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Desire and Divide in La Nuit Bengali and Na Hanyate: A Deconstructive Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how Mircea Eliade's *La Nuit Bengali* and Maitreyi Devi's *Na Hanyate* paint rich tapestry of love, longing and cultural dislocations. These two stories, from the same lived experience, however, crafted from completely different vantage points, navigate the tensions between personal wants and historical reality. Eliade's vision of a brief, intoxicating romance is pit against Devi's righteous reclamation of agency, pushing back against the gaze which distorts and appropriates. At heart, this study inquires into how love, rather than being a straightforward or apolitical force, is vitally braided into arrangements of power, colonial nostalgia and the weight of memory. This paper examines this experience comprehensively and illustrates how longing transforms into a contentious arena for authorship and identity when the tenuous distinctions between East and West, fiction and reality, and self and other are disrupted. Ultimately, this research speaks to the conversation about postcolonial literature, how stories are gendered, early and recent, and how silent negotiations inform how but also why histories are remembered—and who gets to tell them.

Keywords: Desire; Identity; Deconstruction; Ideological contestation; Politics of representation.

Introduction

A society's discernment of factuality is thoroughly created upon the shared knowledge around the context of historical background and the culture, where the society exists. Stories or facts are always needed to apprehend in a particular system as any singular existing element belongs to that system and shapes the empirical world (intermittently!). Culture, recognized as the most complex phenomena, in the words of Edward B. Tylor, includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (*Primitive Culture*, 1871, pp- 1). Analogously, culture is political (Kuumba 112) and conveyor of power, often found in colonial history in the form of binary interactions. Meijuan et al. (2020) describe hybridization as "an effective means of enhancing cultural vitality and advancing the creation of literary works" (p. 27). Hybridity and culture intermingle in search of identity; as Bhabha's "Third space" argues for the in-between place where the hybrid identities are structured, a (non) existent area of vacillation and negotiation where power can be challenged. So culture and identity have always been the ever- evolving complex phenomena for analyzing the postcolonial literature.

The titles *La Nuit Bengali* and *Na Hanyate* carry profound significance for the exploration of desire and division within the texts. *La Nuit Bengali* (Bengal Nights) evokes a sense of mystery, darkness, and cultural otherness, setting the stage for a narrative deeply entwined with Orientalist desire and the colonial gaze. The "night" metaphorically evokes the notion of both the unknown and the hidden, indicating the tensions between the colonizer's fantasies and the lived experiences of colonized people. Meanwhile, *Na Hanyate*, meaning "It Does Not Die," indicates survival and resistance, as a counter-narrative roll, against colonial erasure and colonized simplification. The title shows that identity, culture, and personal truth stay the same even after colonial changes. The titles together show the main ideas of desire and division: one shows desire through the West's exoticized view, and the other shows division through the colonized subject's strong claim to agency. The titles themselves become symbolic

sites where desire is both constructed and contested. Ultimately, they invite readers to question the stability of meaning and to uncover the underlying divides shaped by history and power.

La Nuit Bengali (Bengal Nights) and *Na Hanyate* (It Does Not Die) are two different quests for narrating the history of love that took place in the colonial past of India. Apparently, they seem like two counter love stories; however, the truth of eroticism plays the central idea in both the novels. Eliade originally wrote his account in Romanian, publishing it in 1933. It was later translated into French as *La Nuit Bengali* in 1950 and into English as *Bengal Nights* in 1994. It was not until 1938 that Devi learned of Eliade's autobiographical novel through her father, Surendranath Dasgupta. However, it wasn't until 1972—when Eliade's friend Sergui visited her in Calcutta—that she fully understood the overtly sexual nature of the romance depicted in *Bengal Nights* between herself and the disguised Alain (Eliade). Eliade wrote his novel in subjective narration and described his protagonist as a young Frenchman named Alain. In India, Alain meets Surendranath Dasgupta (fictive name Narendra Sen in Eliade's narration) and after a while he starts living with the Indian family as Mr. Dasgupta has invited him. The conflict, nonetheless, arrives with the meeting of Maitreyi Devi, daughter of Dasgupta, when they fall in love. Later, Maitreyi's father asks Alain to leave the house as well as his daughter's life. This is how the forbidden romance of "self" and "the other" has failed to reach any destination and eventually becomes a barred memory for Maitreyi until 1972. In 1972, she read the translated book and came across the intense erotic scenes that provided her the urge of re-telling herself or the (true) story as a platonic one excluding the sexual desire published as *Na Hanyate.*

After examining both texts, it becomes clear that Devi's work provides the clarity of Eliade's perspective. The differences in expression, the complexities of negotiation and the various interpretations that arise from them all stem from events shaped by a larger process of cultural assimilation. Emotionally the two books are love stories of two opposite gender, however, culturally; they reflect the complexities of the self and the other, the (former) colonizer and the colonized, with power dynamics that often position one as superior to the other, revealing the tensions between identity, domination, and resistance. As a result, most of the colonial mindset (as Alain) fails to understand, showing the tendency for cruel judgment, perpetuating an over generalized framework. A prominent figure in the study of binary logic Jacques Derrida remarks;

Therefore, one has to admit, before any dissociation of language and speech, code and message, etc. (and everything that goes along with such a dissociation), a systematic production of differences, the production of a system of differences—a différance—within whose effects one eventually, by abstraction and according to determined motivations, will be able to demarcate a linguistics of linguistics of speech, etc. (28)

> Derrida's idea of "différance" shows that meaning is made through ongoing differences and deferrals in language. This makes fixed binaries like colonizer/colonized unstable. In *La Nuit Bengali* and *Na Hanyate*, this elucidates that identities and power dynamics are not fixed but are perpetually negotiated through linguistic and cultural codes.

Both the authors have written their stories within their specific and highly opposite historical, cultural, and personal framework. This study endeavors to analyze the yearning to reclaim Devi's identity, alongside Eliade's Orientalist perspective, to highlight stereotypical ideas framed in the name of love and desire.

The purpose of this paper is to determine how Mircea Eliade's *La Nuit Bengali* (Bengal Nights) and Maitreyi Devi's *Na Hanyate* (It Does Not Die) deconstruct identity and desire. It explores the fluidity and fragmentation of identity, both cultural and personal, within the entanglements of gendered power hierarchies, colonialism, and Orientalism through a comparative analysis. The study scrutinizes the confluence of desire, dominance, and recollection, illustrating how these narratives simultaneously reinforce and subvert prevailing discourses on love, selfhood, and the imperial gaze. Utilizing a deconstructive approach, this paper takes a close look at how both texts challenge rigid ideas of identity, love, and truth, revealing the gaps between personal experience and the way history is written. It also examines the Orientalist undertones in Eliade's narrative, contrasting them with Devi's alternative

perspective, highlighting the politics of storytelling, silencing, and reclamation. By exploring themes of cultural boundaries, memory, and the lingering effects of colonialism, this study seeks to contribute to discussions in postcolonial and gender studies, providing a detailed analysis of how identity and desire are broken down, reshaped, and contested within these literary and historical contexts.

Literature Review

For years, literature has extensively depicted East-West relationships, exploring themes of Orientalism, cultural dynamics, and love. *Orientalism* (1978), a cornerstone of this discourse, was written by Edward Said, who critically investigates how the West has historically constructed and represented the East through a lens of power, eroticization, and cultural superiority, ultimately shaping colonial and postcolonial narratives that continue to influence contemporary perspectives. Scholars like Rana Kabbani in *Love and Eroticism in the Orientalist Discourse,* (1986, Chapter 3) and Lisa Lowe in *Critical Terrains* (1991, pp. 45-67) extend Said's arguments, showing how love and desire in colonial and postcolonial literature often solidify Western preeminence.

Mircea Eliade's *Bengal Nights* envisions India as a dreamy, almost otherworldly place—full of mysticism and sensuality—that feeds into familiar stereotypes of the "exotic" Orient. The Western male protagonist is not just watching from the sidelines—he's deeply involved, his desires shaping the way the story unfolds. Cross-cultural relationships in literature frequently reflect power asymmetries, one of the major themes in post colonialism, explored by Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) and Homi K. Bhabha (1994). They argue that colonial power generates hybrid identities while perpetuating deep- seated inequalities. In *Bengal Nights, the European male traveler plays the role of an enlightened White who becomes demented after witnessing the 'quaint' beautiful Indian female as it appears so alien in the eyes of him. Thus he represents both the roles of an observer and the agent of desire for creating the stereotypical images of India. Notwithstanding,* in *It Does Not Die,* Maitreyi Devi offers a powerful counter-narrative, reclaiming her agency and challenging the male-dominated version of her past relationship. Her work embodies Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept of the "subaltern," as she reclaims her narrative and dismantles the colonial romanticized lens that once framed her story.

Literary portrayals of love in intercultural relationships often incorporate both fascination and violence. Frantz Fanon (1952), in *Black Skin, White Masks* (Chapter 5, "The Fact of Blackness," pp. 112) explores how love in colonial contexts is deeply shaped by racial hierarchies and internalized power structures, rendering neutrality unattainable. In Eliade's account, love appears transcendental but is ultimately constrained by cultural barriers, leading to tragedy. Conversely, Devi reinterprets love as an act of resistance, exposing the incompleteness and colonial underpinnings of Eliade's narrative. These works exemplify the enduring influence of Orientalist discourse in literature and the necessity of reexamining historical narratives through a decolonial lens.

Critics have pointed out that Eliade's portrayal of the East fits the classic Orientalist narrative, casting it as exotic, mysterious, and spiritually superior. As K. N. Singh (2000) suggests, Eliade's narrative romanticizes the East, presenting it as a land of mystery and transcendence, standing in stark contrast to the rationality of the West. Yet beneath this idealized portrayal, there is an underlying power dynamic, where the colonial backdrop subtly shapes the characters' relationship, adding layers of complexity and inequality. Scholars such as Ananya Jahanara Kabir (2004) have argued in her essay "Gender, Memory, Trauma: Women's Novels on the Partition of India" that Eliade's depiction oversimplifies the complexities of the colonized subject, particularly in relation to gender. Kabir notes that Devi, when contrasted with Western women, "looked around her with a lively curiosity that was constantly tinged with a suggestion of mockery," a portrayal that reinforces colonial and gendered hierarchies by presenting the colonized woman as exotic and inferior (Kabir, 2004, p. 56). The portrayal of Maitreyi, the novel's female protagonist, presents an idealized image of Indian womanhood, one that both reinforces and challenges prevailing colonial stereotypes.

Eliade's narrative frames love as a transcendent force, yet one ultimately constrained by the realities of colonialism and cultural difference. In contrast, Maitreyi Devi's *It Does Not Die* offers a counter-narrative, portraying love not as an idealized or spiritual experience, but as a complex and often painful confrontation with colonial power dynamics. Scholars such as Ranjana Khanna (2003) contend that *It*

Does Not Die challenges the Orientalist framework by foregrounding the agency and complexity of the colonized subject. Shyam Selvadurai (2010) argues that *It Does Not Die* powerfully illustrates how the colonized experiences love—not as a romanticized or passive ideal, but as a deeply personal and politically charged reality shaped by colonial history and power structures. As Laura Chrisman (2001) and other scholars argue, "Love within the colonial context is never impartial; it is always intertwined with matters of race, power, and dominance."

Although these works have received considerable scholarly attention, the intersection of Orientalism and love remains an underexplored area. While many studies focus on colonial power structures and racial representations, fewer examine how love itself serves as either a form of resistance or complicity within these dynamics, such as Ananya Jahanara Kabir's *Territory of Desire (2005),* **Anne McClintock's** *Imperial Leather (1995),* David Eng's *The Feeling of kinship (2010).* Furthermore, *It Does Not Die* warrants deeper analysis as a postcolonial counter-narrative to Eliade's text, offering a decolonial perspective on their complex relationship. By reexamining these works through a decolonial lens, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation on how colonial love stories reflect, reinforce, and resist colonial power structures.

Material and Methods

Primary material is original materials on which research is based. They are firsthand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under consideration. They present information in its original form, neither interpreted nor condensed evaluated by other writers. In this research, *La Nuit Bengali* (Bengal Nights) by Mircea Eliade and *Na Hanyate* (It Does Not Die) by Maitreyi Devi has been used as a primary material. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study delves into the thematic development of *It Does Not Die* and *Bengal Nights*, focusing on how each text portrays cultural clashes and reclamation of identity. The analysis will be enriched by secondary sources, including critical essays and academic articles, which offer historical context and scholarly perspectives. These sources will help deepen the understanding of how Orientalism and the destruction of identity are explored in both novels, shedding light on the complexities of cultural dynamics and their impact on the characters.

This study adopts the method of "close textual exegesis" and "critical discourse analysis", one of the fundamental methods of modern criticism. The term exegesis means "to explain" or "to interpret", traditionally used in the context of religious texts. So "close textual exegesis" is a careful and sustained investigation into a text. It involves examining key details and patterns to fully understand the text's structure, meaning, and the way it communicates its ideas. This process includes:

- Using short passages and excerpts
- Diving right into the texts with limited pre-reading activities
- Focusing on the texts themselves
- Rereading deliberately
- Noticing things that are confusing
- Responding to text-dependent questions

This paper considers three key components for evaluating the complexity of the texts: qualitative measures, quantitative measures, and the reader and the task. Each of these factors is equally important in understanding a text's complexity. It employs a descriptive qualitative method to examine the themes of Orientalism, cultural erasure, and identity displacement in both *It Does Not Die* and *Bengal Nights.*

Results and Discussion

Deeply ingrained in Orientalist discourse, Mircea Eliade's *Bengal Nights* frames its love story through the lens of colonialism. India is romanticized in the book as a magical, exotic destination that is both erotically fascinating and full of spiritual wonder. This perspective is most clearly seen in the way the main character, Alain, views Maitreyi, who he views not just as a person but also as a representation of the "mysterious East." His obsession with India itself is closely related to his love for her, which perpetuates the Western stereotype of the colonized country as an enticing but unknown object of want.

For Alain, Maitreyi is more like a puzzle that he wants to decode rather than an individual with blood and flesh who deserves to be compreheded for creating a human relationship. He shows an Orientalist mindset to describe her as a strange and mystical creature. *"She fascinated me, not only because of her beauty but because she was different from all the women I had ever known."* This reflects what Edward Said describes in *Orientalism* as the Western inclination to construct the East as "not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other." Alain's representation of Maitreyi aligns with this convention which explores her not simply a woman he falls in love with, but an embodiment of an exotic, foreign world.

Maitreyi's presence in the novel promotes a typical stereotype image of an Indian woman who is simultaneously impossible to tame and submissive. Her unusual nature is frequently likens by Alain, portraying her as wild yet innocent. *"She danced barefoot on the grass, like a child of the monsoon, untouched by civilization."* The dichotomy of the "civilized" Westerner and the "uncivilized" native is reinforced by such depictions, which minimize her to a figure of primordial beauty. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues in *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, "colonial discourse often silence the voices of native women, positioning them as objects of Western desire rather than as agents of their own stories." Maitreyi, as presented in Eliade's novel, is largely voiceless, reminiscent of Flaubert's Kuchuk Hanem, both the females are taking shapes and filtered in the minds of the readers entirely through their narrators.

And finally, *Bengal Nights* reinscribes the colonial fantasy of the "exotic other," reifying love as a form of cultural and ideological possession. The novel denies Maitreyi the space to tell her own story, imposing Alain's perspective so that both her emotions and choices and voice wind up being mediated; this reinforces the colonial impulse to silence native agency. The love story is therefore not a private one but also a metaphor for the imperialists' larger project, in which desire and domination are intertwined.

Maitreyi Devi's *It Does Not Die* emerges as the most overt counter-narrative to Mircea Eliade's *Bengal Nights*, interrogating the Orientalist bias and representations that informed the author's novel. If Eliade romanticizes and exoticizes their youthful love affair — turning Maitreyi into a mysterious symbol of the East—with her memoir, Devi reclaims her own story, multidimensional, poised and human, refusing to be an object. Her novel becomes not just a personal answer, but a political gesture—a declaration of voice to the colonial gaze that sought to define her. In doing so, *It Does Not Die* breaks down the power structures present in Eliade's narrative, revealing how love, when viewed through the lens of imperialist beliefs, transforms into a distortion rather than a genuine truth.

Devi states right away that *Bengal Nights* was a violation of the truth as well as a deception. "You stole my reality, my memories, and turned them into something unrecognizable, *what was sacred to me, you made profane."* In this assertion, Devi emphasizes the harm caused by misrepresentation—how Eliade, as a Western figure, took their shared history and transformed it into a narrative that catered to his own literary and ideological goals. This resonates with Edward Said's argument in *Orientalism*, where he asserts that "knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world." In *Bengal Nights*, Eliade does not simply tell a love story; he fabricates an Orientalist fantasy, where love and desire are viewed through the prism of European superiority and exoticism.

One of the most striking aspects of *It Does Not Die* is its reclamation of agency. In *Bengal Nights,* Maitreyi is portrayed mainly as a passive character, shaped by Alain's perspective—she embodies the mysterious, untamed native, both captivating and elusive. This depiction aligns with Spivak's critical analysis in *Can the Subaltern Speak*? where she observes that "the subaltern woman is often spoken for, rendered mute within dominant discourses." Spivak contends that colonial and postcolonial systems frequently suppress or misrepresent these voices, as representation is influenced by those in authority. As a result, the experiences and desires of the subaltern are often mediated by the viewpoints of colonizers or Western intellectuals, rather than being genuinely represented. In Eliade's narrative, Maitreyi is stripped of her voice, her individuality reduced to a mere symbol of the mystical East.

However, in *It Does Not Die*, Devi refuses to remain silent. She emphasizes her intellectual and emotional complexity, pushing back against the tendency to confine her identity to an Orientalist stereotype. She states, “I was not a fantasy. I was a woman with thoughts, fears, and a heart that broke.” This declaration acts as both a personal and political assertion, resisting the colonial urge to objectify and silence the native woman.

Irrespective of its flamboyance, the love towards Maitreyi can be pictured according to Devi in her work *It Does Not Die*, gave an end to the romantic exoticism of which *Bengal Nights* was about. Alain-Eliade nurtured his love for Maitreyi as a vibrant adventure, projected by a sense of cultural and erotic discovery. Maitreyi for Eliade is tied closely not only to his naivete of India's cultural idiosyncrasies but simply synonymous with India into itself for him a love story, really, like some colonial extension, new directions that can lead to yet more ambivalence between the colonized and the colonizer, as Homi K. Bhabha would put it in *The Location of Culture*. Both Alain's simultaneous fascination and eventual abandonment of Maitreyi entertain us. Yet Devi seems to have gone a step further. Love, rather she weaponizes it to curb of romanticism from love it being considered an exotic joy ride. She emphasizes, "Love is not a fleeting adventure. It is an unwrapping of the soul. In that unwrapping I found both infinite bliss and unbearable defeat." She tears away the colonial vision of love as conquest and expresses love as raw, enduring, and particularly human.

In the end, *Bengal Nights* serves to further reinforce colonial ideals, where imperial possession, love, becomes symbolical of the exotic other. Maitreyi is never given the chance of identifying herself, her inner world being shaped completely by Alain's gaze. Such depictions are maintained by postcolonial critics as mere projections of Western aspirations, thus reinforcing Western preeminence in representation. Although this book is written in the first person, Eliade's work is indeed a contribution to this larger imperialist discourse according to the transformation of a relationship into yet another chapter in the lengthy series of Orientalist representation.

Maitreyi Devi’s *It Does Not Die* functions as both an erudite notice and a political statement against Mircea Eliade’s *Bengal Nights*. Devi takes back her voice from Eliade's Orientalist perspective to challenge the Western practice of romanticizing and taking over Eastern individualities. In her work, she reveals how privileged fibbers use narratives to abolish and distort other people's histories while assessing their social vision. The book *It Does Not Die* extends beyond a romantic narrative to deliver a strong critique of Western erudite dominance and the depersonalized, gender-neutral nature of social discourse.

From the very beginning Devi makes it clear that *Bengal Nights* isn’t just an inaccurate account; it’s a betrayal of her own truth. She writes with pain and anger: “You took my reality, my memories and turned them into something unrecognizable. What was sacred to me you made profane.” This is what her mission is all about – to reclaim a love story that Eliade turned into a sensational tale for Western readers. Unlike Alain who saw Maitreyi as an exotic prize, Devi presents herself as a thinking, feeling woman aware of the societal pressures their relationship was under. She won’t be the passive, naive figure Eliade created. She’ll take back her own story and reveal the emotional weight their affair had for her.

The transfer of agency is by far the greatest novelty in *It Does Not Die*. Within that of Maitreyi, as Stevenson rightly and beautifully describes it, “*Bengal Nights*, is a virtually anencephalic (lacking major parts of the brain at birth), and in the context of Alain's thinking, the strange, untamed and at once charming and mysterious native, on the one hand is.” Above all, though, this representation is, in itself, testable with Spivak's proposition in “Can the subaltern speak?” when she says that “the mute voice of the subaltern woman is, on the one hand, usually talked", when she says that 'the mute voice of the subaltern woman is, on the one hand, usually given voice, but in this voice the subjectivity has been lost in the dominant discourses.” However, Devi keeps quiet in *It Does Not Die*. She claims intellectual and emotional integrity and will not be swallowed up by the Orientalist stereotype. She writes, “I was not a fantasy. I am a woman with feelings, anxieties and a beating heart," it is at the same time a woman's reappropriation, and therefore a political one, which turns the back on the colonial tradition of the woman as an object of gaze and silence.

In addition, the love as depicted by Devi in *It Does Not Die* serves to degrade those utterly Orientalist romancings of *Bengal Nights*. To Eliade, Maitreyi is both an object of adoration and an intoxicating adventure, embodying other cultural discovery and erotic discovery in love for him. He is addicted both to her and his taste for India at the same time: his love story is just another name of his colonial looking. Homi K. Bhabha describes such ambivalences in *The Location of Culture*: "The colonised often desires and yet fears their own native subject." This is seen perfectly within Alain as the man who was crazy about and yet cast aside Maitreyi at the same time. With Devi, love is not a love story of escapism, but a searingly familiar and deeply personal pain. "I write love is not the leap; it is development of soul. And in that unraveling, I laughed and I wept so very hard." The words of the woman as if to debunk that colonialism gloss over the true face love had with violence, this weeding invincible and unyielding human.

Furthermore, *It Does Not Die* devises a problematic of memory and authorship as well. In *Bengal Nights*, for example Eliade writes himself as the unambiguous truth-teller and relates their connection in a romanticized romantic past. In *It Does Not Die*, Devi's response decades later shows how memory is always colluded to by power — who dictates the story and who gets to say it? Trinh T. Minh-ha explains in *Woman, Native, Other*, "The colonized speak back and the authority of the original text is compromised." *It Does Not Die* is such an act — with *It Does Not Die* is writing history from the view point of one whom was previously obliterated.

At the end of the day, *It Does Not Die* goes beyond a remedy for *Bengal Nights*; it is sharp act of literary decolonization. Devi reclaimed her story of voice and unveiled that Eliade's narrative is Orientalist through and through; claiming her love & pain cannot be captured or controlled by anyone else. Through her book, she destroys the pillars of colonial authorship and boldly shows us that the subaltern may indeed speak—thereby erasing herself from oblivion.

The literary interplay between Mircea Eliade's *Bengal Nights* and Maitreyi Devi's *It Does Not Die* extends far beyond the realm of personal memory. These texts operate as cultural battlegrounds in which authority over the past is contested, revealing the intricate dynamics of colonial authorship, narrative erasure, and postcolonial reclamation. The central question that emerges from this literary exchange is not simply one of divergent perspectives, but one of power: *Who gets to tell the story, and how does power shape memory?*

Maitreyi is an ethereal, vague figure like that depicted in Eliade's *Bengal Nights* — her places outside the pale of woman as pure exotic 'Other' in context, not flesh and blood woman or thinking being. He gets exactly what one would expect, owing to the Western canon simplifying the consumption of an essentialized "Orient" other than an autonomous and whole soil. Maitreyi is said about in such a way as to evoke mystery and differentiation: "A separate world to this, a land of secrets that I could never undo." This type of description treats Maitreyi not as human being and power woman, but rather like the other third world puzzle piece. Here, following Edward Said i.e. *Orientalism* —the Orient was not (and is not) a sovereign thing that might be known. Rather, it was built by the West and it mirrored back to the West what the West wanted to envision about itself; its desires, its fear and hence; its fantasy. The narrative crafted by Eliade is perhaps more pretending to be an epic love-story than coloniser could accept as authentic, and it helped for the East to be born only to be gazed upon wanted by colonial female thereafter abandoned.

The *It Does Not Die* of Maitreyi Devi seems like an iconoclastic intervention in radical literary terms, this colonial fantasy getting exposed it is my subjectivity she decides. Devi is not just contesting Eliade´s description; she uncovers the grain of dishonesty within his narrative from the root. At her most unadulterated she howls: "You took my reality and memories and mutilated them beyond all recognition." But here it is not a gifting a personal accusation — it is rather slave-taking and mesmerizing preorder of indigenous voices as property. Spivak says in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" "… to be caught lying is to be robbed of speaking subject." This is the crisis that Eliade's literary novel enacts perfectly with a spoke native woman, represented by myth, and made speechless. The text of Devi, therefore, was not merely different but an act of resistance. As readers, we are left to ask ourselves:

Which version of history do we believe, and what does that choice reveal about our own complicity in the politics of storytelling?

With these two narratives as foils, we see the fluid and conflicted identity project in action. Although Devi openly positions [Eliade] tour de force (a masterful literary achievement) to contain Maitreyi and her culture within the confines of an understanding that he has, the end-up only manages refine but expand once more tine complex reality. It exposes the fallacy of cultural essentialism; these are not thing-like entities to be decided upon by aliens. Rather, they are fluid and complex reflecting individual lives lived in a specific cultural context. The dialogue between these works ultimately compels us to move beyond simplistic representations and embrace the nuanced realities of cross-cultural encounters.

Conclusion

La Nuit Bengali and *Na Hanyate*, the deconstruction of desire as not a spontaneous, natural force but rather an elaborate complex constructed with colonial legacies, asymmetrical cultural relationships and the insistent politics of representation. Love (when it exists outside of the narratives) is not love in a vacuum—mediated by structures of power—grown from a richer territory that composes itself at the merge of possessive and repulsed fascination, possessive and estranged absorption. The lovers, as it feels these protagonists are there is no end to their sensuality but instead writhing in a web of misoperation and projection (i.e.) the self, "other" is more significant than actual presence in front.

At their hearts, the romances in these works function as allegories for a broader historical and ideological conflict, one that is neither solved nor reconciled. The relationships don't fail—not just because they are personally incompatible—but because they carry the burden of inherited narratives. The Western lover, who often acts as the voyeur or the idealist, tries to possess the East in an objectified manner, while the Eastern subject, trapped in the dynamic between the desire to produce self-representation and the line of refusal, attempts to navigate the discordance between self-perception and external definition. This dynamic exposes the inherent fractures in cross-cultural relationships when they are mediated by deeply embedded structures of power and othering.

Yet, beyond these intellectual and structural analyses, there remains a deeply human tragedy at play. Love, despite its inherent contradictions, is a universal pursuit—one that strives for transcendence even when constrained by history. The longing for connection, for understanding, and for a space beyond binaries persists, even when such a space remains elusive. These texts do not merely narrate failed romances; they expose the impossibility of pure, untainted love when desire itself is shaped by histories of dominance and subjugation.

Thus, we are left with an unsettling realization: love, in these contexts, is not a refuge but a battleground, where intimacy is constantly negotiated through the lens of history, culture, and power. Can desire ever exist outside these frameworks, or is it forever destined to be a site of ideological entanglement? As readers, we are invited not just to critique these representations but to reflect on our own perceptions of love, identity, and the ways in which historical narratives continue to dictate the possibilities of human connection. In doing so, we confront the paradox at the heart of these texts—a desire that both unites and divides a longing that seeks fulfillment yet remains eternally fractured.

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