

## Masculine Modes and Moods in Mircea Eliade's *Isabel and the Devil's Waters*

Fevronia Novac \*

This article examines Mircea Eliade's first published novel, *Isabel and the Devil's Waters*, from a feminist perspective. The narrator of *Isabel*, described as an individual in search of authenticity, is a victim of his machist culture. Although he mistreats women, behavior which he blames on a devil, this character is depicted with affection in Eliade's anti-Bildungsroman. This novel left an indelible mark on the aesthetic structuring of gender promoting "masculine" modes unavailable to women, amplifying gender divisions regarding the exercise of aesthetic taste, and relegating sensibility to the female sex in order to deprecate it. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: [journal@transformativestudies.org](mailto:journal@transformativestudies.org) Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2013 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

**KEYWORDS:** Mircea Eliade, Authenticity, Esthetics, Feminism, *Isabel and the Devil's Waters*.

Alas! the love of women! it is known  
To be a lovely and fearful thing;  
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,  
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring  
To them but mockeries of the past alone,

---

\* **Fevronia Novac**, Ph.D., is a poet and essayist. She works at the Canadian Cultural Center in Paris, France. Born in 1969 in Bucharest, Fevronia has lived in the United States, Canada, and France. She earned a doctorate in French literature from the University of Ottawa (Canada) in 2002 with a thesis on the reception of Alain Robbe-Grillet's work. She has published poems and research articles in Romania, Canada, the United States, and France. Her volumes of poetry are: *Barbie, Mafalda, Fevi* (Cartea Romaneasca, 1997), *Marie* (Paralela 45, 2007), *Ophelia Is Wearing Perfume* (Nova International Press, 2008), and *In Dior's Court* (under review at Vineia Press). She is featured in the anthology *UNIVERSITAS. Once Upon a Time, a Literary Circle*. Bucharest: Ed M.N.L.R., 2008. Her most recent book is *The Bear Is Not Dancing. Essays on the Culture of the First Nations of North America*. Tiparg, 2011.