

**LOCATING SATIRE: A STUDY OF SELECT NARRATIVES BY  
VANNEIHTLUANGA**

**Ramdinmawii**

**Department of English**

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**DECLARATION**

I, Ramdinmawii, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to 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 or Institute.

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

**(RAMDINMAWII)**

**(Prof. MARGARET L. PACHUAU)**

**Head**

**Department of English**

**(Prof. MARGARET L. PACHUAU)**

**Supervisor**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**MIZORAM UNIVERSITY**

**AIZAWL: 796004**

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “LOCATING SATIRE: A STUDY OF SELECT NARRATIVES BY VANNEIHTLUANGA” is the bonafide research conducted by Ms. Ramdinmawii under my supervision. Ms. Ramdinmawii worked methodically for her thesis being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English, Mizoram University.

This is to further certify that the research conducted by Ms. Ramdinmawii has not been submitted in support of an application of this or any other University or an institute of learning.

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**(Prof. MARGARET L. PACHUAU)**

**SUPERVISOR**

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(RAMDINMAWII)

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**CHAPTER 1:**  
**INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT OF SATIRE IN**  
**LITERATURE**

Satire, down the ages, has been considered as a powerful form of art by a great many writers, critics, academicians, scholars and literature aficionados. It remains a constant topic of discussion and a subject of selective erudition for researchers within the realm of literature. It is not an easy task to club together the techniques and characteristics of satire under a unified field of theory or genre as it covers a wide range of subject and what makes it more interesting is the fact that it cannot be restricted or limited to any specific morality or political boundary. Satire can also be considered as a sensitive subject and requires to be handled with careful practice from all angles as its result may end up undesirable. Through recorded history and writings from the past to the present, it can be clearly identified that satire is an useful form of literature and its subject matter ranges from individual to individual as well as one place to another, basing its theme from society to a great length of politics. Today, satire has deeply rooted itself not only within the realm of literature, but also occupies an important place in television shows, comics and cartoons across the globe.

Leonard Feignberg has observed and commented that “Satire is such an amorphous genre that no two scholars define it in the same words...Professor Robert C. Elliott comes to the reluctant conclusion that no satisfactory definition is possible. The best we can do, he suggests, is to look at a number of works traditionally accepted as satires and compare the new work with these examples” (Feignberg: 18). It is a commonly accepted notion that the term “satire” is derived from Latin *satura*, which means “a mixture of food” and the Romans were believed to be the first to define the literary genre of *satura* through the works of Horace and Juvenal. In short, satire in literature is

a form of art which aims at attacking human foibles, shortcomings or negative qualities by using various modes of literary devices.

Satire is closely related to irony and are deeply interlinked, whose main intention is to express the discrepancies or contrasts between apparent and intended meaning.

Harry Keyishian has noted:

Satirists especially like to attack unwarranted pride, particularly when someone demands more respect than he or she should. They will pursue the pompous and the parvenu, the hypocrite and the fool, and even tyrants – if they dare – but off limits are the cripple and the victim, who did not choose their circumstances or create their misfortune. A satirist will certainly attack the fake warrior who claims more honors than he is entitled to, but not the military hero who earned the medals he wears – that is, unless he tries to exploit them in appropriate ways (Keyishian: 529)

Therefore, satirists frequently employ irony to create a playful thinking in the minds of the readers so as to realize the difference between what is said and what is accepted which will eventually yields to the successful use of irony in relation to satire. Through the employment of irony as the main device of expressing satire, it makes it more comprehensive to understand the incongruities between what a particular thing should be and what actually occurs. While it is said that satire and irony are interlinked, it should also be noted that “they are not exclusive to each other. Irony occurs not just in satire but in dramatic and comedic art as well. Likewise, satire also uses many other rhetorical and comedic techniques, such as ridicule, to accomplish its goal” (Singh: 70). Oftentimes,



satire is expected to be funny, to evoke laughter and to amuse, but its resulting effect is not always so. Like humor, satire can appear in two forms : “pure” comedy, which aims only to amuse and has no moral intention, and pure denunciation, which has only a moral or didactic purpose and need not make us laugh” (Keyishian: 529). It must be clearly noted that laughter alone is not a manifestation of satire nor is all works of satire humorous, but indeed satirists borrows all the comic devices for the purpose of criticism. Thus, the amalgamation of criticism and humor often brings out the effective essence of satire in literature.

In order to situate satire within the realm of literature, it is of foremost importance to trace its theoretical backgrounds which will act as a prominent foundation in building up the formation and nature of satire. Satire remains the subject of considerable theoretical examination and series of attempts have been made by numerous theorists from the past to the present age as to clearly define the nature of satiric theory. Typically most of these theorists base their understandings of satire ubiquitously upon two models: Horace and Juvenal. They are of the assumption that all satire follow either the pattern of Horace or Juvenal in order to express its tone or attitude. Satire, John Snyder has strongly claimed, is “a genre that stops itself from becoming a fully distinct alternative to other genres” and to defend his statement he has given two principal reasons:

It is unstable as a genre in that it must detour around its perplexity about human nature by constantly seeking its resolutions outside itself...For in satire there are no built-in, absolute outcomes such as victory, loss, and stalemate in tragedy; no wondrous singularity of outcome as there is in comedy; and no sure teleology

such as that prescribed by the novel, which as a form means development instead of stasis, open-endedness instead of closure, progressive ideology instead of eternal verities...Satire is unstable in yet another sense owing to this suspension between attacking human nature and retreating to human nature. It is unstable as linguistic maneuver, or set of moves, between a constative end – reduction of the already reduced or reducible – and a gesticulative modus operandi – irony. (Snyder: 102)

So satire, according to Snyder, is unstable and is liable to change and alteration depending upon the manner in which it is practiced by an individual satirist. Dustin Griffin remarks that “Most satiric theory, at least since the Renaissance, is polemical, ranging itself against some previous practice or claim and attempting to displace it.” (Griffin: 6). In dealing with satire, it is an important task to trace the manner in which satire has evolved and has been passed on from generation to generation.

Although the term “satire” and its literal meaning has not yet been embraced or acknowledged by the ancient Greeks, it can be assumed that they produced a great number of works which can be categorized under satirical work. Outstanding among the ancient writers was the Greek dramatist Aristophanes and his plays can be read as a fine example of satire. He wrote comedies for the ancient Greek competitions in Athens: the City Dionysia and the Leneia. Many of his works survive and have been translated into various languages worldwide; they continued to be read and studied to this day. The plays were famous for making jokes at the expense of particular well-known members of the audience, as well as critiquing Athenian society, government, and foreign policy, especially relating to wars. He made regular use of a character portrayed as an outsider within the context of the play, and who would often be ridiculed by the other characters

for his views, but who ultimately displayed noble characteristics which would emphasize the foolishness of the behavior of those around him. (Parker: 1). Themes which are known as commonly presented in satirical writings such as political satire and social satire also constantly recurs in the works of Aristophanes. His political topic mainly deals with the life-and-death struggle between the Athenian and Spartan leagues but his stance is always to promote peace between the two:

He is the spokesman of the peace party, and four of his plays are passionate and eloquent pleas for peace. No one can doubt their insecurity; but here again we look in vain for any lofty ideal of politics; nor is there any trace of the poet's having felt very deeply the issues at stake in this war, while seldom does he betray any strong sympathies or antipathies as regards the different types of Greek people drawn into this moral conflict. The speech in the *Acharnians*, where he makes Dicaeopolis give serious political advice, minimizes the cause of the war to a quarrel over three harlots; but here he takes care to add that he hates Lacedaemon, and longs for an earthquake to level the proud city with the ground. It is significant that when Peace is drawn up from the pit she is accompanied by Sport and Plenty; all the glories of peace, as painted by Aristophanes, amount to creature comforts and joys, with freedom from the troublesome burdens of war. (Theatre History)

Apart from the political issues that he has plentifully dealt with, Aristophanes also leaves abundant space to caricature the different classes of society and in doing so it seems that the whole panorama of the Greek society passes before the eyes of the readers like a kaleidoscope. It should also be noted that there is always an underlying

strand of humor in most of the works of Aristophanes which makes it easier to identify the element of satire that are inherently presented in his works.

In tracing the evolution of satire as a genre through history, there are broadly two forms of satire under which almost every satirical writing can be categorized: Horatian satire and Juvenalian satire, the one that makes people laugh and the other that makes them cringe. Horatian satire is termed after the Roman satirist Horace and relies mainly on gentle satire along with lighthearted humor. Like Aristophanes, Horace is another great practitioner of satire and his pronouncements can be regarded as one of the earliest pronouncements that have been made about the nature of satire. Horatian satire is considered to be a more cheerful and a delightful form of satire, which aims at attacking human foibles and follies by incorporating humor, wit and ridicule. Hence, a long tradition of Horatian satire evolves from these early practices of gentle satire with a touch of humor. Horace is considered by some scholars as a writer who often draws affinity with his predecessors, especially Lucilius. In defending himself and his mode of satirical practices Horace has once commented: “Lucilius was outspoken before me; so were the writers of old comedy, who censured fools “*multa cum libertate*” (*Satire* 1: 4.5). On the other hand, Dustin Griffin has vehemently argued:

In fact, Horace’s own practice is considerably different from that of Lucilius and Aristophanes. He is oblique rather than blunt, smiling and hinting rather than attacking directly. And the theory of moral satire that he advances misrepresents his own range of interests. One would not know from Horace’s programmatic satires of his digressiveness, his chattiness, the ironic disparity between moral idea

and practice, between spirit and material circumstance...Satire, as Horace practices it, is considerably more diverse than laughter at folly. (Griffin: 8)

It is believed that Horatian satire emerges at a time when the genre of satire was still being shaped, the theoretical pronouncements that have been proposed by Horace must be read with careful examination. It cannot simply be assumed that Horace, in honoring his predecessor, Lucilius, has declared a continuity between their work or is representing his predecessor in such a way as to advance his own pronouncements of satire. "It depended on what element the historian thought was most important in satire – its rambling variety, its defamatory invective, its free speaking, its ribald ridicule, or its moral function". (Van Rooy: 137-39). It should also be noted that Horace himself also makes it more difficult to trace the intended pattern of his satirical works:

Thus he at first determined to suppress the idea of his satire as *satura*, since for him the idea was discredited by its associations. In his first book Horace calls his work not *saturae* or *satirae* but *sermones*, "little talks" or "conversations" (another term derived in fact from Lucilius). It is only in his second book that Horace, having established his identity as an artful satirist, adopts the older term *satura*. (Griffin: 7)

Juvenalian satire is named after the Roman satirist Juvenal and its nature can be distinguished by its resentfulness and harshness in attacking human vices and follies. There are scholars who believed that Juvenalian satire is often related by the sixteenth-century English writers on satire with the Greek notion of *satyr*, the half man-half beast. As Kernan has put it: "most of the practicing satirists in England from 1590 to 1620

thought a satire should be rude, derisive, harsh – written in the kind of language one might expect from a woodland satyr” (Griffin: 10). For reasons unknown, Horatian satire is rarely embraced by the sixteenth-century English writers. It can be the resulting effect of lack of knowledge or lack of native satirists in the Horatian tradition or most importantly, as Griffin has argued: “Perhaps the dominant Juvenalian theory prevented the Horatian voice from being heard.” (Griffin: 12). They have little to say about Horace and little does Horatian tradition find its outlet on literature as most writers preferred Juvenalian satire to Horatian satire. Juvenal, according to them, “unlike Horace, he wrote nothing but satire (and was thus easier to categorize), and his rhetoric, to be sure, answers better to their theory. Even so, they were obliged to imagine a rancorous and savagely indignant Juvenal, not the highly skilled declamatory rhetorician” (Griffin: 11). One fine example is Thomas Lodge’s *Defence of Poetry* (1579) where he discovers the origin of satire in a form of early Greek satyr plays, which “presented the lives of Satyrs, so that they might wisely, under the abuse of that name, discover the follies of many their foolish fellow citizens.” (Smith: 1: 80). Dustin Griffin, on the other hand has strongly argued:

The best of the Elizabethan satirists, by common consent, is John Donne, and the idea that the satirist is a sort of satyr founder when one takes up Donne’s poems, whose rhetoric is derived more from Horace than from Juvenal. Donne’s fawning courtiers (satires 1 and 4) are Horatian, as is the satirist’s presentation of himself as foolish victim...Oddly enough, Kernan, who among modern critics has most fully surveyed Elizabethan satiric theory, has very little to say about Sir

Thomas Wyatt, another important English satirist (perhaps in his century second only to Donne in distinction) in the Horatian tradition. (Griffin: 12)

It was a time when the English writers on satire embraced and employed varying traditions that ranged from Langland and Chaucer to Barclay and Skelton, therefore, it can be assumed that other equally partial theories of satire, apart from Horatian and Juvenalian satire, were also produced.

After the Elizabethan Theory of satire, Griffin has classified the next prevailing theory of satire as Casaubon and Renaissance Theory where he has mentioned that “The central text in Renaissance theory of satire, from a modern point of view, is Isaac Casaubon’s *De Satyrica Graecorum Poesi et Romanorum Satira* (1605)” (Griffin: 12). This theory is based on the idea that the Greek and the Roman satiric traditions have no relation or interconnection with each other. Casaubon’s theory of satire is chiefly distinguished for its appreciation for various forms and styles of satire though his preference was given to Persius, who was “the first of all to enrich, correct, and change for the better Roman satire,” (Griffin, 13). Casaubon conveys a clear sense of the particular excellence of Horace and Juvenal as well. Thus Horace’s satire is marked by “purity of statement,” grace and “simplicity” of narrative, and “a certain inexplicable charm.” Juvenal on the other hand displays a richness of invention, a copiousness of example, “the power of forming great conceptions,” and “lofty and sublime speech.” Because he “scarcely digressed from the thesis proposed at the beginning and certainly never left it entirely,” Persius most effectively reproves vice and commends virtue. (Medine: 271-98).

There are scholars who held the view that if Casaubon's work had been translated sooner or more widely, it might have served as an important influence in theorizing about satire. Casaubon's stance upon satire has created a long dispute between scholars who are on the opposing ends. On one side were Casaubon and his followers Nicolas Rigault and (late in the century) Andre Dacier. On the other were J.C. Scaliger and Daniel Heinsius, who challenged Casaubon, insisting that Greek and Roman satire formed a single tradition and reasserting the older view that satire was essentially a dramatic form, descended from satyr plays. These rival scholars and editors vehemently argued and attacked each other in an attempt to bring down satire to a single tradition. More interesting and noteworthy, perhaps, is the distinguishing fact that the participants in the dispute went on to champion one or another of the classical Roman satirists, each building a conception of what satire is and should be from the practice of his hero. Thus Scaliger, reacting to Casaubon's praise, had preferred Horace and attacked Persius for obscurity, ineptness, and ostentation. Rigault, an editor of Juvenal and Persius, dismissed Horace as concerned with trivia, and Barten Holyday (another editor of Juvenal and Persius) argued that Juvenal's achievement in satire represented the "Perfection" of the form. Heinsius, in turn, declared that Juvenal improperly attacked high crimes and "atrocities" inappropriate for satire – since we do not so much reprehend them as abominate them – and made Horace the model for satire: satirists, he said, ought to excite laughter rather than horror and to employ a "low familiar way of speaking" which is very much in tandem with the Horatian tradition. (Griffin: 13-14)

Dryden is considered as the most important and influential inheritor of Casaubon as he retained most of Casaubon's appreciation for the variety of satire and the different



excellences of the chief Roman satirists. “Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire” (1693) is identified as one of the most prominent theoretical document when it comes to satirical writings. Apart from its many deficiencies and limitations, “our reigning notion of satire as a moral art and as a carefully constructed and unified contrast between vice and virtue finds its fullest and most influential presentation in Dryden’s essay”. (Griffin: 15). There has been an endless controversies, confusion and disagreement upon the origins of satire. Theorists and editors continually dispute over the pronouncements and the traditions laid down by Horace, Juvenal, and Persius to the extent of their right to be considered true satirists. LeBoeuf has also recently argued:

Many scholars refer to ancient Roman *satura* as satire and treat it as such, but when the ancient Roman Quintilian wrote the famous line, “*satura quidem tota nostra est*” (Quintilian X, I, 93), generally translated as “satire indeed is entirely ours,” he was referring to the Roman genre, not to modern satire. This is an important distinction because not all *satura* is satire; despite the fact that the *saturae* of Horace and Juvenal are often translated as “Satires,” they do not qualify as such under our definition. Take, for example, *Satire I* by Horace. The work begins with the statement, “*That all, but especially the covetous, think their own condition the hardest*”...Furthermore, Horace wrote for a small, elite group of his colleagues; the intent to persuade a large audience of the folly of the behavior he criticizes is absent. (LeBoeuf: 4-5)

From the above statement, it can be clearly noted that the origin of satire is an ongoing topic of discussion and confusion among scholars and theorists from the past till the present day. Some of these controversies are also of great concern to Dryden as much

as it is to others. As many critics have commented, Dryden is characteristically ambivalent towards the merits of Horace and Juvenal, finding one thing or another to praise in each. In commenting upon the theoretical stance of Dryden, Harry Keyishian has claimed that:

Our modern understanding of satire is shaped by the distinctions the poet and critic Dryden drew in his "Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" (1693). It was he who differentiated between bitter and genial satire and associated the forms with Juvenal and Horace. He stressed the distinction between formal or "direct" satire, in which a single speaker addresses an audience (or an imagined friend who "stands in" for the audience), and "indirect" satire, which works through some form of narrative or "fable." Dryden suggests that the satirist seems most at home expressing an aristocratic viewpoint, though most satirists favor aristocracies of character and values, not birth status. (Keyishian, 530)

In accordance with Keyishian's claim, it can be identified that Dryden, in his attempt to carefully examine the origin of satire, does not divert a long way from the traditions that has been laid by Horace and Juvenal. Somehow, it can be assumed that Dryden is trying to "lay down some rules, to impose order on the teeming variety of satiric forms, and to redirect energy into a Roman line" (Griffin, 17). No doubt, there is nothing new to gain from his "discourse", except his classification of the Menippean (or as he calls it, following Casaubon) or Varronian tradition. According to the explanation of Keyishian, Menippean satire is named after the Greek Cynic philosopher Menippus (c. 225 B.C.E). "As it tends to work through narrative, it uses many voices and situations to produce its critique...This form is also called Varronian satire, after Marcus Terentius

Varro (116-27 B.C.E), who adopted the Menippean mode in earthy, loosely structured commentaries on social follies, sectarianism, and modern fashions he thought silly, like the craze for Greek philosophy” (Keyishian: 530). Apart from the Mennipean tradition that he has mentioned, Dryden has done little or nothing in formulating a new line of theory for satire. Griffin has straightly argued:

Dryden’s theory of satire...needs to be situated in its fullest rhetorical context as an attempt to reshape contemporary thinking about satire, to justify Dryden’s own practice (especially in “fine raillery”), and to influence its reception. It remains to note, in summary fashion, that Dryden’s theory is of limited value for present-day theorists seeking any comprehensive account of the genre and of limited value even for explaining the practice of satire in Dryden’s own day. Although it has been shown that Dryden’s “Discourse” was widely known in the eighteenth century and that commentators on satire commonly quote it approvingly, his theory represents not so much what satire was and had been as what Dryden and his followers wanted it to be. (Griffin: 21)

Thus, Dryden’s theory of satire, can be considered as having its own limitations because of its narrow foundation on formal verse satire. However, it is not wise to draw a conclusion that Dryden’s theory does not in fact solve all the crucial cases of formal verse satire.

Despite the abundance and variety of satire in the eighteenth-century, there is little development of satire theory. What is new perhaps is the defensive note: much satiric theory in the eighteenth century, as P.K. Elkin’s title points out, is cast in the

form of a “defence” of satire – against the increasing attacks on the satirist’s morals and motives. Commentary on the nature of satire by few scholars and critics may vary from one individual group to the other: On the one end, critics denounced satire as malevolent and destructive, an offence to the dignity of human nature and a threat to the commonwealth; on the other, critics and practitioners countered by insisting that satire was a highly moral art, motivated by the love of virtue and serving as a useful censor of public and private morals. Hostile critics of satire saw only spite, envy, pride, and sadistic delight, while its defenders could not identify (or refused to do so) any low motives or painful consequences; they saw only virtue and justice. Being situated on the defensive, they largely repressed or suppressed any notion that satire could be subversive or even disruptive of public order or private peace. It appears that they were driven to insist not only that satire was a moral art but that it was clearly and explicitly didactic: it instructs a person what was good and what was bad. (Griffin: 24) Griffin has made an elaborate comments on the eighteenth century defenders of satire:

Defenders of satire were not content to argue that the satirist was prompted by a moral impulse or served to stimulate moral thinking. They turned satire into an explicitly didactic art. It is striking that, in an age capable of intense and subtle moral reasoning, the moral defense of satire is presented in such crude terms, as if the satirist were offering elementary lessons in distinguishing good from evil, combating vice and regulating passion, to an audience of moral infants...But “moral” art in the period did not always take the form of a bipolar labeling of virtue and vice. It might be “full of morality” or “moral reflections” without consisting simply of directive sententiae or explicit instructions. (Griffin: 25-26)

Among the numerous defenders of satire, there were also doubters of satire being considered as a moral art. One fine example is Edward Burnaby Greene, who in 1763 was “inclined to think that satire has rarely done any essential good.” Horatian satire, in his notion, served only to “exercise a wanton indiscriminate spirit of ridicule,” Thus, he concluded, “the spirit of acrimony too much affrights, that of ridicule too much diverts.” (Seidel: 122). Though it is considered that the golden age of English satire was the Eighteenth Century and it was in this age that most of the finest satirical writings were produced, it was lacking in its theoretical pronouncements.

In careful examination of the development of satiric theory in the twentieth-century, Dustin Griffin has laid claims that satiric theory after World War II developed at two major American universities, Yale and Chicago. Trained at Yale or teaching there in the 1950s, Maynard Mack, Martin Price, Alvin Kernan, Robert C. Elliott, and Ronald Paulson collectively produced what might be called a rhetorical theory of satire. For them, satire is ideally understood as rhetorical art, along with praise and blame, cast in the form of a fictional war between good and evil. The satirist, not to be confused with the historical author, is a conventional figure who wears a mask appropriate to his rhetorical situation. Griffin further elaborated upon the rhetorical theory of satire:

Such a theory is a natural outgrowth and perhaps the inevitable consequence of the New Criticism, dominant at Yale during the same years, in that it takes as its object “the work of art” – satire in this view is above all a work of art – and tends to separate the work from the author who produced it, the world out of which it grew, and the audience toward which it was directed. This was a useful

tactic at a time when a satirist like Pope still suffered from the hostility of Victorian criticism. (Griffin: 29)

According to the statement made by Dustin Griffin, it can be clearly identified that a rhetorical theory of satire was somehow intentionally proposed to discredit the older biographical approach. It also served to strengthen the hand of the literary “critics” in their contest with the history-minded “scholars”: “satire, so the “Yale” critics argued, demanded a reader who was alert to the workings of wit and imagery more than a reader who knew the historical particulars concerning Thomas Shadwell, Colley Cibber, or Orator Henley.” (Griffin: 29)

On the other side of the university, the “Chicago” theorists of satire, whose main work was published in the 1960s, acknowledge that satire is rooted in history. As exemplified in the work of Sheldon Sacks and Edward Rosenheim, the characteristic feature of their theories is the claim that satire “consists of an attack by means of a manifest fiction upon discernible historical particulars” (Rosenheim: 31). It is also believed that the “Chicago” theorists of satire have challenged the rhetorical view by distinguishing between those satires that function as persuasive rhetoric and those that seek only to punish.

Since the 1960s there has been something of a retreat or a break from the commonly theoretical claims about “the nature of satire.” Most commentators have gradually abandoned the attempt to account for the genre as a whole or even for a wide range of satiric works from several centuries. Claude Rawson have examined that they have instead focused on the satire of a single writer. The characteristic book on satire in

the last twenty years is a discussion of some features of Pope's satiric poems or Swift's prose satires, or a study of lesser-known satirists such as John Marston, Joseph Hall, John Donne, the Earl of Rochester, Charles Churchill, or Lord Byron. Other students of satire have taken a frankly historical perspective and surveyed classical satiric theory (Van Rooy), the standard defenses of satire in the eighteenth century (Elkin), the various traditions of verse satire available to a writer such as Pope, or the translations and imitations of Roman satire in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. In the meantime classical scholars have continued to produce studies of Roman satire or of single satirists and narrowly focused commentaries. (Griffin: 31).

Satire has been the subject of considerable theoretical examination in recent years. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, his influential study of genres and mythic structures, Northrop Frye characterizes satire as "militant irony" as "its moral norms are relatively clear, and it assumes standards against which the grotesque and the absurd are measured" (Frye: 223). Identifying two elements that he calls "essential" to satire – "wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd" and "an object of attack" (Frye: 224) – Frye places satire with a spectrum that has at one extreme pure denunciation, "attack without humor," and at the other extreme romance "the humor of pure fantasy" (Frye: 224-25).

Leonard Feinberg on the other, invites his readers to be skeptical about the moral claims of satire while remarking that the wish to deride can be easily detached from the urge to reform. While ethical satisfaction may be one of the pleasures of the satiric experience, "there are many, many others" (Feinberg: 7). Sigmund Freud acknowledged the existence of the kind of joke that "is an end in itself and serves no particular aim"

(Freud: 90), but he also recognized the sort that is “tendentious” or “obscene,” the former “serving the purpose of “aggressiveness, satire, or defense” (Freud: 97) and the latter serving the purpose of “exposure.”

The Menippean tradition in particular, has continued to attract attention from critics and theorists in recent years, but their tendency has been to focus on the distinctive characteristics about the Menippean. Michael Seidel’s *Satiric Inheritance: Rabelais to Sterne* (1979) is an apparent exception. Acknowledging a debt to Frye, he develops the idea that a “satiric action” typically involves decline, degeneration, loss of potential or of “inheritance.” Seidel is primarily interested in satiric narrative, and his theoretical claims point not toward a general theory of satire but to a general theory of narrative.

Frank Palmeri’s *Satire in Narrative: Petronius, Swift, Gibbon, Melville, and Pynchon* (1990) is in turn indebted to Seidel for the focus on narrative, and to Bakhtin for the idea that Menippean narrative satire typically displays “dialogical parody.” But what lies behind Palmeri is not so much Bakhtin’s idea of “the Menippea,” in which orthodoxies are challenged and subverted from below, as his idea of the “dialogical,” in which different voices or points of view enter into unresolved dialogue. “But in practice, Palmeri finds that narrative satire tends to be “subversive.” By contrast, he continues to assume that most verse satire is “monological,” “conservative,” even “reactionary”; he thus preserves a distinction between the Menippean tradition and the rest of satire.” (Griffin: 34)



John Snyder's discussion of Menippean prose satire in *Prospects of Power: Tragedy, Satire, and the Theory of Genre* (1991) likewise aims to break new ground but still remains within old paradigms. As Snyder conceives it, "ordinary satire" itself remains primarily a "straight and narrow critique" (Snyder: 113) with "targets" (Snyder: 121) at which it aims by means of reason and rhetoric. He recognizes that Menippean satire "excels in sustaining complex ironies" (Snyder: 139), but in doing so the Menippean writer typically shifts from satire into some other genre: tragedy, romance, or the realistic novel.

As with all great literature, a work of satire may escape authorial control. Dustin Griffin in his *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*, suggests that "unless it is closely harnessed, the energy released in satire tends to run away with the satirist" (Griffin: 69). Griffin helpfully reviews the debate over which social conditions provide the best environment for satire (Griffin: 133-41). Some scholars have held, with Juvenal, "that egrogius social wrongs naturally elicit criticism from honest and observant people who, transcending the moral fashions of the day, speak out for justice (or good taste or better standards of behaviour)." (Keyishian: 540). Others have argued that satire flourishes as a reaction to a period of upheaval, as in early-eighteenth-century England known as the "golden age" of satire, recovering from the political upheavals of the previous era. One train of thought suggests that satire arises "at a time when moral norms are so firmly fixed that the satirist can freely and confidently appeal to them" (Griffin: 134); another, that "it arises at a time when moral norms are being called into question and must therefore be reaffirmed with some force to prevent a further breakdown of moral order"

(Griffin: 134); yet another, that it comes into being when there is no public consensus about morality or taste. (Keyishian: 540)

In an attempt to locate satire within the realm of literature, it must also be of prior importance to analyze the numerous satirical writings that have been produced by satirists during their own time. Several examples of modern satire have survived the passing of centuries, at least in part, if not whole. The most well-known example is Petronius' *Satyricon* which was published during the late first century AD. "Although the title most likely derives from the word *satyr*, which would indicate raunchy tales, rather than *satura*, the satirical intent is clear. The largest surviving section, "Dinner with Trimalchio," which contrasts the behavior of a group of wealthy freedmen to that of upper-class Roman citizens, is a perfect example. The criticism of the greed and conceit of the upper class of Rome, as well as of Emperor Nero, is entirely implicit, probably out of necessity; Nero was famous for sentencing those who displeased him to death. Still, upon close inspection of the work, one can see that despite the overt harassment of the freedmen at the dinner for their lack of refined Roman culture, the true character of these somewhat lower-class people is ultimately good, with well-intentioned gestures and generosity, while the character of the higher-class Roman citizens is quite the opposite; they are nasty, cruel, arrogant, and selfish. In the character of Trimalchio one can also see criticism of Nero, who often threw extravagant parties and lived in excess, generally disregarding the greater good and acting on whims rather than careful reasoning." (LeBeouf, 5)

*The Canterbury Tales*, written by Geoffrey Chaucer between 1387-1400, is another significant satirical work still read and studied to this day. The target of the satire in *The Canterbury Tales* is “the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church and the government in England, and the characters are implicitly criticized for this hypocrisy. One of the characters, for example, the nun, is supposed to be married to the church and unconcerned with material things, but in reality she is obsessed with her appearance, constantly primping and pruning herself. Another such character is the Friar, who begs for money which he uses not for the good of the church, but to improve his own condition. Chaucer employs humor to emphasize the absurdity of these characters acting in this way, and in order to make it accessible to the general public he was one of the first to write poetry in vernacular English, rather than French or Latin (Beidler). The work was written during a time of incredible unrest in England; the black death had taken an immense portion of the population during Chaucer's childhood, the working classes were revolting against the aristocracy, and the authority of the church was being questioned (Wheeler). It would have been dangerous to directly state the opinions which are demonstrated implicitly in the *Tales*, making satire the perfect vehicle for Chaucer to voice his opinions. Nowhere does Chaucer outright say that the church is hypocritical, or that the social structure in England is inadequate; he doesn't need to. The characters demonstrate it themselves. And, Chaucer was treated very well by the government; under Richard II, he served Edward III, who granted Chaucer “a gallon of wine daily for the rest of his life,” and Henry IV (Wheeler).

Sir Thomas More's most famous work, *Utopia* (1515), is full of cunning plays on

words and quiet criticism. In short, it describes an ideal society and blends the serious and the satirical by putting a stinging critique of many social injustices practiced in England through the mouth of its narrator Raphael Hythloday, an imaginary traveller who has visited a land in which those faults have been remedied by better institutions and the abolition of all private property. As had been the case earlier in history, overt dissent in his literary work would not only have been censored and remained unpublished, but he would also likely have been severely punished for writing it, and so in this novel More surrounds his opinions with an elaborate framework which frees him from any responsibility for the opinions expressed in the text. Right from the beginning, the person telling the story is given a name (“Hythloday”) which in Greek means something like “dispenser of nonsense.” It is this narrator who, already labeled an unreliable source, introduces his story by criticizing the political and social atmosphere in England. Mention about the utopian practice whereby grooms and brides were required to appear naked before each other before the wedding ceremony certainly mocks customs that require people to bind themselves for life in matrimony without having the opportunity to fully know each other. He then goes on to describe an isolated society which is socialist, unconcerned with wealth, and religiously tolerant. Everyone there is happy, and members of this imaginary society criticize the sort of civilization found in Europe of his day, in which the government appears to be obsessed with wealth and power rather than the public good (McCrery). To this day, *Utopia* is widely read, and the word even has its own dictionary meaning as a perfect society. While More's work, and his general opinions, were embraced by many - including the Catholic church, which later named him a martyr and the patron saint of lawyers and statesmen (Catholic

Encyclopedia) – his opposition to the government (in particular his refusal to accept Henry VIII as the head of the church) led to his execution in 1535. (Keyishian, 536)

Keyishian further elaborated that “when formal satire was banned in England in 1599 (as an act of political censorship) many practitioners of the art shifted their venue to the theater where, especially in the arena of the “private” theaters composed of child actors, they practiced their art and thereby introduced new vibrancy to Jacobean comedy. The playwright Ben Jonson well expresses the anxiety of the dramatic satirist in an authoritarian state in his induction to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), which asks the audience to apply the play’s critique of human behavior generally, rather than maliciously trying to search out “who was meant by the Ginger-bread-women, who by the Hobby-horse-man, who by the Costermonger...what great lady by the Pig-woman, what conceal’d statesman by the Seller of Mouse-traps, and so of the rest.” Towards the end of the play, the author’s anxiety is further expressed by Jonson’s direct request to King James I to assure the author that he has not gone beyond “the scope of writers” and indulged in “license” (Epilogue, lines 3-5). (Keyishian, 536)

One name which is ought to be mentioned within the scope of satirical writings is William Shakespeare. His writings are often laced with humor and in order to bring out the comic effect in his writings, clowns are often incorporated in his works. “Shakespeare did not proclaim himself a satirist as Jonson did, but he expressed the tone and spirit of satire through a variety of characters that remains central figures in exhibiting the varying nature of satire. Among other characters, Shakespeare often includes a number of clowns, like Feste and Touchstone. For instance, in *Twelfth Night*, audiences are able to witness the absurdities that Elizabethan society placed on decorum

within courtship rituals and the ways those rituals are complicated by gender expectations. Speaking of Feste in *Twelfth Night*, Viola plays tribute to the social usefulness of the fool-as-satirist in the following terms:

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,  
And to do that well craves a kind of wit.  
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,  
The quality of persons, and the time,  
And, like the haggard, check at every feather  
That comes before his eye. This is a practice  
As full of labor as a wise man's art;  
For folly that he wisely shows is fit,  
But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit. (*Twelfth Night*, 3.1.60-68)

Voltaire is another writer whose works must be taken into account in dealing with the nuances of satire in literature. It has been observed that Voltaire sometimes seems to be attacking the wrong century. "The Age of Enlightenment, after all, was a reasonably pleasant interlude in human history; the horrors described in *Candide* lay both in the past and in the future, that is, in our own century" (Hodgart: 226). Voltaire's satire is mainly considered as vivid, violent and irate. As elaborated by Harry Keyishian:

The work is full of accounts of rape, slaughter, rank ingratitude, and greed, but the sharpest satire is directed at the teleological thinking of the pedagogue Pangloss, with his fatuously naïve assumptions about this being "the best of all possible worlds" in which disastrous events – violence and exploitation and even the spread of venereal disease – serve the benign ends of a kind of deity. The

philosopher who ignores the evidence of reality in favor of stubborn abstractions receives the most sustained scorn of all. (Keyishian: 537)

Voltaire's *Candide* is a comic vision of disaster which focuses on the awful possibilities of human fate. It is a horrifying picture of the condition of embattled humanity in which war, destruction, oppression and torture are accepted as normal. The length and form of the novel has also been presented in an excellent manner wherein there is a balanced combination of other devices such as the picaresque, the innocent eye, the voyage into the world of ideas, and the fable. Thus, placing Voltaire as one of the most excellent satirists of his time.

Among English satirists, Alexander Pope has gained a lot of honors and praise, whose brilliant style was ideal for examining a variety of manners. He produced a masterpiece of a pleasant form of satire in *The Rape of the Lock*, whose aim was to bring an end to a deadly feud that had arisen over an act of social mischief. It can also be noted that Pope also planned a systematic Horatian satire on a wider scale, of which only fragments survive. (Keyishian, 357) His *Epistle 4: To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington* starts off this way:

'Tis strange, the miser should his cares employ,

To gain those riches he can ne'er enjoy:

Is it less strange, the prodigal should waste

His wealth, to purchase what he ne'er can taste? (Pope: 1-4)

It can also be assumed that Pope could also adopt a Juvenalian tone, as when he boasted of the power of satire to punish those offenders who have been avoiding the law.

Yes, I am proud; I must be proud to see

Men not afraid of God, afraid of me:

Safe from the Bar, the Pulpit, and the Throne,

Yet touch'd and sham'd by Ridicule alone.

O sacred Weapon! left for Truth's defence,

Sole Dread of Folly, Vice, and Insolence! ("Epilogue to the Satires" 208-213)

Like other satirists, Pope is also seen as projecting an air of anxiety about being misunderstood, fearing that the wish to condemn sin or to reform behavior will be taken as mere personal hostility. Hitting at malicious readers who saw meanings in his work that he did not intend, Pope complains in "An Epistle from Mr. Pope to Dr. Arbuthnot" (1741) of the false friend (Keyishian, 538)

Who reads but with a lust to misapply,

Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lie.

A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,

But all such babbling blockheads in his stead (Pope, 1741)

Thus, Pope confirms the characteristic of a satirist that he cannot always count on the approval of the society he believes he is serving.

Jonathan Swift is quite possibly considered as the most well-known literary satirist of all time. It is believed that the conflict between England and Ireland, as well as the state of English government and society in general, brought him to write his most famous works, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and *A Modest Proposal* (1729), both stunning examples of modern satire.



*Gulliver's Travels* is written in the mode of Juvenalian form of satire and remains one of the finest satirical writings under the category of Juvenalian mode. It critiques a “wide range of issues which were prevalent in seventeenth and eighteenth century England. In the novel, Swift attacks pettiness, violence, ethnocentrism, stubbornness, irrationality, religion, and government. All of this is carried out skillfully by Swift, using both exaggeration and placement in an unusual context to make obvious the deficiencies and flaws that he intensely identified in the English behavior.” (LeBeouf, 8) On the other hand Keyishian also commented that “*Gulliver's Travels* is itself a journey from the mockery of court manners in Book 1, set among the Lilliputians, to the devastating condemnation of humanity itself in book 2. Gulliver is created by Swift as a well-meaning soul who undertakes to be spokesman for European civilization, describes the institutions and practices of his culture, including the court, the military, and the legislature, the astonished King of Brobdingnag, unimpressed by his account, declares humanity to be “the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth” (Swift: 132). On hearing this, Gulliver experiences indignation which creates a grim comic effect in the minds of the readers because the king has it right. The elements of the society that he views with disgust are the same elements that trouble his readers as well, but him being a king and can speak from a position of both moral and political authority.” (Keyishian, 538) The novel remains a prominent work of art in the realm of literature to this day, and is often used to introduce young students to satire for the first time.

*A Modest Proposal* is an essay responding to the common sentiment by English landlords that the Irish, perceived as poor, filthy, and even subhuman, were having too

many children, became a burden to society. It is also considered as a work which does not aimed at humanity in general but at a specific social ill, the exploitation of the Irish peasantry by the English landlords. Using the voice of a sincere individual who believes that he has found a humane solution to a vexing social problem, Swift clearly addresses the problem of starvation among the Irish. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England there were a great number of impoverished Irish families who could not afford to feed their children, and Swift begins by describing their plight in sympathetic terms. As a solution, he suggests that the children be sold by the parents, as farm produce, at one year old in order to be eaten by the wealthy. This, he explains, will earn money for the family, provide a delicious delicacy for those who can afford to eat it, and even provide clothing made from the skins of the infants. This suggestion is put forth in serious and even scientific terms, and there is no obvious indication in the tone of the essay that Swift is being ironic. Upon a close look, however, a reader will see that Swift makes occasional scathing remarks regarding the landlords he is critiquing which might easily go unnoticed. The reforms he truly wishes to see, on the other hand, such as making use of local rather than foreign resources and showing mercy to the tenants of landlords, he introduces by claiming that they are useless and that he wants to hear nothing of them. The essay continues to retain its power to readers who are lulled by its rhetorical tone and are then confronted with its utterly logical and utterly hideous solution. (LeBoeuf, 9)

The publication of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain in 1884, has brought forward a critique of “many aspects of the southern culture which existed in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly of religion and racism. Even the opening page of the

book satirizes the culture, with the statement “Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.” This verbal irony serves to emphasize Twain's desire for the audience to look deeper into the text, while at the same time critiquing the tendency of people in the story's setting to follow a “don't question the status quo” philosophy when it comes to important moral situations. The use of an innocent child as a protagonist is effective in deconstructing the flawed moral values of the adult world. Huck Finn, portrayed by Twain as an outsider in a similar fashion to those of Aristophanes’ plays, acts out of a strong sense of morality which more often than not directly contradicts the morals imposed on him by the church and society. His decision to help out an escaped slave – an action that his society tells him will condemn him to hell - and the constant suggestion that he is doing the "wrong" thing, when he is clearly doing good, is a strong implicit critique of the slave trade, and of the church's consent to it.” (LeBoeuf, 10). Till date, the novel remains an important reference in the study of satire in literature.

In dealing with aspects related to satire, the employment of the techniques of satire in the writings of many Mizo writers cannot be overlooked. Satire also plays a significant role within the realm of Mizo literature and the manner in which it is executed by the Mizo writers is worth perusing. As commonly recorded in the history of Mizo literature, satire has firstly found its outlet in the oral literature of the Mizos. R. L. Thanmawia has precisely traced the development of satire in Mizo literature, “few personal attacks between two or more rival chiefs are found in Mizo folk poetry said

that the famous war called “Chhim leh Hmar Indo” (The North and South Battle)” (R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*) fought between the Northern part of Mizoram and the Southern part during 1856-1859 resulted from the singing of satirical songs by Vuttaia, one of the powerful chiefs of the Northern part of Mizoram against Lalpuithanga, a chief of the Southern part, in which they attacked each other with words. The story was that Lalpuithanga set up a new village at Buanhmu. In the meantime, Vuttaia also arrived at the place for the same interest. The former returned to his old village Vanchengte (also known as Chengte). Making fun of Lalpuithanga, Vuttaia recited the following verse:

Buanhmun pai ang pawm tawh hnu,

Chengte-ah lam ang let e,

Lalpuithanglema.

(Lalpuithanga, the subdued chief

Though has claimed and embraced Buanhmun,

Retreats trembling to Chengte)” (translated by R. L. Thanmawia)

The verse strongly suggests the condescending attitude of Vuttaia towards Lalpuithanga as he has subdued him. Vuttaia cannot help making fun of the pathetic condition of Lalpuithanga as he was defeated to return to his old village. This song soon became popular among the Mizo folks and it was commonly sang by the Mizos of that particular era (1856-1859)

Another interesting aspect are the personal attacks which were exchanged between the two poets Awithangpa and Diriallova through the medium of their songs and verses. “The famous poet Awithangpa and his contemporary Diriallova exchanged a long poetical

battle. In the beginning, Diriallova wrote in teasing vein of Awithangpa about his luck with the ladies, and Awithangpa replied in verse.” (R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*) The exchange of harsh poetical words between the two poets continued for a long time. Being an inhabitant of Aizawl town, Diriallova spoke despairingly of his opponent Awithangpa who lived at a village named Maubuang. Hence, Diriallova used to take all the troubles to send his songs to Awithangpa who was living in Maubuang at that time. The following lines clearly express the central idea of their verbal attacks:

Ka zai virthlileng va chang mai rawh,  
Diriallo val Zawlkhawpui huthang valan,  
Awithangpa runpui va deng chim rawh.  
(Were my songs be as strong as the storm,  
That devastating Diriallova of Aizawl town,  
May wreck Awithangpa's house by its blows)

Awithangpa replied:

Awithangpa runpui a deng ngam lo,  
Zai a let e, Buangkhawpui virthli lengin,  
Diriallo vala va khuainuai rawh.  
(Oh, whirl wind of Buangkhawpui,  
Arise and storm the retreating Diriallova,  
Who durst not fulfill his mission) (R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*)

After a long exchange of satirical verses between the two poets, Diriallova fell silent and the satirical war thus came to an end. (R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*). There are hardly any other trace of personal satire that can be identified within the scope of

Mizo literature, therefore it can be assumed that personal satire is not popular among the modern Mizo poets.

Religious satire is another category of satire that is largely incorporated in the satirical writings of the Mizo writers. “The religious satire came out during the second and third decades of the twentieth century. During this period Christianity grew rapidly. The Mizo chiefs attacked the foreign religion vehemently. The early church, on the other hand, was rigid towards its members, and tried to hold off the newly converted Christians from the traditional practices like Chai, traditional dances, drinking of liquor, singing of love songs, and other practices. The non-Christian youths as such, ridiculed the new habit of drinking tea as under,

Tinzu leh tinzu a dang mang e,

Nangni tinzu Luarbawn thingpui hnahtel ro,

Tirhkoh meibulan a dut kuang kuang.

(How different is your drink from ours,

For your drink is a simple Loharbond dry leaf,

The poor preacher quaffs it thirstily) (translated by R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*)

In reading the songs and verses of these period, one can gather the notion that the Church remains the target of attack. “Another popular attack on the Church is the criticism on collection of a handful of rice:

Immanuela a tam em ni?

Chawlhni tuja in buhfaitham zozai hi,

Ei seng hian kei zawng ka ring nem le.

(I wonder if Immanuel be starved,

Why all the Sunday-morning collection of rice,

Be over-flowing all the while) (translated by R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*)

The passage suggests the mindset of the non-Christians towards the practice of the Mizo Christians which has been satirically exposed in the mentioned verses. A handful of rice is a common practice of the Mizo Christians which remains a central part in the field of their mission till today. In the words of R. L. Thanmawia, “Rice collection was meant for the mission work. However from the non-Christian point of view, Immanuel seems to be another king to whom rice collection was compulsory for the disciples. The duty of Pathian or Khuanu (God) is to give blessings to man. Here, Immanuel, as used in this verse, has an ironic significance.” (R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*)

Before the advent of the colonizers into the soil of Mizoram, each village was ruled by a chief and they were independent on their own. The chief held the supreme authority of the Mizo society and enjoyed the highest form of rights and privileges. “Before the Second World War, the Mizos had no consciousness about their political status, but they began to be wearied about the coercive rule of the chiefs. The first political organization, the Mizo Commoners Union party alias the Mizo Union Party came into being on April 9, 1946. Soon after the formation of the party, the slogan on the abolition of the chieftainship was raised. One of them runs as follows:

Baithak arva, artui khawn leh,

Lal hnungzui reng ka ning tawh;

Kawltu chawina daltu an ni, Sazai lian pui pui an ni.

(To give taxes on chickens and eggs all the while,

And to entourage the chief, Are loathsome and punitive,

Aren't they the hindrance to our works?) (translated by R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*)

The slogan strongly indicates the discontentment of the Mizos towards their chiefs. The bold satire and criticism that has been rendered towards their chiefs clearly depicts the disappointment of the people and suggest their desires to abolish chieftainship in Mizoram. “The ideological differences inside the Mizo Union Party soon began due to the anti-chief movement which took the form of mob-violence in many places. A few years later, Pachhunga, the then President of the Party and his followers broke away from the party. Pachhunga was greatly attacked by his opponents. A long satirical poem having forty stanzas was composed and sent to him. Two stanzas may be taken for example:

Union leh Union a dang mang e,

Keni Union Mizoram tundin nan e,

Nangni Union ve chu Vai dawrna.

(How different is your Union from ours!

Our Union is to build up Mizoram, Yours is to appease bureaucrats)

Fascist val em ni ka ram hralhtu?

Vanhnuai mi hril Juda mantirtu iangin,

Nitin sawmthum lai a tel to ti.

(Isn't a Fascist who sold my Land?

Like the famous Judas, the betrayer,



He receives rupees thirty every day) (translated by R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*)

The dissident group formed a new party called UMFO (United Mizo Freedom Organization) on July 5, 1947. This new party was patronaged by the Mizo Chiefs. A poet from the Mizo Union Party ridiculed the other as under:

Zalen muhil lo tho ru, ni a chhuak sang tawh em e,

In kawmawl Lalho reng hu, a lum lua e ka ti.

(Arise, the sleeping UMFO, the sun also rises high,

The chiefs, the blankets of yours had become too balmy) (translated by R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*)

Social satires are also examined in few of the writings produced by the Mizo writers. *Serkawn Concert Hlate*, compiled by R. L. Thanzawna and Raltawna has played a significant role in the development of satire in Mizo literature. The book is a compilation of songs which were sung during the concert organized by Serkawn Middle School approximately between the years 1932-46. "The School teachers composed poems on various themes. They taught the students to sing or recite those new poems before the public. They displayed drama and entertained the audience with different kinds of traditional and western music. They continuously organized this kind of Concert till 1946." (R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*) The first among them is Lalmama's "Chhurbura Hla/ The Song of Chhurbura" which satirizes upon the stupidity and idiosyncrasy of a person named Chhurbura with a touch of light humor. The song narrates about a particular villagers who had gone for fishing, leaving behind Chhurbura as he was too late to join them. He was in a dilemma whether to go and join them or return back

home and the sun had nearly set before he could make up his mind. The song progresses to a stage where Chhurbura, instead of catching a fish, caught a frog which brought a great contentment to him because he considered himself luckier than the others. The song ends with a humorous tone:

Neighbours had gathered in the house,  
As he had decided to feed the whole village  
The tensed frog then jumped out of fear  
It hopped on the grandmother's knees  
Quiet grandma's knees, keep quiet,  
Quiet grandma's knees, else the frog will jump away  
The worried Chhurbura with a knife held firm  
Knocked the grandmother's knees to swell (Lalmama, "Chhurbura Hla/The Song of Chhurbura", translation mine)

Another humorous Mizo songs which are continued to be studied till date are the songs by Sangliana. "Valhuaia/The Brave Lad" is an ironical satire upon a lad who considers himself brave and courageous but he is the opposite in reality. 'The brave lad' "in the opening stanza, compared himself with Lalvunga, a famous Mizo hero of the past. But the action which follows the title is that of a coward." (R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*, 159) The following verse ironically expresses 'The brave lad' as a coward:

Val ka zam ngai lo khuai rau hlauvin,  
Ka inzial mai pawnpui hnuaiah, lum mah se,  
Ka zam ang maw arpui kawlh hlauvin, Vala,  
Muangleiah hel ta then ing e, lim loh nan.

(I never lose my heart for fearing bees,  
I run quickly under the blanket, though it's very hot;  
I never lose my heart for fearing ferocious hen,  
I go round to avoid her fly at me) (translated by R. L. Thanmawia)

The song clearly renders the faintheartedness of 'The brave lad' and the manner in which he lacks all forms of boldness and bravery. "In "Chhuihthang Valmawla", Sangliana exhibits the immoral behaviors of an ignorant man. The man does not know manners and etiquettes. Using a girl to whom the man paid visits, the poet expresses disgust with the presence of such an ignorant man. Here the poet indirectly attacks the Mizo tradition of men courting the girls at night time. Lalmama, on the other hand, criticizes matriarchy followed by some families. The Mizo society is patriarchal. In his "Thaibawih Hla", he ridicules a few henpecked husbands. Three contemporary satirists criticize the style of living and the fashion of the new generation. In his "Leng Uchuaki", P. S. Chawngthu attacks the hair-style, dresses and the behaviour of the younger generation. He censures the adaptation of English names into Mizo names, and he bitterly criticizes the girls who fell in love with non-Mizo youths. Roliana Ralte (b.1951) also satirizes the life style of the modern youth in his "Aw Vala Vala". Beside their dresses, the poet condemns the manner they drink liquor, and the manner in which they waste away time. Another contemporary satirist F. Laltuaia (b.1935), in the introduction to his satirical poem "Tleitir Lungmawl" says that he would criticize none but the empty heart of the youths. He also severely ridicules the dresses, their hair style, western dances, and their manners. In the concluding stanza, he alludes to a legendary man, Thasiama who was said to have died for his disgust with the behaviors of the

younger generation. Laltuaia says that if Thasiama were reborn he would die thirteen times out of disgust with the life-style of the contemporary generation. The foregoing analysis reveals that Mizo poetry has so far found expression in the forms of lyrics, Ode, ballad, elegy, and satire.” (R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*)

The year 1977 brought about a new development in the satirical writings of the Mizos. Lalsangzuala, with his pen name Laisaizawks produced the first Mizo comics *Sudden Muanga*. It is believed that the writer was inspired by Oliver Strange’s *Sudden* which was absolutely famous in Mizoram during that time. The main character of the comics is Sudden Muanga (slow) whose name itself can evoke laughter due to its incongruous meanings ‘Sudden’ and ‘Muanga’ (slow). He is portrayed as a character who can be identified as “jack of all trades, master of none” and in the comments of L. Keivom, “like many other Mizos he lacks principles and consistency, what he regarded as good yesterday will be detested by him the next day...he always has the tendency to justify himself for whatever tasks he has taken up. He is liable to be corrupt if he has the chance to do so and he can be very partial towards honesty and dignity as and when it suits him.” (L. Keivom, “Sudden Muanga: Zofate Superman/Sudden Muanga: Superman of the Mizos”, translation mine). The central theme of the comics is made up of satire and humor which makes it popular among the Mizos, especially the youths. The comics deal with certain issues pertaining to the popular culture of Mizoram and it incorporates religious satire and political satire extensively. Sudden Muanga has played an influential part in imparting the techniques of satire in Mizo literature. The following passage from *Sudden Muanga: Funny Face-1* (1982) is an attack upon the shallowness

and callousness of government officers who used to play unfair means in the process of several job's recruitment:

Within a week, Rualrem Town Hall has been transformed into Muanga Private Bank...

Assistant (in a soliloquy): The applicants are rather fair and pretty...wait, let me show them to the boss. He will be able to decide those applicants who will get selected and those that will be dropped by simply looking at their passport photos.

Sudden Muanga (in a soliloquy): Now I have become rich in no time. Tribal people are fond of things that happen in a haste. We despise things that are meant to be achieved through gradual process. Certain instances like loving the state all of a sudden when election is drawing near, studying hard rapidly when exams are just around the corner...therefore, those who assume that they will certainly go to heaven might suddenly fall down to hell.

Assistant: Look boss, application forms are rushing in. Have a look...they are quite tempting. There are many applicants who seem to be nice and amiable even by the look of their faces...(Laisaizawk's, *Sudden Muanga: Funny Face-I*, translation mine)

As the narrative progresses, an unnamed woman approached Sudden Muanga and begged him to give a job to her daughter claiming that they are poverty stricken. She brought two kilos of pork as a token of appreciation to which Sudden Muanga has replied, "You don't have to do this...just let your daughter visit me tonight with five eggs, I will take her bio-data, do not worry". (Laisaizawk's, *Sudden Muanga: Funny Face-I*) The narrative, thus satirizes upon the lack of fairness on the part of many officers regarding

job recruitment in Mizoram at a certain point of time. *Sudden Muanga* remains one of the most significant comics that is commonly read till date by the reading public of Mizoram, indeed it plays an important part in the development of satire in Mizo literature.

“Thangkura Drama” was formed by a group of friends, namely R. Vanlalzauva, B. Lalthlengliana and Lalchhanhima in the year 1978. This group can be regarded to be pioneering in the field of satirical drama. The members travelled across every nook and corner of Mizoram in order to perform their plays which would often expose the follies and vices of the Mizo society by employing humor and satire as the main essence of their dramas. Unfortunately, their numerous plays have not been published in books but their contributions in the development of satire in Mizo literature cannot be neglected as they inspired budding writers who are drawn towards the areas of satire. They also paved way for other contemporary drama clubs such as “Tuarpuui and Sunpuia” and “Zephyr Drama Club” whose themes are more or less in connection with “Thangkura Drama”. Humor, comic effect and satire can be found extensively in all of their plays.

Irony is one important technique of satire which can be extensively identified in the writings of Mizo writers. “A survey of Mizo poetry reveals that the ironical expressions are verbal in nature, and most of them are found in secular poetry.” (R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*, 154) P. S. Chawngthu, Zirsangzela Hnamte and Vankhama are among the well-known contributors in the field of ironical satire. “Siamtu Pathian tan/ For God the Creator” by P. S. Chawngthu asserts all the living creatures to glorify their creator, but unlike other living creatures, human beings prefer to live in the opposite manners:

...Pa tilung hnurtu, thinlai tina renga'n,

Kan piang keini hringfa leng hi.

(We, the human beings are born

To wound the heart of the Father) (translated by R. L. Thanmawia)

Zirsangzela Hnamte's "Darthlalang/ The Looking Glass" is a fine piece of poem that satirically expresses the deceiving nature of human beings and the manner in which they hardly find satisfaction in their lives. The poet addresses the looking glass which he presented as something that is faithful, truthful and a righteous judge:

Par tlan sirva, nungcha zawngte'n,

An iai nem Khuanu malsawmna,

Mahse duham chin lem nei lo hringfa lengte'n

Kan bel thin che tukchhuakin maw I zarah hian,

Mawi leh zualna beisei chungin

(Birds and all other living creatures

Are not discontent with the Creator's blessing,

But we are the boundless selfish creatures

Approach you every morning,

Hoping to get more beauty from you) (Translated by R. L. Thanmawia)

One famous Mizo song which is impregnated with irony is Vankhama's "Nunrawng Hmeltha/ The Brutal Handsome". The song narrates about a girl's loyalty to her lover and the unrequited love that she has experienced. Hence, she professed her deep love for 'the brutal handsome':

Hleite'n dang ve thei se ka thinlai,

Nunrawng hmeltha, nang tawnah

(I wish if I could change my heart,

From you, brutal Handsome) (Translated by R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Poetry*, 156)

The song clearly renders the ironical twist of fate on the part of the speaker, a girl who is not willing to give up on her lover, even though he is in love with another girl. The title “Nunrawng Hmeltha/ The Brutal Handsome” itself suggests the irony that has been strongly incorporated in the song.

Parody is a technique which is commonly employed by the early Mizo writers. It is a tool which plays an important part in the realm of satirical writings. The advent of Christianity in Mizoram has introduced many Christian songs which certainly paved way for the development of parody in Mizo literature. Most of the famous parodies are Christian songs which has been parodied into love songs. Likewise, techniques of satire are inherently present after careful examination of Mizo literature. One element which is worth analyzing in most of the Mizo satirical writings is social satire, especially found in Mizo contemporary satirical writings. Social satire plays a significant role in studying the popular culture of a particular society. Thus, the satirical writings of many Mizo writers will serve as a helpful information in order to have a closer examination into the popular culture of Mizo society.

There is always a fine thread of similarity to be drawn from most of the prominent satirical writings that has been produced over the years. The similarity lies in “the critical capacity, which allows us to observe and analyze social phenomena. Another is a desire for equity and a capacity for indignation in the face of evil or inappropriate behavior. Yet another is the capacity to be amused as well as angered by bad behavior,



and to express our feelings through artistic forms. (Keyishian, 541) Satire, with all the complexities of its literary and graphic history, has abundantly found its outlet in literature which cannot be overlooked or neglected by readers, scholars, academicians and theorists of all time. It can be regarded as a prominent literary genre which served as a continual process. Till date, it also remains one of the most commonly dealt themes by writers across the globe.

**CHAPTER 2:**  
**SITUATING VANNEIHTLUANGA IN LITERATURE**

Born in 1957, Vanneihluanga has worked as a Program Executive in All India Radio between the years 1984-1995. After leaving the profession in the year 1995, he had taken up business to pursue his passion for writing. To date, he is the owner and editor of Lengzem, a monthly magazine which is widely acclaimed and appreciated by the Mizo people as the magazine mainly features and highlights the popular culture of contemporary Mizo society. His works include *Suangtuahna/ Dreams* (2016), *Rawhtuina Mei/ The Scorching Flame* (2004), *Keimah leh Keimah/ Me and Myself* (2002) *Neihfaka Rilbawm* (2002), most of which are collections of short stories. Vanneihluanga is also one of the three co-owners of Zonet, a local cable network that inherently features the popular culture that sweeps the ethos of Mizo society.

Vanneihluanga is a writer who seems to draw limitless materials from the things that his eyes behold, the various situations that he has been and the environment that surrounds him. His writings often deals with the lives of common people and ordinary events. For him, a village woman selling bamboo shoots on the roadside can act as an important tool to frame out an interesting piece of writing. Likewise, his characters mainly comprise common people, from all walks of life and differing backgrounds. His writings hardly digress from the ethos of Mizo society and are deeply rooted within the realm of Mizo culture. His themes may vary from politics, religion, alcoholism and humanity, there is always an underlying strand of satire which can be easily identified by the readers. Vanneihluanga, being one of the most celebrated Mizo writers, often examines Mizo society from a different perspective, observes and studies from another angle, thus leaving a trail of moral and didactic message upon the minds of the readers.

The chapter will particularly dwell upon the modes and conventions that have been carefully employed by Vanneihluanga in his writings, and situate him within the realm of literature. It shall attempt to portray an in-depth study of the various techniques and styles that fall within the aspects of his writings and in doing so, themes that are particularly central within his writings will also be brought into careful studies. Subsequently, this chapter will also focus upon aspects related to the theory of satire and the manner in which it has been handled by Vanneihluanga that can be applied to the thesis.

As a writer and an editor, Vanneihluanga has placed himself firmly at the acerbic end of satire and humor scale. He is widely celebrated by the reading public of Mizoram for writing short stories, poems, essays and prose that often revolve around the changes and dilemmas which occur within the realm of Mizo society through the passing of time. In a prefatory note to *Malgudi Days* (1943), R K Narayan, one of the best known story writers of India has rightfully described, “The material available to a story writer in India is limitless. Within a broad climate of inherited culture there are endless variations: every individual differs from every other individual, not only economically, but in outlook, habits and day-to-day philosophy. It is stimulating to live in a society that is not standardized or mechanized, and is free from monotony. Under such conditions the writer has only to look out of the window to pick up a character (and thereby a story).” (Narayan) Likewise, apart from his passion for writing, being a sharp observer, Vanneihluanga also has limitless materials to pick out instances and characters that are within his reach. The plot of his stories hardly stray away from the daily routine of life and his characters can often be easily connected or related to by readers,

thus his writings are largely appreciated by the Mizos as they can easily identify the social signification that has been incorporated within his writings.

The underlying satire that has been inherently at work in most of his writings acts as a significant literary tool which makes his writings all the more fascinating for the readers. His works are often laced with a touch of satire that he could make the best out of the society in which he is presently living. Vanneihluanga's handling of satire tries to invoke the authority of common sense, basing its witty criticism on valid standards of morality and behavior as he sharply observes the ethos of contemporary Mizo society. Most of the writings of Vanneihluanga vividly portrays a clear picture of the popular culture of Mizo society and what it takes to be a Mizo living in the post-colonial age that he carefully examines as a writer. When asked about his stance upon satire, Vanneihluanga has commented:

“I suppose satire is in my nature. Whenever I look at certain things of life, I enjoy giving comments or response with a touch of satire...not only in writing, but also at times of conversation, I sometimes even limit myself because I'm afraid that people may not actually understand...It's in the flow of my writing, it is just there...I enjoy expressing things in that manner.” (Interview)

Thus, his works inculcate the ethos of the Mizo people in particular and the vices and follies that plagued the morality and standards of behavior of Mizo society has clearly been brought out through his writings. But it will be wise to remember that it is not the part of a satirist to offer satisfactory alternatives for the conditions, vices and follies it criticizes.

The early works of Vanneihluanga, namely, *Keimah leh Keimah* (2002), *Neihfaka Rilbawm* (2002) and *Rawhtuina Mei* (2004) are collections of short stories which can be categorized under the genre of satirical writings. Most of the short stories that have been clubbed within these three books deal with subjects that are closely related and can be interlinked with the popular culture of Mizo society. Apart from the mentioned three books, there are numerous writings by Vanneihluanga which extensively embraces the various dynamics of satire with a touch of excellence and these writings will also be carefully taken into study within the course of this chapter. It is often assumed that in order to study a particular society, the most effective means to approach is by studying the popular culture of that society. Vanneihluanga, as a contemporary Mizo writer, excels in reflecting the ethos and morale that entails the present Mizo society by sincerely dealing with subjects that are related to youth, religion and politics. Issues that have been certainly dealt with by Vanneihluanga are common issues that can be found almost in every society, therefore his writings are not particularly contrived upon the portrayal of Mizo society at its worst. It can be easily identified that themes of “rootedness” also occupy a central theme in his writings as most of his writings are laced with constructive criticism that has been purposely aimed at the people of Mizoram.

Vanneihluanga, has acquired the popular estimation “The satirist” of Mizo writers. He has gained himself this position not because of an impeccably superior literary merit in comparison to many of his contemporary writers, but because his works, mostly of satire works successfully for him than does the other themes. Most of his writings are laced with a satirical undertones while the essence of humor and laughter is often

brought to the forefront. The creativity of Vanneihluanga can be best identified in his ability to make a joke out of almost any given circumstances. He takes great pleasure in amusing his readers without deviating from the moral effect that he often intended to incorporate within the ambit of his writings.

A careful reading of his works convey that there are numbers of instances where the writer has skillfully juxtaposed satire and humor as “many satirists have blended sentiment with critical humor to retain the reader’s interest and achieve a stronger emotional reaction than would otherwise be possible.” (Feignberg 76) Often there is a blend or mixture of sentimentality and humor in the writings of Vanneihluanga which may act as an important tool for diverting the minds of the readers. This technique is clearly brought out in the narratives “Utawk Pawnfen/A Frog’s Frock” and “Khawl Thluak Nei Lo/The Mindless Machine” which are laced with gentle satire to evoke laughter without any moral intention. The two narratives are autobiographical stories that have been written by Vanneihluanga, and in doing so, have succeeded in bringing out the humor side of him which hardly fails to evoke laughter from the side of the readers. The stories have rightfully portrayed that as a short story writer, Vanneihluanga never runs out of characters and instances in order to frame a wonderful piece of writings. The ability to create a joke at his own expense is another technique that is often employed by Vanneihluanga which strongly appeals the intellect of the readers.

“*Utawk Pawnfen/A Frog’s Frock*” is a narrative which tells of a hilarious experience that the writer and his friends have undergone while travelling to Guwahati together despite the fact that they felt “smart enough” and “confident” to move out of their comfort zone. The simple idiosyncrasies of the three friends have been vividly

portrayed by the writer without any hesitation which strongly gives an effect of humor to the narrative. Vanneihluanga satirizes the lack of good communication skills from the part of the three friends as they were running short of vocabulary when it comes to buying a simple skirt for their wives. Even the thought of it caused an apprehension among the three friends:

“...the friend on my left whispered “Hey, I do not know what they call a ‘pawnfen’ in English, how on earth do we buy one?” I replied “Isn’t it pretty god...no, pettygoat is what it is...I think...” I was miles away from the Chambers’ Dictionary which I had left at home.

But the friend on my right was a know it all, and he was actually very deft in the nuances of translation, so he confidently argued, “Of course not, prettygod refers to a beautiful god, while a petty goat is a small goat; it doesn’t refer to a petticoat at all. I think it is called petty guard.” (Vanneihluanga, “Utawk Pawnfen/A Frog’s Frock” *Keimah leh Keimah/ Me and Myself*, translated by Margaret L. Pachuau)

Though confident as they may seem, the dialogue between the three friends have clearly brought out that none of them were able to utter the exact word for “pawnfen” in English with great confidence as they keep on mumbling the words “I think” whenever they are about to come out with the exact word. From this point, the comic devices have been brought out almost to perfection as the writer continue to attack upon himself and his friends about their lack of vocabulary to actually come out with a word for the shopkeeper to clearly acknowledge what they were searching for. The miscommunication



between the three friends and the shopkeeper in their search of skirt or “pawnfen” to purchase for their wives is the theme which eventually brings out the amusing climax of the narrative:

“After he had done all that he could, the owner of the store took a deep breath, looked at us with folded arms, and declared, “I think what you want is...frock,”

“Frog?”we cried out in unison. So astounded were we. “Yes frock, a woman’s frock,” she pronounced confidently.

We rolled our eyes in horror, and were no longer interested in the purchase. In despair and utter bewilderment, we walked out of the magnificent store, leaving a host of equally perplexed people behind...The words, “Yes frog; a woman’s frog” was enough to diminish our morale.

The man on my left declared, “When the lady saw me gesticulating wildly, she must have felt that we wanted to seek out a prostitute. And in all her wisdom, must have realized that a woman is actually a frog...”(Vanneihluanga, “Utawk Pawnfen/A Frog’s Frock”, *Keimah leh Keimah*, translated by Margaret L. Pachuau, 96)

The whole point of amusement lies within the inadvertent nature of humor that has been brought out from the bafflement among the three friends. There is no felt intelligence in operation within the whole narrative, yet the play of words and the intermingling of puns have been skillfully employed by Vanneihluanga as an effective comic literary devices within a short piece of writing. Given a short limit of time and space, it takes a high standard of creativity and a peculiar writing skill to incorporate the amount of

literary techniques that he has employed within the short story “Utawk Pawnfen/ A Frog’s Frock”. On the other hand, it is clear that Vanneihluanga not only satirizes the simple idiosyncrasies of the three men, but themes that has been satirized in the narrative can also be easily identified within the lives of other people and that it can actually take place. In an attempt to characterize the varying roles of a satirist, Leonard Feignberg has mentioned that “Because the satirist appeals primarily to the mind, he must divert the mind --- and the method he chooses is predominantly playful distortion. He uses all the standard comic devices, plus a number of variations of wit which are more suitable for satire than for uncritical humor.” (Feignberg, 82) Vanneihluanga, as a satirist, hardly fails to bring out the inner working of satire that has been hidden beneath his writings with sumptuous display of wit and various techniques of humor in order to keep the minds of the readers active throughout the story which in turn leads to an effective comprehension from the part of the readers.

Another characteristic of most satire is the use of wit to make the attack clever, or humor to make it funny. Satire, like all literature and poetry, must be intellectually rewarding, be reasonably well written, and especially must entertain in order to survive—and in the particular case of satire, in order to be received at all. The basic mood of attack and disapproval needs to be softened to some extent and made more palatable; wit and humor serve this end by making the criticism entertaining, and even attractive. In the words of Swift, "As Wit is the noblest and most useful Gift of humane Nature, so Humor is the most agreeable, and where these two enter far into the Composition of any Work, they will render it always acceptable to the World" (Pagilaro, 338). “*Khawl Thluak Nei Lo/The Mindless Machine*” is another piece of autobiographical story which

deals with the writer and his encounter with his new scooter, which he has been long anticipated to drive. Throughout the narrative, Vanneihluanga never fails to satirize his lack of knowledge about certain parts of machine and the manner in which he is not, by any means, mastered with the art of driving. The whole narrative is predominantly filled with aspects relating to pure comedy and therefore laughter is the best effect that can be drawn out of the story. The story revolves around the writer and his attempt to drive his new scooter with great confidence to handle it like an expert in spite of the inadequacy of skills to do so:

“With supreme confidence I got onto the seat, released the clutch and twisted the accelerator for all it was worth. Something went “Viiiing!” and I shot up in the air high enough to almost catch a whiff of heaven and dropped back to earth with a spine-arching in a muddy ditch blackened by CRP waste water.”  
(Vanneihluanga, “Khawl Thluak Nei Lo/The Mindless Machine”, *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself*, translated by Zualteii Poonte)

It is at this point that the comic effect of the narrative begins to open up and continue to last till the end of the closing sentences. The driving lessons that he has taken up and the manner in which he has attempted to drive by himself has been vividly described by the writer and it can be assumed that to a great extent, the writer has strongly contrived various means and ways to amuse the readers. “At first even pushing the key into the ignition was a major hassle” and as he determinedly tried to move his scooter he found that “it was like trying to move a stubborn cat --- when I tried to push it forward it just wouldn’t budge and when I tried to put it back, it felt stiff and unyielding”. As the narrative proceed, instances that can easily evoke laughter are

predominantly brought to the forefront as the writer keep portraying himself as a hopeless driver who lacks almost all the skills in the world when it comes to driving his new scooter. The second day of his test driving has even left him pondering:

Lying in bed that night I began to chalk out in theory the art of driving. Why couldn't I drive I asked myself and came up with the answer that, I hadn't really practiced enough, and also, I was way too chicken to practice in public where it would be obvious to everyone that I couldn't drive. (Vanneihluanga, "Khawl Thluak Nei Lo/The Mindless Machine", translated by Zualteii Poonte, *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself*, 41)

The perplexities and the struggles that he has gone through in an attempt to drive his scooter with great confidence has nearly prove futile as readers continue to laugh at his clumsiness in handling his scooter. Despite the fact that he find it hard to admit that he is running out of confidence, somehow towards the end of the narrative, he can't help considering himself as a "mindless machine":

And my scooter seemed to eye me back slyly and say, "Ka pu, you call me a mindless machine and ridicule me all the time but of all scooter owners, no one could possibly be as mindless as you. You ought to have first read up everything about me from your instruction manual!" (Vanneihluanga, Khawl Thluak Nei Lo/The Mindless Machine, *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself*, translated by Zualteii Poonte, 48)

It can be clearly noted that the writer himself remains the central attack even towards the last sentence of the narrative and it is through this attack against himself that the

best effect of comedy has been brought out from the narrative. In one of his interviews, Howard Jacobson has mentioned that “You tell a joke against yourself, you’ve achieved an intellectual moral superiority. We make fun of ourselves than anybody else could. In the act of doing that, we appear to be on the back foot but we’re winning”. Likewise, Vanneihluanga has no hesitation in making fun of himself and his idiosyncrasies while using it as an important comic device to bring out the best effect of satire from his works. This technique is an important tool which is commonly used by satirist, humorist and comedian in order to incorporate “superiority theory” within their works. “The Superiority Theory is the theory that the humor we find in comedy and in life is based on ridicule, wherein we regard the object of amusement as inferior and/or ourselves as superior.” Therefore, by placing himself as the subject of laughter, Vanneihluanga in turn gains himself a superior position by winning favors of the readers regardless of the manner in which he has portrayed himself as someone who lacks wisdom and knowledge. “In his essay on ‘true Raillery and Satyr’ in *The Tatler*, No. 242, Steele points out that pleasantry is indispensable in satire as a means of showing that the speaker, or author, bears no ill will. If the satire is angry and rude, it will be dismissed as an expression of personal malice and prejudice; but if it is good humored, it will command the attention of readers and listeners, and triumph over adversaries, no matter how malicious they may be”. (Elkin, 147) Vanneihluanga is at his greatest in holding poise two important elements or attitudes - satire and humor - which are extensively reflected in most of his writings. There are a number of instances where he prefers to highlight humor and delight rather than savage or harsh satire as though he “felt that smiling satire instructs and reforms more effectively than savage satire because it pleases

more readily". His writings are often laced with a variety of instances and events that tickles the readers and thus making it easier to enjoy reading his works than to read with a heavy heart. Thus, a fine balance of laughter and satire is commonly found in the writings of Vanneihluanga.

"Happy Valley" is a whimsical piece of work which renders a pretty complete picture of a certain group of people residing in one of the most famous localities of Aizawl. In showcasing diverse characters from different family backgrounds and their idiosyncrasies, the story has succeeded in bringing out the most effective form of laughter while being truthful and yet hurting no one:

Those who afforded such dwellings stayed there, more possessive of their homes than their landlords themselves. Thus, all kinds of people gathered there: peddlers and merchants who were not necessarily Paihte, malaria-ravaged people from the west, Maras from the extreme south, wandering Evangelists, Muster Roll Drivers, Muslims who paid no heed to Ramzan and Id, Sericulture office workers who had no inkling of what a cocoon was, babysitters who worked in other people's homes, those who babysat these babysitters, their assorted family and friends, those whose only field of expertise was in auto repair, others who had always belonged to the Left ever since Mizoram entered the political arena; also, those whose sole reason for being sent to Aizawl by their parents seemed to be to appear for Matriculation exams, a big man whose drunken behavior differed depending on whether he drank local liquor or the imported variety, a few who still vehemently declared that they would have no other ruler besides Kumpinu, some who wanted to withdraw their names from the Church Registry because

they were unhappy with the latest translation of the Bible and the new version of the Christian Hymnal, and those whose character could never be ascertained owing to the fact that their stays in Happy Valley were few and far-between, as sporadic as a comet's visits." (Vannehtluanga, "Happy Valley", *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself*, translated by Cherrie L. Chhange).

From the onset of the narrative, each character has been portrayed as a comic figure who distinctly exhibit an interesting yet humorous type of human qualities. They are not just examples of simply good or bad individuals, most of them seem aware that they inhabit a socially defined role and seem to have made a conscious effort to redefine their prescribed role on their own terms. The concept of different socio-economic classes and the influence it has upon an individual according to the level in which they belong appears as theme that runs in parallel with tales of excessive humor: Cutting through Happy Valley was a public road on which rambled along vehicles of all sorts: huge, shiny, and indiscriminately noisy. While those living near the road were privileged to breathe in the faint promise of a glorious future, those living in the outer periphery below the dust of the main road were not unduly worried about the sounds they could hear from above, of people jostling with each other as if eager not to miss out on their share of riches, power and glory. They had a complacent and satisfied aura about them, since they saw the futility of attempting to even join the rat-race, and even if they could hear these sounds of materialistic struggles with their outer ears, they learned to shut their inner ears against them, and instead, forged a lifestyle and attitude that was in tandem with their income, a mixture of village life and city life which resulted in a

unique lifestyle adapted to their means and needs. (Vanneihluanga, “Happy Valley”, *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself*, translated by Cherrie L. Chhange)

The statement is a clear reference to the on-going income inequality among the Mizo people while highlighting the effect it has upon groups of people belonging to different classes. Characters in Happy Valley may seem unimportant and unworthy to the outside world, but the author has paid keen attention to the little things that brings them satisfaction and heart’s content despite their meager income. Influence of socio-economic classes is an ubiquitous theme, an on-going topic in many satirical writings, *Happy Valley* is also one of them. Vanneihluanga vividly paints his characters in tandem with the level of their class and he permits them to freely participate within the realm of his narrative. Throughout the narrative, their voices are clearly heard and their actions are overtly seen. Funny as they may seem, the characters within the narrative appears to be so familiar to the readers and while laughing at them, it makes it all the more easier to identify the type of characters that they represent. “As Wit is the noblest and most useful Gift of humane Nature, so Humor is the most agreeable, and where these two enter far into the Composition of any Work, they will render it always acceptable to the World.” (Pope i. 211) Thus, humor plays an indispensable role through the act of satire because it is laughter and amusement that is capable of denouncing contempt and pain that has been incorporated within the attacks of satire.

“The satirist, in short, demands decisions of his reader, not mere feelings”; he “wishes to arouse [the reader’s] energy to action, not purge it in vicarious experience” (Paulson 1967: 15). Through either mimetic or discursive art, the satirist provokes mirth or sadness, a concern for the innocent or the self-destructive fool, or contempt for the



deceitful person, and always either laughter or scorn at the analyzed subject. Satire cannot function at its best without a standard or situations, certain events or occasions against which readers can compare its subject. It is praised with delight what one admires, enjoys, or profits from, and one censures with indignation the despicable or what causes evil because a person has an acquired sense of what the world should or might be. A person cannot simply perceive something as ridiculous, monstrous, wicked, or absurd without having a comparative sense of the opposite case. Likewise, one cannot believe that something is wrong with the world without some idea of what the world should be and of how it could be made right. The satirist, either explicitly or implicitly, tries to sway readers towards an ideal alternative, towards a condition of what the satirist believes should be. It is assumed that the satirist has the readers' best interests at heart and seeks improvement or reformation. Vanneihluanga is thus regarded by many of the Mizo reading public as one of the best known short story writers and satirists of Mizo writers. His works combine comedy and satire with a touch of social criticism and serious concern about injustice and inequality between the rich and the poor. It also provides a cultural context through his representation of characters and social life and his ability to deal with current subjects in tandem with the ethos of Mizo society in particular.

Irony is another element of satire which can be significantly found in many satirical writings though the manner in which it has been employed differs from one satirist to the other. An unexpected turn of events often leads to unveil the satiric element that is hidden beneath a work of literature and contrasting characters are often used to set the scene for irony. Vanneihluanga also excels in creating characters that

are the “opposite” of each other as can be seen in his short stories *Thunderbird*, *Nihawi Par* and *Pu Khuma*. The protagonists of these three narratives are portrayed as weak and feeble characters in contrast with the other characters who seem powerful and domineering within the realm of the society to which they belong. It is the dividing gap between these opposite characters that mainly act as an important instrument in exposing the vice and folly that has been satirized by Vanneihluanga.

On the other hand, the irony in “The Jackfruit Tree” is achieved through careful plot development that revolves around the “jackfruit tree”. The main protagonists Pa Daia and Nonovi are introduced to the readers as two lost souls in search of inner peace but are victims at the hands of fate. Throughout the narrative, the “jackfruit tree” remains a symbol of “faith”, “love” and “commitment” for the main character Pa Daia and yet it is through the “jackfruit tree” that the irony of the narrative is also extensively meted out. The story begins with a vivid description of the “jackfruit tree”, “The life of that jackfruit tree was even more meaningless than that of an emaciated, withered tree. It was a tree that had been tormented by different classes of laborers as well as immigrants, and it bore those scars well.” (Vanneihluanga, “The Jackfruit Tree”, *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself*, translated by Margaret L. Pachuau) As the narrative progresses, the love story of Pa Daia, an alcoholic, “who was barely coherent enough to distinguish between day and night” and Nonovi, “a lovely damsel, in the prime of her youth” is intertwined with the irony of fate as he abandoned her even though he is fully aware of the fact that she is pregnant with his child. No one knows that fate will take another cruel turn upon the life of Pa Daia even after he has maintained distance from Nonovi for about twenty years: But even in my deepest drunken revelry, I never

forgot Nonovi. She flashed across my mind's eye at all times, and her countenance, amidst the wind across the jackfruit tree soothed me always. In times of joy or sorrow and despair I saw Nonovi's face and I do not recall passing even one night without a glimpse of her visage. Why then did I shrug her away despite the intensity of my desire for her? Ah! It was simply because she was too good for the likes of me. While other men were possessed by spirits, I was possessed by Nonovi. (Vanneihluanga, "Lamkhuang Kung/The Jackfruit Tree", *Keimah leh Keimah*, translated by Margaret L. Pachuau). The above soliloquy of Pa Daia strongly renders the pain and regret that burdens his life after he has completely betrayed Nonovi, leaving her helpless and heartbroken. No one is aware of the truth that has been hidden within the "jackfruit tree" and the effect it has upon the lives of Pa Daia and Nonovi. The irony of fate remains the central theme throughout the narrative and the "jackfruit tree" remains a symbol that encompasses all the unexpected turn of events that occur in the lives of the two main characters. Towards the end of the narrative, Pa Daia is completely torn apart and shattered with the death of his beloved Nonovi which even leads him towards the Church: Inside the Church a man stopped and gazed at me in astonishment.

"What do you want?"

"How beautifully you sing! It touches my heart."

He was silent and gazed at me for a long while

"Poor man, so you want to repent of your sins?"

"Yes but is not permissible"

“Why, who would refuse you?”

“The jackfruit tree.” (Vanneihluanga, “Lamkhuang Kung/The Jackfruit Tree”, *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself*, translated by Margaret L.Pachuaau)

Try as he may, the pain and regret that he feels in deserting Nonovi when she needed him most never seems to leave his thoughts. The secret that has been hidden within the “jackfruit tree” is too devastating for him to bear alone that he even think it impossible for him to repent and be cleansed from his sins. It is expected that Pa Daia must have been living a contented life by leaving behind his past, and mostly Pi Pari and her daughter Nonovi. It is fate that took a cruel turn upon him, that makes him fall even when he tried to rise. “The Jackfruit Tree” is indeed one fine example of Vanneihluanga’s works that can be considered as a wonderful piece of writing where his skills in dealing with the techniques of irony is extensively displayed from the beginning of the narrative to the heart rendering closure of the narrative. The plot of the narrative is cleverly contrived by Vanneihluanga as he excellently permits the story to revolve around the “jackfruit tree” in circles. Everything that has to be found and felt in the narrative begins and ends with the “jackfruit tree” as the characters and the events that occur in their lives hardly stray away from the tree. Within a short limit of time and space, it takes a great effort and dexterity on the part of the writer to finally accomplish what has been achieved in the short story, “The Jackfruit Tree”.

“Innocence Wears Another Look” is another fine example of a literary piece by Vanneihluanga in which the irony of fate is achieved through plot development. The story deals with the life of an innocent boy named Mazama whose fragile emotions and

clumsy nature marks him different from his peers. He is introduced to the readers as a promising boy: “By age twelve, Mazama had made a mark for himself at school as a good and smart boy. Unlike his peers, the children of other officers, who were plagued by behavioural problems, Mazama was often held up as a role model to them. His family too, was very proud of him. He took after his father and was by nature fiercely competitive and loathe to lag behind his peers. Who ever knew him often commented on the fact that Mazama was definitely destined for great things in life.” (Vannehtluanga, “Innocence Wears Another Look”, *Neihfaka Rilbawm*, translated by Margaret Ch. Zama, 16) As the narrative gradually progresses, the boy who is regarded as an exemplary figure to his peers is caught up in a game of downing a bird with catapult, a trait which he strongly determined to master. The narrative then shifted to the story of another significant character, Valtea, a truck driver who is also highly respected within the driver community: “Due to family constraints, Valtea had been unable to continue with his studies and hence had entered his present profession, first as a handyman and later on graduated to being a driver. His motto throughout his long career had always been that, just as a butcher knows the details of the entrails of animals, and doctors that of humans; a driver must know everything there is to know about the vehicle he drives...The fact that he had never had a mishap during the ten years of his entire career was in itself a mark of his great dedication and love for the job. He was well-known throughout the driver community and the Drivers' Union would often hold him up as a shining example for them to emulate.” (Vannehtluanga, “Innocence Wears Another Look”, *Neihfaka Rilbawm*, translated by Margaret Ch. Zama, 19) Undesirably, these two important characters have one thing in common: they are both thrilled by the

act of downing birds and animals without a slightest hint of hesitation. Mazama, the innocent young boy take it as an act of valour while Valtea, the famed truck driver do it out of fun. Ironically, it is the coincidental meeting of these two characters that eventually ends the narrative with a sad tone:

Valtea gave a loud cry. With feathers flying about, the truck came to an abrupt halt. Little did the huge machine, with its might and power so seemingly beyond man's control, realize the extent of the damage it had done.

Valtea leapt out of his seat and ran to the front of the truck. He saw that he had indeed run over one of the jungle cocks. But beside it, there lay a young boy of about twelve years, with what seemed like a school bag slung across his shoulder. Next to one of the wheels was a catapult.

Thus Valtea watched in great distress as “life”, certainly not the handiwork of man, left the young boy. It was only a short while back that this boy was the centre of his parents' lives, one in whom his teachers and neighbours had seen great promise; a boy determined to be on par with everyone. But now, he no longer held any of these admirable traits whatsoever. (Vanneihtluanga, “Innocence Wears Another Look”, *Neihfaka Rilbawm*, translated by Margaret Ch. Zama, 21)

The unexpected turn of events that has been faced by Mazama and Valtea towards the end of the narrative clearly highlight the creativity of Vanneihtluanga as a short story writer. The plot of the story gradually develops in a smooth tone while the reader's attention is drawn towards the young boy but sooner as the truck driver is made to interfere, the tone of the narrative takes a different turn. The ironic climax of the

narrative is successfully achieved with the death of Mazama, a young boy who has been dearly introduced at the beginning of the narrative as a boy with a promising future. Mazama is not the only character who suffered at the hands of fate, the truck driver Valtea is also hit by a pang of guilt with the tragic mishap that he cause for the first time within the number of years he has spent as a driver. The didactic message of the narrative is evidently brought out with this tragic end and it is through the artful use of irony that Vanneihluanga is able to deliver the theme of the narrative to the readers. As a writer, Vanneihluanga seems to be careful in framing his characters and it can be certainly assumed that there is always a strong feelings of affection and empathy towards the personae that he creates. Undoubtedly his characters never fail to express the inner thoughts of the writer as they inhabit a certain kind of quality that appears to be real even with a notion that they are fictionalized characters.

Though not essential like irony, exaggeration is one of the most commonly used techniques in satire, since the depiction of an extreme or blatantly vicious case is one of the best ways to get the target to recognize or admit that a vice exists at all: recognition must precede correction. The satirist brings his description of a wrong to its logical extreme, or at least exaggerates by overemphasis in order to make the invisible visible, the hidden known and complacently oppose and eliminate corruption. To simply express that men are evil will be a waste of time in an age of perversity, so the satirist turns up the volume: “He was perfectly astonished with the historical account I gave him of our affairs during the last century, protesting it was only an heap of conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, banishments; the very worst effects that avarice, faction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage, madness, hatred, envy, lust,

malice, and ambition could produce” (Gulliver’s Travels II. 6). And the Brobdingnagian King's estimate of humankind seems to be slightly inflated also: “I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth” (Gulliver’s Travels. II. 6). By such overstatement, the reader is to understand that he has probably allowed a few too many failings in himself or other men to go by unnoticed, and henceforth he must charge himself to pull in the reins. In accordance with the technique of exaggeration as mentioned in the above passage, Vanneihluanga has dealt with a number of overemphasized stories and instances to incorporate a satirical effect within the scope of his writings. One fine example can be taken from one of his writings under the title “Vawk Theology” (“A Swine’s Theology”) which vehemently exaggerate about the crucial part that has been played by Vawk (Swines) in Mizo society with a highly comic undertone as the title itself suggests a nonsensical connotation. The writing begins with a parody of a few passage from the Book of Genesis:

In the beginning God created Mizos and swines. Then God saw a Mizo man and considered him good. Then, a Mizo man saw a swine, and thought it tempting and appetizing, slaughtered it, ate it, and share it to her wife, henceforth Mizos and swines are in union.” *Laisuih* 1: 1-3 (Vanneihluanga, “Vawk Theology/A Swine’s Theology”, *Rawhtuina Mei/ The Scorching Flame*, translation mine, 117)

The parody which act as an introductory note for the narrative instantly evoke laughter and amusement as the reader quickly identifies the technique of exaggeration which has been well employed by Vanneihluanga at the very outset. As the narrative proceeds, the writer has intensely projected the prominent role of swines in the lives of many Mizo



people with a great effect of humor and this effect can be felt throughout the narrative. It is true to a great extent that pork is considered as the main non-vegetarian dish of the Mizo people and for ages it has been regarded as a cultural tradition to devour pork in the course of Sunday's morning meal as well as on feasts and on certain important occasions in general. This simple yet significant fact has been portrayed by Vanneihluanga in a manner that evoke endless laughter and amusement as though the Mizo people has no other business to think of:

Yes. From the time when our ancestors furiously fought a battle with an act of whipping down a pig's head till date that we are self-sufficient of pigs, a pig has stood in the centre while the Mizo people revolve around it. When Copernicus in the year 1543 put forth his theory that "the Sun is at rest near the center of the Universe, and the Earth, spinning on its axis once daily, revolves annually around the Sun", the Church and the general mass of people found it hard to believe, therefore, if this fearful theory of mine be truth, if I am despised for it and even brought to death, tell my story that "He martyred as a warrior of pigs due to Swine Fever."(Vanneihluanga, "Vawk Theology/A Swine's Theology", *Rawhtuina Mei/The Scorching Flame*, translation mine, 117-118).

In careful analysis of the passage, Vanneihluanga's concern in delighting the readers cannot be underestimated or disregarded due to the fact that his creativity lies within his skillful employment of the technique of exaggeration with an intention to produce the best effect of humor with an underlying strand of satire. The most interesting part of this piece of writing comes after a great leap of laughter when the theme of the narrative shifted to another ambit of tales as compared to the narratives that has been

expressed on the first few paragraphs of the story. The writer cleverly incorporated the vices and follies that he identified as he silently examined the morals and ethos of contemporary Mizo society without deviating from the central figure of the narrative, the hilarious theory of pigs that he formulated. Within the sphere of laughter and amusement, there is an underlying theme of social satire which runs parallel with the “Vawk Theology/A Swine’s Theology”:

...we eagerly pace our steps in imitating the western lifestyles, literacy has unfold our eyes, not only Mizo chicken, Mizo beef and Mizo pork has been considered meager, the whole of Mizo tribe has been conceived as trivial and inferior, we felt the need of acquiring bigger, stout, glorious and mightier which we named as “changkanna” (modernity), some eventually assumed it as “Chanchin Tha” (Gospel). (*Rawhtuina Mei/The Scorching Flame*, translation mine, 118).

The statement has a significant connotation to post-colonial studies which extensively deals about human consequences of external control over the native people while embracing a wide range of different cultural knowledges and social histories, including a variety of critical theoretical approaches. Vanneihluanga’s discernment of the past Mizo society and modern Mizo society which he has portrayed within a small time frame of his writings has brought light to the minds of many readers about the eminent changes that has been experienced by the Mizo people at the hands of the Christian missionaries. It is undeniable that education has a positive impact upon the people of Mizoram, but it is also indisputable that the western lifestyles is highly regarded by the Mizo people and they are so long considered as superior to them:

Given the power of such forms of discrimination to downgrade certain cultures in relation to others, it is understandable that for most postcolonial writers, self-definition through the medium of writing, in particular narrative, has been of crucial importance...

It is in postcolonial narratives, plays, and poems, therefore, that we see strikingly demonstrated how anti-colonial resistance subversively makes use of (appropriates, unravels, and reassembles) aspects of the colonizing culture – its languages, ceremonies, images of authority and superiority – so as to generate transformative cultural productions. (Waugh, 358-359).

It may be noted that Vanneihluanga's writings extensively covers a wide range of themes and issues that happens not only in the world outside but also within the sphere of Mizo society. The themes of his writings often retains a touch of universality and a taste of contemporary subjects along with the various nuances that he deemed worth examining in relation to the morals and ethos of Mizo society. Corruption is yet another crucial theme that is frequently employed as a subject of criticism in numerous writings of Vanneihluanga. Here in "Vawk Theology/ A Swine's Theology" the writer again encompasses the subject of corruption in a whimsical tone by cleverly mocking the governing system of Mizoram, this time by using roosters as metaphor:

They laid certain plans to make a rooster crow in Aizawl which is expected to be free of corruption, but, as "free of corruption..." is a subject where they are no experts, they ultimately gave up on it, they have a firm belief that the only means through which they can acquire self-sufficiency are squash cultivation and

piggery, they highly presume that the rest of the subject deals with corruption, so they made plans to resolve a solution from these two. They must have been holding a strong notion that instead of striving to make an “iskut” (squash) crow, it will be easier to make a pig crow, taking the best advantage of their ruling power, the High Power Committee have finally drawn a strong conclusion with a bold statement: “Let the pigs crow instead of the roosters!” (*Rawhtuina Mei/ The Scorching Flame*, translation mine, 120-121)

At this point one cannot help laughing at the bold statement that have been proposed by the so called “High Power Committee” as the statement makes no sense at any rate. But it is also at this point that the readers are introduced to a world of dirty political systems, corruption, make-beliefs, and the likes. It is undeniable that corruption is a universal evil practice that has been deeply rooted within the core of political system which may act as a great obstacle in the development of any given society. Issues of corruption is not only felt in the state of Mizoram, but taking into consideration the whole scenario of political system in India is adversely affected by corruption and it is getting no better. It must be noted that bribery and corruption continue to pose a significant challenge in India. It is a great embarrassment to learn that The 2012 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions and Bribe Payers Indices rank India 94 (out of 176) and 19 (out of 28), respectively, indicating the severity of the issue. As a writer, Vanneihluanga also greatly felt the need that a greater enforcement of laws to curb the rapid growth of corruption and bribery must be set up in order to uplift the economic status of a particular society. Thus, he frequently uses corruption as a subject

of his attack and criticism in order to teach the Mizo people that corruption is the root of evils which can greatly hamper the morality of a person.

In dealing with the theme of corruption as his main subject of attack and criticism, Vanneihluanga has written an excellent essay on corruption with “Eirukna” (Corruption) as its title where he harshly satirizes a corrupt person with no hesitation. In this essay, the writer has laid down certain points which he feels significant as to have a moral effect upon the minds of many readers:

Trust is a valuable thing. It cannot be simply possessed by preaching, writing and wearing it, but a thing which is ought to be practiced...Respect that we have earned through the course of our life can be lost within the blink of an eye. The easiest way to lose one's own respect is through an act of corruption. There are certain people who holds the notion that one does not lose respect when one's evil doing is not recognized by others. This is not true, the moment we practice evil things, it is the heart that promptly recognizes it...Losing one's respect is harmful than losing a pretty penny. (Vanneihluanga, “Eirukna/Corruption”, translation mine)

The essay leaves a didactic tone for the readers to distinguish between what is bad and what is evil. As the writer has done his work, it is the part of the readers to choose the right path and identify the best measure to retain one's own dignity and respect. In fact, there are certain times that a satirist can act as an instructor, a source of inspiration and a moral guide in leading a person on the right path. Not only concerned

with what has happened but also with what may happen, the satirist, may also serve as a cautionary prophet or an idealistic visionary, as Patricia Meyer Spacks states:

Satire has traditionally had a public function, and its public orientation remains. Although the satirist may arraign God and the universe . . . he usually seems to believe – at least to hope – that change is possible. Personal change, in his view, leads to social change; he insists that bad men make bad societies. He shows us ourselves and our world; he demands that we improve both. And he creates a kind of emotion which moves us toward the desire to change. (Spacks, 363)

It should be remembered here that Vanneihluanga also plays an important part among the reading public of Mizo society as his works are mainly written in the vernacular language of the Mizos which any literate Mizo man will be able to easily comprehend. This in turn can have a resulting effect of social change as most of the Mizo people will become aware of the vices and follies that has plagued the society.

Confusion between literal fact and the truth of art remind the readers that satirists must ultimately rely on audiences to share a common ground of reason and, as far as literary satire is concerned, of belief. Readers of satire are expected to suspend disbelief, to play along with the game, but not to surrender sanity or sound judgment. And satirists may employ fiction for seeking truth but not establishing falsehood. The satirist, in seeking a re-formation of thought, expects readers to engage the satire by applying their reasoning, moral values, and taste to the subject. Through an aggressive strategy of distortion or defamation that demands the readers' critical judgment, the satirist seeks to affect their attitude or perspective, and often through the indirection of a narrator purposely designed to befuddle and obscure whatever exact direction the satirist would

probably have his readers go. As Wayne Booth mentions, “Since the rhetorical intent of these works [innumerable satires and burlesques, from Rabelais through Erasmus and Swift] is evident to every reader, the function of the dramatized spokesman, whether fools, knaves, or sages, is usually quite clear; no one accuses them of mad incoherence” (Booth: 229).

Satire assumes a reasonably sound judgment of its audience, it might be expected audiences, however removed, to share a predictable common sense by which a satire may be, at least broadly, understood. But very often the immediacy of a work is not evident to readers, because a satire, in varying degrees, has been rooted within a context of expectation, convention, and local understanding shared by its originally intended audience. Detailed references of satirical subjects are not always accessible or even clear to different audiences across place and across time; as Northrop Frye comments on this topical nature of satire: “To attack anything, writer and audience must agree on its undesirability, which means that the content of a great deal of satire founded on national hatreds, snobbery, prejudice, and personal pique goes out of date very quickly” (1957: 224). In conformity to this statement, Vanneihluanga can be regarded as one of the most successful Mizo writers when it comes to satirical writings because his themes and subjects are often drawn from contemporary Mizo society and its prevailing ethos. This is one of the many reasons why readers are so keen to get hold of his writings as they can easily identify and relate the contents of his writings with things that are presently happening in and around their daily life. In short, the writings of Vanneihluanga often teach and delight the readers by exhibiting the popular culture of contemporary Mizo society.

Subject-matter – whether politics, sexual relations, bad manners, personal absurdity or literary stupidity, is considered as one of the most important aspects of satire and the manner in which the subject is approached is the one thing that sets it apart from other kinds of literature. Commenting on the techniques of satire, Matthew Hodgart has expressed:

The satirist can use a wide variety of literary forms, but he is bound to use a fairly limited range of techniques. Satire, although its content is often the harshest realities of human existence, is meant to make us laugh or smile. The smile, one assumes, is a sub-laugh, a laugh inhibited by good manners, or not fully called out by the situation. (Hodgart, 108)

Likewise, one of the most important essence of the joke and of literary satire is *wit*, , “the word in English originally meant ‘mind’ or ‘understanding’, later ‘cleverness’: a ‘witty child’ to Shakespeare means just a clever child. But already in Shakespeare’s time it was gaining its modern sense, ‘the power of giving pleasure by combining or contrasting ideas’, the quality of speech or writing which can ‘surprise and delight by its unexpectedness’.” (Hodgart, 110) Vanneihluanga has excelled in the employment of ‘wit’ in his narrative “Mikhual/ The Guest” which satirizes upon a man who is living like a tourist and is treated like a tourist in his own hometown. He is introduced to the readers as a man who is brought up from “a wealthy family from his ancestors, cared by his parents as fragile as an egg, being educated in one of the most pleasant hill stations where kids of wealthy Indian families have been nurtured. Later on, he got a job which his parents found for him, but not because of his potential and qualification, and then a wife, and hence living half of his time on earth with the inheritance of his



parents' properties.” The narrative evokes laughter in the minds of the readers as the story is laced with witty criticisms of a man whose lifestyle is higher than the average people but whose character and attitude is of nuisance to others. Vanneihluanga, with no leniency and with his skillful employment of ‘wit’ has portrayed “the guest”, who considers himself as higher than the standard Mizo people, as a nuisance to others:

“He knows a lot, but doesn’t know the usage. He is very eloquent, but doesn’t know the values. He is good at criticism, but hardly gives suggestions. His educational qualification is merely meant for decorating his first name and last name. But he considered himself as a ruler...and the mightiest of all. There is none who fits in his life, but only him. He stands in the middle...and believes that people revolve around him. But, he is the one who is considered as a “Guest” on this earth.” (Vanneihluanga, “Mikhual/The Guest”, translation mine).

The narrative clearly expressed that satire can be used as an important tool in reducing the stature and dignity of a man whose character and attitude exhibits certain follies of mankind and are worthy of attacking. During an interview with the author, when asked about the particular narrative “Mikhual/The Guest”, Vanneihluanga has commented:

Apart from satirizing the vices and follies of “the guest”, my intention is to pose a challenge to many Mizo youths who have gone out of station to pursue further studies, that they may not neglect their cultural roots, that the good they find outside may not be acceptable here in our society, that they may learn how to value the good things that are already present in our culture. (Interview with Vanneihluanga, 27.10.2016)

It is clear from the statement that, sometimes, the work of a satirist is to leave a didactic message to the minds of the readers or to moralize the mindset of a society that calls for correction. “Satiric literature is critical literature. In order to do his work, the satirist has to find things to criticize...he learns that the easiest thing to criticize in society are hypocrisy, vanity, and folly. In civilized society, hypocrisy enters into almost every activity because society expects from its members an adherence to a high moral code – a code which most individuals find it impossible to adhere to, at least part of the time. And fools pretend to be wise.” Thus, “the guest” who pretends to be wise, but is considered almost as a fool and a nuisance by the people around him is being brought out as a victim of the satirist in the narrative “Mikhual/The Guest”.

Vanneihluanga also experimented his skills on the area of environmentalism which can be clubbed within the discipline of ecocriticism and this cannot be ignored and unheeded while attempting to situate him within the realm of literature. It must be noted that the writings of Vanneihluanga does not only attack the follies and vices of men, and does not only evoke laughter and amusement, but also deals with a wider range of themes which are relevant to be taken into careful study at this present age of globalization.

Vanneihluanga, on the other hand, is likely to project the landscape and environment of the place to which he belongs and thus readers will find him dealing with environmental issues that are closely linked with the environment of Mizoram. In “Thunderbird”, “Innocence Wears Another Looks” and “Thingthiang”, Vanneihluanga has portrayed nature as sentient and alive and is pervaded by an indwelling spirit as he

mentions about three martins who flew nearby a man who is in total despair in the narrative “Thunderbird”:

Three martins flew by and went out of sight. When they returned they started flying in small circles within my range of vision. A fourth joined them. Softly calling out to each other, they flew high up into the sky playfully, then swooped down swiftly again without any fear. Just when I thought they would collide mid air, they would skillfully and speedily maneuver and pass each other by. Seemingly carefree and without a burden, the freedom they owned was one that was inexplicable to humans...I grew to learn their likes and dislikes and came to believe that they too learned to read my mind. They were ready to do anything to make me happy, and as we grew closer I confided all my problems to them. Sometimes they flew me and my Thunderbird high in the sky, and we would explore the length and breadth of Aizawl, looking at all that I wished to see. (“Thunderbird”, translated by Margaret Ch. Zama)

The passage which gives a vivid picture of the martins and their lively actions deeply renders the love of nature on the part of the writer, to an extent of highly considering them as a source of strength and inspiration. The protagonist in the narrative “Thunderbird” is a man who is severely beaten up by his abductors and is left to spend the rest of his life being confined on a wheelchair. As the narrative progresses, the man finds hope and solace in the arms of nature which in turn induces in him a blessed mood through his times of toils and hardships that he has suffered at the hands of humanity. In this manner the writer has given a message to the readers about the importance of being in good terms with nature and the environment in which a person

live as they can act as a source of sublimity that brings comfort to the human body, mind and soul. The narrative clearly suggests that the slanders of enemies, the sneers of selfish men, the evil judgments of civilized men do not affect a man who is in good harmony with nature.

“Innocence Wears Another Look” is a narrative that reads almost like an awareness campaign for preserving nature and the environment where the writer at the outset of the story portrays a young boy who is “often held up as a role model” to his peers. The innocent boy unfortunately trapped himself in the game of hitting birds with catapult and his journey to the world of experience is skillfully traced by the narrative and eventually ended it with a sad tone. “The idea of qualities like hunting, killing is culturally conditioned in the context of the story. By doing these things one can prove his masculinity...The story in its moral earnestness mediates the contrast between innocence and experience in a very subtle way.” (Baral, xiii). The boy who is introduced to the readers as a boy with a promising future and dearly loved by his parents has met an accidental death towards the end of the narrative at the hands of a “man who accidentally runs his truck over him because of his irrepressible urge to hunt and kill animals.” (Baral, xiii). Thus, leaving the readers with a poignant ending yet with a didactic tone of elements that purports to proclaim the need of preserving animals and birds that play an important roles in the environment. “The story shows how quirks in our make up, through seemingly harmless and innocent acts, cause irreparable losses.” (Baral, xiii).

It is undeniable that Vanneihluanga has certainly given a great number of contributions to the realm of Mizo Literature and also in the sphere of Writings from

the North East as a number of his writings have been translated into the English. His writings covers a wide variety of themes, events, and topics that are often closely related with the present popular culture of the Mizo society. His works has greatly reflected upon issues that are related to politics, religion, socio-economic and the prevailing ethos of the Mizo people in particular by incorporating techniques that are contained within the ambit of satire.

**CHAPTER 3:**  
**SATIRE AND POWER IN NEW HISTORICISM**

In a careful analysis of the dynamics of satire, there seems to be a never ending contradiction that satire need have no moral lesson or didactic purpose, for the essence of satire is aggression or criticism, and criticism has always implied a systematic measure of good and bad. A thing, a subject or an object, is criticized because it falls short of some standard which the critic desires that it should reach. The corrective purpose of satire is a common measure which is inseparable from any definition of satire, expressed through a critical mode which ridicules or otherwise attacks those conditions needing reformation in the opinion of the satirist. It can be assumed that there hardly is a satire without this corrective purpose. Accordingly, it will be wise to keep in mind that the best definitions of satire should be formulated from a combination of its corrective intent and its literary method of execution. One of the most reasonable definitions of satire, then, is "a literary manner which blends a critical attitude with humor and wit to the end that human institutions or humanity may be improved. The true satirist is conscious of the frailty of institutions of man's devising and attempts through laughter not so much to tear them down as to inspire a remodeling" (Thrall, 436).

The chapter will particularly delve into the various nuances of satire in tandem with the literary theory of New Historicism. A New Historicist examines and analyzes literature in a wider historical context, carefully examining the manner in which the writer's times affected the work and how the work reflects the writer's times, in turn recognizing that current cultural contexts enhance that critic's conclusions. New Historicists are "influenced by the work of the French theorist Michel Foucault who focused upon the intricately structured power relations in a given culture at a given time

to demonstrate, how that society controls its member through constructing and defining what appears to be universal.” It implies that New Historicists “aspired to a politics of culture” which is covertly manifested in a text because power structure is administered by the state. “The state’s control of its citizenry was internal rather than external. The state subjected its people by creating them as subjects, devising fixed categories under which people could be described and thus controlled. This was the conjunction Foucault evoked as Power Knowledge” (Murry 806-809).

Michel Rayn attributes to the influence of Foucauldian power politics on textual historicity that has been propounded by New Historicists: “The New Historicists were primarily influenced by the analysis of power and the historical studies of Michel Foucault, whose work shifted critical interest from the macro-narratives of politics and economics . . . toward the micro-logical discursive practices” (Ryan, 29). It can, however be assumed that the New Historicists have largely drawn upon Foucauldian tenets of discursive nature of literature which is a cultural construct; however, a complete accord and unison in society can be regarded apparent because constant but repressed struggles keep on running parallel between powerful and powerless in the society. In literature, the suppressive and marginalized voices against dominant power structure and criticism is heard implicitly and extensively which denotes that text does not display the dominant and overt history, however hidden history or histories are intertwined in literature.

The chapter, however, will attempt to locate satire within the realm of New Historicism by focusing extensively upon Foucauldian theory of power which can be closely related with the dynamics of satire. The problem of power regarding the relations between society, individuals, groups, and institutions remains central in the work of



Michel Foucault and has been hugely influential in shaping the true essence and understandings of power. Usually, power is understood as the capacity of an agent to impose his will over the will of the powerless, or the ability to force them to do things they do not wish to do. In this sense, power is understood as possession, as something owned by those in power. But in Foucault's opinion, power is not something that can be owned, but rather something that acts and manifests itself in a certain way; it is more a strategy than a possession: "Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain . . . Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization . . . Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application". (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*)

Satire, which in itself is already a powerful form of art with its numerous strands of techniques can act as an important tool in dealing with power relations within the realm of literature in accordance with the theory of power as proposed by Foucault. Satire, through the ages, has been employed by a great many writers, critics and academicians as an outlet for various forms of criticism, be it constructive or destructive, and the power it holds upon the minds of the readers is undeniable. The best satire does not seek to do harm or damage by its ridicule, but rather it seeks to create a shock of recognition and to make vice repulsive so that the vice will be expunged from the person or society under attack or from the person or society intended to benefit by the attack (regardless of who is the immediate object of attack); whenever possible this shock of recognition is to be conveyed through laughter or wit. Far from being simply destructive, satire is implicitly constructive, and the satirists themselves, often depict themselves as such constructive critics. In his "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift," for

example, Swift denies any malicious intent in his works, and greatly affirms that his purpose was correction:

As with a moral View design'd

To cure the Vices of Mankind:

His vein, ironically grave,

Expos'd the Fool, and lash'd the Knave.

.....

Yet, Malice never was his Aim;

He lash'd the Vice but spar'd the Name.

No Individual could resent,

Where Thousands equally were meant.

His Satyr points at no Defect,

But what all Mortals may correct. . . . (ll. 313-16, 459-64)

Vanneihluanga has made varying attempts to locate satire and power in his narratives by highlighting power struggles that has been constantly at play between the powerful and the powerless which is inherently present within the Mizo society as elsewhere. The chapter shall make careful attempt to draw parallels with Foucauldian dimensions of power and the manner in which satire has been handled by

Vanneihluanga in order to portray the various mechanisms of power. Michel Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction Vol. I* has mentioned:

Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. And “Power,” insofar as it is permanent, repetitious, inert and self-reproducing, is simply the overall effect that emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of them and seeks in turn to arrest their movement. One needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society. (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 93)

*Thunderbird*, *The Jackfruit Tree*, *Pu Khuma/Mr.Khuma* and *Nihawi Par/Sunflower* are narratives that extensively mocks and satirizes the well-to-do families while on the other hand also deals with power struggle between the haves and the have-nots, which in reality is very much present amongst the Mizo society. The narratives clearly reveals that, as a writer, Vanneihluanga is preoccupied with the functions of satire and the significant role that it can play in a society. It can be assumed that, to a great extent, satire can be employed as a literary device which act as an important tool of power to bring out the true nature of a particular society. It takes courage for a satirist to plot a line of attack particularly when his attack is meted out upon the vices of authorities. In the narrative “*Thunderbird*”, Vanneihluanga has pondered upon the hypocrisies and in particular the shallowness of Christianity that has swept the minds of the Mizo people. The helplessness and the pathetic conditions that the protagonist has been put through by his abductors clearly reflect that this is not an act of a true Christian living in a

Christian state. The tone of the narrative is filled with contempt and prejudice as the writer differentiates the gap between the rich and the poor. Satirists, Leonard Feignberg has claimed that "...base their satire on fact rather than theory, experience rather than contemplation, what they see rather than what society says they should see...There are good things in the world, and beauty and courage and loyalty. But the satirists ignores these and concentrates on other things which he sees in much greater profusion---hypocrisy, selfishness, brutality, treachery and stupidity." (Feignberg 58)

In this manner, in the narrative *Thunderbird*, Vanneihluanga "satirizes upon the fact that the relatives of his abductors 'turned up in full strength by my bedside, for a pseudo display of heartfelt pity and compassion wiping their crocodile tears on my blanket'...The random visits made to him were of no use for he claims 'though protesting that they were not worthy of absolution, they continued to plead for forgiveness.' All this remains a direct satire upon the elements of religion, yet mention must be made here that the author does not belittle the faith, the religion per se, at any point of time, rather he satirizes the elements of the practitioners of the faith. Christians who are increasingly hypocritical and thus make a mockery of the religion." (Margaret L. Pachuau, Khiangte, 117-118). For the most part, it mocks the effects of the rapid spread and wide popularity of Christianity across Mizoram. The writer touches upon the issue with a common figure of the time: shallowness of Christianity, and the hypocritical nature of many Mizo Christians. The protagonist in "Thunderbird" has further given a poignant narration of his sufferings at the hands of higher authority which clearly reflects the widening gap between the haves and the haves-not:

Even before I was in any fit state to forgive those who had nearly killed me, their families had already announced to the papers that I, a good Christian, had forgiven them. It must be true, for I am one of those who spend a month's salary on drinks alone, one whom religious counselors see as "evil incarnate." In my full senses I don't recall forgiving anybody, unless, when lying half-dead by the roadside and well on my way to hell, I had metamorphosed into such a good Christian that I had perhaps forgiven my tormentors in a delirium. Unless such a thing had taken place, I don't ever recall being a good Christian.

But their emissaries politely said, "...they're moneyed and you'll never beat them in court. Therefore, forgive them while they ask for it. Besides, they intend to give you a large sum of money as well. Don't you think this will be better for your wife and children?" Of course no one said outright, "You'll be beaten black and blue if you don't comply." But I felt the implied threat nonetheless and so magnanimously gave my pardon.

So here I was, now a renowned "true Christian" who gave the other cheek even to those who hit him, still lying on the hospital bed and hoping for a cure. A month passed by thus and the doctors started losing hope of my recovery. So with the money earned by my noble act, I proceeded to bigger hospitals outside the state, but everywhere I went, the answer was the same, "You are too late." Determined to walk again, I shopped for every specialist I knew. And when I ran out of money, my wife Muani sent what I needed, though I did not know from where she procured the sum. But when that money too petered out, I finally realized that I was destined to spend the rest of my life in a wheelchair, never to

stand or walk again. (Vanneihluanga, “Thunderbird”, translated by Margaret Ch. Zama, *Neihfaka Rilbawm*, 1-2)

The passage firmly renders the resistance attitude of the protagonist towards his abductors and though he pretend in giving his pardon, it is an easy task for the readers to gather the notion that at the core of his heart he felt victimized by his abductors. Towards the end of the narrative, the protagonist is filled with a strong determination to rise again from his state of despair and misery by resisting to let himself stay in a place where he is confined to remain disheartened and helpless as a result of his abductors’ cruel actions towards him. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault states that ‘where there is power there is resistance. Should it be said that one is always “inside” power, there’s no “escaping” from it (95). With regard to this statement we come to know the importance of individuals in power relations. In order to be a relation, where power is exercised there has to be someone who resists. Foucault argues that where there is no resistance, there is not, in effect, a power relation (Mills, 40). This power relation is clearly brought out from the narrative “Thunderbird” where a helpless victim of those in power has eventually gained power and strength towards the end of the narrative. He no longer fears of the powerful, his abductors, rather he gains power and strength, both physically and mentally. Through the element of satire that has been extensively incorporated in the writings of Vanneihluanga, the narrative thus successfully reveals the contradictions in blind faith and following; and highlights many of the social and political imbalances of Mizoram in the twentieth century. This being said, it is easy to note that the writings of Vanneihluanga engages directly with the current socio-political and religious atmosphere of the contemporary Mizo society.

According to Maynard Mack, "Satire . . . asserts the validity and necessity of norms, systematic values, and meanings that are contained by recognizable codes" (Mack, 85). Satire is inescapably moral and didactic in most of the situations even when no definite, positive values are stated in the work as alternatives to the amount of corruptions and human follies depicted by the attack. The technique is that it is through the medium of attacking and mocking the foibles and follies of those in higher authorities or those considered powerful that the satirist reduce his victim to a state of laughter and helplessness. The satirist does not need to state specific moral alternatives to replace the villainy he attacks because the morality is either already present, or it is apparent by implication. The reason the satirist doesn't merely write moral tracts encouraging people to virtue, and the reason he feels justified in displaying anger and indignation at the common follies and vices of men is that the satirist's world is not one of basic good accidentally gone astray, in which every man would seek good if he know how or were shown the way, but rather it is one of unseeing fools and unsightly knaves who either claim to possess virtue already, or who have already rejected it, claiming that vice is virtue. It is a world of hypocrisy, in which social standing, church membership, titles and degrees, peer praise, and wealth are all used to hide evils. In such a world of hypocrites and pretenders, simple moral encouragement would be inefficacious. The satirist, therefore, often displays his critical attitude and implicit morality through irony often by creating a narrator who appears to be as much a hypocrite as the target of the work, but who exposes himself and the target by his lack of true perception or inability to hide his hypocrisy. Men's vices often act as a threat to the society in which the satirist lives, and the satirist feels compelled to expose those

vices for the society's good and his own, in a way that will allow the ones attacked to comprehend and remember the attack, and to see a direction they may take for correction. The satire must be presented in a manner which will bring action, and in a world of complacent hypocrites, irony, with its various means of presentation, is essential as the message can be hardly delivered without it, if that message is to have a powerful effect. In short, the purpose of satire is the correction or deterrence of vice, and its method is to attack hypocrisy through the ironic contrast between values and actions.

Apart from "Thunderbird", other writings such as "Pu Khuma/Mr.Khuma" and "Mizo Hlui leh Mizo Thar/The Past Mizo and the Present Mizo" also explore the elements of religion while reflecting upon the fact that there are quite a number of Mizo people for whom Christianity is merely in terms of farce and they have the least intention to follow the path of the teachings of Christ when it is most required. They act as an object of criticism as he portrays them as shallow, haughty, and narrow-minded. For religion plays a prominent role in the lives of the Mizos which leads a person to highly revere Church elders, youth leaders, and even those who regularly attend mass and fellowship. They are almost regarded by most Mizos as free of sin, but in reality this is not always the case because "if our share seems fair, we do not fear any human, nor do we even fear God." (Vanneihluanga, "Mizo Hlui leh Mizo Thar/The Past Mizo and the Modern Mizo", *Rawhtuina Mei/The Scorching Flame*). Vanneihluanga, has further mentioned that "there has been a drastic change on the part of religion in particular...we now doubt that the normal religion and the words of God are the bridge that leads us to heaven...in this secular state that we proudly look up to, God and religion are already fading." (Vanneihluanga, *Rawhtuina Mei/The Scorching Flame*, 26).



It should also be remembered here that “It is worth noting that both groups, the sceptics and the devout, criticize religion for failing to practice what it preaches, not for the ideals on which religion is based...Only rarely do satirists attack the spiritual concepts of the major religions.” (Feignberg, 38). It is the work of a satirist to impart knowledge upon the minds of the readers and leave the readers to choose what is right and what is wrong. In this manner satire acts as a powerful medium of instruction to make people aware of the vices and follies of mankind and change their mindset accordingly.

Vanneihluanga’s careful discernment of the sensibilities of contemporary Mizo society can be felt within a brief span of his writings where he frequently gives a vivid picture of the vices and follies that has plagued the morals of Mizo society at the set of twentieth century. “Mizo Hlui leh Mizo Thar/The Past Mizo and The Modern Mizo” is a wonderful piece of writing in which Vanneihluanga has made a distinctive comparison between the past days Mizo and the modern Mizo in terms of the changes and differences that has been experienced by the people of Mizoram:

In olden days, each family feared to be the kind of a needy family, to beg and to expect help from others was never in their thoughts. When famine took its toll, foods was never simply asked to the community leaders, complaint was never made even if they were not provided, and with none to wisely direct, sweet potatoes on the outskirts of the village were just dug out instead. Each one, to their own capability, strived to be self-sufficient and be of little help to others instead of simply depending on the help of the neighbours and the community...the lifestyles of the past Mizo people was brought to change with the passage of time...rather than striving to be a self-sustained family, it is taken

as pride to be that kind of family capable of receiving help from the government, if the government do not provide sustenance we blame the government instead. There are a number of people who are totally lost and are of low caliber, who may choose to die of hunger rather than toiling for their sustenance, who solely depend on the government. (Vanneihluanga, *Rawhtuina Mei/The Scorching Flame*, translation mine, 22-25)

Through the statement, Vanneihluanga has vehemently satirizes the deteriorating morality of the Mizo people and in the light of their reading, readers can easily identify the manner in which good ethics and moral conduct are gradually fading. The statement, thus pose a great challenge to the reading public of the Mizos by imparting knowledge to the readers that hard work and diligence among the Mizo youth in particular is certainly the need of the hour to survive in this present age. The powerful nature of satire can be intensely felt throughout this satirical piece of writing as Vanneihluanga freely expresses the good qualities of the past Mizo society and keep comparing them to the modern day Mizo society with their plagued sense of morality. Readers can in turn distinguish between what is good and evil in the light of Vanneihluanga's discernment about the ethical issues of the Mizos after being enlightened with the 'truth' that certain manners of the Mizos are worth mocking at and deserving of criticism. The fact that satire is a powerful literary form cannot be neglected after careful analysis of "Mizo Hlui leh Mizo Thar/The Past Mizo and The Modern Mizo" as the writing is laced with satirical attacks against the evil practitioners which may cause embarrassment to them and impart in them feelings of shame and distress.

In the narratives, *Pu Khuma/Mr.Khuma* and *Lamkhuang/The Jackfruit Tree*, Vanneihluanga has again brought out the manner in which the Mizo society treats the alcoholic and drug abusers, as well as the working classes with a touch of gentle satire and irony. In highlighting the vices of a particular society through the medium of satire, Matthew Hodgart has defined that:

The basic technique of the satirist is reduction: the degradation or devaluation of the victim by reducing his stature and dignity...the satirist tries to reduce his victim by removing from him all the supports of rank and status...The satirist puts on a mask for the purpose of unmasking others...The satirist refuses to allow the satirised to remain with any personae of their own, or with any secrets. (Hodgart, 115-128)

Parallel to this statement, the protagonist Pu Khuma from the narrative “Pu Khuma / Mr. Khuma” is portrayed as an orphan, as one who represents the life of common working class people whose voices are rarely heard in Mizo society. Pu Khuma is introduced to the readers as someone whose condescension reveals that “he is more than fifty years of age with a tanned complexion...Pu Khuma’s job as designated by his bosses is simply ‘Mastar Rawl Lebawr’. He is completely ignorant of what it denotes. He is truly unaware about the source of his monthly salary and the ‘alkatra’, neither does he bother to find out.” (Vanneihluanga, “Pu Khuma”, translation mine) The struggle and suffering that he bears in order to survive in the society that he belongs in turn reflect upon the shallowness of the Mizo people that hardly pay heed to his sufferings and misfortunes. After the untimely demise of his wife, it is laid upon the hands of Pu Khuma to look after his son Thlamuana and Pu Khuma is a working laborer who has to leave his

house daily for work. This conveys that he hardly has time to take care of his son. Their state of penury even limits the son Thlamuana to give up his education:

Both the father and his son feel that they no longer have the competency to pursue further studies. Pu Khuma's physical capability is gradually deteriorating. He has multiple complaints and soon there will come a time when he can no longer carry on with his work. Thlamuana, despite his young age, is clearly aware of this fact, so he starts looking for a job. He ventures out everyday applying every vacant post where his qualification meets the requirements. "Daddy, other applicants have good contacts, they always reject me even if they have lower grades than mine" is the message that Pu Khuma eventually received. (Vanneihluanga, "Pu Khuma", translation mine, *Neihfaka Rilbawm*, 145)

The passage is a reflection of the manner in which unfair means have been commonly practiced in the selection process of jobs and other forms of employment. It is undeniable that this is one of the major reasons why many Mizo youths have lost their trust upon the government as well as higher authorities. Vanneihluanga, thus employ the powerful technique of satire to expose the evil practices of those in higher authorities that greatly hampers the morality of Mizo society. The shallowness and the dishonesty of people, who, time and again profess themselves as Christians, who were considered by many people as powerful and dominant, have been brought down to a state of embarrassment and disgrace. Pu Khuma "doesn't have any idea as to whether it is luck or misfortune. After he has undergone all those sufferings, he can still managed to survive", (Vanneihluanga, *Neihfaka Rilbawm*, 149) and is never really beaten down by those in power or by humanity. Throughout the narrative, he is portrayed as a

wretched and despondent character who can be regarded as an unfortunate individual who lacks any form of blessings that can be received by human beings during their stay on earth.

Pa Daia is another protagonist in “Lamkhuang/The Jackfruit Tree” who is portrayed as a person who is often filled with poor self esteem in life due to his addiction to alcohol. It must be noted that drinking alcohol is considered as a grave sin by the Mizo people after Christianity has entered the state of Mizoram. It is assumed that the Christian missionaries have deeply imparted in the minds of the early Mizo Christians that drinking alcohol is a serious crime. The narrative, with a touch of satire, reveals that humanity often torments the lives of certain people as Pa Daia, who has also been reduced to a state where he felt that “there was none who knew me and none who beckoned to me” (Vanneihluanga, “Lamkhuang/The Jackfruit Tree”, translated by Margaret. L. Pachuau). “The Jackfruit Tree” is written in the form of first person narrative where Pa Daia, the protagonist narrates his heart rendering story by introducing himself to the readers at the beginning of the story as an alcoholic:

My name is Laldailova, people call me Daia, and most often even those who are younger or older than me, refer to me as “Pa Daia”. My father had once been a very successful businessman in the bazaars of Aizawl. Actually, if I were to disclose his name most of you would know who he was. We were three brothers, and all of us chose drink over business. After our father’s death we sold the store and wandered astray. My elder brothers died of alcohol abuse, and I alone remained. I was educated at Dawrpui School and was more interested in cowboy books, rather than my school text books...

At first, I was merely a social drinker, and I would drink only in the company of friends. After a time it was the wine that became my friend. Shortly after, drink became my food, my life...in short it was my very bloodline. So much so that in my early twenties, my face bore the ravages of drink. I looked much older than I actually was. People often thought that I was over thirty, for my body was weak and I did not even feel the lure of young women. As such, rather than making an attempt at enticing Nonovi, I was more contented sitting by the hearth, next to Pi Pari, who in turn would regale me with tales of her youth. In fact on days when I was more excessively drunk I would simply sleep over. The other men who stepped inside that house simply regarded me as a regular inmate of the house, almost akin to a stray dog, and as I was small in stature, the young men would utter, "Where is Pa Daia? Turn the stools around he might be underneath" when I was not around. (Vannehtluanga, "Lamkhuang/The Jackfruit Tree", *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself*, 134-135, translated by Margaret. L. Pachuau)

The passage is suggestive of the fact that Pa Daia has led a tormented life, while simply roaming around searching for a sense of belonging. There are times that he "tried to live my life anew, but in vain, and I was even suspended due to my excessive drinking. I did not have a house in Aizawl anymore. All my relatives were dead, and so I wandered about aimlessly, I even sold zu\* (liquor) and was kicked out of my lodgings many times in the process." (Vannehtluanga, "Lamkhuang/The Jackfruit Tree", *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself* 137, translated by Margaret. L. Pachuau) No one paid heed to the pathetic condition of Pa Daia except Nonovi, his beloved, whom he has deserted

after learning that she is carrying his child because his excessive drinking caused him a lot of difficulty in gaining sober thoughts and he is in no condition to take care of them, but Pa Daia expressed that, “But even in my deepest drunken revelry, I never forgot Nonovi. She flashed across my mind’s eye at all times, and her countenance, amidst the wind across the jackfruit tree soothed me always. In times of joy or sorrow and despair I saw Nonovi’s face and I do not recall passing even one night without a glimpse of her visage. Why then did I shrug her away despite the intensity of my desire for her? Ah! It was simply because she was too good for the likes of me.” (Vannehtluanga, “Lamkhuang/The Jackfruit Tree”, *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself* 137, translated by Margaret L. Pachuau) It can be noted here that Pa Daia is laced with feelings of inferiority and poor self-esteem due to his wayward behavior and he felt that he was not competent enough to marry the love of his life, Nonovi. The ‘jackfruit tree’ is employed as a significant symbol of hope and source of power for the protagonist Pa Daia when he is left with hopelessness at the hands of humanity. With the development of the narrative, readers are informed about the poignant death of Nonovi and how she is deeply mourned by Pa Daia with none to console him and none to fully understand his sufferings:

“...I was alive yet been ravaged by sin, Nonovi had been crushed to death by sin. Yet the accusing fingers pointed at us by society were not quite fair, for the path laid out for us by fate had indeed been tumultuous. And though we were considered akin to dirt, I felt that we were still quite clean. (Vannehtluanga, “Lamkhuang/The Jackfruit Tree”, *Keimah leh Keimah/Me and Myself* 141, translated by Margaret L. Pachuau)

It must be noted from the passage that Pa Daia is the sort of character who hardly gave up on life, though he has been knocked down and beaten down by humanity and fate several times. Towards the end of the narrative, he even enters the Church with a new ray of hope and it is at this point that readers are aware of the powerful nature that lies within the life of Pa Daia who has been portrayed as a feeble character with no one to stand beside him, but he never let the cruel actions of others around him or the harsh treatment meted towards him deter his pace in life.

In defining power, Foucault emphasizes that he does not intend to provide a theory of power, rather, he is involved in the ways the network of power relations operates, how power strategies structure our field of experience. In his first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, he stresses that “power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations” (Foucault, 94). Hence, power is not exercised on a marginalized and subordinate group by a privileged and dominant one. These roles are dynamic, suggesting that there is “no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled” (Foucault, 94). So, it is easy to assume that one can be the subject and the object of power at the same time, one can be both dominated and dominate at different times and in various contexts. However, in both cases, both sides are actively involved, implying that when even one is dominated, this is not a purely passive relationship. Foucault believes that the power relations are implicated in all our social relations. His definition of power departs from the Marxist articulations of the concept that consider it as a possession through which the powerful can suppress the powerless. Foucault’s theory of power suggests that the system of power relations is omnipresent, that is, it can be found in all social interactions. As he



asserts, “it seems to me that power is always already there’, that one is never ‘outside’ it” (Taylor, 15). Power is not a fixed possession but a flow which circulates and is exercised and practiced. Foucault studies power not only as a macro power in institutions, but also in smaller circles such as families and trivial conversations among family members, friends or even taxi drivers and passengers which he refers to as micro power; thus pointing to the unfixed status of power relations.

In like manner, Vanneihluanga, sharply expresses his views upon the contemporary Mizo society and the need to change the mindset of the Mizo people in “Time for a Change of Mindset”. He attacks the men lot in particular while strongly focusing on areas of power relations between the Mizo men and women regarding the important roles that they both play in the society. Since the past days, Mizo society has been living under male dominance and has continued to do so till date, but the contributions of a woman in every household cannot be neglected as the womenfolk play an esteemed role in contributing to their means of livelihood.

“After taking care of all the chores on the home front, the Zo woman would set out to work at the *jhum* (farm lands) early in the morning, carrying on her back her bamboo woven basket that was loaded with necessities including the work clothes of her man. She worked hard cultivating the land alongside him and would then return in the evening loaded with vegetables for the family while the menfolk followed relatively free of any burden. The man’s work was to cut and burn the *jhum*, build and repair the home, and carry the paddy when harvested. While the women worked hard to please the men, men in turn were preoccupied with gaining stature and respect by being good

hunters of game and filling the granary with sufficient grain.” (Vanneihluanga, “Time for a Change of Mindset” translated by Margaret Ch. Zama, MARG 87)

The passage has clearly depicted a vivid picture of the Mizo society back in the past and the status occupied by men and women distinctively. It can be noted that for so long, the importance of a Mizo woman and her worth has often been neglected and is hardly appreciated by the society, as ‘power’ lies within the heart of men folk. There is an old Mizo saying that “Women and crab does not belong to any religion” and “A woman’s wisdom cannot pass a river” which denotes the scornful manner in which women has been treated by the society during the past days. However, in “Time for a Change of Mindset”, Vanneihluanga explicitly portrays the changing status of Mizo womenfolk over the past few years as he honestly exposes the men folk as lagging behind in comparison to the advancement and improvement that has been experienced by the women of Mizo society in particular.

With the passing of time and the entry into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the situation with special reference to Mizoram has been that the women have moved ahead of the men in education, government jobs, and business. Although remaining a culture of male dominance, the reality is that women are now increasingly becoming the decision-makers. One reason why the men have lagged behind has often been overlooked. The fact is that there are no longer any focused goals that young Mizo men can aspire to and pursue. As mentioned earlier, the glory and status of a man once depended on his being a hunter of repute and a good provider...Further, the new religion (Christianity, introduced in 1894 by Welsh missionaries) and the changing world order condemned the destruction of nature

and wildlife, thus making redundant this barometer of the prowess and status of men. (Vanneihluanga, “Time for a Change of Mindset”, translated by Prof. Margaret Ch. Zama, MARG, 87)

The statement highlights the improved status of women in Mizo society as their struggle towards a focused goal has led them into the light of advancement in all walks of life. On the other hand, the writing of Vanneihluanga may be considered as quite deriding by the Mizo men, but it must be remembered that it is the work of a satirist to attack, to deride and to expose the vices and foibles of human in order to bring out the ultimate result of satire. Without a single trace of hesitation, Vanneihluanga has sincerely revealed the truth about the ethos of Mizo society where the men folk has been portrayed as “lagging behind” and has posed a great challenge for them to change their mindset in accordance with the changing of time. The truth that has been utterly exposed with a touch of gentle satire by Vanneihluanga through his writings can in turn impart knowledge to the readers about the present situation of Mizo society. It is also suggestive of the fact that “change” is the need of the hour to mend the lifestyles of most Mizo men.

During the past 100 years the Mizo male has failed to find a meaningful focus. The Mizo woman on the other hand, despite being strongly anchored to the hearth, has educated herself in an environment that has increasingly placed brain power above brawn power, thanks to technology. She has sought freedom through education and, in the process, gained knowledge and self-confidence; whereas education for her male counterpart has ironically only served to make him realize that the foundation of his privileged male status now has no significance. In other

words, education has served to undermine the traditional concept of manliness ingrained in him. (Vannehtluanga, translated by Prof. Margaret Ch. Zama, MARG, 88)

The passage distinctly exposes that power is not something that is owned by an individual, a group of people, or an institution, but power is 'everywhere' and can be exerted by one and all. It is something that keep on passing from one to another, it is not rigid, it is not fixed, and cannot be confined to one position. It is suggestive that in order to understand power as strategy and not as possession one must think of it as something that has to be exercised and not something that can simply be acquired. It has to be identified as something that is not restricted or limited exclusively in certain institutions or individuals, but it is rather a set of relations dispersed and scattered throughout society: "I am not referring to Power with a capital P, dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. In fact, there are power relations. They are multiple; they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration" (Foucault) According to the statement made by Foucault, it can be assumed that for Foucault, power must be understood differently than repression, which simply forces individuals to obey: "if power was never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really believe that we should manage to obey it?" (Foucault). Hence Foucault has expressed that power is "coextensive with resistance; productive, producing positive effects; ubiquitous, being found in every kind of relationship, as a condition of the possibility of any kind of relationship." (Foucault). It should be noted that the existence of power cannot be

limited to a certain group of people, class, society or institutions, but it can be commonly found among the interrelation and interconnection of different people from different groups of society.

The later part of “Time for a Change of Mindset” has delved into areas where traditional practices of the Mizos requires a little adjustment and alteration with the passing of time. These traditional practices of the Mizo people has, for a long time, been considered as unchangeable and is meant to be passed on from one generation to another. These practices are somewhat regarded almost as an unwritten rule of law and are hardly contested or challenged by the people of Mizo society. According to Mizo traditional practice:

When a death occurs, the *zualko* or messenger is immediately dispatched to inform others, and as the community converges, close friends and relatives offer woven cloth called *puan* to cover the deceased. Solemn songs of lamentation are sung till the funeral services are over and the body buried. It is a social obligation on the part of the community to be with the family throughout this period as well as the next day. The young men willingly labour to dig the grave while the men folk make the coffin. The community provides company to the house of mourning for at least a week at the end of which a token sum of say fifty rupees (in present times), is given by individuals to the family. Most localities collect rice for the family from each household in the neighbourhood, and collection of firewood is still the norm in many villages. The family is kept free from the concerns of the funeral such as providing for the coffin, digging the grave, and burying the dead. During the period of mourning, provision is

made for their food. Should the house be in need of repair, this is immediately carried out. All of this is provided for and executed by the people of the neighbourhood. Thus a bereavement becomes an opportunity for the community to extend neighbourly help and goodwill, and for young men and women to prove their mettle. In grave-digging, young men often jostle each other to labour the most, a practice quite alien to outsiders. In fact, such extraordinary practices in connection with the occurrence of death in a community are probably rare anywhere else in the world. (Vannehtluanga, "Time for a Change of Mindset", translated by Prof. Margaret Ch. Zama, MARG, 87)

However, Vannehtluanga has unveiled the problems that can be resulted out of the few traditional practices which has now seemed irrelevant to be applied in the present day, "Fulfilling the Mizo way of life that is deemed best poses a bigger challenge for those living in urban areas than for those in the village." (Vannehtluanga, "Time for a Change of Mindset", translated by Margaret Ch. Zama, MARG) The necessity of changing the mindset of the Mizo people and the need to alter and adjust these practices with the changing times has been cleverly suggested by Vannehtluanga while incorporating constructive criticism within the ambit of his writing:

The bane of many tribes of the Northeast is the reluctance to rid ourselves of a village mindset while attempting to live an urban lifestyle and this has resulted in a life that is neither here nor there. In Aizawl we have the City Bus as well as the Village Councils. It is about time that we decide on what our preferences are. We are proud of the intrinsic spirit of the traditional practices of the early days with regard to death in a community, and this is what we desire to continue. We are not only sentimental about

it, but also realize its value in the bonding of people. Yet progress compels us to filter out and leave some practices behind and museumize them with dignity, while continuing with others.

Some people are of the view that our identity is linked with our traditional customs and practices with regard to death in a community, and that if we change them to suit the changing times, this will adversely affect the Zo identity. So they will do all they can to guard the old ways against this change, even if those are no longer in sync with the times. While this devotion is admirable, the thinking requires a little change. It is not the things that we do but our reasons for doing them that are important. Our tools should be permitted to change with the times, but the core desire to lend each other a helping hand should remain as untainted and pure as it was in the days when our forefathers lived in small and isolated settlements in the deep forests. (Vanneihluanga, "Time for a Change of Mindset", translated by Prof. Margaret Ch. Zama, MARG,88)

Vanneihluanga, like a true satirist, contest against the age old traditional practices of Mizo society which has been held as a dominating factors that control the manners of their living. He cleverly proclaims the need to do away with certain practices that seems irrelevant to the present generations and renders coherent suggestions to improve the lifestyles of the Mizo people. Thus, power is gradually being transferred to the new generations to make certain adjustments and alterations in dealing with traditional practices which has been so long held as uncontestable by the people of Mizoram.

In dealing with the dynamics of power, one important suggestion of Foucault is that power should not be considered as one person's or institution's authority over all others, but rather power should be analyzed as something that circulates. It is "employed and exercised through a net-like organization" (Foucault, 2003:98). Individuals, he states, are the vehicles of power, they don't just experience it but also transfer power; they are not just objects undergoing power but also the agents exercising power. Foucault states that in any society there are many relations of power which make up the social body and power cannot be exercised without certain discourses of truth. He states that "We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth" (Foucault, 2003:93). In other words the way power is wielded is through discourses of truth which first have to be validated by a learned community. To have knowledge, Foucault argues, is to have the ability to make certain statements pass among others as true (Allen, 1999). The community decides what can be regarded as knowledge, therefore power, and what cannot. Power thus circulates throughout society and both creates and is governed by the accepted local practises and discourses within that particular society. One cannot escape power, Foucault argues, power can only be negotiated and resisted from within a local context. Thus, rights are also viewed from a local context and relate specifically to the individual in question rather than the "rights of men" (Gavin, 2009).

According to Foucault, power is not a delimiting force, but rather it is generative and productive of social relations and identities. "Sakhaw Hlui leh Thar/ The Old Religion and the New Religion" is another thought provoking piece of writing by Vanneihluanga where the old religious practices and beliefs of the Mizos have been



compared to the beliefs and practices they firmly embrace after Christianity has entered the state of Mizoram. The writing can be considered as a powerful Mizo literary piece that deals astutely with the nuances of colonialism and its impact upon the Mizo people while strongly focusing on the elements of satire by skillfully attacking the western colonizers. Not only does the work highlight the negative impact of colonialism, it also serves as an important tool in instructing and encouraging the readers to take pride in Mizo culture and traditions which have long been considered as 'inferior' to the western culture as being denoted in the writings of Vanneihluanga. Satire, therefore has a strong power to reduce the 'powerful' to a state of powerless victim and has the ability to impart upon the minds of the readers about "truth" and "knowledge" which will in turn help in the transformation of power. Vanneihluanga can be considered as a new historicist within the realm of Mizo writers in his reconstruction of the past despite his awareness of the fact that he can no longer directly access to the past Mizo days. The same theme is also brought out by Vanneihluanga in "Korean Zawlaidi/ Korean Charms" where he extensively satirizes about the impact of colonialism upon the Mizos and the manner in which Korean culture has greatly influenced the Mizo people at the present age. Vanneihluanga has quietly captured the popular culture that sweeps the younger groups of the Mizos

"Right after the Western colonizers have manipulated our minds to admire white complexions and to feel inferior about Mizo's physical appearances, they left us at the hands of the tan complexioned Indians. In between this moment when we feel inferior to western countenances but superior to the countenances of the Indians, it brings us comfort as we glance at Korean people who seem admirable as the Western people,

whom we resemble in physical appearances...it seems less intimidating to imitate Korean culture than imitating the Western lifestyles with whom we hardly have any resemblance.” (Vanneihluanga, “Korean Zawlaidi/ Korean Charms”, translation mine).

The passage is suggestive of the fact that in the past few years there has been a sudden rise in the Korean influence among the youths of Mizoram. “Korean Waves” has swept the state far and wide as the Mizo youths are increasingly impressed by their music, their taste in fashion and their lifestyles which have been exposed through the medium of music videos and television soaps. The extensive Korean influence among the youths of Mizoram can be undoubtedly identified in an article written by M Rajshekhar:

Stay for a while in Mizoram’s capital Aizawl and you start catching glimpses of South Korea. Travel around the state and the images emerge repeatedly – in the clothes, the hair styles, even the furniture.

In Champhai, the district that conducts most of the trade between Mizoram and Myanmar, business in fairness creams and hair colour is roaring. At her cosmetics shop which stocks both Indian and imported cosmetics, J Lalremruati says most customers favour foreign products. People here think they are not fair enough, she explains. “If the idea is to be more like the Koreans, then why would they buy Indian creams?” (Rajshekhar, “Seoul-stirring soaps in Aizawl: How South Korea’s soft power is changing Mizoram”)

The sweeping popular culture that entails the youths of Mizoram is closely examined by Vanneihluanga and has conspicuously recognized the mindset of the contemporary Mizo youths which can be seen through his satirical writings. Hence, “Korean Zawlaidi/Korean

Charms” by Vanneihluanga clearly renders the struggle of belonging and the confusions of identity on the part of the writer himself.

“The writer appears to be consciously unconscious in order to conceal his identity under the coverings of his ideologies and the presence of certain ideologies again reveal that the author is influenced by his own cultural conditions and that he knows the role he plays is not of a social reformer but just to give the hint to the readers. Thus, a complete suppression of the self is not possible because he is a sensible and sensitive intellectual of the society.” (Sharma, 7) As a satirist, Vanneihluanga acts as an important agent in conveying upon the readers certain issues that are related to crisis of identities and feelings of alienation within the nation. It is clearly evident that Vanneihluanga captures the general sentiments and the prevailing ethos. of the age be regarded as one of the most successful Mizo writers when it comes to satirical writings because his themes and subjects are often drawn from contemporary Mizo society and its prevailing ethos. This is one of the many reasons why readers are so keen to get hold of his writings as they can easily identify and relate the contents of his writings with things that are presently happening in and around their daily life. This is the theme which runs parallel to the theory of New Historicism which is “an approach to literary criticism and literary theory based on the premise that a literary work should be considered a product of its time, place and circumstances of its composition rather than as an isolated creation of genius” (Greenblatt). New historicists consider any texts as cultural construct and is embedded in cultural roots. “New Historicists acknowledge that they themselves, like all authors, are ‘subjectivities’ that have been shaped and informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era...” (Abrams, 186). The writings

of Vanneihluanga often teach and delight the readers by exhibiting the popular culture of contemporary Mizo society and reveals political, social, religious and economical circumstances of the era that he examines. Vanneihluanga, to a great extent, presents reality of Mizo society in segments and refines it with his own imaginative faculty.

**CHAPTER 4:**  
**SATIRE AND IDENTITY**

For a long period of time, concerns over identity, racial and ethnic identity have remained key elements of discussions up to this day. The claim for 'difference' and 'otherness' have been significant within the realm of literature as well as social medias. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the gradual formation of discourses on identity which linked together the concepts of race, nation, and ethnic group or communities. Each of these categories was initially conceived as discrete and homogeneous. Theories of race posited biology, geography, and climatic conditions as the bases for differences in skin colour and, by extension, in the ability to contribute to the progress of civilization through the arts and sciences. Models of nationhood primarily took two forms, one civic and one cultural or ethnic, both of which remain influential today. Civic nationalism, founded on the values of liberty and justice, is underpinned by social contract theory, as depicted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by John Locke and David Hume, and, in particular, in Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* of 1762. According to Rousseau, the state is established and acquires legitimacy in terms of the 'general will of the people', rather than through force. These assumptions now inform most of the institutional democracies of the West. By contrast, cultural or ethnic nationalism draws on the eighteenth-century philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder's historicism, especially his concept of *Volkgeist*, and its foundation rests on the perceived 'wholeness' of a community derived from the totality of its expressions-language, customs, dress, architecture, religion. An extreme version of cultural nationalism romanticizes ethnicity, the state assuming political legitimacy as a natural consequence of ties of consanguinity, as in Nazi Germany. (Waugh, 211)

A great number of studies have emphasized upon the societal aspects of satire, yet its role in the construction of identities has been mostly ignored. Since satire has been ubiquitous in various cultures and epochs, and identity is also among the primary contemporary concerns in the globalized and multicultural world, the study of the role of satire in the construction of social identities can prove to be significantly rewarding. Satire is primarily seen in literary form where irony, sarcasm, and ridicule are used in order to expose, or denounce vice or folly with the intent of shaming individuals, and society itself, into improvement. In addition to satire as a literary genre, there has been an increase in the use of satire in television and social media as well. Self-critical satire plays an important role to break open a rigid national identity, exposing its constructed nature and often calls for creative transformation.

Accordingly, this chapter aims to examine the manner in which satire can contribute to the construction of identity in social subjects. The chapter will have a closer look into the writings of Vanneihluanga and highlight the various techniques of satire that has been incorporated within the scope of his writings and the modes in which satire is being employed in order to construct an identity-individual identity, cultural identity and social identity. It is in its strictest sense a literary term, but is also embodied in various print media, and visual and theatrical forms. It is often expressed in broad sides or orally, a language of the street that expresses societal concern to expunge unwanted traits from the body politic. At the heart of the culture wars that bridged the reformist period between the eighteenth century and the Victorian era, satire allowed for a laughter of unease that elicited enjoyment whilst' exposing repressed illogicalities and prejudices', the contradictions in a society that preached

liberty, yet entrenched class and racial stratification. Satire (as a disparaging genre of humor) is 'a social lubricant and tool or force in the exercise of power in social groups', evoking laughter at values or behavior viewed as deviant. It is thus a source for communal merriment both in forging group identity and in encouraging disdainful laughter at transgressive conduct. (Holdridge)

Wittgenstein has pointed out, "Identity is not a thing (sometimes tangible and measurable in a determine way) but is not nothing either (formless, indeterminate, a single expression of social construction) That is, identity is a problem of living, a contentious and ambiguous force in everyday life (Chatterjee). To begin with, it is an interesting point to closely analyze globalization and urbanization as an influencing factors in the formation of identities. In general, 'globalization' refers to a set of processes involving interaction between different peoples, institutions, communities and organizations across political and culturally constituted borders. Beyond this general definition, however, there is very little agreement amongst scholars about the origins, impact, value, directions and character of these processes...some theorists regard 'globalization' as a relatively new phenomenon, involving the formation of institutions that have transcended older political and organizational institutions like 'nation', others believe that globalization is articulated through a transformational continuum that moves toward, against and through various socially constituted formations - global, national, imperial, regional and local (Robertson, 2000; Bauman, 2004). (Lewis) Thus, the chapter will seek to reconcile the manner in which identity is constructed through the process of interaction between 'different peoples' from across the globe by juxtaposing satire and its role in identity construction.



Vanneihluanga's short narrative "Mikhual/The Guest" is an inventive narrative of the increasingly puzzling nature of cultural identity in the modern world. The narrative is built up with a satirical mockery against an individual who is ridiculed by the writer as someone who does not fit in with his own people, in fact act as an alien in his hometown. Reduction is considered as the basic technique which is often employed by a satirist by degrading, belittling the victim by reducing his stature and dignity, removing from him all the supports of rank and status and in doing so, the satirist expose them to laughter and nuisance. "This may be done on the level of plot and will almost always be continued to the level of style and language." (Hodgart) Likewise, the main character in "Mikhual/The Guest" is being exposed for reduction straight at the outset of the narrative when the writer proclaims "Let us derogate this son of a man in a haste". The introduction quickly draws attention to the readers and imparts a feeling of curiosity to find out the manner in which the writer is going to strip off the character. The technique of reduction begins as the character is portrayed as someone who is living a life of luxury:

His converstions, his mannerism, his body language and his interests cope well with the life of wealthy people...he knows a lot about certain things but is ignorant of means to make use of them. He is very eloquent but he hardly grasps the substance of his speeches. He is good at criticizing, but with no suggestions. (Vanneihluanga, "Mikhual/The Guest", translation mine)

Within a short period of time, the reader is already amused by the superficial nature of this man who "considers himself as a ruler...and the world revolves around him", but in reality, "he is the one whom we considered as merely a guest."

(Vanneihluanga, "Mikhual/ The Guest", translation mine). The satirical reduction of the victim continues towards the middle of the narrative as he is barely exposed as a person who is totally ignorant of the fact that his own people considers him as nuisance while he considers himself as living above their standards, "he disdainfully looked down upon his own race, his homeland, his religion...he despised everything, blamed everything and condemned everything." (Vanneihluanga, "Mikhual/The Guest", translation mine)

A sense of rootlessness runs through the narrative and the feeling of 'in-betweenness' has made up the life of the main character. He is stuck in between a world of nowhere and everywhere, which eventually lets him gather the feelings that he is neither here nor there. In his travel memoir *The Global Soul* (2002), Pico Iyer has mentioned at one point:

"The country where people look like me is the one where I can't speak the language, the country where people sound like me is a place where I'll look highly alien, and the country where people live like me is the most foreign space of all" (Iyer, 24).

The statement made by Pico Iyer is quite disheartening and thought provoking, and somehow it can be related to the life of the character in "Mikhual/The Guest". The narrative gradually shifts in order to describe the character and his heritage with a tone of sarcasm to bring out the effect of satire:

"From his early childhood, he was kept at one of the best and most comfortable educational institutions in India. He used to spend only Christmas

and New Year in Mizoram till the time he reached adulthood...in his hostel room he never held a broom, never did his laundry, he did not cook for himself, he did not even have any idea about the cost of his uniform and books..." Even though he is enjoying a life of luxury and having the time of his life, in his hometown Mizoram, "among these great numbers of his own people, he deeply becomes nothing but simply a guest." ("Mikhual/The Guest", translation mine)

His sense of home can be regarded as nowhere and everywhere, he is left in a state of "betweenness" even when he is surrounded by his own people. Thus, through a satirical portrayal of his character, Vanneihluanga has skillfully drawn a picture of the means and ways in which satire can be useful in constructing an identity like the "Mikhual/ the Guest". It is beyond doubt that he is a person who has undergone certain stages of "hybridization", for whom "home becomes divorced from homeland and is placed in borderlands." (Chatterjee, 49) Somehow, if one takes good advantage of this transformation, unlike "Mikhual/The Guest", this borderland concept of space can be seen as "zones of interaction which open up new possibilities, not walls which enclose; such spaces also allow add to knowledge and further communication." (Chatterjee, 49). However, the case is different in "Mikhual/ the Guest" who does not gain much knowledge or intelligence during the course of time that he has spent outside his homeland and for people like him, "this mixed world, Iyer suggests, can mean greater friction and misunderstanding." (Chatterjee, 49) and thus the search for identity will continue in the life of the main character that is found in "Mikhual/The Guest"

In an interview with Vanneihluanga, when questioned about the reason behind his creation of this particular character in “Mikhual/The Guest”, the writer has honestly commented:

It is true that people like him exist in real life. Behind the comic effect and the satirical mockery that has been posed against the main character, there is an underlying message that I wanted to impart upon the minds of the readers. The message is that even if a person leaves his homeland to pursue further studies, being exposed to other cultures, through education and through the course of their interaction with different people, it is wise to gain knowledge, creativity and skills that will serve as helpful tools in shaping their future when they return back to their homeland instead of living like a guest among his own people. For instance, things that he finds useful or productive in other states may not be as much useful in Mizoram, while things that matter here in Mizoram may also not matter a lot in other states and vice versa, to understand this concept of life, he alone is responsible for taking the best advantage of his education, experiences, and his exposure to other cultures. (Vanneihluanga, “Personal Interview”, translation mine)

Vanneihluanga, in reducing the victim to a state of nuisance and in exposing the true nature of the main character, helps in constructing an identity whose knowledge and inner thoughts are shaped with the wave of globalization. “Mikhual/The Guest” may enjoy the rich diversity of life he has found elsewhere in certain big cities of India with their ethnic diversity, rich variety of languages, clothing, culinary styles and cultural experiences but deep down there is also the importance of place that typically

pervades everyday life in the cities. The narrative is indeed a search for self in an accelerating fast paced world where cultures, borders and cities are increasingly blurred.

The technique of satirical reduction is also skillfully brought out in the short narrative “Utawk Pawnfen/A Frog’s Frock” which urges the readers to laugh out loud throughout the course of their reading. “Utawk Pawnfen/A Frog’s Frock” tells of a group of friends who has gone for a trip to Guwahati at a time when globalization begins to enter the state of Mizoram. The narrative can be read as a hilarious autobiographical travel account of the writer Vanneihluanga with his friends despite the fact that they felt “smart enough” and “confident” to move out of their comfort zones. The simple idiosyncrasies of the three friends have been vividly portrayed by the writer and this aspect strongly brings about humor to the narrative. The writer employs the technique of reduction by reducing himself and his friends to a state of nuisance to the readers. Vanneihluanga satirizes the lack of good communication skills from the part of the three friends as they were running short of vocabulary when it comes to buying a simple skirt for their wives. Even the thought of it caused an apprehension among the three friends:

“...the friend on my left whispered “Hey, I do not know what they call a ‘pawnfen’ in English, how on earth do we buy one?” I replied “Isn’t it pretty god...no, pettygoat is what it is...I think...” I was miles away from the Chambers’ Dictionary which I had left at home.

But the friend on my right was a know it all, and he was actually very deft in the nuances of translation, so he confidently argued, “Of course not, prettygod

refers to a beautiful god, while a petty goat is a small goat; it doesn't refer to a petticoat at all. I think it is called petty guard." ("Utawlk Pawnfen/A Frog's Frock, translated by Margaret L. Pachuau)

Though confident as they may seem, the dialogue between the three friends have clearly brought out that none of them were able to utter the exact word for "pawnfen" in English with great confidence as they keep on mumbling the words "I think" whenever they are about to come out with the exact word. From this point, the comic devices have been brought out almost to perfection as the writer continues to carry out the technique of reduction by mocking himself and his friends about their lack of English vocabulary to make the shopkeeper clearly comprehend the item they were searching for. The miscommunication between the three friends and the shopkeeper in their search for a skirt or "pawnfen" for their wives is the theme which eventually brings out the amusing climax of the narrative:

"After he had done all that he could, the owner of the store took a deep breath, looked at us with folded arms, and declared, "I think what you want is...frock,"

"Frog?" we cried out in unison. So astounded were we. "Yes frock, a woman's frock," she pronounced confidently.

We rolled our eyes in horror, and were no longer interested in the purchase. In despair and utter bewilderment, we walked out of the magnificent store, leaving a host of equally perplexed people behind...The words, "Yes frog; a woman's frog" was enough to diminish our morale.

The man on my left declared, “When the lady saw me gesticulating wildly, she must have felt that we wanted to seek out a prostitute. And in all her wisdom, must have realized that a woman is actually a frog...” (Utawkpawnfен/ a Frog’s Frock, translated by Margaret L. Pachuau)

The whole point of amusement lies within the inadvertent nature of humor that has been brought out from the bafflement among the three friends. There is no felt intelligence in operation within the whole narrative, yet the play of words and the intermingling of puns have been skillfully employed by Vanneihluanga as an effective comic literary devices within the brief narrative. The construction of identity through the techniques of satire can be deciphered in the narrative as the writer exposes the “difference” that is felt by the three friends as they travel to Guwahati. Historically “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. while there seem to be certain cultural markers, especially a common language basis that has contributed to the formation of Mizo identity, the crystallized form has resulted from the boundaries created as a result of colonialism. For various reasons, the Duhlian language gained predominance in the region and is now the lingua franca of the state (now, however known as Mizo)...” (Pachuau, 8). In his article “Locating Hybridity in History”, Santosh Gupta has dealt with the process of hybridity and the manner in which it has been tackled by the people of India, a nation which is well-known for its rich cultural diversities. Santosh Gupta has remarked:

The baffling diversity of ethnic, racial, religious presences in India was treated as a constituting phenomenon of the old and, so, of new India. In the imagining

and narrating of the new India various scholars foregrounded India's diversity, pluralism and most important, the assimilation between the different streams of people/communities into a heterogeneous culture which tolerated difference readily. Indian scholars, historians and political activists emphasized the rich diversity that had arisen in Indian social and cultural scene as diverse religious and cultures entered India and gradually settled down, contributing to formation of a complex culture that incorporated new elements/influences, allowing the differences to prevail without causing clash of civilisations. (Jasbir Jain, *Cultural Narratives, Hybridity and Other Spaces*, 23)

The statement runs in parallel with themes that have been incorporated in "Utawak Pawnfen/ A Frog's Frock" where the writer has satirically expressed that even though the three friends are travelling to a state within the same nation to which they belong, due to their "differences" with mainland India, in terms of their features, mannerism and lifestyles, they meet difficulty in terms of communication as the three friends are also uncomfortable in speaking Hindi. This is in reality the main problem which is faced by a large number of Mizo people when they travel across India, and this remains one of the many reasons as to why Indians across the country often feel that they are tourists from South Asian countries. Thus, Vanneihluanga, in dealing with these issues with a touch of satirical comic effect excels in creating characters whose identities are constructed on the basis of environment to which they belong. Rabindranath Tagore's poetic expression is given below to express the constant process of assimilation that is found in India. In his poem *Sanchayati* he wrote:

No one knows at whose call



Arrived waves of humanity in tumultuous currents

And became absorbed in the ocean (of India)

Here are the Aryans, the un-Aryans, the Dravidians,

The Chinese, the Sakas, Huns, Pathans and Mughuls

All merging into one entity... (Sharma, 140-41)

In dealing with globalization and the effect it has in shaping identities, another satirical piece which calls for closer examination is an article written by Vanneihluanga “Mizo Thalaite leh Zirna (Tunlai Khawvel)/Mizo Youths and Education (The Present World)” where irony is employed as a technique of satire to highlight the present condition of many Mizo youths who have gone out of the state to pursue further studies. The standard device of satirists is irony, “which means literally dissimulation, is the systematic use of double meaning. It also assumes a double audience, one that is deceived by the surface meaning of the words, and another that catches the hidden sense and laughs with the deceiver at the expense of the deceived.” (Hodgart, 130) Often the satirist uses irony “to make the reader uncomfortable, to shake him out of his complacency and to make him an ally in the battle against the world’s stupidity.” (Hodgart, 131) The article begins with lines of irony by exposing the harsh reality that has been faced by the father of many Mizo families by posing a challenge against the Mizo youths, especially those who have gone out of state for their education:

Before saying anything, let us discuss your present condition. A father used to train and teach his son of farm cultivation. Later on, a father advices his son to

pursue education and to acquire a government job. He has taught him right and therefore gains respect and trust, and he administers his family with self-confidence. But after the time of your birth, government jobs have suddenly become rare. A father is running short of proper guidance to give to his children. He has no idea as to whether his guidance will prove to be rewarding. Due to this, a Mizo man, who used to administer his family with confidence during the year 1950 has become a man who administers his family with a great doubt about himself in the year 2000. This is the reason why there are increased number of working women. (Mizo Thalaite leh Zirna (Tunlai Khawvel)/Mizo Youths and Education (the Present Scenario), translation mine)

The ironic effect of satire can be identified in the above statement as the role and status of a self-confident father, who is considered to be the head of a patriarchal Mizo family and is now brought down to a state of self-doubting. The ironical turn of events that has been satirically projected by Vanneihluanga is worth studying in order to examine the transformation of identity that has been undergone by the Mizo men in particular after Mizoram has been brought forward to a world of globalization. It is also an interesting subject to note that apart from the satirical elements that have filled the writing, the article also contains a constructive criticism as well. There are many instances where the writer urges the Mizo youths to firmly adhere to their roots. Rootedness is an important element in understanding and constructing identity:

Education is a process of discovering oneself and our surrounding environment, a process of understanding and transforming it into a more valuable entity.

Think of yourself: Do you consider yourself as someone who would also sin

along if you stay near a sinner, or someone who would save a sinner? The way we judge our own self is often our reality. If you are a rooted person, learn and delve deeper into the languages, cultures and religions of different people as much as possible. Instead of being assimilated, you will be more rooted to your own race...the moment you learn to wear a saree, you will also discover the worth of Mizo 'puan' (traditional weaves worn by Mizo women). You will also realize the beauty of 'Chheih Lam' (one of the traditional dances of the Mizos) when you start to learn the dance of Bharat Natyam... ("Mizo Thalaite leh Zirna (Tunlai Khawvel)/Mizo Youths and Education (The Present Scenario)", translation mine)

The passage serves an important message in that it imparts a knowledge of rootedness to one's own heritage. In the course of interaction with different people, an individual is responsible to a certain extent when it comes to themes of assimilation. This message is clearly expressed by the writer in order to impart upon the minds of readers the advantages and the disadvantages that an individual can face at the hands of globalization.

In this perspective, the aspect of identity that has been posited by the New Historicists, the works of Greenblatt and certain other writers are worth perusing. In Greenblatt's work the desire to reconstruct and affirm the other as an identity speaking on its own terms within its own "foreign" context is matched by an equally strong tendency to dissolve the boundaries between past and present, between familiar and foreign, to read one's own dilemmas of identification into the words of the other and to form one's own narratives of identity in dialogue and exchange with the "dead," i.e.

within the same communicative system, the same web of signification as the other. The desire is not only to allow the dead to speak, but “to speak with the dead,” to include them within our own, present conversations, within our own processes of inventing ourselves by writing stories about ourselves, to use historical subjects as therapeutic vehicles of transference, and as models to emulate and transcend. If Greenblatt's books are full of historical anecdotes that intend to shock the reader into a recognition of radical cultural difference, they are equally full of more personal anecdotes that draw the self-fashioning of the past into constant relation to the author's own self-fashioning. Greenblatt's construction of his own subjectivity takes place within the process of reconstructing the otherness of the other but also in deconstructing this otherness as a contingent invention of both the other and himself. (Toews)

Narrativization becomes the process of identity construction which cuts across the differences in particular identities constructed in different cultural systems, revealing a universal or “generally human” form of constructing or organizing unity out of difference. The broader implications of Said's study for all ethnographic reconstructions of otherness and historical narratives of the formation of collective identities were immediately evident; they have come to pervade, as an organizing problematic, contemporary attempts to historicize the imperial, colonial, and postcolonial relations between western and non-western cultures...Patterns of defining self and other develop in textual traditions, establish themselves in disciplinary regimes of truth, are enabled by and enable political relations of rule, control, and confinement. In other words, subjective identities are authorized and defined within the contingent historical relations of cultural systems, in which knowledge and power are intertwined. Knowledge as the

production of a specific world is in itself a dispersed network of acts of control and submission, impositions of differentiation and connection. Political and administrative institutions, military technology, economic exploitation, and educational discipline are palpable impositions of order on the other that provide the world which knowledge can know; they are guided by and are inseparable from the knowledge which knows that world...The historical recovery of the previously hidden and repressed worlds of others, defined by their own identities and their own definitions of experience, reveals the structures of domination and hegemony that excluded them from visibility, but, Scott insists, it does not in itself display the processes whereby the differentiation of gender identities and experiences is historically constituted and reproduced. Historicizing the history of women entails integrating that history of otherness into a description of the contingent historical processes, the specific acts of domination, exclusion, resistance, and incorporation, whereby the definition of gender identities was produced and reproduced within specific cultures. "Woman" is not a "natural" identity with its own history, but a culturally constructed reality that cannot be described outside of the relations in which it is constituted. Power relations within any cultural space and time produce a multiplicity of subjective identities, but one is privileged as the norm and becomes naturalized as representative of the human. In recounting the construction of difference we are thrown back on our own involvement in the construction of otherness. Historicizing is always also a redefinition of the historian's own identity and thus an act intervening, either critically or affirmatively, in the relations of power through which such identities are culturally constituted...Historicization cannot dissolve either difference or identity. It does not end story telling. Instead it produces a new set

of stories—perhaps even a meta-story or universally human story—about how people come to tell continually changing stories about themselves, wanting to tell their own stories but also needing legitimation and recognition. As stories of story-making, as narratives of narrativization, the stories of new historicism chronicle contemporary struggles to construct difference as the essence of identity. Thus, a lot of responsibility has been laid upon writers, especially those that deal with the writing of history in reconstructing an identity of a particular individual as well as collective identity. (Toews, “Stories of Difference and Identity: New Historicism in Literature and History”). The statement that has been strongly proposed by Toews clearly renders the importance of writers in constructing identities and the manner in which it is intertwined with the history of a given particular society.

In accordance with the concepts already denoted to the reconstruction of identity, there are certain writings by Vanneihluanga that deal with issues of colonialism. The need to reconstruct identities of the past Mizos has been carefully highlighted by Vanneihluanga. In “Mizo Hlui leh Mizo Thar/The Past Mizo and The Present Mizo”, Vanneihluanga has made a distinctive comparison between the Mizos of the past and Mizos of the contemporary times in terms of the changes and differences that have been experienced by the people of Mizoram:

In the olden days, each family was afraid of poverty, to beg and to expect help from others was never in their thoughts. When famine took its toll, foods was never simply asked to the community leaders, complaint was never made even if they were not provided, and with none to wisely direct, sweet potatoes on the outskirts of the village were just dug out instead. Each one, to their own

capability, strived to be self-sufficient and be of little help to others instead of simply depending on the help of the neighbours and the community...the lifestyles of the past Mizo people was brought to change with the passage of time...rather than striving to be a self-sustained family, it is taken as pride to be that kind of family capable of receiving help from the government, if the government do not provide sustenance we blame the government instead. There are a number of people who are totally lost and are of low caliber, who may choose to die of hunger rather than toiling for their sustenance, who solely depend on the government. (Vanneihluanga, *Rawhtuina Mei/The Scorching Flame*, translation mine, 22-25)

Through the statement, Vanneihluanga has vehemently satirized the deteriorating morality of the Mizo people and in the light of their reading, readers can easily identify the manner in which good ethics and moral conduct are gradually fading. The statement, thus poses a great challenge to the reading public of the Mizos by imparting knowledge to the readers that hard work and diligence among the Mizo youth in particular is certainly the need of the hour in order to survive in this present age. The powerful nature of satire can be intensely felt throughout this satirical piece of writing as Vanneihluanga freely express the good qualities of the past Mizo society. He compares them to the modern day Mizo society with their plagued morality. The harsh satire that has been posed against the present generation can in turn act as an important tool in constructing an identity which is generally accepted by the Mizo people and which will renders an individual to reconstruct the present Mizo identity which has gone astray from the morally constructed identities of the past Mizo life. Readers can in turn distinguish

between what is good and evil in the light of Vanneihluanga's discernment about the ethical issues of the Mizos after being enlightened with the 'truth' that certain manners of the Mizos are worth mocking at and deserving of criticism. The fact that satire is a powerful literary form cannot be neglected after careful analysis of "Mizo Hlui leh Mizo Thar/The Past Mizo and The Modern Mizo" as the writing is laced with satirical attacks against the evil practitioners which may cause embarrassment to them and impart in them feelings of shame and distress.

In dealing with themes of colonialism and the resulting effect of "difference" and "otherness", alcohol-drinking is often highlighted by post-colonial writers. Vanneihluanga is no exception, there are various writings where he covers areas of alcohol-drinking and the manner in which it is embraced by the Mizo people. "Sakhaw Hlui leh Thar/ The Old Religion and the New Religion" is another thought provoking piece of writing by Vanneihluanga where the old religious practices and beliefs of the Mizos have been compared to the beliefs and practices they firmly embrace after Christianity has entered the state of Mizoram. The writing can be considered as a powerful Mizo literary piece that frankly deals with the nuances of colonialism and its impact upon the Mizo people while strongly focusing on the elements of satire by skillfully attacking the western colonizers. Not only does the work highlight the negative impact of colonialism, it also serves as an important tool in instructing and encouraging the readers to take pride of Mizo culture and traditions which has long been considered as inferior to the western culture. Vanneihluanga has vehemently expressed the theme of power dynamics in "Sakhaw Hlui leh Thar/ The Old religion and the New Religion" without neglecting to praise the Christian missionaries (the Western Missionaries) for the



enlightenment that they brought upon the less civilized Mizo people, but on the other hand he skillfully satirizes the impact of colonialism:

This new religion itself has also detached Jehova from Khuanu (the name by which the Mizos address God) instead of uniting them. Man bun, which is considered as a sign of displaying Mizo manhood by the men lot has been rejected, they enlightened us to admire Western style of wearing necktie instead of Mizo “thimkual” (hairpin worn by Mizo male to hold their buns), they instilled upon us to condemn the months of feastings (Mizo have their age old practice of feastings during the month of March (Chapchar Kut), September (Mim Kut) and December (Pawl Kut)...they brought us individual freedom while restraining the values of Mizo cultural practices. (Vanneihtluanga, “Sakhaw Hlui leh Thar/ The Old Religion and the New Religion”, translation mine)

The passage clearly renders the “truth” which has long been hidden and hardly been contested by the Mizo people as the Christian missionaries (the Western Missionaries) were always held high and admired by the once colonized Mizos. By expressing this “truth”, the author, being a satirist, is silently gaining power as he is “subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth” which in turn imparts the readers to gain knowledge about this “truth” and thus power will be transformed to the Mizo people who consider themselves as inferior to the western people. Vanneihtluanga has also frankly professed about the presence of power everywhere and how it can be transformed from one person to another in this wonderful piece of writing by suggesting the need to reduce the powerful nature and the condescending attitude of the Western

colonizers and to take pride in Mizo culture and practices. Towards the end of the writing, Vanneihluanga leaves the reader with a thought provoking message:

Without contesting the mightiness of God, being strongly rooted to Mizo culture has to be uplifted along with Christianity. The moment when we learn to equate these two elements and let them embrace each other, only will our culture starts to follow the right path of development. In our present practices, it is likely that the more we glorify Christianity, the more we are condemning our own Mizo culture, the moment we are about to uplift “Mizo”, Christianity often intrudes. When things that are meant to unite oppose each other, war is the only choice that awaits. (Vanneihluanga, “Sakhaw Hlui leh Thar/ The Old Religion and the New Religion”, translation mine)

In reading the passage, it can be assumed that Christianity has greatly enlightened the Mizos and brought them to a new era of civilization, therefore it is beyond doubt that the people of Mizoram has highly regarded the Western Christian Missionaries to an extent of despising their own cultural practices and traditions, thus Vanneihluanga has criticized and satirized the negative impact of colonialism through his writings with hope that “Mizo” need not be neglected even after embracing Christianity.

In an interview, when asked about the question of identity among the Mizos, Vanneihluanga openly commented by referring to the year 1966 when The Mizo National Front had rebelled against India and liberated the state of Mizoram:

I was nine years old. I remember standing in a forest near Aizawl while the Indian air Force was bombing Aizawl. We were told by Laldenga then – and we

believed him – that a ‘thlawhnavar’ (a white aeroplane) would come and drive these IAF planes away. None came

Before that, we thought we were westerners. We were born and raised in the lap of missionaries. And we used to think we were British. In Zodin cinema hall, all the movies we saw were John Wayne, cowboys, western films. We felt they were very near to us. But, gradually, we came to learn that the west is very far away – we were very remote, very ignorant. The missionaries were. We had to depend on India (Rajshekhhar, “Seoul-stirring soaps in Aizawl: How South Korea’s soft power is changing Mizoram”)

The writings of Vanneihluanga are often undoubtedly laced with topics that are related to the questions of identity among the Mizos. By imparting the various techniques of satire in his writings, mainly humor and comic effect, Vanneihluanga certainly tries to imbibe the values of Mizo culture upon the minds of the readers. Satire, therefore helps in imparting upon many Mizo youths the need to take pride of one’s own cultural practices, and to create a unique identity of their own instead of comparing oneself with the practices of the “west”.

**CHAPTER 5:**  
**CONCLUSION**

In an in-depth study of the nature of satire and the potent role it plays within the realm of literature, there could be many justifications for satire. Satire often reveals the truth, and the realization of truth is generally regarded as desirable. "Satire is a gadfly to society, provoking a reevaluation of its attitudes, though not necessarily prompting any action to change those attitudes." (Feignberg, 273) It offers new perspectives to readers and audiences by making criticism more delectable, hence its basic appeal is to amuse and entertain. Contrary to its ability to evoke laughter and its tendency to be humorous, it is not confined to the category of humor as satire is often believed to deconstruct and to morally reconstruct of which humor is not usually capable to do so. Like irony, satire also highlight incongruence and is not necessarily governed by a moralistic impulse. Regarding the vagueness problems with respect to the borders of satire, critics like Ruben Quintero proposes the statement that "We are better able to circumscribe than define satire." (Quintero, 1) The final chapter, however, will attempt to draw a conclusion of the thesis by centrally focusing on the universality of satire within the realm of literature. The chapter will also undertake to indicate the manner in which satire is an all-pervasive element and that it encompasses the worlds of the writer and their texts.

Satire occupies a central place in most of Vanneihluanga's writings as the writer himself has claimed that "it's in my nature". "Satire is invariably occasioned by the author's disappointment with the prevalent conditions of life. It does not however mean that a satirist is always a pessimist. On the contrary, the satirist is always an optimist at heart and his so-called pessimism is only the apparent product of the failure of society to live up to its ideals. Even though the satirist finds fault with the society and seems

angry with it, his implicit intention is to point to the ideal society or utopia that he is so much secretly in love with.” (Naikar, 70). Likewise, the writings of Vanneihluanga, to a great extent, expose the illness of society and the need to mend that particular society in order to live up to the moral standards and to create an ideal society. The aim of his criticism is not to allow the readers to dismiss the author with catchy words and phrases but to make them identify, analyze and understand the subtle and sophisticated pattern of meaning that is supported by the underlying motives and intentions. The intention of criticism is to help the reader to enter into the spirit of the author’s work of art, to get engaged and not to easily turn away from it. It is clear that Vanneihluanga, as a satirist, aims at understanding the varied popular culture of Mizo society and mainly draws his material from the day-to-day lives of the Mizos through his careful observation of the society.

General satire, aimed at many or certain groups of people, is more common and more important than direct attacks on a single person. In most cases, the satirist's ideal is often the reformation or regeneration of a whole society. Though gentle satire is commonly handled by most satirists, harsh attack upon the vices of human are also carried out by most satirists at one point or another. The anger and the disappointment that has been felt by the satirist within their course of examination about a particular society is often exposed through their satirical writings. Pope too, in his fit of disappointment upon the degrading morality of the society has once proclaimed:

See, all our Nobles begging to be Slaves!

See, all our Fools aspiring to be Knaves

The Wit of Cheats, the Courage of a Whore,

Are what ten thousand envy and adore.

All, all look up, with reverential Awe,

On crimes that scape, or triumph o'er the Law:

While Truth, Worth, Wisdom, daily they decry--

'Nothing is Sacred now but Villany.'

Yet may this Verse (if such verse remain)

Show there was one who held it in disdain.

(Pope, "Epilogue" ll. 163-72)

The theme of satire is often the maintenance of standards, the reaffirmation of values, and the necessity of reform. According to Maynard Mack, "Satire . . . asserts the validity and necessity of norms, systematic values, and meanings that are contained by recognizable codes" (85). Satire is inescapably moral and didactic even when no definite, positive values are stated in the work as alternatives to the corruptions depicted by the attack. The satirist does not need to state specific moral alternatives to replace the villainy he attacks because it should be noted that it is not the responsibility of a satirist to provide alternatives for his subject of attacks. It can be assumed that the satirist often presupposes an intelligent readership which will easily be able to recognize the implicit morality without any help other than a few ironic hints from the writer. In most cases, "the reason the satirist doesn't merely write moral tracts encouraging people to virtue,

and the reason he feels justified in displaying anger and indignation at the common follies and vices of men is that the satirist's world is not one of basic good accidentally gone astray, in which every man would seek good if he knew how or were shown the way, but rather it is one of unseeing fools and unsightly knaves who either claim to possess virtue already, or who have already rejected it, claiming that vice is (or is as good as) virtue. It is a world of hypocrisy, in which social standing, church membership, titles and degrees, peer praise, lip service to morals, and wealth are all used to hide evils of the first order. In such a world of hypocrites and pretenders, simple moral encouragement would be totally inefficacious. The satirist, therefore, will display his critical attitude and implicit morality through irony, often by creating a narrator who appears to be as much a hypocrite as the target of the work, but who exposes himself and the target by his lack of true perception or inability to hide his hypocrisy. But at the same time, this "ironic method" is necessitated by the hypocritical society the satirist wishes to attack and reform, because it is the only fruitful method: people pay no attention to moralizers. Since the hypocrisy demands this particular approach, it is not surprising that the satirist takes hypocrisy for granted in his works. The theory is, then, that for the satiric mode to be corrective, certain values must exist which people do not follow, but which values they claim to or want to follow." (Harris, "The Purpose and Method of Satire"). The select narratives of Vanneihluanga focus upon similar themes: satire and its moral philosophy, satire as a powerful form of art, and satire as an important vehicle in the reconstruction of Mizo identity. The study has extensively covered upon areas where satire acts as an all-pervasive mode of literature as it covers a wide variety of subject ranging from politics, religion, human foibles, and so forth. There



are certain features that are commonly found in works of satire as to occupy a central place in discussions of the mode. According to Northrop Frye, there are two things essential to satire: “One is wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack” (Frye, 234). The theoretical unanimity of satire is summarized by Dustin Griffin in his critical study of satire:

Satire is a highly rhetorical and moral art. A work of satire is designed to attack vice or folly. To this end it uses wit or ridicule. Like polemical rhetoric, it seeks to persuade an audience that something or someone is reprehensible or ridiculous; unlike pure rhetoric, it engages in exaggeration and some sort of fiction. But satire does not forsake the “real world” entirely. Its victims come from that world, and it is this fact (together with a darker or sharper tone) that separates satire from pure comedy. Finally, satire usually proceeds by means of clear reference to some moral standards or purposes. (Griffin, 1)

Nonetheless, Vanneihluanga within his scope of satirical writings also highlights the theme of moral philosophy at length, without necessarily providing the alternatives. Ellen Leyburn, in her study of satiric allegory, has gathered the notion that satire is as didactic as any other kind of writing. Its art is “the delivering of a moral judgement,” and its main objective is not to degrade man but to express to him how he has degraded himself. (Leyburn, 23) “Beiseina leh Beidawnna/Hope and Hopelessness” by Vanneihluanga is another piece of writing which is laced with thought provoking subjects with a strong didactic message. The intent of the writing is to draw a fine line between “Beiseina” (Hope) and “Beidawnna” (Hopelessness) while suggesting the importance of not losing hope, to strive hard at one’s goal and the manner in which

'hope' can drive a person's life to the door of success and happiness. At one point the writer mentions Samdala, a character from a Mizo folktale who is best known for living a life of indolence. Vanneihluanga harshly satirizes upon the fact that laziness is one distinguishing factor that leads to "hopelessness" by featuring Samdala as an example: "Samdala, with his slothful mind, simply intends to devour fruit. Lying under the tree, Samdala peacefully waits, with his mouth wide open, for the fruit to fall into his mouth. This shameful indolence often brings embarrassment to a person by using "beiseina/hope" as its mask. A person who gathers the right notion of hope does not merely stands on the river banks and keep gazing at the fish. Instead, he heads home and prepare a net to catch the fish...The right kind of hope carries along with it the urge to strive hard in order to achieve one's goal." (Vanneihluanga, "Beiseina leh Beidawnna/Hope and Hopelessness", translation mine). The passage creatively highlight the need to persevere and to put an effort painstakingly if a person "hopes" to achieve a certain goal by mocking at the slothfulness of Samdala, a character who can be easily identified by the reading public of Mizoram. Vanneihluanga, within his scope of writings, inculcate the ethos of the Mizo people in particular, it can be clearly noted that the vices and follies that plagued the morality and standards of behavior of Mizo society has clearly been brought out through his writings.

Most of the writings of Vanneihluanga reflect the writer's postcolonial concern with the relationship between the history of Mizo society and the history of criticism or literature. Vanneihluanga is a writer who is firmly grounded in the literary traditions of his region and period on which he draws for his purpose. Satirists want to amuse and make their audience laugh as they realize the follies the authors rebuke and the vices

they attack. This requires that both, author and audience have a broadly common understanding of the ills exposed by the satirist and can be easily comprehended. This is the point where the popular traditions and literary strategies unfold their capacity to captivate an affirming audience. “Accordingly one may find in satire a mixture of great erudition and racy popular stories or performance modes as vehicles to reach a wide public.” (Horstmann, Pauwels, 2). Issues pertaining to ‘zu’ (liquor) within the state of Mizoram has been a never ending debate among political parties, church elders and the Mizo people in general. It was a bold move that Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control Act (MLPC) 2014 has been enforced in Mizoram on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015, after the 17-year old ban on consumption of liquor in the state. “Historically, alcohol (different varieties of rice beer) has been very much a part of our Mizo culture. Back during the days when we were warring tribes fighting amongst ourselves under different clans, when we were Animists long before the missionaries came, we drank at every village festival, danced around the bonfire...drunk and carefree. All that changed when the Welsh missionaries arrived in Mizoram in 1894 during British colonization. Along with Christianity, they gave us a script, taught us how to read and write...and abolished some social evils such as...the raiding villages and the tradition of proving one’s bravery by beheading somebody from a rival clan...But the missionaries also made us do away with other practices, such as our consumption of alcohol (terming it a sin) and the way we would sing in unison with drums (which was, ironically introduced into our church rituals years later). Christianity remains a major legacy of the British in Mizoram to this day and consumption of alcohol continues to be considered a grave sin.” (“Life after Mizoram passes the MLPC Act 2014”, milaap.org) Alcohol, thus, has a deep root within

the Mizo culture and somehow it can be noted that the Christian missionaries made a mistake on their part for not teaching or instructing them about “responsible drinking” even after gathering the notion that alcohol (any type of rice beer) occupies a central part among the Mizo people at the time of feasting.

Vanneihluanga, being a quick observer of the popular issues on which he often draws his purpose, ponders upon various issues pertaining to alcohol and the manner in which it is considered by the Mizo people as a ‘grave sin’. In one of his writings that bears the title “Zu/Alcohol”, Vanneihluanga begins his constructive criticism by highlighting that “the presence and existence of alcohol dates back to the Neolithic period, 10,000 years before the birth of Christ which has been accounted by various archaeologists.” (Vanneihluanga, “Zu/Alcohol”, translation mine). The writing states the dire necessity for Mizo people to change their mentality towards the subject of alcohol in particular, to have a careful thinking about “responsible drinking” instead of simply considering alcohol as a “grave sin”. “During the twentieth century, Mizos have failed with the teaching “Do not consume alcohol”. In the twenty first century, we are beginning a step towards the instruction of ‘responsible drinking’ by professing that “It is better not to consume alcohol, but if you cannot help drinking please note that...” (*Suangtuahna/Fantasy* 154, translation mine). The writing articulates various instructions which can be followed by a person in order to become a ‘responsible drinker’, it mentions about how ‘excessive consumption’ of alcohol leads to various health problems, not to consume alcohol to face certain problems, not to turn oneself into a nuisance as a result of the heavy intake of alcohol. This piece of writing can be considered as one of the first writings in the literary scene of the Mizos that depicts the necessity of

‘responsible drinking’. This is the point where the writings of Vanneihluanga can be closely drawn to the theme of New Historicism, in that the Mizo people have so long been under the influence of the Welsh missionaries who merely taught them that alcohol is a ‘grave sin’ and never regarded themselves smart enough to become a ‘responsible drinker’. Said writes: “Many of the most interesting postcolonial writers bear their past within them – as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices – as urgently reinterpretable and redeployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the empire...” (*Orientalism*, 34-5). The writer feels the need to bury the past and a new history begins with this article that the Mizos too are capable of consuming a small amount of alcohol and not be intoxicated. He is under the urge to overthrow the imperial hegemony, heal the psychological wounds and make the Mizos find their own voice. Vanneihluanga brings forth the truth that though alcohol has been banned in the state for nearly two decades, there are a great number of Mizos who cannot help consuming alcohol, and that it is the need of the hour to teach the people of Mizoram that alcohol can be consumed wisely and responsibly. “Significant satire deals with reality, not wishfulness, and it cannot successfully or permanently pervert the truth. The satirist who expresses unpopular views has no social effect, no matter how entertaining he may be” (Feignberg). Vanneihluanga is at his best while attempting to be in tune with the times and ethos of Mizo society.

Dustin Griffin has made a clear statement about his understanding of conventional satiric theory by expressing that the consensus of theorists who published their work around 1960 holds that the satirist operates in a world of clear standards and boundaries. He has pointed out the statement made by John Bullit that “Satire can become a vital

form of literature only when there is a fairly widespread agreement about what man ought to be. The satirists needs the convictions that fixed intellectual ideas or norms can give him, the assurance that he will receive understanding from his readers...Satire is best able to develop from a basis of general agreement on moral and intellectual standards” (Bullitt). Accordingly, the satirist is quite certain of his own moral position; he also assumes such certainty in his readers. Themes of Christianity and identity are extensively predominant in the satirical writings of Vanneihluanga by attacking the follies that are inherent in the lives of Mizo Christians. Joy L.K. Pachuau has commented that “the Mizos understand their identity to be inextricably linked to their Christianity...The collective consciousness of the Mizos, I believe, actively propagates a ‘Mizo Christianity’...There is another aspect to this Christian-ness, which has not always been highlighted. This is the way in which society organizes itself around the church as an institution and operates in accordance with the values defined and inculcated by the church, beyond what is generally called Christian ‘ethics’. Respectability, honour, propriety, hierarchy, and so on, are idioms expressed through the institutionalized church in Mizoram. A family that is seen to be closely associated with the Church and its activities is respected much more than those who do not show as much interest.” (Pachuau, 137-146). Vanneihluanga often satirizes Mizo society by highlighting the contrast between the cherished ideals of Christianity and the actual day-to-day practice of the Mizo Christians. In a state where the ideals of Christianity are expounded so prominently in the Holy Bible and has been taught every Sunday, the people are expected to live up to the precepts denoted in the same. On the contrary, as Vanneihluanga time and again points out, the Mizo Christians are the stark materialists

and can be more materialistic no less than any other society. This is the reason why, at most times, money and official position count far more than any spiritual height or achievement in Mizoram. These type of social vices that plagued the morality of the Mizo Christians are clearly brought out in “Thunderbird” where the protagonist of the narrative is portrayed as a man who suffers physical and mental torments at the hands of higher authorities. The writer touches upon the issue with a common figure of the time: shallowness of Christianity, and the hypocritical nature of many Mizo Christians. The protagonist in “Thunderbird” has further given a poignant narration of his sufferings at the hands of higher authority which clearly reflects the widening gap between the haves and the haves-not:

Even before I was in any fit state to forgive those who had nearly killed me, their families had already announced to the papers that I, a good Christian, had forgiven them. It must be true, for I am one of those who spend a month’s salary on drinks alone, one whom religious counselors see as “evil incarnate.” In my full senses I don’t recall forgiving anybody, unless, when lying half-dead by the roadside and well on my way to hell, I had metamorphosed into such a good Christian that I had perhaps forgiven my tormentors in a delirium. Unless such a thing had taken place, I don’t ever recall being a good Christian.

But their emissaries politely said, ”...they’re moneyed and you’ll never beat them in court. Therefore, forgive them while they ask for it. Besides, they intend to give you a large sum of money as well. Don’t you think this will be better for your wife and children?” Of course no one said outright, “You’ll be beaten black and blue if you don’t comply.” But I felt the implied threat nonetheless and so

magnanimously gave my pardon. (Vanneihluanga, "Thunderbird", translated by Margaret Ch. Zama, *Neihfaka Rilbawm*, 1-2)

Vanneihluanga, like other satirists, is nonetheless armed with moral certainty and as Kernan puts it, the satirist "sees the world as a battlefield between a definite, clearly understood good, which he represents, and an equally clear-cut evil. No ambiguities, no doubts about himself, no sense of mystery troubles him, and he retains always his monolithic certainty" (Kernan, *Cankered Muse*, 21-22). It follows that general satire, aimed at large segments of people, must presuppose and approve of the morals in a widely spread value system. When these values are at odds with behavior, the satirist tries to bring them back in line again or at least prevent the gap from widening. If the lip service values no longer exist in the society, there is no hope for correction in the satiric mode--when the hypocrisy is gone and people are openly gathering vices without opposition, the satirist must either cease writing or be content with merely a satiric record of his disapproval:

An in-depth study of the select narratives by Vanneihluanga brings out the evident truth that satire does not only belong to one particular society. Satire has spread far and wide in the writings of many cultures across the globe, dealing mainly with the common theme of attacking human vices and follies through the various techniques of satire. At present, satire is much a part of Mizo literature and the reading public of Mizos are also aware of its powerful presence in the realm of literature. Vanneihluanga is one of the Mizo writers who open the forum for readers to understand and delve deeper into the dynamics of satire, and in doing so, he makes the readers experience the pleasure that satire has in store for them. "When we read satire, we sometimes are



encouraged to indulge in fantasies with grandiose scenarios, from retaliation against oppression to the extermination of all our enemies...or the special and exquisite delight of standing alone and defiant against a cruel, dull, or corrupt world...Sometimes satirist are motivated by straightforward anger or hatred...sometimes their motives may be more complex.” (Griffin, 164) The complexities of the resulting effect of satire is the reason behind its appeal that many writers and readers find it difficult to do away with. It is also interesting to note that satire, like all other forms of literature, is designed to please, though it has often been regarded as displeasing, harsh, obscure, malignant, and even pessimistic. “By reading satire, one can see the ubiquity of social problems and the continuity of social criticism. He may develop a sensitivity to subtlety. He will be constantly reminded that the conventional picture of the world is, to varying degrees, a false picture. Such reappraisal is refreshing and stimulating and healthy. These things good satire achieves. They are not mean achievements.” (Feignberg, 27). The writings of Vanneihluanga clearly suggest that satire is an universal aspect within the realm of literature. The same problems, vices and follies that he has exposed about the Mizo society are also found in other societies. Thus, satire can act as a significant tool in expressing the popular culture of a particular society which has been closely examined by the satirist.

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## **APPENDICES**

<b><u>NAME OF CANDIDATE</u></b>	<b>:Ramdinmawii</b>
<b><u>DEGREE</u></b>	<b>:Ph.D</b>
<b><u>DEPARTMENT</u></b>	<b>:English</b>
<b><u>TITLE OF THESIS</u></b>	<b>:Locating Satire: A Study of Select Narratives by Vanneihluanga</b>
<b><u>DATE OF PAYMENT OF ADMISSION</u></b>	<b>:01/08/2012</b>
<b>(Commencement of First Sem)</b>	
<b><u>REGISTRATION NO. &amp; DATE</u></b>	<b>:MZU/Ph.D. / 555 of 07/05/2013</b>
<b><u>DUE DATE OF SUBMISSION</u></b>	<b>:Dt. 07/05/2018</b>
<b><u>EXTENSION IF ANY</u></b>	<b>:N/A</b>
<b><u>DATE OF VIVA VOCE</u></b>	<b>:17/08/2018</b>
<b><u>DATE OF SUBMISSION</u></b>	<b>:23/08/2018</b>

**Head**

**Department of English**

## BIO-DATA

**Name** : **Ramdinmawii**  
**Father's Name** : **Lianrikhuma**  
**Address** : **K-3, Republic Veng, Aizawl.**  
**Phone No.** : **08131826280**  
**Designation** : **Research Scholar, Department of English, Mizoram University.**

### Educational Qualifications:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Board/University</b>	<b>Year of Passing</b>	<b>Division/Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
HSLC	MBSE	2003	Distinction	76%
HSSLC	ISC	2005	First	64.5%
B.A	Calcutta University	2008	Second	45%
M.A	Mizoram University	2010	Second	57.56%
M.PHIL	Mizoram University	2012	“A” Grade	6.36 Grade Points

**Ph.D Regn. No. and Date:** MZU/Ph.D. / 555 of 07.05.2013

**Other relevant information:**

List of Publications:

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Title of Chapter/ Research paper</b>	<b>Name of book/journal</b>	<b>Publication details (Place/Publishers) with ISBN/ISSN</b>
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