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THE INDIAN ENCHANTMENT: REPRESENTATIONS OF INDIAN MAGIC AND WIZARDS IN FIVE NINETEENTH CENTURY ANGLO-INDIAN NOVELS

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***Abstract*:**

This article studies representations of Indian magic and wizards in five popular nineteenth century Anglo-Indian novels. Such study allows us to understand how ordinary nineteenth century Britons envisioned Indian occult practices. Arguing that literary representations of Indian magic and wizards were essentially structured by the way Indian magic was conceptualized at both the metropolitan centre and the colonial periphery, this article considers the history of actual British encounter with Indian magicians in both Britain and India. It is found that in Anglo-Indian novels Indian wizards were generally stereotyped as malevolent beings, though favourable representations of wizards were not entirely absent. This article seeks to provide an explanation for this. It goes on to argue that, ultimately, representations of Indian magic and magicians in colonial literature reveal more about colonial ideology and public expectations in Britain, than about occult practices and their practitioners in India.

***Keywords*:** *Indian magic, wizards, Anglo-Indian novels, representations, Hockley, Allardyce, Taylor, Henty.*

1. Introduction

In this paper we examine representations of Indian magic and magicians in five nineteenth century Anglo-Indian novels. Our purpose is to understand how the colonizing British conceptualized Indian magic at that period. In this article, *magic*, *sorcery*, and *wizardry* are used synonymously to denote 'occult practices'. In other words, *magic*, as used in this article, needs to be distinguished from stage-magic, also called *jugglery* in Victorian Britain. Anglo-Indian literature is the literature of the colonial British expatriates in India. It is not to be confused with what we call Anglo-Indian literature today; namely, the writings of the Anglo-Indians (formerly Eurasian) who are now citizens of India. The expatriate British authors claimed for themselves greater accuracy in describing India and its inhabitants than their counterparts in Britain. It is true that Indian wizards and witches appeared for the first time in the metropolitan poet Robert Southey's (1779-1893) epic poem *The Curse of Kehama* (1810). However, Anglo-Indian authors deserve more credit for familiarizing ordinary English readers with Indian occult practices. Their understanding of Indian magic was generally more profound than that of the writers at home.

Studies focusing on representations of Indian wizards and wizardry in early Anglo-Indian novels are not many in number. The probable reason behind this manifest lack of interest in an otherwise interesting field of investigation is the shoddy portrayal of Indian wizards and witches in such works. With the exception of G.A. Henty's *Rujub, the Juggler* and Philip Meadows Taylor's *A Noble Queen*, Anglo-Indian works usually presented Indian wizards and witches in trivial roles. They were introduced in fiction merely to spice up the narratives through their bizarre rituals and mumbo-jumbos. Nevertheless, these writings allow us insights into colonial conceptualization of Indian magic and magicians when studied carefully. Our study of Anglo-Indian novels reveals that colonial attitude towards Indian magicians did not

remain fixed and unchanging. The initial hostility towards Indian wizards was replaced by admiration in the late nineteenth century, which again reverted to hostility in the twentieth century. This article tries to account for such changes in attitude. It further tries to account for the negative stereotyping of Indian wizards that became commonplace in Anglo-Indian fiction from the first half of the nineteenth century. It becomes apparent that such hostile representations originated in British colonizers' paranoia regarding Indian magicians. Anglo-Indian novels of the nineteenth century also reveal the strategies adapted by the colonizing British to attenuate the anxieties born of that paranoia. Disavowal, denial, and rationalization are a few of these to name. Since representations of magic and wizards in these novels form a part of British discourse on India, proper study of these becomes imperative.

2. British Response to Indian Magic: An Overview

Before taking up any Anglo-Indian fiction for analysis, one needs to account for the sudden appearance of Indian wizards and witches in nineteenth century English fiction. Robert Sencourt rightly points out that the British began to take genuine interest in India and its inhabitants only after the decisive victories of Robert Clive in the Carnatic Wars (1746-59) and the Battle of Plassey (1757) (Sencourt 1970, 180). Basically, it was political and administrative exigencies which compelled the British to study the land and its inhabitants. Though travelogues describing India were written even earlier, scholarly studies of the country and its inhabitants first appeared in the late eighteenth century. This was followed by the introduction of Indians as characters in English fiction. Though Indians characters had occasionally appeared in works belonging to even earlier periods like John Dryden's play *Aureng-zebe* (1676), they had nothing distinctly 'Indian' about them. However, the portrayal of Indian characters in English fiction attained a new level of accuracy with the birth of Anglo-Indian literature in the mid eighteenth century. Writers now started paying attention to manners and customs peculiar to the Indians while depicting Indian characters in fiction. This was done to make them clearly distinguishable from the Europeans. It goes without saying that such portrayals were usually coloured by racial prejudices. Gradually, with increase in knowledge and experience, Anglo-Indian authors began incorporating characters from all sections of Indian society in their works. Their object, of course, was to make these works more interesting by including all sorts of exotic characters. Among such characters, one finds wizards and witches on whom the British began to take interest from the nineteenth century onwards. The wizards were given a place in literary works primarily because they manifested the exotic and the 'mysterious' side of India. As Rashna B. Singh writes, "For many in the West ... the mystery and exoticism which had long been associated with India remained a far more appealing aspect of the country than its history or politics" (Singh 1988, 16). Particularly the late Victorians, with their peculiar taste in the occult, were fascinated by these 'mysterious' Indian wizards. Writing on the Imperial Gothic genre, Patrick Brantlinger correlates the growth of spiritualism and occultism in late Victorian England with the flourishing of the Imperial Gothic fiction in the nineteenth century. As recognized by scholars, late Victorian spiritualism came as a reaction to the "restrictive worldview" of "triumphant positivism", to use the words of Brantlinger. Spiritualism, in that age, functioned as an "ersatz religion", a new source of faith in a faithless world (Brantlinger 1988, 228-29). In their search for alternative sources of faith, many Victorians examined what appeared to them to be arcane knowledge and esoteric philosophies of the East. The trend was set by Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's (1831-91) book *Isis Unveiled* (1877). Peter van der Veer points out that, in Blavatsky view, "both the major spirits (the "Masters of the Universe") and spiritualist thought originated in 'the East' and, since one could not go to Tibet [where the Masters resided], colonized India and Sri Lanka replaced it for all practical purposes" (van der Veer 2001, 56). The Indian wizards were seen as inheritors of mysterious knowledge and were therefore given attention to. One finds them appearing in this role in Philip Meadows Taylor's novel *A Noble Queen* (1878) and George Alfred Henty's novel *Rujub, the Juggler* (1893). The late nineteenth century Anglo-Indian authors were judicious enough to realize the reader-attracting capacity of

the Indian wizards. They capitalized upon it accordingly. It is interesting to note that some of these authors presented the wizards in benevolent roles. This is different from the practice of both earlier and later writers who usually villainized the Indian wizards and magicians.

While late Victorian search for esoteric 'Oriental' knowledge may have augmented the Anglo-Indian authors' interest in Indian magic and magicians, their presence in works belonging to the earlier decades of the century needs to be differently accounted for. One must note that the early Anglo-Indian novels were written years before Blavatsky's tales of the mysterious 'Mahatmas' tempted the seekers of ancient wisdom to look East. In fact, the early Victorians had a different reason for taking interest in Indian magic and magicians. Even before the Theosophists started glorifying India's occult wisdom, the British had become acquainted with the mysterious, and seemingly unexplainable, feats of the Indian jugglers. These jugglers, also called *conjurors* in Victorian England, not only performed stunts like toss juggling and balancing acts but also magic tricks. In this respect, they were the forerunners of modern stage magicians and professional entertainers. To be sure, the British had come across Indian jugglers well before the nineteenth century. For instance, the mid-eighteenth century writer John Henry Grose had recorded a magic performance by jugglers in India in his book *A Voyage to the East Indies* (1757) (Grose 2009, 165). However, Indian jugglers became well known faces in Britain only in the nineteenth century, precisely from the 1810s (Lamont and Bates 2007, 311). Some of them went on to become very famous - like the worthy Ramo Samee (?-1850) who performed at the Royal Coburg Theatre, the Hull Royal Theatre and the London's Garrick Theatre, and had his name immortalized in Thackeray's work *The Book of Snobs* (1848) (Banerjee 2011, 60). The popularity of Indian jugglers in Victorian England becomes evident from the fact that the novelist Charles Dickens (1812-70) posed as an Indian magician to display his magic tricks. Lamont and Bates inform that, "In 1849 Dickens, a keen amateur conjuror, blacked up his face and hands, dressed himself in exotic robes, and presented himself as 'The Unparalleled Necromancer RhiaRhamaRhoos'" (Lamont and Bates 2007, 320). 'Rhia Rhama Rhoos' is probably derived from the names of two well-known nineteenth century jugglers, *Ramo* Samee and *Kia* Khan *Khruse*(Lamont and Bates 2007, 320). Unlike Samee, Kia Khan Khruse, however, was not actually an Indian but a Portuguese whose real name was Juan Antonio (Zubrzycki 2018, 262). But Antonio's adoption of an Indian-sounding stage-name shows how popular Indian magicians had become on the English stage. Indian jugglers also appeared in mainstream English literature of that period. William Hazlitt's (1778-1830) essay "The Indian Jugglers" (1828) is a good example. In this work, Hazlitt expresses his perplexity on observing the skills of an Indian juggler. As scholars have shown, the performances of these jugglers generated great curiosity in nineteenth century Britain. Unable to explain the mechanisms behind their tricks, many Englishmen believed that they were supernatural in nature (Lamont and Bates 2007, 308). It is no trivial matter that famous Victorian mediums and spiritualists like the Davenport brothers (Ira Erastus Davenport, 1839-1911 and William Henry Davenport, 1841-77) and Daniel Dunglas Home (1833-86) were suspected of borrowing the tricks of the Indian jugglers to astonish their clients and audiences (Lamont and Bates 2007, 315-16). Reports of many extraordinary feats performed by Indian magicians appeared in various books and journals of that period. These further baffled the Victorian readers. The first English translation of Ibn Battuta's travels appeared in 1829, which described the medieval globetrotter's bewilderment on observing a feat of levitation performed by an Indian magician (Lamont and Bates 2007, 313). In the first volume of *The Oriental Annual* (1834), Rev Hobart Caunter (1794-1851) describes a performance of the famous Indian basket trick in which a "common wicker basket" containing a small child was repeatedly pierced with a sword by the magician. Despite blood running in 'streams' from the sides of the basket, the child reappeared in the crowd of spectators completely unharmed (Caunter 1834, 25-26). W. A. Capon provides an even more spectacular account of Indian magic, which appeared in the magazine *Belgravia* in 1876. After several astonishing tricks, the chief magician ended with transforming a coin held tight inside

the closed hands of an Englishman into a "living wriggling little brown snake, about nine inches long". Capon's reaction to the whole performance manifests his bewilderment. "This, if a deception, was a marvelous one," he observes (Capon 2009, 169). His words suggest that he found it hard to dismiss these feats as mere 'deceptions'. Many other Englishmen were similarly left mystified by tricks like sword-swallowing, the Indian rope trick (where the performer appeared to climb a freely suspended rope), and the mango-tree trick (where a mango tree instantly grew from dried seeds right before the eyes of the spectators). Such tricks seem to have shaken many Occidental spectators' faith in (Western) rationalistic outlook and scientific thinking. Of course, not all Englishmen were equally credulous. Hazlitt, for instance, found nothing mysterious in Indian jugglers' performances. For him, such tricks were sleights-of-hand perfected through daily practice - mere mechanical skills as opposed to creative genius (Hazlitt 1828, n.p.). Some other writers and journalists of that period echoed Hazlitt's views in this matter (Lamont and Bates 2007, 312). Nevertheless, the fact remains that for many Victorians "an Indian juggler was a performer of not only skillful but also mysterious feats" (Lamont and Bates 2007, 308). In fact, as scholars show, the Victorians hotly debated on this matter (Lamont and Bates 2007, 316-18; Zubrzycki 2018, 268-87). Eager to protect the British public from false beliefs, the skeptics not only tried to discredit Indian magic but also censured Indian magicians for practicing such deceptions. The hostility towards Indian magic and magicians in mainstream English literature finds best expression in William Wilkie Collins'(1824-89) novel *The Moonstone* (1868). In this novel the three Indian Brahmins, who travel to England to retrieve the sacred yellow diamond or the moonstone from its present owner Rachel Verinder, pose as jugglers. Besides other tricks, they are shown to be capable of inducing clairvoyance in their associate the young English boy (Collins 1992, 24-25). Collins, however, dismisses this feat as "a development of the romantic side of the Indian character" (Collins 1992, 265). What is mistaken for clairvoyance is explained as being an effect of mesmerism, whereby the hypnotized boy narrates what is already known to the jugglers. Here Collins tries to demystify Indian magic by providing an apparent rational explanation for it. Similar attempts to rationalize Indian magic can be discerned in some of the Anglo-Indian novels described in this article.

Examination of the above-mentioned facts make us conclude that the British became interested in Indian magic after witnessing the spectacular performances of Indian jugglers in the nineteenth century. This interest was kept alive in later years by the search for new sources of mystical knowledge. However, there was yet another factor which compelled the British to take Indian magic seriously in the early nineteenth century. This was related to the sudden upsurge of Protestant missionary activities in India in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. As we know, the East India Company's initial opposition to preaching and proselytization in India was overruled with the promulgation of the Charter Act of 1813. Under the leadership of the parliamentarian William Wilberforce (1759 -1833), the British Evangelicals succeeded in forcing the Company to forego its policy of strict religious neutrality. Emboldened by their success, they launched their offensive against the non-Christian Indian religions, particularly Hinduism, in the early decades of the nineteenth century (for an overview see, Copland 2006, 103-34). However, the dishearteningly small number of converts gained, quickly dampened their early enthusiasm. This made some of the early enthusiasts re-evaluate their methods and approaches. In Sir George Otto Trevelyan's (1838-1928) book *The Competition Wallah* (1864), the narrator Henry Broughton tries to account for the failure of the English Protestant missions in gathering converts in India. He comes to the conclusion that the Anglican mode of worship is too simple for the (so-called) spectacle-loving Hindus to appreciate. Arguing that the Hindus preferred gimmicks over purity, Broughton asserts:

> In what terms can you appeal to the conscience or the good sense of men who canonize a bloated sensual scoundrel for no other reason than because he has never been known to wash himself or to wear a rag of clothing? What can you do with people who see virtue and merit in the performance of

a fakeer? (Trevelyan, 1864, 383)

One should note how Trevelyan vents his ire on fakirs and religious preceptors in this work. No doubt he voices the opinion of a section of Englishmen of his times who held the Indian religious mendicants responsible for the failure of the Protestant missions in India. Many of these fakirs and sannyasis claimed to possess supernatural powers to gain a following. Some of them actually performed incredible feats before English viewers. For example, at the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh's (1780-1839) court at Lahore in 1837, an ascetic named Haridas apparently survived being buried in earth for more than a month without any food or water. This has been documented by none other than Sir Claude M. Wade, the Resident at Ranjit's court (Lamont and Bates 2007, 314; Zubrzycki 2018, 127). British missionaries often raised their outcries against such 'superstitions', accusing the Indian holy men of befooling the credulous through magic tricks. Significantly, as Owen Davis points out, magic and superstition have been closely associated with each other from very ancient times. He states that, "Various forms of magic, *mageia*, had a dirty reputation in late Greco-Roman society, and were often referenced under the ill-defined heading of *superstitio*" (Davies 2012, 41).[1] Particularly, following the Enlightenment, magic, or a belief in it, became "a marker of primitivism, of a benighted earlier stage of human development" (Davies 2012, 1).So when the British accused the Indian holy men of performing magic, they underscored the 'superstitious' nature of the Indian populace. To them, the Indians could be befooled easily on account of their 'primitive nature'. The 'benighted' state of the Indians could then be invoked to justify the colonial mission of 'civilizing' the natives, which in turn vindicated British conquest of India.The majority of the early Anglo-Indian novelists took a similar stance with regard to belief in magic in India. One finds this reflected in the novels of Hockley, Taylor and Allardyce.

It may be noted here in passing that the early Anglo-Indian novelists had their unique reasons for being wary of the Indian miracle men, besides sharing their compatriot's general dislike towards them. As I. H-Shihan correctly points out, the majority of the nineteenth century Anglo-Indian novelists were administrators. Hockley and Taylor, for instance, were colonial officials. These 'Burra Sahibs' or 'big bosses', as H-Shihan calls them, were entrusted with the task of consolidating British rule in India (H-Shihan 2016, 45). Being directly involved in administration, they were suspicious of all indigenous groups that appeared to threaten the stability of colonial rule. As Zubrzycki points out, the itinerant magicians and religious mendicants were perceived as such (Zubrzycki 2018, 141-64). They were often branded as fraudsters and criminals. It is true that sometimes real criminals disguised themselves as miracle men - like the 'Jadua Brahmins of Patna' who posed as alchemists to dupe the gullible (Zubrzycki 2018, 151-52). But to criminalize all for the misdeeds of a few appear sunfair. The colonial officials actually had other grounds for being wary of the itinerant magicians and holy men. As peripatetic groups, they were difficult to govern and control. Moreover, they could be, and were often, employed as political spies by rival powers, necessitating the colonial government's exercise of caution (Zubrzycki 2018, 161-62). But above all, the religious mendicants like the fakirs and the sannyasis did not always act like peace-loving monks. Rather, many of them often worked as mercenary soldiers. David Lorenzen points out that these "warrior ascetics", which included both Hindu and Muslim holy men, became "a significant political and military presence in North India from about the fifteenth century until the early decades of the nineteenth" (Lorenzen 1978, 61). The colonial officers feared these ascetics, as they could be employed by native rulers to fight against the British (Lorenzen 1978, 74). More importantly, the Muslim *Madari* fakirs and the Hindu *Dasnami Naga* sannyasis harassed the British during the early phase of colonial rule. This was the so called Fakir and Sannyasi Rebellion (1763-1800), a series of sporadic skirmishes that disturbed the Bengal province. The British, who crushed the rebellion only after heavy fighting, did not at all feel kindly towards these holy men. Atis Dasgupta shows that in colonial documents the fakirs and the sannyasis were often described as "religious plunderers" (Dasgupta 1982, 48). They were seen as a persistent threat to law

and order. This negative stereotyping of fakirs and sannyasis appears in the works of British administrator-novelists. What made the 'warrior ascetics' particularly formidable was their pretense to supernatural powers which instilled confidence in their lay followers. For instance, the *Madaris* annually practiced fire walking over burning coal. Chanting 'Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Dam Madar, Dam Madar', they walked barefooted on fire with the soles of their feet remaining totally unscorched (Bhattacharyya 2016, 9-10; Zubrzycki 2018, 136).[2] Such demonstrations unnerved those in power. Owen Davies very correctly observes that the British authorities in India were much concerned with the activities of the fakirs because "with their boasts of magical powers, they were a potential focus of resistance against colonial rule" (Davies 2012, 57). The French were similarly afraid of the Marabout wizards in North Africa and employed the magician Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin (1805-71) to expose their tricks (Davies 2012, 57). In India too, the early British writers felt compelled to dismiss the fakirs' claims of possessing supernatural powers. Therefore, in early nineteenth century Anglo-Indians novels the fakirs and the sannyasis are usually presented as charlatans who made their living by duping the gullible.

Jugglers, fakirs, miracle men - Indian wizards appear in Anglo-Indian fiction in any or all of these manifestations. Interestingly, Anglo-Indian authors rarely used the term *jadugar* - the Hindi word for magician or wizard. Nor were these characters called by any other local name. Instead, they were usually designated as fakirs or jugglers. Here one may note that the Anglo-Indian authors, out of ignorance or apathy, did not distinguish between Hindu yogis or sannyasis and Muslim fakirs. Instead, all were indiscriminately labeled as 'fakirs'. Interestingly, the female counterpart of an Indian wizard is always called a witch or a *dayan* in Anglo-Indian novels. Here one may note that the words *jadugar* and its feminine *jadugarni* have value-neutral connotations. *Jadugar* can mean both stage magician and wizard. Also, a *jadugar* or a *jadugarni* can be either benevolent or malevolent or both. A *dayan*, on the other hand, is a malevolent being - the exact equivalent of English 'witch'. This brings us to our main argument - that, barring a few notable exceptions, Anglo-Indian writers were generally hostile towards Indian magic and magicians. The trend was set at the very beginning by Robert Southey in *The Curse of Kehama*, where the 'Indian' witch Lorrinite is presented as a malicious creature:

> Her look hath crippling in it, and her curse
> All plagues which on mortality can light;
> Death is his doom if she behold, ... or worse, ...
> Diseases loathsome and incurable,
> And inward sufferings that no tongue can tell.
> Woe was to him, on whom that eye of hate
> Was bent; for, certain as the stroke of Fate,
> It did its mortal work; ... (Southey 1810, n.p.)

Following Southey, most Anglo-Indian writers portrayed the wizards and witches in negative roles. The only exceptions are Henty and Taylor, who present the wizards as benevolent figures. The following section tries to account for this inconsistency, while studying representations of Indian magicians in nineteenth century fictions.

3. Magic and Magicians in nineteenth century Anglo-Indian Novels

Having considered how British response to Indian magic was generated and structured in the nineteenth century, we move on to examine representations of Indian magic and magicians in works of individual Anglo-Indian authors. For the purpose of this study a few representative texts of this period are chosen. These are *Pandurang Hari*, *Tippoo Sultaun*, *A Noble Queen*, *The City of Sunshine* and *Rujub, the Juggler*. Besides these, Indian wizards appear in minor roles in one or two other nineteenth century Anglo-Indian novels.[3] But these are not taken into account as they provide no new information worth considering distinctly. The nineteenth century Anglo-Indian writers were more interested in Indian magic and wizardry

than the British writers of all previous generations. It is obvious that their greater familiarity with Indian life and society had generated that interest. Unfortunately, little is known about their actual encounter with the Indian magicians. From Taylor's autobiography we learn that the fulfillment of a Brahmin astrologer's predictions about him had left him wonderstruck (Taylor 1878, 296-98). Though he claims in *A Noble Queen* that he had seen an exorcism performed before his very eyes, no objective evidence exists to support this claim. Hockley, Allardyce and Henty did not leave any autobiographical account for us. In the absence of any concrete proof, one can only guess that Hockley and Allardyce must have come across Indian wizards at one time or another during their long residence in India. However, their dismissive stance towards Indian magic shows that they remained unimpressed by their performances. Henty, in all likelihood, had observed first-hand a performance of a group of Indian entertainers named the Oriental Troupe which arrived in England in 1868. One member of this group was a tight rope-walker called Rajub (Zubrzycki 2018, 217). Possibly, he became Henty's model for his Rujub the juggler. Again this is only a guess, as Henty might have just picked up the name from the journals and newspapers which publicized the show. Lacking any reliable evidence, one can only observe that these writers had greater and better chance of observing Indian magic performances than Englishmen of earlier generations.

While discussing nineteenth century Anglo-Indian writers, one should keep in mind that the majority of them were primarily colonial administrators, and not novelists, by profession. They turned to novel writing only to make easy money. As a result, their novels became potboilers in nature. These authors merely reiterated the commonplaces about Indian magic, without challenging public views on the subject. Interestingly, magic never became the main theme of any Anglo-Indian novel. This is true even for *Rujub, the Juggler*, which is really about the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and not about Indian magic.

The first Anglo-Indian author to portray Indian wizards and wizardry in his novel is William Browne Hockley (1792 - 1860).[4] Hockley arrived in India in 1813 and lived in this country till 1823. During this period, he served as an assistant judge at Broach, Gujarat, and Ahmednagar. In his first novel *Pandurang Hari or, Memoirs of a Hindoo*(1826), the protagonist Pandurang Hari disguises himself as a magician at one point in the novel to befool and ruin his enemy Habsi Kotwal. Pandu is a charlatan, and so are all the other magicians in Hockley's works. Hockley frequently employs the device of 'colonial ventriloquism' to condemn the natives. Through an 'Indian voice' the white author articulates and simultaneously authenticates his own views and ideas. Thus Hockley's mouthpiece Pandu inwardly laughs at the credulousness of the Indians, who are so awed by his meaningless antics that they take him to be a god (Hockley 1873, 142). His mummeries fascinate not only the commoners but also the Maratha ruler 'Peeshwa' (Peshwa) Baji Rao II. To impress his spectators, Pandugoes on uttering gibberish and performs a mock magic ritual which involves killing a black-legged fowl, swallowing raw eggs, burning ghee or clarified butter, and sticking two needles through limes (Hockley 1874, 131). By showing how Indians pay undue respect to charlatans like Pandu, Hockley makes fun of the gullibility of the natives. Here one should note that Hockley was never known for cloaking his animosity towards the Indians. In the 'Introduction' to *Pandurang* Hari, he condemns the inhabitants of India in no uncertain terms: "From the rajah to the ryot, with the intermediate grades, they are ungrateful, insidious, cowardly, unfaithful, and revengeful" (Hockley 1874, 22). By portraying their belief in magic, he invents another opportunity for criticizing the Indians.

In *Pandurang Hari* we also find the description of a gruesome magic ritual performed by a naked 'sunyasse'(sannyasi) before the image of Lord Shiva. Incidentally, when Pandurang Hari disguises himself as a magician, he chooses to impersonate a 'Jungum' priest (Hockley 1874, 127). The 'Jungum' or Jangam is a Saivite order of wondering monks. For some unknown reason, Hockley manifests an animosity against Shaivism or the worship of Lord Shiva. The villain in this novel is Gabbage Gousla, a Gossein. Both Vaishnavite and Saivite monks are called Gosseins or Gosains. It is difficult to ascertain to which monastic

order Gabbage belonged to. While he consumes *bang* (cannabis) like a Saivite monk, he invokes Lord Rama and Sita like a Vaishnavite (Hockley 1874, 77-80). However, his preceptor, the sannyasi, is shown to perform his rituals before Lord Shiva. This sannyasi is a Gothic character, as twisted and ferocious in nature. Hockley describes him thus,

> a living skeleton, without teeth, and bent double from age and hardship; his hair was long, matted together ... his nails were as long as the talons of a bird of prey, and his toes were bowed inwards ... (Hockley 1874, 190)

The sannyasi has lost the use of one of his hands by keeping it constantly raised up over his head. As John Zubrzycki informs, this particular form of penance is known as *urdhvabahu*(Zubrzycki 2018, 120). This compound word is derived from Sanskrit *urdhva* meaning 'upper direction' and *bahu* or 'hand'. Zubrzycki further asserts that the British came to know about this practice from the writings of Jonathan Duncan in *Asiatick Researches* in 1799, where he describes meeting a Hindu yogi named Pran Puri who undertook this penance (Zubrzycki 2018, 121). Hockley may have either read Duncan's account or must have seen such an ascetic himself. However, he obviously viewed such practice with abhorrence. The physical deformity of the sannyasi corresponds to his inner depravity. The magic rituals he makes the participants Gabbage and his son Mahadeo perform are both meaningless and revolting. It involves each participant taking a mouthful of blood and spitting it on the image of Shiva for sixteen times in succession. After a few mouthfuls, Mahadeo cannot control his nausea and vomits on the face of the idol! Here Hockley seems to derive surreptitious pleasure from imagining the discomfiture of Lord Shiva. He thereby reveals the typical Christian repugnance at idol worship. After the completion of this ritual, Gabbage and his son are made to wear threads consecrated with blood - obnoxious replicas of sacred threads worn by the Brahmins and some high caste Hindus. Hockley thus leaves no stones unturned to display his passionate hostility against Hindu religious beliefs. This ritual fails in its target of making the participants invulnerable, thereby revealing its utter hollowness. While Mahadeo is killed in battle, Gabbage is defeated and incarcerated for life by his nephew Pandurang in the end. The description of Indian magic given in this novel is calculated to heighten the English readers' repugnance at both magic and idol worship. However, despite all its gothic overtones, Hockley does not directly equate this ritual with Satanism. He definitely finds it too nonsensical for that. It is also to be noted that the description of the grotesque ritual, as it appears in this novel, is not at all grounded in actual Indian magic practices. No Hindu ascetic, however depraved, would ever dream of desecrating the image of his God by spitting on it. This ritual appears to be entirely a product of Hockley's febrile imagination, with no correspondence at all to real magic practices in India.

After reading Hockley, it is a relief to turn to the novels of his contemporary Captain Philip Meadows Taylor (1808-76). Taylor was a colonial official like Hockley; though the early part of his life was spent as a military and civil officer in the Nizam's service (1824-53). After retiring from the Nizam's army, he was reemployed, first by the British East India Company, and later the Crown, to administer the districts ceded by the Nizam to the British (1853-58), along with the native state of Shorapoor (1859-60). Taylor's attitude towards the Indian characters in his novels, however, differs markedly from Hockley. Despite sharing the common prejudices of his countrymen against the Indians, he was more sympathetic to them than almost all others writers of his age. His understanding of Indian culture was also more profound than most of his contemporaries. As a matter of fact, the only realistic descriptions of Indian magic appear in the novels of Taylor. In his second novel *Tippoo Sultaun: A Tale of Mysore Wars* (1840) the two wives of Rhyman Khan - Hoormutbee and Kummoobee - plan to destroy his favourite third wife Ameena through black magic. They hire the service of the Muslim witch Kureena to achieve their goal. Detailed description of magic rituals follow. Kureena instructs Hoormut and Kummoo to purify themselves before the actual performance of the magic ritual: "Ye must send Fatehas[5] to the shrine, feed Fakeers in your presence, eat cooling victuals and abstain as much as may be from meat" (Taylor 1840, 59). This is in conformity with

the Indian tradition of purifying oneself before participating in any important ceremony. The description of the actual ritual shows Taylor's first-hand acquaintance with Indian magic practice. The witch draws a figure on the floor - "a rude imitation of a man, in square lines and crosses." This figure is divided into many compartments containing "Arabic characters and ciphers" (Taylor 1840, 225). As Owen Davies informs, Muslim magicians believe that specific Arabic letters are imbued with magical powers. They still use these in preparing their charms (Davies 2012, 75). A fowl is then sacrificed by Kummoo, as the witch invokes the evil spirits 'Shaitan', 'Shekh Suddoo', 'Nursoo', and 'Numrood' to drink the blood of the fowl (Taylor 1840, 227). These names are not just imaginary, but really occur in Muslim demonology. 'Shekh Suddoo' is an evil spirit, 'Nursoo' is an evil djinn, while 'Numrood' is none other than the Biblical Nimrod (Mrs Ali 1833, 324) . The fact that Taylor knew about these characters, despite being a foreigner, shows his unusual acquaintance with local beliefs. After the evil spirits are propitiated with blood, Kureena pierces a charmed green lime with five needles. Kummoo is then instructed to leave the charm at Ameena's doorstep, which she does. Interestingly, both Hockley and Taylor refer to the use of lime in Indian magic. As R. E. Enthoven reports, lime is frequently used in Indian magic to ward off evil (Enthoven 1932, 30-31). But in some cases, it is also used to contain a spirit or a curse which can be transferred to the intended victim on contact. This is exactly what happens in this novel. Seeing the charm lying at her doorstep, Ameena becomes ill. Taylor suggests that her disease is psychosomatic in nature, originating from her belief in witchcraft. Though counter charms are applied to ward off the evil, Ameena's prolonged illness alienates her from her husband thereby fulfilling the wishes of Hoormut and Kummoo. Taylor uses this occasion to scoff at native 'superstition'. The contrast with the 'rational' British is implied when Taylor asserts that the account of Indian witchcraft would "only provoke risibility, especially in ... fair readers" of England (Taylor 1840, 233). One notes that in his condemnation of 'Indian irrationality' Taylor is not very different from Hockley, despite all his sympathy for the Indian characters in his novel.

In Alexander Allardyce's novel *The City of Sunshine* (1877) one once again comes across the negative stereotyping of Indian magicians. Allardyce (1846-96) lived and worked as a journalist in Bengal from 1868 to 1875. In this novel set in Bengal, the plain-looking Chakwi, the wife of the protagonist Krishna, loses her husband's love when he falls for the village belle Radha. In order to regain Krishna's affection, Chakwi visits the local *daina* (witch) Madri to buy a love potion. Madri is feared by the locals as the deadliest witch in the Gungaputra valley, whose glance "brought certain destruction to either man or beast" (Allardyce 1877, 2). But in reality Madri is just a charlatan with no real magic powers. She lives by deception, exploiting the fears of the superstitious. Madri browbeats the superstitious Chakwi and compels her to surrender her costly jewels to Madri. She is dangerous not because she is a witch but because she is an illegal vendor of poisons. It is the poisoned drink mistakenly sold by her as a love potion to Chakwi that takes the life of her father-in-law Ramanath. Here Allardyce realistically portrays the criminal underclass of India who posed as wizards and witches to earn their living through trickery and deception. There is however the usual jab at the Indians, whose 'infantile nature' make them fall easy prey to such charlatans.

It appears that British attitude towards Indian magicians underwent a transformation in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, even as a few authors like Allardyce continued criticizing them in their works. The influence of Blavatsky and Theosophy must have been the determining factor.Seeking Oriental wisdom, the British began to look upon Indian magicians not as roguish charlatans but as benevolent practitioners of mysterious arts. This change of stance is reflected in the novels of Taylor and Henty. Taylor had spent sufficient time in India (1824-60) to have his views altered by experience. He, who had once trenchantly criticized Indian magic in *Tippoo Sultaun*, treats it with more consideration in his last novel *A Noble Queen: A Romance of Indian History*. Here one finds his sympathetic treatment of an Indian wizard. Zora's grandfather the blind fakir Syud Ahmud Ali performs several exorcisms in this novel. Early in the novel, he provides a paper-charm to the hero Abbas Khan to ward off his nightmares. This is "a paper

divided into sixteen squares, in each of which there were Arabic figures" (Taylor 1986, 69). As both *Tippoo Sultaun* and *A Noble Queen* reveal, Taylor was well acquainted with Arabic letter magic. Probably, he learnt about Islamic magic from his Indian grandmother-in-law Faiz Baksh.[6] Later, he shows the fakir driving away evil spirits from the palace of Rajah Pám Naik, the king of the Beydur tribe.[7] Finally, he exorcises a spirit possessing a young Beydur princess with the assistance of Zora. Again Taylor's descriptions appear to be grounded on his observation of actual practice. The fakir instructs Zora to copy a charm from a book on exorcism written by Mahomed Ghous. Mahomed Ghous is in all probability the sixteenth century Sufi mystic Sheikh Mohammed Ghous of Gwalior. As Zora copies the charm on a piece of paper, the fakir chants his spell in front of the possessed girl. The paper is then burnt in fire. The spirit flies away and the girl recovers immediately (Taylor 1986, 280-81). Taylor's comment in parenthesis is worth noting: "The incidents of exorcism described here took place in presence of the writer of this tale when in India…" (Taylor 1986, 282). Notably, Taylor does not dismiss such practices as mere superstition. Did he start believing in the occult with age? Or did he change his stance keeping the (English) readers' expectations in mind? We should recognize that these exorcism scenes have little organic connection with the main story. They have been introduced to gratify public craving for occult tales. No other possible reason for introducing such scenes in this novel can be imagined

Finally, we turn to George Alfred Henty's mutiny novel *Rujub, the Juggler*. As H-Shihan notes, Henty (1832 -1902) "is Anglo-Indian only in an extended sense" (H-Shihan 2016, 83). A novelist and a war correspondent by profession, he paid sporadic visits to India, never staying long in this country. Nevertheless, twenty of his novels are set in India. In *Rujub, the Juggler* Indian magic is glorified. The eponymous character and his daughter Rabda are wandering jugglers who perform magic tricks to entertain people. Rujub astonishes the hero Ralph Bathurst with a display of the Indian pole trick, where Rabda sits on the top of a freely extending pole which grows upwards to an enormous height carrying the girl with it. She, however, disappears from the top of the pole to reemerge unharmed on the ground. This amazing spectacle leaves Bathurst awestruck (Henty 2006, 17). But Rujub's powers do not end here. More than a juggler, he is a mage having access to mysterious knowledge. Rujub calls himself a hereditary conjurer who has inherited closely guarded 'secrets' of magic from his ancestors (Henty 2006, 14). Bathurst has to admit that "Many of your tricks can be done by our conjurors at home, but there are some that have never been solved" (Henty 2006, 14). Henty thus unrestrainedly praises Indian magic, which differs from the way the early Anglo-Indian authors treated it. Patrick Brantlinger is wrong in believing that Rujub's magic provides the author "a ready-made excuse" for rejecting Indian customs "as irrational" (Brantlinger 1988, 217). As Henty describes it, Indian magic is not 'irrational' but has the power to unsettle Western rationality. Here we need to reflect that being unconnected in any way with the colonial administration, Henty had no real reason for being afraid of Indian miracle men. Perhaps, it was easier to be charmed by Indian magic from a distance. We also remember that Taylor displayed his appreciation for Indian magic only after he retired and settled in Ireland, probably providing further evidence in support of this assumption. Anyway, Henty complicates his representation of Indian magic by suggesting that it is really Egyptian in origin. Rujub informs Bathurst, "They [magic tricks] have come to us from the oldest times, and it is said they were brought by wise men from Egypt; but that I know not" (Henty 2006, 16). This statement is significant. One is reminded about nineteenth century speculations regarding the birthplace of magic. Some like Madame Blavatsky believed that magic originated in India (Davies 2012, 40). Medieval Christian writers, however, believed that magic was born in Babylon, Egypt and Persia (Davies 2012, 34). By hinting at the non-Indian origin of 'Indian magic', Henty thus reflects his pro-colonial bias that denied any power of originality to the Indians. Given his ill reputation as a racist writer, this move by Henty does not appear surprising.[8]

Whatever the case might be, this novel portrays Rujub and Rabda as wizards who possess

unexplainable supernatural powers like foresight, telepathy and clairvoyance. They help Bathurst rescue his lady love Isobel from the rebel sepoys during the Sepoy Mutiny. Rujub helps Bathurst against his countrymen as the Englishman had earlier saved his daughter from a man-eating tiger. Despite all his veneration, Henty's descriptions of Indian magic are too fantastic and superficial to be taken seriously. However, the glorification of the Indian wizard in this novel reflects the short-lived admiration for Indian magic in the late nineteenth century.

One important thing to note is that in Anglo-Indian fiction the wizards are found to inhabit the fringes of society. Hockley's sannyasi, the witches of Taylor and Allardyce, Henty's Rujub - all come from the margins. Magic in Anglo-Indian writings is conceptualized as a clandestine activity performed by the participant/s in seclusion. It is generally distinguished from mainstream religious rituals. This is rather unusual because orthodox Christianity usually drew parallel between magic and non-Christian modes of worship (Davies 2012, 41). Even when Anglo-Indian writers explicitly equate Hinduism with Satanism, they allege no connection between mainstream Hindu rituals and magic. Witnessing the "festival of Cali" [Goddess Kali], Trevelyan's mouthpiece Henry Broughton comes to the conclusion that "Satan was at the bottom of the whole business" (Trevelyan 1864, 249). Yet he does not make any connection between magic and this festival. It is not the case that the Anglo-Indian authors conceptualized magic as private and religion as communal activity, thereby anticipating the theories of the sociologists Emile Durkheim (1858 - 1917) and Marcel Mauss (1872 - 1950) (Davies 2012, 12; Wax and Wax 1963, 497). Being acquainted with Hindu religious practices, they knew well that, like magic, Hindu *puja* or devotional worship could also be performed in private. In Taylor's *Seeta* (1872) the author shows the innocent heroine worshipping Lord Krishna in her private shrine (Taylor n.d., 118). Though Taylor is against her object of devotion, he does not belittle the devotion itself. Similarly, Allardyce condemns the worship of the *linga*[9] at Dhupnagar but not the worshipper Ramanath. Magic is therefore clearly distinguished from devotional worship in these novels. One might conclude with the observation that the Anglo-Indian authors conceptualized magic as an activity devoted to the attainment of a definite, and often petty, end. Religious rituals, on the other hand, have no such immediate end in view. It may be further added that while both magic and non-Christian religions were derided upon by many Anglo-Indian novelists, their treatments of the magicians were harsher than their treatments of Indian devotees. While Indian wizards and witches were generally portrayed as evil characters, the devotees were at worst looked upon as deluded fanatics.

Representations of Indian magic and wizards in nineteenth century Anglo-Indian novels were not free from ideological underpinnings. The early nineteenth century was an age of turmoil when the British were struggling to expand and consolidate their rule in India. At this stage they were suspicious of all groups that seemed to threaten or undermine their authority. For the reasons enumerated earlier in this article, the Indian magicians were perceived as threatening. Naturally, the expatriate British writers who lived in India considered them antagonists. One finds this reflected in the novels of Hockley, Allardyce, and even early Taylor. Likewise Wilkie Collins, who was a metropolitan author, criminalized Indian magicians in his novel. Side by side, the early Anglo-Indian authors condemned Indian belief in magic as 'irrational'. To them, native belief in magic became a marker of their primitiveness and backwardness which could be cited to justify the colonizers' self-appointed mission of 'civilizing' the natives. Ironically, they overlooked the fact that many Englishmen 'at home' were also impressed by the seemingly supernatural powers of the Indian jugglers. One should note that the conciliatory presentation of the Indian wizards in English literature coincided with the stabilization of British rule in India. With British rule firmly established, the need to fear the wizards vanished for a time. One may say that Henty's treatment of Rujub and Taylor's treatment of Ahmud Ali reflect British confidence in that period. Again, with the waning of confidence in the later age, Indian magic and magicians were depicted with renewed hostility. Incidentally, magic had been rarely rationalized or dismissed as fraudulence in late nineteenth century

works. This may have had to do with the search for arcane Oriental knowledge initiated by the Theosophists. Here lies the main difference between early and late nineteenth century literary approaches to Indian magic.

4. Conclusion

Our examination of the five nineteenth century Anglo-Indian novels allows us to chart the changing British attitude to Indian magic. One observes that the initial hostility towards Indian magic was replaced with admiration in the later part of the nineteenth century. Taylor best reflects the changing British response to Indian magic and magicians. While he scoffs at Indian magic in the earlier novel, his attitude towards it becomes more appreciative in the later work. Interestingly, 20th century Anglo-Indian writers carried forward the tradition of presenting the Indian wizards as symbols of mysterious India. However, while nineteenth century attitude towards Indian wizards was somewhat ambivalent, 20th century writers unanimously condemned them. The wizards appearing in these works are presented as malignant beings who challenge the rational (colonial) order. The condemnation of the Indian wizards in these works can be seen as the manifestation of a reaction against the late Victorian glorification of Indian wizards and holy men. Interestingly, in nineteenth century colonial novels the victims of Indian magic and witchcraft were almost exclusively Indians. With the notable exceptions of Henty's Bathurst and Isobel, Europeans were never affected by Indian magic in these works. One may remember that the early Anglo-Indian authors dismissed Indian magic as 'superstition'. Naturally, they could never treat it as something serious. In contrast, 20th century authors presented the British as hapless victims of Indian magic. In Rudyard Kipling's tale "The Mark of the Beast" (1890), a Hindu ascetic transforms an English soldier into a werewolf for desecrating the image of God Hanuman (Kipling 1890, n.p.). In Alice Perrin's "The Fakirs' Island" (1901), a fakir curses the protagonist Mona Selwyn with small pox and disfigurement (Perrin 2011, 133-40). One may also remember that in the metropolitan writer W. W. Jacobs' story "The Monkey's Paw" (1902), a jinxed artifact created by an Indian fakir wreaked havoc in an English home (Jacob 2015, 1-13). On a funnier note, in H. G. Wells' "The Truth about Pyecraft" (1903) an Indian recipe for "Loss of Weight" is consumed by the obese Mr. Pyecraft. However, instead of making him lose weight, the potion makes him levitate and float like a balloon - much to his inconvenience (Wells 1903, n.p.). Most of these tales belong to the Imperial Gothic genre, as identified by Patrick Brantlinger. In the Imperial Gothic, Eastern superstition challenges and subverts Western rationality. This genre reflects British anxieties with the colonies (Brantlinger 1988, 227-28). The twentieth century Anglo-Indian tales likewise reveal the waning self-confidence of the colonizers who increasingly came to look upon India as a hostile place. In the words of Kipling, "the grim Stepmother of our kind" (Kipling 1886, n.p.).

According to the historian of magic Chris Goto-Jones, "In the modern period, magic has also become intertwined with powerful political and cultural discourses around the existence of a colonial periphery and the romance of 'Others'" (Goto-Jones 2016, 103). While Goto-Jones is speaking about stage-magic, the same idea applies to wizardry. In the colonial period, British discourse converted Indian magic and wizardry into a marker of the Indians' alterity. Our study of the literary representations of Indian magic and magicians in Anglo-Indian fiction proves that apart from a sudden uptick in admiration for Indian magic in the late nineteenth century, Indian magic remained generally depreciated in colonial literature. Magic therefore no longer remained mere spectacle but became intervolved with British colonial ideology. Our study gives evidence to this fact. Ultimately, representations of Indian magic and magicians in Anglo-Indian works tell us more about British views and assumptions on these topics than on the actual topics themselves.

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Notes:

1. Davies points out that the association between magic and priesthood is itself an ancient one. The words *magician* and *mage* have been derived from Greek *magos* which in turn came from Persian *makus.* The *makus* or *magos* was a Persian priest. The ancient Greeks hated such priests for their different religious belief (Davies 2012, 2 - 3).
2. 'Dam Madar' means 'by the breath of Madar'.
3. For instance, Indian wizards also appear in other novels of Hockley like *The Vizer's Son* (1831) and *The Memoirs of a Brahmin, or The Fatal Jewels* (1848) and Taylor's *Tara* (1863). They also appear in mainstream English works like *A Fatal Affinity. A Weird Story* (1889) by Stuart C. Cumberland.
4. The brief biographical accounts of the Anglo-Indian authors supplied here are derived from I. H-Shihan's book *Anglo-Indian Fiction: A Brief Outline.*
5. 'Fatehas' refers to Surah al Fatihah, the first chapter of the *Quran.* Taylor mistakes it as votive offerings.
6. Faiz Baksh was the mother of the business magnate William Palmer of Hyderabad and the grandmother of Taylor's wife Mary. She once gave Taylor a protective talisman (Taylor 1878, 39).
7. Pám Naik is a historical person. He was really a king of the Beydurs. The Beydurs or the Bedars are a tribe residing in modern Karnataka state in India. Taylor supervised the management of the Beydur kingdom Shorapoor during the minority of its rightful ruler (1842 - 1853). One may consult his autobiography *The Story of My Life* for details.
8. For a detailed analysis of Henty's jingoistic imperialism one should consult Huttenback's "G.A. Henty and the Imperial Stereotype".
9. Linga' or *lingam* (the phallus) is the emblem of Lord Shiva.