SITUATING IDENTITY: A STUDY OF SELECT MIZO PRINT CULTURE

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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MZU RESGISTRATION NO. - 130 of 2011

Ph.D. REGISTRATION NO. - MZU/Ph.D./714 of 21.05.2015

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES

SEPTEMBER, 2020

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Submitted
In partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English, Mizoram University, Aizawl.

SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that "Situating Identity: A Study of Select Mizo Print Culture" written by L.V Lalrintluangi has been written under my supervision.

She has fulfilled all the required norms laid down within the Ph.D. regulations of Mizoram University. The thesis is the result of her own investigation. Neither the thesis as a whole nor any part of it was ever submitted by any other University for any research degree.

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DECLARATION

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September, 2020

I, L.V. Lalrintluangi, hereby declare that the subject matter of the thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To God, who has made things all possible.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and indebtedness to my supervisor, Prof. Margaret L. Pachuau, for her precious intellect, patience, encouragement, suggestions and constant interest at all stages of my research work. Her zeal for perfection, unflinching courage and conviction has always inspired me to do more and I feel incredibly lucky to be under her supervision. In spite of her busy schedule, she always spared her valuable time for this thesis. Without her guidance and inspiration, this work would not have been completed.

I am grateful to all my colleagues for being understanding of the time I have taken to work on the thesis and for always encouraging me.

I express my gratitude to my family who are all unfailingly supportive of everything I do. I am thankful for my brother, Mama for always being a friend, especially through this journey. I am thankful to my brother, Tatoa for being the quintessential older brother any sibling could ask for. I am forever indebted to my parents, Lalawmpuii and Vanneihtluanga for giving me the opportunities and experiences that have moulded me into who I am. They have selflessly given their time and encouragement, and they have prayed for me continuously. I do not take for granted the love and devotion they bestow every day. I dedicate this milestone to them.

Date: 02/09/20 (L.V.Lalrintluangi)

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Chapter 1

From Orality to Print Culture in the Mizo Paradigm

This chapter introduces the various elements which are instrumental in the study of identity as seen through the lens of Mizo magazines and periodicals. The thesis starts tracing the flux of Mizo identity from the first printing press that the Mizos received from the Christian missionaries in 1911, during colonial rule. From the predominantly religious magazines to the flurry need for secular representation, and then on to popular, often short-lived magazines, the thesis studies how the people's selfhood adjusted to the changing of times as seen through the burgeoning study of print culture. It demonstrates the need to revisit the existing plethora of print in Mizo to include alternate narratives that reveal hitherto neglected, often ephemeral, magazines and periodicals. It is the recovery of these lesser known printed documents, largely consumed and contributed by the people themselves, which is essential for the mapping of cultural production. With these differing dynamics that the inception of the printing press in Mizoram provides, the thesis questions whether print changes a culture or if a culture is changed by the possibility of propagation that print culture allows. The purpose of the study is to examine the significance of print in culture, with a specific focus on subaltern culture, particularly that of the Mizo.

The study covers the period between the emergence of religious print in Mizo from the beginning in 1911 with the publication of *Kristian Tlangau*[i] to the publication of later secular magazines which continued to 2011. It analyses the significance of both religious and secular paradigms in print, and the subsequent impact that each genre has had in the terms of situating identity and how it has developed immensely through the years. To understand Christianity in Mizoram, it is intrinsic to have a working knowledge of the Mizo people before the religion advanced.

Printing is considered a mid fifteenth-century European invention and practiced by the Chinese as early as 175 AD. Print culture can be best understood as the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society as shaped by the emergence of the printing press. It is a reflection of a culture which could be documented, imbibed and distributed. For centuries, print has been a consequential

part of culture, be it sociological, political or religious. Not only that, but through the years, it has taken one of the biggest parts in society and it is through print that a culture is changed or even identified (Moran, 281-290). It would be true to go far as to say that print formed cultures of nations as it were today. For it was Francis Bacon who said:

> We should note the force, effect, and consequence of inventions which are nowhere more conspicuous than in those three which were unknown to the ancients namely, printing, gun-powder, and the compass, for these have changed the appearance and the state of the whole world: first in literature, then in warfare, and lastly in navigation; and innumerable changes have been thence derived, so that no empire, sect, or star, appears to have exercised a greater power and influence on human affairs than these mechanical discoveries (Bacon, 129).

Bacon's declaration in this effect, would prove the colossal weight that print has allocated in different cultures. With its inception as seen through differing nations, print culture has given massive contribution to shaping the identities of different cultures. Considered a mid-fifteenth century European invention or perhaps rather, are-invention from the Chinese as far back as 175 AD, it would not be so far as to say that print culture has molded modern society. In China, the main religion that the people followed was Chinese Buddhism, one of the oldest dogmas in the world. Here, print took a life of its own as it thrived under the demand for the promotion and spread of Buddhism. An ancient way of life, the journey to understand the law of the cosmos, inherent in the very nature of beings, Buddhism is a dharma that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and spiritual practices. Through woodblock printing, Buddhism became the very first creed which took advantage of the vast distribution of printed items to propagate a definite set of belief. Woodblock print machine was no easy task. It was a towering device that was expensive to produce and difficult to manage. However, the continuation of this technology was prompted by the demand for printing and distributing doctrine to the

Buddhists who, very early on found the significance and uncomplicated way of dedication to their faith. Though the first recorded knowledge of the printing press was used as a weapon for religious propaganda, it was definitely not the last (Eisenstein, 67). For over centuries, it was the need to spread religious propaganda that shifted print culture to such an elevated position it had today.

In her seminal book, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979), Professor Eisenstein has markedly spoken of how printing was benefitted by religious prognosticators the most. When oral forms were transformed to visual, it brought along with it a culture that Gutenberg did not plan on bringing when he modernised the Chinese printing press. Eisenstein's comprehensively researched 1979 book is a study of the first century of printing, particularly the period from 1460 to 1480, when printing presses went from rare to common, and as a consequence, changed the way knowledge was preserved and conveyed. Eisenstein's thesis is that the capacity of printing to preserve knowledge and to allow the accumulation of information fundamentally changed the mentality of early modern readers, with repercussions that transformed western society (441). There had been many earlier heretical movements within the Catholic church before Martin Luther's posting of his 95 theses, but the dissemination and greater permanence of print culture allowed his challenge to have a much greater impact and advanced the attractive notion that the printing press had a comparable impact upon the Reformation. Not only did Luther exploit a medium denied to his precursors for purposes of propaganda, the invention also became, in a manner of speaking, an integral part of his own theological program. The doctrine 'the priesthood of all believers' could not have been realised in practice, without a plentiful supply of the printed Bibles (Lovett, 184). At a time when science and belief were the only options for print, religion and politics had more audience target than science, which only very selected few could understand. Eisenstein thus wrote:

> Exploitation of the mass medium (which is printing) was more common among prognosticators and quacks than among Latin writing professional scientists, who often withheld their work from the press.

> Given the limited circulation of scientific and non-propaganda works and the small number of readers who were able to understand them, it appears plausible to play down the importance of printing. Given the wider circulation of antiquated materials, many authorities are inclined to go even further and assign to early printers a negative, retro-aggressive role. There is no evidence that, except in religion, printing hastened the spread of new ideas (Eisenstein, 453).

Moreover, the competitive nature of the printing industry, which was driven by a desire for sales, provided a new, more public outlet for controversies, and ensured that what began as a scholarly dispute between theologians gained an international audience. Reformation impulses and the printing industry fed off and accelerated one another in an age where religious materials were popular sellers. "The development of the printing press thus emerges as the one truly revolutionary event" in this great transition (Bouwsma, 1356). When ideas were evolved from oral to visual, it garnered such attention to the people that could not be denied or ignored. Print is associated with cognition, universalism, monolingualism and transience. So, when the question on the fundamental opposition between print and orality arose, orality acts as a negative space or binary term against which all of the arguments about print make sense.

For Benedict Anderson, while oral language creates emotional attachment, print creates the necessary cognitive transformation. Anderson clearly says both print and oral language are needed for 'imagined communities', but the important point is to note the consistent pattern that emerges in these contrasting depictions of orality and print's function, to see how these contrasts for a unified whole (Anderson, 22-36). The imagined communities, as described by Anderson, is one in which members will not know most of their fellow members, finite with limited boundaries, sovereign power, and a community of fraternal, horizontal comradeship. It is through the emergence of print capitalism (the technological, mass production of newspapers and magazines, and the spread of vernacular print languages) that individuals could think of themselves and relate to others in different ways. This

possibility to envision parallel and plural realities connected individuals to other individuals to form a concept of an 'imagined community.'

It is with these shifts from oral to print progress that the Mizos too found a print culture which would frame a distinct Mizo identity. This study primarily involves delving into the aspects of identity in the post-colonial dimension of the Mizos, and it traces the religious and national imprints it left to form a hybrid and secular print culture which the people could identify with as a whole. Mizoram is predominantly a Christian society, with 87.16 percent of the population forming the majority religion in 8 out of 8 districts of Mizoram states as denoted in *Ramthar*[ii] magazine (Bu 312, 17) which is one of the many religious magazines published under the Synod Press. The magazine was first published in October 1984, 73 years after *Kristian Tlangau* and it is, to a large extent, published on behalf of the missionaries on mission fields. The editorial in the March issue of 1994 denoted how "Mizoram has the promise of being the new Wales," in regards to the good work that the many Mizo missionaries had done in spreading the Gospel. The article continued to remind the people of their "good work in praying for the missionaries," and how "proud we are as a people to be the followers of the living God,"[iii] (*Ramthar,* Bu 121, 1). With reflections to these articles seen in such magazines, the importance of the religious identity found in early Mizo magazines will be studied at length. It will trace the emergence of the religion and consequently the role that the printing press has played through the years from European culture to Mizo culture along with how the language that was to be used for print later on was formulated.

The Zo community constitute a major tribe found in various parts of South and South East Asia. They are found in northwestern Burma, northeastern India, and Bangladesh. Anthropologists classify them as Tibeto-Burman speaking member of the Mongoloid race. Though they are scattered through three countries, they constitute a single tribe with a rich and distinctive historical and cultural heritage. The tribe consists in a number of different clans, which in the process of migration became divided and developed dialectical differences. When some sections of the Zo tribe moved across the rugged hills of Burma and came into contact with the peoples

of Bengal and Assam they were called Kuki. They were known by this name until the early 1870s, when another name, Lushai was added by the Britishers. (Siama, 145 – 146). The first officer, whose writings were an attempt to understand the Zo people was T.H Lewin. He was a military officer and was involved with the Lushai expedition of 1871 – 1872 and was later appointed Superintendent. In these roles, he had the opportunity to know the people and it is significant that he wrote, "the generic name of the whole nation is Dzo[iv]" (Ralte, 2013, 148). It was the British administrators and military officers who first made the Zo people known to the outside world, and it was also they who were most responsible for the legalisation of their name, 'Mizo', which loosely translates to 'Mi' which stands for people and 'Zo' being the generic name, translates to 'Zo people.' The Mizos, known as the Lushais by the Britishers and the Welsh missionaries are a tribe of "Mongoloid hill-men inhabiting parts of the wild forest – covered mountainous region forming the watershed between Indian and Upper Burma." (Lorrain, 5). Since many sub-tribes even within the Mizo tribe could be included, this study will be confined to this particular geographical domain.

Prior to the coming of the missionaries, the Mizos had neither printed records of their history nor any documentation to supplement their culture. Their past is abundantly ambiguous:

> …it depends largely on the historicisation of myths creates inconsistencies in the formal templates of those included as chhinlung chhuak,[v] thus introducing a lack of clarity regarding which 'tribes' actually form the Mizos…despite confusions over who constitute the Mizos, the Mizos rely on 'cultural practice' as the chief determinant of identity and as the boundary marker of identity (Pachuau, 11).

The main cultural practice of the Mizos is attending church and as denoted earlier, more than eighty percent of the population identified themselves as Christians, and this makes Mizoram one of the few states in India that can claim to be predominantly Christian. The church becomes an important symbol for the

people, and it continues to play a major role in the Mizo society. Religion has a long history of developing along with the evolution of different emerging media and before any other technologies arrived, there was print. With the coming of the Welsh missionaries in Mizoram too, the inception of print began as it did centuries ago in China.

The history of the printing press began hundreds of years before the Mizos were to have any knowledge of it or even introduced to it. At its first invention, the press was not thought of as something that could be used for commerce as it was not an easy task to produce printing material. The task was arduous and needed constant dedication. This movable printing technology spread around East Asia developing from Woodblock printing to paper. The more significant point of woodblock printing for this study is when printing reached China in 593 AD (Shields, 34 - 38). In China, the main religion that the people followed was Chinese Buddhism, one of the oldest dogmas in the world. Here, print took a life of its own as it thrived under the demand for the promotion and spread of Buddhism. An ancient way of life, the journey to understand the law of the cosmos, inherent in the very nature of beings, Buddhism is a dharma that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and spiritual practices. Through woodblock printing, Buddhism became the very first creed which took advantage of the vast distribution of printed items to propagate a definite set of belief (Dean, 266).

When oral forms were transformed to visual, it brought along with it a culture that Gutenberg did not plan on bringing when he modernised the Chinese printing press in the Elizabethan Age. For him, it was purely for business, and what he did not count on was the market that religion had. According to Walter Ong, the transformation of a culture from oral to print was significant in its redundancy:

> Thought requires some sort of continuity. Writing establishes in the text a 'line' of continuity outside the mind. If distraction confuses or obliterates from the mind, the context out of which emerges the material I am now reading, the context can be retrieved by glancing

> back over the text selectively…Since redundancy characterises oral thought and speech, it is in a profound sense more natural to thought and speech than is sparse linearity (Ong, 21).

When thought processes were put down to print, the redundancy provided some 'truth' to it. This documentation of 'truth' was what religion needed the most since it is a creed that relied mainly on belief. According to Eisenstein, the evolution of printing would never have had as much progress as it did if it had not been for its involvement with religion and politics (Eisenstein, 8116). Just as there was a demand for Buddhist dharma centuries before, what heralded the success of the printing press in Europe was the urgent demand for religious propaganda which could be read and seen like never before. It also brought with it a profitable market for the printers since religion was a subject that many, if not all could take part in. At a time when science and belief were the only options for print, religion and politics had a more target audience than science and only a very selected few could understand.

This shift from a balance of senses to the supremacy of the visual, and the consequent changes it caused in western culture, is the concern of McLuhan who thought of print culture as a human experience that elevated thought processes from orality to text. In his book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) he writes about the effects of the introduction of a movable type press on practically any and everything conceivable, from politics to economy, from science to art, from society as a whole to the individual's perception of time and space. He argued, for example, that the Roman Empire could not have been constructed without the papyrus, and with papyrus as a means of communication the empire saw a rise unlike any of its predecessor. In his approach to the subject, McLuhan sets forth what he judges to be the fundamental characteristics of print and looks for their translation into modern culture. He spoke of print, which was the new technology at the time as affecting the sociological behaviour and shaping ideologies of people in quite different ways than before:

> Nowadays, when an author dies, we can see clearly that his own printed works standing in his bookcases are those works which he regarded as completed and finished, and that they are in the form in which he wished to transmit them to posterity…but in the days before the invention of printing, this distinction would not by any means be so apparent. Nor could it be determined so easily by others whether any particular piece written in the dead author's handwriting was of his own composition or a copy made by him of somebody else's work. Here we have an obvious source of a great deal of the anonymity and ambiguity of authorship of so many of our medieval texts. (McLuhan, 132).

It was this very shift of the senses from the oral to the visual which made a great impact to the Mizo people at the turn of the twentieth century. As McLuhan pointed out, technologies are not simply inventions which people employ but are the means by which people are re-invented. The Mizos in the Lushai Hills[vi] were one such people who underwent major changes and re-inventions. It started with the coming of the Welsh missionaries to the Hills while the country was under colonisation. A century later, the re-invention of a whole culture was complete and the experience demands the question of whether man invented technology or whether man is re-invented by his own invention.

As Meirion Lloyd states, it was the mission's goal to educate the people not only in terms of language and literacy, but mostly about the Gospel. Although the technology was not used as far as a business transaction as it was during the Renaissance, the experience solidified the main purpose of the press in Mizoram, which was for spreading religious propaganda:

> Rarely has one invention more decisive influence than that of printing on the Reformation. It was an invention which seemed engineered for propaganda…the advent of printing was an important precondition for the Protestant Reformation taken as a whole; for without it one

> could not implement a priesthood of all believers (Eisenstein, 309 - 310).

The printing press, with its main functions of dissemination, standardisation and preservation has been known to aid the progress of religious reformation, namely that of Protestantism, the Renaissance and the scientific revolution, all within the 16th century. Thus, print culture brought about the cultural prominence of the visual over the oral, which had been the prominent form of communication prior to its establishment. Marshal McLuhan, who is a pioneer in the study of the relationship between print culture and identity, is of the opinion that the advent of print technology contributed to and made possible most of the salient cultural changes in the modern world:

> In this electronic age, we see ourselves being transported more and more into the form of information, moving towards the technological extension of consciousness…Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication (McLuhan, 154).

In 1911, the Mizo culture too changed drastically from oral to visual, as was documented in the culture. However, the documentation of these cultural changes warrants a study as it too aided the progress of many reformations, mainly that of religion. During the 16th century, Eisenstein acknowledged that there were a variety of motives behind the power of the press in Europe – profit, evangelical, individual fame, bureaucratic necessity, and extending the power of the state were among them. In this sense, Eisenstein states, the press is not a single technological innovation that changes everything, but rather an invention that could be used by the church and state, capitalists and scholars to further their interests. What was most important for the Mizos with regards to Eisenstein's argument is that printing greatly contributed to the fragmentation that existed in Christianity. Following Eisenstein's argument, A. W. Lovett too studied that what printing benefitted most were subjects that dealt heavily with ideas. What had initially been an oral culture, mostly based on belief

became printed, 'sighted' and imbibed. With the advent of print, religious divisions become more permanent, heresy and its condemnation, he writes, "becomes more fixed in the minds of followers; religious edits became more visible and irrevocable" (Eisenstein, 185-186). For the Mizos, when the alphabets were printed and distributed, it was 'visible' and 'irrevocable'. This cemented a change in their whole cultural paradigm which rested solely on religious practices.

The alphabets had been formalised and the Mizos were now literate enough to expect the continuation of reading material. The Sunday schools and Bible study centers all over the state attested to the rising number of people who were eager to learn, to read and write. For the Mizos, it was thrilling to see their own language with their own eyes, 'visible' to them in the form of alphabets that were 'irrevocable.' What had been missing in their pre-Christian culture[vii] was filled in by the new religion and this religion came with visual aids which proclaimed authenticity that were never there nor even thought of before. One obvious advantage of literacy for the Mizos was that it enabled them to read agricultural pamphlets, (agriculture was their main source of living), and it allowed them to read instructions on medicine bottles and the government posters on the wall. The missionaries provided regular quantity of books to the eager people, but printing remained a problem until help came in the form of Dr. Peter Fraser.

Dr. Fraser, a medical missionary arrived in Mizoram in 1908 and built a clinic near, what is now called P.C Girls' School[viii]. Dr. Fraser was a man of kind disposition who felt an affinity for the Mizos like no other white man had done before. Apart from constructing hospitals out of charitable inclination, he fought for the freedom of slave system that had existed in Mizo society long after the presence of the Welsh missionaries. Even when H.W.G Cole[ix] argued on the subject with him, taking the opinion that the 'slaves' in Mizoram were not similar to the slavery system as practiced at the time in other colonial countries and that they were merely lowly paid servants, Dr. Fraser took a stand. The Mizos had occupied a place in his heart which brought him to his own retirement from the state in 1912. He only left the place after the slave system had been diminished to his will (Saiaithanga, 46 –

47). Although his twenty-five years of service as a doctor was commendable, what is more important for this study is his huge contribution to the advent of print in Mizoram.

Early in 1911, Dr. Fraser brought to Aizawl a small hand-press. It was the first press ever seen within those hills. One particular use that he made of it was to print appropriate scripture verses on labels. These were stuck on bottles of medicine alone with the dosage instructions (Ralte, 2009, 121). The little hand-press was used effectively for many things, but most importantly, it was notable for being the machine that printed the first publication of Mizo religious magazine known as '*Krista Tlangau'* which translates as 'The Herald of Christ' and later changed to *Kristian Tlangau*. The name is significant in that 'Tlangau' is a village crier who was one of the village officials and whenever a chief wanted to make an announcement or send out a command to the villagers, he would dispatch the 'tlangau' to announce it. The 'tlangau' would go round the village, stopping at key-points to shout the message, till it was presumed that every man, woman and child had heard and understood it. Everyone knew that the 'tlangau' did not speak out of his own authority, but was mouthing the instructions of his chief. The new magazine was called *The Herald of Christ* or in Mizo, *Kristian Tlangau* for such reason. (Lloyd, 137).

The success of the magazine, *Kristian Tlangau* brought with it the need to improve the Christian Press for it could no longer print the amount that was demanded. Not only was it the size of an armchair, it was private property which Fraser took home with him when he left in 1912. When the small hand-press was gone, Col. G. E. Loch[x] offered D. E. Jones[xi] to pay out of his own pocket for a new machine and an adequate supply of type to go with it. This generous and unexpected gift enabled Jones to obtain a foot-treadle machine, quick, light and easily operated. The total cost of the press and type was one hundred pounds, roughly around Rs. 8270 in today's standards, a fortune at the time. Loch stipulated that he gave the machine and the reusable type that Johannes Gutenberg had invented, on condition that the press would never be removed from Aizawl since it was given to the people.

The printing press was named 'Loch Press' in honour of its donor and it served its purpose well. Even after it could no longer be used, it continued to be cherished by the Synod Press. Currently (at the time of writing), it is displayed in a glass case just at the entrance of the Synod Printing Press in Mission Veng, Aizawl. Loch Press remained its name until the electrification of the press in 1958, from which point on was known as the Synod Printing Press (Ralte, 139). The Synod Press published many more Mizo works but *Kristian Tlangau* remains a current and unwinding publication mainly because for the first time, it gave the Mizo people platform to write and read their own culture from their point of view.

Most of the articles are of devotional nature and are written by ministers and lay persons. Suaka[xii] was the first Mizo writer to be published in the magazine and the content of his article was about Wales, 'the heaven on earth', he called it and it was a place he had not even visited. (*Kristian Tlangau*, Vol.1, No.1, 13-14). For more than a decade, the contents of many Mizo articles praised and idolized the white man for 'saving' them from their past godless lives. The 1912 March publication editorial boasts of how lucky the Mizos were to be graced by such 'god-fearing white men, how education had advanced their knowledge of the world around them which they could get only through the Christian missionaries' (*Kristian Tlangau*, Vol.2, No.3, 1). Religion had been used for decades as a weapon of colonisation and the Mizos too fell prey to the tradition.

The Mizos comprehend their identity as inextricably linked to the religion and the collective consciousness of the Mizos actively propagates a 'Mizo Christianity' (Pachuau, 16). The Mizos felt that they had much to be thankful for since it was them who first propagated, along with Christianity, the medium of print. The missionaries understood that the only way to assimilation was to enlighten themselves with the language for them to really speak the 'truth' of the Gospel to them. The Arthington Mission[xiii] arrived at a time when the Mizos were being coerced by circumstances to adopt any modernizing element imposed upon or offered to them. A new administrative structure, legislation, demarcation of chiefdoms, system of taxes, amongst other things, were being introduced for the

consolidation of the British rule. The people had learnt to adjust themselves to the new situation which included impressed labour and frequent levy on their provisions. It was a relief to have their own language in the written form for their own benefit. "The young people," observes Lewin, "proved to be apt scholars and ready pupils – teachers, and the art of reading and writing spread rapidly." In his introductory note, Lloyd observes that within a span of a few decades Mizoram, from being totally illiterate has become the second most literate areas in the whole of India. The Mizos depicted not only a desire to learn but also a spontaneous desire to share with others what had been acquired (Vanlalchhuanawma, 102-105). This desire to share had produced a lot of mission – educated people who were eager to please the 'masters' who had taught them a new language and had opened a new world for them.

The historical moment where the colonised were educated and made to study cultures outside of their own produced the nineteenth century form of imperialism. Gauri Viswanathan has presented strong arguments for relating the "institutionalisation and subsequent valourisation of English literary study to a shape and an ideological content developed in the colonial context," and specifically as it developed in India, where:

> British colonial administrators, provoked by missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other, discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education. (Viswanathan, 21).

So, with education flourishing in Mizoram, the people were taught by the white man of their own identity. It was a single ideology which lead to the naturalising of constructed values such as civilisation and humanity which, conversely established 'savagery,' 'native,' and the 'primitive.' All these were words which were associated with the Mizos as their antithesis and as the object of a reforming zeal. Their native land was regarded to be much more inferior to the white man's land and their way of life was labeled primitive and unacceptable. Education from the missionaries with Christianity as its base was going to mould the ideas and

culture of a people and as an effect for such cause, *Kristian Tlangau* was published solely for the purpose of continuing what the colonisers had started, which was to propagate the religion of Christianity to themselves and to anyone they could.

Mizoram is not in isolation in terms of understanding, as to how colonisation had heralded its own propaganda through print. On this subject of print and colonisation, Julie K. Williams has studied the various aspects using America as an example. Religion was the main weapon of colonisation, in fact, one of the things first published and produced using the printing press were religious tracts affirming Puritanism as the only source of comfort to the Native Americans. Settlement entrepreneurs made a revival of the press to persuade Europeans to come to America. Immigrants brought religious tracts with them to spread Puritanism and other doctrines to Native Americans, the colonists used the press to openly debate issues, print advertisements for business, and as a source of entertainment. Williams stresses:

> The spiritual focus appeared in printed matter soon after settlement began. Both the Puritans, who were known for such efforts and non-Puritans used the press in an attempt to present their arguments to the public and to convert others to their way of thinking… Printing was an important tool to spread God's word (Williams, 46).

On this note, the advent of print culture as seen in Mizoram too became a dubious case in point in the sense that it did not only serve as means to propel the development of Mizoram itself, but was also used as a weapon to sway the people with religious tracts. *Kristian Tlangau*, a predominantly Christian periodical was the first to be published and for years, secular publications did not follow.

It was only in the beginning of the 1970s that a secular magazine began to thrive. For more than fifty years, after the inception of *Kristian Tlangau*, this magazine remained uncontested, and was primarily the only religious magazine in Mizo print culture. However, a different outlook arrived when the two World Wars

began and Mizo men were forced to take part in the British Army. With A. Playfair[xiv] leading the party, 2100 Mizo men went to France to take their part in the War in May 1917. They were away for more than a year and the government even praised their endeavour in the war. The Mizos who took part in the first World War were called '27th Lushai Labour Corp'. Out of this, 71 died in action. Another 30 men were shipped off again under the '8th Army Bearers Corp' and 7 died in service to their country. In the second World War, the British colonies declared war on Germany on 3rd September 1939. Then, on December 1941, British once more declared war on Japan. In these wars, the Mizos had different duties and many of the men held official positions (Siama, 124 – 127).

The most significant role that the two wars had on the Mizo culture was that it broadened their environment and expanded their mindset. Mizoram and its small surrounding had been all that the Mizos had been exposed to most of their colonised years. The war let them understand that there was life apart from their state and that there was an entirely different world apart from theirs. By the second World War, many Mizo men could read English and they were exposed to different cultures. More than three thousand Lushai youths joined the various British Indian and Burmese military services. Towards the end of the war, when the Japanese troops pushed into India's North East borders, the Lushai Hills were occupied by a number of British and the Indian soldiers (Ralte, 2009, 44). The young Mizos who had taken part in the war and the locals who had personal contact with outsider's new ideas that were not of their own current environment, became more vigilante. The fast-changing war economy and various concessions granted to the public had greatly increased not only the political, but more importantly the cultural aspirations of the people. They were reading materials that were not solely Christian in content. The Mizos were no longer confined to a specific domain. A note of inherent secularism seemed to have prevailed gradually. The turn of the millennium has continued to provide the people with specific cultural ideas that began to take root and demanded outlet. They were no longer satisfied with the religious magazine content that had been the only source of cultural exposure for them.

Marshall McLuhan has coined the term 'global village' which is the consequence of the dominance of electrical medium. He has argued that the printing press has led to the creation of democracy, capitalism, individualism, nationalism, dualism, rationalism, Protestantism, and a culture of scientific research:

> Print is the extreme phase of alphabet culture that detribalizes or decollectivizes man in the first instance. Print raises the visual features of alphabet to highest intensity of definition. Thus print carries the individuating power of the phonetic alphabet much further than manuscript culture could ever do. Print is the technology of individualism. If men decided to modify this visual technology by an electric technology, individualism would also be modified. It is through print that technology is enhanced, and media became a part of man…. It is by media that the world is contracted…through print and then television later, man is global. The world becomes a village. (McLuhan, 83).

It is on this level that the effects of the printing press have been felt in the search for identity in a different spectrum. Using the popularised term, 'global 'village' McLuhan had analyzed the effects of mass media and how it has a lasting effect on the consciousness of man. McLuhan studies the emergence of what he calls the 'Gutenberg Man', the subject produced by the change of consciousness wrought by the advent of the printed book. The 'Gutenberg man' is everywhere, all at once and is a part of everything that existed in the world. With the help of modern technology, even the man who had no relation to a topic became the main focus and thus, "man becomes an object of the machine." (Wasson, 578). Therefore, with the emergence of the printing press, 'the world is contracted' and it 'becomes a village.' Once the Mizos realised that their thoughts and ideas could be read and understood by others around them, it became a two-way process. The community expanded, perhaps with each publication that the notion of the 'village' gradually grew global even for the Mizos. Having been exposed to a culture that was not their own, there arose a demand in the Mizos to be part of this global village. This was why they

were no longer satisfied with eucharistic magazines and periodicals. Their domain expanded to outside their own lived experience, and with contributions from the effects of colonisation too, this extension of culture and identity led to various needs in order to find a definite meaning to one's culture.

To meet these demands, several secular magazines began to appear and at the beginning of 1960, the print culture of the Mizos was no longer confined to the ownership of the Synod Press. Some ingenious entrepreneurs had seen the demand of a press that could cater to more than eucharistic reading material and thus, many journals and magazines appeared. One of the oldest and most notable journal is *Thu leh Hla*[xv], first published in 1965 and it is subtitled, "A Monthly Literary Journal of the Mizo Academy of Letters". This journal is especially significant in that, this was the first journal that could put together a group of Mizo men who wanted to write purely for the sake of writing. The content of this journal is starkly different from that of *Kristian Tlangau*. 'The Mizo Academy of Letters'[xvi] was first established in 1964, and it was purely aimed to hone the writing skills for Mizo writers who wished to write on a topic that was not wholly religious in nature. It was registered no. 8 of 1965-66 under Act XXI of 1860 (*Thu leh Hla*, Bu 64na, 4). What started as a playground for Mizo writers turned into a serious literary venture as the need to embrace one's culture arose among the Mizo people.

Language in itself has made its importance felt amongst the colonised for centuries during the colonial rule, under the umbrella of imperialism. It is what divides and unites the colonised and the colonisers in ways which had made many theorists struggle to find a deeper truth regarding the same. The Mizos were so dubious of any foreign rule and it is understandable that Lorrain and Savidge had tried hard to learn the language of the people so that they might perhaps win their trust at such a time. For Frantz Fanon had said, "To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture," (Fanon, 78), with reference to the blacks and the colonised who want to adopt the language of their white masters. For the Mizos, however, it was more or less the opposite, in that the Welsh missionaries, as has been mentioned before, tried hard to learn the Mizo language to comprehend the Mizo culture and to

receive the confidence of the Mizos in any way they could, in order that their sermons could be instilled in the hearts of the Mizo people:

> Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchal structure of power is perpetuated and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth,' 'order' and reality become established. (Ashcroft, 7).

It was this language that the Mizos inherited and will continue to do so for as long as the culture existed. Even years after the colonisers had left, the language stayed on. Even for journals like *Thu leh Hla*, with its contents that varying from analysis of folk narratives to comedic adventures that had nothing to do with politics, the language itself has always been an area for contest. A Mizo man could not denounce nor try to be apart from the colonial experience as long as the language he spoke and read and wrote in, came from the said experience. *Thu leh Hla* was one of the first known journals that tackled this issue with identity. The stark change that the print culture provided for the Mizos confused them as to how they should react in a post-colonial mind-set, for how could a culture denounce another culture which had given them their alphabets? If a Mizo man was to denounce the colonisers' culture, he would have to do it in Mizo language, which ironically was given to them by the said culture.

Following the ideas of the 'global village,' Howard Winger perceived a world where pre-literate man was dominated by the sense of sound rather than sight. Drawing upon research from anthropology, he cites examples from cultures which have remained wholly or primarily pre-literate well into the twentieth century (Winger, 352); he finds the worldviews of such cultures to be in accord with his theory that literacy did not form a culture but was instead simply something that happened inside a cultural identity. Such culture perceives the universe as an organic whole, with the total effect being what McLuhan calls "a simultaneous field," characteristic of such oral cultures. In other words, events happen without reference to western concepts of time, cause and effect, or sequential logic. According to these studies, such ideas are visual and therefore have no place in a culture dominated by

the oral senses (Wasson, 571). However, the Mizos did not understand nor could begin to believe that their pre-Christian culture could have placed them in the same status as they were, after the coming of the missionaries. It was the missionaries who gave them their written text, their alphabets and a press that churned out a print culture (in other words, what they themselves believed to have belonged to was a savage, inhumane one before their arrival). In the face of such confusing ideologies, the Mizos underwent the colonial trauma of cultural identity issues.

With differing viewpoints, the Mizos developed into what Homi Bhabha calls a 'hybrid.' Bhabha argues that hybridity results from various forms of colonisation, which had sprung from cultural collisions and social interchanges which do not necessarily work together. In the attempt to assert colonial power in order to create anglicised subjects, "the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different--a mutation, a hybrid" (Bhabha, 111). As time went on, the Mizos became more and more out of contact with their own neighbouring states which due to the "Thirty-Seven Year Bengali Captivity", they could not really regard as friendly. So, to this day, the people live in a somewhat disoriented group who felt they had more in common with the white man than they ever did with the other states of India. The implicit impossibility of being part of their own national culture separated ideologies and beliefs from mainland culture. The Mizo's relation to the white man's culture gave the thought more texture and the fascination still continues. In Wilson Harris' formulation:

> …hybridity in the present is constantly struggling to free itself from a past which stressed ancestry, and which valued the 'pure' over its threatening opposite, the 'composite.' It replaces a temporal lineality with a spatial plurality (Ashcroft, 2).

The confusion in identity heralded a handful of magazines that were purely made for celebrating the western culture that the Mizos had been hungry for. They had heard of the rock band called The Beatles through radio, read about them in magazines that managed to reach the Hills. Like McLuhan argued, the 'Gutenberg

man' who took advantage of the fast paced media that inventions and technologies emerged even in the Mizo culture. Magazines like *Lei Hringnun*[xvii] which first appeared in 1998 had a content list that purely catered to the Mizo people who wanted to know more about the western entertainment world. It had puzzles, black and white pictures of musicians and actors that the Mizos could not access, were if not from such magazines. The magazine comprised of 16 pages and it said next to nothing about the Mizo culture. As Bhabha denoted, the hybrid nature of their culture was seen through print and *Lei Hringnun* became a forerunner for later magazines like *Diktawn*[xviii] (2006) and *Real Life* (2006). The latter magazines tried to celebrate Mizo culture with its main stories about the Mizo people, their lives and struggles with whatever glamorous side was seen in them. However, the treatment of Mizo culture was done in such a way that it was a mere reflection of the western glamour magazines with little authenticity as expected by the culture. The content in the magazines too catered to the audience with articles about love, relationships and Mizo people, who were deemed worthy of 'celebration'. As much as the magazine took pains to write about Mizo youth culture, the mid-section of the magazine, from page number 17 to 24 always had coloured and attractive pages which depicted western culture (*Lei Hringnun*; 1998). On a symbolic level, the white man had been seen as superior and worthy of the best in the colonised minds. The colonial experience had indeed been founded on the ethnocentric idea that the white man was indeed the better race.

Lelte Weekly[xix] which was first published in 1983, was another magazine that catered to the secular entertainment of the people. Like the other magazines of its nature, it largely depicted the lifestyle of the west, and like every other magazine, including the Christian centric ones, it advertised western lifestyle more than that of the Mizo's way of life. However, the nature of the periodical did change after a certain length of time. On the editorial content of *Lelte Weekly* in October of 1999, there was a call for Mizo youth to not portray the lives and outlook of the west, citing that it was 'dangerous' for a culture that was as young as the Mizo culture and advised the youths to maintain a very Mizo outlook in their everyday life. (*Lelte Weekly*, 7). Left confused by the colonial experience, the Mizos had difficulty in

understanding who they really were as a culture. When the magazine that advised such Mizo centric ideas especially had pages of western lifestyle advertised in its magazine, it was confusing indeed.

As Harris says, the present sees a dawn in which the people are awakening to realise how valuable their own indigenous culture and beliefs are, and how important it is to try to remain 'pure' of their nativism even though the idea seemed impossible with everything which had happened in their lives. Harris further explains that "cultures must be liberated from the destructive dialectic of history, and imagination is the key to this. He sees imaginative escape as the ancient and only refuge of oppressed peoples, but the imagination also offers possibilities of escape from the politics of dominance and subversion. Harris deliberately strives after a new language and a new way of seeing the world" (Ashcroft, 34). As seen through the varying print culture, the Mizos underwent 'identity trouble' and continued to do so even with time. The Mizos continued the work of the missionaries in print in magazines such as *Ramthar* (1984). The more eucharistic publications were always the forerunner of print culture in Mizo. It engaged with the peoples' minds more than any other magazines that came up later. *Agape*[xx] is another Christian centric magazine, first published in 1986. The interesting fact about *Agape* is that it is a magazine published on behalf of the women of the church. The publication of the magazine falls under the women of Presbyterian Church of Mizoram. Another magazine is *Zonu*[xxi] which first appeared in 1983. *Zonu* prided itself by denoting that it is the first magazine by women published for Mizo women by Mizo women themselves, for the solidarity and representation of every women at home[xxii].

While Gutenberg may not have known that his invention of the printing press was an "epoch making event that lead to the end of the Middle Ages" (Eisenstein, 18), Myron Gilmore also devotes several paragraphs to this topic in his book *The World of Humanism 1453 – 1517* (1952) where he began with the conquest of Constantinople and ended with the posting of Luther's *Thesis*. Delving into the significant history of transition from medieval to modern civilization, he states:

> The invention and development of printing with movable types brought about the most radical transformation in the conditions of intellectual life in the history of western civilization. It opened new horizons in education and in the communication of ideas. Its effects were sooner or later felt in ever department of human activity (Gilmore, 186).

The question that had been raised at the beginning of the chapter has continued to dwell upon the question of whether printing press has had a hand in the evolution of a culture or whether the culture has been changed by the advent of the printing press. Reviewing several magazines that came out since the beginning of print in 1911, perhaps for the Mizo, the press did bring change to the culture. The press was used in Mizoram, (like any other place at the inception of the printing press) for religious purposes. This shaped the peoples' ideologies in multiple ways.

For Elizabeth Eisenstein, the coming of the printing press was the biggest change that a culture could undergo wherever it was placed. Not only did the press allow for the shift from script to print, it revolutionised western culture by creating an entirely new symbolic environment that would fill renaissance Europe with new information and abstract ideas. Later disciples of Eisenstein too stood by the importance that the printing press had on culture formation when William J. Bouwsma talked of how it affected a revival of learning, which would require new skills, attitudes and a new kind of consciousness. In addition, the printing press would inspire individualism while at the same time undermining the authority of the Catholic church. Finally, the printing press enriched a capacity for scientific and conceptual thought, as well as stressing the need for clarity, sequence and reason. All of these would move into the forefront of European society as the medieval and oral environment receded in favour of the creation of a new literate society. (Bouwsma, 1357).

The new Mizo literate society at the turn of the twentieth century saw signs of development with varying magazines and periodicals that emerged. The content

and themes of the magazines are divided into purely Christian centric content, entertainment and the literary by 2011. Identity making as seen through the century of print culture provided a study that made an interesting notion of the people so largely dominated by the colonial experience long after the physical presence had gone.

Notes

[i]'Kristian' in English translates to Christian, 'tlangau' translates to 'crier,' (Dailova, 126, will be denoted as ibid hereafter). The magazine can be described as a village crier who would announce news and important events to the Christians in the form of a printed magazine.

[ii]*Ramthar* can be translated as 'New World.'

[iii] These passages are translated from the the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[iv] A misnomer for 'Zo' by T.H Lewin, which is frequently used by the cognate tribes of the Lushais for their nomenclature.

[v]The obscure origin of the Mizo, regarding whether 'Chhinlung' is a person's or a place's name, which has never been decided has contributed to the rich and varied folk tales that is intrinsic to Mizoram. Several theories as to how the various Mizo sub – tribes came to settle in Mizoram, ranging from the cave from which they emerged was a hole; a passage at the Great Wall of China through which the oppressed sections of the society (including the Mizos) left the country, to the widest accepted theory that the Mizos belonged to a Mongoloid stock have gradually testified to the love of stories and folk legends amidst the Mizos corpus.

[vi]According to J.M. Lloyd, Lushai Hills was referred to as the "remote and mountainous part of South East Asia. But now its correct and official name is Mizoram, the country of the Mizos" (Lloyd, 12)

[vii]According to Meirion Lloyd, the pre-Christian Mizos practiced an elaborate form of animism. Animism has been described as the faith that depends on tribal memory and oral traditions more than on sacred literature (21)

[viii]P. C. Girls is an all-girls school established by the Welsh missionaries in 1903 and is situated in Model Veng, Aizawl, Mizoram.

[ix] H.W.G Cole was an officer known to the Mizos as 'Cole Sap' which means 'English Cole.' He was the 11th Deputy Commissioner of Mizoram.

[x] Col. G. E Loch was the local commandant stationed in Mizoram, under whose supervision of road construction, Aizawl became accessible from Silchar.

[xi] D. E. Jones was one of the Welsh missionaries who came to Mizoram and who helped in devising the Lushai language alphabet. He was nicknamed 'Zosaphluia' by the Mizos to show their fondness of him.

[xii]Suaka's full name was Suakmichhinga. He was the first person to be educated in the Lushai alphabets that D.E Jones and J.H Lorrain formulated and he helped in translating the Bible to Mizo (Ralte, 111).

[xiii]Robert Arthington was a British millionaire who wanted immediate salvation and with this enthusiasm, established what he called the Arthington Aborigines Mission in 1889 for evangelisation of tribal people in North East India. It was through this mission that J.H Lorrain and F.W Savidge came to Mizoram as missionaries (Lloyd, 30).

[xiv]Lieutenant Colonel Playfair commands the 27th Labour Corp in Mizoram and led the soldiers in battle in France (Nunthara, 121).

[xv]*Thu leh Hla* can be translated as 'Prose and Poetry.'

[xvi]The Mizo Academy of Letters was founded by early Mizo literates for the safeguard of Mizo language and to help it flourish in 1964. The Academy started awarding its 'Book of the Year' award in 1989.

[xvii]Can loosely be translated as 'Life of man on earth,' (Ibid, 308). *Lei Hringun* was one of the best selling magazines and it had strong undertones of celebrating the 'white man.'

[xviii] '*Diktawn*' is a kind of 'zawlaidi' which is a myth in Mizo folklore which can be used to make someone fall in love with them. The magazine follows this sentiment to use as a charm to the audience (Translation from the editor).

[xix] '*Lelte*' is the name of an insect which is comes around the Autumn season (Ibid, 332). For the Mizos, it brings nostalgia and often said to soothe the soul. The magazine is named after, not only the insect but how the insect conveys all these emotions to the people.

[xx]*Agape* is a Greeco-Christian word which means the 'highest form of love or charity.'

[xxi]*Zonu* translates to 'Mizo woman' (Ibid, 544)

[xxii] An interview was done with the editor of *Zonu* Magazine, Pi Chhingpuii on April 8th, 2020 over the phone

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Chapter 2

Mizo Religious Identity and Print Culture

This chapter will expound upon the aspects of Mizo identity, intrinsically that which pertains to religion and how it has been shaped by the emergence of print by the turn of the twentieth century. It will trace the settlement of the Welsh missionaries in the state and the development of a language that would later be instrumental in forming a distinct Mizo print culture. The most important practices were those dictated by the church and its panoptic gaze upon the people. This aspect plays a significant role in their cultural identity and in effect, their print culture as well. The chapter will highlight the arrival of the first printing press in Mizoram, notably that of the Synod Printing Press and how it enhances the development of an intrinsic Mizo identity through the machine of the printing press. The chapter will also give emphasis to the establishment of the church in Mizoram and how that establishment led to the start of the print culture.

The printing press arrived in Mizoram in 1911 by the end of the British rule in colonial India. A later development in the northeast region of the country, the growth of the press followed the path of a Christian evangelical triumph that replaced oral traditions drastically. This technological Christian endeavour swept the northeastern side of the country, affecting the different tribes settled there mainly with regards to their cultural situation. For the Mizos, as has been established earlier, the evolution of their language from oral to written was given to them by the Welsh missionaries who settled in the state for evangelical enterprise. Therefore, even before the very birth of the print culture, which was also given to the Mizos by the white missionaries, the emergence of their language to written form and how that affected the later development of print takes precedence. To the Mizos themselves, their history and legacy was a mystery as there were no coherent means to trace back their origin, being of oral culture before the birth of their written language. One interpretation of the ethnological term 'Mizo' is based on an oral tradition which says, 'The Mizo progenitors say that the genealogy of Mr. Mizova's descendants was written and preserved in a leather scroll at the time of *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi*[i]; but the scroll being of leather was eaten up by a dog.' (Dahrawka, 10-11) This tradition about the loss of genealogy explains the difficulty of recovering the past identity of the Mizos.

The ‘Zo’ people, scattered across the region in their differing tribes, did not share a language and spoke languages distinct to their sub-tribe. Inherently a tribe of migrants, the very process of migration divided the tribes and developed not only language but dialectical differences. Within their small ambit, the Mizo tribe was rich in culture as they were different in their language. The Ralte[ii] clan were believed to have settled in the northern part of the region where they spoke a specific language which was separate from the likes of the other major clans (Liangkhaia,112). The problem of varying languages as well as dialects was already a constraint when it came to cultural unity.

The printing press became a critical tool in uniting a people (not only the Mizos) for it is instrumental in disclosing the barrier of language amongst the people. It is significant that the Bible was the first book Gutenberg printed, since scripture was at the center of the medieval world. Gutenberg’s Bibles were printed in Latin, and printing was initially welcomed as a divine gift, not only for the dissemination of religious knowledge, but because it also highlighted the language of Latin as a language that was commonly used by all who could read and write in the 1940s (Kovarik, 21). Religious tracts have heralded the development of print culture, which in turn have formed a coherent language paradigm within a group of people for centuries. This became the situation in Mizoram as well. With tribes and sub-tribes spread across hilly regions, the arrival and dissemination of the printing press from the missionaries became the uniting factor amongst them.

The impact of the printing press became clear when Martin Luther famously nailed his ‘95 theses’ to a Church door in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31st 1517. Within a month, they were a subject of controversy throughout Europe, and within a few years, an estimated 300,000 copies had been printed. “For the first time in history, a great reading public judged the validity of revolutionary ideas through a mass medium which used the vernacular language. Printing was then recognised as new power and publicity came into its own,” Elizabeth Eisenstein wrote (2516). The

printing presses transformed the field of communications, and fathered an international revolt which Luther himself described as “God’s highest and extremist act of grace,” (Eisenstein, 1176). Thus, people began to see the printing press as an agent of freedom, delivering them from bondage to the Roman church and delivering the light of true religion to Germany. Just as print and religion had been part of each other for so long that they almost could be seen as one unit, the development of the printing press in the country too followed this pattern.

India too was then, a country of various vernacular languages of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, and the tension of uniting a people had come under the umbrella of the printing press as well. The printing press first came to Goa through the Portuguese missionaries in the mid-sixteenth century, a very similar situation as with that of Mizoram. Jesuit priests learnt Konkani and printed several tracts. By 1674, about 50 books had been printed in the Konkani and in Kanara languages. Catholic priests printed the first Tamil book in 1579 at Cochin, and in 1713 the first Malayalam book was printed by them. By 1710, Dutch Protestant missionaries had printed 32 Tamil texts many of which were translations of older works (Rees, 23-25). Religious texts, therefore have been part of the progress of print in Europe, India and further more into Mizoram. They reached a wide variety of people, encouraging discussions, debates and controversies, within and among different religions. Print did not only stimulate the publication of conflicting opinions amongst communities, but it also connected communities and people in different parts of the world.

In Mizoram too, before the arrival of the missionaries, the people were scattered across their state firmly established in their pre-colonial beliefs of superstitions and early ways of life. Although having a culture of their own and distinct sub-tribes, there was no known cultural unity. The missionaries took little time cultivating a written form of language for the Mizos. They understood the political situation in Mizoram very early, and they saw how the Mizos were averse to the idea of belonging to their own mainland culture. The stepping stone to uniting

the varying sub-tribes within the Mizos started with the missionaries, and with them framing a written language to unite a culture.

The formulation of said language began with the religious endeavour that the Welsh missionaries undertook. With Arthington's haste to spread the Gospel everywhere he could, he could see no delay in sending three pioneer missionaries to Northeast India; William Pettigrew, Frederick William Savidge and James Herbert Lorrain. On the 16th of December, 1890, these three missionaries left London and sailed for India. While they were on board the ship for thirty-six days, they had the company of another missionary from Bengal, who was on his way back. This bilingual missionary taught the keen missionaries bound for Mizoram, the Bengali language. The most ingenious amongst them was Dr. Lorrain, who was a Ph.D. from Cambridge University, a teacher and a YMCA[iii] worker. He managed to learn enough Bengali to communicate. The knowledge of this language was particularly significant as it became the root language through which the Mizos were to learn a language, and consequently utilise the same for purposes of documentation. While they were in Chittagong (before they reached Mizoram), Dr. Lorrain found a book written by Thangliana, entitled, *The Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Dwellers Therein,* 1869, the first Lushai book, which held the study of the Mizo language. Thangliana or Captian T.H.Lewin was one of the first Englishmen to come to Mizoram. He was the District Commissioner of the Chittagong Hills Tracts, who entered Mizoram by way of Demagiri (Tlabung)[iv] in 1865. He became so popular with the local tribesmen that as a mark of respect, he was called Thangliana which meant 'greatly famous'. He lived with the Mizos for nine years and his memorial stone at Demagiri remains as evidence of the extent of his popularity with the Mizos. This book written by him, not only held aspects related to the study of the Mizo language but also to the various languages of the Hill people residing on the Hill Tracts. It was the first book that they found which helped them with the study of the language of the people to whom they were to preach the Gospel to (Ralte, 177 – 178). The languages in the book were of the different Hill people, all of them distinct to their clans.

These various languages of the Hill people were diversifying (according to Benedict Anderson's model of 'imagined communities). The question as to why there could not have been a uniformed cultural milieu within the tribal states, as the varying languages spoken divided people became a matter of concern. Benedict Anderson has explicitly conveyed the importance of print when it came to giving a people a form of cultural unity. According to him, the inception of a group of people forming awareness with one another, to having a sense of harmony began with what he called 'print capitalism':

> Print Capitalism…made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves to others, in profoundly new ways, (printed documents) are printed in local languages. This unifies several dialects into one printing language read by everyone who start to see themselves as connected…when uniformity in the same language occurs, a people start to picture themselves as not disparate population but one unified whole. They start to imagine a community (Anderson, 64-65).

In this way, the ideal allowed for the people of Mizoram to form a sense of 'national consciousness' which happens when languages and cultures come together to form visual representation of a people with print. The technologies of writing and printing formed a strong footing in the formation of 'tribal' identity' amongst the Mizo people.

The missionaries (as denoted by Thangliana) found out quickly that the Mizos had the potential of lingual unity, a commonality to which they could respond to. This specific language of the Mizos under the former name was 'Duhlian' or as often referred to by the foreigners, 'Lushai.' Thus, the language for the Mizo people was chosen and the early missionaries often referred to the Mizos in their earlier written works as the Lushais. Forty-four dialects or languages are listed as belonging to the Central-Kuki-Chin sub-groups under which the Mizo language is one of them. The Mizo identity has emerged mainly from a combination of several 'tribes' who

speak Tibeto-Burman languages, but who live in the geographically contiguous territory now known as Mizoram (Lalthangliana, 107). Therefore, the importance of forming a language was well established by the missionaries, right from the time they arrived. They, indeed felt that framing a written language was what would bring the people together. Out of all of the forty-four dialect or languages known to the Mizo clan, the one that took precedence was the 'Duhlian' language, the 'Lushai' language as has been called by the missionaries. This was the language that they learnt on their way to Mizoram and it was this language that was imposed upon the Mizos when evangelical developments began taking place in the state. When they did frame the alphabets, it was with the outset of these that the Gospel mission flourished in Mizoram. From coining one of the most important part of their cultural practices as part of the mission, the shift from oral to print slowly began to take form.

Under favourable context and scale, print technology contributed to the emergence of privileged standard languages amidst a babel of tongues. What print capitalism did for the people was that it gave a new permanency to language, which with the passage of time, went on to build that sense of antiquity which is imperative to the subjective idea of a nation, or in the case of the Mizos, their culture. What print capitalism did then, was to create 'languages of power' amongst the already existing tongues amongst the people.

Even before the Synod Press was established, the missionaries had been formulating a working Mizo language often typed on cheap and common typewriters. It seemed destined that the Mizo alphabets were solely drafted for the purpose of print. Unlike the state's neighbours such as Assam, which has over a hundred languages, mostly spoken amongst the Mongolian tribes, the Mizo language was simple with excellent alphabet. For the larger books which were not feasible to print on typewriters, they were printed in the Government Press at Shillong and later to presses in Sylhet, Dacca, Calcutta, Allahabad and Madras. It was these early printed documents where, not only the formulation of language was starting to take form, but where Christianity for the Mizos were implemented through the new

medium of print culture. On the certain changes of words and spellings made by print, J.M Lloyd writes:

> At first, the word Jihova was used for God, on the grounds that it was Biblical and therefore clearer in its meaning. When the first edition of the Gospel was printed in Mizo, the 'J' from the word Jihova was removed on the grounds that Isua was easier for the Mizos to pronounce and, in any case, there is no 'J' in the Mizo alphabets (Lloyd, 79).

Therefore, little by little, as a formative print culture was established, words changed as new ones were coined to cater to the people's understanding. Words had to be formed to express the new ideas and concepts that the Gospel had brought. The more significant development through all these coinages of new words and ideas through print was how thoroughly the Mizo people imbibed the invention of both language and machine. On a visit to one of the Christian churches in Mizoram in 1938, Lewis Mendus[v], one of the missionaries narrated how impressed he was with the Mizo people's ability to discuss matters about their language and church, their courtesy to each other and how they settle matters amicably. He said that the church "has become a Politics of the people" (Lloyd, 264).

What had happened was, (as established before) not so much a transcendent experience as a careful understanding of the subject culture and implementing it to meet the needs of the Mizos with Christianity. What resulted was a blurring of the idea that religion is an autonomous and marginalised social practice in an apparently progressively secularised world. Indeed:

> Religion always exists as a system of power, meaning that it orders life through a set of force relations; not through a violence which forces people to do things but through the shaping of individual subjects to voluntarily carry out a particular way of life (Foucault, 1999, 149).

In instances of where physical force could not coerce the Mizo people to succumb to the rules of their mainland nation, they willingly accepted the ideas of the gospel because it was, as Foucault pointed out, a process of, "shaping of individual subjects to voluntarily carry out a particular way of life." This behaviour as set by the environment, already defined as one's culture was what was exchanged between the Mizos and the gospel of the white man most earnestly. There were no force attempts to pressurise the people as "…the gospel found them (the Mizos)…and they all but accepted the word of Christ…" (Lloyd, 23). The process of acculturation was complete without a single drop of blood in violence.

To this end, substantiating the theory of Foucault is another political proponent as well as Gramsci's who strongly spoke of how inherent hegemony worked through a culture. According to him, power is manifest in many institutions, although he mainly talked about how it manifests in political and civil society:

> State political institutions, including the military, police, courts, and prisons all represent dimensions of state coercive power. These political institutions employ violence and threats of violence in order to express the will of the state. However, Gramsci draws attention to how infrequently these institutions have to assert their power. Except in times of crises, most people accept the legitimacy of the state without being forcibly compelled to do so. The tacit acceptance of the state has much do to with the institutions of civil society, including schools, civic associations, and religious groups, which sustain themselves, as well as political and economic institutions through the exercise of power in covert ways. This aspect of power is captured by Gramsci's concept of hegemony (Kreps, 161).

Following this premise, the assimilation of the Mizo religious culture to that of Christianity, believed to be the white man's religion could be understood. The

colonial situation between the two cultures was nothing but peaceful and the conversions of the Mizos to Christianity began to take place in just the same vein.

It was not so much a question of whether they wanted to convert to Christianity or debate over whose God was better or which religion held more tangible truth, but more of an inevitability, a matter of time until the Mizos were converted. Gauri Viswanathan has argued to this point that conversion is an interpretive act that belongs to the realm of cultural criticism. To that end, she has further examined key moments in colonial and postcolonial history to show how conversion questions the limitations of secular ideologies, particularly the discourse of rights that are central to both the British Empire and the British nation-state. Implicit in such questioning is an attempt to construct an alternative epistemological and ethical foundation of national community. She asserts:

> By undoing the concept of fixed, unalterable identities, conversion unsettles the boundaries by which self-hood, citizenship, nationhood, and community are defined, exposing these as permeable borders (Viswanathan, 16).

This is a statement which is inherently political and one which transforms the whole idea of the conversion of the Mizos. Even with its entire links to spirituality it could, perhaps be seen as nothing but a political debate. This is what had also been dealt in great detail by Michel Foucault who agrees that religion is nothing but a political force. By connecting the idea of power and subject of the situation, based on his interest in Christianity, Foucault's enterprise involves, "repositioning religion in the space of the body and the politics of the subject" (Foucault, 1994, 6). According to Foucault, the analytical framework through which Christianity can be understood is not as the path of or to the path of transcendence, but rather as that which takes charge of non-transcendent corporality.

Conversion also gave the Mizo people the idea that if one was not a part of that particular group, he was denied the experience of conversion and thereby

denying the very idea of being a member of the Mizo community as well. This sense of community, the 'imagined community' as established before was brought on by the birth of print in the Mizo culture, and the missionaries very knowingly introduced printed documents to the Mizo. The visual representations of religion for anyone was more palpable, believable and most importantly, achievable even for them. This longing to achieve a state of ownership to something that was so foreign and innovative was what drove the early educated Mizos to acquire their own printing press.

According to the records of J.Meiron Lloyd, "On 25th July, 1899, two young men named, Khuma and Khara became the first two Mizos to confess their faith openly in baptism." Very soon, the Church grew larger and larger in terms of organisation and educational work. Until 1923, the Mizo Church was a part of the Khasi Assembly and by then, the Christians there numbered 15,678 members and there were 396 churches and places of worship (Lloyd, 55). The conversion could be seen, in part, as a form of appeal and seemingly more trustworthy for the Christian faith which was tangible in the written form such as the Bible, as well as true songs that were soon to be rendered in print and sung in church.

Foucault's general notion of 'technologies of the self' played an important part in affecting the conversions of the Mizos into Christianity. Foucault defines 'technologies of the self' as techniques that allow individuals to be affected by their own means, with a certain number of operations on their own bodies, minds, souls, and lifestyle, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, and quality of life (McCoy, 56). Religious instructions have never been so tangible than when put into print before for the Mizos. As Luther describes it, catechism depends on a mediatic precondition that may be as important as prosaic, and "non-dialogical" writing was in Foucault's account deemed as 'technologies of the self'. For the Mizos, at this point in time, it was only the printed texts that were entirely "uniform" and "settled" when it came to the matters of belief. Only through mass production enabled by printing can many such identical words be truly and completely memorised "according to the text, word for word" by the masses of

people. Before the printing press, variation and error in hand-copied manuscripts made any one copy distinct from another. This simple fact rendered any literal, "word-for-word" learning effectively impossible. While some attributed the flawlessness and precision of print to the devil, Luther saw in the printing press nothing less than "God's highest act of grace" (Eisenstein, 1176).

For Foucault, as well as Luther, the importance of religious texts cannot be inconsequential. This was established with the pictorial books, hymn books as well as the printed Bible with which the missionaries used as weapons of converting new believers. For something arbitrary as belief, sight and visuals were as important as any other weapon which could be used. What the eye sees, the brain sees clearer. The eye is merely used to transmit, so what we see is only determined by what comes through the eyes. What we see is affected by our memories, our feelings, and by what we have seen before. Foucault wrote:

> This theme of self-renunciation is very important and this self-renunciation comes through sight. Throughout Christianity there is a correlation between disclosure of the self, dramatic, verbalized or textual, and the renunciation of self. My hypothesis from looking at these two techniques is that it's the last one, textualisation, which becomes the more important for it provides better 'truth' than verbal or other form (Foucault, 1999, 29 - 30).

The above statement forms a summary of Foucault's idea on the power of visual representation when it collides with belief. Printing produces communications that require a visual response. As such, it came into a world of men with integrated responses and disturbed the ratio of the senses by its emphasis on sight. A characteristic of the printing press is its step-by-step technique of using interchangeable parts. It was the first complex industrial machine and introduced the linear flow of the assembly line into human experience. This process affected the human sense of time, bringing to human thought a new concept of the lineal progression of events and of causes and effects.

It certainly held a more authentic and palpable dynamic than their previous rites and rituals to which the Mizos could not boast of any documentation in terms of its proof of authenticity. The only vindication that they had was that it was handed down to them from time unknown, which was hardly proof of anything. The Welsh mission came with written books and songs that were uncontested, and equipped with the history of how Christianity had saved so many regions from the horror of the pagan rituals that the Mizos had been following. It was only right that the Mizos believed this to be true for these tales of Christ were written down, in print, visually present for them to see with their own eyes. It was as tangible as anything they had ever encountered. None of their early, pre-Christian beliefs had ever had visual illustrations nor had they been depicted in such comprehensible form.

In a July issue of *Kristian Tlangau* published early on in 1916, an article titled, "Kan Pathian" (Our God) denotes how truly the Mizo were now to be able to have a God to turn to when they were in need. The article reads:

> We have a God we can turn to in our deepest despair as well as our greatest sorrow. He will not fail us for He is all encompassing (*Kristian Tlangau*, Vol. V, No. 7, 9)[vi].

It had been unthinkable to imagine such a world of safety for the Mizo after they could read and see in books that they had a God to protect them. This passage showed clearly that it was not a person who orally told them of a God, but it was there to see and to believe. For the first time in their lives, the Mizos came to understand how truthful 'written words' could be. Picture books too, are powerful visual tools that the print culture had heralded even during the time of the Reformation period. For children and also illiterate people at large, during the 16th century, it was important that they understood what they saw on the pages of a book or a document. They would try to analyse the meaning behind it. This was a new invention that print could visually take credit for. James Moran (*The Book History Reader)*, when editing Eisenstein's work on the development of print culture writes:

> If we accept the idea of a movement from image to word…they provided the content for magnificent emblem books and…helped to inspire an entirely new genre of printed literature – the didactic picture book for children. In this form, the ancient memory images re-entered the imagination of the Protestant children, ultimately supplying Jung and his followers with evidence that suggested the hypotheses of a Collective Unconscious (Eisenstein 163).

It is through this collective unconscious that the Mizos had indeed formed a uniform cultural identity. The Mizos found this uniformity from print. To promote a collective Mizo unconscious cultural identity, the missionaries had Sunday School books, hymn books and Biblical story books printed at Sylhet by the droves. The language that the missionaries themselves had curated were taught in such schools and very quickly, the Mizos adopted or rather imbibed a thriving print culture, that were deeply rooted in Christian identity. The very act of reading printed language allowed an individual to assume him or herself to be a part of something larger than just his sub-clans, all reading the same document. People became more aware of the commonalities of the group whilst its members effectively remained strangers. Thus, one's sense of belonging was not primarily centered on a small group of people, but a larger 'imagined' population. To this conclusion, what Anderson termed as print capitalism may be defined as 'print colonialism', for print culture in Mizoram was indebted to the missionaries and most importantly to the colonial pursuits in the form of evangelical Christian endeavour.

With these hypotheses, it certainly remains accurate that right from the Renaissance to the Reformation period, either print culture instigated the rise of literacy among the masses or literacy brought on the wide success of print industry. Whatever the conclusion between the two estimation, it becomes inevitably true that print culture and education go hand in hand. It was with education too that the Welsh missionaries began to spread the word of God in Mizoram and it was them who turned the tribe from illiterate to literate.

The formulation of a specific written language ushered in a new age for the Mizos which ultimately led to education. Savidge and Lorrain were instrumental as forerunners of this facet in the history of the Mizo where it was because of the endeavour of these two missionaries that Mizo culture markedly jumped from oral to written and consequently to print. With regards to language and education, there can be no doubt that the Mizos certainly benefitted from the rule of the Britishers and the teachings of the Welsh missionaries as well. Their very own alphabet had been prepared for them by the two missionaries, Lorrain and Savidge, and it was because of this language that Mizo literature itself had a flourishing experience in Mizoram. Education was one of the most important facets which colonialism provided and the Mizos, (who prior to the teachings of the missionaries were illiterate) profited immensely from it.

After they had settled in Mizoram, Lorrain and Savidge, to further their influence and their power of knowledge amongst the Mizo people, settled in Mizoram and established a school on 2nd April, 1894 (Ralte, 216). At this time, the small school served as both an education centre as well as a Sunday School and was referred to as "Biak In."[vii] It "basically meant a sacred house of worship. But it was originally used as a centre of both general and theological education as well as of worship," (Vanlalchhuanawma, 107). Thus, in introducing the "Biak In" structure, the Arthington Mission challenged the social traditions on one hand and paved the way for Christianity to take a central place in the Mizo social setup on the other. It is through this medium of school and language that the missionaries and the influence of the white man in general started to take stronger foothold upon the lives and culture of the indigenous people of Mizoram. As denoted thus:

> It is through an appropriation of the power invested in writing that this discourse can take hold of the marginality imposed on it and make hybridity and syncreticity the source of literary and cultural redefinition." (Ashcroft, 77).

Therefore, it was clear to understand that the significance of a written language was not lost on the white man in colonising the minds of the people. And since the missionaries wanted to make the people understand the full impact of the Gospel and since their hard work on the Mizo dictionary, which they had been preparing for quite some time now would be of no use without the knowledge of reading and writing on the part of the Mizos, the best method, they found was to produce a "self – propagating church of the Mizos…starting an elementary school to help the people read and write" (Saiaithanga, 108).

The establishment of the school became the source of what was later to be seen as the cultural hegemony. This later became so much a part of their lives that it was not something one could just simply let go as soon as the area became independent and rid of the white man. Even though the missionaries taught them their own language, (which ironically was developed by the white man,) it was gradually understood that the language of the white man was deemed superior by the Mizos.

> One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over the language. The imperial education system instills a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm in the minds of the people, and marginalizes all 'variants' as impurities….Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth,' 'order,' and 'reality' become established (Ashcroft,117).

The basic reason for the success of Roman letters over the Bengali script could be what was called, "Thirty-seven Year Bengali captivity" which referred to the attempt to impose the Bengali script on different peoples of Northeast India. Moreover, owing to some inauspicious earlier contacts, the Mizos had developed unfavourable attitudes towards their territorial neighbours in general, and their immediate Bengali neighbours in particular. (Vanlalchhuanawma, 101–102). The missionaries had done everything they could, as innocent as their aim might had

been, to learn the language of the ones they were to rule over, politically and hegemonically. Language had always been one of the most important part of earning a peoples' trust in the colonial regime and the white men did exactly that, and ultimately this trust was extended to their religion as well as to their emotions.

Language in itself has made its importance felt amongst the colonised for centuries during the colonial rule, under the umbrella of imperialism. It is what divides and unites the colonised and the colonisers in ways which had made many theorists struggle to find a deeper truth regarding the same. It certainly proved beneficial for the missionaries to continue their work since at the time the Mizos were so dubious of any foreign rule. It is understandable that Lorrain and Savidge had tried hard to learn the language of the people so that they might perhaps win their trust at such a time. For Frantz Fanon had said, "To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture," (Fanon, 78), in reference to the blacks and the colonised who wanted to adopt the language of their white masters.

For the Mizos, however, it was more or less the opposite, in that the Welsh missionaries, as has been mentioned before, tried hard to learn the Mizo language to comprehend the Mizo culture and to receive the confidence of the Mizos in any way they could in order that their sermons could be instilled in the hearts of the Mizo people. However, opposite to the arguments of Fanon as the Mizo colonial situation may be, it was not an inaccurate assessment for the Mizos, more so, it affected the people more than many other colonised circumstances as not only were the languages and script of the white man imbibed, but the fact also lies in the reality that the Mizo's very own culture was 'given' to the Mizos by the white man.

> To learn a language means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilisation. Every colonised people - in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality - finds itself face to face with the language of

> the civilising nation; that is with the culture of the mother country. The colonised is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards (Fanon, 54).

The linguistic system that was involved in influencing the emergence of the Mizo alphabets was also without doubt, all sprung from Western origins. Lorrain and Savidge adopted two forms of systems – Sir William Jones'[viii] system, which was *Exercise in Lushai Dialect* and Sydney Edle's system, *Grammer of the Lushai Dialect*. Using these two systems and with the natural flair for linguistics which Rev. Lorrain possessed, they managed to chart out the alphabets. They also researched upon various systems of writing, thinking only about what could work best for the scripts which they had prepared and also which could be easier for the Mizo people to understand and apply. Finally, they chose the *Hunterian System of Orthography* while they were still in Silchar in 1893 (Ralte, 112).

With such efforts to win over the people, it was only inevitable that the Mizos would find the missionaries quite unlike any other white men they had come across and mostly, unlike the people in their neighbouring states. Slowly, but gradually they trusted the white men and this thus led Mizoram from being totally illiterate to becoming one of the most literate states in the whole of India in less than a century.

> The Mizos showed not merely a desire to learn but also a spontaneous desire to share with others what had been acquired….The literary work of the pioneer missionaries consisted of a child's primer published by the Government in 1895, a dictionary, a hymn book of about a dozen songs, a catechism and a well known Lorrain's *Lushai English Dictionary* containing 33,000 words, published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1940. 'The literary work done by our predecessors,' ponders D.E. Jones, 'has given the language a written form which will probably be permanent.'….The lasting impact of the

> Arthington Mission to the Mizos in the field of literature can hardly be overemphasized (Vanlalchhuanawma, 105).

Starting from the education system and slowly merging over to the main reason (which was to spread the Gospel of Christ), for which they had stepped foot in the land, the two missionaries began to take steps in preaching the Gospel to the people. On 21st April 1895, Lorrain and Savidge organised the first Bible study class amongst the Mizo people, and on 16th September, 1895, Lorrain preached his first sermon in Mizo (Ralte, 108). The school-cum-chapel became the centre of preaching and evangelism. It was in this manner that the religion of the white man, which is Christianity started to gain popularity among the people.

The school acted as a place of Christian propaganda as well as a place where language and culture were learnt and exchanged respectively. The more fundamental argument to Fanon could be that, in the case of the Mizos, it is does not necessarily apply as he claimed, which was, to speak a coloniser's language is to assume his culture or embrace his civilisation. There are many ways in which a colonised subject could benefit from learning the coloniser's language. It could, firstly be employed for communication or as a sign of being proficient. In colonial situations, the colonised language is the principal language for administration and it is easier for the colonised to conform. Another reason is the fact that it was mostly used for upward mobility in a society, which compromised exclusively of the colonials. The learned and more proficient colonial linguist might have learnt how to speak the white man's language not with a view to becoming 'white' or 'whiter' or to impersonate the white man's culture. He might have learnt it primarily for the opportunity that it presented for his own personal promotion.

One such instance of imbibing the coloniser's tongue for benefit could be seen in the person of Pu Suaka[ix], who was one of the most important figures to initiate the culture of print in Mizo. *Kristian Tlangau*[x], the magazine of the Mizo Christians was a prominent development in the Mizo print culture. As mentioned earlier, it showed and even boasted of how the Mizo culture was so accepting of the

white man's culture, for the exchange was being close to completely peaceful. *Kristian Tlangau* was not the first Mizo magazine but it became the most significant part of Mizo literary history because in its case, it was religion that brought in print culture into the region where in the case of the earlier Reformation era, the reformers made use of the printing machine to serve an end. So, for the Mizos, print and religion go hand in hand because a religious magazine became the first successful printed document that was published by Mizos themselves. Also, it was religion that heralded the rise of print culture in Mizoram. The Mizos felt themselves lucky and blessed to have such an innovative invention to spread their new found religion in the form of *Kristian Tlangau*. In the publication of August, 1912, the first article is titled, 'Kristian Rawngbawltu Lawmna' which translates to 'The joys of being a follower of Christ,' where the writer gives thanks to having such a wonderful invention as the 'Lushai Kristian Press'[xi]:

> …where news of the many newly converts from pagan traditional Mizo sects to Christianity could be told to the many readers of the magazine and how these converts were spawned by the goodness. Christian faith that was spread everywhere by magazines such as this[xii]. (*Kristian Tlangau*, Vol 2, No. 8, August, 1912).

On reading such articles as these, it is significant to note that the colonisation of the minds of the Mizo people by their colonisers was complete. In following the theoretical arguments of Gramsci, hegemony is not dominance in the literal form, but a negotiation between groups in a situation of unequal power in all forms of institutions. The force in power then manage to retain the overall strategic control while acknowledging partially the aspirations of the subordinate groups. The commodification of the printing press in the hands of the rising bourgeoisie proved to be a stronger weapon than the repressive media regime. As the balance of power in society changed and the interest of the old and the new ruling classes gradually began to converge, an institutional reversal in the organization of press regulation emerged in the Mizo society. The power of knowledge, in the case of the Mizos, when knowledge comes in the form of education, was what distinguished the classes

amongst the people. On the topic of how the Mizos attained a printing press of their own, cultivating their own magazine and ultimately producing them, Gramsci's theory of hegemony of the colonizers over the subaltern yet again attains significance:

> The philosophy of praxis does not aim at the peaceful resolution of existing contradictions in history and society, but is the very theory of these contradictions. It is not the instrument of government of the dominant groups in order to gain the consent and exercise hegemony over the subaltern classes. It is the expression of subaltern classes who want to educate themselves in the art of government and who have an interest in knowing all truths, even the unpleasant ones, and in avoiding the impossible deceptions of the upper class, and even more their own (Kreps, 173).

This statement was true for the Mizos too, in that it was the Mizos who wanted to be educated, who wanted to learn, to produce work as their superiors had done in the field of religion. This was the completion of cultural hegemonic rule over the Mizo people in the sense that they were not physically forced to be part of the white man's evangelical team. The Mizos not only volunteered, but also expressed in many ways to the missionaries of their own desires to produce a Mizo magazine that would inherently be of their language (although given to them by the white men) which would speak to the Mizos in a more meaningful manner. To put this into action, educated men began to take form of starting the first Christian Mizo magazine, *Kristian Tlangau*.

The most important person in the formulation of this magazine was Pu Suaka, whose full name was Suakmichhinga and was born in 1868 in Lunghret village. He, with Thangphunga, the first two pupils of the missionaries, helped translate the Bible into Mizo alphabet with the Welsh missionaries. They closely followed G.H. Loch who would later be instrumental in the development of print in Mizoram and it was through Loch that Suaka became the first Mizo to hold a

government office as a postmaster in 1892. He mastered the Mizo alphabet under Lorrain and Savidge in 1894, April and he was occupied as a translator in the Governor's house for his fluency in language. Due to him, office letters no longer had to be first translated to Bengali since he could easily translate it from English to Mizo, and soon he was promoted to the position of a clerk and received thirty-five rupees as salary. Suaka was the first Mizo to have 'Pu' preceding his name to indicate his superior position amongst the Mizos, which was equivalent to the Hindi's 'babu.' Although he had been one of the decorated translators of the Mizo Bible, Suaka was not a Christian for a length of time. He only converted in December 20th, 1907 and was baptised by Rev. Robert Evans on December 26th in Mission Veng Church (Ralte, 263 - 265). The delay in his conversion, well after achieving all he could in office of the government is what Fanon meant by being 'elevated from (the colonized) jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother's country's cultural standards.' (Fanon, 54). Pu Suaka was fortunate enough to attend the schools, learn the language of the colonisers and was able to advance his cultural and political situation in a colonial state. The fact that he translated the Bible even before conversion spoke volumes of his personal benefit in learning the white man's culture and language. In Fanon's words:

> …historically, the Negro wants to speak the language French because it is the key that can open doors which were still barred to him fifty years ago (Fanon, 50).

For the Mizo men who learnt English for the efficiency of their own personal purposes, Fanon would hesitate to call it a case of cultural infliction upon the colonised subject. When it came to language it was a parallel concurrence between the white men and the Mizos. However, the assimilation of the culture was set from the very beginning with the written form of the Mizo language.

The other Mizo men who set out to formulate the first religious Mizo magazine were also individuals who thrived in the cultural exchange that happened between the Mizos and the white men. As Fanon pointed out, speaking, learning and

understanding the language of the white man opened doors. Before the arrival of the missionaries, the very idea of owning a printed document, let alone be the ones to develop one was unthinkable. A culture, whose identity was reportedly lost due to the scroll eaten by a dog, made it difficult to trace the past, but they definitely formulated a distinct Mizo print culture prospect.

The other, equally important forerunner of Mizo print culture was R. Dala. His full name was Ralzadala and he was born in 1884 in Thangkhama village. While he was in Tezpur studying Forestry, he met Dr. Peter Fraser and was so taken by his passion and love for the Mizo people, that he left his studies and followed Dr. Fraser wherever he went. With the help of Suaka, R. Dala, decided to produce print material for the Christian Mizos. It was documented that the two men, along with nine others met at Lianhmingthanga's house in Thakthing Veng around July 1911 to discuss the future of the monthly magazine, *Kristian Tlangau* (Ralte, 272).

These other nine men were Zakunga who was the headmaster of the Mizo school who later became a merchant; Daia, a Circle Interpreter; Dohnuna, one of the wealthiest Mizo men; Thangruaia, also a Circle interpreter, who later became a Lushai clerk in Lunglei; Zotuawnga, one of the first Mizo government officials, Lianhmingthanga, who became a Pastor, Thanga, one of the first Mizo men to finish his matriculation; Chawnga, the first Mizo headmaster of a school and Kawlkhuma, who set the foundation of the Salvation Army in Mizoram. R. Dala became the editor of the magazine at the beginning but later, Chawnga took his place in November 1911, and the secretary was Zakunga while the treasurer was Thanga. At the first meeting, Suaka, Dohnuna, Daia and Thangruaia donated a hundred rupees each for the inception of the magazine. And as such, the first Mizo religious monthly magazine was published on October of 1911 with 350 copies at its inception. The magazine was immensely successful amongst the Mizos for it was a landmark in the culture and people wanted to be a part of it. In 1912, the copies increased to 500 due to popular demand. The press used for this was the small hand-press from Dr. Fraser and it was given the name of *Christian Press* possibly because of its attempt to publish the first ever Mizo magazine which was a predominantly Christian

endeavour. The magazine consisted of around thirty-two pages produced without a break. The contents were filled with articles from the Mizos and from the Britishers alike. Since 1911 it has had increasing circulation up to the present (Ralte, 275). Over the years, *Kristian Tlangau* had become the official newspaper of the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram and has flourished for it immensely:

> Though a journal of the church, it maintains its independence and a notable feature of its history is that it has never been subsidized from outside, a record that very few church magazines anywhere could emulate (Lloyd, 138).

However, before the inception of the small hand press in 1911, the Mizos had already had monthly magazines at this time. Major J. Shakespear[xiii] understood the need for a vernacular, a common language with which the Mizos could be communicated with. The problem of language and differing dialects have caused tension within a culture for centuries. Shakespear's actions were informed by an awareness of the need for the Lusei language to experiment with different genres in order to become a standardized language as well as a literary language. To find a progress to this direction, Shakespear was instrumental in acting as an editor to the first two magazines in the Mizo language, which are, *Mizo Chanchin Laishuih*[xiv] which first came out in 1898 as an experiment of sort, but it was short lived until its publication stopped in 1899. The second magazine *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu*[xv] followed in the same vein, but it ran for a much longer record, spanning over forty years in its irregular publications. At the beginning, of these two publication, it was said to have been handwritten and not printed, painstakingly laboured under for a limited amount of audience (Hluna, 14). These magazines were more than anything, government issued magazines which did not deal with the search for cultural identity. It also did not cater to a reflection of Mizo sensibility as seen from their own perspectives. The magazines covered news on government ordeals, local administration, general knowledge, health issues, local knowledge and other items of interests.

These two magazines were used as an instrument to pass on information about the government and its activities inside the state. *Mizo Chanchin Laishuih* was published three times in 1898 and the fourth issue in January of 1899. In the second issue of the magazine, published 24th August, 1898, there is a notification from the Deputy Commissioner denoting that anyone who managed to shoot a bear or a tiger would be given an award (*Mizo Chanchin Laishuih*, 1898)

Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu (1902 - 1941) happens to be the first journalistic product that was printed in the history of the Lushai Hills District. Though there were no printing presses in the Lushai Hills at this juncture, this periodical was printed at Sylhet, currently located in Bangladesh. It is not clear as to whether the pieces which the men and women wrote for the magazine were scrutinised and edited by a board of editors for accuracy, use of language, on ideological moorings. In the four decades of its existence, Shakespear provided leadership for the first decade (1902-1911), while Makthanga had the longest career as the editor of the magazine (1911-1936) (Lalthangliana, 167).

Shakespear's actions were informed by an awareness of the need for the Lusei language to experiment with different genres in order to become a standardised language as well as a literary language. The production of *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* may be seen as an effort in this direction. One of the earliest literary journalistic institutions to employ *'chanchin'* (news) and to elaborate this particular narrative form may be unambiguously traced to *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu.* Lalkailuaia and Sainghinga acted as editors for the rest of the life of the magazine. The first issue of *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* ran through 14 pages in 1902 but by January 1904, the magazine increased the number of pages to 20. The first issue was priced at 1 anna and in 1904, the price remained the same even as the number of pages increased. It is likely that the contributors did not receive money for writing in the magazine throughout its existence till 1941 (Lalthangliana, 151).

The presence of these two magazines were instrumental in tracing the history of the Mizos but they did little to form a coherent identity of the Mizo people. Since they were government magazines, under the guardianship of a white man, the

contents were not cultural, rather they were the voice of the Mizo people and thus were silenced. Even with Shakespear's analysis of the people, the Mizos were considered by colonisers as little more than animals and head-hunters who mindlessly cut off their opponents' head in battles. The magazine was first publication in 1898 and it mostly dealt with what the Britishers officials (fondly given the Mizo nickname of 'bawrhsap') wanted for the Mizos, on how to act and what rules to follow. Some of the magazines were often distributed amongst the Mizo chiefs for them to read as well.

The first person who was ever known to document and give the name 'Mizo' to the tribe was Col. J. Shakespear. However, this magazine did not contribute much to the Mizo culture as there was hardly anything that could prove a description of the Mizos as a tribe. One of the articles pertains to how Suaka and a friend went to Kolkata with one of the government officials:

> The officer, along with his wife and children, accompanied by Khamliana, Thangchhingpuia, Suaka and Zira have set out to visit the mainlands. When they reached the 'Tlawng River,'[xvi] they went further and found 'Khulhkhut' (Kolkata). This is a big city and its huts are built with stone, as high as the sky limits. Along the roads are filled with horse carriages and aside the roads are filled with incredibly large amount of people. At nights, there are lanterns lit so bright that it is exactly like daylight. 'Khulhkhut' city is a day's walk from end to end[xvii] (*Mizo Chanchin Laisuih*, No. 4, 1898).

Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu which was first published in 1902 usually consisted of fourteen pages. It was published under the care of Superintendent Capt. J. Shakespear once more. The magazine generally covered news on government orders, local administration, general knowledge, health issues, local knowledge and other items of interest. This magazine was printed in Sylhet where most of the Mizo related tracts were printed. On this magazine, Joy Pachuau wrote that the main thrust was to induce the readers to look critically at their own society and to improve it. For

example, an article in Mizo society held out the improvements that conversion to Christianity would bring:

> Those who obey Pathian (God) will live in the following manner: We will live for the good of others and we will do what is good for others, we will not get drunk, we will not commit adultery, we will not slander, we will not fight with anyone, we will not try and fool anybody, we will not steal, we will not envious of other peoples' wealth, nor will we treat people badly. Whatever we believe is good, is Pathian's word. We call people who obey Pathian evil people; this is wrong. How can we call anyone who follows all that is good, bad? Those who follow good deeds are the good ones. We should not look down upon them, and instead follow after them…it is a bad thing that we do not follow the good and choose to follow the bad. (Pachuau, 69).

It is with this direction towards the conduct of a newly converted culture that the printed magazines and periodicals started in Mizo. With the colonial gaze so decidedly on the culture with the previous two publications, Suaka and R. Dala set out with a mind to perpetrate a truly Mizo magazine, printed by Mizos,and the content was filled of a decidedly Mizo mindset. The two forerunners were of the opinion that they could fashion out a culture that was specifically of Mizo matter but as the main identity construct for the Mizos during this time was intrinsically Christian in nature and since the Mizos identified themselves as Christians first and foremost, it is hardly surprising that the first Mizo cultural magazine was of religious concerns. With the first two magazines, *Mizo Chanchin Laisuih* (1989) and *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* (1902) having a much shorter life span, it is clear that the people of Mizoram subscribed to the ethos of *Kristian Tlangau* (1911) because it continued consistently without any setback. The missionaries provided the press at the beginning and many articles by them appeared in the journal, it was mainly run by the Mizos.

With the evident progress of the printing press, it slowly catered not only to the *Kristian Tlangau* but ventured on to different religious documents and tracts. The success of the magazine brought with it the need to improve the Christian Press for it could no longer print the amount that was demanded by the reading public and Col. G. E. Loch provided the means in the form of a new printing press. The printing press was named Loch Press in honour of its donor and served its purpose well. Loch Press remained its name from the time it first began until the electrification of the press in 1958. It was the time when the property of the press was transferred from the Mission, and was handed to the property of the Synod. It was considered to be named the Synod Press from then on (Lloyd, 139). The Synod Press published many more Mizo works but *Kristian Tlangau* remained a current and unwinding publication mainly because for the first time, it gave the Mizo people platform to write and read about their own culture from their point of view. However, it did not start out this way.

The magazine became hugely successful and it appeared as if it could be of a capitalist venture. However, it did not quite reach that state. The very nature of print and the objective of it was business. And even though there may be a shared commitment to capitalists interests and promoted capitalist activity in the Mizo society, the people were few and far between who could thoroughly 'consume' the magazine at the beginning of its inception. Therefore, what Anderson termed as 'print capitalism' could not quite be used in terms of the *Kristian Tlangau* at the start. So, what the missionaries did then was to form a cultural magazine that could penetrate the minds of the people instead of a capitalist one. With little opportunity for Mizo printed language to develop into commercial success, it does not quite meet the definition of print capitalism, and maybe more correctly described and 'print colonialism' in the case of the Mizo culture. Julie K. Williams cites the beginning of Puritanism in America as example and talks of how the main focus of a coloniser's work was to convert, often using print media as a weapon:

> Their (the coloniser's) agenda was to change thought and behaviour. Although at times colonisers exchanged scriptural works for goods or

> money, the intent was to subsidize the printing costs or to engender a sense of value in the product, rather than seeking to make a profit (Williams,165).

What is significant in this argument is in the fact that even though the white pioneers of the first Christian magazine might have capitalism in mind, the acculturation that happened in the Mizo society had more force with the change of the people's thoughts and behaviour. To this day, the sole reason for the publication of *Kristian Tlangau* has not been for profit, but it is the most pervasive form of printed document that the Mizos had had. Deeply rooted in religious propaganda, the magazine spoke volumes in terms of the history of how print came to play such an important part in every religious development in the world.

There were a number of different methods of propaganda used during the Reformation including pamphlets, leaflets, texts, letters and translations of the Bible. Protestant and Roman Catholic propaganda during the Reformation attempted to sway the public into adopting or continuing religious practices. Propagandists from both groups attempted to publish documents about church doctrine, to either retain their existing believers or to influence new believers. Occasionally, these printed texts also acted as manuals for lay people to refer to, about the appropriate way to conduct themselves within the church and society. Printed texts were available for a large number of literate people and also, the ideas and beliefs of the reformist writers, including Martin Luther were widely disseminated orally to the Mizos. Pamphlets took little time to produce and they could be printed and sold quickly, thus making them a very effective form of propaganda. The sheer number of pamphlets produced during this time period indicates that the Protestant works during the Reformation was available on a consistent basis and on a large scale, thus making the controversial ideas accessible to the public masses. This is one of the reasons why the Protestants were successful in their propaganda campaign as well as in the Reformation.

> …letters, treatises and sermons appealed to an elitist and hierarchal group. The people were not hostile to print or literacy, but they did respond to the 'rhetoric persuasion' in mass address by attacking habits of deference attached to print culture…by the end of the Reformation era, the cleavage was widening between the oral and the print worlds (Tebbe, 262-263).

The Mizos comprehend their identity as inextricably linked to the religion and the collective consciousness of the Mizos actively propagates a 'Mizo Christianity' (Pachuau, 16). The Mizos felt they have much to be thankful for since it was them who first propagated, along with Christianity, the medium of print. The missionaries understood that the only way to assimilation was to enlighten themselves with the language in order to really speak the 'truth' of the Gospel to them.

Foucault recognises Christianity as the ultimate power structure which imposes an obligation upon its followers to accept its dogma, its sacred text and, most importantly, its authority as truth through confession and the pastoral power. People willingly submit to this aspect of Christianity much in the same manner in which they submit to governmental and medical authority. Foucault does not seek to understand why this phenomenon has occurred. From his decided conclusion of the church as a mere political tool, it can be understood while analysing some of the changes and differences or rather similarities in folklore and Christian practices that perhaps the early Christians were 'manipulating' the customs and beliefs of the people. This could perhaps be instrumental in replacing pre-colonial beliefs with that of the post-Christian traditions.

Foucault, for the later part of his life, had been occupied with the idea of religion and culture. He primarily sees religion as nothing but a set of enforced relations and discursive practices which dictate human life and their culture, forcing answers on its followers with no room for questions. His treatment of religion is one of scrutiny and suspicion, but he holds that "religion is a part, a central part, of the

cultural conditions of knowledge. In this sense, it is very difficult to separate religion and culture; they are interconnected parts of each other" (McCoy, 133).

The contemporary culture of the Mizos was born out of the culture clash as well as the tension between the colonizer and the colonised and the direct cut from the manner of life which they had earlier known. In his introductory note, Lloyd observes that within a span of a few decades Mizoram from being totally illiterate has become the second most literate areas in the whole of India. The Mizos depicted not only a desire to learn but also a spontaneous desire to share with others what had been acquired (Lloyd, 2). This desire to share had produced a lot of mission – educated people who were eager to please the 'masters' who had taught them a new language and had opened a new world for them.

The historical moment where the colonised were educated and made to study cultures outside of their own produced the nineteenth century form of imperialism. Gauri Viswanathan has presented strong arguments for relating the "institutionalization and subsequent valourisation of English literary study to a shape and an ideological content developed in the colonial context," and specifically as it developed in India, where:

> British colonial administrators, provoked by missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other, discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education (Viswanathan, 44).

This vast blossoming of what was essentially a new industry was entirely due to the ideas of Martin Luther. Just as Luther needed the industry for influencing followers and for the fast and vast distribution of his doctrines, the printing press too needed the Reformation movement for the growth of its industry. At a time when the topic of interest for the masses was religion, Luther provided a demonstration that garnered a successful market for both sides of the contradicting doctrines. Eisenstein has written of how ignored print culture had been in the studies of these significant

points in history and how the invention of printing press had been the sole reason as to why the Reformation could have happened in the 16th century Europe. She wrote:

> In accounts of the rise of Protestantism as in accounts of other movements, the effects produced by printing tend to be drastically curtailed and restricted to the single function of 'spreading' ideas. That new issues were posed for churchmen when the scriptural tradition 'went to press' and that print contributed to dividing Christendom before spreading Protestantism are possibilities that have gone unexplored (Eisenstein, 651).

Eisenstein once more wrote of how Luther thanked the invention of the machine for the growth of his doctrine. She wrote that during the Reformation, Luther often spoke of how divine the printing press was in facilitating their movement and spreading their doctrines. For him, the invention was a holy gift that had been granted by God to accelerate his ideology and impart God's true teachings to the people through the distribution of his many books. It was the invention of print and its prevalence that convinced the masses that it was his teachings that they should follow, and not violence that so often got involved with religion. Perhaps, it is no surprise that the first periodical that was printed in Mizo press was religious in nature, as religion as way of colonising a people had long been established in different cultures across the world. As had been previously indicated, the Reformation benefited incredibly by the invention of the printing press. However, it was not only the Reformation that had made use of print culture and the influence that it had on the masses.

So, with the conversion of the Mizo people firmly established, what flourished was a rich diversity in religious magazines printed at the Synod Press which followed the success of the *Kristian Tlangau*. After *Kristian Thalai*[xviii] (1970) was published, *Ramthar* (1984), another extension of the publications from the Synod Press was published, both magazines successful in terms of readership and distribution. *Ramthar* magazine deals with mission work that the Mizos themselves

had initiated well after the missionaries had left the state. It deals with the work that the Mizo missionaries had undertaken and it notified the Mizo Christians about the places that were yet to be converted to the Christian faith. It reports on the mission fields that had been visited over the month as well as the expenditure that were used in the excavation. The intention of this magazine is to imbibe in the people a sense of participation in broadening the teachings of God just as the Welsh missionaries had taught them. *Kristian Thalai* is a magazine primarily published for the Mizo Christian youths, ages anywhere from thirteen to forty. It has one of the largest readership amongst youths and it constantly encourages them to take part in fellowship. In 2003, the editorial of the magazine denotes how instrumental the magazine has been in the endeavour of spreading the Gospel:

> The task of maintaining *Kristian Thalai* by our able editors has shown great success and we are able to reach more readership every year. However, the task does not lie with the editors alone. This is a mission we can all help and participate in. Just as the Lord wants us when we are at our best and youthful selves, let us take it upon ourselves to further the mission of spreading the Gospel by contributing as much as we can. The task to call upon our brothers and sister through this magazine is a holy and sacred duty[xix] (*Kristian Thalai*, November issue, 2016).

Another important magazine that came out under the Synod Press is *Agape* which was published in 1986. Mizo culture is a predominantly patriarchal culture, and the coming of the Gospel gave to the people the idea of equality under the umbrella of the Christian faith. It might seem unlikely that Mizo women could be progressive in managing a magazine of their own to the early Mizo people, but that was what happened in 1986, when the first religious Mizo magazine by Mizo women was published. This magazine usually deals with, as it is written on the cover of the magazine, 'sermons,' 'Christian family,' 'cooking recipes,' and 'health,' (*Agape*, Vol. 1, No. 2). One of the most important differing concerns that crept up at the beginning of the success of print was the concern of women and their welfare. The

Church had also recognized the importance of women when it came to the management of the Christian family and has been continuing to give utmost support in their endeavors with the magazine as well as their socio-religious responsibilities.

The latest and perhaps the most important installment in the Synod Press publication is the magazine, *Kristian Naupang*[xx] whose first publication came out in October, 1994. This magazine might be the most important for it was with the children's Sunday School that J. H. Lorrain. F.W. Savidge began their mission in Mizoram for they knew that knowledge and education imparted onto children in an investment that lasted through life. *Kristian Naupang* mainly deals with issues of friendship, respecting elders, value of parents, articles about Bible heroes and heroines and most importantly, 'Bible milem' which means 'Bible pictures.' In the December issue of the magazine in 1994, an article entitled, 'Pathian fate,' meaning 'Children of God,' conveyed the greatest desire for the magazine to be a solace to children with its pictures, to those who might not have the privilege of education. "One of Jesus' greatest joys when He came to the earth was to be amongst children. Let this magazine be a light, a guide to those children," (*Kristian Naupang*, Vol.1, No. 5) reads the article. And to the time of writing, the magazine continues to be distributed to the children attending Sunday School every month.

Thus, the Synod Press has published a plethora of magazines, pamphlets, periodicals and many such that are exclusively religious in nature. The chapter comes full circle with the beginning of the language of the Mizos which led to this reading culture that had greatly advanced the print culture of the people. When Fanon said, "to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture," (Fanon, 42) it spoke heavily of the history of the Mizo culture. The outlook of the Mizos, their experiences and ultimately their cultural identity was completely changed by the coming of print in the land.

Fanon describes culture as "a combination of motor and mental behavior patterns arising from the encounter of man with nature and with his fellow-men," (181), which means that fundamentally culture is learned behaviour. In the case of

the Mizo colonial situation, it was a cultural exchange. Foucault claimed a power/knowledge complex relationship between the participants in a group, Gramsci talked of how a subdued hegemonic force pervaded the minds of the Mizo people, thereby leading to cultural assimilation (Kreps, 445).

Taking all of these into the Mizo print culture context, and imbibing all of it with the history of how print had advanced religious propaganda in the fifteenth century, there can be no argument that print had evolved the culture of the people at different stages of its evolution. For the Mizos, there has been an exchange of culture, possibly a hegemonic assimilation of the white man's culture over their own.

Notes

[i] 'Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi' is a Mizo myth well before the beginning of man. 'Khuangchawi' is meant to show success and in this particular story, Thanrawkpa threw a feast for all animals to celebrate his success. In the myth, all animals ranging from the lion to the snail attended the Khuangchawi and the animals got so drunk that the nocturnal animals were known to have been afraid of the sun since then.

[ii]The Ralte Clan of the Mizo were scattered across the Northern part of Mizoram.The clan can now more or less be found anywhere in the state. The Ralte Clan subdivided themselves into four clans namely – Kawlni, Siakeng, Khelte and Leichhun (Lalthangliana, 42)

[iii]The Young Men's Christian Association is a worldwide organization with more than 58 million beneficiaries from 125 national associations (World YMCA, ymc.int).

[iv] Tlabung is a village on the south of Mizoram having Bangladesh as its neighbouring country. It was through this village that the early foreigners usually entered Mizoram.

[v] Enoch Lewis Mendus stayed in Mizoram as a missionary from 1921 to 1944. He was instrumental in the developing the education institutions in Mizoram and even served as one of the chairmen in Aizawl Theological College (Ralte, 255).

[vi] This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[vii]The Mizos use this word today to refer to Church.

[viii] Sir William Jones (28 September 1746 – 27 April 1794) was a scholar and visionary, who came to India as a judge of the Supreme court, and with the help of Charles Wilkins, in 1784 started the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the journal *Asiatic Researches.* These two institutions were instrumental in establishing the field of Indology.

[ix]Suaka's full name was Suakmichhinga. He was the first person to be educated in the Lushai alphabets that D.E Jones and J.H Lorrain formulated and he helped in translating the Bible to Mizo (Ralte, 111).

[x] 'Kristian' in English translates to Christian, 'tlangau' translates to 'crier.' The magazine can be described as a village crier who would announce news and important events to the Christians in the form of a printed magazine.

[xi]Lushai Kristian Press or the Mizo Christian Press

[xii]This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[xiii] J. Shakespear was the acting superintendent in Mizoram between 1897-98 and 1900-03. He was an intelligence officer for the Lushai Expeditionary Force in 1888. He came to South Lushai Hills on March 1889, as part of British Military campaign against the Lushai. Eventually, he became the first superintendent of the Lushai Hills.

[xiv]*Mizo Chanchin Laisuih* translates to 'Mizo News Mostly' (Dailova, 345, 446). From the name itself, it can be understood that the magazine served as an instrument to push government news and agenda.

[xv]*Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu* translates to 'Mizo and the Plain Dwellers' Magazine.'

[xvi] The longest river in Mizoram

[xvii]This passage has been translated from the original vernacular Mizo to English by me

[xviii]*Kristian Thalai* can be translated as 'Christian Youth.'

[xix]This passage has been translated from the original vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[xx]*Kristian Naupang* translates to 'Christian Children.'

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Chapter 3

Print Culture and Mizo Sensibility

There was a rapid change in Mizoram following the Indian Independence in the political, as well as the cultural spheres in the land, and most especially to marked changes in Mizo print culture. The chapter will trace the political struggle of the state and how a specific print culture was developed as a result of the Mizo Nationalist Struggle in 1966 and its aftermath. During this politically unstable period, a variety of cultural publications in mediums like magazines and literary periodicals captured the imagination of the Mizos as an autonomous cultural entity. The cultural productions in the form of magazines and literary expressions have gone on to assimilate the region into a national community even as it appears to strive for a distinctive regional identity. Since the granting of statehood, representative institutions like the legislature, media and civil society organisations, including the church continues to play an important role in the articulation of the needs and aspirations of the contemporary Mizo culture.

The chapter denotes an extended analysis for the emergence of the 'Mizo Academy of Letters' which was first established in 1964, along with the analysis of some of the articles in the literary magazine, *Thu leh Hla*[i]. This magazine formed an important part in the development of a secular print culture in Mizoram, and is given significant focus. India gained independence in 1947 and the feeling of nationalism stirred amongst the Mizo people. There arose a demand amongst the Mizos for a separate identity from that of the states surrounding them. For the first time, after having mainly religious and didactic magazines to cater to their print culture, the Mizos decided to publish an exclusively Mizo magazine, in search of their own separate identity. The first issue of *Thu leh Hla,* edited by J.F Laldailova[ii] was published in 1965 and it continued to flourish under different editors. The magazine was innovative and groundbreaking because at the time, all the Mizos had known of periodic publications were religious in nature. *Thu leh Hla* boasts of a many articles pertaining to the of Mizo language in the formal educational system, which was something that the Mizos had not given attention to before. It also played a hand in the development of Mizo idioms

including lack of appropriate usage of phrases and reflection on an intellectual engagement with the notion of culture. The study points out the emergence of a certain Mizo personality in the articulations of the various themes presented in the magazine. Along with the rise in cultural awareness, the Mizos yearned for a secular culture to express their indigenous sentiments and identity. The Mizo Academy of Letters was therefore formed, mostly to regulate and develop Mizo language and also to advance the field of Mizo literature.

Zonu[iii] (1983), another product of the Mizo Nationalist Struggle[iv] is reflected extensively in this chapter. This magazine is one of the first representations of Mizo women in print and continues to become the leading Mizo women's magazine. The chapter questions as to whether the silence of women regarding the suffering they endured during the nationalist struggle in the magazine is a deliberate form of resistance or even a denial of their pain. It will trace the women in print in early European print culture and the lasting effects it continued to have even in Mizo women's forum, at the time of writing.

The chapter will also trace several magazines that came up in the late 1970s and early 50s that dealt with nationalism as a result of the social events, namely *Sofia*, 'Weekly News Magazine of Mizoram' (1978), *Huapzo*[v], 'Magazine of Understanding' (1982), *Zonieng*[vi] 'To Build Up A Mizo Nationalism' (1987) *Eros*[vii] (1985), a weekly magazine that focused on specific Mizo identity as a result of the Mizo Nationalist Movement, and *Zoeng*[viii] (1982). These magazines have been chosen for the focus of this chapter in order to trace the evolution of the magazines at large. The chapter will focus on the consensus ethos of nationalism that emerged in print media as a result of the political divide in Mizoram and the intrinsic Mizo sensibilities that came along with it.

This chapter denotes a great political transition from the colonial era to the flourishing print culture as a result of political unrest which Mizoram went through. This was in part a result of the realization amongst many of the Mizo

intellectuals that there needed to be a specific identity for the Mizos to have a part in the Indian political arena. In 2006, James Dokhuma[ix], one of most prominent writers in Mizo published a book called, *Mizo Tawng Kalphung* (Mizo Language Structure) and in his forward, he mentioned how his avid participation in politics were all in vain because he did not have the kind of education that he wanted to have. He declared himself unfit to address even the speaker of the Parliament because of his lack of education. He noted four main points he recalled were essential for any political party to safeguard, and amongst these four points, he writes, "the preservation of cultural identity[x]" as the most important goal that a political party could have. He continued thus:

> For the success of this notion, there has to be power, and since I am not in the possession of this 'power' I am very aware that there is nothing a man like me could contribute to politics. However, I also realize I can leave a legacy in the preservation of a cultural identity through writing. It is with my desire to have a part in perfecting the Mizo language that I write this book, *Mizo Tawng Kalphung* (Mizo Language Structure), and it is the part I have played to preserve my culture[xi] (*Mizo Tawng Kalphung*, 1-2)

With this statement from Dokhuma, we can see how language, literature and politics intertwine to develop a cultural identity. In the January 1986 issue of *Huapzo* magazine, under an article titled, 'Indira Gandhi was shot on a Wednesday, death to the assassins on the same day,'[xii] there is a passage of how Mizoram needed to look into its future, focusing more on nationalism rather than any other issue in the state:

> we have come through great hardship to attain a certain kind of peace in our time. With these political unrests around us (the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984), Mizoram needs to look towards the future of politics. We are now equipped with means to

> unite our people more than ever before and this is the time to protect ourselves from all unrest… (Vol. IV, No. 3).

With these statements seen in popular magazines of the day, it was clear that Mizoram was still going through a period of unrest, even if internally. The means with which these concerns could be put out was through print, the very magazines which the popular mass now used to express their concerns. It is therefore clear that print media had become indispensable in times of great social change. From the centric eucharistic magazines to these political issues, the people have come to understand how powerful the weapon of print was for uniting a culture.

The history of print culture in Mizoram, in many ways, before the 1960s were developed by the church. It was through the endeavour of the Synod Press that the Mizos formulated lexical union and were able to fashion out a standard form of printed language and continued to make use of this language in many fields of expression. Through cultural magazines such as *Thu leh Hla,* there is a clear indication that the Mizos were still going through the process of formal standardization of their language even after 60 years of colonial rule. Given the complicated history of oral to print in such a short amount of time, as well as with education and literature, Mizo print culture requires a narrative that allows research to understand the changing Mizo identity through all of these stages. For years of production and reading of mainly periodic publications which were religious and didactic, it was only through the Mizo Nationalist Struggle and the feeling of nationalism that the early Mizo intellectuals felt the need to produce media content that did not only feed the church institutions.

However, before studying the emergence of secular forms of media forums that developed after the independence of the country, a contextual analysis of Mizoram's political state is required for this chapter. The first political party called The Mizo Union came to existence towards the end of 1930s as a result of

a general concern for the unity of all Mizos, particularly, of the 'hnamchawm'.[xiii] Freedom from political and economic exploitation, investment of local administration with the chiefs and their protection by the British regime, encouraged the Mizo chiefs to act more arrogantly in relation to their own people. The tie between the chiefs and the government grew closer with the course of time. Administration through the chiefs continued with adaptations and adjustments, necessitated by the circumstances. A meeting of the Mizo chiefs was held at Thenzawl [xiv] in October 1941 in which the chiefs assured the superintendent of their co-operation in the British war effort. In the meeting held at Aizawl in April 1942, all the chiefs, under the chairmanship of McCall [xv] declared war on Japan. The deepening identification of the Lals with the British imperialism was not approved by the common people (Lalthangliana, 161).

From the 1940's, there arose a need for a national identity and the educated elites founded the political party known as the Mizo Union in 1946 and prior to that, they periodically complained that they did not have representative institutions in the Mizo Hills to express their public grievances. Due to the colonial policy of isolation, the Mizo Hills were declared as an excluded area and issues relating to the Mizo Hills were not discussed in the Assam Provincial Legislature. There were times when the native elites demanded participation in the Assam Provincial Legislature. The colonial officials along with the chiefs rejected their demands (Lalthangliana, 489). With India gaining independence in 1947, this demand became vocal among the Mizo literati. Along with this rise in political consciousness, they realized that they lacked a secular culture to express their new political sentiments and identity.

This argument leads to the central claim of the chapter that globalisation actually proliferates rather than destroys identities. Seen as a European experience that went hand in hand with colonialism, globalisation has undergone immense negative study in recent years. Stuart Hall questions as to whether globalisation gives people an identity or whether native identity is stripped off from them (Hall,

188). Globalisation is really the globalisation of modernity, and modernity is the harbinger of identity. It is a common assumption that identity-formation is a universal feature of human experience. Print media became an important tool for the formation of cultural identity as result of globalisation. The Mizos felt, that with the start of a distinct national identity that came like waves at the earlier part of the century, there was not enough representation of Mizo ideals and values apart from that of the religious magazines that had been circulating in and around the state for almost three decades.

When studying media coverage, the question that must be asked is where the interest lies. Is the media studied solely as a source of information, or is it studied more deeply, in its own right, in order to learn about its role and the mechanisms in the formation of identity? What printed magazines and periodicals provided, given these questions, was that, first of all, it gave the people a unified form of language, a language that the Lusei people could see and identify with. Unlike the lores that had been one of the main aspects of identification of the Mizos up until the introduction of the printing press, the Mizos could not only feel a sense of belonging to their culture, but could also see it through the newly emerging cultural magazines and periodicals.

Another important aspect that these issues provided to the people was that these magazines gave cultural unification when it came to identity formation. Their thoughts, feelings and moreover, literary inclinations could be seen in these magazines. These approaches of studying media coverage hold in common that national identity is constructed and reinforced through national discourse, of which the media, though especially the press, constitute the most important part (Allen, 201). It is reflected more precisely, in the way the national identity in question is reinforced in magazines and periodical coverages.

This print culture coverage first came to the Mizo people through purely political means. The people were dispersed about their role in the society a few

years even before the independence of the country. For the first time in Mizo society, the common people started to question the role of the Mizo chiefs and the power they held over their people. With the ending of the power of the Mizo chiefs in early society and also with the physical establishments of 'Zawlbuk'[xvi] (now defunct), the Mizos strongly felt the need for a representation in some way for their changing cultural spheres. For the very first time in his history of the Mizos, the hierarchy of the chiefs were challenged by the 'hnamchawm' like never before.

The ideology of the common people could no longer be sustained by the slowly disappearing chiefs. Ideologies work to reproduce or sustain the existing relation between dominant and subservient which equals the society and bond up the relation between dominant and subservient, but media specifies and defines the resistance style of individuals that dominate. Agreeing with Hall's ideology of print media as important means to understanding culture, Jennifer Tebbe explains how print can obscure the manipulation of meaning in media with publications such as clear-set propaganda, which can have a hand in influencing the individual to oppose the dominants and their meanings of cultural products, and to construct their own cultural norms and meanings, in the same way that media could help to create critical concurrence in society for other group (Tebbe, 199).

What is further seen through the comprehensive study of print in Mizoram was that print culture acts as an agency in part of forming a specific Mizo identity. Globalisation through exposure, as has been mentioned before, conveyed that the Mizos had benefitted from participating in the World Wars, from interacting with their colonial white men, learning about their crafts, understanding the importance of print in the evolution of a culture and wanting to be a part of it. The impact of globalisation in the cultural sphere has been viewed in a pessimistic light. Typically, it has been associated with the destruction of cultural identities, victims of the accelerating encroachment of a homogenised, westernised, consumer

culture. This view tends to interpret globalisation as a seamless western cultural imperialism.

What is argued is something more specific; that Mizo cultural identity, properly understood, is much more the product of globalisation than its victim. Due to the exposure that the Mizos underwent as result of certain nationalist agencies, there arose a need in the people for a better representation of their culture, for the formation of a secular culture that has not been there before. By breaking away from the norms of the chieftainship, the Mizo people realised that they wanted an identity separate from the rulers. Traditionally, the Mizos were subject to the authority of the chiefs where the chiefs had a pre-eminent position. The chiefs were the supreme ruler of each of their own jurisdiction. The chiefs enjoyed various privileges, such as the allotment of land to the people for cultivation and the exaction of taxes. The chief was the father and protector of the Mizo society (Vanlalchhuanawma, 321). Breaking away from this, they wanted a medium with which to represent this search for cultural identity separate from the control of any agencies, be it the colonisers or the chiefs.

Apart from the regular church based magazines and political organs, the decade saw an increase in non-church and non-political publications which had not emerged in the region before. This may be characterised as efforts coming mainly from individuals who were interested in developing new literary and cultural tastes against the background of developmental and cultural agenda of the Indian Nation State. With education and exposure that the educated Mizos have had in their studies out their own state, they soon realised that they lacked a secular culture compared to the other cultures that they had been exposed to, and they voiced their concerns and desire for such a culture. In 1952, the literary figure Rokunga[xvii], a patriotic song composer spoke of how the Mizo people were lacking freedom or even imagination to produce any secular form of art. This was mostly due to the fact that they had not been accustomed to having any alternate expressions than that of the religious kind. Rokunga states:

> There was no room for patriotism or freedom of artistic expression in the Mizo culture. There were no songs to sing or perform except for the hymns and songs one learnt in Church for the Mizos. The Christian Mizo youths had no room for musical expression of any kind. The pre-Christian songs have been cast aside as they were deemed immoral by the Church after conversion. Love songs were unacceptable and 'Kaihlek Zai'[xviii] was prohibited by the Church. There was a need to give the people freedom when it came to Mizo prose and poetry,"[xix] (Thanmawia, 1998, 116).

With this statement, it was undeniable to notice how much the Mizos were starved of secular platforms for any kind of artistic expression. They had outgrown the church magazines as well as the didactic approach to which print culture had been introduced to them during colonial rule and with the emergence of a new era after the independence of the country, it seemed as if the Mizos too wanted another form of identity than that of the religious.

In the first 1965 issue of *Thu leh Hla*, there are 15 articles, including the editorial where all of them stressed the need for a particular Mizo identity. In the editorial, the editor J.F. Laldailova denoted the requirement for a standard Mizo language which could be followed by all writers in the field of literature. He also called for a flourishing print culture which could only be achieved through this development in language. The forerunners of the magazine, he wrote, were not masters of the language themselves, but were all driven by the common goal and the hope to see a thriving literary culture and to promote Mizo identity in the coming years. Laldailova went on to encourage the people to contribute to this goal and to be fearless in supplying their own ideas and opinions which was the only way to have a successful print culture (*Thu leh Hla,* Bu 1na, 1). The first issue of the magazine had contributors who had notable presence in the Mizo society.

The first article titled, 'Hmasawnna' meaning 'Progress' was written by, Selet Thanga[xx], one of the first prominent writers in Mizo. He was born on 9th June, 1920 and worked at the Govt. Higher Secondary School for most of his life. A. G. McCall described him as "an excellent man. I am confident that he will do everything excellently" (Vanlalchhuanawma, ix). The most famous book he wrote was *Zirlai Puitu*[xxi] (1973). He also wrote many songs during his earlier years. He remained to be one of the many writers who contributed to *Thu leh Hla* magazine until his death in 1995. He critically examines the issue of institutionalising the Mizo language in the formal educational system. Being a teacher, his article 'Hmasawnna' pertains mostly to the field of education in the Middle and Higher school level. The progress (Hmasawnna) he wanted was for the schools where the students were taught of difficult prose and poetry where the language was so old that the students could not enjoy them. He wanted the school system to be progressive in the sense that preparation for these difficult linguistic studies should start from Middle school and move forward from there[xxii] (*Thu leh Hla,* Bu 1na, 2).

Selet Thanga seems to understand, from the article above, that education at the lower level was the foundation for the success of a flourishing culture that J.F. Laldailova hoped for, as written in his editorial. Progress can come in all fields but for Thanga, real progress started with education, and mostly with the progress which should be seen in the school curriculum. It is through understanding and most importantly, with enjoyment of the Mizo prose and poetry that the newer generation of the Mizos would further the print culture of the Mizos.

The second article of the magazine is written by the editor, J.F. Laldailova himself and it is titled, 'Thangthar Tawng' which means 'Language of the new generation' and it is a crucial study of idioms and phrases which have been forgotten by the new generation of the Mizos. He writes:

> Being a people who move from one place to the other, the Mizos have been generating their language with not only time, but with the different places that they had moved and settled in. Some of the idioms and phrases of our ancestors have been forgotten and the new generation of the Mizos have not advanced the language either. Although most of the language that we use now were derived from the Duhlian language, many have been appropriated from Hindi as well. There are many words which we have not found to substitute for from Hindi to Mizo [xxiii]. (*Thu leh Hla*, Bu 1na)

What is interesting to note in this statement is that language was the binding force that pulled the people together, while creating the feeling of shared identity. Benedict Anderson wrote of a community where people who have never seen each other before could imagine themselves as being part of a bigger, homogenous identity because of some commonality. This commonality is found through 'print capitalism' (Anderson, 145) as Anderson states, and what print capitalism brought, even in the context of the Mizo literary society was the unification of language.

An imagined community can be thought of as the formation of a shared national identity among the nation and its people, in which the people perceive themselves as a homogenous body despite never having met the other individual. Anderson describes the nation as 'imagined community'. The nation, and the concept of an imagined community could not be formed without the media acting as a catalyst which contributed to the construction of a shared identity among the nation and its people. Print media can be described as the driving force which forms the basis of a shared identity. With this concept in hand, *Thu leh Hla* served as a major event in Mizo literary print history because even though the proponents of this magazine were brought out of a traumatic political upheaval, what it started was a print culture in Mizoram as had never been seen before. The search for

synonyms in the 'Duhlian' language by J.F. Laldailova was a worthy mission for it was beginning with the publications of magazines and periodicals that the people began to form an identity belonging to them. The language of books and poetry were different from the language of the print media because they were the language of the authors and poets, whose own language gave them a sense of identity. Print media and its circulation on the other hand served all its audience, and the language in these magazines were used by the people, who were an imagined common identity.

The tenth, thirteenth and fourteenth articles from the first issue of *Thu leh Hla* magazine were titled, 'Mizo Teh Dan' (How to Measure a Mizo), 'Mizo Ze Dik' (True Mizo Character) and 'Mizo Dik Tak' (The True Mizo). These articles form demonstrations as to how the Mizos continued their search for a specific identity. Culture, being a vast and fluctuating concept, with a multitude of dimensions, these articles explore the tendency to define Mizo culture in terms of the distinctive features which establish their alterity. After years of imbibing a foreign culture, as a result of colonialism, the focus of the Mizos (as reflected in these articles) shifted to the self-realisation that identity is sought through gaining an understanding of one's own culture in its wider multi-cultural context. In the article 'Mizo Ze Dik' (True Mizo Character) written by Zatluanga[xxiv], who was a prominent writer in Mizo, the author denoted the ideal Mizo character as well as his encouragement for magazines such as *Thu leh Hla,* so as to form a Mizo community beyond the state. He writes thus:

> The Mizo has now become synonymous with a people of good will. We celebrate together as well as lament together. We are a community in the true sense. We share a language with which we can now communicate with our brothers and sisters from all parts of the world through written words (*Thu leh Hla,* Bu 1na, 26).

While giving the people an idea of what being a true Mizo was, Heathorn also added the important issue on how important language has become in communication as well as in identity formation. European capitalism is all about the standardisation of print languages. This standardisation allowed for a common language to be used. This allowed each individual of the nation to have the imagination of sharing the same experience. Due to the time symmetry that publications of magazines allowed, it enables all members to experience events at the same time (Heathorn,105 -109). The shared experiences that were facilitated by print media enabled individual members of a nation to share a common experience and a shared identity with another member, despite never having interacted with each other. This therefore breeds the idea of a national community. Anderson talks of the importance of language as such:

> What the eye is to the lover – that particular, ordinary eye he or she is born with – language – whatever language history has made his or her mother tongue – is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother's knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures are dreamed (Anderson, 154).

For him, the future of a nation can only be imagined through the evolution of language, for it is with language that a nation is unified. The institutionalisation of the Mizo language goes through the process by which the printed languages came to be accepted, or 'taken for granted' in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal. The magazine *Thu leh Hla* became a forerunner for the acceptance of the Mizo language and in many ways, it standardised it.

The magazine conveyed in many ways the importance of language and how it should be evolved and preserved. J. F Laldailova was indeed very keen in progressing the language and bemoaned over the fact that the Mizos were still

using many foreign words to describe certain things because there simply wasn't a word for it. He gave credit to the forefathers who have travelled and gave Mizo names to trees (thingkung), rivers (lui), mountains (tlang) and flowers (pangpar) during their nomadic past years as they moved from place to place. However, there had been little advancement and generation of the Mizo words because there had not yet been any substitute for keys (chabi) and lock (tala) which were derived from Hindi. He called upon the younger generation to come up with words which were entirely Mizo so that the people would no longer have to depend upon other language to express themselves (*Thu leh Hla,* Bu 1na). The writer understood distinctly that sharing a language with an alien culture meant that the Mizos were not far from assimilation. Aware of being a minority, Dailova wanted to fashion out a distinct language that would be able to form the basis for a strong, specific Mizo identity.

The article in *Thu leh Hla,* titled, 'Mizo Dik Tak' (True Mizo) was written by a respected writer and composer named, C.Z Huala[xxv]. In the article, the writer once more stressed the need to be different from the foreign culture which had been part of the Mizos for so long. Many of the Mizos no longer understood the sacred traditions of what it meant to be a Mizo, writes the author. In the race to be modern, the Mizo people were misguided and their characters were no longer a reflection of the 'true Mizo' (*Thu leh Hla,* Bu 1na). Ideally, the relation between tradition and modernisation should be a dialectical and ultimately a harmonious one. Unfortunately, as seen in this article, it did not seem to be so for the Mizos. However, when overt tension arises in such debates, often the minority finds unity in trying to retain its traditions for fear of assimilation. Both external colonisation and internal colonisation have debilitated the inner strength of weak and marginalised communities within nation states. This situation has provided an occasion for weaker nations to express their unity. It appears that C. Z Huala is indirectly referring to the internecine quarrels among the Mizos themselves and the process of the making of 'we' identity.

This idea of 'we' is what Anderson talks more about in his study. His book is founded on; first, that our belief that nations are ancient and a historical construct is a very modern phenomenon, one that has been brought about through capitalism (particularly print capitalism); and, second, the belief that everyone belongs to a nation in some capacity (Blackburn, 121). Regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that individuals might face, the nation is still framed as one of equal 'comradeship' as the ideology conveys. He argues against the notion that nations are created through determinants such as race or religion within a given cartographic border but instead asserts that they are 'imagined' into existence. The aspect of the imagination of 'we' is a result of the nationalist struggle and the events that followed became an intrinsic part of studying a print culture in Mizoram.

Following the notion of Anderson, Heathorn agreed that 'Print Capitalism' gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation (Heathorn, 106). 'Print Capitalism' and the new secular pilgrimages of the functionaries of the new centralized absolutist and colonial states determined the 'shape' and 'kind' of the new consciousness and community, while making it national. Print-capitalism denoted 'a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of print, and the fatality of human and linguistic diversity' (Blackburn, 43). The new vernacular print languages laid the basis for national consciousness by unifying 'fields of language and communication below Latin and other spoken vernaculars. They also gave 'a new fixity to language'. And they made out of dialects which were closer to the print languages privileged 'languages of power' (Anderson, 498). This first widened the community as print made incomprehensible dialects intelligible, and it also laid the basis for the antiquity which would so often be claimed for nations, and the third marginalised more distant dialects in ways which occasionally led to 'sub-nationalisms'. Therefore, out of the nation's 'independence' arose an idea in the people of the sub-tribes of Mizoram that they

too could be free of the 'rulers', that they too could form an identity separate from that of the native chiefs as well as the colonial white man. This need is heralded through the upheaval of the printed magazines as such.

In the 1982 issue of *Thu leh Hla,* B. Lalthangliana[xxvi] wrote an article titled, 'Mizo History' where he denoted how, through books and magazines, the Mizos had come to understand and reflect back on the traditions and culture of their forefathers, which might have been forgotten and lost to the wind if it had been oral tradition with which we passed down the history. The memory of earlier times, even the times we could not fathom or imagine due to the little resources the Mizos had of their past, could now be felt through the reading of these texts. Lalthangliana continued to convey the importance of tracing oral history to put down into print so that all memory of the past might not be lost. "We have used our language for words and poetry to very good results, but using the written language to formulate a historical database for the Mizos is just as important," (*Thu leh Hla,* Bu 198na, 16). In this article, the author greatly praises the plethora of poems and songs which have been published and used to formulate a standard Mizo language as earlier editors like J.F. Laldailova had desired. However, in the same magazine, 17 years later, B. Lalthangliana, a much needed historian also called for the need to trace back the Mizo history or else the people might lose their identity altogether. If a people did not know and understand the root of their origin, it becomes difficult to improve on an adopted culture. Therefore, print became an important tool where transformation from divided people to an imagined community was made possible. Having had a rich oral history, B. Lalthangliana understood that getting the past in print was as important as fashioning out a language for prose, poems and songs.

Print, therefore is associated with cognition, universalism, mono-lingualism, and permanent memory, whereas orality is paired up with its opposites: emotion, particularism, multilingualism, and transience. First, it is clear that print goes together with cognition, since print accounts for the major

cognitive transformations that engender imagined, national communities: above all, the crucial changes in conceptions of time – from messianic to simultaneous, homogenous time – are attributed to the reading of novels and newspapers; in addition, the awareness of fellow citizens is attributed to the daily consumption of newspapers. In particular, print is only what allows the nation to be conceptualised, whereas oral language gives it emotional force; or, put differently, print allows us to imagine the nation, while orality makes us passionate about the same.

With printing flouring with the first prominent culture magazine, *Thu leh Hla*, it was disheartening for the Mizo literary community when the National Fight for Freedom in Mizo began to take a foothold and all publications except *Kristian Tlangau* was put on hold. The Mizos underwent years of unrest due to certain political struggles. In 1960, Mizoram went through a year of 'Mautam[xxvii] Famine' which occurs every 50 years due to the death of bamboo. When these bamboo flower, food supply for rats increases and they multiply in alarming rate and ended up eating other crops. This leads to food shortages and to famine. In 1960, although the Mizo District Council warned the state government, no help came forth. The famine took a heavy toll. There was great frustrations from the Mizos, and as a response to the neglect of the suffering of the Mizos, Ladenga, the president of the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF), an organisation founded during the famine to help the people, delivered a speech on August 6th, 1961, in which he declared that Mizos were 'Mongolians' and not 'Indians' (Verghese, Thanzawna, 14). On October 22nd, 1961, the name, 'Mizo National Famine Front' (MNFF) was changed to 'Mizo National Front.' In 1965, the MNF submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India, and part of if reads:

> The Mizo people are inseparably knitted together by their strong bond of tradition, customs, culture, language, social life and religion. The Mizo stood as a nation, even before the advent of the British government, having

a nationality, distinct and separate from that of India. In a nutshell, they are a distinct nation (Memorandum, 30th Oct, 1965)[xxviii].

Four months after the submission of this memorandum, the MNF began an armed revolution against the Indian government. The unrest continued until the mid 1970s when the MNF and the Indian government began talk peace and the Peace Accord was finally signed on June 30th, 1986 (Pachuau, 90-94). Mizoram seemed to witness a regulation in the production of any magazines or periodicals, including newspapers, except for *Kristian Tlangau* during this time. When India attained independence in 1947, the Mizo Union was the first political party and it encouraged people to participate in imagining a Greater Mizoram consisting of overlapping boundaries with Manipur, Tripura, Burma and Bangladesh (Liangkhaia, 176). Folk songs were deployed to express this newly emerging Mizo nationalism. These forms of cultural expression were not like the folk songs of the Lusei past nor were they completely in tune with the Christian lyrical compositions. Strangely, the emergency imposed in Mizoram seems to have occasioned the emergence of different kinds of lyrical compositions. These compositions were not necessarily against the Indian State nor did they approve of the Mizo National Front. Though the Mizo National Front is arguably the most important institution in post-colonial Mizoram that imagined and affirmed the Mizos as a political community, there is a pre-history to the making of Mizo nationalism. There are some critical events that occurred during colonial rule which may be seen as a precursor to the emerging political consciousness.

This period may be regarded metaphorically as a period that boycotted the various forms of magazines and periodicals that were registered by the Mizo literary elites and the public. There is a lack of reflexivity associated with these kinds of printed medium. In other words, magazines have a register that encompasses forms which have deep connections with the modern state. It is not surprising that only the Indian State and the MNF produced documentary

literature accusing each other and the Mizo public did not contribute to the production of artistic or literary work.

With the newly emerging literate society, and with the Mizos gaining education in and around Assam, it was inevitable that a students' association was formed. 'Mizo Zirlai Pawl,' (MZP) was formed on October 27th, 1935. It started as a Mizo multinational student organisation and was originally called the Lushai Students Association but was later changed to 'Mizo Zirlai Pawl,' on September 1st, 1946. The association published its first magazine in the Mizo language in 1938 and is registered under the 'Registrar of Newspapers for India,' (MZP files). J. Malsawma, ex-President of the association reflects upon the beginning of the magazine and wrote of how only one edition was published in 1938 because of how unfeasible printing was for them at the time. For him, the magazines he had collected around 1939, 1940 and 1941 were treasures he had kept safe for years. On a personal interview held at his house, he recalled how significant the MZP magazines had been in shaping the identity of the people

> Following the footsteps of earlier editors such as, Buchhawna, R. Rochhunga, L.H. Liana, H. Lalsiama, Lalhlira, Sangliana and few others, we tried to find a way for a larger distribution of the magazine in the 50s. It was just five years after the Indian Independence that we could start publishing again after a long ordeal of political unrest. When the publication began once more, we found more people who wanted to participate and write in these magazines than we ever did before[xxix] (Malsawma, interview)

From this notion, it can be seen that nationalism greatly played a hand in construction literary identity for the people. More than that, texts provide the platform for argument which as Stuart Hall argues, is a product of how a society critically reflects on its past so as to 'construct singular narratives for distinct peoples or nationalities' (Hall, 33). The general theorisation of how nations are

imagined was well captured in Benedict Anderson's landmark work *Imagined Communities* (2006). Anderson argues that nations are imagined because of the sense of affinity imagined among people, who are often physically dispersed, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion and bound in some way to a shared polity (Anderson, 6). More important is how Anderson views the role of print media in constructing the community of a nation through the assumed ritual of sharing uniform contents of a magazine as each issue hits the stands. In his opinion, newspapers, magazines and periodicals (and more recently the entire media landscape) provide the technical means for representing the kind of imagined community that is the nation. In a similar vein, Eisenstein argues that the address of the newspaper is therefore 'an address to an anonymous, extensive and interchangeable audience which is connected by its common membership of a bounded, linguistically-homogenous national community' (Eisenstein, 4). However, she argues that we need to view print cultures, not as way of causing the emergence of publics, but as a way of convening publics as well.

The power that print media has over political ideology was undoubtedly the reason why almost all of the magazines and periodicals were stopped during the armed conflict around 1966 in Mizoram. *Hruaitu*[xxx] (1961), *Zalen*[xxxi] (1962), and *Thu leh Hla* (1965) were the few papers that continued its publications as much as possible, but even these could not contend with the height of the rising conflict in 1966. *Kristian Tlangau* was the only magazine that did not stop its publication during this period (Lalthangliana, 244). However, as stated by J. Malsawma, the censorship of journalistic publications during this time only seemed to have flamed the thirst for political as well as cultural identity once the window for publications opened yet again after the unrest.

The idea of patriotism was most likely what heralded these publications of cultural magazines and periodicals. As has been mentioned in the publications of *Thu leh Hla*, the Mizo people wanted to create an identity that was specific to their region as well as themselves. If the publications of these magazines and

periodicals were meant to gain power, it was inherently for the need for a unified cultural status within the divided state. It seemed as if there was an arena of consumers who wanted to feel a part of the nationalist events that were occurring.

Zonieng[xxxii] was a monthly magazine, whose motto as printed on the cover was, 'To build up Mizo nationalism.' *Sofia*, another weekly magazine had its contents filled with the political upheaval in the state at the time. Apart from these overtly political publications, the Presbyterian Church also published periodicals like *Harhna Hruaina*[xxxiii] (1949) and *Upa Lengkhawm*[xxxiv] (1949). It is likely that the church was getting anxious about the pronounced articulation of the Mizo community as linguistic, territorial and ethnic community in addition to being a Christian religious community. In other words, the religious identity precedes the political identity and often feed into each other although occasionally they do not seem to complement each other. For instance, the important literary and cultural organ *Kristian Tlangau* (1911) was published even when emergency was imposed in the mid 1960's. The only occasion when the *Kristian Tlangau* was not published was during the Second World War, as they could not procure newsprint and other materials needed for publishing the magazine.

From the rapid flourishing of printed magazines and periodicals that emerged during this period, it could not be denied that the advent of capitalism, in particular, one of its first manifestations which is printing, facilitated the development of national identities (Eisenstein, 233). The significant and rapid cultural and economic change had an impact on all Mizo communities. Although printing had a profound on the Mizo society, its existence and development were not driven by commercial imperatives. Education was growing amongst the people, the main form of livelihood for the Mizos was no longer agriculture, and the demand for a larger public of consumers thrived during this period (Thanmawia, 2008). *Thlirvelna*[xxxv] (1953), a literary bi-monthly magazine, *Mizo Naupang*[xxxvi] (1953), a children's magazine, *Hun Thar*: *New Times* (1954), a

weekly paper on wars, and *Tunlai*[xxxvii] (1957), *Sikul Thlirna*[xxxviii] (1957) and *Zirtirtu Thian*[xxxix] (1959), were educational magazines.

H. Raltawna, one of the ex-official bearers of the Mizo Zirlai Pawl wrote of how much he treasured these educationally focused magazines during his time. On October 27th, 2002, the year that the association reached it 67th year, he wrote an article on how these writings in the magazine had helped him.

> I do not have much of the earlier magazines with me. I cannot recall how they got lost, but most of the blame falls on the struggle the Mizo people went through in 1966. J. Malsawma and B.T. Sanga were some of the people who contributed much to the magazine and they were the few people who were admired for their proficiency in the Mizo language. The contributions that came around 1956 and 1957 were the ones I remember touched me deeply. I was lucky enough to hold the Vice President seat in 1958 and the magazine, I always felt, was one of most prized possession of our association[xl]. (Raltawna, *Souvenir magazine*, Vol. VII, No. 10).

The wave of educationally focused magazines and periodicals in the fifties attested to the growing literacy and the need for education among the Mizos. Therefore, printing was a business, and the vernacular existed for Mizos and it allowed, (first the missionaries and then the government officials) the liberty of disseminating similarly printed texts around Mizoram. Although, they may have had a 'shared commitment to British capitalist interest,' and promoted commercial activity, while seeking a financial return for printing Mizo language material, it seemed as if it was not solely for commercial reasons that these educational and cultural magazines and periodicals flourished so richly at the time in Mizo. The agenda was to change and develop Mizo thought and behaviour. These printed texts assisted in creating a self-conscious reading community which connected the

scattered Mizo population. This development of reading cultural materials came full circle to the argument that globalization, through means of print media in the Mizo society proliferates instead of destroying Mizo identity.

These cultural changes that the Mizos went through were distinct from the changes they underwent in the pre and also post-colonial context when it came to narratives of their identity. Oral culture was originally the very core of Mizo cultural identity, and it also became a way by which the people of a region in general could find a sense of identification. It has been established that "historians have been notoriously wary of memory as a historical source. In challenging orthodoxies about historical sources, methods and aims, and by using memory for contemporary political purposes, oral history has generated fierce debates (Ong,x). The idea of orality and how they could easily lose their way from one generation to the other was not lost on Dahrawka, one of the first Mizo men to have written down the Mizo lores in printed form, as he cites the fact that these stories would soon lose their coherence if it was not in written form for documentation (Dahrawka, 2).

In this vein of the need for documentation of one's culture for its continued existence, Anderson has one again said:

> All profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives… The photograph…is only the most peremptory of a huge modern accumulation of documentary evidence…which simultaneously records a certain apparent continuity and emphasises its loss from memory. Out of this estrangement comes a conception of personhood, identity…which, because it cannot be "remembered", must be narrated (Anderson 192).

The contemporary culture of the Mizos was born out of the culture clash as well as the tension between the nation states and the direct cut from the manner of life which they had earlier known. This tension however, brought to the people a culture that developed their thoughts and behavior, way of thinking and living, and in other words, provided a popular culture for the Mizos that had never been there in the society before.

Revisiting the time when an air of nationalism pervaded Mizoram, K.Sapdanga [xli] spoke of how he remembered that the print media had quintessentially reflected the ethos of the culture:

> As an editor, you want to sell your magazines. If you want content that will sell after the Mizo national struggle, then nationalism was always the topic. Since magazines, unlike novels or stories directly cater to its audience, they serve as a perfect medium for the reflection of a cultural identity. When people contribute their own writings and concerns, the expression of a culture intertwined and they represent their own individuality and character in a society. Magazines serve as a great medium for such contribution because we like to see ourselves represented, especially by people we seem to think our own equal. The Mizo people had this print revolution to represent themselves like never before (Sapdanga, June, 2019)[xlii]

The emerging magazines and periodicals saw a time in the Mizo society where the people could comprehend their claim and foothold in their own state and wanted to participate. The people found representation through this printed forum and thrived on it. It was a radical thought, in early Mizo society, that a commoner, a ‘hnamchawm’ would carve out his or her own ideas and formulate their own way of thinking. However, with the beginning of globalization, by means of this print culture, representation of the people could be seen through magazines and periodicals.These mixed publications of articles concerning

different aspects of forms of life, from anyone who wished to participate in various degrees calls for a dissemination of power that could have been put in hegemonic class. Obviously, the media shaped public discourse, and one can argue that they do so in accordance with Foucault's conception of power-knowledge. Further, the "media affect the formation of discourse, and consequently plays an important part in constituting a formed cultural identity" (McCoy, 71).

In another issue of *Zonieng* (1986), in an article titled, "Kan Zoram Hun Tur," (The Future of Mizoram), the writer narrates his own life story of how his fifty seven years in Mizoram had been very kind to him and his family and writes, "as lucky as we have been to have lived a peaceful decade without disturbance (this article was in the July issue in 1989 and the writer is bidding farewell to the decade), things might not always be so in our state. Whatever war we are to face in the years to come, I urge my fellow Mizos to be brave and to be resilient. We will be victorious again."[xliii] (Vol. III, No. 7). The strain of the Mizo's struggle for freedom in 1966 and the years of hardship and violence that followed, clearly still lay heavy with the people more than twenty years later. What these popular magazines did was to give platform to such people who continue to remember the struggle and need an outlet for it, as well as to give comfort to the readers who might find representation of their own pain through the words of everyday people. Put differently, the popular literary magazines provide alternate value judgments, points of views and realities for the Mizo social imaginary, the ways in which the members of the society imagine their social existence and how they develop their interactions with their fellows within their shared social world (Taylor, 214).

Other selected magazines which dealt with politics in nature were *Senhri*[xliv] (1984), a weekly periodical, *Eros* (1985) and *Sofia* (1978), sub-titled, 'A Weekly news Magazine of Mizoram.' These magazines in the late 80s dealt heavily with politics, mainland as well as local, making people invested in the affairs of the state as well as the nation. Articles about the MNF came up time and again and the May 1986 issue of *Sofia* seemed to be littered with the concerns for

the local political scene (Vol. I, no. 14). These political magazines and periodicals contained little or no fictional material of any kind. They are a little more than newsletters, but were different in the sense that original contributions from writers were often published, all political in nature. If there were articles, they were mostly about the famous politicians of India. These magazines and periodicals did not last for long. They were significant in the sense that they clearly reflected the times in Mizoram were political effects that still reverberated throughout the society and people were still very much interested in the national as well as state level politics, even though the nationalist struggle had ended a few years before. These magazines showed how the unstable politics of Mizoram at the time affected the minds and lives of the people long after the furore had died down.

These magazines were selected due to their mass readership as compared to others (they are the 1st and the 2nd in terms of monthly circulation of popular literary magazines, thus reaching to a bigger public), their polyphonic authorial formation which includes a great variety of authors coming from different sociological, cultural, economic and political backgrounds and because of their 'founding' canonical status. Therefore, by this approach as seen in these local magazines one cannot view the popular literary magazines simply as a literary genre or work but rather one will try to consider them along with the power relations generated both by the cultural field and other spheres. The chapter too situates them in their historical, sociological and political context, examine their linguistic and discursive characteristics and analyse their relationship with the public sphere and the social movements (Bakhtin, 131). Before the era of globalisation, there existed local, autonomous, distinct and well-defined, robust and culturally sustaining connections between geographical place and cultural experience. These connections constituted one's 'cultural identity'. This identity was something that the people simply 'had' as an undisturbed existential possession, an inheritance, a benefit of traditional long dwelling, of continuity with the past.

Identity, then, like language, was not just a description of cultural belonging; it was a sort of collective treasure of local communities. It was also discovered to be something fragile that needed preservation that could be lost. Into this world of manifold, discrete, but to various degrees vulnerable, cultural identities there suddenly burst, in the case of the Mizo print scene, around the 1950s, the corrosive power of globalisation. Globalisation, has swept like a flood tide through the world's diverse cultures, destroying stable localities, displacing peoples, bringing a market-driven, 'branded' homogenisation of cultural experience, thus obliterating the differences between locality-defined cultures which had constituted our identities. Though globalisation has been judged as involving a general process of loss of cultural diversity, some of course did better, some worse out of this process (Parvini, 14).

Another important representation that was found through print media as a result of the Mizo nationalist fight for freedom was female representation. It was, and still continues to be rare to have a female voice in a society such as the Mizo society where it is commonly accepted to be a patriarchal society. It is an ideology in which men are seen as superior to women, that women are and should be controlled by men and that they are part of men's property. So, the idea that the first female representation is found by way of the Nationalist struggle, albeit many traumatic experiences, was one of the key points in Mizo women's history.

The history of print began with purely religious tracts in nature and slowly moved on to more secular, cultural magazines and periodicals. Female representation in general itself is rare in Mizoram and it is perhaps promising that the first representation that women found as a group was in print media. *Zonu* magazine was first published in 1983, seven years after the MHIP (Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl)[xlv] was set up in 1976 (by this time the nationalist struggle in Mizoram had come to an end). Prior to this formation, the critical condition of the hill politics had already resulted in the formation of Mizo Women's Organization known as 'Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual' (MHT) initiated by

few middle-class women on July 16, 1946 (Lalthangliana, 188). Moving on from this social formation, the MHIP was brought to the forefront and continued to be the stronghold of women's haven since. The MHIP acted as the association formed for the protection for Mizo women.

As a result of the hardships that the Mizo women underwent in the Nationalist struggle and the aftermath, the MHIP was created in 1974 when Mizoram was still a Union Territory. The organisation aims to uphold and protect the rights and liberties of women even decades after the struggle is over. *Zonu*, the magazine, which is published to this day, is not all political in nature but it is borne out of the struggle of the Mizo women which the MHIP tried to empower, protect and guide because of the nationalist struggle. It is under the umbrella of the MHIP, and is published by the 'Chhinga Veng' MHIP women members for the betterment of a Mizo woman. Perhaps, because the magazine is not political in nature in actuality, it provides a peaceful environment after the many hardships which the Mizo women bore the brunt of. Through the power of print, the women found their voice, unity and empowerment.

Representation, however whether it is representing something is a political activity. Since Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the concept of representation has been one of the major undercurrents that determined the post-colonial discourses in various humanitarian fields.[xlvi] Taking the cue from Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak problematises the question of representation of subaltern in the colonial and post-colonial texts. The account of the 'subaltern' offers a radical turn in the issue of representation and envisages a new rhetorical space of social engagement especially with regards to the social agency of the marginalised section, like the Mizo female and their need for a new form of representation through print. The fundamental premise of humanism is that it believed in a universal human nature despite the differences across time, place, culture, gender and ethnicity (Ashcroft, 41).

The crimes committed against women during the decades of struggle in Mizoram has been bloody, terrifying and as often been documented, abusive. The fight for freedom was a universal phenomenon, not baring the women because of their gender. These crimes gave the various women's groups from across the state and even outside, a mutual agreement where they come together and form a powerful organisation that worked, to fight for the collective rights of the women of the state. However, as empowering as having a print medium to express their suffering in the fight for freedom as it appeared to be, it is quite ironic that the main theme of the magazine has nothing to with nationalist politics. The question of whether the dominance of male patriarchy still covers the whole ideal of the magazine is often asked.

Spivak, engaging with Edward Said addresses the question of 'worlding' and 'othering'[xlvii] in order to expose the unequal power relationships embodied in the representation of the subaltern. Critiquing both postcolonial and post-structural engagement to 'speak for' the subaltern, Spivak argues that there is no 'unrepresented/ essentialist' subaltern who can know, speak and represent themselves in history, culture and politics (Vinayaraj, 12). Spivak's theory of subalternity makes its representation impossible and at the same time, denies any kind of essentialist position of subaltern identity. This 'impossible' subalternity locates feminism in a subverted way. She exhorts the 'first world feminists' to learn to stop feeling privileged as 'a woman' (Spivak, 132). What she intended to do with feminism and its representation is to relocate the gendered subaltern/the marginal woman to emphasise the differential, dispersed and heterogeneous location of women. She tries to attend to the issues of representation of the colonized, disempowered, marginalized and disfranchised women in the complex context of post-colonialism and globalization. The Mizo women too were marginalised, and their suffering in the 1960s, the abuse and trauma to this day stands uncontested. And yet, all these are not reflected in *Zonu*.

The weight of *Zonu* magazine lies more with topics on beauty, household maintenance and cooking recipes. This could be seen as ironic since the magazine itself was borne out of such violence. Even if there is a political strain in the magazine, it is mentioned with a strong religious acceptance. Could it be that the Mizo women are silent and not addressing it even though they had a voice to do so because they wanted to forget the horrors of their struggle and because they wanted to keep the peace? The question arises out of the humble acceptance that is the main focus of the magazine.

The clever household hacks or the two or three cooking recipes encouraged women to go on with their lives for remembering horrific history and the steps and measures that the womenfolk have suffered in the name of the nationalist struggle did nothing to help anyone. Silence, then, for the Mizo women became one of the most important aspects of keeping the peace in the nationalist struggle for freedom in the state of Mizoram. According to Spivak, women as *subaltern*, their voices have been silenced in between the imperialist/ colonialist object-constitution and the nationalist/ patriarchal subject formation. She argues that the 'voices of the gendered subaltern subjectivity' has been lost in between the notion of the 'liberative act' of the imperialists who tried to abolish this crime 'in the name of civilisation'. How social and control institutions either directly or indirectly allow for the silencing of certain ethnic identities, and also how some identities tend to become displaced or lose their significance when they are placed among a much dominant culture (Ashcroft, 110). Bearing in mind Spivak's infamous contention that 'the subaltern cannot speak', it can be understood through the narratives of this magazine that there are instances where we can hear the voices of the subordinate or those from a minor ethnic group, but what we hear tends to be suppressed or silenced in favour of the more dominant ethnic identity, which is the male identity in that of the Mizo society.

Spivak has been more than forthcoming with her stance on the silence of the subaltern. She talks of how the voices of the marginalised are hidden behind the dominant culture:

> My whole point in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is that you can't simply make the subaltern visible or lend her a voice. The subaltern "cannot speak," instead, because her speech falls short of fully authorized, *political* speech. Too much gets in the way of her message's being *heard*, socially and politically (Spivak, 182).

The horrors of the struggle and the impact that it had on the people were of notable mention. However, the outcome of all of these, particularly the Mizo women, although victims to this war, was that Mizo women finally found representation through print which, as established, continues to be an increasingly powerful medium of instruction. *Zonu* is the first Mizo women's magazine which has been purely written by women and for women. It is the first Mizo women's magazine that has been the culmination of the horrific struggle that women had suffered during the nationalist struggle and although the process had been indeed horrific, not only have women found representation in print, but also found empowerment through the hardships in Mizoram.

Following Spivak's notion on the silence of women, Mizo women were not in isolation when it came female representation and the complication that came with it. Women in print have had tension well within the European 15th century timeline. Within a year of bringing the printing press to England, William Caxton displays the understanding that 'women questions' will be important and controversial in the new medium. New economies were forming and for Caxton, and the early printers following him, women's issues were always marketable. This showed early signals of the rapidly broadening, sometimes paradoxical, and usually controversial presences of women in early English culture. Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry VII, was one of the earliest female writers in

English print; her translations of two French devotional treatises were printed in 1503 and 1506. For Caxton, these books and the others he published for women were meant for 'women instructions.' In translating and printing the *Boke of the Knyght of the Towre* (1484), Caxton has made the first printed English conduct book for women:

> 'in especial for ladyes and gentilwommendoughters to lords and gentilmen.' The stated aim is for these young women to 'lerne to behaue them self vertously/ as wel in their vyrgynyte as in their wedlock and wedowhede' (Bicks, 12).

Overall, in early print, we find several main kinds of works about women. The well studied romances and courtly poems, and the numerous, largely conventional devotional works; conduct books, medical and gynaecological treatises; marriage literature and early printed secular literature focuses on representing daily lives, usually non-elite lives. Themes here include the uncomfortable intersections of sex and economics and the unpleasant realities of marriage (Bicks, 69).

There was a surprisingly limited literacy in sixteenth century France, and making a point that would also apply in England, traces restrictions on women's literary involvements to medieval manuscript culture:

> In the medieval past, most manuscripts had been transcribed for the Church and universities from which women were largely excluded. Both of these institutions separated women from knowledge used by men to produce and reproduce power and privilege (Kurowski, 79)

Evidence suggests that there is a pattern of women using whichever name, married or maiden that carried the most clout in the world of publishing at the

time. Summit's list of sixteenth century women printers and their output reveals that women printers worked across the complete range of kinds of printed books. By the end of the century, Summit retells the story of Mary Erler, that as a widow, she came to use her own name and printer's mark and rewarded her colophons such that 'we begin to see an emerging sense of self, a self separated from that of her husband…the beginnings of a separate female identity, making her mark in print, the product as her own,' (Bicks, 72).

To seek women in early print is to revise what we thought we knew, we find whole segments of non-elite literary culture that were previously invisible, to examine women's authorship in early media is to complicate accepted lines. To read the actual record of women's work in print culture is to find whole realms of unacknowledged agency. The Mizo women too found self identity through the print medium that they first had in *Zonu*. The main role of a Mizo maiden has always been seen "as gentle, kind and unproblematic in Mizo history. She is inherently good, and pure and lives implicitly for the men" (Saiaithanga, 113). Perhaps, this is what the women wanted to portray. Even if identity formation for women in print has a long way to go, it is not doubt, inarguably true that nationalism and its effects has heralded a print culture in Mizo and found representation, silenced or not, in all forms of life.

Despite the long debate and discourse on the Mizo National Fight for Freedom, it was only in a recent decade that studies on the struggle or ethnic conflicts in Northeast India from a gender perspective entered the theater of official discourse. Most of these works are carried out by both national and international agencies, social scientists and mainstream Indian feminists. Numerous works have emerged, but generally most of the works are confined to the impact of violent conflicts on women (as victims of sexual and physical abuse). While the attempt to retrieve women's, agency attracted few scholars who focus on women militants and combatants in insurgency war, most of the works limit women's agency to the role of women's organizations (mostly composed of

elite women) as “peacemakers”. Moreover, the dominating framework of “victimizing discourse” still hold back the subaltern women to voice their perspective and aspiration on ethnic nationalism. According to Spivak, the silence of the subaltern women is not a failure of articulation but the result of the failure of representation (Spivak, 89).

With all these reflections on the Mizo culture and society, magazine articles become inherently significant to understand the changes in society, and the topic of concern in each given time. Moreover, through the narratives in the popular literary magazines, these literary texts naturally gain an additional political definition and status as the magazine sets them against the context of a plurality of voices in which each narrative, literary or otherwise, resonates against one another in a single space and time. Thus, as the cultural and political sphere are getting intertwined more and more each day, narratives of the popular literary magazines are acting as both the organ of political dissemination by cultural means, and, vice versa, as the organ of cultural dissemination by political means (Rothfork,159-162).

From the literary *Thu leh Hla* that thrived immensely after the Mizo National Struggle (1966) to the women’s journal *Zonu*, it can be formulated that there has always been a thirst for identity formation from all community in the cultural sphere in Mizoram. From this chapter, it is clear to see that when studying the history of evolving cultures, the Mizos had been indeed starved of representation of any kind, apart from the religious magazines and periodicals. Although the coming of the missionaries had heralded in progress in education which led to a successful print culture, it had been concentrated mostly to didactic and religious forms of expression. The mid-century (1950s-1970s) became a turning point in Mizo print culture history for it was the time when the people themselves took it into their own hands to break away from normative constraints that had been placed upon them since colonial time, and even further on to breaking away from printed church representation as well. As some important epoch in history often happened due to political revolutions, the Mizos too found

burgeoning print culture after a long period of suffering and hardship. Perhaps it is unfortunate that these upheavals came at the cost of political struggles and many personal sacrifices. However, history has always had a way of procuring cultural phenomenon out of such struggles. Mizoram is a case in point, as all these aspects for a specific Mizo sensibility led to the beginning of a thriving print culture.

Notes

[i]*Thu leh Hla* can be translated as 'Prose and Poetry.'

[ii]J.F. Laldailova (1925-1979) was the first editor of *Thu leh Hla* and was one of the most prolific writers amongst the Mizos.

[iii]*Zonu* can be translated as 'Mizo Woman'.

[iv] The Mizo Nationalist Struggle for Freedom was the Mizo's fight against the government of India in 1966. On March, 1966, the Mizo National Front (MNF) made a declaration of independence after launching coordinated attacks on the government offices and security forces posted in different parts of the Mizo district in Assam.

[v]*Huapzo* can be translated as 'Inclusive'

[vi]*Zonieng* can be translated as 'Sun of Mizoram/ Light of the Zo people.'

[vii]*Eros* is a name borrowed from Greek which means love. The Mizo representation for this can no longer be traced as the magazine was discontinued in 1989 and the editors are not available for contact.

[viii]*Zoeng* can be translated as 'Light of Mizoram.'

[ix] James Dokhuma (1932-2007) has written 42 books, 40 poems and more than 400 essays and articles. He was awarded the Padma Shree for writing in 1985. The government of Mizoram bestowed him the title 'father of Mizo lexicography' in 1971.

[x] This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[xi] This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[xii]This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[xiii] 'Hnamchawm' in early Mizo society are the common people. They were under the guardianship of the Mizo chiefs and before the events narrated, they had no say in the chieftainship of their 'Lals' (chiefs).

[xiv]Thenzawl is a town in Serchhip district of Mizoram. The town currently serves as an important center for the traditional Mizo handloom industry.

[xv]Anthony Gilchrist McCall served as the I.C.S Superintendent of the Lushai Hills from 1932 to 1942 and on 1st January, 1938, he, on the advice of the Mizo public declared that the Zawlbuk (a traditional bachelor's quarters of the Mizo people) was no longer compatible with formal education, Christianity and government system and, resolved to put an end to its existence.

[xvi] 'Zawlbuk' was a traditional bachelor's quarters of the Mizo people, predominantly of the Luseis living in Mizoram. It was prominently the largest house in the tribal village, and it was customary for every village to have it constructed in the middle of the habitation.

[xvii]Rokunga (1914-1969) was a traditional writer and composer. He is most well known for his patriotic songs, traditional festive and Christmas songs. He remains one of the most cherished songwriters in the history of Mizoram.

[xviii]*Kaihlek Zai* is a form of Mizo songs where words are interchanged with the same melodies or vice versa. Familiar examples are those of gospel songs where the words are changed with secular ones.

[xix]This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[xviii] Selet Thanga (1920-1995) was one of the first to pave the way for Mizo education. He worked for 28 years in Govt. Mizo High School and wrote the book, *ZirlaiPuitu* meaning, 'The Students' Aid'.

[xxi]*Zirlai Puitu* can be translated as 'The Students' Aid.'

[xxii] This passage has been paraphrased and translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[xxiii]This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[xxiv] Zatluanga was an eminent writer in the Mizo and he wrote the seminal book, *Mizo Chanchin* published in 1966 which have been used as a secondary resource for this thesis.

[xxv] C.Z Huala (1902 -1994) was one of the first educated Mizos, having passed Middle School, the highest level of education in Mizoram in 1920. In 1942, he took work as a Labour Commander and in 1963, worked as a teacher at the Aizawl Theological College. He composed notable gospel songs and remained a respected member of the Mizo literary community to his death in1994.

[xxvi] B. Lalthangliana (1945 -) is a prominent Mizo historian and author. He has been given the 'Book of the Year' award, organised by MAL (Mizo Academy of Letters) for two of his books, *Ka Lungkham* (1989) and *Mizo Literature* (1993).

[xxvii] 'Mautam' means the death of bamboo, and 'Mautam tam' basically translates as famine caused by the death of bamboo

[xxviii] See, "Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the Mizo National Front General Headquarters, Aizawl, on the 30th October, 1965."

[xxix] An interview was held at Pu Malsawma's house in Zarkawt on July 15th, 2019. He was the president of Mizo Zirlai Pawl from 1956 – 1957.

[xxx] *Hruaitu* can be translated into 'Guide.'

[xxxi] *Zalen* is taken from 'Zalenna' which means freedom.

[xxxii] *Zonieng* can be translated as "Sun of Mizoram/Light of the Zo people".

[xxxiii] *Harhna Hruaina* can be translated as 'Revival Guide.'

[xxxiv] *Upa Lengkhawm* can be translated as 'Elderly Fellowship.'

[xxxv] *Thlirvelna* can be translated as 'Point of View.' The magazine's main theme is to reflect the observe the current time and place of a particular ethos.

[xxxvi] *Mizo Naupang* can be translated into 'Mizo Children.'

[xxxvii] *Tunlai* can be translated as anything that is happening 'at the present moment'.

[xxxviii] *Sikul Thlirna* can be translated as 'Outlook on Schools.'

[xxxix] *Zirtirtu Thian* can be translated as 'Friend of the Teacher.'

[xl] This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

[xli] K. Sapdanga was the editor of the magazine *Zoeng* in 1988 and 1989. Currently, he is the editor of *Vanglaini*, the largest selling newspaper in Mizoram, and he is also one of the co-owners of *Zonet,* a local cable TV network.

[xlii]A personal interview was done with the editor on 18th June, 2019 at his office in Aizawl Venglai. The interview has been translated from Mizo to English by me.

[xliii]This passage has been translated from the original Mizo text to English by me.

[xliv]*Senhri* is the name of a wild flower, which blooms in nature, considered to be the state flower of Mizoram.

[xlv] 'Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl' can be translated as Mizo Women's Association

[xlvi] It was Edward Said's Orientalism that represented the first phase of postcolonial theory. Said's intention was to unmask the ideological disguises of imperialism as a hegemonic epistemological project. According to Said, the Orientalism 'unveils the western style of dominating, restructuring and having authority over the non-European cultures and people'. For Said, the representation of the east in terms of the European imagination (what Said calls fantasies) was integral to the conquest of the east. Said argues that the Orient 'is an epistemological construction of the Occident' by which they retained their political and cultural superiority over the Orient.

[xlvii]In her seminal essay "A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present," published in 1999, Spivak addresses the question of the worlding 'of the native' or the formation the 'other' by the European self. It is the colonial epistemological trajectory, Spivak argues that, through which the 'other' comes to know and narrate itself. 'It is the moment in which the colonial authority speaks for as the native', the other becomes self. Here Spivak destabilizes both colonial and post-colonial representations of subaltern identity that can provide an authentic voice in history.

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Chapter 4

Popular Print Culture and Mizo Hybridity

The development of periodicals and magazines flourished by the end of the twentieth century in Mizoram. The state was peaceful after a long struggle for the fight for independence and there was a ground for development for different arenas. Education, one of the most important aspects brought in by the Christian missionaries has been a great boon to the people of Mizoram. As a result of this progress, concepts like nations, nationality, ethnicity, sovereignty and independence became popular among the groups of the indigenous people. With the help of the Roman script introduced over the Bengali script as result of the thirty-year long captivity, there arose a conflict in Mizo literature, which in turn united the people through a common language and created greater unity and solidarity among them. The formation of "public opinion in general was accelerated and strengthened with the people's ability to read and with growing numbers of print media in the form of newspapers and magazines all over the region. These factors in turn are responsible in shaping the socio-cultural and political consciousness of the people." (Subba, et all, 140). This chapter will trace the change and evolution of culture and identities that have been brought about by popular magazines in the Mizo language.

One of the most important contributions of Christian education as a result of the Gospel venture, with regard to the people of Mizoram is to make them aware of their cultural identity. When put together with a foreign culture, one's own culture is enhanced, differentiated and either appreciated or shamed in some circumstances. However, the most common progression of putting cultures together is that it provides cultural consciousness amongst the people than ever before. This cultural identity is deeply enmeshed with the Mizo's new found religion from the white man, and in a way, a person's identity is dependent on the religion that one adopted. So, having adopted Christianity as a people group, Christianity plays a very crucial role in self-identification (Pachuau, 28).

It would not be wrong to go far as to say that Mizo cultural identity begins and ends with their Christian religion. If a Mizo person was asked to identify himself or herself, the most common form of identification would be that they are Christians. Their day to day practices, cultural norms and activities coincide largely with their

adopted religion. “The Mizos admit that they owe their identity and solidarity to Christianity and that is the strongest integrating force in their society,” (Hluna, 471).

For this reason, for many years, the only magazine that could be seen for consecutive years in the Mizo literary society were the religious periodicals, mainly *Kristian Tlangau*[i]. It was the only magazine that did not stop its publication during the Mizo National fight for freedom. It continued to sustain the general literary-educated public and remained the axiom of all Mizo magazines and periodicals at the time. However, with the exposure and the spirit of rebellion that the Mizos had had with the past political upheavals, there arose a sense of revolution in the cultural literary sphere. The people felt the need for a new form of expression to change along with the changing times as well as changing ideas. The didactic, religious contents could no longer suffice to feed the Mizo identity as well as the growing number of educated people across the region.

As like the Romantic Era[ii], there seemed to be a demand for breaking the mold, a necessity for something more than the pedantic expression of the self. Just as the Romantic Era is typically noted for its intense political, social and cultural upheavals, conventionally marked as beginning with the French Revolution in 1789, the Mizo National Front uprising in 1966 seemed to have a lasting revolutionary effect on the growth of Mizo literature. Writers such as Wordsworth most emblematically used their poetry as means of dealing with the trauma of the Revolution’s bloody transformation and the disappointment of democratic hope. The period was a movement of self-introspection and the uprising of the common man and is marked by the freedom of expression, and all forms of art broke free from traditional and classic rules. It was a time when ‘free verse’ in poetry became popular and the beginning of the feeling that the power of one individual could shape history. The Romantic period gave hope to those who felt stuck within a rigid class system and the feeling that anyone, even the common man could achieve greatness and could express himself in whatever form or subject (Ferber, 134).

As the French Revolution changed the lives of virtually everyone in the nation and even across continents because of its drastic and immediate shift in social reformation, "emphasized progress towards a more co-operative society it greatly influenced many writers at the time. For the first time in European literary society, literature was not solely for the higher classes or written by those few who had the window to write. The audience had changed too because the general public could read and were hungry to consume more than the amount of work that had been published before. Hancock writes:

> There is no need to recount here in detail how the French Revolution, at the close of the last century, was the great stimulus to the intellectual and emotional life of the civilized world, how it began by inspiring all liberty-loving men with hope and joy….it (the French revolution) also inspired people on all forms of life; inspirations that were restricted for the collected few now were in the hands of anyone who wanted to seek it. It was a time of freedom of art as it has never been before…. (Hancock, 47-79).

Literature began to take a new turn when the spirit of the revolution caught the entire nation and turned things in a whole new direction. The newly acquired freedom of the common people did not only bring about just laws and living but ordinary people also had the freedom to think for themselves, and in turn the freedom to express themselves. Triggered by the revolutionary spirit, the writers of the time were full of creative ideas and were waiting for a chance to unleash them. Under the new laws writers and artists were given a considerable amount of freedom to express themselves which did well to pave the way to set a high standard for literature. This freedom of expression, together with the spirit of political upheavals often open gateways to power struggle politics that could be used through print. In the earlier chapters, there has been mention of print media as a weapon to subvert ideas but these events and ideologies are not separate from the other. Literary or cultural products such as the popular literary magazines have the most intimate relations regarding social power.

The idea of 'discourse' in the basic Foucauldian sense, according to Hall "is a group of statements which provide a language as well as medium through media, for talking about a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (Foucault, 1994, 44) such as the revolution or even the Mizo freedom movement. Within this realm of critical perception, magazines and periodicals become significant weapons in trying to understand a particular historical moment, or more importantly, the cultural milieu of the time as well as the current identity formation of the people within the said climate. Magazines and periodicals provide material that are quite different from other forms of literature such as the novel or verse. According to Hall, they provide a language that reflects best the time to allow for the study of cultural identity. One such important part of the Mizo cultural scenario at this time was the start of popular magazines after a harsh political climate.

In the first 2000 edition of *Lungdum*[iii] (1997), a monthly magazine, the tenth item reads 'Millennium's First Baby' in English, even though it was a Mizo magazine. The very title of the article spoke volumes of how far the Mizos have come in the experience of the acceptance, tension and being part of the colonisers' endeavour. It is also symbolic of the year as well. It was 2000, a new century and it was time to move past the religious magazines, the political upheavals and move on into pure entertainment. The article, the writer unknown, reads of how the new Millennial baby would grow up in the Mizo world.

> Can we name a baby 'Millennium?' We Mizos celebrate such change of the centuries with names. Names are important. We have names given to us because of nationalist struggles, names given to us just because we were born at a certain place too. It is not too far-fetched to name a Mizo baby 'Millennium.' This baby's name will reflect the ending of an era and the start of another. It is an era which some are anxious about while some look forward to the possibilities it could bring. The baby will grow up to be part of the computer world, and

> gone are the days where we sung Mizo lullabies to new born babies…. (*Lungdum*, January Issue, 2000)[iv].

From this article, the scenario in Mizoram seemed to have changed a lot from purely Eucharistic, then political to something as delightful as a whole article published with the concern of a baby's name. What this seemed to convey, however is that the cultural ethos of the Mizo people has changed drastically and print magazines continued to be a true reflection of that aspect. The nationalist struggle had boomed over the people for a long period of time and for such a heavily laden political scene, Foucault has spoken about the importance of media and how it has played a part in understanding power relations within a society. It happened to be because of struggle, hardship and different tensions that the year 2000 could completely be different from those of the past. Within the Mizo context, 'power' has been in the hands of very few when it came to magazine production as well as distribution. Few could participate due to several reasons, one of them being that there were fewer educated people to write, and even fewer people to appreciate this literary form of expression.

However, as this changed, there also occurred a change of power with the Mizo media circle. According to Foucault, specific discourses are used to construct certain topics, define and produce the objects of our knowledge and render them possible for a meaningful way to talk about. Discourses and the knowledge they produce are highly interrelated to questions of power, our conduct and the construction processes of identities and subjectivities. In this regard, political issues and notions discussed in the popular literary magazines such as the refugees or the freedom of expression, are involved in this process of what he called 'power/knowledge' as the magazines constitute a certain way of talking about these issues (as an institutional site) and produce knowledge through a range of texts, which is called their 'discursive formation'. This formation as seen in the coming magazines and periodicals form an excellent ground for particular cultural studies. In this way, 'power' could be considered, within the ambit of magazine and periodicals, as not only in its negative sense, something that excludes, represses, censors,

abstracts, masks or conceals but also as a productive force, as Foucault makes the argument that "it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained in this production". (Foucault, 1988, 149). In other words, other than any other literary forms, these articles from magazines and periodicals provided reality in the most factual of ways, reflecting the time better than any other literary forms of expression.

Thus, putting Bakhtin and Foucault together, the popular literary magazines can be thought as yet another institutional site within the cultural field competing for meaning with other social groups, classes, individuals and discourses. According to Bakhtin, the combination of fiction and non-fiction that could be found in these magazines and periodicals are tools to show distinctive meta-narratives about particular cultures (Bandish, 239). The use of the term 'political' is not in some divine sense but rather in the sense that the organization of cultural and social life and the power relations embedded inevitably in it. Fueled by certain revolutions, the Romantic Era and Mizoram's most important political scene, these political upheavals called out for the common man to come forward and be part of the changing scene. Whereas one could almost feel a sort of hegemonic class that dominated the literary scene through magazines and periodicals, the change of the times saw the flourish of the medium as everyone seemed to have opinions that they wished to share.

Following a familiar pattern of freedom of expression after the revolution, the Mizos too contributed to the opportunity that such an event allowed. Not only could the common man express himself as he pleased, there flourished magazines and periodicals that catered solely for the common man, dealing with topics apart from the prior subjects of theology or literature that previous magazines provided for. Of course, there had already been periodicals published of secular essence[v] but they had all been under the guidance of, and contributed by the Mizo literati, the educated elites who had dominated the literary scene in Mizoram for years. Never had there been magazines and periodicals that catered purely for basic public consumption and entertainment. With the growth of Mizo population, coupled with

the progress in education and a hunger for more material, there was an inclination for something other than that of Eucharistic content that had dominated the periodical publications for more than half a century.

In one of the editorials of one of the most popular magazines called *Diktawn*[vi] (2006), there was an outcry to God about the humanity of the Mizo people:

> "A Deaf God": We are a people who find harmony and fellowship in singing and dancing, not only in church but everywhere else as well. In any event, we Mizos are always found to be singing. If we are not shouting 'Hallelujah' or praying at the top of our voices, we are guilty of having being in a church that does not welcome the holy spirit. We, as a people, make sounds to declare our emotions to others and to ourselves as well. However, all these practices are not reflected in our day to day lives. We do not respect the time of our 9 to 5 jobs nor our neighbors and it seems as if we are residents from the heavens that we pray for…has God turned a deaf ear to our loud praises? No, it is not our God who is deaf but us, as we have turned to praying as loudly as we can![vii] (Vol. 1, No. x, 2)

What can be deciphered from this passage is that publications from the church alone no longer sufficed and from the editorial mentioned above, the general public seemed as if they needed to grow along with the progress that was happening around the state. The cultural ethos of the Mizo seemed to have changed drastically from that of the beginning of their print culture where popular magazines like this could write of a 'Deaf God' who had not heard the people's prayers. It even seemed as if it is a cry for another genre of periodicals and magazines which were not religious or political or even cultural. Many magazines did come up which were of purely entertainment in nature.

The emergence of the popular literary magazines as a contemporary literary and cultural genre in Mizoram represents the unique combination of humor, literature and politics in the contemporary sphere. The popular literary magazines "manifest themselves in a somewhat, ambiguous way as they prefer to use humorous, ironic and sarcastic language, as an alternative political mode of communication, rather than didactic statements due to their multifaceted nature and dynamic features" (McKenzie, 151). This was what the Mizo society needed at a time when the state was pained with trauma, exposed and consumed with western culture and fervently hoping to be a part of it. At a time when confusion, suffering and development at every level exhausted the people, popular magazines could act as a balm or even an escape from the events of their surroundings. With such politically exposed society, the popular magazine seemed to have been brought in by the changing times.

However, as much as it evolved the reading culture of the Mizo society, the popular literary magazines do more than just form a complex authorial crew. Through their easy-to-read informal narrative format which signifies personal and humanistic experiences, the popular literary magazines are able to open a new position in the cultural field to combat the official state narratives on certain topics such as democracy, freedom of thought and expression, peace or identity politics. The religious and politically focused publications that had been the main organ before in Mizo print culture, began to be replaced by a more public oriented theme. There were contributions from 'ordinary people' who were neither prominent members of the society nor had any advice to the topic of morality. Memoirs of authors or the interviews conducted with 'ordinary citizens' constitute a sense of 'intimacy' between authors and readers, thus allowing fast and easy dissemination of ideas. These ideas are crucial to gain perspectives of anything that had to do with society and culture. When there had been only few selected people writing, there had only been only few who understood, and a little more who felt the need to follow what was written down. However, new meanings generated by the popular literary magazines, as part of the discursive struggle challenge the hegemonic discourses and they are able to reach to the wider public due to high circulation numbers compared

to other magazines in the cultural field, which in a sense, what makes them 'popular (Liu, 71-74).

Mizo magazines such as *Real Life* (2006) is an example of a popular magazine that challenged the hegemonic discourse. The magazine, as reflected by its name, catered to the everyday lives of people, not necessarily famous, well known or prominent. The few educated people who only wrote for magazines in earlier years are now completely discarded and the magazine stands as proof to the fact that, people did not need to be prominent citizens in the society to be featured in the magazine. These articles talked of everyday illnesses, people who work daily jobs and more importantly, the articles are contributed by every day people as well. In the 2010, March edition, there is an interview of a mother who had lost a daughter, a young girl of just eight years old. The girl's name "Lalbiaksangi" is the title of the article and it is hauntingly inclusive as well as 'real.' The mother was asked about how life had been going on without a loved one. The magazine suggests that the sorrow, the nostalgia and the entire conversation is inherently universal. (*Real Life*, March 2010). These are magazines that came up in the Mizo arena that do not wholly cater to a literary crowd nor to any religious denomination. However, because of the varying degrees of the evolution of magazines that had come up over the years in terms of Mizo magazines, these universal contents finally found space in the later years.

This popularity allowed for a wider audience and also for contributors who might not necessarily had felt an inclination to be part of the literary forum. The term 'popular magazine' opened a whole new dimension in the Mizo society, its main achievement being that of inclusivity. Not only could anyone participate in this literary sphere, but anyone could be the subject or even the muse. The opinion that only literary elites could and should write for public consumption have been dispensed with, and in many cases, the consumers enjoyed a 'real life' story of a regular person with whom they could relate to in their day to day lives. One does not have to be extraordinary.

Narratives of various authors contributing to the popular literary magazines may seem fragmented at first sight but these narratives tell us the story of contemporary Mizo society, from various perspectives, with their 'situatedness' within the current socio-political context of the Mizo. In other words, narratives, being concrete tools of story-telling or writing of individual subjects, reflect the particular social, political and cultural contexts that they are situated, since they shape and are shaped by this certain historicity (Bakhtin, 211). Just as in the Mizoram scenario, the magazines that have come up have been shaped by the history that they had been part of.

> According to Bakhtin, history must be understood so that it is neither random nor completely ordered, neither of which would allow for genuine 'becoming.' Even with the question of evolutionary biology, it is his belief that no cosmic designer would have built them in that compromise way; therefore, they must have come about by making do with the resources of changing environments and natural history. In other words, messiness and tinkering, not perfect adaptation, are the true marks of historicity (Morson; Emerson, 220 – 232)

Magazines, in this sense make for great reflections on modern society as the authors are diverse as they are a part of said society. They are on-going as part of history and they tell a story of a particular time, not only by what is written on the page, but by the inclusivity of the contributors, what they are writing about, the topics they chose, the people who are written about and by whom, and most importantly the ideas they represent. It continues to be a part of historical process to understand the cultural identity of a people. Within the ambit of the Mizo magazines too, there is a noticeable change in relation to the themes, as well as the language reflected from the beginning of the printing press in 1911 to the plethora of popular magazines that has come up in 2011. These newer magazines might not have the didactic theme of the earlier religious magazines, or even share the keen obligation to formulate a standardized language as the earlier secular magazines might have had, but it is through the 'messiness and tinkering' participation of everyone, and in

not simply trying to give 'perfect adaptations' in contributing to these magazine, that the Mizos could find a true mark of their history. It is possible to say that magazines have become more inclusive because of the number of the growing educated population in Mizoram, and due to the effort people have shown in wanting to be part of the new technology that is print media. This inclusivity was not always so.

One of the most inclusive mediums as form of expression through magazine within the Mizo agency would probably be the *YMA Chanchinbu* (magazine). The YMA stands for 'Young Mizo Association' and it is a non-profit, secular, and non-governmental organization of the Mizo people. It was established on 15th June, 1935 originally as Young Lushai Association (YLA), which was later replaced with 'Young Mizo Association' in 1947. It was initiated by the Welsh Christian missionaries who understood the need of cultural conservation of the Mizo tribe, who were under pressure of political and social modernization.

The organization started their own magazine in 1973 and remains, to this day one of the most influential magazines with more than 10,000 copies in circulation. The *YMA Chanchinbu* serves as a great platform to study the cultural identity of the indigenous people as anyone who has reached the age of 14 can be a member and there is no age limit. Therefore, there can be contributions from anyone of any age who felt inclined to write to the magazine. Following the trend of the rise of the popular magazine in the 90s, as mentioned before, the *YMA Chanchinbu* too felt the boon and rise of the Mizo magazine and encouraged the growth as this aspect (according to the magazine) conveys progress in education as well as in terms of awareness as a culture.

An editorial in the *YMA Chanchinbu* (magazine) in 2006, September issue mentioned the incredible growth of popular magazines in recent years and gave positive reviews on such an event. It encouraged young Mizos to be engaged and be part of the phenomenon for if used correctly, these magazines can be made a weapon of society and politics as previously mentioned. The editorial of the magazine went thus:

> "Growth of Local Magazines:" The progress of 'print media' has engaged a big part of each of our lives. Even in Mizoram, a number of magazines have been launched and many people have embarked on this great evolution and even made professions out of this. It is up to us, as to how we use this new media and whether or not this could be a worthwhile endeavor or not. Very much aware of this great boon to our society, the Central YMA, in partnership with the government, has instigated an annual magazine competition based on many things, but more so on the content and the participation of such magazines.[viii] (*YMA Chanchinbu*, Bu 392na, 1)

With this published in one of the most circulated and most inclusive magazines of the Mizos, it is quite clear that print magazines had taken a deep root as a part of the cultural milieu. The competition continues to this day and still encourages the participation of its members to be an active part of their culture and to represent this through writing in various cultural magazines. This type of competition to take part in widening platforms had always seemed to be one of the many encouraging deeds that the Young Mizo Association has done. In fact, back in 1947, when the YMA was still known as organization known as Young Lushai Association,[ix] they had formally conducted patriotic song writing competition in the town of Aizawl. This competition was announced in the *Kristian Tlangau* magazine published in 1947:

> The Young Lushai Association has called for a competition for anyone who would wish to take part in composing songs for Mizoram. It should be patriotic and should reflect the sensibility of the Mizos[x] (Vol. XXXVI, No. 418, 17).

The early educated were aware that the only form of literary expressions available to them as Mizos, had been primarily religious in manner, and they called for a platform through which there could have cultural expressions of a secular

kind. The increasing amount of circulation of each magazine becomes a reflection of the consumers' interest in the role that this print medium played in constructing an identity of the people. There have been many theoretical discussions about the role of the cultural or symbolic sphere and particularly about literature in social sciences. (Finkelstein, 221-234) These theoretical discussions may offer significant insights for our research since the popular and more distributed magazines tend to highlight their particular 'literary' characteristics even though they contain contributions from other cultural areas such as photography or caricature. Some argued that the 'fictional' character of literature has made it inadequate in grasping social reality. Literature, is a platform for the author to have freedom on his subject material, oftentimes leading to creating a whole different world than that of the current climate, there seems to be a suspicion that media does not reflect the cultural identity of the people at present in its truest form.

For example, even in the Mizo magazine scenario in the 90s, there was a trend, that was an invention of the American popular magazine culture, of the serialization of stories published in magazines. From the start, general interest magazines contained articles, poems and letters, with self-advertising and competition that followed close behind. In England, Charles Dickens, editor of *Household Words*[xi] was the first to have a novel serialized and is credited with the invention of the 'cliff-hanger'. Serials were so popular that they quickly became the mainstay of the popular magazines. In America, Edgar Allen Poe developed the short story into an art form, which remained the backbone of American magazines, and this art made its way across the Atlantic. The short stories were not only made popular by Poe but perfected as well. Not only was it benefitted by the writer, the magazine editors too wanted short stories made into serials as this would cage audiences to be attentive to the stories that there would be a guarantee that they would buy later editions. This form of serialization was started in America, but was only the root for in took branches everywhere including Mizoram (Allen, 85)

In similar manner, translations of *Arabian Nights* in Mizo by P.L. Liandinga was serialized in *Lengzem*[xii] (2000)[xiii] magazine for more than one year. Other

examples of original stories that were local in nature were common during this time as it attracted consumers, promising the selling of these magazine once the readers become invested in such material. However, as much as it created producer and audience relationship, such material questions whether these reflected the cultural identity of the indigenous people at large.

What do these stories, most specifically stories of foreign origin, signify in terms of identity construction and how do they represent the society? Other than pointing out the important aspect of progress in education (mainly to do with the fact that Mizos were educated and has outreach enough to translate English to Mizo with creative minds) the and growth of mindset to accept and consume such material, there seemed to be little to no reason as to why these could contribute to the culture formation. What it did however, was to give platforms to little known creative writers who would write original Mizo stories in these magazines and periodicals. Following the trend that Edgar Allen Poe had set, there arose several writers who started out as serial fiction story writers in magazines.

In contrast, some thinkers (Eagleton, 208; Bakhtin, 81) still believe that social scientists should use literature and literary products as they provide a great opportunity in revealing society's socio-cultural–and political–personality through expressions and symbols of language which are crucial in grasping social reality. Literary products and their production processes may disclose that particular society's belief system, manner of life, social relations and history because like other outputs, literary products are coming out of a socio-economic processes and realities. Literature and literary and cultural products cannot be surely placed in completely objective or descriptive categories yet they are not totally subjective either. (Kuist, 307).

Eagleton, when speaking of literature as indicative of society, thoroughly understands the importance of it, when it comes to understanding the society. According to him, signification is not only in the written word but also the language, the reason as to why certain elements fit into certain specific time even though the

subject material might be antithesis to the time. For him, the consumers play as much part in understanding the importance of certain key points in literature as in understanding the writer. Why do these 'caricatures' fit into magazines? Why do the Mizo people consume foreign elements when it said nothing about their own reality and most importantly, how do these relationship between the author and the consumers play out in identity formation? Eagleton states:

> Literary texts do not exist on bookshelves: they are processes of signification materialized in the practice of reading. For literature to happen, the reader is quite as vital as the author (Eagleton, 41).

He went on to narrate an argument regarding the importance of literature and its part in the society, by denoting that any work of literature is an ever on-going process of what is regarded as 'literature' and it is in itself a social one and should be considered along with the value systems of societies and their particular historicity. Literature and its products do "more than just 'embody' certain social values" as Eagleton argues (15), they are vital in the deep entrenchment and wider dissemination of those social values and political ideologies through specific set of institutions such as periodicals, books or coffee houses. Thus, discussions on the broad sense of literature lead us one step further into one of its tools, language, which is used to generate meaning and other discursive practices.

Each article (narrative) situates itself in the literary public sphere, which prefigures its political counterpart. According to Bakhtin (112), and generates new – political – meanings and discourses to convey its message to the public in an entertaining and memorable way, for example, by using short stories, poems or articles concerning culture specific paradigm. For the Mizos too, ever since the start of popular magazines, there had been topics of very specific cultural attributions that writers gravitated towards. As with the contents found in *YMA Chanchinbu* which, to a large extent, deals with the Mizo culture and society, there had been other magazines that allowed for similar theme. There was also a hoard of literary writers, poets and novelists who turned to this journalistic medium to voice their opinions in

a more direct manner than they were used to in their other literary venture. Magazines, in this sense, provided a space for creative literary writers to fully commit to articulate their interest in their society without having to create to 'fictional' creative sources.

James Dokhuma[xiv] was one such individual in the Mizo arena who enjoyed contributing to both creative literature as well as periodical articles in magazines to candidly voice his opinions on Mizo culture without having to divulge into the fictional world. Just as the American writers' contribution heralded the major sale of the various magazines which they wrote for, Dokhuma's contribution to one specific magazine known as *Meichher*[xv] (1975) greatly helped the magazine as well. He had written numerous novels and short stories before he ventured to writing for magazines. He was one of the Mizo great writers who had received the honour of Padma Shree and by the 1970s he has been contributing to the magazine published under the Adult Education Wing, *Meichher* (1975).

Dokhuma began to gain notice for being an excellent writer around the 1960s and it was through this magazine, along with other various literary magazines[xvi] that he was able to first express himself as someone who knew and cared deeply about the Mizo society and culture. He was one of the few writers who chose to continuously write articles in cultural magazine, mostly *Meichher*. Being an educational magazine, he perhaps felt that his topics of concerns had thematic elements to the magazine. *Meichher* magazine itself is a reflection of the Mizo society and how far education has made its mark in the culture. What started as a small backyard school by the Welsh missionaries in the early 1900s had turned into a full organization that had continued to impart education on each level. The magazine traces a time period from which education amongst the Mizos really thrived and reports on how it persevered to this day.

For more than half a century, specifically from 1895 to 1952, elementary education was looked after by the Christian mission through the Honorary Inspector of Schools. During the period between 1953 and 1972, the management of Primary

Education was in the hand of the District Council. When Mizoram became Union Territory in 1972, the administration and management of Elementary Education, which are Primary and Middle School were transferred to the government. Due to the effort of this ongoing endeavor, starting with a literacy rate of 0.9% in 1901 census, Mizoram has now achieved a literacy rate of 91.58% in 2011 census. In order to prevent relapsing of Neo-literates and inculcate awareness, spreading of knowledge to Neo-literates and local youths, a small library is maintained in each Nodal Continuing Educational Centre. The Adult Education Wing published a good number of books and booklets meant for Neo-literate adults, school drop-outs, as well as local youths. The Wing then published regularly a literary monthly magazine called *Meichher* in Mizo language since March 1975 till date. (Directorate of School Education, home profile). The magazine is regarded one of the important cultural and educational epochs of the Mizo magazine periods with great writers contributing to it such as James Dokhuma, as mentioned.

In the first issue of the magazine, James Dokhuma wrote in detail about the importance of working hard as labourers, For the Mizos, this is the 'test of a man's strength' he said. He wrote in the article titled, "Kut Hnathawh Hlutna" (Value of labour):

> This labour is hard work in the ever-growing world, it is something each of us would least wish to have as work. There are growing numbers of people who rejected such work and are condemned by the society for being lazy. Times have changed. Even if there are not as many labour work as there was to be done in the past, a world before the machine, there is still time to work on many things. The superior being has less time for being idle[xvii] (*Meichher*, vol. 1, no. ii).

With this contribution, the nature of Mizo society is explained in very few words, along with the changing times that the culture faced. What Dokhuma voiced here, is his concern for the youths of Mizoram who could no longer identify with their forefathers who would have nothing to eat if they did not go to their farm and

physically extract food from there. With the beginning of modernization brought on by the white man, there were growing numbers of governmental work that did not require as much hands-on labour as in the past. Dokhuma saw this as laziness from the youths, but also acknowledged that this was because of the change that was happening in the society. From such articles, it can clearly be noted that Mizo society was no longer what it had been in the days of old. In just under half a century, the whole work culture had changed, the cultural identity of the youth had changed and although the articles had instances of regret in it, it encouraged the youths to take advantage of the changing times and not sit idle but be part of such change.

In another issue of the magazine, Dokhuma talked about the intrinsic identity of the Mizo, the backbone of the YMA, which is 'tlawmngaihna.'[xviii] Dokhuma took it upon himself to remind the Mizo people what it is to be a Mizo. The Mizo identity relied so much on religion and also on cultural practices and 'tlawmngaihna' is one such practice that had been prevalent in the Mizo society that had survived pre-colonial era. Dokhuma wrote:

> "Tlawmngaihna is something that do not ask for value, it instead attempts to live a life of value, something that is intrinsic in Mizo culture. It is a part of the Mizo and who we are as a people. It is an act that does not want ceremony. It has been part of the Mizo culture and can even be said that a Mizo cannot be one without 'tlawmngaihna.' It is a selfless act that reflects the nature of the people, that is our identity. Where would the Mizo be without 'tlawmngaihna?' The moment we lose 'tlawmngaihna' is the moment we lose our Mizo identity."[xix] (Meichher vol. 3, no. vi.)

The notion is a popularly known sentiment in the Mizo culture, instilled in the cultural ethos of the Mizo people a at very age to every child. In this regard, we may think of the popular literary magazines in light of Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of the 'narrative' which holds the idea that "man is a story-telling animal," and it is

through the life of man that meaning is derived. He insists that "all life is a unified narrative embedded in several other narratives," and it is in his belief in life as a historical narrative embedded within myriad historical narratives which prompts the examination of how the past is written, and how to capture the embedded nature of one story within other stories (MacIntyre, 101-122). It is through the lens of this concept that these magazines can be seen to signify 'human stories and narratives' in their content, mostly through memoirs, to constitute cultural and political meanings. Their narrative formation may not always be well-structured – like for instance, novels – due to their limited space for many authors, but their concentric and intense formation tend to be effective in practical terms since they are being issued monthly, which enables them to be actively involved in (and influenced by) recent socio-political developments and context. Put differently, authors in the popular literary magazines tend to present their own narratives in relation to the greater social and political phenomenon or events which are naturally connected to other lives and narratives just as MacIntyre argues (Schneewind, 659 - 610). Each month, the authors of the popular literary magazines are able to find something new to tell the readers while forming a dynamic narrative and discourse with their 'easy-to-read' format that enables fast and easy accumulation and dissemination of ideas.

Hence, this whole process of the formation of narratives indicates that social actors make sense of the world they live in through their life narratives both individually and collectively as they mobilize their socially-constructed emotions and forge their identities within the boundaries of their social context. In this sense, the concept of narrative has close ties with the process of identity formation which has directly related to social and political developments of our environment. Indeed, the authors of the popular literary magazines tell their short stories or memoirs about themselves, other people and their social surroundings each month that inevitably correlates with, and falls into our general understanding of the world, our perceptions and our social identities.

In a similar manner, Charles Taylor (23) discusses the issues of narrative and identity in relation with our historically developed 'social imaginary', the ways in

which people imagine their social existence, how they fit into the social world with others, how things and interactions go on between them and their fellows, individual experiences and expectations and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these experience and expectations. In other words, social imaginary is not a set of ideas, but rather, it is what enables for us the regular practices of society and our everyday life through making sense of them. It is a discourse community technique or paradigm methods for associating data to form a gestalt image or pattern; "it is what enables narrative or discourse, through making sense of the practices of a society," (Taylor, 2). Hence, the idea of "tlawmngaihna" that Dokhuma talked about in the above passage is an act, which is practiced regularly in the Mizo society and also a concept that has been instilled in the people so much so that the Mizos now identify themselves as being part of the society through this practice – "It has been part of the Mizo culture and can even be said that a Mizo cannot be one without 'tlawmngaihna.'" Dokhuma writes (Meichher vol. 3, no. vi.).

In general terms, the popular literary magazines try to develop a discursive strategy to combat the 'polarizing' and 'anti-democratic' effects produced by the official state narratives as well as the partisan and, or mainstream media on topics such as terrorism, peace, minorities or the freedom of thought and expression. This form of narrative had been prevalent in Mizoram during the nationalist fight for freedom that the people underwent before the popular magazine made an entry in the society. True to form, these magazines mirror the ideals and cultural identity of the people and with the end of such heavy political agendas, there was a sense of freedom from the people to express themselves in more ways than one. In a sense, they aim to produce new discourses, meanings, and therefore knowledge in the Foucauldian sense, on particular topics to constitute certain – and alternative – ways of talking about these issues. Foucault's thoughts contain perspectives, interpretations and theoretical openings to enrich the study of culture. The idea that power is productive as well as coercive, situational as well as pervasive adds a crucial dimension to his contribution (Foucault, 1994, 121).

Early Mizo popular magazines such as *Zonieng*[xx] (1987) has its motto written at the top of the cover page which reads, "To Build up a Mizo Nationalism." At first glance what seemed to be indeed a magazine of political in nature, when looked through its contents had as diverse topics as any popular magazines might have. In the January issue of the monthly magazine in 1988, the contents vary from the story of a girl who ran away because of a car accident to the miracle of a person who was resurrected and on to something that might seem insignificant to many like the workings of a bulldozer (Vol. II, No. I). As random as these concerns might be, it is a true representation of what literary medium could be if the contributors are diverse individuals with diverse interests. On one part, it showcased the literary inclinations of the general writer, creatively writing about an accident, an event from pure imagination, showing signs of success. On another part, the miracle of a 'resurrected person' would be attractive to an audience who, as had been established in the beginning, were intrinsically religious. As a culture based on religious practices, the very title of resurrection would sell to the large Mizo audience who had interests in such spiritual experiences where miracles are part of their belief system. The lengthy article of the working of a bulldozer would be something closer to a great phenomenon in 1988, Mizoram. Machinery came few and far between and the very existence of a bulldozer, and trying to understand the workings of it, reflected the society of the Mizo people at the time, while showing their interests at such a given time.

In June of 1983, a popular magazine called *Lelte*[xxi] *Weekly* emerged which became one of the first magazines published to cater specifically to popular and secular music. Both as a creative practice and as a form of consumption, music plays an important role in the narrativization of place, that is, in which people define their relationships to local, everyday surroundings. Inevitably perhaps, the power that can be invested in music as a statement of identity has also led to music becoming an instrument and expression of nationalism. The most obvious example of music being used in this way are national anthems, in combination with flags and emblems 'serve as an identification of state and cultural representation.' Rokunga (as denoted in the earlier chapter) has been an iconic forerunner in understanding how deeply rooted

the Mizos are to songs and he saw, very early on, the need for artistic expression of secular music.[xxii] This desire that Rokunga had was one of the reasons why C. Dinthanga[xxiii], the editor of *Lelte Weekly* decided to publish a music magazine which would cater to the secular taste of the Mizos. According to him:

> Music is at the root of Mizo identity. Even from time we cannot remember, there is always the idea of music in most people's minds. If there is any important event in Mizo history, there is always music that accompany such even. There was a time in the history of Mizo where secular form of musical expression was so rare that 'Kaihlek hla[xxiv]' was really the only kind of rebel against this constraint that people felt upon their need for expression. People like me, a man who's instinct is to turn to music in times of need or happiness, there had not been a lot of platforms for expressing my love for music. There was such a long period in the Mizo history where the kind of magazine that I wanted to publish would never have been successful. There would have been outburst for it not being didactic or moral enough. However, I wanted this magazine (*Lelte Weekly*) to become a mouthpiece for the people who want to express joy, love, happiness or any other emotion with freedom and without inhibition[xxv].

Dinthanga related back to the time when secular forms of expressions did not have a place in the Mizo culture and is now grateful for the accepting field that print culture provides in the society. People who had been starved for representation, other than those of the religious and the didactic could now have a voice through secular magazines like *Lelte Weekly.* With all these varying forms of expression that came to front, it can be seen how far the Mizo people have come in identity formation as seen through these magazines. It can also be seen in such magazines how much the western world has influenced the Mizo culture as well. *Lelte Weekly* too had mostly western content at the inception of its publication, western music and the American music at the forefront (*Lelte Weekly*, Vol. 1, No. 1). When it came to Mizo popular magazines there is a post-colonial element in the fact that almost all of these modern

magazines sell their wares with Western culture at the center of their cover pages. One such magazine is *Lei Hringnun*[xxvi] (1998) where in each of the issue, the contents dealt with western culture, be it sports, politics or entertainment. On many of its issues, all of the contents had themes pertaining to the western world. The cover of the magazine too had pictures of said contents, mainly of foreign in nature.

These are telling signs of what it took to sell a magazine during this time when people were confused as to what their cultural identity was. Enamored by the west, attracted by something so alien to ourselves is a phenomenon that had been part of colonial experience for a wide variety of time and space. Even years after the white men had left the state, the Mizo culture had developed into what Homi Bhabha called a 'hybrid'.

As flourishing as the Mizo magazines have been, there arose a tension that had been dealt with at the very beginning which was language. A formulated language for print was formed and used, and it evolved triumphantly through the years. New Mizo words formed at great intervals for the growth of Mizo literature. However, looking at these later magazines, the stark reality of how the colonisers' language have been imbibed can be seen. *Thu leh Hla*[xxvii] was one of the first magazines that dealt heavily with language, and there were many articles that contributed towards the desire for the progress of Mizo language. The proponents were and continue to be eager in wanting a language that is intrinsically, purely Mizo and not combined with the white man's tongue. However, this proved impossible as the magazines that had come up in recent years had concerns of not only literature, but capitalism as well. Print capitalism, as has been expounded in earlier chapters has to be part of the advancement of print literature so there arose, as in any other colonized culture, a people of 'hybrids.'

Bhabha argues that hybridity results from various forms of colonization, which had sprung from cultural collisions and social interchanges which do not necessarily work together. In the attempt to assert colonial power in order to create anglicized subjects, "The trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as

something *different*--a mutation, a hybrid" (Bhabha, 111). As time went on, the Mizos became more and more out of contact with their own neighbouring states which due to the "Thirty Seven Year Bengali Captivity", they could not really regard as friendly. Their only hope was to communicate with the Welsh missionaries and the Britishers who had stayed with them earlier but this aspect, after independence was not possible after independence. So to this day, the people live in a somewhat disoriented group and often feel they had more in common with the white man than they ever did with the other states of India. The implicit impossibility of being a part of that culture which gave the thought more texture and the fascination with the white man still continues.

In Wilson Harris' formulation:

> …hybridity in the present is constantly struggling to free itself from a past which stressed ancestry, and which valued the 'pure' over its threatening opposite, the 'composite.' It replaces a temporal lineality with a spatial plurality (Ashcroft, 2).

These hybrid popular magazines started to really increase in popularity as the Mizo people became more and more exposed to the outside world, while desiring to mimic the white man. Magazines such as *Diktawn* (2006), as popular magazines go, has tried to retain the intrinsic Mizo identity back in its magazine, but there still remains the Western attributes that has been part and parcel of the cultural identity for so long. Under the editorial guidance of Lalhmachhuana Zofa, the magazine has reached one of the biggest readerships in Mizo magazines. The name *Diktawn*, he says is an old term for 'zawlaidi'[xxviii] in the Mizo myth, where he hoped he could charm the readers into his magazine. One of the main focus of the magazine is to regain the 'true identity' of the Mizos as he saw it. His name 'Zofa' itself is a penname which does not truly exist in Mizo surnames, but means a child of the 'Zo'[xxix] people.

As much as these magazines try to instill the Mizo back into their production, magazines are made for public consumption and will needed to satisfy the public

needs. In its 2011, September issue there is a picture of a Mizo girl instead of random western pictures that one might find on the internet. The contents and the stories published there are original and local in nature. However, under the Sports, Movie, Music and Knowledge headings there are all the elements of the influence of the western world that are all English in nature. What this indicated was to whom the popular magazines now catered to. The audience had changed, the cultural identity of the people had changed. Dokhuma wrote about 'tlawmngaihna' in the 1970s, and by the end of 2000s, the Mizo people wanted more of the other man's culture than their own. However, the journey of the magazines and periodicals seem to have a few culture specific inclinations with the coming of these new magazines like *Diktawn* where the contents tried to protect mostly Mizo material, although there are still exceptions. Looking at all these magazines, what has become clear is the manner in which culture formation has undergone such changes in the last several years as seen through the lens of the print media.

Thereby looking at their discursive formations, this allows for a multiplicity of voices and narratives to co-exist in one magazine as an alternative public sphere. These magazines challenge or combat other discourses by generating alternative or new meanings and discourses on certain social and political issues regarding the socio-political context of Mizoram. Indeed, studying popular magazines enable us to explore the historical and material conditions of that particular period by looking at the literary and cultural productions and dispositions of the time. Surely, literary history studies which focus on certain authors or works may help in getting basic information about this particular subject or cultural product. However, the socio-political context of the time passed unnoticed in this kind of work. On the other hand, a study, which focuses on the popular magazines, is able to serve the proper ground for an understanding of the cultural, material and political conditions of that period since it provides information about a large number of authors, rather than a single one; numerous texts, rather than one book. So, therefore it has the capacity to illustrate various social, political, cultural and ideological backgrounds.

The popular literary magazines, which were also a part of the same cultural traditions with comics, have somehow managed to incorporate this linguistic code into literature with their unique discursive formations. These magazines, have contributions from famous authors, musicians, journalists or other well-known public figures and respected writers and they discuss the current social and political issues by highlighting ‘humane stories of everyday life,’ through their ‘easy-to-read’ writing format.

McLuhan believed that culture is affected by technology via the impact on social structures but also by the manner in which it changes us in a more personal fashion. He believed that "sense ratios or patterns of perception" are altered by technologies. According to McLuhan's theory, technologies alter the manner in which we habitually process information, and incline us more toward some learning styles than others (McLuhan, 321). Studying and examining literary magazines by using their literary or textual data accompanies certain difficulties for researches in terms of sampling, due to the magazines’ wide range of texts, authors and topics and their rich content. Each month, approximately more than 30 authors contribute to the popular literary magazines with a variety of literary forms and topics.

Thus, as Bakhtin (191) argued; we cannot separate language, a socially constructed sign-system, from its historicity and sense of community. This collective sign-system is able to generate a common ground among members of the society. Moreover, because of its strong influence, language has always been a sphere for struggle for meaning as well as to influence other meanings to form a kind of hegemony. This process of production of meaning – or knowledge – is vital to understand the relations of power in the Foucauldian sense. “Speaking of literature and ideology”, Eagleton (19-20) notes, as two separate phenomena is quite unnecessary since “literature, in the meaning of the words we have inherited, and is an ideology”.

So then, although it had taken many years, the Mizos soon realized that their worth and values lay in the life which had been theirs during the pre-colonial times.

As Harris says, the present sees a dawn in which the people are awakening to realize how valuable their own indigenous culture and beliefs are and how important it is to try to remain 'pure' to their nativism even though the idea seemed impossible.

Harris further explains that "cultures must be liberated from the destructive dialectic of history, and imagination is the key to this. Mixing past, present, future and imperial and colonial cultures within his own fiction, Harris deliberately strives after a new language and a new way of seeing the world." (Ashcroft, et al, 34). The question arises, therefore if the Mizos could find a way to attain that same kind of imagination by reliving their past through their own imagination and as well as their non-fictional contributions in these culturally popular magazines and periodicals. Harris provides, there is nothing more instrumental than on-going narratives to bring a people back to their origins and to have them remember that they had survived, albeit through different means, but are able to function properly without the white man for centuries.

Therefore, an analysis of the popular literary magazines as literary or cultural products is part of the political and ideological history of our own epoch since literature is closely bound up with beliefs and values (Eagleton, 2008). In the concept of the social imaginary, the focus is more on the manner in which ordinary people 'imagine' and perceive their social surroundings which are carried in images, legends and stories of everyday life. Literary and cultural products are one of the key elements of this process since they have the power to shape our consciousness and the reality about the world we live in. Accordingly, Benedict Anderson, (211) even our national consciousness, something that we take for granted most of the time, is a 'constructed imagination' through political and cultural projects and artifacts, which are closely related to the development of print capitalism and the rapid dissemination of ideas. Thus, the stories, images and representations about the social, economic and political life of the culture of the people as a whole as seen in popular literary magazines, simultaneously shape both the readers and the authors' understandings or 'imaginaries' as well, and this is perhaps partly done unconsciously.

That is to say, “literature” as Eagleton (17) puts it, “has become a whole alternative ideology, and the ‘imagination’ itself, becomes a political force. Its task is to transform society in the name of those energies and values which art embodies”. Just like the Romantic poets that Eagleton talks about, many authors of the popular literary magazines are also political activists who perceive continuity rather than conflict between their literary and social commitments.

Taylor (83) also touches upon the concept of the ‘public sphere’ following Habermas’s footprints and describes it as a “common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media” including print, electronic as well as face-to-face encounters to discuss matters of their common interest and tries to form a common-sense about these issues. Public sphere has made it possible for widely dispersed individuals to share the views that have been linked in a certain space of discussion and share/exchange their ideas. People that are never met are linked in this particular common sphere of discussion through media.

Readers share their ideas about the magazine, or share certain ‘quotes’ from the authors to reflect their ‘state of mind’ and thus enter into ‘dialogues’ with each other, particularly through social media. In parallel with our previous discussions on the public sphere and identity, this common realm, as Fraser notes (368) “is not only an arena for the formation of discursive opinion; in addition, it is an arena for the formation and enactment of social identities”. Authors express their opinions and values, even their own morality, value-judgments or ‘tastes’ through their stories and writings in the popular literary magazines. The readers, on the other hand, may either comment upon these writings on social media or send their own material to the magazines with the possibility of getting published each month. Therefore, we can talk about a kind of ‘participation’ and ‘inter - subjectivity’ of both parties. This participation of both sides creates the possibility of “being able to speak ‘in one’s own voice’, thereby simultaneously constructing and expressing one’s own cultural identity through idiom and style” on this common sphere (Fraser, 369).

Popular magazines, in this sense act as both the writers' voice printed for the reading public, but since it acts as a consumer capitalist paradigm, unlike any other printed work, it has to feed the public. For this reason, periodicals and magazines continue to form a significant base for understanding the identity and cultural ethos of the people with the time. In 1911, the first publications were of religious in nature, pertaining solely to the need for God, the higher power to help the people through struggles and hardships. For years, this sentiment held power over the people until the need for a national identity after a political upheaval became inevitable. Just like any other enlightenment that occurs after certain revolutionary period in time, Mizoram too changed its disposition, or perhaps its moral over the course of the growth of these publications. If the need for a never failing God was prevalent in certain periods of time in Mizoram, the publications of magazines in 2011 spoke volumes about how much humans are capable of helping themselves.

In *Lengzem* magazine, April, 2011 edition, an article titled under 'Hnehna Hlado' [xxx] conveyed how human effort could overcome a lot of the inhumane difficulties man faces during this time. The magazine editor, Vanneihtluanga [xxxi] spoke of what his magazine aims to do[xxxii], which is to create a dynamic outlook on Mizo culture. Not how he himself sees the Mizo, but more so on how Mizo society is reflected in the magazine. Endeavour, courage and struggle are the main themes of the magazine along with certain satiric social and political issues.

'Eizawnna', meaning 'employment' is a popular item in the magazine which is about helping the people on how to find employment. These magazines do reflect the times of the society, the changing minds of the culture and the zeitgeist notion that is unmistakable in their studies. The search for employment would have seemed redundant in the 1950s magazines where the main issues that were tackled were language and nationalism. However, the Mizo people seemed to have come to a point where faith cannot be solely put on God, nor their fellow men or even the government. Faith in oneself seemed to be the most important part of the society in 2011. The theme of these magazines have changed markedly throughout the years as can be seen from the first article published in *Kristian Tlangau* in 1911[xxxiii], to the

social and cultural issues that the Mizos have faced in 2011. Magazines and periodicals continue to reflect the cultural identity of the people as a whole, from religious, to nationalist concerns and entertainment contents which are not necessarily of a Mizo context.

However, these magazines searched for identity in over the years in whatever way that they could, and it is undeniable that print publications truly express the ethos of the changing world. Magazines, being a heavily public minded business, the main aim of it all still is to feed the public. In this sense, the popular literary magazines, like other cultural products, are the arenas of social and political struggle within the cultural and symbolic sphere. Therefore, theories on language, discourse, culture, public or private sphere and social movements may serve good ground for our conceptualization of the popular literary magazines. In relation to these unique characteristics and discursive formations, the popular literary magazines have strived to reach very high circulation numbers in Mizoram. If a certain type of literary genre or activity is privileged over other forms, as Eagleton reminds us (16), it denotes something significant about the society that we live, as well as our socio-political context.

Notes

[i] 'Kristian' in English translates to Christian, 'tlangau' translates to 'crier,' (Dailova, 126, will be denoted as ibid hereafter). The magazine can be described as a village crier who would announce news and important events to the Christians in the form of a printed magazine.

[ii] Romantic age and rebellion, expression of self,

[iii] *Lungdum* can be translated as 'Earnest.'

[iv] This passage has been translated from the original vernacular Mizo language to English by me.

[v] *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu* came out in 1895 concerning journalistic reports of the everyday lives of the Mizo people. It was under the guidance of Major. J. Shakespear, the first superintendent of the Lushai Hills

[vi] 'Diktawn' is a kind of 'zawlaidi' which is a myth in Mizo folklore which can be used to make someone fall in love with them. The magazine follows this sentiment to use as a charm to the audience (Translation from the editor).

[vii] The passage has been translated from Mizo to English by me.

[viii] The passage has been translated from Mizo to English by me.

[ix]Young Lushai Association (YLA) was the name given to the largest and most comprehensive non-profit, secular and non-governmental association of the Mizo people when it was first established in 15th June, 1935. It was later replaced with Young Mizo Association (YMA) in 1947 and it still continues to carry the name to this day.

[x] This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.
[xi] *Household Words* was an English weekly magazine edited by Charles Dickens in the 1950s. Its first publication was on 28th September 1950, and its last publication in 22nd March, 1951. It was one of the first magazines that was aimed for the middle class.

[xii] *Lengzem* can be translated as 'Love Song'

[xiii] The serialization of *Arabian Nights* started in the June issue of 2001 and ended in the November issue of 2002 in *Lengzem* magazine.

[xiv] James Dokhuma (1932-2007) has written 42 books, 40 poems and more than 400 essays and articles. He was awarded the Padma Shree for writing in 1985. The

government of Mizoram bestowed him the title 'father of Mizo lexicography' in 1971.

[xv] *Meichher* can be translated as 'Torch.'

[xvi] James Dokhuma contributed to *Thu Leh Hla*, as well as the *MUP (Mizo Upa Pawl) Chanchinbu* (Magazine of the Elderly) during the 1960s and 70s

[xvii] The passage has been translated from Mizo to English by me

[xviii] In Lushai Mizo Dictionary made by J.F Laldailova (1925-1979), 'tlawmngaihna' is described as altruism, chivalrous, a moral act without the hope of getting anything in return. There is a very similar term called 'Ubuntu' in Africa spoken by the Nguni Bantu tribe.

[xix] The passage has been translated from Mizo to English by me.

[xx] *Zonieng* can be translated as 'Sun of Mizoram/ Light of the Zo people.'

[xxi] 'Lelte' is the name of an insect which is comes around the Autumn season. For the Mizos, it brings nostalgia and often said to soothe the soul. The magazine is named after, not only the insect but how the insect conveys all these emotions to the people (Ibid, 332)

[xxii] See Chapter 3, pg. 82

[xxiii] C. Dinthanga was born in 1956 and has recorded over 70 songs himself. He is, a self-acclaimed, great admirer of Rokunga. He is the editor of *Lelte Weekly* (1983).

[xxiv] *Kaihlek Zai* is a form of Mizo songs where words are interchanged with the same melodies or vice versa. Familiar examples are those of gospel songs where the words are changed with secular ones.

[xxv] Interview with C. Dinthanga, the editor of *Lelte Weekly* was conducted over the phone on 29th July, 2020. The interview was done in Mizo and has been translated to English by me.

[xxvi] *Lei Hringnun* can be translated as 'Life on earth.'

[xxvii] *Thu leh Hla* can be translated as 'Prose and Poetry.'

[xxviii] 'Zawlaidi' is an old Mizo myth, a charm which can exist in any form. Lovers would put in varying things in the charm in order to make the object of desire fall in love with them.

[xxix] A personal interview was conducted at his office on 22nd September, 2017.

[xxx] *Hnehna Hlado* can be translated as 'Victory war cry.' *Hnehna Hlado* has been published as a series of books with six volumes telling stories of small and big success stories.

[xxxi] Vanneihtluanga (1957 -). He is the editor of *Lengzem* magazine that was first published in 2000. He is one of the partners who are currently in charge of running the local channel, *Zonet.*

[xxxii] An interview was conducted on 12th February, 2020.

[xxxiii] See *Kristian Tlangau* Oct, 1911

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis is a narrative of the of literary works as seen through magazines and periodicals in Mizo. These narratives reflect the political and cultural identities of the people and they act as an agent of change in accordance with the Mizo society. The study follows three distinct phases in colonial and post colonial times. The first is led by the beginning of the printing phenomenon that took place in Mizoram and it has followed the historical events that led to the publication of the first religious Mizo magazine called the *Kristian Tlangau*[i] in 1911.

The thesis traces the historical base on the Mizo people and how the printing press came into Lushai Hills and how the first Mizo religious magazine came to be published in 1911. The invention of the printing press as well as the introduction of it to the Mizo people had been more than historical phenomenon, and it is more of a cultural exchange. When Fanon said, "to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture," what he identifies is the mode of inflection as well as the syntax, that is the manner of sentence formation of a language; 'to speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language…" He defines culture as "Culture is a combination of motor and mental behavior patterns arising from the encounter of man with nature and with his fellow-men" (Fanon, 78), meaning that culture is a learned behavior. For the Mizos it was a cultural exchange. The white men understood the importance of language and realized very early on that the Mizos were not a tribe that took forced imposition lightly.

Given the nature of colonial situation, both the colonised and the colonisers are alienated individuals. Fanon argues that the language of the coloniser is one medium through which the colonised subject suffers psychological violence. With such a model, as one can proceed to examine how, in the colonial context, the process of cultural diffusion takes place. One aspect of this process which is taken up by Fanon is that of culture and language. Fanon's discussion of the role of language in the colonial situation leads him to a hypothesis concerning the relationship of language to culture. The hypothesis asserts that in adopting and using the language of the coloniser, the colonised subject not only assumes the culture of

the coloniser, but also rejects his own culture. This could not be more related to the coloniser/colonised relationship in the Mizo context as well. The indigenous people had come into contact with their coloniser, and express themselves in script, and this had been the most important development when it came to the Mizos. Instead of another journalistic magazines such as the *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu*[ii], the Mizos wanted a space they could call their own.

The study covers the period between the emergence of print in Mizo from the beginning in 1911 with the publication of *Kristian Tlangau* to the publication of later secular magazines such as *Diktawn*[iii] that continued to 2011. It analyses the significance of both religious and secular paradigms in print, and the subsequent impact that each genre has had in terms of situating identity and how it had developed immensely through the years.

While situating the legacy of print, the aspect of colonisation has continued to play an important part. Under the rule of the British, more and more Mizos accepted Christianity and in effect, education too was enhanced. In her seminal book, Professor Eisenstein has established a reputation amongst students of the early modern period for a number of studies, on the printing press. Eisenstein continued her quest in exploring the links between the three greatest historical developments in early modern Europe: The Renaissance, the Reformation and the use of Printing Press. She pointed out, in many of the cases that she had laid out in her book that the Italian Renaissance became the Renaissance of European history as a consequence of the recently invented printing press. This device guaranteed a permanency to the thoughts and discoveries of the period which similar cultural revivals had been denied. In a subsequent work, Eisenstein advanced the attractive notion that the printing press had a comparable impact upon the Reformation. Not only did Luther exploit a medium that had been denied to his precursors for purposes of propaganda; the invention also became, in a manner of speaking, an integral part of his theological programme. The doctrine ‘the priesthood of all believers’ could not have been realized in practice without a plentiful supply of the Bible; and this meant printed Bibles (Lovett, 184).

The church was school at the time, a Sunday school where they were taught everything that one might have learnt in a formal educational institution. The church functioned as both for the Mizos. The first documented knowledge of a Sunday School was a meagre place at the house of one of the missionaries. So, with children, from a very early age to be influenced by the pictures in their Bible books, in a way helped them to become good Christians because of the rigid belief that they encountered with the pictorial evidence of their belief in the books. It is intrinsically because of this, that print culture had inherently been a part of framing Mizo consciousness.

There is in Martin Luther, the sense of a special blessing conferred on the German nation and it was associated with Gutenberg's invention, which emancipated the Germans from bondage, to Rome and brought the light of 'true religion' to a God-fearing people. Ferguson wrote:

> As if to offer proof that God has chosen us to accomplish a special mission, there was invented in our land a marvellous new and subtle art, the art of printing. This opened German eyes even as it is now bringing enlightenment to other countries. Each man became eager for knowledge, not without feeling a sense of amazement at his former blindness.' (Ferguson, 397)

This kind of enlightenment was what the Mizos felt when they were operating a Western invention, the printing machine for the first time. Luther himself described printing as:

> 'God's highest and extremist act of grace, whereby the business of the Gospel is driven forward'. It was typical of the Protestant outlook that he also regarded it as 'the last flame before the extinction of the world' (Eisenstein, 7542).

It was perhaps significant to believe the attributions that Luther paid to the printing press for it was very much a propaganda for him. However, it could not be denied that when in sculpting the identity of a culture, it was impertinent for the Mizos. It not only did it brought about literacy (Mizoram has the second highest literacy rate in India to date), the identity of the whole community is based on their cultural practices which is not different from their religious culture.

Marshall McLuhan has argued that the printing press has led to the creation of democracy, capitalism, individualism, nationalism, dualism, rationalism, Protestantism, and a culture of scientific research (McLuhan, 83). It is on this level that the effects of the printing press have been felt in the search for identity in different spectrums. For Jonathan Friedman, cultural identity refers to the "attribution of a set of qualities to a given population" (Friedman, 29), who act as cultural beings. He adds that in practice, which means as it is experienced by individuals, cultural identity is equivalent to ethnicity. In his definition, it complexifies the concept: "personal, sexual, national, social, and ethnic identities all combined into one". In intercultural communication (be it research or teaching), 'cultural identity often refers to a localized national culture' (192)

The study has illustrated upon the printing press has been used as a weapon of propaganda for religious tracts not only in Mizoram but in Europe and America as well due to various colonial circumstances. The Mizos comprehend their identity as inextricably linked to the religion and the collective consciousness of the Mizos actively propagates a 'Mizo Christianity' (Pachuau, 16). If language is an expression of a particular culture, the implication is that, according to Fanon's claim, the colonised subject, who speaks the language of the coloniser instantly assumes the latter's culture. To say this, is in effect to claim that the primary function of a language in the colonial context is to facilitate and promote cultural and political domination (Fanon, 45)

On this subject of print and colonization Julie K. Williams has studied various aspects using America as example. Religion was the main weapon of

colonization, in fact, one of the things that was first published and produced using the printing press were religious tracts affirming Puritanism as the only source of comfort to the Native Americans. Settlement entrepreneurs made a revival of the press to persuade Europeans to come to America. Immigrants brought religious tracts with them to spread Puritanism and other doctrines to Native Americans, and the colonists used the press to openly debate upon issues, print advertisements for business, and it was also used as a source of entertainment. Williams stresses:

> The spiritual focus appeared in printed matter soon after settlement began. Both Puritans, who were known for such efforts and non-Puritans used the press in an attempt to present their arguments to the public and to convert others to their way of thinking… Printing was an important tool to spread God's word. (Williams, 46).

In practice, identity allows individuals to stratify their social experiences by linking with various others and groups or communities. In the case of the Mizos, it was religion, and Christianity in particular that was their core community. The lived experiences of the people thus became the only way to formulate and study the identity of the Mizos until their lives and cultures were documented by the Welsh missionaries in the turn of the twentieth century. From the printing culture that have been established in 1911, the identity of the Mizos is deeply rooted in their religious practices as well as their accepted cultural practices, and amongst these, religion played one of the most important part of their culture.

With print evolves a culture that is inclusive, a connection between human activities as had never been before. 'The Gutenberg man' emerged as a result, a subject who is produced by the change of consciousness wrought by the advent of the printed word. This printed word is distributed and consumed and it led to the creation of nationalism, cultural change, information and standardisation of culture and ultimately the alienation of individuals. A 'global village' is formed, which is the consequence of the dominance of this electrical medium and the effect is has on its consumers (McLuhan, 136).

As much as print culture brought in uniformity amongst its consumers, so can it provide the opposite. It provided shared ideas to a group of people, gave new ideas to another and 'out of all these visual ideas in printed book, propagandas and pamphlets came the single most important result of the printing machine which was nationalism' (Friedman, 64). Nationalist struggles of different nations and cultures have been delineated through differing studies which testified its significance in forming the national identity of a nation.

This search for national identity in the Mizo scenario is a pertinent theme in the thesis. The immediate decades after independence witnessed rapid changes in political, economic and cultural spheres in Mizoram. It had focused on the political struggle of the state and how a specific print culture was developed as a result of the Mizo Nationalist Struggle. During this period, a variety of cultural articulations in mediums like magazines and literary periodicals affirmed and contested the imagination of the Mizos as an autonomous cultural entity. The cultural productions in the form of magazines and literary expressions have gone on to assimilate the region into a coherent community even as it appears to strive for a distinctive regional identity. Since the granting of statehood, representative institutions like the legislature, media and civil society organizations including the Church continues to play an important role in the articulation of the needs and aspirations of the contemporary Mizo culture.

With India gaining independence in 1947, this demand became vocal among the Mizo literati. Along with this rise in political consciousness, they realized that they lacked a secular culture to express their new political sentiments and identity. These magazines gave cultural unification when it came to identity formation. Their thoughts, feelings and moreover, literary inclinations could be seen in these magazines. These approaches of studying media coverage hold in common that national identity is constructed and reinforced through national discourse, of which the media (though especially the press) constitute the most important part (Anderson,

201). More precisely, in the way the national identity in question, is reinforced in magazines and periodical coverages.

In 1965, the 'Mizo Academy of Letters'[iv] (MAL) declared in their inaugural editorial of *Thu leh Hla*[v], that the Mizo language requires to be standardized and made comparable to other modern Indian regional languages along with an effort to cultivate a literary culture among the Mizos. After more than 45 years, it appears that these twin purposes namely, 'pedagogic' and 'aesthetic' still permeate the functioning of the literary organ, *Thu leh Hla*. The editorial suggested that there is a hope of setting right a linguistic-literary deficit if people come forward enthusiastically to create and consume the proposed literary tradition (Thanmawia, 145). In other words, the editorial appeared to provide a platform for the standardization of Mizo language through a critique of contemporary literary and performative Mizo language that is used in everyday Mizo life in the region.

In other words, the religious identity precedes the political identity and often feed into each other although occasionally they do not seem to complement each other. For instance, the important literary and cultural organ *Kristian Tlangau* was still published when emergency was imposed in the mid 1970's. The only occasion when the *Kristian Tlangau* stopped publication was during the Second World War as they could not procure newsprint and other materials needed for publishing the magazine.

The Mizo Hills District Council of Assam in the 1950's experienced a new atmosphere among the freshly educated elites of Aizawl. There seemed to be a thirst for reading content which was neither overtly political nor religious. Apart from the regular Church based magazines and political organs, the decade saw an increase in non-Church and non-political publications which has not emerged in the region before. This may be characterized as efforts coming mainly from individuals who were interested in developing new literary and cultural tastes against the background of developmental and cultural agenda of the Indian Nation State. Publications

included themes from literature, education, children's literature and also Government policies and programmes. Examples include publications like *Thlirvelna* [vi] (1953), a literary bi-monthly magazine from Lunglei, *Zoram Hriattirna* [vii] (1953), the District Council newspaper mainly announcing the Government's information, *Mizo Naupang*[viii] (1953), a children's magazine, *Hun Thar*[ix] (1954), a weekly paper on wars, and *Tunlai*[x] (1957), *Sikul Thlirna*[xi] (1957) and *Zirtirtu Thian*[xii] (1959), which were educational magazines. (Thanmawia, 118). Nevertheless, it appears that there is an absence of journalistic writing that was based on objective facts among the publications, such as hard news and reporting.

The armed conflict continued for more than two decades and there was a general repression of people's voice. On several occasions, writers and journalists were physically assaulted and sometimes imprisoned by the Indian State (Lalzuithanga, 11). In the writing of the postcolonial history of Mizoram, this democratic voice seems to have become invisible. This period offers a glimpse of the transition from a peculiar traditional authority inflected by the colonial rule through a policy of isolation, to a democratic representative form of governance in postcolonial India.

From the rapid flourishing of printed magazines and periodicals that emerged during this period, it could not denied that the advent of capitalism, in particular, one of its first manifestations which is printing, facilitated the development of national identities (Eisenstein, 233). The significant and rapid cultural and economic change had an impact upon all Mizo communities.

The wave of educationally focused magazines and periodicals in the fifties attested to the growing literacy and the need for education among the Mizos. Therefore, printing was a business, and a vernacular existed for Mizos that allowed, first the missionaries and then the government officials to disseminate the same printed texts around Mizoram. The agenda was to change and develop Mizo thought and behaviour. These printed texts assisted in creating a self-conscious reading

community which connected the scattered Mizo population. This development of reading cultural materials came full circle to the argument that globalization, through means of print media in the Mizo society proliferates instead of destroying Mizo identity.

These cultural changes that the Mizos went through were distinct from the changes they underwent in the pre and also post-colonial context when it came to narratives of their identity. Oral culture, which was originally the very core of Mizo cultural identity, also became a way by which people of a region in general could find a sense of identification with. The contemporary culture of the Mizos was born out of the culture clash as well as the tension between the nation states and the direct cut from the manner of life which they had earlier known. This tension however, brought to the people a culture that developed their thoughts and behavior, way of thinking and living, and in other words, provided a popular culture for the Mizos that had never been there in the society before.

Popular culture is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is the stake to be won or lost in that struggle. It is the arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured. It is not a sphere where socialism, a socialist culture -- already fully formed -- might be simply "expressed". But it is one of the places where socialism might be constituted. That is why "popular culture" matters (Hall, 112).

Identity, then, like language, was not just a description of cultural belonging; it was a sort of collective treasure of the local communities. However, it was also discovered to be something fragile that needed protecting and preserving, for it could be lost. Into this world of manifold, discrete, but to various degrees vulnerable, cultural identities there suddenly burst, in the case of the Mizo print scene, around the 1950s, the corrosive power of globalization. Globalization, has swept like a flood through the world's diverse cultures, destroying stable localities, displacing peoples, bringing a market-driven, 'branded' homogenization of cultural experience, thus

obliterating the differences between locality-defined cultures which had constituted our identities (Anderson, 121-132).Though globalization has been judged as involving a general process of loss of cultural diversity, some of course did better, and some worsened by this process.

Magazines and periodicals provide material that are quite different from other forms of literature such as the novel or verse. According to Hall, (121) they provide a language that reflects the time that best allows for the study of cultural identity. One such important part of the Mizo cultural scenario at this time was the start of popular magazines after a harsh political climate. These general public contributions form an exceptional backbone for criticism as they were produced by the audience to whom the elitist magazines catered to before. Many eighteenth-century magazines consisted of items of news or opinions condensed or excerpted from newspapers, and usually did not include fiction, although writers reported in the first person, often with little or no attempt to objectivity. Magazine editors chose what they thought was interesting or important, keeping items to a length that allowed the reading of a few in an evening, between a long day's work and going to bed. Early magazines were highly significant for the development of popular culture, but many have perished. As paper was scarce, it was often reused for wrapping paper, baking paper and toilet paper (Imamoglu, 76). After a long period of limited availability, early examples are now re-emerging online due to the efforts of enthusiasts and scholars.

The first popular magazine to bear the name was the *Gentleman's* Magazine and the trend started from there onwards in 1973. Magazine editors were often reporters who published their own stories, including their creative writing, along with those of other writers. Many writers, including women, were able live on their earnings through writing. American magazines also provided a work space for women writers of fiction and journalism, such as Sarah Hale, Anne S. Stevens and Willa Cather. In addition to their ability to produce worthwhile fiction, female magazine editors achieved a rare degree of respectable visibility in the workplace.

This thesis has made references to Terry Eagleton, Stuart Hall, Mikhail Bakhtin and Michel Foucault, to emphasize the role of literature, language and discourse, their close relation with socio-political contexts in terms of producing certain knowledges, and the power relations surrounding the cultural field and other spheres. Furthermore, theoreticians of narrative and identity such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor and Benedict Anderson, have been incorporated due to their fruitful insights on identity construction process, both in personal and collective level, through stories and narratives.

In the light of these observations; the thesis captured several differences between the early traditional magazines and the popular literary magazines in terms of their form, content, use of language and their discursive formation in general. The adjustment to the rapid pace of cultural change that is now a normal part of life rests heavily on our ability to make lasting records and to communicate over distance by writing things down, using known and accepted writing systems to represent language. McLuhan hypotheses that print is the medium, not the message itself, that most influences society's habits, customs and thinking, that the technology – the written word, the print and the paper – is more influential than what it is written (McLuhan 118). In spite of fears to the contrary, voiced with each advance in electronic technology, print remains significant to the media scape. Even as technology satisfies more and more, print retains a materiality that people enjoy, something that does not feel arbitrary or fleeting. The weight of a text and the activity of turning the page is a physical activity that divides our reading time and signifies progress.

In this vein, the popular literary magazines are trying to remove the previously set borders between humor and literature or between sociology or politics and literature. They are becoming an active actor in circulation of products, persons and ideas through their polyphonic nature and thus contributing to the formation of an alternative "common sphere of appearances" in the current socio-political context of Mizoram which enables diverse individual subjects to appear and coexist to

express their ideas for public discussion. In this sense, the literary magazines, as material and discursive aspects and products of their period, provide valuable insights about the 'zeitgeist,' in other words, the spirit of the time (Imamoglu, 23) Thus, the research on the literary magazines enables us to form logical links with the literary products and concrete social, cultural and political discussions of the time they are produced. That is to say, narratives of the literary magazines are also the stories of various people's lives and their identities which are naturally embedded in the stories of their communities and societies. Put differently, the narratives (texts) in the literary magazines are very much related to the greater social and political context and or phenomenon, including elements from the stories of other lives rather than belonging subjectively to one particular author.

Following this vein of observation, in the editorial of one of the prominent magazines, *Lungdum*[xiii], there was a reflection of the times as depicted in 2000, where the computer age has started to take form in Mizoram. People were confused, they were excited and at the same time, a bit frightened of this new technical revelation. What could be seen in the following passage is a call for caution for the people, to look into the year and the new machine with awe but also as something that could damage our society as well:

> The world is progressing and the population reaches new heights each year, and yet the earth does not evolve along with these. Due to such problems, people find complications with each other and make nuisance of ourselves. Education advances intellect and according to these intellectuals, it seems as if computers will cause more harm than good to society. So, what could be important for the Mizo people in the year 2000? Personal development is indeed crucial. However, in the pursuit of this we could easily turn our beautiful homes into one of terror. Our quest for purpose and security in this world of computer-age has given us reports of our own people suffering from mental problems, some even going to the length of committing suicide[xiv]. (*Lungdum,* vol. 4, No.3, 2000)

What could be seen from this excerpt is that the turn of the millennial harbored tension amongst the Mizo people. In other words, narratives, as being concrete tools of story-telling or writing of individual subjects, reflect the particular social, political and cultural contexts that they are situated, since they shape and are shaped by this certain historicity (Bakhtin, 211). According to Bakhtin, history must be understood so that it is neither random nor completely ordered, neither of which would allow for genuine 'becoming.' Even with the question of evolutionary biology, it is his belief that no cosmic designer would have built them in that element of compromise; therefore they must have come about by making do with the resources of changing environments and natural history (Morson, Emerson, 220 – 232)

Marshall McLuhan has argued that the printing press has led to the creation of democracy, capitalism, individualism, nationalism, dualism, rationalism, Protestantism, and a culture of scientific research (McLuhan**,** 1962. Pg. 83). It is on this level that the effects of the printing press have been felt in the search for identity in different spectrum. What print culture contributed most was for a reading, workable literary revolution in the form of these magazines and periodicals that have become so significant in understanding a particular culture or climate. Some thinkers (Eagleton,45; Bakhtin, 191) still believe that social scientists should use literature and literary products as they provide a great opportunity in revealing society's socio-cultural–and political–personality through expressions and symbols of language which are crucial in grasping social reality.

Mizo print culture, in this sense make for great reflections on modern society as the authors are diverse as they are a part of said society. They are on-going as part of history and they tell a story of their particular time, not only by what is written on the page, but by the inclusivity of the contributors, what they are writing about, the topic they chose, the people who are written about and by whom and most importantly, the ideas they represent. The discursive formation divulges as to how it allows for the multiplicity of voices and narratives to co-exist. Print culture

has enabled us to explore the historical and material conditions of a particular period by looking at the literary and cultural productions and dispositions of the time. Literary historical studies which focus upon certain authors or works may help in basic information about this subject.

The study, has been able to serve proper ground for an understanding of the cultural, material and political conditions of Mizo print culture. The technical act of writing, producing and disseminating texts are altered by digital technology in the twenty first century, but the reflection of a society as well as the agglomeration of ideas, which can be seen in magazines and periodicals have not been altered by digitization. New media require new modes of understanding and interaction, but these changes do not portend the end of the magazine or of readership, but rather an extension of a cultural practice that is deeply embedded in our social and personal lives.

Notes

[i] 'Kristian' in English translates to Christian, tlangau translates to 'crier,' (Dailova, 126). The magazine can be described as a village crier who would announce news and important events to the Christians in the form of a printed magazine.

[ii] *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu* came out in 1902 concerning journalistic reports of the everyday lives of the Mizo people. It was under the guidance of Major. J. Shakespear, the first superintendent of the Lushai Hills.

[iii] *Diktawn*, according to the editor, can be translated as an old term for 'zawlaidi' (a magic potion in the Mizo folklore which can charm people) in the Mizo myth where he hoped he could charm the readers into his magazine.

[iv] The Mizo Academy of Letters was founded by early Mizo literates for the safeguard of Mizo language and to help it flourish. The Academy started awarding its 'Book of the Year' award in 1989.

[v] The magazine *Thu leh Hla* can be translated as 'Prose and Poetry.'

[vi] *Thlirvelna* can be translated both as 'Outlook' and 'Point of View.' The magazine's main theme is to reflect the observe the current time and place of a particular ethos.

[vii] *Hriattirna* can be translated as 'Information.'

[viii] *Mizo Naupang* can be translated as 'Mizo children.'

[ix] *Hunthar* can be translated as 'New Times.'

[x] *Tunlai* can be translated as anything that is happening 'at the present moment'.

[xi] *Sikul Thlirna* can be translated as 'Outlook on Schools.'

[xii] *Zirtirtu Thian* can be translated as 'Friend of the Teacher.'

[xiii] *Lungdum* can be translated as 'Earnest.'

[xiv] This passage has been translated from the vernacular Mizo to English by me.

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APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1) DRC.	:	01/05/2015
2) BOS.	:	15/05/2015
3) SCHOOL BOARD.	:	21/05/2015
4) MZU REGISTRATION NO	:	130 of 2011
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ABSTRACT

SITUATING IDENTITY: A STUDY OF SELECT MIZO PRINT CULTURE

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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SEPTEMBER, 2020

This thesis is a study of the literary narratives as seen through select magazines and periodicals in Mizo. It covers the period from 1911 to 2011, and within this duration the study reflects upon the religious, political and cultural identities of the Mizo and depicted how they acted as an agent of change in accordance with the Mizo society. Although there had been earlier Mizo periodical publications such as *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu*[i] (1902) prior to 1911, this year has been selected because of the historical phenomenon which the Mizo underwent as a result of the beginning of the ownership of their first printing press. The printing press, both as a machine and as an 'event' had been part of a people's progression and change for centuries, right from the inception of the Chinese printing press in 175 AD. The thesis has studied as to how this phenomenon had changed the Mizo culture and how it has been a part of the search for the people's identity as well.

This study primarily involves delving into the aspects of identity in the post-colonial dimension of the Mizos. Mizoram is predominantly a Christian society, with 87.16 percent of the population forming the majority religion in 8 out of 8 districts of Mizoram states (*Ramthar*[ii]*,* Bu 312, 17). Thus, the emergence of the religion is studied at length. It traces the emergence of the religion and consequently the role that the printing press has played through the years from European culture to Mizo culture along with how the language that was to be used for print was formulated.

Prior to the coming of the missionaries, the Mizos had no printed records of their history nor any documentation to supplement their culture. Their past is abundantly ambiguous (Pachuau, 11). The main cultural practice of the Mizos is attending church and as denoted earlier, more than eighty percent of the population identified themselves as Christians, and this makes Mizoram one of the few states in India that can claim to be predominantly Christian. The church becomes an important symbol for the people, and it continues to play a major role in the Mizo society.

In her seminal book (1991), Professor Eisenstein has markedly spoken of how printing had been benefitted by religious prognosticators the most. When oral forms were transformed to the visual, it brought along with it a culture that Gutenberg did not plan on bringing when he modernized the Chinese printing press in the Elizabethan Age. For him, it was purely for business, and what he did not count on was the market that religion had (Eisenstein, 119). According to Walter Ong, the transformation of a culture from oral to print was significant in its redundancy, writing establishes in the text a 'line' of continuity outside the mind. If distraction confuses or obliterates from the mind, the context out of which emerges the material. "Since redundancy characterizes oral thought and speech, it is in a profound sense more natural to thought and speech than is sparse linearity" (Ong, 21).

When thought processes were put down in print, the redundancy provided some 'truth' to it. This documentation of 'truth' was what religion needed the most since it is a creed that relied mainly on belief. The evolution of printing would never have had as much progress as it did, if it had not been for its involvement with religion and politics (Dean, 9). As Meirion Lloyd states, it was the mission's goal to educate the people not only in language and literacy, but mostly about the Gospel (116). Although the technology was not used as far as a business transaction as it was during the Renaissance, the experience solidified the main purpose of the press in Mizoram, which was for spreading religious propaganda, "Rarely has one invention had more decisive influence than that of printing on the Reformation. It was an invention which seemed engineered for propaganda." (Eisenstein, 309)

Chapter 1: From Orality to Print Culture in the Mizo Paradigm

The introductory chapter elucidates upon the inception of the printing press, from the Chinese invention in 175 AD. to how it came to the Lushai Hills in 1911. Its focus is upon the conflict that exists within the Mizo community with the coming of the Welsh missionaries and delves into how print media played a role in Mizo religion, particularly with regards to the Christian faith. It traces the inception of

print culture in Mizoram and the pattern that had evolved as a result of the emergence of the printing press.

What was most important for the Mizos with regards to Eisenstein's argument is that printing greatly contributed to the fragmentation that existed in Christianity. Following Eisenstein's argument, A. W. Lovett too stated that printing was most benefitted by subjects that dealt heavily with ideas. What had initially been an oral culture, mostly based of belief became printed, 'sighted' and imbibed. With the advent of print, religious divisions become more permanent, heresy, and its condemnation, he writes, becomes more fixed in the minds of followers; religious edits became more "visible" and "irrevocable." The "doctrine the priesthood of all believers could not have been realised in practice, without a plentiful supply of the printed Bibles" (Lovett, 184). For the Mizos, when the alphabets were printed and distributed, it was 'visible' and 'irrevocable'. This cemented a change in their entire cultural paradigm which rested solely on religious practices.

Chapter 2: Mizo Religious Identity and Print Culture

This chapter denotes the nature of Mizo identity in relation to the printing press. This aspect of identity intrinsically pertains to religion and how it has been shaped by the coming of print media in the turn of the twentieth century. It traces the settlement of the Welsh missionaries in the state and the development of a language that would later be instrumental in forming a distinct Mizo print culture. Their most important practices being those dictated by the church and its panoptic gaze upon the people. Religion, specifically Christianity, plays a significant role in their cultural identity and in effect, their print culture as well. The chapter lays emphasis upon the establishment of the church in Mizoram and how that establishment led to the start of print.

Early in 1911, Dr. Fraser brought to Aizawl a small hand-press. It was the first press ever seen within those hills (Ralte, 275). The little hand-press was used effectively for many things, but most importantly, it was notable for being the

machine that printed the first publication of a Mizo religious magazine known as *Krista Tlangau* (The Herald of Christ) and it was later changed to *Kristian Tlangau* (The Herald of the Christians). Following the rise of *Kristian Tlangau,* various religious periodicals and magazines were published under the Synod Printing Press. Some of these have been selected for study; *Kristian Naupang*[iii] (1994), *Kristian Thalai*[iv] (1984), *Ramthar*[v]*,* (1984), *Agape*[vi] (1986),

Language is another aspect that played a significant role in the development of cultural identity through print evolution. The 'Dzo'[vii] people, scattered across the region as differing tribes did not share a language and they spoke in languages that was distinct to their sub-tribe. Inherently a tribe of migrants, the very process of migration divided the tribes and developed not only linguistic but dialectical differences. Within their small ambit, the Mizo tribe was rich in culture as they were different in their language. The Ralte[viii] clan were believed to have settled in the Northern part of the region where they spoke a specific language which was separate from the likes of the other major clans (Lalthangliana, 112). The problem of varying languages as well as dialects were already a hindrance when it came to cultural unity.

The printing press became a critical tool in uniting a people, for it was instrumental in disclosing the barriers of language amongst the people. The problem of language and differing dialects have caused tension within a culture for centuries. It is significant to note that the Bible was the first book Gutenberg printed, since scripture was at the center of the medieval world (Eisenstein, 21). These various languages of the Hill people were, according to Benedict Anderson's model of 'imagined communities' the reason as to why there could not have been an uniformed cultural milieu within the tribal states, as the varying languages that were spoken divided the people. Benedict Anderson has explicitly argued upon the point of the importance of print when it came to giving a people a form of cultural unity. According to him, the very beginning of a group of people forming awareness with one another, to having a sense of harmony began with what he called 'print capitalism.' He conveys that "the printers acquiesce to the demands of the

consumers" and this unifies several dialects into one printing language read by everyone who start to see themselves as connected. When uniformity in the same language occurs, a people start to picture themselves as not disparate population but one unified whole. "They start to imagine a community" (Anderson, 64-65).

Chapter 3: Print Culture and Mizo Sensibility

This chapter traces the development of print magazines and periodicals as a literary as well as political tool. It briefly dwells into the political struggle of the state and studies as to how a specific print culture was developed as a result of the Mizo nationalist struggle in 1966 and its aftermath. During this politically unstable period, a variety of cultural publications in mediums such as magazines and literary periodicals captured the imagination of the Mizos as an autonomous cultural entity. The cultural productions in the form of magazines and literary expressions have gone on to assimilate the region into a coherent community even as it appears to strive for a distinctive regional identity. These publications are seen as a tool that unite an 'imagined community' and assumed that identity formation is a universal feature of human experience.

With the ideas of unified community that print provides, the chapter traces as to how the idea of a coherent Mizo sensibility goes hand in hand with print media for the Mizos (in tandem with the political unrest that it went through). Seen as a European experience that went hand in hand with colonialism, globalization has undergone immense negative study in recent years. Stuart Hall questions as to whether globalization gives people an identity or as to whether native identity is stripped off of them (Hall, 188). Globalization is really the globalization of modernity, and modernity is the harbinger of identity. It is a common assumption that identity-formation is a universal feature of human experience. Print media became an important tool for the formation of cultural identity as result of globalization. The Mizos felt, that with the start of a distinct national identity that came like waves at the earlier part of the century, there was not enough

representation of Mizo ideals and values, aside from that of the religious magazines that had been circulating in and around the state for almost three decades.

Along with the rise in political consciousness, the Mizos realized that they lacked a secular culture with which to express their emerging political sentiments and identity. The Mizos recognized that the only form of literary and performative expressions available to them as Mizos, happened to be primarily religious cultural expressions which catered to the ideals of the church. In 1952, the literary figure Rokunga[ix], a patriotic song composer remarked that the youths of Mizoram had no artistic forms of expression to represent themselves apart from the hymns that were sung in church. The pre-conversion poems and songs have been deemed 'immoral' by the church and even songs like 'Kaihlek Zai'[x] were prohibited by the church (Thanmawia, 116). With this statement, it was undeniable to notice how much the Mizos were starved of secular platforms for any kind of artistic expression. They had outgrown the church magazines as well as the didactic approach to which print culture had been introduced to them during colonial rule and with the emergence of a new era after the independence of the country, it seemed as if the Mizos too wanted another form of identity than that of the religious.

Magazines and periodicals such as *Thu leh Hla*[xi] (1965), published by the 'Mizo Academy of Letters,' *MZP Magazine*[xii], (1938), *Hruaitu*[xiii] (1961), *Zalen*[xiv] (1962), are some of the texts which are studied in the thesis. Due to the growing educated population as well as literary tradition, educational magazines like *Hun Thar*[xv] (1954), *Tunlai*[xvi] (1957), *Meichher*[xvii] (1973) and *Zirtirtu Thian*[xviii] (1959) were periodicals that flourished for a short while. The wave of educationally focused magazines and periodicals in the fifties attested to the growing literacy and the need for education among the Mizos. These magazines allowed each individual to have the capacity of sharing the same experience. Due to the time symmetry that publications of magazines allowed, it enabled all members to experience events at the same time (Heathorn, 105 -109). The shared experiences that were facilitated by

print media enabled individual members to share a common experience and a shared identity with each other, despite never having interacted with each other, thus breeding the idea of a community. The agenda was to change and develop Mizo thought and behaviour. These printed texts assisted in creating a self-conscious reading community which connected the scattered Mizo populace. This development of reading cultural materials came full circle towards the argument that globalization, through means of print media in the Mizo society proliferates, instead of destroying Mizo identity.

Another important representation that was found through print media as a result of the Mizo nationalist fight for freedom was female representation. It was, and still continues to be rare, to have a female voice in a society such as the Mizo society which is commonly deemed to be patriarchal. Female representation in general itself is rare in Mizoram, and it is perhaps promising that the first representation that women found was in print media. *Zonu*[xix] magazine was first published in 1983, seven years after the MHIP (Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl)[xx] was set up in 1976 (by that time the nationalist struggle in Mizoram had come to an end). Taking a cue from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1994), Gayatri Spivak problematizes the question of representation of the subaltern in the colonial and post-colonial texts. The account of the 'subaltern' offers a radical turn in the issue of representation and envisages a new rhetorical space of social engagement especially with regards to the social agency of the marginalized section (Spivak, 112). The Mizo women and their need for a new form of representation was done through print.

From *Thu leh Hla* to *Zonu*, it can be formulated that there has always been a thirst for identity formation in the cultural sphere in Mizoram. Perhaps it is unfortunate that these upheavals came at the cost of political struggles and many personal sufferings. However, history has always had a way of procuring cultural phenomenon out of such struggles. Mizoram was a case in point as the

search for a specific Mizo sensibility led to the beginning of a thriving print culture.

Chapter 4: Popular Print Culture and Mizo Hybridity

This chapter focuses upon how the effects of struggle and the advancement of education in Mizoram resulted in an enhanced print culture in Mizoram. The formation of public opinion in general was accelerated and strengthened with the people's ability to read. There were also growing numbers of print media in the form of periodicals and magazines all over the region. These factors in turn are responsible for shaping the socio-cultural and political consciousness of the people. It traces the change and evolution of culture and identities that have been brought about by secular, popular magazines and periodicals in Mizoram. *YMA Chanchinbu* (1973*) Huapzo* [xxi] , (1982), *Senhri* [xxii] (1984), *Zonieng* [xxiii] , (1987), *Lei Hringnun*[xxiv](1998), *Lengzem*[xxv], (2000), *Diktawn*[xxvi] (2006), are some of the popular magazines that thrived in terms of a study for the search of Mizo cultural identity.

What the study of these secular, popular magazines seemed to convey is that the cultural ethos of the Mizo people had changed drastically and print magazines continued to be a true reflection of the same. Foucault has spoken about the importance of media and how it has played a part in understanding power relations within a society. Within the Mizo context, 'power' had been in the hands of very few, especially when it came to magazine production as well as distribution. Few could participate due to several reasons, one of them being that there were only a few who were educated enough to write, and even fewer people to appreciate this literary form of expression. However, as this changed, there also occurred a change of power with the Mizo media circle. According to Foucault, specific discourses are used to construct certain topics, define and produce the objects of our knowledge and render them possible in a meaningful way.

This formation as seen in the magazines and periodicals form an excellent ground for cultural studies. In this way, 'power' could be considered, within the ambit of magazines and periodicals, as not merely negative (something that excludes, represses, censors, abstracts, masks or conceals) but also as a productive force, as Foucault denotes it "produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (Foucault, 194). In other words, other than any other literary form, these articles from magazines and periodicals provided reality in the most factual of ways, while reflecting the ethos of the age better than any other literary form of expression.

As flourishing as the Mizo magazines have been, there arose a tension that had been dealt with at the very beginning in the form of language. A formulated language for print was formed and this evolved triumphantly through the years. New Mizo words were formed at great intervals for the growth of Mizo literature. However, looking at these later magazines, the stark reality of how the language of the colonisers have been imbibed can be deciphered. *Thu leh Hla* was one of the first magazines that dealt heavily with language, and there were many articles that contributed towards the desire for the progress of the Mizo language. The proponents were eager for the development of a language that was intrinsically, purely Mizo and not combined with the white man's tongue. However, this proved impossible as the magazines that had been published in recent years had concerns of not only literature, but capitalism as well. Print capitalism, (as has been expounded upon in the earlier chapters of the thesis), has to be part of the advancement of print literature so there arose, as in any other colonized culture, a people of 'hybrids.'

Bhabha argues that hybridity results from various forms of colonization, which had sprung from cultural collisions and social interchanges which do not necessarily work together. In the attempt to assert colonial power in order to create anglicized subjects, "The trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something *different*--a mutation, a hybrid" (Bhabha,

111). The Mizos continue to live in a somewhat disoriented group, who feel that they have more in common with the 'white man.'

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The concluding chapter summarizes the three distinct phases in colonial and post-colonial Mizoram as seen through the lens of print culture. The narratives reflect the political and cultural identities of the people and they act as an agent of change in Mizo society.

The discursive formation divulges as to how it allows for the multiplicity of voices and narratives to co-exist. Print culture has enabled us to explore the historical and material conditions of a particular period by looking at the literary and cultural productions and dispositions of the time. Literary historical studies which focus upon certain authors or works may help in basic information about this subject. The study, has been able to serve proper ground for an understanding of the cultural, material and political conditions of Mizo print culture. The technical act of writing, producing and disseminating texts are altered by digital technology in the twenty first century, but the reflection of a society as well as the agglomeration of ideas, which can be seen in magazines and periodicals have not been altered by digitization. New media require new modes of understanding and interaction. However, these changes do not portend the end of the magazine or of readership, but rather encapsulate that print culture continues to be an extension of a cultural practice that is deeply embedded in our social and intellectual ethic.

Notes

[i] *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* can be translated as 'Mizo and the Plain Dwellers' Magazine.' It was published in 1902 until 1941 under Capt J. Shakespear who was the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills at the time. It was a magazine issued by the government.

[ii] *Ramthar* can be translated as 'New World.'

[iii] *Kristian Naupang* can be translated as 'Christian Children.' It is a magazine which caters specifically to children from 3-16, published under the Synod Press.

[iv] *Kristian Thalai* can be translated as 'Christian Youth,' catering to the Mizo youth from ages 13 – 40.

[v] This is a religious magazine that catered to the reports of missionaries on mission field and can be translated as 'New World.'

[vi] *Agape* is a Greek word which means the 'highest form of love or charity' and the magazine falls under the guardianship of the women of the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram.

[vii] A misnomer for 'Zo' by T.H Lewin, which is frequently used by the cognate tribes of the Lushais for their nomenclature.

[viii] The Ralte Clan of the Mizo were scattered across the Northern part of Mizoram. The clan can now more or less be found anywhere in the state. The Ralte Clan subdivided themselves into four clans namely - Kawlni, Siakeng, Khelte and Leichhun (Lalthangliana, 42)

[ix] Rokunga (1914-1969) was a traditional writer and composer. He is most well known for his patriotic songs, traditional festive and Christmas songs. He remains one of the most cherished songwriters in the history of Mizoram.

[viii] *Kaihlek zai* is a form of Mizo songs where words are interchanged with the same melodies or vice versa. Usually known are those of gospel songs where the words are changed with secular ones.

[xi] *Thu leh Hla* can be translated as 'Prose and Poetry.'

[xii] This is a *Mizo Zirlai Pawl Magazine,* which translates to 'Mizo Students Association Magazine.'

[xiii] *Hruaitu* can be translated as 'Guide.'

[xiv] *Zalen* is taken from 'Zalenna' which means freedom.

[xv] *Hunthar* can be translated as 'New Times.'

[xvi] *Tunlai* can be translated as anything that is happening 'at the present moment'.

[xvii] *Meichher* can be translated as 'Torch'.

[xviii] *Zirtirtu Thian* can be translated as 'Friend of the Teacher.'

[xix] *Zonu* translates to 'Mizo Woman.'

[xx] 'Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl' can be translated as 'Mizo Women's Association.'

[xxi] *Huapzo* means 'inclusive of all,' which means the magazine caters to all audience.

[xxii] *Senhri* is the name of a wild flower, and is considered to be the state flower of Mizoram.

[xxiii] *Zonieng* can be translated as 'Sun of Mizoram/ Light of the Zo people.'

[xxiv] *Lei Hringnun* can be translated as 'Life on earth.'

[xxv] *Lengzem* can be translated as 'Love Songs.'

[xxvi] *Diktawn*, according to the editor, can be translated as an old term for 'zawlaidi' (a magic potion in the Mizo folklore which can charm people) in the Mizo myth where he hoped he could charm the readers into his magazine.

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