

TRANSLATION AND MODERNITY: 20TH CENTURY MANIPUR

TRANSLATION AND MODERNITY: 20TH CENTURY MANIPUR

A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

TRANSLATION STUDIES

BY

Akoijam Malemnganbi

Registration No: 16HAPT01



**CENTRE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD, INDIA
JUNE, 2022**



CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**TRANSLATION AND MODERNITY: 20TH CENTURY MANIPUR**” submitted by Akoijam Malemnganbi (16HAPT01) in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Translation Studies from the University of Hyderabad is a bona fide research work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

This thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously, either in part or in full for the award of any academic degree or diploma to this or any other university or institution.

The student has the following publication(s) before submission of the thesis for adjudication and has produced evidence for the same in the form of acceptance letter or the reprint in the relevant area of her research:

1. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2022. “Translation as a Modernising Agent: Modern Education and Religious Texts in Colonial Manipur (1891-1947).” in *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*. DOI: 10.1080/0907676X.2022.2071163. Routledge, Taylor & Francis, UK. (Published)
2. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2021. Trans. “Leima’s Winter” in *Adda*, Commonwealth Writers of Commonwealth Foundation, UK. (Published)
3. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2020. “Narrating Margin and Violent Erasure: Translating Manipur and the dominant Gaze” in *Violence and Terror: Narratives from North East India* edited by Prof. Mala Renganathan. ISBN 978-93-85839-35-1. DVS Publishers, Guwahati. (Published)

The student has made presentation in the following conferences:

1. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2019. "Hinduism and Indigeneity in Manipur: Rupture and Recuperation." *SEASIA Biennial Conference 2019* held from 7 to 9 December 2019. Organized by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) of National Chengchi University in collaboration with SEASIA Consortium, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Taiwan Asia Exchange Foundation and Academia Sinica, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan. (Travel Grant received from ICSSR).
2. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2019. "Naoriya Phulo's Eigi Wareng: A Call to 're-search' the Meitei-existence." *Raw.Con 2019, the 7th Annual Researchers at Work National Conference* on 'Religion in Cultural and Comparative Perspectives' held from 26 to 28 February, 2019. Organized by the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad, Telangana, India.
3. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2018. "Translated Texts and Naoriya Phundrei: Hegemonic Language and Cultural Assimilation." *The IInd Annual International Conference* held from 7 to 11 October 2018. Jointly organized by Caesurae Collective Society and CART – T&M, OU and Caesurae Collective Society in collaboration with Department of English, MANUU, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.
4. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2017. "Narrating Margin and Violent Erasure: Translating Manipur and the Dominant Gaze." *International Seminar on 'Narratives of Terror and Violence in South-East Asia' (NOTAVISA)* held from 16 to 18 November, 2017. Organized by Department of English, NEHU, Shillong, Meghalaya, India.

Further the student has passed the following courses towards the fulfilment of the coursework requirement for Ph.D. in 2016-17

Course Code	Course Name	Credits	Pass/Fail
TS-801	Research Methodology	04	Pass
TS-802	Practical Translation	04	Pass
TS-821	Course with supervisor	04	Pass
CL-810	Cultures and Civilizations	04	Pass

Prof. K. Rajyarama
Supervisor, CALTS
University of Hyderabad

Director

(CALTS)
University of Hyderabad

Dean

School of Humanities
University of Hyderabad



CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

Declaration

I, Akoijam Malemnganbi, hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**TRANSLATION AND MODERNITY: 20TH CENTURY MANIPUR**” submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Translation Studies embodies veritable research work carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Prof. K. Rajyarama, Centre for Applied Linguistics & Translation Studies, School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad. It is a research work which is free of plagiarism.

I also declare to the best of my knowledge that this thesis has not been submitted previously, in part or in full, to this or any other university or institute for the award of any academic degree. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhgana/INFLIPNET.

A report of the plagiarism statistics from Indira Ghandi Memorial Library, University of Hyderabad is enclosed.

Date: 29 June, 2022

Place: Hyderabad

Akoijam Malemnganbi
Registration no. 16HAPT01
Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies,
University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, Telangana.

Countersigned by:

Professor K. Rajyarama
Supervisor, CALTS
University of Hyderabad

Dedication

সেঁগাঘাটে চহকোত য়োঁইছোঁ জীভেচিগিচি নহুে য়'নচেং চেংগাংচি,

য'ছোঁ জায়েজায়েচি জাচেং জাভেচ' য়েচি য়হুেচি

নজাং নচ'ভেং জীংমচ'।।

I dedicate this thesis to

Ima Oinam lairembi, guardian deity of my birthplace,

my grandparents and my parents who brought me into this world.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Prof. K Rajyarama who provided me with constant moral and academic guidance throughout this journey. In each and every step of the way, she extended her invaluable advice and suggestions. Her kindness has made this otherwise stressful journey a gentle and comforting ride. It would have been impossible to have this thesis ready without her abundant support.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to my doctoral committee members Prof. Shivarama Padikkal (CALTS) and Prof. Sowmya Dechamma (CCL) who introduced me to the world of Translation Studies through giving me indispensable insights and crucial academic inputs which helped me formulate my arguments in the thesis. Under their caring guidance, I was able to focus on my work and formulate my arguments without fear.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to Prof. Bhimrao Panda Bhosale, Head, CALTS, School of Humanities and all faculty members of the Centre for their valuable academic suggestions which helped me in refining the arguments presented in the thesis. In addition, I also thank the non-teaching staffs of our Centre for their timely co-operation and consistent support during these long years.

I wish to show my sincere admiration for my friends, seniors, and juniors in the CALTS who accompanied and encouraged me when I doubted myself. Among them, I would like to mention a few names; Dr. Antarleena Basu for always being there both as a friend and as my academic companion who takes care of me with much love and warmth; Chythan and Parshu for being my prompt and affectionate friends who helped me continually; Ayoob and Vasil for encouraging and supporting me in every step of the way; Sashi, Prabhakar, Mahendra and Sabah Mohammed for their kind words and support; Monalisa for her calm and gentle company; Siltu for her cheerful presence; and last but not the least, Che Somobala, Che Bempi and Che Jomita for being my guardians in the Centre who provided me with comfort and a homely feeling.

I would also like to express my appreciation for Prof. MT Ansari who is in the Centre for Comparative Literature for offering the course on *Cultures and Civilizations* which made us engage with critical debates and issues on the idea of culture and civilization. Additionally,

I wish to thank the non-teaching staffs of the CCL and my friends Thahir (CCL) and Saranya (CCL) for helping me consistently.

I am grateful to ICSSR, Government of India, for providing me with travel grant to attend the *Seasia Biennial conference 2019* which was held at Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan. I am also grateful to the directors of the Manipur State Archives, Assam State Archives, and West Bengal State Archives which I visited during the course of my PhD. I would like to make a special mention of Mr. Md. Abul Kalam, Deputy Director, Manipur State Archives for taking the extra step in encouraging and facilitating young research scholars, for preserving our hope and trust in kindness and professional integrity. Mr. Ningthoujam Biswajit, Dusting bearer, Manipur State Archives is another person to whom I owe my deep gratitude and respect for his kind and thoughtful actions which averted the tension of having to deal with a disturbing experience with the archivist who denied me access to the materials in the archives during her personal leave.

I also thank Mr. Mayengbam Dilip, former Director AIR, Imphal, Mr. Ritesh K Sharma, Transmission executive, AIR, Imphal, (Retd.) Prof. Arambam Lokendro, Prof. Paonam Gunindro, Vice-Chancellor, Manipur University of Culture, Prof. Nahakpam Aruna, Manipuri Department, Manipur University, Prof. Polem Nabachandra, Manipuri Department, Manipur University, Mayanglambam Gourachandra, Founder, People's Museum, Kakching, Dr. Arambam Noni (Assistant Prof, Dhanamanjuri University), Arambam Damudor (Research Scholar, JNU), Wangam Somorjit (Historian and writer), Dr. Loya Leima Oinam (Assitant Prof. Dept. of English, D.M. College of Science, DMU), and Pompi Basumatary (Assitant Prof. Dept. of English and Cultural Studies, Christ, Deemed to be University, Delhi, NCR) for sparing their precious time and helping me with accessing research materials from various sources including their private collections. They also made me familiar with their insightful observations which were crucial in developing the arguments presented in the thesis. (Retd.) Prof. MS Ningomba shared his own personal experiences of spearheading the language movement in the 1990's and for this priceless narration, I would like to thank him.

I would also like to thank Achom Omen (Research Scholar, EFLU) for checking my research paper and giving me valuable feedback; Dr. Naorem Deepak (Assistant Prof, Daulat Ram College, Delhi) for his guidance and advice during the process of research paper publication; Dr. Laishram Priti for her advice during the process of applying for travel grants for attending conferences; Dr. Pudangkoi Luwang (Pheiroijam Sova Luwang, writer) for helping me in collecting vital research materials; Langlen Soibam (Research Scholar, MU) and Tongbram Narmada (Research Scholar, MU) for hosting me like their own sister when I

first visited the Manipuri department as part of my field work for the research; Kongbrailatpam Sudip for his generous help during procuring visa for attending the conference in Taiwan; Akoijam Rebica (Research Scholar NEHU) and Dr. Chirom Kamaljit, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, NEHU, for hosting me with such great affection and kindness at NEHU; and Mayanglambam Merina for her kind hospitality when I visited People's Museum, Kakching as part of my field work.

I would also like to thank the following for keeping my academic motivation alive throughout this journey in their unique ways: Thounaojam Swar, Makakmayum Furkan, Kulajit Maisnam, Salam Chingkheinganba, Khundrakpam Ranson, and Maibam Safiur Rahaman. I am also grateful to Hijam Bikram and Songarin Phinao for their timely help in providing technical support.

I am filled with gratitude and delight to have the following people in my life, especially during the difficult journey of completing the research work: Thokchom Veewon for the endless conversations on social issues, culture, history and always looking out for me; Thongam Sophia for the many hang outs to cheer me up during my low phases; Phamdom Rameshori (Thoi) for being there to celebrate my ups and share my downs; Dr. Aman Shahni for the warm hugs; Khundrakpam Bronson for rekindling my spirit with his delightful company; Nepram Sonia for staying close and listening to all my ramblings, Shyama Sangardas for being my muse; Athira Varghese for her constant caring presence; Gairan Pamei for the endless calming conversations; Mutum Yoiremba for the countless arguments and counter-arguments, and taking out the time to proofread parts of my thesis; and Dr. Thongam Bipin for all the academic discussions we had, for guiding me throughout and keeping me inspired with new ideas and hopes.

During these long years on campus, I would not have been able to complete the thesis without the love and support of the following people who took care of me like a family far away from home: Dr. Kongbrailatpam Sandeep, Merenmeso Pongen, Gowtham Uyalla, Dr. Rongsenzulu Jamir, Shinaj PS, Dr. Aso Aier, Dr. Thungdemo N Yanthan, Kimalong Longkumer, Myrlysa Ibarilang Hall Kharkongor, Dr. Atungbou Newme, Dr. M. Yurreisem, Dr. Eastrose Miachieo, Komuni Kaje, Sanderstar, Dr. Yumnam Sapha, Thangjam Sumanta, Laishram Samyokpha, Yingmei Konyak, Laishram Priyanka, and last but not the least Sabina AK.

I am blessed to have uncle Sivaji Vadrevu and aunty Kasturi Luxmi as another set of parents in Hyderabad. Their love and affection made me able to resettle in the new city

without any fear, concentrate on my studies and later on my research work without having to worry about adapting in a foreign region when I was still a teenager.

I am also thankful to my relatives who supported me consistently and my little nephews and nieces who bring me absolute joy and happiness. As for my parents, I take this opportunity to say that it simply does not make sense to thank them when they are above and beyond these formalities. Nevertheless, I wish to express my deepest love for them. I feel loved and cared for beyond words can express. To see them in action bursting with sacrificial spirits gave me the encouragement and the inspiration to prepare myself mentally, intellectually and emotionally to see the world and its tragedies with seriousness while not losing sight of life's little moments of joy. To add to this, I am showered with blessings to have two loving and caring little sisters who took care of all my needs and helped me in every possible way throughout my life and one little brother who is sensitive, kindhearted, and would step up without being asked to accompany me while visiting the state archives and libraries across the country for collecting materials for the research. I would also like to add my cousin, Helena, who is the elder sister we never had for taking on the responsibility of looking after the family and letting me enjoy the pampering of an elder sister. Without their love and care, this would still have been only a dream.

Table of Contents

Certificate	i
Declaration	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgement	vi
Table of Contents	x
List of Tables	xiii
Abstract	xv

Chapter 1 Introduction.....1

1.1. Introduction.....	2
1.2. Translation Studies and the cultural turn.....	6
1.2.1. The rise of Translation Studies as a discipline.....	6
1.2.2. The cultural turn in Translation Studies.....	9
1.3. Modernity: A literature review.....	15
1.3.1. Western Modernity.....	16
1.3.2. Colonial Modernity.....	17
1.3.3. Alternative/multiple modernities.....	31
1.4. Modernity in Manipur	34
1.4.1. Modern Manipur: A Historical Perspective.....	38
1.4.2. Modern Manipuri literature and translation in the 20th century.....	42
1.5. Methodology and conceptual framework for the analysis.....	52

Chapter 2 Translation in Manipur: 1891-1947.....62

2.1. Introduction.....	62
2.2. Section 1 – Background.....	65
2.2.1. Imposition of Vaishnavism in the Eighteenth Century.....	65
2.2.2. The Arrival of Western/Colonial Modernity in the Nineteenth Century.....	70
2.3. Section II - Translation Projects in the First Half of the Twentieth Century.....	73
2.3.1. Translations as Texts Books.....	76
2.3.2. Translations of Sanskrit Religious Texts.....	81
2.3.2.1. Beyond the Text: A Plea for Recognition.....	82
2.3.2.2. Atombapu's Texts and the Erasure of Meeteilon.....	85
2.4. Conclusion.....	87

Chapter 3 Translation in Manipur: 1947 -1992.....89

3.1. Introduction.....	90
3.2. Translations and Translated texts: 1947-1992.....	91
3.2.1. Translations from Bengali.....	91
3.2.2. Translations from Sanskrit.....	94
3.2.3. Translations from English.....	98
3.2.4. Translations from other languages.....	100
3.2.5. Translations from Meeteilon to other languages.....	101
3.3. The formation of the modern Manipuri discourse.....	104
3.3.1. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's "'Adivasi' Literatures of India: The Uncultivated 'Adivasi' Languages in India" and Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education": A critical comparison.....	104
3.3.2. Modern Manipuri Literature as represented in the <i>Indian Literature</i> : Cultural hegemony and dominance.....	115
3.3.3. Inclusion of Manipuri Language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution: Extending the hegemony.....	128
3.4. Conclusion.....	132
Chapter 4 Construction of a Hinduized Modern Identity in Meeteilon Literature: Chaoba, Kamal, Anganghal.....	134
4.1 Introduction.....	135
4.2 Writing and Authorship: A Pre-Requisite for Being Modern.....	138
4.3 Identity Formation and the Politics of Naming: Characters, Places and Titles.....	142
4.3.1 <i>Khamba Thoibi Seireng</i>	142
4.3.2 <i>Madhabi</i>	145
4.3.3 <i>Labangga Lata</i>	149
4.4 Transferring Hinduism in modern Manipuri literature: References and Comparisons from Sanskrit epics <i>Ramayana</i> and <i>Mahabharata</i>	151
4.4.1 <i>Madhabi</i>	151
4.4.2 <i>Labangga Lata</i>	154
4.4.3 <i>Khamba Thoibi Seireng</i>	158
4.5 Conclusion.....	163
Chapter 5 Resistance and Modernity in Meeteilon Literature: Naoriya Phulo and Arambam Somorendra.....	166
5.1 Introduction.....	167
5.2 Naoriya Phulo (b.1888-d.1941).....	169
5.2.1. Social ostracization and Phulo.....	174

5.2.2. Phulo and his first and second <i>waafong</i> (Public Speech).....	177
5.2.3. Western Education and enlightenment as integral to Phulos modernity.....	179
5.3. Arambam Somorendra (b.1935-d.2000).....	182
5.3.1. “Judge Saheb ki Imung”: An interpretation of modernity in Manipur.....	186
5.3.1.1. Modernity and Language.....	186
5.3.1.2. Colonial modernity: British colonization and Indo-Aryan Supremacy.....	187
5.3.1.3 The idea of a modern woman/wife: Gender and modernity.....	192
5.3.1.4. Binary articulations of modernity; <i>Kaang saanaba</i> Vs clubbing...	194
5.3.1.5. Indigenous food items and colonial modernity.....	195
5.4. Conclusion.....	200
Chapter 6 Conclusion.....	201
Conclusion.....	201
Tables	206
Bibliography	211
List of Publications and Certificates of Paper Presentations	229
Plagiarism Report	

List of Tables

Table 1 A list of Sanskrit words used by Atombapu Sharma in the front matter of his books along with the Meeteilon and English equivalents.....	206
Table 3.1 A list of translated texts from Bengali literature by Ayekpam Shyamsunder	207
Table 3.2 A list of Sanskrit/Bengali/Hindi words from the translations of <i>Julius Caesar</i> and <i>Antigone</i>	209

Abstract

Over the last few decades Translation Studies as an emerging research area has proved itself crucial in understanding how certain rationalities were negotiated between cultures and languages. The cultural turn in Translation Studies has forged a new path to foray into the realm of understanding modernity in Manipur through its literary discourse using translation as a site of critical analysis. In the context of Manipur, the engagement with modernity which was introduced during the colonial period (1891-1947) largely informed the present discourse and the framework of constructing the literature, culture and history of Manipur.

The present research work is an attempt to observe and theorize the nature of Manipur's engagement with the idea of modernity and the role that translation played in the construction of colonial modernity. Using an interdisciplinary research method, the thesis looks at the confluence of history, literature and translation to identify the issues of power, dominance and hierarchy. Divided into two parts, the first part of the thesis focuses on making an analysis of the translation corpus/activities in Manipur in the 20th century. Through mapping out two trajectories of translation projects in Manipur during the colonial era (1891–1947), the thesis argues that translation served as a modernising agent via projecting the Indo-Aryan culture as modern/legitimate as opposed to the indigenous culture as traditional/outdated. The first trajectory traces the implications of the translations of textbooks as a direct result of the introduction of modern education in colonial Manipur, while the later discusses the translations of Sanskrit religious texts as an indication of the merging of the Indo-Aryan hegemony within the tradition of colonial modernity in Manipur.

The second part of the thesis investigates the formation of modern Manipuri literature through examining the works of three prominent modern Manipuri writers: Khwairakpam

Chaoba's *Labangga Lata*, Lamabam Kamal's *Madhabi* and Hijam Anganghal's *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*. The canonization of these three texts as modern Manipuri literature and the close relationship it has with the emergence of a dominant Manipuri modernity informed by Hindu hegemony is highlighted in the thesis. It also explores the conception of an alternative modernity in the works of Naoriya Phulo during the colonial period and Arambam Somorendro during the latter half of the 20th century. The analysis observes that Phulo and Somorendro share a fundamental characteristic in conceptualizing modernity in Manipur rooted in indigeneity which could point towards the existence of an alternative modernity that functions in contrast to the prevailing dominant modernity in Manipur mediated by Bengali and Sanskrit literature where translation played a key role as an enabling agent.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 1 Outline

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Translation Studies and the cultural turn

1.2.1 The rise of Translation Studies as a discipline.

1.2.2 The cultural turn in Translation Studies.

1.3 Modernity: A literature review

1.3.1 Western Modernity

1.3.2 Colonial Modernity

1.3.3 Alternative/multiple modernities

1.4 Modernity in Manipur

1.4.1 Modern Manipur: A Historical Perspective

1.4.2 Modern Manipuri literature and translation in the 20th century

1.5 Methodology and conceptual framework for the analysis

1.1 Introduction

In today's modern world, it has become increasingly impossible to live in isolation; both as an individual or as a community. The whole world is now a global community tightly knitted together despite embodying diverse cultures and differing views, and being identified as separate different countries (193 member countries of the United Nations). The ongoing covid-19 pandemic which originated in Wuhan, China in late 2019 has been spread to over 220¹ countries across the globe by June 2021. It took less than a month for the virus to spread in many of the countries. The covid-19 pandemic is a testimony to an important mode of our modern living: global connectivity.

The dominant mode of our modern living originated with the idea of modernity. Thus, whether one likes it or not, in David Scott's term, we are all "conscripts of modernity"². It is in this context that the present research endeavours to seek an explanation on how Manipuri modernity/a modern Manipur is conceptualized through its literature to accommodate its existence in a modern world. A small state located in the Northeast of India inhabited by a group of indigenous communities who shared a common history for centuries, Manipur encountered various forms of violence in its past. The 20th century marked the arrival of colonial modernity in Manipur which exacerbated the existing violence while at the same time bringing forth a new consciousness among the Manipuris to identify themselves within the ambit of modernity.

This research seeks to understand how a modern Manipur is conceptualized through its literature and to examine how translation aided in the formation of modern Manipuri literature. It also makes an effort to alert the readers to the possibility of exploring a different conceptualization of Manipur's modernity which has been superimposed and marginalised

¹ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/countries-where-coronavirus-has-spread/>

² David Scott, *Conscripts of modernity: The tragedy of colonial enlightenment*, (Duke University Press, 2004).

over the years by the dominant modernity. The introductory chapter provides a background to the research underscoring the research motivations and the research goals. The primary research areas involved in this research such as cultural Translation Studies, modernity and a history of Manipur and its literature are studied and discussed as part of the literature review. As the concept of revivalism has been studied extensively in Thongam Bipin's doctoral thesis³ with regards to the idea of nation and nationalism, the present research diverges from these ideas and instead focuses on the idea of modernity pertaining to the introduction of western education and the formation of the modern literary discourse in Manipur via treating translation as a site of analysis where modern power is constituted. Throughout the thesis, I have used the term *Meeteilon* to refer to the language spoken by the *Meetei* following the official spelling recognized by the government of Manipur. However, it is also spelt as Meiteilon/Meitei by certain writers depending on the particular school of thought which they prefer⁴. However, for a more accurate reference, the term "Manipuri" is used rather than Meeteilon to refer to the language while writing in association with a writer, a particular document or an event. This chapter lays out the conceptual framework of the research, the methodology used for data collection, and the manner of inquiry and analysis involved in the research.

The thesis is divided into two main parts; the first part examines the history of translation in Manipur, particularly the 20th century while the second part deals with finding out the modalities of a modern Manipuri literature and the possibility of reconceptualising alternative modernities exhibited during this period. The former is an inquiry to the role that translation played in the formation of modern Manipuri literature while the latter part

³ Thongam, Bipin, Doc. Thesis, "Revivalism and/as Resistance the Meetei Movement in the Twentieth Century" submitted in University of Hyderabad, 2017.

⁴ Some of the theories are discussed in Thongam Bipin's doctoral thesis submitted in University of Hyderabad. The term *Meetei* originates outside Manipur from the theory proposed by Naoriya Phulo who was from Cachar while *Meitei* is the spelling that has been used by those residing in Manipur. Often Meetei and Meitei is written with a slash in between.

compares and examines certain selected canonical texts from the earlier half of the century. It takes a revisit to the 20th century analysing the conceptualization of Manipuri modernity as embodied in the works of Naoriya Phulo and Arambam Somorendra's play "Judge Saheb ki Imung". The thesis is driven by the curiosity to seek for an explanation of what is normativity in the context of Manipur and how is it constructed. The present research is located in the realm of literature, with a particular focus on translation, which reflects as well as reinforces certain dominant cultural ideologies in a society. The normativity that pervades the dominant Manipuri modernity is put under scrutiny viz a viz the emergence of colonial modernity in Manipur.

The second chapter entitled "Translation in Manipur: 1891-1947" gives a historical account of the history of translation in Manipur during the colonial period. After the British occupied Manipur in 1891, various transformations took place in all aspects of life. The impact of colonial modernity was felt directly by the people of Manipur. This chapter maps out two prominent trajectories of translation projects that were taken up during the colonial period; the need to produce school text books with the introduction of western education and the enterprise of bringing Sanskrit religious texts closer to home.

The third chapter entitled "Translation in Manipur: 1947 -1992" provides a literature review of the translations that were made in Manipur post WWII. It discusses the changes as well as the similarities in the translation scene in Manipur before and after the war. An important change that took place was the shift in popularizing and making the translations more accessible to the public rather than limiting it to the elite literary circle. The discourse around modern Manipuri literature initiated in the 1970's with the recognition of Manipuri language by Sahitya Akademi is studied to understand how modern Manipuri literature is conceptualized vis a vis the Indo-Aryan literatures in India. The chapter ends with presenting an analysis of the possible rationalities which informed the inclusion of Manipuri language in

the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution with regard to the formation of a modern Manipuri literature *augmented* through translation.

The fourth chapter entitled “Construction of a Hinduized Modern Identity in Meeteilon literature: Chaoba, Kamal, Anganghal” opens the second part of the thesis. This chapter provides a comparative analysis of the works of the three most prominent modern Manipuri literary figures - Khwairakpam Chaoba, Dr. Lamabam Kamal and Hijam Anganghal, popularly known as Chaoba-Kamal-Anganghal, the triumvirate. Three of the most notable works are selected from each of the writers; Khwairakpam Chaoba’s historical novel *Labangga Lata* (1934), Lamabam Kamal’s novel *Madhabi* (1930) and Hijam Anganghal’s epic *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* (1940), to examine the contents and draw out certain common elements which constitute them as modern canonical texts.

The fifth chapter entitled “Resistance and Modernity in Meeteilon Literature: Naoriya Phulo and Arambam Somorendra” looks at the works of the harbinger of revivalism in Manipur, Naoriya Phulo and his conceptualization of modernity in the early 20th century. The chapter further makes an analysis of Arambam Somorendra’s “Judge Saheb ki Imung” to find out how and to what extent Somorendra shares a similar conceptualization of modernity in Manipur which is a continuation/extension to Naoriya Phulo’s vision of a modern Manipur. Their interpretation of modernity differs drastically from that of the dominant modernity around which the social, cultural and literary institutions continue to rely on to constitute and sustain certain hegemonic narratives.

The last chapter provides the conclusion of the thesis which argues that translation served as a modernizing agent in Manipur during the colonial period. It further argues, through a critical analysis of select modern Manipuri texts and ascertaining the modalities which constitute them as modern texts, that the dominant Manipuri modernity is essentially a

Hinduized modernity shaped and augmented through a hegemonic Indo-Aryan connection. The possibility of exploring a different conceptualization of Manipuri modernity is introduced through the revivalist figure Naoriya Phulo in the 1940's and Arambam Somorendra in the 1970's.

1.2 Translation Studies and the cultural turn

This section gives an account of the rise of Translation Studies as an independent discipline and subsequently the paradigm shift in this field termed as the “cultural turn”. This will help in locating the motivations and goals of the present research in this field wherein the cultural turn marks a crucial theoretical development which allows critical inquiry and an interdisciplinary approach as legitimate methodologies of research in Translation Studies.

1.2.1 The rise of Translation Studies as a discipline.

Prior to establishing Translations Studies as an independent discipline in its own right, it was treated as part of either Linguistics or Comparative Literature. Despite serving a crucial function to both disciplines without which either subject could be investigated, translation was perceived merely as a tool or a medium of analysis. The obsession with fidelity, the meaning of the original text and the search for equivalence is informed by such a perception of what translation entails linguistically and what its function is. Both the linguistic approach and the functionalist approach focused around the process of translation rather than pursuing an inquiry on the metaphysical questions and issues of translation itself. In 1959, Roman Jakobson, whose writings represent the linguistics approach, classified translation into three types; “1) Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language, 2) Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language, 3) Inter semiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of

signs of nonverbal sign systems.”⁵ W.V.O. Quine, and J.C. Catford also focused on the linguistic approach to translation⁶. Among the linguists who incorporate the functionalist approach, Eugene Nida stands out as exemplary for his theorization of the *dynamic/functional equivalence* and *formal equivalence*. The skopos theory proposed by Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer also account as a significant functionalist theory of translation⁷. Skopos theory conceives translation as an action which has an aim or a purpose. It is treated as a process of negotiation performed by the translator for an adequate *translatum* depending on the skopos or the aim/purpose of the particular translational action. Hans Vermeer states that the goal of this theory is “to know what the point of a translation is” and that it “campaigns against the belief that there is no aim (in any sense whatever), that translation is a purposeless activity”⁸. This theory points out that there can be multiple possibilities of a translation depending on the skopos (aim) of the action. In other words, it challenges the assumption that there is only one meaning to a text. The search for fidelity as the sole legitimate function of translation is, thus, refuted.

Translation Studies emerged as a separate and distinct discipline in the 1980’s following which the central issues of translation, the history of translation and the concept of *equivalence* and *translation* began to be perceived as an area of study that invites rigorous and extensive research in its own right. Written in 1972, James Holmes proposes in his paper “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies” to name this particular field of study as “Translation Studies”. He states, “the designation ‘Translation Studies’ would seem to be the most appropriate of all those available in English, and its adoption as the standard term for

⁵ Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004), 114.

⁶ Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, (Routledge, 2014), 28.

⁷ Ibid., 35.

⁸ Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004), 231.

the discipline as a whole would remove a fair amount of confusion and misunderstanding.”⁹ Highlighting the importance of extending the research in translation beyond the linguistic and the functionalist approach, he points out, “Translation Studies thus has two main objectives: (1) to describe the phenomena of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience, and (2) to establish general principles by means of which these phenomena can be explained and predicted.”¹⁰ These two branches are designated as *descriptive translation studies* (DTS) or *translation description* (TD) and *theoretical translation studies* (ThTS) or *translation theory* (TTh). His approach to Translation Studies focuses on the context and the relationship between translation practices and other textual practices. A call to “examine the subject itself” and to start “a meta-discussion” is made in this seminal paper.

Termed as Descriptive Translation Studies, Holmes’ approach was foreshadowed by Anton Popovic and Jiri Levy who were prominent adherents of the Czech school¹¹. In “Translation as a decision process” (1966), Levy propounds that Translation is a decision-making process bound by the context. By means of examining the semantic paradigm of the word in the source text, the translator chooses a particular word from the set of words in the target text which corresponds closest to the chosen *meaning*¹². In “Aspects of Metatext” (1976)¹³, Anton Popovič, brings in the concept of translation as a form of meta-communication wherein the *prototext* and the *metatext* interacts within certain literary traditions. Israeli scholars Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury are prominent figures in the

⁹ Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004), 175.

¹⁰ Ibid, 176.

¹¹ Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 39.

¹² Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, 156.

¹³ Anton Popovič, “Aspects of metatext,” in *Canadian review of comparative literature/Revue Canadienne de littérature comparée* (1976): 225-235.

field of descriptive Translation Studies¹⁴. In his essay, “The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem”, Itamar Even-Zohar foregrounds translation practices within a polysystem comprising of culture and history. He concludes the essay stating that “translation is no longer a phenomenon whose nature and borders are given once and for all, but an activity dependent on the relations within a certain cultural system.”¹⁵ Through identifying two translation strategies i.e., *source-oriented* translation and *target-oriented* translation based on the principles of *adequacy* and *acceptability* respectively, Gideon Toury brings attention to the two sets of cultural *norms* involved in the process of translation¹⁶. In other words, the importance of cultural contexts in the field of Translation Studies is highlighted.

1.2.2. The cultural turn in Translation Studies.

The second phase in the development of descriptive translation studies by the end of the 1980's is now termed as the *cultural turn*¹⁷. It ushered in a paradigm shift in the Translation Studies where translation is seen as a cultural product intertwined with ideologies and power. Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere, in their seminal book, *Translation, History and Culture* (1990) assert “the central function of translation as a shaping force.”¹⁸ The role of ideology and power is highlighted in shaping certain translation practices and consequently shaping the literature and culture of particular places. Translation is viewed as a form of rewriting and as such possessing the manipulative power to introduce “new concepts, new

¹⁴ Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 40.

¹⁵ Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, 197.

¹⁶ Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, 198-211; Gideon Toury, *Descriptive translation studies and beyond*, Vol. 4, (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1995).

¹⁷ Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 43.

¹⁸ André Lefevere, ed. *Translation/history/culture: A sourcebook*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

genres, new devices”¹⁹ etc. All rewriting is manipulative and is reflective of “a certain ideology” and “a poetics.”²⁰ In viewing translation as rewriting, Lefevere also introduced the concept of *patronage*²¹ to assert that translation does not occur in vacuum. He suggests that there are two factors which make sure that the literary system exists in tandem with the other subsystems in the society. One is internal represented by the *professionals* (critics, reviewers, teachers, translators etc.) who construct the literary canons while the other is external which he calls *patronage*. He defines patronage as the power “that can further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature.”²² However, he clarifies that one should understand this power in the Foucauldian sense rather than a simple repressive force. This power can be exerted by “a group of persons, a religious body, a political party, a social class, a royal court, publishers, and last but not the least, the media, both newspapers and magazines and larger television corporations”²³. *Patronage* has three components; an ideological component, an economic component and a status component. All three components could work together at the same time; however, it is also possible that the three components remain relatively independent to each other. He illustrates this using the example of contemporary bestsellers where the economic component does not necessarily bring either status or uphold an ideology. In contrast, most examples from the past where a ruler appoints a writer in his court illustrate how the three components of patronage function together.

With the rise of cultural studies, the new interests in the economic matrix of cultural production expanded in the field of Translation Studies as well. The cultural turn shifted the

¹⁹ André Lefevere, ed. *Translation/history/culture: A sourcebook*, (London: Routledge, 1992), André Lefevere, *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame*, (Routledge, 1992).

²⁰ André Lefevere, ed. *Translation/history/culture: A sourcebook*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

²¹ André Lefevere, *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame*, (Routledge, 1992), 15.

²² Lefevere, *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame*, 15.

²³ Ibid.

central questions and issues of translation from dealing with structural analysis of a text to that which moves beyond the text such as ideology, hegemony, history and culture. Derived from the theory of deconstruction initiated by Derrida, the traditional theoretical assumptions on translation such as the notion of equivalence in terms of linguistic, aesthetic, literary function and certain other correlations between the “original” and the “translation” were challenged (Gentzler 2010). In *Contemporary Translation Theories*, Edwin Gentzler summarizes some of the principal questions that the new Translation Studies deconstructionist scholars pose:

“What if one theoretically reversed the direction of thought and posited the hypothesis that the original text is dependent upon the translation? What if one suggested that, without translation, the original text ceased to exist, that the very survival of the original depends not on any particular quality it contains, but upon those qualities that its translation contains? What if the very definition of a text’s meaning was determined not by the original, but by the translation? What if the “original” has no fixed identity that can be aesthetically or scientifically determined but rather changes each time it passes into translation? What exists *before* the original? An idea? A form? A thing? Nothing? Can we think in terms of pre-original, pre-ontological conditions?”

Post-colonial Translation Studies is an important strand of this second phase of descriptive Translation Studies. In the Indian context, it was inaugurated by Tejaswini Niranjana with the publication of her book *Siting translation* where she asserts that translation activity, in the colonial context, is not a simple humanistic enterprise of linguistic transaction between one community/culture and another but a “site” that constitutes questions of “representation, power, and historicity”²⁴. Explaining in detail the implications and

²⁴ Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-colonialism and the Colonial Context*, (California: University of California Press, 1992).

consequences of the translation practices during the colonized period from a post-colonial context, she further argues that,

“The context is one of contesting and contested stories attempting to account for, to recount, the asymmetry and inequality of relations between peoples, races, languages. Since the practices of subjection/subjectification implicit in the colonial enterprise operate not merely through the coercive machinery of the imperial state but also through the discourses of philosophy, history, anthropology, philology, linguistics, and literary interpretation, the colonial ‘subject’ - constructed through technologies or practise of power/knowledge – is brought into being within multiple discourses and on multiple sites. One such site is translation.”

She elaborates in detail how translation projects during the colonial period were incorporated to serve the interest of the colonial British. It reinforced certain “hegemonic versions of the colonized” by virtue of assuming translation as a transparent representation of an “original”. Niranjana studies how the two kinds of translators of Indian literature in late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, i.e., Christian Missionaries such as the Serampore Baptists William Carey and William Ward, and administrators such as William Jones advance themselves as the authority on translation with the help of their “standard versions”. She writes that through “these authoritative translations, missionaries berated Hindus for not being true practitioners of Indian.”²⁵ Citing these translations as an authentic source of knowledge, stereotypical Hindu images were constructed by James Mill in his supposedly secular historiography. His books on Indian history such as *History of British India* later on served as a model for histories of India for a long time. The fact that these translations were seen as original and authentic was precisely problematic because it allowed the colonial

²⁵ Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 19.

masters to construct “a teleological and hierarchical model of cultures that places Europe at the pinnacle of civilization, and thus also provides a position for the colonized”²⁶.

Earlier in 1991, Eric Cheyfitz had already argued in his book *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from the Tempest to Tarzan* that the act of translation is central to European colonization and imperialism in America²⁷. Presenting a deconstructive reading of Edgar Rice Burrough’s *Tarzan of the Apes* and William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Cheyfitz draws out certain characteristics in both the narration which construct Europe in opposition to the “New World” that needs to be translated in order to be understood or made human. Such a translation is set in a hierarchy of linguistic eloquence that distinguishes between the “civilized” and the “savage”²⁸.

Written in 1999, *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* edited by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi is a compilation of essays that foregrounds translation “in the heart of the colonial encounter” and theorizes the various ways in which translation has been used “to establish and perpetuate the superiority of some cultures over others.”²⁹ The first essay entitled “Post-colonial writing and literary translation” by Maria Tymoczko analyses post-colonial writing as a form of translation in the sense that both writings involve inter-cultural practices and transmission of elements from one culture to another. He argues that “a translator’s refractions of source text have analogues in the choices a minority culture writer makes in representing the home text, for no culture can be represented completely in any

²⁶ Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 18.

²⁷ Susan Bassnett, and Harish Trivedi, ed., *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1999, 13.

²⁸ Guillermo Bowie, review of *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from the Tempest to Tarzan* by Eric Cheyfitz in *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Special Issue: Shamans and Preachers, Color Symbolism and Commercial Evangelism: Reflections on Early Mid-Atlantic Religious Encounter in Light of the Columbian Quincentennial (Autumn, 1992), pp. 610-612.

²⁹ Bassnett and Trivedi, *Post-Colonial Translation*, 17.

literary text, just as no source text can be fully represented in a translation.”³⁰ Discussing the case of the Indian English novels, G.J.V. Prasad recalls Salman Rushdie’s proposition that the British Indians are “translated men” and as such, the texts created by all Indian English writers³¹ are translations, i.e., “the very act of their writing being one of translation.”³² In proposing thus, he shows the intricate nature of writing in English and the close relationship it has with the concept of translation and the colonial condition in India. Western metaphysics associates translation with the idea of “loss”. This perception is challenged when it reached colonial India where translation is also seen as a “gain”. There is a conscious effort made to make the writings in English sound more like translations rather than originals. Defamiliarizing the English language in their writings allows the Indian English writers to carve a space for themselves within the literary tradition which is distinctly Indian despite writing in English³³.

Another important strand in the descriptive studies that can be mentioned is that of the “the power turn” which highlights the relationship between translation and power propounded by Edwin Gentzler and Maria Tymoczko.³⁴ In the introduction to their book *Translation and Power* (2002), Tymoczko and Gentzler take reference from Holmes and Popovic and assert that “a normative approach was tantamount to an implicit allegiance to a given but unspecified range of values commonly shared by those in power in any given

³⁰ Bassnett and Trivedi, *Post-Colonial Translation*, 23.

³¹ On the development of Indian English novels see Meenakshi Mukherjee, *Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985); and on the emergence of novels in India see, Shivaram Padikkal, “Inventing modernity: the emergence of the novel in India,” (1993).

³² Bassnett and Trivedi, *Post-Colonial Translation*, 41.

³³ Also see the theory of ‘cultural hybridity’ in Homi K Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

³⁴ Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 44.

culture.”³⁵ It has brought the issue of power relations, agency and resistance to the fore front of Translation Studies. Echoing the works of postcolonial translation theorist Tejaswini Niranjana, they argue that the act of translation itself is a tool of knowledge production and the simple understanding that knowledge merely precedes translation is faulty.

The motivations and goals of the present research emanated from this “cultural turn” in Translation Studies and it is carried out within the framework that was developed with the rise of descriptive translation studies. Locating the research work in Manipur with a focus on literature and translation, the thesis is an attempt to examine the discourse around translation and its relationship with power, culture and history of the region. It aims to look at how colonial modernity is constituted through literature in Manipur and the role of translation in ushering a modern Manipuri literature. Hence, the following section is a discussion of the term “modernity” and it serves as a literature review of the discourse on modernity. It gives an introduction to the multiple conceptualizations of *modernity* and provides the necessary framework for locating the research in the ongoing discourse.

1.3. Modernity: A literature review

The word *modern* denotes a division in time³⁶; and space as well with the rise of colonialism. The term *modernity*, as it is interpreted and reinterpreted by multifarious scholars in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities as well as scholars who belong to other newly incorporated inter-disciplinary fields, is one of the most difficult and debated words of our present generation. It governs our politics, social life, economy etc. depending on the values and ethos we cherish as distinct communities but bound by similar or shared

³⁵ Maria Tymoczko, and Gentzler Edwin, *Translation and power*, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).

³⁶ Patricia Seed, “Early Modernity: The History of a Word,” in *The New Centennial Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (spring 2002), pp. 1-16.

preoccupations in a global scale³⁷. The definition of *modernity* differs from one scholar to another according to their political stand and the ideologies they believe in. Broadly speaking, *modernity* constitutes the new or *modern* social institutions and practices, *modern* formations of community³⁸, *modern* ideological apparatuses (hospitals, prisons, schools and colleges etc)³⁹, a new moral order⁴⁰ and beliefs such as liberty, secularism, equality for all (democracy) etc.

1.3.1 Western Modernity

Western Modernity as a concept is essentially linked to the idea of *enlightenment* propagated by western *modern* philosophers such as Raynal, Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, etc. from France, Kant, Leibniz, Goethe etc. from Germany, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Bacon etc. from England starting from early 17th century, popularly known as the Renaissance Period in Literature, which gradually culminated to its peak during the French Revolution in 1789 with the slogans *liberty*, *equality* and *fraternity*. The idea of liberal humanism was launched during this period. It questioned and challenged the old ways and belief systems that were hitherto prevalent among the masses. New ideas erupted among the philosophers and their writings and political comments gradually took hold of a new era. According to Kant, “enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one’s own understanding without another’s guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one’s own mind without

³⁷ Talal Asad, “Conscripts of Western Civilization?” (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1992).

³⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (Verso Books, 2006).

³⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (Vintage, 2012); Louis, Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards Investigation)” in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* 9.1 (2006): 86-98.

⁴⁰ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, (Duke University Press, 2004).

another's guidance."⁴¹ Liberal humanism propagated a world view where "man" is at the centre as opposed to the traditional belief in the Great Chain of being, a hierarchy where God is at the top, above everything else. Thus, the *ability* of man and the idea of being a human were given a significant role in how the West perceived the world. A new class emerged who challenged and demanded the end of monarchy as well as the separation of the church and the state. The idea of the *state* as an independent administrative body, separate from the church, a religious institution, emerged along with the idea of the *secular*. Charles Taylor believes that western modernity as a moral order was constituted in three cultural forms namely, the economy, the public sphere, and self-governance⁴². Tracing the history of western modernity, Taylor provides us with a perspective on how society was seen as a platform of exchanging goods and services to promote "ordinary human flourishing", and how religion was practiced in the domain of *public sphere*, a concept propounded by Habermas⁴³. While the public sphere emerged as a shared space where information is exchanged, discussions are held on myriad issues to come to a resolution by refraining from using violence as a tool of resolving conflicts. The idea of the *secular*, to separate religion from the state, resulted in restricting religion to the private sphere.

1.3.2. Colonial Modernity

In the colonial context, the euro-centric conceptualization of modernity proved to be inadequate to understand the particular modernity that the colonial subjects experienced. It was through colonialism that the colonies encountered a form of modernity which is violent and inescapable. In an effort to conceptualize colonial modernity, Partha Chatterjee writes in

⁴¹ Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* (1995):1-7

⁴² Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*.

⁴³ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (MIT Press, 1991).

“Our Modernity” that “the history of our modernity has been intertwined with the history of colonialism....ours is the modernity of the once colonized”. Critiquing the concept of enlightenment⁴⁴, Chatterjee states that when Kant announces what he calls *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment), he also announces the separation of two distinct domains, the public and the private. Enlightenment, according to Kant, is a blessing in the public domain. Whenever a debate on public matter arises, those who are knowledgeable enough should be allowed to express their opinions and thoughts. One of the central aspects of enlightenment is to be able to do something by yourself and hold responsibility for the consequences without the guidance of another by exercising your own reason. However, in the private domain, it is not acceptable to use reason to avoid something in the interest of the self. For instance, Chatterjee uses the example that one cannot avoid paying taxes to the government simply because she/he does not agree with the government collecting taxes from the public. In any case, the present predicament is the reverse. One cannot simply do or say what one wants in the public domain which might affect other human beings while the possibilities are limitless in the private domain. Chatterjee’s point is to identify the paradoxical nature of enlightenment. On one hand one talks about accepting each and every one in the fold of discussion, that it is wrong to exclude anyone, that everyone is equal. On the other hand, one’s opinion is also more acceptable if one has more knowledge or is an expert in a certain field. This is precisely the reason how colonialism was able to justify itself. He writes, “Foreign rule was necessary, we were told, because Indians must become enlightened”. The fact that some people were accepted as more knowledgeable or reasonable than the others allowed colonialism to work seamlessly in India. But the irony is that this same “modernity” that allows colonialism to justify itself is the reason why the colonized were able to question their colonizer. Chatterjee

⁴⁴ Partha Chatterjee, *Our Modernity*, (No.1. Rotterdam: Sephis, 1997).

further writes that “modernity is the first social philosophy which conjures up in the minds of the most ordinary people dreams of independence and self-rule.”

In agreement with Chatterjee’s argument, the subaltern theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty observes that “Nationalism and colonialism thus emerge, unsurprisingly, as the two major areas of research and debate defining the field of modern Indian history in the 1960’s and 1970’s”⁴⁵. India’s modernity is undeniably linked with the emergence of nationalism. Thus, with the introduction of English education as the backbone of inculcating *modern* ideas, several writers and nationalists made an attempt to construct a modernity that is different from the western modernity in diverse fields, especially in the fields of literature and art. He argues that this attempt to produce a distinct “national modernity” is a cultural project of nationalism. He elaborates that this need of producing a national modernity was precisely because of the nature of western modernity itself. Western modernity, however indispensable, was inadequate for the Indian audience. *Modernity* changes and realizes itself differently depending “upon specific circumstances and social practices.” The idea of the “multiple modernities” is invoked to prove that “there cannot be just one modernity irrespective of geography, time, environment or social conditions.” *Modernity* as an idea that succeeds tradition is strongly imprinted in the mind of Partha Chatterjee that he asserts the existence of a “true” modernity “which consists in determining the particular forms of modernity that are suitable in particular circumstances.” For him, to be truly modern is to apply the methods of “reason” in identifying or inventing unique technologies which are suitable for “our” needs. He identifies modernity as constituting itself with two kinds; a universal modernity and a particular modernity. The form remains constant while the contents change accordingly.

⁴⁵ Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography,” in *Nepantla: Views from South* 1.1 (2000): 9-32.

A clear picture of an attempt made by the post-colonial writers in their writings in search of an alternative modernity while rejecting the western modernity is presented in *Genres of Modernity: Contemporary Indian Novels in English*, a book where the writer, Dirk Wiemann, “reads a sample of contemporary novels as involved in the project of ‘locating modernity in the present’”. He argues in his reading that “to conceive of the postcolonial test as transmodern invention expressed through articulatory processes, I claim, means first of all to acknowledge its global relevance as a description of entrenched modernity from outside the West but not outside modernity; and secondly, to overcome the ultimately relativistic notion of co-existing alternative versions of modernity in favour of a modernity that is singular but not one.” He further adds that what we need is a “framework that accounts for the historical difference in order to explode the myth of a universal and unilateral modernity, while at the same time retaining the insight that all difference by definition involves a rationality, hence some degree of commensurability.” Both Dirk Wiemann and Partha Chatterjee acknowledge the existence of a certain trajectory of history where modernity, albeit alternative, is the goal of every “modern” civilization.

The critique of Modernity in India, as many scholars have put forward, has two divergent issues. The first issue is the one that concerns a “lack” proposed by Arjun Appadurai in his *Modernity at Large*, other scholars such as Nicholas Dirks, Gyan Prakash working under “the intellectual leadership of Bernard Cohn in the 1980’s.”⁴⁶ Dipankar Gupta, in *Mistaken Modernity*, asserts that there is “a lack of modernity”⁴⁷ in the Indian society as a result of the prevalence of “caste divisions, corrupt/despotic power structures, and incomplete

⁴⁶ Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Modernity and Ethnicity in India,” in *South Asia Journal: Journal of South Asian Studies* 17.s1. (1994): 143-155.

⁴⁷ Dirk Wiemann, *Genres of Modernity: Contemporary Indian Novels in English*. Vol. 120, (Rodopi, 2008).

secularisation.”⁴⁸ Arjun Appadurai, extending the argument, explains that it is the exploitations that colonialism brought with it that produces this “lack”. Dipesh Chakrabarty writes in his essay, “Modernity and Ethnicity in India”, that historians such as Appadurai draws our attention “to the way that colonially instituted practices and knowledge-systems affected the formation of new subjectivities in India and cast a lasting shadow over the emerging politics of identity in the subcontinent”.

In contrast, Ashis Nandy asserts that the Indian society is neither “anti” nor “pre” modern but merely “non” modern. Nandy views modernity as belonging to a different civilization altogether which happens to “once gate-crashed”⁴⁹ in India. In spite of these differences, however, Wiemann argues that both share a common assumption. Both sides assume that there is an essential gap between the Indian society and the western model modernity where the latter is a non-dominant force in India. The difference is that one sees Western modernity as an embodiment of positive qualities which the Indian society has not yet achieved because of its own inadequacies while the other refrains from passing a judgement due to incommensurability of the two civilizations. The latter understanding admits no “lack” in the Indian tradition. In reverse, its argument is that the forces of Indian Civilization are strong enough to withhold the total assimilation of “modernity” which necessarily arose from the western model of civilization to the Indian society.

The second issue is that of criticizing one of the central aspects of modernity which is nationalism. The second issue diverges from the first issue in the sense that it attacks the very nature of modernity and its significance. In other words, the focus has been shifted to how modernity operates as the framework of colonialism rather than discussing the incongruities

⁴⁸ Dirk Wiemann, *Genres of Modernity: Contemporary Indian Novels in English*.

⁴⁹ Ashish Nandy, *The intimate enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, Vol. 251, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988).

of modernity in the Indian society; modernity as an accomplice or an agent of colonialism rather than discussing the sheer distinctiveness of Indian society as either a hindrance or barrier to modernity. Informed by the subaltern studies, “an intellectual project, a field of studies”, the aim of the project was to develop “a critique of nationalism and of the political imagination for which the nation-state represented the ideal form for a political community”⁵⁰ employing especially history as a field of illustration and contestation. The project began, in Ranajit Guha’s words, as a critique of the “prevailing academic practice in historiography.....for its failure to acknowledge the subaltern as the maker of his own destiny”⁵¹. By prevailing academic practice, he refers to the two contending schools of history: the Cambridge school and the nationalist historians. Both the schools present the history of nationalism as the struggle of the elite classes, be it British, the “foreign elite” or Indian, “the dominant indigenous”. He announces that the aim of the *Subaltern Studies* is “to produce historical analysis in which the subaltern, Ranajit Guha, explains that a remarkable feature of Indian Capitalism, a colonial type, was the “social domination and subordination of the subaltern by the elite.” In India, domination operated itself without hegemony unlike in the western capitalist countries where the masses are dominated by consent or hegemony. Inspired by Gramsci’s theories, Guha analyses the economic power structure in India founded on capital formulated by both colonialism and nationalism as “dominance without hegemony”⁵², thus the forms of power that resulted in India was not “pre-political”. This critique, Chakrabarty clarifies, rejects “all stagist theories of history” and in criticizing the power structure as not “pre-political”, Guha implicitly rejects the distinction between what is

⁵⁰ Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Subaltern Studies and Political Historiography,” in *Nepantla: Views from South* 1.1 (2002): 9-32.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ranajit Guha, *Dominance Without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*, (Harvard University Press, 1997).

“modern” and “premodern”. Partha Chatterjee provides us with another theory that critiques nationalism as the only legitimate political community affiliated with the nation-state in modernity. In *The Nation and its Fragments*, Chatterjee argues that the modern-state as institutionalized in India resulted from establishing a mono cultural political imagination whose model comes from the European social theory. In such a society, difference is erased and dissent is made illegitimate in preference to inculcating one monolithic community. Here, we can remind ourselves Ashish Nandy’s take on differentiating between Hinduism and Hindutva, where Hindutva is Hinduism with a nationalistic tendency of assimilating the peripheral communities to the dominant culture of Hinduism.⁵³

All the above criticisms stand together to defy one common conventional framework of “modernity” which is its universality. They expose that the universalism in “modernity” is, in reality, universalization of the parochial experience of the West, a result of Europe deprovincializing itself. It presents Europe as one homogeneous entity without any antinomies of its own, just as the “non-west” was presented to the West through “orientalism”, as one homogeneous entity with no difference whatsoever. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* by Dipesh Chakrabarty which was published in 2000 elucidates this point in detail. “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Past”, a chapter in this book points out that the postcolonial historians are persistently in need of including the history of the West as a reference point while writing their own history. He observes that Europe remains sovereign producing theoretical subject of all histories, including the one we call Indian, Chinese, Kenyan, and so on. There is a distinct way in which all these other histories tend to become variations of the master narrative that could be called “the history of Europe”. Thus, the history of India can

⁵³ <http://www.firstpost.com/living/ashis-nandy-on-future-of-india-a-poor-mans-america-with-shrinkage-of-liberties-3088894.html>

only be articulated through occupying a position of alterity. Social Sciences in Europe, in this sense, have always been producing theories that seemingly apply to humanity as a whole, but it was done so in relative ignorance of the experiences of those living in the “non-western culture”. He poses us the question that even though the theories were formulated in absence of taking into account of “our” lives and experiences, how is it possible that “we” find it eminent in understanding our societies, and will we be able to return the same “gaze”. He suggests that an answer can be formulated through the lens of how the western philosophers have justified themselves in claiming such theories as universal. They consider only European society capable of producing theoretical knowledge while rest of the others, non-Europe societies, remain only a field of empirical data on which western theories can be applied. Edmund Husserl, in his Vienna Lecture in 1935, proclaims that a fundamental difference lies between the western philosophers and the “oriental philosophers”. According to Husserl, the former produces “theoria” or “universal science” while the latter produces what is termed as “practical universal” wherein the world is looked at in a “naïve” manner which end up producing merely “mythical-religious” character. Another example Chakrabarty gives is that of Marx that uses the categories such as “bourgeoise” and “pre-bourgeoise”, “capital” and “pre-capital”. These categories assume a chronological relationship with the use of the work “pre”. Using “capital” as a universal category, Marx made it possible to evaluate and judge the progress of every society, dividing it into stages where every society reaches its peak when it reaches the stage of communism. However, in order to reach communism, each society needs to overcome the stage of capitalism where the bourgeoisie culture rules. According to Marx, the most advanced and complex organization of production is the bourgeois society and since, he assumes, things reveal its categorical essence only in its fullest development, western societies which have reached the capitalist

stage provides theoretical knowledge to study the non-western societies which are still in the pre-bourgeoise or pre-capital stage.

However, Chakrabarty reminds us, Marx's maxim "from each according to his ability to each according to his need" is contrary to the liberal capitalist principle of "equal pay for equal work". Thus, Marx, fundamentally, remains in opposition to liberalism and capitalism but nevertheless runs along the same narrative of transition. Indian history has been written based on this framework of transition where it essentially remains "incomplete". Indian history has been written as a history of transition through a "homogenizing narrative" from that of "medieval" to "modernity" and this transition is translated as "inadequate" because of the lack or its incompleteness. One feature of this "lack" is the rarity of the presence of a private self. The writer gives literary instances to illustrate his point.

The larger question Chakrabarty brings forth is that Europe presented itself as the sole authority to formulate legitimate narratives of modernity backed by "an army" and universalises it to the point that Europe is seen as the "primary habitus of the modern." He clarifies that the project of provincializing Europe does not arise to not merely bring in the question of "cultural relativism", to merely posit those different civilizations have different ways and cultures. He does not reject Enlightenment for what it is, but questions "how-through what historical process- its 'reason', which was not always self-evident to everyone, has been made to look 'obvious' far beyond the ground where it originated". The project aims to entail certain processes through which Europe acquired the modern for itself. One of the processes he mentioned is European imperialism. An equally crucial participant in letting Europe acquire modernity as their own is the project of nationalism. The nationalist's discourse of instituting India as a modern nation-state also helped in elevating Europe to the status of being the author of modernity. His argument is to "write into the history of modernity the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force, and the tragedies and the ironies

that attend it”. The irony of the “undemocratic foundations of ‘democracy’” is highlighted in the book. While concluding, however, Chakrabarty admits that “finally- since Europe cannot after all be provincialized within the institutional site of the university whose knowledge protocols will always take us back to the terrain where all contours follow that of my hyperreal Europe – the project of provincializing Europe must realize within itself its own impossibility.”

In another attempt to engage with the undeniable interrelationship between colonialism, modernity and its effects in India, Sudipta Kaviraj, introduces the term *fuzzy* in his essay “The Imaginary Institution of India” to define the earlier conceptions of communities. Earlier, the diverse communities in India did not have distinct differences which could distinguish themselves rigidly with clarity. The boundaries between the communities, be it geo-territory or language were fuzzy in that sense. The communities were not enumerated like the modern ones which rose after interacting with modernity. As soon as modernity reached India through colonialism, the conception of communities changed drastically. For instance, nation-state, the only legitimate political community in modernity, does not allow *fuzziness* “as evident from the cheerful intensity with which modern nations fight wars for control of uninhabitable land.” As he further points out, “Nationalism, once it came into its own, through its massive and obedient instrument of the national state, continues to press on with the relentless project of enumeration- the endless counting of its citizens, territories, resources, majorities, minorities, institutions, activities, import, export, incomes, projects, births, deaths, diseases. It counts, it appears, every quantifiable thing”.

In 2016, Kaviraj is criticized for his take on fuzziness as a force that mitigates identity conflicts as far as religion is concerned among the Dalits. Nathaniel Roberts, who “lived amidst the slum dwellers, eating what they ate, drinking what they drank”, argues in the book *To be Cared for: The Power of Conversion and Foreignness of Belonging in Indian Slum*,

that “the assumption that hard boundaries and mutually exclusive identities are productive of conflict, whereas fuzzy boundaries and multiple identities mitigate it, is questionable”. Putting his argument from the perspective of the lower caste, he writes that although religious identity was markedly vigorous in Anbu Nagar, the particular slum where he did his research situated in a “large agglomeration of slums called Kashtappatinam, in an industrial area north of Chennai’s old city centre”, no conflict seem to exist in terms of religion simply because religion in the slum is not a marker of identity, nation, or ethnic. The slum dwellers saw morality as a “*universal* property that did not vary by religion. Slum dwellers did not subscribe to the secular modern understanding of religion as culture and therefore did not see different religions as comprising different ‘systems of values.’”

A more clear and extreme position than Roberts, when it comes to modernity in India, is taken by the Dalit scholars. While the subaltern post colonial scholars criticize modernity, one of the most prominent adherents of modernity among the Dalits, is Kancha Ilaiah. In an interview⁵⁴, he answers, “English education is a liberator because it does not carry caste and cultural baggage. It is also embedded with global knowledge and scientific spirit. Brahmins, who constitute the main historical ruling intellectual class of India, adopted double standards by using Sanskrit as their spiritual language and English as their power and market language. The Dalits, however, lost out in every sphere because of the forceful denial of education. That is why I insist that if even ten per cent of Dalits learn English, they would make people see from the windows of their villages, as the intellectual community has a disconnect with grass roots reality.” Kancha Ilaiah endorses modernity and sees it as a “liberator” for the Dalits. Acquiring English education, for Ilaiah, is crucial in the Dalit struggle in order to achieve social equality.

⁵⁴ <http://gulfnews.com/news/asia/india/kancha-ilaiah-bats-for-english-schools-for-dalits-1.1165058>

We can observe here that although modernity is criticized for what it is, in its diverse aspects, it has become indispensable albeit inadequate. In another argument, Shivarama Padikkal points out the shortfalls in the project of nationalism employing the novel and discussing its emergence in India to illustrate the disconnect between the upper caste nationalists and the lower sections of the society in his essay “Inventing Modernity: The Emergence of the Novel in India.” He argues that there is an essential difference in the ways that the novel arose in the west and in the colonized state of India. He writes that, “the novel in India begins as the story of the English-educated class’s striving for social identity, for a new nation, for a new sense of community”. While the radical rupture between “individual” and “society” was the central concern in the western novels, in India, the focus and themes of the novels revolve around the conflicts, visions and ambitions of the middle class. He shows that the middle class in India during the 19th century employed the novel as a medium to engage with modernity by inventing new contents that are drastically different from what the western novels employ. The English educated middle class, in an attempt to tackle the conflict between modernity and their “Indianness”, employs the novel to “create a homogeneous, unified, pan-Indian ‘common’ sense of ethical, epistemological and social belief” which can be put in front of their colonisers as the opposite of what the Europeans are, an imagination of a modern nation, instilling the feeling of nationalism in the process. In the process of demonstrating a “cultural uniqueness” and “an essential difference of his country” the writers tend to return to a “glorious past”. However, he argues, this return is merely a form of rewriting and assimilating the diverse communities in a Hindu fold. Thus, the novels during this period were extremely “communal in nature”. While defending their history against the appropriation of the colonizers, they end up re/appropriating it into a Hinduized narrative which excludes and creates an image of the Muslim as the “other”. Thus, a homogeneous monolithic image of India was appropriated in these novels excluding the

“problems” and “perspectives” of the other classes. In his essay, “No, not the nation: Lower Class Malayalam Novels of the 19th century”, Dilip Menon illustrates a different perspective and a distinct take on nationalism. The lower caste Malayalam writers hardly depict in their novels the kind of passionate attitude that the nationalist writers had towards their “motherland” and its “glory”. Travel, mobility, death, etc. are used as regular tropes in the novels. While the upper caste novels tend to provide a synthesis between the old and the new, the lower caste novels display a wholesome dismissal of the old tradition. Lower caste novels are set mostly in the colonial cities where ample opportunities wait for them while upper caste novels are set in the glorious Hindu cities. An attempt is made to retain the traditional patriarchal culture and descriptions are focused on its associated artefacts and practices in the family in upper caste novels whereas in the lower caste novels any place can become their home. In the lower caste novels, the focus is not on the objects but on the idea of the “home”. Thus, the perception of what it means to be modern is vastly contrasting between the upper caste and lower caste. In addition, Tejaswini Niranjana, in “Whose culture is it? Contesting the Modern”, challenges the appropriation of the modern by the Brahmins through literature in context of Kannada literature by tracing a historical literary evaluation that helped in forming Kannada modernity. Niranjana explains that through literature, the Brahmin critics claim to speak about literary works while in reality, they speak authoritatively about culture at large evoking an intellectual and moral authority in the footsteps of western writers such as Mathew Arnold, T.S. Elliot and F.R. Leavis. When Kuvempu, the only Shudra among the Kannada writers, wrote a play called Shudra Tapasvi based on one of the episodes in *Ramayana*, he was criticized for showing concern for maintaining the Verna system as “caste arrogance and prejudice”. He was advised not to use mythological stories but devise new ones if such “new” things are to be portrayed. Similar things happen to the novel *Madhavi* where Madhavi, Yayati’s daughter defies the kings and princes that came in the hope of

winning her as their wife. *Madhabi* was ignored by the established literary professionals attacking the writer for creating a character who goes against “our” culture. The culture of the society as such was to be preserved at any cost. While the modern is endorsed, the endorsement limits itself when it comes to “our” culture, a culture which is exclusively upper caste Hindu male oriented. Niranjana questions such kind of a hegemonic notion of the modern.

Giving a critique of the caste question raised by the lower caste and their proponents, Dipesh Chakrabarty provides an answer which he has already touched upon briefly in “*Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography*”. He elaborates in “Modernity and Ethnicity in India” that it surprises him “whenever intellectuals from a colonial formation embrace the Institutions of modernity, however inevitable and powerful they might seem, without any sense of irony qualifying their welcome.” He asserts that something fundamental has changed in the Indian society. It would be wrong to claim that the Hindus were never involved in religious persecution as far as ethnic conflict is concerned. He further writes that the “so called” caste system was not so rigid during pre-British era, that it could be a “matter of negotiation.” He claims that “modern problems of Hinduism and caste are inseparable from the history of this modern public life in India, which the British instituted and the nationalists preserved in what Kaviraj was trying to do with the use of the word fuzzy to define a pre-British era’s conceptualization of communities. He also points out the dependence of the colonizers on the techniques of using “measurement” in the same manner Kaviraj focuses on the significance of enumeration in modernity. We can observe here an interesting feature; how Kaviraj and Charkrabarty, both who belong to the upper caste, play with words while dealing with explaining caste system. Chakrabarty quotes Kaviraj from his essay, “The Imaginary Institution of India,” “To say their community is fuzzy is not say it is imprecise. On the appropriate occasion, every individual would use his cognitive apparatus to

classify any single person he interacts with and place him quite exactly and decide if he could eat with him, go on a journey, or arrange a marriage into his family.” The above-mentioned instances were precisely where and how caste system was operated. To avoid eating with an untouchable or marrying an untouchable is how caste system is practiced.

1.3.3. Alternative/multiple modernities

For some scholars, modernity also means the acculturation of cultures signifying that there is not one singular modernity but multiple modernities, depending on the differing results in the process of assimilating with different civilizations⁵⁵. In other words, the universalizing tendency of western modernity is being questioned here. Extending the debate further, Talal Asad argues that such criticism that emphasizes the possibility of multiple modernities or subaltern modernities or the alternative modernities necessarily assumes a normative modernity. He goes on to say that it is often assumed that “Western modernity is not only the standard by which all contemporary developments must be judged, but also the only authentic trajectory for every tradition....on the assumption that ‘real tradition’ is unchanging, repetitive and non-rational”⁶. Asad puts forth an argument which goes beyond the conventional debate on modernity by giving a different meaning to tradition opposing how it has been usually interpreted so far. Asad does not view tradition and modernity as mutually exclusive to each other. He points out that liberalism which is central to modernity has been “the dominant tradition of political and moral thought and practice” in the west.

Enrique Dussel, an Argentine-Mexican philosopher, in his essay “Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity” proposes that there are two paradigms that characterize the question of modernity. One is Eurocentric while the other is planetary. The first assumption sees modernity as exclusively European which developed in the middle age and later spread across the globe. Hegel believed that the spirit of Europe,

⁵⁵ Charles Taylor, “Two Theories of Modernity,” in *Public Culture* 11 (1999): 153-174.

more precisely the spirit of the German, is the “Absolute Truth” which realized itself naturally in due course of time without the influence of any other culture or civilization. This forced assumption has been challenged, though controversial, by Martin Bernal in his book *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* tracing the origin of Greek classical civilization to Africa and the Asian countries. The second assumption conceptualizes modernity as the “culture of the centre of the World-System”. European modernity is not “independent” and “self-referential” but is part of a world-system. Nevertheless, Dussel makes Europe remain as the centre. He discusses why modernity as such did not emerge in China. The simple answer he gives is that China had no interest in expanding itself into Europe. He writes that historians like Joseph Needham ponders upon the “Grand Question” why modern science which accelerated in Europe into its peak did not emerge in China, one of the most advanced civilizations of the period. Needham was convinced of the universality of science as a human enterprise. For Needham, industrialism played a crucial role in developing modern science which never emerged in China because of its “agrarian bureaucracy”.

Dussel argues further that there are two modernities. The first one was a Hispanic, humanist, renaissance modernity linked to the Mediterranean world while the second one is the modernity of the Anglo-Germanic Europe. The first kind of modernity produced a theoretical and philosophical reflection which is followed by the later kind. However, most often than not, it has gone unnoticed in the discussions on modernity and thus modernity is seen as an independent European product. He argues that this tendency of giving a Eurocentric attitude to modernity still persist even in the discourse on postmodern. In the postmodern, the crisis of modernity is essentially restricted to the European experiences. Thus, the question of post-modern sense of irony is limited to the western audience. It can be noted there that the uneasiness with modernity in the postcolonials do not have anything to do

with the post-modern sense of irony, but rather “a certain scepticism about its values and consequences”⁵⁶ because “the history of our modernity has been intertwined with the history of colonialism.”⁵⁷ The postcolonials were refrained from enjoying the fruits of modernity in a universal domain.

A significant development in the debate on multiple modernities that deviates and challenges the normative view of alternative modernities is Walter Mignolo’s concept of “options” from which his theory of *decoloniality* is constructed⁵⁸. Mignolo questions the use of the term “alternative” arguing that it implicates the existence of a normative modernity i.e., there is already a modernity from which the alternatives emerge. He explains that, “If you look for alternatives you accept a point of reference instead of a set of existing options among which the decolonial enters claiming its legitimacy to sit at the table when global futures are being discussed.....if you argue for ‘alternative modernity or modernities’ or ‘alternative development,’ you are already accepting that there is *a* modernity and *a* development to which nothing but alternatives could exist. You lose the match before starting the game.”⁵⁹ Invoking the concept of “coloniality of power” developed by the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano, Mignolo extends and formulates his own theory on decoloniality generated from the decolonial options. In his own words, decoloniality means “long term processes involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power”⁶⁰ which would lead to the “new humanity” of Frantz Fanon. Thus, Mignolo asserts that the first step is to delink from coloniality/modernity which means to refrain from looking for alternative modernities but instead look for alternatives to modernities altogether.

⁵⁶ Partha Chatterjee, *Our Modernity*, No.1. (Rotterdam: Sephis, 1997).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Walter D Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, (Duke University Press, 2011).

⁵⁹ Ibid., Preface (xxix).

⁶⁰ Walter D Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, 52.

The present research seeks to examine the construction of modernity in Manipur in the 20th century reflected in the formation of a modern Manipuri literature and the role of translation in instituting and sustaining certain narratives within the discourse on Manipuri literature. It also endeavours to tease out and highlight other forms of modernities which could explain the colonial experience in a more comprehensive way, particularly the one reflected in the works of Naoriya Phulo and Arambam Somorendra which manifested itself as resistance (revivalism) to the dominant Manipuri modernity.

1.4. Modernity in Manipur

Located in the far east of India bordering Myanmar, Manipur is a small state comprised of a valley in the middle surrounded by multiple hill ranges. It became a part of India in 1949 after its “takeover”⁶¹/ “territorial occupation”⁶²/ “annexation”⁶³/ “merger”⁶⁴ by India. On the east and the southeast, it borders Myanmar (formerly Burma) while Mizoram lies to its south and southwest, Assam to its west and Nagaland to its north. It is inhabited by multiple ethnic communities of which the majority is the Meetei followed by others such as Tangkhul, Zeliangrong, Mao, Maram, Thadou, Anal, Aimol, etc. Among the Meeteis, a significant number is made up of those who belong to the seven clans (Mangang, Luwang, Khuman, Angom, Moirang, Khaba Nganba, and Sarang Leisangthem). The remaining are

⁶¹ Arambam Noni, *1949: The Story of India's Takeover of Manipur*, (Imphal: Centre for Alternative Discourse Manipur, 2018).

⁶² Laishram Malem Mangal, “Annexation of Manipur as the 19th State of India: The Status of the Territory of Manipur in International Law since 1949,” *Beijing L. Rev.* 11 (2020): 328.

⁶³ <https://www.imphaltimes.com/it-articles/item/4524-problem-of-1949-annexation-of-manipur>

⁶⁴ N. Joykumar, “The Merger of Manipur into India and The Manipur State Congress.”; Khaidem Mani, “The Manipur merger agreement & The Manipur state constitution act, 1947.”; Prof. Gangumei Kamei, “Ethnic responses to merger: A historical perspective.”; Sanatomba Kangujam, “Revisiting the Merger of Manipur.”; Lal Dena, “The Hill People and the Merger of Manipur.”

bamons⁶⁵ and pangals⁶⁶, the descendant of those who migrated to Manipur and married the local women. The former follows Hinduism and are treated in a similar manner with the Brahmins of India while the latter follows Islam and are often relegated to a lower social status. Meeteilon which is officially known as Manipuri is the mother tongue of the Meeteis and the lingua franca of the state. Other ethnic communities have their own languages, out of which most of the major languages are recognized by the state. The issue of language is integral in the formation of modern Manipuri society and it is starkly visible in its literature as well. The question of reconstructing certain languages, communities, religion and ethnicities as modern and therefore, legitimate, while others are projected as “pre-modern” or “out-dated”, and therefore, illegitimate and irrational needs a critical analysis if one wants to understand the politics and history of the state in a more nuanced manner. Before delving into the question of modernity in Manipur, a brief discussion of how modernity is conceptualized in the neighbouring states is given below.

Despite the persistent calling of attention in the academia to locate the discourse on Manipur in the larger context of what is termed as the “Northeast”, the seven states (eight states if Sikkim is included as the only brother) that comprise the entity called “northeast” have very little in common in terms of culture and history except sharing a similar racial feature. In order to refrain from collectivizing these states as a single unit, the research makes a conscious choice of avoiding to view them as essentially monolithic and from making any outright superfluous comparisons. Other scholars have also problematized categorizing this region as a single unit termed as the “Northeast” through tracing the colonial origin of the

⁶⁵ Longjam Nobinchandra, “Bamons: The Meitei-Brahmins,” in *Manipur: Past and Present, Vol IV* ed. By Naorem Sanajaoba, (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005), 451-457; S. Bebita Devi, “Brahmans Migration in Manipur: Ascertaining the Reason,” in *Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Volume 9, Issue 2 (Mar. - Apr. 2013), 29-36.

⁶⁶ Abdur Rahman, “The Meitei-Pangal,” in *Manipur: Past and Present, Vol IV* ed. By Naorem Sanajaoba, (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005), 459-463; Salam Irene, *The Muslims of Manipur*, (Gyan Publishing House, 2010).

term and underscoring the problem associated with an under-theorization of race and racism in the Indian context⁶⁷. However, to underscore the plurality of the region and at the same time to contextualize the location of the research from a perspective that recognizes a shared colonial experience while encountering modernity, it can be mentioned that diverse forms of colonial modernity emerged in these seven states. While the encounter with colonial modernity for the Naga community is linked primarily with the proselytization to Christianity, it had no significant effect on the Meeteis who inhabited the valley area in Manipur. Tezenlo Thong, author of the book *Colonization, Proselytization, and Identity: The Nagas and Westernization in Northeast India* published in 2016, asserts that “The emergence or reconstruction of modern Naga subtribal, tribal, and supra-tribal configurations is associated with the processes of Western colonization and proselytization”⁶⁸. He points out that the ethnonym *Naga* is a colonial construct and the toponym of the state Nagaland owes its origin to a foreign language (the English word “Land”). He provides an interesting conversation among the members in the Indian parliament concerning the naming of the new state for the Nagas where alternative names such as “Nagaram” and “Naga Pradesh” were suggested⁶⁹. As far as the Meeteis of Manipur are concerned, even though the Bible was translated as early as the 1824⁷⁰ into Meeteilon by William Carey, it failed to have any significant impact among the Meeteis. However, the people who inhabited the hill areas in Manipur were gradually influenced by Christianity under the supervision of the Christian missionaries such as Reverend William Pettigrew who came to Manipur to convert its

⁶⁷ See Bora, Papori. "The problem without a name: comments on cultural difference (racism) in India." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 5 (2019): 845-860; Rai, Rohini. "From colonial 'mongoloid' to neoliberal 'northeastern': theorising 'race', racialization and racism in contemporary India." *Asian Ethnicity* (2021): 1-21.

⁶⁸ Tezenlo Thong, *Colonization, Proselytization, and Identity: The Nagas and Westernization in Northeast India*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 82.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 78.

⁷⁰ Chongtham Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 212.

people⁷¹. In case of Assam, the discussion on tea plantation and the standardization of Assamese language and literature constitute the primary site for the formation of a modern Assamese identity.⁷² In an attempt to map out the formation of the Mizo identity, Joy L. K. Pachuau underscores the relationship between the advent of Christianity in the Lushai Hills during the colonial period and the consolidation of the Mizo identity under a single ‘tribe’ invoking the concept of *Sakhua* or “tribe spirit”.⁷³ She also underpins the role of the strained relationship between India and the Mizos represented by the Mizo National Front who declared Mizoram independent from India in 1966 as crucial in constructing the Mizo identity⁷⁴. A more explicit study on Mizo modernity is provided by P. Thirumal, Laldinpui and C Lalrozami in their book *Modern Mizoram: History, Culture, Poetics* published in 2019. Through examining certain Mizo cultural practices mainly text, performance and image, they put forward a detailed theorization on Mizo modernity comprising of two modes of existence. These two modes of existence were informed by a dual rationality viz. “embodied Mizo rationality” or “Mizo sensibility” and “historically instituted rationality” which coexisted together during the early colonial period. The former rationality refers to “a persisting form of intelligibility in the community by virtue of its members living together” while the latter refers to “a rationality that informs colonially mediated modernity including the rationality of the postcolonial Indian nation state.” Hence, the terms *Lushai* and *Mizo* convey different meanings despite referring to the same entity i.e., Lushai being historically accurate in tandem with the historically instituted rationality while Mizo is politically correct informed

⁷¹ Chungkhosei Baite, “Christianity and Indigenous Practices: A Brief Sketch of the Baite of Manipur,” in *Global Journal of Human-Social Sciences: C Sociology & Culture* Vol 15, Issue 3, (2015); M Thanmung, “Christianity and Social Change among the Naga Tribes of Manipur,” in *Language in India* 15, no. 2 (2015).

⁷² Sharma, J. (2002). “The making of 'Modern' Assam,” 1826-1935 (Doctoral thesis). <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.19054>; Bodhisattva Kar, “‘Tongue Has No Bone’ Fixing the Assamese Language, c. 1800–c. 1930,” *Studies in History* 24, no. 1 (2008): 27-76.

⁷³ Joy LK. Pachuau, *Being Mizo: Identity and Belonging in Northeast India*, (Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁷⁴ Pachuau, *Being Mizo: Identity and Belonging in Northeast India*, 82.

by the embodied Mizo rationality of inclusivity. They also highlighted the primacy of listening as part of their culture in the Mizo rationality over textuality which instructs the historically instituted rationality.

In the context of Manipur, the idea of modernity is conceptualized most prominently in the field of history and literature. However, there is no literature available wherein Manipuri modernity as such has been examined and theorized as a mode of rationality. The historicization of a particular period in the history of Manipur as modern by multiple scholars has prompted in establishing a corpus of Manipuri literature called the Modern Manipuri literature. The present research endeavours to provide an understanding of Manipuri modernity through identifying the dominant mode of rationality as well as highlighting the existence of other forms of contesting modernities⁷⁵ particularly the one grounded in Meetei indigenous values and the revivalist movement. The following sub-sections provide a discussion on the historization of a Modern Manipur and the construction of Modern Manipuri literature.

1.4.1 Modern Manipur: A Historical Perspective.

Gangmumei Kamei, one of the most noted historians of Manipur, states in his book *A History of Modern Manipur: 1826 – 2000 (A study of feudalism, Colonialism and Democracy)* that the Treaty of Yandabo (1826) that formally closed the first Anglo-Burmese War marked the beginning of the modern period in Manipur⁷⁶. As an effect of the Treaty, Manipur regained its lost independence from the hands of the Burmese after the *Seven Years of Devastation*. A treaty was signed between Manipur and the British known as the Anglo-

⁷⁵ Owing to the limitation of time and scope, the present research refrains from exploring further in this area. However, it acknowledges the importance of investigating other forms of modernity in Manipur which would explain the colonial experiences of other smaller ethnic communities in Manipur in a more nuanced and accurate manner.

⁷⁶ Gangmumei Kamei, *A History of Modern Manipur: 1826-2000 (A Study of Feudalism, Colonialism and Democracy)*, (Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2016), 1.

Manipur Agreement of 1833. Divided into three volumes, Prof Kamei categorizes Manipur's modern history into three phases viz. the feudal era that spans from 1826 to 1891, the colonial period (1891 to 1947) and the post-colonial period. These three phases represent the transition from feudalism to colonialism to democracy respectively. According to Prof Kamei, modernization was brought in Manipur aftermath the first Anglo-Burmese war in 1826. With the establishment of the British political agency in 1835 to look after the relationship between Manipur and British India, European technology ranging from military technology (arms and ammunition) to civil technology (to construct roads, bridges, buildings etc.) to modern tools and equipment such as wall clock, binocular, telescope, thermometer, barometer etc. were brought in Manipur along with the introduction of modern services such as postal and telegram services. He refers to RK Jhalajit, another historian, who posited the same theory that modernization began in Manipur during the reign of Gambhir Singh (1825-1834). The colonial period is marked by the British rule which spans from 1891 to 1947 while the post-colonial period began after 1947 when the British left Manipur after WWII. The colonial period is embroiled in a series of protest against the British rule such as the first and the second Nupi Lan, the Kuki rebellion and the Naga religious movement Heraka led by Haipou Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu. In the post-colonial period, he deals with the emergence of democracy in Manipur through experimentation with constitutional monarchy. Prof. Kamei views the postcolonial period, particularly the period between 1972 when Manipur gained statehood and 2000 as "Democracy in Practice". As such, his categorization of Manipur's modern history focuses more on the political history rather than the cultural and social history of Manipur.

A more controversial history of Manipur was constructed in RK Jhalajit's book, *A Short History of Manipur*, first published in 1965 by Manihar Sahitya Parishad. There was a heated debated among the historians during the same time that he published this book

pertaining to the origin of the Meeteis and the claim for an Indo-Aryan connection. In his book, Jhalajit professes a history of Manipur where the genealogy of the Meetei king is linked to Arjuna of the *Mahabharat* and translates Manipuri history as an integral part of Indian history. He asserts that Manipur has been always a part of India culturally and geographically as early as 300 BC. It is his theory that there was a break in the connection between 12th century and 14th century after which Manipur was reconnected with India⁷⁷. By claiming that Manipur is mentioned four times in the *Mahabharata*, he assumes that the “Manipur” in the *Mahabharat* is Manipur indeed. However, the name Manipur was assigned only in the 18th century during the reign of King Pamheiba alias Garibniwaz.⁷⁸ Manipur was assigned various names such as *Kangleipak*, *Poireipak*, *Meitrabak* etc. and Meeteis were known with different names to different peoples such as *Cassay* to the Shans or Pongs of Upper Burma, *Kathe* to the Burmese, *Meklee* to the Assamese etc.⁷⁹ Without any shred of evidence, in the preface to the second edition of the book, he claims, “we are sure that wave after wave of Prakrit and Pali speaking peoples settled in the Manipur Valley. They married local Mongoloid women. Fusion of races and cultures began. Pending further evidence, we place the first immigration of the Indo-Aryan speaking peoples about the later phase of the Maurya Empire.” Prof. Gangmumei Kamei refutes these claims and argues that, “Manipur’s alleged Aryan connection should be viewed as an aspect of Sanskritization and an attempt to gain respectability in the Hindu world” and as an attempt to instil this tradition in the minds of the people. . Both Joytirmoy Roy and Suniti Kumar Chatterjee⁸⁰ along with a host of other

⁷⁷ R.K. Jhalajit, 2nd ed., *A Short History of Manipur*, 1992, 5.

⁷⁸ Gangmumei Kamei, 3rd ed., *History of Manipur: Pre-colonial period*, (Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2015, 1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 2.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*.

scholars⁸¹ agree that the claims made by Jhalajit with regards to identifying Manipur as Mahabharat's *Manipur* is erroneous and wrong while others⁸² still subscribe to the view proposed by Jhalajit. However, the fact remains that Joytirmoy still believed in the stories which connects Manipur to Hinduism in the early period. He calls the period before the 8th century as the Puranic Age and identifies the *puya Leithak Leikharol*⁸³ as a *puran* and retells the story of creation as narrated by Mahadev to Ganesh without questioning the connection between Hindu mythology and Manipur. He also glorified king Pamheiba for paving the way for cultural integration with India reflecting his Indo-Aryan supremacist attitude. He asserts that "had the people of Manipur not received the guidance of such an able personality they could not probably have reached their present higher level of culture than other backward communities in the neighbouring state."⁸⁴ It is quite ironic to note that T. C. Hudson, referring to the description given by Colonel McCulloch in terms of how the Manipuris dress, quotes thus in *The Meitheis*, "the men dress in the same way as they do in Hindustan; but as a people the Munniporees [Manipuris] far surpass the people to the west in the cleanliness of their garments."⁸⁵ What Joytirmoy assumes as a "higher level of culture" is represented in Colonel McCulloch's view as an unhygienic culture, thereby implying an *uncivilized* culture.

The historicization of Manipur's past in the modern historical discourse is hence a site of contestation where the foundational values of a modern Manipur and modern Manipuri literature are negotiated. The adherents of the Indo-Aryan origin theory advocate a narrative which essentially segregates the Meeteis from the rest of the other ethnic communities in

⁸¹ Kamei, *History of Manipur: Pre-colonial period*, 4.

⁸² Joytirmoy Roy, *History of Manipur*, (Calcutta: K L Mukhopadhyay, 1958), 5.

⁸³ Many puyas are believed to be rewritten during the reign of Pamheiba incorporating Hindu mythologies and tradition. The version of *Leithak Leikharol* referred by Joytirmoy Roy is one such *puya*.

⁸⁴ Joytirmoy Roy, *History of Manipur*, 33.

⁸⁵ T.C. Hudson, reprint ed. *The Meitheis*, (New Delhi: B.R. Publishing corporation, 1975), 13.

Manipur. Meanwhile, its opponents seek for a legitimized space where Meitei can have a revitalized relationship with the indigenous value system that shares multiple foundational affinities with the other ethnic communities' belief systems. Nonetheless, modern Manipur experiences multitude issues pertaining to ethnic division and disputes even among the revivalist members. Despite occupying a marginalized position among the Meeteis, the revivalists, particularly those who identify themselves in public as Meitei marup followers, are often denounced and branded as fanatics. Their approach is mostly perceived as outdated and Meitei centric rather than inculcating an idea of modern Manipur as a multi-ethnic state. The thesis tries to contextualize the revivalist movement⁸⁶ for a more comprehensive understanding of its emergence and the rationalities for its presence in modern Manipur through examining the conceptualization of modernity in Manipur and finding out its location in the dominant imagination.

1.4.2. Modern Manipuri literature and translation in the 20th century

Among the most authoritative meta-texts on Manipuri literature, Chongtham Manihar's *A History of Manipuri Literature* is considered an unavoidable introductory text that gives an extensive account of the development of what we now call the Manipuri literature⁸⁷. Manihar classifies the development of Manipuri literature into three periods; a) the early period comprising of literatures that were produced before the advent of Hinduism in Manipur, b) the middle period which emerged with the rise of Hinduism in Manipur and c) the modern period which began with the British occupation of Manipur in the late 19th century.

⁸⁶ I use the term revivalist movement to mean not just the actual incidents of protest and the projects of the Meitei marup followers but to mean the idea of revitalizing the indigenous value system in all the realms in the society.

⁸⁷ It is not only given as a crucial reference book in colleges and universities for courses dealing with Manipuri literature but one would also find it recurring as a reference in the discourse on Manipuri literature extensively.

The defining features of the early period was guided by four principles viz. the archaic use of language, comparative antiquity of the theme, absence of alien words and the style of composition. Manihar calls the literatures produced during this time the pre-Hindu Manipuri literature. They were mostly ritual songs⁸⁸, hymns⁸⁹, accounts⁹⁰ of heroic lives by anonymous writers, stories about romantic love⁹¹, the royal chronicles⁹², religious works⁹³ and other literary works which cannot be accommodated to any of the genres given above, such as *Poireiton Khunthok*, *Salkao*, *Leiron* (description of indigenous flowers), *Yenlon* (description of herbs), *Toreirol Lambuba* (description of the topography), *Tharon*, *Nongmaijing Chinggoiba*, *Langol Chinggoiba* etc. There is no direct mention of any translation activity during this period. However, there are suggestions of translation activities especially between the Shan language and Meeteilon in the 14th century for he writes that the Shan contact “coincided with a literary and cultural awakening in Manipur.”⁹⁴

The middle period began with the coronation of Meidingu Pamheiba who is also known as Garibniwaz in 1708. He was initiated into Gaudiya Vaishnavism by his father Charairongba but later on leaned towards the tradition of Rama worship under the guidance of Shantidas Goswami. It was during his reign that Hinduism was enforced on the people of Manipur even to the extent of taking extreme steps such as giving death penalty and

⁸⁸ Some of the songs he mentions are ‘Ougri’, ‘Khencho’, ‘Lairemma Paosa’, ‘Anoirol’, ‘Ahonglong’, ‘Yakeiba’, ‘Pakhangba Langyensei’, ‘Langmailon’, ‘Kumdamsei’ etc.

⁸⁹ Some of the hymns he cites are ‘Sana Lamok’, ‘Apoklon’, ‘Mei’, ‘Nonglao Eesei’, ‘Louta Eesei’, ‘Phoukouron’ etc.

⁹⁰ Some of the heroic accounts are that of *Chengleiron*, *Tutenglon*, *Numit Kappa*, *Thawanthaba Hiren*, *Chainarol*, *Nongsamei* etc.

⁹¹ The following stories are mentioned: *Nungpan Ponpi Luwaopa*, *Naothingkhong Phambal Kaba*, *Panthoipi Khongkul*, *Panthoibi Naheiol*. The story of Khamba and Thoibi of Khuman and Moirang respectively is also included in this genre.

⁹² *Cheitharol Kumbaba*, *Ningthourol Lambuba*, *Moirang Ningthourol Lambuba*, *Chada Laihui* etc.

⁹³ *Leithak Leikharon*, a treatise on Meitei Meitei cosmogony; *Sakok Lamlen*, a sequel to *Leithak Leikharon*; *Nongsaba Laihui*; *Pakhangba Laihui*; *Sanamahi Laihui* etc.

⁹⁴ Chongtham Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 105.

ostracization from the society to those who refused to convert into Hinduism. In *Cheitharol Kumbaba*, the royal chronicle, it is stated that “formerly, the Manipuris used to bury the dead bodies within their own house compounds but the Raja Garib Nawaz issued orders throughout the country to dig out all the graves and to remove the skeletons from their compounds”⁹⁵. He dug out all the graves in his compound and “performed the cremation ceremony of their skeletons and heads on the bank of the river *Ningthi*, and from this time he introduced the system of burning dead bodies instead of burying.”⁹⁶ It is further mentioned that “he also distributed Gotras amongst the subjects.”⁹⁷ During his reign, the controversial *Bijoy Panchalis* began to be composed by the new scholars in his royal court. These texts produced a new narrative retracing Manipur and the origin of the Kings of Manipur in the Hindu epic *Mahabharat*⁹⁸. The title “Maharaja”⁹⁹ began to be used to address the king replacing the word “Meidingu” along with the redesignation of his army commanders as “Senapati”, “Mantri”, “Katwan”, “Dewan” etc. Manihar views this period uncritically and as such the *Bijoy Panchalis* were termed as royal chronicles in his book. J.B. Bhattacharjee¹⁰⁰ and Thokchom Jayanti¹⁰¹ also treated them as chronicles although Jayanti cautions against taking what is written in these texts at “face value”. However, as Naorem Deepak points out *Bijoy Panchalis* never replaced the royal chronicle *Cheitharon Kumpapa*. He argues that

⁹⁵ Longjam Joychandra ed., *The Lost Kingdom (Royal Chronicle of Manipur)*, (Imphal: Prajatantra Publishing House, 1995), 29.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ One of the foremost oppositions against this Aryan-oriented theory comes from the book *Mahabharatki Manipur Adungeigi Kangleipak Natte (Manipur of Mahabharat is not ancient Kangleipak*, 1968 by revivalist Kangjia Gopal.

⁹⁹ This information is also available in *The Lost Kingdom*, 33.

¹⁰⁰ J.B. Bhattacharjee, “‘Bijoy Panchali’: A Bengali Chronicle of Manipur,” in *Proceedings of the North East India History Association*, 11 (1990): 43-46.

¹⁰¹ Thokchom Jayanti, “Religious interaction in Manipur in the 18th and 19th centuries: A study of the Bijoy Panchali,” In *Presidency Historical Review*. Vol 1, Issue 1, March 2015, 82-93.

these texts cannot be accounted as chronicles and rather asserts that, “These texts aggressively sanskritised the names of the kings, the rivers, the mountains and villages and older traditions and deities were identified with Vaishnavism. *Bijoy Panchalis* played a crucial role in creating these myths, which were used by the elites to legitimize their stations and privileges in society. By the beginning of the 20th century, these myths were accepted as unquestionable truth by the elites. The ruling elites considered themselves as Kshatriyas, sons of Arjun and as Aryans. Grierson’s *Linguistic Survey of India* and Hodson’s *The Meitheis* published in 1908 CE created quite a scandal in the royal court after they classified Manipuri as a Tibeto Burman language and not an Aryan. This started a historical debate, perhaps the first one in the region, on the question of origin of Manipur.”¹⁰² Arambam Saroj Nalini also suggests that the royal chronicle, *Cheitharol Kumbaba* which was formerly written in Meetei Mayek was “displaced by the Bengali script from the time of Garibniwaz, but continued in use for both religious and secular purposes.”¹⁰³ To underscore this debate is important in examining the discourse on translation in Manipur since it is this same narrative which legitimized the treatment of Sanskrit and Bengali translations into Meeteilon as “wealth”.

Further, the categorization of the literary works produced in the middle period into four categories viz. the Hindu epics, traditional Meitei faith, historical biography, and fiction, demonstrates the pervasiveness of Hindu hegemony in Manipur. The Hindu epics comprised a major category where separate sections are dedicated for discussing the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* running more than 30 pages. These compositions of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in Meeteilon are not treated as translations by Manihar but rather as versions. By not recognizing them as translations, he ignores to acknowledge that two completely

¹⁰² Naorem Deepak, “Myth Making and Imagining a Brahminical Manipur Since 18th century,” in *Raiot*, April 2, 2018. <https://raiot.in/myth-making-and-imagining-a-brahmanical-manipur-since-18th-century-ce/>

¹⁰³ Arambam Saroj Nalini Parratt, *The Court Chronicles of the Kings of Manipur: The Cheitharon Kumpapa*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), Introduction, 7.

different languages are involved. On the other hand, for the second category, Manihar dedicates only around 5 pages where he discusses the single most prominent work *Sanamahi Laikan* produced in this period. Another 30 pages are dedicated in discussing the remaining two categories. The disparity in giving his attention to the second category which represents one of the most important texts for the revivalist movement in Manipur and the first category which represents the Hindu epics reflects the presence of a hegemonic discourse in Manipuri literature.

Manihar proposed that the modern period in Manipuri literature blossomed in the early 20th century. The transition between middle period and modern period is marked by Haodijamcha Chaitanya (b.1867). He was the son of Haodijam Gokul (Polando) who served as the syce of Col. Kittinge, Chief Commissioner of Assam. He wrote Khamba *Thoibigi Warini* (1899), *Khagi Ngamba* (1900), *Takhel Ngamba* (1902) and *Chingthangkhomba* (1902). Before Haodijamba, the literary texts were in the manuscript form and there was not much importance given on who wrote the texts. Manihar refers to the literatures that were produced in the 20th century as pre-World War II literature and post-World War II literature. Pre-World War II literature is dominated by three writers: Khwairakpam Chaoba, Lamabam Kamal, and Hijam Anganghal. Manihar gives an account of all three writers and discusses their works stating that they “heralded the approach of modern Manipuri literature”¹⁰⁴. Other prominent writers include Hawaibam Nabadwipchandra who translated Michal Madhusudan Dutt’s *Meghanad Bodh Kavya* with “matching the grace, resonance and form of the original”¹⁰⁵, Arambam Dorendrajit whose “masterpiece” is *Kangsa Bodh*, an epic derived from Michal Madhusudan Dutt’s original but stamped with his own theme that favours Krishna over Kangsa. Hijam Irabot, Ashangbam Minaketan and R.K. Jhalajit are also

¹⁰⁴ Chongtham Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 219.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 228.

mentioned in this section. In his discussion of the novels, Kamal's *Madhabi* (1930) is appreciated as the text that "opens the account of the history of the Manipuri novel."¹⁰⁶ Khwairakpam Chaoba's *Labangga Lata* (1940) is presented as embodying certain historical aspects. However, there is no outright categorization of the novel as a historical novel like other recent scholars such as Thingnam Kishan has made¹⁰⁷. Another esteemed novel he mentioned is Anganghal's *Jahera*. However, it can be noted that Anganghal is known for his *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* defined as a *magnum opus* rather than *Jahera*.

In the section that discusses drama, Manihar designates the origin of the Manipuri drama to the "zeal" of the Bengali officers and Meitei teachers from Assam who resided in Manipur. He writes, "these amateur drama lovers brought a miniature theatre of Bengal, though crude, down to Manipur. It was then gradually modified to suit the local situation and taste."¹⁰⁸ In the beginning Bengali plays were staged during the Hindu festivals like Durga Puja and Basanta Panchami where local artists also participated. Manihar explains that these local artists were fluent in Bengali and so they contributed their share fairly. The Bengali play *Pagalini* was translated into Manipuri in 1905 followed by the translation of many others. Here, Manihar clarifies that half of the diction of *Pagalini*'s translation was still in Bengali and it was only in 1918 that the second Bengali play *Parthaparajay* was translated into Meiteilon in what he calls "chaste" Manipuri by Khaidem Nongyai. The first Manipuri play *Nara Singh*¹⁰⁹ written by Lairenmayum Ibungohal was staged in 1925. The production was made under the patronage of King Churachand who wished that a "genuine" Manipuri play

¹⁰⁶ Chongtham Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 229.

¹⁰⁷ http://e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Arts_and_Culture.Manipuri_Literature_in_History.Manipuri_Literature_in_History_6

¹⁰⁸ Chongtham Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 235.

¹⁰⁹ Nara Singh, the hero of the play with the same name, is King Churachand's great grandfather.

be staged. It can be noted here that Kamal's "Devjani" which Manihar describes as "crude and not so polished" would have been the first Manipuri play to be staged as preparations were made in 1924. As such, Manihar pays little attention to why it didn't happen. Lairenlakpam Sarat gives a practical explanation for why it was never staged before 1969. He suggests that since the play is a satire and embodies a critical commentary on the power relationship between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas through depicting the characters critically albeit in a comical manner, no one wanted to risk offending the existing Brahma Sabha and the King by staging it in public.¹¹⁰ This would be an archetypal example of how Andre Lefevere's concept of *patronage* functions in the case of Manipur. It is pertinent to mention here that the name Naoriya Phulo does not even feature once in this discussion of the modern Manipuri literature that were produced in the early half of the twentieth century despite being one of the first Manipuri who started translating and writing books in Meeteilon since the 1920's. Only a handful of academic works is available on Naoriya Phulo and his contribution in the Manipuri society, particularly the Meetei society.¹¹¹

In the discussion of the post-World War II literature, novels no longer occupy an extensive space in the Manipuri literary world. Drama comes in the forefront with the rise of prominent playwrights like Haobam Tomba (b.1908), Sarangthem Bormani (b. 1928), M. Biramangol (b. 1909) and L. Netrajit (b. 1914). Padma Shri awardee, G.C. Tongbra receives a special mention owing to his distinct style of writing than the rest of the playwrights. Described as a Shavian, his works amounting to nearly 100 plays are characterised by "witty

¹¹⁰ Lairenlakpam Sarat, *Dr. Kamal: Pungsi Amasung Manglaan*. (Imphal: Manipur Association for Science and Society, 2014), 70.

¹¹¹ See Thongam Bipin, Doc. Thesis, *Revivalism and/as Resistance the Meetei Movement in the Twentieth Century*, Submitted in University of Hyderabad, 2017; H. Nirendra Singha, Doc. Thesis, *Naoriya Phulo's Literary Discourse: A Critical Study with Special Reference to his Religious Thoughts*. Submitted in Assam University, Silchar, 2008; M. Madan Mohan Singh, "Meetei Philosophy (Naoriya Phulo)," in *Manipur: Past and Present: The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization (Pan Manipuris in Asia and Autochthones)*, Vol IV, ed. Naorem Sanajaoba, (New Delhi: Mital Publications, 2005), 259-274.

humour and racy prose”. Some of his prominent plays include *Mani-Mamou*¹¹² (1962), *Matric Pass* (1964), *Hingminnaba*¹¹³ (1961), *Looda Mee Changda*¹¹⁴ (1969), *Leisabi Chithi Khela*¹¹⁵ (1970), *Chengni Khujai*¹¹⁶ (1972), and *Ngabongkhao* (1978)¹¹⁷ for which he received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978. After G.C. Tongbra, Arambam Somorendra emerged as a young playwright with “new themes, verve in characterisation and gusto in dialogue.”¹¹⁸ Manihar describes his play “Judge Saheb ki Imung” (produced in 1968, published in 1973) as “a tense drawing room drama”, “a mimicry of an educated middle-class family”. His other plays which Manihar mentions include *Karbar* (1970), *Tirtha Jatra* (1975), *Dasha* (1978) etc. Comparing the plays of G.C. Tongbra and Arambam Somorendra in his thesis¹¹⁹, Sulekha Singha regards Tongbra as the playwright who introduced “wit and humour” in modern Manipuri Drama while Somorendra’s plays are regarded as drawing room drama featuring serious intellectual debates between the characters. In his thesis, he examines four plays by Arambam Somorendra which he classifies as “domestic plays”; “Judge Sahebki Imung”, “Tirtha Jatra”, “Dasha and Sanatombi”. “Judge Saheb Ki Imung” is particularly described as a “domestic tragedy”. He views the contradictions in the play embodied in the characters as a confrontation between westernization in the name of “modern

¹¹² Collective noun that refers to mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

¹¹³ Co-existence.

¹¹⁴ Man in the Fishing Trap.

¹¹⁵ Girls for Lottery.

¹¹⁶ The Begging Bowl.

¹¹⁷ The Flesh Trap (Writer’s own translation). In the foreword to the English translation of the play published by Kumari Mona Tongbram, Imphal, the writer states that ‘the word *Ngabongkhao* literally means a coarse Chadar bag in Manipuri. It was in earlier days associated with packing up of anti-social rogues to be thrown into the Barak River and is still an anathema to the ears of headstrong youths.’ This word has a deeper meaning in the revivalist narrative since those who refused to convert into Hinduism were condemned with this kind of punishment.

¹¹⁸ Chongtham Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 248.

¹¹⁹ Sulekha Singha, “GC Tongbra Amadi A SomorendraSomorendragi Domestic Playshing Changdamnaba,” PhD Dissertation, Assam University, 2016.

outlook” and the local value system. The present research diverges from this view and treats the play more than a simple “domestic play”. It tries to tease out certain rationalities and arguments drawn in this play with regards to the idea of modernity, civilization and progress pertaining to the Manipur condition.

As far as translation is concerned, a dual role is attributed to its progress in the 20th century. According to Manihar, the first role is “meeting the needs of the readers” while the second role is to stimulate the writers. He asserts that translation “steps into the breach” caused by the gap between a growing reader after the introduction of western education and the lack of written work in the local language. Most of his comments on the translated texts revolved around the question of command over the languages involved. Among the translators, he makes a special mention of Atombapu Sharma and Kalachand Shastri, both of whom were Sanskrit scholars and translated Sanskrit literature extensively into Meeteilon. Referring to Atombapu Sharma, he writes, “a self-made man in the study of Sanskrit, without ever attending a regular institution, he enjoyed recognition as a learned scholar from all quarters of the country.”¹²⁰ However, his “self-made” status and “recognition” has come under criticism since “many of his works are very brief”¹²¹ and “repetitive”¹²². According to John Parratt, his early work *Harei Maye* (1930), a book on astrology, shaped his reputation in Bengal among the Brahmins, that he made no real contribution outside this circle. He self-published many of his books and owing to his self-taught nature, his theoretical approach and methodologies were flawed. Parratt goes on to argue that “Atombapu was not the renaissance scholar that Nilakanta claims. He can best be characterised as a propagandist of an agenda which sought to subordinate and absorb the Mongoloid world view into a wholly different

¹²⁰ Chongtham Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 286.

¹²¹ John Parratt, “Atombapu and religious roots of Integrationism,” in e-pao, 24th March, 2006. http://e-pao.net/epPageExtractor.asp?src=features.Atom_Bapu_and_religious_roots_of_Integrationism.html..

¹²² Ibid.

one, derived from a literalist and uncritical reading of carefully selected Sanskrit scriptures.”¹²³ Meanwhile, Kalachand Shastri is appreciated for his “more homely”¹²⁴ translations of the *Mahabharata* which were very different from the earlier translations made by Atombapu Sharma that were “heavily blended with Sanskrit.”¹²⁵

The reputation of both Atombapu and Kalachand Shastri was affirmed by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee who hailed them as giants among scholars. Atombapu is gloried as “the greatest name in the history of Manipuri literature”¹²⁶ while Kalachand is commended for the translation of *Mahabharata* following the “illustrious example”¹²⁷ set by Atombapu Sharma. He declares that it was the translators “who transformed the mind and spirit of the Manipuris by extending the horizon of their literary experience, and made them familiar with some of the greatest things in Indian literature, ancient and modern. They brought the Manipuris in line with the rest of advanced India in their thought and ideas and aspirations.”¹²⁸ For Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the translations from Sanskrit comprise “a special aspect of modern Manipuri literature”¹²⁹ and are treated as “wealth”¹³⁰. This narrative which regards the translations as “enriching” modern Manipuri literature is endorsed by the elite literary circle of the time such as Elangbam Nilakanta who reproduced his narrative to build a literary discourse around it, and by historians like RK Jhalajit who perpetuated an Aryanized

¹²³ John Parratt, “Atombapu and religious roots of Integrationism,” in e-pao, 24th March, 2006. [http://e-pao.net/epPageExtractor.asp?src=features.Atom Bapu and religious roots of Integrationism.html](http://e-pao.net/epPageExtractor.asp?src=features.Atom+Bapu+and+religious+roots+of+Integrationism.html)..

¹²⁴ Chongtham Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 287.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Suniti Kumar Chatterji, “‘Adivasi’ Literatures of India: The Uncultivated ‘Adivasi’ Languages,” *Indian Literature* 14, no. 3 (1971), 25.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 24-25.

¹²⁹ Suniti Kumar Chatterji, “‘Adivasi’ Literatures of India: The Uncultivated ‘Adivasi’ Languages,” *Indian Literature* 14, no. 3 (1971), 24.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

historiography of Manipur¹³¹. Some of Nilakanta's articles which were published in the journal *Indian Literature* are analysed as part of this research in chapter 3. So far, there is no academic work available on translation in modern Manipuri literature which makes an attempt to problematize this hegemonic narrative. This narrative continues to remain uncontested and dominant owing to its standardization and normalization in the academia. The discourse on translation in modern Manipuri literature still widely perceives translation only as an apolitical tool to link different cultures, to enrich certain literary traditions. The present research seeks to fill this gap in academic discourse by way of offering a fresh perspective using the frameworks developed in the field of Translation Studies after the cultural turn.

A detailed conceptual framework for the research is laid out in the following section along with a description of the methodology employed while carrying out the research pertaining to data collection and data analysis.

1.5. Methodology and conceptual framework for the analysis

The research takes up an inter-disciplinary postpositivist approach and primarily uses the framework proposed by Translation Studies scholars and literary critics who belong to the broad area of Cultural Studies, Literature and Translation Studies. In particular, it relies on the theoretical framework proposed by Tejaswini Niranjana incorporated in the Postcolonial Translation Studies, Foucault's conception of knowledge production and discourse, Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, Andre Lefevere's concept of *patronage*, Gayatri Spivak's notion of epistemic violence, Dipesh Chakravarty's theory on Europe deprovincializing itself and its relationship with colonialism and modernity, Edward Said's critique of Orientalism etc. It also uses Pascal Casanova's theorization of the consecration of authors and texts to

¹³¹ R.K. Jhalajit Singh, *A Short history of Manipur*, (1992).

analyse the literary canon formation in the case of Chaoba-Kamal-Anganghal, Atombapu Sharma on the one hand and Naoriya Phulo and Arambam Somorendra on the other.

Chapter 2 particularly tries to locate and contextualize the use of certain registers and words from a language perceived as superior to validate social positions of power and high status as manifested in the case of Atombapu Sharma and the reception of his works in the Manipuri literary discourse. The primary research aim addressed in chapter 2 is the inquiry of the nature of translation projects which emerged in the early half of the twentieth century. It seeks to understand the role of translation as an agent of modernity ingrained in the introduction of western education in Manipur. It is observed that the introduction of western education in Manipur functioned more as an extension of the colonial education system which already existed in Bengal rather than engaging with modern subjects such as the natural sciences. As a result, knowing Bengali literature and learning Sanskrit were highly regarded and was conflated with what is termed as modern education. As mentioned earlier, this chapter also addresses the research question why and how Atombapu Sharma was regarded as the greatest translator in Manipur during the colonial period in the dominant discourse on Manipuri literature. Drawing from Lefevere's concept of *patronage* that works outside the literary system and the *professional* who function within the literary system, Atombapu's rise to fame and reputation is examined to explain the process of canonization in modern Manipuri Literature.

Chapter 3 primarily looks at the use of the idea of modern/pre-modern in the dominant discourse on modern Manipuri literature and provides a critique to this narrative invoking the arguments proposed in the book *Voices of Modernity*. The writers suggest that the "pre-modern stage" consistently used by the western modernists prefigures a temporal hierarchy where advancement occurs as time progresses. Thus, the notion of tradition, viewing as something from the past, is accorded with negative qualities. Apart from tradition,

other binaries have been used devotedly in the construction of “modernity and social inequality: female/male, rural/urban, working class/bourgeois, unsophisticated/educated, oral/literate, Oriental/ Europe.” This tendency of constructing modernity in binary or opposite terms, specifying the *modern* as urban, elite, learned, cosmopolitan versus the *provincial* as rural, lower class, ignorant, old-fashioned and indigenous has been criticized by other post-colonial theorists as well. The phrase “Old wives’ tales” used by John Aubrey, an English Antiquarian, embodies the basic tropes through which modernity was constructed; old as opposed to the “new” or the “modern”, “wife” as opposed to men who are rational and modern, and “tale” as opposed to written literature. In the chapter entitled “Orality, Writing and Text” in his book *The Art of Not Being Governed*, James C. Scott argues that the existing hierarchy between oral and written literature is not of an inherent nature but an invented one. He makes a conscious decision to use the term “orality” or “non-literary” in preference to “illiteracy”, “to call attention to orality as a different and potentially positive medium of cultural life as opposed to a mere deficiency.” Writing has been used persistently as a synonym of the modern while orality has been relegated in the past. The non-west was thus looked upon as “pre” modern, those who are not yet modern because of their lack of writing tradition. *Historicity* which is presumed to be a marker of the progress of civilization is denounced by Scott with illustration that it is wrong to “presuppose that only written history counts as narrative of identity and a common past” and that it does not indicate a lower stage of civilization but an active choice of that group of people, a strategy taken up in order to position themselves vis-à-vis their powerful text-based neighbours. The revivalist movement in Manipur in the 1970’s is contextualized in relation to how it was perceived and represented in the modern Manipuri literary discourse based on these new theoretical developments which examines the construction of binaries in western modernity. Chapter 3 ends with an analysis of the discourse on the inclusion of Manipuri language in the Eighth

schedule of the Indian Constitution in 1992 while seeking to find out the rationality behind its inclusion and highlights how the inclusion was treated in the Indian academia.

Chapter 4 makes an attempt to provide a proposal that accounts for the construction of canonization in modern Manipuri literature. It seeks to observe certain shared elements among the selected texts viz, *Madhabi*, *Labangga Lata* and *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*. Derived from this observation, it is argued in chapter 4 that five fundamental elements constitute a modern Manipuri literary text viz. i) the written form, ii) attribution to authorship, iii) identification of the characters as Hindu subjects iv) prevalence of using references from the Hindu epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, and v) Using Indo-Aryan literary and cultural lexicon as formal registers. The presence of the latter three elements indicates that assimilation to and glorification of Hinduism proves to be an essential requirement for a text to become modern or to be consecrated as a modern Manipuri literary canon. Chapter 4 reinforces Casanova's theory on consecration of literary text using Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs proposal that language functions as a central medium through which modernity was diffused in the world. They argue in their book *Voices of Modernity* that different linguistic codes exist in our society and language plays an undeniable role in concentrating power in the hands of the few. Tracing the development of modernity throughout the centuries and showing how language ideologies have changed in parallel to modern development, they demonstrate how various forms of inequalities were perpetuated through language politics. Starting with John Locke, they argue, language has been created and rendered a powerful means of maintaining social inequality. Using Latour's argument that "it was not scientific thinking per se that fuelled modernity but rather the construction of cultural domains of 'society' and 'science' as separate and autonomous", they illustrate how modern power works in two ways i.e., "hybridization" and "purification". Modern power hybridizes and purifies "society" and "science" at the same time. Modern power "seeks to

erase awareness” of, or in other words, purifies the connection between “science” and “society” so that the illusion of the autonomy of these realms can be maintained. However, its inevitable link is manifested in the technological “advances” which have been embedded with “powerful social meanings”. Nuclear weapons which are scientific products essentially define the social power relationships between nations. It is noted that Locke identifies the capacity of knowledge acquisition with good language, thus closing the door of education to women (gender), the poor and the labourers (lower class) whose linguistic codes vary from those of the elite middle-class men. This difference in linguistic code is visible in the works of these three writers and the ones selected for discussion in chapter 5. The writers who have been classified into two groups for the analysis represent two different linguistic codes where one is favoured over the other. In the preface to *Voices of modernity*, the writers admit that they “dared to read texts that had been marginalized and largely forgotten alongside canonical works.” The research uses their methodology to identify the “differences” between the texts, the marginalized texts on one side and the canonical texts on the other, in search of the reason which makes one forgotten while the other cherished. This was the guiding principle for choosing the writers whose selected works will be studied extensively. Hence, I have selected Chaoba, Kamal and Anganghal for discussion in chapter 4 whose works have been canonized, anthologized and hailed as the renaissance spirit of the modern period in Manipuri literature. In contrast, for the discussion in chapter 5, I have selected Naoriya Phulo (1888-1941), another writer from the first half of the twentieth century who has been largely forgotten by the Meiteilon literary world except by the marginal followers of *Apokpa Marup*, a revivalist group founded by Naoriya Phulo himself in Cachar in the 1930’s. Chapter 5 recalls a similar argument proposed by the Dalits in India in the work of Naoriya Phulo pertaining to modernity. One of the most prominent adherents of western modernity among

the Dalits, is Kancha Ilaiah. In an interview¹³², he responses, “English education is a liberator because it does not carry caste and cultural baggage. It is also embedded with global knowledge and scientific spirit. Brahmins, who constitute the main historical ruling intellectual class of India, adopted double standards by using Sanskrit as their spiritual language and English as their power and market language. The Dalits, however, lost out in every sphere because of the forceful denial of education. That is why I insist that if even ten per cent of Dalits learn English, they would make people see from the windows of their villages, as the intellectual community has a disconnect with grass roots reality.” Kancha Ilaiah endorses modernity and sees it as a “liberator” for the Dalits. Acquiring English education, for Ilaiah, is crucial in the Dalit struggle in order to achieve social equality. In his article “Dalits and English”, published in *Deccan Herald*, Ilaiah welcomes the step of the Indian government to introduce English teaching in all government schools arguing that “English education is the key for adopting the modernist approach suitable to the globalised India.” S Anand warns in “Sanskrit, English and Dalits” that the Brahminical class has monopolized the use of English as have the other symbols of western modernity justifying the denial of English to Dalits by falsely claiming that the “faulty” use of English by Dalits is an act of resistance to colonial modernity. Anand declares in his article that “Today, if someone like Kancha Ilaiah is being reckoned with, despite typical dismissals of his being ‘unscholarly’, it is because for the first time after Ambedkar a dalit writer is being packaged and sold in English, if not with a kind of hype that surrounds Arundhati Roy and Salman Rushdie at least with a fair degree of savviness. This underscores two things: the importance of speaking in English, a language that has been monopolized by the Brahminical elite and denied to Dalits; and secondly, that it is a myth that Dalits resist English/modernity. To give another example, the pan-Indian popularity of a Journal like *Dalit Voice* owes to the fact of

¹³² <http://gulfnnews.com/news/asia/india/kancha-ilaiah-bats-for-english-schools-for-dalits-1.1165058>

its being published in English.”¹³³ Naoriya Phulo, likewise, saw English education and modernity as liberating forces and conceptualized an alternative modernity in his works that is rooted in the indigenous value system. But the fact that he has been fundamentally projected as a religious figure has largely contributed in legitimizing the condemnation he receives as a fanatic leader in the dominant discourse on Manipuri culture. It has also resulted in misconstruing his contribution solely as a religious revivalist figure. The primary aim of this chapter is to explore his conceptualization of modernity by observing him as a person who envisioned a modern Manipur which is drastically different from the one represented in the dominant one. Further, to bring in a more nuanced understanding of this alternative modernity, Arambam Somorendra’s play “Judge Saheb ki Imung” which was written in the latter half of the twentieth century is also examined. It provides an extended and a more critical approach to the idea of modernity by way of introducing women’s issues and a critique of the western modernity through the characters of Aruna and Mohan. Multiple aspects such as gastronomical experience, cultural games, language, knowledge, and race are engaged in the conversation between the characters to present his argument where he makes a clear distinction between civilization and westernization.

Chapter 6 provides the conclusion of the thesis along with a summary of the main chapters. The first two main chapters (Part I) focus on the history of translation in Manipur in the 20th century and the discourse around it. The significance of translated text in the corpus of modern Manipuri literature is examined using the frameworks available in the area of descriptive translation studies along with contextualizing the revivalist movement in the 1970’s in Manipur viz a viz the delegitimization of this movement in the modern Manipuri literary discourse. These two chapters foreground the arguments proposed in the succeeding chapters; first, a conceptualization of the construction of the dominant Manipuri modernity

¹³³ S. Anand, “Sanskrit, English and Dalits,” in *Economic and Political Weekly* (1999): 2053-2056.

reflected in its literature as essentially informed by Hindu hegemony and Indo-Aryan supremacy, secondly, a reconceptualization of the construction of an alternative/optional Manipuri modernity drawn from the marginal spaces, particularly from the works of Naoriya Phulo and Arambam Somorendra.

A tempting framework that could have been incorporated in the research but has been excluded owing to its limitation is the theory of Sanskritization proposed by M.N. Srinivas¹³⁴. This exclusion also suggests a conscious choice making process as a method of this research. Sanskritization describes the process of caste mobility in the hierarchy where a lower caste moves to a higher caste through performing certain shared social practices. In the context of Manipur, Prof. Gangmumei Kamei proposes to call the dominance of Hinduism in Manipur in the 18th century as Sanskritization. King Pamheiba identified himself as a Kshatriya along with distorting the history of Manipur by re-writing the genealogy of the Meitei Kings as descendants of Arjuna of the *Mahabharat*. Sairem Nilbir concurs this view in his essay “Sanskritization Process of Manipur Under King Garib Niwaz,”¹³⁵. The concept of Sanskritization could prove useful in analysing the social and religious situation in Manipur in the 18th century as both Kamei and Nilbir have proposed and are referred to in chapter 2. Nevertheless, since the present research focuses in the 20th century, this theory presents itself rather limiting than pertinent because of two main reasons. The first one being a question of power and subjugation prevalent in the construction of knowledge in the academia, and secondly, it fails to account certain aspects of the research theoretically. To substantiate the first point, it can be mentioned that the overarching narrative of caste which functions as the premise of Sanskritization tends to absorb the marginal narratives arising out of regions

¹³⁴ M. N. Srinivas, “A Note on Sanskritization and Westernization,” in *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Aug., 1956), pp. 481-496.

¹³⁵ Sairam Nilabir, “Sanskritisation process of Manipur under King of Garibaniwaz,” in *New Insights into the Glorious History of Manipur* ed. H. Dwijashankar, (New Delhi: Akanksha Publishing House, 2009): 239-249.

where the concept of caste does not exist. The *mangba-sengba* culture practised among the Meeteis in Manipur is often misconstrued as caste, thereby, legitimizing the absorption of Manipuri culture under the grand umbrella of caste narrative. Such constitution of knowledge is problematic precisely because it misrepresents the identity of the Meeteis by accentuating its existence as Hindu subjects. On the other hand, it contributes in invisibilizing the indigenous identity, thereby marginalizing the emerging narratives within the grand narrative of a Hindu India. As far as the second point is concerned, it is imperative to point out that the concept of Sanskritization does not account for the resistance movements that emerged after the introduction of western education in Manipur in the 20th century. It does not explain why the Meetei kings never made any attempt to move above their Kshatriya caste adopted in the 18th century. Moreover, despite identifying themselves as Hindus, the emerging modern writers showed an ambivalent attitude towards locating themselves within a social hierarchy bounded by caste reflected in their marginalized works such as Lamabam Kamal's "Devjani" that questioned Brahmin supremacy. Moreover, apart from the king and the descendants of the royal family, the general population of the Meeteis has no clear identification with any of the caste with the exception of *bamons* identified as *Brahmins*. Another point that needs consideration while identifying the dominance of Hinduism in the 18th century in Manipur as Sanskritization is the fact that it ignores to represent a large section of the population who, instead of desiring for "mobility in the caste hierarchy" as explained in Sanskritization, were punished for refusing to adopt the "higher" Kshatriya caste. For these reasons, this concept has been excluded from employing as a theoretical framework either wholly or in part.

In order to carry out this research, extensive secondary materials were collected ranging from research papers, PhD thesis, articles, books, administrative records, government reports, catalogues, archival documents etc. Primary texts include Khwairakpam Chaoba's *Labanga Lata*, Lamabam Kamal's *Madhabi*, Hijam Anganghal's *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*,

Naoriya Phulo's *Eigi Wareng* and Arambam Somorendra's "Judge Sahek ki Imung". The materials were collected from various sources including online sources. During the course of my research work, I have visited the Manipur State Archives, Assam State Archives, West Bengal State Archives, and Manipur Sahitya Parishad etc. to collect archival documents and old translated books which would help me in formulating a more comprehensive observation pertaining to my research work and more so to lessen the chance of missing any significant information related to translation which are available and accessible. I have also visited the Central Library, Manipur University and have acquainted myself with several professors in the Manipuri Department who helped me extensively in my research work, both while collecting rare materials which were in their custody and formulating the arguments in my thesis. The task of collecting the materials turned out to be quite a journey in itself since the practice of proper record-keeping in the state institutions and maintaining documents/archival materials is managed properly. But the fact that a number of scholars, translators, curators, historians and academicians are making quite an effort in collecting these rare texts and preserving them at their own capacity in an individual level has proved to be a blessing for my research work. Hence, most of the secondary materials which I have collected were from certain individuals whom I have come into contact with through literary functions and social events which I have attended such as the ones organised by Leiramol Khorjeikol (Leikol) over the years¹³⁶, and the celebration of Manipuri Language Day held at Chandrakirti Auditorium in 2018 etc. Notwithstanding the obstacles while collecting the materials, the research was carried out in the aim of contributing a new perspective with respect to how one perceives translation activity in Manipur and to illustrate how it was integral in the construction of a dominant Manipuri modernity as reflected in the modern Manipuri literature.

¹³⁶ A women's literary society in Manipur founded by the acclaimed Maharaj Kumari Imasi Binodini in 2003. I joined LEIKOL in 2018 as a life member.

Chapter 2

Translation in Manipur: 1891-1947

Chapter 2 Outline

2.1. Introduction

2.2. Section 1 – Background

2.2.1. Imposition of Vaishnavism in the Eighteenth Century

2.2.2. The Arrival of Western/Colonial Modernity in the Nineteenth Century

2.3. Section II - Translation Projects in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

2.3.1. Translations as Texts Books

2.3.2. Translations of Sanskrit Religious Texts

2.3.2.1. Beyond the Text: A Plea for Recognition

2.3.2.2. Atombapu's Texts and the Erasure of Meeteilon

2.4. Conclusion

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the translation scene in Manipur in its first half of the 20th century. It opens up the thesis of the research by introducing the background for the arguments presented in the succeeding chapters. For the purpose of this research, 1891 is taken as the beginning year since it was also the year when the British colonial rule officially began, closing it with 1947 when the British left Manipur. This chapter explores the operation of colonial modernity in Manipur via translation which for the purpose of the research will be seen as a means of expanding colonial education.

Since the 1990's, translation as a discipline, and translated texts have been increasingly dealt with from a cultural perspective¹³⁷. It is no longer true that translation is simply a humanistic enterprise consisting of linguistic transaction devoid of political and social consequences¹³⁸. The act of translation has never been an equal exchange of cultures, languages or ideas. In her essay "Consecration and Accumulation of Literary Capital: Translation as unequal exchange", Pascal Casanova writes,

The literary and linguistic inequalities and hierarchies which organize the world literary field reveal another economy of linguistic exchanges: far from being the horizontal exchange and pacified transfer often described, translation must be understood, on the contrary, as an unequal exchange occurring in a strongly hierarchized universe. Translation can therefore be described as one of the specific forms of the relationship of domination in the international literary field; and is therefore an important factor in the struggles for legitimacy which occur in this universe, and one of the principal means of consecration of authors and texts.

¹³⁷. Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*. (Routledge, 1991); Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire*. (New York: Routledge, 2014); Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from the Tempest to Tarzan*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the politics of transmission* (Psychology Press, 1996).

¹³⁸. Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context*. (Univ of California Press, 1992)

Casanova's words resonate closely with the translation scene in Manipur specially during the first half of the twentieth century. The inauguration of modern Manipuri literature during the said period has an inseparable link with the struggle for legitimacy in the literary history of Manipur. A number of translations were made in this period in the hope of creating a "modern Manipuri Literature". In many of the cultures across the world, translation of western texts has significantly influenced the modernization process. They use translation as a means of gaining modern ideas in politics, warfare, technology, medicine etc. However, in Manipur, very few western texts were translated in the first half of the twentieth century even though the paraphernalia of modernity could be seen everywhere including in literature since the British occupation in 1891. Majority of the translations that were produced in Manipur in the twentieth century were primarily from four particular source languages targeted into one language: "Meeteilon" also referred to as "Manipuri language". Sanskrit was the most translated language followed by Bengali, Hindi and English respectively, while few translations were made from Meeteilon into these four languages. In order to contextualize the translation scene in Manipur and to critically analyse the situation, the chapter lays out the fundamental transformations that took place in Manipur in the preceding centuries; for it would otherwise only be a fragmentary attempt if the socio-historical context, the values and beliefs that prevailed in the preceding centuries viz eighteenth century and nineteenth century are left unaddressed. In the eighteenth century, Hinduism emerged as the hegemonic religion in Manipur; while in the nineteenth century, during the reign of King Chandrakirti, modern ideas and modern machineries began to seep into the soil of Manipur. These developments in the previous centuries shaped the translation scene in the twentieth century in Manipur.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section gives a historical account of the imposition of Vaishnavism in the eighteenth century and the arrival of western/colonial

modernity in the nineteenth century along with a translation history of each century. The second section is sub-divided into two parts. In this second section, the paper maps out two trajectories of translation that emerged in the early twentieth century in Manipur viz. the need to produce school text books and the enterprise of bringing Sanskrit religious texts closer to home. The former is a direct result of British colonization and thus reflects the emergence of modernity in Manipur through education via translation while the later draws its inspiration from Sanskritization¹³⁹, an indication of the presence of Indo-Aryan hegemonic domination in Manipur which existed alongside British colonialism. Both trajectories were greatly facilitated by the arrival of the printing machine and the establishment of the Churachand Printing press in 1930, the first private printing press in Manipur owned by Phurailatpam Atombapu Sharma who was patronized by King Churachand.

Section 1

2.2 Background

2.2.1 Imposition of Vaishnavism in the Eighteenth Century

In the first half of the eighteenth century, although the Meetei king Charairongba practiced some form of Hinduism, its influence was not widespread in Manipur. It was only after King Pamheiba, Charairongba's son, adopted it as the state religion during his reign that Hinduism as a religion began to flourish in Manipur¹⁴⁰. *Sanamahi Laikan*, a *puya*¹⁴¹ written in Meetei *mayek*¹⁴², which narrates the process of Sanskritization in Manipur in the eighteenth century, records the instance of renaming this geo-political location as Manipur, a Sanskrit name, by King Pamheiba besides changing his own name to Garibniwaz; thus initiating the

¹³⁹. M.N. Srinivas, reprinted (1965), *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1952).

¹⁴⁰. Gangmumei Kamei, *History of Manipur: Pre-colonial period* (National Publishing House, 1991).

¹⁴¹. Old manuscripts written on various topics about Manipur. They are considered as repositories of the indigenous knowledge system and constitute an important resource for drawing out historical facts.

¹⁴². *Mayek* means script in Meeteilon.

process of Sanskritization¹⁴³. It is documented in the *puya* that Manipur was named as such inspired by the story of Arjun and his son from the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*. He also introduced the title “Maharaja” to be used in place of “Meidingu” or “Ningthou” to address the King¹⁴⁴. The king’s fascination with Hinduism made him identify closer to the Indo-Aryan culture from the West (of Manipur) at the expense of sabotaging his relationship with his own people and his neighbours in the East. Saroj Nalini writes in one of her papers¹⁴⁵ that *Meidingu* (king) Pamheiba made a series of raids in Burma, convinced by the preaching of his “guruji”, that “virtue would be obtained by bathing in the water of the river Irrawady”. She further writes that the Burmese ascribed these raids to a “religious fanaticism” of the King under the influence of his Guru. However, the new religion received little support from the other members of the royal family and the *maibas*¹⁴⁶. T.C. Hudson writes on the severity of the circumstances and the oppressive nature of the king to his people in his book *The Meithei* thus, “Religious dissent was treated with the same ruthless severity as meted out to political opponents and wholesale banishments and execution drove the people into acceptance of the tenets of Hinduism.” Arambam Saroj Nalini Parratt and her husband John Parratt report¹⁴⁷ that many of the traditional sacred sites of the Meeteis known as *Umang Lais* were destroyed in 1723. Three years later, nine *Umang Lais* were brought together and buried

¹⁴³. Sairam Nilabir, “Sanskritisation process of Manipur under King of Garibaniwaz,” in *New Insights into the Glorious History of Manipur* ed. H. Dwijashekhkar, (New Delhi: Akanksha Publishing House, 2009): 239-249; Kamei, Gangmumei 3rd Rev. ed., *History of Manipur: Pre-colonial period*. Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2015.

¹⁴⁴. Longjam Joychandra. ed. *The Lost Kingdom: Royal Chronicle of Manipur*, 33.

¹⁴⁵. John Parratt, and Saroj Nalini Parratt, *Collected Papers on the History and Culture of Manipur* (Imphal: Patriotic Writers’ Forum Manipur, 2010), 73.

¹⁴⁶. A maiba is like a shaman but serves a more significant role in the Meetei society. Their views are regarded highly in the royal court. However, with the adoption of Hinduism, it decreased tremendously.

¹⁴⁷. John Parratt, and Saroj Nalini Parratt, *Collected Papers on the History and Culture of Manipur*.

while “ritual offerings were then made near the Temple of Hanuman on the spot where they (the *Umang Lais*) were buried.” She further writes,

A temple of Krishna was erected in 1722, and four years later an image of the same deity was placed near the palace pond. Ritual reforms were also carried out to conform to Hindu principles. In 1722, a public spectacle was made of those who had eaten beef, and in the following year laws were enforced to prevent the keeping of unclean domestic animals near housing areas.

Naoriya Phulo, pioneer of the revivalist movement in Manipur, mentions in his writings of another event known as “Nongkhrang Iruppa”, a ritual of mass baptism into Hinduism ordered by the King under the guidance of Guru Shantidas Gosai. Once converted into Hinduism, the Hindu meeteis were forced to limit their food habits; they were forbidden to eat meat which they used to have routinely. An alien food culture was suddenly enforced on the people foreshadowing the transformation of the Meeteis into “interpellated” Meeteis embodying Hindu subjectivities.

After the death of King Pamheiba in 1751, the military power of the erstwhile Manipur kingdom began to wane and familial fights for authority among the princes gave the Burmese an opportunity to invade Manipur in 1819 when the infamous “Seven Years Devastation” occurred. Many of the Meeties residing in the valley area of Manipur fled into different directions. They settled at various places around Manipur, mainly, Cachar, Tripura and Bangladesh. It was only after Chinglen Nongdrenkhomba defeated the Burmese in 1826 with the help of the British that Manipur was able to regain its sovereignty¹⁴⁸. As far as translation is concerned during this period, secondary sources show that King Pamheiba

¹⁴⁸. Gangmumei Kamei, *History of Manipur: Pre-colonial period*.

patronized his court pandits as translators¹⁴⁹. The translations in the eighteenth century were largely of Sanskrit religious texts which were translated into Meeteilon from the Bengali versions. There were little translations from other languages. The book *Arong Nanda Kumar* written during the reign of King Chingthangkomba popularly known Rajarshi Bhagyachandra can be mentioned here as one of the few texts that were translated into Meeteilon from the Shan language¹⁵⁰.

It was during this period that the Hindu epics such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* were translated into Meeteilon. Sahitya Akademi Awardee, Sagolsem Lanchenba Meetei argues that Hinduism could be ingrained in Manipur successfully beginning Pamheiba's reign due to the translations of the Hindu epics that were composed delicately.¹⁵¹ He elaborates that, under the King's order, Kritivasa's *Ramayana* was translated by a group of scholars. The King asked "one of his favourite servants Kshema Singh Moiramba to compose the *Ramayana* in Manipuri for which he might engage as amanuenses five young scholars well versed in Bengali language."¹⁵² These five young scholars who comprised the group of translators were Premananda, Mukundaram, Laxmi Narayan Eroiba, Ramcharan and Laxmi Narayan. In the eighteenth century, the people even believed that if one could listen to seven *kandas* of *Ramayana*, not only one's sins will be erased but it could cure infertility as well¹⁵³. The king advised his court writers and translators to let his people listen to *Ramayana* which is believed to have a mystic power to calm down those suffering from anguish and is in distress. In such an atmosphere, translated texts began to occupy a crucial space in the lives

¹⁴⁹. E. Nilakanta, "Vaishnavism in Manipuri Literature." (Paper presented at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, April, 1985), 4.

¹⁵⁰. Wangam Somorjit, *Meeyamgi Kholao*. (1. Vol. 4. Issue, 2014), 77-151.

¹⁵¹. Sagolsem Lanchenba Meetei, "Manipuri Anubad Sahityada Mityeng Ama" (Paper presented at the Seminar on Anubad Sahitya, Imphal, Feb 11-12, 2006).

¹⁵². Ch. Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 114.

¹⁵³. Sagolsem Lanchenba Meetei, "Manipuri Anubad Sahityada Mityeng Ama," 14.

of the people swaying them into accepting and embracing Hinduism impetuously out of desperation.

As mentioned earlier, most of the translations in the eighteenth century were mediated through Bengali. In one of his articles E. Nilakanta writes,

Angom Gopi who adorned the court of King Garibniwaz (1709-1748) composed his 7 volumes Manipuri *Ramayana* based on Krittibasi *Ramayana*, almost an independent work, taking liberties with the original text and adding much of his creative imagination. We transcreated another episode entitled Parikshit, based on the *Mahabharata* of Gangadas Sen of Bengal. Another work dealing with the episode of Virat Parba of the *Mahabharata* is attributed to Prince Nabananda who composed the verses with the help of scholar, based on the work of Rama Krishna Das of Bengal. Another great scholar, Labango Singh Konthoujamba, during the reign of Rajarshi Bhagyachandra, composed another book, Ram Nongba (the death of Rama) dealing with the later section of uttra Kanda....A translation of the Bengali work, Janmejaya Sarpa Yaina (King Janmejaya's snake sacrifice) also appeared during the reign of Bhagyachandra¹⁵⁴.

In Manipur, in the eighteenth century, translation did not occupy a secondary position in the literary world as it is generally accorded to in the West. These translations were mostly transcreations rather than word to word translation, and the translators' sole purpose was to bring the text close to home to augment the religious conversion, domesticating its alienness by transforming the texts significantly leaving no space for liminality. Therefore, these texts were perceived as original texts in themselves and were treated no less sacred than the original versions. In fact, in the chapter dealing with the 18th century in Ch Manihar's seminal book *A History of Manipuri Literature*, translations of the Hindu epics constitute an independent literary category of its own.

¹⁵⁴. E. Nilakanta, "Vaishnavism in Manipuri Literature." (Paper presented at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, April, 1985), 3-4.

2.2.2 The Arrival of Western/Colonial Modernity in the Nineteenth Century

There is not much evidence or sources that inform us about what happened in Manipur regarding translation activities in the nineteenth century. Mention can be made of a translation that was completed in 1802. Longjam Parsuram, along with his students, Chirom Abhimanyu, Wairokpam Gangacharan and Oinam Nabashyam translated Gangadas Sen's Aswamedha Parva of *Mahabharat* as *Langgoi Sagol Thaba*. For Manipur, nineteenth century was a period of crisis. It began with the Burmese invasion of 1819 resulting in the Seven Years Devastation which continued till 1826. In an article, Prof Gangmumei Kamei writes, "Burma occupied Manipur in 1819 and ruled the Kingdom for seven years and let loose a reign of terror. Burma took away 30,000 Manipuri prisoners to Ava. The valley was depopulated. It is estimated that at the height of the Burmese reign of terror, the population was reduced to 2000/3000 souls only (Brown: 1873). The people fled to the surrounding hills particularly the western hills of Tamenglong on their way to safer kingdom of Cachar."¹⁵⁵ After the British intervention in 1826, Manipur regained its freedom and henceforth, the relationship between Manipur and Britain strengthened. Around this time, the Bible was translated from English into Meeteilon in the Serampore bible translation (New Testament) by William Carey¹⁵⁶. The first British Political Agent in Manipur, Captain Gordon, was appointed in 1835. In 1839, "a clock had been imported from Culcatta for the first time. The English time was kept in the Palace and a Ghari Loisang (Office for ringing bell) was established"¹⁵⁷. Modern means of administration was gradually gaining legitimacy.

¹⁵⁵. Gangmumei Kamei, "The Glorious Exploits of the Manipur Levy: 1824-35," *E-Pao*, January 14, 2012, [The Glorious Exploits of the Manipur Levy 1824 35 \(e-pao.net\)](http://TheGloriousExploitsOfTheManipurLevy182435(e-pao.net))

¹⁵⁶. https://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/bib/works_bible.htm gives the year of publication as 1827 while Ch. Manihar mentions in page 212 of *A History of Manipuri Literature* that the Bible was translated into Meeteilon as early as 1824.

¹⁵⁷. Longjam Joychandra. ed. *The Lost Kingdom: Royal Chronicle of Manipur*, 115.

For the first time, translation was used as a political means of administration in 1863. A letter arrived from “the Government of India on the contention between the Maharaja and Mr. Durand”¹⁵⁸ which conveyed the justification of the Maharaja. The said letter was translated into Meeteilon and was hung in the market. The seed of modernity was planted in this century especially during the 36 years reign of King Chandrakirti from 1850 to 1886. He was the first Manipuri King who received English education and the first English School, Johnstone Middle English School which still survives till today was founded in 1885, a year before he left his throne¹⁵⁹. He was taught English along with some 30 boys in a primary school established by Captain Gordon at Langthabaal in 1837 on a trial basis. It was eventually abolished after the death of Captain Gordon in 1844 due to lack of support from the people of Manipur. It is recorded that they read English Grammar and Clift’s geography¹⁶⁰. As mentioned earlier in this paper, King Chandrakirta who was fascinated by the western civilization and educated in English began to “imbibe much of western culture, manners and tempers.”¹⁶¹ For the first time in Manipur, he introduced Post offices, Telegram offices, and hospitals etc. Written texts were slowly gaining legitimacy over orality while the Manipuri King continued to associate himself with the British Political agent through letters, more so since the 1826 Treaty of Yandabo which ended the Seven Years Devastation in Manipur. He accepted British titles such as KCSI (Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India) which was given to him for rendering timely help to the British troops.

However, this does not mean that the influence of Hinduism was waning in Manipur. On the contrary, King Chandrakirti continued and even expanded the religion infusing its

¹⁵⁸. Ibid. 170.

¹⁵⁹. Ch. Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 209.

¹⁶⁰. Wangam Somorjit, *Manipur: The Forgotten Nation of Southeast Asia*, (Imphal: Waba Publications, 2016), 351.

¹⁶¹. Ch. Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 209.

cultural elements into modern contexts. For example, he “gave punishment to those who did not prefix ‘Shri’ while writing the name of a person.”¹⁶² In the written form, a hallmark of modernity, a Meetei is inevitably identified as a Hindu by giving this honorific title. A Meetei could not exist without being a Hindu subject in the literary/modern world. The enforcing of this rule reflects a desperate attempt of forced acculturation to elevate the Meeteis to a “higher” rank. It is not a co-incidence that the Meetei kings after Pamheiba considered themselves as Kshatriyas and later in the twentieth century, prominent writers such as Hijam Anganghal refers to them as belonging to this particular caste¹⁶³. The tradition of prefixing the title “Shri” while addressing a man in formal documents and writings in the first half of the twentieth century began from this period onwards. By the 19th century, Bangla was so popular in Manipur that it became the medium of “communication with literature.” Those who sang Padavali¹⁶⁴ songs in Meeteilon were condemned and even ostracized in the early part of the 20th century. The story of translation in Manipur till the later parts of the 20th century is deeply interwoven with the culture and the religion of that period. 20th century discourse on culture and religion in Manipur was incomplete without the story of translation. Prof Joytirmoy writes in his 1985 paper, “In fact, literature of that age (19th century) is the hand made of her religion. It began with Manipuri translation (in Bengali script) of Sanskrit religious works and Bengali devotional songs and a few original compositions. In literature, it was mostly a period of translation of religious works.”¹⁶⁵

The British takeover in 1891 finally closed the century with Manipur losing its independence. Since the then king, Churachand, was left with little power over administration

¹⁶². Longjam Joychandra. ed. *The Lost Kingdom: Royal Chronicle of Manipur*, ix.

¹⁶³. Anganghal, Hijam. *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*. (Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1940).

¹⁶⁴. Vaishnava devotional songs.

¹⁶⁵. J. Roy, “Historical and Cultural Relation Between Manipur and Bengal”, (Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, April 23-May, 1985), 17.

of his own kingdom, the Brahma Sabha, an apex body of the Brahmins, became his platform to exhibit his authority over his people¹⁶⁶. The King, in an attempt to regain a sense of power and authority over his people, started imposing heavy taxes on the people such as “Chandan Senkhai”¹⁶⁷ which is a tax for putting *tika* on the face. Since the domain of religion and culture received lesser attention from the British government, although they have taken over the political power completely, the King and his group of ministers focused on controlling the cultural and religious aspects of the people. The Brahma Sabha had the sole authority to declare a person as *mangba* (impure) if and when a person does not abide by their rules. On top of this, an economic aspect also emerged while regulating these rules. Culture and religion no longer occupied a sacred space in its truest sense but were treated as something that could be negotiated through money. For instance, the Brahma Sabha could declare a person as *sengba* (pure) if a certain fee has been paid to them. It was an efficient way to kill two birds with one stone; to generate money as well as prove their legitimacy and authority in religious and cultural spaces. By the 1930’s, the Meetei society found itself hegemonized widely by the Hindu value system. Inherently oppressive in its nature¹⁶⁸, the weaker sections of the society (women and pangal, the Meetei Muslims) were suppressed and those Meeteis who didn’t follow Hinduism were declared *mangba* and were ostracized from the society. Despite continuous struggles over the decades against Indo-Aryan cultural assimilation following a transformative revivalist movement initiated by Naoriya Phulo in the 1940’s, majority of the Meetei still follow Hinduism and widely practice Hindu rituals today.

Section 2

2.3 Translation Projects in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

¹⁶⁶. John Parratt, *Wounded Land: Politics and Identity in Modern Manipur*, (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005).

¹⁶⁷. Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd, *Why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra critique of Hindutva philosophy, culture and political economy*, (SAGE Publications India, 2018).

Aftermath the British occupation of Manipur in 1891, Manipur was ruled indirectly by the British through her political agents and King Churachand was made the head of Manipur State Durbar for namesake. Many changes took place in Manipur during this period. The trend of translation activities also made a new beginning. The chapter maps out two primary trajectories wherein translation activities took place in Manipur in the beginning of the twentieth century. One was the need to produce modern books to fill the void of textbooks in formal schools while the other was the re-production of Sanskrit religious texts through translation. While the need to produce modern books was fulfilled by the translations of Bangla texts into Meeteilon, the later project was single-handedly fulfilled by the most prominent twentieth century Sanskrit scholar in Manipur, Phurailatpam Atombapu Sharma. The former was a direct result of modernity for which the seeds were planted in Manipur in the nineteenth century while the latter was an extension of the Hindu hegemony that blossomed in the eighteenth century in Manipur. Both these trends aided in sustaining and reinforcing the existing linguistic hegemony. It is interesting to note that in the twentieth century, few Manipuri books were translated into other languages while thousands of books from other languages were translated into Manipuri. Until the latter half of the twentieth century, only one or two texts were translated from Meeteilon into English. The first text which was translated from Meeteilon to English was the royal chronicle of Manipur, *Cheitharon Kumbaba* in 1897. It was translated from Meeteilon into English by Mr. Bama Charan Mukhrejee, a clerk of the regent, as ordered and commissioned by the British Government¹⁶⁹. Although the translation began in the month July in 1891, it took 6 years to complete it (1897)¹⁷⁰. Fourteen Pandits including Mr Naoriya Hidang and Mr. Sarang Panjee helped him in translating the chronicle. Under the order of the British Government, all the

¹⁶⁹. Longjam Joychandra. ed. *The Lost Kingdom: Royal Chronicle of Manipur*, i.

¹⁷⁰. Ibid.

recensions of the Royal Chronicle, *Cheitharol Kumbaba* was collected from the palace and the villages by Khuraijamba Lallup. In this particular case, translation was employed as a tool to expand the project of orientalism. Translation ceased to be a humanistic enterprise that connects peoples and languages echoing Niranjana's assertion. The Royal chronicle of a state was made to be translated by an "outsider", (a Bengali clerk who worked for the British Government) for the benefit of the British to gain "knowledge" and "understand" Manipur and its people. In the *Linguistic Survey of India* Vol III, Part III, compiled by G.A. Grierson, in page 23, he mentions the translation of the parable of the Prodigal son into Meeteilon by Rev. William Pettigrew in 1896 which was transliterated into Meetei Mayek by "Pandit Sarang Ojha" as specimen I for studying the language. Another two translations, one of folklore (prepared by Babu Bisharup Singh in 1899) and a folksong (Chingda Saatpi Ingellei)¹⁷¹, from Manipuri to English are provided as Specimen II and III respectively. These translations were made for the explicit purpose of examining and studying the language and not for its literary brilliance even though it was accepted as a literary language. It can be noted here that translation, in this case, became a manifestation of the orientalist project executed by the colonizers of "knowing" the "orient", rather than a mere linguistic exchange. This is an epitome of unequal exchange of translation. However, the chapter seeks to go beyond such a binary understanding of the system, the colonized and the colonizer. The paper deals with a new perspective of examining the translation scene in Manipur focused in the first half of twentieth century when Manipur was under British occupation. It explores the layered emergence of colonial modernity and Indo-Aryan hegemony in Manipur, how these two systems operate in a dominated space via a negotiation of the conflict of power. Rather than assuming the activity of translation as harmless and apolitical in nature, following the assertion highlighted in the descriptive translation studies, the chapter argues for a position

¹⁷¹. It is recorded that this folksong is from Hill Tippera (Tripura) which has 18,000 Meeteilon speakers at that time according to a report in the survey on page 1.

that locates translation as a site of power that needs to be studied critically. Translation is examined as a modernising agent and a platform where hegemonic dominance is perpetuated in the realm of language, literature and culture. The paper maps out two trajectories of translation in the early half of the twentieth century in Manipur. These trajectories are discussed and critically examined below.

2.3.1. Translations as Texts Books

It is clear that Sanskrit became a hegemonic language in Manipur in the early twentieth century. In the language hierarchy, Sanskrit is at the top, and then comes Bengali. While these two languages were taught formally in the newly introduced English schools, Meeteilon was excluded as a subject. It was only in 1907 that it was resolved to be included in the lower classes by King Churachand. Since 1909 Bengali literary texts began to be translated into Meeteilon to be used as Manipuri text books¹⁷². Makar Singh's *Mapi Lairik* and Munal Singh's *Mapi Lairik II* were introduced in the lower classes in 1910-1911 but these texts were replaced by Bengali Literature from class III onwards¹⁷³. The Bengali text books were later on replaced by the Meeteilon translations once the printing was completed. Manipuri was recognised by the Calcutta University as a Vernacular paper for Matriculation only in 1924 where Khwairakpam Chaoba's *Chhatra Macha* (1923) was prescribed as its text book. For the Intermediate Arts, Ashangbam Minaketan's *Basanta Seireng* which was inspired by Tagore's *Gitanjali* was prescribed as the text for the Manipuri Vernacular paper in 1931¹⁷⁴. It was only in 1948 that Manipuri was included as a BA vernacular paper for which translations was prescribed as its text books. It can be noted that half the titles of *Chhatra Macha* and *Basantagi Seireng* is constituted with borrowed words from the Indic languages, "Chhatra"

¹⁷². Thokchom Mangoljao, *Western Education in Manipur*, 60.

¹⁷³. Ibid.

¹⁷⁴. Ch. Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 218.

meaning “student” and “Basanta” meaning “spring”. To embellish the titles with words from the Indic languages, especially Sanskrit, Bangla and Hindi were considered as the norm for writing modern texts in this period. There are many more texts which follow this pattern.

It is mentioned in Ch. Manihar’s book *A History of Manipuri Literature* that “textbooks in Manipuri, *either translated or adapted from Bengali*, were introduced into the lower classes.” It is recorded in the Manipur State Archives annual report 2009-2011 that a health guide was translated into Manipuri by the Dy. Inspector of School Manipur, Assam in 1920 into *Hakchang Nada Yektanaba Pambei*. Which language it was translated from is not given, however. When Manipuri was first introduced in BA as a vernacular paper in 1948, Arambam Dorendrajit’s *Kangsa Bodh*, Ph. Vasudev Sharma’s *Sakuntala* and *Kapal Kundala* by M. Koirang were prescribed as BA texts¹⁷⁵. All three texts are either adaptations or translations from Sanskrit literature and Bengali literature.

Khwairakpam Chaoba translated Thomas Gray’s *Elegy*, one of the few western texts that were translated in the early half of the twentieth century in Manipur, and published it in his poetry book *Thainagi Leirang* in 1933. However, his translation was not complete; he translated only 60 lines while the complete elegy has 128 lines. He also wrote school English textbooks where he translated certain English sentences such as greetings, introductions and short conversations¹⁷⁶.

An interesting point to note here is that although it was the British who occupied Manipur, very few English texts were translated into Meeteilon or vice versa until the 1960’s. Except for the translation of a small section of *Numit Kappa* into English attached as an appendix (II) in *The Meitheis* by T.C. Hudson which was published in 1908 and Khwairakpam Chaoba’s translation of *Elegy*, there is no record of any translations from

¹⁷⁵ Ch. Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 218.

¹⁷⁶ Thokchom Prafullo, ed. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahaakki Sahitya*.

Meeteilon into English or vice versa in the first half of the twentieth century. In contrast, Manipur witnessed a boom in the production of translation from Sanskrit and Bengali into Meeteilon in this period. One way of explaining this phenomenon could be to look at how western education was brought and administered in Manipur and which languages were preferred, encouraged and used in these schools. The Brahmins from India, mostly Bengalis, who came as British government employees engaged directly with the Manipuris and ran the political administration including the education sector. Most of the teachers in schools and colleges were either non-Meeteis or Meeteis from Cachar and Silcher. In 1895, in the month of July, the headmaster post of Johnstone School was transferred from William Pettigrew to one Babu Maheswar Das¹⁷⁷. In 1897, under the advice of Reverend Pettigrew, a Meetei from Cachar was appointed as the Inspecting Pandit to look after the L.P. schools in the valley¹⁷⁸. In 1903, when Pettigrew retired, one Meetei Tonu Singh from Sylhet took charge of the situation and became the first Meetei Deputy Inspector. In 1923, Jamini Sundar Guha who served as the second master was promoted to the post of Head Master for Johnstone School after the British official who acted as the Head Master left the school¹⁷⁹. Those few Meeteis who were appointed for various positions in the schools were from the neighbouring Bengali speaking states such as Cachar and Sylhet as we can note from these records. Under these circumstances, Bengali was institutionalised as the legitimate modern language of Manipur. Being educated meant to be able to speak in Bengali and to be familiar with its literature. Thokchom Mangoljao states in his book *Western Education in Manipur Vol 1*. that western education was introduced in Manipur through Bengali language and script¹⁸⁰. The first

¹⁷⁷. Thokchom Mangoljao, *Western Education in Manipur*, 14.

¹⁷⁸. Ibid., 40.

¹⁷⁹. Ibid., 34.

¹⁸⁰. Ibid., 3.

middle English school in Manipur (Johnstone Middle English School) founded by Sir James Johnstone in 1885 used to teach Bengali language and script to the students until 1924 when Calcutta University finally recognised Meeteilon written in Bengali script for matriculation¹⁸¹. About a decade before the establishment of the Johnstone English school, in the month of February 1872, General W. F. Nuthall succeeded in establishing a school for boys and kept it running for a few years. 111 boys were registered in this school when the political agent of Manipur visited it. It is recorded in the *Annual Administrative Report on Manipur 1872-73* that these boys were taught Bengali and to translate Manipuri into Bengali and vice versa. No other subject is mentioned of being taught in this school, not even English¹⁸².

We can further observe that out of the three Middle English schools in the state in 1927, the only one in Imphal is a Bengali School which followed the curriculum prescribed for Middle English Schools in Assam. The other two which were missionary schools were located in the hill areas¹⁸³. In 1927, out of fifteen masters in Johnstone School, eleven were Manipuris while four were Bengalis comprising almost one-third of the teachers. Among these 15 masters, two were Sanskrit pandits¹⁸⁴. Above all, Sanskrit was a compulsory subject¹⁸⁵. It is not surprising to note that between 1910 to 1931, as far as the number of students who were sent outside the state for further studies through state scholarship are accounted for, those who went for learning Sanskrit was the highest. While 102 students were

¹⁸¹. Thokchom Mangoljao, *Western Education in Manipur*, 4.

¹⁸². Wangam Somorjit, *Manipur: The Forgotten Nation of Southeast Asia*, 354.

¹⁸³. G.P. ICS Stewart, *Administration Report of the Manipur State, 1932-1933*, (Imphal, 1933), 18.

¹⁸⁴. *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁸⁵. Thokchom Mangoljao, *Western Education in Manipur*, 43.

sent for learning Sanskrit, only 59 students were sent for medicine and only 23 were sent for engineering¹⁸⁶. Sanskrit as a subject was given more priority than the science subjects.

As it has been mentioned before, since there was a dearth of local teachers, Bengali teachers from outside the state or Meeteis residing in the neighbouring areas such as Cachar were appointed in Schools while, for further studies, the students were sent to India. King Churachand was sent to Mayo College in Ajmer in 1895 while his first son Budhachandra was sent to Rajkumar College in Raipur. It is recorded that Budhachandra visited England in 1922 for a brief period of six months¹⁸⁷. King Churachand's second son Priyabrata Singh was sent to Rajkumar College in Raipur, and then to Allahabad, who received his BA degree in 1934. His other son Lokendra Singh was sent to the same college that he himself attended, i.e., Mayo College in Ajmer¹⁸⁸. The *Administration Report on the Manipur State for the 1926-27* records that twelve scholars were studying outside the state aided by State Scholarships. Three were in the Murarichand College, Sylhet, one was in Calcutta, four scholars in Berry White Medical School, Dibrugarh and four were learning Sanskrit in Banaras and Nabadwip¹⁸⁹. By 1931-32, six scholarship holders were in Cotton College Guwahati, seven were in Murarichand College, Sylhet, and one was in Berry White Medical College, Dibrugarh in Assam, one in Government Medical College, Calcutta while three were studying Sanskrit in Nabadwip¹⁹⁰. The Manipuri students who went outside the state for further studies received the same education that was meant for the Indian subjects. They were taught the Indian languages like Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi. They received western education through foreign languages that were designed for the Indian subjects. While the

¹⁸⁶. Thokchom Mangoljao, *Western Education in Manipur*, 37.

¹⁸⁷. E.F. ICS. Lydall, *Administration Report of the Manipur State for the year 1943-44* (Imphal, 1945), 7.

¹⁸⁸. Joytirmoy Roy, *History of Manipur*, 155.

¹⁸⁹. C.G. I.C.S. Crawford, *Administration Report of Manipur State for the year 1926-27*, (Imphal, 1927), 20.

¹⁹⁰. G.P. ICS Stewart, *Administration Report of the Manipur State, 1932-1933*, (Imphal, 1933).

Indian students were leaving for Britain for higher studies, Manipuri students were leaving for Sylhet, Ajmer, Calcutta and Nabadwip etc. Although the factors for this trend could have been financial or otherwise, we can safely presume that it is more than clear that western education did not reach Manipur simply via English language but with other mediating languages viz. Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi.

Western education not only meant the study of the natural sciences but an augmentation of the prevailing hegemonic languages to the status of the official language to be used for official purposes and in public spaces. Henceforth, in literature as well, we could see the expansion of the influence of Bengali and Sanskrit Literature. Through the introduction of western education, modernity reached Manipur via a foreign language which was not English. A modern Manipuri literature could be consecrated only through these two languages. Only after adorning with Bengali jargons and Sanskrit chants could Manipuri literature become a modern literature.

2.3.2. Translations of Sanskrit Religious Texts

Early twentieth century translation in Manipur would not have had its birth without Atombapu Sharma. He played an enormous role in promoting Sanskrit through both his translations and his original books written in Manipuri. The single most prolific translator in the early half of the twentieth century was Phurailatpam Atombapu Sharma. Atombapu's reputation could be attributed to what Andre Lefevere calls the double control factor; the first factor represented by the *professionals* who work within the literary system and the concept of *patronage* that functions outside the literary system. Owner of Churchand Printing Works, the first private Printing press in Manipur established in 1930, Atombapu was patronised by King Churchand, who secured his financial and social status by appointing him as a court member. Atombapu Sharma had himself appointed as the Sanskrit teacher in Johnstone

School after persuading the Durbar to enforce Sanskrit as part of the curriculum¹⁹¹. He was the Junior Sanskrit Pandit in Johnstone School since 1916 onwards where he stayed for 20 years. He took up the task of translating the *Srimad Bhagavat Gita* and many other Sanskrit religious texts into Manipuri starting from 1933 and self-published them over the years. He first began his venture as a translator with the translation of Kautilya's *Arthasastra* in 1925. *Ras Panchadhyay*, *Rig Veda (Vol. 1)*, *Gopal Sahasranam*, *Hari Bhakti Vilasa*, *Hari Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu Bindu*, *Chaitanya Charitamrita Slok Mala*, *Chanakya Slok*, *Deva Puja*, *Ujjwala Nilamani Kiran* and *Chandi*¹⁹² are some of the religious texts that he translated into Manipuri before his death in 1963. He has over 100 translation publications to his credit. Atombapu Sharma was such a pious translator that upon his death-bed he wished that he must be not cremated but buried because it would be his atonement for not completing the task of translating the *Srimad Bhagavat Gita* into Meeteilon¹⁹³. Some of his original works include *Manipur Purabrata*, *Harei Maye*, *Manipur Itihas* (1942), *Pakhangba* (1952), *Meitei*¹⁹⁴ *Kirtan*, *Sankritan Mahayagya* etc.¹⁹⁵ The only notable translation during the colonial era other than Atombapu Sharma's translations was Asangbam Mineketan *Sita Banabas* which was published in 1936. The role of the *professionals* is dealt with in the following section.

2.3.2.1. Beyond the text: A Plea for Recognition

¹⁹¹. John Parratt, *Wounded Land: Politics and Identity in Modern Manipur*, (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005).

¹⁹². Ch. Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 286.

¹⁹³. Kojam Brajabihari, "Atombapu: Ningsingba Khara" In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, edited by Arambam Somorendra Somorendra, (Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989), 19.

¹⁹⁴. Meitei is another name for Meetei which was used earlier in Manipur. Meetei was first used by Naoriya Phulo, the harbinger of the Meetei revivalist movement in Manipur and it was adopted as the formal name of the Meiteis by the state government in the late 2000's.

¹⁹⁵. Ninthoukhongjam Khelchandra, "Panditraj Atombapu Sharma" In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, edited by Arambam Somorendra, (Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989), 25.

Looking beyond the texts and inquiring the nature of the circumstances of these translations give us some stark revelations. Considering the fact that he was a Sanskrit scholar, it is not surprising that he would choose to translate Sanskrit religious texts. He was not introduced to English till in his late 20's. He could understand the language but there is no evidence that he could have spoken it¹⁹⁶. In this context, it seems probable that Atombapu knew very little or had little interest in the western texts that were popular during his time. His sole commitment was towards the advancement of Sanskrit in Manipur.

His primary objective of translating these large volumes of Sanskrit texts was, accordingly to Elangbam Nilakanta¹⁹⁷, to prove that Meetei has Arya blood, an Aryan origin, because his time demands that only such a recognition would give the mongoloid Meeteis its deserved respect and dignity. Nilakanta, who represents one of the *professionals* forming the canon within the literary system, proclaims him as a renaissance man for bringing forth change and transformation in Manipuri culture stating thus, "If one knows not Panditraj Atombapu, it is impossible to understand Manipuri culture. If one knows not Manipuri culture, it is impossible to understand Panditraj."¹⁹⁸ Nilakanta's statement reflects the closeness between culture and literature bestowing Atombapu's texts an important place in the field of both Manipuri Literature and culture. His contribution is placed on a pedestal since it cultivated a *dignified* life for the Manipuris. However, it needs to be called into attention that the congruent usage of Sanskrit with dignity and assuming the process of Aryanization as moving towards a *dignified* life echoes the civilizing mission of the Europeans.

¹⁹⁶. Ananda Mohon. "Reminiscence: Oja Ama Oina Atombapu Sharma" In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, edited by Arambam Somorendra, (Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989), 31.

¹⁹⁷. E. Nilakanta, "Manipuri Sabhyatagi Nabajagarangi Murti – Panditraj." In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations, 1889-1989*, edited by Arambam Somorendra, (Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989), 58.

¹⁹⁸. Ibid.

In order to explain the translation phenomenon in the first half of the twentieth century in Manipur, it is indispensable to address the issue of the politics of recognition, especially in the case of Atombapu Sharma that was shaped by both the *professionals* and *patronage* simultaneously within and outside the literary system. In 1948, the title Panditaraj was given to Atombapu Sharma by Calcutta Government Sanskrit College in recognition of his efforts in promoting Sanskrit culture¹⁹⁹. In 1947, a year before, he was conferred the title “Garesna Siromani” by Manipuri Sahitya Parishad²⁰⁰. He was recognised and appreciated for his works in promoting Sanskrit in both Manipur and India. In 1951, he became a member of Bhartya Sanskrit Sangam while in 1956 he was selected as an expert panel member of the committee whose work was to screen the students of Manipuri dance for receiving the Indian Government scholarship²⁰¹. From the recommendation of the Sanskrit Commission, he received a life time pension and on 15 August, 1959 he was given a Certificate of Honour by the President of India. Another *professional*, the Indian linguists Suniti Kumar Chatterjee hails him as a “present day Rishi”, “an Augustya in Eastern India”²⁰². This politics of recognition²⁰³ by giving him certificates of honours, titles and certain govt. positions and pension cannot be ignored while dealing with the question of Indo-Aryan language and Indo-Aryan cultural hegemony in Manipur. It reinforces a false and distorted reality where an elevated mode of living exists only when an Aryan identity is created. Proximity to the Indian Aryan culture remains the only basis for attaining a dignified life. Through giving him such titles, he is given an Aryan identity, the “Panditaraj”, a “Rishi”, even an “Augustya”. In the case of Atombapu, *patronage* was practiced by the King, established literary institutions,

¹⁹⁹. Ninthoukhongjam Khelchandra, “Panditraj Atombapu Sharma” In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, edited by Arambam Somorendra, (Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989), 25.

²⁰⁰. Ibid.

²⁰¹. Ibid.

²⁰². Ibid.

²⁰³. Charles Taylor, “The politics of recognition.” in *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, 25-73, 1997.

official administrative bodies and even the state itself. Thereby, the reciprocation of his translations with appreciation and accolades could be seen as a means of expanding the legitimacy of the Indo-Aryan hegemony in Manipur through the literary world since his merits only pertain to how far he was involved in sustaining and augmenting the status of Sanskrit to the extent of claiming the Meeteis as an Indo-Aryan descent.

2.3.2.2. Atombapu's Texts and the Erasure of Meeteilon

One of the most distinctive features in Atombapu Sharma's writings is his extravagant use of Sanskrit, especially the titles in the front matter of his books. Table 1 gives a list of the Sanskrit words he uses in place of Meeteilon words in the front matter of his books. He uses these Sanskrit words in place of the Meeteilon equivalents since Sanskrit was considered as the superior literary language, the language of the educated. As far as he is concerned, there is no need to translate these Sanskrit words into Meeteilon, an inferior language. For his texts to become truly literary, it must be adorned with Sanskrit. It was clear that Sanskrit was gradually replacing the formal registers of Meeteilon marking the public space as its territory. This was a common feature in the texts of the emerging writers as well. The titles of the poetry, novels, and other literary pieces published in the early twentieth century unwittingly reveal the alarming influence of Sanskrit in Manipuri Literature. The title of the first Manipuri novel by Dr. Lamabam Kamal published in 1930 is *Madhabi*, a corrupt version of *Mādhavi* while the first Manipuri daily published in 1933²⁰⁴ by Phurailatpam Atombapu Sharma in his private printing press was called *Dainik Manipur Patrika*. Even Khwairakpam Chaoba avows in his foreword to *Chhatra Macha*, the first text book for the Manipuri subject, that he has not translated some Sanskrit *Sabdha* as he considered them as Meeteilon whose meanings are known by all. The fact that it has to be stated beforehand and that he still differentiates between Sanskrit *Sabda* and Meeteilon words nevertheless signifies an

²⁰⁴. Nonthoukhongjam Khelchandra, "Panditraj Atombapu Sharma" In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, 22-27, edited by Arambam Somorendra, (Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989).

independent and a separate identity of Manipuri language from that of Sanskrit. Ironically, it was during this period that Meeteilon began to gain a sense of dignified identity as a result of the extensive efforts of the Manipuri writers acknowledging its significance and values in their works. Thongam Bipin explores the ambiguous attitude of the Manipuri writers towards Meeteilon in his articles. On the one hand, the following famous quote given in his article²⁰⁵ from Khwairakpam Chaoba's poem "*Meitei Kabi*" serves as a reminder for the desire of the Manipuri writers to elevate the status of Meeteilon.

"Lairaraba Eronni

Khangdabana Haibani

Meitei Kavi Lakkhini.."

"A poor language ours is,

Says those who are ignorant,

Meitei poet shall come.."²⁰⁶

On the other hand, the use of the Sanskrit term *Kavi* shows the reliance of the Manipuri writers on Sanskrit while composing a modern text. Inserting Sanskrit words became a prerequisite and a measuring scale to judge the value of the writings. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power and its construction through a combination of recognition and misrecognition is reflected in Modern Manipuri literature. The only difference that remains is that the misrecognition, in this case, is not only a misrecognition of the imposition of Sanskrit but also of the existence of literary texts purely in Meeteilon. Naoriya Phulo, contemporary of Atmobapu Sharma and the pioneer of the revivalist

²⁰⁵. Thongam Bipin, "Making of a Normative Meitei: Re-reading of Khwairakpam Chaoba and Lamabam Kamal" *Kangla Lanpung* XII (I): 51-84, 2018.

²⁰⁶. Ibid.

movement in Manipur quit translating into Meeteilon from other languages and wrote his own original books using purely Meeteilon words only²⁰⁷. Atombapu Sharma and Naoriya Phulo embody the two extreme poles in this measuring literary scale. While Atombapu Sharma who committed his whole life in translating and promoting Sanskrit literature was cherished with fame and honour, Naoriya Phulo who made a conscious effort of avoiding the use of Sanskrit in his writings was ostracized from the society for refusing to identify himself as a Hindu. He was never projected as a poet or a writer. His writings are not included in the school syllabus and are not recognised as part of the twentieth century literature. This non-recognition or misrecognition sustains the narrative of the indigenous community being an inferior community and thus makes them lead what Charles Taylor would call a “reduced mode of living” in a modern society. It reveals how the Indo-Aryan hegemony works in Manipur through the literary world where translation plays a vital role. Sanskrit and Bengali literature were construed as the prerequisite elements to create what was called modern Manipuri literature.

2.4. Conclusion

During the colonial period, translation not only served as the tool to generate a modern Manipuri Literature via a re-production of the translated text books and Sanskrit religious texts but it also shaped and created a modern Manipuri identity represented in the literature of the period which legitimizes Hinduism as a crucial component in the modernization process of Manipur. It is no co-incidence that Atombapu is regarded as the “Father of Manipuri Journalism and one of the creators of Manipur Public life”²⁰⁸ by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, a Bengali linguist who believes in the *intrinsic*²⁰⁹ importance of the Aryan

²⁰⁷. Naoriya Phulo, *Lainingham Naoriya Phulo gi wareng apunba*, (Imphal: M S Tampha Publication, 2010).

²⁰⁸. Nonthoukhongjam Khelchandra, “Panditraj Atombapu Sharma” In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, 22-27, edited by Arambam Somorendra, (Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989).

²⁰⁹ S. K. Chatterji, “‘Adivasi’ Literatures of India: The Uncultivated ‘Adivasi’ Languages”, 5.

languages and associates the Indian *civilization* with the Aryan language. The emergence of journalism, a crucial component of modernization in Manipur, is largely associated with Atombapu Sharma, owner of the first printing machine in Manipur. Through a modern channel, he was able to legitimize Hinduism as a part and parcel of Manipuri modernity. He projected a seamless merging of Hinduism and modernity that allowed him to become the perfect candidate to be elevated as the ideal which was demonstrated through giving him recognitions and status by the state with the support of the elite class. In a similar fashion, Meeteilon could carve a space in the public sphere via school textbooks that were all translations from Bengali and Sanskrit literature. The unflinching nature of viewing translation in Manipuri literature as an apolitical humanistic enterprise by the academicians limits the study of possibilities of how we can understand the Manipuri society and how modernity functions in it. The argument is to break away from this limitation and open the door of possibilities by treating translation as one of the categories of analysis to better understand the relationship between literary culture and the modern Manipuri existence.

Chapter 3

Translation in Manipur: 1947 -1992

Chapter 3 Outline

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Translations and Translated texts: 1947-1992

3.2.1 Translations from Bengali

3.2.2 Translations from Sanskrit

3.2.3 Translations from English

3.2.4 Translations from other languages

3.2.5 Translations from Meeteilon to other languages

3.3 Formation of the modern Manipuri literary discourse

3.3.1 Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's "'Adivasi' Literatures of India: The Uncultivated 'Adivasi' Languages in India" and Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education.": A critical comparison.

3.3.2 Modern Manipuri Literature as represented in the *Indian Literature*: Cultural hegemony and dominance.

3.3.3 Inclusion of Manipuri Language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution: Extending the hegemony

3.4 Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the translation scene in Manipur in the colonial period has been discussed along two trajectories: translations of Sanskrit religious texts and the translations from Bengali literature into Manipuri (to be used as textbooks in imparting western education). During this period, Phurailatpam Atombapu Sharma created himself as the single most prolific translator in Manipur. Owing to the patronship offered by Maharaj Churachand and as the owner of the first private printing press in Manipur, Atombapu Sharma translated several Sanskrit texts and self-published more than 100 books in total. On the other hand, the production of textbooks relied heavily on the translations from Bengali Literature.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the translation scene in Manipur in the latter half of the 20th century. After World War II, with the increase of private printing houses, there was a drastic increase in the production of translated books. During the colonial period, the translation project was primarily to make Sanskrit and Bengali literature available in Manipuri to “enrich” Manipuri Literature. In the latter half of the century, more translations from Bengali literature were produced and incorporated into the education system while, as far as Sanskrit Literature is concerned, there was a shift towards popularizing it to the common people including children rather than catering to the taste of the few elite scholars. Atombapu’s translations were full of Sanskrit terms that they were hardly comprehensible to the common people. Adaptations and shortened versions were produced aimed for children particularly. *Domestication* was preferred to *foreignization* as a technique of translation. Although the Sanskrit texts still retained its sacredness, it was not exclusive anymore. The new translations became more and more accessible and inclusive. This chapter suggests that efforts were made to accommodate it into the popular literary

discourse in the form of modern literature; rather than keeping their circulation limited to the elite circle.

The second section looks at the formation of the discourse around modern Manipuri literature which was initiated with the recognition of Manipuri language by the Sahitya Akademi in 1971. Modern Manipuri literature began to be looked at as part of a hierarchical Indian literary tradition. To understand the narratives around the status of modern Manipuri literature, this section critically examines the rationalities that were involved in composing the corpus of modern Manipuri literature. A critical analysis of the articles written about Manipuri literature in the journal *Indian Literature* from 1971 to 1992 published by the Sahitya Akademi is provided to dwell deeper into the arguments.

3.2 Translations and Translated texts: 1947-1992

3.2.1 Translations from Bengali Literature

Several Manipuri writers took up the task of translating various literary texts of popular Bengali writers. It was no longer primarily translated to be used as textbooks, although some of them were included in the Manipuri syllabus of BA and MA. I.S. Kangjam notes in his paper²¹⁰ that the lion's share of literary translations in Meeteilon is that of Bengali Literature. Two of the most popular Bengali writers among the translators in Manipur were Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. Several Manipuri writers have translated their works beginning with Bankim's *Kapal Kundala* translated by Mutum Koireng in 1948 and *Durgeshnandini* by Ayekpam Shyamsunder in 1958²¹¹; as a result, multiple versions of their works are available in Manipuri literature. Ayekpam Shyamsunder, especially, had taken up the task of translating the works of Bankim Chandra

²¹⁰ I.S. Kangjam, "Sanskrit, Bangla amasung Bharatki atei lonsinggi sahityagi Manipuri anubadna Manipuri Sahityada piba Ithin," in *Manipuri Handok Sahitya* (Imphal: The Cultural Forum Manipur, 2007), 48-52.

²¹¹ Chongtham Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 285.

and Sarat Chandra in a significant manner. His translation of *Kapal Kundala* is still used as the prescribed textbook for Manipuri BA students (MIL, Unit-4, Anubad Sahitya) and has been reprinted 7 times. It has also been transliterated into Meetei mayek.

As stated in his book, Chongtham Manihar affirms that “the entire works of Bankim and Sarat Chandra are now available in Manipuri”²¹². A list of translations by Ayekpam Shyamsunder is given below in Table 3.1.

Iboyaima Haobam also translated Sarat Chandra’s *Parineeta* as *Luhonglabi Nupi* and *Bipradas* in 1968²¹³. Chongtham Rajen (1979)²¹⁴ and M. Ramcharan Singh (1960)²¹⁵ also translated Sarat Chandra’s *Devdas*. Commissioned by the Manipur state government, Sarat Chandra’s *Grihadaha* (2nd part) was translated by G. Surchand Sharma as *Yum Chakpa* in 1985. Prabodh Kumar Sanyal’s *Priyo Bandhabi* was also translated by G. Surchand Sharma and published in 1967 with a publication grant provided by Manipur government. Its second edition was brought out in 1981. Another prolific translator of Sarat Chandra’s works is L. Raghumani Sharma. He translated *Baikunther Will* in 1990, *Pather Dabi* as *Lambigi Dabi* in 1990, *Arakshaniya* as *Leisabi Sari* in 1992, and also *Chobi* in 1992. He also translated *Nabab Nandini* in 1971, a sequel to Bankim Chandra’s *Durgeshnandini* written by Damodar Mukhopadhyay.

Lourembam Iboyaima translated Michael Madhusudan Dutta’s *Virangana Kavya* (1966), *Krishnakumari* (1968), *Padmavati* (1971) and *Meghanad Bodh Kavya* (1973), and

²¹² Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 28.

²¹³ Mayanglambam Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983* (Imphal: Apunba Naharol Sakti, 1989), 17.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 72.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 73.

Rabindranath Tagore's *Malini* (1968)²¹⁶. Michael Madhusudan Dutta's *Meghanad Bodh Kavya* was quite popular throughout the 20th century. Beginning its first translation by Hawaibam Nabadipchandra in 1934 which was published in 1939²¹⁷, it has been prescribed as a textbook for Elective Manipuri in the BA level under Manipur University²¹⁸. The first canto was reprinted in 1958²¹⁹ by Book Land, New Market, Imphal which was followed by reprinting it three more times by Manipuri Sahitya Parishad where the first edition was made in 1965 with 2000 copies and the 3rd edition in 1990 with 3000 copies²²⁰. According to H. Radhakanta Singh²²¹, G.S., Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Nabadipchandra's translation is unique and can be said to be a product of Manipuri literature itself since his translation has very few Sanskrit words even though the original Bengali novel was heavily adorned with Sanskrit words, an indication that *domestication* was the preferred technique.

Meghanad Bodh Kavya was translated again by Ningombam Ibobi Singh in 1981 and A. Minaketan in 1963²²². Ningombam Ibobi also translated Krittivasa's *Ramayana* (1963) and Kasiram Das's *Mahabharata* Vol 1 (1965) and Vol 2 (1968)²²³. R.K. Shitaljit translated "Narottam Thakur's *Lalsa* (1950), *Srimad Bhagavat Gita* (1965) and *Vaisnava Padavali*

²¹⁶ Mayanglambam Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983* (Imphal: Apunba Naharol Sakti, 1989), 17.

²¹⁷ In *A History of Manipuri Literature* by Ch. Manihar, it is mentioned that the text was not published until 1965 but a copy is found in the archive.org as uploaded by an archivist under the username Public Resource where the said text is published by Thabal Printing Works, Uripok in 1939 containing the first canto with reviews given by the daily newspaper *Lalit Manjuri Patrika*, Lairenmayum Ibungohal Singh, BA, BL, and Khwairakpam Chaoba, vernacular textbook composer for matriculation and I.A.

²¹⁸ <https://dlpimanipur.gov.in/textbooks.html>

²¹⁹ Hawaibam Nabadipchandra, *Meghanad Tuva Kavya* (Imphal: Book Land, 1958).

²²⁰ Hawaibam Nabadipchandra, *Meghanad Tuva Kavya*, (Imphal: Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, 1990).

²²¹ See "Nabadipchandra Singh gi Maramda" in the front matter of the publication by Manipuri Sahitya Parishad.

²²² Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*, 67.

²²³ Ibid., 14.

(1972)”²²⁴. *Gitanjali* by Tagore has been translated by both A. Minaketan and S. Krishnamohan²²⁵. *Tulsi Ramayana* translated by one L. G.C. was published in 1968²²⁶. In the field of drama, Arambam Somorendra notes that “N. Thanin, a pioneer artist and B. Nutanchandra Sharma were the major translators who gave many translated plays of D.L. Roy and other Bengali playwrights to the Post World War II Manipuri drama”²²⁷. *Evam Indrajit* by Badal Sircar was translated by MK Binodini as *Amasung Indrajit* in 1990²²⁸.

3.2.2. Translations from Sanskrit Literature

In the latter half of the twentieth century, Sanskrit remained an important source language for translations into Meeteilon. Several texts were translated more than once by different translators between 1947 and 1992. Kalidasa’s *Abhigyan Sakuntalam* was translated and published in 1948 by Phurailatpam Basudev Sharma²²⁹. It was later translated by the noted Sanskrit Scholar Aribam Brajabihari Sharma in 1956²³⁰. He was the principal of Government Sanskrit Tol and a lecturer in the then J.N. University. In his translation, many literary words are still kept in the Indo-Aryan languages. More than half of the words used in the “*Wahei Ama Anidang*” of the front matter are not Meeteilon words. He also translated several other Sanskrit texts such as *Kumarsambhav* (1963), *Malavikagnimitra* (1964), *Meghadut* (1967), *Raghuvamsa* (1968), *Uttar Ram Charitam* (1971) and *Mrichhakatikam*

²²⁴ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 286.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*, 50.

²²⁷ Arambam Somorendra, “Manipuri Drama,” *Indian Literature* Vol. 44, No. 2 (196) (March-April, 2000), 32-39.

²²⁸ <http://www.imasi.org/biography.php>

²²⁹ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 285.

²³⁰ Ibid.

(1972)²³¹. Out of these, *Meghadut* was rendered into Manipuri earlier in 1958 by Khumanthem Gourakishore²³². His translation has been reprinted 6 times over the years (1965, 1989, 1993, 1996, and 2004) to make it available for the University students as stated by the publisher, Khumanthem Ongbi Ibetombi. After the 1968 translation by Brajabihari, commissioned by the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad²³³ in 1972, *Raghuvamsa* was translated by R.K. Sanatomba (1969)²³⁴, Lourembam Iboyaima Singh²³⁵ and Kalachand Shastri. In its 1972 publication, the then General Secretary of the Parishad, Hijam Guno gives the reason for the publication as “to solve the problem of non-availability of Sanskrit translated texts to be used as textbooks for Manipuri language and literature which has been added as a subject recently in the MA level.” Using translated texts as textbooks for Manipuri subject continues to be a notable factor for the translation projects in the latter half of the century.

Lourembam Iboyaima also translated Sanskrit texts such as *Swapnavasavadattam* (1968), and *Pratima* (1974)²³⁶. While Gokul Sastri translated *Kiratarjjaniya* (1964), *Uttar Ram Charitam* (1968) and *Ratnavali* (1972), G. Surchand Sharma translated “Bana Bhatta’s *Kadambari* (1965), *Manu Samhita* (1967), Nandikeswar’s *Abhinay Darpan*, Jiva Goswami’s *Ujjwala Nilamani* (1978), *Chanakya Slok* (1981) and Bharata’s *Natya Sastra*”²³⁷. It can be noted that many of these texts have been already translated by Phurailatpam Atombapu Sharma in the first half of the century.

²³¹ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 285

²³² http://www.e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=reviews.books.Reading_Kh_Gourakishore_Megh_dut_in_Manipuri_Part_1_By_Irengbam_Mohendra

²³³ Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*, 66.

²³⁴ Ibid., 84.

²³⁵ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 285.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid, 286.

One of the most prominent translators was the Sanskrit scholar, Chingangbam Kalachand Shastri, who “handled alone translating Vyasa’s *Mahabharat* since 1956 and till now²³⁸ he has published the 29th volume covering up to the “Anusasan Parva” short of only one or two volumes to complete the work”²³⁹. He had already translated three more volumes by 1992 of which the 32nd volume was published in 1999 by Chingangbam Ongbi Ghambini Devi²⁴⁰. The first half of these volumes entitled as *Manipuri Mahabharat* were published by Manipuri Mahabharat Committee (printed in Mahabharat Press) while the latter half were self-published and printed in Churachand Printing works. This shows that the translation works were taken up as part of the acculturation project in an organized manner as well as in the individual level by those who were patronized by the king and the elite circle. Chongtham Manihar states that while Atombapu’s translations are “pedantic” and “heavily blended with Sanskrit”, Kalachand’s is more “homely”. In other words, Atombapu’s translations gave emphasis on *foreignization* while Kalachand incorporated the approach of *domestication*. Kalachand Shastri’s translations accentuated the popularity of the Mahabharat making it easily readable to the common people. He also translated the *Bhagavad Gita* in 1961 where he states that his translation is in the verse form whereas the earlier translations available in Manipuri are mostly in the form of commentaries. Despite being in the verse form, his translation of *Bhagavad Gita* is similar to his translations of the *Mahabharat*; they are easily readable and the rhythm makes it even more exciting and melodious.

In the introductory note given to the first volume of the *Manipuri Mahabharat*, the rationale behind the translation is to *enrich* the literature of Manipur. *Mahabharat* has been

²³⁸ Manihar’s book was published in 1996.

²³⁹ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 286.

²⁴⁰ Chingangbam Kalachand Shastri, *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 32 (Imphal: Chingangbam Ongbi Ghambini Devi, 1999); Chingangbam Kalachand Shastri died in 1996, three years prior to the publication. He was born in 1902.

translated in several languages all over the world (Russian, English, Chinese, Japanese, German, African languages etc.) as well as in many Indian languages (Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bangla, Assamese, Tamil, Telugu, and Punjabi etc.)²⁴¹ and its significance has been discussed in all of these languages. Therefore, a need was felt to translate the same into Manipuri also. A meeting was called on 20th of June, 1955 at the residence of Dr. R.K. Ibungotonsana. In the meeting which was named Manipuri Mahabharat Sabha, a project to translate the *Mahabharat* in Volumes was recommended and Chingangbam Kalachand Shastri was chosen as the translator for this project. Under the guidance of Phurailatpam Daoji Sharma, Kalachand Shastri began the project of translating the *Mahabharat*²⁴². Receiving the Padma Shree award in 1971 in the field of Literature and Education gave Kalachand Shastri an influential position in the Manipuri literary society and with this recognition given by the Indian government; he began to self-publish the volumes of *Manipuri Mahabharat*. Raghumani Laishram (1969, 1972) and Yogendranath Giri Singh (1981) also translated²⁴³ the *Bhagavat Gita*.

There are also numerous adapted shorter versions of the Hindu epics. The following are worth mentioning. Along with *Uttar Ram Charit* (1968), Gokul Shastri translated and self-published shortened adaptations of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat* and *Kadambari* as *Asamba Ramayana* (1971), *Asamba Mahabharat* (1978) and *Asamba Kadambari* (1973)²⁴⁴. R.K. Shitaljit adapted *Sakuntala* in 1972 to be fit into a pocket size book²⁴⁵. Surchand Sharma also

²⁴¹ Kalachand Shastri, *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 1 (Imphal: Manipuri Mahabharat Sabha, 1956). See the Introductory note.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*, 70.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 30.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 76.

rendered the *Ramayana* as *Anganggi Ramayan* and Mahabharat as *Anganggi Mahabharat* (1967) for children²⁴⁶.

3.2.3. Translations from English

Compared to translations from Bengali and Sanskrit, English translations in Meeteilon were minimal. However, some prominent translations were made from English to Manipuri. Shakespeare's works were very popular during the 60's, 70's, and 80's and many of his works were translated into Manipuri during this period. While *Othello* was translated by Chongtham Somorendra²⁴⁷ and G.C. Tongbra²⁴⁸ in 1964 and 1965 respectively, Ashangbam Minaketan translated *Rape of Lucrece* as *Lucrecy Phamlanba* in 1965²⁴⁹. Achom Pasot²⁵⁰ and I.R. Babu²⁵¹ also translated *Julius Caesar* in 1972 and 1981 respectively. Achom Pasot also translated Shakespeare's *Romeo Juliet* (1972) and *Twelfth Night* (1972). While I.R. Babu translated Sophocles' *Antigone* in 1973, the most versatile and acclaimed playwright of his time, G.C. Tongbra staged multiple plays in Meeteilon translated from diverse authors namely Sophocles, William Shakespeare (*Macbeth* in 1969 and *Julius Caesar* in 1970), Henrik Ibsen, GB Shaw, Luigi Pirandello, Christopher Marlowe, Samuel Beckett etc²⁵². In 1974, Thiyam Narendra translated *Two Gentlemen of Verona* as *Veronagi pukchel chaoba ani*. L. Birendrakumar Sharma translated Marlow's *Doctor Faustus* in 1982 and

²⁴⁶ Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*, 86-87.

²⁴⁷ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 287.

²⁴⁸ The Catalogue of the exhibition of printed books from 1899 to 1972 collected by Peoples' Museum, Kakching, 2010 at Manipur State Art Gallery, Palace Compound, Imphal, 23.

²⁴⁹ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 287.

²⁵⁰ The Catalogue of the exhibition of printed books from 1899 to 1972 collected by Peoples' Museum, Kakching, 2010 at Manipur State Art Gallery, Palace Compound, Imphal, 42.

²⁵¹ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 287.

²⁵² Longjam Joychandra, "Engrazidagi handokpa Manipuri Anubad Sahitya," in *Manipuri Handok Sahitya* (Imphal: The Cultural Forum Manipur, 2007), 78-86.

Shakespeare's Sonnets in 1992²⁵³. Indrakumar Sagolsem translated *Arabian Nights* in 1977 and *Pinocchio* in 1978 as short stories²⁵⁴. A noteworthy translation that can be mentioned here is that of Ahmad Hassan's Manipuri translation of the *Holy Quran* from English in 1991. It was published by the Islam International Publications Limited, England²⁵⁵.

It is interesting to note that despite being translated from English into Manipuri, I.R. Babu's translations *Julius Caesar* and *Antigone* contain a significant number of non-Meeteilon words, from the Indo-Aryan linguistic tree. This could be seen as a continuation of embellishing Bengali, Sanskrit and Hindi words as formal and literary registers during the colonial period. A list of the words from Sankrit/Bengali/Hindi in the translations of *Julius Caesar* and *Antigone* is given in table 3.2.

In 1970, the English translation of *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* was translated into Meeteilon by Irengbam Bijoy²⁵⁶ and Thingjam Bijay²⁵⁷. Nabakumar Khaidem rendered the story of King Oedipus as *Ningthou Oedipus* in 1976²⁵⁸. Some Russian novels were also translated into Manipuri from its English versions. Moirangthem Birmangol Singh translated a novel of Nikolai Ostrovsky in 1982 and some poems of Vladimir Mayakovsky in 1987²⁵⁹. Mayanglambam Birmangol translated Maxim Gorky's *Mother* as *Ima* in 1969²⁶⁰. In 1990,

²⁵³ Longjam Joychandra, "Engrazidagi handokpa Manipuri Anubad Sahitya," 79.

²⁵⁴ Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*, 21.

²⁵⁵ Ahmad Hasan, *The Holy Quran: Arabic Text with Manipuri Translation*, (England: Islam International Publications Limited, 1991). Further research work could be done on the role of this particular translation and its impact on the pangal literary tradition. No other records are found of the translation of the Quran into Meeteilon before this.

²⁵⁶ Joychandra, "Engrazidagi handokpa Manipuri Anubad Sahitya," 79.

²⁵⁷ Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*, 56.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 46.

²⁵⁹ Joychandra, "Engrazidagi handokpa Manipuri Anubad Sahitya," 80.

²⁶⁰ Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*, 57.

T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" was translated as "Khouganglaba Lamlen" by Longjam Joychandra²⁶¹. Rajkumar Mani translated Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* as *Hanuba Amasung Samudra*²⁶² in 1992 and Octavio Paz's poem "The Broken Pitcher" as "Kairaba Ising Pun" in 1995²⁶³. Although the title contains the Bangla word Samudra in *Hanuba Amasung Samudra*, the translation has little to no Indo-Aryan words. There could be two reasons for this. Either, by 1992, the momentum in the language movement in Manipur after the 70's has had an effect on the usage of literary language or because Hemingway's style is unadorned, simple and direct, there was no need to embellish the translation with ornate and formal registers borrowed from Bangla and Sanskrit words.

3.2.4. Translations from other languages

As far as Hindi is concerned, Munshi Premchand's *Godaan* was translated into Manipuri by S. Nishan Singh in two volumes (Volume 1 in 1971, and Volume 2 in 1980). He also translated *Gaban* in 1980 and earlier in 1968, *Chitrlekha* by Bhagawati Charan Verma²⁶⁴. Elangbam Dinamani translated *Tyagpatra* by Jainendra Kumar in 1970, "Andha Yug" by Dharamvir Bharati in 1985 and Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* from Hindi as *Koksagol* in 1992²⁶⁵. There are translations from other Indian languages as well such as Urdu, Assamese, Gujarati, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil but they were translated from their respective English, Bengali or Hindi translations, the three major link languages²⁶⁶. It can be noted that the Buddhist text *Dhammapada* was translated by Kirtichan

²⁶¹ Joychandra, "Engrazidagi handokpa Manipuri Anubad Sahitya," 80.

²⁶² Rajkumar Mani, trans. *Hanuba amasung Samudra* (Imphal: Srimati Sulochana Devi and RK Tombi, 1992).

²⁶³ Joychandra, "Engrazidagi handokpa Manipuri Anubad Sahitya," 80.

²⁶⁴ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 287.

²⁶⁵ Elangbam Dinamani, trans. *Girish Karnad Ki Hayawadan (Koksagol)* (Imphal: Self publication, 1992).

²⁶⁶ Elangbam Dinamani, "Manipuri Handokpa Sahitya: Asha amadi samyasa" in *Manipuri Handok Sahitya* (Imphal: The Cultural Forum Manipur, 2007), 55-56.

Tensuba and was published by the All Manipur Buddhist Association, Imphal in 1983.²⁶⁷

Although Buddhism does not have a strong hold in Manipur, it has a small dedicated and committed following and hence some literary texts.

3.2.5. Translations from Meeteilon to other languages

Although the practice of literary translation was not unfamiliar in Manipur, very few texts were translated from Manipuri to other languages during the colonial period. In 1897, a translation of the royal chronicle *Cheitharol Kumbaba* by a Bengali clerk commissioned by the British Political Agent, Major Maxwell, was published followed by the translation of a section of *Numit Kappa* which was attached as an appendix (II) in T.C. Hudson's *The Meithei* in 1908. A few decades later, it was followed by the translation of Thomas Gray's *Elegy* by Khwairakpam Chaoba. Except the translations mentioned above and a few other sporadic publications, there were not many translations from Manipuri into English. It was the same case with other languages as well. The latter half of the century saw a significant jump in translating from Meeteilon into other languages. As far as Hindi is concerned, the first Manipuri text that was translated into Hindi is a collection of nine poems from Lamabam Kamal's poetry book *Lei Pareng* by Aribam Chhatra Dhwaja Sharma in 1962²⁶⁸. After this, in poetry, "Aadhunik Manipuri Kavitayen" (1989) and "Phagun Kee Dhool" (1990) were translated by Kangjam Ibohal Singh. The first Manipuri novel *Madhabi* was translated into Hindi by Ch. Nishan Ningtam in 1978 and Pacha Meetei's award winning *Imphal Amasung Magi Ising Nungsit ki Phibam* was translated as *Imphal Aur Iski Abo Hava* in 1984 by Yumnam Ibotombi. Some other notable translators who use Manipuri as source language and Hindi as target language are Dr. I.S. Kangjam (Tirtha Yatra), A. Krishnamohon Sharma

²⁶⁷ [http://www.e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Manipur and Religion.Buddhism In Manipur](http://www.e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Manipur%20and%20Religion.Buddhism%20In%20Manipur)

²⁶⁸ Devraj, "Importance of Translation in the Development of Manipuri Literature," in *Manipuri Handok Sahitya*, (Imphal: The Cultural Forum Manipur, 2007), 73.

(Thambalnu), Dr. Hajarimayum Subadani Devi (Lei Pareng), H. Anandi Devi (Sapne Ka Geet) etc.²⁶⁹

By the late 80's, a clear shift in focus could be seen in the literary translations spearheaded by the Department of Manipuri Language and Literature, Manipur University. Rather than translating texts from other languages to *enrich* Manipuri Literature, there was a desire to let the world know about Manipuri literature through translation. A conscious effort was made to translate the ancient Manipuri texts “so that those who do not know Manipuri Language may have a chance to go through and study the same”²⁷⁰. A series of translations from selected old Manipuri manuscripts into modern Manipuri and English was published in 1987 by Manipur University, Department of Manipuri Language and Literature under a project granted by the National Archives of India. The first one in the list is *Khongchomnupi Nongkarol (Ascent of the Pleiades)*, an old Meeteilon manuscript written around 10th to 15th century which narrates the romantic tale of a couple of young boys and girls belonging to different clans and their ascent to heaven. *Chainarol (Stories of Martial Duels)* is another text in the series which records various stories on chivalrous duels between warriors and princes. *Takhel Ngamba (Conquest of Takhel)*, the third in the series, chronicles the conquest of Tripura which was formerly known as Takhel to the Meeteis by the Meetei King Pamheiba in the early 18th century. These texts were translated by Khaidem Sanajaoba, Lecturer in English, Lilong Haoreibi College, Manipur.

This new shift could have been an influence of what Sairem Nilabir calls “a new wave” which was referred to in the dominant modern Manipuri literary discourse as a period of crisis (late 1970's to early 1980's). This period is discussed in detail in the later part of this chapter.

²⁶⁹ Dinamani, “Manipuri Handokpa Sahitya: Asha amadi samasya,” 59.

²⁷⁰ Excerpt from the ‘Acknowledgement’ in *Khongchomnupi Nongkarol* given by Prof. I.R. Babu Singh, Department of Manipuri Language and Literature, MU, July 1, 1987.

Despite bringing a reversal in the translation practice, the politics of translation was still focused on exoticizing the texts as a means of “knowing” and “observing” the respective ethnic community and their “culture”. These texts are not seen in themselves as literary pieces that merit their own literary criticism but rather as cultural artefacts which have to be studied and examined to understand the social, historical and other aspects of the particular ethnic community. In the preface to *Khongchomnupi Nongkarol*, K H Mahale, V.C. Manipur University writes, “I hope the series in translation, which we propose to bring out, will make ancient Manipuri literature known all over the world and prove to be very useful to sociologist, historians and other scholars.” In contrast, the translation of Bankim’s, Sarat Chandra’s and Shakespeare’s works is treated as reflective of the greatness of the authors and the richness of the languages in which they were written. They are not seen as cultural artefacts but great literary pieces.

Some other literary pieces which were translated into English were Dr. Kamal’s *Madhabi* and Pacha Meetei’s *Imphal Amasung Magi Ising Nungsitki Phibam* translated by R.K. Birendra in 1975 and 1985 respectively. The introduction to the translation of *Madhabi* given by E. Nilakanta begins thus, “Manipuri Language has a rich literary tradition of which the scope and variety has proved to be overwhelming in a way: indeed, one of the oldest literatures in India. But modern Manipuri literature was born during the colonial period, under the influence and inspiration of Bengali scholars and writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Kali Prasanna Ghosh and partly of English Romantics including Scott. There was a definite break in the tradition and the pioneer Manipuri writers found themselves expressing a new age, a new spirit and outlook. It was indeed the age of renaissance.” By 1975, it has been established that Manipuri language has had a rich literary tradition which the writers of the colonial period seemed to have not known or were aware of because of which the writers felt the need to *enrich* Manipuri literature resulting in the production of

what we now call modern Manipuri literature. As a consequence, such as mentioned above, translators began to use Manipuri as a source language rather than a target language. In the translator's note to *Madhabi*, R.K. Birendra states that he had "an irresistible urge" to present the novel to "a wider reading public than the original Manipuri text can cater for."

3.3. Formation of modern Manipuri literary discourse.

In this section, the thesis provides an analysis of a series of writings on Manipuri literature published by the Sahitya Akademi in its journal *Indian Literature* from 1971 to 1992. Manipuri as a language was recognised by Sahitya Akademi in 1971²⁷¹ and was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 1992²⁷². It examines how the discourse on modern Manipuri literature unfolds in these writings. While most articles serve as reviews of the literary scene in Manipur for the respective years, others provide critical comments and literary criticisms on certain works or certain period. The term "modern" was introduced in the discourse on Manipuri literature in these writings to refer to those writings that emerged after the colonial contact, particularly the twentieth century.

3.3.1. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's "'Adivasi' Literatures of India: The Uncultivated 'Adivasi' Languages in India" and Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education.": A critical comparison.

The discourse on Manipuri Literature in *Indian Literature*²⁷³ was inaugurated in Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's "'Adivasi' Literatures of India: The uncultivated 'Adivasi' Languages" published in 1971. Before this, there is no record of the mention of Manipuri literature as part of Indian literature anywhere in its literary discourse. In this article, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, a prominent Indian linguist, categorizes the languages in India into four

²⁷¹ M. Ningamba Singha, M. Ninghaiba Singha, and Th Kanchanbala Singha, "Language Policy of India: Dominance and Suppression to Manipuri Language," *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 1, no. 5 (2013): 141.

²⁷² M. Ningamba Singha, "Manipuri Language Movement: 1924-1992," PhD Diss. (Assam University, 2014).

²⁷³ Not only in the journal *Indian Literature*, but in Indian literature as well.

“racio-linguistic” groups: the Austric, the Sino-Tibetan, the Dravidian and the Aryan. He goes on to claim that the Aryan is the most “important” language group on the basis of “number” and what he calls an “intrinsic” value. Through this rhetoric of classification, a language hierarchy is constructed prioritizing the languages that concentrate around the Hindi belt over others. The Dravidian languages of the south is placed in a secondary position while discrediting the significance of the Sino-Tibetan and Austric languages except Newari of Nepal and Meeteilon (which he records as “Meithei” following the colonial nomenclature) of Manipur.

Suniti Kumar Chatterjee concludes that these languages do not show “any high literary development” and it was so because the speakers of these languages were in “a comparatively primitive condition in their way of life.” Employing the *culture* vs *civilization* binary, he perpetuates a hegemonic linguistic hierarchy within these languages where one is superior/inferior to the other on the basis of number and modern universalism theory (“intrinsic”). By terming these communities as possessing some “sort” of folk culture but no civilization, he advances a discriminatory narrative where these communities are degraded implying an association with barbarism. While the term *culture* has no implication to progression and hierarchy, *civilization* implicates a historical progression of self-development and a condition of refinement and order²⁷⁴. By making a distinction between the concept of *civilization* and *culture*, he implicates a social and intellectual hierarchy dependent on historical progression. Chatterjee employs these anthropological definitions of *Culture* and *Civilization* propagated in the 19th century and assigns hierarchical terms such as *advanced* and *backward*.²⁷⁵ It is in this context that Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, imitating the colonial

²⁷⁴ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 57-60, 87-93.

²⁷⁵ See Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, “What is the Difference Between Culture and Civilization?: Two Hundred Fifty Years of Confusion,” in *Comparative Civilizations Review* 66, no. 66 (2012): 4; Edward Burnett Tylor,

orientalist view of the other, assigns a degraded status to these “other” languages and the speakers of these languages. As he goes on to describe these languages, he presumes the absence of a writing system (script) as a “lack”. However, as James C Scott who chooses to use the term “*nonliteracy* or *orality*, in preference to *illiteracy*”, would argue, orality is “a different and potentially positive medium of cultural life as opposed to a mere deficiency.”²⁷⁶ Chatterjee continues to call them “non-developed languages” and “backward peoples” imitating the colonial terms for the indigenous communities.

As far as Meeteilon is concerned, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee considers it as “the most important, and in literature certainly of much greater importance than Newari” among the Tibeto-Burman languages. However, the reason he presents for Meeteilon being the “most important” among the Tibeto-Burman languages is contestable owing to the premise of his interpretation of what constitutes a “developed” and “rich literary tradition”. A modern Universalist mode is adopted in Chatterjee’s description of the languages available in India and it is most visible in his usage of the word “intrinsic” without carrying the burden of explaining the exact nature of the entity. Dipesh Chakrabarty problematizes such a universal positivist premise in his book *Provincializing Europe*. Just as European ideas were universalized throughout the “age of enlightenment” across the world, or more precisely their colonies, unaccounted of their particularity that could not claim any “universal validity”, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee presupposes an “intrinsic” value to the Indo-Aryan languages and literature in comparing them with the literatures available in different languages in India. In the same manner that a European Universalist model is presumed as *true* and *evident*, treating

Primitive culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom. Vol. 2. (J. Murray, 1871); and Adam Kuper, “Civilization, Culture, and Race: Anthropology in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Cambridge History of Modern European Thought: Volume 1, The Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 398-421.

²⁷⁶ James C Scott, *The art of not being governed*, (Yale University Press, 2009), 221.

the Indo-Aryan languages as a superior linguistic and cultural group to other languages and cultures is assumed as having an “intrinsic” value.

An analytic comparison of the tone in the language between Suniti Kumar Chatterjee’s article and a colonial text would substantiate the argument effectively. For this purpose, the research examines and compares the infamous colonial text by Thomas Babington Macaulay, i.e., “Minute on Education” wherein Macaulay argued for the introduction of colonial education in India resulting in the creation of colonial subjects, with Suniti Kumar Chatterjee’s article. Several post- colonial critiques²⁷⁷, including translation theorist Tejaswini Niranjana’s²⁷⁸ have already identified the colonial narratives that run in the text. Although the content and the purpose of Macaulay’s “Minute on Education” and Suniti Kumar Chatterjee’s article are different, similar assumptions are made and similar attitudes are exhibited throughout the texts. Both texts deal with language and the importance of languages in India through hierarchization and assuming the existence of a universal truth from an authorial position. Using the word “truth” repeatedly, Macaulay’s “Minute” postulates the existence of a constant universal truth; “the contest between truth and falsehood”, “the propagation of truth”, “the cause of truth”, “the progress of truth”. In contrast to this truth is “falsehood” and “lavishing on false texts and false philosophy”, “a dead loss” etc. A binary hierarchy is established through a series of oppositions which assign positive traits to the West and negative traits to India.

He considers Arabic and Sanskrit as useless languages through comparing investing on these languages with other *useless* investments such as chaunting money at the cathedral and rewarding for killing tigers. Investing and encouraging the study of Arabic and Sanskrit

²⁷⁷ See Pramod K Nayar, *Colonial voices: The discourses of empire*, (John Wiley & Sons, 2012); Gauri Viswanathan, “The beginnings of English literary study in British India,” *Oxford Literary Review* 9, no. 1/2 (1987): 2-26.

²⁷⁸ Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting translation: History, post-structuralism, and the colonial context*, (University of California Press, 1992).

to improve the intellectual of the “natives”, to him, is a “mere delusion”. As far as other languages are concerned, he declares that they are neither “literary” nor has any “scientific information” that they are “poor” and “rude” and “until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them.” The “natives” could be “improved intellectually” only “by means of some language not vernacular amongst them.” He declares that he has “never found one among them (orientalists) who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.” According to him, “the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable” to the literature in India and Arabia as far as recording of facts and investigating general principles are concerned. The western literature is *intrinsically* superior of all the languages in India. While describing western literature, he uses positive adjective phrases and noun phrases such as “noblest”, “superior”, “eloquence”, “vehicles of ethical and political instruction”, “just and lively representations”, “most profound speculations”, “full and correct information”, “vast intellectual wealth”, “wisest nations of the earth have created”, “greater value”, “language of commerce” etc. On the other hand, Arabic and Sanskrit are, “by universal confession”, described as “differ for the worse”, “disgrace”, “less”, “ignorant”, “barbarous” etc. The civilizing mission of the European colonizers is also visible in the text when Macaulay writes that, “the languages of western Europe civilised Russia. I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindoo what they have done for the Tartar.” In order to justify his argument, Macaulay conflates his own opinions and prejudices with a *universal truth* which he casually inserts in the text with the phrases “by universal confession” and “universally felt”.

As posited above, in a similar fashion, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee occupies an *authorial position* and employs phrases like “as a matter of fact” while declaring that of all the linguistic and cultural groups in India, “the Aryan is the most important Indian civilization

has found its expression primarily through the Aryan speech as it developed through the centuries – through Vedic Sanskrit..... and finally in the last phase, of the different Modern Indo-Aryan languages of the country.” Although the notion of India as a political and cultural category, more specifically as a nation, is fairly recent and attributed to European colonization and colonial modernity, Chatterjee tries to solidify his supposition by presenting it as a “fact”. As mentioned earlier, his hierarchical categorization of the languages in India into four racio-linguistic groups not only racializes the languages in India but extends the colonial racial prejudice into languages and reinforces the racial hierarchy informed by European colonial modernity. The colonial narrative manifested in Macaulay’s “Minute on Education” is reproduced in Chatterjee’s article in assigning an “intrinsic” value to the Aryan languages. Various colonial terms such as “primitive”, “backward peoples”, “non-developed” etc. are used while referring to the languages of the Sino-Tibetan family and the Austric family. While none of the Aryan languages are identified as Adivasi or primitive, Dravidian languages have “some backward tribes which speak Dravidian” and majority of them belong to the Sino-Tibetan and Austric families. It should be noted, however, that when he uses the word “Adivasi” or “Primitive” in this article, the terms are not connotated with a positive meaning which account them as the authentic original inhabitants of a particular place or to put it in more palatable terms like “aborigines” or “indigenes”. The terms are interpreted more closely to crudeness, not fully developed yet and in its infant stage which are all antonyms to progression/civilization.

Another stark feature of the reproduction of the colonial narrative in Chatterjee’s article is the marked distinction between *culture* and *civilization*. The civilizing narrative of the European colonizers drawn from the enlightenment rationality is reproduced in stating that the speakers of the Sino-Tibetan languages and Austric languages had “some kind of folk *culture*, but no *civilization*.” In the title, the writer refers to the “Adivasi” languages and the

literatures as “uncultivated” positioning them into an inferior status in the language hierarchy. In case of Manipuri literature, although Chatterjee accords it a “higher” status to other Sino-Tibetan languages, he exhibits certain colonial attitudes towards Meeteilon literature in the same manner he does so to other languages that belongs to the “racio-linguistic” group. His reason for assigning a higher status to Manipuri literature is drawn from the same hierarchical narrative that favours Aryan languages over the others. While doing so, this hierarchical interpretation is infused in conceptualizing what modern Manipuri literature is. As Richard Bauman and Charles L Briggs have pointed out in their book *Voices of Modernity*, construction of certain categories embedded in the discourse on modernity results in normalization of certain social inequalities. In the case of Manipur, the discourse on Modern Manipuri literature initiated by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, in describing it as part of the Modern Indian literature, ensued in normalizing a certain language hierarchy and linguistic inequalities. He makes a clear distinction between what is called the “old/archaic” Manipuri in contrast with the *modern* Manipuri. This “old/archaic” Manipuri is, moreover, conceptualized as “Pre-Hindu” and they are termed as old in relation to Hinduism in a teleological historical progression informed by the Eurocentric concept of modernity. The literatures produced before the coming of Hinduism in Manipur which expands for about six centuries are categorized in a single group as old Manipuri literature comprising of “old Meithei ballads from the middle of the twelfth century”, and “some romantic and heroic stories of ancient times.” This “older literary tradition” encountered a breakthrough during Pamheiba’s reign in the 18th century when “a new period began in the history of Manipur and in Manipuri literature”. During this “new” period a “new” literary genre emerged which is described as “travel-books”. However, it should be noted that the example he gives as one of these “travel-books” is actually a religious text which describe the pilgrimage of King Bhagya Chandra. It was also in this period that *Mahabharat* and *Ramayana* began to be

translated into Manipuri. Chatterjee further states that this was the period of *confluence* between early Manipuri literature and modern Manipuri literature. Although, in his own words, “the modern period of Manipuri (the language) really came into existence with the beginning of the 19th century, after English education had found a place among the Manipuri people”, he had projected an amalgamative relationship being established between the emergence of modernity in Manipur and the coming of Hinduism in the previous century, i.e., the 18th century. In this theorization, the advent of Hinduism is constructed as the point from which Manipuri literature is historicized. It limits the study of Manipuri literature into three basic periods; the early period (Pre-Hindu period or medieval period), the period of confluence, and the modern period where the coming of Hinduism is centralized as the principal point of reference. A more recent periodization by Ch. Manihar²⁷⁹ makes a distinction between the old and the medieval period where the middle period, as he calls it, falls between Pamheiba’s ascension on the throne in 1709 and the occupation of Manipur by the British in 1891. However, he also calls this early period as *pre-Hindu* period. Chatterjee describes this early period which is conflated with medievalism as “some old pre-Hindu” period written in a “complicated system of writing” while the period of confluence and the modern period is described as “advanced” and not “backward” anymore.

The modern period, according to Chatterjee, came into existence in Manipur in the 19th century, late 19th century to be more specific. The Vaishnavism influence from the earlier century “helped to make modern Meithei or Manipuri literature and culture entirely Sanskrit-oriented.” It was the “European officials and missionaries who came to Manipur and Bengali teachers” who, in his word, “helped” the Manipuris to “build a new literature”. He further distinguishes Manipuri literature from other Sino-Tibetan languages stating that the translations from Sanskrit are its “wealth” and “a special aspect of modern Manipuri

²⁷⁹ Manihar, *History of Manipuri Literature*, 2003.

literature”. In this context, Phurailatpam Atombapu Sharma is mentioned as “the greatest name in the history of Manipuri Literature” and he is showered with adulations for his extensive translations into Manipuri “of a number of outstanding religious and other texts from the Language of the Gods (like the *Bhagavata-Purana* and the *Bhagavata-Gita*, the *Gita-govinda*, *Gopala-Sahasra-nama*, the *Markandeya-Candi*, the entire *Sarasvata Grammar* of Sanskrit with the Meithei commentary, portions of the *Rigveda*, besides any number of religious and ritualistic texts)”. Another translator whom he glorifies is Atombapu’s student, Chingangbam Kalachand for his translations of the entire Sanskrit *Mahabharata* in 21 volumes and “a long poem of 12,000 lines on the life of Krishna (*Vasudeva-Carita*)”. Haobam Iboyaima Singh also gets a mention for translating “all the writings of the Bengali poet Michael Madhusudan Datta, besides some of the works of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, and a good many Sanskrit works.” The translations and adaptations of plays from Bengali and English beginning the early half of the twentieth century also forms an important constituent of the Modern Manipuri literature.

Apart from translations, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee’s article accounts eminent writers like Lamabam Kamal, Hijam Anganghal and Khwairakpam Chaoba along with their works that embody and assimilate certain elements of Hinduism such as *Madhabi*, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, *Jahera*, and *Labangga Lata*. Any other texts such as Kamal’s “Devjani” which subverts the Hindu dominant narrative and unsettles such a normalization of hierarchy is ignored and invisibilized in his writing. In such a discourse which is still dominant in the academia, the only element that makes Manipuri literature “an advanced Modern Indian Literature” is its connectedness and close proximity to the Indo-Aryan Literature and culture exclusively. Modernity is essentially treated as *advanced* while at the same time, it is made exclusive to Indo-Aryan literature in relation to modern Manipuri literature. Arguing that it was they, the translators, who “extended” the horizon of Manipuri literature through making

them “familiar with some of the greatest things in Indian literature, ancient and modern”, Chatterjee writes that the Manipuris are brought in line with the rest of “advanced India in their thought and ideas and aspirations”. Thus, it was not only in relation to literature and languages that modernity was conceptualized as essentially *advanced* and *Indian* but in relation to thought and ideas as well as a progression towards *civilization*.

In Manipuri literature, assimilating the Indo-Aryan literature and culture is construed as indispensable to become *modern* and *advanced* (*civilized*). This projection is further augmented in the orientalist treatment of the people residing in the North-eastern Himalayan range in India by identifying them through the lens of Sanskrit literature. This particular article by Chatterjee was published as part of a book entitled *Kirata Jana Krti – The Indo-Mongoloids: Their Contribution in the History and Culture of India* published by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta in 1951. It was first “appeared in the form of a contribution to the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Calcutta in 1950”²⁸⁰. The second edition came out in 1974 along with certain added information. To explain the colonial condition in India and the orientalist treatment that India itself was subjected to, Tejaswini Niranjana has laid out certain arguments using Edward Said’s theory on orientalism in her book *Siting Translation*. She discusses the colonial nature of the “orientalists” in addition to examining the “anglicists” as well, concerning their roles in reinforcing subjugation and degradation of the Indians from the perspective of Translation Studies²⁸¹. It is well established that the Asiatic Society was involved largely in carrying out the orientalist research/studies in India. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee’s article exhibits traces of the colonial infatuation with the *Orient* which are the “Indo-Mongoloids” in the Northeast region in this case. They are the “other” in the *Indian*

²⁸⁰ See Forward to *Orientalism* by Edward Said.

²⁸¹ Niranjana, *Siting Translation*.

civilization which can be part of India only through assimilation where translation has worked exceedingly successful as far as Manipur is concerned.

This narrative is standardized and normalized through enforcing an authorial position on the writer with regard to the text and the material (read *oriental*, the Northeast of India) he is writing about as well as through developing referential power among similar texts. To analyse the relationship of authority between these texts, the principal methodological device that Edward Said proposed in his seminal book *Orientalism* serves quite effective and precise. Said's method of identifying *strategic location* and *strategic formation* could be used in this case to find out the authorial position that Suniti Kumar Chatterjee occupies in relation to the orient or the "Indo-mongoloid". First of all, Chatterjee locates himself vis-à-vis the orient through identifying the orient as *Indo-mongoloid* (in relation to India based on race) and *Kirata* (in relation to Sanskrit Literature based on region). In both identifications, the *orient* occupies a position which is inferior and degraded. The tone of the narrative in the article is that of representing the *orient* or speaking on its behalf much similar to Edward Said's observations given in the theorization of orientalism. Such a narrative is repeated by other Bengali writers such as Gopal Haldar, who is mentioned by E. Nilakanta Singh in his paper on "Historical and Cultural relation between Manipur and Bengal"²⁸², as having expressed thus, "from identity in isolation to identity in integration." Such an expression postulates that the identity of Manipur has been hitherto an identity in isolation. The contact with India has led to integration which is a way towards progression. This fits perfectly in the narrative of India being a place of unity in diversity. However, it also discounts and ignores the relationship that Manipur has had with the South East Asian countries historically. Such a narrative recognizes progression, or rather, *civilization* as a direction (East to West) rather

²⁸² Elangbam Nilakanta, "Historical and Cultural relation between Manipur and Bengal," paper presented in *Historical and Cultural relation between Manipur, Assam and Bengal*, Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, April 23 – May, 1985.

than a shared set of unique social customs and beliefs developed and organized over a period of time.

Suniti Kumar Chatterjee is quite popular in the discourse on Manipuri literature. He is frequently used as a referential point by the Manipuri writers to legitimize their writings. His narrative of the Indo-Mongoloid was picked up and followed widely by the Manipuri writers. E. Nilakanta, in another article²⁸³, writes, “as a matter of fact, the contribution of the Indo-Mongoloids to the history and culture of India is immense and scholars like Dr. S.K. Chatterjee have taken pains to identify them and assess their contribution.” His book *Kirata-Jana-Kriti* is referred in both the articles of Nilakanta which are mentioned above. “Manipuri: At best, A period of waiting” (Dec, 1971), the article that came out on Manipuri literature in *Indian Literature* after Chatterjee’s inauguration, mentions Arambam Somorendro as “another angry young playwright”. While, on one hand, the connection with India and the Indo-Aryan culture is revered as the path towards *civilization*, writers like Arambam Somorendro whose values and beliefs differs drastically from that of Chatterjee and his followers is branded as “angry” young playwrights. The dominant narrative perceives them as simply “angry” implying an emotional interference rather than a logical one or literarily capable.

3.3.2. Modern Manipuri Literature as represented in the *Indian Literature*: Cultural hegemony and dominance.

The next article on Manipuri literature in the *Indian Literature* came out in 1976 (July-August) where Nilakanta discusses the influence of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee in Manipuri Literature. In this article, Nilakanta eulogizes Sarat Chandra by calling him a “Yogi

²⁸³ Elangbam Nilakanta, “Vaishnavism in Manipuri Literature”. This article was collected from the Manipur State Archives and is undated. However, considering that the latest reference mentioned in the article is that of *Aspects of Indian Culture* by Nilakanta himself published in 1982, the article was most probably written after 1982.

with a difference”, a “modern Rishi....a Rishi who discovered a world of sweetness and beauty in the so called dark spots of our social existence.” He states that Ayekpam Shyamsunder “created a sensation” with his translation of *Devdas* at a time when “most of the pioneer writers of Modern Manipuri literature were too much steep in the tradition of Bankim Chandra to discover new fields”. Sarat Chandra is described as a man who is due to get his deserved credit. His works, like a classic, “assail and occupy the strong places of our consciousness.” Bengali literature was, as pointed out by many, seen as a model for developing modern Manipuri Literature.

Discussing the literary texts that were produced in Manipur from 1900 to 1930, Elangbam Nilakanta calls it the modern Manipuri literature in the ending of his article entitled “Manipuri Literature (1900-1930)”²⁸⁴. As argued in the later chapters, modern Manipuri literature had a massive influence of Bengali translation. Nilakanta substantiates it when he writes that the “pioneer writers of modern Manipuri literature were all steeped in Bengali literature and also in Sanskrit learning. Naturally it started with translations from Bengali.” However, this does not mean that Nilakanta was not aware of the degrading status that was conferred to Manipuri literature within the Indian literary system. At the end of the article, he writes, “a few kindred souls in the field of literature and social action were responsive to the call of freedom, and wrote with new enthusiasm and excitement about Mother Manipur who was neglected, unknown, and even looked down upon by others. It also marked the literal awakening of modern Manipuri literature.” Modern Manipuri literature, is thus, a platform for negotiating the status of Manipur through participating in India’s dominant literary narrative. In other words, the linguistic hierarchy assumed by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee based on race is followed and endorsed in the discourse on Manipuri literature by

²⁸⁴ Elangbam Nilakanta, “Manipuri Literature (1900-1930),” *Indian Literature*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (May-June 1977), 102-105.

Nilakanta himself who is a Manipuri. The hegemonic power of Chatterjee's narrative is seen in Nilakanta's treatment of Manipuri literature alongside Bankim Chandra and Sarat Chandra.

Contrary to admiring and cherishing the connection with the Indo-Aryan culture and literature, the effort in search for a connection with the past, more precisely with the "pre-Hindu" past, is seen as shameful and humiliating. Giving a review of the scene of Manipuri literature in 1981, Nilakanta argues in his article, "Manipur: Cause for Concern" published in *Indian Literature* as part of the *Annual Survey of the 22 Languages and Literatures of India*, that Manipuri literature is in a "crisis" and he calls for help to save it from "stagnation" and "monotony". He gives two rationales for calling this particular phase a "crisis". The first one is the lack of independent publishers in Manipur and the rising cost of publication. This reason is a practical one which addresses the technical problem. It acts as a demotivating factor and a hinderance to the young promising writers. In contrast, the other one is more subjective and political. He writes,

"Another reason for this state of affairs might possibly be due to the fact that in their quest for identity in which the young writers and scholars are involved, the cultural horizons are not expanding and the space of vision of the writers is not enlarged. Bengali literature created a profound impact on the pioneer of modern Manipuri literature. But now, the promising young writers have lost touch with the literature of the neighbouring areas. An arrogant pose of 'cultural superiority' is being assumed at the moment and it has isolated Manipuri from the most natural influence. A few translations would not help much and Manipuri literature has not become richer by the inflow of other cultures. It now runs the risk of monotony and also the danger of provincialism. The entire situation cries for sound orientation and something like a new literary policy on the part of the Government and the people, which is yet to emerge. This is clearly a serious ailment which might lead this language and literature to doomsday unless it is arrested in time. Any number of symposia

and seminars on this issue cannot save this situation. This may sound like a cry of despair. But this is a fact which every Manipuri writer or scholar has to face squarely.”

Here, the negative nomenclature, “crisis” is used to refer to a phase in modern Manipuri literature where the writers focus more on “the quest for identity”. By “the quest for identity”, the writer is referring to the shift in focus while perceiving the Indo-Aryan culture. Earlier, the pioneer modern writers had perceived it as a model for Manipuri culture. In contrast, the writers in the late 70’s were more focussed on the indigenous “pre-Hindu” culture. Further, the search for the self is branded as provincial and narrowminded; the sense of reclaiming a separate identity unrelated with the Indo-Aryan culture is ironically termed as “cultural superiority”. While the Indo-Aryan culture and literature were being taken for granted as a superior culture and never questioned, Nilakanta brings in the issue of “cultural superiority” in relation to the “pre-Hindu” culture. The young writers’ attempt to learn about history and the “pre-Hindu” culture in Manipur is confused with the idea of superiority. It was most likely for the simple reason that while doing so, the writers’ interest in the hegemonic Bengali literature was waning. Since scholars like Nilakanta believes in the superiority of the Indo-Aryan culture, it follows that he would construe the disconnection as a sign of decadence.

As far as provincialism is concerned, in western modernity, it goes hand in hand with the idea of universalism. With the spread of western modernity through colonialism, Europe and European ideas gained their Universalist position across the globe. Its normative status was perceived as indubitable knowledge until the emergence of the idea of deconstruction. Modern discourse made all other regions in the world provincial as a result of constructing Europe or European ideas as Universal. Europe was postulated as the centre/origin of knowledge production. Consequently, social hierarchy and colonization were justified and sustained through such a narrative. Dipesh Chakrabarty, as mentioned earlier, provides a

critique to the Universalist tendency that Europe and European ideas are ascribed with in the modern discourse. In the introduction to his book *Provincializing Europe*, explicating “the Idea of Provincializing Europe”, he writes,

“To “provincialize” Europe was precisely to find out how and in what sense European ideas that were universal were also, at one and the same time, drawn from very particular intellectual and historical traditions that could not claim any universal validity. It was to ask a question about how thought was related to place. Can thought transcend places of their origin? Or do places leave their imprint on thought in such a way as to call into question the idea of purely abstract categories?..... To provincialize Europe was then to know how universalistic thought was always and already modified by particular histories, whether or not we could excavate such pasts fully.”

In brief, Chakrabarty challenges certain modern discourses which postulate Europe as an ahistorical and nonspatial knowledge producing model throughout modern history. Likewise, when Nilakanta suggests provincialism as soon as there was a break from imitating and eulogizing the Indo-Aryan culture, he is endorsing a postulation which depicts the Indo-Aryan culture as ahistorical and nonspatial. Here, although Bengali literature is given a spatial reference when he writes “neighbour”, we must note that this space is in relation to the self and so, it differs from having the same meaning as the term provincial which possesses negative connotations such as rural, narrow, parochial, rustic, petty etc. In a more general sense, I.R. Babu also adopted the binary narrative of regionalism/nationalism in his description of the post-Independence literary scene in Manipur²⁸⁵. Affected by the political changes, these new conceptualizations of Manipur as provincial and regional emerged prominently after Manipur became a part of India in 1949.

²⁸⁵ I.R. Babu, ‘Post-Independence Manipuri Literature,’ *Indian Literature*, January-February 1977, Vol. 20, No. 1, 43-48.

Nilakanta continues to make extreme statements calling this phase “a serious ailment which might lead this language and literature to its doomsday” and that it has isolated Manipur from its “most natural” influence. The problem lies in the fact that he provides no explanation for representing Bengali literature as Manipur’s “most natural” influence. By terming it “natural”, the hegemonic status which Bengali literature occupies in the Manipuri literary system is concealed yet accepted. Further, the “search for identity” is equated with decadence and the future is projected as doomed unless it is stopped. His subjective opinion informed by the hegemonic dominant narrative is presented as an objective fact.

If we take a relook at what was happening in the late 70’s in Manipur, it becomes clearer why this phase was represented as a “crisis” period in the recent history of Manipuri literature. The hegemonic modern Manipuri literature discourse treats this period with obscurity. Initiated during the colonial period by Naoriya Phulo, “the quest for identity” by this generation of literary figures sprung as an attempt to regain a sense of dignity and pride on the face of discrimination and degradation of the Manipuri culture in relation to the Indo-Aryan culture. *Meetei Marup* was instituted in Manipur on May 14, 1945 as a branch of *Apokpa Marup* which was founded by Phulo in Cachar where the members vowed to trace the indigenous ways of the Meeteis and transform their life accordingly. The devout Vaishnava Meeteis, as expected, made it quite impossible for the revivalist movement to gain momentum and spread across Manipur. Their attempt to stop the movement was thus summarized by Sairem Nilabir as follows,

“In order to nib the movement in the bud, in 1947 the Brahmasabha, the highest authority on Hindu religious affairs took up a stern action against the leaders of the movement. On Oct. 31, 1947, the Brahmasabha issued an order to ostracise 38 persons on the ground that they were members of Meetei Marup or devotees of Sanamahi religion and that they had renounced Gouriya Vaishnavism without any respect to the Vedas and Brahmins and that they had their

own sect mark on their forehead. The order further asked every Hindu Gouriya Vaishnavite not to mix up with them in any religious function and not to dine with them. The names of the Meetei nationalists, ostracised by the Brahmasabha are - (he mentions all the 38 names). A copy of the order was sent to the then Chief Minister of Manipur to be published for public information. Besides the above 38 persons, other Sanamahians were also excommunicated by the Meetei Hindus in their religious ceremonies. If they happened to come as invitees all the orthodox Meetei Hindu invitees left the places of ceremony. In order to save from this ungraceful scene, the host requested the Sanamahians to leave the place. In other words, against the cosmopolitan Meetei tenets they were looked down upon as untouchables. Thus, the movement continued with humiliation from the orthodox Meetei Hindus.”²⁸⁶

Khuraijam Bijoykumar asserts that the emergence of Sanamahi (revivalist) movement in Manipur is “a result of the dual administration under the British and the native ruler”²⁸⁷, especially the politics of the *mangba-sengba*²⁸⁸. By the late 1970’s, the period mentioned by Nilakanta as “an ailment” in his article, Sairem proposes that “a new wave” emerged in the Sanamahi (revivalist) movement which was “organised and launched by educated youths” which Nilakanta labelled as “young promising writers”. It was manifested in a series of attempts to restore the safeguarding of the traditional deities from the control of the Meetei Bamons²⁸⁹ (Brahmins) and Meetei Hindus.

²⁸⁶ Sairem Nilabir, “The Revivalist Movement of Sanamahism” in *Manipur past and present: The ordeals of a civilization*, Vol 2. (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005), 117.

²⁸⁷ Khuraijam Bijoykumar, “Religious Revivalism and Colonial Rule: Origin of the Sanamahi movement” in *Colonialism and Resistance: Society and State in Manipur*, (London: Routledge India, 2015), 75-90.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Descendants of Brahmin migrants who married Meetei women. However, S. Bebita argues that the theorization that postulates these migrants as Brahmins needs reassessment. For this argument, see her article ‘Brahmans Migration in Manipur: Ascertainning the Reason’ in *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, Volume 9, Issue 2 (Mar. - Apr. 2013), 29-36.

According to Sairem Nilabir²⁹⁰, the first event that took place was “the taking over of the *Lainingthou Sanamahi*”²⁹¹ in 1975, a desecrated and reinstalled image of Sanamahi which was entrusted in the hands of the bamons during Pamheiba’s reign and passed down to a bamon named Leihaothabam Surjayaima Sharma residing at Keishamthong Moirangningthou Leirak in Imphal. The young members of the new revivalist movement demanded that Sanamahi should be worshipped by maibas and not bamons. They also demanded to shift the image at a sacred site where indigenous ritual ceremonies could be performed and worshipped from the residence of the said meetei bamon. In connection with this event, two young men died at the police firing and several more were arrested and put in jail. Subsequently, in December of the same year, “Lainingthou Sanamahi Temple Bill” was introduced in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, was passed and became an Act to fulfil the demands of the revivalist. Their demand was fulfilled in 1977 when the Government declared that they are free to worship the deity at the proposed sacred site. Earlier, in the previous year (1974), some selected maibas²⁹² and revivalist members, representing the entire Meetei community, went through a ritual called *Nongkhrang Parei Hanba* signifying the freedom to renounce Hinduism. When Pamheiba forced the people to convert into Hinduism in the eighteenth century, they were made to take an oath holding *Nongkhrang*²⁹³ branches and dipping in the water of Lilong to never renounce Hinduism in future. The ritual of *Nongkhrang Parei Hanba* functioned as a release from this oath. The second event was “the taking over of the *Nongpok Ningthou Laipham*”²⁹⁴ in 1978 which was followed by the

²⁹⁰ Nilabir, Sairem. “The Revivalist Movement of Sanamahism” in *Manipur Past and Present: The Ordeals of a Civilization*, Vol 2. (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005), 109-126.

²⁹¹ *Lai* (God) + *Ningthou* (King) + *Sanamahi* (Name of the deity).

²⁹² A Maiba performs and officiates the rituals and customs in the meetei traditional society.

²⁹³ A type of indigenous plant.

²⁹⁴ Dwelling place of the deity *Nongpok Ningthou*. It was appropriated with the Hindu God Shiva.

“taking over of the *Kongba Maru Laipham*”²⁹⁵ on March 22, 1979. The *Mongba Hanba Umang*²⁹⁶ which had been earlier restricted to the people who wanted to worship the traditional deity, was opened in June of 1979. As a response to the number of people gathered in that place to reclaim the space, the police arrested 10 persons including the president of the leading organization Manipur National Front (MNF). They were, however, released on the same day. The next incident was “the attempt to take over the *Hiyangthang Lairembi*”²⁹⁷ in Sept, 1979. This deity was appropriated to the Hindu Goddess Kamakhya (Durga) and worshipping her as a *Lairembi* was not allowed earlier. After an agreement signed between MNF and the “Lai committee”²⁹⁸, they were also allowed to worship her as a *Lairembi* instead of worshipping her as *Kamakhya*. One of the most important events which consolidated the new wave was the inauguration of commemorating the burning of the *Puyas* in a formal manner in 1978 at *Mongba Hanba Umang*. It reflects the steering of the revivalist movement towards incorporating the politics of written literature construed within the ambit of western modernity. It was also in this period that the Meetei mayek (script) was officially accepted by the state government after a series of protests and meetings over the years²⁹⁹.

To represent this new wave as a factor for the lack of what he terms “good” modern Manipuri literature suggests his active participation in sustaining the hegemonic narrative that treats the Indo-Aryan culture with a sense of, in his own words, “cultural superiority”. It

²⁹⁵ Sacred source location of the *Kongba* river.

²⁹⁶ Sacred grove where the traditional *Mongba Hanba* deity dwells. It was appropriated to the Hindu God Hanuman.

²⁹⁷ The traditional deity of *Hiyangthang* hill.

²⁹⁸ The committee that looked after the *Hiyangthang Lairembi*.

²⁹⁹ See *Report of the Meitei Mayek Expert Committee, 1979* and unpublished PhD thesis of Thongam Bipin entitled *Revivalism and/as resistance the meitei movement in the twentieth century* in the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad.

resonates closely with Spivak's concept of *epistemic violence*³⁰⁰ which demonstrates that dominance of one culture by another is not indicated by just physical domination. It could also embed itself in the process of knowledge production and its dissemination which claims authority over all other knowledge production, thus, justifying and rationalizing the domination. The rationality and the meaning embedded in the narrative of the revivalists which prioritize the search for an identity separate and distinct from the Indo-Aryan culture is superimposed with their dominant narrative where the revivalist members are framed as the "other" and "the new wave" in the late 1970's and early 1980's as "an ailment".

This dominant narrative is sustained through his other articles as well. Through publishing it in an established platform, which is *Indian Literature* in this case, the narrative is automatically granted its legitimacy and authority within the Indian literary system. This dominant concern for the "new wave" is reflected in the title of the articles as well. "Manipuri: The Uncertainties" (1978)³⁰¹, "Manipuri writing: A Year of Stagnation" (1979)³⁰², "Manipuri: Unfilled Gaps" (1980)³⁰³, "Manipuri: Cause for Concern" (1981)³⁰⁴, "Manipuri: Monotony and Stagnation" (1982)³⁰⁵, "The Manipuri Scene: Crisis of Identity Amidst Changing Values" (1984)³⁰⁶, "The Manipuri Scene: 1984 & 85: Are the Springs

³⁰⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the subaltern speak?" *Die Philosophin* 14, no. 27 (2003): 42-58.

³⁰¹ Baasi, "Manipuri: The Uncertainties," *Indian Literature*, Vol. 21, No. 6, *Language and Literature Survey* (November -December 1978), pp. 242-246.

³⁰² Bassi, "Manipuri Writing: A Year of Stagnation," *Indian Literature* (1979): 170-173.

³⁰³ Baasi, "Manipuri: Unfilled Gaps," *Indian Literature*, Vol. 23, No. 6, *Annual Survey of Indian Literature* (November - December 1980), 195-199

³⁰⁴ Elangbam Nilakanta, "Manipuri: Cause for Concern," *Indian Literature* 24, no. 6 (1981): 94-99.

³⁰⁵ Elangbam Nilakanta, "Manipuri: Monotony and Stagnation," *Indian Literature* 25, no. 6 (1982): 197-203.

³⁰⁶ Elangbam Nilakanta, "The Manipuri Scene: Crisis of Identity amidst Changing Values," *Indian Literature* 27, no. 6 (104) (1984): 98-104.

Drying up? (1986)³⁰⁷ etc. are the titles of the articles which were published during the period of this “new wave” in the *Indian Literature*. The writers open these articles with a negative view of this period. The opening sentences of the articles mentioned above are given below to demonstrate how they set their discourse in motion.

1. “Manipuri: Cause for Concern”: “It is with a feeling of deep pain that I take up my pen for a review of Manipuri Literature. Something is seriously wrong in the language and literature of this small sub-nation of India.”
2. “Manipuri: The Uncertainties”: “Manipuri Literature in the years 1976-1977 does not break any new ground by way of any significant production of literary work.”
3. “Manipuri writing: A Year of Stagnation”: “Though literary awards from such prestigious institutions like the Sahitya Akademi, Manipur State Kala Academy and the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad are there, no significant literary work in Manipuri had been produced during the year 1978.”
4. “Manipuri: Unfilled Gaps”: “There has been great period of upheaval in the literary history of communities marked by rich production of literature both in quantity and quality. It is very rare to find quality ma(t)ched with quantity and where the balance is struck it is very fortunate. For Manipuri literature there has been for the last seven-eight years a wide gap between quality and quantity and almost invariably the quantity outweighs quality.”
5. “Manipuri: Monotony and Stagnation”: “In my previous survey for the year, 1980, I cried for an atmosphere of creative expression in the context of a new literary policy for this small community of about a million. The atmosphere is still elusive and there is no perceptible changed in the literary policy, if there be any. The conclusion is

³⁰⁷ Elangbam Nilakanta, “The Manipuri Scene: 1984 & 85: Are the Springs drying up?” *Indian Literature* 29, no. 6 (116) (1986): 93-97.

obvious; Manipuri is passing at the moment through a phase of monotony and even stagnation.”

6. “The Manipuri Scene: Crisis of Identity Amidst Changing Values”: “The literary scene in Manipur in the past few years has been such that it does not evoke any faith and confidence. The young poets and writers are still passing through a phase of crisis of identity even though it is temporary.”
7. “The Manipuri Scene: 1984 & 85: Are the Springs Drying up?”: “There has been positive evidence that the creative springs of Manipuri literature have been drying up in the present decade. There is not even a semblance of a steady flow.”

As shown above, the mood of this period or the new wave is set through repetitive dismissal of the quality of the texts that were produced. Chaoba Mayanglambam’s book *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming (1900-1983)* which is a list of 2,016 books that were published between 1900 and 1983 records a fair number of books produced during this “crisis” period. Texts which focus on the revivalist ideology were largely produced beginning the 70’s and the early 80’s. Mention can be made of Yaima Athokpam’s *Mayekki Houlakpham* (1973)³⁰⁸ and *Meetei Mayekki Phithup* (1982)³⁰⁹; Hemchandra Chanam’s *Iyek Ipi* (1980)³¹⁰; R. K. Sanajaoba’s *Apokpa Ningba Macha* (1979)³¹¹, *Naoriya Phulo na Asumna Hairammi* (1980)³¹² and *Apokpa Ningba* (1980)³¹³; Bhogeshor Oinam’s *Sanamahi Laikan* (1972), *Numit Kappa* (1977), *Moirang Ningthourol Lambuba* (1982), and several other Puyas

³⁰⁸ Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming (1900-1983)*, 89.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 88.

³¹¹ Ibid, 83.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

which were transliterated into Bengali (Devnagari) script from Meetei mayek³¹⁴; founder of Meetei marup, Takhellambam Bokul's books produced in the 70's and 80's³¹⁵; Tamphajao Yumnam's *Iyek Ipi 18 gi Wangulon* (1974)³¹⁶; Chingtam Wangkhemcha's *Meeteigi Nongkalon* (1975)³¹⁷; Ng Kangjia's *Kangleipak Kangleilon* (1978) and others³¹⁸; I.S. Kangjam's *Mongyamba* (1971)³¹⁹ etc.

Albeit producing a number of texts which focus on the revivalist ideology during this period, there were still a number of publications of translated texts from Bengali literature and other Indo-Aryan literatures. But the quantity was far less than expected by these scholars. The main concern for these scholars was not the lack of publication in itself, but the lack of books of *quality*. To them, the texts which focus on the revivalist ideologies do not account as texts with *quality*. Their claim, therefore, is that there is a wide gap between *quality* and *quantity* during this *crisis* period. The notion of *quality* is, therefore, limited and accorded to only those texts which either refrain from questioning the status quo of the Indo-Aryan culture and literary tradition or which have been crafted/modelled to suit the sensibilities of the Indo-Aryan culture. Constant efforts are made to relate Manipur with the Indo-Aryan culture in every aspect starting from the false identification of Manipur as *Manipur* in *Mahabharat*³²⁰ to casually suggesting that the traditional music instrument

³¹⁴ Chaoba, *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming (1900-1983)*, 60.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 58, 59.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 41.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 37.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 22.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 5.

³²⁰ Rajendra Kshetri, *The emergence of Meetei nationalism: A study of two movements among the Meeteis*, (Mittal Publications, 2006), 28.

*Pena*³²¹ might be a possible corruption of the *Veena*³²². Translations such as Chingangbam Kalachand Shastri's *Mahabharat* from original Sanskrit, Bengali novel *Srikant* etc. are appreciated as "notable", "beautiful", "amiable" and involving a stupendous task.

In the article "The Manipuri scene: A Steady Flow" (1987), Nilakanta declares that, "The elite of the middle-class society of Manipur valley who are bewildered and lost in the maze of the emerging values of a consumerist society are yet to develop reading habit and intense love for their language and literature, for which models are available in Assamese and Bengali." Derived from his obsession with Bengali literature and Assamese literature shared with his contemporaries, these literatures are presented as the *models* for framing a new Meiteilon (Manipuri) literature. As a result of this obsession, "the entire works of Bankim and Sarat Chandra are now available in Manipuri"³²³.

3.3.3. Inclusion of Manipuri Language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution: Extending the hegemony.

Portraying a negative set of sensibilities accorded to the literature produced during the new wave continued throughout 1980's. It can be pointed out that the political demand for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the Eighth Schedule (ES) of the Indian Constitution was also in full swing during this period³²⁴. The recognition of Manipuri literature given by the Sahitya Akademi served as one of the foundational arguments for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES. Statements given by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee are quoted as justifications for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES³²⁵. He is seen as an authoritative figure who has the power to

³²¹ A traditional mono stringed instrument made of coconut shell played like a violin.

³²² Nilakanta, 'Manipuri: Cause for Concern,' *Indian Literature*, Vol. 24, No. 6, 94-99.

³²³ Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature*, 285.

³²⁴ Ningamba, "Manipuri Language Movement:1924-1992", PhD Diss. Assam University, 2014, 129.

³²⁵ Ibid.

grant modern Manipuri literature a legitimate status within the field of Indian literary system. He is quoted as giving a “nice certificate about the richness of the language of Manipuri”³²⁶.

It can be noted that the demand for inclusion of Manipuri in the ES is divided into two phases by M. Ningamba Singha in his thesis entitled “Manipuri Language Movement: 1924-1992” submitted to Assam University in 2014 where he focuses on two language movements in Manipur and parts of Assam in the 20th century. The first movement demanded the British Government for the introduction of Manipuri as a vernacular language during the colonial period while the second movement demanded the Indian government for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES of the Indian Constitution. The second movement is divided into two phases i.e., phase one from 1953 to 1989 and phase two from 1989 to 1992 depending on how the nature of the demand was carried out. In the first phase, different organizations came with their own aims while in the second phase they all came together under a “single Umbrella organization” i.e., Manipuri Language Demand Co-ordination Committee (MLDCC).

Several justifications were put forward for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES of which one was the recognition by Sahitya Akademi. Another notable feature was the recognition in universities as a subject where Calcutta University is the first to include Manipuri as a vernacular subject for BA examination in the year 1948. Calcutta University made these changes after a series of memorandums were submitted to “the President of the Manipur State Durbar, Registrar and Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University”³²⁷ by the Manipur Sahitya Parishad (MSP) where they proposed a collection of Manipuri books to be used as the prescribed text books. These memorandums reflect the hegemonic narrative

³²⁶ Ningamba, “Manipuri Language Movement:1924-1992”, 190.

³²⁷ Ibid., 79.

which normalizes Bengali cultural superiority in Manipur. Th. Modhu Singh, Secretary of the MSP admits that “We can never be expected to produce Bankims, Michaels, Sharatchandras”.³²⁸ In another memorandum, referring to the collection of books he proposed, he writes, “I am afraid that the list submitted by me may not be able to satisfy you, the more so when compared with Bengali and other advanced literature”³²⁹. His memorandums were responded with statements such as, “The attitude of the University of Calcutta has always been very sympathetic towards all backward languages, but the case for Manipuri for recognition as a language with an equal status with Bengali and other developed Modern Indian languages up to the B.A. Examination is not at all a strong one.”³³⁰ In this matter, translations from Bengali and English were encouraged as options for producing “suitable” textbooks³³¹. As stated in the letters, it can also be pointed out that when these correspondences were taking place, Imphal, the capital of Manipur, was bombed in the Japanese invasion and it remained a battle ground for World War II³³². Nevertheless, the matter of pushing for the recognition of Manipuri as a language for BA examination headed by MSP was crucial for the people of Manipur. As such, more arrangements were made to convince the Registrar of the Calcutta University of the *richness* of the Manipuri literature and language. New lists of original books and translated books were sent for approval with repeated updates where Chatterjee was consulted to check “the nature and merits of these works”³³³. Finally, when the decision to recognize it as a vernacular subject for BA

³²⁸ Ningamba, “Manipuri Language Movement:1924-1992”, 79.

³²⁹ Ibid, 82.

³³⁰ Ibid., 85.

³³¹ Ibid., 86.

³³² Naorem Deepak’s article, ‘Japanese invasion, war preparation, relief, rehabilitation, compensation and ‘*state-making*’ in an imperial frontier (1939–1955)’ gives a detailed analysis of the impact of the Japanese invasion in Manipur viz a viz India’s state-making process.

³³³ Ningamba, “Manipuri Language Movement:1924-1992”, 94.

examination was made in 1949, it was notified through Suniti Kumar Chatterjee to the MSP³³⁴. As mentioned in the earlier chapter, the translated texts which were approved as prescribed texts books were translations from Bengali and Sanskrit Literature³³⁵.

The representation issue was also brought forth as an argument for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES³³⁶. Before 1992, the ES represented only two major linguistic groups in India i.e., the Indo-Aryan languages and the Dravidian languages. Therefore, including Manipuri would account for representing the Tibeto-Burman language family. However, Manipuri, as discussed above, was presented as one of the most *advanced* Tibeto-Burman languages in India by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee on account of having a “wealth” of translations from the Indo-Aryan literature. From this perspective, the inclusion of Meeteilon/Manipuri reflects the normalization of Indo-Aryan cultural superiority rather than accepting and accommodating marginalized literary traditions which are different and diverse. Even the politics of recognizing the terminology Manipuri rather than Meeteilon or Meiteilon during the inclusion is telling of its hegemonic power.

As pointed out by the editors of *Language and the state: Perspectives on the eighth schedule*, the criteria for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES are not stated explicitly but can only be inferred³³⁷. There are no clearly stated criteria for the inclusion of a particular language in the ES of the Indian Constitution. The inclusion of three more languages including Manipuri in the ES in 1992 left the Indian academicians wondering with suspicion about the language policy in India terming the inclusion as “sidelining the main purpose for

³³⁴ Ningamba, “Manipuri Language Movement:1924-1992”, 96.

³³⁵ Ibid., 97.

³³⁶ Ibid., 118.

³³⁷ Gupta, R. S., Anvita Abbi, and Kailash S. Aggarwal, eds. *Language and the state: Perspectives on the eighth schedule*, (Creative Books, 1995), 15.

which the Schedule of languages was created (Article 351)”³³⁸, “creation and propagation of stereotypes whereby certain standardized varieties are considered as superior and the dialects considered inferior”³³⁹, “a Pandora’s box as a result of which a number of speakers of different minor languages have staked their claim for this purpose”³⁴⁰, “not so unique and quite a few other languages are equally advanced”³⁴¹ etc. Summarizing the arguments, Kailash S Agarwal suggests in the epilogue to *Language and the state: Perspectives on the eighth schedule* that “the central focus has to be the revaluing of the non-Scheduled, non-legitimized languages and providing a voice to the muted groups and communities.” Thus, the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES presented itself in the Indian language discourse as a double-edged sword where Meeteilon or Manipuri is portrayed as a privilege language but at the same not necessarily *advanced*.

3.4. Conclusion.

In case of Manipuri, the inclusion was notably influenced by its connection with the Indo-Aryan literary tradition brought about by the translation projects as shown in the arguments provided by the Manipuri literary societies and organisations. The dominant discourse on modern Manipuri literature as part of the Indian literary system which began from the 1970’s with the recognition of Manipuri by Sahitya Akademi constructs and normalizes certain hegemonic ideologies. The project to *enrich* Manipuri literature through translation which began during the colonial period extended in the latter half of the twentieth century. However, in the later decades, a shift in focus was visible with the emergence of a new wave that foregrounds the essence of the Meetei identity to an earlier period before the

³³⁸ Gupta et al. eds. *Language and the state: Perspectives on the eighth schedule*, (Creative Books, 1995), 32.

³³⁹ Ibid., 90.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 98.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 104.

consolidation of the Hindu hegemony in Manipur. With this consciousness, there were efforts to reverse the treatment of Meeteilon from a target language into a source language. A rediscovery was made of a number of manuscripts known as *Puyas* which are considered to be a repository of the indigenous knowledge system produced before the arrival of the British. Throughout the twentieth century, translation was used directly and indirectly as a political and cultural tool in an effort to fit the Manipuri identity, particularly the Meetei identity, in the modern world informed by the frameworks of colonial modernity.

Chapter 4

Construction of a Hinduized Modern Identity in Meeteilon Literature: Chaoba, Kamal, Anganghal

Chapter 4 Outline

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Writing and Authorship: A Pre-Requisite for Being Modern

4.3 Identity Formation and the Politics of Naming: Characters, Places and Titles

4.3.1 *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*

4.3.2 *Madhabi*

4.3.3 *Labangga Lata*

4.4 Transferring Hinduism in modern Manipuri literature: References and Comparisons from the Sanskrit Epics Ramayana and Mahabharata.

4.4.1 *Madhabi*

4.4.2 *Labangga Lata*

4.4.3 *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*

4.5 Conclusion

4.1. Introduction

Writing stands as a testimony to the emergence of modernity in most of the cultures across the world. Although Manipur has had a long history of written culture, it was mostly confined in the limited space of the royal court guarded by the royal scholars. Manuscripts on various topics were circulated among the scholars and were kept and preserved safely in the *Amaiba Loisang*³⁴². Chongtham Manihar mentions in his seminal book *A History of Manipuri literature* that the first stone inscription in Meetei *Mayek*³⁴³ was installed by King Kyamba at Khoibu village in the fifteenth century and the tradition of writing the royal chronicle *Cheitharol Kumpapa* also began during his reign. T.C. Hudson writes in *the Meitheis* thus, “In conclusion it may be pointed out that there exists in Manipur a store of written records which, apart from historical value, possess an ethnological importance as affording, unconsciously and unintentionally, remarkable evidence as to the level of culture from which as yet the bulk of the population has not emerged. There is yet a rich harvest to be gathered in, and, if the workers are few, their labour will be justified by its reward.”³⁴⁴

The modern Manipuri writers emerged only in the early 20th century during the colonial era under the British Empire. It is needless to say that western education played a significant role in producing these modern Manipuri writers. After the arrival of western education with the establishment of the Johnstone Middle English school in 1885, writing became a tool for the common people and was no longer treated as the property of the scholars in the royal court. However, western education did not include Meeteilon (Manipuri) in its school system. Instead, Sanskrit and Bengali were introduced as the vernacular

342. Ch. Manihar, *A History of Manipuri Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2003), 10.

343. Meetei Script

344. T.C. Hudson, *The Meitheis*. (London: David Nutt, 1975), 133-134.

languages. Manipuri as a vernacular language was not introduced in the matriculation exam until 1924 when Calcutta University finally recognised Meeteilon written in Bengali script³⁴⁵. It is not surprising that such was the fate of Meeteilon considering the hegemonic status the Indo-Aryan languages particularly Bengali and Sanskrit occupied during the colonial era in Manipur. These two particular Indo-Aryan languages were conferred a highly prestigious status by the cultural apex body, Brahma Sabha, a brahmin institution, patronized by the then Manipuri King, Maharaj Churachand.

This chapter opens the second part of the thesis. The second part explores the idea of Manipuri modernity by juxtaposing two contrasting representations of Manipur; the representation that we see in the literary works of the canonical figures on the one hand and the representation that we find in the marginal texts such as Naoriya Phulo's works on the other. Phulo's works are crucial to understand the alternatives to the dominant normative representations presented in the canonical texts constituting modern Manipuri literature precisely because his works embody a very different kind of composition and are rarely treated as literary texts. The influence of translation in Manipuri literature is rampant as we have seen from the discussion in the preceeding chapters. It was hardly possible for the writers to escape from translation in the Manipuri literary space. The second part of the thesis examines how translation is involved in shaping modern Manipuri literature. It tries to find out what elements constitute modern Manipuri literature, what makes them modern texts, why were certain texts and writers were hailed as modern while others were simply unacknowledged and remain outside the literary corpus. Employing the method used by Richard Bauman and Charles L Brigg in *Voices of Modernity*, the present thesis makes an attempt "to read texts that had been marginalized and largely forgotten alongside canonical

345. Thokchom Mangoljao. *Western Education in Manipur. Vol. 1.* (Imphal: Education Department, Government of Manipur, 1967), 4.

works”³⁴⁶. The thesis reads these texts with regard to the role it has in constructing a hegemonic modern Manipuri identity i.e., being literate (in Bengali / Sanskrit / Hindi / English) and being Hindu (naming culture, rituals, festivals, practices). Chapter 4 discusses three prominent modern Manipuri literary figures - Khwairakpam Chaoba, Dr. Lamabam Kamal and Hijam Anganghal, popularly known as Chaoba-Kamal-Anganghal, the triumvirate. The discussion on the marginal figure Naoriya Phulo and his works is continued in chapter 5.

For discussion in this chapter, three of the most notable works are selected from each of the writers; Khwairakpam Chaoba’s historical novel *Labangga Lata* (1934), Lamabam Kamal’s novel *Madhabi* (1930) and Hijam Anganghal’s epic *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* (1940). The contents of these three texts are analysed critically to draw out certain elements which constitute them as modern canonical texts. They will be read in conjunction with Naoriya Phulo’s writings in the following chapter to find out which varying elements made them occupy contrasting spaces in Modern Manipuri literature. All three of them came from different backgrounds and had different levels of education. Kwairakpam Chaoba studied till class 10 and was a school teacher while Lamabam Kamal was a doctor by profession. Hijam Anganghal studied only till class 5 but his curiosity and the love for his mother tongue stimulated him to write his *magnum opus*, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, one of the longest epics in the literary world with 33,451 lines in the verse form. Although, they all came from different backgrounds, they had one thing in common. The literature they produced became what we now call modern Manipuri literature.

They were recognised as modern Manipuri literary giants by the established literary societies such as Sahitya Parishad Manipur by giving them awards and instituting awards in

³⁴⁶. Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs. *Voices of modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), X.

their names. The Sahitya Ratna award was given to Khwairakpam Chaoba in 1948³⁴⁷ while Hijam Anganghal is known as Mahakavi Anganghal in the literary world and the literary award Mahakavi Anganghal Award is conferred to a selected Manipuri writer every year by Sahitya Thoupang Lup and Hijam Romani Memorial Trust³⁴⁸.

While *Madhabi* is the first Manipuri novel set in Langthabaal, Imphal, *Labangga Lata* is the first Manipuri historical novel set in the 17th century during the reign of King Khagemba. *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* recounts the romance story between legendary Thoibi, princess of Moirang and Khuman Khamba, an orphan in Moirang. The story of Khamba and Thoibi which used to circulate orally (Pena Esei) among the people is put down into the written form for the first time. In spite of belonging to diverse genres, the selected texts share certain common features which constitute the modalities of being “modern”.

4.2. Writing and Authorship: A Pre-Requisite for Being Modern

Western modernity makes it impossible to imagine any oral literature as modern literature. Even though the story of Khamba and Thoibi has been passed down from one generation to another in the oral form, it could become a part of modern literature only after it has been put in the written form by Anganghal. While it existed solely within the tradition of *Pena Esei*, it was not considered modern literature. In the forward to the epic, Anganghal laments the fact that the beauty of Khamba-Thoibi story could only be heard but not read³⁴⁹. To this remark, one of his relative replies, “You ought to write it with whatever you have; you can’t claim someone’s talent as yours.” The dual modality of being modern i.e., writing and authorship is suggested in this anecdote. Only after someone (Anganghal) authors a book

347. Thokchom Prafulo, comp., *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya*. (Imphal: Khwairakpam Sorojini, 1996), 418.

7. DIPR. “Birth Anniversary of Mahakavi Hijam Anganghal Singh.” *Sangai Express*, July 28, 2018.

349 Hijam Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 2nd ed. (Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1986), ii.

could the story of Khamba and Thoibi become modern literature. A similar modality works with *Labangga Lata* wherein the oral story of “Sanongba Higaiwa” is written down and transformed into a historical novel, a modern form of genre. The romantic story of Labangga and Lata is set against the backdrop of the conflict that arose between the two brothers of the 17th century King Khagemba of Manipur, Yaiskul also known as Sanongba and Khwairakpa, after Manipur won the war against the Chinese (*Khagi* in Manipur). The term “higaiwa” means “gossip” in Meeteilon and we could trace the etymology of this term to the story of conflict between Sanongba and his brother Khwairakpa. The idiom “sanongba higaiwa” signifies any sort of conflicting event/argument where there could be no resolution. When Khwairakpa’s *hiruhanba*³⁵⁰ breaks a burrowed *hee*³⁵¹ from Sanongba, Sanongba demands that he should be given the same *hee* that the *hiruhanba* burrowed. He insists that he neither wants it fixed nor a new *hee*, but should be given the exact *hee* that was burrowed from him, as fit as ever. Interwoven with the story of Sanongba higaiwai, the love story of Labangga and Lata comes alive in this historical novel. While Khamba Thoibi Seireng and Labangga Lata were adaptations from the literature that existed in the oral form, *Madhabi* was an attempt by Dr. Lamabam Kamal to generate and inspire the Manipuri people to experience the enjoyment of *reading* and *writing* which is something that he believed to be lacking in Manipur. As expressed in his introduction to *Madhabi*, he is saddened by the fact that when so many books such as novels, verses and journals in other languages have flooded the market, no Manipuri texts are available to be read and enjoyed. *Madhabi* is supposed to be enjoyed in reading while inspiring others to write. Modern Manipuri literature meant it has to be written down and a writer has to be there to its credit.

³⁵⁰. The person who looks after someone’s *Hee*.

³⁵¹. A long traditional wooden boat.

However, not all written literature has the privilege of belonging to the corpus of modern Manipuri literature. Writing and authorship do not assure that the texts are treated as part of modern Manipuri literature. As rightly pointed out by André Lefevere, the process of selecting canons “operates within the entire oeuvre of a certain author commonly regarded as a classic”³⁵². While Kamal’s *Madhabi* generated quite a sensation during his time and was later on hailed as a modern Manipuri literary classic, his other text, “Devjani”, a play adapted from the story of Yayati and Devjani in the Adi parva of the *Mahabharat* written even before *Madhabi* remains shrouded in obscurity in the discourse on Manipuri literature for a long time. It was staged for the first time by Kalakshetra only in 1969³⁵³. “Devjani” presents a critique to the oppressive nature of the Brahma Sabha through its satirical rhetoric. It subverts the power and authority of the Brahma Sabha by transforming the sensibility of the original characters without changing the plot of the story. Kamal portrays the characters in a comical manner stripped off of its seriousness and sacredness. Through the characters of Sarmistha and Yayati, he questions the oppressive system and the discriminatory rationales of the Brahma Sabha where the bamons have the authority to either declare someone as “mangba”(Impure) or “sengba” (pure) purely on the basis of monetary benefits, gratifications of their emotional and physical needs all the while maintaining their status-quo in the Manipuri society. In the character of Devjani and her father Sukhra, Kamal shows the insidious nature of the bamons in deluding the people as well as the King with their perceived prestigious birth and superior status in the society. The existence of a play such as “Devjani” posed a threat to the dominant narrative of imagining a modern Manipur, a Manipur politically ruled by the British and culturally administered by the Brahma Sabha. For fear of

³⁵² André Lefevere, *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame*, (Routledge, 1992), 20.

³⁵³. Lairenlakpam Sarat, *Dr. Kamal: Pungsi Amasung Manglaan*. (Imphal: Manipur Association for Science and Society, 2014), 70.

transgressing the authority of the Brahma Sabha, “Devjani” ceased to exist altogether during the colonial era let alone being considered a part of modern Manipuri literature. Any sort of idea that either reflects or generates a suspicious nature towards Hinduism and Sanskritization is completely ignored and erased from the discourse on modern Manipuri literature. Hence, what defines modern Manipuri literature and the principal feature that constitutes and legitimizes the modality of what makes a text modern in Manipur is to take part in the hegemonic discourse that accords an inconvertible space to Hinduism in Manipur.

A comparative study of the three selected texts reveals that the content of modern Manipuri literature essentially requires the assimilation and glorification of the Hindu culture. The contents of all the three selected texts are bound together by the inevitable eulogization of Sanskrit and Bengali Literature via references and comparisons. The principal framework for Modern Manipuri literature was necessarily drawn from Sanskrit and Bengali literature. Hence, even the term for literature itself was the Sanskrit word “Sahitya”. The texts which were produced during the colonial era in Manipur were categorized under genres which were available in Sanskrit/Bengali Literature during that period such as Naatak, Kavya, Patrika, Upanyas, etc. As such, *Madhabi* was categorized as upanyas, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* as kavya and *Labangga Lata* as itihāsik upanyas. Although, Dr. Kamal uses the English term “novel” to define *Madhabi* in his short introduction to the text, it is referred to as an upanyas in the Manipuri literary discourse. However, the fact remains that the term has never been translated into Meeteilon nor a Meeteilon term has been invented which could convey the essence of the word assuming there is none in the Meeteilon vocabulary. During this period, it has also become a formality to prefix “shri/shrimati” before one’s names and suffix “Singh/Devi” while addressing in public or on paper. Thus, the writers of these texts are addressed in their full names as “Shri Lamabam Kamal Singh/Dr. Kamal Singh”, “Shri Khwairakpam Chaoba Singh” and “Shri Anganghal Singh/Hijam Anganghal Singh”.

Following the western model, all these texts provide the name of the author/s, publication year and the name of the Publishing houses/Publishers. *Madhabi* comes with a small note of introduction and a dedication note where the writer supplicates himself to an imaginary literary deity. *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* is introduced by Anganghal in reasonable three and half pages. His introduction is preceded by a series of adoration notes to “Shri Gurudev”, “Shri Shri shri Khamba Mahaprabhu”, “Shri Shri Shri Krishna” and “Golokpati Shri Shri Shri Krishna” respectively. These notes are elaborated and discussed in the next section.

4.3. Identity Formation and the Politics of Naming: Characters, Places and Titles

One of the most significant ways of assimilation is reflected in the names of the characters. Most of the main characters in the texts bear Hindu names such as Khagendrajit (Conqueror of Khagi), Labangga (cloves), Lata (creeper), Nabin (new), Indurekha (full moon), Madhu (sweet/honey) etc. in *Labangga Lata*, Madhabi (goddess Luxmi/a flowering creeper), Birendra (Lord of warriors), Sashi (moon), Dhirendra (Lord of the brave), Bhubanchandra (world + moon), Dhananjoy (Arjuna), Nabinchandra (new+moon), etc. in *Madhabi*. In *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, the characters retain their original names mostly because it is based on a folk story except for the name Kunjalata, an orphaned girl killed by a tiger in Khoirentak. These characters possess Hindu titles and are addressed as Yuvaraj, Maharaj, Maharani, Senapati, Menjor, Mantri, Rajkumar, Dolaipaba, Shri, etc. They identify themselves as Vaishnavas and Kshetrias consistently in the texts.

4.3.1. *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*

In *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, although the names of the characters remain intact for its cultural signification is invariably integral to the story, they are compared, contrasted and collated with anecdotes and characters from the Sanskrit narratives such as the Hindu epics, *Mahabharat* and *Ramayana*. Before the actual text begins, Anganghal supplicates for

blessing from four figures in the following respective order: “Shri Gurudev” to bring light to his ignorant disposition, “Shri-shri-shri Khamba Mahaprabhu” an incarnation of God, “Shri-shri-shri Krishna” and “Golok Pati Shri-shri-shri Krishna” for being re-incarnated as Khamba among the mortals. These adoration notes collate the story of Khamba-Thoibi within the larger tradition of the Hindu narratives by treating Khamba as an avatar of Krishna. The writer calls upon these figures assuming that he is not worthy of performing the task of writing his (Khamba) story. He does so, so that they will help him in completing the task successfully. In the last adoration note, Anganghal claims that Krishna reincarnates as Khamba in Manipur to play his *leela* after he has finished playing *Rasa Leela* in Brindavan. As far as Anganghal is concerned, Krishna existed before the story of Khamba and Thoibi serving as its precedent. The Hindu narratives are infused in all the three texts in both time and space. Manipuri literature remains dependent on these narratives in search of reference points.

Towards the ending of the epic, Khamba is compared with Mahadev holding his *trisul*³⁵⁴. By forcing the character of Khamba within the structure of the dominant Hindu narrative, the wholeness of Moirang folklore by itself undergoes a metaphorical breakdown. This breakage implicates a sub-categorical position for Khamba where his indigenous identity is subsumed within the multiplicity of Krishna’s identity. In short, Khamba’s character is dependent on the larger Hindu narrative; he can only be a part and never be exhaustive by himself.

Almost all the characters in *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* are original except for a character named Kunjamala whose heart is described as pure as Ganga³⁵⁵. She is seen praying to *Hari*, repeatedly chanting his name, when she sees Khamba vowing to avenge her death by killing

³⁵⁴. Hijam Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 2nd ed. (Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1986), 50 (Book IV).

³⁵⁵. Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 44.

the tiger³⁵⁶. Since the story of Khamba and Thoibi is believed to be from the 12th century when Moirang stood as an independent Kingdom, it can be extrapolated that the name Kunjamala came much later along with the coming of Hinduism in Manipur. In the story given by T.C. Hudson in his book *The Meitheis* which was published in 1908, the episode of killing a tiger in Khoirentak and the finding of a dead body is mentioned. . But the name of the girl is not mentioned anywhere³⁵⁷. One of the crucial features of *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* that reflects the process of assimilation is the collation of the Hindu goddesses with the characters in the epic. It has been mentioned above that through interpreting Khamba as an incarnation of a Hindu God, the totality of Khamba's identity as independent from Hinduism is compromised. Likewise, Thoibi is treated as an incarnation of Durga in many instances such as in the monologue recited by the personified moon while Thoibi was running towards Khamba in Khorì Keithel³⁵⁸ and in the court of Tumu King³⁵⁹. In this episode, Khamba remarks that Thoibi is God's daughter, a descendent of Vishnu³⁶⁰ just as Moirang King's blessing is considered as Vishnu's blessing³⁶¹. Further, Thoibi is compared with other Hindu goddesses as well such as Lakshmi and Saraswati while she is playing Kaang, a traditional game in Kabo during her exile³⁶². The relationship between Khamba and Thoibi is compared with Chakravaka birds, reborned lovers who were cursed to be separated during night time in the Hindu legend.

³⁵⁶ . Hijam Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 2nd ed. (Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1986), 52 (Book IV).

³⁵⁷ . T.C. Hudson, *The Meitheis*. (London: David Nutt, 1975), 150.

³⁵⁸ . Hijam Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 2nd ed. (Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1986), 356 (Book II).

³⁵⁹ . Ibid. 273 (Book III).

³⁶⁰ . Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 376 (Book II).

³⁶¹ . Ibid., 384 (Book II).

³⁶² . Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*., 189 (Book III).

Similar patterns of collation can be seen in other characters as well such as “*Chingu Indra Soraren*”³⁶³, “*atiya guru Sidaba*”³⁶⁴, “*Chingu Mahadev*”³⁶⁵ etc. At the wedding of Khamba and Thoibi, it is written that “..all the 33 crores Gods in Hindusim came to attend the wedding taking the human form”. Many of the places that Thoibi crosses while coming back from Kabo are named after Mahadev such as Mahadev Lokchao³⁶⁶ and the Land of Loiloi Mahadev³⁶⁷. Langthabaal and baruni are used interchangeably with Canchipur and Nongmaijing ching respectively. Nongmaijing ching has become the abode for Mahadev in Manipur.

4.3.2. *Madhabi*

In a similar vein, the relationship between Madhabi and Urirei follows this binary power relationship where Hinduism is seen as complete, independent while indigeneity is regarded as dependent and submissive. The Sanskrit name Madhabi possesses a dual signification; that of the flower Madhumalati and Goddess Lakshmi. When Biren first sets eyes on Madhabi and Urirei, they are compared with Lakshmi and Saraswati. As mentioned earlier, Thoibi in *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* is also compared with these two Hindu Goddesses. Towards the end of the novel, Madhabi’s actions are compared to that of a Goddess by Urirei³⁶⁸ and she is convinced that Madhabi is not a human being but the Goddess of the Heibok. Urirei, in contrast, could not live up to become the metaphorical Goddess that was assigned to her in the opening scene. The readers can also assume that Madhabi means flower

³⁶³. Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 199 (Book I).

³⁶⁴. Ibid., 202 (Book I).

³⁶⁵. Ibid., 356 (Book II).

³⁶⁶. Ibid. 279 (Book III).

³⁶⁷. Ibid.

³⁶⁸. Shamurailatpam Gopal, ed. *Dr. Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*. (Imphal: Poknapham Publications, 1999), 133.

in this context since Urirei, a parallel character to Madhabi is also the name of a flower which literally translates as Creeper flower. In the chapter “Chingyagi Leikol”, Biren addresses them as flowers, Madhabi and Urirei, without knowing their names³⁶⁹. As soon as the two characters, that of Urirei and Madhabi, are juxtaposed together as representing the tension between *indigeneity* and *Hinduism* respectively, the tell-tale signs that runs in the deep structure of the novel begin to emerge. Although Urirei triumphs in the end, throughout the novel, she has no real agency over the circumstances of her life and is portrayed as submissive and dependent while Madhabi makes her own decisions and acts upon them. She is inviolable and independent. When Biren leaves Urirei for higher studies, she could do nothing but look at him from the distance standing on top of the Heibok Hill, filled with regret and guilt. Her gaze is that of a victim in the society, helpless and incapable because she was born as a woman. In contrast, when Madhabi looks down from the same Heibok Hill to Dhiren, her suitor, her gaze is jovial and she is the one playing with Dhiren. In another instance, Urirei is captured by Bhupon and his followers brought her in the forest. When Urirei cries out and prays to Madhusudan, a Hindu God, after losing all hope, Madhabi runs out from the bush shouting and looking like a *Bhairavi* with dishevelled hair, outstretched tongue and a sword drawn over her shoulders³⁷⁰. Madhabi is repeatedly compared to Hindu goddesses and acts as the saviour for Urirei. Furthermore, the writer assures the readers that Urirei is nowhere like the beautiful Sakuntala nor a princess like Sabitri but is compared with Uchek Langmei, a character from the Meitei folklore who met with a tragic fate. In a single occasion, Dhiren compares Urirei with a character in Bengali Literature and claims that there is no one in Manipuri literary history who can be compared with Urirei while comparing Biren with Nongban from Khamba Thoibi folktale of Moirang. However, the readers are

³⁶⁹. Gopal, ed. *Dr. Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*, 58.

³⁷⁰. *Ibid.*, 99.

made known that this was simply not true since Dhiren's comparison of Urirei and Biren are based on the information given in the forged letter.

The sacrificial acts of Madhabi culminates in the end into being a saint who is unaffected by physical pleasures. She leaves Dhiren for good when she hears the news of his impending marriage with a girl of her own age. But, for Madhabi, her loss is a conscious choice of an independent individual who is able to make her own decisions as opposed to Urirei who is drawn as a victim in the society in the hands of multiple characters and incidents; the wildfire, being stalked by Bhupon, being left by Biren, the drowning, the news of her father's death, the capture by Bhupon, and the second drowning. The second drowning occurs right after Urirei hears about Biren getting married with another girl and the death of her mother. She attempts to commit suicide by jumping in the *Rasmandal* pond. It is believed that Manipuri Ras leela was performed adjacent to this pond for the first time during Bhagyachandra's reign. The *Rasmandal* pond could function as a connotation for Hinduism where Urirei literally drowns herself implying the submersion of indigeneity in a larger narrative of Hinduism. Incidentally, Urirei is saved by Biren after hearing Madhabi's cry for help only to be immersed again in the Hindu rituals of marriage in the final scene. She goes through the ritual of *Kanyadaan* discharged by her long-lost father who appears from the crowd near a corner of the Mandap. The marriage ritual is officiated by a brahmin. Initially, the brahmin gets worried about his *dakshina* and blurts out "Nonesense!" when the bride goes missing but when he is assured of receiving three *dakshina* instead of just one, he is filled with ego and remarks, "How can something I, a man, do go wrong?". Here, Kamal subverts the ideal sacred image of a Brahmin. Instead of performing the ritual to preserve the sanctity of marriage, he is easily swayed by money.

Apart from the binary relationship between Urirei and Madhabi, we can also look at the contrast that is presented in the treatment of the characters of who have Meeteilon names

and Hindu names. While the major characters are given Hindu names, the minor characters still retain their names in Meeteilon. Birendra's little sister is called Thambal while the son of one of the relatives of Birendra is called Tomal. Tomal, like Biren used to go to a school but he is a failed version of Biren since he is made to drop out after three years because his father thought it useless since he wasn't making any money. In contrast, Biren's completion of education made him a sought-after man by rich parents for their daughters' hand-in-marriage when he comes back home from Kolkata. Moreover, Biren is reminded of his royal bloodline by his friend Sashi calling him a *rajbangsa* several times. Not only Biren's name is not Meeteilon, he doesn't even bear a *yumnak*, an important identity marker among the Meeteis; his full formal name is Rajkumar Birendrajit Singh. His *yumnak* or family name is replaced with Rajkumar and the title Singh is placed after his name. But the point is, despite having no markers of the Meetei identity, Rajkumar Birendra Singh is drawn as a prototype of what we can call a modern meetei. He has received modern education and is hailed as an MA passed. He believes in written documents as shown in his acceptance of the letter signed by Sashi as authentic and true although it was forged³⁷¹. This reverence to written documents makes him vulnerable nevertheless modern as opposed to his uneducated friends who mock writing/reading and modern education. Sashi throws Biren's book when he sees no picture in it while another friend begins to recite gibberish holding Biren's book upside down³⁷². When Biren accepts the proposal of marriage to Rajendra's daughter, one of Sashi's close friends questions his morality. He blames *Ingreji Bidya* (English education) if it has corrupted Biren's conscience to trust his friend Sashi who is in jail for his sake and Urirei who has suffered much for his love³⁷³. The question of what constitutes this modern education is the

³⁷¹. Gopal, ed. *Dr. Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*, 117.

³⁷². *Ibid.* 53-54.

³⁷³. Gopal, *Dr. Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*, 122.

crux of the matter. Bengali literature which represents western education in Manipur during the colonial period is reproduced in *Madhabi* where Biren is reading “Folktales of Bengal” while waiting for dinner³⁷⁴. Despite written in English, the content of the book, however, is about Bengal. In the chapter entitled “Awaba pao” (Bad news), the writer describes that some books are carefully kept under his pillow while books on maths and science lay below the table to suggest Biren’s romantic attitude while suppressing the scientific temper³⁷⁵. These romantic books include *Sakuntala*, *Kadambari* and Shakespeare’s Dramas. As the bad news gets revealed, we see that Biren not only *studies* about Bengal in his father’s pursuit for giving modern education to his son, he actually *goes* to Calcutta (Kolkata) to study in Presidency College and later in Calcutta University.

Another minor character in the novel, Urirei’s mother, shares the same name as Thambal, Biren’s sister. Both Biren’s sister and Urirei’s mother have to hide their identity in order to survive in the society ruled by people like Bhupon and his father Dhananjay. Biren’s sister is dressed up as a guy to avoid any danger after Bhupon and his followers have tried to kidnap her while Urirei’s mother has had to change her identity by disguising herself as a relative of Rajendra, a rich man who saved her from the pyre. They both are dependent and have no agency of their own. Their circumstances change only because of the actions of the people around them coupled with their inactions.

4.3.3. *Labangga Lata*

Despite being set during the reign of King Khagemba, the historical novel *Labangga Lata* embodies the ethos of the early 20th century which was heavily influenced by Hinduism. The novel incorporates multiple stories from the Hindu epics and is carefully constructed to fit the Hindu subjectivities in the text. In *Labangga Lata*, the name of King Khagemba is

³⁷⁴. Gopal, Dr. *Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*. 54.

³⁷⁵. *Ibid.*, 80.

changed into Khagendrajit replacing the Meeteilon suffix “ngamba” (victor) with “Indrajit”, a Sanskrit name. However, the names of his two brothers, his inferiors, Khwairakpa and Yaiskul Laakpa are retained in this historical novel. It is ironic, however, that these two brothers try to prove themselves as kshatriyas, identifying themselves as Hindus, repeatedly, despite the writer keeping their real names. When Khwairakpa is in the battle field in the war against the Khagis, he tells Labangga that as long as the Meetei blood runs in his body, he will not utter with his mouth that he has no strength left to fight with the enemy. Just as soon as assuring himself of his Meetei identity and pride, he identifies himself as a kshatriya born in the family that conquers the Kauravas³⁷⁶. After the war, a feud arises between the two younger brothers of King Khagendrajit. As it turns out, Yaiskul pronounces in the durbar meeting that it all started when the *hiruhanba* of Khwairakpa burrowed a *hee* from Yaiskul and returns it broken. He demands that if the exact *hee* is not returned to him, neither a repaired one nor a new one, he must kill Khwairakpa’s *hiruhanba* for his mistake. King Khagendrajit disagrees with him and says if anyone is at fault, it is not the *hiruhanba* but Khwairakpa and he will be served an appropriate punishment for that. To this remark, Yaiskul reminds himself that he is also a descendent of Arjun and that he himself is more than capable to decide to whom the punishment must be given to³⁷⁷. In the chapter entitled “Leipak Kaibagi Mayol Chongba”, the King and Khwairakpa find out the real reason behind Yaiskul’s anger. They inferred that the trivial matter of the broken *hee* couldn’t have been the real reason that instigated Yaiskul’s rage. Earlier during a conversation with Yaiskul, Khwairakpa turned down Yaiskul’s suggestion for giving his daughter Latasana to Labangga who is his second-in-command. To amuse himself, Khwairakpa tells Yaiskul that he would, instead, give his daughter to Madhu, his second-in-command in jest. Yaiskul has taken this

³⁷⁶. Thokchom Prafulo, comp. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya*. (Imphal: Khwairakpam Sorojini, 1996), 428.

³⁷⁷. Prafulo, comp. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya*, 446.

rejection to his heart and after concocting a fake feud, threatens to kill Khwairakpa's *hiruhanba*. However, instead of mitigating the situation, Khwairakpa declares that a vow made by a Kshatriya cannot be broken and that he is after all a descendent of Arjun³⁷⁸. In the letter sent to King Khagemba as the last appeal as well, Yaiskul laakpa refers to himself as a Kshatriya and therefore, he cannot go against his word³⁷⁹. In the chapter "Labangga Lata gi Luhongba", Yaiskul Laakpa asserts that he will perform the *Kanyadaan* for Latasana in marriage with Labangga. Her wedding gifts shall be in hundreds and will be fitting for a princess since he himself is a descendant of Arjun and Brabuvahan. In the same manner that Arjun married Subhadra after eloping with her, Labangga and Latasana must also get married³⁸⁰. Other characters such as Madhu, Yaiskul's second, also identifies himself as a Kshatriya. In "Khagigi Laanfam", Madhu reassures King Khagemba to not worry about the impending war with the Khagis. He says that he is a Kshatriya and so, death in war does not bother him³⁸¹.

4.4. Transferring Hinduism in Modern Manipuri Literature: References and Comparisons

from the Sanskrit epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

4.4.1. *Madhabi*

Madhabi opens with a scene where the male protagonist, a school going student, is seen reading a text book and getting disturbed by his friends who don't go to school. A binary structure is created instantly in this scene among the natives; those who embrace modern education vs those who reject it. This binary only sharpens as the novel progresses culminating in the male protagonist fulfilling his journey by getting an MA and being the talk

³⁷⁸. Prafulo, comp. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya.*, 448.

³⁷⁹. Ibid., 453.

³⁸⁰. Ibid., 464.

³⁸¹. Ibid., 431.

of the town while his uneducated friends were not even introduced properly except for Sashi who ends up in jail. Biren, the male protagonist gets closer to Dhiren, his friend in Calcutta, who returns with Biren in Manipur and gets the same attention as Biren. While describing Biren's father, Kamal portrays him in a positive light stating that he is a wise man who doesn't gossip around and, instead, focuses on the welfare of his child which is why Biren is studying. In stating thus, he also implies that those who do not study are wasting their time, gossiping around.

For Kamal, the arrival of modernity through western education is a not a violent one nor colonial in nature. Kamal perceives it as an opportunity to ascend higher in the social ladder. However, both Biren and Sashi are bound by a common characteristic; both subjects are deeply entrenched in Hindu ideals and Hindu culture. The ritual of Baruni Kaba, (climbing Baruni hill) also known as Nongmaijing Ching in Meeteilon, to worship Lord Mahadev points towards the hegemonic presence of Hindu culture in Manipur. Nongmaijing Ching is renamed as Baruni and the appropriation of the Noimangjing ching as the abode of Shiva is represented clearly. The characters participate in this ritual ceremoniously and the event is used as a trope for germinating romantic love between the main characters Biren and Urirei. Biren meets Urirei for the first time while she along with Madhabi are culling flowers for the ritual³⁸². Later on, their love is tested while climbing the hill. He saves Urirei from the wildfire risking his life and they both go on top of the hill to pray to Lord Mahadeva³⁸³. The night Biren comes to tell Urirei that he is leaving for Culcutta, Urirei could not sleep filled with grief and regret for revealing her love for Biren.

Kamal employs time to represent Urirei's emotion and he describes it through referring to Hindu poets, cities and King Ravan. He writes, "How strong the flow of time is!

³⁸². Gopal, ed. *Dr. Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*, 58.

³⁸³. *Ibid.*, 69.

The current of a strong wind can be obstructed by the mountain, the heavy flow of great rivers can be stopped by the ocean – but who is there to stop the flow of time? Which Himalayan range, which *Soraren*, which King Ravan can stop time even for a second.....many places like Ujjain and Hastina have gone with the current of time, many Kalidasas and Bhavabhuti have submerged in time...”³⁸⁴. In the chapter entitled “Urirei gi Asha”, Urirei’s hope is compared with Shakuntala waiting for her husband’s memory to regain and Sabitri holding onto her dead husband³⁸⁵. For comic relief, Kamal writes that Dhananjay, Bhubon’s father, had merely fourteen strands of hair on his head when he was getting ready for shaving during his Churakaran, one of the first sacrament rites for the Hindus, a process that symbolizes the Hindu subjectivity of the Meeteis by making their profane bodies go through sacred Hindu rituals³⁸⁶. From birth to death, the body of a Meetei goes through a series of Hindu rituals and rites in several stages. As mentioned before, Churakaran is one of the first sacrament rites. Other sacraments such as marriage by the bamon Purohit and Shraddha is mentioned in *Madhabi*. Three weddings take place performed by the bamon purohit³⁸⁷, while the shraddha of Urirei’s father takes place after the news of his “death”.

The writer also uses Hindu festivals and its associated practices to build up his plot. Urirei’s house is burned down by Bhubon’s men ordered by Dhananjay during the *Yaoshang*³⁸⁸ season. Some of his men slipped among a bunch of youths who were roaming around the

³⁸⁴. Gopal, ed. *Dr. Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*, 86.

³⁸⁵. Prafulo, comp. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya*. 91.

³⁸⁶. Ibid. 89.

³⁸⁷. Ibid. 132.

³⁸⁸. Yaoshang is another name for Holi in Manipur. But some evidence suggests that it might have been an indigenous practice to which Holi has been incorporated.

locality to enjoy Yaoshang at night. They secretly set her house on fire and burned it down³⁸⁹. Urirei's mother pleading for her daughter to Bhupon's men is compared with the animal sacrifice Bali in Hinduism. Kamal writes, "Similar to how an attending crowd feels elated instead of feeling remorse when they hear the screams of the *bali* goat that has been placed in front of the temple, Bhupon's men felt no sympathy for Thambal. They watched Thambal crying and begging for her daughter with amusement"³⁹⁰. When Urirei falls in the hands of Bhupon's men for the second time, she starts to chant the name of "shrimadhusudan"³⁹¹. When Dhiren insists Biren to tell him about Urirei, Biren tells him everything in detail. To describe how he narrates Urirei's story, Kamal alludes to *Ramayana* by comparing its narration with how Biren tells Dhiren about Urirei. It serves as a metaphor for the length, emotion and intricacy of his relationship with Urirei's³⁹².

4.4.2. *Labangga Lata*

Chaoba's *Labangga Lata* is another example of Manipuri literature imitating Bengali literature. He uses Bengali historical novels as models for creating *Labangga Lata*³⁹³. Although the settings of the novel, the war against the Khagis and the feud between the brothers, are based on historical facts, *Labangga Lata*'s representation of 17th century Manipur is far from being historical. Historical novels utilize the past to tell stories where fictional characters are fit in adhering to the beliefs and practices that were prevalent during certain periods of time. However, the interesting part is to examine how the historical events are constructed by the writer to tell his story. In *Labangga Lata*, 17th century Manipur is

³⁸⁹. Shamurailatpam Gopal, ed. *Dr. Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*. (Imphal: Poknapham Publications, 1999), 90.

³⁹⁰. Gopal, ed. *Dr. Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*. 96.

³⁹¹. Ibid. 99.

³⁹². Ibid. 116.

³⁹³. Aruna, Nahakpam. "Chaoba Singh Amasung Itihasik Upanyas." In *Kunsuba Chahichagi Manipuri Upanyas Neinaba*, edited by Aruna, Nahakpam, (Imphal: Chungkham Yashawanta, 2019), 31.

pictured as heavily influenced by Hindu beliefs and practices. Before the ascension of King Charairongba in the 18th century, Manipur had no close affiliations with Hinduism. The name Manipur was changed as such by Pamheiba who succeeded Charairongba. Although Charairongba was the first Meetei king to convert into Hinduism, Manipur was still known by various names. In this novel, the coming of Hinduism in Manipur is pushed back another century. Instead of taking the readers back to 17th century, the historical characters from the 17th century are transported to early 20th century Manipur.

Through addressing King Khagemba as “Maharaja”, a title which was introduced during Pamheiba’s reign to replace the Meeteilon title “Meidingu”, the novel pictures not only the characters as Hindu subjects but Manipur as a Hindu nation. Manipur is revered as “Jai, Manipur Mata ki Jai”³⁹⁴, identifying Manipur as a nation that resembles Bharat Mata. The writer infuses various Hindu festivals which did not exist during Khagemba’s rule in Manipur³⁹⁵. In the chapter “Nupi haiba amasung leibak kaibagi maru hunba”, Yaiskul comes to Khwairakpa’s house to convince him to give his daughter Latasana to Labangga. But Khwairakpa rejects the proposal and instead promises to give her to Madhu, his commander. The chapter opens with a description of a number of Hindu festivals one after another to show how time flies and the growing relationship between Labangga and Latasana. Festivals like *Jagabundu Kaang Chingba*, *tarpan*, *sri Panchami*, *Holi* and playing *Ras Leela* which were introduced by King Bhagyachandra in late 18th century are mentioned by the narrator. Labangga and Latasana celebrate these festivals together.

³⁹⁴. Thokchom Prafulo, comp. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya*. (Imphal: Khwairakpam Sorojini, 1996), 454.

³⁹⁵. Aruna, Nahakpam. “Chaoba Singh Amasung Itihasik Upanyas.” In *Kunsuba Chahichagi Manipuri Upanyas Neinaba*, edited by Aruna, Nahakpam, (Imphal: Chungkham Yashawanta, 2019), 35.

During the fight against the Khagis, it is heard shouting “Jai Jai, Durga maki Jai.....Khagendra Maharajki Jai” ³⁹⁶ in the distance. The meetei soldiers are portrayed as worshipping the Hindu goddess of war, Durga. The more crucial element is making them chant in Hindi rather than Meeteilon. The subjects not only worship the Hindu god, but are made to do so in another language as well. Although the characters are Meeteis, they are steeped towards becoming ideal Hindu subjects. The plots are set in motion by the desire of the characters to fulfil their roles as consummated Hindus. The main plot of the story, the feud between Khwairakpa and Yaiskul, is fuelled by their desire to keep their vows even if a war is at stake for fear of losing their Kshatriya identity. Both remind themselves constantly that they are Kshatriyas and declare in front of their respective followers that they will not go back on their words. Their commanders, Madhu and Labangga, also identify themselves as Kshatriyas and they are proud of serving King Khagendra even if it means death. To them, dying while protecting their King is a way of attaining Sanatan dharma as Kshatriyas³⁹⁷. Labangga’s marriage to Latasana is also prompted by Yaiskul’s desire to follow in the steps of his “ancestors” Babruvahan and “Arjun Mahavir” who married Subhadra³⁹⁸. In the end of the novel, Khwairakpa finally won the war against Yaiskul and comes to Rampur to take back his daughter. However, his daughter insists that she stays back in the same place since her husband did not give her the permission to leave Rampur and that her duty now is to wait for her husband to return. She has committed herself to the faith of Sita and Ram and her duty is to follow the footsteps of Janaki who came to earth to show the ideals of Pativrata. The Hindu belief that a wife’s devotion to her husband will bring fortune and prosperity to the family exemplified by the actions of Sita is exploited in this final scene.

³⁹⁶. Thokchom Prafulo, comp. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya*. (Imphal: Khwairakpam Sorojini, 1996), 429.

³⁹⁷. Prafulo, comp. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya*, 431.

³⁹⁸. Ibid. 464.

4.4.3. *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*

As seen in the other two texts, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* also compares the actions and events that unfold in the epic by alluding to *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. When Khamba goes into hiding after the event of catching the bull named Purum, Thoibi becomes lovesick and Senu tries to console her by pointing out that even Sita had to walk in the forest and was captured by a monster. Hence, Thoibi must not remain desolate, she will surely find him³⁹⁹. Here, it is not the omniscient narrator that is telling the story about Sita but Senu, a character from the 12th century where Khamba Thoibi were believed to have lived. A relationship is established between the two stories where they are intermeshed together. Thoibi is compared with Sita but only lesser because while Thoibi is Moirang's "Ibema", limited to a particular place, Sita is sangsar's "mabema" belonging to the whole world. In Book III, when Chingkhuba sends Thoibi into exile in Kabo, he gets scared if he will lose Angkhurangbi similar to the untimely demise of Ram's father consequent upon the separation from his son (Ram)⁴⁰⁰. In another instance, Khamba utters in shock, "*Hare hare*"⁴⁰¹, a vocative form of Krishna and Ram, a consolidated chant that symbolize the synthesis of Ramandi adopted by Pamheiba and Gaudiya Vaishnavism adopted by Bhagyachandra. In Book II, when Khamba is trampled by elephant *Yaisha* and is critically injured, *Takhen Sarung Hanba* hears him whispering "hari-hari". To this, he encourages Khamba to chant "*hari*" as He is their only hope⁴⁰². Khamba prays to *Hari* again when he is about to touch Kunjamala's dead body in Book IV⁴⁰³. The same expression is used by Thonglen when the two messengers bearing

³⁹⁹. Hijam Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 2nd ed. (Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1986), 26 (Book I).

⁴⁰⁰. Ibid. 144 (Book III).

⁴⁰¹. Ibid. 39 (Book I).

⁴⁰². Ibid. 349 (Book II).

⁴⁰³. Ibid. 50 (Book IV).

news from Chaoba Nongthomba tell him Khamba is dead⁴⁰⁴. By Anganghal's time, it has become a literary fashion to treat Vaishnavism as an integral part of the Meitei consciousness. It is interesting to note that "Hare hare" is not a calculative or conscious response by Khamba. It is more of an instinctive reaction to the situation suggesting the manner and extent of how deeply Vaishnavism has been ingrained in the Meitei consciousness. This particular utterance of surprise and shock, "hare hare", is not exclusive to Khamba. It was a quite common expression among the public⁴⁰⁵. Evidently, at this point, Meeteis were not in a position to question Hindu hegemony since the collective memory of oppression and atrocities associated with the arrival of Vaishnavism has been wiped out. Any text that reminds the exhumations of the dead bodies of Meitei ancestors in the 18th century⁴⁰⁶ or the existing social discrimination and economic exploitation through the systematic administration of Brahma Sabha under the colonial government is censored and effaced in modern Manipuri literary discourse⁴⁰⁷.

In contrast, texts such as *Khamba Thoibi Seireng* where the narration closely associates the characters with Hindu epics are hailed as modern literary classics. On page 60, in the chapter entitled "Kaangjei", Thoibi's devotion to Khamba is compared to having a Sati's heart. Chaning, daughter of Tumu king, also reiterates Thoibi as a Sati⁴⁰⁸. We can see a similar comparison of Sati with Angkhurangbi, Thoibi's mother in Book IV⁴⁰⁹. In Book I, in the chapter entitled "*Lei Hekpa*" (collecting Flower), on page 113, the narrator says that for

⁴⁰⁴. Ibid. 28 (Book III)

⁴⁰⁵. Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 333 (Book III).

⁴⁰⁶. Longjam Joychandra, ed. *The Lost Kingdom: Royal Chronicle of Manipur*. (Imphal: Prajatantra Publishing House, 1995), 33.

⁴⁰⁷. Naoriya Phulo, *Laininghan Naoriya Phullo gi Wareng Apunba*. (Imphal: M S Tampha Publication, 2010).

⁴⁰⁸. Hijam Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 2nd ed. (Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1986), 161 (Book III).

⁴⁰⁹. Hijam Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 2nd ed. (Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1986), 138 (Book IV).

each of the words Khamba used to rebuke Thoibi for fastening the knot of the rice parcel tightly, Thoibi's sins were absolved by Chitragupta. In "Fi waiba", Book I, page 154, Thoibi's dance is compared with Durga dancing on Mount Kailash. In the chapter entitled "Leirangba" in Book 1, page 162, Angom Nongbaan compares Thoibi with Sita and Khamba with *Rabon*. In the last chapter "Lamjel" of Book I, on page 281, Nongbaan's men try to block Khamba's path. Instead of stopping Khamba, one of the men, described as someone who was born prematurely, ends up hanging on Khamba's arm. Khamba decides to let him hang anyway thinking that it is a long way and this person would not be able to reach Moirang. The narrator compares this scene with Hanuman carrying the Sun tucked under his arm. A little later in Book I on page 301, the womenfolk of Khunthak and Khunkha began throwing insults at each other. The narrator describes this scene where two women start to fight thus, "Khunkha Toro jumped in and has entangled Khunthak Parvati's hair on her hand." Here, Parvati is used to refer to the woman from Khunthak as a comic relief. But the interesting take here is the subversion of the image of Parvati from a powerful Hindu goddess into an ordinary Khunthak woman. Anganghal's play with words temporarily enables the ordinary Khunthak woman to occupy an elevated position indicating the potential for reversing the power dynamic. But this does not amount to degrading Hinduism since the subversion is indirect and does not exist on the surface level.

In the chapter entitled "Torbung Sadanba", page 302, in Book II, the narrator claims that even Karthik would like to imitate Thoibi when she comes out fully dressed as a male warrior. Whereas Thonglen is described as "Durga" when he comes out fully dressed for war⁴¹⁰. By comparing Thoibi with Karthik, and Thonglen with Durga, although Anganghal seemingly elevates Thoibi's and Thonglen's greatness in the eyes of the readers, it is measured and defined through the lens of Hinduism. Another example is Thonglen's angry

⁴¹⁰. Hijam Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 2nd ed. (Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1986), 36 (Book III).

shouting being compared with Mahavir Arjun shooting arrows in the Virat battle⁴¹¹. A hierarchical relationship is constructed between the characters with Hinduism as the reference point, the paradigm in which modern Manipuri literature functions.

The controversial narrative of tracing Meitei's origin to Arjun in *Mahabharat* and identifying themselves as Kshatriyas is implicated in Moirang King's words in the chapter entitled "Kao"⁴¹². When Nongbaan swears by his sword and names animals, Moirang King remarks, "For women, swearing by their children is the ultimate, as it is for men swearing by animals and Kshatriyas swearing by their swords". To this, Khamba defends himself swearing by Lord Vishnu as his witness. In another instance, Nongbaan is venerated as an idol for the Kshatriyas⁴¹³ and he ponders to himself during a fight with the tiger thus, "Hey Tiger, you are a Kshatri and I, Nongbaan, am also a Kshatri"⁴¹⁴. Moirang Thonglen scolds Angom King for lamenting his son, Nongbaan's death by questioning if he is not a Kshatri⁴¹⁵. As mentioned in Khamba's swearing, throughout the text Vishnu is worshipped by the main characters and his name is used frequently in mantras and prayers. The elephant *Yaisha* which is made to trample Khamba is referred to have possessed the power of Vishnu⁴¹⁶ and when Chingkhuba is freed from the prison cell, the first thing he does is pray to Vishnu. Nongbaan also chants "jai Vishnu" while throwing his spear to the tiger inside the *pan*. He casts the spell of Vishnu on his spear and throws it towards the tiger. However, the spear is caught by the tiger after praying to the same God, Vishnu⁴¹⁷. The worshipper of Vishnu, a

⁴¹¹. Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 41 (Book III).

⁴¹². Ibid. 48 (Book II).

⁴¹³. Ibid. 55 (Book IV).

⁴¹⁴. Ibid. 76 (Book IV).

⁴¹⁵. Ibid. 94 (Book IV).

⁴¹⁶. Ibid. 339 (Book II).

⁴¹⁷. Ibid. 76 (Book IV).

Vaishnav is construed as the ideal person as opposed to a *Maha murka* as suggested in Nongbaan's words while he was dying. He confesses to Khamba that he is a *maha murkha* unlike Khamba who is a Vaishnav⁴¹⁸. Such a statement implicitly normalizes the oppressive treatment of the non-followers of Hinduism by identifying them as *Maha murkhas* who do not have any claim to a dignified status in the society. They represent the "others" in the society who are the opposite of Vaishnavas. Hence, the ostracization of those who did not comply to Brahma Sabha's dictates. In contrast, the Vaishnavas are treated with respect and are given a place in Vaikuntha⁴¹⁹, the realm where Vishnu resides.

Further, Senu prays to Shiva and Durga when Khamba enters the *pan* (fortified area) to catch the tiger while Thoibi is described as being in one with Durga. Thoibi seemingly hears Durga's voice assuring her for Khamba's safety and she feels Durga's image in close proximity with her body⁴²⁰. As the epic progresses, Moirang *cheirap* which translates as Moirang's court is described as graceful and dignified as Indra's "*sobha*"⁴²¹, derived from Bengali pronunciation for "*Sabha*". In another instance, it is written that after seeing Thoibi's dance in Tumu king's court, no dances were ever performed in Indra's court because God's dancers were embarrassed of themselves⁴²². The replacement of Maiba and Maibi by Pandits as Meitei King's advisors in the 18th century is pushed back as far as Khamba Thoibi's period in the history which is believed to be the 12th century⁴²³. The Kurukshetra war in *Mahabharat* is alluded to in Khuman king's reply to Moirang king. While waiting for

⁴¹⁸. Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 120 (Book IV).

⁴¹⁹. Ibid. 86 (Book IV).

⁴²⁰. Ibid. 34 (Book IV).

⁴²¹. Ibid. 79 (Book II).

⁴²². Ibid. 276 (Book III).

⁴²³. Ibid. 82 (Book II).

Khamba, Khuman king refers to *Ikop*, their meeting place, as Kurukshetra⁴²⁴. Kunti, Pandav's mother, is evoked⁴²⁵ and so is Kourav's army⁴²⁶ to corroborate the truthfulness and the magnitude of the incidents in this epic. Nidra which means sleep in Sanskrit is personified as a female deity who controls a person's sleep. She helps Thoibi to fall asleep when Panthoibi prays to her addressing as *Ima* (mother) so that she could warn Thoibi of the fate of Khamba. The fact that Nidra is represented as a mother-figure to Panthoibi, a Meitei deity is indicative of how highly Anganghal regards Hinduism and Hindu epics. Hindu hegemony is sustained in modern Manipuri literature through representation of such layered veneration of Hindu Gods while simultaneously erasing any sort of criticism against Hinduism, both in the literary world and the real world.

In Book III, when Khamba is dying after the *Samu Khongyetpa* incident, his parents, Puremba and Ngangkhareima beg *Jomraj* (Yamraj) for their son's life⁴²⁷. While Salang Maiba is trying to retrieve Khamba's soul, the scene is described thus, "In case the soul gets startled and tries to get away, on the left resides Thangjing while Mahadev resides on the right, they stand on each side of Khamba's soul"⁴²⁸. Lord Thangjing, the most important deity of Moirang is seen side by side with Mahadev. They are presented as sharing a harmonious dual guardianship over Khamba. However, interestingly, in the next description, only *Chingu Thangjing*, Khamba and Salang Maiba are there. Mahadev is not mentioned anywhere. *Chingu Thangjing* leads the way with Khamba in the middle and Salang following Khamba.

⁴²⁴. Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 134 (Book II).

⁴²⁵. Ibid. 289 (Book II).

⁴²⁶. Ibid. 292 (Book II).

⁴²⁷. Ibid. 87 (Book III).

⁴²⁸. Ibid. 92 (Book III).

The presence of the concept of *swarga*⁴²⁹ and *narak*⁴³⁰ further illustrates the assimilation of Hindu beliefs in an otherwise indigenous ballad. Hence, the concept of *paap* and *paapi* are often encountered in the text.

4.5. Instituting Indo-aryan Literary and Cultural Vocabulary as Formal Registers

In *Madhabi*, the literary words and terms are all written in the dominant Indo-aryan languages (Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi). These words comprise the formal register of Modern Manipuri literature. The other two selected texts exhibit similar patterns of employing literary terms from these three languages. A list of the Sanskrit/Bengali words and terms that are embellished on the novel to make it qualify as modern Manipuri literature is provided in the appendix. In the forward to the novel *M*, while referring to the genres of books, Kamal uses literary terms such as Naatak, Kavya, Patrika because this is what education meant during his time. Education means the knowledge of Sanskrit and Hindu culture. Sanskrit constituted itself as a field of knowledge that legitimizes Hinduism as the authorial superior culture. This is what constituted knowledge for them. It reflects Foucault's theory on the relationship between knowledge and power that "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations". With the institution of Sanskrit/Bengali literature as a field of knowledge, oppressive institutions such as Brahma Sabha was regarded as an indubitable apex body that leads the people. Recounting the literary atmosphere during Chaoba's time, Lairenlakpam Sarat gives an excerpt from *Khwairakpam Chaoba* by Elangbam Dinamani which runs thus, "Samna hairabada, hakchangna Manipur oiraga pukningdi Bengali oikhre"⁴³¹. It can be translated as, "In short,

⁴²⁹. Anganghal, *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 117 (Book III).

⁴³⁰. Ibid. 132 (Book III).

⁴³¹. Lairenlakpam Sarat, *Dr. Kamal: Pungsi Amasung Manglaan*. (Imphal: Manipur Association for Science and Society, 2014), 58.

the body is Manipuri but the sentiment is Bengali". This statement echoes the colonial sentiment embedded in the famous expression "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" in the "Minute on Education" (1835) by Thomas Babington Macaulay.. An examination of *Sahitya Ahanba*, the Manipuri literature book written by Khwairakpam Chaoba and Hawaibam Nabadwipchandra for class 2 and class 3 students reveals important information on what kind of students these new schools wanted to produce. The history of England and English culture is taught as "our" in the text where King George is not only a Ningthou (king) but ningthourel (king of kings) ⁴³². But the tricky part is that this "our" is followed by "Bharat", thus, under the British colonial government, Manipuri people are not only identified as belonging to the English Empire but "Bharat" as well. The sense of belonging to the Aryan culture and the need to identify as Hindu subjects by Meetei in a modern Manipur is sustained through such a rhetoric. All the three texts integrate incidents and characters from the Hindu epics as illustrated above. Regarding such a practice, Phulo has stated in his book *Eigi Wareng* published in 1940 that, "We will be filled with nostalgia when we hear the stories of our forefathers, of their lives. Without listening to their stories, we are bound to remain detached and impassive..... Nowadays, many *mayanglon* words are inserted in all Meetei stories.....stories from *Ramayana* and *Gita* have permeated the Meetei religious vocabulary..... Radhe Krishna Gourahari has replaced the original prayers." The need to reconnect with the past and preserve an undistorted memory is proposed in this statement.

4.5. Conclusion

One thing is common to all the three writers; the need to embellish their works with Sanskrit and Bengali words to give them the status of "literature". The literariness and the

⁴³². Thokchom Prafulo, comp. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya*. (Imphal: Khwairakpam Sorojini, 1996), 484.

modernness of the text are decided by the content of the text besides being produced in the modern form or genre. It is not enough that the text is in the modern form or genre, it must also conform its content to suit the modality prescribed within and driven by Hinduism. It can be said that in many of the translations, some words are never really translated into Meiteilon. With the frequency in usage, such linguistic terms (Bengali and Sanskrit words) begin to constitute the formal language register. However, it cannot be denied that these writers made some genuine efforts to contribute and expand Meiteilon literature and were convinced of their moral responsibilities to preserve Meiteilon Literature at a time when the language was non-existent in the public space. Hence, the framework for modern Manipuri Literature was set within the terms and conditions of colonial education which came via Bengali/Sanskrit Literature. Thus the thesis argues that the canonization of these texts was augmented and made possible by certain external forces which exist beyond the question of poetics. Manipuri literature's encounter with colonial modernity was necessarily channelled through the Indo-Aryan culture. Modern Manipuri literature, as we know today, emanated through this encounter and is a contiguous manifestation of Manipur's disjunctive encounter with colonial modernity during the colonial era.

Chapter 5

Resistance and Modernity in Meeteilon Literature: Naoriya Phulo and Arambam

Somorendra

Chapter 5 Outline

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Naoriya Phulo (b.1888-d.1941)

5.2.1 Social ostracization and Phulo

5.2.2 Phulo and his first and second *waafong* (Public Speech)

5.2.3 Western Education and enlightenment as integral to Phulo's modernity

5.3 Arambam Somorendra (b.1935-d.2000)

5.3.1 "Judge Saheb ki Imung": An interpretation of modernity in Manipur

5.3.1.1 Modernity and Language

5.3.1.2 Colonial modernity: British colonization and Indo-Aryan Supremacy.

5.3.1.3 The idea of a modern woman/wife: Gender and modernity

5.3.1.4 Binary articulations of modernity; *Kaang saanaba* vs clubbing

5.3.1.5 Indigenous food items and colonial modernity

5.4 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

“Eigi ipaa imaabu laini haijabada kanaanasu laalli haigadaba leite. Ima ipa nattanadi taibang paanda oiba ngamde. Ima ipaabu khangjarabadi tengbanbagi mapubusu khangba ngamjei....imaa ipaabu pelhallabadi, laiyaam pumnamaksu pelli haiduna imaa ipaabu laini haina ningasi, meegi maaaa mapaada pijarugadagi sarukti imaa ipaada pijasi, imaa ipaagi yaathangdagi laireibaak fangba oijarage, haiduna meetei marup eikhoina houjik asida laojaribani.”⁴³³

[English Translation]

“There is no one who can say that I am wrong when I say my mother and my father are God. Without mother and father, there cannot be a living world. One who knows one’s mother and father also knows who God is. When one satisfies one’s mother and father, God is also satisfied. With this thought, let us pray to our mother and father as Gods. Instead of offering to *other’s* mothers and fathers, let us offer to *our* mother and father. Let us hope that we go to heaven with the blessing of our mother and father. Such is what we Meetei marup wants to convey.”

The quotation given above is an excerpt from a speech given by Naoriya Phulo in a public platform on 25th September 1931⁴³⁴. Revered as a prophet-like figure, Naoriya Phulo established the Apokpa⁴³⁵ Marup in Cachar, a group of meetei who believe in the indigenous way of life. Ancestral tradition and knowledge are central to this community; it is, in a sense, a continuation of the ancestor worship culture of the Meeteis⁴³⁶.

In the previous chapters, it has been argued deriving from an examination of the modalities of being modern in three canonical modern Manipuri literary texts and an analysis of the translation scene in Manipur in the early 20th century that the dominant Manipuri

⁴³³ Phulo, Naoriya. *Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi wareng apunba*. Imphal: M S Tampha Publication, 2010, p 294.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 286.

⁴³⁵ The literal translation is birth-father.

⁴³⁶ See, Devi, Haobam Bidyarani. "Nature Worship." *International Journal of All Research Writings* 1, no. 10 (2019): 28-36.

modernity is essentially conflated with Hinduism and its encounter in Manipur was mediated by Bengali Literature and Bengali colonial subjects. In this chapter, the harbinger of revivalism in Manipur, Naoriya Phulo and his take on such an encounter with colonial modernity in the early 20th century is introduced followed by Arambam Somorendra's idea of an alternative modernity represented in one of his plays written in the latter half of the 20th century.

When Thomas Babington Macaulay expressed his opinion that, “we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect”⁴³⁷, it reflected the core essence of western education introduced via modernity/colonialism. This statement has been quoted several times by Post-colonial thinkers to sum up the colonial attitude embedded in western education and as an example of epistemic violence in Gayatri Spivak's seminal essay on Post colonialism, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” It has been used to show that western education was not merely a humanistic enterprise of sharing knowledge but a tool to disrupt the indigenous rationalities through committing epistemic violence. Manipur encountered a similar kind of disruption during the colonial era. Western education was introduced in Manipur via Bengali along with Sanskrit as a subject while excluding Meeteilon altogether. The syllabus was structured in such a way to form a class of people who are Meetei in “blood and colour”, but Bengalis (specifically, the Bengali babus or colonial subjects) “in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect”. In this chapter, Naoriya Phulo's revivalist project during the colonial period is examined as an opposing idea to the emergence of this class in Manipur. The chapter also presents a critical analysis of Arambam Somorendra's play “Judge Saheb ki Imung” as reflecting a continuum that follows the indigenous narrative introduced in Phulo's revivalist movement. The two

⁴³⁷. Macaulay, Thomas Babington. “Macaulay's minute on education.” (1835).

ideas are studied as constituting the foundational premise of initiating an optional modernity in Manipur which works in opposition to the dominant idea of a Manipuri modernity.

5.2. Naoriya Phulo (1888-1941)

Born in 1888 at Laishram Khun, a meetei village in Jaribond, Cachar⁴³⁸ (Assam), Naoriya Phulo grew up far away from his native place Manipur from where his grandfather Naorem Herando fled to escape the war fought between the Meetei clans, Moirang and Mangang. He grew up as a brilliant student (scholarship holder) and was the first Meetei in Hailakandi to go to an English school. He is described as an intelligent child who is considered as a role model by the elders in Laishram Khun. From his early childhood, Naoriya Phulo developed deep interest in reading and writing. Naoriya Madhusudan, composer of Phulo's biography, *Apokpa*, recalls the stories narrated by his grandmother, Laishram Thambou, thus,

“Angaangmak oirabasu wakhan chaoba saktamda

Mong haababu leitana nungaibagi fibamda|

Numit chuppa ipaabu saanaduna marei hai

Angaang ama leibagi kanaabusu yette hai||

Angaang ama leibagi ibok thoina waakhide

Chatthokkhini haibagi ibok thoina khankhide||

Khongji makhol taadare kadaidabu leiriba

Kadomdabu chatkhiba kanaagabu saanariba|

Phundrei, Phundrei hainabu iboknabu koubasu

⁴³⁸ In the Hailakandi district of Assam there are around 34 meetei villages which comprised Jaribond. There are several other meetei villages scattered around Assam. Assam served as a refuge for many Meeteis who fled Manipur for various reasons. For more information on Naoriya Phulo and his religious life, see Nirendra, Hodamba's PhD thesis entitled "Naoriya Phulo gi Sahitya: Laininggi Wanguronda Akhannaba Mityeng Thamduna Neinaba" (Naoriya Phulo's literary Discourse: A Critical Study with Special Reference to his Religious Thoughts) submitted in Assam University. (2008)

Sanggoidagi Khumak-e thoidoknabu naknasu||

Ipubokna Ibiba chejet ama louduna

Chetna luna touduna makhutnabu paiduna||

Kaachiin marum amada waakhal leiba saktamda

Lonningbada lolli hai araak araak machinda||

Iboknabu koubada ima lakle haiduna

Iboktamna chellak-e taphi taphi touduna||”

“Even though a mere child, bearing a thoughtful face,

In a solemn and delightful pace,

he spends his time playing all day,

disturbing none such as most children may.

Grandmother had little to worry, looking after a child such as he.

She was hardly bothered about where he may be.

When she did not hear the sound of the *khongjee*⁴³⁹,

When she wondered where he may be,

‘Phundrei, Phundrei’⁴⁴⁰ she called out,

he answered from the *Sanggoi*⁴⁴¹, quite nearabout.

Taking a piece of paper where grandfather made a few notes,

⁴³⁹ An anklet that makes sounds which young children wear so that the parents know where their children are.

⁴⁴⁰ Phulo’s real name was given by his parents.

⁴⁴¹ An open shed separate from the main house but very close to each other.

holding it dearly and keeping it close,
 in a corner bearing a thoughtful face,
 he reads and utters all that comes to his mind.

When called out by my grandmother,

He comes scurrying saying ‘Coming mother!’”⁴⁴²

Despite discouragements from his relatives who advised his father, Naorem Chaoba, to send Phulo to learn singing which was considered a respectable career among the Meeteis then, he was sent for further study in Norsingpur Boy’s M.V. School from class 2 to class 4 and Hailakandi Govt. Victoria memorial high English school from class 5 to class 10. In 1915, as soon as he passed the 10th exam, he joined as a teacher in the same school. Two years later, in 1917, he left the school and joined a newly recognised Middle English school in Lala which is situated much nearer to his locality. Being the only Meetei in this school, he was not welcomed by his colleagues. Therefore, he began to look for another job which he found within a week. He became a clerk in the DC office in Silchar, a position where he was paid more than a teaching position. But Phulo did not want to remain as a clerk; therefore, he applied for a Sub-Inspector post in the police station in the same year. Here too, he was the only Meetei who applied for the post, a result of the dominant attitude of gouriya meeteis of distancing themselves from modern institutions. Phulo began to translate the stories of Harichandra, Dushmanta-Sakuntala, Sabitri-Satyaban etc. as early as 1915 when he became a teacher. He also composed plays based on Ram-Sita banabas.⁴⁴³ Later in his life, instead of translating, he began to write his own books about Manipur and Meeteis indigenous ways and values. He wrote several books, poems, and songs etc. Among them, *Sakok Thiren* and *Eigi*

⁴⁴² Madhusudan, Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsu Wari (Biography)*. Apokpa Marup Hounasang, Laishram Khun, Jaribon. 2009, 30.

⁴⁴³ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsu Wari*, 53.

Wareng are notable. A crucial feature of his books is the use of Meeteilon purely. This is a contrast to the books that were produced in Manipur during that time where Sanskrit and Bengali registers were rampant in the Meeteilon books.

After he joined as a *daruga*, a sub-inspector, his salary increased twicethe amount of which he used to earn as a clerk. It was during this time that he began to research the ancient customs and values of the Meeteis focusing on language particularly. He was posted in multiple police stations in and around the territory of the then Assam i.e., Dribugarh, Sibsagar, Bukaghat, Nalbari, Amingaon, Rangiya, Haflong, Tinsukia, Badarpur, and Kulaura (in present Bangladesh). He retired in 1931 and dedicated his life to *Apokpa Marup* which he founded in 1930, a group of two families which vowed to revive the indigenous ways of the Meeteis. On 12th April, 1930, he and his three brothers and four brothers-in-law denounced Hinduism leaving their *lukun*, the sacred thread that binds them to Hinduism and vowed to begin their journey of *knowing* their *Ipa Ipu*⁴⁴⁴. Later on, other meeteis joined them and thus gave birth to the present Apokpa Marup in Cachar. It was brought into Manipur later on by Takhelambam Bokul, a skilled carpenter from Keishampat, Imphal, and Pukhrambam Surchand and Ibocha, both of whom were reputed goldsmiths from Manipur. They joined Apokpa Marup in 1938 when they were in Jaribond and after seeking permission from Naoriya Phulo, they spread their ideas in Manipur forming a new group renamed as Meetei Marup⁴⁴⁵.

⁴⁴⁴ It literally translates as father and grandfather. It refers to the ancestors in Meeteilon. Since Meeteis are an ancestor worshipping community, Phulo was enssentially searching for a way to stay connected with his cultural roots through this act of ‘knowing’ his Ipa Ipu.

⁴⁴⁵ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Pungsi Wari*, 418.

Naoriya Phulo visited Manipur when he was still working as a Sub Inspector and went to historic places in Manipur such as Kangla⁴⁴⁶ and Thangmeiband⁴⁴⁷. He then visited various holy sites for the Hindus such as Kasi (Varanasi), Nabadwip and Puri. He was a well-travelled man for his age which influenced him vastly in convincing him to dedicate himself in researching the indigenous values and customs of the Meeteis in his later life. It can be inferred from these records that Phulo, although remembered as a religious figure, was quite a rational man and held respectable positions in the modern institutions suggesting the embodiment of modern values more than he is given credit to in the present discourse on revivalism in Manipur. According to his biography composed by his first child, Madhusudan, Phulo encountered various supernatural life changing experiences. Such a narrative draws him closer to his religious side where the present narrative revolves around predominantly. It is not surprising that his story revolves around mystery and religiosity since Hinduism has claimed a space of legitimacy in Manipuri modernity. In order to criticise Hinduism, a religious figure is projected onto Phulo precisely because the new project of reviving needs to go beyond the ambit of modernity which has been conflated with Hinduism. Further, since religion is in the realm of the personal in the modern discourse, projecting him as a religious figure appears to be much more promising in rising consciousness among the Meeteis without political and social repercussions that an impersonal state law (such as AFSPA) can invoke to suppress the movement. Such examples could be seen in how the state responded to the dissenting voices that came out in the 1960's and 70's in the form of armed insurgent groups who believe in modern international laws. Though political in nature and non-religious, these groups were inextricably linked with indigenous identity politics while their primary demand was self-determination for Manipur.

⁴⁴⁶ The royal palace of the kings of Manipur. It was the centre of polity for the Meeteis which is also a sacred site where meetei deities reside.

⁴⁴⁷ An area in Imphal, Manipur where Naoriya Phulo's great grandfather used to reside.

It needs to be understood that Phulo's project of revivalism is not essentially that of researching the past exclusively but it also envisaged a future that accommodates both western modernity and the indigenous values and beliefs. For him, Hinduism was as an obstacle towards synchronizing the indigenous meetei value systems and western modernity. This thought is further explored in the later sections. It can be noted here that Phulo arranged for Maharaj Churachand's stay in Amingaoan in 1928 who was on his way to Calcutta. Taking this opportunity, he made three crucial complaints to the Maharaja⁴⁴⁸. The first one was that the Meeteis in Assam are not able to learn their own language in the schools while the second one was to allow them to use Meeteilon while performing traditional rituals and rites. In the last complaint, he asked the king if there is a Meetei script used in Manipur. These complaints comprise the three primary issues initiated by Naoriya Phulo pertaining knowing oneself, particularly the Meeteis. To have modern education and nourishing one's own language and script are central issues to his thesis. King Churachand was accompanied by Phurailatpam Atombapu Sharma who has been discussed in detail in chapter 2 of this thesis as representing the polar opposite to Naoriya Phulo and his values.

5.2.1 Social Ostracization and Phulo

While Naoriya Phulo was posted in Haflong, he was ostracised from the society for stating thatt *Daru Brahma* is *Ukang lai*⁴⁴⁹. Even the act of a simple translation was seen as blasphemous by the Hindu Meeteis that he was declared a *nastik* and an impure by the society and was ostracised on 10th of August, 1929⁴⁵⁰ as a punishment for desecrating the name of the Lord. A month later, on 26th of September, 1929, his three brothers and four brothers-in-law were ostracised for defending Naoriya Phulo by expressing their dissent on the ground that he

⁴⁴⁸ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsu Wari*, 173-174.

⁴⁴⁹ *U* or *oo* is a tree, *Kang* is dry and *lai* means god.

⁴⁵⁰ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsu Wari*, 200.

was simply using his mother-tongue⁴⁵¹. Apokpa Marup met with a series of attacks both physically and socially from the gatekeepers of Hinduism in the society. The first attack among others was made by a group of gouriya followers under the leadership of seven gouriya elders. In this attack, when Aribam Ramgopal, a Meetei bamon, stormed to hit Phulo, he did not try to defend himself but instead welcomed him with open arms saying, “Come closer and hit me, let me weep calling my father in my own mother-tongue, and fulfil my destiny.” He used even the attack as an opportunity to enforce his pledge of preserving his mother-tongue. In another instance, a hitman named Mutum Tarang was hired to assassinate Naoriya Phulo. Mutum Tarang, however, failed to execute the task. After trying to kill him for three days, he came out and made a confession to Phulo on the fourth day⁴⁵². There were similar instances where Phulo and the gatherings of Apokpa Marup were disrupted repeatedly. The Apokpa Marup used to gather and organise sessions during traditional ceremonies such as marriage where the Apokpa members take turns in narrating the history of Manipur and remembering the indigenous values and beliefs. Even when the local police were consulted to guard the gathering⁴⁵³, the only policeman who was sent to guard the place was hit by a stone hurled by a gouriya youth to disrupt the gathering. It was announced by both the meetei gouriyas and the bamons that those who would step even on the shadows of the Apokpa Marup members would be declared as impure. Naoriya Phulo, being an educated man who knew the modern institutions very well, filed a complaint for attacking the gathering which resulted in hurting a policeman as well. After two months of court trial, it was decided that the attackers must pay a fine of Rs. 30 each and spend one month in jail. However, thinking about posterity, Phulo submitted a written statement requesting to dissolve

⁴⁵¹ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsì Wari*, 201.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 260.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 281.

the decree and instead to make an agreement to refrain from future attacks⁴⁵⁴. However, Apokpa Marup was still treated as an outcast group. Another chastisement occurred in the 1930's regarding the marriage between the Apokpa Marup members and the Gouriya followers⁴⁵⁵. When a young man eloped with a woman from the Apokpa Marup, the man's family had to pay the penalty of arranging a Kirtan⁴⁵⁶ session. Later on, the penalty was replaced with offering khechi⁴⁵⁷ to the local bamons. They could also go through the process of purification ritual where they listen to Bhagavat in a public space. In this way, denouncing Hinduism during this period was met with severe chastisement and social ostracization.

5.2.2 Naoriya Phulo and his first and second *waafong*.

This section critically analyses the speeches Naoriya Phulo gave after he resigned from the post of Sub Inspector on 6th May 1931⁴⁵⁸. After he returned to Laishram Khun, several Meeteis came to meet him and learn about the Apokpa Marup. The first speech was given on 18th September 1931 to talk about the ostracization as well as the objectives of the Apokpa Marup, while the succeeding speech was given a week later i.e., on 25th September 1931.

First of all, Phulo problematizes the dual identity of the meeteis; of being a Meetei and a Hindu at the same time. He implores the Meeteis to embrace a single identity expressing thus, “being on two *hees*⁴⁵⁹ is not right, it must be impossible, let us be on a single

⁴⁵⁴ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsu Wari*, 304.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 327.

⁴⁵⁶ A performing art involving ritual singing and dancing which revolves around the stories of the Hindu Lord Krishna.

⁴⁵⁷ A corrupt Meeteilon word for Khichri.

⁴⁵⁸ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsu Wari*, 230.

⁴⁵⁹ Long traditional wooden boat. The metaphor of being on two *hees* is used to signify a position where a person is committed to neither one or the other.

hee.” (Translation mine)⁴⁶⁰. He further clarifies that meeteis should be boarding the *hee* which our forefathers used to be on. It can be reminded that this statement closely follows the Meetei proverb that if one boards two *hees*, one ends up with dismembered legs while trying to be on both *hees* with one leg on each *hees*. It means that if one is focused on two things at the same time, it usually ends in failure. A deeper meaning would be the inconsistency in commitment and indecisiveness. By 1931, the controversial narrative that links Meeteis with Aryans as descendants of Arjun, had not gained its hegemonic status yet. Phulo recounts in his speech an anecdote where one Bisnupriya⁴⁶¹ Mahendra wrote claiming Meeteis as Aryans but ends up being mocked in the newspapers by his *mayang* colleagues⁴⁶².

Secondly, Phulo views this contending duality as a war of *lousing*⁴⁶³ which can be translated as knowledge suggesting the nature of epistemic violence and the need to reclaim the self and the indigenous/ancestral rationality. He questions the rationality of interpreting Sanskrit songs and dances as *education*, the primary pursuit for the Meeteis while “gyan/bigyan”⁴⁶⁴ (science) is considered for the *mayangs*⁴⁶⁵. In *Eigi Wareng*, he points out the hypocrisy of being ruled by the British and its *mayang*⁴⁶⁶ employees in Manipur whom the Meeteis treat as their superiors while criticizing those Meeteis who receive the same education that the British and the *mayang* get. He points out that Meeteis act subservient to

⁴⁶⁰ Phulo, Naoriya. *Lainingham Naoriya Phulo gi wareng apunba*. Imphal: M S Tampha Publication, 2010, 274.

⁴⁶¹ A group of people who are believed to be the descendants of the Meeteis who fled the seven years’ devastation war. They are heavily influenced by Hinduism since the seven years devastation war occurred from 1819-1826 when King Marjit was ruling the Kingdom. He was the son of King Chingthangkomba aka Bhagyachandra who popularized Vaishnavism in Manipur.

⁴⁶² Phulo, Naoriya. *Lainingham Naoriya Phulo gi wareng apunba*. Imphal: M S Tampha Publication, 2010, 283.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 275.

⁴⁶⁴ Phulo uses this term to refer to western education, especially science.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁴⁶⁶ The Indo-Aryan non-Manipuris.

the British and the *mayang* employees despite them receiving the so-called *impure* western education. He questions when will Meeteis ever become “Ukil, Moktar, Hakim” etc. when the Meetei mothers’ repeated advice to their children is to learn Pung, Isei, Pala etc.⁴⁶⁷ In this process, he views Manipur as a centre, as God’s abode, a holy place⁴⁶⁸, as opposed to the dominant narrative of locating the centre in Brindavan by thegouriya following meeteis . He argues that Meeteis accept this duality because they don’t recognise Hinduism and Meeteis as two separate entities. To recognise it as such was seen as a blasphemy. He clarifies in his second speech that Hinduism did not *replace* the traditional faith which is why they co-exist⁴⁶⁹. Hinduism, specifically Gauriya, overwhelmed the traditional faith and pushed it underneath. A hierarchy was constructed where the status of the indigenous faith stands inferior to Gauriya religion.

To disrupt the hegemonic presence of Hinduism in Manipur, Phulo reverberate the orientalist narrative of representing the Hindus as effeminate and cowardly⁴⁷⁰. He views Hinduism as an effeminate religion which weakens the strength of the Meeteis mentally (epistemic violence) and physically (teaching a food habit that avoids meat). Quite ironically, Phulo makes use of the same narrative which has been criticized by post-colonial theorists as oppressive and colonial as a resistance narrative aimed towards decoloniality.

5.2.3. Western education and enlightenment as integral to Phulo’s modernity

Enlightenment

⁴⁶⁷ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsì Wari*, 31.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 280.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 288.

⁴⁷⁰ One of the theorists is Tejaswini Niranjana. See the introduction to her book *Siting Translation*. page 26.

Phulo's modernity closely resembles the concept of Immanuel Kant's idea of enlightenment introduced in his paper in 1784. The meeteilon term "mit mai pangba"⁴⁷¹ which can be translated as enlightenment is used by Phulo frequently while referring to gaining consciousness to the nature of oppression. According to Kant, enlightenment is, "man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. Dare to know! (Sapere aude.) "Have the courage to use your own understanding," is therefore the motto of the enlightenment."

Likewise, Phulo asserts that those who act only when guided by someone else are still in the dark. To be enlightened, one needs to rise above this "self-imposed nonage". Kant points out that "nonage in religion is not only the most harmful but the most dishonourable." He argues to rise above religion, specifically the dictates of the church. He further argues that "to agree to a perpetual religious constitution which is not publicly questioned by anyone would be, as it were, to annihilate a period of time in the progress of man's improvement. This must be absolutely forbidden." While Kant proposes for a break away from religion, Phulo's proposal was to break away from an alien culture; the combination of gauriya religion and Mayanglon⁴⁷². Despite this difference, Phulo's understanding of discarding gauriya and embracing the traditional faith stems from the same principal essence of enlightenment i.e., to think for oneself and act on it rising above the fear of "indecision" and "lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance." There is a clear distinction between the self and the *other* embedded in the language (mayanglon) and religion (gauriya). He argues that Meeteis and gauriyas are two separate distinct bodies; they

⁴⁷¹ The literal translation is 'to open one's eyes and face'.

⁴⁷² Naoriya Phulo uses this term to refer to both Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi. It means the language of the Mayang, a meeteilon term that is used to denote the Indo-Aryans.

are not integral to each other. He perceives religion as that which exists outside our being, which can be changed or replaced like clothing. Phulo stressed on the fact that the Meeteis' embracement of gauriya was not through a harmonious consensus as believed by many during his time but through violence and coercion. It was not the willingness of the people that has made the presence of gauriya widespread. For the common people, it was a matter of survival and not one of choice⁴⁷³. To keep their consciousness alive, the story of *Pebet*⁴⁷⁴ was invented⁴⁷⁵, the struggle continues to exist embedded in the folktales. The existing rationality of interpreting religion as inherent and permanent is, hence, disrupted. Through this rhetoric, he invalidates the dominant narrative that qualifies discarding Hinduism as a sacrilege and an impractical decision.

Western Education

The introduction of western education in Manipur was one of the most challenging tasks for the British administrators. It was rejected repeatedly by the people of Manipur, especially the Meeteis majority of which had been converted into Hinduism. Western education was treated as impure and worthless. Highlighting the attitude of the people, Naoriya Phulo gives a popular expression frequently used by the elders during his time, “*Nakhoigi school haibadu karisu kaannaba natte, ichaasaa isusaa, mee oige hairadi pung, isei, palaa tammu*”⁴⁷⁶ which translates as, “What you call *school* is nothing but useless. My

⁴⁷³ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsu Wari*, 290.

⁴⁷⁴. The story of *Pebet* is a folktale usually narrated to young children by their grandparents while waiting for dinner in the evening. It is the story of how a cunning cat pretends to be a saint so that he can eat the young chicks of the bird *Pebet*. The cat represents the Brahmins who brought the new religion in Manipur while the *pebets* represent the common people of Manipur. The theme of the story is deception and greed which is embodied in the character of the ‘saint’ cat known as the Houdong Lamboiba in the story. He pretends to be harmless and caring of the *Pebet* chicks while in reality, all he cares about is to eat the chicks when they have grown enough.

⁴⁷⁵ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsu Wari*, 291.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

dear children and grandchildren, if you want to become a successful person, go and learn *pung, isei, pala*.”⁴⁷⁷ Throughout his texts, Phulo consistently propounds for western education drawing out certain attitudes of the Meeteis towards it as unreasonable and senseless. He abhors the extravagance that the Meeteis indulge themselves in during Hindu festivals. He asserts that the Meeteis of his time love songs and dances so much that they end up wasting their time in performing the Ras Leela the whole night. Instead of sending their children to schools to learn about the world, the parents make them perform Krishna dances and proudly present them in front of the audience despite not even knowing what the song says. He writes that these children end up being song teachers since they get distracted from their school work. On the other hand, those students who remained in schools and studied till BA and MA end up paying respect to those song teachers who dropped out of schools. He makes fun of this situation recalling that the song teacher hardly knows what he is singing about since the lyrics are in Sanskrit. When he teaches his students, both the student and the teacher rote learn the words like birds learning how to speak human language. It is a language that they don't understand but blindly imitate.

It can be mentioned that though it might seem like Naoriya Phulo accepts western education without criticism, his take is more complicated. Phulo used modern education as a tool to defend himself from Hindu hegemony. It served as a refuge for him from a conscripting situation where he is forced to identify as one or the other. A strict binary identity was constructed during this time where one can be only either a Hindu or a Christian. There was no space for the existence of an indigenous self. Those who went to schools were branded as Christians⁴⁷⁸; schools were considered impure by the gauriyas. The boys who went to schools were considered naughty while girls were refrained from going to schools on

⁴⁷⁷ Types of song, dance and instrumental performances associated with Manipuri Nat Sankirtan.

⁴⁷⁸ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Pungsi Wari*, 29.

the excuse that they might give romantic letters to boys in secret if they learn how to write. Naoriya Phulo exposes the hypocrisy of the Gauriya Meeteis by asking why they accept those mayangs who have come to Manipur after educating themselves in England and run after them while disapproving those Meeteis who go to school back at home⁴⁷⁹. He also questioned why only certain skills were considered as knowledge such as singing Sanskrit songs while studying disciplines like laws were considered impure. He also makes fun of the pure/impure practice of the gauriyas. He argues that numerous rules are laid out regarding what is pure and impure but eventually they themselves end up eating unhygienic food and die very young. He writes, “After fetching the cholera infected water and making sure that he (the gauriya) doesn’t touch any pangal (the Meetei Muslims), on his way, he comes hopping to avoid touching dirt and crap on the ground, and cook his food. When the cooked food is laid exposed while he is having his before-meal prayer, a swarm of flies covers his food. Since there is no such special fly as the Nabadip fly, the flies that were on the food carry all sorts of germs and diseases. After the prayer, he has a hearty meal and drinks the water up to his throat. At dawn, he suffers from cholera and no one could even call the medicine man before he succumbed to the disease. People say that he was a devoted man to Krishna, and that is why He (Krishna) took the person near him sooner than later.”⁴⁸⁰ Similar to Kancha Ilaiah’s opinion on the ban of eating meat in Hindu culture, Phulo was also against such cultural imposition. The imposition of the habit of abstaining from certain food items and fasting on certain days is viewed as unhealthy and a ploy to lessen the physical strength of the Meeteis as far as Phulo is concerned. In short, he sees the gauriya culture as a stumbling block to the learning process and the growth of the Meeteis in moulding a healthy society.

5.3. Arambam Somorendra (1935-2000)

⁴⁷⁹ Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Pungsi Wari*, 31.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 55.

The thesis examines another revolutionary figure of Manipur, Arambam Somorendra, whose ideas and actions guided significantly the formation of a modern Manipuri identity in the latter half of the 20th century. He is generally not associated with the revivalist movement nor with Naoriya Phulo in the Meeteilon literary discourse. However, it cannot be denied that they both shared a similar ideology on what constitutes modernity, their vision for a modern Manipuri identity and its inevitable correlation with resistance and indigeneity. The thesis makes an argument that, in both their writings, the concept of indigeneity is valued as paramount in construction of a modern Meetei and a modern Manipur. One of the most crucial issues that both Phulo and Somorendra called attention to was the identification of the Hindu hegemony in Manipur on top of British colonialism sustained through the suppression of the traditional faith and customs. They diverge from one another in the fact that while Phulo regarded western modernity embedded in western education as a blessing for the Meeteis, Somorendra's perception of western modernity is more complex. As such, Somorendra makes a clear distinction between *westernization* and *modernization/civilization*. While Phulo's vision of a modern Manipur is androcentric and Meetei-oriented, Somorendra's imagination was inclusive of both women and the various indigenous ethnic communities of Manipur. In this sense, Somorendra continues as well as extends Phulo's conceptualization of a modern Manipur rooted in what may be called indigenous modernity, an alternative or what the decolonial thinker Walter Mignolo would call the optional modernity. However, in comparing Phulo's project with Mignolo's decoloniality, there is a clear deviation. While Mignolo talks about decoloniality in the context of western imperialism and ofdelinking from the colonial matrix of power bounded by the Eurocentric episteme, the premise of coloniality for Phulo and the Meeteis is not of the Eurocentric episteme by itself but rather the Indo-Aryan episteme rooted in Hinduism forced on an indigenous community.

Born in 1935, Somorendra was a notable Manipuri playwright of his time. He began writing as early as 1950 and his first publication entitled *Kavita Mala*, a collection of poems⁴⁸¹, was brought out in the year 1952. He has numerous poems, lyrics, plays, novels, travelogues etc. to his credit. When he was in DM College, in 1955, he established a theatre group called Amateur Artist Association (AAA) composed of those who will become eminent artists such as Nongmaithem Pahari and Aribam Shyam in the field of arts and cinema in modern Manipur. Later on, they merged with the prominent Aryan Theatre which was established in 1935 when Atompabu Sharma popularized the Aryan origin theory of the Meetei. It is interesting to note here that out of the eight plays staged by Aryan Theatre from its inception till 1942, only two were original plays⁴⁸² while the other six were translations from either Sanskrit or Bengali literature including *Riziya* translated by Arambam Dorendrajit⁴⁸³, Somorendra's father.

According to his wife, Arambam Ongbi Ibemhal (Memchoubi), Somorendra used to “worship” Longjam Gyanen, the youngest person who received guerrilla training in Myanmar along with Hijam Irabot. He often met Gyanendra who was studying Law in Mumbai when he was pursuing MA in Pune. Subsequently, the United Nations Liberation Front (UNLF), the oldest Manipuri revolutionary group, was established in 1964 under his leadership. It remained as an unarmed organization militant group till 1991 working for rising political consciousness among the people. However, when the state declared for his arrest, Somorendra went into hiding in 1969. He emerged into society in 1975 when the state government declared general amnesty to the underground group and he continued to write and work as a social activist until his death in 2000.

⁴⁸¹ Rajkumar, BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra, Vol. 1*. Imphal: Arambam Ongbi Ibemhal, 2013, v.

⁴⁸² Arambam Dorendrajit's “Bhagyachandra” and Wahengbam Gourachandra's “Mainu Pemcha”.

⁴⁸³ Rajkumar, BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra, Vol. 1*. Imphal: Arambam Ongbi Ibemhal, 2013, xi.

It can be noted that Manipur encountered a drastic political change when the British left Manipur in 1947. With the end of the IInd world war, a new spirit among the post-colonial nations arose and as such, Manipur was also left to make a decision to either join India or remain as an independent state. The first democratic election in Manipur was held through adult franchise in 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947⁴⁸⁴. However, in the succeeding year, the “takeover”⁴⁸⁵ of Manipur by India in 1949 by dissolving the elected Manipur Legislative Assembly on 15th Oct of the same year left the people of Manipur feeling betrayed and subjected to humiliation. From being one of the first independent democratic states in South East Asia, Manipur was relegated into the status of a part-C state. Traces of this wound could be found in many of his writings where he avoids confronting the issue explicitly, perhaps, for inescapable political reasons. The particular play that has been selected for the analysis is no exception. Through contending colonial modernity, Somorendra problematizes the normalization of cultural and language hierarchy embedded in western and Indo-Aryan supremacy through a critique of western education and western culture where he makes a clear distinction between *modernity* and *westernization*. According to Somorendra, colonial modernity mediated through Bengali and Sanskrit literature is not only oppressive but strips the colonial subject of their own identity. Retired Judge Saheb Phulo Babu and his son Damudar, a London-returned barrister are exemplary colonial subjects who represent the hybrid men in his selected play. Juxtaposing these hybrid men against the rationalization put forth through the characters of Aruna and Mohan, the play problematizes the presentation of the hybrid men as empowered and occupying an authorial space where the colonial subjects could reverse the subservient roles assigned to them by their colonial masters.

⁴⁸⁴ Noni, Arambam, “Narrating the Nation in Manipur: Reproduction of a Historical Question” in *Northeast India: A Reader* Ed. By Bhagat Oinam Dhiren A. Sadokpam.

⁴⁸⁵ Noni, Arambam. *1949: The Story of India’s Takeover of Manipur*, Centre for Alternative Discourse Manipur: 2018.

5.3.1. “Judge Saheb ki Imung”: An interpretation of modernity in Manipur.

“Judge Saheb ki Imung” (Family of the Judge), written in 1967, was one of Somorendra’s earlier plays. His perception of modernity is seen most prominently in this play and hence, this play was selected for the analysis. Through the characters and their dialogues, Somorendra makes an attempt to answer what modernity entails by bringing the debate on colonial modernity into life. Phulo Babu, a retired Judge Saheb mentioned in the title of the play, reflects the composite character of those who have endorsed western modernity unquestioningly and have been co-opted into the colonial government. His eldest son Damudar, following in his father’s footsteps, has completed Law from London and has become a barrister. Whereas, Mohan (his second son) is portrayed as someone who stays rooted to his culture. Along with his sister-in-law Aruna, Damudar’s wife, Mohan represents a critique to western/colonial modernity. As anti-heroes in the play, they shake the core foundations that constituted the idea of a successful modern Manipuri man. The contention in Phulo Babu’s family reflects the larger issues of engaging with colonial modernity in Manipur. A close reading of the play offers a substantive illustration of how colonial modernity operates in Manipur and how it was rationalized.

5.3.1.1. Modernity and Language

One of the most important features that distinguish a modern man in the dominant discourse on modernity in Manipur is to emulate the speech of the colonizer which is the English language. Here, Somorendra makes a distinct difference between the ability to speak English and the actual speaking the language. For Somorendra, speaking the language where it is not required for communication purposes amounts to performing the colonial subjectivity. Being *modern* is the ability to speak the language but not necessarily to become a speaker of the language. While Phulo Babu and Damudar who represent the hybrid men

persistently insert English phrases whenever they could, Aruna and Mohan restrain from speaking in English. Even though both understand the language, they hardly use English as a means of communication. Using it as a rhetorical trope to assert his ability, Mohan, sometimes, argues back in English while having heated conversations with Damudar and Phulo Babu. The following is an extract from Act III Scene II, the last scene where Damudar tries to confront Mohan by blaming him as the reason for Aruna's insistence on the divorce.

Damudar: *I am blaming you again! You are the spark of this conflagration!*

Mohan: *How dare you insult our values? Tamo, you are someone who doesn't know himself, who believes that immature and imported ideals are his own. You have no idea what is consensus in human values. Actually....I do not like to talk with you in this matter! You are not a match for me!*

Damudar: Damn you! Idiot! You are a real duffer!

Mohan: *No! Let me tell you, you are a novice in the study of the philosophy of life!* Shouting is not going to make your words the truth.

Damudar: *What philosophies you fool!* Your beliefs are wrong and I stand against it. That is why I am sending Aruna back to her natal house.

Mohan: Ah! No, no, iteima is not going back. You cannot just send someone away when you have no arguments left. *Well! I have been waiting for a chance to talk with you!* Let's talk then.

Damudar: *Note, father! You see!?* That validates my argument. I am correct, you see. *Mohan is the brain behind Aruna's move.* He wants to defy me and so incites Aruna. *That is a calculative move!*

5.3.1.2 Colonial modernity: British colonization and Indo-Aryan Supremacy.

Another distinct feature of Manipur's colonial modernity is its implicit incorporation of Hinduism within the western framework. Mohan, Phulo Babu's second son, reflects on the colonial system and comes to the conclusion that colonial education begins from learning Bangla/Sanskrit and ends with English. Phulo Babu proudly agrees that it is so. Mohan continues to elaborate his encapsulation thus, "*Sanskrit slok khara thiba heiba, Kalidas, Bhabhuti paba, Rabindranath, Sarat, Bankim, DL Roy, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Bernard Shaw khoi oiriniye pabungna Khanglibase*"⁴⁸⁶ (Then, what pabung⁴⁸⁷ knows must be some Sanskrit slokas, to read Kalidas, Bhavabhuti, Rabindranath, Sarat, Bankim, DL Roy, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Bernard Shaw etc.?). While referring to the modern ideals and values believed by his father, Mohan not only states the ideals associated with western modernity such as democracy, equal rights and justice, he also includes his father's faith in Gandhi, non-violence, Jawaharlal Nehru, socialism in India etc. His question to Phulo Babu after these deliberations was if Phulo Babu was either a British or a Bengali; the question of identity, of who exactly is he is raised. In this expression, through Mohan, Somorendra brings in the question of identity and the need to acknowledge the connection it has with one's civilization and culture. The issues that revolve around the politics of recognition, identity and dignity cannot be set aside as far as Mohan is concerned. The trope of *progress* viz. a viz. the notion of civilization appears frequently in these conversations. Mohan argues that imitating the behaviour of the British and endorsing their beliefs and values is not *progress*⁴⁸⁸. The idea of *progress* differs drastically between Mohan's and that of his father's. When Mohan disagrees with Pholo Babu's idea of *progress*, his father's immediate conjecture is to identify Mohan as a communist. To this speculation, Mohan firmly presents

⁴⁸⁶ Rajkumar, BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra, Vol. 2. Imphal: Arambam Ongbi Ibemhal, 2013, 241.*

⁴⁸⁷ Meeteilon term of addressing one's father.

⁴⁸⁸ BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra, 241.*

his contrarian view that he is neither a communist nor a *congress* suggesting dissociation from both European modernity and India's modernity. In other words, this conjecture indicates that Manipur's colonial modernity was a combination of European modernity and the Indian modernity from which Mohan chooses to escape in order to build his own through research⁴⁸⁹ and a re-searching of the ancient values. For Mohan, the ideals of modernity need to be scrutinized before adapting it to one's own culture. The writer illustrates Damudar's superficial understanding of modern ideals such as *decency*⁴⁹⁰ when Mohan disagrees with his interpretation of *decency*. Mohan understands *decency* as simply behaviour while Damudar views it as indivisible from the western sense of dressing which is why he makes fun of Mohan for wearing "bathroom" chappal when he comes to pick him up from the airport. Damudar mocks him stating that he is lucky he is not in a *civilized* society. The claim made by Damudar that Mohan lacks decency for coming to the airport in his "bathroom chappal" shows his inability to perceive a non-conforming culture as a *decent* culture. The western interpretation of decency is used to establish a binary hierarchical structure between differing cultures categorizing them as *civilized* and *uncivilized*. Damudar's statement implies that Mohan is in an *uncivilized* society, thus mocking his own society as *uncivilized*. On the other hand, his obsession with trivial physical appearances such as the colour combination of Mohan's pants and shirts underlines the illusionary and temporal characteristics of western modernity. Attributing the essence of *decency* to clothes, its colour and style, represents the superficial engagement that Manipur had with modernity in the 20th century.

While the infusion of Indo-Aryan culture is seen as legitimately modern, indigenous beliefs and practices are relegated in the private space and seen as pre-modern or not modern *enough*, hence, not worthy of revitalization. When Mohan tells his father that he is

⁴⁸⁹ BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra*, 240.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 246.

researching “ancient Manipuri culture and tradition”⁴⁹¹, his father questions if it’s worthy and declares that he doesn’t “care for that rotten culture”⁴⁹². Nevertheless, he admits that he still practices the traditional customs such as worshipping the Sanamahi, contributing rice and vegetables for *Saroi Khaangba*⁴⁹³, performing *Ipaan Thaba*⁴⁹⁴ etc⁴⁹⁵. and he is not able to defy these traditions. But the crux of the matter is that these practices are deemed neither exalting nor respectable. They are merely *preserved* as traditions which are no longer associated with a person’s social position and status rather than being *revived* or celebrated with pride and honour. In Manipuri modern society, social status can only be achieved through western education while indigenous knowledge and values are accorded a lesser social space where they are permitted to *survive* but forbidden to *thrive*. In another instance, while having a discussion with Nungsisana, his wife, about their future daughter-in-law Aruna, Phulo Babu worries if his son’s association with the revivalist groups whom he terms as “sanamahi” would influence Aruna since one of her uncles also belongs to a revivalist group⁴⁹⁶. As far as Phulo Babu is concerned, the revivalist groups/ Meetei marups are social deviants who are on the verge of going crazy⁴⁹⁷. Damudar also concludes that Aruna needs to consult a psychiatrist⁴⁹⁸ and that she is outdated and crazy. They are given different names

⁴⁹¹ BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra*, 240.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ The indigenous practice of chasing away evil spirits every Saturday during the month of Lamta (March), the last month in the Meetei calendar.

⁴⁹⁴ The indigenous practice of performing rituals on the sixth day after a baby is born. During this ritual, the maibi asks the parents if they want the child or the yaangkok, a traditional winnowing basket, to which the parents typically reply that they want the child.

⁴⁹⁵ BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra*, 242.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 243.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 244.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 270.

and branded as a “taku”⁴⁹⁹, “angaoba”⁵⁰⁰. These terms serve as a retribution for committing the “crime” of not conforming to Hinduism. They are implicated with many negative traits such as barbarism, sub-standard, outdated, demented and uncivilized. To explain this name calling, it would be helpful to use Foucault’s theory on modern forms of power where a capillary form of power is exercised “*within* the social body, rather than *from above* it”⁵⁰¹. What used to be controlled by the sovereign power held by the King i.e., condemning those who did not convert into Hinduism to death penalty in the 18th century in Manipur, has been transferred into the realm of language practised *within* the society. Projecting them as “mad” and then categorizing this madness (angaoba) as a mental illness (needing a psychiatrist) functions as a mechanism of othering the revivalists in the society as well as dismissing their arguments as irrational and dangerous.⁵⁰² It constructs and legitimizes their narrative as the truth.

Aruna and Mohan are also referred to as *modern boy* and *modern girl* to undermine their dissenting voices by infantilizing them. Damudar frequently infantilizes Aruna while making arguments addressing her as a “rebel of a *girl*”, a “silly *girl*”. Likewise, Mohan is described as a “child” and a “boy”, someone who is still young and ignorant.

Another ironic element of colonial modernity which is shadowed in Damudar and Phulo Babu’s definition of modernity is their lack of criticism of the hegemonic Hindu beliefs and cultures. Although Damudar and Phulo Babu discard the indigenous cultural values and beliefs as rotten and rubbish, he has no qualms about matching his bride by a Hindu

⁴⁹⁹ BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra*, 243. A corrupt version of the Hindi word daku which means a bandit.

⁵⁰⁰ Thongam Bipin elaborates the use of the term ‘angaoba’ in his unpublished PhD thesis submitted in the CCL, UoH in 2017.

⁵⁰¹ Michel Foucault, *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*, (Vintage, 1980), 39.

⁵⁰² For more on the theory of madness as mental illness in the modern era, see Michel Foucault, *Madness and civilization*, (Routledge, 2003).

astrologer. They both believe in the superstitious practice of match making known as “kuthi yengba”⁵⁰³. This recalls the criticism put forward by Naoriya Phulo during the colonial period. He views kuthi as a symbol of bondage to Hinduism from birth till death. All the important rituals that are performed to initiate the crucial stages of a person such as birth, marriage, death, are dictated by one’s kuthi. *Kuthi* serves as a way of ascertaining the compatibility between the bride and the groom before the arrangement of a marriage proceeds. Nungsisana informs her husband Phulo Babu that Damudar and Aruna are *rajyatak*, a perfect match, after coming back from the astrologer. However, as the play unfolds, it is shown that Damudar and Aruna are far from being a perfect match and are on the verge of a divorce. The play closes with an open ending where Mohan leaves his family and Damudar and Aruna not able to resolve their conflict.

5.3.1.3 The idea of a modern woman/wife: Gender and modernity

Two conflicting ideas of what constitutes a modern woman is presented in “Judge Sabeb ki Imung”. One is represented by Aruna, the character herself while the other is a projection of who Aruna should be by the dominant male figures in the play, Phulo Babu and Damudar. As far as these two dominant male figures are concerned, a modern woman is *athletic* (read physically fit, sociable) and well-educated⁵⁰⁴. She is active and gregarious but at the same time her acts and behaviour must be bound to her husband’s likings and sentiments. When Aruna is introduced in the play, she is introduced as a potential wife for Damudar. She is instantly assigned a familial role which is subservient to the male characters. In their conversation, Damudar expresses his relief that she will be able to prepare him a nice breakfast at least⁵⁰⁵. She is seen as someone who can be “trained”⁵⁰⁶ and “taught”, and who

⁵⁰³ Horoscope matching.

⁵⁰⁴ BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra*, 248.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

must “adapt”⁵⁰⁷ to her husband’s family. In a conversation with her, Damudar elaborates her role as a wife thus, “*A wife must respond to her husband’s likings*. She must keep her husband happy; she must know his sentiments and respond accordingly. She ought to care about her husband’s likes and dislikes...”⁵⁰⁸ When Aruna defies Damudar’s words, she is accused as a rebel. The difference in their definition of modernity is also reflected in their failed marriage. Aruna is approved as a wife based on the premise that she is a modern woman since she is educated and has finished MA. However, as it turns out, Aruna’s education and her definition of modernity differs vastly from that of Damudar’s. Damudar’s modernity is patriarchal while Aruna’s modernity incorporates feminism as its core element. She asserts that she is a human being independent of her husband and challenges⁵⁰⁹ the notion that women ought to do what men say. She re-affirms that it is because she is educated, she understands that her husband is not a god, and that she need not worship him as an uneducated woman would. The more interesting part is that Aruna’s modernity not only incorporates feminism but it also consolidates the idea of intersectionality in her feminist understanding. Her understanding of feminism is different from simply critiquing the patriarchal beliefs. She deconstructs the notion that a *modern* woman wears dresses and saris, keeps their hair short, wears revealing clothes etc. She asserts that wearing or eating something *new* does not automatically make a person modern. It is not the physical appearance that is important but the mentality of a person. A woman can still wear a phanek and be modern as long as she believes in modern ideologies. This understanding suggests that women’s collective interest might differ from one culture to another, and therefore, claiming

⁵⁰⁶ BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra*, 247.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 252.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 252.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 277.

one culture as modern while another culture as pre-modern based on the physical appearance of the woman and what she wears is misleading and fallacious. In other words, she is suggesting that there is a clear distinction between westernization (both UK and India reflected in wearing a dress and a sari respectively) and modernization/feminism.

Aruna's education entails critical thinking and it makes her question the inequalities prevalent in the society. Consequently, her imagination of being modern and modernity is rooted in such an understanding of what education means. Damudar, as usual, accuses Aruna of being self-centred, a common trope used by the conservatives to dismiss and demoralize a woman. Both Damudar and Phulo Babu believe that even her arguments are not of her own but instilled by Mohan, the male figure who represents the contrarian view in the family. They see Mohan as the "brain" behind her arguments.⁵¹⁰ Damudar asserts that Aruna is "a pawn in Mohan's chessboard."⁵¹¹ He truly believes that Aruna is instigated by Mohan as a ploy to defy Damudar's authority in the family.

5.3.1.4. Binary articulations of modernity; *Kaang saanaba* vs clubbing

As Richard Bauman and Charles L Briggs have rightly pointed out in *Voices of Modernity*, various tropes of asymmetries that sustain social inequalities are employed to articulate and construct modernity. Binaries such as female/male, rural/urban, working class/bourgeois, unsophisticated/educated, oral/literate, European/Oriental etc.⁵¹² The articulations represented in "Judge Saheb ki Imung" are reverberations of what Bauman and Briggs call associational complexes which made up the discourse on modernity: "rural (or aboriginal), lower class, ignorant, old-fashioned, indigenous – in a word, *provincial* – versus

⁵¹⁰ BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra*, 256.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 278.

⁵¹² Bauman, Richard, and Briggs, Charles L. *Voices of modernity: Language ideologies and the politics of inequality*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, 11.

urban, elite, learned, cosmopolitan, that is to say, *modern*.” Damudar and Phulo Babu claim themselves to be urban, elite, learned, cosmopolitan and thus *modern* while the ideas propagated by Aruna and Mohan are declared as rural, lower class, ignorant, old fashioned, indigenous and thus *provincial*. The notion of *khunung* consistently employed by Damudar mirrors the notion of *provincial* as given in this excerpt. *Khunung* is a combination of two words, Khun (village) and manung (inside) and it can be translated as old or outdated. It also refers to the values and beliefs held by the rural, lower class, and old-fashioned people. While the indigenous games such as kaang saanaba⁵¹³ and thaabal chongba⁵¹⁴ are treated as *khunung* culture and termed as “iraang”,⁵¹⁵ Damudar embraces the western form of social gathering such as clubbing whole-heartedly. He explains to Aruna that if she participates in kaang saanaba, it will hurt his prestige. Besides, those who have organized the game are a useless bunch of uncivilized people. In contrast, clubbing is viewed as an appropriate modern form of social gathering attended by government officers, military officers and the rich *bhadraloks* of Manipur. He calls them gentlemen and ladies and prides himself over associating with these people who he terms as *bhadraloks*, an imitation of the colonial Bengali elite class. When Aruna declines his proposal to go to the club and dance, he calls Aruna a “*khunung*” girl and accuses her of being conservative and narrow-minded. But the irony is their insistence on continuing the family tradition while replacing the indigenous tradition with the values that comes with colonial modernity.

5.3.1.5. Indigenous food items and colonial modernity

⁵¹³ *Kaang* is an indigenous team sport. *Saanaba* means ‘to play’.

⁵¹⁴ *Thaabal chongba* is an indigenous group dance where the participants hold hands forming a ring and dancing in unison.

⁵¹⁵ *Iraang* can be translated as fanfare, festival, protest or being flirty according to the context. However, it also carries a sense of excess and inappropriateness. In this particular context, the closest translation would be fanfare. Damudar views kaang saanaba as immoral and excessive, terming it as village fanfare (*khunung iraang*).

As both Dolly Kikon and Dr. Hoineilhing Sitlhou have pointed out in their articles concerning the food habits in the Northeast of India and its political, cultural and social implications in the larger narrative of the singular Indian modernity, food, despite being often relegated to the private sphere as inconsequential, plays a significant role in constructing identities and reinforcing belongingness to a particular community. When a particular food is consumed, the gastronomical experience differs from person to person according to their religion, social status, caste and region. While Kikon problematizes the singular Indian modernity constructed around the discourse on dominant food practices and dietary habits through exploring the politics and socio-cultural implications that revolves around consumption of *Akhuni* (fermented Soya bean), a delicacy relished across the eastern Himalayan societies, Dr. Sitlhou examines the research gap in the social sciences of studying food as a politico-cultural item. Kikon views the process of problematizing the singular version of Indian modernity through exploring the political implications of *Akhuni* consumption as *fermenting modernity*. She describes the process of “preparing and eating *akhuni* in the nation’s capital -New Delhi” as demonstrative of the sensory and emotive conditions of tribal modernity suggesting the existence of a sensory imagined community as a social group. A similar concept is reflected in the selected play in its treatment of food and dietary practices as a part and parcel of constructing modern identities. The difference in food habits among the family members in Phulo Babu’s household reflects the conflicting perceptions of modernity. While Damudar and Phulo Babu’s modernity consists of changing their dietary practices in accordance with the western communities, both British and the Indo-Aryan communities, Mohan and Aruna find it deceptive and gratuitous as constituents of Manipuri modernity. In the opening scene of the play, when Bhimo, the house servant answers Phulo Babu that the morning meal consists of *Hawai moog*⁵¹⁶ and *ngaakraa*⁵¹⁷, and

⁵¹⁶ Yellow lentils.

*thaangjing iromba*⁵¹⁸, a combination of indigenous food items which would salivate any typical Meetei, it fails to evoke that emotional response in Phulo Babu. Instead, he ends up asking if there is heinou achaar (Mango pickle). For breakfast, both Phulo Babu and Damudar prefer “toast”, omelette, coffee, tea etc. which generally comprise the English breakfast. On the other hand, the emotional response evoked in *Bhimo* and *Ekashini*, the housemaid, during their conversation about the meal that they would be preparing for the day when Damudar reaches home demonstrates the deep connection that food has with our emotive conditions and familial relationship in the community. The following is an excerpt of the conversation from Act 1, Scene 2 which illustrates the deep social connection that they have from sharing the same sensory aesthetics of food, of belonging to the same sensory imagined community.

*Ekashini: Ta*⁵¹⁹ *Bhimo!* What dish shall we prepare today since our *ibungo ahal*⁵²⁰ is coming back?

*Bhimo: Ibema*⁵²¹ lets prepare *Ngakraa* with *Soibum*⁵²², and *singju*⁵²³ with *yongchaak anouba*⁵²⁴ and *hawaimaton anouba*⁵²⁵ (salivates). And let’s have a bit of plain *hawaijar*⁵²⁶. Prepare it at your best; let him have it deliciously since he hasn’t eaten home food⁵²⁷ for a long time.

⁵¹⁷ A type of catfish indigenous to Manipur.

⁵¹⁸ *Thangjing Iromba* is a type of side dish prepared by mashing chilly and fermented fish, the two basic ingredients, and adding *thangjing*, an aquatic plant indigenous to Manipur.

⁵¹⁹ Elder brother

⁵²⁰ Ibungo is an endearing term used to address a boy or a younger male member of the community. Ahal means the eldest.

⁵²¹ Ibema is an endearing term used to address a girl or a younger female member of the community.

⁵²² Fermented bamboo shoot.

⁵²³ A popular Manipuri spicy mixture of raw vegetables, local herbs, chilly and fermented fish.

⁵²⁴ Young stinky beans.

⁵²⁵ Tender pea leaves.

⁵²⁶ Meeteilon name for *akhuni*, fermented soya bean.

Ekashini: I was thinking the same thing, to give my best while cooking. Let me make it more tasty than usual.

Bhimo: Add the coriander leaves at the right time when the water in the *ngakraa* curry has condensed properly, let the smell of *soibum* and coriander leaves blend together.

Ekashini: Yes, yes, I will do my best. But *ta Bhimo*, tell me, how is my cooking?

Bhimo: (Salivates) Ish! It's really delicious *ibema*, truly. By heaven, it reminds me of the dishes cooked by your sister-in-law (his wife). (Filled with nostalgia) When I return from the hill, she would arrange the warm water to wash my legs and keep a bowl of boil bottle gourd almost full to its brim and I would eat and drink it up, how relishing it was indeed!

Ekashini: Um, *ta Bhimo*, so my cooking reminds you of my sister-in-law – that means it IS delicious!

Bhimo: Yes *ibema*, it is indeed. If you don't cook, the members in this family would go starving. When they are invited for lunch by others, they just taste a little and leave it because their cooking is not the same as yours.

Ekashini: But *ta Bhimo*, when the new bride comes, you should be on my side in the matters of the kitchen.

Bhimo: Why *ichan*, nobody dares question your mastery in cooking! Let us test the new bride, let her cook a few meals and see if she cooks well. If she cannot, then you shall teach her step by step. And if she doesn't listen to you, your brother is here! (Sound of vehicle approaching, loud horns) Eh! I can hear the vehicle. It must be him. (Looks outside) Yes yes, he has come. Come, *ibema* (runs out). (Outside) *Ibungo, ibungo*, you have come finally! Ish, you look changed!

Damudar: (Outside) Eh! *Ta Bhimo*! *Great to see you*!

.....

⁵²⁷ See the concept of home food as defined in Dr. Hoineilhing Sitlhou's paper "Food Culture and Identity in Northeast India: Prospects for Social Science Research" Vol. 4 (2), October 2020, pp. 54. in *Explorations, ISS e-journal* Published by Indian Sociological Society.

Damudar: (Looking at the watch) It's almost *twelve thirty*. *Iche*⁵²⁸, what have you cooked?

Ekashini: I have cooked *ngakra* with *soibum ibungo*.

Damudar: *Oh, I see*. So, this *soibum* must be the one made from bamboo.

Ekashini: Yes, it is made from *Usol*⁵²⁹.

Damudar: I shall check it then! *Iche*! Let me wash my face, then I will have food.

The response elicited by *Damudar* when *Ekashini* mentions the dish lacks a certain emotional connection with the food prepared by *Ekashini* with such passion and dedication. He seems to be neither familiar with the mentioned dish nor curious about its taste. He simply gives an obligated response saying he will have to see how it is after taking a bath. When he asks if *soibum* is made from bamboo, *Ekashini* specifies that it is made from bamboo shoots. This lack of emotional excitement or the absence of connection with the food being prepared is the “missing link” that *Aruna* refers to frequently in her arguments. *Damudar*’s illusion is manifested in this flavourless response and in this sense, he is distant from his own reality. This shows that dietary practices and food habits are important sites where conflicting perceptions of modernity are confronted and negotiated.

To add to this argument, *Mohan* is persistently scolded for smoking weed which is considered as a part and parcel of being a *Meetei marup* follower by non-followers such as *Phulo Babu*. It is regarded as a bad habit which the *Meetei marup* followers inculcate. On the contrary, as soon as *Damudar* reaches his house, he takes out a cigarette case and hands out one each to *Bhimo*, and *Phulo Babu*. He even offers one to *Ekashini* asking if she smokes. While smoking weed which is associated with the *Meetei marup* followers is considered a

⁵²⁸ Elder sister.

⁵²⁹ Bamboo shoot.

bad habit, smoking cigarettes is regarded as a socially acceptable activity involving a sense of sharing and relaxation despite both serving the same social purpose and both harmful to our bodies. In case of drinking as well, Damudar prefers going out to the club and drinking fancy wine and socializing with the *bhadraloks* while Mohan drinks with *Bhimo* in secrecy at his house. He relishes in eating *bora*⁵³⁰ while drinking, a common evening snack similar to fritters which Damudar terms as unhealthy food along with *singju*. The crumbling relationship as reflected in the differing food habits between the two brothers reinforces the idea that Dr. Hoineilhing has suggested in her article that food “plays a crucial role in holding the society together by mending and maintaining bonds.” It demonstrates the existence of a close connection between food and different imaginations of modernity.

Thus, through engagement with the ideas of language, knowledge, gender, race, binary hierarchy and gastronomical experiences, Somorendra presents a critique to the dominant understanding of modernity in Manipur.

5.4 Conclusion

Although Phulo is generally located within the Meetei revivalism discourse where he is revered as a prophet, his ideas and vision of a modern Manipur cannot be evaded. Within the limits of British colonialism, he found western education as a tool to reclaim a dignified identity and future for the Meetei. Presenting his arguments, Phulo constructs a modern subject that stands as an anathema to the dominant conceptualization of the modern subject who is essentially limited to identifying as a Hindu. Similar ideas are reinforced in Arambam Somorendra’s play “Judge Saheb ki Imung” which not only continues but extends the principal premise of focusing on indigeneity as a driving force for constructing an alternative Modern Manipur.

⁵³⁰ Bora is similar to pakora in its cooking style but the ingredients could vary tremendously since it is also made from various locally available native herbs and vegetables.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The existing cultural debates on Manipur's history and literature generated within the frameworks instructed by colonial modernity are indicative of the layered issues that persist in Manipur. Owing to its geo-political location where South Asia meets South East Asia, one such issue is the everyday negotiation between two principal approaches; an eastern oriented approach by virtue of belonging to the mongoloid race ethnically, culturally and socially, and an Indo-Aryan approach which was instituted historically patronized by the Manipuri King and the elite class. The present research is an inquiry from the perspective of Translation Studies into the nature of this contestation/negotiation during the colonial period where an additional framework of understanding and constituting knowledge was administered on the people, as well as the postcolonial period in Manipur when the consequences of colonialism was exacerbated within the Indian state after the transfer of power.

The cultural turn in Translation Studies has forged a new path to foray into the realm of understanding modernity in Manipur through its literary discourse using translation as a site of critical analysis. In part I of the thesis, translation projects and translated texts are examined as a site of power and a modernizing agent which was incorporated in introducing western education in Manipur in the early half of the century as well as in constituting the dominant discourse on modern Manipuri literature in the latter half of the century. It is observed that the role of translation was not limited to the realm of literary practices but involved and was informed by larger cultural issues and debates pertaining to the construction of a modern Manipur. On one hand, the translations from primarily Sanskrit literature and Bengali literature into Meeteilon were incorporated as textbooks such as Arambam Dorendrajit's *Kangsa Bodh*, Ph. Vasudev Sharma's *Sakuntala* and Mutum Koireng's *Kapal Kundala* in an attempt to augment the status of Meeteilon as a subject in the

western education system. While on the other, Sanskrit scholar Atombapu Sharma produced a vast corpus of translated text from Sanskrit literature into Meeteilon patronized by King Churachand. Having owned the first private printing press in Manipur, he had full access to printing his translations which he made use of generously. The function of *patronage* and *professionals* is observed as playing an active role in canonizing a Sanskrit oriented literary tradition and in amplifying the status of Atombapu Sharma as a giant in the field of translation. In the dominant literary discourse of the latter half of the century, he was appreciated and upheld as a literary giant for his translations which secured modern Manipuri literature a place in the modern Indian literary tradition. A critical observation of the formation of the modern Manipuri literary discourse indicates the prevalence of cultural hegemony in modern Manipuri literature where Hinduism and the Indo-Aryan literary tradition assume a superior status which was constituted as the truth. Ranging from Atombapu's translations of the Hindu epics adorned with Sanskrit registers to Kalachand Shastri's translations of the same into a more, in the words of Chongtham Manihar, "homely" language, modern Manipuri literature is structured around this assumed literary hierarchy reflected in these translations. The research endeavours to explicate this assumed hierarchy through examining how the translations were perceived in the modern Manipuri literary discourse. A series of articles on modern Manipuri literature that were published in the journal *Indian Literature* were analysed and it is observed that certain values were assumed as "intrinsically" superior while ascribing other values as "pre-modern". Based on that assumption, the translations were seen as "wealth" for modern Manipuri literature. The dominant discourse fails to see the relevance of subjugating one culture by another in the context of Manipur manifested in its literature. The thesis argues that it is imperative to emphasize this relevance to question the perpetual representation of translation in a facile

manner as a mere augments of literature in the dominant modern Manipuri literary discourse.

Part II of the thesis primarily focuses on finding out what constitutes the dominant conceptualization of modernity in Manipur as reflected in the canonical literary works. While at the same time, it also seeks to highlight the alternative conceptualizations of modernity. It is observed that the translated texts play a major role in formulating and legitimizing certain elements as modern while discarding others as “pre-modern” and “outdated”. Besides being in the written form to which authors are attributed, all three of the selected canonical texts also exhibit shared elements that predominantly glorify Hinduism and treat the Hindu epics as foundational reference points. Characters, places, events and concepts that define these epic narratives are invoked consistently to emphasize their own narratives. In contrast, certain texts which either question or fail to incorporate these elements such as Lamabam Kamal’s *Devjani* and Naoriya Phulo’s *Eigi Wareng* were censored and not recognised as constituting standard modern Manipuri literature. An attempt is made to find out the nature of such a construction of canons by locating it within the cultural debates pertaining to historicization of Manipur within the ambit of colonial modernity. It also brings forth the ideas propagated by Naoriya Phulo in connection with modern issues pertaining with language politics and the idea of modernity through a reconceptualization of what he represents as fundamentally *modern* rather than *pre-modern*. In the dominant discourse, he is projected as a prophet limiting his relevance in the realm of religion solely. An observation is put forward in Part II of the thesis which argues that Naoriya Phulo’s project was not essentially limited to religion. Rather, it emanated from his critical approach vindicated by western education while seeking to understand the existence of the Meeteis. To discern a clear picture of what entails Naoriya Phulo’s modernity and how he has envisaged a modern Manipur, the thesis analyses his educational background, how he engages with modern institutions such as police station to

defend the attacks made on him and his followers, his ideas such as embracing a single identity termed as “boarding a single *hee*” rather than being both Meetei and a Hindu at the same time, his questioning of what constitutes knowledge, his notion of “mit mai pangba” which closely resonates Kant’s notion of the *enlightenment* and his endorsement of western education.

In part II of the thesis, the analysis also observes certain similarities in conceptualizing modernity between Naoriya Phulo and Arambam Somorendra, especially in his play “Judge Saheb Ki Imung.” Somorendra shares similar revivalist tendency that we see in Phulo’s works rooted in the idea of reclaiming the indigenous value system through research and a rediscovery of a dignified identity. Through the characters, the contestation between colonial modernity and an alternative modernity comes to life. Here, Somorendra treats language as a site of contestation making the distinction between knowing how to speak in English and the act of speaking in English. According to Somorendra, while simply knowing English is regarded as a skill set, the act of speaking in English and performing that choice is a manifestation of the ingrained colonial subjectivity. Further, Somorendra’s modernity refuses to view the Indo-Aryan culture as an essential constituent of modernity. Hence, his conceptualization of Manipuri modernity is in direct contrast to the dominant modernity in Manipur. A crucial development in Somorendra’s work is the bringing of gender as a focal point in constructing modernity in Manipur. Through the character of Aruna, he engages with the issues of women pertaining to the idea of modernity. Ironically, Damudar, Aruna’s husband who represents the dominant idea of a successful modern man, fails to acknowledge Aruna as an individual. He views Aruna only in relation to a man, i.e., a wife to him and a daughter-in-law to his father. When she steps outside the set of norms accorded to a wife and a daughter-in-law, Damudar perceives that as a transgression from rationality to irrationality. The same logic of irrationality is utilized to undermine the

revivalist tendency represented in Aruna's character. Further, the difference in attitude towards food habits, Damudar's ignorance of the indigenous food items and his general lack of excitement when presented with an indigenous delicacy, is characteristic of his performance of colonial subjectivity. Thus, in conclusion, part II proposes that Phulo and Somorenda share a fundamental characteristic in conceptualizing modernity in Manipur rooted in indigeneity which could point towards the existence of an alternative modernity that functions in contrast to the prevailing dominant modernity in Manipur mediated by Bengali and Sanskrit literature where translation played a key role as an enabling agent. Without translation, it would have been impossible to establish a dominant modernity in Manipur in the 20th century which was informed by Indo-Aryan supremacy and Hindu hegemony.

Table 1

A list of Sanskrit words used by Atombapu Sharma in the front matter of his books along with the Meeteilon and English equivalents.

Sl.No.	Words used by Atombapu Sharma	Meeteilon	English
1.	Bhumika	Wahoudok	Introduction
2.	Parisist	Chetap/Chehaap	Annexure
3.	Sanskaran	Khutnam	Edition
4.	Visaya	Hiram/Wareng	Chapters
5.	Suchipatra	Hiram Lamai	Contents
6.	Patra	Lamai	Page
7.	Granthakar/Lekhak/Binit	Ayeeba/Nolukna Haijariba/Taraagi/Khorjei	Writer
8.	Utsarga	Katchaba	Dedicated to

Table 3.1

A list of translated texts from Bengali literature by Ayekpam Shyamsunder¹

Sl. No.	Name of the book	Name of the writer	Year of Publication
1.	<i>Durgeshnandini</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	1958
2.	Unidentified text		1961
3.	<i>Rajarshi</i>	Rabindranath Tagore	1961
4.	<i>Indira</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	1963
5.	<i>Devi Chaudhurani</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	1963
6.	<i>Chandrasekhar</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	1964
7.	<i>Anandamath</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	1964
8.	<i>Rajani</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	1965
9.	Unidentified text		1967
10.	<i>Raj Singh</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	1968
11.	<i>Chitrangadha</i>	Rabindranath Tagore	1975
12.	<i>Kapal Kundala</i> ²	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	
13.	<i>Bishabriksha (Hoo Pambi)</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	
14.	<i>Krishna Kantagi will (Krishna Kanta's will)</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	1963 ³

¹ Source: Chaoba, Mayanglambam. comp. *Phonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*, Apunba Naharol Sakti, 1989, 78-79.

² <https://dlpimanipur.gov.in/textbooks.html>

³ Source: Catalogue of the exhibition of printed books from 1899 to 1972 collected by Peoples' Museum, Kakching, 2010 at Manipur State Art Gallery, Palace Compound, Imphal, 19.

15.	<i>Radharani</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	
16.	<i>Devdas</i>	Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay	
17.	<i>Bankim Chandragi Upanyas Khara (Some novels of Bankim Chandra)</i>	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	
18.	<i>Sitaram</i>	Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay	1968
19.	<i>Srikanta (1)</i>	Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay	1979

Table 3.2

A list of Sanskrit/Bengali/Hindi words from the translations of *Julius Caesar*⁴ and *Antigone*⁵

Word	Page & Text	Word	Page & Text
জয়	2, JC	মূর্তি	4, JC
পূর্ণ, ইচ্ছা, বিষয়	9, JC	শয়তান, দন্ড	12, JC
স্বর্গ	21, JC	স্পর্শ, পুন্য	26, JC
অবস্থাসি	30, JC	অন্ধবিশ্বাস	36, JC
অর্থ	46, JC	বিধি	49, JC
ভদ্রলোক	60, JC	উত্তরাধিকারী	73, JC
বিশ্বাসঘাতক	74, JC	হওয়ার	90, JC
দোষ, দর্শন	94, JC	দন্ডি	97, JC
দূত	100, JC	অমঙ্গল, ভূত-প্রেত, নিয়ম	106, JC
বিধাতা, বিদায়	107, JC	পাপী	109, JC
পঞ্চভূত, ব্যবহার	120, JC	অতিথি	1, A
মর্যাদা, শান্তি, পৃথিবী	2, A	ঈশ্বর, আশীর্বাদ	5, A
স্থায়ী, বৃহস্পতি,	6, A	অন্তরা, রাজমুকুট, বিষ্ণু, জয়, প্রতিধ্ব	7, A
ইন্দ্র, কৃষ্ণা চতুর্দশিনী, মন্দির	8, A	বিধি, যুক্তরাজ্য, বিধাতা, উত্তরাধিকারী, পরীক্ষা, প্রমাণ	9, A

⁴ Babu, IR., 2nd ed. *Shakespeare gi Julius Caesar*. Imphal: Poknapham Publication, 1998.

⁵ Babu, IR., 3rd ed. *Sophocles ki Antigone*. Imphal: Triumvirate Publishers', 2004.

ধন্য	10, A	সূত্রধর, প্রজা, সান্নী	11, A
স্বর্গ, নরক, জ্ঞান, মণি	14, A	মঙ্গল	16, A
জগৎ, কল্পনা, কাল ভেইরাব, কালবৈশাখী, সমাধি	17, A	পূর্ণিমা, মূর্তি	18, A
মহারাজ, দায়, অর্থ, দণ্ড	19, A	পাপ	22, A
ভদ্রলোক	23, A	সম্মান, দোষ	24, A
সাফলী	25, A	ভাব	26, A
পাত্র, সমর্থন	27, A	কালাক্ষার, গর্ভ	28, A
মত, বুদ্ধি	30, A	নগর,	34, A
সাপ	35, A	প্রায়শ্চিত্ত, অমর, দেবতা	36, A
আশা, নিদ্রা	37, A	ফাঁসি, নিয়তি, নায়িকা	38, A
শান্তি	39, A	গুরুজন, অভিসার	41, A
ব্রাত, বন্দি	43, A	পূজারিণী, অভিযান	44, A
যুগ	45, A	যাত্রী, ধর্ম, মন্ত্র	46, A
যজ্ঞ, অভিসাপ	47, A	সংসার,	48, A
রাষ্ট্রগুরু, জ্যোতিষী, শিক্ষাগুরু	49, A	কর্মফল	50, A
তীর্থ	53, A	মাতৃভূমি	56, A
ভিক্ষা	57, A		

Bibliography

- Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards Investigation)," in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* 9.1 (2006): 86-98.
- Anand, S. "Sanskrit, English and Dalits." In *Economic and Political Weekly* (1999): 2053-2056.
- Ananda Mohon. "Reminiscence: Oja Ama Oina Atombapu Sharma." In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, edited by Arambam Somorendra, 28-33. Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso Books, 2006.
- Anganghal, Hijam. (1940) *Khamba Thoibi Seireng*, 2nd ed. Imphal: Hijam Raju Singh, 1986.
- Aruna, Nahakpam. "Chaoba Singh Amasung Itihasik Upanyas." In *Kunsuba Chahichaagi Manipuri Upanyas Neinaba*, ed. Aruna, Nahakpam, 30-42. 2nd ed. Imphal: Chungkham Yashawanta, 2019.
- Asad, Talal. "Conscripts of Western Civilization?" In *Dialectical Anthropology: Essays in Honor of Stanley Diamond*. Vol. 1, edited by C. Gailey. Gainesville. FL: University Presses of Florida, 1992. 333-351.
- Babu, IR. "Post-Independence Manipuri Literature." In *Indian Literature*. Vol. 20, No. 1 January-February (1977), 43-48.
- 2nd ed. *Shakespeare ki Julius Caesar*. Imphal: Poknapham Publication, 1998.
- 3rd ed. *Sophocles ki Antigone*. Imphal: Triumvirate Publishers', 2004.

- Baite, Chungkhosei. "Christianity and Indigenous Practices: A Brief Sketch of the Baite of Manipur." In *Global Journal of Human-Social Sciences: C Sociology & Culture* Vol 15, Issue 3, (2015).
- Bassi, and Baasi. "Manipuri: The Uncertainties.' in *Indian Literature*, Vol. 21, No. 6, *Language and Literature Survey* (November -December 1978), 242-246.
- "Manipuri Writing: A Year of Stagnation." in *Indian Literature* (1979): 170-173.
- "Manipuri: Unfilled Gaps." *Indian Literature*, Vol. 23, Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. Routledge, 1991.
- No. 6, in *Annual Survey of Indian Literature* (November - December 1980), 195-199.
- Bauman, Richard, and Charles L. Briggs. *Voices of modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Bebita Devi, S. "Brahmans Migrations in Manipur: Ascertaining the Reason." in *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Volume 9, Issue 2 (Mar. - Apr. 2013), 29-36.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 2012.
- Bhattacharjee, J.B. "'Bijoy Panchali': A Bengali Chronicle of Manipur." In *Proceedings of the North East India History Association*, 11 (1990): 43-46.
- Bhogeshor, O. trans. 2nd ed. *Sanamahi Laikan*. Imphal: Tamar Publications, 1995.
- Bijoykumar Singh, Khuraijam. "Religious Revivalism and Colonial Rule: Origin of the Sanamahi movement." in *Colonialism and Resistance: Society and State in Manipur*. ed. Arambam Noni, Kangujam Sanatomba, London: Routledge India, 2015, 75-90.

- Bipin, Thongam. "Revivalism and/as resistance the meetei movement in the twentieth century," PhD Diss. University of Hyderabad, 2017.
- "Making of a Normative Meetei: Re-reading of Khwairakpam Chaoba and Lamabam Kamal." in *Kangla Lanpung* XII (I): 51-84, 2018.
- Birendra, R.K. trans. reprint. *Madhabi*. Imphal: Manipur State Kala Akademi, 2016.
- Bora, Papori. "The problem without a name: comments on cultural difference (racism) in India." In *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 5 (2019): 845-860.
- Botz-Bornstein, Thorsten. "What is the Difference Between Culture and Civilization?: Two Hundred Fifty Years of Confusion." *Comparative Civilizations Review* 66, no. 66 (2012): 4.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Brajabihari, Kojiam. "Atombapu: Ningsingba Khara" In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, edited by Arambam Somorendra, 16-21. Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989.
- Brajabihari Sharma, Aribam. *Abhigyan Sakuntalam*. Imphal: Nabakanta Sharma, 1985.
- Bowie, Guillermo. Review of *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from the Tempest to Tarzan* by Eric Cheyfitz in *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Special Issue: Shamans and Preachers, Color Symbolism and Commercial Evangelism: Reflections on Early Mid-Atlantic Religious Encounter in Light of the Columbian Quincentennial (Autumn, 1992), pp. 610-612.
- Catalogue of the exhibition of printed books from 1899 to 1972 collected by Peoples' Museum, Kakching, 2010 at Manipur State Art Gallery, Palace Compound, Imphal.

- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Modernity and Ethnicity in India." In *South Asia Journal: Journal of South Asian Studies* 17.s1. (1994): 143-155.
- *Provincializing Europe: Post-Colonial Thought and Historical Difference*. United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- "Subaltern Studies and Political Historiography." In *Nepantla: Views from South* 1.1 (2002): 9-32.
- Chaoba, Mayanglambam. ed. *Fonglaba Manipuri Lairiksinggi Maming: 1900-1983*. Imphal: Apunba Naharol Sakti, 1989.
- Chatterjee, Partha. *Our Modernity*. No. 1. Rotterdam: Sephis, 1997.
- Chatterji, Suniti Kumar. "'Adivasi' Literatures of India: The Uncultivated 'Adivasi' Languages." In *Indian Literature* 14, no. 3 (1971): 5-42.
- 2nd ed. *Kirata Jana Krti (The Indo-Mongoloids: Their Contribution to the History and Culture of India)*. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1974.
- Chelliah, Shobhana L. "Asserting nationhood through personal name choice: The case of the Meithei of northeast India." In *Anthropological Linguistics*. Vol. 47, No. 2 (Summer, 2005): 169-216.
- Cheyfitz, Eric. *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from the Tempest to Tarzan*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
- Crawford, C.G. I.C.S. *Administration Report of Manipur State for the year 1926-27*. Imphal, 18, 1927.
- Deepak, Naorem. "Myth Making and Imagining a Brahminical Manipur Since 18th century," in *Raiot*, April 2, 2018. <https://raiote.in/myth-making-and-imagining-a-brahmanical-manipur-since-18th-century-ce/>

--- “Japanese invasion, war preparation, relief, rehabilitation, compensation and ‘state-making’ in an imperial frontier (1939–1955).” In *Asian Ethnicity* 21, no. 1 (2020): 96-121.

Dena, Lal. “Hill People and Merger of Manipur,” In *E-pao*, 15th July, 2018.

http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.History_of_Manipur.Merger_ofManipur_with_the_dominion_of_India.Hill_People_and_Merger_of_Manipur_By_Lal_DenaDevi, Haobam Bidyarani. “Nature Worship.” In *International Journal of All Research Writings* 1, no. 10 (2019): 28-36.

Dinamani, E. *Girish Karnad Ki Hayawadan (Koksagol)*. Imphal: Self, 1992.

--- Dinamani, Elangbam, “Manipuri Handokpa Sahitya: Asha Amadi Samasya,” in *Manipuri Handok Sahitya*. Imphal: The Cultural Forum Manipur, 2007, 55-56.

DIPR. “Birth Anniversary of Mahakavi Hjam Anganghal Singh.” In *Sangai Express*, July 28, 2018. <http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=18..290718.jul18>.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. Vintage, 1980.

--- *The History of Sexuality: Vol 1: The Will to Knowledge*. Penguin UK, 1998.

--- *Madness and civilization*. Routledge, 2003.

--- *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage, 2012

Guha, Ranajit. *Dominance Without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*. Harvard University Press, 1997.

George, KM. ed. *Modern Indian Literature: An Anthology Plays and Prose Volume 3*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994, 425-431.

Gopal, Shamurailatpam, ed. *Dr. Kamal gi Khomjinba Lairik*. Imphal: Poknapham Publications, 1999.

Gourakishor, Khumanthem. 6th ed. *Kalidas ki Meghadut*. Imphal: Khumanthem Ongbi Ibetombi, 2004.

Grierson, G. A., *Linguistic Survey of India, vol. III: Tibeto-Burman Family, part III: Specimens of the Kuki-Chin and Burma Groups*. Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1904. (Source: Digital South Asia Library supported by The University of Chicago)

Gupta, R. S., Anvita Abbi, and Kailash S. Aggarwal, eds. *Language and the State: Perspectives on the Eighth Schedule*. Creative Books, 1995.

Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. MIT Press, 1991.

Hudson, T.C. *The Meitheis*. Reprint, London: David Nutt, 1975.

Irene, Salam. *The Muslims of Manipur*. Gyan Publishing House, 2010.

Jayanti, Thokchom. "Religious interaction in Manipur in the 18th and 19th centuries: A study of the Bijoy Panchali." In *Presidency Historical Review*. Vol 1, Issue 1, March 2015, 82-93.

Jhalajit Singh, R.K. 2nd ed. *A Short History of Manipur*. 1992.

Joychandra, Longjam, ed. *The Lost Kingdom: Royal Chronicle of Manipur*. Imphal: Prajatantra Publishing House, 1995.

Joychandra, Longjam. "Engrazidagi handokpa Manipuri Anubad Sahitya." In *Manipuri Handok Sahitya*. Imphal: The Cultural Forum Manipur, 2007, 78-86.

Joykumar, Naorem. *Religious Revitalisation Movements in Manipur*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2012.

--- "Merger of Manipur to India and the Manipur State Congress," In *e-pao*, 17th August, 2018.

http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.History_of_Manipur.Mer

[ger of Manipur with the dominion of India.Merger of Manipur into India and Manipur State Congress Part 1 By N Joykumar](#)

Kalachand Shastri, Chingangbam. *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 1. Imphal: Manipuri

Mahabharat Sabha, 1956.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 9. Imphal: Manipuri Mahabharat Sabha, 1962.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 11. Imphal: Manipuri Mahabharat Sabha, 1963.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 12. Imphal: Manipuri Mahabharat Sabha.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 13. Imphal: Manipuri Mahabharat Sabha, 1965.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 14. Imphal: Manipuri Mahabharat Sabha, 1967.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 15. Imphal: Manipuri Mahabharat Sabha, 1967.

--- *Mahabharat* Vol 16. Imphal: Manipuri Mahabharat Sabha, 1968.

--- *Kalidas ki Raghuvangsa Mahakavya*. Imphal: Manipur Sahitya Parishad Imphal, 1972.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 19. Imphal: Printed by the author in Churachand Printing Press, 1973.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 21. Imphal: Printed by the author in Churachand Printing Press, 1976.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 22. Imphal: Printed by the author in Churachand Printing Press, 1977.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 23. Imphal: Printed by the author in Churachand Printing Press, 1979.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 25. Imphal: Printed by the author in Churachand Printing Press, 1982.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 28. Imphal: Printed by the author in Churachand Printing Press, 1989.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 29.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 31. Imphal: Printed by the author in Churachand Printing Press, 1989.

--- *Manipuri Mahabharat* Vol 32. Imphal: Chingangbam Ongbi Ghambini Devi, 1999.

Kamei, Gangmumei. "The Glorious Exploits of the Manipur Levy: 1824-35," In *e-Pao*, January 14, 2012.

[The Glorious Exploits of the Manipur Levy 1824 35 \(e-pao.net\)](http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.History_of_Manipur.Merger_of_Manipur_with_the_dominion_of_India.Ethnic_responses_to_merger_A_historical_perspective_By_Gangumei_Kamei)

--- 3rd Rev. ed., *History of Manipur: Pre-colonial period*. Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2015.

--- *A History of Modern Manipur: 1826-2000 (A Study of Feudalism, Colonialism and Democracy)*. Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2016.

--- "Ethnic Responses to Merger: A Historical perspective," In *e-pao*, 26th May, 2018.

http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.History_of_Manipur.Merger_of_Manipur_with_the_dominion_of_India.Ethnic_responses_to_merger_A_historical_perspective_By_Gangumei_Kamei

Kangjam I.S. "Sanskrit, Bangla amasung Bharatki atei lonsinggi sahityagi Manipuri anubadna Manipuri Sahityada piba Ithin." In *Manipuri Handok Sahitya*. Imphal: The Cultural Forum Manipur, 2007, 48-52.

Kangujam, Sanatomba. "Revisiting the Merger of Manipur," In *e-pao*, 28th October, 2013.

http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.History_of_Manipur.Merger_of_Manipur_with_the_dominion_of_India.Revisiting_the_Merger_of_Manipur_Part_1_By_Sanatomba_Kangujam

Kant, Immanuel. "What is Enlightenment?" In *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, 1995:1-7.

Kar, Bodhisattva. "Tongue Has No Bone' Fixing the Assamese Language, c. 1800–c. 1930." In *Studies in History* 24, no. 1 (2008): 27-76.

Karlsson, Bengt G. "Indigenous politics: Community formation and indigenous peoples' struggle for self-determination in northeast India." In *Identities Global Studies in Culture and Power* 8, no. 1 (2001): 7-45.

Khelchandra, Ningthoukhongjam. ed. *Ariba Manipuri Sahitya gi Itihas (History of Old Manipuri Literature)*. Imphal: Self Published, 1969.

--- "Panditraj Atombapu Sharma" In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, edited by Arambam Somorendra, 22-27. Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989.

--- 6th ed. *Ariba Manipuri Longei: Old Manipuri to Modern Manipuri Dictionary*. Imphal: Dr. N Debendra Singh, 2012.

Kikon, Dolly. "Fermenting Modernity: Putting Akhuni on the Nation's Table in India", In *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 2015, 38:2, 320-335.

Kishan, Thingnam. "Manipuri Literature in History." In *e-pao*. 2007, May.

http://www.e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Arts_and_Culture.Manipuri_Literature_in_History

Kshetri, Rajendra. *The emergence of Meetei nationalism: A study of two movements among the Meeteis*. Mittal Publications, 2006, 28.

Kuper, Adam. "Civilization, Culture, and Race: Anthropology in the Nineteenth Century." In *The Cambridge History of Modern European Thought: Volume 1, The Nineteenth Century*. edited by Breckman, Warren, and Peter E. Gordon, Cambridge University Press, 2019, 398-421.

Lanchenba Meetei, Sagolsem. "Manipuri Anubad Sahityada Mityeng Ama." Paper presented in the Seminar on Anubad Sahitya, Imphal, Feb 11-12, 2006.

Lefevere, André. ed. *Translation/history/culture: A sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 1992.

--- *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame*. Routledge, 1992.

Lydall, E.F. ICS. *Administration Report of the Manipur State for the year 1943-44*. Imphal, 7, 1945.

Macaulay, Thomas Babington. "Minute on Indian Education." In *Archives of Empire:*

Volume I. From The East India Company to the Suez Canal. Vol. 1. edited by

Harlow, Barbara, and Mia Carter, Duke University Press, 2004, 227-38

Madan Mohan Singh, M. "Meetei Philosophy (Naoriya Phulo)." In *Manipur: Past and*

Present: The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization (Pan Manipuris in Asia and

Autochthones), Vol IV, edited by. Naorem Sanajaoba. New Delhi: Mital Publications,

2005, 259-274.

Madhusudan, Naoriya. *Apokpa: Laininghan Naoriya Phulo gi Punsu Wari (Biography)*.

Apokpa Marup Hounasang, Laishram Khun, Jaribon. 2009.

Malem Mangal, Laishram. "Annexation of Manipur as the 19th State of India: The Status of

the Territory of Manipur in International Law since 1949." In *Beijing L. Rev.* 11

(2020): 328.

Mangoljao, Thokchom. *Western Education in Manipur*. Vol. 1. Imphal: Education

Department, Government of Manipur, 1967.

Manihar, Ch. *A History of Manipuri Literature*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2003.

Mani, Khaidem. "The Manipur Merger Agreement and the Manipur Constitution Act, 1947,"

In *e-pao*, 7th July, 2018.

http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.History_of_Manipur.Mer

[ger of Manipur with the dominion of India.The Manipur merger agreement By Khaidem Mani](#)

- Mani, Rajkumar. *Hemingway gi Hanuba Amasung Samudra*. Imphal: Srimati Sulochana Devi and RK Tombi, 1992.
- Mignolo, Walter D. *The darker side of Western modernity*. Duke University Press, 2011.
- Mukherjee, Meenakshi. *Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Nabadipchandra, Hawaibam, 2nd ed. *Meghanad Tuva Kavya*, Book Land: Imphal, 1958.
- 3rd ed. *Meghanad Tuva Kavya*. Imphal: Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, 1990.
- Nandy, Ashish. *The intimate enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*. Vol. 251. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Nilabir, Sairem. "The Revivalist Movement of Sanamahism." In *Manipur Past and Present: The Ordeals of a Civilization*. Vol 2. edited by Naorem Sanajaoba, New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005, 109-126.
- Nilakanta, E. "Vaishnavism in Manipuri Literature." Paper presented at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, April, 1985.
- "Manipuri Sabhyatagi Nabajagarangi Murti – Panditraj." In *Atombapu Centenary Celebrations 1889-1989*, edited by Arambam Somorendra, 57-58. Imphal: Atombapu Research Centre, 1989.
- Ningamba Singha, M. "Manipuri Language Movement: 1924-1992." PhD diss., Assam University, 2014.
- Nirendra Singha, H. Doc. Thesis. "Naoriya Phulo's Literary Discourse: A Critical Study with Special Reference to his Religious Thoughts". Submitted in Assam University, Silchar, 2008.

- Niranjana, Tejaswini. *Siting translation: History, post-structuralism, and the colonial context*. University of California Press, 1992.
- Nishan Ningam, Ch. trans. *Madhabi*. Imphal: Self Published, 1978.
- Nobinchandra, Longjam. "Bamons: The Meitei-Brahmins." In *Manipur: Past and Present, Vol IV* edited by Naorem Sanajaoba. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005, 451-457.
- Noni, Arambam. "Politics, Society and Literature in Modern Manipur." In *Colonialism and Resistance*, Routledge India, 2015, 107-119.
- 1949: *The Story of India's Takeover of Manipur*. Imphal: Centre for Alternative Discourse Manipur, 2018.
- Pachau, Joy LK. *Being Mizo: Identity and Belonging in Northeast India*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Padikkal, Shivaram. "Inventing modernity: the emergence of the novel in India." In *Interrogating modernity: Culture and colonialism in India*. Ed. Niranjana T et al. Seagull Books, 1993, 221-241.
- Parratt, John. *Wounded Land: Politics and Identity in Modern Manipur*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005.
- "Atombapu and religious roots of Integrationism." In *e-pao*, 24th March, 2006.
http://epao.net/epPageExtractor.asp?src=features.Atom_Bapu_and_religious_roots_of_Integrationism.html
- Parratt, John and Parratt, Saroj Nalini. *Collected Papers on the History and Culture of Manipur*. Imphal: Patriotic Writers' Forum Manipur, 2010.
- Phulo, Naoriya. *Laininghan Naoriya Phullo gi Wareng Apunba*. Imphal: M S Tampha Publication, 2010.
- Prafulo, Thokchom, comp. *Kabi Khwairakpam Chaoba Amasung Mahakki Sahitya*. Imphal: Khwairakpam Sorojini, 1996.

Popovič, Anton. "Aspects of metatext." In *Canadian review of comparative literature/Revue Canadienne de littérature comparée* (1976): 225-235.

Raghumani Sharma, L. 4th ed. *Damodar Mukhopadhyay gi Nabab-Nandini*. Imphal: Srimati Sanahanbi, 1992.

--- trans. *Leisabi Sari (Arakshaniya)*. Imphal: Srimati Sanahanbi, 1992.

--- trans. *Saratchandra gi Baikhunther Will*. Imphal: L. Jitendrakumar Sharma, 1990.

--- trans. *Saratchandra gi Pather Dabi Anisuba Saruk*. Srimati L. Sanahanbi, 1990.

--- trans. *Saratchandra gi Chobi*, Imphal: Srimati Sanahanbi, 1992.

Report of the Meitei Mayek Expert Committee, 1979.

Rahman, Abdur. "The Meitei-Pangal." In *Manipur: Past and Present, Vol IV* edited by Naorem Sanajaoba. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005, 459-463.

Rai, Rohini. "From colonial 'mongoloid' to neoliberal 'northeastern': theorising 'race', racialization and racism in contemporary India." In *Asian Ethnicity* (2021): 1-21.

Rajen, Toijamba. *Manipuri Drama da Realism*. Imphal: Writers' Forum, 2007, 89-102.

Rajkumar, BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra, Vol. 1*. Imphal: Arambam Ongbi Ibemhal, 2013.

Rajkumar, BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra, Vol. 2*. Imphal: Arambam Ongbi Ibemhal, 2013.

Rajkumar, BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra, Vol. 3*. Imphal: Arambam Ongbi Ibemhal, 2013.

Rajkumar, BS. ed. *Arambam Somorendra gi Apunba Khorjei (Complete Works of Arambam Somorendra, Vol. 4*. Imphal: Arambam Ongbi Ibemhal, 2013.

Robinson, Douglas. *Translation and Empire*. New York: Routledge. 2014.

Roy, Joytirmoy. *History of Manipur*. Imphal: K L Mukhopadhyay, 1958.

- Roy, Joytirmoy. "Historical and Cultural Relation between Manipur and Bengal." 17, Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, April 23-May, 1985.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Random House, 1979.
- Sanajaoba, Khaidem. trans. *Khongchomnupi Nongkarol (Ascent of the Pleiades)*, Publication Series 1. Imphal: Department of Manipuri Language and Literature, 1987.
- trans. *Chainarol (Stories of Matial Duels)*. Imphal: Department of Manipuri Language and Literature, 1987.
- Sarat, Lairenlakpam. *Dr. Kamal: Pungsi Amasung Manglaan*. Imphal: Manipur Association for Science and Society (MASS), 2014.
- Saroj Nalini Parratt, Arambam. *The Court Chronicles of the Kings of Manipur: The Cheitharon Kumpapa*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Scott, David, *Conscripts of modernity: The tragedy of colonial enlightenment*. Duke University Press, 2004.
- Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Nus Press, 2010.
- Seed, Patricia. "Early Modernity: The History of a Word." In *The New Centennial Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (spring 2002), pp. 1-16.
- Sharma, J. (2002). "The making of 'Modern' Assam, 1826-1935" (Doctoral thesis).
<https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.19054>.
- Shepherd, Kancha Ilaiah. *Why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra critique of Hindutva philosophy, culture and political economy*. SAGE Publications India, 2018.
- Shitaljit, RK. *English to Manipuri Dictionary*. 22nd ed. Imphal: RK Dusari Gopal Singh, 2016.
- Shyamsunder, Ayekpam. 15th ed. *Bankim Chandra gi Kapal Kundala*. Imphal: Srimati Chandrabati Devi, 2011.

Simon, Sherry. *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the politics of transmission*.

London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Singha, Sulekha. "GC Tongbra Amadi A Somorendragi Domestic Playshing

Changdamnaba." PhD Diss. Assam University, 2016.

Singh, E. Nilakanta. "Manipuri: At Best, a Period of Waiting." In *Indian Literature* 14, no. 4 (1971): 92-96.

--- "Saratchandra and Manipuri Literature." In *Indian Literature* 19, no. 4 (1976): 95-99.

--- "Manipuri Literature (1900—1930)." In *Indian Literature* 20, no. 3 (1977): 102-105.

--- "Experiments in Manipuri Poetry." In *Indian Literature* 21, no. 2 (1978): 142-146.

--- "Manipuri: Cause for Concern." In *Indian Literature* 24, no. 6 (1981): 94-99.

--- "Manipuri: Monotony and Stagnation." In *Indian Literature* 25, no. 6 (1982): 197-203.

--- "The Manipuri Scene: Crisis of Identity amidst Changing Values." In *Indian Literature* 27, no. 6 (104) (1984): 98-104.

--- "Historical and Cultural relation between Manipur and Bengal," paper presented in *Historical and Cultural relation between Manipur, Assam and Bengal*, Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, April 23 – May, 1985.

--- "The Manipuri Scene: 1984 & 85: Are the Springs drying up?" In *Indian Literature* 29, no. 6 (116) (1986): 93-97.

--- "The Manipuri Scene: A Steady Flow." In *Indian Literature* 30, no. 6 (122) (1987): 129-134.

--- "Manipuri Scene: Twinkling Little Lights." In *Indian Literature* 31, no. 6 (128) (1988): 67-73.

--- "Manipuri Scene: Slow March Towards Shrinkage." In *Indian Literature* 32, no. 6 (134) (1989): 113-118.

--- "Manipuri Scene: Promise of Creativity." In *Indian Literature* 35, no. 2 (148) (1992): 154-160.

--- "Vaishnavism in Manipuri Literature" (n.d.)

Singha, M. Ningamba, M. Ninghaiba Singha, and Th Kanchanbala Singha. "Language Policy of India: Dominance and Suppression to Manipuri Language." In *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 1, no. 5 (2013): 141.

Sitlhou, Hoineilhing. "Food Culture and Identity in Northeast India: Prospects for Social Science Research." In *Explorations*, ISS e-journal, Vol. 4 (2), October 2020, pp. 49-66.

Somorjit, Wangam. *Meeyamgi Kholao*. 1 (4): 77-151. 2014.

Somorjit, Wangam. *Manipur: The Forgotten Nation of Southeast Asia*. Imphal: Waba Publications, 2016.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the subaltern speak?" In *Die Philosophin* 14, no. 27 (2003): 42-58.

Stewart, G.P. ICS. *Administration Report of the Manipur State, 1932-1933*. 26. Imphal, 1933.

Taylor, Charles. "The politics of recognition." *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. 25-73. 1997.

--- "Two Theories of Modernity." In *Public Culture* 11, 1999: 153-174.

--- *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Duke University Press, 2004.

Tensuba, Kirtichan. trans. *Dhammapad (Wakok Loinaba Wahandok)*. Imphal: Old Manipur Buddhist Association, 1983.

Thanmung, M. "Christianity and Social Change among the Naga Tribes of Manipur." In *Language in India* 15, no. 2 (2015).

Thong, Tezenlo. *Colonization, Proselytization, and Identity: The Nagas and Westernization in Northeast India*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Toury, Gideon. *Descriptive Translation Studies and beyond*, Vol. 4. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1995.

Trivedi, H., and McGuire, S. B. eds. *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Tylor, Edward Burnett. *Primitive culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom*. Vol. 2. J. Murray, 1871.

Tymoczko, Maria. *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*. Routledge, 2014.

--- and Edwin, Gentzler. *Translation and power*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002.

Venuti, Lawrence. ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, 57-60, 87-93.

<http://thepeopleschronicle.in/daily/english/1560>

[http://epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=news_section.Oja Naorem Sanajaoba.Sanajaoba Articles.Problem of 1949 Annexation of Manipur Part 3 By Naorem Sanajaoba](http://epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=news_section.Oja_Naorem_Sanajaoba.Sanajaoba_Articles.Problem_of_1949_Annexation_of_Manipur_Part_3_By_Naorem_Sanajaoba)

<https://dlpimanipur.gov.in/textbooks.html>

[http://epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Arts and Culture.Translation in Manipur](http://epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Arts_and_Culture.Translation_in_Manipur)

<http://www.imasi.org/biography.php>

[http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Folks.Pena The Royal Court Music Of Manipur](http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Folks.Pena_The_Royal_Court_Music_Of_Manipur)

<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/92832>

http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=reviews.books.Reading_Kh_Gourakishore

[Megh dut in Manipuri Part 1 By Irengbam Mohendra](#)

http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Manipur_and_Religion.Buddhis
[m In Manipur](#)

Publications

1. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2022. "Translation as a Modernising Agent: Modern Education and Religious Texts in Colonial Manipur (1891-1947)." in *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*. DOI: 10.1080/0907676X.2022.2071163. Routledge, Taylor & Francis, UK.

(Journal Metric: Scopus indexed, ISSN:0907-676XE-ISSN:1747-6623, CiteScore 2021-2.7, SJR 2021-0.959, SNIP 2021-1.522, CiteScore Rank #6/934 in the category of Literature and Literary Theory, #58/1127 in the category of Cultural Studies)

2. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2021. Trans. "Leima's Winter" in *Adda*, Commonwealth Writers of Commonwealth Foundation, United Kingdom.

<https://www.addastories.org/leimas-winter/>

3. Malemnganbi, Akoijam. 2020. "Narrating Margin and Violent Erasure: Translating Manipur and the dominant Gaze" in *Violence and Terror: Narratives from North East India* edited by Prof. Mala Renganathan. ISBN 978-93-85839-35-1. DVS Publishers, Guwahati, India.

SEASIA Biennial Conference 2019

CERTIFICATE of Presentation

This is to acknowledge

Akoijam Malemnganbi

has presented in Panel 1.2 Education Policies and Practices in Historical Perspective

Paper title: Hinduism and Indigeneity in Manipur: Historical Rupture and Recuperation

SEASIA Biennial Conference 2019

Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan



Chair, Conference Committee, SEASIA

Organized by



中央研究院
社会学研究所
Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica

TAEF
Taiwan Asia Exchange Foundation
臺灣亞洲交流基金會



CSEAS
Center for Southeast Asian Studies
Kyoto University

Dec. 5 - 7, 2019



Indian Council of Social Science Research

(Ministry of Human Resource Development)

Post Box-10528, ArunaAsaf Ali Marg,

JNU Institutional Area, New Delhi, Delhi 110067

EPABX: 26741849 Fax:91-11-26741836

Website: www.icssr.org

M.P. Madhukar
Deputy Director
IC Division (In-charge)

File. No. CON/365/2019-ICS

Dated: 14.11.2019

Dear Ms. Malemnganbi,

This is regarding your request seeking financial assistance for participation in the **“SEASIA Biennial Conference 2019”** to be held from 5-7 December 2019 at Taipei, Taiwan.

Your request has been considered by the Expert Committee on Travel Grant and I am pleased to inform you that the Committee has recommended financial support for your participation in the conference. The ICSSR would cover **100%** of the total cost of the return air fare (economy class) for the sector **Hyderabad-Taipei, Taiwan-Hyderabad** and also visa fee, travel insurance, maintenance for 5 days, airport transfer, registration fee up to US \$ 200. You are advised to travel by Air India as per the Government of India directives and also the air tickets should be purchased through the authorized agency of Government namely M/s Ashoka Tour and Travels, M/s Balmer and Lawrie or IRCTC.

You are requested to kindly submit following documents after completion of your visit:

1. A detailed report on your participation in the conference along with certificate of participation/attendance issued by the organizers.
2. Two copies of air ticket & fare receipt, Passport, stamped visa on passport, original boarding pass, receipt of visa fees, travel insurance, registration fee, boarding & lodging, purchase of foreign exchange along with statement of head-wise expenditure incurred on the visit. While claiming the reimbursement, you are requested to provide information whether you have received any financial support from any other organization on this visit.
3. The ICSSR expects that its supported papers presented in international conference be published in high valued journals/edited books/impactful reports with due acknowledgement to ICSSR. You are requested to come out with a plan of publication, if any with regard to your presentation to be made. The ICSSR also reserves the right to publish such papers presented abroad in its own journals such as Indian Social Science Review, ICSSR Journal of Abstracts and Reviews, etc.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(M.P. Madhukar)

Ms. Akoijam Malemnganbi
Ph. D. Scholar
Translation Studies, CALTS
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad-500046, Telengana



Indian Council of
Social Science Research



cii



CENTRE FOR COMPARATIVE LITERATURE, SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
National Conference on
RELIGION IN CULTURAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that

.....AKOIJAM MALEMNGANBI.....

participated/presented a paper/~~responded to a session~~ titled

.....Naoriya Phullo's Eigi Mayeng : A Call to 'Re-search'
the Meitei Existence .

.....in the annual Researchers at Work Conference (Raw.Con) 2019 on

"Religion in Cultural and Comparative Perspectives"

held from 26th to 28th February, 2019.

at the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India.

Coordinators

Faculty Advisor

Head

Centre for Comparative Literature

26/2/19.



Translation Across Borders: Genres and Geographies

9-11 October 2018

II Annual International Conference of Caesurae Collective Society

Jointly organized by
Centre for Advanced Research and Training – Translation & Multilingualism
(CART-T&M)

Osmania University, Hyderabad

&
Caesurae Collective Society

in collaboration with

Department of English, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad

Certificate

This is to certify that Akayian Nulmgarbi
of Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, UOH, Hup
has ~~participated~~ / presented a paper titled Translated Texts and Vernacular Plurality:
Idiosyncratic Language and Cultural Assimilation
at the International Conference


Prof. T. Vijay Kumar
Coordinator, CART – T&M


Dr. Nikhila H
Joint Secretary, Caesurae Collective Society


Prof. Syed Mohammed Haseebuddin Quadri
Head, Department of English, MANUU



Certificate of Participation Awarded to

Akoijam Malemnganbi

for having presented a paper titled

"Narrating Margin and Violent Erasure: Translating Manipur and the Dominant Gaze",
at the International Seminar on "Narratives of Violence and Terror in South Asia" (NOVATISA)
organized by the Department of English, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong
in collaboration with NEC, Shillong and ICSSR-NERC, Shillong
held from the 16th to the 18th of November 2017 in the Old Guest House Auditorium, NEHU, Shillong


Convenor
Prof. Mala Renganathan
Department of English


Head
Prof. Sukalpa Bhattacharjee
Department of English

Translation and Modernity: 20th Century Manipur

by Akoijam Malemnganbi

Submission date: 29-Jun-2022 12:38PM (UTC+0530)

Submission ID: 1864504607

File name: Malemnganbi_Akoijam.pdf (1.29M)

Word count: 66681

Character count: 355641

Translation and Modernity: 20th Century Manipur

ORIGINALITY REPORT

9%

SIMILARITY INDEX

4%

INTERNET SOURCES

7%

PUBLICATIONS

2%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

Akoijam Malemnganbi. "Translation as a modernising agent: modern education and religious texts in colonial Manipur (1891–1945)", Perspectives, 2022

Publication

5%

2

baadalsg.inflibnet.ac.in

Internet Source

<1%

3

Submitted to University of Dehli

Student Paper

<1%

4

www.eledu.net

Internet Source

<1%

5

archive.org

Internet Source

<1%

6

blackandwhitenewsblog.wordpress.com

Internet Source

<1%

7

epdf.pub

Internet Source

<1%

8

ebin.pub

Internet Source

<1%

9	docslib.org Internet Source	<1 %
10	www.manipurresearchforum.org Internet Source	<1 %
11	Lynette Shultz. "Chapter 4 Engaged Scholarship in a Time of the Corporatization of the University and Distrust of the Public Sphere", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2013 Publication	<1 %
12	dokumen.pub Internet Source	<1 %
13	Enrique Dussel. "Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2020 Publication	<1 %
14	Submitted to University of Queensland Student Paper	<1 %
15	e-pao.net Internet Source	<1 %
16	kanglaonline.com Internet Source	<1 %
17	www.scribd.com Internet Source	<1 %
18	digital.lib.usf.edu Internet Source	<1 %

<1 %

-
- 19 Akoijam Malemnganbi. "Translation as a modernising agent: modern education and religious texts in colonial Manipur (1891–1947)", Perspectives, 2022
Publication

<1 %

-
- 20 digitalcommons.risd.edu
Internet Source

<1 %

-
- 21 theanarchistlibrary.org
Internet Source

<1 %

-
- 22 www.ijisme.org
Internet Source

<1 %

-
- 23 en.wikipedia.org
Internet Source

<1 %

-
- 24 digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu
Internet Source

<1 %

-
- 25 estudantedavedanta.net
Internet Source

<1 %

-
- 26 www.dalitnetwork.org
Internet Source

<1 %

-
- 27 shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in
Internet Source

<1 %

-
- 28 "Demystifying Myanmar's Transition and Political Crisis", Springer Science and Business

29	www.azaniansea.com Internet Source	<1 %
30	bayanbox.ir Internet Source	<1 %
31	inspirit.net.in Internet Source	<1 %
32	irgu.unigoa.ac.in Internet Source	<1 %
33	vdoc.pub Internet Source	<1 %
34	Submitted to The University of Manchester Student Paper	<1 %
35	GEORGE KAM WAH MAK. "'Laissez-faire' or Active Intervention? The Nature of the British and Foreign Bible Society's Patronage of the Translation of the Chinese Union Versions", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland, 2010 Publication	<1 %
36	docs.wixstatic.com Internet Source	<1 %
37	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<1 %

38 Natasa Thoudam. " Fiction or History in the Making of the Past: A Dialogue between the Public and the Private in Maharaja Kumari Binodini Devi's (The Princess and the Political Agent) ", Indian Journal of Gender Studies, 2016
Publication <1 %

39 www.firstpost.com
Internet Source <1 %

40 mafiadoc.com
Internet Source <1 %

41 Submitted to University of Malaya
Student Paper <1 %

42 etheses.bham.ac.uk
Internet Source <1 %

43 research-repository.griffith.edu.au
Internet Source <1 %

44 ejournal.iainbengkulu.ac.id
Internet Source <1 %

45 ia800306.us.archive.org
Internet Source <1 %

46 indialogue.in
Internet Source <1 %

47 raiot.in
Internet Source <1 %

48	"The Bright Dark Ages", Brill, 2016 Publication	<1 %
49	April Shemak. " Alter/natives: myth, translation and the native informant in Pauline Melville's ", Textual Practice, 2005 Publication	<1 %
50	navayana.org Internet Source	<1 %
51	repository.canterbury.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
52	Submitted to Horizon Education Network Student Paper	<1 %
53	Sanjib Baruah. "In the Name of the Nation", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2020 Publication	<1 %
54	Submitted to University College London Student Paper	<1 %
55	Submitted to University of Exeter Student Paper	<1 %
56	epdf.tips Internet Source	<1 %
57	go.gale.com Internet Source	<1 %
58	beta.benjamins.com Internet Source	<1 %

59

Submitted to 7034

Student Paper

<1 %

60

etheses.whiterose.ac.uk

Internet Source

<1 %

61

link.umsl.edu

Internet Source

<1 %

62

orsl.conncoll.edu

Internet Source

<1 %

63

researchspace.auckland.ac.nz

Internet Source

<1 %

Exclude quotes On

Exclude matches

< 14 words

Exclude bibliography On