

Wilfrid Laurier University

Scholars Commons @ Laurier

---

Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive)

---

1990

## Gender and The Search for Identity in Gwendolyn MacEwan's *Julian and Noman* Stories

Anne Marie Martin  
*Wilfrid Laurier University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/etd>



Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), and the [Literature in English, North America Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Martin, Anne Marie, "Gender and The Search for Identity in Gwendolyn MacEwan's *Julian and Noman* Stories" (1990). *Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive)*. 1593.  
<https://scholars.wlu.ca/etd/1593>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive) by an authorized administrator of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact [scholarscommons@wlu.ca](mailto:scholarscommons@wlu.ca).

Gender and The Search for Identity  
in Gwendolyn MacEwen's Julian and Noman Stories

by

Anne Marie Martin

B.A., York University, 1972

Thesis  
Submitted to the Department of Religion and Culture  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Master of Arts degree

Wilfrid Laurier University  
1990

© Anne M. Martin 1990

Property of the Library  
Wilfrid Laurier University

UMI Number: EC56419

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent on the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EC56419

Copyright 2012 by ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This edition of the work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

## Abstract

This thesis looks at the theme of gender and the search for identity in three fictional works of Canadian poet and novelist Gwendolyn MacEwen. The works considered are her first novel Julian the Magician (1963) and her two collections of short stories Noman (1972) and Noman's Land (1985).

The thesis examines the way self-identity is characterized and considers the way gender is presented in relation to the self. The work shows the development of MacEwen's idea of self from a creative eternal force equivalent to the Christ image in Julian the Magician to an eternal force that finds its expression through the ability to grasp the experience of the essential human aspect of loneliness, in her two collections of short stories. MacEwen's portrayal of women, however, remains consistent throughout these works. As her work progresses the gender question becomes more clearly articulated.

MacEwen portrays women primarily in terms of the body while men are characterized in terms of the mind. The self is identified with the intellect, thereby indicating that men by nature are predisposed to redemption. Female identity is based on a woman's role as mother and helpmate to help a male to find his own identity. MacEwen does not provide an understanding of human nature that overcomes the mind/body dichotomy, which leaves women marginalized and disempowered.

## Contents

Introduction.....	3
1. <u>Julian the Magician</u> .....	12
2. <u>Noman</u> .....	46
3. <u>Noman's Land</u> .....	87
4. <u>Conclusions</u> .....	121
Sources Cited.....	127

## Introduction

Poet and novelist Gwendolyn MacEwen once explained her reason for writing as wanting

to communicate joy, mystery, passion...not the joy that naively exists without knowledge of pain, but that joy which arises out of and conquers pain. I want to construct a myth.<sup>1</sup>

MacEwen is not only a self-professed mythmaker; within the Canadian literary scene she is recognized as a writer with a propensity for mythmaking. Ellen D. Warwick describes MacEwen as a mythopoeic writer.<sup>2</sup> Margaret Atwood talks of MacEwen as a poet who is not interested in "turning her life into myth; rather, she is concerned with translating her myth into life, and into the poetry which it is a part of."<sup>3</sup>

As a Canadian writer, MacEwen is not alone in her concern for myth and mythmaking. Nevertheless, it is not easy to describe her place as part of the Canadian poetic imagination. Jan Bartley suggests that

even though her roots are well known and her position in Canadian literature well established, MacEwen is often seen as outside, or at least on the periphery of, the mainstream

---

<sup>1</sup> In Gary Geddes and Phyllis Bruce, eds., 15 Canadian Poets, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen D. Warwick, "To Seek a Single Symmetry," p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Atwood, "MacEwen's Muse," p. 31.

of the Canadian poetic imagination.<sup>4</sup>

MacEwen was born in Toronto, in 1941. Her formal education came to an end at the age of eighteen when she finished Western Technical High School and dedicated herself to writing. By the age of seventeen she had published her first poems in Canadian Forum. She wrote Julian the Magician, her first published novel, when she was nineteen. In her late teens she also wrote three other novels, one of which became the short story, "Day of Twelve Princes."

From 1960 to 1962 MacEwen lived in Montreal, where she worked with poets, Al Purdy and Milton Acorn, to edit the magazine Moment. Acorn and MacEwen<sup>5</sup> were married and later divorced. MacEwen was remarried to Nikos Tsingos in 1971. She travelled in Egypt, Israel, and Greece. She was writer-in-residence at the University of Western Ontario in 1984-1985. MacEwen died in Toronto in 1987.

Over the course of her career MacEwen wrote ten volumes of poetry, two novels, two collection of short stories, a travel

---

<sup>4</sup> Jan Bartley, Invocations: The Poetry and Prose of Gwendolyn MacEwen, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> In his review of her first privately published book of poetry, The Drunken Clock (1961), George Bowering comments that to her credit: "The wife of Milton Acorn, Miss MacEwen has nevertheless escaped the instinctual proselytizing of the middle Toronto group, and already writes better poetry than does her husband." ("The Canadian Poetry Underground," Canadian Literature 13:66-67.)

guide to Greece, several radio plays and documentaries,<sup>6</sup> two collections of children's poetry, and a theatrical work. She received various Canada Council awards, the 1969 Governor General's Award for her collection of poetry, The Shadow Maker, and the 1973 A. J. M. Smith Poetry Award for Armies of the Night.

As an active creator of the Canadian imagination MacEwen partakes in a process that engages her in the making of what Northrop Frye calls "a mythological universe":

Man [sic] lives, not directly or nakedly in nature like the animals, but within a mythological universe, a body of assumptions and beliefs developed from his existential concerns. Most of this is held unconsciously, which means that our imaginations may recognize elements of it, when presented in art or literature, without consciously understanding what it is that we recognize.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the attention given to her explicit mythmaking

---

<sup>6</sup> Bartley, Gwendolyn MacEwen and Her Works, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> N. Frye, The Great Code, p. xviii. Frye's notion of the unconscious recognition of mythic elements may be what Joseph Sherman is speaking of in his review of MacEwen's book of poetry, Armies of the Moon: "I am not at all sure why it is that I like and admire [MacEwen's] poetry. Perhaps because she is so magnificently obscure, and that has always invited something like admiration. She casts such a thick and strangely woven cloth over her work that it is at the best of times, translucent. But so skillful is she in her poetic craft that the reader is attracted again and again to her work, partly because so little can be fathomed at first reading, and partly because what is, at one moment, clear, shifts in the next moment to a further extension of meaning, or even to a new meaning." (The Fiddlehead, Spring 1972 94:119)



intentions<sup>8</sup> little work has been done to discover what MacEwen's myth is. Only one major work has been done on MacEwen, Jan Bartley's Invocations: The Poetry and Prose of Gwendolyn MacEwen (1983). Bartley presents an overview of all of MacEwen's poetry and prose to that date. While Invocations provides groundwork for the study of MacEwen's work, it is limited by its generality. Bartley recognizes this limitation of her study, attributing it to "the lack of criticism concerning Gwendolyn MacEwen" and the need to make up for what is missing.<sup>9</sup> Other than book reviews there is no new criticism to add to that which Bartley had available when she wrote Invocations, and most of that criticism, as Bartley correctly notes, "is little more than superficial reviews, with the exception of five publications which attempt to

---

<sup>8</sup> For example, Frank Davey speaks of a particular aspect of MacEwen's writing as "kinetic myth:"

The most outstanding technical feature of these novels and stories is that the various myths seldom appear merely superimposed on the action. The leading characters-- Akhenaton, It Neter Ay, Julian, Noman, Kali--are all convincingly drawn figures, with plausible motivations and realistic and colloquial dialogue. The artistic effect is not one of stories contrived to parallel myths, but of characters who discover themselves reliving myth involuntarily and often unprofitably...one finds kinetic myth--myth alive and re-enacted in the spontaneous actions of real people. Frank Davey, "Gwendolyn MacEwen: The Secret of Alchemy," p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Bartley, Invocations, p. vii.

consider some aspect of her writing in detail."<sup>10</sup> Bartley wrote Invocations to try to open up the discussion of MacEwen's work.<sup>11</sup> In this thesis I intend to investigate one aspect of that discussion in relation to MacEwen's myth.

Despite all that has been said about MacEwen and mythmaking, MacEwen is not at all clear by what she means when she says, "I want to create a myth." In a 1979 interview with Bartley MacEwen indicates her ambivalence about the widely quoted phrase:

I used to use that phrase as a kind of quotable quote, but I'm not sure if it is quite accurate. It is not so much a matter of invention as of perception-in a way it's more a matter of saying what I see.<sup>12</sup>

MacEwen's uncertainty about the phrase may very well be a result of the difficulty in understanding the nature of myth. For when talking about myth one is confronted with the history of its meaning:

The meaning of myth has been historically evoked through many versions of its main themes: myth as the source of history (euhemerism), or as religion, morality, or as expression of psychological origins. There is mythic form,

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. ix. The articles Bartley is referring to are: (1) Atwood, Margaret. "MacEwen's Muse," Canadian Literature 45:23-32; (2) Davey, Frank. "Gwendolyn MacEwan: The Secret of Alchemy," Open Letter (second series) 4, Spring 1973:5-23; (3) Gose, E. B. "They Shall Have Arcana," Canadian Literature 21:36-45; (4) Slonim, Leon. "Exoticism in Modern Canadian Poetry," Essays on Canadian Writing 1:21-26, and (5) Warwick, Ellen D. "To Seek a Single Symmetry," Canadian Literature 71:21-34.

<sup>11</sup> Bartley, Invocations, p. ix.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

in which the structural significance of myth is said to lie in its metaphorical word-play (as Vico, Muller, and Schlegel pointed out) or in its symbolic consciousness (Jung and Cassirer). These arguments are closely linked to the theories of the function of myth as ritual, speculation, or wish-fulfillment, and even as primitive science.<sup>13</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis myth is any story that deals with ultimate questions and tries to make sense of the world and the individual's place in it. I am not presenting any theory on the nature of myth but accept for the time being that it has an intrinsic, although elusive, nature. My concern here is the language and the consequent images that myths provide the individual to order the world in meaningful terms. For if the images do not adequately describe the phenomena one experiences, the myth fails.

MacEwen, in turn, states that she uses myth as one of her tools of literary creation:

In my attempt to describe a world which is for me both miraculous and terrible, I make abundant use of myth, metaphor and symbol; these are as much a part of my language as the alphabet I use.<sup>14</sup>

She may, however, have been dubious about the nature of creating a myth and what that really means. Myths are part of what she refers to as her "raw materials:"

I am involved with writing as a total profession, not as an

---

<sup>13</sup> Eric Gould, Mythical Intentions in Modern Literature, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> In John Robert Colombo, Rhymes and Reasons, p. 65.

aesthetic pursuit. My prime concern has always been with the raw materials from which literature is derived, not with literature as an end in itself.<sup>15</sup>

MacEwen gives no clear idea of what she means by myth and I question whether it is possible to create myth consciously. The fact remains that MacEwen is regarded as a mythmaker, and no matter how loosely the term is bantered about, her work is identified in relation to myth.

To unravel all the elements in her work is too large a task for a thesis of this size. I have, therefore, limited my study to the Julian and Noman stories in Julian the Magician, Noman, and Noman's Land, which present recurring plot structures and characters. Within these stories I am treating only one theme, that of personal identity.<sup>16</sup>

The theme of personal identity is central to the Julian and Noman stories. Although Julian and Noman form the question of identity in different ways, both try to find images that identify the self.

The word "self" carries with it a number of philosophical and psychological connotations. In MacEwen's work the self is an eternal, creative force equivalent to the divine. Individuals

---

<sup>15</sup> In Geddes, 15 Canadian Poets, p. 280.

<sup>16</sup> MacEwen's historical fiction, King of Egypt, King of Dreams (1972), which is based on the life of pharaoh Akhenaton, also centres around this theme.

create their identity from the power of the self to transform images into a meaningful expression of who they are. Identity can be changed. It can also be threatened and destroyed. The self cannot be destroyed, but as identity changes, the self has to find new means of expression, or else the individual finds her- or himself in a state of confusion or madness. In Julian the Magician the self is equivalent to the Christ within. Julian's identity as a magician shifts as the self creates new images of what a magician is. In Noman and Noman's Land the self is characterized by loneliness. Loneliness is a motivating creative, eternal force. The underlying force is not described in terms of something divine but in terms of an emotion. In Noman and Noman's Land personal identity is also related to memory. In the words of David Hume, "Memory does not so much produce as discover personal identity."<sup>17</sup> Noman's story is the story of the discovery of his identity as he in Noman accepts his memories and in Noman's Land recovers his memory.

As MacEwen's work progresses she expands the theme of personal identity to include Canadian identity. In Noman's Land the two become closely linked as MacEwen's "Kanada" becomes a symbol for both Noman's land and Noman himself.

In my study of identity I am going to pay particular

---

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Troy Wilson Organ, Philosophy and the Self: East and West, p. 160.

attention to the relation of identity to gender. MacEwen writes at a time when Western society is being challenged with the question of what it means to be a woman. Gender consciousness is changing, demanding a new expression of identity. The new identity requires new images and myths to express it. As I look at the question of identity in the Noman and Julian stories, I consider the way in which MacEwen takes up this challenge, and I ask whether she is able to create a myth that helps establish a new identity for women.

My thesis is that MacEwen's attempt to express her own vision fails to create a myth, a story that deals with basic human identity, that is satisfactory for contemporary women. Her vision is bound to the male-centered, patriarchal society she is part of and does not present an alternative to the images it provides.

In chapter one I look at the theme of personal identity as developed in Julian the Magician. In chapter two I consider the development of the theme in Noman, a transitional work between the Julian and the Noman stories. In chapter three I trace the way the theme is developed in the Noman story through MacEwen's final fictional work Noman's Land. In chapters two and three I consider the way MacEwen's resolution of the identity question relates back to earlier works. I also consider the relation of the theme to gender and consequently to the myth she creates.

Julian the Magician

The Structure of the Novel

Julian the Magician is divided into two sections. The first section, made up of ten chapters, gives an account of the last seven days of Julian's life. The chapters are titled according to the sequence of events<sup>18</sup> that he experiences. The story is related chronologically from an omniscient, third-person point of view with some flashbacks to Julian's childhood and youth.

Section two, the epilogue, which comprises about one third of the novel, is made up of

notes from the diary of the magician called Julian, having been discovered by Peter the apprentice in the abandoned wagon shortly after the crucifixion.<sup>19</sup>

It is written in diary form, narrated by Julian. Another voice

---

<sup>18</sup> MacEwen loosely structures the novel around the Gospel of John. The first six chapters focus on the key miraculous events that helped establish Jesus' identity in that gospel: Chapter One, "The Baptism", John 1; Chapter Two, "Water and Wine," John 2:1-12; Chapter Three, "The Riverman", John 5:1-10; Chapter Four, "Waterwalk," John 6:16-21; Chapter Five, "Ivan," John 9; Chapter Six, "Lazarus," John 11:1-27. The last four follow the final events of Jesus' life: "The Last Supper," "The Betrayal," "The Trial," and "Golgotha."

<sup>19</sup> Gwendolyn MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 109.

is introduced as an "editor,"<sup>20</sup> whose comments are included as footnotes.

The journal section is also made up of seven days. Each day corresponds to a particular part of Julian's life.<sup>21</sup> The time lapse between days varies considerably. Years separate day one and day two. It appears to be two years between day two and day three. An indeterminant amount of time intervenes between day three and day four. Probably years pass between day four and day five. There are one or two days between day five and day six. The editor tells us,

It appears that time was running short and DAY SEVEN was written immediately after DAY SIX.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> It could be inferred from the preface to the diary that Peter is the editor: "Notes from the diary of the magician called Julian, having been discovered by Peter the apprentice in the abandoned wagon shortly after the crucifixion." MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 109. I will simply refer to this character as the "editor."

<sup>21</sup> Day One describes his reflections as he prepares to leave his mother and become apprentice to the magician Kardin. Day Two and Day Three describe his time as an apprentice with Kardin. Day Four is the beginning of his own inner conflict. Day Five describes Julian's awareness of a distinction between himself and the "foreign genius" within him. Day Six relates Julian's submission. Day Seven shows Julian's new awareness of himself as "conscious God."

The editor comments on the nature of Julian's entries: "Did Julian include in his diary only that which was vital and significant at given times, or is this haphazard arrangement of perceptions and smashed narrations an outcome of his highly occupied life and his lack of sufficient time to elaborate and connect? We do not know." p. 117.

<sup>22</sup> MacEwen, Julian, p. 148.



The first section provides, for the most part, the external framework of Julian's search. The second section provides a more comprehensive picture of Julian's inner struggle.

The story develops in relation to Julian's understanding of himself as a magician. The structure of the novel reflects the inner and outer nature of that development. The two sections are separate and could be read autonomously. Nevertheless to fully understand one section you need to know the other, in the same way that Julian can be known from the outside or from his own perspective. But in either case the view is limited. It is not only the scope of the view that is important but the formative forces of the inner and outer worlds. The way in which Julian is understood from the outside by those around him changes as his inner awareness changes. At the same time Julian's recognition of how he is being understood by those around him affects how he understands what is going on within himself. The question of identity is linked to both the outer world of others and to the inner world of the individual and the effect of one upon the other.

### The Christ Within

Julian understands himself as a magician. This understanding is challenged by his self, the Christ within him,

leading to his subsequent transformation as a man.<sup>23</sup> This process forces Julian to recognize that "divine" power is not a transcendent other but an essential aspect of himself. This knowledge, however, is not self-evident but must be gained by pursuing the true nature of the self while at the same time being pursued by it. The acquisition of true identity culminates in the submission to the self as a transformative power and as death.

MacEwen's primary myth for Julian's search is the Christ myth. It is much too simple and misleading, however, to state that "the reader who knows what happened to Christ knows what happened to Julian the Magician."<sup>24</sup> MacEwen uses gospel material to frame the story but Julian's story is not a retelling of the popular Jesus story. The Julian story does not tell the story of a God who comes to earth to redeem humanity through the life, death and resurrection of one individual for all. It tells the story of the personal redemption of Julian through the

---

<sup>23</sup> I use "man" here with deliberate exclusiveness to reflect MacEwen's use of exclusive language and the exclusiveness of transformation for males.

<sup>24</sup> E.B. Gose, "They Shall Have Arcana", p. 37. It is interesting to note that, like Gose, most critics do not appear to recognize MacEwen's departure from the traditional Jesus story. This seems to imply two possibilities that are not necessarily mutually exclusive: the critics have not read the text carefully; they have a general idea of the Christian myth but their knowledge of it is such that they do not recognize deviances from it.

realization that he must die to the Christ force in himself. The Christ story is a symbol for the deity which is in Julian. When this force wins in the end, Julian realizes that it was not a foreign<sup>25</sup> or an alien<sup>26</sup> power that he had battled with but a hitherto unknown part of himself.

MacEwen's use of what appear to be gospel fragments could be a cause for the misunderstanding of the use of the Christ myth. For although the fragments seem to be from the New Testament and are set off in italics from the main text giving the impression that they are something other than MacEwen's own work, the gospel passages are reworked by MacEwen to suit her own portrayal of Julian. As the story progresses, Christ is more like Julian and Julian is more like Christ, until in the end they are recognized as one. Julian does not imitate Christ, but lives out the identity of the symbol.

### The Process

The development of Julian's identity is the process of learning who he is. This process and Julian's life are essentially the same thing. When the process ends, Julian's life

---

<sup>25</sup> MacEwen, Julian, p. 140.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

also ends.

The process can be divided into three stages: the awakening of the internal creative force, the recognition of the force and Julian's struggle with it, and the final submission and self-appropriation.

The first stage happens gradually as Julian begins to sense a change in himself. His identity is stable insofar as it is developed. For a transformation of identity to take place, Julian has to have this initial sense of who he is, otherwise the change would go unacknowledged as there would be no identity to be challenged.

In the second stage Julian identifies an internal force that is both alien and threatening. The third stage comes about when Julian submits to the force. Self-appropriation follows immediately upon submission.

Although these stages overlap, as one grows out of the other, it is possible to identify changes in Julian's self-knowledge at each stage. These inner changes, however, have to be seen in light of the external events that he experiences. His transformation happens within the context of the world around him. He is a part of that world. He acts in it and is acted upon by it.

### The Awakening

Julian is the bastard son of a peasant mother and gypsy father. His mother gave him his most striking physical feature, his golden blond hair, which contrasts with his handsome gypsy features. She probably also gave him a name but what it is remains a mystery, for the boy creates his own name, Julian, before he leaves her. He identifies little with his mother, who he lives with until he sets out to be an apprentice.

The mother is a passive woman. She is passive in temperament; she sits and waits year after year for her gypsy lover to return. She is also passive in her outlook: she maintains the traditional religious views of her community, which Julian opposes through his personally acquired knowledge.

Julian does not know his father. He refers to him as "that dirty little gypsy,"<sup>27</sup> nevertheless, he credits him with giving him his magical talents. His father, although physically absent from Julian's life, is present and active in Julian inasmuch as Julian believes that his father gave him his abilities as a magician.

This combination of a present yet passive mother and an absent yet active father forms an initial sense of identity with the male as the provider of the essential being. The mother has

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

produced the body that encloses what Julian refers to as his genius and then sits about waiting for her lover. Julian, in turn, sets out to live his life from what that lover gave him. The relationship between son and parents is functional and not emotional. The parents provide the child with certain attributes he uses to live his own life and find his self.

Julian not only associates himself with his magical talents from the time he is young, he also associates with his intellect:

[He] immersed himself in demonical literature from the age of ten--Boehme first, then back to Magnus in alchemy, Paracelsus and the rest. Alchemy began to bore him.... He abandoned this line and fell into philosophy; emerged later sobered, but still unsatisfied. The human element wasn't there as he wished it. The human element. Myth. Folklore. Bible. Kabbalah. The Gnostics. The mystical Christ....<sup>28</sup>

By referring to his early studies as demonical literature, a moral judgement is placed on the nature of these works and could be extended to indicate the nature of his self. This is further developed by the use of the Christ image from gnostic Infancy Gospels where Julian finds parallels between his own life and that of the mystical Christ.<sup>29</sup> The young Christ is not only a magician, he performs miracles, but he is also ostracized by the community:

Here he found fancy parallels for his own ostracism--a self-imposed one. "Take heed, children, for the future of his

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy and Pseudo-Matthew.

company, for he is a sorcerer," said the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy. "Shun and avoid him, and from henceforth never play with him...." So said the mothers to their children of the questionable Christ....<sup>30</sup>

It is important to note that Julian's ostracism is self-imposed. His attitude not only implies that he is aware of being different but also indicates a certain contempt for society. The mystical Christ that Julian identifies with is of much the same character:

The fifth century<sup>31</sup> Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew had it--a delightful story of the mystical Christ, where Jesus playing with children at the Jordan made 7 pools of clay and passages to bring the water. One of the children shut the passages. "Woe unto thee, thou son of death, thou son of Satan" cried the Christ, and immediately the boy died. The boy's parents grieved, informed Mary and Joseph. The Christ not wanting to worry his mother gave the dead boy a swift kick to the buttocks, saying "Rise, thou son of iniquity." After this, he took clay from the seven pools and fashioned twelve sparrows. "Fly!" he implored, picking them up in his hands. "Fly through all the earth and live!"<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> MacEwen's dating is incorrect. Oscar Cullman (Infancy Gospels," p. 406) states that the pseudo-Matthew "was written probably about the eighth or ninth century."

<sup>32</sup> MacEwen, Julian, p. 8. MacEwen was probably working from the Montague James translation of the Apocryphal New Testament which outlines the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. The passage regarding this incident reads: "When Jesus was in Galilee at the beginning of his fourth year he was playing by the Jordan, and made seven pools. A boy spoilt them, and was struck dead. The parents complained. Joseph asked Mary to admonish Jesus. She begged him not to do such things, and he, not willing to grieve her, 'smote the back side of the dead boy with his foot and bade him rise: which he did and Jesus went on with his pools.' Immediately following Jesus makes the sparrows: "He took clay from the pools and made twelve sparrows on the sabbath. A Jew saw it, and spoke to Joseph, who spoke to Jesus. Jesus clapped his hands and bade the sparrows fly." p. 76.

The infancy gospels were written to meet theological and biographical concerns that early believers had regarding Jesus. MacEwen focusses on a story that not only anticipates Jesus' ability to perform miracles, transform life and raise the dead, but also focusses on the boy's character, which "earned him the opprobrious title of 'supernatural little bully'".<sup>33</sup> The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew also gives examples of Jesus using his power in a more positive and socially acceptable way. Julian, however, finds the parallel in the negative aspect of Jesus.

MacEwen uses the Christ myth in a very particular way. She divorces parts from the whole to recreate a new story. There is nothing unusual in this mode of literary creation. Many stories draw on aspects of other stories. MacEwen, however, challenges the most fundamental myth of the Western world and tries to give that myth a new meaning. She does this by introducing material from a source that also challenged the early Christian church. She is therefore creating a parallel not only between Julian and Christ but also between the world of gnosticism, and other non-mainstream versions of early Christianity, and the twentieth century.

The mystical Christ also provides Julian with a teacher:

Julian thanked the mystical Christ for supplying him with his most successful trick--clay and wing, clay and

---

<sup>33</sup> Butler, The Myth of the Magus, pp.68-69.



sparrow.<sup>34</sup>

Julian accepts this unusual power to transform clay into sparrows without questioning how he attained it. He sees the power as tricks, external illusions. The boy is intelligent, yet unaware, not recognizing the depth of the power needed to change clay into flesh.

Julian defends his magic as a celebration of God. What God is to the young Julian is ambiguous, but his statement implies a transcendent other. Nevertheless, God is an external power to be celebrated and not worshipped. Teachers and books provide the knowledge for the act. Julian does not yet recognize them as catalysts for his own inner powers.

We can establish Julian's early sense of identity as that of an aspiring magician and a precocious student who separates himself from family and community. He relates to the divine as a transcendent other to be celebrated through his own magical gifts.

The awakening of his inner powers begins very subtly with the recognition of a relationship between images of the outer world and sensations inside of himself:

Amber. The quality of amber. Daylong and nightlate I have looked upon things that enclose amber...and found that after too much colour my stomach grows fluffy and vague. A certain nausea overtakes me (is it too much work?) at these

---

<sup>34</sup> MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 8.

times, my forehead swims in its own sweat and things like bees buzz under my eyelids - most annoying; then I realize that they too are amber and the system expands.<sup>35</sup>

The amber outside is the colour of the bees<sup>36</sup> under his eyelids. Julian is not just imagining something inside, he has actual physical sensations. He feels nauseated and senses stirrings in his mind. The early signs of the new life that is awakening inside of him. The new life is intellectual. His mind is the womb.

The awakening of the power in Julian as seen in his relation to the outside world is best exemplified through the juxtaposition of Julian and his teacher Kardin.

The editor provides a hint to who Kardin is:

Kardin, from what we can gather, was a highly erudite magician cum-chemist, notorious in central Europe for experiments of the most disturbing nature and feats of magic regarded as vulgar and dangerous by his contemporaries.<sup>37</sup>

Julian as a loner is set off against Kardin's enjoyment of the company of what Julian refers to as his beery women. Julian considers the women to be a distraction for Kardin. Julian is

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>36</sup> Although MacEwen does not develop this symbol any further, it is interesting to note that the bee symbolizes "The inspiration or wisdom which discerns the essence of life. The essential oneness which underlies appearances is further emphasized by the way in which bees work together as a single unit." Tom Chetwynd, A Dictionary of Symbols, p. 40.

<sup>37</sup> MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 112.

also set off from his teacher by his alchemical abilities. Kardin states that Julian is a failure at alchemy and that his power is of another nature, a "human alchemy." Kardin sees that his student has powers he himself does not have. Julian's powers have not come from Kardin. They are inherent in Julian. This becomes clear to Kardin at the time Julian begins to experience new mental sensations and power. The key external incident takes place during an evening performance when Julian stands in for Kardin who goes rushing off

screaming about some chemical concoction he'd left reacting in a closed test-tube.... What did I do? O rabbits or something... and a quick hypnosis on a jellyfish subject who could have gone into a trance had I cut off his fingernail. What did I do?...The act was good; the audience was pleased. But what did I do, after all? Suspend him for a minute, control his reactions...why the rise of voices?...the subject at my feet mopping the floor with his hair? the hands? the voices, the hysteria....

Did I show him the Kingdom of Heaven? Less than that couldn't have brought on the madness. Did I show him the Kingdom?<sup>38</sup>

The student Julian has an influence over others that is beyond his comprehension. He uses the analogy of showing the man the Kingdom of God, not knowing that this is what he has done. Later Julian realizes that the power of the Kingdom is the power of the self. To go into the Kingdom one goes into oneself. Julian still identifies himself as a magician who pulls rabbits out of a hat and does not see the other magician in him who has the power

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

to transform the human into the divine. His audience senses the power in him and considers it to be divine. Julian, unable to recognize what it is they see, wants to disown the power. He wants to "shuck it off" as something other than himself:

Absurd. I shuck the whole thing off like an old jacket.... Yes, I shuck it off and it is all shucked off and it was a freak scene--one which will not happen again.

But good God--is my human alchemy, what I thought to be so innocent and experimental, carrying itself this far? Reacting like chemicals in Kardin's test-tube?<sup>39</sup>

The worship that Julian receives from his audiences and also from Kardin, who bows before him before he sets off on his own, forces him to reassess what a magician is. He fears the very process of finding out that knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge has now moved from an external process of books and teachers to an internal creative process.

What develops is the concurrent growth of the inner force and Julian's desperate attempts to understand himself in light of the changes being forced upon him.

The primary image is that of an organic being growing inside of him. He intuits what is happening and fears having to be split apart to let the growth develop. "Must the creative whole be slit, split and sliced merely to manifest itself?"<sup>40</sup> Julian, the apprentice "who failed at alchemy", is unwittingly entering

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 119-120.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

an alchemical process where he is the prima materia that must be "slit, split and sliced" to manifest itself. The interplay between the growth of Julian's self in his mind, the reflection of that by others and his own recognition of what is occurring becomes more complex and intense.

In a mad rage for answers to his identity as magician, he ends by defining himself as IAO, as Christ:

IAO IAO IAO. Is the High Self going forth in manifestation.  
IAO is the disciplined lower mind.  
IAO is Christ and I am IAO.<sup>41</sup>

In his Dictionary of Mysticism and the Occult Nevill Drury describes the Iao as

a god-name equivalent to the Tetragrammaton among certain Gnostic groups.<sup>42</sup>

MacEwen takes the term from the gnostic work the Pistis Sophia. The epigraph to the novel explains the term in relation to the Greek letters that form it:

...turning himself towards  
the four corners of the world  
and saying "iao, iao, iao!.."

iota, because the universe  
hath gone forth;

alpha, because it will turn  
itself back again;

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>42</sup> Nevill Drury, Dictionary of Mysticism and the Occult, p. 125.

omega, because the completion of all the completeness will take place.<sup>43</sup>

IAO is not only a name, but the name is comprised of parts that have independent meaning. Before Julian leaves home to serve under Kardin he also forms his own name, each letter having a specific meaning. "Julian" is the result of the parts that form him. But his human name has to give way to the divine.

Drury throws more light on the significance of the name IAO. He explains that

Magician Aleister Crowley ascribed special significance to the name, regarding it as a "formula of the Dying God," and related it to sacrificed male deities--Dionysus, Osiris, Balder, Adonis and Jesus Christ.<sup>44</sup>

The "formula of the Dying God" is played out in the Julian story as Julian dies to the Christ that grows within him. The human has to be sacrificed to the divine. His intuitive identification with the IAO and Christ anticipates his own death. But while Julian is an apprentice, IAO and Christ are still just disembodied words. He sees no connection between the words and his self. When he is challenged by the outside world as being divine, he is repulsed by the insinuation.

One evening after an actress unsuccessfully tries to seduce him he finds himself back at home unable to sleep. He tries to

---

<sup>43</sup> MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Drury, p. 125.

understand what bothers him so much about it. He decides that "It was her worship...Her stupid unthinking invalid worship."<sup>45</sup> During the experience at the woman's home he "grew cherub-wings" out of disgust at her suggestions of his holiness. That night he tried to pull them off but they hurt him. Julian not only grows the wings that prove his otherness but senses them and tries to take them off. However, he still wants to deny anything different about himself. He still thinks it is the outside world that is trying to control and form him.

Julian tries again to reformulate what he is when he leaves Kardin to go out on his own. Now being a magician is a question of practicality. He has to earn his living. He sets out his plans to "embark on a simple uncomplicated profession as an entertainer."<sup>46</sup> He is trying to define himself through his separate parts, the magician versus the mystic, while inside of him he feels

his power growing like a live foetus in his skull, and the knowledge of his power permeates the pores, the marrow; the sweet terrible knowledge pours through him like the worst wine.<sup>47</sup>

The fetus, the child of his being, starts to demand attention by forcing Julian to act, thereby making itself part of his

---

<sup>45</sup> MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 127.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

existence. Julian is overpowered by a "sudden nameless urge" that drives him to immerse himself in a dark, icy river. With the action come images of his mystical knowledge giving expression to the power of the force: the mystical dove, Alpha and Omega combined--the sum of their numbers, 802; the ineffable Name.<sup>48</sup>

The growing power breaks through into his unconscious and manifests itself in night terrors. Out of these dreams Julian articulates the birth of this being:

"Tell me [says Peter his apprentice] you are only a craftsman, "...  
The answer was long in coming; Julian had some labour pains in getting it out; he trembled. "Inside the womb...of the art, my dear Peter...is a foetus, another art. The virgin craft...expands, feeds the other...."<sup>49</sup>

In his dreams he struggles with the power as it becomes more oppressive, growing until it reaches his consciousness and he awakes from a dream acknowledging its existence.

Have I plagued you, my dear Peter? If so I'm sorry...there's some alien...heat in me that demands.<sup>50</sup>

In this stage of awakening, the growth of the inner power begins to mark Julian physically. He appears with strange "half-smiles pasted on his face" and walks with something of a stagger,

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.



unusual for him."<sup>51</sup> Peter, his apprentice, notes an "odd frightening light pouring into his eyes."<sup>52</sup>

It is at this time that Julian performs his three important miracles: turning water into wine, healing a village idiot and healing the blind man Ivan, thereby establishing his divinity to the outside world. He is called a "man of God," but the outside world does not know that he is a man being overtaken by god.

### The Acknowledgement of the Power

Once Julian consciously admits to the power he begins to analyze what it is within him. He refers to it as a "secondary logic which has overtaken him."<sup>53</sup> He feels completely alienated from this power and at the same time completely dependent on it.

Things I know, deeds I do, miracles I perform, all stem from this foreign genius who is not me.<sup>54</sup>

He yields his power as a magician to its power. He is awed by the brilliance of the force's intellect. "I prostrate myself before him," he says. "He is complete."<sup>55</sup> The irony is that

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

Julian lives in a divided state and see completeness in what is only a part of himself. He separates himself totally from what he considers to be the other. He has split himself and now worships his other half, considering himself an apprentice to "the greatest Magician."<sup>56</sup> Julian lives in an illusory world of two selves in alternating states of wakefulness and sleep:

I worship him and let him occupy me as he wills and carry out his brilliant career with my flesh as his robes....

I must sleep again, for he is waking...<sup>57</sup>

Finally, the two sides find themselves awake and meet in a verbal confrontation:

We are both awake now. Neither of us sleeps to let the other one breathe. Who will gain control?

Are we fighting for control?

Yes. You can either go to sleep and let me take over, or--

Yes?

Or I can kill you; it's all the same.

How can you kill me? I'm giving you life--you reside on me like a parasite. If I die, you die.

It's the reverse now, magician.

No!

Yes.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-41.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 144-145.

The divided Julian cannot survive. He has to be made whole again. This can only happen when he submits to the power of the other which articulates not only its power of life but also its power of death over Julian. When Julian submits, he submits to this complete power. As the submission occurs, he has a vision of olive trees which are twisted out of shape from their fear of growing upwards. The olive tree, its branch the symbol of peace, grows in a state of torment, just as Julian has to suffer internally through his own personal growth to reach a peace in himself which is a peace in Christ:

What kind of trees are around you?

O, olive, olive trees, mangled and stunted. They grow horizontally instead of vertically...curious things...the way they grow you'd think they were terrified of leaving the earth, they go into painful contortions to stop themselves from going up, they twist themselves up, crush their limbs and veins in the effort, tighten their bowels about their torsos until they look like terrible black clowns...

All this to stop growing upwards?

Yes, I think so.

They are in great pain then, are they?

Yes.

And what is an olive branch?

Peace.

And what is an olive branch again?

Peace.

And where is peace?

In you.

You let me win, magician? So easily?

Yes.

You will not fight more?

I will not fight more.

How do the silk and velvet chains feel?

Good. Good on my arms. It is complete.

Would you like me to loosen them?

No--I am already dead. The rest is yours--you have control. You wear me well.<sup>59</sup>

Julian is dead. He has become much like the old jacket he once wanted to shuck.<sup>60</sup> He is worn by the Christ as a useful personal object. With total surrender, however, immediately comes self-appropriation.

The new Julian is no longer alienated from himself. There is only one voice now, that of Julian who has appropriated the Christ within him. He now defines himself in terms of that union:

Man is the unconscious agent of God's creative will. He pushes genesis.

He is an instinctive Tool. He is the fingers of God.

And I have become a conscious agent. Have dipped into my own divinity and found it warm. And thus did I approach the conscious state of deity within myself, Julian the

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp.146-147.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. above p. 23.

Magician.

I am therefore conscious God....

As the IAO turns and the IAO turns back, it is both end and beginning, and the green race between is the IAO.

I am the IAO. The fingers must turn back into the hand; Julian the Magician who is Christ must complete Himself and enter into the one knowledge which is death. And death is the IAO....<sup>61</sup>

In the appropriation of Christ, it is actually the Christ aspect of Julian that appropriates Julian. The inner takes over the outer. The subject, in other words, becomes subjected to the object within to create a new unified whole. Although Julian has totally submitted and appropriation has taken place, he must still pass through the final stage that seals his identity. He has to die. Julian first gave himself to Christ and in so doing brought about the death of his former identity, but the final completion has to be actual and not symbolic. He martyrs himself to his knowledge in his final performance as magician. For the knowledge which has the power of fulfillment can only be completed through death. Death is necessary for the completion of the IAO.

Julian enters into his death completely conscious of his action in relation to his identity. In the comically staged crucifixion, he quietly dies. From the clay of his own body the soul will rise. His last performance is a peaceful one, although, according to the editor, while

---

<sup>61</sup> MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 150.

we read this [Julian's diary], he bargains for his soul by producing red rabbits for Lucifer and several clay pigeons for an audience of angels.<sup>62</sup>

### The Magician and the Christ

Julian as magician exemplifies the divine potential of human nature. In his role as magician Julian is both performer and alchemist. The alchemist is the embodiment of the divine power. The performer publically exhibits these powers.

In the alchemical tradition, the alchemist equates his own spiritual transformation with that of the alchemical process:

All the ingredients mentioned in alchemical recipes - the minerals, metals, acids, compounds and mixtures - were in truth only one, the alchemist himself. He was the base matter in need of purification by the fire; and the acid needed to accomplish this transformation came from his own spiritual malaise and longing for wholeness and peace.<sup>63</sup>

Julian is never referred to as a spiritual alchemist but as a human alchemist. Unlike the spiritual alchemist he does not devote his life to the alchemical process. Instead of using a flask to increase his spiritual understanding, Julian uses those about him to try to help them see themselves in relation to their human potential.

The alchemist acts upon base materials to help them reach

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>63</sup> Coudert, p. 201.

perfection. Julian describes his work as magician in similar terms:

But the magician is basically the sole conscious agent in the course of things. All elemental laws come under his hand; he manipulates; he controls....<sup>64</sup>

In both cases, however, they not only control, but are controlled. While the alchemist acts upon matter in the flask, he is also acted upon by the images produced through the process which lead him toward spiritual perfection. Julian acts as a creative agent and in turn is acted upon by the creative force within him until he is also transformed. Like the spiritual alchemists Julian is his own base matter, the prima materia. His body is the krater<sup>65</sup> for the mercurial mixture which will lead to his inner, personal transformation.

There is a striking similarity between Julian's experience and Carl Jung's description of the alchemist's relation to the Christ-image:

If the adept expresses his own self, the "true man," in his work, then, as the passage from the "Aquarium sapientum" shows, he encounters the analogy of the true man--Christ--in new and direct form, and he recognizes in the transformations in which he himself is involved a similarity to the Passion. It is not an "imitation of Christ" but its exact opposite: an assimilation of the Christ-image to his own self, which is the "true man". It is no longer an

---

<sup>64</sup> MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 47.

<sup>65</sup> Krater is the Hermetic vessel used in the Hellenistic school of spiritual alchemy in which mental baptism took place. Coudert, p. 193.

effort, an intentional straining after imitation, but rather an involuntary experience of the reality represented by the sacred legend.<sup>66</sup>

In both cases the individual's development has an outer framework defined by images of what Jung refers to as the sacred legend that conceals the inner transformation. Both also experience the passion. For the alchemist and for Julian the passion is that of dying for the sake of the divine image that is concealed in themselves as prima materia. This passion is the opposite of the theological concept of the divine dying for the sake of humanity. Whereas God empties himself of his divinity to come to earth to redeem humanity, Julian must empty himself of his humanity to redeem the Christ in him.

The Christ myth also offers a direct parallel between the human as magician and the divine as magician. The alchemist recognizes the innate ability of matter not only to be transformed but to progress toward perfection. Transformation

---

<sup>66</sup> Carl Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 349. It is hard to say how familiar MacEwen was with Jung's work at this stage of her career. However, in her book of poetry The Shadow Maker, published in 1969, two of the four sections of the book are prefaced by quotes from Jung. The first section "Holy Terrors" is introduced by a passage from his Symbols of Transformation:

"The onslaught of instinct then becomes an experience of divinity, provided that the man...defends himself against the animal nature of the divine power. It is 'a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'"



can be seen as a form of healing. When tried for Ivan's death, Julian defends the curative nature of his own magic:

I cure men's souls, let them glimpse a grand Unknown, let them recognize the possible breath of their own interior sense.<sup>67</sup>

Julian considers the power that enabled him to heal Ivan to be of the same type of magic that Christ used when he healed. He tries to clarify the nature of his own work by explaining Christ's miracles in terms of magic:

As soon as we accept the reality that Christ's healings were early and superlative examples of the finest and purest magic--then the situation is clarified.<sup>68</sup>

After Julian has been overtaken by Christ and become essentially divine he differentiates between himself and other men. Julian is different because of his self-consciousness:

Man is the unconscious agent of God's creative will. He pushes genesis.

He is an instinctive Tool. He is the fingers of God.

And I have become a conscious agent. Have dipped into my own divinity and found it warm. And thus did I approach the conscious state of deity within myself, Julian the Magician.

I am therefore conscious God.<sup>69</sup>

The awakening and subsequent surrender to the power within him is the awakening and surrender of his consciousness to the divinity. The magician as portrayed in Julian recognizes the

---

<sup>67</sup> MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 91.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 150. Emphasis added.

divine more readily than other men, for the very nature of his work is to become more conscious as a human being and to make others so. The Christ is not some other outside of the individual to be believed in but the essence of the human self.

The Gnostic teacher Momoimus would have thought Julian's life which begins with understanding himself as a magician and ends with Julian recognizing himself as the Christ, the IAO, as quite appropriate:

Abandon the search for God and the creation and other matters of a similar sort. Look for him by taking yourself as a starting point. Learn who it is within you who makes everything his own and says, "My God, my mind, my thought, my soul, my body." Learn the sources of sorrow, joy, love, hate....If you carefully investigate these matters you will find him in yourself.<sup>70</sup>

#### MacEwen's Notion of Human Nature in Julian the Magician

The story MacEwen tells is redemptive and optimistic when seen from within a gnostic-like worldview and notion of human nature. From outside of this worldview the vision of human nature is destructive and pessimistic.

In the gnostic worldview the material world is a fallen state created not by God but by a demiurge. Human beings house a

---

<sup>70</sup> In Hippolytus, Refutationis Omnium Haeresium, 8.15.1-2. In Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels, p. xix.

divine spark from the transmudane God. Redemption of the divinity within comes from the knowledge, gnosis, of who one is, where one has come from and where one is going. Salvation, in other words, is self-knowledge. Knowing one's self is knowing one's divine nature. A dualism between the inner and the outer worlds results. Heaven is within; matter is without. As an individual becomes more self-conscious, she or he moves away from the material world and closer to the inner divine world of the true self. The cause of evil in the gnostic world is not sin or guilt but lack of self-consciousness, lack of knowledge.

Julian the Magician presents a very similar worldview. The knowledge found is referred to as "The Terrible Knowledge" that the IAO, the Christ, is the true inner self. His life is a struggle to apprehend that knowledge and when it is gained his life is complete. Although the gnostic view is that one uses the intellect to reach salvation, in Julian the Magician the essence or divinity of human nature is contained in his mind. It is seen as a power and a genius. It is creative in that it can turn the mundane into the divine. The essence is both dependent on the human mind--for that is where it grows--and like a plant grows out of the earth. It is also autonomous and acts upon its birth-ground, creating a new environment.

In Julian's world, as in the gnostic world, materiality is alien to human nature. What is natural, in the sense of

pertaining to human nature, is what grows inside of the mind. The divine is, therefore, what is natural, and it is inherent in the human intellect. Since the essence is created within the mind, the mind is both mother and father to the creation. Julian is consequently characterized as being androgynous. Human nature is seen as self-creative, therefore self-dependent. The individual depends on the self for the creative potential. Since human nature is self-creative and the self is located in the intellect, sexuality as a creative potential is also found in the intellect. Julian explains himself in these terms:

It is possible I am a woman--I have long debated it. However, my gender is of no matter--my mind is decidedly bisexual; thus I can navigate in both female and male territory as freely as grass, and anticipate both female and male qualities in all things.<sup>71</sup>

The self is the "divine essence of life,"<sup>72</sup> which when released at death is revealed as perfection. "Three days to raise the dead divine essence of life," Julian says. "Three days to uncover--perfection."<sup>73</sup> Julian's lack of concern about Ivan's death stems from the understanding that "his [Ivan's] pure silver essence has been lifted from its shackles of bone."<sup>74</sup> The body has served its purpose and is of no more use. Resurrection is of

---

<sup>71</sup> MacEwen, Julian the Magician, p. 121.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

the spirit and it happens at the time of death. Life is lived to gain this knowledge of death and to enter into it.

The question now to ask is, what does the story have to say about the gender issue? Understanding the gender question is an extension of understanding the human being as a dichotomy of mind and body. The mind is associated with the divine, the body with the material world, which eventually is discarded as worthless.

The female in Julian the Magician is characterized as weak and passive. Such is the case with Julian's mother. The village women are brazen and stupid. On two occasions women are explicitly referred to as "test-tubes."<sup>75</sup> They are empty vessels waiting to be filled by the male. When Julian refers to being conceived, he talks of being shoved into his mother's womb.<sup>76</sup> The use of the word "shove" echoes another reference made to alchemists who "shoved gold into a tube during an experiment."<sup>77</sup> The notion of the gypsy shoving Julian into his mother's womb creates the image of a miniature Julian having to undergo the gestation period and of the mother having no role in his creation other than that of housing what already exists. This view makes the woman nothing more than a receptacle for the development of

---

<sup>75</sup> See pp. 120, 123.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

the human encasement of the divine, denying the female any creative role for the true human self. But the divine spark had to come from somewhere, and, if not from the woman or from the union of male and female, the only place left is the male sperm.

Each female presented in the story is in some way denigrated. The young Julian talks of holding "utmost distaste" for his teacher Kardin's women but excuses him for "he [Kardin] deserves distraction."<sup>78</sup> Although Julian's aunt Anya shows some insight into understanding Julian's nature, she is called a "fat-brain"<sup>79</sup> and is portrayed as physically unattractive<sup>80</sup> in contrast to the attractive Julian. The actress who tries to seduce Julian is called aggressive, making Julian feel "like a woman next to all that aggression."<sup>81</sup> He calls her stupid and wonders if she thinks at all. He later tells her to get pregnant, to "use [her] attributes diligently" and not "let them go to waste."<sup>82</sup>

There is, therefore, a consistent depiction of women as mindless physical beings. Even the aunt, who is the only woman characterized as having a thought in her head, is a very minor

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

character used as a foil to the young Julian's developing intellect. In the body/mind split the female is explicitly linked with the body and denied the mind, leaving the woman as ultimately incapable of having a true self. MacEwen has not introduced any female character who could possibly be redeemed.

In the ancient gnostic world women were often, though not exclusively, given the same status as men. They, like men, were saved through attained knowledge. The implication is, however, that women give up their "works of femaleness."<sup>83</sup> Pagels speaks of these works in terms of "the activities of intercourse and procreation."<sup>84</sup> The body is denied in favour of the intellect. In the Gospel of Thomas Jesus says that, "For every woman who will make herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven."<sup>85</sup> In Julian the Magician, however, there is no indication that women can share Julian's experience. Although Julian's role as magician is to open minds and help them to see their hidden divine selves, the male and the female are so divided that the story does not offer the hope of redemption to the female.

The Julian story is individualistic, self-centered, male-centred. The self is the divine core of the human being.

---

<sup>83</sup> Dialogue of the Saviour. In Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels, p. 80.

<sup>84</sup> Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels, p. 80.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

However, to establish the meaning of self there is a denial of nature, relationships, feelings, and women. MacEwen has envisaged a self that affirms human nature in terms of the mind/body split which subordinates the female to the male.



## II

### Noman

Ten years after the publication of Julian the Magician MacEwen published Noman. She now writes about her own cultural and social environment. She tries to understand the self in terms of myth and in the title story "Noman" tries to create a myth in and for her contemporary world.

Noman is a collection of short stories<sup>86</sup> which acts as a transitional work between the Julian and the Noman myths. In Julian the Magician images of the self were found in the Christ myth. Julian the Magician is set in nineteenth-century Europe, a time when the use of the Christ myth is congruent with the social reality. Even Julian's greatest intellectual opponent, the doctor and lawyer, called himself a Christian. In Noman, the cultural milieu has changed radically. It is set for the most part in the 1960s in Toronto. The stories take into account the diversity of people that makes up the society and the different mythic backgrounds they draw on. It is also a society

---

<sup>86</sup> The collection is made up of "House of the Whale," "Fire," "Day of the Twelve Princes," "The Oarsman and the Seamstress," "Kingsmere," "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician," "Snow," and "Noman."

that is philosophically and psychologically alienated from God. The Christ myth will not work in the same way it did in Julian the Magician. The question now becomes, if the Christ myth will not work, what will? If the human imagination needs to find a form for its expression of the creative force within, where is it going to find it? The Noman myth is the search for images that express this identity in twentieth-century Canada. MacEwen is looking for mythic language within the confines of a particular country, which she calls "Kanada," at a particular time, late twentieth century. Time and place are crucial. When Julian the magician returns in "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician," the contemporary Toronto setting leads him to very different experiences than nineteenth-century Poland did. MacEwen is working from the premise that although the historical moment changes, the underlying human psyche does not. It functions according to certain common laws. MacEwen refers to these laws in the preface to her historical fiction King of Egypt, King of Dreams (1971):

Man [sic] does not change so quickly; his psychology at bottom remains the same, and even if his culture varies much from one epic to another, it does not change the functioning of his mind. The fundamental laws of the mind remain the same, at least during the short historical period of which we have knowledge; and nearly all phenomena, even the most strange, must be capable of explanation by those common laws

of the mind which we can recognize in ourselves.<sup>87</sup>

What MacEwen means by these common laws can only be inferred from her work. Despite the vagueness of the quote it is important. MacEwen understands the human mind as more than just a cultural product. Common laws form the matrix for cultural interpretation. The stories she writes happen in Kanada but are not strictly Kanadian, even as King of Egypt, King of Dreams is set in Egypt in the fifteenth century B.C.E. but focuses on aspects of human nature that are not bound temporally and spatially.

Part of the common law that can be inferred from her work is the notion of self as a creative energy expressed through the imagination. As I look at Noman I consider how this law affects individuals living in late twentieth-century Kanada.

Noman can be organized into four groups of stories: (1) the title story, "Noman;" (2) the preface stories, "House of the Whale," and "Fire;" (3) the pre-Noman stories, "Day of Twelve Princes," "The Oarsman and the Seamstress," "Kingsmere," and "Snow;" and (4) the continuation of the Julian story, "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician."

The title story "Noman" is the principal story in the collection as well as the beginning of the Noman myth. The

---

<sup>87</sup> Ferrero, Les lois psychologiques. Quoted in Gwendolyn MacEwen, King of Egypt, King of Dreams, p. i.

preface stories not only begin the collection but they also introduce questions regarding the nature of self-identity in relation to myth, reality and the human imagination. They support the Noman story through their use of theme and imagery but, unlike the pre-Noman stories, they do not directly set up the Noman myth.

The fourth section, "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician," brings the Julian myth into the twentieth century. Julian materializes fully grown at the top of a ferris wheel and is confronted with a new power he has to overcome.

In this chapter I will look at the development of the image of the self in "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician." I will then look at the preface stories, "House of the Whale" and "Fire." Finally, I will consider the title story "Noman," in which I include a discussion of "Day of Twelve Princes."

#### The Second Coming of Julian the Magician

In the middle of Noman appears "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician." It is clearly established at the beginning of the story that Julian is the same Julian of the novel Julian the Magician<sup>88</sup>:

---

<sup>88</sup> Julian comments (p. 56) that someone had written a book about "the events of [his] last life." In a 1985 interview

In my last life in Europe I was crucified by a bunch of drunkards and peasants in a small village.... It was all due to my fatal resemblance to the Nazarene worker of wonders who had preceded me by some two thousand years, and my fatal flirtation with the magic of that ancient mountebank. I did not, however, arise on the third day as he is reputed to have done, but somewhat later.<sup>89</sup>

This time Julian materializes, fully grown "on a ferris-wheel in a second-rate carnival."<sup>90</sup> Unlike his earlier incarnation he is very certain of his identity. He does not have to discover who he is.

In "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician" Julian personifies the self. He no longer associates himself with the Christ image that overtook him in his previous life, but his essence is still a fundamental creative and eternal force:

I am the primitive machinery that grinds beneath the gears and cogs of your world, O Philistines, and my name is the same from eternity to eternity.<sup>91</sup>

The language has changed from Julian the Magician. He is now talking to a technological society and describes himself as "the primitive machinery" that makes it function. As the active force of the imagination, which makes him "the freest of men, for I

---

MacEwen said that she did not want to see Julian the Magician reprinted. At the time Noman was written, however, she seemed to be trying to keep the earlier Julian alive in relation to the latter.

<sup>89</sup> MacEwen, "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician," in Noman, p. 55.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

shape the cosmos according to my pleasure,"<sup>92</sup> he is both creative and destructive. In the new cultural milieu he couches the dualistic image in general religious terminology. He calls himself "icon and iconoclast."<sup>93</sup> Julian is both idol and destroyer of idols. As an idol to the contemporary world he is power. He still has his magical power. As an iconoclast he comes to destroy the power that is idolized in the twentieth century. He is the ongoing imaginative process expressed in each age which forces the changing of reality to make way for the continuance of the process.

As an eternal force Julian is by nature always present. In contemporary North America he recognizes himself "sleeping deep in North America's subconscious beneath layers of comic books and dreams.... Only the children worship me now."<sup>94</sup> He identifies his self in Batman. He talks of Batman's identity hidden by the "'B' at the beginning of his name."<sup>95</sup> The hidden identity of Batman is Atman.

The use of atman as a symbol of the self parallels the use of the Christ image as a symbol of the self as internal creativity. The atman image can be understood in terms of the

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

relationship between the individual and the universal soul as expressed in the Vedic texts, the Upanisads. The Upanisads or "Equivalences" appeared in the fourth or fifth century B.C.E.:

Without abandoning ancient modes of [Hindu] thought, these texts reveal a sort of gnosticism which attempts to explain by way of parables that the atman or individual soul is identical with the brahman or the universal soul. "Thou art That": that is to say, "Thou the individual, art identical with the ultimate principle of things." This is the supreme truth which leads to Liberation.<sup>96</sup>

Identifying the self with the "ultimate principle of things" is the gnosis of the Vedic text. In the mortal state it leads to a state "of no consciousness of, not of unconsciousness."<sup>97</sup>

The consciousness within the mortal state is inherently dualistic. In this condition one sees as if it were another, and understands as if it were another. Thus duality is premised on the assumption that the "other" is real, whereas the "other" is iva (as it were), that is phenomenal; but in the immortal state, the state of liberation (moska), there is no duality.... The Self that is consciousness exists, but it cannot be consciousness of anything since Atman is Brahman and Brahman is Totality.<sup>98</sup>

Julian as an atman image has parallels with the portrayal of self developed as the Christ image in Julian the Magician. In both cases the self is equivalent to a universal creative principle. Consciousness of what the self is takes place in an incarnated state. Julian loses his self-awareness during what

---

<sup>96</sup> Louis Renou, Hinduism, p. 25.

<sup>97</sup> Troy Wilson Organ, Philosophy and The Self, p. 138.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 138-139.

he refers to as "the century of my Sleep."<sup>99</sup>

In the twentieth-century North American world Julian sees that his self, his imaginative power to create, is not part of the reality he has returned into:

Reality belongs to him who can make and break his own dream, who can cause the sun to rise and set at his command, knowing his command is but a gesture or a noise.<sup>100</sup>

Now reality is knowing that the creative power is an illusion.

Julian the Magician, the master of illusions knows, that the illusion itself is the creative power. When reality lacks magic, knowledge is superficial, it is only of the outer world and not the inner.

When Julian conjures up reality, a Fat Woman materializes. He drops his magic wand. She grabs it and chases him. She threatens to destroy him.

'Give it back!' I [Julian] screamed, but she only waved it faster, and then, like an elephant, charged toward me. She pursued me through the gloomy midway, jiggling and laughing and shouting all kinds of obscenities, and the blackness bore down like death.<sup>101</sup>

For Julian contemporary reality is death. It wants to kill the creative inner self. Julian's battle with this twentieth-century reality that threatens to obliterate him is overtly

---

<sup>99</sup> MacEwen, "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician," p. 56.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 62.



fought with his arch enemy, the Power House, where he takes a job as a night watchman.

The Power House symbolizes the generative force of the reality which alienates the individual from the creative self. It is an external power that controls not only the material world but individuals as well. When Julian casually takes a fellow worker's pulse, he verifies his hunch that it is "geared to Machine."<sup>102</sup>

Julian also begins to feel trapped by the power of Machine:

I'm starting to feel like a battery, my pulse charged by the Power House. Daily I live and die. I turn in on myself like a great hook and fish myself from my sleep to go and guard Machine.<sup>103</sup>

Julian struggles not to come under the power of the Power House. Whereas in the nineteenth-century he fought against the power of the Christ within him not recognizing that he was really fighting his own creative energy; now he fights against a force that has the potential to destroy his essence. He is fighting against a form of Power that stifles the imagination. It creates a reality that brings disbelief and yawns from his audiences. Magic is boring. There is no opening of minds. It is also a reality that creates an apprentice, Tony, who does not care at all about the mystery and the secrets of the art but simply wants "to have

---

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

power over them"<sup>104</sup>.

Julian decides that the deadening power of the Power House has to be destroyed. Its death will be his rebirth:

I am going to crash the pulse of the Power House. It will be gone, destroyed, and I, Julian, will arise out of the electrical rubble unharmed and in fact renewed like the phoenix whose existence is a direct affront to time and death.<sup>105</sup>

In his last magical act Julian catches a lightning bolt and hurls it at the Power House:

Then it was over; the fuses of the city spluttered and died and the lights went out forever.<sup>106</sup>

As he scribbles down the final notes of his journal by candlelight, he talks of the relationship between himself and the reader:

Remember that the Master of Illusions doesn't make you believe what he wishes, but what you wish. Remember that all this was not my dream, but yours, that I speak from within you and you hear. And if you are laughing I am also laughing, and if you are weeping I am also weeping, and where this journal is, I am.<sup>107</sup>

He is the reader's imaginative self. He reinforces the notion of belief without which no illusion can be turned into reality and no dreams can become the future. Julian leaves again on the ferris-wheel, disappearing out of time and space.

---

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

In "The Second Coming of Julian the Magician" Julian steps into time and space as a prophetic maverick. He is a symbol of the self, the eternal creative force, once defined in terms of the Christ image and now in terms of the atman.

In the other Noman stories we meet twentieth-century individuals who are trying to survive within the deadening society that Julian encountered. Noman looks at different ways in which the self as creative energy is threatened and the way in which it tries to survive.

### The Preface Stories

The preface stories, "House of the Whale" and "Fire," introduce some of the questions regarding twentieth-century reality in relation to self and the imagination. "House of the Whale" tells the story of George Lucas, a young Haida Indian who has to face the death of his own mythic world. The death of his mythic world also means the death of his own self.

The story is not just about the tragedy of aboriginal people and their loss of identity through the death of myth; it is also about the relationship of the new inhabitants of Kanada to the indigenous myths. In other words, it is about the death of myth and the recreation of myth.

George Lucas recalls a party in a rich lady's house

Where everyone was admiring her latest artistic acquisition--a genuine Haida argillite sculpture. It illustrated the myth of Rhpisunt, the woman who slept with a bear and later on bore cubs, and became the Bear Mother...Mrs. What's-Her-Name kept babbling on and on about the 'symbolic' meaning of the carving until I got mad and butted in and told her it was obviously a bear screwing a woman, nothing more, nothing less. She looked upset and I was a little drunk and couldn't resist adding, 'You see, I too am genuine Haida.' And as the party wore on I kept looking back at the elaborate mantelpiece and the cool little slate sculpture, and it was dead, Aaron, it had died--do you see?<sup>108</sup>

For George Lucas the sculpture is dead. The death of the sculpture is the death of the myth that helps to define his world as a "genuine Haida." George Lucas recalls "Louis Collison, the last of the great carvers,"<sup>109</sup> and how as a boy he envisaged another Louis Collison, "a little man, who lived inside the argillite and worked it from the inside out."<sup>110</sup> Within the sculpture is the creative force of the Haida carver. The image is reminiscent of the creative force within Julian. The sculpture is the base material; the little man is the creative force that gives it spiritual expression. The death of the last great carver is also the death of the great creative spirit from within the tradition.

The dead sculpture is now Mrs. What's-Her-Name's possession. As an outsider to the tradition she retells its story to her

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

friends. There are two ways of looking at this situation. It is possible to see the rich woman as foolishly talking about something that no longer has any meaning. It can be said that the sculpture is not hers but belongs to the Haida people. On the other hand, by telling the story she keeps the story alive. It is true that it is not coming directly from her past. Yet even if her interpretation is not that of Haida's, the sculpture provides her with some symbolic meaning which, despite George Lucas' sarcasm and despair, is making it come alive for her. While George Lucas looks at the sculpture and only sees death, Mrs. What's-Her-Name is bringing the mythic substance from the sculpture into her own mythic world.

George Lucas relates an incident about his grandfather that further exemplifies not only the death of myth but the misappropriation of myth:

My grandfather was so well versed in our legends and myths that he was always the man sought out by myth-makers to give the Haida version of such and such a tale. My last memory of him, in fact, is when he was leaning back in his chair and smoking his pipe ecstatically and telling the tale of Gunarh to the little portable tape-recorder that whirred beside him. Every researcher went away believing he alone had the authentic version of such and such a myth, straight from the Haida's mouth - but what none of them ever knew was that grandfather altered the tales with each re-telling. 'It will give them something to fight about in their books,' he said. The older he got, the more garbled the tales, shaking with laughter in his big denim overalls when the little men with tape recorders and notebooks went away.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

The grandfather knows he is telling dead stories and has no misgivings about reworking the corpses. But again it can be seen as a double-edged sword. The academics may very well fight their battles over the correct version of the myths. But they fight from their own underlying knowledge that the myth carries in it something of value to their understanding of human nature as well as to their academic prestige. The myths retold, although incorrectly, can have a new life outside of the Haida tradition.

Here we see MacEwen's common laws at work. Images provide the expression of the human self which can cross cultures and be appropriated within a new mythological universe. This is not to say that suddenly all Torontonians are going to see some aspect of their lives reflected in the myth of Rhpisunt or that everyone will be reading one version or another of the stories George Lucas' grandfather told. It does mean that there is a possibility for the stories to become imaged in some way within the mythological universe of the new Kanada.

Haida George Lucas needs new images to define a world for himself. In Toronto he loses himself "to become neither Indian nor white but a kind of grey nothing, floating between two worlds."<sup>112</sup> He loses his identity as a Haida and is not able to appropriate anything meaningful to take its place and the story

---

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

insinuates that he will not be able to. What was once his is being taken over and remade by the myth-makers and rich Torontonians. His own fate is sealed when he is identified by the white man's myth as a "dirty Indian."<sup>113</sup> Out of his anger of being wrongly identified he kills the man.

In the story "Fire" a young woman, Alison, and her friend Chris "go a little off the deep end"<sup>114</sup> when the fireplace in the flat Alison has just rented enflames their imaginations and they end up feeding all her belongings to it. Whereas George Lucas was living the death of his self-identity as a Haida, Alison and Chris experience the creative and symbolic power of the creation of fire which challenges and deepens their sense of mythic identity.

'Imagine, Chris,' she said, becoming gradually hypnotized by the flames, 'this is how it was when the pioneers came. And before them the Indians...'

'True. But after all you can't go on romanticizing that kind of life...We're all slaves to our environments...What about human environment?...What about spiritual environment...?'

'Chris...Isn't it fascinating to see all life as a consummation. I mean a consuming, like the fire consumes. A burning, an energy, a turning of everything into pure heat, or stars.'

'That's what I've been trying to tell you,' he said. 'We are consumed. By hungry forces outside of us, or inside us. We're burned out. We have no chance. We're eaten up, by wind, or rain, or other people, or our own inner demons.'

'But then who are we?' she cried. 'What is the we

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>114</sup> MacEwen, "Fire", in Noman, p. 18

that's being consumed? Don't you see what I mean...we are the consuming, we are the fire! That's the whole point. The we is an energy, a process, not a thing that's a victim of other energies. Which is why we can never be slaves to life; we're partaking of the same energies, always.'<sup>115</sup>

Their existential questioning moves from the outer world to their inner selves, which Alison identifies with the energy of the fire. The self is energy and fire. It is a process.

Alison contradicts Julian's experience when she says that "we can never be slaves to life; we're partaking of the same energies." Julian saw his energy and that of the Power House as cancelling each other out. They could not survive together. One had to give in to the other. Alison does not recognize that one becomes a slave to life when the energy of the self is dictated to by a stronger energy. To maintain its power the self, like a fire, needs to be fed. Its creative energy must be maintained.

The first of Alison's possessions to go into the flames is her five-year-old Webster's dictionary. Her hardback copy of The Golden Bough soon joins it. Words and myths are the first to be destroyed in this transformative fire of their imaginations. Out of the transformation of the old comes the new. Material belongings, the results of creativity, follow on, also making their way to the flames.

Alison and Chris see a connection between what they are

---

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-23.



doing and an Indian potlatch. They have a vague idea of what a potlatch is, just enough to give the ritual meaning in their lives too.

'This is just like an Indian potlache [sic]!' Chris exclaimed. 'Some of the West-Coast tribes used to throw their most precious possessions into a big fire to show how wealthy they were.'

'You mean they were wealthy enough to show their utter contempt for what they owned,' she said.

'Yes. Something like that. I'm starting to see the point,' he said, and pulled out his address book from his jacket pocket and threw it into the fire.<sup>116</sup>

Again we see the misappropriation of an image. Chris and Alison are not having a potlatch. But the image gives them a point of reference to give meaning to their own actions. Out of the ritual enactment come new feelings. The enactment takes them closer to their own creative centre:

'Don't you have the strange feeling...that it's freezing winter outside and we're living in a huge hostile forest, willing to sacrifice anything, our souls, even, to keep the fire going?'

'I do, sort of,' she said, her arms full of books she'd gathered at random, not even looking at the titles, 'But after all Chris, it's only October. I mean, we're not going to die or anything, if the fire goes out.'

'I know,' he said, throwing his tie into the fire, 'but I just have this feeling.'<sup>117</sup>

Chris's feeling of being willing to sacrifice anything to keep the fire going against the threats of "the huge hostile forest" discloses his intuitive recognition that the power of the

---

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

imagination must be kept alive at all costs. The image is, however, very unnative. It comes from Chris's imagination, not from that of the aboriginal people he earlier tried to identify with. The fire that Chris senses does not only protect the physical body, it also protects the power of the self. The fire as self is therefore a paradox. The self is the fire and the self needs the fire for its power.

The power provokes feelings that Alison also identifies with. The next morning as she looks at her smoky room, she feels that she has been taken back to some time in the past:

It had been more than strange to wake up and see the room-- (only yesterday full of books, clothes, tables)--now reduced to a misty void, an uninhabitable region fit only for ghosts. She was thrust back to some point very distant in time; this, she thought, is what the caves of the early men looked like, full of strange chunks of carbon, white ash, charred stumps of nameless things that had once, perhaps, been trees, or bones.<sup>118</sup>

She senses that her present has been freed to move back to its roots, back to the place where creation occurs. It is out of these charred ruins that the present is made. The fire in them, their imaginations, has both destroyed and created. Chris now senses his own power to ward off the fears of the forest, to have the means to be able to survive imaginatively. The creation of the fire has opened them up to the power of fire of their

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

imaginations.<sup>119</sup>

In these two preface stories one sees that myths are both essential to the human mind and are a product of it. They are born out of the fire of the imagination, which needs to be fed images to transform into living symbols. When a group stops listening to the myths and stops believing in their power, it has nothing to identify with. In a fractured mythic universe such as Kanada individuals find their own mythic expression. The Canadian imagination can try to appropriate the dead images of the past of the land it now occupies but these images are not appropriate for they are not from the creative self of the new Canadians. MacEwen indicates that personal identity is tantamount to identity through a myth but a Canadian myth still has to be found.

### Noman

The title story "Noman" is a beginning of a myth to find images to express Canadian identity. The story revolves around the character Noman and is told by two characters, Jubelas and Kali, through separate accounts of their experiences with him. Noman, like Julian, has to be understood in terms of his personal

---

<sup>119</sup> There are allusions here to the alchemical process: the individual as process, the fire as transformative energy, the interplay of outer and inner symbols--the fire as essential to human survival, both physically and psychologically.

inner conflict and the way that conflict affects, and is affected by, others around him. These two aspects of Noman are developed through the contrasting relationships he has with Kali and Jubelas and the way he is portrayed by them.

In "The Book of Jubelas" we learn not so much who Noman is but what the image of Noman is, as seen through Jubelas' eyes. Noman's identity is a product of Jubelas' imagination. Noman is more of a presence than a tangible character. When Jubelas finishes his story, the reader is left with an impression of the effect Noman has had on Jubelas but with little sense of Noman as a character.

The Noman of the "The Book of Kali" is more fully characterized. His personal identity is disclosed and a very different Noman is portrayed. The shift in perspective in "The Book of Kali," however, alters the understanding of "The Book of Jubelas," creating an unresolved tension between the two "Noman" books.

I will begin by looking at "The Book of Jubelas" on its own, for outside of the context of the whole "Noman" story it offers an interesting study of the destruction and creation of self.

### The Book of Jubelas

Jubelas introduces his book as an investigation of the crime

of Noman's death. The focus of the story, however, is Jubelas' attempt to understand who Noman is. The real crime of Noman's alleged death is that Jubelas is left alone in a new reality that Noman helped him create. Jubelas needs to understand Noman so that he can understand himself in his new reality.

Understanding Noman is contingent upon understanding Jubelas' acquiescence to Noman's power to take away his sense of identity and to give him another. The relationship between Jubelas and Noman is established at their first meeting when Jubelas abdicates his self-identity to Noman by allowing Noman to name him. Noman's identification of Jubelas as Jubelas establishes power over him. Jubelas has not the strength of identity to defend himself against Noman. The name Jubelas, however, is not propitious. Being Jubelas is not a "joyful" experience. The given name points back to the bliss of his former reality. The name indicates something he loses and cannot regain.

As Noman's creation, Jubelas gives up the challenge of his own search for identity in order to look for Noman's. He cannot answer Noman's question of who he is if he is not Noman, but he does not consider who he might be. His concern is for Noman's identity. In other words, Jubelas gives precedence to the knowledge of his creator over his own self-knowledge. Jubelas does not realize that looking for Noman's identity is the

same as looking for his own. Jubelas begins an apparently insignificant search for Noman's national identity. He is certain that Noman is a foreigner. Noman contradicts Jubelas' idea of a Kanadian--no Kanadian could wear a trench-coat so well or could be "so interested in everything that was going on around him."<sup>120</sup> But the search becomes directed at Jubelas. First his sense of identity as a Kanadian is challenged:

He [Noman] was so damned debonair. He sort of leaned into the world, testing the ground with his feet as if there was a big hole somewhere but he knew he would never fall into it. I would have liked to be like that. I always felt so clumsy and so Kanadian. Like the little tugboat that use to run to the island on the winter with the sign inside that said it was only qualified to navigate in Minor Waters.<sup>121</sup>

Being Kanadian is being what Noman apparently is not. A Kanadian is a little tugboat who is not allowed out into the big seas. Being Kanadian is feeling insignificant and powerless.

This turning of the search toward Jubelas drives him mad. He is opened to a reality that forces him to look at life from a new perspective. Noman challenges not only Jubelas' sense of Kanadian identity but the way he looks at all of life:

Oh I told him I thought I was going nuts....  
'You're not going nuts, Jube you're going sane,' he said. 'I know it's hard to tell the difference.'  
'Let's do something,' I said. 'Let's go rob a bank or see a film or something!  
'I hate films.' he said. 'The vast fiction of Rome

---

<sup>120</sup> MacEwen, "The Book of Jubelas," in Noman, p. 86.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

unfolding before my very eyes. A Swedish camera exploring the pores on somebody's thigh. An American camera exploring miles of the lush blood-soaked vegetation of Asia. I hate watching people crawling out a cinema after escaping 'reality,' then wandering through the seething streets looking for some excitement. Ugh. Wondering why Bloor Street can't be the Champs D' [sic]Elysee.'

Christ, I thought, now I can't even enjoy a good film anymore. 'O come on!' I cried. 'You're fouling everything up for me!'

'If Noman is hurting you then no-one's hurting you after all,' he said. 'If Noman is blinding you, then you aren't blind.'<sup>122</sup>

Part of the confusion that Jubelas experiences is that he is caught between two worlds. Whereas George Lucas was caught in the grey area between the Haida and the white world, Jubelas is caught in the same place but now it is defined in terms of sanity and insanity. It can also be called reality and lack of reality. Reality and sanity relate to a mythic world one understands, such as Jubelas' world before Noman. A mythic world provides the images that give meaning to life. Once these images are gone, meaning also disappears and the world feels unreal, creating a sense of insanity. Lack of reality and insanity, therefore, relate to lack of a mythic world--Jubelas' world after meeting Noman. Jubelas feels that he is insane because he loses touch with those elements of his life that give it meaning. But he does not realize that he is an accomplice to the act. He gives in to Noman. He gives in to the possibility of seeing life

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 92

differently. The reality that Noman appears to be creating is a reality that Jubelas allows to be created. Since one's self is inherent in one's sense of reality, there is a confusion of selves as Noman and Jubelas' realities start to mix.

This confusion becomes apparent in Jubelas' feeling that Noman is like his own son. The image of Noman as a son is reinforced by a dream his wife Omphale has of giving birth to Noman:

She [Omphale] dreamed she had given miraculous birth to Noman in the middle of Bay Street.... And the newborn Noman, in the dream, is fully grown, wearing a Roman toga with a big gold buckle. He was impatient, and he stamped his foot, and he asked permission to leave. And Omph had cried out - 'Leave? What do you mean leave? You've just been born! Babies don't leave!'<sup>123</sup>

Noman is born out of Jubelas and Omphale's feelings and imagination. Omphale's character as mother is not developed in the story. The father/son relationship gets turned upside down. Jubelas becomes not only like a son but a child. He is jealous of the attention Noman gives to anyone else. He feels that he has lost Noman when they are with others. On one occasion he flies into a fit of rage and nearly demolishes a juke box in a restaurant. Noman calmly pays the restaurant owner for the damages caused by Jubelas' temper tantrum while Jubelas keeps "mumbling I didn't mean to do it, I didn't mean to do it, like a

---

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 98.



kid."<sup>124</sup> The son, Noman, creates a new disempowering reality for Jubelas by turning Jubelas into a helpless child who does not have control over his own feelings.

Noman as a son image has to be seen together with Jubelas' image of Noman as a magical, golden lion. Jubelas feels that Noman is a lion who possesses him:

How can I [Jubelas] describe him so you'll understand? First of all he wasn't bad. He never lied for instance - he just talked truth like it was a different kind. And he kind of pounced on you like a lion and ate you up...but very polite about it, very gentle.<sup>125</sup>

The image is ambivalent. The creature is gentle and polite, yet destructive, creating a sinister image. Noman as a lion is a deceitfully destructive power. This dualism is also portrayed as the power of a magician:

When he looked at you his eyes were full of surprise, as if he never asked or expected to see the things he saw. Everything sort of played itself out before him. He himself did nothing, but he made it all happen.<sup>126</sup>

The magician while appearing not to do anything causes things to happen. In this aspect Noman resembles Julian. Both are seductive and have a powerful affect on individual minds. Whereas Julian makes others feel his god-like power, the most important aspect of Noman as the lion image is his ability to

---

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

make Jubelas feel alone.

One afternoon Jubelas is out wandering around alone, a new habit that begins with knowing Noman, and he comes across a large parade:

Big phoney floats came sailing past me, and everyone was screaming and pushing and I heard drums.... Then down the road floats this huge gold float in the shape of a lion, a big paper mache lion. Somehow I felt that it was coming after me, that it was going to bear down on me. And I was alone, more alone than I'd ever been in my life; big scared tears started streaming down my face.... And suddenly - I didn't know what I was doing - I ran out into the middle of the road screaming Noman, Noman! and everybody was laughing and yelling at me, and I didn't care. Then two cops came charging out of the crowd and told me I was obstructing the parade, but I tried to throw them off, shouting, 'Leave me alone, I gotta follow the golden lion!' By the time they got me back to the curb the big beautiful beast was far away. I knew from here on in I was alone.<sup>127</sup>

The images that Jubelas creates, the son and the lion, indicate two aspects of Noman and also of himself. The son is Jubelas' creation, yet the son is strong and independent, turning Jubelas into a dependent child. Jubelas is insecure, jealous of what Noman has to offer others. And he is envious of Noman's strength and power. Ironically, Noman only exists for Jubelas inasmuch as he is his creation. It is Jubelas who pursues Noman after their initial meeting. He explains it as being interested in what he does not know.<sup>128</sup> Jubelas finds in Noman what he does

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

not know in himself.

The boundaries of self between Jubelas and Noman are nebulous. In the lion image Jubelas sees the potential of its overpowering destruction. But at the same time the lion is gentle and made of paper mache. Jubelas feels his own potential in Noman but masks it in politeness and artificiality. The disparate images indicate the ambiguity of self within Jubelas. Noman, as the embodiment of the images, makes Jubelas feel insignificant, desperate and lonely.

Noman in "The Book of Jubelas" personifies power. He is akin to Julian. He is both creative and destructive, and he opens minds to new realities. Noman, however, does not reveal the Kingdom of Heaven to Jubelas. His power opens up Jubelas to his imagination and to that area where new worlds are created. Since the new world is still unformed and the old is no longer valid Jubelas feels disoriented and interprets the experience as going mad. His self is alienated from what it was, making him feel despair and loneliness. He does not have a world he can identify with. His self still has to recreate it or try to reclaim the old.

### The Book of Kali

"The Book of Kali" establishes Noman's identity from Kali's

point of view, providing a radical change from Jubelas' perspective. In "The Book of Jubelas" Noman is depersonalized. He does not provide Jubelas with any information about his past and he is unidentifiable in the present. Jubelas describes him as coming from nowhere and going nowhere.<sup>129</sup> In "The Book of Kali" Noman is individualized. He has a past which connects him to the earlier short story "Day of Twelve Princes." His new identity casts a new light on the reading of "The Book of Jubelas."

In "The Book of Kali" Noman moves from one stage of self-denial to another. The first stage of self-denial is marked by the beginning of Noman's relationship with Kali. As with Jubelas, Kali's first meeting with Noman is initiated by the act of naming. In "Noman" the creation of relationships is equivalent to the creation of a new identity. It is through others that one both loses and tries to regain an understanding of self. It is not a solitary process. This is a departure from the Julian story, where the process of self-knowledge depends primarily on the inner creative force and the recognizing of that force as the core of the self through interacting with others. In "Noman" the relationships are more complex. In Julian the Magician the destruction of identity and its renewal is from

---

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

within the individual. In "Noman" the destruction of identity is from the outside as reality is destroyed by the power of an individual to destroy personal myth leaving in its place despair and loneliness.

In "House of the Whale" George Lucas is destroyed through the destruction of the reality of who he is by the death of his people's myths. There are no more stories to tell. There are no images to keep his self alive as a Haida and he cannot find a myth that gives him self expression in the white people's world. The only reality offered to him is that of a "dirty Indian."

In "Noman" Noman's reality, and consequently his self, are overcome by the defeat of his personal myth as a boy. The fall of Noman's reality is told in the earlier short story "Day of Twelve Princes." It is not until late in "The Book of Kali," however, that it becomes evident that Noman is Samuel of the former story.

Noman now has a past which is the genesis of the adult Noman. "Day of Twelve Princes" is the creation story of the fallen Noman. The story of his fall is the story of having his reality collapse around him. He has to confront his mother's deceit. She tells him his father is a gypsy-like man who died in Europe, but, in fact, his father is Aubrey. Samuel and his mother lived with Aubrey and his wife Sarah from, it is implied, sometime before Samuel was born. For fourteen years he lived

with his mother's lie and his father's deception. He learns the truth when he overhears his mother and Aubrey making love. It is not only the lies and deception he has had to live with but Aubrey's wife's madness. Samuel's birth brought on Sarah's madness which is finally healed when she has her own son. In this convoluted adult world Samuel has to find some sense of identity.

His principal survival mechanism is his imaginary army of twelve white princes of the day who battle twelve riderless horses of the night. In Samuel's mythic world Samuel is the leader of the white princes; Aubrey is the leader of the horses of the night. The white princes are the power of Samuel's imagination, his dreams. The horses represent the power of his father, the "night mares" that have to be tamed. Ironically Samuel sets up this battle field before he actually knows that Aubrey is his real father, indicating an intuitive awareness of who his father really is. In his dreamworld, however, Samuel calls on the spirit of his dead father to help him fashion bows for his princes from the power of the sun.

When his princes are finally defeated they hold white flags of surrender to the sun. Samuel has had to surrender to the power of his imagination. He is unable to bring together the horses and the riders. He cannot be reconciled with his father. All he has left is the power of his imagination to form his new

world. But like George Lucas, he is still in that grey area where the images are formed. He has to create a new mythic beginning for his life. His creation story in "Day of Twelve Princes" is the creation of a "no self" that has to begin again.

When the adult Samuel meets Kali, he tell her that he has amnesia. He accepts the name Noman that she gives him because it is an expression of his true self. Having no memory is equivalent to having no self. If the self cannot be remembered, it is as if it is not there. Identity presupposes memory, or consciousness of who one is.

To remember also means confrontation with what is remembered. To be known, to have an identity, means an obligation to both the present and the past. Living as Noman means he does not have to live with his personal past.

Identity finds its images from the mythic vocabulary of the imagination. When these images are destroyed, as happens to Samuel in "Day of Twelve Princes," and as seen in "House of the Whale," identity goes with them. Noman's feigned amnesia is both the result of his past--he has no myth to relate to--and the result of wanting to forget the event that brought about the fall of the myth.

When Noman gives up the facade of his amnesia he is admitting to having a past. However, keeping his name Noman indicates that he does not identify with the past. He is not

Samuel. He still does not have an identity.

"Noman" has taken a radical turn. It is no longer a story about Noman as a depersonalized power affecting the identity of others. It is about Noman as a individual who has to reestablish his own identity. For Noman to regain his identity he has to regain contact with the essence of his self. In other words he has to establish a new mythic base.

Part of the process is confronting the father, which he does through Jubelas. Noman abandons his amnesiac state when he asks Kali to introduce him to her two friends, Jubelas and Omphale. There are three notable parallels between the relationship with Aubrey and that with Jubelas. They are both based on deception. Jubelas does not know that Kali not only knows Noman but that she also knows the "awful truth. Noman [is] Kanadian."<sup>130</sup> Secondly, madness is a result of both situations. In "Noman" Jubelas goes mad; in "Day of Twelve Princes" Sarah suffers because of her inability to live with Samuel and the reality he creates for her. The third parallel is the development of the father/son relationship. Aubrey as father and Noman in his role both conceal who they really are. Aubrey and Noman both withhold information that affects how Samuel and Jubelas view reality. As a result Samuel is left estranged from Aubrey just as Noman and

---

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 105.



Jubelas are left estranged. There appears to be no hope of reconciliation between Samuel and Aubrey. At the end of "The Book of Kali" the relationship between Jubelas and Noman is left unresolved.

Noman undertakes his game with Jubelas to "prove something." One can only infer what he wants to prove. But he does prove the power of Noman. Noman has the power of being a new source of reality for Jubelas. His power, however, is negative. He gives to Jubelas the same despair that his own father gave to him. Noman has created for himself surrogate parents who suffer for his loss of identity. Jubelas feels the despair of Noman's loneliness. Noman in essence has shared his pain with his father through Jubelas, something he could not do with Aubrey when he was a boy. Noman tells Kali that he fantasizes about meeting his father and he tells his father that he has killed him. Aubrey replies that he knows. Noman may have tried to kill his father through his imagination but he has been unable to kill the emotions associated with the father. The emotions of despair have filled the void left when the princes admitted defeat, and this is what Noman has to offer Jubelas as his identity.

"The Book of Kali" makes it clear that Noman is someone; and that at the core of his self are loneliness and despair. The myth of Noman is a myth of alienation. Noman is alienated through a disruption of reality by the inability to reconcile the

father/son relationship. Whereas in Julian the Magician the self is a creative power formed through the union of the human and the divine, in Noman the self is in a state of despair and loneliness created by the inability to unify the fundamental relationship of the father and the son. In the twentieth-century myth the individual is alienated from God and from others. Relationships are based on deceit. Parents lie, making one's identity also a lie which has to be rectified.

The solution to Noman's identity is to "die." He and Kali stage a mock Saturnal so that he "can be born again, maybe even assume a real name."<sup>131</sup> Noman's death is symbolized by the trench-coat, which he wore with un-Kanadian grace, floating "down like a great terrible bird and [settling] on the frozen floor of the valley"<sup>132</sup> where they had earlier staged the Saturnal. Noman's last stage of his identity denial is the doffing of his exterior facade, the one that so confused Jubelas. He has admitted to his personal past and has a national identity.

After "dying" Noman goes to Kingsmere with Kali. The story ends with Noman stepping naked into the forest. He is totally exposed--open to the dangers of the forest but also open to what it has to offer him. Kingsmere is the beginning of his new

---

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

quest. The ruins he goes through, the "synthetic history"<sup>133</sup> brought from Europe by William Lyon Mackenzie King, "broken bits of history"<sup>134</sup> which have been placed on to the Kanadian landscape creating "a tension between past and future,"<sup>135</sup> are symbolic of the ruins of his own personal history which he has to leave behind. At the far end of one field is an arch. "You only have to pass under the arch to be free, to be away from this place."<sup>136</sup> Noman goes through the arch to a freedom away from the synthetic Kanadian history and away from his own. There is no indication of what this will mean and how Noman's quest will develop. The ending is left open as is the tension between the first and second books. Jubelas is still apparently mad, living in the reality of Noman's deceit and despair.

### Noman and Gender

On considering Noman with respect to identity and gender, the most obvious feature is that Noman, like Julian the Magician is male-oriented. Principal characters are consistently male. The case can be made that MacEwen is simply writing from a male

---

<sup>133</sup> MacEwen, "Kingsmere," in Noman, p. 54.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

perspective. The question to be asked is how she treats the female characters that do appear. In Julian the Magician they fared little better than test-tubes. In Noman they are more ambiguous, but ultimately do little better.

The principal females characters are Kali and Omphale in "Noman." Omphale is not developed as a character, thereby downplaying any possibility for a relationship between her and Noman. She is little more than a symbol for woman as a reproductive body. Her very name, "navel," links her with this role and her dream of giving birth to Noman is the strongest image of her in this role. She is there as a physical mother. Within the context of "The Book of Jubelas" Omphale can be seen as a mythic mother, not a real person.

Kali is more complicated. There is a discrepancy between Kali's character and her name. Kali is a Hindu goddess. In Patricia Monaghan's description,

one of the most powerful, most common, and--to Western eyes --most terrifying of these forms [of the Devi, goddess] is Kali ("Black Mother Time"), the goddess who perpetually transforms life into a fascinating dance of death.<sup>137</sup>

Other than that she dresses in black<sup>138</sup>, gives the occasional

---

<sup>137</sup> Patricia Monaghan, The Book of Goddesses and Heroines, p. 164-165.

<sup>138</sup> The word kali means "black." Even though she wears black she has a closet full of coloured blouses. Jubelas' only extensive description of her is in relation to these clothes: "We were on our way to meet Kali - a friendly character we'd known on and off for

"black" look at Jubelas and Omphale, drinks Bloody Marys and has an attraction to India<sup>139</sup>, there is nothing in her character that suggests the destructive female deity she is presumably named for. She sees Noman as her Siva, the creator-destroyer dancing god,<sup>140</sup> yet she is more of a parody than an illustration of his consort.

It might be argued that "Kali" like "Jubelas" is really an intentional misnomer. The opening paragraph of the "Book of Kali," however, suggests that there was an original intention for her to be a little more like her namesake:

I [Kali] won't start off with a description of Noman.... Rather I shall begin with myself who am colubrine, and who he named Kali. (Kundalini, he said once, as I lay coiled like the magic serpent at the base of his spine.) I haven't shaved my armpits for eight and a half years and at full moon I go stark mad. At the age of eight, an angel invaded my bed and showed me a terrible premature salvation. At the age of ten I was deflowered by a tree. My face is composed of precise planes and my eyebrows angulate (angulate?) to wide inverted V's and taper off toward the temples - (the churches, Noman, beating in my head). I have sensitive

---

years. She always wore black, but she had 31 satin shirts, all different colours, one for every day of the month. One time we'd seen her she'd been threatening to pack her bags and go to India forever. We said Bon Voyage. But she couldn't decide which of her shirts to take, so she didn't go. Besides she told us later that she couldn't leave the country because she didn't have a good enough photograph for a passport." (p. 84)

<sup>139</sup> She says she continually makes plans to go there, or at least she did until she met Noman, because she gets bored easily (p. 103).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

nostrils, like a colt's. My mouth hurts me.<sup>141</sup>

The initial focus of "The Book of Kali" is on Kali. The intensely graphic image that she uses to describe herself is not at all sustained, however. And whereas Noman has a dramatic effect upon Jubelas<sup>142</sup> and shatters his sense of reality, "The meaning of Noman" sits as an item on the bottom of Kali's list of "images or incidents to stir [her] blood back into being"<sup>143</sup> when she is bored. This is not to say that Noman was simply a curiosity item. She also has her moments of despair over his identity:

I had to resist the temptation to pack suitcases for India. You can't imagine what a problem I had making both centres meet. I saw Noman as Siva in the annexes of department stores. We were dying, Egypt, dying. I screamed when noons came only at twelve o'clock.... I had a piece of Noman's hair in my wallet, which I'd take a watch to now and then, saying 'Who are you? If you don't answer I'll burn you.' And the hair would lie there, lie there smelling like a campfire in a northern forest, saying nothing.

'Noman, you're losing my mind,' I used to tell him. 'Why can't you be honest and lie once in a while? Why can't you be serious and crack a few jokes?'<sup>144</sup>

But Kali does not stay upset for long. Noman does not send her into any sort of existential crisis:

---

<sup>141</sup> MacEwen, "The Book of Kali," in Noman, p. 103.

<sup>142</sup> Kali tells of seeing Jubelas during this period and that he had "turned hairy and antediluvian and afraid" (p. 107).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

I suppose what was really bothering me was the fact that my car was being fixed.<sup>145</sup>

She is emotionally unaffected by Noman. He does not disturb Kali's sense of identity in any way. Being without a car is more upsetting than Noman.

Nevertheless, Kali's primary response to Noman is little less than adoration:

He was born in the year of our Lord 1940. Perhaps a star went nova over the Exhibition Grounds that day, perhaps not.... He was tall and dark--(can you imagine him short and blond?)--and he had a birthmark on his inner thigh that looked like the spiral nebula in Andromeda.... He has a small scar from a minor operation on his stomach--(who did it? I cried, I'll tear him apart!)--and he combs his hair every night so he'll look good in his dreams.... His own blood is a potent drug that lifts him to heaven or drops him into hell; he sees colours that smell like sage and seaweed, taste like wild honey and bacon rind, sound like the bells of the world ringing together."<sup>146</sup>

Her love and worship coupled with her practicality and motherliness make her instrumental in helping Noman to organize his life and open up to himself. She not only helps him to meet Jubelas and Omphale and plays silent accomplice through the months, she also witnesses his anger about his past. She is there to listen to his story when he is finally ready to tell it. She offers him her emotional support. She is his lover. She recognizes that the only answer to his identity problem is to

---

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

stage a mock death. Finally she introduces Noman to Kingsmere, where he leaves his past and enters the future. She does not act as a guide but as a catalyst and a friend. Her identity, however, is not challenged by Noman. In short, her role is to help Noman find his own identity.

Kali falls into the traditional role of helpmate. Some time after her bed was invaded by a angel and she was deflowered by a tree, Kali apparently gave up her own personal myth for that of the traditional role of helpmate. Kali's genesis stories do not lead her on a personal search for identity.

MacEwen's short stories "Snow" and "The Oarsman and the Seamstress," which are also in Noman, indicate that she is very steeped in the male/female dichotomy. The female characters of the stories are nameless, supportive women. In "Snow" the woman is there to help her friend Grigori experience snow for the first time and finally, happily, die in it. In the "Oarsman and the Seamstress" the woman is making a velvet shirt for her Greek lover who she imagines to be an oarsman on a Byzantine galley. She gives up making the shirt and uses the cloth as a cover for the two of them:

Is there room for a woman on your ship? she whispered into his ear. I'll stow away, no-one will see me, I'll be hidden by dark red velvet. Take me with you, Constantine.<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>147</sup> MacEwen, "The Oarsman and the Seamstress," in Noman, p. 51.



The female experiences through the male. She watches while Grigori experiences the snow. She imagines Constantine's adventures, not her own. She has to ask permission to occupy the male world.

It seems that in "Noman" MacEwen wants to break with the traditional female image but is unable to. She cannot fit the female image of the goddess Kali into her story. I suggest that this is because MacEwen is still finding her own images of identity as a woman through the Western mythic vocabulary that works from a mind/body and female/male dichotomy. MacEwen may very well have sensed the inadequacy of this framework but she has not found a way out of it in Noman.

Noman's LandStructure of Noman's Land

Like Noman, MacEwen's last fictional work, Noman's Land, is also a collection of short stories.<sup>148</sup> All of the stories centre directly on Noman and his search for identity. The stories are presented chronologically, now and then diverging from the time sequence to allow for the differing points of view. The stories also present time as circular. Characters and events return. Noman's Land begins where Noman ends. At the end of "Noman" Noman steps into the forest at Kingsmere, leaving Kali behind. At the beginning of Noman's Land Noman finds himself coming out of the forest through the same arch at Kingsmere. The first time the arch is lighted up by lightning as he takes off his clothes and goes into the forest leaving Kali behind. This time he is struck by lightning, left naked and amnesiac. Kali happens by

---

<sup>148</sup> The collection is made up of "The Loneliest Country in the World," "A Horse of a Different Colour," "Magic Wars," "Demon of Thursday," "The Twelfth of Never," "The Man in the Moore," "Looking for the King," "An Evening with Grey Owl," "Tennis at Midnight," "Footprints on the Ceiling," "The Mysterious Hooded Man," "The Holyland Buffet," "Nightchild" and "The Other Country." The individual stories are autonomous and many were originally published independently.

soon after and picks him up. Thirteen years separate these two events. MacEwen also plays fictional time off against actual time by making this time lapse correspond to the thirteen years that separate the publication of Noman (1972) from Noman's Land (1985).

Not only time but place plays an important role in the continuation of the story. Noman is back in Kanada. In Noman's Land Kanada is more clearly depicted as the mythic land where Noman has to search for his identity. Noman's search is primarily a search within his own memory, thereby making Kanada a symbol for Noman's land, the land within his mind. It is a land where identity is still unclear. Just as Kanadian identity is not definable, neither is Noman's.

In the Noman stories Noman is a stranger in his own land. When he arrives, he is greeted by a vision of a huge neon sign that reads, "Welcome to the Loneliest Country in the World."<sup>149</sup> The nature of Kanada corresponds to his own. Part of Noman's discovery is that Kanada is many lands. It is not just the many lands of the people who make it up but the land of the mind which makes it up. Kanada is as much an imaginative creation as it is a physical place. The country where Noman finds himself is one of the many countries within Kanada. It is related to Kingsmere,

---

<sup>149</sup> MacEwen, "The Loneliest Country in the World," in Noman, p. 9.

the land where Noman has his second birth.

Kingsmere, his fatherland, has a king, William Lyon MacKenzie King. He searches for the King to find answers to his identity. The quest ends in the final story, "The Other Country," when the King leads Noman to the other country where he can find himself. This country is an extension of Kingsmere. It is the "mere" of the King, the "sea" of the King, Lake Ontario.

The quest which begins in the forest ends in the sea. The sea represents the unknown land of Noman's mind, his unconscious. He has not only to immerse himself in this land but must be willing to die in it to find his own identity.

#### Noman and Noman's Land

In "Noman" Noman's pretense of amnesia and his anonymity foreshadow the beginning of Noman's Land. This new beginning is Noman's rebirth after his earlier death. He is birthed through the arch, out of the forest at Kingsmere--a newborn child naked and without any memory. He is not like Julian the Magician returning in full knowledge of who he is. Noman has not yet made that discovery. Like an infant he has the potential for understanding who he is. His mind is not a tabula rasa; what he is is already a part of him waiting to be discovered. In the same way that Julian blew up the Power House with a bolt of

lightning to dispel the power of the alienating city, lightning has disempowered Noman's mind, alienating him from himself, and he must now search to find his identity. He comes out of the forest, which is now referred to as Eden.<sup>150</sup> It is no longer seen as hostile. But it is not in the garden where he has to find himself but back on the streets of Toronto where he originally lost his identity. As before, the search also happens in the company of others.

Some of the others he already "knows." He resumes his relationship with Kali, and Jubelas comes back into his life. Reintroducing these characters extends the relationships already established. Kali's relationship with Noman is more defined and Jubelas' situation is better resolved after he was left abandoned at the end of "The Book of Jubelas."

New relationships are developed with a self-exiled Arab poet, Ibrahim, and with the Nightchild, Noman's thirteen year old son. Other relationships are less tangible: the ghost of William Lyon MacKenzie King and the traumatic influence of a conversation, which Kali relates to him, between Grey Owl and Anahareo.

Each of these characters defines an aspect of Noman and his search. Hence to understand the development of Noman's identity

---

<sup>150</sup> MacEwen, "The Loneliest Country in the World," in Noman's Land, p. 9.

I will look at these characters individually and in turn consider how they are affected by Noman.

### Jubelas

Jubelas relates the story "Looking for the King." The story reintroduces the question of identity in relation to sanity and madness and implicitly considers Kanadian identity. Whereas Jubelas' previous experience with Noman pivoted around trying to ascertain Noman's national identity, Noman's Kanadian identity is clear from the start. The emphasis is no longer on what Noman's national identity is but on Noman as Kanadian in relation to his power over Jubelas.

When Jubelas comes under Noman's power once more he identifies it in terms of his old madness:

He was turning the world upside down just like before, and then I knew the old madness had begun again. Where I lose myself and end up somewhere inside his head.<sup>151</sup>

Ending up inside of Noman's head is ending up in Noman's land, which is equivalent to Kanada, where identity is undefinable. Jubelas is now feeling Noman's experience as a Kanadian and senses the other land which Noman has to discover.

Being taken into Noman's land brings back Jubelas' former

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

state of loneliness. Jubelas interprets the resurgence of the feeling as a result of Noman's ability to act as a mirror:

Being with Noman makes you more alone than you've ever been because everything bounces off of him, and you yourself bounce off of him like he's a mirror and all he's there for is to throw you back on yourself. He can do anything he wants, he isn't the one who suffers. When you're with him you're on your own. He gets off scot free and leaves your brain like the first floor of Honest Ed's.<sup>152</sup>

Jubelas' loneliness is Noman's loneliness and consequently Kanadian loneliness. As before, Jubelas holds Noman accountable for his own suffering. Although he recognizes Noman as a mirror, he does not want to own the loneliness Noman reflects back to him.

Noman's power over Jubelas does more than reflect. Jubelas feels as he if is entrapped in the Black Hole of Noman's mind:

You're wondering why I put up with all of this. Sure, I wanted to escape from him, but when he's not a mirror he's a Black Hole. His mind is a Black Hole and nothing escapes a Black Hole, not even light. The gravity inside is so strong that no known form of energy can break its grip. It's a one way trip in time and space. That's what I read somewhere. So I was inside his mind, a prisoner. I was walking around inside his brain, able to get signals from the outside, but unable to send any out.<sup>153</sup>

Noman's energy draws Jubelas to himself, leaving Jubelas caught within a new perception of time and space. Jubelas feels imprisoned within a dark power, receiving messages from without,

---

<sup>152</sup> MacEwen, "Looking for the King," in Noman's Land, p. 69.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

but cannot communicate in return. Jubelas is now sensing the inner state of Noman that creates the feeling of loneliness. As a true amnesiac Noman is in a timeless void that needs to be filled with an understanding of who he is. Jubelas feels Noman's pull as Noman tries to absorb and make sense of the world around him. But once Jubelas is taken into the amnesiac mind there is no communication back out because it cannot properly interpret all the experiences. There are no images to define the experiences. Jubelas, through his own, albeit unacknowledged, power of empathy, is able to sit within Noman's mind and feel the chaotic darkness of it. To be able to empathize Jubelas must have some understanding of the amnesiac state. This state is later established as part of the Kanadian experience which is also equivalent to Noman's land:

So my brain's in this place where what's real and what's not real meet or they don't meet depending on how you look at it --where things aren't clearly defined and one thing just sort of oozes into another.<sup>154</sup>

Jubelas' ability to describe Noman's land without knowing that this is what he is describing is attributable to his Kanadian nature. As a Kanadian Jubelas participates, although in his case unconsciously, in Noman's land. Noman's land is this undifferentiated state where the past and present, dreams and reality, are all mixed up; where time and space are altered.

---

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 73.



Living in touch with Noman's land compels Jubelas to act in ways he would not normally act. He follows Noman around looking for the King in such places as Honest Ed's, subway stations and a "mystical society." Jubelas follows without understanding the implications of what he is looking for. Jubelas follows blindly on, not knowing this journey is also his own.

The experiences, however, create memories that have their own reality:

Some things I'm not sure are real memories, like the time I thought I saw Noman chasing someone round and round those high corridors in Sunnyside Baths, and it was a short fat little guy in a brown suit all right, it was not a ghost because I saw it, or did I?<sup>155</sup>

Jubelas' questioning of the reality of the memory indicates his ambivalence toward illusion and actuality. Memories from his Kanadian past, the ghost of King, are being conjured up. Whereas Noman chases King because he knows that King can give him an answer to the question of who he is. Jubelas sees King as a "short fat little guy." The experience is "maddening" because Jubelas has no context to understand the image. He is being opened up to answers about his own identity before he has posed the questions in his own mind. He is still unconscious of this aspect of his identity. Nevertheless, he is capable of experiencing the world through the power of his own imagination.

---

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

When Noman challenges him on who created whom, Jubelas feels angry and threatened:

Once I [Jubelas] screamed into the black plastic ear of the telephone that I was fed up with everything, and there was just this clicking silence like our phones were conversing in static. I screamed and screamed and there was this clicking silence, clicking silence. Finally I heard his voice, very soft like always. 'You see, Jube? For all you know, I may not be here at all. How do you know I'm here? Maybe you invented me, maybe I never existed.'

'I hate your guts,' I said. 'Take your violin and your alternative realities and your circular time and stuff them.'<sup>156</sup>

Jubelas depends on Noman for his sense of identity. If Noman disappears, if he is just part of Jubelas' imagination, Jubelas loses the one contact that makes his insane world have any reason to be, otherwise Jubelas has to claim all the insanity for himself. For Jubelas illusion and reality are worlds apart. They are not two aspects of one world.

Jubelas is the unconscious Kanadian mind. He represents the feeling of insanity when challenged with the depths of the Kanadian self. Jubelas, however, is so alienated from this self that he does not see that it exists. Although he is capable of feeling Noman's land, he sees it only as Noman's and not as his own.

Kali

---

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

In Kali's story "Nightchild" the question of gender is clearly articulated. Males and females are separate; they have enigmatic, divergent natures:

We offer each other the priceless gift of our own mystery-- for what more do we have to give, finally, than the enigma of our selves? What can we 'know' of one another? Nothing. Men doodle differently than women; women make circles and arcs and men make arrows and knives. Closer to the mystery we cannot come, nor do we want to.<sup>157</sup>

Noman is a mystery Kali cannot and does not want to know. Kali also claims that Noman does not want to know her. The idea of knowing each other is described as "distasteful"<sup>158</sup>. Their inability to know each other is based on the male/female dichotomy, which forces them into different life experiences. Noman looks for his identity, while Kali provides a point of reference for Noman to live from. Kali describes herself in terms of containing time and of being Noman's sanity:

Torn out of time, memory-less, he could imagine himself as a master of time, but when he realized in truth he possessed neither the past nor the future, he returned to me. I do not need to master time; I contain it. I am his fixed point, his sundial; with me he can watch the shadow of himself turning and returning to the same position. I am his compass, I am his sanity.<sup>159</sup>

Kali says she is fixed in time and contains time. She is sane,

---

<sup>157</sup> MacEwen, "Nightchild," in Noman's Land, p. 113.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>159</sup> MacEwen, "Nightchild," in Noman's Land, p. 112.

and she is stayed. This indicates that there is no change in Kali; there is no process of personal development. This is a gender and not a personality difference as is made apparent in the difference between Kali's relationship with Noman and Jubelas' relationship with him. Whereas Jubelas is absorbed by Noman and taken into his alienated mind, Kali remains detached from Noman. Jubelas as a male can be possessed by Noman, brought under his male power into his mind. Kali, on the other hand, is unable to come under his power for she is not a male. Inherent male and female differences prohibit Kali and Noman from crossing personal boundaries.

As in Noman, the basis of Kali's relationship with Noman is adoration. She romanticizes their thirteen-year separation:

Let me tell you of the kind of love that endures absences. Even defines itself by absences, thrives on absences. Let me assure you that thirteen years without him had the same texture as a day, and it was of little consequence how many moons passed, how many breaths. Time does nothing to you; you do things to time. Criminals do time in prison; lovers make time. I gathered time, waiting or not waiting, it did not really matter--for I had the child, and the child seized time and swung it round and round his head like a sword.<sup>160</sup>

She seemed to spend the thirteen years in one long sigh, somehow waiting but not waiting for Noman while she made it through the long hours of raising a child on her own. Motherhood is disassociated from the realities it entails and love is

---

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

understood in terms of absence. Nevertheless, Kali emphasizes the love aspect of their relationship and sings praises to the greatness of lovers:

Strange that no one is born knowing how to love. It is a tremendous task requiring great courage, a dynamic surrender to one's real being. The only heroes on earth are lovers. In love we achieve one another. It is a great victory, a terrible blow to the angel of death. They should give a standing ovation to the world's lovers, offer them the Nobel prize. Ours is the only story worth telling.

It is unclear from Kali's story what she means by "one's real being." The story of lovers may be the only one worth telling; her story, however, does not portray Noman's love. It is her love that she talks of, and it is a highly romanticized one at that. Noman's search for identity certainly relies on Kali's support but it is not evident that Noman surrenders himself to love in relation to Kali. In her understanding of love Jubelas might very well be seen as Noman's potential lover. For Jubelas is challenged to give up his identity to Noman's. Jubelas is also able to move into Noman's mind. There is a crossing of personal boundaries between Jubelas and Noman which is not possible between Kali and Noman.

Although Kali talks of providing Noman with his sanity, the stories indicate that her primary role is that of the mother of his child. She embodies the future through the creation of the child but her role as mother is as producer of the physical body. She certainly is not oblivious to the male/female dichotomy, but

she is ambiguous in her response to it.

When Noman rescues their son from the icy lake waters, Kali sees it as act of the father baptizing the son, of giving birth to the soul. Kali furiously insists on the unjustness of the male and female roles, but at the same time she is very content with her role as mother of the "physical" child:

'It's not fair,' I said. 'Women give birth to a child's body, but men give birth to its soul. A mother teaches him how to tie his shoes, and a father teaches him astronomy or magic. It's not fair.'

I was furious.

'Yes, it's fair,' Noman said. 'It's perfectly balanced, the power is equally divided. Thirteen years ago at Kingsmere I asked you to come with me, under the arch. Let's move into time, I said. And you didn't come - why?'

'I didn't have to,' I smiled. 'I already contained the future.'<sup>161</sup>

"Containing the future" indicates that she was pregnant when Noman went into the forest at Kingsmere. Her reply shows that she accepts the role and that her anger at the male/female division is not to be taken seriously.

When Noman finally ends his search, Kali sees the end in terms of the reunification of the family. Noman now teaches the boy his magical secrets, while Kali stands on the outside as a witness to the events. Her ongoing adoration for Noman is apparent. His love for her, however, other than the physical lovemaking, is not shown. There is no indication that Kali's

---

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

love is reciprocated. Kali finds her identity as a woman through her relationship with Noman, but there is no evidence that Noman finds his identity through his relationship with Kali.

### The Nightchild

The relationship between Noman and the Nightchild reestablishes the magician as embodying the creative self and looks at identity through the continuation of the theme of the estranged father and son. The final resolution of the conflict between Noman and his son is a part of Noman's journey to self identity but is not dependent on it. The resolution is as important for the boy's struggle as it is for Noman's for it limits the possibility of the generational recurrence of broken identity.

Unlike Noman's relationships with Aubrey and Jubelas, the relationship of Noman and his son does not begin through conscious deceit. It begins with the boy's recognition of Noman's inner creative self. The Nightchild is awed by the power of a magician he sees at a birthday party. The boy immediately discovers that he understands the reality of illusion and the power of creation:

All during the magician's performance he had felt that he

was the only one in the room who understood what the magician was really doing - for he wasn't doing 'tricks', he was doing something else, something more important and unnerving than anyone knew. When he produced fire he invented fire. When the silks were pulled from his wand they were a river of miracles. The other kids laughed and he hated them. Magic was not a laughing matter, magic was dead serious.<sup>162</sup>

The boy is intrigued by what he intuitively recognizes as something important and unnerving, but he does not recognize the secret nature of magic that demands privacy. When he stays behind to watch the magician put his equipment away, the magician turns on him:

'Get lost you twit,' said the magician.

It was then that the sky cracked into a thousand pieces and fell onto the boy's head. Reality took a sharp turn to the left; nothing would ever be the same again. Life, he decided then and there, was a big lie. Life could get lost, life could take a walk.<sup>163</sup>

Whereas the power of the magician's act opens up a new world to the boy, the power of the magician's words destroys his former reality. The boy's reality is shattered by his disillusionment with the magician, who embodies the boy's newly discovered power.

The situation is further complicated because the boy does not know that the magician is his father. The magician, Noman, in turn does not know that he has unwittingly just sent his son into a world of despair, turning him into a nightchild who lives

---

<sup>162</sup> MacEwen, "Magic Wars," in Noman's Land, p. 33.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 34.



"under the helmet of darkness."<sup>164</sup>

Now he peered into people's windows, his face pale as clay, pressed against the glass panes of their lives, looking for something he couldn't name, for its name belonged to a superior language he had not yet learned.<sup>165</sup>

Unlike Jubelas' experience with Noman, the emphasis is not on finding loneliness. Before his experience with the magician the boy not only knows but delights in loneliness:

His loneliness was something that shone from him like light. It was an exquisite loneliness, almost refined. It was a gift; he had been born with it, and it was something that the world could never take away from him. He possessed nothing but this thrilling loneliness, and he guarded it with a passion, sharing it only with the blue bicycle in whom he confided all his secrets.<sup>166</sup>

The boy's loneliness is a form of solitude that allows him to create a dynamic reality. "When he was very young, every day had been a birthday he celebrated in a thousand ways, every moment had been a hole into which he dropped his joys and terrors, bizarre adventures."<sup>167</sup> After the destruction of the boy's reality he has to find something to reidentify it in new terms that he can understand. The power of his self has been opened and at the same time undermined. Jubelas, on the other hand, is not aware of his self and his creative potential, which

---

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

is characterized by loneliness.

The boy's self-awareness brings to mind the precocious young Julian and Samuel. All three boys recognize the inner creative self that has to find its identity. Unlike the other two boys, the Nightchild is to be reconciled with his father, who also possesses knowledge of the self.

Aubrey disillusions Samuel but Aubrey does not share Samuel's power. Aubrey's power is the power of his deceit and personal weakness. Aubrey does not acknowledge his parentage to Samuel and then refuses to stand up to Sarah on behalf of the him when she throws Samuel and his mother out of the house. All Aubrey can do is cry for the boy. The battles Samuel fights with Aubrey end with Samuel's surrender to the reality of a father he cannot have.

Noman and the boy fight a different kind of war, which stems from the power that they share. The boy has to accept the magician who rejected him as his father. Noman has to accept the boy who threatens him as his son. They have to be reconciled in terms of their creative energies. They fight on very particular grounds meeting in a common place of neither day or night:

Whenever Noman saw the boy, day was just turning into night, so it was neither one thing or the other but a place in space and time that belonged to the two of them alone.<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

This grey area of alternative time and space is the creative area of the self, the source of magic. This is the one place they both can identify power in themselves. At first the boy is just a grinning menace. But the battle soon turns full scale:

Noman desisted from retaliating on any grand scale. He could have turned on his full powers and wiped out the boy with a single soul-destroying stare, but he contented himself with relatively harmless acts such as giving the boy a case of unbearable itching all over his body which lasted a full twenty-four hours.<sup>169</sup>

The reconciliation does not come until after the boy "goes too far." He learns to bend time and eclipses Noman. Noman again shatters the boy's sense of power by breaking the ice under him as he skates on the lake. Noman rescues his son from the icy water:

'I hate your guts,' the boy said. 'I knew I wouldn't drown down there. Don't you know how hard it is to drown? I could have been down there half an hour and I still wouldn't be dead. Ever heard of the Mammalian Diving Reflex?... And anyway I could have found my own way out?'

'Shut up,' Noman said.<sup>170</sup>

By forcing the boy into the icy water Noman baptizes him into the knowledge that the power of the self is the power of life and of death. Their reconciliation comes through their mutual acknowledgement that Noman is the master and as such he is willing to be the boy's teacher. The boy therefore identifies

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., pp. 113-114.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

with the father and Noman takes on the identity of both natural and spiritual father. It is a relationship based not on sentiment but on the respect of the power of the self. The nameless boy and the Noman father now can create a reality that they alone share. They can go off and "[dream] up their own names."<sup>171</sup>

### Grey Owl and The King

Grey Owl and the King, William Lyon MacKenzie King, have a significant impact on Noman's understanding of his identity. The King creates the land of Kingsmere where Noman's search begins. Kingsmere, Kali explains to Noman, is where King "[tries] to decorate with relics from the past, and [ends] up creating a time-warp."<sup>172</sup> King imposes history where there is none creating a distortion in time:

'The ruins don't belong in that landscape, the landscape rejects them, they create a tension that's almost electrically charged.' She glanced at his arm, recovered now from the numbing effect of the lightning.<sup>173</sup>

The electrical charge of the landscape is associated with the

---

<sup>171</sup> MacEwen, "Nightchild," in Noman's Land, p. 128.

<sup>172</sup> MacEwen, "The Loneliest Country in the World," in Noman's Land, p. 15.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

electrical charge that took away Noman's memory, insinuating that the tensions of the land are powerful enough to obliterate memory. When the past is unreconciled, the present cannot bear the memories.

King does not only provide the landscape that Noman emerges from, he also embodies Kanadian identity:

If you study a picture of him [King] it's like studying a snowbank: opaque, inscrutable. He communicated telepathically with his dog, employed mediums to contact his dead mother, and made no important decisions unless the hands of a clock or watch formed a propitious angle. He needed spiritualists, he needed prostitutes. He had dreams and visions of Hitler and was impressed by the Fuehrer's love of peace."<sup>174</sup>

King is mysterious and ambiguous. He is superstitious and has questionable values. He tries to find a way to live with the past and to make sense of the present.

Noman's relationship with the King is established in Noman's mind through a dream:

I saw him in a dream last night. Short fat little man with a brown suit and a little dog. I said: you can't be a ghost, I don't believe in you. He said: Don't you think this country is old enough to be haunted? Don't you think I'm important enough to be a ghost? Come and find me, I'll tell you everything, I'll show you how to survive here.<sup>175</sup>

The King challenges not Noman's belief in ghosts but, rather, his belief in the possibility of Kanada being too young

---

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

to have a past that can haunt it. King's ghostly being affirms the existence of Kanadian identity which is hidden in Noman's mind.

Noman's search for the King is connected to an image that he finds through the Englishman, Archie Belaney, who takes on the identity of an indigenous Kanadian, Grey Owl. Kali tells Noman how Grey Owl's wife, Anahareo, felt after she discovered that her husband was actually English:

When, finally, I was convinced that Archie was English, I had the awful feeling that for all these years I had been married to a ghost--that Archie never really existed.<sup>176</sup>

In trying to understand her husband's new identity as Archie and not as Grey Owl, Anahareo feels that he is not real but something intangible, a ghost, an aspect of him which once was living and is now dead. Archie, like Noman, lives but appears as a ghost, for his identity has been displaced. Noman sympathizes with Archie and his response to Anahareo's feelings reflects his own search:

How awfully unfair. Of course he existed. As surely as you or I. He was only looking for his soul, or for God, or whatever.<sup>177</sup>

His ambivalence about what Archie is looking for--"his soul, or for God"--is the closest indication of a spiritual search in the

---

<sup>176</sup> MacEwen, "An Evening with Grey Owl," in Noman's Land, p. 78.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

Noman story. God is but a "whatever" within Noman's consciousness. There is no attempt to associate any spiritual connection between Noman and his search. Whereas in Julian the Magician the self is expressed in religious images, the primary image for Noman's search is not only secular but Kanadian:

They [Grey Owl and Anahareo] spoke of how the Indians had no opposites of God, how good and evil were not separate forces, but two aspects of one spirit, one reality. He liked that.

They sought themselves in each other's eyes like all the world's lovers from the beginning of time. But they couldn't discover their histories in one another, for when she looked into his eyes she only saw the lost lands of her fathers, and in her eyes he saw the desolate country which was his soul. He claimed that only the natives had a memory, that the white people suffered from a permanent amnesia brought about by his first glimpse of vast and horrifying expanses of snow.<sup>178</sup>

Archie Belaney sees the desolate country of his soul reflected in the eyes of his wife Anahareo, while she sees the lost lands of her people in his. This is the land of Kanada where the aboriginal peoples have lost their land and consequently their identity and the white people have never found theirs. The aboriginal memory is tied to their past, but they have little future as seen in the case of George Lucas. The white people on the other hand have no memory after being shocked by their first vision of vast and horrifying expanses of snow. The future of the white people is dependent on regaining their memory.

---

<sup>178</sup> MacEwen, "An Evening with Grey Owl," in Noman's Land, p. 75.

Noman's amnesia symbolizes the amnesia of all Kanadians caused by a trauma of alienation metaphorically represented by the image of the snow. The image suggests the stunning of the psyche by a power too immense to be contained. But somewhere within the whiteness of the mind there is a memory of the past.

The image of the white people suffering from permanent amnesia is linked to the King who is "opaque and inscrutable" like a snowbank. The image becomes a reality narrowing the boundaries between illusion and reality. When Noman sees a mysterious hooded man during a blizzard, he follows him through the streets down to the lake where

The white of the snow of the air merged with the white of the shoreline, so when Noman got to the bottom of the curved bridge there was no more horizon. The sky and the lake were one; it was awful.<sup>179</sup>

The place of their meeting is significant. It is the place of the white people's permanent amnesia. The "awful" white where time and space lose reality, where the King, who is dead, is alive, where the land, the lake and the sky are all one.

Noman's quest takes him into this mind and there the mysterious man addresses him:

'So,' said King, 'it seems you have found me.'

'What do you have to tell me?' Noman asked... 'How do I survive here?'

'By embracing the loneliness,' said King. 'You already have survived. And by being an explorer. The exploration

---

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 102.



of this country hasn't ended; it never will. Each time you go further into the interior, you find another country.' Then he stepped onto to an ice floe, neatly and carefully, as though it were an escalator.<sup>180</sup>

Noman responds to the King's cryptic message with a boyish anger reminiscent of the Nightchild's angry reaction to him:

'You cheat! Come back! What other country?' Noman cried.

'I have not cheated you. I have given you something to look for. That's more than enough. Goodbye.' The ice floe moved away from the shore.

'You've got to tell me more, you bastard!'

'Don't insult me, I'm old enough to be your father,' said King...'It will all be clear to you...'<sup>181</sup>

The King tells Noman to embrace what is his, his loneliness, and to discover the country. This vision of the King has led him to the lake and the vision disappears into the lake. "Sooner or later everything led to the lake," Noman thinks. "He would remember."<sup>182</sup>

Noman finds the King, the father of his homeland, in an image outside of himself. This awful white place with no definable point of reference is the amnesia of the white people's mind. The outer vision has an interior reality which Noman later experiences as a white death:

'White,' he whispered, 'everything white, the sky and the lake all white, no division, no horizon, nothing....'

---

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

'Death is not black, Ibrahim, it is white,' he whispered.<sup>183</sup>  
The image of the great white storm is also inside of Noman.  
Noman dies in this violent white death of his mind, then  
immediately comes back to life. Deep inside the tumultuous white  
death, Noman finds another place he has to go. "The core of  
absolute quiet, it's this I must reach."<sup>184</sup> Through the death  
experience Noman has briefly experienced the land the King speaks  
of. However, he also has to experience it through life.

Noman's personal amnesia disappears but he now knows the  
white people's permanent amnesia. He completely dies to his  
personal identity and has to experience the collective identity  
which all share.

### Ibrahim

If Jubelas is the unconscious Kanadian imagination, Ibrahim  
is the awakening Kanadian imagination. Ibrahim is a self-exiled  
Arab poet. Like Noman, he has cut himself off from his past  
because he cannot face the reality of it. Ibrahim fears for his  
own life because he has had a three-year affair with his best  
friend's wife. As a stranger to Kanada Ibrahim has to learn to

---

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

live with the loneliness that is part of his new identity. Like Jubelas Ibrahim also depends on Noman's existence to understand this new identity in his new land but unlike Jubelas Ibrahim knows that his new home is Noman's land:

I would remain here in Noman's land with my despair and my loneliness and my silly hobbies. I would remain wherever Noman was, for he was all I had left of Ali, and all I had left of myself.<sup>185</sup>

Ibrahim's experience as a new Kanadian is juxtaposed with the world he comes from:

You [Westerners] know nothing of death and therefore nothing of life! I come from a fiery people, a tragic people, a people who, live in pictures of black and white, not grey like you North Americans.<sup>186</sup>

Ibrahim sees Kanada as a land where life and death are undefined, and concludes that the only way to survive in such a place is to forget:

I must forget who I am. I must lose myself to find myself. then I will write better poetry. I must merge with people, cohabit and amalgamate. I must forget the Old World altogether. Down with the past; up with the future.<sup>187</sup>

Survival for Ibrahim is giving up his past, which is giving up his self. Ibrahim wants to be able to write poetry again. He wants to be able to make contact with his creative centre. To do

---

<sup>185</sup> MacEwen, "Footprints on the Ceiling," in Noman's Land, p. 99.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-91.

so he too has to be reborn into his new land so that he can regain contact with his self in the new context. Noman is the channel for Ibrahim's rebirth.

Ibrahim witnesses his dead friend Ali speak through Noman just before Noman dies into the white storm. Ali absolves Ibrahim of his sins, leaving Ibrahim free from the guilt of the past. Whereas rebirth is normally considered to be a auspicious event, Ibrahim's rebirth, which happens on the night of his birthday, is a rebirth into grief. For although Ibrahim has been freed from his past he still has to live in the present, and the present is Kanada, Noman's land. Ibrahim is reborn into the knowledge of the despair of living in Noman's land.

Through Ibrahim's rebirth the meaning of the place of the white storm is extended. It is not only where memories have been lost. It is also where the dead are found. It is where Noman finds the King and where Ibrahim finds Ali. In the depth of the self are found other selves. They are ghosts of the past but also voices of the present that redeem the past and provide the courage to face the future.

Noman does not know that Ali spoke to Ibrahim through him. But out of this experience Noman gains what he calls "the Terrible Knowledge."

I live with death. Most people don't know that they will die at all. I have embraced my death and made it part of my living; in a sense my life is nothing but the knowledge of

my end. I know I will die; thus I am reborn.<sup>188</sup>

Noman's experience has also been one of rebirth. For he has died and "embraced his death." In the great white expanse of the depths of the mind is both life and death. This is the self hidden behind the amnesia. Noman's experience has taken him one step further than Ibrahim. Noman also knows Ibrahim's loneliness and despair but he now also knows that embracing the loneliness is embracing death, which is also paradoxically embracing life. Once he is conscious of the Terrible Knowledge, Noman can follow the King into the lake.

#### The Culmination of the Search: The Other Country

The search for identity culminates in Noman's final act, swimming a marathon race across Lake Ontario. The act is a public, international event. It is not something Noman does on his own. In another society this journey might have been organized through the spiritual leaders and recognized as an initiation into the tribe. In Noman's secularized world he uses the structure of proving physical prowess as a means for his own initiation into his own personal tribe, which the King is the leader.

---

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

King's ghost has guided him to the lake. But Noman alone knows that. He is both in the race and outside of it. A reporter interviews him and scribbles in her notebook:

He's [Noman] a bundle of nerves, they all are. God, you'd think there were easier ways of killing yourself than this. He wants to find another land; most of the others just want to win this crazy marathon. Well I guess they all have their reasons for what they are doing.<sup>189</sup>

Unlike the other swimmers, Noman is not just swimming across the lake. He is looking for something in the lake. Something that the King went down to:

The first time he went down he was looking for his name. Somewhere at the bottom of the lake was his name, his drowned self. He sank into the awful world of water, only to discover that his body bobbed up again of its own accord. The second time he went down to explore the spaces between life and death, to find what lay there in the self, in that other country.<sup>190</sup>

Immersing himself in the lake, is immersion into his own being. Understanding begins in being able to find his own name. The "awful world of the water" is the awful world of the self. It is the awful white world of the mind which encompasses life and death.

Immersion in the self means surrendering to it:

Take me to the absolute depths, he prayed, let me give over at last. Let me offer it all up to the black water--the lost loves, the broken dreams. I'm dragging it all down with me to the bottom of the lake; the past, the future,

---

<sup>189</sup> MacEwen. "The Other Country," in Noman's Land, p. 129.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

everything.<sup>191</sup>

His offering is himself. He sacrifices himself both to and for his self. Like Julian he submits to the other power. While Julian submitted directly to himself through the otherness he found within, Noman submits to himself through the medium of the lake.

But his lungs betrayed him, forcing him to the surface with repeated bursts of fiendish energy. Could it be so incredibly difficult to die? Could it be that death didn't want him, and the lake wasn't interested in his offerings? What then?....

Suddenly he began to laugh because it was all so goddamn funny. What a colossal irony--he couldn't die now when he tried, he who had died so many times in the past. as it a luxury to even consider death in the midst of life, an unearned luxury? No, it was more than this--it was an error. It was as he had always known. You couldn't die.... He knew that he was immortal; he knew it with absolute certainty. He had always been here and always would be.<sup>192</sup>

He lives the Terrible Knowledge, the knowledge of life and death, making it an absolute certainty. He enters into the same knowledge that Julian found: the one knowledge that is death. Unlike Julian he keeps on living, drawing a simple philosophy from what he has learned:

It occurred to him that since he was alive he may as well do something about it. And following upon that thought was another - that as long as one was alive, one may as well do it right, period. It was as simple as that; it always

---

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

had been.<sup>193</sup>

His own sacrifice to death has redeemed him in life. He can live freely, knowing he will die but that he will also live again.

The Noman story ends in a burst of energetic optimism. Noman's journey reunites him both with himself and with the world. The journey begins and ends with the self. The creative power of life is in the self. Until he recognizes himself as an eternal creative being he cannot see the beauty of life. The beauty in life comes from the recognition of the other country which Noman explains to the reporter is "Right here.... There is another country, you know, and it's inside this one....'God,' he said, 'God the world is beautiful.'"<sup>194</sup>

Noman's despair ends when life becomes real through death. Life is not an illusion that he is one day going to have to give up to the power of death. Life continues. Death is the name of the beginning of a new life.

#### Gender and Noman's Land

The optimism of Noman's Land's affirms human nature and its ability to live within a reality based on loneliness. The

---

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p. 138.



reality Noman's Land offers is also based on the male/female dichotomy which underlies all of MacEwen's work. There has been no change in the portrayal of human nature with respect to gender. On the contrary, Noman's Land provides a clearer statement of male and female roles as mind and body respectively. Kali explicitly states her role as mother of the physical child and with few reservations accepts the implications of the male/female split.

There are few other women in Noman's Land to consider. Noman has no other contact with women. The only other place to look is at Ibrahim's experiences. He talks of two women from his own culture, his girlfriend, a young virgin who lovingly waits for him, and his lover, "the breasty unquenchable creature,"<sup>195</sup> his friend Ali's wife. These women, both from outside Western culture, present the virgin/whore aspects of female identity. Ibrahim encounters only a few Western women. He is distraught by his sexual frustration and his inability to relate to the women in Toronto. He cannot understand Kali's befriending him, opening up the possibility to him of the female as friend and not just sexual object. His one sexual encounter is with a "female of German extraction." The woman is described as aggressive in appearance:

---

<sup>195</sup> MacEwen, "Footprints on the Ceiling," in Noman's Land, p. 94.

She had apricot-coloured talons, and wore pink-tinted glasses and a collar made of a fox around her neck--a fox whose head was a plastic clip that clipped onto its own tail, so in this grotesque death the animal was forced to devour itself.<sup>196</sup>

She wears the form of an ouroboros symbol. The fox collar, however, is not a regenerative symbol but that of "grotesque death."

The woman is also portrayed as aggressive in nature.

'Arabs,' she breathed. 'I love Arabs. Scimitars, black horses, swirling robes. Dominance. Abraham, most men are only after me for my mind, it's disgusting. I'm sick of women's lib, I want to be a sex symbol!'<sup>197</sup>

Ibrahim's reaction is one of disgust:

Bloody Western amazons, I thought, bloody Western whores. My body was betraying me with a spectacular display of unreadiness.<sup>198</sup>

Ibrahim feels threatened by female aggressiveness just as Julian had felt threatened by the actress who tried to seduce him. This woman, however, who occupies about three paragraphs in Noman's Land is MacEwen's only attempt to challenge the issue of female identity. The German woman is portrayed as being caught in an either/or situation. She sees herself as being slotted as intellectual or sexual. There is no apparent alternative. Her own attitude toward sex, however, is also based on a hierarchal

---

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

dichotomy of dominance and submissiveness, another aspect of the male/female roles. Nothing is resolved through this character, but at least the issue of the problem of female identity is raised to some degree.

In Noman's Land all males and females are caught in these roles that they cannot break away from. The roles, however, are not challenged and the underlying foundations of the roles are accepted. The principal female character, Kali, calmly acquiesces with little more than a brief statement of protest.

Conclusions

In the Noman and Julian stories MacEwen looks at the question of identity in relation to a creative, eternal self. Her early Julian story uses the Christ myth as an underlying matrix. Julian's self-identity is developed as a magician in relation to the Christ image. To develop her theme MacEwen also draws on related gnostic and alchemical imagery. Her image of identity, therefore, is closely tied to a particular worldview and Christian images. It is exclusive in its understanding of identity and in its religious overtones.

In the Noman story MacEwen looks for a new basis to express the self. She does not draw on the Christ myth but tries to develop a new Kanadian myth drawing on the Kanadian imagination: Kanada is a land of self-discovery, William Lyon MacKenzie King is the King--a man of knowledge and a guide for Noman. Kingsmere is Noman's birthplace, and Lake Ontario is the lake of rebirth. It is possible to infer that MacEwen does not drop the Christ myth simply because she wants to find something Kanadian but because it does not express Kanadian self-identity in meaningful terms. The Christian myth is no longer recognized as the exclusive mainstay of North American mythic identity. Her

concern with aboriginal people and new Kanadians indicates her awareness that the Kanadian mythological universe is expanding. New images are needed to express basic human concerns.

In both the Julian and Noman stories MacEwen tries to find images to bring life and death together and both stories consequently end in the attainment of what is called the "Terrible Knowledge." This knowledge differs as she moves from a more anti-social exclusive worldview to one that is more social and inclusive. In the Julian story the "Terrible Knowledge" is equated with submission to the Christ image in oneself and therefore with death. Realizing this knowledge is an end in itself. Such knowledge assumes the death of the physical body, thereby freeing the incarcerated divinity from the material world. In Julian knowledge is so self-contained that there is little room for relationships with the outside world. The transforming nature of self-knowledge applies to the self strictly as an individual. The process does not happen in isolation, but it is a process for the self as self. Julian is self-contained as a human being. He is androgynous. He is not dependent on others. He is also completed in his spiritual nature as his humanness gives way to the divine in him. The acceptance of this self-containment, or wholeness, is freedom, and this freedom means freedom from any identification with the physical world.

In the Noman story the "Terrible Knowledge" involves finding identity in the material world through accepting death. Realizing this knowledge means not only the ability to survive in the physical world but the recognition of its beauty. Sense of identity changes in the Noman stories, taking on a more inclusive nature. Transformation is still through the creative power of the self. As in the Julian story transformation involves the completion of human identity in the form of a myth. But the telling of the Noman story is the making of a new myth. The Noman story is the creation of the myth of Noman, the Kanadian who finds his own identity. Kanada is the symbol of where one finds Noman's land. Noman's land is where life and death meet in the creative self. It is out of the self and the loneliness Kanadians experience there that the Kanadian story has to be told.

In MacEwen's stories she has been able to find symbols that unify life and death. But she has been unable to break with the Western dichotomy of the body and the mind.<sup>199</sup> The breaking up of human nature into these two aspects creates in turn a male/female dichotomy. MacEwen's premise of personal identity is based on the fundamental assumption that male identity is associated with

---

<sup>199</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Motherearth and the Megamachine," in Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion, 43-52.

the mind and that the female identity is associated the body. The imagery to support this view pervades her fiction. The dichotomy is resolved in the Julian story by making Julian androgynous. He does not need women, he is complete in himself. This in itself is not sexist but the women of the story are portrayed as mindless test-tubes, which immediately subordinates them to the male Julian who is redeemed. If human nature is to be redeemed through the intellect there has to be an intellect to begin with. But the women in Julian the Magician do not seem to possess one.

In the Noman story, MacEwen works out this dualism by defining the roles in the persons of Noman and Kali. It is made explicit that males and females are different in nature. Noman searches for his true identity; Kali knows her identity by virtue of her sex. Noman provides the Nightchild with his soul and Kali provides only the body. Noman is the discoverer looking for new lands of the imagination. Kali does not have to venture into the grey areas of the mind. She is a constant, unchanging point of reference for Noman to find his own inner identity, which is located in his intellect.

This male/female dichotomy puts an impenetrable barrier between Kali and Noman. However, a very different kind of relationship develops between Noman and the male characters. The males can cross personal boundaries in the form of a

psychological intimacy, which is impossible between Kali and Noman. This is particularly evident in Noman's relationships with Jubelas and Ibrahim.

There is some indication that MacEwen may have been trying to find images alternative to the traditional Western identity of a woman by, for example, giving Kali the name of the Hindu goddess. But MacEwen does not develop Kali's character to explore this alternative. MacEwen also unsuccessfully tries to associate Kali with Lilith. Kali does not have any of Lilith's characteristics nor does MacEwen even reflect on what being Lilith means.

MacEwen has not, therefore, created a new myth for women. She has not been able to envision an image of human identity that allows women to be a complete being, both body and mind. The images she presents do not speak to contemporary women's experience. While Noman is out exploring Noman's land, Kali is busy helping to secure the sign outside that land that says "No Women Allowed." In these fictional works any possible mythmaking intentions have failed, and, although reviewer Suniti Namjoshi refers to MacEwen as a "priestess [who] has power and that power must be maintained or the oracles would cease,"<sup>200</sup> there are no prophetic oracles for women in the Julian/Noman

---

<sup>200</sup> Suniti Namjoshi, "Oracles and Metrics," Canadian Forum 55:63.



stories.

## Sources Cited

### PRIMARY SOURCES

- MacEwen, Gwendolyn. 1963. Julian the Magician. Toronto: Macmillan.
- MacEwen, Gwendolyn. 1969. The Shadow Maker. Toronto: Macmillan.
- MacEwen, Gwendolyn. 1971. King of Egypt, King of Dreams. Toronto: Macmillan.
- MacEwen, Gwendolyn. 1972. Noman. Ottawa: Oberon Press.
- MacEwen, Gwendolyn. 1985. Noman's Land. Toronto: Coach House Press.

### SECONDARY SOURCES

- Atwood, Margaret. "MacEwen's Muse," Canadian Literature 45:23-32.
- Bartley, Jan. 1984. Gwendolyn MacEwen and Her Works. Toronto: ECW Press.
- Bartley, Jan. 1983. Invocations: The Poetry and Prose of Gwendolyn MacEwen. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Bowering, George. 1962. "The Canadian Poetry Underground," Canadian Literature 13:66-67.
- Butler, E. M. 1948. The Myth of the Maqus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chetwynd, Thomas. 1982. A Dictionary of Symbols. London: Paladin.
- Colombo, John Robert, ed. 1971. Rhymes and Reasons: Nine Canadian Poets Discuss Their Work. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Coudert, Allison. 1987. "Renaissance Alchemy." In Mircea Eliade, ed., Encyclopedia of Religion. vol. I. pp. 199-202. London: Macmillan.

Cullman, Oscar. 1963. "Infancy Gospels." In E. Hennecke & W. Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha, vol. I, Gospel and Related Subjects, 363-417. Trans. R. M. Watson. London: Lutterworth.

Davey, Frank. "Gwendolyn MacEwan: The Secret of Alchemy," Open Letter (second series) 4, Spring 1973:5-23.

Geddes, Gary, and Phyllis Bruce, eds. 1970. 15 Canadian Poets. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Frye, Northrop. 1982. The Great Code: The Bible and Literature, Toronto: Academic Press.

Gose, E. B. "They Shall Have Arcana," Canadian Literature 21:36-45.

Gould, Eric. 1981. Mythical Intentions in Modern Literature. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jung, Carl Gustav. 1968. Mysterium Coniunctionis. Ed. H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. 2d ed. Bollingen Series XX, vol. 14. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Monaghan, Patricia. 1981. The Book of Goddesses and Heroines. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Namjoshi, Suniti. "Oracles and Metrics," Canadian Forum 55:63.

Organ, Tony Wilson. 1987. Philosophy and the Self: East and West. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press.

Pagels, Elaine. 1981. The Gnostic Gospels. New York: Vintage Books.

Renou, Louis, ed. 1962. Hinduism. New York: George Braziller.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. 1979. In Christ, Carol P. and Judith Plaskow, eds., "Motherearth and the Megamachine." Womanspirit Rising: a Feminist Reader in Religion, 43-52. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Schneemelcher, W., 1963. E. Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha, v. 1. London: Lutterworth Press.

Sherman, Joseph. "Review of The Armies of the Moon," The Fiddlehead 94:118-20.

Warwick, Ellen D. "To Seek a Single Symmetry," Canadian Literature 71:21-34.