



Pakistani Anglophone Young Adult Fiction and the Art of Commodification of Culture: An Insight to Sheba Karim's *The Skunk Girl* and Rukhsana Khan's *Wanting Mor*

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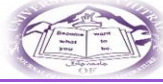
Abstract

This article aims to explore the art of commodification of culture deployed in the Pakistani Anglophone Young Adult (YA) fiction with special reference to Sheba Karim's *The Skunk Girl* (2009) and Rukhsana Khan *Wanting Mor* (2010). It has been contextualized in the postulates of the commodification of culture highlighted by Nederveen Pieterse in his work *Globalisation and Culture: The three Paradigms*. The term commodification has gained immense popularity in the contemporary era of globalization partly because of free trade and the economy. Culture in principle is one of the essential standpoints of globalization owing to its subtlest but the most penetrating tentacle in general and its capability to commodify in particular. Having a base in the economy, culture has been systematically commodified as a heterogeneous, homogeneous, or hybrid form to be sold either physically in galleries, museums, and tourist spots. The literature by South Asian writers has been altered to present the cultural illustration as hybrid, heterogeneous, or homogenized. Which according to Pieterse is the form of commodification of culture. It is this aspect that the present article intends to explore to assert that the success of YA Fiction is undoubtedly owed to aesthetic and academic merits but mainly due to the successful deployment of the technique of commodification of culture.

Keywords: Culture Commodification, Heterogeneous, Homogeneous, Hybrid, YA Fiction

Introduction

The term culture seemingly appears to be a simple term but owing to its complexity it is one of the complex terms to expound. As an umbrella term, it is taken as a complex phenomenon as the social behavior as well as simply as norms, values beliefs, practices, way of life, and even as the social conscious of an individual or a society. Resultantly, it has as many as 167 meanings as pointed out by Kroeber, A.L., & Kluckohn, C. It is understood as “an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior . . . to the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group” (Tylor, 1981). It is also defined as “learned and shared human patterns or mode` is for the living; day-to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism” (L. Damen, 1987, p. 367). The last but the most comprehensive definition has been provided by Raymond Williams



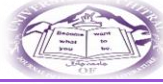
(1958) as “a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior” (p. 57).

Culture is projected and perceived through products, practices, and perspectives. The products include both concrete and intangible as arts, music, literature, paintings, and so on. The practices are the social pattern of behaving in society as per set pattern. whereas perspectives include beliefs, doctrines, and cultural norms. These three Ps are interlinked with each other.

Literature, owing to its multiplicity constantly shifts its place from product to prospect and to perspectives. It is generally assumed as the most effective platform to reflect society and its culture. Hanauer (2001) has justified literature as a useful source of cultural knowledge because it is projected by the author who is indulged in a literary experience and not a personal voice of an emotional being, although prominent critic as Terry Eagleton (1983) argues that there is no inherent quality of literature, it generates its meaning only through the interpretation of the reader. Substantiating its status as an artifact of culture without having an active role. But again according to Philip Tew “novels both rationalize and engage dialectically with our historical presence, playing their part, however provisionally at times, in our understanding of and reflection upon our lives” (Tew, 2007, p. 07). Suggesting that there exists a strong connection between literature and culture. The interconnection of literature and culture can be traced historically from the earlier piece of surviving English literature *The Beowulf* which does not merely give an account of the heroic deed of a great warrior but overtly portrays the Anglo Saxon culture. Similarly, what can be the best example of 14th century England and its policies and practices other than the famous *The Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer? Literature and culture are interlinked and literature molds and shapes culture as substantiated by Leo Lowenthal (1961) “Literature may justify or defy society, but it does not merely passively record it” (pp. xv-xvi).

Culture has gained a pivotal role in the contemporary era of globalization. As globalization thrives on tripods of military, economics, and culture, but culture is most important among the three. The notion of globalization has encouraged the celebration of different cultures of the globe which are different on a macro level but contribute to the uniform global culture which has been carried out through literature.

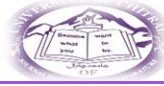
Like the definition, the representation of culture is a far complex phenomenon. It has never been portrayed or projected merely through art and craft. its portrayal and presentation



have always been intentional. In other words, it has always been commodified. The term commodification derived from *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) elaborating the systematic procedure of the role of commodification. The bourgeoisie has undoubtedly torn the bond of feudal relation of a man to another man but has created a vicious bond of self-interest among the individual based on cash payment. Everything from religious doctrine, to daily practice and philistine sentiments, is now linked with money. The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage laborers. The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil and has reduced the family relation into a mere money relation (Fernbach, 2019, p. 64)

The wide use of the Marxist notion of commodification became prominent in the global arena in 1977 after the popularization of the term globalization which gave birth to the term commodification. The commodification of culture is now taken as the selling of the culture in the market. Through participating in international chains like McDonald's, KFC, Disney Lands, etc., or through buying souvenirs, an Individual participates in the process of commodification of culture. The successful conduction of the Annual Dubai Shopping and Cultural Festival is but the commodification of culture for economic gains and benefits, the commodification of culture is carried out as it is one of the subtlest, yet most penetrating forms of commodification.

The contemporary culture theorist Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2004) has identified three paradigms of representation of culture through the ages. It has either been depicted as cultural differentials he has termed as the clash of civilization or “polarization” (p. 1389). By taking the notion from Samuel P. Huntington’s *Clash of Civilisations* (1996)., Pieterse is of the view that the primary purpose of the depiction of culture differential is to reassert and re-establish the notion of othering of West over the Rest and to reassert the notion of binaries. The depiction of polarization in the culture is as per the demand of globalization and an effective way of projecting a culture. The polarization of culture through art and craft has given The Native American tribes the to earn their livelihood. In literature, it is the exotic culture that is celebrated and the non-native writers have been able to gain access to academia is through the portrayal of exotic other cultures as traced out by Graham Huggan (1994). He while focusing upon the postcolonial literature is of the view “postcolonial critics may, unconsciously,



contribute to a “global commodification of cultural difference”, and become part and parcel, unwittingly, of course of a “booming alterity industry” (344)

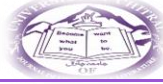
The second paradigm of culture depiction is the portrayal of a homogenized culture which Pieterse has termed as “McDonaldisation” (p. 1389). taken from the popular food chain McDonald's because “McDonald's formula is successful because it is efficient (rapid service), calculable (fast and inexpensive), predictable (no surprises), and controls labor and customers” (p. 1389). The objective of a homogenized culture is to promote the idea that there exists a single universe having a uniform culture based on a uniform ideology. According to Prasad (2006), the homogenized culture encourages the individual to consume the same brand, service, cuisine, and even to wear the same clothes. For Robertson (1992) the homogenization of culture gives birth to World culture or globalized culture. The validity of this globalized culture is debatable as Berger (2002) is of the view that under the mask of the homogenization of global culture, it is an American or the Western Culture tradition that is replicated

The last and the most contemporary representation of culture is the hybridization of culture or the rhizome of culture which can be termed as “the interpenetration of the global and the local resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas” (Ronald Robertson (2001). He is of the view that though hybridization is the progeny of racism yet it is the only practical form of culture as it entertains the notion of inclusiveness. By focusing upon the American popular culture, Pieterse is of the view is that the wider appeal of American culture is the intermixing of marginal and peripheral culture. C Hamelink (1983) is of the view “the richest cultural traditions emerged at the meeting point of markedly different cultures, such as Sudan, Athens, the Indus Valley, and Mexico” (Hamelink, 1983, p. 4). In cultural studies, Hybridisation is interlinked with Creolisation and glocalization. Appadurai (1990) is of the view that hybridity indulges in both differentiation and interconnection and the world should be celebrating this cultural diversity rather than urging for the monolithic culture.

The three paradigms assert that culture is not an abstract entity it is a thoroughly fiscal product and has been commodified successively over the years by selling it as a heterogeneous, homogenous, or hybrid product.

Literature Review

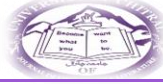
Anglophone fiction has been of greater significance not only because of its literary aesthetics but more of its cultural representation making it a profitable and money-making commodity as asserted by King Kok Cheung (1997) “marginal cultural productions are



capitalized on today's marketplace" (p. 195). The Anglophonic literature serves as one of the best marginal cultural products and is readily cashed in the globalized market. The Anglophonic writers have paved their way in the contemporary globalized market by projecting their own culture which has been foregrounded as either different, similar, or hybrid as per the demand of the global audience and the marketing giants. For that purpose, the works of these writers are produced and sold abundantly. Cultural trajectories projected by these writers have completely been accepted in the globalized arena, claiming to be projecting a different and exotic culture but subscribing to one of the above-mentioned trajectories. (Werbner, 2004). The market accessibility of Anglophonic literature dates back to the tremendous success of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) along with other writers as Vikram Seth, Jhumpa Lahiri and Amitav Ghosh whose works not only excelled aesthetically but at the same time their works were the top sales figure too.

South Asian literature has gained tremendous fame and acceptance around the globe which is evident from the fact that almost all multinational firms like HarperCollins, Addison-Wesley, Macmillan, McGraw-Hill, Oxford University Press, and Cambridge University Press, Penguin, and Prentice-Hall have established their branches in South Asian countries. The eminent writer Aijaz Ahmed (1992) is of the view that South Asian literature is governed by the "grids of accumulation, interpretation and relocation which are governed from the metropolitan countries" (p. 44). They hunt and groom all those writers and authors who not only have emerged from the prescribed cosmopolitan fields but who are more market accepted. To appease the publishing pundits of these multinational firms, their art is compromised considerably. The writers tend to focus more upon the culture of South Asian countries, as India, Bangladesh, etc. by inculcating the ideology of the supremacy of the West. As Kamila Shamsie (2009) has pointed out that "'international' or 'global' writing remains another term for 'minority' writing, with a need to appeal to the majority audience to receive widespread attention or even to make its way into bookstores" (p. 110). This is reflected from the fact that India has become the hub of the publishing groups by gaining the status of the world's third-largest producer of English books

Pakistan, an economically under-developed country is still struggling to boom its publishing and merchandising industry, resultantly, Pakistani writers have preferred and chosen neighboring countries like India for the publication of their works. The prominent novelists and authors as Uzma Aslam Khan's *Trespassing*, Shandana Minhas *Tunnel vision*

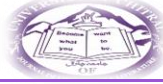


(2007), and Mohsin Hamid *a Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) are among the few whose work mentioned above were published in India. Even the important fiction and non-fiction of Nepalese writer Manjushree Thappa C or Sri Lankan author Chhimi Tenduf-La's *Loyal Stalkers*, have been published there. Consequently, the aesthetic importance of the South Asian work cannot be underrated due to its overwhelming response in the international market but the transformation of this aesthetic piece of writing to internationally well acclaimed and accepted writing too is an open secret. These works have followed and adapted themselves as per paradigms laid out by the market forces or the publishing houses. The contemporary British and American literature does not necessarily lie upon the publishing entrepreneurs but they have ensured that world literature in general and South Asian literature, in particular, is grounded in the institutionalization of culture. The commodification of the culture is carried out through market-sponsored bookstores, libraries, and publishing groups and the allocation of the awards. Sarah Brouillette has aptly stated:

correlate to this vernacularising project is publishers 'new commitment to accessing niche markets of minority readerships in the West. Another is their interest in outsourcing publishing tasks. Under ultra-liberal trade mandates, a growing number of export process zones are cropping up in South Asia, and publishing functions are being annexed to these areas in accord with a larger Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) trend. Key transnational firms are cutting costs by shipping things like book design and editing to South Asian companies or, more often, to other transnational firms that are headquartered in the West but have mostly South Asian offices and personnel. In this way, the whole book production system is being globalized (p. 34)

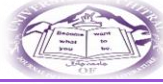
The above-mentioned quote elaborate the strategies adopted by the publishers in commoditizing South Asian literature, beginning from the establishment of the marketing zones to the printing and disseminating of the exotic yet cheap books to appeal to the taste of the public is but a systematic stratagem to commoditize South Asian fiction

The authors of world literature are bound to subscribe to the notions of migration, ethnicity, race, culture as core themes of their works but craftily ensure the notion of Othering. The irony is that the representation of the orient is constantly done by those who are non-resident yet emphatically proclaim to be the sole representations. Without being the authentic representation, South Asians have emerged out to be the epitome of an unceasing reproduction of the recurrent cliché and the enforcement of the stereotypes. Graham Huggans (1994) has



termed these writers as exotic because they deliberately authenticate the cultural differences for the market gain as it is the only sought-after product of the market of academia. He postulates “postcolonial critics may, unconsciously, contribute to a “global commodification of cultural difference”, and become part and parcel, unwittingly, of course of a “booming alterity industry” (p. 344). While taking into task Booker’s award and particularly the one Booker of the Bookers awarded to Rushdie’s *The Midnight’s Children*, he is of the view that “The novel reveals to its Western readers their hunger to consume: it feeds their desire for entertainment; satiates their keen exoticism appetites, but it never fails to mock them for their complicit enjoyment (p. 84). Amit Ray (2008) has traced Huggan’s notion of exoticism in the novels by the South Indian writers. For him, not only Rushdie but the other prestigious writer as Arundhati Roy’s novel *The God of Small Things* has emphatically highlighted postcolonial exoticism. While focusing upon Rushdie’s *The Midnight’s Children* Roy is of the view that is “proffering snake charmers and stammering sadhus, characters, and descriptions of exoticism that offer sly gibes at those who might simply consume his fiction for its ‘otherness’” (p. 132). The writers intentionally blur and oscillate between two variants of their culture, either as an uncultured, wicked, or monstrous backward culture or the overstated glorified culture with the apparent aim of gaining market access. Being fully conscious of the practice, some writers as Vikram Chandra has been targeted by Meenakshi Mukherjee for the use of native diction in his work. Vikram Chandra has openly professed it to be an important mechanism or as the trade of the time, besides he has urged the young writers to do the same.

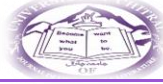
The Pakistani Anglophonic literature too has adhered to the global ideology of presenting the culture completely supported by stereotypes and the repeated clichés in his work. With Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lover* the first to do so. The apparent theme of the novel is about honor killing well reinforced by the anticipated stereotypes. Besides, it ends with the assertion of America / Europe as the safest place for occupation and abode while Pakistan is the most dangerous place to live in. Similarly, about Mohsin Hamid’s *Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007,) it has been rightly pointed out by Ahmed Naqvi that it is a raft of Pakistani fiction that was tied into the US, Islam, Pakistan, and terrorism. Every subsequent novel seemed to have one or all of these signifiers in their title, and many of these were about the trauma of well-adjusted upper-class Pakistanis in the West facing the fallout of the attacks (Naqvi, 2014)”.



The list can go on but the primary purpose of choosing these texts is that these fictions have been aesthetically acclaimed but they are at the same time the master of the proclamation of the clichés in the contemporary era. These and many other similar works of fiction present what is the demand of the Western audience and in return, they get acceptance in the mainstream academia, the publishing industry, and the market. Beginning from the very first South Asian work of ultimate significance the *Midnight's Children* by Rushdie which has been asserted as the best voice of the continent only to assert its status as a Western inclined and patronized literature. Aijaz Ahmed's stance on Rushdie's work is again thought-provoking as according to him "The blurbs on the Vintage paperback edition of *Shame*-based partly on a quotation from the New York Times-compare him with Swift, Voltaire, Stern, Kafka, Grass, Kundera, and Marquez" (Ahmed). His remark can be taken as the market trend for the writer with an Asian origin, with a vintage ground of having the ability to express in English and the knack to endorse and assert otherness is affirmed as the sole and genuine presenter of that particular nation. To conclude this argument, I would bring forth the *Satanic Verses* by Rushdie. Despite the severe criticism it received in its native country, its market acceptance is primarily due to its dealing with the tenants of Islam and about the Western sought life of Prophet Mohammad in particular. As the result, it is already made ready-made items to be sold in the western market easily. Ironically only those writers who have been honored in the form of glories, acknowledgments, and rewards from the West, despite receiving harsh criticism from their own country are considered as the real author. Ironically, most of the Anglophonic writers of Pakistan and India come up to that standard set by the West-oriented market.

In a nutshell, South Asian fiction can be termed as fetish commodities sold in the market by transforming their culture as the most sought-after products to be sold in the market.

Treading in the footsteps of the parent fiction, the other subgenre of South Asian fiction including chick lit and young adult fiction has made a strong contribution in globalized academia. Thus, among the Indian origin writers, *Mistress* by Anita Nair, *Jungle Girl* By Ginu Kamani, *The Marriage Bureau by Rich People* by Farahad Zama, *Matrimonial Purposes* by Kavita Daswani, *One Hundred Shades of Whites* by Preeti Nair, *Salam Paris* by Kavita Deswani, are noteworthy. The Pakistani chick list goes as; *Haveli (2013)* by Zeenat Mahal, *How it Happened (2012)* by Shazaf Fatima Haider *Karachi You'r Killing Me (2014)* by Saba Imtiaz, and *A Diary of a Social Butterfly (2008)* by Moni Mohsin are a few among the many. Similarly, the other sub-genre the Young adult fiction, commonly denoted as YA too



has paved its way in the globalized horizon, as evident from the list published by YALSA, the list includes *Motherland* by Vineeta Vijayaravhan, *The Sea of Tranquility: A Novel* by Raja Millay Alex, *All Involved* by Ryan Gattis, *Salt to the Sea* by Ruta Sepetys *Scythe* by Neal Shusterman *Out of the Easy* by Tara Sullivan. The fame of the young adult literature commonly denoted as YA by South Asian writers is asserted from the fact that a separate category of award, the South Asia Book Award (SABA) has been prescribed for them.

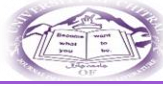
The South Asian YA on one hand prescribes a different shade of culture as prescribed by their mature writers but interestingly assert the otherness as rightly pointed out by Rosagam and Pillai (2016) that these YA show “not just as an individual who is at the cusp of adulthood but also as the "other" in a white society” (p. 44). The primary theme in most of these novels has been a quest journey in which the protagonist goes through an expedition of gaining knowledge and enlightenment in the form of his identity among the white peer. In a traditional quest journey, the religious myths have been a guardian angel but in YA the quest journey is supported by the cultural myth that plays a pivotal role. According to Rosagam and Pillai:

Reading texts written by writers from one's own culture and being exposed to the cultural aspects of one's ancestral home allows readers to become aware of the interpolation of language, dialect, landscape, and other aspects that reveal the intermingling and overlapping of the two cultures and the third space they inhabit” (p. 42).

Despite its emerging fame, YA fiction with a South Asian theme has not been completely explored. These fictions have been vastly published, marketed, and distributed they need to be explored at stretch. These fictions have compromised themselves as per market trends. Interestingly they have mostly negotiated upon the portrayal of the culture which is as per the demand of the cultural pundits. Being an Anglophonic piece of writing and proclaiming to be the projector of the authentic culture, it is the culture that has been compromised a lot. as These fictions are the carrier of cultural dimensions, here these areas need to explore.

The research focuses upon two Anglophonic YA by Pakistani origin American writers *The Skunk Girl* (2010) by Sheeba Karim and *Wanting Mor* (2010) by Rukhsana Khan. These two fictions have been analyzed as per the theoretical framework of Pieterse theoretical paradigm to trace the commodification of culture

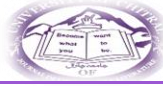
Content Analyses



The *Skunk Girl* (2010) is by Sheba Karim, a Pakistani Origin American author. She is from a small town in New York and is graduated from New York University School of Law and has a degree of M.F.A from Iowa Writer's Workshop. *The Skunk Girl* is her debut novel dealing with a Muslim, Pakistani girl. Her second novel *That Thing we call a Heart* (2017) was declared as the Best Contemporary Teen Read of 2017. It has been accredited by the Kirkus Review as Best Teen Book of 2017, The American Library Association (ALA) has considered it as Amelia Boomer Best Feminist book for Young Adult. Her upcoming Book *Mariam Sharma Hits Road* (2018) is distributed by Harper Collin which is based on road trips/ adventures of a South Asian Besides, two of her short stories have been nominated for Pushcart Award.

The Skunk Girl was nominated for the selection of the 2012 Silicon award and it was published in the United States, India, Italy, Denmark, and Sweden. It is about a 16 years old Pakistani Muslim girl Nina Khan living in New York. The focus of the novel has been her relationship with her parents and her relatives who want her to excel academically and not to indulge in western practices of young and eventually to betrothed to a Pakistani boy. Her strongest desire to spend.

This bildungsroman novel of Pakistani girl besides highlighting the usual theme of friends, romances, relationships, and tracing self-identity have explicitly highlighted the cultural and religious practices. The deeper studies clarify that it purely follows one or more of the cultural practices depicted by Pieterse Neverdeen. The contemporary Pakistani fictions have always projected religion, a cultural practice as a contrast, different and as a diverging point and eventually as a major obstruct of the success of non-natives abroad and especially in a European country. Karim has chosen a daring step of projecting a hybrid culture. while dealing with Islamic religion in general, she seems to have taken a specific measure to show Islam as hybrid religion having the tendency to absorb all. Islam has been projected as a religion of absorbing the difference and extremism associated with polarisation. it is surprising to see that the practices adhered to by most of the characters including the protagonist are not pure Islamic. Nina's entire family is not a typical Islamic family focusing on the regularity and punctuality of the prayers except her mother. The only time when they ensure the punctuality of the prayers is when the protagonist's religious aunt visits them. Besides, there are many other such minor hints in the novel which enforce an equivocation of a hybrid religion. One explicitly stated is about a religious tutor of Nina, brother Hussain. He once showed his concern



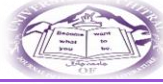
about a painting depicting two Mexican women holding flowers, by stating that it is “It is haram to depict human figures,” (p. 82). He was absolutely right as per Islamic doctrine it is so but her family instantly removed him from the said post but decided to retain the picture. Karim candidly states that Nina continued reading Holy Quran “under the watchful eyes of the Mexican women” (p. 83). Karim has asserted the notion of a homogenized religion to assert that non-native immigrants are not extremists as per se as has been always been depicted in the electronic and print media.

She has not only stopped on that but has continued presenting her protagonist as a girl who loves an Italian boy Asher Richelli, she has even attended a dance party where she tasted beer for the sake of experience and even stole a kiss of her boyfriend but feels satisfied because these minor incidents do not put her or her religion at a stake. Karim has in fact tried to assert Pieterse's notion that the only way for the protagonist and her religion to remain intact is by observing a hybrid culture.

The novel does not stop at this point only. When Nina is confused and is feeling guilty about adopting this hybrid culture, she seeks help from her sister who besides a nerd is also her mentor. Karim notion of a hybrid religion is advocated through the protagonist's sister who declares:

Whose definition are you applying to that? In every religion, people pick and choose what they want to follow. Look at Ma and Dad's own friends—a few of the aunties cover their hair, and a few of the aunties drink, some fast during Ramadan, some don't. You can't spend your life worrying about what other people will think. If you live decently and help others, is Allah going to condemn you simply because you had a beer? I don't think so, but others might. In the end, you have to do what *you* believe is right (pp. 208-209)

Karim's notion of a hybrid religion is what has been substantiated by Peter Beyer (1994) ‘globalization allows for religions previously isolated from one another to now have regular and unavoidable contact. As a result, globalization brings to the light the fact that since religions have similar values, not one of them is “correct” and, therefore, can be changed’ (Beyer, 1994). Karim through her protagonist has propagated this idea that in a hybrid religion it is not to practice the doctrine of one religion but to follow what is considered as right or wrong and by the intermingling of two religions as per the demand of the time.

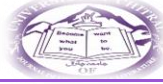


It is not only the hybrid religion that has been projected by Karim, but she has also focused upon the hybridization of t culture too. The family insists to be deeply inclined to the Pakistani culture in policy but turns out to be a liberal family in practice. Nina's family wears the ethnic costumes in and advocate the ethnic cuisine in their Pakistani social gatherings but when alone, the family loves to dine out and try the almost all-new restaurant. Nina wears Western attire at her school and among her friends. This adaptation of a hybrid culture has made her life easy and is never tormented by her friends. This has been possible due to her adoption of a hybrid culture. She has never faced the identity issue which is faced by the non-native in the European country. her friends acknowledge the limitation of her cultural restrictions but have never mocked her. Karim's novel openly professes that adaption of a hybrid culture is the best way of living. Hybridity is the offspring of globalization and the safest way of living in this globalized world.

To conclude from these instances, one can easily conclude the market acceptance of Karim's *Skunk Girl* is partly due to its aesthetic values as it has dealt with all the typical issues of young adults as identity, romance self-realization with special emphasis to South Asian protagonist. At the same time, it has focused on the reassertion of a hybrid culture. Karim through this novel echoes what Pieterse has advocated that hybridization stands for cultural assimilation and co-existence. The protagonist can adhere the cultural mixing and assimilation without compromising on her native culture. Similarly, embracing hybridity, the local culture can emerge with a new face and shape.

The second novel for the research is *Wanting Mor* (2009) is by Rukhsana Khan who is another Pakistani origin Anglophone writer from Ontario Canada. She began her career by writing songs as *Adam's world Children Video* and ended up writing short stories and novels. Her book *Big Red Lollipop* won two Awards, Golden Kite Award in 2011 and Charlotte Zolotow Award in 2011. She then wrote *Silly Chicken* (2005) *Ruler of the Courtyard* (2003) *King of the Skies* (2001) *The Roses in My Carpets* (1998) *Bedtime Ba-a-a-lk* (1998). She wrote written two novels *Wanting Mor* (2009) *Dahling, If You Luv Me Would You Please, Please Smile* (1999), few short stories *A New Life* (2009) *Many Windows* (2008) *Muslim Child* (1999). The list affirms her to be a versatile writer.

Wanting Mor (2009) won the *Middle East Book Award* (2009) and has been selected numerous awards as *Capitol Choices Noteworthy Titles for Children and Teens* 2010, *CYBIL Awards* 2009, *IRA Notable Books for a Global Society* 2010, Muslim



Writers Awards Children's Books 2011, SSLI Honour Book 2009 USBBY Outstanding International 2010. With 13 editions *Wanting Mor* deals with the struggles and the efforts of an 'orphan Muslim girl' in Afghanistan.

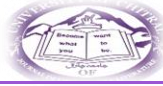
The plot is about a young girl Jameela, with a physical deformity, a cleft lip, the unexpected death of her mother, the marriage second of her alcoholic father, the rough treatment of her stepmother, her abandonment in a market by her father, and her final settlement in an orphanage. The setting of the novel is a war trampled Afghanistan and her strength is her blind obedience to the fellow beings and her firm trust in Allah.

This novel is supplemented with the cultural practice ranging from the daily routines, customs, and going on to religious details moral details. Khan has effectively deployed the technique of what Pieterse describes as the polarization of culture or heterogeneous culture where the culture is portrayed as different or other. Khan has ensured that the cultural traits are represented as estranged, exotic, and different. She began with Jameela's early morning ritual of lightening a flame for the preparation of a cup of tea for her father. She "strikes the flint with steel" (p. 20) which is followed by "blowing on the tinder" and "Feed it small sticks then bigger" (p. 20). This minutest detail of lightening a fire is sufficient not only to excite the curiosity of the Western audience but at the same time it highlights the technological backwardness of an Asian country. Furthermore, there is further detail regarding Jameela's method of using ashes as a detergent for washing utensils and crockery. This practice and usual cultural practice is quite different and enhances the notions of the orient as different and their culture as heterogeneous.

From the minute daily routine Khan goes to the religious practices too, she extensively elaborates the burial ritual performed in Afghanistan as:

First, we take a sheet and cover it. Then working under the sheet, we remove my mother's clothes...muttering prayers, we gently clean her, make wudu for her, then wash her hair, the right side of her body, then left...when her body is clean we are ready to wrap her...some of the women are wailing (pp. 12-13).

This graphic description, following a methodical process of washing and wrapping a body is quite different from the practice followed in the West. This graphic description along with its placement in the first chapter is not coincidental but deliberate. This portrayal serves the targeted purpose, it not only enhances the notion of polarization of culture which is different though exotic and it also endorses what Linda Nochlin(1989) has stated that it is "of the



picturesque – Orientalizing in this case – is to certify that the people encapsulated by it, defined by its presence, are irredeemably different from, more backward than, and culturally inferior to those who construct” (p. 51). The ultimate purpose is the same as has been highlighted by Pieterse the commodification of a heterogeneous culture.

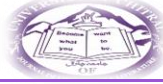
Besides the daily and religious practices, the cultural representation is done through the language, as elaborated by Ashcroft & Griffiths (2002) the non-native writers either deploy the abrogation or the appropriation of language especially English Language *Wanting Mor* has deployed abrogation in its communication. Thus we can see words like b *Agha, purani, chadri, charpae dusterkhaan, corbacha, ghushl*, and the list goes on, which are occur recurrently in the text even though there exists an English substitute The use of estranged language is apparently to authenticate the cultural norms but deliberately project the Asian culture as different from the westernized culture. This is done to assert the orient culture as essentially dissimilar and inferior *other*. According to Lisa Lau:

(R)e-Oriental writers set themselves up as ‘translators’, translating one culture to/for the other, have the dual role of opening the channels of communication, but also of holding the two sides separate because it is this very separation that lends heightened significance to their role. (p. 585).

As Pieterse has rightly pointed out that for the West, the culture of the East is different as it lacks the refinement and aesthetic which the Western culture has. It is messed up and disorganized, an ideology passed on through the legacy created by the colonial writers and particularly by E.M Foster in *A Passage to India (1924)*. The culture depicted in these works is deliberately portrayed as a contrast to the refined and sophisticated culture of the East.

Conclusion

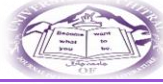
From the above discussion, it is evident that culture can never be taken as an abstract entity, as a token of identity, or as an empirical representation of society. Earlier, it was assumed that only the apparent element of the culture as food, clothing, and music do transform. The cultural values, norms, and practices are always taken as permanent and integral. In the contemporary era of cultural commodification, even this notion has been altered. the massive production and distribution of art and literature have played a pivotal role in this respect. The authors and the writers of South Asian literature, in particular, have deliberately portrayed their cultural practices as either heterogeneous, homogeneous, or hybrid for monetary gain and as per the desire of the publishing pundits. The above-stated three forms of culture are merely



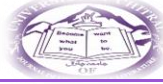
three forms of cultural commodification to present their culture as either exotic or as clichés as per market demand. The tendency pioneered by the established writers as Salman Rushdie, Mohsin Hamid, Arundhati Roy, etc. has been carried forward by the emerging writers of popular fiction too as evident from the above selected Young Adult fiction. Undoubtedly, these and many other popular fictions writers have established their academic and aesthetic merit, but a deliberate attempt has been made on the part of these writers to portray the cultural traits and practices. For the market accessibility and international fame, these cultural traits and values have been craftily commodified by presenting them as either stereotypes or exotic.

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