

## **Maitreyi** **From Authenticity to Colonial Fantasy**

Fevronia Novac<sup>1</sup>

Mircea Eliade's novel, *Maitreyi*, about his friendship with Maitreyi Devi, Indian writer, has been celebrated in Romania since its publication in 1933 as an exercise in authenticity. When it appeared in the United States in 1994, translated as *Bengal Nights*, it was read as "colonial fantasy". The American publishing house printed at the same time Devi's response to Eliade's book, *It Does Not Die*, first published in 1974 in India, where it was a success surpassing that of Eliade's book in his native Romania. This article will analyse the fate of the two books and their divergent critical reception in Romania and the United States. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: [journal@transformativestudies.org](mailto:journal@transformativestudies.org) Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2016 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

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It was a pen name under which, in 1933, Mircea Eliade sent his novel titled *Maitreyi*<sup>2</sup> (the real name of the girl he loved in India) as a manuscript to a competition for a Romanian literary prize. Although Eliade did not reveal himself as the author, he used his friend's name in

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<sup>2</sup> Translated in English as *Bengal Nights*, 1994.