

# **Sindhi Literature - A Glance**

**By Mohan Gehani**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests on the stage, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I venture to speak about Sindhi literature, at the outset I would like to delineate the limitations of the scope of such a venture. In the aftermath of the partition in 1947, the population of Sindhi Hindus who migrated to India, though inheritors of glorious civilization, language and vibrant literature, comprised only a band of population which mostly constituted educated middle class, petty traders and sprinkling of land owning gentry. The larger part of the landowners, peasantry artisans and manual workers by and large constituted Muslim majority, hence remained on their soil. Thus we Sindhis in India do not have the backyard of peasantry, working class, artisans and landowners. We are confined to narrow band. Therefore, when I speak of Sindhi literature all these facets are absent from my literature. Added to this limitation is, that Sindhi speaking people who migrated from Sindh constitute less than half a percent of population in India and that too scattered all over the surface of the land mass of India and not a few have chosen to make this whole world as their abode in absence of even an inch of land under their feet which they can lay claim to.

I will confess that any attempt at evaluation of the literature along the lines of structuralism and deconstruction will flounder as they basically deal with the language as a system and my language as stated earlier has obvious limitations. My language is not only not spoken in the markets, it is not the language of any state, it is not a language of any official work. Under the impact of globalization, and a peculiar character of the society the economic wellbeing that has accrued to this business community, my language is progressively being banished from the households also . Now mostly it has remained a language of memory retention . Yet surprisingly this language can boast of the most vibrant literature that any modern language in India can boast of. It is really miracle of miracles in the face of all the odds that I have described.

As mentioned earlier, it can be said that the uprootment in the wake of partition of India was harrowing experience would be understatement indeed! The feeling of bewilderment, followed by gloom, and sinking down the current- suffocating and gasping for a breath. In this feeling of utter helplessness it was incumbent on the writer of those times to promise better times and better society...only the literature speaking about the total change and new order promising equality, eradication the scourge of centuries of poverty could strike the responsive chord among the people. Sindhi language already had a band of progressive writers in nascent stage in Pre partition time and they came forward with the 'promised' revolution. They had the faith in the destiny of the community in which language played a very important role and they held that Sindhi community had a distinct identity that had to be upheld. In Sindhi community the appellation of being progressive lost the narrow connotation of being aligned to a particular political party (apart few exceptions) and the progressive literature poured forth like a torrent. No doubt as is wont large body of literature produced then was topical and reflects a particular situation of society. It has failed to survive the test of time.

It is in this period that came the short story "GOPU" of Tara Mirchandani, herself a young girl at that time, which depicted the stark reality of the times, when the young children lost their innocence of childhood and took the responsibility of sustaining the family by selling sugar candys' in the local train compartment.

Sindhi poets also portrayed the same reality.

Renowned singer Master Chander be wailed:-

Birds are leaving their garden,  
Leaving familiar sights and sound,  
Leaving old homes, birds are leaving their  
garden.

Kavi Pahilaj bemoaned:-

Necklace of Sindh is torn,  
Pearls are scattered all around!

Parsram Zia, lamented,  
Country attained freedom, Capitalists have thrived,  
For common man it is same hopelessness still!

Hari Dilgir, said,  
Neither a lamp, nor oil, nor matchstick, nor a wick, it is darkness,  
We had dreamt, we shall see bright lamps all around!

Krishin Rahi said,

Only hunger will not produce revolution,  
If the will to fight is not strong, nothing can be achieved by  
mere death!

In keeping with strict Marxist theory of ‘Declassing’ of an individual, Jethanand “TAAB” wrote some significant stories, and AJ. Uttam’s story “Raja” is also reminiscent of those times.

It is during this period that Sundri Uttamchandani wrote her immortal classic of short story “BHOORI” in which she depicted a beauty of yesteryears, standing shoulder to shoulder with her husband to face the financial crisis and eke out existence by selling papads in various Sindhi settlements of Bombay - Retaining her grace and pride. Thus sounding a clear message of dignity of labour.

The flow of life did and does not run along the predicted lines, the revolution which was supposed to be waiting round the corner proved to be elusive and Sindhi community took a different route to face the adversity. Their hard work and entreaprulal skill, accumulated through the centuries came in handy and they occupied themselves with one point agenda of making their economic lot better. Where writers helped to provide necessary first aid, but failed on their promise, the society in all its worldly wisdom took a different route and soon

writers found themselves redundant on that front. As society changed its course so did the writers. The fight against the system was changed to a fight to retain a distinct linguistic and cultural identity of the community , with a sense of pride in their glorious multifaceted heritage. It may be mentioned that when the constitution was framed and Indian republic came into being, Sindhi language did not find mention in the eighth Schedule of the constitution, which for all practical purposes was necessary for Sindhi being considered as one of the Indian modern languages. An all embracing and all inclusive movement of the inclusion of Sindhi language in the 8<sup>th</sup> schedule started. This attracted many younger writers who were not even in their teens when they left Sindh. At many places where Sindhis had pockets of some significance, Ulhasnagar, Ahmedabad, Poona, Delhi, Jaipur, Ajmer and at many other places literary classes started - cultural groups sprang up. Prof. Ram Panjwani apart from his teaching duties as a professor, traversed along all Sindhi settlements singing Sufi songs and bringing cheer to dejected. The most important contribution of Prof. Ram Panjwani was to project “Jhulelal” (Water God) as a deity of Sindhi community. This has proved to be a cementing force for the Sindhi community as Jhulelal is revered all over India and Cheti Chand ( 1<sup>st</sup> day of Chaitra month ) is celebrated all across India as Sindhyat day, as per call given by Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahitya Sabha. Gobind Malhi, alongwith Bhagwanti Nawani with her inimitable voice and Satram Rohra, electrified Sindhi people with their programmes. A group sprang up in Ajmer under the inspiration of Goverdhan Bharti who had matured into a fine lyricist and a significant . Such groups sprang up at Delhi, Jaipur and many places- here one fact needs to be stressed that the guiding spirit behind all these endeavors were writers who had already made a name for themselves in the literary field. All India conferences were held- where writers from different places gathered. It was indeed a period of heady enthusiasm! The Sindhi language eventually found its place in the constitution in the year 1967.

In Bombay, Prof. M U Malkani played a role of true patriarch and groomed and encouraged many writers who in times to come were to attain great heights in their literary career. Most of the Sahitya Academy awardees of Mumbai are from that Sindhi Sahit Mandal. Prominent writers at that time were Kirat Babani, A.J.Uttam, Gobind Malhi , Arjan Shad, Krishin Rahi, Moti Prakash, Mohan Kalpana, Guno Samtani, Lal Pushp, Loknath Jetley, Sundari

Uttamchandani, Kala Prakash, Tara Mirchandani, Mohan Gehani Vishnu Bhatia, Anand Golani, Ishwar Anchal, Vasdev Nirmal and many others. Old writers like Prof. Lehraj Aziz, Parsram Zia, Prof. K.B.Advani remained quite active in their literary creation.

Similarly in Ahmedabad Arjan Hassid like a magnet attracted quite a young talent which in times to come bore significant results. The names of those who were drawn towards this literary movement are Vasdev Mohi, Prem Prakash, Prof. Namdev Tarachandani, Prof. Hiro Shewkani and many others who are regularly contributing to enrichment of Sindhi Literature. In Ajmer, veteran writer Tirth Basant attracted many a young talent which include Goverdhan Bharti, Bhagwan Tilwani, Hari Himthani and Dholan Rahi. In New Delhi where eminent master of Sindhi Rubai, Dr. Harumal Sadarangani resided and a significant poet of Sindhi Narayan Shyam had also settled. A band of young poets and writers emerged that included Harikant, Lacham Komal, Satram Kalyani who had already started writing in Sindh he also became active, Dr. Motilal Jotwani, Param Abhichandani, and Anand Khemani have remained active in their literary creation. Whereas, in Jaipur a trio of Sunder Agnani, Lachman Bhambani and Vasdev Sindhu Bharti emerged and contributed significantly to Sindhi literature.

Influx of so many writers at the time when the community and very language were in the gravest crisis of its existence can not be logically explained. It only points to, the will to survive and survive we did inspite of all the odds stacked against us.

In this entire process one concept that emerged was “Sindhyaat”. A sense of distinct identity based on language, literature, culture, traditions and sense of rich heritage and history. It resulted in a strong and perennial flow of nostalgic literature and the literature revolving round the loss of language and cultural moorings and a necessity of holding fast to these threads which lend community a distinct identity.

Nostalgic literature was written immediately after partition where the relationship of love and friendship and family feeling that Hindus and Muslims shared in pre partition sindh was reflected. With the passage of time the nostalgia gave place to search for cultural roots . This

sentiment of Sindhyat cuts across all the literary trends and age groups! Inspite of the wound of partition which was inflicted on the basis of religion there was not any feeling of grievances, or bitterness, only the fond memories pervaded. Among novelists Gobind Malhi was first writer who wrote 'Pakhira Valran Khan Vichrya' (Birds separated from the flock) in which rural Sindhi life in pre partition period is taken as a background .The protagonist of the novel refuses to leave his motherland for the only reason of the love of his soil. This is recurring subject in many novels of Sindhi writers. Kishin Khatwani in his last novel written about 50 years after Gobind Malhi's novel wrote 'Tarander Badal' (Floating clouds) in that the protagonist of the novel a great intellectual leaves his lady love and embarks upon an unknown Journey in the Kutch desert to head for Sindh and losses himself in the vast desert.

Professor Ram Panjwani wrote a short story 'Mohamed Gadhi-a-waro' (Mohamed- the coachman). In this he relates his real life experience of how he was saved during communal riots by a Muslim coachman. Narain Bharti has written ever green stories of Sindhi Literature, 'Claim' and 'Dastavez' (Document), Ram Kukreja wrote unforgettable story 'Dhachiwaliyan'. Kirat Babani wrote a story about a Sufi darvesh 'Mohamed Ram'. Kala Prakash immortalized her village 'Khanwan' by writing a short story of the same name. Recently, Thakur Chawla has related many incidents of pre-partition era in his piece 'Tun Hite Rahi Pao' (You stay up here). He relates the experience of meeting his lady love of teen years after more than half century while on tour to Sindh! Many such instances from the body of Sindhi literature could be cited.

But now due to globalization and consequent emphasis on English language has created an alarming situation for Sindhi Language. This sentiment finds its echo in the Sindhi literature also.

'Ghanti' ( A call bell ) a short story of Harish Vaswani is in fact, a warning call to community to wake up before it is too late as Sindhi language one day may become extinct.

The same sentiment is expressed by Narayan Shyam in his poetry. He states,

God forbid! A day may not dawn,

When people would say,  
Once there was Sindh and the Language of Sindhis'.

The study of Sindhi poetry is permeated with this sentiment. When the government wanted refugees to file the claim of their properties left behind, the prominent poet

Lekhraj Aziz thundered:-

You are asking me about the claim to my property,  
Entire Sindh is my property and I lay claim to Sindh!

Arjan Shad said:-

Let my vision wander across the border,  
Allow me to look at the soil of my motherland,

Narayan Shyam said:-

Granted water of Jamuna and Ganga is nectar,  
But the milk of mothers' breast is only Sindhu !

Krishin Rahi composed in traditional Sindhi form of bait 'Sindh and Sindhis' which remains all time high. This one piece was enough to lend him immortality. This sung by Bhagwanti Nawani brought tears to many old eyes.

There are rivers a plenty here,  
But only Sindhu permeates in their soul!

And the last stanza says,

Those born here will also be called Sindhis,  
As strangers when they would visit Sindh,  
People would say Sindhis have come to see Sindh!

Arjan 'Hassid' asks,

How can I call any speck of dust as my own,  
I have already left my home!.

Vasdev Mohi says,

I like languages,  
I love but three,  
English        gives me daily bread,  
Hindi        keeps me connected to country,  
Sindhi        gives me dreams!

Shrikant Sadaf born in post partition India, bemoans the fact,

Sadaf was a poet indeed !  
Alas! Not born in Sindh!!.

Infact immediately after the partition a sort of poetic dialogue ensued between the poets who had migrated to India and their Muslim poet friends who were left back home. A veteran poet Khialdas Fanni started such a poetic dialogue with his poet friends left in Sindh , which was reciprocated by his poet friends from Sindh and the same pattern was followed by many others, but soon any communication across the border was banned. Only a few books or letters could be smuggled. This remained the case till recently.

Another significant result of uprootment of Sindhi community was that in the process of resettlement, the role of the Sindhi woman underwent a significant change. Apart from the traditional responsiblity of running home they came forward to shoulder the responsibility of bread earner also. This shattered many orthodox chains and in big cities at least the women became liberated, though not rebellious and moved from the confines of sheltered homes to market place and offices. In this situation the Sindhi literature was also enriched by lady

writers who have distinguished themselves and happily their tribe is steadily increasing. During pre partition period we get the name of solitary woman writer Guli Sadarangani who with her novel 'Ithad' (Unity) based on the subject of inter communal marriage had created many a ripple. In post partition era the leading women writers Sundri Uttamchandani, Kala Prakash, Tara Mirchandani, and Popati Hiranadani emerged who (with exception of Tara Mirchandani who went into hibernation for quite some time but has once again wielded her pen firmly) have made significant contribution to Sindhi Literature.

Sundri with her first novel 'Kirandar Deewaroon' (Crumbling walls) dealt with changing man – woman relationship and stressed the equality of both the sexes in rebuilding the society. Her domestic language sprinkled with idioms and folksy language as spoken by women brought her much appreciation. Kala Prakash in her first Novel, 'Preet purani reet Nirali', (Old love- A new way) also dealt with man- woman relationship with a changed perspective. Popati Hiranandani brought a fiery consciousness in her writings.

Kala Prakash brought out a book 'Mamta Jun Lahroon' ( Waves of motherly affection) it was written in poetic prose and bespeaks of delicate feelings of mother for her children and offers insight in child psychology.

There has been no looking back for these brave writers. All above have been honored with Sahitya Akademi award. Kala Prakash's novel 'Waqt Withuoon ain Wichotiyoon' (Time – Gaps- and separation) portray's a life of a working woman in Bombay and her juggling of domestic duties. Her recent novel 'Purana Pakha' (old houses) deals with a theme of inter caste marriage between Hindu girl and a Muslim boy. A theme which was handled by Guli Sadarangani about 70 years ago. If any proof was required about the secular character of Sindhi literature this fact is eloquent enough. Soon these lady writers were to be joined by other women writers who have significantly contributed to Sindhi literature. One of them being Rita Shahani a copious writer from Poona, Indira Poonwala, Indira Vaswani, Maya Rahi,

Daya Jashnani, and the young new but important voices are of Rashmi Ramani, Veena Shringi, and of course bringing in fresh breath Vimi Sadarangani and their tribe is steadily increasing.

Again, I take your leave to go back in time.

The post partition period also saw the emergence of cold war. This cold war was all pervasive-even the literary field where many sought apolitical refuge, sadly as the cold war did not leave any space. As a part of a dream of Free India , Socialist ideals, which for common man meant freedom from exploitation, equality and freedom from want found ready acceptance. As a corollary the ideas preached by progressive writers were in sync with popular sentiment and found acceptance. With the result where progressive literature confirmed to broad liberal humanitarian values it attained great heights but when it was sought to be sectarian as handy made of a particular party it degenerated into mere slogan mongering. In this situation in every language the established hierarchies of the groups of writers was challenged. In Sindhi, such a movement which signified a shift in emphasis from social context to centrality of individual was spearheaded by three Writers, Mohan Kalpana, Guno Samtani and Lal Pushp. They are labeled ‘romantic writers’ by Sindhi critics, which description I feel does not adequately fit them. In fact from literary point of view nothing is in common among them except the fact that they opposed the status quo of the literary establishment. Mohan Kalpana, who was most vocal writer in the polemics, on a creative level has limited canvas and milieu of troubled times is conspicuous by its absence, but it was compensated by intensity of feeling and his ‘introvert’ approach. His early novels deal with adolescent love and in every novel the main character is gifted but poverty stricken artist, philosopher- a poet- - a painter and the heroine is well to do. In the end it is always heartbreak for the hero! . But this fault is redeemed by his ready wit and repartee and his imaginative use of language. In fact his larger than life personality casts its fascinating shadow on his literature. His Novel ‘Maa’ (Mother) is reminiscent of Gorky’s ‘Mother’. This novel has Sindh as backdrop; and his last Novel ‘Kaaon ain Samund’ (Crow and the Sea) is quite an evocative title but concerns itself mainly with the struggle of Sindhis in Sindh-with obvious political overtones of Jiye Sindh movement in post partition Sindh.

Guno Samtani has a very small quantity of literature to his credit. His characters reflect the influence of Bengali literature, which in Sindhi translation, formed a staple diet for Sindhi

readers in earlier years. He has used Hindi words in abundance to give a veneer of classicism to his writings.

Lal Pushp has traversed along many a literary school and soon he joined the ranks of 'Modernists.'

In the Indian context the phenomena of 'Modern' literature is a source of pleasant surprises and bewilderment. It's ambit included every thing from traditions of Pre revolution Russian formalists, modern experimentalists like T S Eliot and Ezra Pound, Freudian symbolist – the steam of consciousness – Kafkan surrealism – Existentialism of Camu as well of Sartre- Theater of absurd of Samuel Backet and many more strands were lumped together and it came as ' Modern Literature'. To utmost amazement all but few jumped the bandwagon. At least so it happened in Sindhi literature- it was very easy as no rules were supposed to be followed. No doubt many dead leaves, straw and dead branches, swam on the surface of the torrent, but when the waters subsided on the shore lay some incomparable pearls along with the pebbles. On the whole this deluge proved to be beneficial as far as Sindhi literature is concerned.

Lal Pushp who belonged to earlier generation produced the short stories with man- woman relationship, with psychological and philosophical discourses. . His most talked about Novel 'Huna Je Atam Jo Mout' (The death of his Self) suffers from a zig zag narration and does not moves along a time line. It did create some ripples due to its novelty and won him Sahitya Akademi Award! It was explained as an attempt to delve deep into the innermost recesses of consciousness.

Professor Motilal Jotwani strictly does not fall in the category of 'modernist' trend, but his stories and novels represent a rarified atmosphere and conversation which is supposed to be profound between two characters in which first person singular is always prominent. His novel 'Orange traffic light' is a significant contribution.

Other two important names that occur to me who are well informed about the theoretical aspects of deconstruction and use these tools in their critical assessment are Anand Khemani and Param Abhichandani. But at creative level they have not been able to offer something very significant or substantial, which in my opinion will stand the test of time. But all the same they do add to the variety. According to post modernists it is the bursts of creativity from which the reader has to chart his course to meanings and contexts. We do not have such readers as yet!

Anand Khemani in his trilogy of novels comes out as extremely rebellious against all socially established norms and institutions. He has tried his hand at anti poetry also but has only a few takers.

Param Abhichandani entered the scene with his novel 'Jharana', (Springs) which adopts the technique of stream of consciousness and metaphorically deals with alter ego as Twin soul. His 'Hika Jar Ba Jibbon' also more or less follows the same pattern. His last novel was 'Aein bi' (This way also) .

Shyam Jaisinghani was introduced in literature through his novel 'Kacha Daagha' (Weak threads). He takes his characters from educated higher middle class professionals. His weaving is tight and blends his language with unique texture often sprinkled with English to give an authentic flavor of the class that he seeks to portray. Subject of his novel is clash of loyalties to which a young person is subjected, his love for mother and his love for his wife and the turf war between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in which husband is constantly to play referee and is being pulled on both the sides. Such hackneyed subject has been handled with freshness and fineness which is really commendable.

Many more novelists have been writing in this period. Rita Sahani's contribution is quite substantial. Krishin Khatwani and Kala Prakash have already been mentioned.

It is in the field of short story and poetry that 'modern' trend found its forte!

During this period Ishwar chander emerged as a profolic and popular writer. He took his characters from lower middle class and the break up of the joint family system, the generation gap- denial of expectation of older generation by young generation who would turn out to be selfish in contrast to self less sacrifice of the parents and their consequent disillusionment. The pain inflicted by changing value structure on the older generation is his hall mark. This struck a responsive chord among the readers.

The short Story ‘An other day’ by Shyam Jaisinghani stands out as a significant contribution. It covers many conflicting gamut of emotions in a single day by upper class professional working couple- life typified in any metropolitan city. The placidity of narration is simply amazing!

His another story ‘Addai Ghar’ (two and half houses) dwells on the rootlessness and consequent sense of being adrift of overseas Sindhi businessman. Two and half house is a metaphor for a movement of horse on the chess board.

During this period Vishnu Bhatia has also contributed many stories but his contribution though substantial in quantity has not remained of uniform quality. He has written some stories with explicit sex content.

Lakhmi Khilnani has been scathing about the neo- rich class that is fast emerging in the society, their ostentiousness and preoccupation with only amassing money and chasing creature comforts, being oblivious to the cultural needs of the community. In one of the stories the cruelty of the materialistic culture is brought forth when a son is shown as using his own mother as a carrier of contraband and left helpless at the airport without any sense of remorse or twinge in conscience.

Satish Rohra, and many others as Ishwar Bharti, Bansi Khuchndani , Gopal ‘Kali’ and many others have also contributed to this genre.

It is in the field of poetry that significant work is done. The prominent among the new wave poets who made their entry into literature are Harish Vaswani and Vasdev Mohi. As new wave poets of protest and as a gesture of turning their back on the tradition they took to free verse and have produced some of the fine poetry of that time.

Harish Vaswani used the thought scape in original way and by a novel turn of phrase, his language he broke the virgin soil. His analogy of roads having conspired to stagnate him won him instant appreciation. He has explosive way with the words. He explores the new horizons of creativity.

Vasdev Mohi is another significant poet who made entry at that time and has remained a poet of understatement. His creative use of language sets him apart from all other poets. He has come back and added new leaf to the traditional Ghazal form. It is in the Ghazal that many innovative experiments are being done at present he is now experimenting with a new form 'Haiko' Ghazal .Poets of older generation who are great master of this form are Arjan Hassid and M. Kamal. Of course in the same league, Mohi also finds his place. Whereas Arjan Hassid has brought poetry nearer to prose in his inimitable way and M. Kamal is master of irony and satire and playing with the contradiction to bring beauty to his ghazals. Mohi has embellished his Ghazals with unusual Radifs (Refrain). At present those poets who are successfully tilling the virgin soil and breaking new ground in Ghazal are, Gope Kamal, Goverdhan Sharma 'Ghayal' veteran Bhagwan Khilnani 'Saqi', Khiman Mulani, Vinod Assudani, Dholan Rahi, Shrikant Sadaf and Laxman Dubey.

All other forms are relegated in the background. Experiments are being done with shorter forms. Prabhu Wafa started with 'Panja karaa'. A piece of 5 lines . An eminent poet Inder Bhojwani experimented only with one line (Tanha). This form has been adopted by Satish Rohra and others. Many have taken up to writing a Japanese form of 'Haiko'(ignoring the rules that this form demands ) one need to string only three lines! Now the poetry has been reduced just to only four words by Gopal Thakur as "Chouakra"this experiment is also being followed by many others. Could this be due to paucity of time? Who has the time to pursue

the rigor of larger forms which require a lot of painful practice! Now no wonder we have SMS poetry!

But there are a few pleasant exceptions.

Earlier in 80's Narayan Shyam had penned his mini classic 'Roop Maya' comprising number of sonnets to pen a Puranic tale of Meneka and Vishwa Mitra. It has remained unsurpassed masterpiece at the pinnacle of aesthetic sensibility.

Prem Prakash has produced a long poem 'Bhagat'. Bhagat is a traditional form which combines song, dance, story telling and some buffoonery. Thus Bhagat has been taken as a symbol of reaching across. It has characters from all religions – all separate yet merged into one- yet distrustful and enemies out to destroy each other. They know that by destroying one all will be destroyed and the only option open to them is to sing and dance together and this touches another significant aspect also of danger the community faces of extinction due to its indifference to everything but material affluence. Bhagat also stands as a cultural symbol of Sindhyat.

Gope Kamal has written a book of free verse 'Wapsi' (Return) dealing with the character who left shores of his own country to seek material wealth and in retrospect feels the pain of loss of long cherished childhood memories. A fine blend of flashback depicting utter poverty and wealth, a painful but bewitching past full of hopes and dreams and dreary present full of all the comforts!

The significant book of poetry in recent past is "Mankoo". This book is about only one character. A Villager, who comes to a big city with big dreams to sell his only asset, his labour. The cruelty of poverty in the village and cruelty of poverty with all its brutality of city life is laid bare. A peep is afforded in the inner life of Mankoo, his hopes, his fears, his aspirations, his failures and his bitter struggle in the city and fleeting life force. This book has been translated in Gujarati and Hindi language also and has won many accolades.

This brings me to a serious question, which could be subject matter of another discussion among Sindhi intellectuals. Obviously 'Mankoo' is not Sindhi character. At the same time he is a part of Sindhi literature because the book is written by Sindhi writer in Sindhi Language. As mostly Sindhis are living in big cities and towns and are under the same influences as his other neighbors speaking different languages and belonging to different communities with their distinct cultural heritage. What is it that will distinguish Sindhi character from any other, thereby making Sindhi literature distinct from other apart from the language? Is there any distinct Sindhi character whose distinct features can be identified? I think this question I shall leave for Sindhi intelectuals to grapple with at appropriate time and forum.

Sir! Now I shall come to one point that is cause of concern for ALL OF US though this is out of the orbit of my subject. But it does merit at least a mention as a poser. For all these thousands of years the philosophers and creative writers have engaged themselves with 'reality' and now we are suddenly confronted with an other Kind of reality. The virtual reality. In fact is not the ' virtual reality' of cyberspace, with cyber communities ,blogs and cities, cyber identities, cyber markets, cyber marriages, challenging the 'old' notion of reality itself? The basis on which the entire philosophical and edifice of ideas is resting. Another question which stares us in the face is that today only dominant relation is that of a producer and consumer .How will literature or for that reason any creative art shall escape being a commodity. This is a larger question which confronts us all. .How shall we over come this situation only time will tell.

Mohan Gehani