

“The Many that Naga Writings are: Rereading Memory, Indigenization, and Nationalism in Selected Texts from Nagaland”

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **“The Many that Naga Writings are: Rereading Memory, Indigenization, and Nationalism in Selected Texts from Nagaland”** submitted by **Soumik Sengupta** bearing Reg. No. **20HCHL05** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy in Comparative Literature is a bonafide work carried out by him under our supervision and guidance.

The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or institution to award any degree or diploma.

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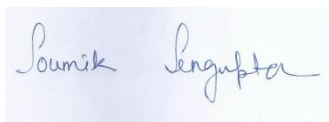
DECLARATION

I, **Soumik Sengupta**, hereby declare that this Dissertation entitled, **“The Many that Naga Writings are: Rereading Memory, Indigenization, and Nationalism in Selected Texts from Nagaland”** submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of **Dr. J.Bheemaiah** and **Dr. Sowmya Dechamma** is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or institution to award any degree or diploma.

Date: 15-01-2023

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A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "Soumik Sengupta" in a cursive script.

Signature of the Student

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Introduction

“But to-day
I no longer know my hills,
The birdsong is gone,
Replaced by the staccato
Of sophisticated weaponry.” (Ao 2013)

Writing is a powerful response for many who are dominated and oppressed, especially for those who are the representatives of minority communities. Numerous interpretations can be given to the same event, and the more people that write about it, the more the general public is exposed to the various perspectives that exist, which ultimately leads to a more balanced comprehension. Many indigenous writers from all over the world choose to write because they want people to see the many different realities that exist outside of the stereotypes that were created in the colonial and the mainstream global gaze, worldviews, and existences from a completely different world that have been hidden and marginalized throughout.

The contemporary Naga writer or poet, in addition to having a creative urge to articulate and express themselves, feels an overwhelming urgency and need to write so that people understand them for who they truly are and not for how they have been misbranded. They write to respond to earlier statements or misrepresentations, to explain their side of the story, to rewrite history, or to offer recourse to history that has been written or established. In addition to this, they write to restore their dignity, affirm their individuality, and, most importantly, leave a written legacy for future generations. (Patton 2019)

Therefore, despite the fact that Naga writing in English is a relatively new phenomenon, it is undeniably a movement that is on the rise. Over the course of the previous ten years, Nagaland has seen a discernible surge in the number of publications of writings written in English. The rise is due in large part to the proliferation of domestic publishing houses, which have played a vital role in its development. Writing is a relatively young development in Naga culture, and literature written down is an even more modern form of creative expression than writing itself. In the past ten years, Nagaland has seen a significant increase in the number of publishing of writings in the English language, namely in literary subgenres that traditionally fall under the category of literature. These subgenres include poetry, short tales, and novels in fiction among others. Tajenyuba Ao - who is believed to be the author of the first book written and published in English by someone from the Naga communities - had written 'A History of Anglo-Naga Affairs' (1832–1913), which was printed by the Tribune Press in 1958 after being self-published by himself. (Keditsu 2022)

Nagaland, like the rest of the Northeastern states in India, has frequently felt isolated from the dominant discourses of the country throughout its quite tumultuous history. One of the most complex crises India has faced since independence is the Indo-Naga conflict. As part of The Naga Labour Corps, the British-Indian government deployed between 2,000 and 3,000 Nagas to fight in the trenches as labourers and porters during World War I. They brought with them a sense of shared identity and culture, and it was because of this that The Naga Club was eventually founded in Kohima in 1918. In August 1947, the Naga National Council (NNC), comprised of seventeen Naga ‘tribes’ and twenty additional ‘subtribes’, organized a demonstration and called for the independence of Nagaland. The Nagas proclaimed their independence on August 14, 1947, and the Indian Army entered the Naga Hills in 1954. Indian leaders were opposed to any further country division, which made the Naga

independence campaign much more difficult. Previously an Assam district, Nagaland finally became the sixteenth state of the Indian Union in 1963.

By the middle of the 20th century, Nagaland was home to several rebel organizations, including the Naga Federal Government (NFG), Naga Federal Army (NFA), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah), and National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang). In an effort to eventually find a peaceful conclusion, the Suspension of Operation agreement (AGSOP) was signed on September 6, 1964. Under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967, rebel organizations including the NNC, NFG, and NFA were labeled ‘unlawful associations’ and outlawed by the Center in 1972. Security troops reportedly launched a significant counter-insurgency operation, escalating the war, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal. The Centre and a portion of the NNC and the NFG signed the Shillong Accord on November 11, 1975. Both sides agreed to renounce their weapons and recognize the Indian constitution as a result of the deal. (The Long History of Naga Insurgency 2021) However, it did not remain entirely peaceful as we know, the discussion of which is outside the scope of this research. The history of the land has often informed and determined the creative practices of its inhabitants as can be found in the following phases of this thesis.

This research has - ‘The Many That I Am: Writings from Nagaland’ (published in 2019 by Zubaan), ‘Dancing Earth : An Anthology of Poetry from North-East India’ (published in 2009 by Penguin Books India), and ‘The Oxford Anthology of Writings from North-East India: Poetry and essays’ (published in 2011 by the Oxford University Press) – as its primary texts. It seeks to locate the recurrent themes found in the three anthologies - containing shorter forms of narratives written in English – mentioned above. The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first one is titled ‘Naganization of Language and Perspectives’ which attempts to understand the appropriation of the medium and usual writing strategies by the

Naga authors writing in English. The second chapter investigates the inscriptions of memory and the tropes of understanding and representing the past and is named 'Understanding Memories and Remembrances in Naga Literature'. The third chapter investigates the portrayal of turmoil in public life and domestic spaces during and because of the wars and conflicts. It tries to understand how these writings portray the lived experiences of people affected by the political struggles while also acknowledging them from multiple perspectives.

The preservation and dissemination of the written word have always been significantly aided by anthologies, in the largest context of collections of independent works; and also collections of brief forms like proverbs and epigraphs have a long tradition in this literary format. The anthology also encouraged innovation by serving as a template for authors of many literary genres to imitate, and it has been suggested that the novel's origin owes a great deal to the anthology. This is related to its close connection to the reader as a figure. My selection of anthologies as primary texts is also rooted in the diversity it has the potential to contain. My intention as a researcher from the beginning had been to investigate the recurrent themes and issues the bodies of literary works I had chosen to represent. The worlds of anthologies have fitted right into my ambitions as I proceeded with my research.

Investigating the shorter forms of narratives also helped me formulate my understanding better since it gave me wider scope to assess and also question my motives and understandings. The texts which are referred to in this research can be broadly classified as short stories, poems, memoirs, etc.

Also, my position as a researcher has to be stated clearly. Neither do I come from an indigenous community, nor have I been a permanent resident of Nagaland. I am therefore an external researcher by nature. I have consciously tried to avoid to present appropriative remarks or arguments in the course of this research.

There are a few polemics which I have tried to steer clear of. Firstly, I did not wish to involve in the debate about the term 'Naga' in general. There are many assertions that 'Naga' is an ethnographic term formed by external agencies to classify a certain population for various reasons. I do not wish to delve into this further as I have only worked on the authors who have been comfortable in identifying themselves as 'Nagas'.

I also did not wish to put my commentary on the political debates that surround the present context of the North-Eastern states of India and also Nagaland. I merely tried to act as an observer and my research, I hope, has been of learning and unlearning.

Chapter One

Naganization of Language and Perspectives

According to Professor Salikoko S. Mufwene, indigenization of a language can be understood as the adaptation (and sometimes affirmation) of a language according to the needs, exchanges, and habits of its users in a novel ecology. (Mufwene 2009) The practice of indigenization can be seen in many places around the globe and especially the ‘postcolonial’ spaces in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The nature and manner of these obviously differ, relating to the complications of the usages, methodologies, implications, transmissions, or influences of the spaces and people concerned.

The adaptations involve structural borrowing from languages that the new speakers have already learned, as well as additive, subtractive, and substitutive changes made in terms of the communicative habits of the newly formed users as directed by the flora, fauna, and relevant geographical orientations they must contend with. The process also includes changes to the socioeconomic system that governs the social interactions of the new speakers. It is impossible to separate the process of indigenization from the mass movements (both intellectual and otherwise) that introduce the diction to the new area and necessitate adjustments. The agent of indigenization is therefore at least dual from the standpoint of colonization as a whole, which has given rise to new, colonial forms of English. They entail adjustments made by the colonial language's traditional speakers as well as its indigenous users, who have to be able to express in their language the colony's altered social and geographic environment, particularly concerning components of the indigenous cultures. (Mufwene 2009)

In the context of this research, Nagaland presents a unique socio-political scenario in terms of its historical record of British colonization, attempts of proselytization by the American

missionaries, and also its trajectory of conflict and negotiations with the Indian state.

American missionaries, British anthropologists, and Indian administrators built and presented to the world a large portion of Naga lives and identities through their respective narratives.

The first English-language publications by Nagas were published in the 1970s, and one of them was a collection of folktales called 'Folk Tales from Nagaland', which was released by the Department of Art and Culture, Nagaland. They contained a wealth of recollections, traditions, and beliefs that were essential to Naga existence. Their folktales served as both educational hubs and a means of recovering their past. As a result, once these awkward silences ended, Nagas started to acknowledge and revive these traditional stories. Gradually the oral tales developed into the source of Naga creativity. (Patton 2019)

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Naga writings in English first appeared. With the references of it the term 'contemporary' is very commonly used when referring to Naga literature in English because its beginnings are still relatively recent. A sizable collection of works make up the Nagas' oral literary tradition, and the written literary tradition is present in some groups' native tongues. However, English is the primary language used by current Naga authors to express themselves in literature. The Nagas' use of English as their primary literary language in the modern era can be attributed in large part to missionary education. The adoption of English as a medium for literary expression in the modern era might have also been influenced by the linguistic diversity among Nagas. Additionally, English highlights the linkages between modern Naga literature and the world by showing these works' ties to the capitalist network of knowledge production. A language that has not been a part of the historical identity is used to express the worldview, mythopoeia, etc. However, how English has been utilized to express the political and everyday struggles with reality points to a localization of the same language that enables a modern litterateur to convey the particular in a universal medium. It has to be also understood that this does not infer that the local contexts

and idioms are being converted into a universal parlance in this instance. Instead, the inference can be that the local realities are expressed through the transformation of the global language.

English acts as the major medium of literary articulation, and the Naga writers of contemporary literature primarily use English. In addition to this, the moment of articulation is a 'postnational' moment, (R 2021) and at the same time, it has key characteristics related to Naga nationalism. It is important to see current Naga literature in English as simultaneously occupying a 'postnational' and nationalist context and exhibiting postcolonial literary compositional traits. The primary language of literary expression is English, and Naga writers of modern literature mostly write in English. Additionally, the moment of articulation incorporates important elements of Naga nationalism while also being a 'postnational' event. It is crucial, according to Bhumika R, to view current Naga literature in English as simultaneously occupying a 'postnational' and nationalist context and exhibiting postcolonial literary compositional traits. (R 2021)

Many of the short stories and poems in the selected anthologies use socio-cultural frames to address changes brought about by Nagaland's post-British colonial era. Like the novel, the short stories and poems have been adapted and localized to fit the cultural imagination of the Nagas, or as Prof. Bhumika R points out as 'Naganization' of the literature (R 2021), which can be found substantiated in this research.

The poem 'Stone People from Lungterok' by Temsua Ao is based on an important traditional imagery of a collection of stones that indicate the locations connected to the ancient beginnings. According to a notation at the poem's conclusion, Lungterok in Ao-Naga means six stones. According to the Ao-Naga origin story, six individuals—three men and three women—from the location known as Lungterok were among the first people to rise from the

earth. The poem by Tamsula Ao begins simply with the word Lungterok, immediately arousing interest in what it might mean. When a place's name is mentioned at the outset, it gives a fair idea of how significant it is to the community. The poet goes on to explain that it is the location of the birth of their forefathers, the 'stone people'. Rather than fully explaining the contents and the mysteries behind the words and the title of the poem, the poet forces her (unaware) readers to delve deep into the belief systems and folktales of her community, thus pushing them towards familiarizing themselves with the unfamiliar. The use of folktale or perhaps an 'origin story' in the poem encapsulates the politics of Naganizing the narrative.

'Stone-People of Lungterok' employs a range of folk motifs and images. The poem makes use of the rich imagery from the tradition of stone assemblages marking locations connected to the ancients' beginnings (Aier and Jamir). The poem includes a note explaining that the word 'Lungterok' directly translates to 'Six Stones' in the Ao Naga language. Beginning with the word Lungterok, the poem describes it as the origin, the site where the first ancestors rise from the earth:

“Lungterok

The six stones

Where the progenitors

And forebears

Of the stone-people

Were born

Out of the womb

Of the earth.” (Ngangom and Nongkynrih 2009)

She follows the first lines by giving the ethnic group the name ‘Stone-people’ a ‘barbaric and balladic’ people who learned their culture from instructors in the wild and formerly had a thorough awareness of the region. (Bender 2012) One aspect of the traditional culture was the practice of head-hunting, which was formerly common among several peoples in North-East India and other parts of the region:

“Stone-people,
The poetic and politic
Barbaric and balladic
Finders of water
And fighters for fire.
Stone-people,
The polyglots,
Knowledgeable
In birds’ language
And animal discourse.
The students,
Who learnt from ants
The art of carving
Heads of enemies
As trophies
Of war.” (Ngangom and Nongkynrih 2009)

The section that follows makes references to mythology and folklore involving celestial entities, such as the idea that stars are thought to be the spirits of the dead.

“Stone-people,
The romantics
Who believed
The sun can sulk
The moon can hide
And the stars are not stars
But pure souls
Watching over bereaved hearts.
Here below
With their glow.” (Ngangom and Nongkynrih 2009)

As they descend from the sky to the ground, the following few lines enumerate the traditional jobs, professions, businesses, and crafts of the individuals who made up the old way of life. The processes of conquering and rebuilding between communities are invoked as part of traditional warfare:

“Stone-people,
The potters and weavers
Planters and growers
Hunters and carvers
Singers of songs and takers of heads,
Gentle lovers and savage heroes,

Builders of homes and destroyers of villages.” (Ngangom and Nongkynrih 2009)

Many communities in the area have significant attitudes toward the world that are influenced by the spaces and borders between the human and the other realm of the spirits living inside diverse spaces in nature.

“Stone-people,
The worshippers
Of unknown, unseen
Spirits
Of trees and forests,
Of stones and rivers,
Believers of soul
And its varied forms,
Its sojourn here
And passage across the water
Into the hereafter.” (Ngangom and Nongkynrih 2009)

Finally, the poet asks a question about the destiny of her people by evoking the dichotomy of ‘savage and sage’ once more.

“Stone-people,
Savage and sage
Who sprang out of LUNGTEROK,

Was the birth adult when the stones broke?

Or are the stone-people yet to come of age?" (Ngangom and Nongkynrih 2009)

The oral traditions, in particular, the historical accounts (personal and folk) recounted by men and women in different cultural settings about various social concerns, illustrate how the community built its identity, or 'self', in their representations over the years. The Ao-Nagas depend greatly on their knowledge, which comprises both verbal and nonverbal expressive behaviour, much like any other oral civilization. This tradition is learnt and handed down orally from generation to generation and is preserved in the people's mnemonics. The knowledge, the beliefs, and the institutions that instructed the people and the communities to guard their identities, their 'selves', against degradation and invasion despite changes that took place over the course of time and space are embodied in the folktales and the origin legends. Some of the genres that are featured in the lores include folk tales, songs, proverbs, riddles, performing arts including music, dances, theatre, painting, arts, and a rich material culture. These subgenres aid in defining the Naga people's uniqueness and identity in contrast to other communities in Nagaland. Many of these incorporations in modern literature can be used to piece together how different Naga cultures and traditions have evolved over time and how it has managed to maintain their sense of continuity.

Temsula Ao was quoted in the volume of Indian Folklife published in 2006, and his thoughts on the current situation of tradition among the ethnic groups of North-East India are as follows:

"The cultures of North East India are already facing tremendous challenges from education and modernization. In the evolution of such cultures and the identities that they embody, the loss of distinctive identity markers does not bode well for the tribes of the region. If the trend is allowed to continue in an indiscriminate and mindless manner, globalization will create a market in which Naga, Khasi, or Mizo communities will become mere brand names and commodity markers stripped of

all human significance and which will definitely mutate the ethnic and symbolic identities of a proud people. Globalization in this sense will eventually reduce identity to anonymity ". (Bender 2012)

Similar worries about situations of rapid cultural change as local folk cultures are influenced by influences from urban, consumer-based cultures, various political and religious agendas are evident in the works of other Naga poets. Regarding what are seen as unfavourable or ambiguous elements of cultural change and loss, these poets express a variety of emotions. The poems were composed whilst North-East India was experiencing waves of dynamic change that were affecting many civilizations in diverse ways. Poets take inspiration from many modes of expression, which frequently appear to be extensions of the emotions and concerns of the groups to which they belong. Themes and imagery that make use of 'local knowledge', folk traditions, nature, and present societal challenges are commonplace in the poetry that is generated in each location. Paying attention to these stories and experiences is a crucial component that should not be disregarded in the process of developing approaches to these literatures that were created as a result of change as well as the traditions which spiritually straddle the area.

Easterine Kire's poem 'Genesis' introduces us to the ideal hunter Keviselie, whose name also refers to an elderly wise man who speaks of a utopian period before strife and war brought death and damage to his land. She guides the readers metaphorically through the violence and insurgency in Nagaland in the guise of a folktale (Sebastian 2012). They lived in Kelhoukevira (where life is good/paradise) with a bountiful harvest, "the mountain air in their breath," and their singing covering the entire earth. All was well with the land and her seven daughters. Kire decides to portray the conflict in the country as a female traveller in their land, Plague, in order to keep with the agricultural metaphor. The Angami belief in

Kirhupfümia, a small group of women believed to be capable of maiming, blinding, or killing people by simply pointing at them with their fingers, may be the source of the Plague's depiction as a woman. (Thomas 2016) They were not permitted to reside in a village because of the perception that their sheer existence was poisonous there. As it becomes more difficult to identify who is to blame for the predicament of the Nagas, Kire uses 'Plague' very cunningly. This uncertainty enables her to assign responsibility for what the warring factions and outside forces have done in her country. The lyrics "Ah Kelhoukevira Keviselie knows you better than you know yourself" reflect the gap that is currently perceived between the land and its inhabitants as a result of past amnesia. Only the songs from that era are still popular now, as though the land itself had forgotten its history. Only Keviselie, the guardian of culture, has any chance of restoring the country to its former splendour. But there is a discussion of a purge in order for that transformation to take place. Before a fresh dawn of Kelhoukevira can come, the land must purge itself of all its polluting elements, as he says in reference to another moon. When she will be healed and returned to herself. We find it noteworthy that Kire seems to lack faith in the people's ability to interact with the land in the future in order to renew a relationship with their past, and that Keviselie is portrayed as a protector of wisdom. (Thomas 2016) Kire tries to use her works to bridge the gap between the Naga people and their own past because nature is personified as both a mother and a lover at the same time. The poem also tells us that the abundance of natural resources in a region had a major impact on the ancestors' choice to dwell there and, therefore, on the formation of their unique identity there. In order to develop its culture, every group also engages in unique kinds of negotiations with the natural world. (Sebastian 2012) In the poem, Kire discusses the plenty that may be found in nature, thereby ascribing her community's understanding.

“Keviselie speaks of a time
when her hills were untamed

her soil young and virgin

—

every evening they would return

their baskets overflowing

with the yield of the land

when they would gather around

and their songs filled all the earth.” (Ngangom and Nongkynrih 2009)

Emisenla Jamir in her short story ‘Where the Hills Grow Houses’ portrays the life of Mangyang - a retired Superintendent who worked in the department of Rural Development – seemingly in the current Kohima. While describing his daily life the writer uses different words which can be understood as infused with the lives and realities of the people she is describing. “... He would squat by the hearth and pull out firewood from the stack kept neatly on the tsukden” (Longkumer 2019); the word ‘tsukden’ is quite noticeable here in midst of the description of the inners of Mangyang’s house. While it can be inferred from the text that tsukden is probably a place inside the house where the firewood is kept as a collection, it is very well explicit that such arrangement might be particular to such kinds of houses where Mangyang lives and therefore the author deliberately pushes the readers – especially those reading from a different location altogether – to make an effort and familiarize themselves with the lives of people they are reading about. Such examples can be found in other places in this text as well as in the words such as ‘phika cha’ (a kind of tea) (Longkumer 2019) or even ‘mistris’ (which also suggests workers in other Indian languages as well).

Vishu Rita Krocha in the short story 'Cut Off' portrays the three generations of Naga Lives through Tasu. The story starts in 1905 when Tasu was born in Zhavame village in the remote South-East village which had male warriors to defend the village to protect itself from the enemy invaders. The story progresses through the development of Tasu and fading away of the warrior fights and headhunting tradition to the point that it is entirely diminished. However, in his last stages of life at ninety-five, because of mainstream politics a situation arises where his village has to defend itself again but the women leaders subvert the situation bravely. In the portrayal of this dynamic change in Naga lives the author uses many words presumably of her own language such as 'thu bao' which is later explained as 'large grain baskets'. There have been interesting descriptions of Naga names in the story as well, as found in the naming of Tasu's boy, 'Kavikha' meaning 'the best'. In the last part of the story when everything became calm again after the brief upheaval, Tasu was described wrapping her granddaughter Chavi in a white 'rumini' and shawl, making her look like an angel. The author though never discloses to her audience anything related to it.

Sirawon Tulisen Khating in her anecdote entitled 'Retold by Grandma – Yarla's Tattoos' recounts her Azao's story about the incorporation of tattoos in Ao Naga lives. Her grandmother remembers how Noksangmenla and Yarla – the two sisters accidentally discovered tattoos from the Ngupde tree which became very popular with the community people. The practice continued until Christianity became dominant and Azao's mother had tattoos but since it was forbidden in the new religious practices she could not. The narrator deliberately uses the word Azao to refer to her grandmother, (Longkumer 2019) which perhaps can be understood as denoting the special connotation of the relationship that Ao Naga grandparents share with their grandchildren. In other instances, there are many Ao Naga words found in the narrative such as when Azao mentions how the girls in the dormitory bullied Yarla by calling her 'chepralikha', the discovery of the sac of the tree

‘Ngupde’, or how earlier in the Ao Naga society everyone was allowed to have a tattoo excepts the ‘alars’. The usage of these words perhaps also indicates the untranslatability of many of the references and connotations and in the end realities so as to push the reader to understand the community from outside their own frame of reference.

Indigenizing (or, Naganizing) the novel to portray (and maybe attempt to bridge) the disconnectedness of the present generation from their roots and with their elders has been a recurrent theme in many of the Naga writings of this era. We can see a similar endeavour in Jungmayangla Longkumer’s ‘Old Man Story’ and Emisenla Jamir’s ‘Storyteller’.

Jungmayangla narrates the journey of a nineteen-year-old boy Sanen who was initially disappointed to miss spending the vacation with his friends in Dimapur and had to spend his days with his grandfather – with whom not many of his other children and their families connected very much - in his village. At some point when he casually joked about his mother’s obsession with making and keeping pots – which did not mean much to him – his Awo took him to a Lithu, a place far away from his house where Sanen’s grandmother (Azao Temsu) used to collect earth to make pots. Gradually with conversations with village elders such as Azao Senti (his grandmother’s cousin) and Azao Alemla (his grandfather’s widowed sister), he got to learn that pot-making is a revered profession of the village. He also found that his own grandmother was very skilled in this trade and that their grandparents lives revolved around this. The story represents the deep disconnect that is glaringly present in the relationship between generations, circumstances, realities, and even ideologies. Many of the words incorporated here for example, ajen (east), achep (west), chachem (old woven sling bag), aling (bamboo strings), khui, khel (probably denoting the divisions of the village) can be understood as representing the subconscious anxiety of the Azaos and Awos in attempting to impart their traditions on their young ones. (Longkumer 2019)

Numerous instances discussed in this chapter show how the Naga historical awareness is permeated with the mythic and narrative core. The works depict the worry and desire of the Naga people to reclaim their lost ethnic identity.

There are several reasons to want an everlasting oneness with the past, but Tilottama Misra, in the editorial note she wrote for ‘The Oxford Anthology of Writings from North East India’ identifies the most significant one,

“Fiction An intense sense of awareness of the cultural loss and recovery that came with the negotiation with ‘other’ cultures is a recurrent feature of the literatures of the seven north-eastern states. Each small community or linguistic group has responded through its oral or written communication to the majoritarian cultures from either mainland India or from outside the borders of the country, in its own distinctive manner”. (Misra 2011)

Temsula Ao bemoans the Naga identity's discordant character, which veers between the ideals of the country and urban life. The works of many of the narratives present here make this plainly clear as they make an effort to arouse the historical consciousness of the Naga people by outlining the culture and practices that prevailed before the onset of British colonization. The interests of the group came before those of the individual under the collectivist society that the Nagas practiced.

‘Storyteller’ by Emisenla Jamir – as the name suggests – is about storytelling and keeping the narratives alive through generations. The narrator from the beginning of the story declares her aspirations about being like Otsula as she fascinates about storytelling – “you will remember today, and they will watch as the memories emerge out of your lips as your stories”.

(Longkumer 2019) The narrator describes the changing circumstances with the advent of modernity the children and youth are moving out of their homes, their old ways, and their

existing social systems. The narrator describes how a mother wailed that her daughter was going to become a 'tsumar' as she wanted to become a nurse rather than stay for the household chores. Gradually the story ends as Ostula picks out a 'pot' from inside her head which according to her contains all the stories about everything and puts it in the narrator's head. We discover the narrative was also part of the storytelling and the narrator says to the reference she is directing her story all along and that it is their time now to remember and tell all the stories now. The narrative embraces many of the 'folk stories' that are there in the cultural memory, such as that of Jina and Etiben's, Rangtsungba and Salunaro's, Longkongla's, and Aonglemela's. (Longkumer 2019) The mentions of these also put across the fact that how storytelling has been an integral part of the community that the narrator belongs from. It perhaps also makes some of the (unaware) readers curious and some (aware readers) revisit the traditional aspects of the community. The narrator also uses words such as 'tsumar', 'angu pongsen', and 'machang' where apart from the former there were no direct explanations are visible.

Abokali Jimomi in her poem 'Hekutha Qhumi' narrates the process of making (or, one can even say nurturing) the 'village woman's loom'. This poem celebrates 'Hekutha Qhumi' a major cultural tradition of the Naga (specifically Sumi Naga) communities. The poet says that each Naga textile incorporates a distinct cultural meaning that represents identity, position, and accomplishments; it is more than simply a simple textile since it conveys cultural knowledge. It is impossible to overstate the importance and worth of the vast and priceless textile legacy of the Naga people. For many Naga women, weaving is their primary source of income. In rural homes, it aids women in providing for the health, education, and nutrition of their children. It has also aided in the development of numerous prosperous Naga women co-ops and entrepreneurs, whose loin loom products now serve a diverse clientele of VIPs, tourists, and customers even outside the state and nation.

Jimomi mentions that Naga women have unique artistic independence and strength, which is passed down from moms to daughters, in the craft of cloth weaving. She says it is because women have always been drawn to weaving as a creative outlet and a place to experiment and be creative. Being fully in control of an essential knowledge system feels good to women in their culture. The poem embodies the creative process as she says –

“Patterns that outlast lifetimes like a fascinating fable of yore

Industry and love braided into your loom unwavering”. (Longkumer 2019)

The poem expresses the meaning that Naga craftswomen provide to the weaving of ‘Hekutha Qhumi and the storytelling that is incorporated into it.

“Scenes of hope you weave into the story of your Hekutha Qhumi”. (Longkumer 2019)

In her short story ‘Outbooks’, Narola Changkija recalls how, as a young Naga girl growing up in the '80s and '90s, she yearned for as many 'outbooks' as she could find. The Bible and school textbooks are the only two types of books, according to her mother. All other books were considered ‘outbooks’ and weren't actually recommended. Changkija, however, believed that her father had given his blessing. When they gave him glimpses of the world he lived in, with all of its colourful and gorgeous paradoxes, she asks, "How could he not?" In her essay ‘Outbooks’, Narola Changkija describes the conflicting identities that arise in her young Naga self as she becomes aware of the Others nearby.

“We lived in a Scheduled Tribes environment where our innermost reality and our outward appearance conflicted. Although we were descended from head hunters from the distant past, we were dependent on the kind donations of a Central Indian

government. We were not like the tsumars, who lived on the plains”. (Longkumer 2019).

She recognizes their ‘otherness’ and wonders why they are here in the Nagas' realm. Instead of taking a combative stance of rejection or a supplicant stance of mimicry, it is this awareness that shapes her perception of who she is. Changkija includes the words ‘Abao’ and ‘Alao’ to describe her parents which heightens the cultural meanings of the relationships she shared with them. (Longkumer 2019)

In Abokali Jimomi’s ‘Vili’s Runaway Son’ and Monalisa Changkija’s ‘The Hunter’s Story’ – although they don’t impact the narratives majorly – there are instances of using words which point out towards the indigenization of the medium. In the former Vili and her husband are described to be selling telephone cables to a ‘luhatina man’, without further elaborating anything about it. Monalisa Changkija mentions ‘dao’ as a weapon, (Longkumer 2019) which contextually portrays the picture of a hunter’s weapon in the story. These indicate how the untranslatability of the realities is a major aspect of the Naga writing.

The politics of the indigenization of Anglophone writings has far wider implications and consequences worldwide. The agent of indigenization is thus at least dual from the perspective of colonization as a whole, which led to the emergence of new English varieties that were particular to colonial situations. They include modifications made by the colonial language's traditional speakers as well as its indigenous speakers, who needed to be able to communicate about the colony's new social and geographic environment, particularly about parts of the indigenous cultures. Minority groups' involvement in settlement colonies adds to the complexity of the situation. Similar to indigenous communities, these minority groups experienced socioeconomic pressure to adopt the majority tongue. Additionally, under the

influence of the languages they had previously spoken, these minority groups adapted the dominant language to fit (some of) their traditional communication patterns. Therefore, a key issue is whether or if each group had an equal impact on English's adaptive development, and if so, under what specific ecological circumstances. Unavoidable discrepancies exist between the results of the indigenization of English in other nations besides England. The presence of English dialects with national names like American, Australian, and Indian Englishes as well as dialects with regional and ethnic names like (American) Southern English, Appalachian English, and African American (Vernacular) English illustrates this point. (Mufwene 2009)

Various names make it evident that the results of the indigenization of English in these nations have varied. Despite the fact that a large portion of the variation, in this case, is also due to differences in the structural features of the English varieties that the non-European populations were exposed to and the specific mode in which 'English' was 'transmitted' to them, the traditional distinction between creole vernaculars (such as Gullah and Jamaican Creole) and other colonial English varieties (such as Nigerian and Indian Englishes) is also true. For instance, 'transmission' of creoles often took place via chance meetings, but 'transmission' of variations conventionally categorized as 'indigenized Englishes' generally took place through classroom instruction. (Mufwene 2009)

Easterine Kire, from her unique location as a Naga author, has addressed this issue regarding the appropriation of English in Naga writings as well. O'Reilly refers to this issue as "the use of Indigenous cultural traditions, the appropriation of English, and the impact (whether cultural, psychological, or political) of colonialism and its aftermath." (O'Reilly, et al. 2001)

Many authors have written works in English which portray the marginalized history of the Naga people and their Indigenous cultural identity to readers all over the globe. The indigenous identity of the Naga people had mostly been expressed via colonial discourses up to this moment. Naga writers have only recently started to depict the unique culture and

cultural identity of the Naga people to the rest of the world. The colonial invasion led by the British government and the cultural imposition of Christianity changed their otherness or individuality, which is at the core of their Indigenous identity. The indigenous people's expression of opposition to colonial authority in terms of both land and religion established the foundation for decolonization, which they claim can only be accomplished by destroying the compartmentalized colonial system. They believe that rejecting the colonial reality entails vehemently asserting that 'their world is fundamentally different'. As a consequence of their continual opposition against colonialism's social, political, and cultural invasion as well as the faiths and cultures of people who are not Indigenous, they become different and defend their otherness. The authors as members of this Indigenous writers' collective can also be seen as trying to decolonize themselves through their writings and carrying out their responsibility as indigenous storytellers who pass on the history of the land and people "to a new generation in much the same way that a more sophisticated nation would". (Mandal and Singh 2022)

Chapter Two

Understanding Memories and Remembrances in Naga Literature

By telling stories about the past, literary works aid in the formation of societal memories.

One rapidly realizes that remembering the past involves more than just recalling events and people; it frequently also entails recalling earlier texts and rewriting earlier stories. This is because literature serves as a channel of cultural memory. Literary works serve as a vital link between generations because they often circulate at later times. In other words, reading works that were written or composed in former eras is a crucial component of cultural memory. It is possible to review many of the old debates in literary studies regarding the establishment of the canon as examples of the ways in which societies disagree about which founding writings should be remembered or not. It is more immediately interesting how literature produces a ‘memory of its own’ in the form of intertextual interactions that give antiquated texts new cultural vitality. Rewriting canonical works and more generally - previous cultural narratives like myths and folktales - makes up a large portion of literary production. These rewritings can be either critical contestation or devout recollection (or recitation, as it were). In any case, however, these literary acts of recollection make a very distinctive contribution to the ongoing creation and dissemination of cultural memory as well as to our reflection on that memory.

Literature makes memory observable by creatively depicting activities of recollection. As a result, it not only aids in creating collective memory in the manners we have been explaining, but it also contributes to the cultural understanding of how memory functions for both people and groups. On the other hand, literature functions as a ‘mimesis of cultural memory’, reflecting on the epistemology, ethics, and mechanisms of collective memory. As such, it

interacts with historians and sociologists about how to understand the past and the forms that are appropriate for it. (Erll and Rigney 2006)

In many indigenous narratives from around the world, 'memory' has been used to establish a connection to one's family, ancestors, and individual and collective heritage - written through the landscape and the body, and it has been necessitated to claim communal memory alongside current individual memory. (Dodson 2003) Future memory is also transmitted via literature and manifested through lineage. Because authors are already constantly retelling the past and changing it, and because the stories have no beginning or finish; there is no linear or restricted link between the past, present, and future. (Heiss and Toorn 2002)

In order to accurately portray these orations in written tales without losing the performative aspect of them, Northeast Indian writers in English have to constantly negotiate between indigenous oral tradition and the 'mainstream' and westernized literary genres that we know today. Studying the writing styles of current Naga authors shows novel literary narrative paradigms that emphasize a heritage of writing that adapts western forms to the cultural imagination of the different Naga communities. The majority of indigenous literature claimed to be falling under this category. By telling the experiences of generally unremembered lives spent in the shadow of great national histories, Naga authors, originating from the colonial tradition of ethnographic representation, aim to consolidate ethnic and cultural identities in postcolonial times. Many of the Naga authors believe that remembering the past is essential to building a sense of community since it shapes people's historical awareness and cultural identity. (Sarkar and Gaur 2022)

For this research, the anthologies investigated as primary texts show a significant recurrence of using 'memory' as a narrative tool.

The Battle of Kohima often referred to as the Stalingrad of the East, is a historical event that took place in Nagaland during World War II and is responsible for the inescapable political and social changes in the Naga people's way of life. Since the history of marginalized groups has been overlooked in the creation of national history, the Naga people, who took part in the struggle, did not get much academic attention and suffered from 'cultural otherness'. (Sarkar and Gaur 2022)

Easterine Kire explores the universality of love and sensations of the heart during the battle of Kohima in 'Cherry Blossom in April', a story about a young Naga woman and a Japanese soldier who were from very different cultural backgrounds. The narrative - as if a story remembered - takes place during the Japanese invasion during the battle of Kohima. Sanuo, a resident of the village of Rusoma, is the subject of the tale who falls in love with a Japanese soldier. Although the war was mostly portrayed as a battle between two forces, the people of Kohima and Nagaland had great stirrings in their lives. They were assigned to carry weapons and ammunition in addition to performing manual labour. The Japanese soldiers' sexual assaults on the women, on the other hand, terrified the women. The Nagas were made to carry large items over long distances and to work as coolies by the Japanese. Asoso Yonuo says, "The Nagas were killed with utmost brutality against the norms of war as set down in the international law. They were suspected to be British spies." (Yonuo 1992) The Nagas as a group of civilians - who were concealed participants in the conflict - were sandwiched between the British and Japanese armies' formidable militaries. (Khrienuo 2013)

Sanuo, the main character, was filled with thoughts upon seeing the Japanese officer Kuniyuki, despite the fact that she was sleeping in bed and listening to gunfire travelling from Kohima to her town. At different points, the Nagas and the Japanese soldiers also became close since they were fighting the British, not each other. The Japanese soldiers were also fed and housed by the Nagas. Despite their linguistic barrier, Kuniyuki and Sanuo were

profoundly in love. Going before the village chief, Gaonbura, she declared, "We are now man and wife, the young and I.... For as long as destiny will allow us." (Longkumer 2019)

In the story, Kire weaves the personal and political together while presenting the readers with a crucial chapter in Naga's social history through the intimate family narratives and personal portrayals. The tale contains the cultural traits of the Naga people's intangible heritage in a symbolic embodied narrative space, informing readers about Naga worldviews as they read in context. The narrative is important in terms of 'memorizing' and portraying ordinary Naga lives during the war challenging the dominant narrative of the war as happening between only the two imperial regimes. The individual accounts divert the war narratives from the official colonial commemorative culture.

In other instances, memory has been used to uplift the consciousness of identity which has been a global phenomenon of indigenous literature. One notable feature has been the utilization of oral tradition and material culture to recreate memory and connect indigenous identity to locally meaningful locations. Indigenous people all over the world are working to reassemble the connections between memory and knowledge in a way that both clarifies meanings for local audiences (especially young people) and reaches out to audiences far away. Here, memory is essential, but transmission methods differ greatly across regions, genders, and generations. In the Northeast of India, redefining a recognizable shared past to which memories can be attached is necessary to forge connections among people who have been scattered by forced relocation, collectivization, and conflicting government policies. Understanding how historical representations using oral tradition and material culture occur in various literary representations as prevailing tropes is crucial in this case. Indigenous oral traditions can aid in different types of historical understanding, especially in areas where written records are scarce or non-existent. Locals are able to express referential meaning more evocatively and create connections between public and private memories by using

material culture in their own narratives. The more vistas of memory that open up as a result of a complex history, the more complex the poet's perception, analysis, and verbalization of his experience will be. The density of expression that results from the complexity of human circumstances allows for a wide range of interpretations. The complexity of the situation necessitates sifting through the archives of memory and history and placing the current situation within the context of all available intellectual resources. This framework takes into account poetry and other forms of literary expression in addition to pertinent theoretical justifications, especially those that address the historical aspects of literature. Indigenous narrative memory is described similarly by Jackie Huggins: It is an organic process and a collective activity; similar to a map of possible worlds from which people can draw to make sense of their lives. Huggins also emphasizes the significance of genealogy, family history, and a feeling of place in the formation and resurgence of individual and community memory among Indigenous peoples. (Huggins 2005)

Naga Anglophone literature weaves together a variety of sources to frame newly emerging indigenous nationality narratives. When considering the phenomenon psychologically, it is conceivable to draw the conclusion that both sides have continuously used historical memory to either establish or challenge effective hegemony. Memory obscurely preserves the past, while poetic expression gives it a distinct form. A nation preserves its visible structures of identity and culture when they are in danger on a collective level by using the power of collective memory.

In the anthologies chosen, Tamsula Ao's 'Stone People From Lungterok' and Easterine Kire's 'Genesis' can be investigated to understand the above assertions.

Tamsula Ao's poem 'Stone People from Lungterok' is based on rich traditional imagery of a collection of stones that designate the starting points of the Ao Naga ancestors. It starts

simply with the word Lungterok, which immediately piques curiosity about what it might mean. It is immediately apparent how important and deeply ingrained a location is in Naga culture when its name is mentioned at the offset. The poet continues by stating that it was the place where their ancestors, the 'stone people' were born. The poet forces her (unaware) readers to delve deeply into the belief systems and folktales of her community, thus pushing them towards becoming familiar with the unfamiliar, rather than fully explaining the contents and the mysteries behind the words and the title of the poem. While Easterine Kire introduces us to the 'ideal hunter' Keviselie in her poem 'Genesis', the name also alludes to an old wise man who describes a utopian period before strife and battle brought death and damage to his nation. She uses a folktale to metaphorically lead readers through the strife and insurgency in Nagaland. (Sebastian 2012) They lived in Kelhoukevira (where life is good/paradise) with a bountiful harvest, "the mountain air in their breath," and their songs filling the entire earth. All was well with the land and her seven daughters. Kire decides to portray the conflict in the land as a female traveller in their land, Plague, in order to keep with the agricultural metaphor. The Angami belief in Kirhupfümia, a small group of women believed to be capable of maiming, blinding, or killing people by simply pointing at them with their fingers, may be the source of the Plague's depiction as a woman. They were not permitted to live in a village because of the perception that their very existence was poisonous there. (Thomas 2016) As it becomes more difficult to identify who is to blame for the plight of the Nagas, Kire uses Plague with great subtlety. This ambiguity enables Kire to assign responsibility for what the warring factions and outside forces have done in her country. The lines "Ah Kelhoukevira Keviselie knows you better than you know yourself" (Ngangom and Nongkynrih 2009) reflect the gap that is currently felt between the land and its people as a result of past amnesia. Only the songs from that era are still popular today, as though the land itself has forgotten its history. Only Keviselie, the guardian of culture, has any chance of

restoring the country to its former splendour. But there is talk of a purge in order for that transition to take place. Before a new dawn of Kelhoukevira can come, the land must purge itself of all its polluting elements, as he says in reference to another moon. When she will be healed and returned to herself; we find it interesting that Kire seems to lack faith in the people's ability to communicate with the land in the future in order to rekindle a relationship with their past, and that Keviselie is portrayed as a protector of wisdom. Kire tries to use her works to bridge the gap between the Naga people and their own past because nature is personified as both a mother and a lover at the same time.

The remembrances of these poems can also be understood in terms of 'Blood-Memory'. Chadwick Allen extended the word 'blood-memory' to form the blood-memory-land complex, which designates the three primary and interconnected battlegrounds. He talks about a fluidity and an interconnected 'circular logic' that enable writers to define an enduring indigenous identity (the 'blood') in terms of narratives of connection to specific lands (the 'land') and to use narratives of connection to specific lands (the 'memory') to assert an enduring identity once more ('Blood'). (Allen 2002) However, given the history of violent uprooting and expulsion from lands and communities, such a claim of permanent identity does not come readily. (Harkin 2014) Blood memory is typically a location of sadness and melancholy in this context when recording the struggle and the journey to an identity based on uprooted and marginalized groups. Temsula Ao's narrative of 'Lungterok' (the originating land), the ancestral connection of the 'stone people' with Ao Naga community (the blood) certainly can be understood as reminding the readers about the intimacy of them with the 'spirits of trees and forests, of stones and rivers, believers of soul'.

Similarly Kire's personifications and interchanges of Kelhoukevira and Keviselie in the form of a lament of the glorified past towards the current Angami Naga audience towards remembering in a similar blood – memory – land narrative. 'Blood memory' is a process that

identifies a connection to one's family, ancestors, and individual and collective heritage through the landscape and the body. It is necessary to claim communal memory in contrast to current individual memory, and it is also necessary for future memory to be embodied through lineage and passed on through literature. (Perreault 2010) Because the authors are already telling the past in new ways and transforming it constantly, the relationship between the past, present, and future is neither linear nor constrained. (Dodson 2003)

There are many instances of 'storytelling' as a creative practice in the selected anthologies. Indigenous storytelling traditions of today offer a vital and different form of expression that can break through the deafening silence left in the wake of this history of marginalization. By establishing literary and artistic spaces where previously unspoken ideas can be expressed in words and images, such practices change how Indigenous peoples are portrayed as the inevitable and eternal victims of repression. Indigenous storytelling has been used in a wide range of genres and media, including novels, narrative and documentary films, performance art, theatrical productions, and visual art, demonstrating its adaptability. Along with its capacity to weave together the different yet mutually intertwined spheres of cultural and political representation, this location's flexibility contributes to some of its strengths. Indigenous storytelling is distinctly political in the way it depicts the constraints and opportunities for achieving harmony in unequal and uneven political kinships. Political kinships can exist between people, with animals, with spirits, or with elements of nature like the land or the sea. The desire to maintain harmony and reciprocity between or among various political affiliations is expressed in kinship ecologies. Indigenous cultural practices are distinct in that they use storytelling to turn the loss into a driving force for change for Indigenous peoples. Indigenous storytelling epistemologies pose fresh and intriguing problems for historical and social truth discourses. They gather knowledge from the textual constraints of rhetoric and facts charting a new course that balances the individual's ethical

duty to uphold community through the maxim of empowering social, epistemological, and representational diversity. Aspects of the national imaginary can be decolonized in ways that are non-institutional, perhaps less obvious but no less effective, by combining indigenous storytelling in its traditional oral mode with written or visual forms, as well as the many options available for creative expression. This can be done by creating spaces in which to recognize, acknowledge, and transform the dominant discourses of a repressive state. Indigenous narratives center on Indigenous peoples' creative or artistic practices and the effects of those practices. This is something that so-called 'objectivity' refutes. Indigenous peoples are now skeptical of any claims made to objectivity because, in their words, "objectivity is always aimed at the native". (Fanon 1961) In addition to redefining scholarship as a process that starts with the self, telling stories is also becoming an act of upending dominant ideas of intellectual rigour and legitimacy. Zavala criticizes the ideology of social science as being dissociative of the self and politically neutral. He urges "the transformation from a mainstream, colonizing social science to a transformative, anti-colonial project" (Zavala 2013) that is guided by grassroots communities and activism in place of so-called intellectual neutrality.

Due to its seclusion and subsequent war condition, Nagaland's history is not well-documented. In addition, due to its tumultuous relationship with the dominant powers in general, it is very difficult to get enough archival materials. Memory narratives may be a valuable option in certain cases. These tales could help illuminate how people now see the past. Due to their dual meaning, these tales are useful. They prevent appropriation by both state and non-state actors by revealing how the general public perceives certain occurrences. They also challenge the prevalent interpretation of the statist discourse by allowing us access to several commonly accepted views of the same events. Naga authors have immediately addressed the necessity for an alternative discourse that does not exclusively depend on the

authority of the archives to capture those historical knowledge fragments that are subjugated by the supremacy of the document. Given that the politics of archiving have prevented all pasts from being fully recorded, efforts to confront the past in its otherness often rely heavily on the creative imagination. There are whole civilizations, like Nagaland's, that do not have the same type of written record repository as many of the hegemonic cultures. The creative imagination may arise in such situations as an essential adjunct to historical storytelling, particularly when the objective is to offer voices to people who are marginalized and removed from the centralized production of information. Kuisma Korhonen makes the case in 'Tropes for the Past: Hayden White and the History/Literature Debate' that the traditional linear structure of historical narratives may not be the best way to deal with the incredibly complex web of interconnections and distinct perspectives that shape the historical events. Literature has the potential to be revealed as "serious research on world making, language, and their complex relationship" since studying it may show many sorts of hypertextuality that link the present to the past. (Korhonen 2006) Sukalpa Bhattacharjee, an academic from northeast India who has long studied literatures from this area, highlights how for a long time now, many critical studies have been encouraged in asserting 'historical' through narratives by criticizing the 'an/other history', and assumed differences between 'literary' versus 'narratives' in her essay 'Narrative as An/Other History or His/Story Otherwise'. She talks about how people might learn about historical events that were not correctly documented by utilizing storytelling. She asserts that "one could weave together the fragments of the moment through fiction, memoirs, testimonies, individual and collective memories". (Bhattacharya 2011) She pursues these moments in an 'interlocution' between the text and the setting. Through this encounter, a chance for dialogue between multiple histories and identities may be created. Literary narratives vary from historical discourse in that they are able to accept deviations. Literary tales provide the author the chance to learn from the edges rather than

from sources that the government supports, and they also give her a platform to share her unique perspective.

In the prologue to her acclaimed short story collection *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* (titled 'Lest We Forget'), Temsula Ao, one of Nagaland's most prominent literary figures, writes that "memories are often sifted through as invisible sieve and selections are made...either to be preserved or discarded". (Ao, *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* 2006) But in order to hear the voices of the unheard, the readers must reach beyond her personal experiences to the shared community recollections. What do you do if someone else's recollection is just of anguish and nothing else - is the doubt Ao's readers are faced with. This is where things become tricky since it is impossible to check the accuracy of another person's recollection and challenging to go back in time. However, literary tales are not supported by their similarity to historical truth; rather, this interaction between knowability and unknowability is what generates room for a discourse built on conversation.

Some of the examples found in the selected anthologies also point out this pressing need. Vishu Rita Krocha depicts the three generations of Naga Lives in the short story 'Cut Off'. The story begins in 1905 when Tasu was born in the remote South-East village of Zhavame, which had male warriors to defend the village and keep out invading enemies. The development of Tasu and the disappearance of the warrior battles and headhunting tradition are major plot points in the narrative. However, as he nears the end of his life at 95 years old, a situation arises where his village must once more defend itself, but the women leaders bravely thwart the situation. In 'Old Man's Story', Jungmayangla Longkumer tells the journey of Sanen, a nineteen-year-old boy who was initially miffed that he couldn't spend the holiday with his friends in Dimapur and instead had to spend it in his village with his grandfather, with whom few of his other children and their families had strong bonds. His

Awo took him to a Lithu, a location far from his home where Sanen's grandmother (Azao Temsu) used to collect earth to make pots, at some point after he casually joked about his mother's obsession with making and keeping pots, which did not mean much to him. He gradually came to understand that pot-making is a highly respected profession in the village through conversations with village elders like Azao Senti, his grandmother's cousin, and Azao Alemla, his grandfather's widowed sister. He also learned that his own grandmother was an expert in this field and that it played a significant role in their grandparents' lives. The narrative illustrates the stark disparity that exists between generations, circumstances, realities, and even ideologies. Many of the words used here, such as ajen (east), achep (west), chachem (old woven sling bag), aling (bamboo strings), khui, and khel (probably denoting the divisions of the village), can be understood as symbols of the Azaos' and Awos' unconscious anxiety about passing on their traditions to the next generation. This story's anxieties are a result of the postcolonial situation that affects indigenous people, in which they are essentially forced to adopt Western ideas of modernity, despite these ideas having little to no connection to their traditions and knowledge systems. As it may also symbolize the success of the colonial politics in using the 'Ideological State Apparatus', like the school and the church, to repress the knowledge-systems of the colonial other—the indigenous and the native. In 'Old Man's Story' the apparent disconnectedness of young Sanen from the pot-making tradition of his community is attributed to the colonial history of Nagaland. Through Tasu, in her story 'Cut Off', Vishu Rita Krocha depicts the changing of realities with the advent of modernity and the absolute transformation of demography. The villagers in Tasu's granddaughter's time just went ahead with their aggression to defend their village, perhaps having little idea of the ravages of inter-village warfare which had been absent for some time. It is due to the timely intervention of the womenfolk, it reached a point of resolution without significant harm.

In her anecdote titled ‘Retold by Grandma - Yarla's Tattoos’, Sirawon Tulisen Khating tells the tale of her Azao about how tattoos became a part of the community’s culture. Her grandmother recalls how the two sisters, Noksangmenla and Yarla, unintentionally discovered tattoos made from the Ngupde tree, which quickly gained enormous popularity among the local populace. Until Christianity took over, the custom persisted, and Azao's mother wanted to get a tattoo but was unable to because it was against the new religious doctrines. The narrator purposefully uses the word ‘Azao’ to refer to her grandmother, which might be understood to be alluding to the unique significance of the bond between Ao Naga grandparents and their grandchildren. Sirawon Tulisen Khating through her memoir portrays an important aspect contributing to the change of moral and social perceptions of different Naga communities – Christianity. Similar to the usage of tattoos another important practice of headhunting was severely disrupted with the advent of Christianity. Only the Konyak Nagas continued the practice of headhunting into the middle of the twentieth century; the majority of Nagas stopped doing so in the late nineteenth century, though some did so into the early twentieth. The Naga labourers who were sent to France belonged to the generation that was embracing Christianity's new worldview. While claiming to be teaching them about peace and nonviolence, Christian missionaries actually used coercion to gather labour in the Naga Hills for the War. These historical changes brought about by Christianity also continued the altered perception and the growing disconnect between the newer generations with the older ones. (Achumi 2022)

Emisenla Jamir's story ‘Storyteller’ is about storytelling and passing down stories through the generations, as the title would imply. "You will remember today, and they will watch as the memories emerge out of your lips as your stories", (Longkumer 2019) the narrator says at the beginning of the story, declaring her desire to be like Otsula. With the arrival of modernity, the narrator describes how children and youth are leaving their homes, their traditional ways,

and their preexisting social systems. The narrator recounts how a mother cried out that her daughter would end up as a 'tsumar' because she preferred to study to be a nurse rather than stay to help with the chores. The narrative comes to an end as Ostula places a 'pot' on the narrator's head that, in her opinion, contains all of the stories about everything. The narrative is gradually revealed to have been a component of the storytelling, and the narrator informs the reference to whom she has been directing her story that the time has come for them to remember and share all the stories. Numerous 'folk stories' from the cultural memory are incorporated into the story, including those of Jina and Etiben, Rangtsungba and Salunaro, Longkongla, and Aonglemela. The mentions of these also highlight how important storytelling has been to the community that the narrator is a part of. It might also pique the interest of some (unaware) readers and prompt some (aware readers) to revisit the traditional elements of the neighbourhood.

When discussing the variety of Native writing in North America, Thomas King uses the word 'Interfusional literature' (Gibert 2001) to characterize tales that are written in English but keep the archetypal indigenous voice of the storyteller, as well as traditional topics and oral discursive strategies. The same pattern is shown brilliantly in 'Storyteller' and 'Retold by Grandma - Yarla's tattoos'. Despite the fact that these tales are written in English, they have Naga oral literature-like structures, visuals, topics, and even characters. The writers have consciously decided to reproduce the narrative voices of the indigenous Naga storyteller because she is an organic intellectual who has made it her goal to preserve her people's oral traditions in a world dominated by discourses of 'Western Modernity'. There can be found a moralistic slant in the narratives. They span from anecdotes to tales and legends since indigenous stories often impart a moral code and a value. On several levels, such as understanding nature and environment, ethics, and principles, these tales' metaphorical meanings are formed. However, the fundamental goal of these interpretations is to aid the

young in finding their position in society, especially at a time when they are experiencing significant disorientation as a result of a traumatic background. The narrators embrace their responsibilities as the community's griot and the guardian of her people's history, just as Easterine Kire said,

"We, indigenous communities are living books. Our young are empty books that need to be filled with beautiful stories, while our elders are our culture's history and history books". (Kire 2019)

Chapter Three

Nationalism in Naga Literature

Ethnonationalism and nationalist movements by stateless nations are still prevalent in many political systems around the world. Ethnonationalism has been linked to internal colonialism, state imperialism, and economic exploitation, among other things. Despite the economic expansion and more autonomy, these disputes have not been addressed. For more than 60 years of the Indo-Naga war, the Nagas have repeatedly argued that they are not what the state aspire them to be and that Naga territories can't be assimilated into something they were not historically. Because of their history and ideology, the Nagas often see themselves as defending their independence rather than anything else they might be accused of. This claim has been historicized through different events in history. There has been a progression from the early defence of independent village-states to the formulation of a pan-Naga cause through the establishment of the Naga Club in 1918, which ultimately resulted in the declaration of Naga independence on August 14, 1947, a day before Indian independence, to its current formulation as a peoples' movement. Modern external forces including British colonialism, the current state-building activities like military repression and extrajudicial legislation, modernity, economic inequities, and worldwide indigenism have all had an impact on the rise of Naga nationalism. The operational core of Naga nationalism, which supplies the cultural resources for their identity, is made up of elements like family, history, origin, mythology, race, polity, language, territory, symbols, and religion. The nationalism that manifests itself as a legitimate effort to define and defend the 'Naga way of life' is a believable reflection of the deep psychological tie and knowledge of their shared humanity that this ethnic core also generates. (Lotha 2009)

In the texts dealt with here, Nagas' historical identity struggles, such as their opposition to the colonial invasion, are not just described as historical facts. The history of their negotiation with identity (specifically in the political realm) is brought into the narratives in order to highlight the structures that made up Naga societies prior to colonization, its changes in the event after colonization, and the significance of the nationalist struggle in the postcolonial period. Even if the time of expression is a 'postnational' moment, it is noteworthy that this retelling of a historical event or memory of historical events is represented through literary forms and styles that resemble postcolonial literary legacies around the globe. (R 2021) The Naga nations' nationalist conflicts and problems, which are context-specific realities alongside postcolonial and 'postnational' realities, complicate matters further. This is why a modern Naga literary piece in this circumstance cannot disregard them. It becomes unavoidable for the articulations to interact with these facts. In the era that has been dubbed 'postnation', many literary narratives in the anthologies fit the parameters similar to that of 'postcolonial fictions'. (R 2021) However, this element can be found not very much highlighted on the futility of the concept of nationhood. Instead, the narratives can be found having the aspirations, turmoils, and problematics of the Naga nationhoods and Naga identities.

The complicated tenors of Nagaland's historical and political environment are indicated by the fact that the Naga nationalist movement started toward the conclusion of the British leave and persisted in the aftermath. The narratives that are the subject of this study were created during what can be called a 'postnational' era and engage with issues of country and nationhood in a way that is strongly influenced by the sociocultural environment of the present-day Naga communities.

Modern English-language short fiction and poetry by Naga writers often address issues of Naga nationhoods, nationalism, and identity. In contrast, the narrative in the earlier stage of

modern Naga literature's short tales and poems is centered on the massive cosmic events of identity and turmoil, within which the Nagas live and exist. However, the most recent pattern suggests a little shift, with Nagas' everyday lives gaining centre stage and fading into the background while the more important or microcosmic events unfold. (Patton 2019)

To understand the articulations of 'nation', 'nationalism', 'insurgency' etc. it is imperative to understand the historical trajectories of the development of Naga Nationalism(s).

The pre-independence history of the Nagas may be divided into two major periods. The Naga Hills region first saw a lengthy era of endemic head-hunting and conflict. The second phase started with the arrival of the British, who gradually put a stop to 'local warfare, blood-feud, and head-hunting'. Growing unhappiness about their failure to adapt to changing socio-political circumstances was a significant factor in the Naga movement(s). The Naga conflict(s) have a distinctive past and a long history of mobilizing ethnic politics. In their view economic egoism or internal economic colonialism are not the most significant factors in Naga nationalism; rather, it is a political problem and the limits of power, not the amount of power one has, are what matter. (Kikhi 2020) Because their goal is to decide the destiny of ethnic groups, ethnic nationalist movements continue to exist. The larger state has kept the conflict going by approaching 'the Naga problem' with a colonial attitude toward minorities and ethnic groupings. The central government and the Nagas have both misunderstood or, more accurately, undervalued one another. The state has experienced calm thanks to ceasefires and ceasefire negotiations, but today's linked ceasefire and extortion practices deter private growth and investment. (Kikhi 2020) The most recent 'Naga Peace Accord' also known as the well-known 'Framework Agreement', was signed on August 3, 2015, after 80 rounds of negotiations between the Indian government and the NSCN(IM). It has been declared to mark the start of a new era and the resolution of the Indo-Naga conflict. While some academics have emphasized the urgent necessity to resolve the Naga issue, others have

questioned if this agreement represents the greatest possible deal for both India and the Nagas. There is no 'Greater Nagaland or Smaller Nagaland' according to V S Atem of the NSCN(IM), and the Nagas were split by 'arbitrary orders' of the British authority and then the Indian government. (Kikhi 2020) The responses from this side were mostly concerns expressed about the merging of all Naga-inhabited territories by the chief ministers of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur. According to a group of Naga academics, the decision should be made by the populace in a referendum, just as Scotland did when it chose to leave the United Kingdom. The Naga Hoho, the top Naga civil society organization, and its affiliate, the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), have been unable to broker peace between the various Naga militia groups. For political solidarity among neighbours with similar but slightly different cultures who live in close proximity to one another, there are a number of models, both ancient and modern, that might serve as examples according to this group. (Kikhi 2020)

The narratives studied as part of the chosen anthologies often portray the anxieties and impacts of the struggles in their daily lives.

During guerilla warfare, many of the writings deal with the challenging situation faced by ordinary people. A thorough awareness of the current state of affairs in the northeastern Indian states, where numerous organizations have been waging a campaign for their own states and governments, served as the inspiration for these narratives. The human struggles of those who are not actively associated with these movements but whose lives are profoundly influenced by the environment are addressed in Ao's stories. This problem is addressed in a different way by 'Sonny' The ex-lover of the narrator passed away suddenly and violently. However, she is unable to express her sorrow or attend the burial despite how much he meant to her and how much she still loved him. By publicly revealing that she still feels an emotional connection to the guy she loves, she would imperil her prospects of finding

employment and perhaps even her life. And because he put ‘the cause’ ahead of her, she is hurting and has been struggling for a very long time. This struggle is complicated in ‘Sonny’ by adding a love element and fusing it with sociopolitical issues. The protagonist is a woman whose situation in her community is made more difficult by her work as a journalist for a national newspaper in the ‘mainland’. The narrative highlights the distinction of different locations and approaches of understanding Naga nationalism by telling the stories of two people who during that time belonged to very distinct places and vocations in the society. The narrative captures the complex reality of contemporary Naga society, which includes the Nagas' desire for a distinct national identity as well as their disillusionment over the evolution of nationalist movements, the reality of a global era marked by greater fluidity between cultures and societies, and the issue of negotiating and reinventing elements from the past/tradition. Even while connecting with elements from the past or tradition and recreating them in the contemporary literary text is a common postcolonial textual quality, the story in this work makes the Naga experience challenging and necessitates dealing with it in terms of its own subtleties.

‘Sonny’ also presents the problematics of the movement from deep within. Sonny’s high idealism and willingness to even leave the love of his life for the nationalist cause are juxtaposed – at the end of the story – with his increasing disenchantment with his then group’s workings and probably the commitments to the cause. When the narrator returns after the news of Sonny’s death she understands the complicated nexus of power and politics - intertwined with both ‘overground’ and ‘underground’ – being responsible for her beloved’s death.

In ‘Vili’s Runaway Son’, Abokali Jimomi portrays the pangs of Vili as a wife and a mother. Her son dropped out of school and joined an underground army and since has been living far away from his family. The story focuses on the present when Vili’s husband has been taken

away by the same group and she has been summoned to pay two lakh rupees because her son has apparently joined a rival gang stealing a gun. Vili and her husband had no regular jobs to afford that kind of money and the entire story focuses on her scrambling for money from different people and also her relatives. Finally, after selling the two pigs she had, borrowing some money, promising her employer to collect pig fodder for her for six straight months, and negotiating with her son to return the gun she could bring her wounded husband back. The story ends with Vili worrying about the medical expenses for her husband, her repayments, and their daily living amidst all these. The story places a strong emphasis on the home and the private, and it emphasizes how closely connected the domestic sphere is to the Naga liberation movement. The suffering brought on by a disruption of normal household life is one of the main themes this narrative explores. Focusing on a single family unit and not emphasizing on the contours of the polemics; rather, it depicts how the broader backdrop is woven into people's daily activities. While the Naga nationalist forces and the Indian military forces are at war, the narrator's family fights to maintain the normalcy of their daily lives. It demonstrates the interaction of the Nagas with external societal factors. The characters don't disparage Naga nationalism or the debate over their independence. Instead, they emphasize the disturbances to daily life brought about by the current socio-political setting.

These narratives also highlight the role and perseverance of women during times of conflict. The transformative potential of war for female empowerment has received scholarly attention recently. Armed conflict can open a window of opportunity for transforming the societal role of women in by acting as a disruptive shock. As a result, women today are not only viewed as conflict victims but also as agents of change. Despite their vulnerability in conflict situations, women may be exposed to new information and opportunities that have had a positive impact on their lives and the lives of those close to them. These narratives often show how women have led to alter the situations of the public and the private by conspicuously performing as

active agents. It is perhaps also important to highlight the narratives written by women authors who are more prone to have intricate insights about the lives of common women during the conflict.

Temsula Ao's 'the Curfew Man', portrays the lives of people who were quite 'uniquely' involved in the anti-insurgency actions. It contains a character in Satemba who personifies the young people often caught in the maelstrom of Naga history. In 'the Curfew Man', his wife assists him in finding a 'suitable job' for himself through her, even though it did not ultimately go in his favour. When the Army imposes a curfew on the town, Satemba becomes a government informant who prowls the streets after hours to spy on his fellow Nagas who have joined the insurgent group. Soon, terms like 'convoy', 'grouping', 'curfew', and 'situation' took on a completely new connotation that frequently served as a warning to the populace about something sinister. Satemba, a former Assam Police constable who functioned as one of many who acted as the middlemen between the two parties, 'some by choice and others by compulsion', were caught in the middle of the two motivations for joining the organization. The narrative describes a time when things were getting worse and civilian deaths were attributed to unlucky encounters between the army and underground rebels. Despite having a damaged knee, Satemba continued to work as the nighttime messenger who enforced curfews. He did not want to consider the future repercussions or the 'reasonable payment' he was paid elsewhere because he was well aware of the work he was handling and the risk involved. Despite all the trouble he went to in order to win over his superiors when he ultimately made the decision to retire, he became 'history', was forgotten by everyone, and was no longer the man who performed his service faithfully despite having a broken kneecap.

In Temsula Ao's 'The Letter', an 'armed man', who remains anonymous in the narrative travels out on an 'emergency tax' extortion in a community alone, only to deal with

vengeance that ended fatally. Fascinatingly, this community had decided shortly before the visit that they would stop paying a 'tax' to the underground, would decline to perform 'free' government labour, and would deter army visits by refusing to sell any of their produce to them. In order to achieve the quiet, tranquil ordinariness of the modest village life, the 'situation' was to be unfriendly to any outsiders. A few damp notes of smaller amounts, a torn ID with nearly legible writing, and a letter addressed to a postbox in a nearby town were found when the dead 'armed man's' pockets were searched. The assailants remembered every word of the letter from the deceased man's son pleading with the father to send the money for his exam costs, despite the fact that he had never been a good student. But in this instance, Ao doesn't just show the 'armed man's' suffering. Ironically, this armed man is a member of the so-called 'national workers' who earlier engaged in acts of flagrant extortion against the locals, robbing them of the money they had worked so hard to obtain by helping the BRO excavate the initial alignment for a motorable road to their village. On that tragic day, one of the extortionist's rifle butt seriously hurt a man. The man had made an effort to convince the boss to excuse him from the current accounting because he owed the wood dealer money and also needed to transfer money to his son for his exam expenses. Consequently, everything comes full circle. Ao maintains a macrocosmic perspective the entire time while delving deeply into each character in (perhaps) passing detail.

Therefore, 'The Letter' continues to be an engaging tale of a villager who attempts to intimidate the impoverished communities in order to get money for his son's board exam fee while costumed as a militant (as earlier in the story, the militants had robbed him of it). The father utilizes this tactic out of absolute necessity, which effectively conveys his desperation. In this way, the oppressive 'occupation' troops who are deployed to ostensibly maintain the peace are no better than the militants or 'underground government'. This compelling tale reveals Ao's compassion as it blurs the borders between a deceased rebel and the purportedly

innocent villager who caused his death. The main challenge that both guys are dealing with is how to make ends meet. The murky sections in this tale are the most obvious.

The works of Baptist missionaries and the subsequent propagation of Christianity had an immense impact on the shaping up of the 'Naga consciousness' and their nationalistic struggles of today. Chophy contests the widely held belief that missionaries who came to the northeast highlands collaborated with colonial rulers or were protected by them. In actuality, rather than being friendly, their relationship was frequently adversarial. The missionaries that travelled to the area in the late 19th century were Americans, whereas the colonial power was the British. (Chophy 2021) The colonial rulers, some of whom were anthropologist scholars, were anxious to maintain the 'exotic' way of life of the indigenous people. The missionaries frequently changed not just the religious beliefs of the communities but also their entire way of life. They frequently began by studying the differing languages, producing a script for the natives, and then establishing schools. The officials, who saw it as a loss of priceless culture, were upset about this. (Chophy 2021)

In the first part of the 19th century, these missionaries, who were primarily affiliated with the American Baptist Mission, initially pitched their tents in the Assam plains. However, they discovered that there was no harvesting of 'souls' as per Christianity in these rich plains. The 'old iron-clad institutions and traditions' dominating social life, which the missionaries found difficult to penetrate, were to blame for the missionaries' challenges in Assam. (Chophy 2021)

The missionaries then turned their attention upward to the hill ranges that flanked the Assam plains and found sympathetic listeners among the communities that engaged in headhunting. These groups lacked a shared print or writing tradition. Instead, they had a strong oral culture. According to the Chophy, this made life simple for the missionaries. The missionaries started

by becoming familiar with the local tongues. It was not going to be simple. (Chophy 2021) By gesturing and pointing at everyday objects, they distracted peasants who were on their way to work in their fields and learned new words and sounds from them. The Bible and gospel literature were then translated into this new language after they had first constructed a script to suit the ‘tribal’ parlance. Then, schools were opened. (Chophy 2021)

According to Chophy again, during British times, political agents had expressed resentment at the new religion for irrevocably changing traditional ways of life; in the post-independence period, many political leaders of the new Indian state saw it as a rabble-rousing faith, and thus an impediment to national integration. (Chophy 2021) The fact that the two most important independence movements in the northeast following Indian independence were in the two states with the highest Christianization rates—Nagaland and Mizoram—didn't help. Foreign missionaries were expelled from Nagaland by the middle of the 1950s, and the same thing occurred in Mizoram in the 1970s. Chophy also says that there is currently some sort of hierarchy among the communities, with those who adopted the faith initially feeling superior to those who did so later. (Chophy 2021) Alternatively, the changes brought on to the ways of life also contributed to the disconnects between generations who struggled to make sense of the new perceptions and social behaviours and the traditions and customs of the elders. The current project of building a foundation of the ‘Naga identity’ by various groups and fractions involves this discourse of connectedness as well in their quest for political struggle. This is one of the major informing factors in the ‘Naganization’ (R 2021) process of the current writings in English.

In her anecdote titled ‘Retold by Grandma - Yarla's Tattoos’, Sirawon Tulisen Khating tells the tale of her Azao about how tattoos became a part of Ao Naga culture. Her grandmother recalls how the two sisters, Noksangmenla and Yarla, unintentionally found tattoos made from the Ngupde tree, which quickly gained enormous popularity among the local populace.

Until Christianity took over, the custom persisted, and Azao's mother wanted to get a tattoo but was unable to because it was against the new religious doctrines. The narrator purposefully uses the word 'Azao' to refer to her grandmother, (Longkumer 2019) which might be considered to be alluding to the unique significance of the bond between Ao Naga grandparents and their offspring. More Ao Naga vocabulary can be found in the story, such as when Azao talks about how Yarla was teased by the other girls in her dorm by calling her 'chepralikha', how the tree's sac was discovered, or how in older Ao Naga society everyone was permitted to get tattoos except the alars'. It discusses the Nagas' colonial background, the influence of missions, and changes in the sociocultural framework of Naga civilization. Additionally, this 'memoir' makes the case for the re-invention of Naga identity in the modern era, as well as the yearning for the rootedness in the traditions of the past and how it has changed Nagaland's social landscape in the postcolonial era.

Through Tasu, Vishu Rita Krocha depicts the three generations of Naga Lives in the short story 'Cut Off'. The story begins in 1905 when Tasu was born in the secluded South-East community of Zhavame, which had male warriors to defend the village and keep off invading enemies. The emergence of Tasu and the disappearance of the warrior battles and headhunting custom are major plot points in the narrative. However, as he nears the end of his life at 95 years old, a circumstance emerges where his town must once more defend itself, but the women leaders valiantly thwart the situation. It describes the Nagas' way of life and worldview before colonization and the effect or arrival of Christianity in the first portion. It also depicts the modifications to Naga society brought about by missionary teachings and the adoption of the contemporary educational system. The process of adopting the new culture and giving up the old way of life can also be assumed from the entire timeline. This transformation of the Naga political identity may be understood as a part of a larger context

in terms of cultural colonization as well which stems from the efforts of proselytization and missionary activities throughout a century.

According to the debate in this paper, modern English-language Naga literature tracks the development of Naga nationalism and highlights the hybridity that defines Naga experiences throughout the so-called 'postnational' era. The current Naga literary texts encompass three realities—Naga nation and nationalism, postcolonial terrain characterized by its colonial past, and 'hybridity' of identity—while the 'postnational' order places emphasis on the melting of national boundaries and fluidity of identities. It is also can be found expressed at a time when the 'postnational' order is in effect. (R 2021) Consequently, it becomes essential while discussing the particular experiences of the postcolonial Naga literary text in English. In terms of specific expressions of general realities like the postcolonial, for example, its complex sociocultural and political shape needs to be engaged. In this way, exploring the various postcolonial expressions in Naga literature can aid in understanding the intricacies and help to avoid ironing out distinctions by highlighting the variations that make up postcolonial experiences. All of these elements suggest that, even as it is situated on the broad landscape of postcolonial literary heritage, modern Naga literature must be read in terms of its distinctiveness. For instance, it's crucial to emphasize how the socio-spatial plots of texts that discuss Naga identity or history extend into larger social or spatial realms rather than just remaining restricted to Naga societies or spaces as they are often defined by outside forces in terms of ethnicity. The narratives under discussion here, for example, show that they were once part of larger, South Asian, or global worlds and that these settings were crucial to highlighting the postcolonial posture in the writings. However, such placing does not remove them from the distinctiveness of the historical or cultural background of the Naga people. In reality, this makes the issues' treatment even more complex. In other words, at more subtle

levels, the global or postcolonial moments influence the stories and themes in these writings and help us understand and situate better from the ground and perhaps above.

Conclusion

The political movement(s) in Nagaland has been claimed to be one of the longest-standing conflicts in South Asia and the world. Over the course of several decades, it has seen and caused many events also unfolding in the form of the region's development, which has had an impact on the lives of the Naga people. It continues to insist on a political settlement for the Naga people however varied the meanings might be in separate contexts.

Although it has not been the research's intention to focus particularly on this but the subjective-objective nature of the term 'Naga' has an impact on the larger politics of nationalism and the state as found by the heterogeneous understandings of the public and private life in the chosen literary narratives. It can be broadly assumed that the Naga identity as a community cannot be objectively interpreted, yet at the same time can be found bound by many aspects of the shared history. As Naga Nationalism interacts and communicates with the rest of the world, it is still changing and incorporating new concepts; as a result, the Fourth World Nation notion is also brought up to discuss and define 'the Naga'. It has to be stated that there are no lists or findings from the research that may be used to attribute the term 'Naga' in any way whatsoever.

As writers are affected and motivated by their surroundings it is of no surprise that Naga writings in English have significantly portrayed the contemporary state of affairs in various ways. Through diverse themes and different genres the politics of writing has been vibrant as investigated in the preceding chapters, be it through reminiscing the past, incorporating folk and myth tales, using non-English words, or even portraying the domestic space affected by the conflict(s).

As the research progressed through different drafts and chapters it also shaped the personal journey of the researcher as a learner. At the end of writing and discarding countless words,

rereading different works to better understand the nuances and the politics of the written words it has been an adventure to undertake and stand in the last lap of this memorable journey. I hope this research has been able to avoid appropriative assertions and can only be found true to 'research as learning and unlearning'.

The scope of an M.Phil research is not very broad and therefore this research obviously has certain limitations. As indicated in the beginning, this research only includes shorter forms of narratives and puts forward the general arguments about Naga writings in English through them only. Also, there is a 'politics of visibility' in the act often in selecting the primary texts (and probably also in the selection of the contents in those primary texts).

Therefore any future researcher obviously has a vast scope in accommodating more diverse genres in their research as well as looking into literary works which might not be overtly visible in the first stages of the investigation.

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