's life writing was made up of the closely related religious and social virtues validated by nineteenth-century British society. A comment by Porter and Wolf holds good here:

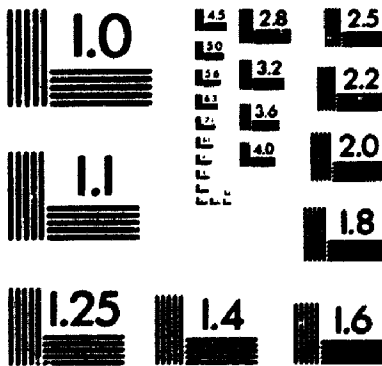
To some extent the self is created in a social context and a person may be largely the product of the situations in which he finds himself. Our roles are, more often than not, created by the demands of others or at least by our perception of the ideas and expectations that others have of us.

(65)

In Moodie's day, the social context happened to have been inundated with religious principles and attitudes.

However, to claim that Moodie's life account was determined totally from without by socio-religious givens would be to commit an error of omission. Experience -- and not always experience of an obviously religious significance -- played a larger role and is, therefore, central to the works. The value of relying on experience gradually to reveal the truth of a life, rather than beginning with a set of a priori notions about that life, is described by Spengeman. Though he is specifically discussing Dante's La Vita Nuova, his observation holds good for much life writing, including Moodie's, as it began to develop into secular detail and away from the pattern set by Augustine. "The action of [.] life," he says, "is justified not only by its place in the formal design of truth, but by its being

2



the medium through which that design is manifested. Instead of explaining the truth behind the protagonist's errors... thus emphasizing the difference between them," Spengeman holds that "[the] narrator allows the form of truth to emerge gradually from the protagonist's experiences...." He concludes that this narrative method "imitates the process of...enlightenment, allowing the form to unfold with the action, exactly as truth arose from the events of [the] life" (36). Hence, it is possible that not only the reader, but also Moodie herself may find the writing to be a vehicle of discovery. Perhaps even she did not absolutely "know" the meaning of her life when she began composition and had to have it dawn upon her gradually.

Whatever the case, the multi-phase protagonist in Moodie's books learns through experience. Such a process, indeed, came to be seen as almost necessary for the production of a life account, St. Augustine's views notwithstanding. As Spengeman points out, as autobiography developed, the portrayal of externally determined rather than internally discovered, complete truths became technically difficult because writers found that the pre-set pattern was tending to pervert the honesty of the depiction. Despite his or her theological beliefs, the artist, even in Augustine's case, needed the sinful experience of the protagonist in order to tell a good story. This observation has held good for autobiographers ever since and is also valid for Susanna Moodie.

Over the centuries, this artistic problem was partly resolved by changes in theology. As has been noted, when man came to be viewed as an individual responsible to God for his own salvation, recounting and understanding experience, even the ordinary experiences of everyday, took on much more importance. The theological given did not disappear but it did retreat into the background; as Spengeman points out, referring to Grace Abounding, John Bunyan could

indulge in a taste for the secular because the divine superstructure that had given shape to Christian life for centuries was still intact...Augustine had to insist on an ordering theological system because he was erecting it. Bunyan got it intact. With the form given, Bunyan could fill in the proofs. (51)

The relevance to the work of Susanna Moodie of this theory of the value of secular experience may now be becoming clear. The theological given in her work, too, has, to a large extent, retreated into the background, indeed much further than was the case with Bunyan. Despite her own statements, it is easy to miss the fact that her life writing can profitably be read as spiritual autobiography. In Augustine's work, as Spengeman notes, the aim could not be overlooked. As experience came more into focus, however, it became easier for readers to misconstrue its import and to see it only for its own sake.

Nevertheless, though Moodie lived two centuries after Bunyan, for her and for many people like her, the system still held. Though Christian interpretations of life were being undermined by both science and philosophy in the nineteenth century, Moodie, despite being assailed by occasional doubt, ultimately chose to reaffirm their value. "Filling in the proofs" was central to her aims and was very likely one of the determining criteria behind the choice of events to include in her books.

Furthermore, this focussing on individual and often secular experience in autobiographical writing while at the same time retaining a religious infrastructure, was abetted in England by the pervasiveness of Anglicanism. Whereas the more rigid Calvinistic sects usually avoided elaborating on worldly dealings in their autobiographies, Anglicans held that spiritual concerns are properly worked out only in the secular arena. Cloistered virtue was not something to be revered. In his book, Autobiography in Seventeenth-Century England: Theology and the Self, Dean Ebner discusses these Anglican narratives. "The most startling thing one notices about these life accounts," he says, "is that, without exception, the psychology of conversion and its intricate exploration of spiritual emotions is absent" (72). Furthermore, in the Anglican tradition, excessive introspection was even discouraged. Because of this active discouragement, autobiography began to take on even greater secular breadth:

Frequently, the opposition to pious concerns was so great among Anglican autobiographers as to result in almost purely secular autobiography. They were offended by Puritan spiritual excesses. They believed that interaction with the world taught humility, charity and peace. (Ebner 88)

A work which recounted the affairs of everyday life could, therefore, still be about the progress of the soul. The Anglican espousal of reason and the via media can be seen here. Hooker, a theologian central to the Anglican tradition, had seen "the book of nature as an important source of the mind's knowledge of God and ethical order" (Ebner 93). According to Ebner, Hooker also believed in "the power of reason alone to lead man, not all the way, but much of the way towards a knowledge of God." Ebner concludes that

a theological tradition which emphasized the ability of natural reason to gather from sensory experience the knowledge of laws which would govern the whole range of human affairs, and a theological tradition which insisted upon sensuous aids in worship, encouraged the autobiographer to turn from his subjective states in conversion, even from pity itself, to a delineation of the world which lay before him. These were the theological views which allowed the Anglican autobiographer to share the interest of other

Renaissance humanists in a wide spectrum of external and public affairs rather than to confine himself, under the influence of a pervasive pietism, to the private matters of the individual soul. (94)

For all the reasons discussed above, experience came to be seen as contributing directly to man's spiritual progression. Moodie, then, had two lines of tradition to draw upon when engaged in recording the events of her life. On the one hand, she was aware of the more overtly religious tradition which spoke almost exclusively of matters of the soul. This is the form more obviously concerned with spiritual life which had come down through Augustine and then the Puritan reformers and with which Moodie was probably familiar through her conversion to Dissent, if in no other way. This tradition appears to have given her autobiographical works their basic form and design and also to have given rise to the occasional reiteration of her intent. Her statements on God's Providence in both Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It in the Bush are examples.

On the other hand, for most of her life Moodie was probably an Anglican. Very little is actually known of her religious affiliation; the letters -- both published and unpublished -- are largely silent on the question. However, critics do seem to assume that, having left the Congregationalists and returned to the church of her youth and upbringing to be married, she resumed her affiliation

with that denomination. She seems to have remained allied with the low church, evangelical wing -- for instance, an early letter from John Moodie avows that he should never quarrel with his "own darling's 'enthusiasm,'" a term much in vogue among Evangelicals -- but she does seem to have forsaken the Dissenters. Thus, because of the Anglicanism of Moodie herself, all of her family and the society in which she spent her formative years, it is not difficult to allow that the attention she pays to physical, worldly detail in her life writing may yet have spiritual import.

Two factors discussed above -- the fact that spiritual autobiography entails the recounting of movement from sin to grace and the fact that worldly experience might be spiritually valid -- led to the use of one very conventionalized technique which may be seen as important to Moodie's work. It became common practice to portray the movement from sin to grace with one specific, worldly experience -- the physical journey. In his work, Private Chronicles: A Study of English Diaries, Robert A. Fothergill notes the usefulness of the journey motif:

It is much easier when travelling to perceive one's life as a progression by stages, than when fixed in one place and in one occupation. In fact it may be claimed that experiencing life as a graduated succession of changes is an absolute prerequisite for writing a journal. (14)

Though Moodie's work is autobiography rather than journal, the observation made by Fothergill is still valid. Indeed, the pattern also shows up in other true autobiographies and in fiction based on autobiography. In his discussion of Augustine's work, for instance, Spengeman says that in the first two parts of the Confessions, "travel stands for fruitless human ambition, home for spiritual resignation to the eternal will of God" (20). This pattern is also central to Robinson Crusoe, as George A. Starr's book, Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography, makes clear. "The voyage," he says, "had long been a popular metaphor for the object and rigors of spiritual aspiration..." (18).

In Moodie's autobiographical writing, the theory does not fit perfectly, but it does still shed light on her work. In "Crusoe In the Backwoods: A Canadian Fable," T.D. MacLulich discusses the relevance of the Crusoe story, including the spiritual progression made concrete by Crusoe's journey, to the experiences of the Moodies and Traills. Though he ultimately holds that Moodie's trials cannot be seen in the Crusoe tradition, his synopsis of Crusoe's experiences is useful. Literary criticism, MacLulich says, "sees Crusoe as starting in a state of childish rebellion." Over the course of his travels -- synonymous with ever worsening trials -- he "grows and matures into a chastened, repentant, thoroughly mature figure," and "[undergoes] conversion in the Puritan tradition" (116).

The suggestion made here is that the pattern is useful but that it does not fit exactly because Moodie's journeys were real rather than simply literary conventions to be adopted and shaped to portray spiritual progress. However, the physical upheaval caused by Moodie's emigration does provide a nice counterpart to her emotional and psychological dislocation. Moodie leaves an ideal, almost paradisaical realm -- indeed, in "Rachel Wilde" the Suffolk countryside is described as Eden -- to emigrate to Canada. She originally settles in a more or less cultivated part of the country; it is not civilization, but it is not exactly wilderness either. However, she does not remain there. Like Crusoe, she must go further and further from society until she is sufficiently humbled. The backwoods is Moodie's "island," the location where she faces her faulty nature and, to a large extent, overcomes it. In this progression she is very much like Crusoe who cannot begin his trip back to the human community until he is chastised and humbled by total isolation. Only when he is brought to trust completely in the wisdom of God rather than in his own proud self-sufficiency, and only when he agrees that God, and not he himself should choose his lot in life, is Crusoe fit to return to society. Though Moodie's conversion is not identical and though her specific experiences do not match the fictionalized experience Defoe credits to Crusoe, the general pattern holds.

Because this line of suggestion may be new to readers, especially as it is applied to Roughing It in the Bush, it may be helpful to take a broad overview of Moodie's autobiographical writings before paying specific attention to her own character traits. So far, the ideas presented have been offered in a largely theoretical context and, sometimes, in the context of what is known of Moodie's personal life. However, there is also considerable internal evidence, aside from her self-characterization, to show that she viewed her emigration as an experience of learning, change and progress. Her preparations for the trip, her journey to the new world and her settlement in the primitive wilds were events which contributed to the process of spiritual maturing she felt she had to undergo. Attention to four particular facets of her autobiographical work will provide some evidence that she held this overview. These four facets include overt statements of her views on learning, in one form or another, statements on the problems involved in seeing one's own character accurately, and two sets of allusions -- one Biblical and one to Wordsworth's poetry.

First, there are several statements scattered throughout the writing, delivered in either the narrative voice or the voices of the characters, which indicate that education in its broadest sense is a central preoccupation. One important passage appears in the June 1848 issue of "Rachel Wilde;" it stresses the necessity of forcing "a

strong will...to make successful war against the imperfections of [one's] own faulty temper" (234). The type of learning alluded to here is arguably spiritual in nature.

Another passage, from early on in Flora Lyndsay, illustrates the necessity for acquiring practical knowledge as well. After describing Flora's many errors in making preparations for the trip to Canada, the narrator says:

If "necessity is the mother of invention," experience is the handmaid of wisdom, and her garments fit well. Flora was as yet a novice to the world and its ways. She had much to learn from a stern and faithful preceptress, in a cold and calculating school. (32)

A third statement consisting of an apostrophe to poverty comes as commentary on the family's lifestyle in the bush and confirms that the rigorous trials undergone there are the means whereby the tempering process is continued:

Ah, glorious poverty! thou art a hard taskmaster, but in thy soul-ennobling school, I have received more godlike lessons, have learned more sublime truths, than ever I acquired in the smooth highways of the world. (II: 115)

Though these passages deal with differing types of learning -- some of it spiritual and some practical -- the difference is more apparent than real. The argument that practical experience may have spiritual import in an autobiography has been made earlier and has relevance here,

for the practical experience which Moodie's protagonist undergoes has spiritual meaning for her life.

Moreover, the sentiments expressed in the autobiographical works are ones Moodie also gives voice to elsewhere. In "The Broken Mirror: A True Tale," from the April 1843 issue of The Literary Garland, the narrator makes the connection between suffering hardship and coming to valuable self-understanding. "Glorious adversity!," she says, "despised as thou art by the sons of men, from thee all that is great and noble in our nature emanates. It is only thou which teachest us a knowledge of self...(ns 1, 148). A narrative aside made in "The First Debt," from the November 1841 Literary Garland, also shows Moodie's belief in the importance of self-knowledge. "A person totally ignorant of the faults and weaknesses of their own character," she says, "is not able to form a very accurate estimate of the mental qualifications of another" (os 3, 534). The first epigraph to this thesis is another indication of Moodie's views on the subject.

Supporting the contention that the four autobiographical works together plot a process of recognizing and overcoming deleterious characteristics are some recurring and very similar statements on the difficulty of seeing truly when looking at oneself. The narrator and supposed "editor" of "Rachel Wilde," for instance, tells readers that "youth, blind to the faults of others, is as blind to its own" (235)! In Flora Lyndsay, one of the

characters expresses similar sentiments. Mrs. Waddell, the Lyndsays' temporary landlady in Scotland, tells the obviously flawed Flora that "we are nane sensible o' our ain defects" (130). In the chapter on the charivari in Roughing It in the Bush, Moodie, exclaiming on the hypocrisy of her neighbour, Mrs. D____, says, "Alas for our fallen nature! Which is more subversive of peace and Christian fellowship -- ignorance of our own characters or of the characters of others" (I: 237)? The repeating of these similar sentiments helps to substantiate the view that one concern of the books is that it is both difficult and necessary to see and overcome one's own flaws.

The third and fourth aspects briefly noted above provide much more important and sustained evidence of the centrality of the learning and maturing process. In Roughing It in the Bush, Moodie twice likens herself and John, in their early days in Canada, to "strangers in a strange land." The words are, of course, those of Moses exiled in Midian. The point is, though, that for Moses even Egypt is not a true home. It is only with his exile that he and his people can begin the long trek back to their real homeland. Certain Judeo-Christian myths mentioned earlier have relevance here. In Biblical typology, the period of the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness is a type of man's wandering in sin and darkness -- in other words, exiled from Eden -- after the fall. Because man has been granted both free agency and the gift of Christ's grace, he

has the responsibility to find his way back to God. Though the long period of the fall is a time of trial for man, there exists at its end the possibility of re-entry to paradise. While it is true that this ultimate paradise is not exactly the same as the one from which he set forth, it is still a paradisaal realm. In fact, in Christian theology, it is a superior one. To be a stranger in a strange land is, thus, to be struggling to learn, to be trying to move from sin to grace -- in short, to be passing through the process undergone by the protagonists of all spiritual autobiographies.

Moodie makes another biblical allusion in her effusion on the city which stands at the gateway to Canada, guarding "that great artery flowing from the heart of the world" (Roughing It in the Bush I: 19). With the actual, physical location, no doubt, calling the allusion to her mind, she calls Quebec the "city founded on the rock" (I: 19). These are the words capping the three chapters in the gospel of St. Matthew which record some of Christianity's central teachings and which begin with the Sermon on the Mount. Christ says, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock./ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock" (7:24, 25). Three chapters of the New Testament -- Matthew 5, 6, and 7 -- provide the context for this verse, and

perusal of them may shed light on the terms in which Moodie understood the allusion. The very first verse of these chapters, in fact, admonishes against pride, with Christ's assertion that the "poor in spirit" are blessed and will inherit the kingsom of heaven (5:1). Other well-known commandments given in these passages include the forbidding of anger against one's fellow man, the forbidding of hurling insults -- that is, of calling one's brother "fool" -- and the censure of living at other than peace with one's neighbours (5:22-26). Also castigated are spite and the desire for revenge. The fifth chapter contains the well-known passages on turning the other cheek and going the second mile. Chapter 7 begins with the famous, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Once again perhaps the necessity for self-knowledge is, either consciously or unconsciously, alluded to by Moodie. The relevance of these passages to concerns she shows throughout her autobiographical writing will be clearly outlined in succeeding chapters. Here, it need only be said that they are central to a reading of her work, as spiritual autobiography.

She also likens Quebec to the city on the hill. The Biblical reference is Matthew 5:14: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

Can it be, then, that Moodie sees this new world as a place to begin again with the quintessential Christian virtues? Perhaps the society of the new world, cleansed of some of the corruptions of the old, can truly be built upon a rock.

Obviously, it would be unwise to push this line of reasoning too far. It is true that Moodie makes no attempt to follow any of these references through at any length nor does she use them very obviously as structuring devices for her writing. However, it is also true that she knew the Bible very well. For instance, in a letter to James Bird she quotes twenty-eight biblical passages to prove that man has a "glorious hope in remission of sins through the blood of the blessed Redeemer" (Letters 46-47). Some incidents recounted in both Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It in the Bush certainly show that the composite protagonist of these works has many biblical passages at her fingertips. Given that she was familiar with the context from which she so easily plucks her allusions, Moodie may quite readily have seen her emigration to Canada as an opportunity to learn and practise those tenets which make up her religion. Hence, emigration could be a kind of baptismal experience; Canada was a new world, indeed.

Another set of biblical allusions involves the myth of the fall. These can be found quite consistently throughout the first three autobiographical books. In the April, 1848 issue of "Rachel Wilde," for instance, musing on Rachel's joy in nature, the narrator says:

Ah, blessed, thrice blessed season of youth and innocence -- when earth is still the paradise of God, and its crimes and sorrows are veiled from the eyes of the undefiled by the bright angel of His presence. They see not the flaming sword, they hear not the doom of exile; but wander hand in hand with pitying spirits through that region of bliss." (183)

A similar observation, this one more specifically about Rachel, is made when the girl takes refuge in the fields and woods around her home as she attempts to escape the censure of her family:

Rachel sitting among the grass and discoursing poetry to the flowers, felt not the darkening influence of the dust and rubbish of the world. Her wealth was the abundance of nature, the garniture of fields and woods. To have been undeceived would have robbed her of the beautiful, to have driven her forth from paradise with the flaming sword. When goaded into pain by the sneers and scoffs of those who knew not her hidden Eden, Rachel sought the 'Divine Mother,' and on her verdant, ever fragrant bosom dried her tears." (235)

The chief character of these autobiographical works is, of course, ultimately forced to depart from Eden. She has both to grow up and to leave England, agreeing "to follow the

adverse fortunes of the beloved -- to toil in poverty and sorrow by his side -- a stranger and an exile in a foreign land" ("Rachel Wilde" 235).

It should be admitted here that, in some ways, these references to Eden and what they represent in Moodie's work stand in contradiction to the suggestion that her life writing constitutes a spiritual autobiography. In fact, this inherent contradiction again highlights a confusion of ideas or beliefs that has been mentioned earlier as characteristic of both the Victorian period and of Moodie herself. For the true spiritual autobiographer, God lies ahead, and ignorance and the depravity of original sin lie behind. Therefore, the chief character's task is always to move forward. However, with the advent of romanticism and its view of childhood as an innocent, idyllic time, the endeavour of the autobiographical character became confused. At some level at least, the goal came to be the recovery of that lost bliss which lay in the past. The romantic autobiographer, hence, was greatly tempted to move backwards. This clash of ideals often causes confusion and contradiction in both content and form in autobiographies written after the eighteenth century, a point which William Spengeman discusses in his chapter on Rousseau in The Forms of Autobiography. It may be just such a clash that causes some of the uncertainty which readers find in Moodie's works. Sometimes she castigates repining and believes that she should move forward, towards acceptance of the life God

has decreed for her. At other times, however, she experiences bittersweet longing for her past; she pines both for England and her childhood. Moreover, to some degree, this longing always exists in her writing. Nevertheless, at one important level of her autobiographical works, Moodie castigates this backsliding. In other words, she decides that forward movement is best despite the pain it involves.

Just as exile from Eden was, paradoxically, the beginning of a definite good for Adam, so exile may be an opportunity for Moodie. Though, in theological terms, it were better had man never fallen, all is not lost now that he has. As Herbert Weisinger suggests in Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall, "the fall of man is felt to be simultaneously harrowing and ecstatic, for at the very moment when man is thrown into the deepest despair, at that moment and at that moment alone, he is made aware of the possibility of realizing the greatest good..."(20). Weisinger says that the theory of the fall has given rise to the idea of "progression from ignorance, through experience to light" (20). He finds this idea voiced in Paradise Lost XII, 470-8:

That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I shall repent me more of sin,
By me done and occasioned, or rejoice

Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring
 To God more glory, more good will to men
 From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.

It is true that, for Adam, the fall betokened the beginning of his trials but it is also true that those trials would lead him back to paradise as a full and complete son of God with his virtue, to a large extent, a function of his own inner struggles and choices.

Moodie, who knew Milton, appears to think that her protagonist has something in common with his Adam and Eve. When Flora, for example, embarks on her trip to Canada, the narrator says, "Sad she was, and pale and anxious; for the wide world was all before her..."(167). The allusion here associates Flora's situation with the one described in the last lines of Paradise Lost. Milton says, "Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;/ The world was all before them, where to choose/ Their place of rest, and Providence their guide..."(XII, 645-47). Moodie's protagonist, then, is leaving what, in some ways, may be seen as a paradise. However, this departure also begins the trip back. Though Moodie never sees England again, she does eventually return to the colonial equivalent of civilization; and, in accepting God's decree as to her lot in life, she also comes closer to oneness with Him.

Moreover, true to pattern, the new world has, in some ways, the potential of a paradise. Grosse Isle, as described in Roughing It in the Bush, looks to Moodie like a

"perfect paradise at this distance" (I: 10). The suggestion might well be made that Moodie is disabused of this notion after she actually lands on the island. The point is, though, that it is not the place itself which she finds disgusting but the people who are there -- people of old world origin who, as Moodie several times argues, have been so abused and degraded by the British class system that their excesses, if not condoned, can at least be understood. The epigraph to this chapter sums up her view of the quarantine ground itself: "Alas, that man's stern spirit e'er should mar/ A scene so pure, so exquisite as this" (I: 1). The new world itself is unsullied. Even after her disillusioning visit Moodie likens Grosse Isle to "a second Eden just emerged from the waters of chaos." Her experience has not dampened her enthusiasm at all. "With what joy," she says, "could I have spent the rest of the fall in exploring the romantic features of that enchanting scene" (I: 17)!

A passage from the early pages of Roughing It in the Bush, Volume II, also likens the new world to a paradise. The topic under discussion is ghosts and the reasons for the lack of superstitions among Canadian-born settlers. Their guide tells the Moodies that "the country is too new for ghosts. No Canadian is afraid of ghosts. It is only in old countries, like your'n, that are full of sin and wickedness, that people believe in such nonsense." Moodie comments:

This theory of Mr D_____ 's had the merit of originality, and it is not improbable that the utter disbelief in supernatural appearances which is common to most native-born Canadians, is the result of the very same reasonable mode of arguing. The unpeopled wastes of Canada must present the same aspect to the new settler that the world did to our first parents after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden; all the sin which could defile the spot, or haunt it with the association of departed evil is concentrated in their own persons. (II: 13, 14)

Moodie, then, shares, in theory at least, the beliefs which her sister, Catharine Parr Traill, so successfully put into practise. To a large degree, the new world can be whatever newcomers choose to make of it.

The other allusions which may be cited as indication that Moodie saw her Canadian experiences as constituting a learning process are to Wordsworth. In her article on "Rachel Wilde," Margot Northey mentions the connection between the story and Wordsworth's work but concentrates on the figure of the romantic artist. The suggestions presented below raise other issues.

Moodie does not mention Wordsworth in her letters, but much has been written about her romantic cast of mind. For instance, William Gairdner's article, "Traill and Moodie: Two Realities," deals extensively with this aspect of her

personality. Moodie's own writing offers considerable proof that she believed that nature never did betray the heart that loved her. She also found that recourse to the "Divine Mother" always offered solace in an existence where the world is too much with us. Indeed, ideas which have found their best-known embodiment in Wordsworth's poetry show up throughout Moodie's works, but are most notable in "Rachel Wilde." Discussing the young girl in that work, the narrator says:

Who would not gladly be a child again, to sit among the grass and weave daisy chains, to build grottos with twigs, and decorate them with snail shells; to hear mysterious music in the breeze as it wanders amid the tops of the lofty pine trees, or impels forward the small wavelets of the brook --to have no knowledge of sin -- no fear of death -- no agonizing doubts as to the future. Well has the bard of nature exclaimed, when these holy recollections of his infant years thronged fast round him:

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy" -- (183)

If the general content of this passage and the phrase "holy recollections of his infant years" were not, in themselves, enough to call to mind the full title of Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode," the quoting of line 66 -- "heaven lies about us in our infancy" -- could leave readers with little doubt that Moodie knows the poem. In fact, it

is possible that the autobiographical works rely, to some extent, on the ideas which lie at the ode's core.

In his chapters on Wordsworth's influence on Victorian religious thought, Stephen Prickett discusses primarily the content of the poetry. He also observes, though, that "it is less often noticed that the form used by Wordsworth" for affirming "an emotional unity and sense of wholeness in the face of the ambiguities and doubts of an increasingly fragmented and complex intellectual climate in The Prelude and the 'Immortality Ode'" -- that of autobiography -- is the "traditional Christian form for describing spiritual crises" (89). Prickett notes that the earliest Prelude was written, like Augustine's Confessions, in thirteen books, but adds that the similarity "lies much deeper than numerical ordering:"

The Confessions of Augustine...are about the growth of Augustine's mind. Though it is ostensibly a "spiritual" autobiography, the peculiar fascination and greatness of Augustine is that he could not separate the "spiritual" from the whole of the rest of his mental development --any more than Wordsworth could separate the poetic. Augustine, like Wordsworth, was in search of a particular quality of wholeness for which his religious intuition gave him the perspective. (89)

This last statement can very fittingly be applied to Moodie as well. And since, in some ways, Wordsworth's

"autobiographical" poetry can be seen fitting into the old, Christian tradition of spiritual autobiography, it becomes even more useful and appropriate to note its relevance to Moodie's work.

Wordsworth begins the ode with an epigraph from his own earlier poem, "My Heart Leaps Up," the first line of which is, "The child is father of the man...." In the poem which follows, he describes the ways in which the innocent, pure appreciation of the natural world experienced by his childish self now enriches his adult life. Part of Moodie's intent in "Rachel Wilde" is, undoubtedly, to show the same thing. In that story much attention is given to Rachel's oneness with nature. The other autobiographical books carry the theme through to illustrate how this oneness coloured her adult life and her works. In the first paragraphs of the initial story, Moodie dwells at length on her belief that an adult's character takes its nature from the environment of the child's youth:

Our very thoughts...have taken a colouring from
the location in which we were born....

The quiet beauties of a rich agricultural
district; or the bold rugged grandeur of a
mountain land, leave their abiding traces upon the
ductile heart of youth.... (113)

The body of Wordsworth's poem goes on to present his feeling that, though the world was once "apparelled in celestial light," there has now "past away a glory from the

earth." "Rachel Wilde," too, devotes considerable time to showing that, for the young child, the world is imbued with "the glory and the freshness of a dream." It is also true, as one sees in Flora Lyndsay and, to a much greater extent in Roughing It in the Bush, that for the developing autobiographical protagonist, the inevitable "yoke of earthly freight" surely comes, "heavy as frost and deep almost as life." Nor does this "freight" consist of only physical hardship; much of it is spiritual malaise, as it is for Wordsworth.

Moodie's central character also shares other traits with the speaker of Wordsworth's poem. In the ninth and tenth stanzas he says that the thought of his past years breeds in him perpetual benediction, but not for the "simple creed of childhood" (137, 138). Rather, his "song of thanks and praise" is for "those obstinate questionings, / Of sense and outward things" (144-45).

Surely the questioning tendency readers see portrayed in the autobiographical protagonist is Moodie's counterpart to Wordsworth's "obstinate questionings." These tendencies consist, not in the doubt about social or religious mores experienced by the adult character, but, rather, in the young Rachel's wondering awe at the "great unknown power [which] had called her into existence" (234). They are also manifested in the many ponderings of Flora or the Moodie of Roughing It in the Bush on the validity of spiritual monitions.

There are aspects of both Wordsworth's poem and Moodie's tales where the two accord quite closely, then, but there are also areas where Moodie uses Wordsworth's words and ideas for her own purposes. It is quite possible that this alteration may have been accidental or unconscious, of course. Moodie may simply have read Wordsworth in light of things she already believed. For example, it is likely, as a later discussion will indicate, that she interpreted his poetry in more orthodox religious terms than those which he originally intended it to express.

In the previously quoted passage from "Rachel Wilde" on how nature affects character, Moodie has quite significantly altered Wordsworth's idea on that subject. For him, the effect of nature is on the mind and heart of the child -- an effect which colours what will, for lack of a better term, be called his "spiritual" life as an adult. The memory of the child's unadulterated joy later revivifies the care-worn world and allows him to feel something of his old certainty that he is one with the life force of the universe. While Moodie also seems to have held this view, as some of her rhapsodies on nature show, she took it further than Wordsworth ever did. In the early passage from "Rachel Wilde," for example, Moodie's expressed view moves into the prosaic. For her, the agricultural district and the rugged mountain land "often determine the future character of the individuals, born and educated amid such scenes. A taste for peaceful and elegant pursuits, will mark the one, while

a spirit of enterprise and a stern desire for military glory will predominate in the other" (113). For Moodie, the type of landscape experienced in youth affects the specific type of temperament the adult will have and, hence, determines his choice of life work.

Again, attention to the "Intimations Ode" can shed light on Moodie's resolution in her life story, as long as the differences between the two sets of ideas are kept in mind. In the famous tenth stanza of the ode, for example, Wordsworth's speaker affirms that

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind,
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind. (180-
89)

This finding of strength in what remains behind -- basically an acceptance of human pain and the love and hope that can arise from struggling with it -- is the core philosophic precept of the poem and is one Wordsworth also expresses elsewhere. In "Tintern Abbey" the speaker says that, in recompense for his childish, paradisaal innocence he has

received other gifts. Now he hears "the still sad music of humanity...of ample power to chasten and subdue" (86-93). Moodie, too, came to see human suffering as chastening and subduing. She also came to hear the "still sad music of humanity" through her involvement in trials and sacrifice. For Moodie, though, what has been given up is more material in nature than it is for Wordsworth. He has lost childish innocence. She too has lost that quality, as the passage about weaving daisy chains indicates. However, she has also lost home, friends, family and social status.

Still, the general analogy holds good. The point of growing up, for Wordsworth, is not to retain a childish, immature longing for the idyllic realm of the past but to learn to tap the remembered beauty of that past to enhance a deepened, fully cognizant understanding and acceptance of present realities. Moodie makes that determination as well, though her resolution is expressed in terms of the social and geographical situation she finds herself in.

The narrator of Roughing It in the Bush, for example, states right at the outset that the weeping and wailing for the past which readers see the Moodie of Volume I indulging in, is wrong. The narrator praises Canada as "the first, the happiest, the most independent country in the world" and charges "British mothers of Canadian sons" to teach those sons the love of their new country. If they do this, she says, they will "cease to lament [their] separation from the mother country" and "will soon learn to love Canada as [she]

now [loves] it, who once viewed it with a hatred so intense that [she] longed to die...." She concludes this exhortation with a warning:

But oh! beware of drawing disparaging contrasts between the colony and its illustrious parent.

All such comparisons are cruel and unjust; -- you cannot exalt the one at the expense of the other without committing an act of treason against both.

(I: 20-21)

Given this statement, readers may well be intended to see Moodie's many later lamentations and comparisons -- explicit and implicit -- with condemnation; does she not, throughout the first part of the book, show herself constantly failing to find joy in what remains behind?

The final statement of this book, before the ending poem of praise is, "I shall consider myself amply repaid for revealing the secrets of the prison-house...(II: 291). There is no doubt that the chief focus of Moodie's attention in these last paragraphs is the physical hardship she had to suffer in the bush. But, it should again be remembered that she is writing, not only spiritual autobiography, but emigrant guidebook for Richard Bentley. She wants to prevent those settlers unused to physical drudgery from living in the backwoods. For people such as these, the more remote regions are a "cell" or a "green prison," as she elsewhere calls them.

However, it is also true that "prison house" is an odd term, one which a writer would not normally use to refer literally to a place of incarceration. It is, on the other hand, a term from the "Intimations Ode," a term, in fact, from the line following the one Moodie quotes in the first paragraphs of "Rachel Wilde." She has, then, both begun and ended the story of her spiritual struggles -- for in Life in the Clearings the struggle is past -- with allusions to Wordsworth's poem. Though heaven did, indeed, lie about her in her infancy, "shades of the prison house" closed around the adult. These two truths are consistently illustrated throughout the first three autobiographical books. Since, in Wordsworth's poem, the process of growing up is likened to a sojourn in the "prison house," it may also well be that Moodie uses the term to indicate the nature of her own stay in "prison." Her "incarceration" in Canada, and especially in the woods, is a period of growing up, of coming to terms with an adult world which necessitates the exchange of naive ignorance of the world's pain for an appreciation of the "still, sad music of humanity." If these observations can be accepted, it should not stretch the credulity too far to suggest that this coming to terms, this finding of strength in what remains behind, involves the learning process which Moodie had to undergo.

The lamenting, proud, peevish, fear-ridden and largely incompetent woman of 1832 gives way, after rigorous trials, to a brave, strong, resourceful woman thoroughly capable of

fending for herself, for her children and, sometimes, for her husband. The woman who in thought, word and deed railed against Providence by hating "that lot in life to which it had pleased God to call her" disappears. Also, like Crusoe, Moodie learns genuinely to accept God's dictates as to her own path. Having done so, she rejoins the wider community, in this case represented by the rapidly growing colonial town of Belleville. It is a discussion of this progression, this movement from "sin" to "grace," which occupies the succeeding chapters.

III. Early Providential Mercies and Unregenerate Life in Sin:
Susanna Moodie's Character Traits as Embodied in
"Rachel Wilde," Flora Lyndsay and Volume I of
Roughing It in the Bush

The spiritual autobiography initially presents to its readers an account of early mercies and opportunities offered by God to the central character while, at the same time, emphasizing that character's propensity for sin, despite God's favour. Part of the reason for this presentation is that it not only emphasizes God's goodness, but also delineates man's perversity. Despite God's munificence, man, naturally depraved, is shown inevitably going astray.

Such an offering of factual evidence for man's innate sinfulness stressed the need for salvation, an emphasis that was necessary because it was the achieving of this salvation which occupied most of the autobiographer's later attention. Hence, in these traditional autobiographies, childhood tends to be portrayed as a time of both happiness and unhappiness, with the latter aspects stressed. This is a trend which is still evident in nineteenth-century accounts. LuAnn Walther notes that one of the traditional views which the Victorians

Victorians inherited was that the child was "potentially wicked and needed constant guidance and discipline" (67). Readers may see this attitude very much alive in Moodie's portrayal of the perverse temperament of the young Rachel Wilde, a character whose last name is descriptive of her personality.

Like the children of many of the earlier accounts, Rachel, though living amidst bounty, is still "sinful." Also as in these accounts, the "providential mercies and opportunities" are given rather short shrift by the writer because they are not the central focus of attention. Nevertheless, Moodie does make it clear that, in some ways, her protagonist is a blessed individual.

One of the most important points to be derived from a reading of the initial autobiographical tale is that Rachel is precocious in her ability to perceive the beauty of the natural world. Since a longer discussion of this ability comes later in this chapter, all that will be said now is that, throughout all her trials, Rachel, -- and, indeed, Flora and the Moodie of Roughing It in the Bush -- is comforted by the immanent spirituality she perceives in nature. This perception is shown to be a constant strength to the protagonist throughout all the autobiographical narratives. In a sense, through her love of nature, God is always with her.

It must be observed here that this appreciation in Moodie's composite protagonist owes much more to the

influence of the romantic movement than it does to autobiographical tradition. In fact, Landow also discusses how, along with the views of innate depravity in children which it had inherited from earlier religious traditions, the nineteenth century had also adopted the romantic concept of the child as a free and natural innocent. Childhood was "an Edenic, blissful state, a time of...blessedness" (xxxviii). The "six years darling of a pygmy size" became, in some ways, the repository of all that was good, since he or she had not yet been corrupted by the evils of the "civilized" world. In "Rachel Wilde," this attitude to the child is very evident and goes side by side, often awkwardly, with the view of the young girl as arrogant, spoiled, bad-tempered and disobedient. LuAnn Walther notes that this ambiguous, double-barrelled attitude to childhood informs many Victorian autobiographies (66-67). Nevertheless, despite its genesis in romanticism, in the more traditional terms of earlier autobiographies, this knowledge of the spiritual nature of the world can also be seen as the chief "mercy" bestowed upon the character by God.

Rachel is also given a good education and allowed to develop mentally without the restraints imposed upon many nineteenth-century girls. Through their unrestricted reading, the Wilde children live

with the mighty dead of all ages, in a world of history and romance. The little Rachel listened

with eagerness to every word which fell from the lips of her elder sisters. The jumble of history, travels biography and poetry, mixed up in her infant mind, produced a strange combination of ideas, and made her see visions and dream dreams."

(114)

Rachel has, in effect, been given access to the world of thought, access which Moodie knew had stood her in good stead throughout her life.

Nor are more tangible blessings lacking from the protagonist's life though neither the Wildes, the Lyndsays nor the Moodies are ever wealthy. To begin with, Rachel Wilde has at least one supportive and understanding sister who turns out to be a great help during all her family trials. Moreover, the chief character in Flora Lyndsay is very happily married. While it is true that there is an important component of feminine unrest and questioning in the books, especially in Flora Lyndsay, it is also true that, at base, the adult protagonist adores her husband and, for the most part, accepts nineteenth-century sex role conventions. This is one of the areas where the more extreme, feminist readings of Moodie's works break down. And, as Moodie shows in her three fictional tales collected under the title, Matrimonial Speculations, marital contentment was one blessing she rated very highly. Only slightly less than John does Flora adore their baby, Josie. Several passages in the book indicate the couple's

preoccupation with "little Miss Innocence" whose arrival "has added greatly to [their] domestic happiness" (6) and passages from the early letters between John and Susanna Moodie in The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection show the parents' doting affection for their "little Dabchick," Katie, on whom Josie is modelled.

In addition to family happiness, the Lyndsays are blessed with very dear friends. Mary Parnell, whom Carl Ballstadt suggests is the fictional counterpart of Moodie's friend, Miss Gooding, helps Flora make all her preparations for her journey. Mary and two other friends, James Hawke and Adam Mansell -- the counterparts, perhaps, of James Bird and Allen Ransome -- endure extremely inclement weather in order to see the family off. The Hawkes, in fact, think highly enough of the Lyndsays to let them take their young son to his uncle in Canada.

Aside from family and friends, Flora has other, less obvious things to be grateful for. The narrator claims, for one, that Flora is endowed with a strong, resilient spirit:

"the consciousness that they [are] actually on their way to a distant clime [braces] her mind to bear with becoming fortitude this great epoch of her life" (94). Given the complaining of the Moodie readers see in the early passages of Roughing It in the Bush, this claim of fortitude is one they may receive with some scepticism. However, it is also possible that the narrator of Roughing It in the Bush over-emphasizes her protagonist's faults in order to stress

the progression which she makes over the course of that book.

Conforming to the traditional pattern of spiritual autobiography, however, the depiction of the character's falling away from God into sin takes up much more of the writer's attention than the discussion of her blessings because it is more important to the overall purport of the books. "Rachel Wilde," Flora Lyndsay and the early chapters of Roughing It in the Bush can be seen as related works, one key purpose of which is to outline the composite protagonist's errors so that readers may better understand the eventual triumph over them expressed in Roughing It in the Bush --especially the second volume -- and in Life in the Clearings.

In the past, critics writing on Susanna Moodie have tended to see her as a rather static figure. The general assumption has been that she brought her beliefs and patterns of behaviour with her from England, already set as if in stone, and that much of the outrage and unhappiness -- as these critics see it -- expressed in her work is due to the unwillingness of Canadian life to conform to her expectations. The introduction has outlined these views in some detail. And, as the first chapter has stated, there is some justification for holding such opinions. However, it is the contention here that a careful reading of all four autobiographical works, carried out in order, may show this aspect of Moodie's response to Canada to be less all-

encompassing than has previously been thought. For Moodie, the trip to Canada, and especially to the backwoods, was the journey prescribed by God as the remedy for her own spiritual ills. The fault lay, not in the life God had chosen, but in the sinful protagonist who was too stubborn and stiffnecked to accept His all-wise dictates.

Some other critics have come to views which are similar, even when considering Roughing It in the Bush alone. In "Proficient in the Gentle Craft," for example, Carl Ballstadt traces true change in Moodie's attitudes as that change manifests itself in her responses to water throughout Roughing It in the Bush. And, in a recently delivered but as yet unpublished paper, Alec Lucas has suggested that attention to the sketches which make up the core of Roughing It in the Bush and to the original order of their publication in The Literary Garland and The Victoria Magazine shows a real progression and adaptation to Canadian life. Though he does not actually make such an argument, John Moss, in Patterns of Isolation, indicates that he might be receptive to such views in his observation that Moodie portrays herself in ironi' and unflattering ways (85). G. Noonan, in "Susanna and her Critics" also seems to think that Moodie's ironic portrayal of herself serves to "[counter and implicitly criticize] her specious principles" (283). Finally, Carol Shields, in "Three Canadian Women: Fiction or Autobiography," suggests that Moodie might be among those writers who "use diaries or memoirs as

exploratory machinery, as attempts to understand themselves or their period" (50).

The suggestions made here go one step further. While I basically do agree with these critical opinions, I also suggest that, as developmental spiritual autobiography, Roughing It in the Bush cannot stand alone. It ignores the first twenty-eight years of the chief character's life -- the years in which her flawed nature was developed -- and it does not show the culmination of her struggle with her flaws, though it does go some way in that direction. The remainder of this chapter, then, suggests that the protagonist representing Moodie suffers from several categories of moral and social error and that the portrayal of the genesis, development and continuation of these errors can only be appreciated if the four autobiographical works are read together as one unit. The attention given to these categories in earlier, more traditional autobiographies would have been lavished upon the protagonist's "sins" and the delineation of these errors in Moodie's works serves the same function as the portrayal of sin would have had in an earlier account; it shows what the central character has to overcome.

As a child, Rachel Wilde was labelled "entirely bad; a stubborn, self-willed, crazy-pated creature" (234). Though Moodie seems to indicate that her elders' poor handling of Rachel was a contributing factor in her disposition, her later statements show that she sees the central character,

in all her earlier manifestations, as having, over the course of her life, been involved in a process of overcoming undesirable traits developed in youth. The central thematic issues which show up again and again in the first three autobiographical works devolve from Moodie's preoccupation with these traits. Influenced by the norms of her society, she perceived these as moral and social shortcomings.

For the sake of orderly discussion, these errors have been rather arbitrarily divided into seven categories -- pride and arrogance with respect to social class; a tendency towards extremes; scathing, satiric propensities linked to a practice of judging people in quick, shallow ways; doubt and sceptical questioning regarding women's roles; doubt regarding the value of fitting into the community; doubt about the Victorian rejection of high romanticism; and, finally, doubt regarding the wisdom of God's providential design. Most of these problems begin to be evident in the book dealing with the important period of childhood. As Margot Northey observes, "these recollections of the early years have more import as a key to Susanna Moodie's perception of herself than do the recollections of her later life" (118).

Because the discussion of Moodie's character has been organized in this manner, the rest of this chapter and all of the fifth chapter tend to be rather additive in technique. Therefore, in order to make the line of reasoning easier to follow, both chapters have been

subdivided and each instance or error or evidence of its having been overcome is dealt with under a separate heading.

1. Pride and Class-Related Arrogance

The narrator of "Rachel Wilde" portrays one of the central character's moral problems as pride, a fact which is not surprising given Christian theology and the retreat into religious orthodoxy occurring in society at large during Moodie's early life. Moodie shows Rachel to have been arrogant and spoiled from the period of early youth. Though she does not insist that the child is totally depraved in the way one of her autobiographical predecessors might have done, what she gives readers is the delineation of a haughty, self-willed, though undoubtedly precocious child, determined to get her own way. Rachel refuses to associate with people she dislikes, even when her feelings are obviously unjustified, is destructive and mischievous, and obstinately decides to strike out on her own when she feels herself to have been the recipient of unfair treatment. In addition to this objectionable conduct, the narrator admits that, even as a child, Rachel "loved praise" and longed for fame (183, 225). Moreover, Rachel is shown as being greatly enamoured of her pretty clothes and, with her "head turned by a scarlet coat and a gay feather, [she] felt as proud as a peacock as she strutted about in all the dignity of her new finery" (126).

Though this childish vanity is only mildly censured by the narrator, a related problem is definitely condemned. Closely allied to this pride is a sense of class superiority. Many readers of Moodie's work have noted that she retained a sense of class differentiation all her life and that she usually espoused the view that a right thinking society would inevitably be hierarchically structured. R.L. McDougall, for instance, in his introduction to Life in the Clearings, says of the British emigrants to Upper Canada in the 1830's that their voice was "middle class, conscious of its respectability, socially conservative and orthodox in its moral and religious beliefs." It tended to be "anti-democratic and to see the devil's hand in republicanism" (xiii). This claim made of Moodie is partly true but it would be an error to mistake this adult attitude for the one of pure, unadulterated snobbery which she portrays in her characters, Rachel and Flora, and in the Moodie of Volume I of Roughing It in the Bush. The later belief described by McDougall is one of moderation which she worked towards over a number of years. Rachel, Flora and the Moodie of Volume I, however, manifest the unthinking prejudices prevalent in the British society of the day.

In "Rachel Wilde," part of what makes Rachel appear as such an obnoxious little tyrant is her arrogant snubbing of Mr. Pierce, the uncle of her family friend, Lucy Long, on the grounds that he "keeps a shop." When visiting the benevolent old man, Rachel "[draws] stiffly back from the

[shop] entrance and with a curl of her lips...[exclaims], 'I don't mean to stop here. Papa never visits with trades people'" (128). The narrator, moreover, makes quite clear that this pride is ill-founded. Miss Long's wealthy uncle, she says, "looked upon himself as a very respectable and substantial personage, as in truth he was. But Rachel was the daughter of a poor gentle-man, had been brought up with very aristocratic notions, and the sight of the shop, called all her pride into active operation" (128). Rachel, then, is shown as having learned some of her character flaws and this incident is, thus, one instance where readers can see Moodie justifying herself by blaming others for her attitudes.

Nor is it only Rachel's immediate family which teaches her pride and "aristocratic notions." The tale makes clear that Lucy's father, Mr. Long, who is to be Rachel's guardian for a year, is also teaching her lessons of pride and ill-temper. He, himself, is a "violently passionate man, and used to storm at his daughters and servants in a way which made [Rachel's] flesh creep" (159). On one occasion she prefers to spend a day with Mr. Long's field hands, a preference the old man does not take kindly. The narrator explains Rachel's childish, romantic assumptions and Mr. Long's reaction, which is to consider her "an ungrateful little baggage to prefer the shepherd's cottage to his own handsome house" (214). Steeped in his own aristocratic notions, he insists on impressing upon Rachel the

differences in the social strata. The narrator's comment upon this insistence is that, for Rachel, "the first, worst lesson of humanity, was taught her from that hour" (214).

To reinforce these observations on Rachel's pride, the narrator also includes a long, rather unrelated -- at least in any obvious way -- discussion of class arrogance as it affects those at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Explaining the perfidious behaviour of Nancy, the Long's scullery maid, she says:

She was a domestic slave, and the hard treatment she had received from others, had made her callous to praise or blame. If she was an artful, dishonest creature, she had been rendered so by circumstances over which she had no control.

(185)

Following this description, the narrator gives, in considerable detail, the sordid nature of Nancy's origins and the hard treatment she receives from both her employers and her fellow servants. Then follows a rather detached, theoretical set of observations about the nature of class stratification itself:

Such neglected beings are more objects of deep compassion, than of thoughtless blame: -- while contemplating their unmitigated wretchedness, we strive in vain to solve the great riddle of life.

Some, from the first dawn of existence, appear the sport of an untoward destiny -- vessels of

dishonor fitted for destruction; while others occupy the high places of the earth, and revel in its luxuries to satiety. Alas! for the sinful pride of man, for to it, and to it alone, must we trace this fearful incongruity. Pride must have broken the ancient bond of unity, which, at some remote period of the world's history, existed between its children. Yet, God, in his infinite mercy, has provided a link which shall yet bind into one, the dissevered chain, and through the mediation of his blessed son, unite into one loving family, the severed kindreds of the earth; and the holy precepts that Jesus taught, practically born out, shall produce the great moral reformation, that shall banish poverty, and misery from among us: --

"That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that." (185)

This passage has been quoted at some length for two reasons. First, it gives Moodie's theoretical views on the kind of class arrogance she has made part of the young Rachel's character. Second, it is a very clear, succinct statement of an idea which is central to all of Moodie's autobiographical works; one of man's most important tasks is to overcome his pride and the sins consequent upon it in order to facilitate God's eternal aims.

In her article, "Moodie's 'Rachel Wilde:' Completing the Self Portrait," Margot Northey also takes note of this long passage. She sees it as an expression of Moodie's interest in character development and how it takes place. She claims, though, that the interest does not lead to anything. Moodie really "does not sustain this thesis with the other characters in the tale or even with Rachel," she says. "We learn less about how circumstances shape Rachel's character than about how Rachel's temperament and innate sensibilities lead her to act and react as she does" (123).

While some of Rachel's character traits are portrayed as inherent, the statement quoted above is not wholly true. The first passages of the story state that character develops out of its environment, in the sense both of nature and of the treatment meted out by others. To back up these introductory statements, Moodie constructs the tale of Rachel Wilde in such a way as to give a history of the influences brought to bear on Rachel. Her parents, older sisters and temporary guardians affect her largely for ill. The story tellers, poets and historians she reads, the natural world and her older sister affect her for good. Certainly, one of Moodie's aims in writing is to show how the good influences came to predominate.

Moreover, if "Rachel Wilde" is read as the first part of a four-book set, then the development of character throughout the composite protagonist's life is even more clearly shown. Northey herself implicitly admits this

claim; the point of her article is that the characterization of Moodie as a lonely, rejected, romantic artist is begun in "Rachel Wilde." These thoughts on character development aside, however, the chief function of this passage lies in its obvious message. It is superimposed on the tale, awkwardly but deliberately, to guide the reader's reaction to Rachel. It also provides a perspective on later versions of the central protagonist in other works.

For the condescending, arrogant snobbery portrayed in Rachel is also an aspect of the adult protagonist's character. Flora's unfounded sense of superiority is deliberately held up for criticism when she causes embarrassment among her hosts on the brig, Anne, by showing a distinct unwillingness to make the acquaintance of the wives and sisters of the ship's officers. Though John Lyndsay assures her that the "ladies" -- a term Flora questions when it is applied to these women -- are all "nice, good-tempered, natural women who will behave themselves with due decorum," Flora agrees to the meeting with very "bad grace." The narrator, commenting on this scene, informs readers that Flora had not yet "overcome her prejudices regarding superiority of blood and breeding." Apparently her assumptions are obvious, for during the introductions the lower class women cast a "scared look...at each-other when Mrs. Lyndsay takes [her] seat among them; and the dead silence which [falls] upon them...[checks their] lively chattering...." John Lyndsay, much more

egalitarian in nature than his stiff and formal wife, darts "a reproving glance" in her direction and tries to smooth over the awkwardness by receiving the women with "a frank courtesy" (177-78).

As if to back up the validity of the criticism implicit in this scene, an eccentric Irishwoman, Miss Wilhelmina Carr, in recounting her own world travels, tells Flora that "these bull-headed English are the most prejudiced animals under the sun" (46). In putting such statements into the mouths of her characters, Moodie thus sets the stage for the self-condemnation which both she and her husband engage in, though in different ways, in Roughing It in the Bush.

Certainly the Moodie readers see portrayed in the early portions of that book shows these prejudices. One new challenge for the reader, however, is that the portrayal of error in that work is dramatic, and judgement of the protagonist is left largely up to the reader. No narrator condemns the chief character's actions or attitudes as was the case in "Rachel Wilde" and Flora Lyndsay. In fact, the speaker is often -- though fortunately not always -- synonymous with the character and shows all the same flaws. As Carol Shields has noted in "Three Canadian Women: Fiction or Autobiography," "the 'I' of this book is not the voice of one who is recounting a series of adventures; it is the fully developed character-narrator, a persona which [over the course of the book] is expanded and enhanced..."(51).

The French Canadian health officer described in the first chapter of Roughing It in the Bush, for instance, is presented in nothing but condescending tones and phrases. The same kind of superior, condescending tone is evident in Moodie's description of the ship's emigrants finally freed from their long confinement at Grosse Isle. To her dismay, the Scots settlers, whom she is inclined to respect because she thinks they know their place, act just as badly as the Irish, from whom she expects such insubordination. "Our passengers'" she says with self-important possessiveness, had, on board ship, conducted themselves with "the greatest propriety." Once ashore, however, they become "just as insolent noisy as the rest" (I: 11-12).

Early passages of Roughing It in the Bush describe a crisis which the Moodies experience because ship travel in 1832 was something less than safe. The Anne is rammed by another ship as it sits at anchor. As this scene is presented, Moodie is the only female character who shows any courage or good sense. Moreover, the very unflattering view which the Moodie of 1832 has of the inhabitants of a coach stop shows that the disdain she manifests for old-world emigrants is also to be the attitude with which she meets her new countrymen:

Our entrance was unexpected, and by no means agreeable to the persons we found there. A half-clothed, red-haired Irish servant was upon her knees, kindling up a fire, and a long, thin

woman, with a sharp face, and an eye like a black snake was just emerging from a bed in the corner. We soon discovered this apparition to be the mistress of the house.

"The people can't come in here!" she screamed in a shrill voice, darting daggers at the poor old man.

"Sure there's a baby, and the two women critters are perished with cold," pleaded the good old man.

"What's that to me? They have no business in my kitchen." (I: 43-44)

Since it is quite rare, in real life, to meet one-dimensional, caricatured individuals who can be faithfully described in such satiric terms, it seems reasonable to suspect that this portrait is another early instance of Moodie's predisposition for scorn and arrogance. It says as much, if not more, about her as she was in 1832 as it does about the coach stop proprietors.

The same kinds of observations can be made about Moodie's early encounters with the loyalists. To her, they are not really British subjects worth the name but are a "lower order of Americans" who have "spied out the goodness of the land, and borrowed various portions of it." They are "odious squatters who are ignorant as savages without their courtesy and kindness" (I: 80-81).

Even towards their own, properly humble, British-born servants, the Moodie of Volume I shows an appreciation tinged with patronization and condescension. Although the sentiments Moodie expresses with respect to characters such as her Scots servant girl, Belle, and the Irish apprentice, John Monaghan, are meant to pass as praise, the tone and diction indicate that Moodie -- at least in her early days in Canada -- sees the "lower orders" as existing in a kind of feudal inferiority to herself and her husband. Virtues in servants are valued, at least partly, because they indicate the strength of the master-servant bond. They also seem to make servants a more valued good and, thus, enhance the prestige of those who command their obedience and affection.

Attention to the chapters in Roughing It in the Bush written by John Moodie indicate the manner in which such an attitude is to be viewed. His chapters, he says, "afford a connecting link between his wife's sketches," and for this important reason, they should not be cut from editions of the work (I: 241). Without his contributions, it is easy to miss the fact that Susanna Moodie often allows herself to appear ironically, and in a bad light. With his additions, however, the portrayal is more difficult to ignore. It is thus correct to say that, in many ways, both Moodies have one general purport in writing. While it is true that John Moodie intends primarily to explain and excuse his own failings and to give factual detail which will be useful for

future settlers to know, some of that factual detail -- for instance, on the social milieu in Canada and how to deal with it -- are made concrete by Moodie's portrayal of herself in her early days in the colony. As Audrey Morris notes, "there is little doubt that John approved of everything Susanna wrote. Their writing styles were very similar, so much so that there is reason to believe that they helped each other in their compositions" (207). Indeed, early letters from Series I of The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection show that Moodie solicited her future husband's advice and help in her writing (Letter 57).

In one of John Moodie's chapters he echoes the words of Miss Carr in Flora Lyndsay; according to him "Englishmen, when abroad, are the most addicted to the practice of giving themselves arrogant airs towards those persons whom they look upon in the light of dependents on their bounty" (I: 245). In another passage, he as much as admits that their initially cool reception by the Cobourg innkeepers, Mr. and Mrs. S____, was their own fault, for these worthy people "had often been deeply wounded in their feelings by the disgusting and vulgar arrogance of English gentlemen and ladies, as they are called" (I: 268).

His most severe condemnation, moreover, is reserved for British women. The wife and daughter of this innkeeper he says, are

"true ladies and when [he contrasts] their genuine kindness and humanity with the arrogant airs

assumed by some ladies of a higher standing in society from England...when [he remembers] their insolent ways of giving orders to Mrs. S____, and their still more wounding condescension -- [he]... cannot but feel ashamed of [his] country women."

(I: 268)

Given that he "blames himself, at least as much as [the Americans and Canadians]" for his annoyance at new world "familiarity," it is not too difficult to assume that he sees his wife, as one of these condescending British ladies, to share in the fault (I: 269).

John's appendix entitled "Canadian Sketches," which was added to the second edition of Roughing It in the Bush, also makes very clear that the British emigrants who arrived in the early 1830's were guilty of jumping to conclusions about the "Yankees." He points out that after the influx of Tory loyalists who fled to Canada during the American Revolution, "the name of U.E. (United Empire) Loyalists or Tory came to be considered an indispensable qualification for every office in the colony." Initially, he points out, this caused no problem. However, gradually other American settlers also began to arrive who had "no claim to the title of Tories or loyalists," though, they were "in their feelings and habits...not much more republican than their predecessors." The earlier American settlers, he says, viewed these newcomers with jealousy, seeing them as "a swarm of locusts...come to devour their patrimony." In

other words, their dislike was based in self-interest rather than ideology. Then, John contends,

the British immigrants, who afterwards flowed into this colony in greater numbers, of course brought with them their own particular political predilections. They found what was called toryism and high churchism in the ascendant, and self-interest or prejudice induced most of the more early settlers of this description to fall in with the more powerful and favoured party; while influenced by the representations of the old loyalist party, they shunned the other American settlers as republicans. (304-05)

This, he says, was the common mistake made when British emigration was at its height twenty years before. One very fine sketch in which Susanna Moodie makes these kinds of observations concrete is the one where Mrs. Joe finds her doing the laundry. In this episode, as Carl Klinck notes, Moodie does not "pour out confessions" but prefers to "dramatize her vision of herself" ("Introduction" xi).

Initially, Moodie has not been doing many of her own chores. She emphasizes that she either cannot or will not knit, wash clothes, bake or milk cows. Often, when any such necessity arises and there are no servants in the vicinity, she goes for help to the H_____ family, a group of the "odious" American settlers she claims to despise. Obviously, asking your neighbours to do work you would

normally assign to your servants is not going to predispose them in your favour.

Because the book is set one hundred fifty years in the past, and because students of nineteenth-century literature often become accustomed to the social stratification which both authors and protagonists take for granted, it is very easy to overlook one important aspect of this sketch and to be seduced into accepting the same view of the situation as is held by the Moodie of 1832. Many readers of Roughing It in the Bush seem to have done so. However, thinking of a modern equivalent brings the events home. For example, asking your next-door neighbour -- a person you have only recently met -- to step over during a spare minute to do your housework because your cleaning lady is ill, would be a request comparable to some of those Moodie makes. Obviously, the response would be one of justifiable bewilderment and outrage. Nevertheless, the Moodie of 1832 claims to be unable to understand her neighbours' ill will. This scene, however, provides readers with a picture of its origin.

The time has come, it seems, for Moodie to attempt some physical labour; Katie's baby clothes need washing and there are no servants at home to perform the chore. Because of her ignorance of the work, Moodie has soon scrubbed the skin off her wrists. Absorbed in her painful task, she does not see Mrs. Joe watching her from the open shanty door:

"Well, thank God! I am glad to see you brought to work at last. I hope you may have to work as hard as I have. I don't see, not I, why you, who are no better than me, should sit still all day like a lady!"

"Mrs. H____," said I, not a little annoyed at her presence, "what concern is it of yours whether I work or sit still? I never interfere with you. If you took it into your head to lie in bed all day, I should never trouble myself about it."

(I: 140-41)

Moodie has, in effect, just told her neighbour that she means nothing to her. Mrs. Joe and her concerns are so far removed from those of the Moodies that there is no common ground. In other words, Mrs. Joe is too different from -- no doubt meant and interpreted as too far beneath -- the British newcomers to warrant Moodie's attention or concern. The point Moodie is making, which has very little to do with the nicety of minding one's own business, is one Mrs. Joe does not miss, as her rather odd reply shows; she responds, not to what Moodie says, but to what she means:

"Ah, I guess you don't look upon us as fellow-critters, you are so proud and grand. I s'pose you Britishers are not made of flesh and blood like us. You don't choose to sit down at meat with your helps. Now, I calculate, we think them a great deal better nor you." (I: 141)

As Mrs. Joe's outburst shows, it is not this particular incident of seeing Moodie doing washing which has brought on this clash. It is, rather, the thinly disguised condescension and arrogance, the assumption of innate difference, which breed her ill-will. This small incident has merely been the occasion for tapping her pent-up resentment; nor is her response difficult to understand and sympathize with. She notes that the British refuse to eat with their hired hands, people Mrs. Joe calls "helps" rather than "servants," a semantic difference of some importance. Mrs. Joe also knows that Moodie equates these servants with herself and her family, since she is always asking the H_____es to do servants' work for her.

Indeed, Mrs. Joe's final claim is not merely a statement made to insult. No doubt the earlier settlers do find the talents of the "helps" a great deal more useful and praiseworthy than those of the newly arriving British. In a country where cold, accident, illness and hunger are kept at bay only by backbreaking effort, the ability to appreciate the fine sentiments of Letitia Elizabeth Landon may, indeed, be undervalued. As John Moodie points out again in one of his own chapters, "the North Americans generally are much more disposed to value people according to the estimate they form of their industry" (I: 270).

His wife, however, is not yet ready to accept such a radical point of view and prefers, instead, to fall back on her own perceived strengths:

"Of course," said I, "they are more suited to you than we are; they are uneducated and so are you. This is no fault in either; but it might teach you to pay a little more respect to those who are possessed of superior advantages. But, Mrs. H_____, my helps, as you call them, are civil and obliging, and never make unprovoked and malicious speeches. If they could so far forget themselves, I should order them to leave the house. " (I: 141)

Whether or not one thinks that education confers merit, this speech is surely stupid and totally lacking in sensitivity. Not only does it reinforce Mrs. Joe's certainty that Moodie views her as a servant, but it is also blatantly smug and insulting. How can the Moodie of 1832, a helpless newcomer who cannot perform the simplest domestic task, call a more competent person -- whatever her perceived character flaws -- ignorant and fit company only for others who are also ignorant? Such colossal pride, made all the more infuriating by the naive certainty with which it announces itself, gives rise to an understandably passionate outburst from Mrs. Joe who "[rejoices] to see [Moodie] at the wash tub and [wishes] that she may be brought down upon [her] knees to scrub the floors" (I: 141).

After such a delineation of the faults of Moodie, the protagonist, may not the reader be intended to view with irony the naive arrogance of her concluding statement?

"This speech," she says, "only caused a smile, and yet, I felt hurt and astonished that a woman whom I had never done anything to offend should be so gratuitously spiteful" (I: 141). Probably Moodie has done nothing but offend Mrs. Joe since the day she arrived. In 1832, however, she is still too ignorant, too used to the social mores of England, to perceive it; it occurs to her only with later reflection. It is, incidentally, interesting, when reading this passage, to know that in "The Broken Mirror: a True Tale," from The Literary Garland of April, 1843, Moodie's narrator states that "blunt people are always great egoists, and not always sincere" (ns 1, 149). It would, of course, be a perversion of the text to suggest that the Moodies' Yankee neighbours are all paragons of virtue. However, they are human beings with human feelings and sensitivities and are deserving of more respect than Susanna Moodie initially gives them.

2. Propensity for Imbalance and Extremes

The second of the moral/social defects which repeatedly show up in the central character of each autobiographical account is uncontrolled passion of one sort or another, or a propensity for imbalance and extremes. An early and straightforward manifestation of this imbalance is to be found in the young Rachel's temper tantrums. Upon discovering that she has made two appointments for one evening, the child is told that she must keep the engagement

she has made to take tea with some new acquaintances rather than accompany her adult companions to a play. This ruling is not to Rachel's liking. Her subsequent attempts to get her own way include screaming until she is hoarse, throwing things and biting (157). As years pass, Rachel's family and friends understandably become less willing to tolerate her "petty tyrannies," as the narrator terms them; the discipline becomes harsher in attempts to push the wayward Rachel closer to conformity. Now, instead of raging, she resorts to being sullen. The narrator's comment on this behaviour is that the girl

had yet to learn by bitter experience, the philosophy of life. To force a strong will, instead of battling with others, to make successful war against the imperfections of her own faulty temper, and those headstrong passions, which at this period of her history, bid fair to destroy a fragile body and a sensitive and highly imaginative mind. (234)

Several of Moodie's purely fictional works, including the children's books, Passion and Patience and Rowland Massingham, centre on this need to control ill temper and prideful passion. While it is true that the type of admonition offered in these works is typical of Victorian juvenile literature, they do, at least, show that Moodie was fully cognizant of how her society saw such excesses. Carol Shields, too, has noted that the prevailing formula of

Moodie's children's stories is "to translate youthful willfulness into moral responsibility" (Susanna Moodie: Voice and Vision 70). The fact that Moodie goes to some lengths to portray these flaws in this version of her young self indicates that she was also aware of the need for control in her personal life.

This need for reason and balance shows up in much of Moodie's writing for adults as well. In fact, excess is often shown as leading to insanity. One obvious example is Brian, the still-hunter, who, in his younger days, was given to excessive drinking. Other, lesser-known characters exhibiting the same tendency towards extremes include the wife of Leopold of Saxe-Nuremburg, in "Ernest Von Webber," who goes insane with jealousy and desire for revenge. Colonel Stainer, in "Mildred Rosier: A Tale of the Ruined City," undergoes a fanatical experience of repentance and conversion to a Calvinist religious sect. This conversion, the narrator says, while it "was deep and sincere...affected by its intensity the sanity of the convert" (The Literary Garland ns 2, 156). Finally, for Roland Marsham and his mother in "The First Debt: A Tale of Everyday," atheism, one extreme on the continuum of religious belief, goes hand in hand with madness.

In the autobiographical tales dealing with the adult versions of the protagonist, excesses and extremes of several types, in addition to the irascibility shown by Rachel, come in for condemnation. Flora in Flora Lyndsay

is, "like many of her sex, more guided by feeling than reason" and, as such, is described as "a faulty, impulsive, enthusiastic creature" (84). Though at some level Moodie admires these qualities because they indicate a romantic temperament -- perhaps like that of Marianne Dashwood in Sense and Sensibility -- in the main she condemns them.

This concern with excess, here manifested in the form of sentiment, repeats itself continually in Flora Lyndsay and not only with respect to Flora. In impulsive but erroneous anger and grief "old Jarvis" kills the dog which had valiantly tried to save his drowning son. His daughter, Nancy, commits suicide when she learns that her supposed fiance is actually a married man and Flora's own nurse, a forlorn and elderly woman, tells of how she gave in to excessive sentiment by depriving herself of a husband and family when death had denied her a life with her first love. The work makes clear that her only reward for so foolish a sacrifice is to be left solitary and friendless in old age.

It might be claimed that such a reading of the nurse's personal account is incorrect given Moodie's often exercised propensity for writing silly, sentimental fiction with stereotypically romantic resolutions. Indeed, she did write some books of this type. However, she was also quite capable of expressing very unsentimental points of view. Protestations of undying love tended to be immoderate and irrational. Moreover, as the nurse's story shows, they were also impractical, and practicality was something for which

Moodie developed a greater respect the longer she lived in Canada. In "The Sailor's Return," for instance, she recounts yet another story of a young girl whose fiance drowns at sea. In this story, however, the girl declines perpetual mourning and within two years of the death finds herself married to another, and the mother of an infant. The narrator asserts that with this tale she refutes false theories about loving only once (The Literary Garland os 4, 13-18). A poem with similar thematic content is "The Disappointed Lover." Here the jilted individual voices no inconsolable despair but calmly resolves to love again (The Literary Garland os 2, 480).

Personal extremes of many sorts show up in the early chapters of Roughing It in the Bush as well. When she first sights Grosse Isle, Moodie considers it to be "a perfect paradise" and "ardently" desires to go ashore (I: 5, 10). Her emotional response to the St. Lawrence is to be "blinded with the excess of beauty;" she believes it to be "scarcely surpassed by anything in the world" (I: 7-8). On casting anchor at Quebec City, she is lead to a exclaim, "What a scene! -- Can the world produce such another?" " I never before felt so overpoweringly a sense of my own insignificance..." (I: 18, 19). Furthermore, her very positive reactions are also frequently negated by swings to the extreme, opposite viewpoint. Her meeting with the emigrants at Grosse Isle, for instance, produces only disgust.

The young Moodie's tendency to such extremes is also projected onto others in Roughing It in the Bush. When another emigrant ship rams the Anne by mistake, Moodie says that she "never witnessed such an agony of despair" as that displayed by the godless Margaret Williamson (I: 27). Again, when the Irish emigrant, Tam Grant, is left in Quebec, "the distress of the poor wife knew no bounds" (I: 30). As for Oscar, the ship captain's Scots terrier, "a more faithful or attached creature [she] never saw" (I: 28). Similar uses of the superlative are numerous throughout Volume I but these examples should be sufficient to portray this key aspect of Moodie's temperament. She herself admitted in 1854, that "there is something in [her] character which always leads [her] to extremes" (Letters 151).

3. Satiric Propensities and Unidimensional Judgement

In Christian theology, all error stems from the deadly sin of pride. One error portrayed in these works which very obviously arises from that source is the tendency to judge others in shallow, unidimensional ways and to indulge in the ill-natured, satiric mockery that, for the Victorians, went hand in hand with such shallow modes of seeing. Though there is little doubt that this tendency was one for which Moodie had a natural flair, it was also quite possibly encouraged by her education and reading. Her early letters

are full of the play of sporting intellect; later on, however, this drollery is more and more repressed. Aside from the fact that Moodie's early hopes were blighted by hardship, especially by the ever-pressing and desperate need for cash, there may be good reason for this cessation.

For Moodie was, in a way, a woman caught out of her time. She was born on an historical cusp and raised in a period of rather extreme social and cultural transition. Born in 1803, during the lascivious but intellectually free final years of the reign of George III, Moodie came into womanhood in the much more restrictive period just prior to Victoria's ascension to the throne. According to Muriel Jaegar in Before Victoria, the rise of fundamentalist Christianity in the late eighteenth century and the move to prominence of people like William Wilberforce ushered in the period which we now know as the "Victorian" era quite some time before Victoria was actually crowned. Jaegar argues that, in fact, the final, public stamp of approval was given to the new, restrictive attitudes by the general outrage over the details of George IV's marriage which were revealed at his divorce hearing in 1821.

Moreover, this religious retrenchment was complemented by political hysteria precipitated by the French Revolution; hence, a kind of severe conservatism came to hold sway in all walks of life. By the time of Moodie's early girlhood, the socio-political conservatives together with the evangelical and dissenting "enthusiasts" had totally

succeeded in casting a dampening pall over the high-spirited legacy of the previous century. On the religious front, especially, what Jaegar calls the evangelical "conspiracy" had convinced the public to "be earnest in [its] piety, to accept the bible literally, to believe in original sin and to see human life solemnly as merely the preparation for an eternity which was all important" (17).

In such an atmosphere, the approval or emulation of the wit and vivacity of writers like Johnson, Fielding, Sterne, Smollett and the essay writers of the popular eighteenth-century periodicals could hardly survive. Moreover, Moodie grew up reading at least some of these people. In the biographical sketch introducing Pearls and Pebbles, Agnes Moodie Fitzgibbon, working from her Aunt Traill's notes, says that the young Stricklands read "old magazines of the last century" found in their father's library (viii). In the chapter on Toronto in Life in the Clearings, Moodie herself says that she has read Smollett, Fielding and Richardson -- and in true Victorian fashion claims to have now come to dislike them. If nothing else, her great admiration for Dickens, expressed in the same chapter, might suggest a natural inclination towards satire, though that is not why she claims to like his books.

The Victorian period was, above all else, one of high seriousness, and as the century moved towards its midpoint this trait became steadily more entrenched. Matthew Arnold, arguably one of the best spokesmen of his age, claims that

"only seriousness is constructive" ("Renan's 'La Reforme Intellectuelle'" 48) and that only this high seriousness can balance out the dangers of "quickness and flexibility," the "turn for gaiety, wit, fearless thinking and...impatience with restraint" ("A Speech at Eton" 29).

Since gaiety, wit, fearless thinking and impatience with restraint were seen as suspect, satire, which had been one of the chief forms of literary play as well as one of the best honed tools of the social and moral commentator, now came to be viewed with disfavour. The very force of satire -- its tendency to focus on only one aspect of a character or situation -- was now held against it, for such a viewpoint ensured a restricted understanding. Donald Hair, commenting on Tennyson's view of the subject, says that the poet,

like many of his contemporaries...thought satire a very limited genre, and if he were to rank the literary kinds, as Arnold did, he would likely place it in an equally low position. For satire, though right in what it attacked, was wrong in the attitude it displayed.

The ultimate problem attributed to satire, Hair says, was that it was so limited. It categorized and classified, treating men as "types rather than individuals" (79).

More important, perhaps, than what was thought by Tennyson or other spokesmen of the age, is that Moodie herself agrees with this opinion. Though she had earlier

expressed appreciation for Pendennis, by 1855 -- shortly after completing the publication of her autobiographical works -- Moodie, writing to Richard Bentley, is criticizing Thackeray, for, though he makes his readers laugh,

the laugh is not that of mirth. It is a bitter, satirical laugh against the faults of your neighbours, that they are so well hit off. But it does you no moral good, and you feel ashamed of yourself for being so much amused at the expense of others. I am angry with myself for enjoying Thackeray so much. He is a literary giant, but one that makes you afraid. (Letters 161)

Furthermore, this observation is not merely something peculiar to Moodie's own personal taste. She is aware of the opinion as a tenet of literary criticism as well. In discussing a recent poem in The Victoria Magazine in November of 1847, the reviewer -- definitely one of the Moodies -- says:

It is written in a bitter and ironical spirit, which fails to engage our sympathies. It is much to be doubted whether satire ever did, or ever will, produce any beneficial result in improving the mind or morals of men. That which awakens angry or resentful feelings, rarely tends to improve the heart, or produce those great moral changes, which must take place before we can hope to realize permanent improvement in mankind

individually or in the mass. (review of "Moorland Minstrel" by Thomas McQueen 71)

This opinion, interestingly, is expressed at the time Moodie was beginning to publish her autobiographical tales.

Given the attitudes prevalent in her day and her own stated agreement with them, we can, then, reasonably expect Moodie to portray, in a negative manner, satiric tendencies and the unfair judgements from which they often spring. The concern with quick, shallow judgements and a satiric tongue does not show up in "Rachel Wilde" for obvious reasons; children do not usually have the ironic viewpoint necessary to give satire its bite. However, the tendency is very obvious in the adult protagonist.

Flora Lyndsay's "besetting sin" is the "love of the ridiculous" (37). It is this love which encourages her to strike up an acquaintance with the eccentric Miss Wilhelmina Carr, "a very improbable, if not an impossible variety of the human species feminine" (32). When it appears that Miss Carr is finally going to introduce herself, Flora is "scarcely able to keep her delight in due bounds" (37). All this delight shows Flora in no good light, however, for she wants to know Miss Carr solely for her own amusement. And, amuse her Miss Carr does; three chapters are devoted to sketching her ridiculous behaviour and ideas. And yet, Flora does Miss Carr a disservice; she is undoubtedly odd but she has also had an unhappy life. No one, it turns out, has ever really loved her. To cap her unfairness, Flora

jumps to the conventional conclusion that Miss Carr would be better off under the "protection" of her half brother, even though she knows that he only wants to have his independent sister declared mad so that he can gain access to her fortune. Indeed, Flora's attempt to persuade Miss Carr to surrender her freedom constitutes a personal betrayal. Despite Miss Carr's many deliberately illustrated kindnesses to Flora, Flora has no true regard whatsoever for her benefactress. Moodie's portrayal of Flora's response to Miss Carr as nothing but a figure of fun thus comments very negatively on Flora's character.

Another example of Flora's propensity for judging people unfairly can be found in her interactions with Mrs. Dalton on board the steamer to Leith. Her initial opinion, formed after only a few minutes' observation, is that Mrs. Dalton is "worldly" and "sophisticated" -- that is, immoral and shallow. With some reason, since Mrs. Dalton is proud and flirtatious, Flora takes an immediate dislike to her. Later, however, Flora learns her very unhappy history and finds "her heart softening" towards the other woman. In talking with Mrs. Dalton, Flora implicitly admits her own error; "superficial observers," she says, "only judge by outward appearance" and are therefore apt to jump to unfair conclusions (122).

Despite this recognition, Moodie again shows the same unloving, intolerant and even cruel propensity in Flora when the Lyndsays finally arrive in Edinburgh. In order to

create sympathy in the reader -- a sympathy which will come to fruition only with Mrs. Waddell's revelations at the end of the sketch -- Moodie begins with a very detailed description of the physical characteristics of the otherwise likable landlady. She is obese, not overly clean and poorly dressed. Her face is "pock-marked [and] flabby," her mouth wide and her teeth "yellow [and] projecting." She has a "comical good-natured obliquity of vision in her prominent light-gray eyes, which [are] very red about the rims." Flora's final judgement is that, "without being positively disgusting, she was the most ordinary, uncouth woman [she] had ever beheld" (129-30).

James Hawke, the Lyndsays' young companion on the journey, loves to tease the old woman because her reactions amuse him:

"Aye, Mister Jeames," she would say, "ye will a' be makin' yer fun o' a puir auld body, but 'tis na' cannie o'ye."

"Making fun of you, Mrs. Waddell" -- with a sly glance at Flora, -- "how can you take such an odd notion into your head! It is so good of you to tell me about all your courtship -- it's giving me a hint of how I'm to go about it when I'm a man. I am sure that you were a very pretty, smart girl in your younger days" -- with another quizzical glance at Flora. (130)

Mrs. Waddell's pathos-filled reply -- all the more effective because the pathos is unconscious -- offers a suitable rebuke to the convulsed James and Flora. "Na na, Mr. Jaemes, my gude man that's dead an ganne said to me, the verra day that made me his ain -- 'Katie, ye are nae bonnie, but ye a' gude, which is a' hantel better'" (130).

Moreover, if Mrs. Waddell has an unfortunate physiognomy herself, her daughters are doubly cursed. They are described as "tall, awkward shapeless waddles, whose unlovely youth was more repulsive than their mother's full-blown homely age." Their large "fishy-looking" eyes are red-rimmed and in them "the old lady's innocent obliquity of vision had degenerated into a down-right squint." Their legs are "bony and ill-shaped" and their figures "wide and slovenly." Even Mrs. Waddell admits that, when an infant, Nancy was "the maist ugsome wee thing [she] ever clappit an e'e upon" (131). A reader might suppose that such misfortune, especially in an age when a woman's welfare depended largely on her physical appearance, would call forth sympathy. In Flora, however, it causes otherwise unfounded dislike.

Again, Flora is implicitly chided for her lack of charity. Moodie sets up the scene to make her appear mean spirited. Moreover, this time Flora recognizes her error. After listening to Mrs. Waddell's genuinely touching and "artless" account of the anguish caused her by an aristocratic young lady's mockery of "the deformity o' [her]

puir bairn," Flora "stood reproved in her own eyes, for she knew she had regarded the poor, ugly girls with feelings of repugnance on account of their personal defects" (130). James Hawke, her co-conspirator in the mockery, is hard put not to weep at the cruelty which has been shown the landlady.

If anything, this tendency towards satiric attitudes and quick judgement is just as marked in Roughing It in the Bush. The Moodie of the early chapters frequently unleashes -- for the benefit of her readers at least -- venomous barbs at the people she encounters. Her description of the French Canadian health officer as a figure from the apocalypse -- with a nasty, off-hand aside at all Frenchmen -- her description of the lower-class emigrants on board ship and at Grosse Isle, her account of the coach stop proprietors and of the guests at the Cobourg hotel and many of her caricatures of American settlers, all offer cases in point. Moreover, the fact that the sketches are often humorous does not excuse Moodie's scathing portrayals. As she herself says, what she is engaging in here is "a bitter satirical laugh against the faults of [her] neighbours."

4. Scepticism and Doubt and their Origins in Susanna Moodie's Education and Upbringing

Another general, more all-encompassing area of error is a tendency in the chief character of these

autobiographical works to indulge in doubt and a desire to question the dearly held tenets of her society. It is fairly easy to make the case that the three areas of moral and social error outlined above were problems of which Moodie was aware. Their embodiment seems overt and deliberately shaped and is often backed up with narrative comment. It is more difficult to suggest that the protagonist's sceptical and questioning tendencies are deliberately portrayed. Nevertheless, they do make up a definite and fairly large part of Moodie's character -- a part which shows up again and again throughout the autobiographical works and with which Moodie appears to be uneasy. Moreover, some coming to terms with these tendencies does seem to occur in the latter portions of Roughing It in the Bush and in Life in the Clearings, just as resolution occurs with the other flaws. For these reasons, then, these doubting tendencies are included in the discussion.

This scepticism is a personality trait characteristic of Susanna Moodie herself. Many of the entries in John Moodie's Spiritualism Album, included in The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection, stress her doubting, sceptical nature. Indeed, some of these supposed "revelations" from the spirits as to her character come with Moodie, herself, acting as the medium, a fact which may be very telling as to her view of herself. The wisdom of relying on the spirits of the dead to obtain critically valid literary opinions is

certainly open to question; nor is it suggested here that these opinions be accepted as valid truths from the lips of people who knew Moodie. Nevertheless, these observations on Moodie's personality seem to be made so often and are never disagreed with, even by Moodie herself, that it seems reasonable to suspect that many of Moodie's contemporaries viewed her as a sceptic. In one such communication session, a "free-thinker" born in 1024 and persecuted during his life for nonconformity, claims to be her special kindred spirit; the search for truth, he says, is a bond between them (81). Perhaps more easily accepted is William Gairdner's observation, solidly based in his reading of Roughing It in the Bush, that Moodie, indeed, has a doubting nature which she continually tries to suppress.

This doubting, questioning propensity on Moodie's part, a propensity which shows up, either consciously or unconsciously, in the characterization of her autobiographical protagonist, probably stems from at least two sources. On the one hand, it probably has something to do with innate, personal inclination. On the other, however, it probably comes out of the education given to her as a child, an education Moodie stresses in "Rachel Wilde."

One of the more liberal aspects of the late Georgian period was the relative freedom granted to women to study, discuss and write on the topics of the day. It was this period which had produced women like Mary Wollstonecraft. Though she was undoubtedly an exception, women in more

conventional spheres also took advantage of the opportunity to think; the most famous of these women came to be known by the term "blue-stockings."

Unfortunately, these women, though granted certain intellectual freedoms in their own day, had come to be subjects of ridicule in that of their grandchildren. Women, consequently, began to lower their expectations. For instance, in Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood, Joan N. Burstyn points out that women's magazines, in the years after 1825, "abandoned discussion of political affairs and filled their columns with moral tales, poetry and advice on etiquette" (34). Moodie was a well-read woman and had even been contributing to magazines herself in her late teens, if not to any which regularly published political commentary. Consequently, she would very likely have felt the confusing effects of this change.

This alteration in the lot of women is one of the most obvious social occurrences to transpire during the early and middle years of the nineteenth century. A corollary of this change is the transformation which took place in theories of education for females. Some of the undesirable character traits delineated in Moodie's autobiographical works -- mostly those relating to this doubting, questioning attitude -- can thus be seen as deriving from the clash between the pre-Victorian type of education which Moodie experienced and the expectations brought to bear on her in later life by a definitely Victorian society.

Prior to the general acclamation of the tenets of Evangelicalism, it had not been unheard of for girls to receive very good intellectual training. According to Deborah Gorham, "many early Victorian girls received a first rate education in Papa's study" (21). From the comments made by both Traill and Moodie on their early reading in their father's library and from the description of Mr. Wilde's training of his daughters in "Rachel Wilde," it appears that the young Stricklands were fortunate enough to receive this type of teaching:

Mr. Wilde held all public schools in abhorrence, and his mode of tuition was the very opposite to that pursued in the seminary. Lessons were seldom committed to memory. He read -- he explained -- he argued with his children. He called their attention to the subjects which he selected for their information, and set them thinking. They were allowed freedom of discussion and they were never suffered to abandon a point until they understood its meaning. History, which is rendered so dull and distasteful to the young, by being dunned into them as a task, was a delightful recreation to the little Wildes; and they ransacked every book in the well-furnished library to make themselves masters of all the histories and biographies which it contained. (114)

However, by the time Moodie reached early womanhood, opinions on education like those described in this passage were in decline and those of people like Hannah More were in ascendancy. Moreover, at some point, Moodie definitely became familiar with Mrs. More's writings for she invokes her authority in The World Before Them and in "Mildred Rosier." Mrs. More, a former blue-stocking and successful playwright herself, had been converted to Evangelicalism and by the early nineteenth century had come to be one of the foremost advocates of a restricted role for women. As Muriel Jaegar points out, religion was one of the chief means used to repress women's aspirations for self development; "good works," she says, "were now becoming almost the only outlet left to women under the evangelical dispensation, and even these had to be on a strictly private basis. Wilberforce would not allow [women] to take any public part even in the Anti-slavery agitation" (124). Restraint, patience and humility, not intellect, were now to be a woman's chief attributes. Since this was the case, and since women had to be protected from the supposed "evils" of the real world, educating girls became suspect.

For the type of education encouraging free thinking which Moodie describes in "Rachel Wilde," Mrs. More expresses only pious, horrified condemnation, a condemnation which is, interestingly, very closely echoed by the cold, narrow-minded Mrs. Stainer in "Mildred Rosier." According to More, Christianity called upon women to reject almost all

forms of worldly learning because such learning contained subtle attacks on religious faith. In her words, while "the dead fly lies at the bottom, the whole will exhale a corrupt and pestilential stench," regardless of what useful or instructive material might also be conveyed (I: 30-31).

According to Joan N. Burstyn, it was thought that learning, in general, "interfered with the functioning of intuition since it turned women to reason." Because reasoning was not a feminine talent while intuiting was, "a learned woman...lost the very essence of her femininity" (37). As the Victorian decades rolled on, this patronizing attitude became more and more entrenched. A columnist for the Quarterly Review, for instance, writing in 1866 on the principles of education and what, in the view of his society, constituted women's mission in life, held that

women in general are probably best as they are -- in possession of that intuitive right judgement which is safe at first thought, though with the stronger half of intelligent creation, second thoughts are best. (qtd. in Burstyn 37)

Women were no longer accorded the right to think; their true province was deemed to be feeling. Obviously, a woman who appreciated "full freedom of discussion" and who had been taught never to abandon a point until she understood its meaning, must often have found herself in difficult straits in a society which valued women for whatever "first thoughts" might occur to them and for their acquiescence to

the "sober second thoughts" of its "stronger half." In other words, she would have had to come to terms with the duty of the Victorian woman, which was to submit. Throughout Moodie's autobiographical works, readers see her struggling to acquiesce to the dictates of her society but the rebellious, critical intelligence, encouraged and developed by a method of education which had gone out of vogue, constantly doubts and questions the validity of these "truths." The last four areas of moral and social error which this chapter addresses, then, may all be seen as aspects of this questioning, sceptical tendency.

5. Doubt Regarding Women's Roles

One of the most obvious manifestations of doubt in these works lies in the area of interactions between the sexes. Because the most important, indeed, virtually the only task designated to women by nineteenth-century society was the impressive sounding work of fashioning the morality of the nation, and because this fashioning took the form of mothers bequeathing upright social and moral principles to their offspring, the nineteenth-century woman could only fulfill her true calling within the context of a family. "Family," of course meant the traditional father or husband-dominated, nuclear arrangement. The woman's rational opinions were not, in theory at least, considered of great value.

Though we may surmise that she found submission to the dictates of her society on this head difficult, Moodie did, nevertheless, fight to accept them. The sanctity of marriage and family life shows up again and again throughout all her writing. She frequently castigates "marriage-hindering Mammon," for instance, and she continually emphasizes that the great importance of marital stability is its effect upon children. She also espouses the Victorian concept of home and family as a haven of domestic felicity, the more nurturing and sheltering if it is rural rather than urban in setting.

This agreement with the basic dictates of her society, however, does not mean that she had no problems with the concept -- not so much, perhaps, with what women should do as with what they should be. Recourse to Hannah More once again indicates the theoretical viewpoint of Moodie's contemporaries. Girls should be taught "an early and habitual restraint" and be "inured to contradiction." They should not receive praise for displaying "vivacity or wit" but should be commended for their "patience [and] humility." They should be taught "to mistrust their own judgement," and should learn "not to murmur at expostulation but should be accustomed to expect and endure opposition." Finally,

they should early acquire a submissive temper and a forbearing spirit. They must even endure to be thought wrong sometimes, when they cannot but feel they are right. And while they should be

anxiously aspiring to do well, they must not expect always to obtain the praise for having done so. (I: 143)

Such dicta are bitter medicine for a person with any sense of self-worth. The submission demanded, of course, was primarily to one's husband, the author and sole arbiter of one's fortunes after marriage. Though Moodie's purely fictional heroines always show such acquiescence, they are usually adolescents. Such complete submission to the wishes of another would, arguably, be an easier task for a young girl than for a twenty-seven year old woman who had, for some years, been self-sufficient and free.

In fact, Moodie's letters show that she had qualms with respect to the loss of her own self-governance, qualms she voices after a temporary rupture in her relationship with John Moodie. Corresponding with her friend, James Bird, on the breaking off of her engagement, she does not sound like the stereotypical disappointed woman. "Ah! friend Bird," she says, "our engagement was too hasty. I have changed my mind. You may call me a jilt a flirt or what you please, I care not." She will neither "marry a soldier" she says, "nor leave [her] country for ever [sic] and [she feels] happy that [she] is once more her own mistress" (Letters 55). Moreover, in this letter Moodie goes on to talk at some length and with great enthusiasm of the new, single life as a writer which she has planned for herself.

The lovers' quarrel is made up, however, and the marriage takes place. Moodie then informs Mr. Bird that she "pronounced the fatal obey, with a firm determination to keep it." Her "blue stockings," she says "have turned so pale that [she thinks] they will soon be quite white, or at least only tinged with a hue of London smoke" (Letters 60-61). These expressions, though jocular, do indicate that, prior to marriage, Moodie saw herself as an educated, scholarly woman -- a "blue-stocking" -- but that she also realized that these activities and attitudes were inappropriate in a wife and had to be suppressed. She was also well aware of the married woman's duty to surrender all rights to her own destiny -- hence her references to being her own mistress and the "fatal obey."

In light of these observations, it is not surprising that a doubting, questioning and occasionally pathetic treatment of sexual mores and of interactions between men and women runs throughout the autobiographical works. The first chapter has already dealt briefly with the subject of Rachel's severe shortcomings as an ideal daughter. It is in Flora Lyndsay however, that Moodie's doubt really receives embodiment for in that book she delineates character and sets up situations so as to indicate that the power imbalance approved of by Victorian society or, indeed, any power imbalance between men and women, can cause trouble. In Susanna Moodie: Voice and Vision, Carol Shields expends considerable time on this embodiment. Her conclusions,

though, seem quite programmatically feminist and, sometimes, not very well substantiated, perhaps because they are based on single episodes seen in isolation. She says, for instance, that though "women feature in anecdotes as being ignorant and easily shocked, it is men whom Mrs. Moodie finds ridiculous" (37). "In the case of John Lyndsay," she says, "the personality is revealed seemingly unconsciously in his actions and speeches. Indeed, the narrator ironically insists that John Lyndsay is a perfect gentleman. His strength and talents are praised repeatedly, but, in contradiction, his essential heartlessness is revealed again and again" (25-26). However, close attention to the texts -- especially if they are all read together -- may show that such readings alter Moodie's meaning. The views offered here and especially in the fifth chapter are, perhaps, more in line with the attitudes Moodie is likely to have espoused.

In the first three chapters of Flora Lyndsay, men do seem to enforce their wishes at women's expense. John Lyndsay peremptorily dismisses Flora's objections to emigrating and informs her that they will go when he chooses, how he chooses and with her money. It seems as if Flora is unfairly dominated. Captain and Mrs. Kitson, the Lyndsays' landlords, are shown engaged in one episode of their long-term wrangle over who should "wear the breeches," with the ridiculous Captain refusing to let his wife manage their household affairs or to let Flora's servant woman hang

out the laundry as she sees fit. The fourth chapter presents a relationship in which power is still in imbalance but where the wife is unfairly dominant. The shrewish Mrs. Ready, in attempting to convince Flora to object to emigrating, seems to say that any acquiescence to a husband's wishes indicates deplorable weakness of character. These early chapters, then, certainly signal to the reader that the question of authority in marital relationships is one key aspect of the work.

The best and, for a modern woman, most poignant of Moodie's embodiments of her doubts with regard to proper submission to male authority, however, comes in her creation of Miss Carr. One of the traits which makes Miss Carr so odd is that she totally ignores Victorian strictures on the behaviour of women and vehemently champions women against their "tyrannical lords." Moreover, she makes such a rational case for her views that the modern reader, at least, is seduced and cannot help but believe that her argument is one Moodie has considered well and is strongly tempted to like. She gives Miss Carr strength, personal vitality and an eccentric -- for the period -- kind of integrity. Certainly, in Matrimonial Speculations Moodie lauds the decision to live as a spinster when the only alternative is to enter the kind of marriage which is nothing more than "legal prostitution" (82).

When John Lyndsay questions Miss Carr about her solitary travels over Europe, she assures him that "[women]

are just as able to shift for themselves as men..." (37). When she describes her half-brother's schemes to declare her mad and so take her inheritance, she exclaims: "As if a woman has not as much right to see the world as a man, if she can pay her own expenses and bear her own burthen, without being a trouble to anyone. It is certainly no business of his how I spend my money, or where and how I pass my life" (38).

Miss Carr's longest piece of advice, though, is saved for when she has Flora alone. She tells her it is "a shame that these selfish men should be tamely allowed by...foolish women to monopolise [sic] all the good things in life, and make that criminal in a female which they cannot deny themselves." She deplores the fact that women are often "frightened by [men's] blustering into passive obedience, and persuaded that what is good for a man is quite out of keeping with a woman." To convince Flora to admit the validity of her argument, she urges her to try havana cigars and brandy punch. Flora declines -- not because she thinks she would dislike them --but because she "could never forgive [herself]" for being so unladylike and because she is afraid her husband will catch her. When Miss Carr asks whether John Lyndsay does not drink and smoke, Flora admits that he does -- with other men. The admission leaves the reader with the blunt juxtaposition of men's behaviour with women's, a juxtaposition which makes the "stronger half of humanity" look extremely hypocritical (55-56).

Flora's -- and, perhaps by extension, Moodie's -- implicit admission that she has felt the pull of such arguments comes in her recounting to her husband the story of how she had had her fortune read as a child. The gypsy had told Flora she would "wear the breeches" in the family, a prediction which still upsets her (146). In fact, women's "wearing of the breeches" is an activity Flora considers uneasily at several points in the tale.

6. Doubt Regarding Community

Another socially sanctioned tenet, the rightness of which Moodie seems to have questioned, either consciously or unconsciously, is the value of community and her place in it. The Victorian period was one which saw a movement away from the solipsism of romanticism back to the sanctity of community. This movement was, of course, abetted by evangelical doctrine with its emphasis on caritas and the communion of believers strengthening and supporting each other. Romanticism came to be seen as excessively, even dangerously, inward looking and self-centred.

Many nineteenth-century scholars have traced this attitude in the works of both poets and novelists as well as in the writings of Victorian social commentators. Jerome Buckley, in his wide-ranging work, The Victorian Temper, conducts one of the best discussions of the issue. According to him, by the second or third decade of the

nineteenth century, the romantic nature of the age had "visibly decayed" (16):

The leading figures of the new generation were forced to reject certain romantic values, to repudiate specific attitudes and gestures, in order to secure their own orientation. The Victorian era rapidly recognized its proper spokesmen in writers who were strenuously conscious of Victorian problems.... (17)

According to Buckley, this new attitude manifested itself particularly in the Victorian response to the poetry of the early decades of the century. Much of the censure brought to bear on the romantic poets and the points of view they had adopted arose as a result of their perceived lack of social concern. They were too inward in orientation, and hence were selfish. The Victorian era, with its crises in religious belief, in social and political systems, in scientific discovery and in economic outlook, could not afford such exclusive inwardness. Coleridge, Keats, Byron, Shelley and even Wordsworth, though to a lesser degree, came in for this kind of condemnation.

The story line of "Rachel Wilde" makes clear that, even as a small girl, Rachel shares the solipsistic, romantic temperament which the Victorians came to criticize. She is much more at home with various aspects of nature than she is with her human community. She prefers to make "companions and playmates from the living creatures around [her]" and

the narrator goes into several paragraphs on how the child spends much of her time among the foxhounds, guard-dogs, lambs, cats, pigeons and especially with Jack, a tame raven (158). In the company of her animals and "away from the parlour," the narrator declares Rachel to have felt as "happy as a queen with all her subjects around [her]" (159).

This preference for a companionless existence grows even stronger as Rachel approaches adolescence:

Rachel was a solitary child. Other children felt no sympathy with her -- they could not comprehend her fantastic notions. She talked of things they understood not, and asked questions which they could not answer. Full of vague and undefined thoughts, with a mysterious consciousness of the great mystery of life, overshadowing her like a cloud, from the midst of whose darkness, gleams of that far off eternity, flashed from time to time, like lightning through her brain; Rachel lived in a world of her own creations. (234)

This passage goes on at some length, describing the thoughts and personality of the young Rachel. She is stereotypically romantic, alone, isolated, at one with the "white radiance of eternity" and totally divorced from the concerns of the world. In fact, she even sees herself as a future "romantic" poet, desiring to "give life and reality to those visions that so charmed [her]" (235). There is no

doubt that the adult Moodie, in considering the girlish Rachel, sees her as an exceptional child and lauds her earlier introspective tendencies as the precursors of a higher and more perceptive consciousness. The oft-noted romantic in Moodie makes such justification inevitable. However, it is also true that some part of the older woman, the one writing the autobiographical account and now living in a Victorian society, feels it incumbent upon her to point out that such egocentric naivete is not right. The final comment after all this sublimity is, "youth, blind to the faults of others is as blind to its own" (235). And, as Moodie herself admits to Mary Russell Mitford in an already noted letter, her roaming in the "beautiful but delusive regions of Romance" has made her "totally unfitted to mingle with the world" (Letters 38).

As the central protagonist of these autobiographical works evolves and grows, she learns the value of fitting in, if only for practical, social reasons. Rachel has been described as "the child who revelled in grand conceptions alone with nature, and the solitude of her own soul" (235). From such a beginning, however, Flora becomes a woman who holds "it wise...in order to avoid singularity, to conform to existing fashions" (42). On board ship to Leith, Flora, again, tells Mrs. Dalton that "it is better...to avoid all appearance of evil" (122). As these passages indicate, Moodie's autobiographical character may be learning the

value of conformity without being truly convinced of the value of community.

On the one hand, Moodie is aware of the advantages of being at one with one's fellow men. Within the first paragraph of "Rachel Wilde" the narrator asserts that "no one ever did or could live for himself alone" (113). And, even if it were possible to avoid admitting need for others in Britain, the new world certainly allows no such proud and misguided assumptions, if only for practical reasons. The narrator of Flora Lyndsay, looking back on the young Flora says, "she had yet to learn that the proximity of fellow-labourers in the great work of clearing is indispensable; that man cannot work alone in the wilderness, where his best efforts require the aid of his fellow men" (31). Later on, in Roughing It in the Bush, readers see Moodie beginning to learn this lesson. When the Moodies' backwoods home catches fire, the narrator says it was saved by "persons working in unison" (II: 166), and when the whirlwind strikes, readers are told that "people gain courage by companionship (II: 214).

On the other hand, before she has been subjected to much hardship, the Moodie of the early chapters of Roughing It in the Bush prefers to act as if her much-vaunted education sets her above her neighbours. It turns out, however, that in the colony, this asset is pretty much useless, at least for several years. Until she is given the opportunity to write for The Literary Garland, she is not

able to use this training to contribute to her family's maintenance. Early on, she is almost totally helpless; she cannot bake bread, do laundry, milk the cows to supplement her daughter's diet or even knit a pair of stockings for the impoverished John Monaghan. In these instances she is forced to sue to her neighbours for aid and, in return, she can offer them very little. David Stouck, in fact, has suggested that Moodie's early attitude to her neighbours in Canada is "a bulwark against a profound sense of inadequacy" (466). Her long-suffering willingness to lend her belongings may, thus, be an attempt at usefulness. If so, however, it falls short, not merely because Moodie is being flagrantly taken advantage of but because she is not yet assimilated into the community.

In Canada, the ability to conform is reft from her. The society she had agreed to conform to has, for the most part, disappeared; simple conformation to the tenets of the new one offends her patrician soul and is, therefore, out of the question. She attempts, indeed, to transport the old social mores -- the polite topics of conversation, the proper distance between classes, the strict division of labour -- to her new setting. But, because her genuine sense of community and brotherhood is so weak, these trappings fail. The social proprieties miscarry, not simply because society in Canada is different, but because, in Moodie's case, these trappings are hollow and are based in pride and egocentricity. There is, as yet, no true good

will or appreciation of her neighbours as fellow, struggling human beings -- regardless of class -- backing them up.

Close attention to some of the best known sketches from Roughing It in the Bush substantiates this observation. One such sketch is the previously discussed account of the meeting between Moodie and Mrs. Joe. Another describes a meeting between Moodie and old Mrs. H____, Uncle Joe's mother. Usually this sketch is lumped in with the evidence that Moodie -- with some reason, perhaps -- sees her neighbours as unmannered boors and, therefore, retreats into her aristocratic, defensive shell. However, the sketch is worth looking at closely again. If we keep in mind that it was written some time after the fact, we may begin to see that the Moodie of the account is allowed to look rather bad to the reader.

Mrs. H____ comes to borrow some silk to line a hood she is making, at the same time predicting for the young newcomer that the winter is going to be long and difficult. Moodie listens with interest to the old lady's narrative for, as she herself admits, Mrs. H____ "was really possessed of no ordinary capacity, and though rude and uneducated might have been a superior person under different circumstances" (I: 145).

Mrs. H____ describes her trip to Upper Canada from "the U-ni-ted States" with her husband and two infants in "the year of the great winter," sometime during the American Revolution. Their trials were severe and, as Mrs. H____

accurately states, make Moodie's troubles seem mild by comparison. Mrs. H_____'s tale is filled with real pathos and yet she has not come to complain or demand pity. She is, in these revelations, simply offering something of herself to Moodie. Moreover, by opening up in this way, she has made herself vulnerable to someone who -- at this point at least -- is very likely to scorn her. Yet this step of dropping the protective barriers with another is one of the first which must be made on the way to developing friendship and empathetic fellow feeling.

Mrs. H_____, though rough in manner, is trying to exchange confidences with Moodie. She asks about Mr. Strickland Senior and is told that "he lost the greater part of his property from being surety for another." Mrs. H____ replies, "That's a foolish business. My man burnt [sic] his fingers with that." Furthermore, throughout this attempted exchange of confidences, the old lady seems to show some genuine concern for Moodie. "And what brought you to this poor country," she says, "you who are no more fit for it than I am to be a fine lady?" Mrs. H____ asks Moodie if she likes the country and upon being answered in the negative, replies:

I thought not; for the drop is always on your cheek, the children tell me; and those young ones have keen eyes. Now, take my advice; return while your money lasts; the longer you remain in Canada the less you will like it; and when your

money is all spent, you will be like a bird in a cage; you may beat your wings against the bars, but you can't get out. (I: 145)

Moodie, however, either fails to perceive or prefers to ignore the fact that Mrs. H_____'s search for ground common to them both, and her desire for an exchange of confidences, are friendly overtures. Moodie is certainly no stranger to prying curiosity herself; of Brian the still-hunter, for instance, she later says, "He is a strange being. I must find out who and what he is" (I: 185). Despite this trait, however, and despite the fact that she is very willing to learn Mrs. H_____'s history, Moodie considers it an affront for the Yankee to expect confidences in return. For Mrs. H_____ to show interest in Moodie's life is deemed impertinent, despite her seeming concern for Moodie's plight:

There was a long pause. I hoped that my guest had sufficiently gratified her curiosity, when she again commenced: --

"How do you get your money? Do you draw it fresh from the old country, or have you it with you in cash?

Provoked by her pertinacity, and seeing no end to her cross questioning, I replied, very impatiently, "Mrs. H_____, is it the custom in your country to catechize strangers whenever you meet with them?

"What do you mean?" she said, colouring, I believe, for the first time in her life.

"I mean," quoth I, "an evil habit of asking impertinent questions."

The old woman got up, and left the house without speaking another word. (I: 145-47)

While it is true that questions about personal financial status are often considered rude and unacceptably direct, such artificial conventions are lacking in meaning in a society where people exist at a subsistence level and, thus, depend heavily on each other for aid and support. Furthermore, there are things the Moodies need from the H_____ family much more than the H_____es need anything from them, yet Moodie rejects the chance to establish mutual good will. Moreover, Mrs. H_____ has previously revealed to the Moodies the financial troubles of her son -- troubles of which the Moodies are the direct beneficiaries -- and has even given them exact figures. Finally, even if Mrs. H_____ 's questions are ill-intended, Moodie again reacts meanly. She could, if she were the true lady her husband praises, turn aside the queries in a manner less cruel and abrupt.

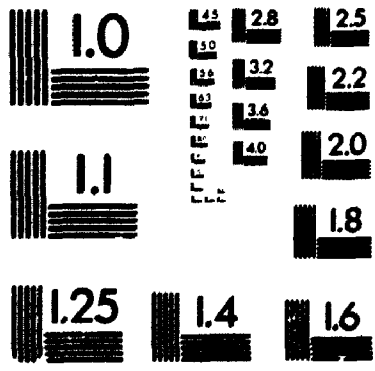
In fact, Moodie here shows, in her younger self, the same condescending behaviour she manifested with Mrs. Joe. In Flora Lyndsay, Flora's personal life is intruded upon in a very rude and nasty manner by Mrs. Ready and yet because Mrs. Ready is of the same class, Flora thinks it proper to

maintain the outward forms of courtesy. Even the Moodie of Roughing It in the Bush maintains decorum in the face of the most provocative ill-manners when the filthy, bad tempered, free-loading Malcolm abuses the Moodie's hospitality. Again, Malcolm, though utterly degenerate, is of the same class. Yet to Mrs. Joe and Mrs. H_____ the young Moodie is shown as being cruel and disdainful. The word "impertinent," used instead of "rude" or "ill-mannered" in her cold rebuff of Mrs H_____, shows the true state of affairs. Moodie simply does not, in 1832, consider the lowly Yankee squatter her equal and so -- unconsciously perhaps -- assumes that she is not worth the trouble it would take to be civil. What the reader is presented in this passage is the young Moodie, because of her class predilections and arrogance, putting off a genuine offer of companionship and aid and thereby rejecting entry into the community where her lot is to be cast. Given this arrogant snubbing of Mrs. H_____'s overtures, is it any wonder that the old lady turns against the Moodies, causing them annoyance at every turn and squeezing from them as much money as she can get for the rent of her small shanty?

7. Doubt Regarding the Rejection of Romanticism

As the introductory paragraphs on this subject of community have indicated, Moodie experienced a lifelong amour with romanticism, a passion which is embodied in her

3



characterization of Rachel. This fact is important because a third issue which may have caused Moodie doubt and questioning --again perhaps not entirely at a conscious level-- was the retreat from high romanticism into something more orthodox which was characteristic of the mid nineteenth century. As has been suggested, the part of the nineteenth century which has become known as the Victorian period was one which saw the rejection of the high romanticism of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Byron. The truth of the imagination was too individual, too egocentric to fit into the scheme of things as devised by the conservative and socially-minded Victorians.

They did wish to keep the romantic notion that the life force was immanent or, in more orthodox terms, that the power and glory of God could be seen in all things, but the pantheistic or transcendentalist trappings which had accompanied the idea of Spiritus Mundi made most of the establishment exceedingly nervous. These ideas were too far removed from the familiar, safe and comfortable confines of orthodoxy. Once again, historians and other nineteenth-century scholars have delineated this retreat in their examinations of the works of prominent Victorian thinkers. Stephen Prickett, for instance, in Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Wordsworth and Coleridge in the Victorian Church examines how the work of the period's two pre-eminent Romantic poets influenced the contemporary church and how it

was read in ways that altered it by fitting it to the needs of its Victorian audience.

For one thing, the value of individual, imaginative perception was, in the sphere of religion, transformed into the evangelical stress on the importance of a personal, felt experience of one's saviour. As Frederick B. Artz notes, "the strong reaction against the rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" can be seen in the nineteenth century in "the rise and spread of Methodism in England." The Methodists "belittled human reason and laid great emphasis on developing the personal and emotional aspects of religion" (122). Hence, strong feeling in religion was one form of romanticism which survived, though in modified form, and was acceptable. This acceptability is, perhaps, one reason Moodie was drawn to Dissent.

As passages in Rachel Wilde show, Moodie, in many ways, was strongly inclined to venerate aspects of first-generation romanticism. The solitary musings of the young girl might almost serve as a parallel commentary on some of Wordsworth's poetry:

She felt that some great unknown power had called her into existence, dream-like as that existence appeared to her; and the young soul stretched forth its longing arms towards God. An intent [sic] desire to know, what to her, was buried in impenetrable mystery, conquered even the fear of death. She longed to die -- if death could answer

her questions and solve her doubts; and day after day, she sought a deep dell in a beautiful grove upon the estate, to sit alone with nature, and ponder over these awful and dread sublimities.

From constantly brooding on such themes, her character took on a sadder, sterner tone, and she loved those objects best, that best assimilated with her thoughts. The lofty trees tossed into furious motion by the winds -- the deep surging of ocean rolling in terrible grandeur to the shore -- the black embattled thunder clouds -- the solemn roar of the earth shaking thunder -- the sweeping rush of the devastating rain, was music to her ears. Her spirit rode sublimely above the warring elements and gloried in the majesty of the storm. (235)

This passage, along with the following references to "lofty visions," "electric flashes of mind," and "sudden revelations of the spirit world within and around her," leave little doubt as to the young Rachel's devotion to the sublime and transcendent. And, although religion is included in such rhapsodies with the use of terms like "God" and "heaven," the tone and general import of the passage owe much more to romanticism than to orthodox Christianity.

The same kind of response to the sublimity of nature shows up in Flora Lyndsay. On one occasion, when exposed to

a view of Edinburgh from a rooftop, Flora feels "her cheeks pale, her eyes moisten" and

slowly and solemnly [her] soul mounts upwards towards the creator of this wondrous vision of power and beauty, till humbled and abashed by a sense of its own utter insignificance in a presence so august and incomprehensible, it sinks back to earth in silent self annihilation, to wonder and adore. (152)

Roughing It in the Bush, especially early chapters, also contains such passages. On the approach to Quebec City, for example, Moodie's

mind expands with the sublimity of the spectacle, and soars upward in gratitude and adoration to the Author of all being, to thank Him for having made this lower world so wondrously fair -- a living temple, heaven-arched, and capable of receiving the homage of all worshippers. (I: 17)

Before the "mellow and serene glow of the autumnal day, [harmonizing] so perfectly with the solemn grandeur of the scene around [her]," her spirit falls prostrate (I: 18).

Though it is true that in these passages Moodie always mentions God, it is also true that He is not the real focus of her rhapsody as He is in religious "asides" by Catharine Parr Traill, for instance. Nor is He always referred to as God, but is often denoted by such terms as Presence, Author, Originator or Eternal -- terms which are euphemistic. The

intensity of her observation is, rather, aimed at nature itself and the life she feels streaming through it, an entity she sometimes calls the "Divine Mother" ("Rachel Wilde", 126, 235; Roughing It in the Bush, I, 138, 172). Her attitude, then, partakes as much of the romantic and sublime as of the orthodox Christian and, as such, is a disposition which should be tempered. It is interesting to note that by 1853 Moodie considered the work of Margaret Fuller Ossoli to be "rather spoiled by its transcendentalism," a statement which indicates that she must have been moving away from the attitudes she held when she had valued, above all else, "the sudden revelations of the spirit world within and around her" (Letters 144).

In fact, despite the effusions found in "Rachel Wilde," Flora Lyndsay and early parts of Roughing It in the Bush, Moodie seems, from an early age, to have doubted the religious acceptability of a romantic passion for nature. In "Enthusiasm" from Enthusiasm and Other Poems, published in 1831 but written during adolescence, she criticizes the romantic poet. Though he may be freed and rejuvenated by nature, he commits a grave error in refusing to see the physical world clearly -- not as beautiful for its own sake but as careworn and sin-ridden. The poet is blind because "his world is all within." In actual fact, the world is given its true meaning from without, by God:

Would you unfold the mystery and read,
The record the eternal hand of God

Has, of himself, on Nature's tablets graved?
 You must explore another wondrous book,
 Of deeper interest far -- the book of life --

The glorious volume of unsullied truth! --
 Peruse this volume, and then walk abroad
 And meditate in silence on the scenes
 Which lately charmed your unassisted sense,
 Till your soul burns within you; and breaks forth
 In holy hymns of gratitude and praise. -- (11-12)

Moreover, in the same poem she castigates the imagination,
 the faculty which is ultimately responsible for perceiving
 nature in romantic ways:

His universal sovereignty demands
 That deep devotion of the heart which men
 Miscall enthusiasm! -- Zeal alone deserves
 The name of madness in a worldly cause.
 Light misdirected ever leads astray;
 But hope inspired by faith will guide to heaven!

Never while reason holds her steady rein
 To curb imagination's fiery steeds
 May I to joyless apathy resign
 The high and holy thoughts inspired by thee. (22-
 24)

Obviously it would be unwise to belabour this point.
 Moodie's attitude to nature was always more or less

romantic, of course. She simply seems to have adopted romantic conventions and adapted them to her own pious needs. Indeed, it may well be that she was not aware that Wordsworth, for instance, was not perfectly orthodox. "Uncertainty," also from Enthusiasm and Other Poems is, in fact, so close in tone, diction and content to some of Wordsworth's poetry that it is not too extreme to say that its basis is stolen. One passage, for example, reads:

For memory hoards up joy
 Beyond Time's dull alloy;
 Pleasures that once have been
 Shed light upon the scene,
 As setting suns sink back
 A bright and glowing track,
 To show they once have cast
 A glory o'er the past. (100-01)

This poem, which bears obvious similarities to the Intimations Ode, goes on to talk about how Christian faith can overcome uncertainty, something Wordsworth's poem does not do. In fact, it would not be without foundation to suggest that Moodie, like many of her contemporaries, sees the "intimations of immortality" as religious faith. Nevertheless, though she picked and chose from among romantic ideas and adapted them when she saw fit, she still seems to have felt some uncertainty and uneasiness about romantic effusiveness, quite possibly because of the changing attitude of her society.

Moreover, the passion for the "natural" is not the only aspect of the protagonist's character which proves her romantic affiliation. Like many first-generation romantics, Moodie was, early on, an admirer of Napoleon, the supposed champion of freedom and liberty. In her letters she mentions this early passion and she embodies it in her characterization of Rachel Wilde:

whether from a contradiction in human nature, or from an inherent admiration of genius, Rachel had conceived a love for the detested Bonaparte. In him, she realized all the greatness of her favourite heroes; she pursued his victorious career with an enthusiasm unsurpassed by his most devoted followers. He was the idol of her imagination, whom she worshipped to the exclusion of all others. (235)

Rachel is also shown becoming attached to another well-known object of romantic veneration, Milton's Satan. Rachel, the narrator says, "literally fell in love with the devil, and upon his being turned into a serpent, flung down the book and refused to read any further, to the great amusement of Dorothea" (251).

The Victorian era demanded the tempering of fancies such as these. For romantics, Milton's Satan and Napoleon stood, above all else, for the power and magnificence of the individual striking out in defense of personal rights and abilities. In that direction, however, lay democracy, 7

system the average British Victorian viewed as being synonymous with revolution and anarchy. Men had to be governed by some greater law. Total liberty was a chimerical goal, impossible to achieve and, as Moodie herself later came to believe, undesirable.

8. Doubt Regarding Providential Design

The last and, for a Victorian woman, most serious area of moral error to be dealt with is Moodie's doubt regarding the wisdom of the dictates of Providence. As Joan N. Burstyn points out,

religious writers, in their exaggeration of domestic virtues, described women as saviours of society. Men might be assailed by religious scepticism, but women never. Charles Darwin commented that his father had known 'during his whole long life, only three women who were sceptics' (102)

The reader may, at first, look somewhat askance at this accusation of doubt, and with some reason. Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It in the Bush, especially the latter, are rife with exclamations on the merciful nature of Providence and its effects in the protagonist's personal life. However, it is very possible that these utterances express as much Moodie's own efforts at belief as they do unquestioning conviction. The object of her vehemence in these cases may

not only be her audience, but herself as well. If, in the words of Browning, "you desire faith -- then you've faith enough" ("Bishop Blougram's Apology" 634), Moodie can be seen, through embodiment in her autobiographical works, as struggling towards the reality of faith by affirming what she hoped was true. And, as with many of the other received truths of her society, her critical intelligence tended to undermine her comfort.

At some levels, of course, the questioning is of a very simple type and poses no real crisis of faith. In Life in the Clearings, for example, Moodie roundly chastises those materially spoiled readers who dislike realistic fiction -- for her "realism" means dealing with unpleasant social conditions -- because it often shows people mired in sin and squalor. In defending the works of Charles Dickens and Eugene Sue, she tells her audience, "You may well be honest; for all your wants have been supplied, and you have yet to learn that where no temptation exists, virtue itself becomes a negative quality" (213). In this instance, Moodie is not so much questioning the value of conventional morality as she is falling back on a rhetorical device to urge tolerance, compassion and even empathy for the poor.

In other cases, though, the questioning is troubled and sincere. In Enthusiasm and Other Poems, some of which Moodie says were written when she was as young as fourteen, she can be seen expressing -- again perhaps unwittingly -- doubt about the validity of God's actions. Many of these

poems are examples of the religious sublime. Moodie attempts one of the simplest forms of this type of poetry by taking Biblical passages and reworking them into verse. The object is to emphasize the grand and awful nature of God. On the surface, these poems do just that; they recount various Biblical tales, usually those describing the destruction of sinners. In looking at them more closely, however, one cannot help believing that Moodie is not altogether comfortable with the judgements of an all-powerful Jehovah. She never overtly criticizes what occurs; indeed, the speaker offers nothing but the most commonplace and orthodox commentary. However, the true impact of at least some of these poems lies in their structuring, for Moodie frequently sets up the situation such that one occurrence, directly following another, gives rise to very obvious situational irony. Moreover, this ironic juxtapositioning occurs obviously enough and often enough to show that, at one level, Moodie was uncomfortable with some precepts of traditional Judeo-Christianity.

One poem, in particular, manifests Moodie's questioning attitude. "The Overthrow of Zebah and Zalmunna" is a paraphrase of Judges 8:5-23. In this passage, Gideon, the hero of Israel, is pursuing his nation's enemies, the Midianite Kings, Zebah and Zalmunna. Finally, he succeeds in capturing and executing them. However, he not only kills the two kings, but also goes out of his way to destroy certain Israelite communities which had declined to aid him

in his pursuit. In fact, he tortures his countrymen to death, a detail which Moodie conveniently chooses to omit. Since Moodie was, for a time, a dissenter herself, since some of the dissenting sects had a decidedly Old-Testament, eye-for-an-eye, retributive orientation, and since it is partly this tradition out of which Moodie's enthusiastic writing comes, it might seem natural if she were to accept this kind of behaviour without question. However, the poem is structured so as to make her discomfort obvious. Whereas in the Biblical account there is no such statement, the final, heroic death-speech of the poem is given to Zebah and Zalmunna:

Proudly then Zalmunna spoke:

"Dost thou think we dread the stroke
 Doomed to stretch us on the plain
 With the brave in battle slain?
 Leave yon tender boy to shed
 Tear-drops o'er the toomless [sic] dead:
 Like the mighty chiefs of old,
 Thou art cast in sterner mould.
 Rise, then, champion of the Lord,
 Rise! and slay us with the sword:
 Life from thee we scorn to crave,
 Midian would not live a slave!
 But when Judah's harp shall raise
 Songs to celebrate thy praise,

Let the bards of Israel tell
 How Zebah and Zalmunna fell." (56)

Gideon, by contrast with the Midianites whom Moodie creates in this poem, comes off rather badly.

Another indication in this poem of Moodie's uneasiness with God's unlimited ability to act in any way He chooses -- including ways that humans would often see as cruel and arbitrary -- can be seen in her alteration of the speech of Jether, Gideon's son, to whom is given the right to execute the kings. Jether refuses. The Biblical statement is, "But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared because he was yet a youth" (20). In the poem, however, Jether's refusal is attributed not to fear or inexperience, but to reasons which make him seem more humane: he is too overcome with grief for the death of his family in the recent battle.

This poem and several others like it in the collection -- especially "The Destruction of Babylon" and "The Earthquake" -- indicate that, though something in Moodie may have wanted to acquiesce, she could not whole-heartedly give her stamp of approval to the combination of fear and bribery that constitute some evangelical Christian forms of persuasion. It is not surprising, really, that a woman who could understand a passion for Milton's Satan should also see as heroic the harried objects of Israel's voracious quest for land.

This doubt regarding the all-wise dictates of Providence can also be seen closer to home, as it were, in

the autobiographical works. In Flora Lyndsay especially, an expressed faith in Providence is often undercut by occurrences and here, again, the undercutting seems deliberate. Old Davy Jarvis, though he has never "rebelled against the Providence of God" has lost a daughter and two sons to the sea (65). His resulting grief has driven him "stark, staring mad" and led him to kill his dog, Neptune, "the best, the truest friend man ever had" (65). Miss Betsey Clarke tells Flora a story of how her next-door neighbour had feared for the lives of her two sons caught out at sea during bad weather. Betsey, in an attempt to calm her, exclaims, "Why, Mother, dear...is it not weak, almost wicked of you to doubt God's providence in tnis way" (75-76)? Betsey, herself the affianced of one of the boys, is told by her father to "say your prayers, Betsey, and trust in Providence. Your lover is as safe in his good ship to-night, as in his bed at home" (77). However, it is that very night that both her lover and his brother drown. The narrator makes no comments on these events but the ironic juxtapositioning of what people say and what happens strongly suggests doubt.

At a later point in Flora Lyndsay, John and Flora are staying in Leith, where cholera is rampant. Flora, expressing the fear that she might be seriously ill, is told that the disease "is an affliction sae lately sent upon the nations by the Lord.... Your best chance is to trust in Him" (161). This counsel, however, seems to stand others in

ill stead. The W____s, a fine, affectionate family with whom the Lyndsays become friends, are totally destroyed by illness. The narrator emphasizes at some length the admiration and respect they are due, especially the father. Despite this worthiness, however, Providence seems to have forgotten them. One by one, Mr. W____'s wife and children all die, leaving him alone, a shrunken skeleton "too miserable to attend to anything but [his] own burden o inarticulate grief (166)." Mercifully, he too dies.

Such an effective description of family decimation and misery makes it fairly obvious that Providence is not necessarily looking after things in the way that might be hoped, despite loud affirmations to the contrary. In view of the pitiful deaths in Flora Lyndsay, both from drowning and cholera, it is not totally out of line to wonder if Moodie did not doubt the wisdom of her own trip to Canada, as much for practical as for sentimental and patriotic reasons; after all, in 1832, a trans-atlantic voyage invariably claimed lives. She advises trust in Providence but she shows Providence frequently letting people down. And, even if the universe is unfolding as it should, it is cold comfort to believe that death, if and when it comes, is the will of God.

The cry, "Is God just to his creatures" in fact, echoes throughout the middle two of Moodie's autobiographical works. In Roughing It in the Bush her apostrophes to Providence are frequent. Nevertheless, the family is

poverty-stricken, often ill with the ague and frequently hungry. John Moodie breaks a leg, potentially a much more serious injury than now. Once the house burns down on a dangerously cold day, a tornado hits once and a carelessly set forest fire almost dooms the family to a horrible death. John is also away with the militia for months on end. As the early letters from The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection show, he and his wife were, at the time, torn between wanting him to stay home and hoping he could remain in the militia so as to make enough money to forestall creditors who were trying to sell the livestock out from under them. Moreover, while John Moodie is away his family suffers frequent illnesses and his wife is running the bush farm alone. And, although Moodie alludes only briefly to these events in Life in the Clearings, the Moodies lose two children -- one son in infancy and one at the age of six to the Moira River in Belleville.

Finally, although they deal partly with later years in Moodie's life and are, therefore, not directly relevant here, some of her published letters show that things never got much better for the Moodies. Their financial troubles were severe throughout their lives, they were subjected to political and social harassment in Belleville, they suffered from frequent health problems and their relations with their children were often unhappy. One may be forgiven for wondering whether the only favour Providence ever did for

them was to ensure that they remained alive to endure their sufferings.

Moreover, for Moodie, an introspective and thinking woman, the true import of her experiences in Canada may have lain, not so much in their physical nature, unpleasant as that sometimes was, as in the theological doubt to which they gave rise. As the narrator in "Rachel Wilde" notes, contemplation of the decrees of God sometimes causes man "to strive in vain to solve the great riddle of life" (185). In other words, God frequently seems arbitrarily cruel. This dilemma, one of Judeo-Christianity's oldest, is summed up in a modern article in the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. There is, the writer says, "a range of suffering beyond all enumeration and conception, baffling the imagination, affronting the intelligence" (XII: 1). Moreover, he continues, "the deepest element in the problem of pain is that so much suffering is meaningless, as far as our most careful thought can discern. How can a world crossed by such a bar sinister be the expression of wisdom, power and goodness" (XII: 2)?

One standard theological answer to this question is that God teaches and chastens through suffering. Moral goodness is "being wrought out [in the world] not merely in spite of, but actually by means of, the suffering that is to be found in all human pain" (XII: 2). In their own lives both Moodies seem to accept this view. In Roughing It in the Bush, Susanna Moodie constantly stresses the role of

trial in bringing her to a position of childlike reliance on Providence. John Moodie, too, speaks of their attitude to the role of suffering in their lives in his correspondence with George Hodson. In a letter to John Moodie from The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection, Hodson takes up the topic, quoting and agreeing with much of what John has said in a previous letter to him:

I shall now take as my guide the order of your letter and unite with you in adoring and [word missing] the goodness of Divine Providence towards you and your family -- calling your religious attention upwards by apparently adverse events; -- teaching you patience by suffering and wisdom by experience -- humbling you that he might exalt you -- instructing you in the Christian lessons of dependence on divine care, and convincing you more fully of the real source and Giver of your temporal solace as of your spiritual blessings -- finally giving you to taste if not to drink of the cup of sorrows, that you might have a greater relish of that joy.... (Letter 35, Series I)

However, the problem becomes more complex when the suffering is not confined to oneself. As the modern theologian notes, "if there remains a margin of suffering that bears no relation to character and cannot be related to the chief end of creation, the theistic conclusion remains open to doubt" (XII: 5). The fact that much of the world's

pain and suffering bears little evident relation to the spiritual development of humankind has suggested itself to many observant and questioning individuals. This realization is the cause of Brian's anguish in Roughing It in the Bush and, by extension, is a problem Moodie at least ponders. The valiant buck deer, an animal Moodie uses several times in a symbolic way in that book, is neither guilty of sin nor in need of tuition. As William Gairdner observes, for Moodie, the killing of the deer by wolves borders on the suggestion the God is unfair (40-41).

These seven problematic areas of Moodie's life, then -- these social and moral errors, or "sins," in religious terminology -- largely define her characterization of her versions of herself in "Rachel Wilde," Flora Lyndsay and the first part of Roughing It in the Bush. This is not to say that these errors constitute all there is to know of her character. They have been chosen for discussion, rather, because the concern with them is consistent throughout the first three books, indicating that they were central issues in her life. The following chapter suggests that Catharine Parr Traill, too, was concerned with many of these same issues and that, at one level, her books on Canada form a very neat and useful commentary on those of her sister. This next chapter, then, prepares the reader more fully for the resolution of Moodie's moral and social flaws which is delineated in Volume II of Roughing It in the Bush and in Life in the Clearings.

IV. Catharine Parr Traill as Moral Exemplar in The Backwoods of Canada and The Canadian Settler's Guide

Many observations on the personality of Susanna Moodie have been made over the years by critics of Canadian literature. Indeed, some of these observations overlap with the delineation of character carried out so far here. The fact that she is proud and aware of class distinctions can hardly be missed. Her romantic temperament as it reveals itself in her response to nature has also been noted, and Carol Shields discusses her feminist leanings, taking them at face value. However, these traits have usually been approached as incidental aspects of her works. Or, if character has been seen as central, there has been little aim or pattern attributed to its portrayal. Critics have not really granted to Moodie the mental stance given almost automatically to other life-writers -- that is, that she is, if not the sole, then certainly the most important, focus of her own attention. It has not been suggested except briefly, obliquely and in passing, that she is aware of many of these traits, that she delineates them from genesis through development throughout all of the autobiographical works, and that she does so often showing herself in a

negative light. For Moodie does understand her own personality traits. Moreover, true to the pattern of spiritual autobiography, she sometimes sees them as undesirable, a view which can be strengthened by a reading of the works of Catharine Parr Traill which were intended for emigrants. The suggestion advanced is that in these works, especially in The Backwoods of Canada, Traill portrays herself as the ideal, Victorian, emigrant woman. Moodie later seems to play off this definition in her characterization of her own autobiographical protagonist, especially in Roughing It in the Bush. Traill then re-emphasizes the definition in The Canadian Settler's Guide.

To some extent, Moodie and Traill, in their works, appear to have used each other as sounding boards. As a matter of fact, ideas -- and in at least one case, verbatim passages -- which appear in some of Moodie's works, also appear in Traill's. A paragraph from Moodie's The World Before Them, for example, shows up in Traill's Pearls and Pebbles -- and, incidentally, was supposedly transmitted word-for-word to Moodie by a spirit on January 17, 1858 (Spiritualism Album 83, Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection).

Moodie seems to have looked upon Traill as the epitome of female, Christian virtue which she should and did desire to emulate. Moodie's letters and the editorial commentary in the published edition of them make clear that, for all intents and purposes, the Strickland family was two families. The children born in the country were

considerably younger and were, consequently, quite isolated from the older girls born in Kent. In fact, if "Rachel Wilde" is any indication, some enmity seems to have sprung up between the two groups, an enmity which may explain Moodie's lifelong problems with her older sisters. The younger children seem to have formed a society unto themselves and drawn together for company and support. It appears that the young Susanna fell back on the support of her next oldest sister, Catharine, since she was the only one willing and able to mitigate the execration pouring down on the head of her difficult and unruly sister. In "Rachel Wilde" we see a description of such sibling affection:

Poor Rachel, her heart was full of affection, full of deep, abiding love -- love strong as death, but those around her, knew not how to call forth all its energy and tenderness. In all her sorrows, and they were many, she found one faithful friend and counsellor, in her sister Dorothea.

Dorothea, was nearly two years her senior; was a gentle, loving, lamb-like creature, full of sincerity and truth. Her talents were equal, perhaps superior, to those of her impetuous irascible sister; but she had a perfect contrroll [sic] over her passions. (234)

Rachel loves Dorothea "devotedly." Her affection for "this kind sister" falls "little short of idolatry; untractable [sic] to others, she was tractable to Dorothea"

(234). The beginning of Moodie's tendency to see Traill as a moral teacher is, perhaps, being described here, for it is directly following these statements that the narrator informs readers that "the philosophy of life" which Rachel had to adopt at that time was to learn to control her own strong passions. This control is a virtue the older sister has learned by the age of eleven and one which is certainly obvious throughout all of Traill's work. Further suggestion that Moodie venerated such control is found in her novel, Geoffrey Moncton. There, Philip Mornington, who has previously been living a riotous life, is now happy because he has brought his "passions under the subjection of reason" (53). In another of Moodie's fictional works, a comparison with Austen's Sense and Sensibility is, again, instructive. Alice Linhope in "The First Debt" is, like Elinor Dashwood, blessed with strong feeling but feeling which is controlled (The Literary Garland os 3, 241). It is, then, in this important task of learning to control herself that Traill was Moodie's teacher. Indeed, as Moodie points out in a letter to Mary Russell Mitford written before she ever came to Canada, her "beloved sister Catharine" is "dearer to [her] than all the world -- [her] monitress, [her] dear and faithful friend" (emphasis added, Letters 43).

In fact, all of the moral and social errors which Moodie embodied in the characterization of her multi-phase autobiographical protagonist seem to have been considered first by the virtuous Traill in The Backwoods of Canada of

1836. There is one exception which will, for the sake of convenience, be mentioned briefly now. Traill seems to have had a very tolerant, non-judgemental attitude to the world. She could see all sides of an issue and this ability contributes to the total lack of satiric wit in her writing. In her work, satire, or even the most gentle irony, is almost totally lacking. One partial exception is the tale of "Barbara," published in The Literary Garland in December 1841 (os 4, 21-26). This story begins by portraying Barbara, a family servant, in a rather unkind and unidimensional way. As the tale progresses, however, the pathetic elements of Barbara's life seem to have occurred to Traill and the treatment is softened. In The Backwoods of Canada, Traill praises "a little reflection" as being useful to settlers heading for the bush (101) and she seems to have thought it might stand one in good stead in other walks of life as well. As already discussed, the Victorians thought that it was a quick, unidimensional way of seeing which gave rise to satire; the careful, reflective Traill may have had little reason to be concerned with this error.

However, all of the other character flaws which Moodie portrays in her autobiographical works also find emphasis in The Backwoods of Canada and The Canadian Settler's Guide. Basically, what Traill does is show that these problems do not affect her life and that she is the better for it. In some cases, she also discusses them in theoretical terms and chides hypothetical women who manifest them. Because

religious faith is the basis of Traill's stability and control, this is the aspect of her character which will be discussed first, rather than last as it was with Moodie. Because of the prominence of religion in many aspects of life during the Victorian period, it is natural that Moodie should see her shortcomings in moral and spiritual terms. It is not surprising, then, that Traill's strengths -- those same areas in which her sister was fallible -- should have been seen as coming out of the kind of spiritual stability which Moodie initially lacks.

As was the case with Moodie, there is very little information available on Traill's denominational affiliation. Since her family was Anglican and since there is no evidence to the contrary, it seems fairly safe to assume that she also belonged to that sect. According to Pearls and Pebbles, she was married in the Anglican church. Whatever her denominational associations, her statements in all her works and the tributes paid to her by others strongly indicate that she was a very devout Christian. Traill seems always to have exhibited a grave and gentle serenity, to have had a tranquil, still centre to her being which was the outcome of an unquestioning faith. In Blake's terms, Traill seems always to have existed in a state of organized innocence. While Moodie was forced to battle her way through the broils and mazes of experience, Traill never embarked on such a quest because she never had to. For her, Pilgrim's Slough of Despond simply did not exist.

The "unaffected piety" mentioned in Pearls and Pebbles as central to Traill's character (xxxii) shows up everywhere in her work. "The Hebrew Martyrs," published in The Literary Garland in September, 1840 (os 2) but written much earlier, is a blatant example. Its religious sentimentality manifests itself primarily in reams of biblical paraphrase. For example, immediately after being delivered from slavery, the chief character, Azariah, exclaims:

Surely, oh Lord...thy judgements are true and righteous altogether; thy thoughts are very deep, and thy ways past finding out. I acknowledge thy power, thy goodness and thy mercy; and confess mine own unworthiness. Thou hast visited thy servant in the land of captivity, even as thou didst the Patriarch Joseph, when he lay fast bound in prison in the house of his enemies. Holy and blessed is thy name. (445)

A very little of such writing goes a long way. Suffice it to say that the tale is full of similar rhetoric and that, unlike the case with Moodie's recounting of biblical tales in her poetry, it is not possible to see in it any degree of irony.

Moreover, of paramount importance to this tale is the conventional, otherworldly Christian belief that even if steadfast faith does not alleviate present suffering, it will undoubtedly lead to a heavenly reward. While mourning the cruel death of "a Christian mother supported on either

side by a lovely female child," Azariah questions God's justice (447). At this point, an older and presumably wiser convert undertakes to correct him:

Happy are those that are counted worthy to suffer for righteousness sake. The gates of death open to them a passage to everlasting life; an eternal inheritance, unfading and that passeth not away. They have fought the good fight, they have finished their course, and from henceforth is laid up for them a crown of everlasting glory! (448)

Nevertheless, even the recounting of Azariah's question indicates that Traill was aware of the sort of dilemma in which Moodie was caught. God often appears unjust to his creatures. However, unlike Moodie, who, though she often admits the value of suffering in her own life, seems to have questioned its effects on the innocent, Traill espoused the view that pain and death have been brought into the world, not by God nor for any reason God may have devised, but by man's sin at the fall. Hence, she can more readily accept them, a statement borne out by the surprisingly bleak nature of her children's tales, many of which are beast fables.

For while it is true that, in Traill's view, Providence governs the world, her faith does not blind her to the fact that nature is frequently cruel. Her animal stories have been likened to those of Charles G. D. Roberts and, indeed, she often shows nature in all its seeming amorality. The baby squirrels in Afar in the Forest are eaten by a wood

owl. Little Downy, the field mouse, is left old and alone to starve to death when her only surviving daughter is caught in a mousetrap. The ruthlessness of nature is even more consistently portrayed, and with much less comment, in Traill's late collection of tales, Cot and Cradle Stories. In "The Queen Bee," an unsuspecting snail who wants "only to hide herself from some outside danger, from a garden toad or some voracious bird," is buried alive in wax to provide living sustenance for a hive of young bees (20). In "Mrs. Marjery Pie," a magpie's eggs are "murdered" by a bird of prey. Two baby chipmunks in "The Further Adventures of Tit and Tat" are killed by an Indian and made into soup.

Human beings also suffer in Traill's stories. Willy, the child protagonist in "Blind Willy's Dream," who had "a smile for everyone" and was "never seen crying or fretting" is, nevertheless, struck with scarlet fever and left blind at the age of four (60-65). Katie, in "Katie's Secret," goes to some length to protect the life of her "dear little grey bunny," but to no avail; she is devastated when her brother deliberately breaks its neck (70). In The Canadian Crusoes, it is shown that man often suffers as part of the rise and fall of circumstances in much the same way animals do. Hector's account of the flight of Charles II from Puritan England portrays the Crown Prince as a man "hunted like a partridge;" surely it is not accidental that the lost and hungry young people have just succeeded in killing a

wild partridge and, even as Hector speaks, are roasting it for supper (52, 53).

For Traill, however, the seeming cruelty of nature was not the occasion for pause it was for her sister.

Theologians again explain the doctrine Traill accepted:

The Christian doctrine of providence...believes that the problem of pain is part of the wider and deeper problem of moral evil. It does not stay to discuss the fact of physical evil before it has dealt with the greater problem of sin. It presses on to the tremendous fact of breach with God, confident that, if this has been met and healed, no other discord can remain fully unresolved. Reconciliation with God will be the final solution of the history of pain which reverberates throughout the universe. To be reconciled to God, is to be reconciled to life. (Encyclopedia of

Religion & Ethics XII: 6)

A long passage from Pearls and Pebbles clearly states Traill's acceptance of this tenet that it is "sin [which has] marred the harmony of Nature" (62). The rebellious nature of the world, the grief man feels in beholding it and the effort required from him to change it, she indicates there, are his punishment for error. His task is now to labour to restore "that which was cursed for his sake" (189). In The Canadian Crusoes, Hector expresses doubt that God, who has created all the world's wonders, will let any

harm befall him or his companions since they, too, are God's creatures. His sister, however, objects. "True" she says, "but then, Hector, we are not as God made us; for the wicked one cast bad seed in the field where God had sown the good" (47). Her insinuation, then, is that many of life's griefs fall justifiably on the shoulders of those chiefly responsible for them.

Because Traill never questions the fact that whatever is, is right, she is sustained when she encounters life's trials. Her poem, "The Father to his Dead Son," published in The Victoria Magazine in January 1848, provides a good example of her accepting faith. Unlike some of Moodie's poems in the Enthusiasm collection, no questioning is inherent. The bereaved parents merely "own [God's] sovereign power,/ And meekly kiss the rod" (107). It is this kind of religious acceptance which provides the backdrop against which everything else in Traill's emigrant books is played out.

Only five paragraphs into The Backwoods of Canada, readers see Traill's first affirmation that her own fate, too, is in the hands of God. This faith shows itself in her attitude to her trip. It is interesting to note, in passing, that the weather is very different in each of the sisters' accounts of the journey out from Great Britain. Whether the difference indicates use of the pathetic fallacy or whether it reflects actual fact would now be very difficult to determine. Regardless of meteorological truth,

however, the descriptions do aptly point up the sisters' differing attitudes. Moodie, at this point, is still rebelling and does not yet accept that God's plan for her is right. Aptly enough, then, her trip out, as described in Roughing It in the Bush, is "tedious, [plagued with] baffling winds [and] heavy fogs" (I: 3). The passengers run short of water and food, a sailor drowns while others look on and the ship is rammed and almost sunk. Traill, on the other hand, trusts completely in God's wisdom as to her lot in life. Her trip, recorded in The Backwoods of Canada, is quick and without problem. In observing the gulls she is moved to recall the words of the American poet, William Cullen Bryant: "He who from zone to zone/ Guides through the boundless air their certain flight,/ In the long way that I must tread alone/ Will guide my steps aright" (9).

Nor does this faith seem to diminish with time and hardship. In the fifteenth letter, of September 30, 1834, Traill describes her meeting with an emigrant clergyman. He recounts his journey to the colony, tells of the trials he has faced and testifies to the rightness of his being in Canada. This minister cites as justification for his attitude the sixth to ninth verses of Deuteronomy which describe God's goodness in bringing the Israelites to Canaan, "a land of wheat, and barley, and vines and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey" (280). At least one critic sees Traill as sharing in the minister's faith and viewing her own emigration in

stereotypically religious terms. William Gairdner points out that one way she emphasizes her faith in Providence is by likening her own journey to that of the Israelites. "Despite the scientific nature of Catharine Parr Traill's observations," he says, "the book [The Backwoods of Canada] is...a religious allegory of flight from Egypt to the promised land" (36). For Traill, then, Canada is her true home, the home of God's choice, despite what she may have to endure in getting or staying there. Very early on in The Backwoods of Canada she begins to refer to "our" wild fruits (144), "our" roads (123), "our" lakes (159) and words that "we" use (101), whereas Moodie takes some years to claim anything Canadian as her own.

Obviously, a woman espousing such a view is going to find the vicissitudes of her new life easier to bear than a woman who doubts whether God's providential design is always just. It is this very faith, moreover, which allows all of Traill's other attitudes to be so different from those of her sister. This faith is embodied in her actions and becomes incarnate in all facets of her life, whereas many of Moodie's ideas and actions embody doubt. At one point in The Backwoods of Canada, Thomas Traill comments on his brother-in-law's admonition to make the best of present circumstances, by saying: "This is true philosophy; and the more forcible, because you not only recommend the maxim but practice it also" (127). Like her brother, then, but unlike

Moodie, Traill is, even early on, a doer of the word and not a hearer only.

Because Traill truly feels she is governed by God's grand design, the home He is leading her towards is rendered in positive terms. Moreover, when read in conjunction, the descriptions of this new home and its inhabitants offered in the two sisters' accounts seem almost deliberately intended to contrast each other in both content and tone. For example, though Traill finds the Newfoundland coastline somewhat forbidding, she "[hails] its appearance with rapture." Never did anything seem "so refreshing and delicious to her as the land breeze...bearing health and gladness on its wings." A small bird is greeted as a "good omen -- a little messenger sent to bid [them] welcome to the New World" and its appearance causes her to feel "an almost childish joy." She says that "Hope was busy in [her] heart, chasing from it all feelings of doubt and regret" (11-13).

Moodie, however, begins her account on a very different note. Because she "took a freak" of cutting Flora Lyndsay off from Roughing It in the Bush, this second work misses an account of the first approach to Moodie's new home. The initial chapter begins with the ship already well up the St. Lawrence and, here, the account is no positive one. The first line of the work, in fact, reads, "The dreadful cholera was depopulating Quebec and Montreal, when our ship cast anchor off Grosse Isle, on the 30th of August, 1832...(I: 1). The account goes on to describe the health

officers who try to force the passengers ashore at the risk of drowning, the rude, inarticulate ship captain, the avaricious customs men, the death of other emigrants trying to land in bad weather, and the near sinking of the vessel.

Moreover, had Moodie left the whole tale of Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It in the Bush as one unit, the approach to North America would still have been portrayed negatively. Becalmed off the coast of Newfoundland in rain and fog, Moodie describes the emigrants' experiences in Flora Lyndsay as distressing in the extreme and their response to the forbidding coastline as one of fear and apprehension (317-337). Though there are occasional descriptions of nature in its more pleasant aspects, the general tenor of Moodie's account is negative, and thus much different from that of her sister. In her early days in Canada, Moodie seriously doubts the wisdom of God in casting her lot in the colony, whether she overtly admits it or not.

A final good example of the sisters' differing responses toward their new home is their very similar accounts of running into their disgruntled precursors in Upper Canada. While at Montreal, the Traills meet the disappointed emigrant who has been persuaded to come out to the colony by William Cattermole. He has briefly tried settling and failed, and is now on his way back to England, roundly abusing Upper Canada along the way to any who will listen. Traill's comment on this man is that "he had never reflected on the subject, or he could not have been so

foolish as to suppose he would encounter no difficulties in his first outset, in a settlement in the woods. We are prepared to meet with many obstacles, and endure considerable privations..." 42). The Traills, then, press confidently onward.

In an almost identical situation, Moodie is unable to be nearly so sanguine. In Cobourg, the Moodies meet Tom Wilson who has also been persuaded to emigrate by Mr. Cattermole's panegyrics. Moreover, Wilson berates the country in almost the same terms as Traill's disappointed emigrant. He too vilifies the cheats and rogues who make the colony out to be something it is not, and derides the insects, the swamps, the bad food and the living conditions. Moreover, his account also shows that his expectations were ignorant and ridiculous. Though John Moodie is inclined to dismiss these trifling annoyances, Susanna Moodie's response is very different from her sister's. "Good heavens," she says, "let us never go to the woods" (I: 70).

Nor do Traill's early encounters with Canada's inhabitants show the pride and social disdain manifested by Moodie's protagonist. While the first North American they meet -- a Frenchman -- calls to Moodie's mind apocalyptic cataclysm, recorded in her reference to the rider on the pale horse (I: 1), Monsieur Paul, another Frenchman, guides the Traill's ship into Quebec City. Traill describes him as willing to help the emigrants and as "good natured and obliging" (The Backwoods of Canada 15). Traill also

justifiably appreciates the two Irish girls who nurse her through cholera in Quebec "almost [quarrelling] which should be her attendant" (43).

On the journey from Cobourg to Amhearst, the Traills find that their fellow travellers all "[prove] very agreeable" (55) and when they finally arrive tired, ill and wet at a Peterborough inn, the proprietors go out of their way to help, even though the inn is full and its inhabitants have long been asleep:

On seeing my condition the landlady took compassion on me, [and] led me to a blazing fire, which her damsels quickly roused up; one brought a warm bath for my feet, while another provided a warm potation, which, I really believe, strange and unusual to my lips as it was, did me good: in short, we received every kindness and attention that we required from mine host and hostess, who relinquished their own bed for our accommodation, contenting themselves with a shakedown before the kitchen fire. (79)

Obviously, Traill finds Canada's inhabitants to be a much friendlier and more worthy lot than the Moodie of Roughing It in the Bush who, as was mentioned earlier, gives a less positive account of the hospitality of a coach stop proprietress.

Another difference which stands out when reading the sisters' accounts in conjunction is their versions of Grosse

Isle. Again, Moodie's shows class arrogance while Traill's does not. It is true that Traill did not go ashore, while Moodie did, but Traill's description shows that she can see and hear the people very clearly from aboard the ship. Moreover, given the general tenor of her remarks in The Backwoods of Canada, it is extremely unlikely that Traill's account would have been different even if she had gone to the island. She says:

You may imagine yourself looking on a fair or crowded market, clothes waving in the wind or spread out on the earth, chests, bundles, baskets, men, women and children, asleep in the sun, some in motion busied with their goods, the women employed in washing or cooking in the open air, beside the wood fires on the beach; while parties of children are pursuing each other in wanton glee, rejoicing in their newly-acquired liberty. Mixed with these you see the stately form and gay trappings of the sentinels, while the thin blue smoke of the wood fires, rising above the trees, heightens the picture and gives it an additional effect! (21)

For Moodie, however, this same "extraordinary spectacle" presents the "confusion of Babel." The Moodies are "literally stunned by the strife of tongues" and Susanna Moodie "[shrinks], with feelings almost akin to fear, from the hard featured, sun-burnt [sic] harpies, as they [elbow]

rudely past [her]". Eventually she "[turns] in disgust from the revolting scene" (I: 10-11). For Traill, though, this conglomeration of colour and motion seems to indicate diversity and life rather than the chaos and depravity which her sister perceives.

Moreover, though the fort's officer dourly warns Traill that, "in this instance, as in many others, 'tis distance lends enchantment to the view," one sees no proof of her agreeing anywhere in The Backwoods of Canada (21). She does not adopt a cynical attitude or fall back on class superiority the way Moodie does. Indeed, given the same warning by her ship's captain, Moodie, very frequently, in her early days in Canada, finds his words accurate.

A third fine example of the way the sisters' accounts complement each other on this topic of pride and social disdain is their treatment of the "bees" in both tales. It does not seem likely that the work party held by the Traills was, in actual fact, that much different from the one held by the Moodies; the families lived very close to one another in the bush and would have had the same neighbours. Yet Traill speaks of entertaining the "worthy hive" and defines bees as "those friendly meetings of neighbours who assemble at your summons to raise the walls of your house, shanty, barn or any other building..." (121). "This laudable practice," she continues

has grown out of necessity and if it has its disadvantages, such for instance as being called

upon at an inconvenient season for the return of help, by those who have formerly assisted you, yet it is so indispensable to you that the debt of gratitude ought cheerfully to be repaid."

(121-22)

Even the one disadvantage she does cite carries none of the connotations of moral depravity, licentiousness and drunken hooliganism that Moodie sees in this "most disgusting picture of bush life." For Moodie, bees, though praised by others, are only "noisy, riotous, drunken meetings, often terminating in violent quarrels" (II: 67). As at Grosse Isle, she once again retires in distress.

One of the reasons for Traill's more tolerant attitude may be that her notions of class stratification show a certain plasticity right from the beginning. She observes, for example, that "many of the professional men and storekeepers" in Peterborough "are persons of respectable family and good education" (81). Nor does she appear to disapprove of their being occupied in ways which, in Britain, would have been considered demeaning. She says that though a store is, in fact, "nothing better than what [they] should call in the country towns at home, a 'general shop,' yet the storekeeper in Canada holds a very different rank from the shopkeeper of the English village" (81). Traill realizes and stresses for her family back in England that in Canada necessity has altered social views of honourable work:

you must not be surprised when I tell you that it is no uncommon circumstance to see the sons of naval and military officers and clergymen standing behind a counter, or wielding an axe in the woods with their fathers' choppers; nor do they lose their grade in society by such employment. (81)

Obviously, in adopting these tolerant attitudes and in so readily adapting to new, practical necessities, Traill is going to fit into the communal setting much more easily than her more rigid and intolerant sister. She notes that some of the people of Cobourg make up a "select society" (54) and even admits that odious manners are "doubtless too generally" attributed to Americans (50). In fact, while staying at an inn on her journey up country, Traill solicits information on the Rice Lake plains from a Yankee farmer and finds his comments useful and interesting (62). On another occasion during her trip she requests tuition from a lower-class tavern keeper on the manufacture of yarn and is, again, impressed with what she hears (47). Traill says that the emigrant woman should not be "too proud to profit by the advice and experience of older portions of the community, from whom she may learn many excellent lessons of practical wisdom" (181). Interestingly enough, the narrator of Volume I of Roughing It in the Bush shows the Moodie of that book exhibiting just such pride. Consequently, it takes Moodie a long time to join the community whereas, for Traill, acceptance occurs almost immediately. This is not to say

that Traill liked everyone and everything she met, for she did not nor could she ever have been called republican in her attitudes. Like her sister, she too finds the Canadians and Yankees occasionally rude. The innkeeper at Cornwall is one example. In general, though, it is not incorrect to say that the spirit with which she approaches her new compatriots is opposite to that of her sister.

Indeed, this acceptance is engendered, not only by her temperament but by a shrewd acknowledgement of the fact that it is a practical response, and practicality becomes something in which Traill sets great store. The Canadian Settler's Guide, for instance, is a good example of her bestowing on prospective emigrants all the practical knowledge she has gained on every conceivable subject. It is, perhaps, because of this practical bent that Traill is not so stereotypically romantic as her sister. Their attitudes to nature, for instance, are quite different at the root though they have a kind of surface similarity. On the approach to Quebec, Catharine voices her tiredness with the St. Lawrence River, a feeling Moodie would be incapable of experiencing, or at least, of expressing (14).

Indeed, the sublime does not really appeal to Traill and the character trait which explains this lack of appeal for her may be what lies behind part of the characterization of Dorothea in "Rachel Wilde." In that story, Dorothea finds her little sister's passion for Satan amusing but otherwise incomprehensible. Whereas in Flora Lyndsay and

early portions of Roughing It in the Bush, the chief character's eye and heart are often drawn to the magnificent, the awesome and even the terrifying in the natural world, Traill's taste is much quieter. She prefers gentle landscapes and because she is so eminently practical, the scenes which draw her attention are most often the pastoral and the bucolic. After all, the possession of neat, tidy farms means comfort and prosperity and it is these benefits which both the Traills and the Moodies have come to Canada to obtain. In these attitudes, Traill shows the Victorian love of peaceful, rural domesticity which was so opposite to the sublime aloofness esteemed in earlier decades and which was so tempting to Moodie. And not only does Traill notice primarily rural and bucolic scenery, but her appreciation of what she likes is restrained, whereas Moodie's is usually effusive.

Nor does Traill's approval of the idyllic nature of Canada diminish with closer acquaintance as the fort's officer has satirically predicted. On the stagecoach trip overland, she has the chance to pass through much agricultural country and is able to form first-hand opinions. She decides, for instance, that the land around Rice Lake, is well-suited to "grazing or dairy farms" and the trees are "most picturesque, growing in groups or singly, at considerable intervals, giving a park-like appearance to this portion of the country" (61).

The Backwoods of Canada contains a host of passages which illustrate Traill's governing attitude to nature. Every description she gives reflects her faith and the tranquility of her own personality. It is, in fact, quite possible that this faith and tranquility both give rise to and grow out of her preference for domestic landscapes. Traill loves not the torrential and wild, not the extreme, but that nature which has been cut back to the moderate realm of the tame and cultivated. Moreover, while Moodie's feelings and reactions to nature are marked by rapture, Traill's are more matter-of-fact. And, while Moodie's are, at least initially, more indicative of romantic, sublime appreciation, Traill's are more orthodox Christian. Moodie's descriptions of nature consistently show her lingering over its merits and leading up to a remembrance of God at the end. As much passion comes out in the first part of such descriptions as in the second. With Traill, the observation often comes more fully alive when its meaning in God's design is revealed. Her description of an insect known as a sawyer is one example. It is quoted at some length to show that Traill's appreciation can be rather dry until the natural world's religious significance is revealed:

The animal in its immature state is a whitish colour; the body composed of eleven rings; the head armed with a pair of short, hard pincers: the skin of this creature is so rough that on passing

your finger over it, it reminds you of a rasp, yet to the eye it is perfectly smooth. You would be surprised at the heap of fine sawdust that is to be seen below the hole they have been working in all night. These sawyers form a fine feast for the wood-peckers, and jointly they assist in promoting the rapid decomposition of the gigantic forest-trees, that would otherwise encumber the earth from age to age. How infinite is that Wisdom that rules the natural world! How often do we see great events brought about by seemingly insignificant agents! Yet are they all servants of the Most High, working his will, and fulfilling his behest. (The Backwoods of Canada 306)

The immediately positive response which Traill manifests towards all aspects of colonial life may strike the reader as unlikely. It is difficult not to feel that a woman who had so recently forsaken her native land, family and friends must have found life in a primitive outpost galling and unsatisfactory. How is it that Traill could, in less than two years, come to feel so total an acceptance of her radically altered lot? A large part of the answer lies in her faith in God's providential design, but this answer does not tell the whole story. Another significant reason is found in Traill's femininity, a femininity defined along ideal Victorian lines.

It stands to reason that Traill received the same upbringing and education as her sister. Moreover, as her many botanical and scientific treatises show, she had just as concise and inquisitive a mind. However, whereas for Moodie this education led to doubt and questioning, Traill used her education in more acceptable ways. As Hannah More, again, points out,

a lady studies, not that she may qualify herself to become an orator or a pleader; not that she may learn to debate, but to act. She is to read the best books, not so much to enable her to talk of them, as to bring the improvement she derives from them to the rectification of her own principles, and the formation of her habits. The great uses of study are to enable her to regulate her own mind, and to be useful to others. (II: 1-2)

Traill, indeed, fits the mould as described here by Mrs. More; whereas Moodie is given to debate, Traill's forte is action. Moreover, in temperament she is the pleasant, acquiescent, accommodating person the Victorian woman was supposed to be. This willingness to accommodate is a trait not readily obvious in Moodie's character but is one both she and Traill saw as admirable in a woman. In both her books intended for prospective settlers, Traill constantly admonishes women to do their "duty" which, in brief, seems to mean making life easier for their men. In The Backwoods of Canada, for example, she says:

I am sorry to observe, that in many cases the women that come thither give way to melancholy regrets, and destroy the harmony of their fire-side, and deaden the energies of their husbands and brothers by constant and useless repining. Having once made up their minds to follow their husbands or friends to this country, it would be wiser and better to conform with a good grace, and do their part to make the burden of emigration more bearable. (182)

As any student of Canadian literature can attest, many of the earlier parts of Roughing It in the Bush are devoted to Moodie's useless repining; there are at least six such instances in the first one-hundred and fifty pages.

In The Canadian Settler's Guide, originally called The Female Emigrant's Guide, Traill exhorts women to remember

to do [their] duty in that state of life to which it may please God to call [them]....

There should be no wavering on their part, no yielding to prejudices and pride. Old things are passed away. The greatest heroine in life is she who knowing her duty, resolves not only to do it, but to do it to the best of her abilities, with heart and mind bent upon the work. (16)

It is in statements like these that readers begin to see, even more clearly, the play between Traill's and Moodie's writings, especially if they are read in conjunction.

Looking at them in this way, the reader is tempted to suspect that the consistently opposite nature of the two sisters' accounts is not entirely accidental. Even if it can be accepted that Moodie and Traill experienced many events so similar as to be virtually identical -- right down to the words spoken to them -- surely it is not likely that Moodie's experiences were almost uniformly negative while Traill's were positive. Surely, Moodie did not really have so much more occasion for "useless repining" than her sister. Given this unlikelihood, two suggestions present themselves.

First, it is possible that Moodie is a negative, unhappy, depressed individual and that her unconscious choice of events to record reflects her temperament. For like reasons, Catharine Parr Traill, whose temper was "sunny," may unconsciously reflect her own personality by choosing to describe happy events. Readers of Moodie and Traill have made this assumption, and it probably has some merit. However, it is also possible and worth considering whether both sisters do not choose their mode of self presentation consciously and deliberately. Traill, writing between 1832 and 1834 and publishing in 1836 says in several places that she chooses to be positive and that this ability to be positive is an asset in a woman. For example, in The Backwoods of Canada, she says that "it has ever been [her] way to extract the sweet rather than the bitter in the cup of life, and surely it is best and wisest so to do" (310).

Moodie, writing at the same time or later, undoubtedly knows Traill's views and Traill's book. Why, then, would she, who saw Traill as her "monitress" show her protagonist to be, in many ways, the very opposite of the kind of woman Traill praises, unless she intends to portray herself in a negative light, thus illustrating the progression she had to make over the course of her emigration experiences? In The Backwoods of Canada, Traill says that women

need some wholesome admonitions on [their] duties and the folly of repining at following and sharing the fortunes of [their] spouses, whom [they] have vowed in happier hours to love "in riches and in poverty, in sickness and in health." (284)

Perhaps, then, Moodie realized that these admonitions could prove useful for her purposes in her own writing.

In fact, it looks very much as if, throughout her first three autobiographical books, but especially in Roughing It in the Bush, she partly characterizes herself as the very female her sister castigates. It almost seems that when Moodie began writing the sketches, she relied on The Backwoods of Canada to define the flawed moral character of her protagonist. Since, in a traditional spiritual autobiography, the chief character begins in a state of error and progresses toward grace, might Moodie not have accepted the ready-made, extensive definition of error, especially female error, already drawn up by the sister she considered as her "monitress"? Moreover, it also appears

that, when Traill wrote the Canadian Settlers Guide, she reiterated all the lessons she had previously delivered by criticizing the type of woman Moodie had portrayed herself as being in Roughing It in the Bush.

This dual effort, so to regard it, may have had one very useful benefit. It could have provided for Moodie part of the means by which to interpret her life and present herself as the erring protagonist of a developmental autobiography. At this point, therefore, it may be useful to show that, to some degree, Moodie has chosen to portray her protagonist in ways that contribute to seeing her as an erring individual, fitting a pre-determined form, rather than in ways which accord inconveniently with the facts.

It has been stated earlier that it is very difficult to tell now what parts of Moodie's works are fiction and which "truth." However, there are a few indications that Moodie may sometimes have "lied," or at least exaggerated to suit her own ends. For instance, in all of the autobiographical works, Moodie shows the chief character grieving and reticent at the thought of emigration. It is possible that this unwillingness, though undoubtedly felt, is so heavily emphasized as much to meet formal requirements as to indicate fact; the typical protagonist of a spiritual autobiography must reject the lot in life to which it has pleased God to call her. Really, however, in a letter to Mary Russell Mitford written at least one year before Moodie

even married, she says that her brother has emigrated to Canada, a country

to which I often feel strongly induced to follow him, having many dear friends in that land "of the mountain and flood." He gives me such superb descriptions of Canadian scenery that I often long to accept his invitation to join him, and to traverse the country with him in his journeys for Government. (Letters 42)

She does, indeed, go on to admit that she would hate to leave England. Still, this passage shows that the notion of emigration was probably not such anathema as she portrays it to be in Roughing It in the Bush.

Moreover, the Moodie of that book may well be made to look more incompetent and unwilling to work than she actually was. Five days after her marriage, for instance, she tells James Bird that she is being taught to cook -- beginning "the pudding and dumpling discussions," as she puts it (Letters 61). How is it, then, that two years later she does not know that bread has to be allowed to rise twice and cannot be put flat into a cold oven? These are the most rudimentary principles of baking and whether the oven used is of brick or a bake kettle, they do not change. Futhermore, in a late letter to Traill, Moodie notes the fact that, since she now has to put up with poor food, it is a great misfortune always to have been such a good cook (Letters 288) Yet, in Roughing It in the Bush, Malcolm

derides her cooking. Even her husband, in this instance, is shown tacitly agreeing; his comment after Malcolm's rude departure is that the peas and potatoes -- dishes which can be ruined only with great difficulty -- are fine.

In an early novel entitled The Young Emigrants, written long before either sister was a prospective settler, Traill portrays Ellen, the daughter in an emigrating family, as unfit for the adventure. In fact, until the initial clearing and settling work is done, Ellen is left in England, for she was "naturally of an indolent habit, and she wanted that firmness of mind and cheerfulness of temper, that so strongly marked the characters of her brother and sister..."(20). Commenting on Ellen's temperament, the narrator says, "It is always wisest and best to submit, without murmuring, to those things which we have not the power to remedy" (28). This characterization of Ellen fits the mould in which Moodie casts her own protagonist in her autobiographical works, especially in Roughing It in the Bush. At some level, Moodie seems to be concretely embodying in the character who represents herself, the points Traill makes didactically in her works.

If these suggestions can be accepted, the joint reading of Traill's emigrant books and of Roughing It in the Bush becomes a more interesting endeavour. In The Backwoods of Canada Traill says:

Since I came to this country, I have seen the accomplished daughters and wives of men holding no

inconsiderable rank as officers, both naval and military, milking their own cows, making their own butter, and performing tasks of household work that few of our farmer's wives would now condescend to take part in. Instead of despising these useful arts, the emigrant's family rather pride themselves on their skill in these matters.

(182)

In Roughing It in the Bush, Moodie more than once states that she is afraid of cows and, at first, will not milk. This task is one which she asks the H_____es to do for her.

In The Backwoods of Canada, Traill also emphasizes baking as a requisite skill. The emigrant woman, she says, "sighs for those little domestic comforts, that display of the refinements and elegancies [sic] of life, that she had been accustomed to see around her." "However," she continues,

the accomplishments she has now to acquire are of a different order. She must become skilled in...the making and baking of huge loaves, cooked in the bake-kettle, unless she be the fortunate mistress of a stone or clay oven. She must know "how to manufacture hop-rising or salt rising for leavening her bread.... (183-84)

As most readers know, one of the best sketches of Volume I of Roughing It in the Bush shows Moodie asking the H_____es for instructions on making leavening and then going on to

make bread which, not yet risen and put into an initially cold bake kettle, turns out inedible (I: 146). As iⁿ to emphasize the point, Traill, in The Canadian Settler's Guide says that "the making and baking of good, nourishing, palatable bread, is perhaps one of the most important duties of the practical housewife...." (91)

Again, in The Backwoods of Canada, Traill, answering a hypothetical question on the skills of a good female emigrant, says,

like the pattern of all good housewives described by the prudent mother of King Lemuel, it should be said of the emigrant's wife, "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hand holds the distaff."
 "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." (181-82)

Yet, in Roughing It in the Bush, Moodie cannot or will not knit John Monaghan a pair of stockings and, once again, is forced to turn to the H___es for help. In The Canadian Settler's Guide, Catharine says of knitting:

If you do not understand this useful art, I strongly advise you to turn your attention to it as soon as possible.... To the mind of the well-regulated female, there is no disgrace in so feminine an occupation. She is kept in countenance by ladies of her own rank; and indeed

would be considered as a very useless and foolish person, if she despised that which everyone here practises. (178-79)

In The Backwoods of Canada, Traill also emphasizes the foolishness of bringing most household goods from England. "Articles of hardware," she says, "are not much more expensive here than at home, if at all, and [are] often of a kind more suitable to the country than those you are at the trouble of bringing" (180). Moodie, however, "like most of her sex [has] a tender regard for china" and has brought these articles with her. To her dismay, on the trek into the bush, the sleigh is upset because of deplorable road conditions and all her crockery is destroyed; "scarcely one article remains unbroken," she laments (Roughing It in the Bush II: 16). Interestingly, in The Canadian Settler's Guide Traill observes that "instead of crockery, the old bush-settler's plates and dishes, cups &c. were of tin, which stood the rough travel of the forest roads better than the more brittle ware" (51).

While Moodie devotes a whole chapter to the evils of borrowing Traill curtly says in her few paragraphs on the subject in the settler's guide, "If a neighbour, or one who is hardly to be so called, comes to borrow articles of wearing apparel, or things that they have no justifiable cause for asking the loan of, refuse at once and unhesitatingly" (39).

It has also been theorized that one of the tales Moodie attributes to Brian, the still hunter, is an implicit questioning of the value of the kind of scientific study of which Traill is so fond (Gairdner 41). In The Canadian Settler's Guide, readers are given Traill's justification. She says that many "wild fruits and roots and leaves of plants" are edible but that only botanists can know which ones are wholesome. "This," she says, "is indeed the main use of botany as a study, though many persons foolishly despise it, because they are not really aware of the value of the science, and the benefits that mankind has derived from it" (81).

Perhaps the most telling area of comparison is Traill's collection of statements on who should venture into the backwoods. For Moodie, the determining factor is class. Educated gentlefolk do not, under any circumstances, belong in the bush, much as Robinson Crusoe did not belong in a life at sea. God had not ordained his choice. This is one area, in fact, where there may be genuine disagreement between Moodie and Traill -- where Moodie shows the protagonist's statements not ironically, but at face value. Moodie thought that God never intended the necessary work of "[reclaiming] the waste places of the earth" to be undertaken by the gently nurtured. They were not fit for it (Roughing It in the Bush xii). For Traill, however, this had never been the case. She says that British officers and their families living in the bush "are the pioneers of

civilization in the wilderness," and, because they are forced actually to live on their backwoods grants, are thus leading the advanced guard of civilization... bringing into these rough districts gentle and well-educated females, who soften and improve all around them by mental refinements...serving [their] country as much by founding peaceful villages and pleasant homesteads in the trackless wilds, as ever [they] did by personal courage, or military stratagem, in times of war. (The Backwoods of Canada 3-4)

Traill's view of those attributes which make people, especially women, unfit for settlement in the woods or, indeed, in Canada at all, has nothing to do with class and everything to do with inner fortitude. In The Canadian Settler's Guide, she says that if the emigrant female "be a weakly woman, destitute of mental energy, unable to bear up under the trials of life, she is not fit for a life of hardship -- it will be useless cruelty to expose her to it." (50)

Much of the discussion in these latter pages has concentrated on Traill's view of ideal feminine behaviour. As noted earlier, one demand Victorian society placed on women was that they be pleasant and accommodating. They should be, in Hannah More's terms, "inured to contradiction" and "taught to mistrust their own judgement." Moodie, of course, presents a protagonist who is very judgemental and

self-assured but Traill takes care to note her own malleable nature. She is always tolerant, open-minded and willing to alter both her ideas and actions. In giving an opinion on the state of agriculture outside Quebec City, for instance, she concludes that, of course, "these are merely the cursory remarks of a passing traveller, and founded on no personal experience" (The Backwoods of Canada 32). An old gentleman whom the Traills meet on the stage to Amhearst undertakes to correct some of their naive assumptions about the ease with which one may establish oneself in Canada. Traill's immediate response shows a pre-eminently sensible willingness to change her view:

I began to think my fellow-traveller spoke sensibly on the subject, with which the experience of thirteen years had made him perfectly conversant. I began to apprehend that we also had taken too flattering a view of a settler's life as it must be in the backwoods. (The Backwoods of Canada 58)

In a letter describing the bush, Traill readily admits her inability to voice a valid opinion on Canada's climate after only four months of residence; "it is not one season's acquaintance with the climate," she says, "that enables a person to form any correct judgement of its general character, but a close observation of its peculiarities and vicissitudes during many years residence in the country" (The Backwoods of Canada 131). The Moodie of Roughing It in

the Bush, however, while visiting her sister, shows very little reticence in turning "disgusted from the prospect before [her]" and immediately concluding that "there [is] very little beauty to be found in the backwoods" (II: 20).

Traill even proves willing to change her opinion of the infamous Yankees whom many British travellers so despised and whom the Moodie of Volume I of Roughing It in the Bush so thoroughly thrashes:

We had heard so much of the odious manners of the Yankees in this country that I was rather agreeably surprised by the few specimens of native Americans that I have seen. They were, for the most part, polite, well-behaved people. (The Backwoods of Canada 82)

In fact, dislike of Americans may be one of the character traits both Traill and Moodie felt to be indicative of error. In Traill's The Young Emigrants, published in 1826, Ellen, for instance, says that she has conceived a dislike for Americans before she ever leaves England. Her brother admits that he feels the same way but adds that "perhaps it is to cure us of such an unjust prejudice, that it has pleased God to appoint our future dwelling among them" (13).

Certainly, the kinds of pliant responses readers see in Catharine Parr Traill are inconceivable from the Moodie characterized in the early parts of Roughing It in the Bush. She is seldom loath to judge what she encounters -- even if she does not always voice her opinions aloud -- nor does she

ever seem to consider that perhaps she evaluates people and situations on a set of criteria to which they are not amenable.

As many of the excerpts have shown, Traill avoided extremes. In fact, one connecting link between all her views -- on religious faith, on pride and class status, on romanticism, on community and on women's roles -- is that she espoused moderation. An accurate term to describe her mental attitude might well be "balanced." Indeed, Carl Ballstadt, in the chapter on her in Robert Lecker's collection, says that "to delineate advantages and disadvantages [of settlement]...she chooses a rhetoric of balance" (164). Readers know, moreover, that balance was one quality Moodie shows her protagonist to be lacking.

Traill is not unaware of the colony's deficiencies when compared with England, or of the physical, emotional and intellectual hardships she will have to suffer in her new home but she can also see the considerable advantages she will gain by settling in Canada. When the scale of her opinion tips towards pessimism, as it frequently and understandably does, she quickly restores the balance by searching out and dwelling on the corresponding optimistic point of view. This shifting and almost immediate righting of the balance takes place constantly in the early months of her sojourn in North America and is often expressed in The Backwoods of Canada. Her initial response to Montreal, for instance, is to liken it to the "fruits of the Dead sea,

which are said to be fair and tempting to look upon, but yield only ashes and bitterness when tasted by the thirsty traveller" (35). This unfavourable description runs on for many paragraphs but then suddenly takes a more optimistic turn. "The other portion of the town, however, is of a different character" she says, "and the houses are interspersed with gardens and pleasant walls." She says that from the hotel window she has

a superb view of the city, the river, and all the surrounding country, taking in the distant mountains of Chamblay, the shores of St. Lawrence, towards La Prairie, and the rapids above and below the island of St. Annes. The Royal Mountain (Mont Real), with its wooded sides, its rich scenery, and its city with its streets and public buildings, lie at your feet: with such objects before you, the eye may well be charmed with the scenery of Montreal. (39-40)

In fact, Traill discovers that, like the city of Montreal, most situations have a second, more positive side. Her first response to log shanties, for instance, is that "nothing can be more comfortless than some of these shanties, reeking of smoke and dirt, the common receptacle for children, pigs and fowls." Then, however, she wrests her attention away from this "dark side of the picture" to admit that "by far the larger proportion were inhabited by tidy folks, and had one, or even two small windows, and a

clay chimney regularly built up through the roof; some were even roughly floored, and possessed similar comforts with the small log houses" (94-97).

As it happens, Traill is spared the particular trial of living in a log hut herself by the hospitality of her brother, Samuel Strickland; he and his wife take the Traills into their home while a real house is being built. Again, Traill's balanced appreciation is voiced. She perceives the ill but chooses to emphasize the good. Though she admits that her accommodations lack "the elegance and convenience to which [she] had been accustomed in England, [they] were not devoid of rustic comfort" (119). "If I miss many of the little comforts and luxuries of life," she continues, "I enjoy excellent health and spirits, and am very happy in the society of those around me" (119-20). And, when finally built, the Traills' own "humble home," though rude, and "not exactly as we could wish" does not lack in comforts, many of which Traill enumerates at length (142-43).

Always, Traill shows herself aware of advantages which make up for any deficiencies she may experience. Instances in which she sees and notes shortcomings in her new lot but deliberately passes over them to concentrate instead on the situation's positive aspects, are numerous throughout The Backwoods of Canada. Obviously, she saw the same things Moodie saw; in many cases she probably viewed exactly the same landscapes and met exactly the same people. The reason for Traill's balanced, rational optimism, then, lies in her

own character. The seeds of attitudes sown in Traill long before she reached Canada were here given opportunity to grow, bloom and bear fruit.

The same opportunity was being presented to Moodie and she knew it. Her challenge, then, was to use adversity, no matter how distressing it might be in a physical, practical sense, as a learning experience, to do battle with "her own faulty temper" and to mould herself into the woman she wanted to be and whom she saw reflected in the person of her sister and "monitress." Her task, then, in writing her autobiographical works, especially Roughing It in the Bush, is to show that this development does take place.

V. Roughing It in the Bush as Evidence of Conversion

Inherent in the suggestions made so far is the view that Susanna Moodie was aware of her character flaws. Readers might well object to this view, however, and cite as evidence for their scepticism the many negative, critical comments made throughout much of Roughing It in the Bush, especially the first volume. According to some readers of Moodie's works, these comments show her true and final response to Canada and to her emigration experience. Many of these observations have been outlined in the introduction. Moreover, it would be incorrect to say that these kinds of contentions have no validity. Some part of Moodie always missed Britain and, throughout her life, she sometimes compared Canada unfavourably to her original home, though it should also be said that in Volume II of Roughing It in the Bush and in Life in the Clearings these criticisms occur much less frequently. However, in attempting to separate the patterns which make up the spiritual autobiography from the amalgam of conflicting feelings, ideas and experiences which constituted Moodie's life, readers may profitably consider whether this falling away does not, perhaps, illustrate backsliding -- one of the

key traditional divisions of a spiritual autobiography. According to Linda H. Peterson, backsliding and despair are important facets of the conversion stage which the protagonist of a spiritual autobiography must undergo. In effect, their function is to break the pride and throw the protagonist into a state of dependence on God. This suggestion carries all the more weight, with respect to Moodie's work, when readers note that the negative critical comments the protagonist makes in Roughing It in the Bush -- the book which, to a large extent, shows that conversion has occurred -- appear almost solely in Volume I and the very early parts of Volume II. A careful look at the poems which head and foot each chapter provides some substantiation for this claim.

In the first several chapters of Volume I, the beginning poem, when there is one, expresses despondency, bitterness and longing. The exception is the introductory poem to the chapter on Quebec City. Here Moodie was, perhaps, so carried beyond herself by the grandeur of the terrain that, even in recalling the scene many years later, she desired to include a poem of praise. It should be noted, however, that even here the poem does not laud settlement, as later poems do, but praises instead the sublime landscape. The concluding poems of each of the first four chapters, moreover, do uniformly manifest a negative attitude. They express regret for what is lost tempered by few happy expectations for the future.

Beginning at the fifth chapter, though, the chapter where readers see Moodie take the first tentative steps towards making Canada her home, the ending poems begin to be more positive. This chapter's poem, entitled, "Oh Canada! Thy Gloomy Woods," begins like its predecessors, as a lament on the part of those "whose fondest wishes rest/ Beyond the distant main" (5-6). However, it changes mid-way through to a discussion of Canada's advantages -- to, in a modified, prosaic way, a finding of strength in what remains behind:

I, too, have felt the chilling blight
 Their shadows cast on me,
 My thought by day -- my dream by night --
 Was of my own country.
 But independent souls will brave
 All hardships to be free;
 No more I weep to cross the wave
 My native land to see. (I: 109)

From this point on, the concluding poems which deal with Canada embody positive attitudes. They become, in fact, a sort of versified list of the advantages of emigrating. The exception, which stands out because it is so different from the several poems which have preceded it, is "Oh, let Me Sleep," with which John Moodie concludes the first volume. Assuming again that John Moodie is one with his wife as far as much of the subject matter and intention of the book are concerned, we can see that this poem is, in fact, a return to the despondent wailings which characterize

the early chapters and, as such, is a good example of the couple's "backsliding." Though the Moodies' failure on the Cobourg farm -- a failure, incidentally, due to their own stupidity -- as well as their unfortunate experiences with the local inhabitants do provide some reason for the gloom, John Moodie suggests the folly of their attitude:

Thus, I often caught myself humming over some of the verses of that excellent moral song, "The Pilot," and repeating, with a peculiar emphasis, the concluding lines of each stanza,

"Fear not! but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou may'st be."

Such songs do good; and a peculiar blessing seems to attend every composition, in prose or in verse, which inculcates good moral sentiments, or tends to strengthen our virtuous resolutions. This fine song, I feel assured, will live...in the memory of mankind.... Sometimes, however, in spite of my good resolutions, when left alone, the dark clouds of despondency would close around me, and I could not help contrasting the happy past in our life with my gloomy anticipation of the future.

It was "in such a mood," he says, that the lamentation was penned. (I: 292-93)

In these passages, then, John Moodie as much as admits that the negativity he is exhibiting is a form of error. In spite of "[his] good resolutions," he backslides. If "such

excellent moral songs" do good, then the implicit ramification is that verses such as "Oh, Let Me Sleep" do ill. Furthermore, to submit to despair is to commit mortal error because such submission implies a denial of God's power. With his quotation from "The Pilot" John Moodie indicates that he accepts this assessment; one must, above all, trust in Providence. Moreover, in succumbing to the temptation to contrast his present life in the colony with his past life in Britain, John Moodie commits an error which his wife has previously warned against. Such comparisons do an injustice to both Canada and Britain. Thus, even after more than one year in Canada, the Moodies are not completely reconciled to the lot in life to which it has pleased God to call them. Only with their sojourn in the bush and the rigorous trials that accompany it, do they truly come to learn trust and acquiescence.

As one might expect, then, the poems of Volume II show the Moodies having to begin over again with the process of learning acceptance. The initial poem is about despair. If the future were not concealed from our gaze, Susanna Moodie says, "Hope, the blessed watcher on Life's tower,/Would fold her wings, and on the dreary waste/ Close the bright eye that through the murky clouds/ Of blank Despair still sees the glorious sun" (II: 1). Though the ultimate point of this verse is that the sun is, indeed, shining beyond, Moodie is concentrating more on the despair at this point and the hardship of getting through it.

Nevertheless, in this volume the poems become positive more quickly, with Moodie finding aspects of her new life to praise quite early on in her stay in the bush. If we exclude the poems which are merely forewords and afterwords to the subject matter of the chapters -- that is, those which make no wider comment on a settler's life in general -- we are left with only two chapters which have introductory poems embodying negative feelings. These are "Disappointed Hopes" and "The Fire." The other poems all tell of the beauty of various aspects of the Canadian wilderness or the advantages of living in Canada. Furthermore, both of the two chapters with negative introductory poems resolve that negative attitude within the narratives. In neither case does the tone remain despairing or the content critical despite the fact that hardships are described.

The concluding poem of the book is the most important one, in that it leaves the reader with Moodie's final word. In editions of the book which cut the poems, we end up with a distorted view of Moodie's final intentions. These editions end with her criticisms of the backwoods and her attempts to convince educated, upper-class settlers to avoid them. In these editions she says that if, with her sketches, she can dissuade settlers from going to the backwoods, she will not have "toiled and suffered in vain." In the original version, however, the words, "Reader! my task is ended," come after the panegyric "The Maple Tree."

Although this poem belongs to what A. J. M. Smith would later call the "my mother drunk or sober" school of Canadian poetry, it is an important part of Roughing It in the Bush and should not be omitted. What is important is the evidence it supplies that Moodie has, at least as she presents herself in the book, overcome her backsliding. Her final word is a joyful celebration of what is still Canada's central symbol. Nowhere in the poem is there any mention of longing for Britain. There is not even, as there is in many of the other poems of praise, the hint that Canada's undoubted future greatness will be owing largely to its connection with the mother country. It is only after she has presented the reader with this final view of her Canadian experiences, that Moodie's task is really ended. The backsliding tendency has been overcome.

Readers may wonder if it is not, perhaps, a misnomer to call this change which takes place in Moodie in Canada, "conversion." There is, for instance, no particular theological movement which she comes to espouse. Nevertheless, in the wider sense, the analogy is useful. Conversion means literally "to turn about" or "to reverse order," and this is exactly what Moodie presents herself as having done.

Carl Ballstadt is one critic who has argued that Moodie does undergo a dramatic change in her attitudes over the course of her stay in Canada. He sees this change manifested in Roughing It in the Bush through the statements

she makes about various bodies of water. In "Proficient in the Gentle Craft," Ballstadt suggests that, initially, Moodie sees Canada and its wilderness as places which deaden the poetic instinct so essential to her happiness, "primarily because the familiar associations with and responses to water are not possible here, the rivers leading as they do into the dark prison of the pine grove" (103). As time passes, however, we see this attitude alter.

For example, as Moodie comes to appreciate the brook outside her shanty, "brawling in the gay sunshine" (104), feelings "allied to poetry and gladness" once again enter her heart. Later on in the bush, she becomes even more impressed with the "power and splendor" of Canadian rivers and compares British waterways unfavourably (106). She even undertakes to write poetry about Canadian rivers, an activity which illustrates her emerging sense of belonging. Ballstadt says that, following this "initiation and recognition, excursions on Canadian waters prove to be the sources of some of Mrs. Moodie's happiest moments" (106). No longer does the forest remain a prison, but becomes "a haven and place of freedom," as Moodie's enraptured descriptions show (106-07).

In Roughing It in the Bush, "conversion," not simply in a general sense but with respect to Moodie's specific character flaws as outlined in earlier chapters, is also seen to have occurred. The folly-ridden, spoiled and rather unlikable character portrayed in "Rachel Wilde," Flora

Lyndsay and early parts of Roughing It in the Bush, reverses order to become the strong, resourceful and admirable woman of Volume II and the wise and tolerant narrator of Life in the Clearings. Futhermore, in this process of turning about, the protagonist representing Moodie is won over, as a convert, to the moral and social tenets of her society and religion. She is won over to the way of thinking embodied in the personality and actions, for example, of Catharine Parr Trail.

Admittedly, there are problems in pursuing this line of thinking. One troubling issue which arises is that in Roughing It in the Bush, the actual conversion experiences themselves are not much depicted. We do not see Moodie in the process of change. We do not see the moments of epiphany. What we are given instead is incident after incident which indicate that she has changed. Why she does not show these conversion experiences themselves is unclear. Perhaps she felt that she did not have the talent to sketch them effectively and sensitively. She often complained to Richard Bentley, for instance, that her writing abilities were wanting. There may also be reasons which have little to do with her talents. In her article in Landow's collection, Elizabeth Helsinger discusses the great reticence which Victorian autobiographers had to revealing details which had personal, emotional meaning in their lives. "The strongest reason for the Victorian objection to self-revealing literature," she says, "seems to be...that it

is the mere delirium of vanity, an act of selfish pride. Their objection is profoundly moral" (6). For Moodie, then, illustrating her own character traits and her overcoming of undesirable aspects of them through the medium of her interactions with others may have been an acceptable solution to this problem. She may, thus, have been attempting to show the changes in her attitude more obliquely. Regardless of the technique Moodie chooses, however, the general import of Volume II of Roughing It in the Bush is that the protagonist is a much different person in 1840 than she was in 1832.

1. Pride and Class-Related Arrogance

It has been illustrated that pride and class arrogance are chief among the moral and social flaws which Moodie emphasizes in the make-up of each version of her central character. It is these flaws which, perhaps, offer the greatest challenge as the protagonist experiences the learning opportunity presented by emigration. Nor can it be convincingly posited that this attitude is one Moodie ever totally loses. Someone raised in a society as rigidly structured as nineteenth-century Britain is never going to be a true democrat. However, her attitude does change substantially and we see that that change has taken place over the years portrayed in Roughing It in the Bush.

We especially see it emphasized during the time in the backwoods, for it is only when the Moodies are stripped of the wherewithal to maintain their aristocratic pretensions and are forced to work like servants, as Mrs. Joe has bitterly hoped, that Susanna Moodie overcomes her pride. Early on she shrinks from learning from the settlers, something her sister Catharine had advocated. Over the course of her trials, however, Moodie comes to milk cows, to knit, to cook -- sometimes improvising with whatever ingredients the backwoods throws up -- to paddle alone on the stormy lake, to make advantageous deals with the Indians, to do physical labour in the garden and even to fight fires. Almost none of these activities would have been acceptable to a woman of Moodie's class in Britain. The struggle she had with her pride is exemplified in her abhorrence of the field work. Through experiencing these hardships, though, the arrogant and peevish Moodie can disappear. In the later parts of Volume II she no longer views her neighbours with an intolerance and condescension which have earlier made her seem unlikable. Even though she does, admittedly, still recognize differences in rank, she is no longer guilty of such tactless patronizing. The sketch of Jenny is a good example.

Jenny is from Ireland, a country Moodie had been accused of treating unfairly by journalists reviewing her Canadian sketches for the Catholic periodicals. It is true that the treatment of the Irish emigrants in Flora Lyndsay

and in the early chapters of Roughing It in the Bush is condescending and, perhaps, even ill-natured. They are either drunken, loud and violent, totally ignorant of true religion or fit primarily to provide comic relief. Over the course of several years, however, Moodie's attitude seems to alter. For instance, the portrait of Malachi Chroak, though it is undoubtedly comic, is not really nasty. He is described as "good naturedly drunk" rather than as one of the loud, vulgar rabble she otherwise castigates (II: 74). Her portrayal of his antics at the logging bee emphasizes genuine wit, wit which Moodie herself seems to enjoy thoroughly since she recounts his doings at some length. Nor is the Moodies' response to the old Irish dragoon condescending. Though inherent in the sketch is their realization of the class difference which exists between themselves and the poor settler, the Moodies respect his optimism, determination and physical courage. The portrayal of Jenny, then, may cap the development of Moodie's treatment of both the Irish and the "lower orders." Jenny is described, not as a "servant" but as the family's "domestic friend," a

generous, warm-hearted daughter of the Green Isle
 -- the Emerald gem set in the silver of ocean
 ...that impoverished but glorious country where
 wit and talent seem indigenous, springing up
 spontanecusly in the rudest and most uncultivated
 minds; showing what the land could bring forth in

its own strength, unaided by education, and unfettered by the conventional rules of society. Jenny was a striking instance of the worth, noble self-denial, and devotion which are often met with -- and, alas! but too often disregarded -- in the poor and ignorant natives of that deeply-injured and much abused land (II: 223-24).

It is possible that this panegyric is intended to diffuse the criticisms of those who called Moodie, albeit in somewhat more polite terms, an English bigot. It is also true, however, that, in this passage, the narrator seems implicitly to recant some of the ideas the protagonist has earlier espoused. The general tone of approval is certainly quite different from the distinctly superior tone in which Irish emigrants on board ship were described in both Flora Lyndsay and the early chapters of Roughing It in the Bush. Moreover, the reference to the "[land's] own strength," unaided by education [emphasis added], may well call readers' minds back to the arrogance shown by the protagonist of both books in her insistence on the value of education and the lower class emigrants' lack of it. The implicit castigation of the "conventional rules of society" may also take readers back to the scene with Mrs. Joe and the earlier Moodie's view of eating with the "helps," or to the scene with old Mrs. H_____ and the propriety of asking personal questions. Now, more than these social or

educational trappings, the narrator seems to praise "noble self-denial."

A passage from one of Moodie's unpublished letters, written during her sojourn in the bush, is instructive here. Talking of one Mrs. Caddy, a neighbour who, judged on the basis of this and other letters appears to have been a woman of the "lower orders," Moodie expresses to her husband her gratitude for being nursed through a long illness. Mrs. Caddy, she says, "is really a most generous, affectionate woman, and I begin to love her very much and to be sorry I ever suffered my prejudices to overlook her real merits" (Letter 81, Series I of The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection).

The kind of false pride of which Moodie implicitly accuses herself here can be very detrimental in a practical sense, a lesson Moodie has already received with respect to learning domestic skills from the Canadians, and one which she sees reiterated in the bush. Captain N____, Jenny's profligate ex-employer, for instance, has alienated his neighbours with his unfounded pride and he and his family are now suffering for it. He is described as

a proud man -- too proud to work, or to receive with kindness the offers of service tendered to him by his half-civilised, [sic] but well-meaning neighbours.

"Hang him!" cried an indignant English settler ...whose offer of drawing wood had been rejected

with unmerited contempt. "Wait a few years, and we shall see what his pride will do for him. I am sorry for his poor wife and children; but for himself, I have no pity for him."

This man had been uselessly insulted, at the very moment when he had been anxious to perform a kind and benevolent action; when, like a true Englishman, his heart was softened by witnessing the sufferings of a young, delicate female and her infant family. (II: 229-30)

Apparently, Jenny's "real merits," like those of Mrs. Caddy and the insulted settler on the English line, have become obvious to Moodie for she goes on, in the long section on her "domestic friend," to laud Jenny's long-suffering self sacrifice for the wife and children of the arrogant Captain N____. Moreover, the following passage from the third last chapter of Volume II could not have appeared in earlier portions of Roughing It in the Bush without sounding badly out of character:

That harvest was the happiest we ever spent in the bush. We had enough of the common necessities of life. A spirit of peace and harmony pervaded our little dwelling, for the most affectionate attachment existed among its members. We were not troubled with servants, for the good old Jenny we regarded as an humble friend.... (II: 206)

By the time she is ready to leave the bush, then, pride of class status seems to be something which Moodie has, to a considerable degree, overcome. In fact, she admits as much in her introduction to Mark Hurdlestone, the Gold Worshipper, a novel she published contemporaneously with the autobiographical books:

When I look back upon those years of trial, softened by distance from my "tranquil and happy home," I rejoice exceedingly that they were mine, for they taught me the real value of the lower classes, taught me to recognize the majesty of God's image in the peasant; and to hold it as sacred, and as worthy of admiration and respect, as in the prince. It is almost impossible for anyone who has never earned his own bread by manual labour to feel an affectionate interest in the everyday workers of the world, or regard them really as brethren. Having experienced in my own person somewhat of their trials and sufferings, I never feel the least degraded by honourable poverty, or ashamed of owning that I have worked for daily bread, and would do so cheerfully again, did occasion require. (289)

2. Satiric Propensities and Unidimensional Judgement

One of the protagonist's traits which has previously been shown to arise as a consequence of her pride is the quick, unidimensional judging of others and the related tendency towards satiric mockery. In Flora Lyndsay, in the episodes describing Miss Carr, Mrs. Dalton and especially Mrs. Waddell and her ugly daughters, Moodie shows that these propensities are to be condemned. In fact, after the pitiful account of Mrs. Waddell on how badly she had been hurt by the mockery of her daughter's deformity, Flora realizes her error and feels ashamed of herself. Nevertheless, the next version of Moodie's protagonist perpetrates the same error. As has been outlined in an earlier discussion, the protagonist of the earlier portions of Roughing It in the Bush is certainly capable of holding scathing satiric opinions and of making immediate, negative assumptions about people and situations. One of the most obvious examples of the fact that the protagonist of Roughing It in the Bush does not develop empathy until she is more severely tried, is found very early in Volume II. The passage describes a chance meeting with some other travellers as the Moodie family journeys from Cobourg into the bush:

Perched as we were upon the crown of the height, we looked completely down into the sleigh, and during the whole course of my life I never saw three uglier mortals collected into such a narrow

space. The man was blear-eyed with a hare-lip, through which protruded two dreadful yellow teeth that resembled the tusks of a boar. The woman was long-faced, high cheek-boned, red-haired and freckled all over like a toad. The boy resembled his hideous mother, but with the addition of a villainous obliquity of vision which rendered him the most disgusting object of the singular trio.

As we passed them, our driver gave a knowing nod to my husband, directing at the same time, the most quizzical glance towards the strangers, as he exclaimed, "We are in luck. sir. I think that 'ere sleigh may be called Beauty's egg basket."

The final comment from the author is, "we made ourselves very merry at the poor people's expense..." (II: 6).

Readers who are familiar with the tale of Mrs. Waddell in Flora Lyndsay will immediately see the similarity to this episode. And, given that Flora is made to regret her unkind mockery of physical deformity, it is more than likely that Moodie intended readers to censure her protagonist here as well. This suggestion carries all the more weight when we recall that Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It in the Bush were originally part of the same work. Despite the fact that the autobiographical character -- first as Flora and then as the Moodie of Roughing It in the Bush -- is undergoing more and more hardship as time goes on, she has not yet developed much ability to feel for others. It is true that several chapters of Flora Lyndsay --for instance, "Old Jarvis and

his Dog, Neptune" -- show Flora as kind and sympathetic to the lower classes. It is also true, however, that these chapters present stylized portraits of stereo-typical and suitably humble rustics, rather than the more realistic characters found in the more overtly autobiographical sections.

It is, again, with the ultimate trial of surviving in the bush that the protagonist learns, not pity, but empathy. As Roughing It in the Bush progresses, she comes more and more to identify with, in James Agee's words in Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, the bruised, broken and butchered of the world. As she does so, her ill-natured mockery abates. This is not to say that her portrayal of people and events in the comic mode ceases entirely, for it does not. The "Sketches of a Travelling Musician" in Life in the Clearings is one example. Indeed, Moodie was always much better at the comic sketch than at the serious moral writing she thought she was producing in her novels. Probably the "love of the ridiculous" which she considered to be her "besetting sin" always plagued her and her inability to defeat it shows up in her writing. Even when castigating satire, it is clear that she enjoys it. Nevertheless, the propensity is one she tries to do away with. The final sketch of Old Woodruff and his three wives in Roughing It in the Bush may offer a case in point.

In the original version from The Literary Garland of January 1847, the sketch is satiric in tone and the narrator

shows the protagonist appreciating the ridiculous aspects of her host's character, physiognomy and tale. In this version, old Woodruff is described in satiric terms:

There was not a dash of romance in his composition. Had a phrenologist examined his head, I verily believe that no bump of ideality could have been discovered in that mountain range of skull-land; -- all about that wondrous region being a dead flat -- the aspect of his head giving you the idea of a copper pot with the head closely screwed down. He was a shrewd, humorous looking Yorkshireman, with a sharp red weather beaten face, a pair of small keen grey eyes, glancing knowingly towards his ridgy nose, or looking obliquely back upon his high cheekbones. A large coarse, good natured mouth, in a great measure relieved the upper portion of his face from the sinister expression which had been acquired by long dealing with the world and in overcoming the knavery of his species; for Woodruff was not a rogue himself, though very expert in detecting roguery in others. (13)

However, the Roughing It in the Bush version of old Woodruff's description is briefer and has had the more satiric, negative observations removed:

Our host was a shrewd, humorous-looking Yorkshireman. His red, weather beaten face, and

tall, athletic figure, bent as it was with hard labour, gave indications of great personal strength; and a certain knowing twinkle in his small, clear grey eyes, which had been acquired by long dealing with the world, with a quiet, sarcastic smile that lurked around the corners of his large mouth, gave you the idea of a man who could not easily be deceived by his fellows; one who, though no rogue himself, was quick in detecting the roquery in others. (II: 287)

Though Woodruff may be "no rogue himself" when it comes to business dealings, his history, as recounted in the periodical version, proves him to be a thoroughly unlikable fellow. He freely admits that he married his first wife for her money. "It is all very well to marry for love," he tells Moodie's brother, Major Strickland, "if a fellow can afford it; but a little money is not to be despised; it goes a great way towards making the home comfortable" (16)

After this first wife's death in childbirth, old Woodruff thinks that "the best compliment [he] could pay to her memory was to take another wife." This time he chooses a "devilish fine gall [sic]" despite her well-known emotional instability, because he is set on marrying for beauty. His wife cuts her throat three days after the wedding and Woodruff's comment to his guests is, "What put such a thing into her head I could never find out, but you

may depend upon it, I never felt so uncomfortable in all my life" (17).

Despite the unfortunate nature of the events described and the cold stupidity of Woodruff's response, Moodie and her brother are, by this juncture, having a hard time keeping straight faces:

The idea of a man telling such a dreadful circumstance, in such a calm, matter of fact manner, declaring with the greatest philosophy, that it only made him feel uncomfortable, had in it something so irresistibly comic, that I was forced to hasten to the window to ascertain the state of the weather, in order to conceal the laugh which would come to my lips in spite of every effort to restrain it.

"No wonder that it made you feel uncomfortable, Woodruff," said my brother casting a wicked look at me, which made me turn again to the window. "It would have been the death of some people. But you are a remarkably strong-minded man or you could not take it so coolly." (17)

As a purely literary construct, this sketch may, indeed, be seen as humorous, because readers do not respond to the unfortunate wives or even to Woodruff, himself, as they would to real people. However, an unpublished letter from The Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection suggests that "old Woodruff" really did exist and did go on to marry the

much younger woman the sketch shows him ogling. And, in a real situation of this nature, the response of Moodie and her brother are inappropriate. Here readers see them engaged in the love of the ridiculous which the narrator had censured in Flora and upon which the Victorians frowned. Moreover, not only do they appreciate the inappropriate and unconscious irony of Woodruff, but they engage in irony themselves in their undetected baiting of their host; Woodruff is a callous man, not a "remarkably strong-minded" one and they know it. His third wife, it turns out, had begged her husband to hurry back to Quebec City from the bush when she lay deathly ill with cholera. Woodruff, however, chooses instead to tarry with an old friend, making merry while his wife dies. His comment to his guests on this behaviour is, "Well, Mr. S____, I did not think it could make much difference. It was only three hours" (18).

Abruptly, Moodie's attitude changes. She no longer finds Woodruff's callousness amusing, an alteration which indicates that, in comparison, her initial response was lacking:

My brother, looked again at me. "What an unfeeling wretch!" thought I. "This man looks upon his wives much in the same light that he would upon a horse. His grief for their death only amounts to the inconvenience which it occasions. Heaven defend me from such a husband!"

(18)

From the point of view of lively characterization and stimulating dialogue, this sketch ranks among Moodie's best. However, it is almost totally cut from Roughing It in the Bush. There it forms only a small part of the chapter, "The Magic Spell," with the whole, detailed history of Woodruff's matrimonial misfortunes, as well as the reaction of his guests, omitted. When Major Strickland comments on Woodruff's luck in surviving three wives, the old man's comment in the book version is cut to a simple, "Ay, have I not Mr. S_____? but to tell you the truth, I have been both lucky and unlucky in the wife way...." The narrator then glosses over the whole episode with, "and then he told us the history of his several ventures in matrimony, with which I will not trouble my readers" (II: 289).

In view of the considerable excisions Moodie has made - and there is no evidence that anyone else made them -- it seems reasonable to wonder if she simply came to consider the excerpted parts unsuitable. In the Garland sketch, is she not having the ill-natured laugh at the expense of a neighbour which she condemned in her literary criticism? It is possible to suppose, as Michael A. Peterman does, that Moodie often deliberately cuts blunt or vulgar incidents when writing for the British public, in order to protect those readers' supposedly finer sensibilities. This suggestion is undoubtedly true some of the time, as a comparison of texts shows. However, many incidents portraying crudeness, cruelty and pettiness are also left in

Moodie's writing. Flora Lyndsay, for example, is full of them; so are Matrimonial Speculations and The World Before Them, all of which were aimed at the British market.

Therefore, it may simply be that, at the end of a long book outlining trials and sorrows which have brought one to a greater reliance on both God and man, Moodie felt, despite her natural, somewhat perverse sense of humour, that it was wrong to scoff at trials and sorrow. She may also, perhaps, have felt it wrong to conclude an account of spiritual struggle and conversion -- which should end with reconciliation and peace -- with ill feeling and condemnation, no matter how well deserved. In general, this tendency to soften the depiction of people and events is evident throughout later portions of Roughing It in the Bush. Moodie's tendency towards satire lessens, the longer she lives in the bush.

3. Doubt Regarding Women's Roles

In earlier chapters, four of the moral and social errors which the protagonist is shown to perpetrate are grouped under the general heading of scepticism and doubting questioning. One of these areas of doubt is women's roles, an area with which we also see Moodie having come to terms during her habitation in the bush. Despite all her questions and uncertainties, what she does seem to value in marital relationships is a kind of happy medium, a balance

between "wearing the breeches," which Flora fears and Miss Carr advocates, and the passive "bread and butter" obedience, which Mrs. Ready so despises. On this topic I must disagree with Carol Shields who argues, in a chapter of her book entitled "Mrs. Moodie and Sexual Reversal," that Moodie's strong feminist tendencies show through in her unconscious treatment of Flora, Miss Carr and John Lyndsay. She says, for one thing, that, "in Mrs. Moodie's novel, Flora Lyndsay, traditional dependence is tested. The whole novel, in fact, outwardly a simple story of a family emigrating to Canada, is a subtle struggle between husband and wife for control" (48). While it may be true that Flora tests the traditional dependence, she does not test it that she might gain control, nor is her testing unconscious. The topic of sexual mores is a developed subject of concern in these works. The goal Moodie shows the protagonist working towards is to become a true helpmeet to her husband. All of the first three autobiographical works pay tribute to this endeavour. Even in "Rachel Wilde," a story set long before the chief character is old enough to worry about matrimony, the narrator, in the last paragraph, skips ahead by almost two decades to see a time when she will find "the desire to be loved by one noble heart...dearer to her than ambition, than the applause of the world". She gives up her own planned life "to follow the adverse fortunes of the beloved, to toil in poverty and sorrow by his side..." (252).

Closer to the truth than Shields' line of reasoning, perhaps, is Michael A. Peterman's position that the feminist leanings he sees embodied in Miss Carr show "the unconventional, willful side of Moodie herself, the side that in her autobiographical writings, constantly contends with her equally strong needs for the assurances of familial, social and spiritual order " ("Susanna Moodie" 94). Eventually, it is this familial, social and spiritual order which wins out.

Though Captain Kitson in Flora Lyndsay does not follow his own advice it nevertheless holds good and is central to understanding many of Moodie's struggles in Canada:

Mrs. Lyndsay, -- you are a sensible woman...and I hope that you mean to submit patiently to the yoke of matrimony; and not pull one way while your husband pulls another. To sail well together on the sea of life, you must hold fast to the right end of the rope and haul in the same direction.

(14)

Because of this need to pull together, the protagonist is made to reject the dominant female role -- nor is she simply paying lip service to convention, as Shields suggests. It is true that Moodie often shows, throughout the first three autobiographical books, the attitudes and opinions of her male characters to require tempering. Incidents describing the disagreement over taking a nurse out to Canada, describing John Lyndsay's foolish determination to embark

during a storm, describing the Lyndsays' differing choices of a ship in which to procure passage and recounting Susanna Moodie's own reticence at leaving the Cobourg farm, all provide cases in point.

Yet, to see these incidents as evidence of the female protagonist's struggle for control or as proof that, either consciously or unconsciously, Moodie saw herself as the stronger, more capable partner in the relationship, as Carol Shields does, is to read the text selectively. Moodie also shows clearly in the autobiographical works that the opinions and actions of the male character sometimes have the greater merit. Shields' unsubstantiated claim that John Moodie was "stubborn and unlikable" is not borne out. Admittedly, John Lyndsay, whom Shields says is John Moodie, sometimes behaves like a Victorian male and, hence, to the modern woman, seems to have glaring character flaws. Nevertheless, he is shown to be much less arrogant than Flora. Moreover, in his own chapters of Roughing It in the Bush, John Moodie shows that he freely accepts that the arrogance and patronizing airs of the British justifiably dispose others against them. He seems to have realized this fact early on while his wife has to learn the lesson the hard way and over time.

John Moodie also brings himself to do physical work much sooner than his wife. Long before they have even moved into Uncle Joe's house, John is doing manual labour. With no servants available, he does all the farm chores during

"the iron winter of 1833." "My husband did not much relish performing the duties of a servant in such weather," Moodie says, "but he did not complain" (I: 149-50). Susanna Moodie, on the other hand, complains loudly, and cannot bring herself to take on such heavy manual toil until forced to it several years later in the bush, and then only because starvation threatens.

Until Moodie accepts her lot, she is not really "hauling in the same direction" as her husband. She must resolve, as her sister, Catharine, had advocated, "not only to do her duty but to do it to the best of her abilities with heart and mind bent upon the work." The narrator's statement summarizing Flora's difficult relations with the satiric, ill-tempered women on board the steamer to Leith may also show the rather conventional view of women's role that Moodie came to espouse. "What a difference there is in women!" the narrator says. "Some, like ministering angels, strew flowers and scatter blessings along the rugged paths of life; while others, by their malevolence and pride, increase its sorrows an hundred fold" (118). As Moodie learns both practical skills and spiritual fortitude in Canada, helping her husband with both moral support and the physical maintenance of the family in the bush, she becomes less like those women Catharine Parr Traill describes, who deter their husbands' progress, and more like one of those who "scatter blessings along the rugged paths of life."

In her coming to terms with the necessity for manual labour -- from working in the fields and the garden, through fighting house fires, to catching fish and snaring ducks on the lake -- Moodie abandons some of the stereotypical sex role conventions. In doing so she, in fact, proves that Miss Carr's words are true; women are just as able to shift for themselves as men. Unlike the case with Miss Carr, however, discovery of this truth does not alienate Moodie. In the case of John and Susanna, it does not drive the sexes apart but binds them closer together. Of her resolution to help John on the farm, for instance, Moodie says, "we cheerfully shared together the labours of the field...one in heart and purpose" (II: 115). It is, thus, through shared suffering in the backwoods that Moodie finally learns to work wholeheartedly with her husband rather than against him.

4. Doubt Regarding Community

Another area of scepticism for Moodie was the value of community and her place in it, as opposed to the aloof solipsism she seems to have preferred. Earlier discussions have shown that the autobiographical protagonist, from childhood onward, was happier alone and, by the age of womanhood, was "totally unfitted" for the world. This romantic aloofness also melds with the protagonist's class arrogance, especially after she embarks for Canada. In her

early days in the colony, she rejects quite vehemently efforts at familiarity made by her new countrymen.

Nevertheless, it is also in the early chapters of Roughing It in the Bush -- the fifth to the ninth inclusive -- that Moodie begins to take the first tentative steps towards joining the new community. In "Our First Settlement and the Borrowing System," we see her trying to fit in, to at least a small degree, by lending her goods to her neighbours. Though the attempt is a fiasco, Moodie does show herself willing to try. When Emily S_____ returns for the whisky jug which she has insisted on lending, a jug she now expects to retrieve full, Moodie says, "Thinking that this might be the custom of the country, I hastened to fill the decanter..."(I: 91). "Old Satan and Tom Wilson's Nose" contains the well-known description of Moodie's first attempt to make bread without yeast. In this case, Moodie bows to her neighbours' superiority in the art but, unlike other instances where she sues to them for help, she tries to benefit from their expertise so that she may do the chore herself. She does not ask them to do the work for her, as with the milking of the cows, nor does she offer to pay for their services as with the knitting of John Monaghan's stockings. Though she makes the request for aid by proxy, she is still showing herself willing to learn what they have to teach.

It is also in this chapter that she begins to develop some feelings for the land as she listens to the small brook

that flows not far from old Mrs. H_____'s cabin. In "John Monaghan," the Moodies begin to provide hospitality and charity, not simply to require it themselves. They offer shelter, food and work to a homeless and mistreated Irish apprentice. However, it is in the chapter entitled "Phoebe H____ and Our Second Moving" that we begin to see Moodie really take a role in an activity which does not directly concern herself. It is quite difficult to find in the text substantiation for David Stouck's suggestion that the "story of Phoebe [H____] the sensitive and gentle child born to the uncouth family of 'Uncle Joe,' is paradigmatic of the author's own feeling of being unappreciated and unjustly treated by the world" (469). There is little to indicate that Moodie personally identifies with this girl, though she does undoubtedly find her to be a more sympathetic and worthy character than other members of her family.

In this chapter, Phoebe contracts a terminal illness. Not surprisingly, given her family history, she knows little of religion or the afterlife and is in despair for the welfare of her soul. This situation provides Moodie with an opportunity to come into her own. Someone of her education and personal background -- one who had written the letter to James Bird on the subject of redemption through Christ's blood -- is ideally suited to convey spiritual light and comfort to the dying girl. Through Moodie's agency, God [opens] the eyes of [Phoebe's] soul, and [calls her] out of the darkness of ignorance and sin to glory in His marvelous

light" (I: 181). The autobiographical protagonist, then, begins her learning experiences with respect to community, very soon after she gets to Canada. However, the true, complete resolution of her aloofness takes place only as she undergoes rigorous hardship in the bush and thereby learns to feel sympathy for the rest of suffering humanity.

The fact that the resolution has occurred is born out by "The Walk to Dummer," the last chapter which actually deals fully with life in the bush. In fact, this chapter shows that the protagonist has largely overcome, not only her solitary tendencies, but also her traits of pride and sarcasm as well. Because of its importance to the account as a whole, this chapter should never be edited out. Clara Thomas has argued that

the enduring attraction of Roughing It in the Bush lies in the character that Susanna Moodie drew of herself...indomitable, determined on survival with dignity and with humour -- a heroine in the process of agonized transformation from a comfortably middle-class drawing-room lady to a battle-scarred, but not beaten, pioneer wife [and] mother.... ("Heroism, Feminism and Humanism" 25)

Nowhere does one find better proof of the success of this transformation than in this chapter. Here the selfish, arrogant, fear-ridden and incompetent character of the early

chapters has been replaced by a woman of courage, physical strength, altruism and delicate fellow feeling.

The chapter tells how Moodie and her friend, Emilia S_____, learn of the severe conditions in which Mrs. N_____ and her children are living. Because Mrs. N_____ 's alcoholic husband has deserted her, the family is cold and starving. Immediately, the two friends decide to go to the rescue. Moodie, it appears, has developed empathy for her fellow, struggling settlers. Instead of being totally turned inward, her focus has become external:

By unflinching industry, and taking my part in the toil of the field, I had bread for myself and family, and this was more than poor Mrs. N_____ possessed; but it appeared impossible for me to be of any assistance to the unhappy sufferer, and the thought of my incapacity gave me severe pain. It was only in moments like the present that I felt the curse of poverty. (II: 237)

Moodie, who has earlier shrunk from milking or doing the laundry herself and who had, initially, been unable to believe that she was expected to live in a one-room shanty with a loft, now minds the "curse of poverty" only out of concern for another.

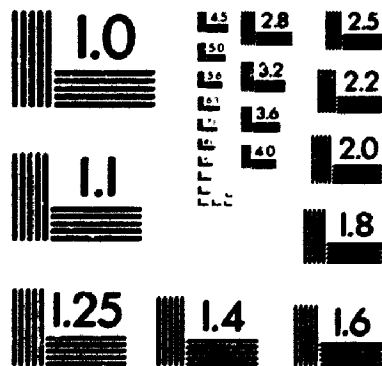
When told that the ladies of Peterborough will provide the necessary aid if they can first ascertain Mrs. N_____ 's true circumstances, Moodie immediately proposes, "Then let us lose no time in going upon our own mission of mercy" (II:

238). It is difficult to believe that this Moodie is the same woman who once viewed the dark forest with terror, considering it the abode of such varied evils as ghosts and savage animals. Moodie and her friend travel on foot for many hours, in darkness, wind and bitter cold, often gingerly picking their way over freezing streams and crawling over and under fallen tree trunks. Certainly, the emigrant of 1832 would never have undertaken such a trip. And, despite what might seem unpleasant conditions, the group appears merry, its spirits buoyed by consciousness of the value of its errand. No whining complaints are heard:

The sun had, during our immersion in the dark shades of the swamp, burst through his leaden shroud, and cast a cheery gleam along the rugged boles of the lofty trees. The squirrel and chissmunk occasionally bounded across our path; the dazzling snow which covered it reflected the branches above as in an endless variety of dancing shadows. Our spirits rose in proportion. Young C_____ burst out singing, and Emilia and I laughed and chatted as we bounded along our narrow road. On, on for hours, the same interminable forest stretched away to the right and left, before us and behind us. (II: 244)

The attitude manifested here is certainly a far cry from the one Moodie describes on her initial trek into the bush. Then, she had found herself in "the heart of a dark cedar

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swamp"...[her] mind...haunted with visions of wolves and bears." "Beyond the long, wild howl of a solitary wolf, no other sound awoke the sepulchral silence of that dismal-looking wood" (II: 12-13).

Close to the end of their trip, the party stops at the home of one of Thomas Traill's former servants. Despite the fact that she has both soup and tea on the fire, Hannah offers the cold, hungry trekkers neither. As the scene with Almira, proprietress of the coach stop in Volume I illustrates, Moodie, in her younger days, would have had a considerable amount of cruel comment to make about such blatant lack of hospitality. Now, however, both ladies seem to take the disappointment in stride. In considering the girl's behaviour, Moodie even implicitly admits the warmth and kindness of the Irish whom she has, in the past, mocked. "Hannah was not an Irishwoman," she says, "no, nor a Scotch lassie, or her very first request would have been for us to take 'a pickle of soup' or 'a sup of thae warm broths'." Both ladies can even laugh at the episode (II: 246).

Moreover, it seems that throughout the whole day of vigorous exertion and discomfort, Moodie's chief concern has been to avoid wounding the feelings of Mrs. N_____ by offering her charity. Before setting out she had discussed the matter with Jenny, a rather enlightening fact in itself; one does not discuss one's personal feelings with a woman who is regarded purely as a servant:

I had some misgivings as to the manner in which

these good things could be introduced to the poor lady, who, I had heard, was reserved and proud.

"Oh, Jenny," I said, "how shall I be able to ask her to accept provisions from strangers? I am afraid of wounding her feelings." (II: 239)

Jenny's reply, too, is enlightening. On the one hand, the response -- especially Jenny's affectionate mode of address -- shows that the relationship between her and Moodie is not of the type which Flora or the Moodie of earlier chapters had advocated as proper. It is much closer and warmer. On the other hand, Jenny's reply also offers both a condemnation of the settlers on the English line -- the same settlement where Moodie and Emilia later miss out on the soup and tea -- and a nice discrimination which may now be applicable to Moodie's sense of pride as well:

Oh, darlint, never fear that! She is proud, I know; but just enough to consale her disthress from her ignorant English neighbours, who think so manely of poor folk like her who were once rich. She will be very thankful to you for your kindness, for she has not experienced much of it from the Dummer people in her throuble, though she may have no words to tell you so. (II: 239)

Obviously, the Moodie who allows an uneducated Irish servant to condemn British settlers and even tacitly agrees with the assessment, has come quite a distance. And, in this instance, her fellow-feeling bears fruit. Mrs. N_____

does not remain isolated. Besides delivering the food and offer of help herself, Moodie also writes to her husband, away with the militia during the rebellion, and he raises a subscription for the destitute family among the officers. Emilia S_____ reports to her friends in Peterborough and the community rallies around the family. Mrs. N_____ and her children are given a neat, warm cottage to live in and, from that time on, other neighbouring settlers take on the responsibility of their support. In a country where just maintaining oneself and one's family is difficult, such sacrifice shows true community spirit. Moodie says:

to the honour of Canada be it spoken, all who could afford a donation gave cheerfully. Farmers left at her door, pork, beef, flour, and potatoes; the storekeepers sent groceries, and goods to make clothes for the children; the shoemakers contributed boots for the boys; while the ladies did all in their power to assist and comfort the gentle creature thus thrown by Providence upon their bounty. (II: 256)

It might be argued that, in this instance, Moodie is assisting a person of the same class as herself and that this episode is, therefore, no proof that she has joined the new community. But that would be to miss the spirit of the account. The chapter is pervaded with a sense of "we-are-all-in-this-together" and, therefore, must adapt and support

each other as best we can. Moreover, she has solicited advice from an ignorant, ill-spoken peasant woman and even acted as courier for her in delivering to Mrs. N_____ some loaves of Jenny's bread. Nor has Moodie acted alone but has worked in conjunction with farmers, storekeepers and shoemakers. Instead of being isolated from the community herself, then, she has become an integral part of it; she has, in fact, been instrumental in bringing others, literally and figuratively, in from the cold.

5. Doubt Regarding the Rejection of Romanticism

Chapter III of this thesis presented a brief, introductory mention of the Victorian response to romanticism and the need Victorians felt to reject first generation romanticism as too extreme and solipsistic. That chapter also indicated that Moodie had some difficulty with this rejection but that she, again, struggled to bring her own opinions into line with accepted wisdom. Part of this rejection will, obviously, manifest itself in attitudes to nature. One might, therefore, expect the rapturous, almost pantheistic delight which Moodie shows as the young Rachel's response to nature, to be tempered over time. Indeed, as the reader moves from Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It in the Bush to Life in the Clearings, he or she sees the focus of Moodie's attention shift more and more from nature as valuable in itself, to God. A passage from Volume II of

Roughing It in the Bush points up the beginning of this change. Though it may seem very much like other exclamations Moodie makes about nature, there is a subtle difference from those found in Volume I of Roughing It in the Bush, in Flora Lyndsay and especially in "Rachel Wilde." Moreover, the difference exists in spite of the fact that the works were all written -- or at least published -- within seven years of each other:

What a beautiful, moonlight night it was, as light as day! -- the great forest sleeping tranquilly beneath the cloudless heavens -- not a sound to disturb the deep repose of nature but the whispering of the breeze, which, during the most profound calm, creeps through the lofty pine tops. We bounded down the steep bank to the lake shore. Life is a blessing, a precious boon indeed, in such an hour, and we felt happy in the mere consciousness of existence -- the glorious privilege of pouring out the silent adoration of the heart to the Great Father in the universal temple. (II: 44)

Though the romantic attitude is still evident in this passage, it is tempered. Passion and storm have been succeeded by tranquility and calm. Moreover, the heart-felt prayer that would once have been addressed to Nature, the "Great Mother," is now offered to the Great Father, a much

more orthodox deity. In both temperament and address, this passage expresses a more conventional piety.

An early statement in Life in the Clearings leaves no doubt as to the increasingly orthodox direction which Moodie's relationship with nature has, by that point, taken:

Next to the love of God, the love of nature may be regarded as the purest and holiest feeling of the human breast. In the outward beauty of his creation, we catch a reflection of the divine image of the Creator, which refines the intellect, and lifts the soul upward to Him. (3)

The view expressed here sounds as much characteristic of Catharine Parr Traill as it does of the Susanna Moodie with whom readers have become familiar.

However, Moodie was a "romantic" throughout her life. As Carol Shields has noted in her book, "her theology appears to be diluted Wordsworthian passion, in which religion and nature are sometimes equal or nearly equal in importance and sometimes blended into one truth" (6). It is also true that Moodie interpreted romantic principles through the medium of her education and religious upbringing and, therefore, her use of romantic thought to interpret nature was always more or less coloured by Christianity. But recognizing this truth need not blind one to the fact that, as she shows time passing, she also shows her appreciation for the natural world becoming muted. In embodying this muted appreciation in her work, she may

simply be illustrating the mellowing effect of time upon the ardent opinions of youth. However, it is also possible that the change mirrors the subtle alteration in social and religious attitudes which occurred over the course of her life. During these years romanticism became Christianized.

Another aspect of romanticism which has been mentioned in connection with Moodie's autobiographical protagonist is the love of personal freedom and unrestrained individuality. In "Rachel Wilde" Moodie portrays this love in Rachel's hero worship of Napoleon Bonaparte and the fictional figure of Satan in Paradise Lost. She also shows Rachel's longing to be totally unfettered, to be the mistress of her own world. After one refusal to obey rules, for instance, Rachel is punished by being sent to tend sheep with the servants. There, she concludes that she likes living with the lambs, freed from being "cooped up in dull dark houses," and that she prefers always "to hear the birds sing and [see] the sun shine" (213).

In order to shed light on Moodie's adult views on personal freedom, we may turn momentarily from the autobiographical works to a consideration of some of her juvenile literature and short fiction. In some of these tales, unfettered freedom, despite its initial attractiveness, is shown eventually to be destructive, both to the "free" individual and to others around him. In Rowland Massingham: or, I Will Be My Own Master, the chief character, Rowland, is constantly reiterating his desire to

control his own life. "I am determined in what so nearly concerns myself," he says, "to be my own master" (4). It seems clear, as well, that Moodie views this insistent individualism as a romantic trait. In the story, Rowland's tutor recounts for him the Greek myth of Phaeton and the chariot of the sun. When asked what he thinks about the hero's ill-fated attempt to control his father's horses, Rowland says:

I think he was perfectly right...to try his skill in horsemanship; and though he did get a sad tumble and had his head split with a thunderbolt, it was worth making the experiment. Had he succeeded, he would have been pronounced a god.

(9)

Despite the somewhat mundane diction and circumstances of the framing story -- that is, the attempt to teach discipline to a spoiled, arrogant child -- the sentiment expressed here is Byronic or Faustian. Rowland lauds the daring human spirit, even though egotistical over-reaching of its proper bounds may bring about destruction. Failure, if decreed, will be met without self pity. The willingness, courageously and uncomplainingly, to risk such disaster, alone ushers man into the company of the gods.

It is obvious that Moodie appreciates the enthusiasm and courage, however foolhardy, which make up a large part of Rowland's character. The devil-may-care type of romantic hero was one for whom she felt considerable admiration.

William Gairdner, writing on Moodie's romantic nature, has pointed out that the people she characterizes, even in the autobiographical works, are often stereotypical romantics -- in his terms guilt-ridden loners and brooders (40).

However, though she may have been attracted to the romantic hero, one part of Moodie decreed that this type of character be rejected. In her children's tales, harsh measures are often imposed to break the individual will, measures of which the author appears, ultimately, to approve. In Rowland Massingham, for instance, Rowland is not brought to humility until he has been physically maimed for life. Through his own arrogance and carelessness, he loses a hand in a hunting accident. In return, he gains faith in God and a sense of responsibility, an exchange Moodie seems to feel balances out in his favour.

The point of this story is that life is a kind of mesh made of interwoven strands. People are connected by ties of duty that bind them together. Hence, no person can act in a purely individual way, despite what he or she may intend. This idea was popular among the Victorians; it shows up, for instance, in the recurring web image of George Eliot's fiction. Thus, it is not surprising to find Moodie espousing the concept. At one point, Rowland's tutor delivers a lecture which highlights these responsibilities:

No man who is placed under the authority of another can justly be termed his own master. His actions too, are regulated by the laws of his

country; and though he certainly could go on the highway and put a pistol to the head of his fellow creature, or break open his neighbour's house and murder him in his bed, he must forfeit his life for exercising his free will in so unprincipled a manner. Even the king himself cannot do as he pleases without first consulting his responsible ministers.

There are relative duties...that one human being owes to another which he cannot transgress without violating those laws which hold society together. (79, 81)

Here, again, the discussion of romanticism merges with that of community. To be too individualistic is to cut oneself off from the rest of humankind, as do Faust and the Byronic character. Indeed, this romantic, individual excess leads to sociopathy, and even to criminality. Such excess can be seen in the example of Malcolm, the unwanted guest of "The Little Stumpy Man" chapter in Roughing It in the Bush. Though undoubtedly romantic in nature, Malcolm is also a lonely, tormented murderer. It is, perhaps, the dangers of this form of romanticism which Malcolm illustrates as much as the risks inherent in simply living in the bush, as R. D. MacDonald suggests. Malcolm is presented as a Byronic figure gone bad. The fact that he, too, is an autobiographer, might even indicate Moodie's fear of his sharing some of the romantic propensities and

characteristics which she knew made up part of her own character.

Nevertheless, though Moodie does come to espouse the virtues of community, it must be noted that, in the theoretical realm at least, the rejection of excessive romanticism in favour of warmer and more moderate values sanctioned by the church and society, appears to have caused her some anguish. An example of her thinking on this subject may, perhaps, be found in "Mildred Rosier: A Tale of the Ruined City." This bitter and ironic tale, published in monthly installments in The Literary Garland between February and December of 1844, shows clearly that questioning of the relative merits of romanticism and some types of Christianity -- both of them extremes, admittedly -- had taken place in Moodie's mind long before any of the autobiographical works were published.

The tale's chief characters divide, more or less, into two camps. The one, a group of contraband runners led by Count Fredwald Christenstein, alias Mr. Christian, alias Captain Tasker, may be roughly characterized as romantic in its nature and activities. The other group, headed by the Reverend Jonas Death though he, himself, plays a minor role, may, for the purposes of argument, be called Christian. This group consists of a mix of fanatical Calvinist evangelicals who are coming to wield a great deal of influence in the area of Suffolk where the story is set.

Squarely in between the two groups is Mildred Rosier, the fifteen-year-old heroine.

Ultimately, Mildred does end up on the side of religion. The tale's resolution, however, is problematic to say the least. Mildred, who loves Christenstein, forsakes him and his evil ways more through circumstances over which she has no control than through conscious choice. The forces of "good," though they eventually triumph, do so by means of cruelty and treachery. Moreover, though she devotes herself to a life of good works to assuage her broken heart, Mildred remains lonely and forsaken, vilified by some of the very people who supposedly represent the forces of religion. Ultimately, she dies old and alone, having long since espoused the melancholia which the fanatics earlier tried to force on her. The many references to the old city where the action is set constantly remind the reader of the truth, "sic transit gloria mundi." Neither religion nor romantic passion -- at least in extreme manifestations -- mean anything. They are merely examples of worldly vanity. Furthermore, the many allusions to the book of Ecclesiastes which run throughout the tale show much questioning and bitterness.

Moodie, herself, does seem to have accepted the philosophy espoused in the story by Ebenezer Strong -- that the "fruit of the spirit" is moderation. It is "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance" (ns 2, 438). It is not the grim, joyless

bigotry of the evangelicals nor Fredwald Christenstein's destructive passion. As some of her letters show, Moodie, too, rejected the Calvinist extremes of the fundamentalists. She also, as this discussion tries to point out, rejected what her age saw as the excesses of romanticism, settling for something more moderate. Nevertheless, "Mildred Rosier: A Tale of the Ruined City" may indicate that she felt the loss.

In Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It in the Bush, readers see other embodiments of these views, sometimes with respect to events which occurred in Moodie's real life. There, her autobiographical protagonist has the opportunity to deal first hand with those who have shrugged off community mores and thus become totally "free." In these instances, however, those who liberate themselves from all restraint are no longer portrayed as heroic but as pathetic, ridiculous or obnoxious.

Even the possibly fictional Miss Carr, of Flora Lyndsay, embodies similar themes. Though very much her own mistress, she is still a sad figure. She is independently wealthy, travels wherever and whenever she wants and refuses to abide by the social guidelines governing behaviour for women in her day. However, despite her bravado and independent posturing, Miss Carr is unloved and admits that she has no friends. Her only companion is "the incomparable Muff," a silly, little lap dog. She has experienced abject failure in her attempts to win a husband and buy a son, and

to get respect from the street urchins in the towns she visits, she has to shower them with coins. In fact, Miss Carr's only success in life has been to provide amusement for others.

Though some sketches from Roughing It in the Bush which show Moodie interacting with her neighbours around Cobourg do illustrate her own shortcomings, they also suggest that at least some of her early censure was justified. In that book, those who have most obviously liberated themselves from all restrictions are the Yankees. As Robin Mathews notes, "their chief characteristics are their individual anarchistic tendencies." The majority of the Yankees Moodie meets, he says, "deny the possibility of community based on trust" (7). Though Professor Mathews' Marxist, anti-American bias may be expressed in this observation, in this instance his view is substantiated by the text. Many of the Americans -- Old Satan and his daughter, for example -- are constantly bragging that they are "free" and, indeed, they seem to be free of every trapping civilization offers, including soap and water, decent clothing and shoes, education in even the broadest sense and any social virtues. Ultimately, many of these people are so enamoured of individualism that their sole measure of a particular person's worth is his or her ability to cheat in a deal and thereby advance personal interests at the expense of others. The neighbour who cleverly tricks Moodie's hens into her own yard and congratulates herself on the feat, and the one who

cheats Moodie of her fair share of the apples, are cases in point. Uncle Joe's youngest son, Ammon, is the epitome of unrestrained freedom; he is a young boy who taunts his parents at will. People such as these are detrimental to the progress of a young, growing community. Thus it is perhaps through Moodie's actual association with those who are really free, that she comes to reject extreme, romantic individualism.

6. Doubt Regarding Providential Design

The final aspect of Moodie's scepticism introduced in chapter III is her attitude to God's providence. The suggestion has been made that, when she was a young woman at least, Moodie was given to entertaining doubts about the wisdom of God's design. Many of life's trials seemed to be manifestly unfair, a fact which casts a pall over any belief in His justice and mercy. William Gairdner, again, discusses Moodie's wrestling with doubt in his article on her and her sister. Catharine Parr Traill, he says, was a rationalist; "anyone believing in a good, rational God, was forced logically to believe in a good, rational world" (37). "Moodie," he goes on, "faced by the same dilemma, moves much more easily into irrationality" (37). He argues that Moodie faced "fundamental uncertainties" which Traill ignored. In The Canadian Crusoes, for example, Traill shows death to be part of the natural order, while for Moodie, in the chapter

on Brian in Roughing It in the Bush, the death of the deer "borders on suggesting that God is unfair" (40). When Brian, after recounting the buck's uselessly heroic death struggle, asks the anguished question, "Is God just to his creatures?" Moodie has no answer. Gairdner suggests that Moodie "merely suppresses her doubts, for otherwise, as she well knows, the path from romantic individualism to solipsism, to atheism, to the absurd, may end in despair and insanity" (41). Indeed, Brian is emotionally unstable; he has already tried to cut his throat once by the time the Moodies meet him and does eventually succeed in committing suicide.

It must be admitted that readers do not see this doubt/faith conflict worked through in a very satisfying way over the course of the autobiographical works though, in fairness to Moodie, it should be said that she resolves it as well as many theologians have done. At some levels of the problem of pain, suffering and death, she comes to rather conventional rationalizations. At others, she comes to no conclusions at all. More than anything, the questioning simply seems to be dropped.

Perhaps one reason is that, after 1832, the debate becomes less theoretical and more real for Moodie. Much of the scepticism illustrated earlier is expressed in Moodie's poems and in the autobiographical story of Flora Lyndsay. The poems were published in 1831, but according to Moodie, were written before that, some as much as fourteen years

earlier. The events portrayed in Flora Lyndsay also obviously take place before the protagonist arrives in Canada. The point is that prior to 1832, and especially prior to the move into the bush, Moodie may have been indulging in the luxury of arm-chair scepticism and shows herself to have been doing so. She could, perhaps, have allowed herself the interesting intellectual leeway of looking on God's dealings with people in the Old Testament -- as she does in the Enthusiasm poems -- and finding their justice questionable. Or, she could, perhaps, even show her autobiographical protagonist reflecting on His treatment of people whose lives touched her own in some way -- as she does in Flora Lyndsay -- and questioning its fairness. Such detached considerations may not have had much more than a slightly unsettling impact on her psychological comfort. However, when she began to encounter personal danger and hardship herself, Moodie may well have found that belief in God provided emotional stability. As her life came under increasing stress from loss of friends, family, country and, to some degree, social status, she may have discovered that she could not afford to lose God as well.

As illustrated above, the painful uncertainty of Brian, the still hunter, is occasioned by the gory slaughter of an "innocent" buck deer by wolves. In a later chapter of Roughing It in the Bush, entitled "Disappointed Hopes," Moodie uses the deer as a symbol to illustrate the same spiritual conflict and its resolution. The epigraph to this

chapter speaks of the "iron grasp" of disappointment which is soon to be felt by the struggling Moodies as they lose their crop to the late summer rains of 1835. Having sunk all their money into ill-fated steamboat stock and on capital expenditures for the farm, the Moodies are nearly ruined by this crop failure. Their disappointment, the epigraph says, is akin to the desperation of "the timid deer,/ Who feels the foul fangs of the felon wolf/ Clench'd in his throat...(II: 114). This initial description of the deer and the likening of it to the increasingly harried Moodies are surely calculated to win the reader's pity and interest. One finds oneself identifying very much with the deer, ringed 'round by foes.

When a deer enters the story for the second time in this chapter, the reader and, indeed, Moodie herself, still find themselves siding with the animal and against its enemies. The scene is early morning on the nearby lake and the Moodies, paddling in their canoe, see a buck swimming across the water pursued by Indian hunters and their dogs. The setting is idyllic and the description of the deer is a very attractive one. He is "noble" and "gallant," full of "energy" and "grace," with his "branching horns held proudly aloft, his broad nostrils distended...his fine eye fixed intently upon the opposite shore" and his "glossy hooves" eventually "[spurning] the opposite bank..." (II: 121). The buck here is passionately alive and the appreciation of the author and reader arise from the realization of his

vitality. Moreover, for obvious reasons, his courageous, heroic struggle against great odds is also a factor in endearing him to the Moodies.

By the third entrance of a deer, however, sympathies have shifted dramatically. By the winter of 1836, the Moodies are starving, subsisting mainly on "ground flour and frosted potatoes." All are weak and one son is stricken with ague. Jacob, the family's servant, spies a buck deer out on an island in the lake and is lucky enough to kill it with the only shot left in John Moodie's rifle. This time, there is little concern for the deer and the tone and diction of the passage are diametrically opposite to what they were in the earlier description. The language now is mundane and prosaic; in the mouth of the uncouth Jacob, all sense of the heroic is done away with. "Thae beast iz dead az a door-nail," he informs Susanna. Both Moodie and Jacob again describe the buck as "fine" but the description now holds no connotations of life and vitality. It indicates only that this animal, which is capable of fighting so valiantly and proudly for its life, can be turned into innumerable suppers (II: 123-24). The poem ending this chapter continues in much the same vein. It is entitled "The Canadian Hunter's Song" and deals with the joy and celebration consequent in a hunter's family when he "[drags] the dun deer home." For his wife and children, the deer's death means life (II: 130). Indeed, in the same few pages, Moodie tells how, during that same hard winter, the family

had to kill and eat a pig which had become their daughter's pet.

The point seems to be that life at its most elemental level -- stripped of the artificial trappings common in more civilized settings -- does not allow for sentimentality. Nature, a realm which includes man, is not to be reduced to the sentimental but respected for its power both to kill and to sustain. The scheme of things as God has devised them decrees that all living things take their places in a pattern. Hence, change and death are not simply useless loss, and so are not unfair. This is a belief Moodie has come to hold by 1853 and is well expressed in Life in the Clearings. In a passage actually about noxious weeds, the point is made that objects and events in general have a place in God's pattern, despite the apparent grief they may bring to man:

I firmly believe that nothing has been made in vain; that every animate and inanimate substance has its use, although we may be ignorant of it; that the most perfect and beautiful harmony reigns over the visible world; that although we may foolishly despise those animals, plants and insects that we consider noxious because their real utility has never been tested by experience, they are absolutely necessary in the great chain of Providence, and appointed to fulfill a special purpose and end. (232-33)

Moreover (though a statement of this faith does not appear in Moodie's autobiographical work), her religious novel, The World Before Them, suggests that she came to believe that all occurrences, even those which appear unjust, are part of God's will. This passage, incidentally, is the one transmitted to Moodie by a spirit as she acted as the medium at a family seance and which also shows up in Traill's Pearls and Pebbles:

Oh, that man could comprehend the perfect unity that exists between God and his works. From the least to the greatest, if one among them had not been necessary, it would never have been formed, for the Creator does nothing in vain. There is no waste in the Divine Oeconomy. He gathers up the fragments so that nothing is lost, but renews them in other forms to suit his own purpose. Thus the chain of existence runs on through the long chain of eternity, and not one link is broken, though the law of change operates on all. (183)

If the law of change is, indeed, the principle whereby God's will is worked throughout eternity, then the death of a deer -- or the sufferings of a backwoods family, for that matter -- ceases to be cause to doubt Divine Wisdom. Though such events may cause sadness, they precipitate no moral crisis. Hence, by becoming less subjective, by stepping back and viewing the world from a stance of calm tranquility and detachment, Moodie does away with her spiritual angst.

She seems to achieve a kind of global, rather than an involved and personal perspective. At this level of the problem, Moodie has found an answer to her doubts.

Nevertheless, all pain and suffering are not an inevitable part of the way nature works. Some of it appears, rather, to be arbitrary and inexplicable; it is at this level of the problem that Moodie simply seems to have stopped questioning. To see her final resolution of this problem we must turn from Roughing It in the Bush to Life in the Clearings. In that book she recounts her visit to an insane asylum in Toronto and, in speaking of the patients, simply says that an inmate's lot is due to "a mysterious Providence" (219). The concluding poem in the chapter in question also deals with insanity. The narrator has witnessed the suicide of a woman driven mad by her lover's treachery. The closing lines express both the initial response to the situation and the answer to that doubt:

I turn'd from the scene -- on my spirit there fell
 A question that sadden'd my heart like a knell;
 I look'd up to heav'n, but I breath'd not a word,
 For the answer was given -- "Trust thou in the Lord."
 (228)

For the reader, this retreat into simple acceptance may seem like a falling away from the integrity manifested by the earlier questioning, but there is no doubt that, for the average nineteenth-century woman, this accepting response was the correct one. In this acceptance Moodie has achieved

the faith shown by her sister. Like her, she "meekly kisses the rod."

7. Propensity for Imbalance and Extremes

Because it leads into a discussion of the fourth stage of the typical spiritual autobiography, the return to a consideration of Moodie's extreme tendencies has been left until the end of this chapter. It has already been shown that one of Catharine Parr Traill's virtues was balance, and that this balance was a trait which Moodie desired to make her own. It should also be evident that the extremes to which Moodie's versions of herself are given are manifested in the other flaws. That is, one sees evidence of the protagonist's tendency to extremes in her pride and early insistence on class differentiation, in her tendency to make quick, ill-founded judgements and to mock others, in her entertainment of unconventional theories on sexual roles, in her rejection of community, in her propensity to espouse romantic solipsism and the sublime, and in her questioning of God's providential design. A delineation of the need to forsake extremes and to achieve balanced stability has, thus, been implicitly carried out throughout the autobiographical works and, in this thesis, throughout the examination of Moodie's other character traits.

In Roughing It in the Bush especially, where Moodie undergoes the learning experiences which temper her other

flaws, she learns the value of moderation. It is the next book, then, Life in the Clearings, which contains the culmination of Moodie's spiritual education, a culmination which depends almost totally on her realization of the need for balance in all facets of life. Carol Shields' observation on Moodie is valid here: "she was the voice of the concerned middle, trying to look in both directions at once and attempting with fairness and intelligence to reconcile a fragmented world" (Susanna Moodie: Voice and Vision 68).

Through overcoming the various trials outlined in this and previous chapters, Moodie comes to terms with her flawed nature, and so passes through the equivalent of the conversion stage undergone by the protagonists of many spiritual autobiographies. Through the suffering of "a thousand sorrows" (II: 283) she comes to see, regret and alter her past attitudes, thus experiencing a "turning about" or a "reversal of order."

According to Dean Ebner, despair, which makes up part of this conversion stage, is a state which the struggling soul must experience and in which it must remain until it is weaned from the world (40-41). In her eschewing of her pride and the errors consequent upon it -- occurrences which, in the preface to Mark Hurdlestone, Moodie specifically says are the result of her trials in the bush -- she has indeed weaned herself from society. In fact, so far removed has she become from the world's vanities that

every object of her "humble home" has now "become endeared to [her] during her long exile from civilised [sic] life" (II: 283); she is, in many ways, loath to leave her solitary existence, having "lost all relish for the pursuits and pleasures which are so essential to its [society's] votaries" (II: 277).

However, for the spiritual explorers of the seventeenth century -- the period during which autobiography took on its most basic form and content -- one's task was not complete with personal conversion alone. Only one of the reasons for examining a life in detail was met by achieving individual enlightenment. The second aim of the examination and consequent account was to aid others in their own struggles. This second aim, then, was closely allied to the calling to preach which was the final stage of the autobiographical endeavour.

The Victorians, too, for reasons which were social and cultural as well as spiritual, forsook solipsism and introversion. Any personal journey of enlightenment was seen as incomplete and rather pointless if it benefitted no one but the individual him or herself. This subject has been briefly touched upon above and will not be spoken of again at any length. It need only be said that for the Victorians, personal experience of confusion, suffering or error, was valuable chiefly if it could be made relevant to the wider society and used as a prelude to action. Consequently, it is not surprising to see Susanna Moodie

turning knowledge gained from her personal trials into social, cultural, political and even spiritual advice in her last autobiographical work.

VI. Life in the Clearings as Preaching the Gospel

It has been shown that, in general terms, "Rachel Wilde" and Flora Lyndsay dramatize the way early providential mercies and blessings are bestowed by God upon the protagonist while also indicating, at some length, that character's leanings towards "sin" despite God's favour. Both of these works and the early chapters of Roughing It in the Bush also show the protagonist's "unregenerate life in sin." Roughing It in the Bush, especially Volume II, illustrates that "conversion" has occurred by showing that the protagonist has overcome her moral and social flaws; it also includes in the illustration episodes of backsliding and despair.

If the overall pattern of spiritual autobiography were to hold good, then, one might expect the final book of the set to show Moodie preaching the gospel to which she has been converted. This is not to say that Moodie deliberately wrote Life in the Clearings as part of her life story for this is almost certainly not the case. The book does not, in most instances, show Moodie as protagonist nor does it deal in the same way as her other life writings with her own feelings and experiences. To a large extent, it is simply a

collection of essays gathered from various sources and then artificially inserted into the skeletal framework of a personal account. Nevertheless, in a general way, Life in the Clearings can be seen as the culminating phase of Moodie's autobiographical endeavour since it definitely shows her trying to convey to others what she has learned through her own trials.

We have seen that in one of her letters, Moodie admits that "there is something in [her] character which always leads [her] to extremes" (Letters 151). As pointed out above, this trait is the subsuming characteristic of Moodie's personality and is one she fought long to control. The "gospel," then, may well have something to do with her battle with this form of error. Indeed, this proves to be the case. In Life in the Clearings, the many seemingly varied issues on which Moodie "preaches" find summation in one key tenet -- balance. In her desire to find the happy medium on all issues, Moodie constantly advocates tolerance, acceptance, understanding and moderation.

The book is built around the central structural device of a trip from Belleville to Niagara Falls by steamer. However, the travelling itself is not really very important to the content of the work except as it provides incidental jumping-off points for Moodie's observations and opinions on all manner of subjects current in the Upper Canada of her day. As R. L. McDougall notes in his 1959 introduction to

Life in the Clearings, Moodie "writes now about social, rather than solitary men" (ix).

In a very general way, Moodie's writing in this book may be called topographical since it fits the definition given by Dr. Johnson in his Lives of the English Poets, though there Johnson is speaking specifically about poetry. In such writings, he says, the fundamental subject is "some particular landscape...described with the addition of such embellishment as may be described by historical retrospective and incidental meditation" (I: 77). Moreover, the many, otherwise disparate, issues are linked by a "controlling moral vision," which John Wilson Foster sees as a further characteristic of this type of writing (403). Indeed, if any controlling moral vision binds into a whole Moodie's widely varied observations and remarks in this book, it may well be the continual choice of the via media on all questions.

The via media is a way of approaching religious questions which is central to the theology of the Anglican Church, the religion under whose auspices Susanna Moodie was born, and also under which she probably spent most of her life and died. Eric Lionel Mascall, in his short book on this doctrine, explains the rationale behind it:

on the cardinal points of Christian doctrine, orthodoxy consists in holding together two notions which might well seem to be incompatible. I do not mean that they are incompatible in fact; the

idea that Christianity involves believing contradictions seems to me to be as stultifying and immoral as the view that it involves clutching at one of the horns of any ostensible dilemma. A naive 'both-and' programme and a naive 'either-or' programme both provide scope for theological pyrotechnics but little for steady illumination. My point is simply (1) that...two notions may very well seem to be incompatible; (2) that if we assume that they really are incompatible we shall be tempted to opt for one of them to the exclusion of the other and so fall into error; but (3) that if we go on to enquire how they must be understood if they are not to be incompatible, we shall acquire a very much more profound understanding of the question at issue than we had when we began.

(xiii)

Mascall's observation is relevant here because Moodie, over the course of her years in Canada, chooses the third option; that is, she selectively and intelligently synthesizes and so comes to acquire a more profound understanding of many issues than she had when she arrived.

Though there is no evidence to show that Moodie ever specifically considered this one particular mode of seeing, attention to theological discussion indicates that it fit her needs and opinions very well. Previous chapters have emphasized Moodie's doubting, questioning tendencies. The

Spiritualism Album in the Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection shows that her contemporaries, including her husband, considered her to be unnecessarily sceptical, even cynical. One supposed spirit cruelly tells her that, had she been alive during Christ's sojourn on earth, she would have been among those responsible for His crucifixion.

Yet, within Anglicanism, under the aegis of the via media, doubt is allowed. It is even welcomed. In The Via Media, Being a Vindication of the Faith and Order of the Church of England, Charles Philip Clarke explains. Creeds and dogmas, he says, only "imply a basis of intellectual agreement about God and the world" (emphasis added, 8). "It is a mark of the Via Media," he says "that those who belong to it are welcome to test their religion by their reason and they are not asked to accept anything on authority which seems to them unreasonable" (126). The emphasis on reason is one of the theological tenets related to the Anglican Church's adherence to the via media and is one which John Moodie at least, seems to have espoused. In his article, "Religion and Loyalty" in the January 1848 issue of The Victoria Magazine, he says:

When these things are duly considered, it appears sufficiently that reason is the best friend to religion, and can never be its enemy. Reason, certainly will not explain those truths of religion, which are above human reason; but the Almighty has given it to us to direct us in our

choice of a faith; and we are no where required to believe what is contrary to reason. When knowledge and reason exercise their full sway, and when the embankments of uncharitable prejudice are once swept away, it will be just as natural for truth to prevail as for water to find its level.

(105)

Clarke, in his book on the via media, further asserts that to follow where one's reason leads is morally right, even if it takes one away from the church:

This attitude [unquestioning submission to authority] is contrary to the genius of the Via Media. The doubting Thomas has a moral right to face his doubts and follow his argument wherever it may lead him; even if it leads him away from the faith of the Church we do not condemn, but believe that if he is honest and sincere and looks far enough he will in due time regain the truth. Man in the last resort has to decide as best he can in religion as in worldly affairs mainly by the light of his reason. (127-128)

These quotations from Mascall and Clarke shed light on Moodie's resolution of her own doubts, though in her case the method was applied to secular as well as spiritual concerns. In both religion and worldly affairs, she pursued her doubts using her reason as her guide, and came back to a point of synthesis and balance. She discovered, in

Mascall's terms, how questions and issues can be understood "if they are not to be incompatible." In Life in the Clearings these traits of synthesis and balance are expressed through a running series of discussions on social and religious matters.

Moodie begins the first chapter with a poem lauding unity. The second verse reads:

Union is strength, while round the boughs
Of thine own lofty maple-tree
The threefold wreath of Britain flows,
Twined with the graceful fleur-de-lis;
A chaplet wreathed mid smiles and tears,
In which all hues of glory blend;
Long may it bloom in future years,
And vigour to thy weakness lend. (1)

Here Moodie praises the working together of the two nations which have given Canada its heritage. The attitude expressed is surely a far cry from the amused patronizing with which she had viewed "the only grave Frenchman" she had ever seen in her initial trip up the St. Lawrence River twenty years earlier. By presenting these verses as part of the introduction to her book, Moodie signals that she has adopted a position of compromise. The "asperity of nature," which she cites as a past personal failing in the preface to Mark Hurdlestone, the Gold Worshipper, will no more be found. As Robert McDougall points out, Life in the Clearings is a "very civilized book" (viii).

Other observations on socio-political questions leave no doubt that the "creature of extremes" has had her temperament muted by hard experience. At the time of the 1837 rebellion, for instance, Moodie had been ardently indignant at the temerity of the rebels and had celebrated her feelings in her patriotic verses entitled "The Oath of the Canadian Volunteers." However, several years in Canada -- years which have included increasing persecution of John Moodie at the hands of the Victoria County Tories -- have convinced her that the governance of the Family Compact has not been without faults. Though she is still opposed to anything which smacks of disloyalty to the British Crown, she now questions the government's propensity to practise overt favouritism.

According to historian Kenneth McNaught, during the early years of the century,

the governor's friends in the councils and their hangers-on across the province formed the basis of an early power elite.... At a time when practically all the Upper Canadians were struggling to clear the land, establish the tiny capital of York (Toronto) and simply to survive, the structure of privilege could survive in comparative security. When the future of the society came to be considered more seriously after 1815, the built-in tensions developed rapidly.

It was these tensions which prevailed when the Moodies first arrived in Canada in 1832 and which eventually led to the rebellion. Though by 1852 Moodie can see the rebels' side of the problem -- and indeed, has espoused the Reform cause herself -- her statements on the situation show her desire to adhere to the middle ground; she sees all sides but wholeheartedly espouses none:

The Tory party, who arrogated the whole loyalty of the Colony to themselves, branded, indiscriminately, the large body of Reformers as traitors and rebels. Every conscientious and thinking man who wished to see a change for the better in the management of public affairs was confounded with the discontented spirits who had raised the standard of revolt against the mother country. In justice even to them, it must be said, not without severe provocation; and their disaffection was more towards the colonial government, and the abuses it fostered, than any particular dislike to British supremacy and institutions. Their attempt, whether instigated by patriotism or selfishness -- and probably it contained a mixture of both -- had failed and it was but just that they should feel the punishment due to their crime. (35)

Moodie neither fully condemns nor praises either political faction here. The passage is an exercise in

continuous, and perhaps confusing, alteration of viewpoint. She notes positive aspects of both sides' cases but makes sure she tempers them with negative observations. The same is true of her thoughts on the preferment which partly fomented the discontent. On the one hand, she explains how the native-born Canadians were jealous of the favours shown to the emigrating British, since "most offices of consequence and emolument [including, it would seem, the position of Victoria County sheriff] were given to such persons." The Canadian, she explains, considered such preferment unjust. After all, a man born in the colony surely had more natural interest in his homeland than a stranger and, therefore, had more claim to the authority which would determine its future. These sentiments, she admits, were held "naturally enough." On the other hand, she also remarks that the Canadian was hardly ever as well educated as the upper-class British settler and was, therefore, not as fit to wield power. Then again, despite the British emigrant's undoubted superiority, it is understandable that the "preference shown...proved an active source of ill will and discontent," for this British favourite "too often treated his illiterate but sagacious political opponent with a contempt which his practical knowledge and experience did not merit" (36).

Once again, Moodie avoids making a positive or a negative observation about either the native-born Canadian or the British emigrant unless she also offers an offsetting

comment. Her style, in these passages, might be described in the words used to characterize her sister's work; it is a "rhetoric of balance." In his introduction to the 1959 reprint of Life in the Clearings, Robert McDougall sums up Moodie's ultimate stance on this great political upheaval of her day. Her decision was, in short, to come down on both sides of the fence:

in Life in the Clearings she speaks sympathetically of the rebel cause and represents William Lyon Mackenzie, its fiery leader, as a much maligned man. Yet this change took Mrs. Moodie no further than a position of compromise. On the political front, those who sympathized with Mackenzie's quarrel but refused to back the extreme "republican" measures he eventually proposed were known as the Moderate Reformers; and it is the view of these and their leader, the Hon. Robert Baldwin, that are reflected when the rebellion is touched upon in Life in the Clearings. The symbol of the response is a biographical detail: a son born to Mrs. Moodie in 1843 was christened Robert Baldwin. (xix)

McDougall, then, seems to view Moodie in much the same light as does Robin Mathews who, in his article on Susanna Moodie and Pink Toryism, sees her as adhering to a political middle road through her rejection of both the exploitive capitalism and the extreme democratic republicanism of the Americans.

A topic closely related to this subject of unfair preferment and the reasoning behind it, is class status, something previous chapters have discussed at length. Again, in Life in the Clearings, Moodie shows her position on the subject to be one of avoiding extremes. She alternately praises and censures both the upper and the working classes. On the one hand, she deploras the British for their snobbery and arrogance, much as her husband had done in his original chapters of Roughing It in the Bush. "Most of the pretence and affected airs of importance occasionally met with in Canada, " she says, "are not the genuine product of the soil, but importations from the mother country" (39). In the third chapter of Life in the Clearings she very decidedly links class-based arrogance to "sin" -- that is, to an unchristian attitude -- and, hence, is led to state openly the condemnation which she implicitly embodies in the characterization of herself and others in the autobiographical works. "There is a spirit abroad in the world," she says, "and an evil spirit it is -- which through all ages has instigated the rich to look down with contemptuous feelings of superiority on the humble occupations and inferior circumstances of the poor." This spirit is "diametrically opposed" to Christianity, she continues, for Christ himself performed "his painful mission on earth in no higher capacity than that of a working mechanic."

What a noble triumph was this, over the cruel

and unjust prejudices of mankind! It might truly be termed the divine philosophy of virtue. This condescension on the part of the great Creator of the universe ought to have been sufficient to have rendered labour honourable in the minds of his followers; and we still indulge the hope that the moral and intellectual improvement of mankind will one day restore labour to her proper pedestal in the temple of virtue. (54)

At the same time, however, Moodie hastens to assure her readers that she continues to believe in a society which is hierarchically structured. Her championing of the working classes, she says, "involves no dislike to royal rule, or for those distinctions of birth and wealth [she considers] necessary for the well-being of society." In her opinion "men of talent and education," no matter what name they go by, will end up ruling. Because of this tendency for the most talented to rise to the top of any society, Moodie holds that "perfect unadulterated republicanism is a beautiful but fallacious chimera which has never existed upon the earth, and which, if the Bible be true...never will exist in heaven" (57).

Again, Moodie's rhetoric is balanced. While in one passage she can extol labour as the driving force of the world, she also advises the working classes to recognize the disadvantages they do have and to give place to those who are, in some ways, their superiors. Throughout Roughing It

in the Bush and again in Life in the Clearings, Moodie indicates her belief in the value of an education. By the time of the latter book, however, education is no longer used as a bludgeon to drive back the social aspirations of the "odious squatters" but is, rather, genuinely advocated as a means of self improvement by a woman who now has the true interest of the labouring classes at heart. It is this one important advantage that the working classes lack and on which they must defer to the upper classes. The previously quoted passage on the resentment over political preferment on the part of the Canadian-born colonist makes this point; Moodie believes that only the educated are fit to govern.

Her recommendation on these issues illustrates the calm rationality, logic and tolerance she has come to espouse. Her solution to class-related ill will is not to subdue disaffection and sedition by actively subjugating one class to another, as Upper Canada's first governor, John Graves Simcoe, had originally intended for the colony, nor to espouse total democracy, as American republicanism advocated. It is, rather, to encourage universal education to the point where all people will be capable of taking their full and respected places in society. Ultimately, Moodie is advocating that society be levelled upward:

The ignorance of the masses must, while it remains, for ever separate them from their more fortunate brethren. Remove this stumbling block out of the way, and the hard line of demarcation

which now divides them will soften, and gradually melt away. Their supposed inferiority lies in their situation alone. (56)

In these opinions Moodie bears some resemblance to the liberal humanist thinker, John Stuart Mill who, in his writings on the labouring classes, had often argued for the benefits of education. For example, in his 1845 article on the claims of labour in The Edinburgh Review, Mill praises the power of education to lift the poor out of degradation and misery, and thereby, to alter the dependent relationship they presently bear to the more fortunate classes. The most obvious and, indeed, "the sole remedy" for social ill, Mill claims, is education. Even in the most narrow, formal sense, "too much stress can hardly be laid upon its importance." Mill deplores the poor quality of teaching in English educational institutions for the poor and so cites, as examples of what education may do, schools in Scotland. He says that "for two centuries, the Scottish peasant, compared with the same class in other situations, has been a reflecting, an observing, and therefore naturally a self-governing, a moral, and a successful human being -- because he has been a reading and discussing one..."(289-91).

This quotation from Mill's work expresses, in a nutshell, the value which Moodie also believed would accrue to the working class from education. In fact, many of Moodie's social pronouncements are akin to Mill's and it is the liberal humanist tradition out of which she is writing.

It is entirely possible that Moodie's opinions were formed, not only by her experiences in Canada, but also by the kind of thought coming out of England, expressed in current periodicals. Many of these British journals made their way to Canada and were reviewed and, in part, even copied, for publication in colonial papers.

Moreover, Moodie need not even have gone to British publications in order to receive ideas or encouragement for her views. Colonial newspapers of the time were vehicles for partisan argument to a much greater degree than their modern counterparts and a perusal of some of these old journals between the years 1845 and 1851 turns up numerous articles on the topical subjects of the day. Among these are the treatment of inmates in prison, the incarceration of the insane in "lunatic asylums" and how these institutions are run, the need for temperance and the value of having temperance societies, the worth of mechanics' institutes and the activities of the Orangemen. Anyone familiar with Life in the Clearings knows that these are all subjects which Moodie discusses in that book. Another of the very common topics of interest in these periodicals is the state of education in the colony -- who should be educated, who should deliver the education, whether it should be religious or secular in nature, what subjects should be taught and who should pay. Those interested in levelling society upward tend to argue in much the same terms as does Moodie. Only

with education could the social problems of the working class be ameliorated.

These opinions on pride and class status have been discussed first and at length because of their importance. Statements on this subject are numerous throughout the book. Moodie's continual return to the topic surely indicates that she saw it as central to the work and that she wanted her readers to take note of it. Moreover, her overt statements take Life in the Clearings out of the realm of drama and irony which Roughing It in the Bush inhabits. Again, as was the case with "Rachel Wilde" and Flora Lyndsay, the narrator makes observations and pronouncements for the reader's enlightenment and, here, the narrator states in no uncertain terms that class pride and arrogance are moral evils, contrary to God's plan for the world. Just as the earlier works make remarks which can cast light forward onto the occurrences of Roughing It in the Bush, so this last autobiographical work makes observations which can illuminate them in retrospect. Moodie signals that the social vision of this book is rather different from that embodied in the words, actions and attitudes of the woman who stepped off the boat. Finally, and most importantly for the current discussion, by making balance so obvious an issue for the reader, both in the style of these passages and in what she says, she gives the reader the terms in which to appreciate the rest of the book. Ultimately, Life in the Clearings is a one-note composition.

In some ways, this singular emphasis is unfortunate because it means that the work is much less interesting than its predecessors. It would not be incorrect to say that except in a -- for literature students -- limited, historical way, Life in the Clearings is boring. The reasons have been traced to Moodie's aims. Even critics in her own day argued that she had nothing to say, really, and wrote only to make money. There is probably some justification for this view. Many of the essay-like parts of the book were printed earlier in magazines and, unlike the Roughing It in the Bush sketches, these essays are not related. They are forced, in Life in the Clearings to hang together and can only be made to do so with a great deal of artificial glue.

However, it is also possible to explain the book's lack of gusto by again referring to spiritual autobiography. As history seems constantly to reiterate, sin is more interesting than holiness, conflict more engaging to the attention than rest and the quest more central to what makes human beings truly alive than the obtaining of goals. Like Tennyson's Ulysses, perhaps, those who achieve what they had thought to be their chief desires frequently find themselves enervated. This may be the reason for Life in the Clearings' lack of power. When viewed as part of Moodie's autobiographical works it presents the fourth stage of the spiritual journey, the stage when the quest and conflict are over. Since the struggle with error is complete and moral

and social ills overcome -- for the purposes of the account, anyway -- Moodie, the character, no longer has any role to play. She has been subsumed into the narrator who now stands over and above the subject matter, commenting omnisciently on it. She is now the preacher, rather than the living example which the preacher uses to illustrate his text. However, it is Moodie, the character, as many critics have noted, whose energy drives the books. In Roughing It in the Bush especially, the accounts of people and events are quickened by the transfusion of her own vitality. Because it is this headstrong and passionate, even unlikable Moodie whom readers have come to know, her absence understandably disappoints them. Moreover, despite what many serious-minded Victorians tried to believe, sermons are not nearly as interesting -- perhaps not even as instructive -- as good literature. Perhaps, indeed, this recognition may lie behind Moodie's casting of her other autobiographical stories into quasi-fictional and dramatic forms.

Having noted all these facts, students would seem to be wasting their time were they to examine the book in much depth. A reader who has gone through the first several chapters, divined the central stance and been given a list of topics to which the work turns its attention, has the book in a nutshell. He or she can easily apply the central idea and so know quite accurately beforehand what Moodie will say on any given subject. The few examples which

follow here, then, serve only to show that this reading of Life in the Clearings can be substantiated by the text.

Related in some ways to her views on class is Moodie's opinion as to why family relations in Canada so often proceed more smoothly than they do in Britain. In the colony, the practice of exalting one child at the expense of the others is not common. The eldest son does not automatically inherit his parents' whole estate and so remain in the economic class into which he was born while his brothers and sisters sink into poverty. Rather, the happy medium of providing for all is espoused. Moodie finds the consequent harmony "truly delightful;" Canadians, she says "are not a quarrelsome people in their own homes." Canadian "brothers and sisters ...cling together through good and ill report, like the bundle of sticks in the fable." One facet of this harmony which she particularly appreciates is the immediate willingness to acknowledge all of one's relations. In light of the personal histories of herself and her husband, Moodie's viewpoint takes on a certain poignancy; had such a practice prevailed in Britain, the Moodies and many of their peers might never have been forced to leave their ancestral homes. "I have seldom found a real Canadian ashamed of owning a poor relation," she says. "This to me is a beautiful feature in the Canadian character. Perhaps the perfect equality on which children stand in a family, the superior claim of eldership, so much

upheld at home, never being enforced, is one great cause of this domestic union of kindred hearts" (38-39).

On other varied and frequently unrelated topics, Moodie also shows that balance has become the controlling principle of her life. In Roughing It in the Bush, she often mentions the tendency she sees in Canada toward excessive alcohol consumption and decries its terrible consequences. Captain N_____'s cruel treatment of Jenny and of his wife and children provides a good example of the evils to which the vice may lead. In Life in the Clearings, Moodie continues in the same vein. She claims that the "frightful vice of drinking prevails throughout the colony to an alarming extent" (45).

Nevertheless, in Life in the Clearings, Moodie also clarifies her position on the oft-suggested solution to this social ill. Under no circumstances should one group of people be allowed to force its extreme views on another. It appears that prohibition was contemplated in Canada many decades before its disastrous trial implementation. Moodie, however, is opposed to the measure. She argues for self, rather than state, control and in so doing expresses opinions which hark back to her earlier arguments on education's power to improve the quality of life. While it is true that the changes which will be effected through the espousal of less forcible tactics will occur very slowly, they will be natural and, therefore, more genuine and longer-lasting:

To wean a fellow creature from an indulgence of a gross sensual propensity, as I said before, we must first convince the mind: the reform must commence there. Merely withdrawing the means of gratification and treating a rational being like a child, will never achieve a great moral conquest.

(48)

Readers may also have noted another change in Moodie's attitudes and opinions over the course of the autobiographical books. As she ages and becomes more used to living in a country where hard work is a condition of survival, she becomes more interested in the practical. Hence it is that in early pages of Life in the Clearings she can laud workers over dreamers and can, later on, enter into an ecstatic contemplation of the usually prosaic topic of machinery. Viewing the farm implements at the provincial agricultural show, she is moved to observe that "the genius of the mechanic [is] displayed in the effective articles of machinery, invented to assist the toils and shorten the labour of human hands". Inventors are, for her, the "real benefactors to the human race, to whom the exploits of conquerors, however startling and brilliant, are very inferior in every sense." Given her admitted, early, war-like propensities and her veneration for military heroes, this statement signifies a profound alteration in her viewpoint. In this long passage, she launches into an odd, rapt effusion on the wondrous nature of machines in general:

Mechanical genius, which ought to be regarded as the first and greatest effort of human intellect, is only now beginning to be recognized as such. The statesman, warrior, poet, painter, orator and man of letters all have their niche in the temple of fame -- all have had their worshippers and admirers; but who among them has celebrated in song and tale the grand creative power which can make inanimate metals move, and act, and almost live, in the wondrous machinery of the present! It is the mind that conceived, the hand that reduced to practical usefulness these miraculous instruments, with all their complicated works moving in harmony, and performing their appointed office, that comes nearest to the Sublime Intelligence that framed the universe, and gave life and motion to that astonishing piece of mechanism, the human form. (230)

A reader who has become familiar with Moodie's writing -- both her poetry and prose -- has some cause to feel surprise in encountering this passage. Usually she reserves her rapturous asides for more traditional subjects -- most often sublime nature and its relationship to God. Here, while it is true that she venerates God's creation in her mentioning of the human body, she expresses that appreciation in what are, for her, atypical terms. Instead of approaching God by way of romantic landscape, she comes

at Him through the topic of man-made objects. This departure from her normal pattern may indicate how deep an impression the hardships of Canada and the need for help in overcoming them had made on Moodie. Her adaptation of a generally-felt veneration for machinery to farm implements in particular possibly indicates her new sense of rootedness in a frontier country.

It is quite possible that her interest in mechanics may also have been called into existence by reports of the wondrous exhibits on display at the 1851 Great Exhibition of London, staged in the Crystal palace. According to S.C. Burchell in Age of Progress, the Great Exhibition, awaited with an immense degree of interest and finally opened by Queen Victoria on May 1, 1851, was, in concrete form, a "splendid revelation of the nineteenth-century's belief in the idea of Progress" (7). Burchell's comment on the enthusiasm and support of the Prince Consort helps to explain Moodie's rhapsodizing, especially her bringing into her effusion a discussion of things religious:

To Albert, the immense technical achievements revealed in the new machinery and other displays, and the great esthetic achievement of the Crystal Palace in which they were housed, were only outward signs of an inward grace. The Exhibition was the symbol of an ethical progress which the whole world was making and would continue to make.

(7)

Moreover, articles and essays on the exhibit were available to be read in the Upper Canada of Moodie's day. The November 27, 1850 edition of the Toronto Examiner reprinted an article from the London Morning Herald describing the progress made on the exhibition hall itself since its commencement in October. The article includes a very long, detailed description of what the finished edifice would look like and what would be exhibited in it. The paper continued to print reports on the exhibition, how many people were seeing it and how much money it was bringing in for several months after its opening. The Toronto British Colonist was publishing articles on the planned exhibition as early as July 2, 1850, ten months before it opened. The Weekly British Whig, published in Kingston, included articles on February 21, April 22, May 23 and June 6 of 1851. The last article is especially rapturous. The journalists of the Hamilton Weekly Spectator were so impressed that they kept their readers informed of the exhibition's progress on a more or less regular basis from November 7, 1850 onwards.

Nevertheless, despite her veneration, Moodie once again steers the middle course and expresses, in other parts of the book, opinions which might, on the surface, seem inconsistent with her appreciation of machines. For instance, as her steamboat leaves the Prince Edward District, she points out for her audience "a small lake upon the highest portion of this table-land, whose waters are led

down the steep bank, and made to work a saw-mill...." This harnessing, she says wistfully, "certainly gives a very unromantic turn to [the falls]...but here, as in the States, the beautiful and the ideal are instantly converted into the real and the practical" (144). Later, at Niagara Falls, she deplores the crass, mercantile cast of mind which thinks to pervert magnificent nature to its own commercial purposes:

Oh, for one hour alone with Nature, and her great masterpiece, Niagara! What solemn converse would the soul hold with its Creator at such a shrine -- and the busy hum of practical life would not mar, with its jarring discord, this grand "thunder of the waters!" Realities are unmanageable things in some hands, and the Americans are gravely contemplating making their sublime Fall into a motive power for turning machinery.

Ye gods! what next will the love of gain suggest to these gold-worshippers? The whole earth should enter into a protest against such an act of sacrilege -- such a shameless desecration of one of the noblest works of God. (257-58)

It might be supposed that a logical corollary of the veneration of machines and their power to help man in his struggle against nature is the hope that nature itself will ultimately be subdued to man's needs. In terms which are

more specific to the situation Moodie describes in these passages, it might be supposed that she would appreciate mills since they played a vital part in the pioneer economy, providing flour, sawed logs and processed wool which would otherwise have to be produced at the cost of much arduous labour. In order to operate, such mills must have access to running water as a source of power. Moodie's appreciation of machinery and her regret at the harnessing of waterfalls, would, therefore, seem contradictory. However, though her position may appear illogical, Moodie is again striving for the happy medium. She wants partial triumph over nature -- in so far as such domination is helpful to human efforts at cultivation -- but she does not want man to have total ascendancy. What she ultimately desires is the best of both worlds -- some of nature cultivated to the point where it is hospitable to man and some of nature left unspoiled as God made it.

Under this blanket theme of balance, the subject of religious concerns is also introduced into Moodie's writing. Her religious preoccupations are, again, everywhere evident in Life in the Clearings. One such preoccupation is shown in her taking to heart of Christ's admonition to "judge not" with respect to the various denominations she finds in Canada. Calvinism is the one exception and she castigates it exactly because she finds it too unbalanced in its theology. Her own unhappy and somewhat forced retreat from Dissent, mentioned earlier, may have played a role in

formulating such opinions. "To the soul-fettering doctrines of John Calvin," she says, "I am myself no convert; nor do I think that the churches established on his views will very long exist in the world". Calvin, himself, Moodie characterizes as a man of extremes, "stern, uncompromising, unlovable and unloved, an object of fear rather than of affection." He is "the incarnation of his own Deity; verifying one of the noblest and truest sentences ever penned by man: -- "As the man, so his God. God is his idea of excellence -- the completeness of his own being" (16).

In 1851 Moodie had been accused by critics in Montreal of showing unfair bias against Catholics in her sketch of Michael Macbride which she had published in the February edition of that year's Literary Garland. Because of the unfavourable reviews of the sketch, she had suppressed its publication in Roughing It in the Bush. However, in Life in the Clearings, published only one year later, she includes the anecdote, not solely because she needs to make up enough material for a volume -- as she does -- but also, perhaps, because she makes her religious tolerance so obvious throughout the book. She goes far out of her way to stress her admiration for many aspects of Catholicism, an emphasis which, along with several other facets of the book, indicates that Life in the Clearings was aimed as much at the Canadian audience as at the British:

How much of the ideal mingles with this
worship! No wonder that the Irish, who are such

an imaginative people, should cling to it with such veneration. Would any other creed suit them as well? It is a solemn thing to step into their churches and witness the intensity of their devotions.

I cannot but respect their child-like trust, and the reverence they feel for their spiritual teachers; nor could I ever bring myself to believe that a conscientious Catholic was in any danger of rejection from the final bar. (8)

As was the case with her attitude to the "lower orders," Moodie's views on Catholicism -- especially the Irish brand -- never totally alter; she does not become what twentieth-century readers would call "open-minded" on the subject. Her statements concerning Irish Catholics always seem patronizing at best. She considers them to be ignorant in the literal sense of the word and states that because of this lack of education in the widest sense, they have "enslaved [themselves] with a thousand superstitious observances which to us appear absurd" (8). Nevertheless, the point is that Moodie, although trying to explain and, hence, justify some of her earlier publications, is still expressing a position which was quite tolerant for her time. She concludes that the Catholic's "sincerity should awaken in us an affectionate interest in his behalf, not engender the bitter hatred which at present forms an adamant barrier between us." Moodie would have "the

Protestant...give up a little of his bigotry and the Catholic a part of his superstition." She would have them "consent to meet each other half way, as brothers of one common manhood, inspired by the same Christian hope and bound to the same heavenly country" (9).

Her final remarks on the traditional enmity between the two religious groups indicate that the view she espouses was an unusually tolerant one in the colony. It also serves as a manifesto of her conviction that Canada is truly a new land, and not in only a geographical sense. It is a place to begin over again and one where tolerance and harmonious co-existence should be the rule rather than the exception. Extremes of bigotry and violence over religious questions are for the old country:

In Canada, where all religions are tolerated, it appears a useless aggravation to perpetuate the memory of the battle of the Boyne. What have we to do with the hatreds and animosities of a more barbarous age? These things belong to the past: "Let the dead bury their dead," and let us form for ourselves a holier and truer present. The old quarrel between Irish Catholics and Protestants should have been sunk in the ocean when they left their native country to find a home, unpolluted by the tyrannies of bygone ages, in the wilds of Canada. (9)

The social and political topics which have been dealt with above form only a small part of those to which Moodie turns her attention in Life in the Clearings. Nevertheless, they should suffice to show the overall attitude which informs the book. In all things Moodie is striving for the golden mean and is ardently advocating it to her reading public.

This public to whom Moodie is "preaching," with whom, in some instances, she almost seems to be pleading, is the public of Canada. Though Life in the Clearings was written -- to some degree simply collected -- for Richard Bentley to publish in Britain, much of its subject matter indicates that it is really aimed at Canadians. The whole text shows that community has come to hold great importance for Moodie.

In a long description of a meeting she has had with a local farm woman, Moodie implicitly invites the reader's comparison of herself after twenty years in Canada with the woman she was in 1833. The younger protagonist was shown taking great offense at questions from another local woman, old Mrs H_____, questions which she considered to be rude and impertinent. The Moodie of Life in the Clearings is also "catechized" by a local farmer's wife. This time her deteriorating looks, her age, the condition of her health and the soundness of her teeth are made topics of discussion. The farmer's wife cannot believe that such an ordinary specimen can be "the woman that writes." Such comments and questions are, arguably, just as rude as

anything old Mrs H_____ had said to the newly arrived Moodie. How different now is Moodie's response, however. Her reaction is not to take offense or to retire into aloof superiority and rebuke, but to accept the woman's interest at face value, brushing aside the embarrassed attempts of her companion to smooth over the incident. "Now I am certain," she assures her audience, "that the poor little woman never meant to wound my feelings, nor give me offense. She literally spoke her thoughts, and I was too much amused by the whole scene to feel the least irritated by her honest bluntness" (44). Quite frequently in Roughing It in the Bush, Moodie claims to be amused when she is probably hurt or angry; perhaps she felt that to respond with amusement kept her above the level of those into whose midst she had been unwillingly cast. In this case, however, the situation as described and the overall tone of the book indicate that the statement is an honest one.

This episode, more than anything else in any of the autobiographical works, shows that Moodie is now a member of her colonial community. She understands her neighbours because she is one of them. It is because of this belonging and identification that Moodie feels she has the right to advise her neighbours. In the book's conclusion she says of the criticisms she had made of Upper Canada: "These remarks are made with no ill-will, but with a sincere hope that they may prove beneficial to the community at large, and be the means of removing some of the evils which are to be found in

our otherwise pleasant and rapidly-improving society." (emphasis added, 276). She admits, then, that her aim in Life in the Clearings is to preach. Her literary efforts are now aimed at contributing, from her own personal experiences with moral and social error, to the moral and social well-being of the country of which she now sees herself a citizen:

The sorrows and trials that I experienced during my first eight years' residence in Canada have been more than counterbalanced by the remaining twelve of comfort and peace. I have long felt the deepest interest in her prosperity and improvement. I no longer regard myself as an alien on her shores, but her daughter by adoption -- the happy mother of Canadian children -- rejoicing in the warmth and hospitality of a Canadian Home. (280)

The term "counterbalanced" which Moodie uses in this passage reiterates for readers that she has achieved the via media she advocates so staunchly throughout this work.

By the time Moodie published the autobiographical works in the late 1840's and early 1850's, she was no longer a stranger in Canada. She was home. Hence, the disaffection and longing she expresses in the Canadian sketches and in the 1852 publication of Roughing It in the Bush, is something that she, herself, admits she has not felt for at least twelve years. These traits are no longer

characteristic of the real Susanna Moodie but have, rather, been delineated and offered to the public between 1847 and 1853 to illustrate the change which has taken place in her. With time and experience they have been overcome, leaving the mature Moodie free to write the wise, civilized, community-oriented Life in the Clearings. It is these final passages of this last book which, better than any of Moodie's other statements, show readers that Moodie, the writer of these works, is often very different from the Moodie who is the protagonist of her own story. As George P. Landow notes,

to qualify as autobiography, a work must not only present a myth or metaphor of the self, but it must also be retrospective and hence it must self-consciously contrast two selves, the writing "I" and the one located (or created) in the past.
(xliii)

Consequently, the very fact that Moodie's life writing, read as a unit, contains at least two voices -- a fact which many critics of Roughing It in the Bush see as evidence of ambivalence towards her new life or as paranoid schizophrenia on Moodie's part -- may be due to the very nature of autobiography. It is entirely appropriate that the two voices exist. The autobiographical books, in fact, plot the arduous process whereby the protagonist becomes the writer and the voices become one.

Afterword

According to Malcolm Ross, writing in The Impossible Sum of Our Traditions, "what we often think of as literary criticism in Canada is really a search for those very values -- aesthetic, philosophical, social, moral -- which should have, indeed sometimes may have, shaped and informed our literature" (126). In their attempts to discover these values and thus define the national character, critics have met, time and time again, with two obvious problems. Ross presents these in the form of questions: "Do we have a recognizable cultural identity? The second is like unto it: Do we indeed have a culture, a literature, our own moment or place in the larger imaginative order (126)?" I do not intend to address these questions directly here. For one thing, I believe that they have already been sufficiently posed and answered, and, for another, I do not consider them particularly useful. However, the concern with identity does introduce another literary issue, one not raised so far but which cannot be ignored by any student commenting on Susanna Moodie. That issue is the preoccupation with the so-called "garrison" edifice and Canadians' need to

"garrison" themselves against the hostile wilderness, in both the physical and psychological realms.

It is my hope that by looking at Moodie's life writing as secularized spiritual autobiography, I have, though obliquely, contributed something to this discussion of identity and perhaps questioned whether the garrison mentality idea is as all-encompassing a definition of our identity as has sometimes been assumed. It is my conclusion, after looking at various aspects of the idea outlined by several of its key spokespeople, that it does not tell the whole story about who our literary predecessors -- in this case Susanna Moodie -- were, and therefore does not tell the whole story about the legacy they have willed to us. It is possible that people like Moodie are done a disservice when we apply to them criteria developed out of our own socio-cultural preoccupations. It is possible that in pursuing such applications so single-mindedly, we stifle the full voice of the writers. It is also possible that earlier writers may not, in all cases, have lacked appropriate forms in which to embody their responses to the new land and its people. In the case of Susanna Moodie, spiritual autobiography may have been one such useful form but, in our preoccupation with other concerns, we have not noted its utility. It may be interesting, therefore, to look more closely at the garrison mentality idea with specific reference to Susanna Moodie, to see whether it conveys the definitive word on her writing and whether,

through the medium of her work, it contributes to the definition of who and what we are today. If there remain things to be said, then we are justified in looking elsewhere for a theoretical framework to use in our explorations.

Predictably Malcolm Ross, among many others, sees Northrop Frye as the pre-eminent scholar to have addressed himself to the issue of identity, followed quite closely by several others who have adopted his viewpoint. These include D. G. Jones, John Moss and Margaret Atwood. More recent years have added Margot Northey and Gaile McGregor to the list.

In their wider, more global context, Ross obviously thinks very highly of Frye's ideas. Frye's "verbal universe," Ross says, "created by the imagination out of the raw stuff of nature and event, is meant to be the mighty paradigm for all human hope and deed. In Frye, literature replaces religion by first absorbing it, and then going beyond it" (132).

According to Frye, the central mythic or archetypal preoccupation which devolves from this wider "verbal universe" and which governs the Canadian psyche is the "garrison," and a so-called "garrison mentality" is the predominant psychological cum spiritual cum emotional characteristic of our writing. In other words, it gives us our long-sought "identity." According to Frye, such a mentality "produces (at every stage and version) literature

which is rhetorical, an illustration or allegory of certain social attitudes" (qtd. in Ross 131). These social attitudes and the rhetoric which sustains them are, presumably, the way in which isolated Canadian colonists defended themselves from the apprehended moral or psychological dangers posed by whatever lay beyond their own, largely imported, way of life. Hence, what was originally a physical garrison, also became a mental one.

Ross seems partly to agree with this view and says that "it is to free the myth-making faculty from the rhetoric of the garrison confine" that is Frye's wider aim, an aim he pursues by continually pointing "to the life-giving archetypes of the open verbal universe" (133). In other words, Ross, agreeing with Frye, thinks that it is best if we widen the scope of our identity.

With Frye's more microcosmic observations, however, with his minute delineations of those things which actually make up the Canadian identity -- at least as expressed in literature -- Ross begins to experience some difficulties. For instance, in the title essay of his collection, he asks whether Frye's "terror of the soul" experienced by settlers confronting a sometimes harsh land and climate, is not very similar to Pascal's "awful silence of the heavens." And is not Frye's "ruthless and subconscious God," supposedly posited by emigrants who found their surroundings largely indifferent, very like Thomas Hardy's "dark and baleful chance" (186)? No doubt the early settlers underwent

hardship, fear and failure but was their psychological reaction any different from that experienced by those in other climates and locales suffering through similar situations? Was it, in fact, peculiarly Canadian? Can it be said that this psychological retreat from reality, even if it did occur, has determined the Canadian national character ever since? If so, how did this transmission take place? Ross answers, tongue in cheek:

In Frye's view, we have inherited, as if it were original sin, a state of mind and temper fixed forever by the polity of our earliest settlements. Our first settlers huddled together in scattered colonial garrisons, cut off from their cultural roots and from each other, confronted, Frye tells us, "with a huge, un-thinking, menacing, physical setting." And, of course, hovering over the physical threat of wild beasts, wild Indians, and an alien climate was the shadow of that "ruthless God, or else no God." Presumably the infection of this defensive garrison mentality persists in the chromosomes of our culture. Settlements became cities, railways linked them, the British legions withdrew. But we only managed to multiply our garrisons and to diversify them. (186)

The reason for introducing the afterword with this brief discussion of Frye's idea of garrison mentality, and with one critic's attempt to question it, is two-fold.

First, it has long been the dominant viewpoint in Canadian letters and so affects the way students see almost all of Canadian writing. As Ross notes, though inroads are being made, "the reigning mythology, still, for most of our students and many of our writers and critics, comes out of Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood" (185). Secondly, this idea is recently coming under considerable critical scrutiny, a trend to which, as indicated above, I hope in a small way to have contributed with specific reference to Susanna Moodie.

As the key critical edifice from which to view Canadian literature, the "garrison mentality" construct has naturally influenced, very greatly, the way in which scholars have read the work of Susanna Moodie. In fact, Roughing It in the Bush is often said to be one of the foundation stones in the garrison wall.

Frye himself turns his attention to Moodie briefly in his essay, "National Consciousness in Canadian Culture." While he does allow that, in her attempts to "be clean, fully clothed [and] disciplined in speech and manner" she manifests "the positive virtues of what [he has] elsewhere called a garrison society," her ultimate aim is to illustrate (presumably for the benefit of others as well as to reassure herself) that she "belonged to the gentry." She thus, "devoted all her waking moments to dramatizing her social status" (46).

D. G. Jones, too, sees Moodie as chiefly defending, explicitly and implicitly in both her actions and her accounts of them, the social vision of the world she comes from -- what he calls "the rationalism of the eighteenth century and the sentimental piety of the nineteenth" (61). It is these intellectual constructs which she retains to act as a protective barrier around herself, to keep out the challenge offered by the new world. He then goes on to do Moodie a further disservice by applying to her work the popular ideology of his own time -- the iconoclastic, later years of the 1960's:

She could not foresee that it was precisely the things she so fervently recommends that were often to become the evil to be resisted. It is the exclusive and rather heavily rationalistic emphasis on higher intellectual and moral training that is often presented as deforming rather than transforming the human lump. It is the "purer form of religion" that frequently becomes one of the principal barriers to the fuller discovery of that holy and mysterious nature of man, and which helps to ensure that man remains a stranger to the movements of the inner life. In their rationalism, both disciplines, secular and religious, seem increasingly sterile in the fostering of love, joy, and a sense of creative adventure. (61)

Margaret Atwood, who, according to Malcolm Ross, takes Frye's garrison mentality theory and reduces it to its "secular implications" (134) says that Canadians are "terror stricken by the 'monster' nature." They are "obsessed with the need to survive which, when pushed to the limits, becomes 'a will not to survive,' a need to fail." We are exposed in our literature as "self-certified victims." We must, Atwood says, "face the fact that Canadian literature is undeniably somber and negative, and that this to a large extent is both a reflection and a chosen definition of the national sensibility" (qtd. in Ross 140-41).

In Atwood's canon, the work of Susanna Moodie plays an important, even seminal role. In Survival she sees Moodie and her backwoods endeavors as terrible failures but she contends that Moodie lies, both to herself and others, about her response to her new home. "In Roughing It in the Bush," Atwood says, "Mrs. Moodie's determination to preserve her Wordsworthian faith, collides with the difficulty she has in doing so when Nature fails time and time again to come through for her. If the Divine Mother is all that faithful," Atwood asks, "why are her children suffering" (51)?

In fact, for Atwood, Moodie becomes the spiritual mother of the Canadian psyche, a view she embodies in her poem, The Journals of Susanna Moodie. Here she bestows upon her fictional Moodie all the angst which she sees as so characteristic of Canadians. Indeed, at the end of the

poem, the dead Moodie is a kind of archetypal hag, entombed below ground but poisoning the people above with her sense of alienation and with the "national mental illness" of Canada, "paranoid schizophrenia" (62). Moreover, the afterword to The Journals of Susanna Moodie makes it very clear that Atwood is not simply using poetic license here for her own artistic purposes; she considers the poem to be a piece of literary/social criticism, delineating for readers "many of the obsessions still with us" (62).

Margot Northey, whose book, The Haunted Wilderness, takes the garrison mentality theme and its consequent fear and alienation into the realm of the macabre, follows Atwood's thinking in seeing a continuing feature of our fiction as being "a subjective view of the dark side of life, seen through the distorting mirror of the self, with its submerged levels of psychic and spiritual experiences" (6). She deals with Moodie rather summarily by stating that she feared the breakdown of the social order (25) -- offering little evidence -- and by simply noting that she also experienced varying kinds of fear of the forest, as is shown, for example, in her stated apprehension about bears and wolves (68).

Finally, Gaile McGregor, too, sees Moodie as suffering from a kind of multiple personality syndrome:

Indeed, in Moodie's writing the discrepancy between language and vision seems above all to reflect a serious inbuilt ambivalence, a kind of

psychic dislocation so deep and so anxiety-ridden that the cumulative effect of the book, going far beyond occasional unevenness, is almost wholly one of confusion and despair. (38)

Recently, some critics have again turned their attention to these key themes of Canadian literature and especially to earlier works which are supposed to embody the original angst that we, as descendants of the settlers, have inherited. Some of these critics, moreover, are concluding that the thesis is not as applicable as it was once held to be. I am indebted, here, to Dr. Helen Buss, who has allowed me to use her paper, "Women and the Garrison Mentality: Pioneer Women Autobiographers and their Relation to the Land." This paper was delivered during the 1988 Reappraisals symposium, one of a series on various aspects of Canadian literature held every spring at the University of Ottawa; it is scheduled for publication in December of 1989. In it, Buss questions the blanket validity of the theory, especially as it applies to the writing of early female emigrants. She states that her real complaint about this kind of criticism "is that it only tells a portion of the structuralist story, a valid and important portion, but one that, once accepted as the only valid one, misleads and misdirects the reading act" (5). In her study of the autobiographical writings of such little-known Canadian writers as Elizabeth Simcoe, Mary O'Brien, Anna Jameson, Sarah Ellen Roberts, Susan Allison, Georgia Binnie Clarke

and Martha Black, she has come to believe that many women writers do not naturally react to the "strangeness of the Canadian landscape" -- at least not as expressed in their personal writings -- the way men are supposed to have done, as expressed in their fiction and poetry. Rather, they respond by "merging their own identity, in some imaginative way, with the new land" (7). They do not recoil, in the final instance, but embrace. "I have found," Buss says, "that an imaginative element of self-development with the experience of the land is always present in Canadian women's autobiographical writing throughout the nineteenth century and into our own" (16). I believe that this statement holds good for Susanna Moodie's work as well and that the argument presented in certain parts of this thesis makes such a case. The sections of Roughing It in the Bush describing Moodie's canoe trips and her walk to Dummer are examples.

This is not to say that there is no validity to the garrison mentality idea as it applies to Moodie's writing. Like Buss, I have no "root quarrel with [this] activity of elaboration" (5). Indeed some aspects of the idea are enlightening with respect to Moodie's writing. For example, both Gaile McGregor, and Tom Marshall in Harsh and Lovely Land, note that the forms which emigrant writers use to embody their perceptions of the new landscape are often inadequate to the material. In Marshall's words, the problem with much early poetry in Canada is the "incongruity between Canadian subject matter and the English Romantic-

Victorian poetic idiom" (4). According to McGregor "part of the problem was simply a failure on the part of early writers to achieve an adequate integration of their borrowed ingredients" (36).

To some extent, this is true. Moodie's own nature poetry is cliched, banal and unexciting. In no way does it convey the power of the land as, for instance, does the much later work of E. J. Pratt in Towards the Last Spike or A. J. M. Smith in any of his quasi-imagist poetry. However, I do not really believe that this fact has as much to do with Moodie's attempt to "tame" the land by confining its dangers within familiar forms as it does with her want of talent. Moodie's poetry which was written and set in England and that which deals with subjects that have nothing to do with landscape is also cliched, banal and unexciting. The question Marshall poses and the answer he offers are good ones here: "why then, did [these early writers] fail to write good British poetry about Canada? Is it simply that they were mediocre poets? In a way, yes" (5).

On certain other heads, however, the garrison mentality theory is, I believe, simply wrong when applied to Moodie. She is not concerned primarily with illustrating that she "belonged to the gentry" nor did she devote "all her waking moments to dramatizing her social class," as Frye states. I believe that this thesis illustrates that she had many other, far more important reasons for writing. Moreover, Frye's citing of her attempt to remain "clean, fully clothed

and disciplined in speech and manner" as a manifestation of the garrison preoccupation, may be somewhat unfair. In the nineteenth century it was, relative to our present standards, difficult to remain "clean and fully clothed" everywhere. The Stricklands had lived in genteel but quite severe poverty, so it is not necessarily correct to assume that, for Moodie, maintaining the life of the "gentry" had been that easy in Britain either. And if by "fully clothed" Frye refers to Moodie's concern to provide her children with shoes, he is again being somewhat hard on her. Though she probably did want to remain as "respectable" as possible, her concerns are mainly practical. In Roughing It in the Bush, she shows herself to be grieving over her children's cold, chapped, unshod feet. She is concerned for their health and comfort, not their social aspirations.

Jones' criticism of Moodie is, I believe, blatantly unfair and even irrelevant. He attacks her on quasi-religious/moral grounds, faulting both her rationalism and piety, but does not seem to realize that his touted irrationality -- in his view the way to break down the garrison walls -- is as much a fad as her philosophical stance. He is passing off as literary criticism his own inability to find "love, joy and a sense of creative adventure" within any kind of traditional, disciplined confines. And, even if Moodie's ideas have been determined by her socio-cultural preoccupations, Jones' ideas have been

just as much determined by his, and with no more or less objectively defined worth.

It is Margaret Atwood, however, who, in The Journals of Susanna Moodie, most deliberately distorts Moodie to serve her own ends. She selectively takes events from both Roughing It in the Bush and Life in the Clearings, reoffers them out of context and out of sequence, leaves out important occurrences and statements and then adds occurrences and statements invented by herself. Were she doing this only as a creative artist, there could be little objection. It is difficult to quarrel with an individual poet's choice of metaphors and symbols or with the way in which he or she uses them. Indeed, The Journals of Susanna Moodie, as a poem, is moving and effective. However, as noted above, Atwood claims that it also stands as a piece of socio-cultural criticism and that the things she finds in Moodie's work -- things she perverts in her text -- illustrate the way we still are.

A fine answer to her observations on Moodie's supposedly schizophrenic response to nature can be found in an article by Laura Groening. In "The Journals of Susanna Moodie: A Twentieth-Century Look at a Nineteenth-Century Life," Groening notes that in the poem Atwood is both a poet and a critic who has had much effect on readers of Moodie's work. She says:

Not only is Atwood prepared to play psychoanalyst
...but she willingly announces herself to be a

specific kind of psychoanalyst. That is, because Atwood believes that the national mental illness of Canada is paranoid schizophrenia, she is delighted to discover numerous hidden dichotomies in Mrs. Moodie's vision of reality. (166)

Atwood argues in both the poem and in Survival, that Moodie gets around the problem of nature being the Divine Mother on one hand, but causing her children to suffer on the other, by splitting nature in two -- hence the schizophrenia. Groening responds by citing two problems with Atwood's interpretation of Moodie's response to nature:

First of all, the problem of reconciling the notion of a loving God [presumably Groening's interpretation of Atwood's "Wordsworthian faith"] with the reality of suffering children has been with mankind since the beginning of history and is in no way an unusual response prompted by Mrs. Moodie's unusual exposure to the Canadian landscape. It is a contradiction that is just as likely to occur to one wandering through the slums of London as fighting mosquitoes in the Canadian backwoods. (175-76)

Secondly, Groening finds Atwood's very definition of the term "nature" to be problematic. She contends that when Moodie uses the word, she does not mean what Atwood means:

for Mrs. Moodie, nature means scenery, not the social and physical realities that comprise her daily existence.

For Atwood, who understands man's psychological problems to be rooted in his alienation from the animal part of his psyche, nature tends to be defined more loosely as that which is "other" to the rational human mind. Consequently, while Atwood may be surprised that Mrs. Moodie can speak in the same breath of the Divine Mother and the swamp and bugs, the yoking together of the two ideas is perfectly natural for Mrs. Moodie. Beautiful scenery is a constant solace, but it in no way lessens the actual physical hardships that Mrs. Moodie must confront daily, and she does not expect the sublime force behind the glorious scenery to help, as Atwood puts it, with the vegetable garden. (176)

Groening's opinion expressed here stands as a fine rebuttal to all those who see this supposed schizophrenic split in Moodie. In fact, the case could probably be made that Atwood has simply offered, in The Journals of Susanna Moodie, a rewritten version of Roughing It in the Bush in which Moodie's book becomes one of Atwood's own -- very like Surfacing, for example. In the poem, she has recast Moodie as the angst-ridden character, the icy observer of her own dissociated sensibility who shows up constantly in Atwood's fiction.

As Gaile McGregor notes, though it is unlikely that she would apply her observation in this way, "nature, like other aspects of reality, is not simply perceived but socially constructed. By mythicizing our environment we convert it into a body of symbols, a kind of code..." (vii). There is no doubt that Moodie -- among many others who adhered to the romantic concept of nature -- views nature in a way that has been socially constructed and mythicized. What Moodie is concerned with in her rhapsodic asides is Nature, not nature. In Catharine Parr Traill's work there is a definite connection between the two which she constantly puts before the reader. Traill looks carefully and at close range at all the minute particulars of insects, birds and plants and then moves to the grander focus, the argument from design. Moodie, however, starts on the grander level, staring off into the distance at scenic prospects. Certainly, she almost never views anything at a range closer than the picturesque. She does not have to examine nature closely and critically because for her, God is a truth principally of the emotions, not of the rational mind.

For Moodie, then, nature is not necessarily part of Nature. The latter can exist as a spiritual, emotional construct without challenge from mundane details. Many passages from "Rachel Wilde," Flora Lyndsay and Roughing It in the Bush illustrate this point. The function of the natural world for Moodie is to wield power in her mental life, and so descriptive passages invariably include

rhapsodies on her psychological state or her soul. Hence to say, as Gaile McGregor does, that the "cumulative effect of the book...is almost wholly one of confusion and despair" is simply misguided. There is no connection between the hardship and the sublimity. They inhabit two different realms. Furthermore, it is unlikely that a more objective, unindoctrinated reader would come to McGregor's extreme conclusion.

It is not, I suspect, unfair to say that strict, exclusive adherence to this line of critical thinking has done damage to the study of Susanna Moodie's work. Even though there is merit to this way of reading her, it is surely unfair to fail ever to see anything else. It is for this reason that I have undertaken an examination of some of her works from a different point of view, attempting to see Roughing It in the Bush as part of an autobiographical quartet of sorts.

Moodie was an educated, cultivated Englishwoman and, as commentators on her writing have often noted, she brought many of her cultural preoccupations with her when she emigrated. A number of critics see this transfer as a negative, hampering thing for her happiness in Canada, but as this thesis attempts to illustrate, such may not always have been the case. As chapters I and II show, the genre of autobiography had been established for some time by the mid nineteenth century. Moreover, we know that Moodie was familiar with it, both through her unrestrained reading in

her father's library and through her association with Dissent. It only stands to reason that this familiarity would have coloured her own life accounts, probably both consciously and unconsciously. I do not suggest that there was no clash between her cultural preoccupations and her experiences, or that the clash never affects her writing; much of her poetry provides evidence that it did. I do say, however, that, contrary to what we usually assume, some of these preoccupations may have been quite well suited to convey important aspects of her new experiences. At some levels, she may have been very much aware of the "meaning" of her new way of life, may have been open to its ramifications and did not at all lack an adequate form in which to express this understanding. Developmental, particularly spiritual, autobiography was, I suspect, one such useful form.

For instance, the hardship, both physical and psychological, which she experienced during her early days in Canada, may not have caused Moodie any great metaphysical angst; rather, it may have been interpreted and taken in stride as part of the divinely ordained trial devised by God as necessary for her coming to an acceptance of His decrees for her life. The two voices evident in the first three autobiographical works, voices which are especially noticeable in Roughing It in the Bush, may not indicate schizophrenic confusion on Moodie's part but may simply be the two voices heard in many developmental autobiographies -

-the voice of the present enlightened writer or narrator and the voice of the protagonist, set in the past and moving through various stages of error towards unity with that narrator. Hence, Moodie may not have bequeathed to us, her literary descendants, an identity composed chiefly of rejection or of anxiety about our surroundings. This may, to some degree at least, be overemphasis on our part of one particular facet of her work.

If we continue to look for the appropriateness of the forms Moodie chose to embody her thoughts and experiences, rather than rejecting them out of hand as inadequate, we may find at least certain of her books to be much more interesting than we have held them to be. Hence, to relegate her to one specific spot within the Canadian literary picture has been premature. In our frantic search for some quintessential national identity, we have taken away Moodie's personal identity. In the more extreme cases, we have misread her and have often taken scattered, carefully selected, partial incidents and applied our feelings about them, en masse, to all her work and then to her own character. None of the critics pursuing this line of thinking seems to do much close textual work. They seldom quote Moodie and they do not pursue their arguments at length. They tend to confine themselves to pronouncements.

I believe that it is time for us, as students of Canadian literature, to return to Moodie her full voice.

She was a vital, intelligent person in her own right, apart from anything she may be to us as a literary and cultural ancestor. It is very possible that she has, to some extent, determined who and what we are, but it is less valid that we should, after the fact, determine what she was. If we want to learn anything from her at all, we have first to let her speak and we have to listen. A woman who was so honest with both herself and her audience, surely deserves this consideration.

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