

**A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIZO LITERARY  
CRITICISM**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
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A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIZO LITERARY  
CRITICISM

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## CERTIFICATE

Certified that the thesis entitled “*A Study of the Development of Mizo Literary Criticism*” submitted by F.Lalzuithanga for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Mizo embodies the results of his investigations carried out under my supervision and that, to the best of my knowledge, the same has not been submitted for award of any degree in this or any other University or Institute of Higher learning.

The candidate has been duly registered and has fulfilled all the required norms laid down under the Ph. D. Regulations of Mizoram University.

I consider the work worthy of being submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mizo.

Dated Aizawl  
the 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2025

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# DECLARATION

Mizoram University

June, 2025

I F.Lalzuithanga, 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 basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/ Institute.

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

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

When the origin and development of Mizo literature traced, the written literature in the Mizo language is quite recent when it comes to its history. Before Christian missionaries arrived in the late nineteenth century, the majority of Mizo literature was oral. Because the script was lost, Mizo literature passed down orally has no written tradition. The Mizo people owned parchment, but they used it as to cover a *sum*, and the dog ate and it all gone. Therefore, prior to the advent of Christianity, the Mizo had no written language of their own and all knowledge were handed down orally from one generation to the next. Lost manuscripts resulted in the loss of numerous Mizo folktales, folksongs, and narratives rather than the loss of literature per se. Lalitluangliana Kiangte states the lost manuscripts of the Mizo like that-

In their legendary parchment, the forefathers of the Mizos claimed that they had recorded something in black and white, which however, eaten up by a hungry stray dog since it was carelessly kept in the porch. So, there is no writing that can be read before the advent of the British in the last part of the nineteenth century.

*(Writings in Mizo Manuscripts 2).*

Before the advent of Christianity and the *Zosap* missionaries, the beginning of the Mizo written literature was initiated with the works and publications of Thangliana (TH Lewin)'s *Progressive Colloquial Exercise in the Lushai Dialect of 'Dzo' or Kuki Language, with Vocabularies and Popular Tales* in the year 1874 (*History of Mizo Literature*, 82). Thangliana had written a good number of Mizo words and vocabularies (Lushai-English dictionary of 1256 Mizo vocabularies, English-Lushai dictionary of 1105 English vocabularies) including Mizo three folks tales in this book. Therefore, "it seems that this book is the first ever written document on the Lushai (Mizo) language" and also "claim the existence of any Mizo literature prior to that year, i.e.1874" (*Writings in Mizo Manuscripts 2*).

In addition to the aforementioned study and contribution by Thangliana, additional significant works and publications by British officers occurred, such as Brojo Nath Shaha's *Grammar of the Lushai Language*, 1884 and CA Soppit's *Rangkhoh-Kuki-Lushai Grammar*, 1885 & *A Short Account of the Kuki-Lushai Tribes in the North-East Frontier District of Cachar*, 1887 and OA Chambers' *Hand Book of the Lushai Country*, 1889. Thus, prior to the arrival of the pioneering *Zosap* missionaries who developed and standardized the Mizo alphabet in Roman script, all these efforts paved the path for Mizo literature to begin its march as written literature. Then, "the subsequent literary works done by Christian missionaries ushered in the growth and development of Mizo language and literature," (*Mizo Language and Literature: Emergence and Development* 129).

Most of the publications and literary works done by the *Zosap* missionaries like Pu Buanga (JH Lorrain), Sapupa (FW Savidge), Zosaphluia (DE Jones), Zosaphara (Edwin Rowlands), Pu Mena (EL Mendus), FJ Sandy, JM Lloyd and many more, were related to the religious teaching like Christian literature and educational purpose like textbooks. 'Mizo Zirtir Bu' (A Lushai Primer), the first book in Mizo language was published in 1895 followed by 'Zirtan bu' (Primer) and 'Zawhna leh Chhana' (Questions and Answers) in 1896. The first translated Gospel according to St. Luke was published in 1895, followed by St. John and the Acts of the Apostle in 1898. The first hymn 'Isua vanah a om a' was composed in 1895, followed by the publication of the first hymn book 'Kristian Hla Bu' which contained eighteen hymns in 1899. 'Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai Language', another Lorrain's great work was published in 1898. Another important work like 'Mizo leh Vai Thon Thu' was collected and published by Tarmita (J. Shakespear) in the year 1898. No need to mention here all the lists of their literary works by the *Zosap* missionaries. But their works and contributions cannot be over-emphasized and praiseworthy due to a number of literary works they could produce within a short period of times that paved the way for the development of Mizo literature in written form. From a humble beginning, as it may be said to be in its infant stage, the literary works of the *Zosap* missionaries greatly helped the Mizo language and literature to flourish; and the Mizo literature over the years witnessed a steady growth with a hard work, commitment and dedication rendered by the *Zosap* missionaries.

The foundation for Mizo literature was created by the pioneering British officers and *Zosap* missionaries, and it was built by early Mizo literates and men of letters starting at the turn of the twentieth century. Among the forefather of the Mizo literature, Thanga, R.Dala and Vanchhunga were the first Mizo who contributed their hymns in *Kristian Hla Bu* in 1904



edition (*Mizo Poetry 72 & Leikhabu Ramtiam 128*). ‘Pathian Leikhabu Chanchin’ (The Bible Stories) translated by Challiana and Sapupa was published in 1910. In the same year, Chuaatera translated John Banyan’s *Pilgrim Progress* in Mizo with the title of *Kristian Vanram Kawng Zawh* .

Liangkhaia published the first important individual work *Mizo Chanchin* in 1938. “After Liangkhaia, books on Mizo history and cultures were then written by Vanchhunga, VL Siana, Zatluanga, Hrangthiauva, K.Zawla, Thanga, Lalhmuaka, James Dokhuma, Lalthanliana and others are making remarkable efforts till today” (*Tribal Culture, Folklore & Literature 139*).

The first Mizo novel *Hawilopari*, written by L.Biakliana, son of Liangkhaia was appeared in the year 1936. Biakliana also wrote the Mizo first short story called *Lali* in 1937. The third Mizo novel *Chhingpuii* was written by Kaphleia in 1939. Lalzuithanga wrote a number of fictions like *Thlahrang*, *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, *Aukhawk Lasi*, *Khawfing Chat*, *Eng Dan Nge Ni?* and other literary compositions during 1940s. Capt.C.Khuma *Maymyo Sanapui*, wrote in 1946 and published in 1950 and C.Thuamluaia utopian fictions *Engtin Awm Ta Zel Ang Maw?* and *Sialton Official* also appeared during 1950s.

Even though, the first printed play *Sangi Inleng* in Mizo appeared lately in 1963, the Mizo dramatists and playwrights like Ch.Pasena, Lalkailuia, Chawngzika, Lalzuithanga, Lalhmuaka, Lalthangfala Sailo, Khawlkungi, James Dokhuma, H. Lalsiana, K.Saibela, Liansailova and Laltluangliana Khiangte made a good and significance contributions to the development of Mizo drama from the ‘budding period’ to the ‘flowering period’ (*Mizo Drama 32*).

In the works of prose writings like essay and other critical writings, Kaphleia, C.Thuamluaia, Zikpuii pa, J.Malsawma, JF Laldailova, Siamkima Khawhring, Dengchhuana, R.Zuala, Darchhawna, L.Keivom, RL Thanamwia, Laltluangliana Khiangte and other younger generations have had contributed a great deal to the field till today.

According to Laltluangliana Khiangte, “the first batch of poet-cum-hymn writers” Awithang-pa, Thanga and Liangkhaia “have to be considered as the first batch of poet-cum-hymn writers and they may be considered as the early Three Zo-Pillars (Zo Lungthu hmasa pathum) in the history of Mizo literature” (*Tribal Culture, Folklore & Literature 141*) because these three poets “made extensive impact for other writers who followed them at

their heels like L.Siamliana, RL Kamlala, Hrawva and Damhauhva in 1920s” (*Writings in Manuscripts* 10).

Several poets and song writers like Patea, CZ Huala, Lalmama, Liandala. Chhuana, Vankhama, Rokunga, L. Biakliana, Kaphleia, Lalzuithanga, Laltanpuia, V.Hawla, PS Chawngthu, Nuchhungi and others contributed to the enrichment of Mizo poetry during 1920s to 1950s.

“A close examination of Mizo poetry shows that most of the poems began with a sort of self-expression or out-pouring of a single emotion...It is a fact that the major bulk of Mizo poems, ancient or contemporary are lyrical in nature...However, almost all the Mizo poems are in blank verse and there is no regular stanza although there is a kind of rhyme scheme in some of the poems...some scholar may like to call it songs instead of poems,” (*An Introduction to Mizo Literature* 23).

The first Mizo journal “Mizo Chanchin Laishuih” (The Highlander’s News) was a handwritten, cyclostyled tabloid that was published in 1898. A monthly regular journal called “Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Leikhabu” was published in November 1902 till it ended in 1941. Then, from 1911 till the present, “Kristian Tlangau”, a monthly mouthpiece of the Presbyterian Church has been published without interruption. “LSA Chanchinbu”, later renamed “MZP Chanchinbu” was started in 1938. Particularly in the early stages of literary development, all those periodical journals and magazines have helped to shape and contribute to Mizo literature.

The development of Mizo literature was evolved from oral to written literature stage, gradually develop from its infant stage to attain greater height in maturity, maintain its steady and considerable growth with a new and younger generation of Mizo writers emerged, all of whom made significant contributions to the field of Mizo literature. Today, the Mizo literature has greatly developed and a large number of literary books are published every year. The number of critical works rose along with the number of literary books. As there is progress in Mizo literature, there is progress in Mizo literary criticism too. The more it was understood the meaning and nature of literature, the more it become more involved in criticism. That has led to the development of criticism in Mizo literature.

## Literature and Criticism

Literature is an expression of ideas and thoughts. As the Bible says in Gospel according to Apostle John, chapter 1, verses 1 and 4, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word as with God, and the Word as God...In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind”, the word means the ideas and thoughts and the word simple means ‘Literature’. God is the ‘Creator or Author’ of literature because he was the originator of ideas and thoughts. Just as there is life in the word, literature has life, and that life is the light of mankind! And Criticism brings that light of literature and however, criticism is the one that brings light to the life of literature as well.

The word inside a man and the idea and the innermost thoughts of man are expressed in various ways through art form like poetry, drama and fiction. Art is basically a creation, the product of man and created through inventive powers like imagination and fancy, the two faculty of mind which are gifted to the artists. As Aristotle defined arts as an imaginative representation of reality, art imitates life, so all arts are imitative. What the painter creates with his paints, the same is created by the poet by means of words. And art is a representation of life that is imaginatively conceived and imaginatively expressed. The artist tries to produce the beauty in the object, imitates it and communicates it to others by means of art. So, the business of art is to show life as it looks in ideal hues and colours.

Literature is an art of writing by means of words. Literature is the reflections and expressions of life and deals with human hopes, joys, sorrows, desires, struggle, conflicts and aspirations. A great human feeling, experiences, thoughts and life is a source of literature; hence, no life, no literature. Literature deals with life but it is not a mere imitation of life. It is an imaginative representation of life and reality. As Hudson says, “Literature is the vital record of what men have seen in life, what they experienced, what they have thought and felt about those aspect of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally and expression our life through the medium of language,” (*An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, 10). Therefore, literature is an expression of life through the medium of language and it is the life and language that give concrete shape to literature. If literature deals life and an imaginative works interprets life through literature, literary criticism may be called to be an ‘interpretation of that interpretation’. The creative artist understands, interprets and exposes life; the literary critic understands, interprets and exposes the piece of art. Literary criticism asks what literature is, what it does, and what it is

worth. Literary criticism is the studying, defining, analysing, classifying, interpreting and evaluating the works of literature.

According to Vilas Salunke, “Literature is related to two other humanistic discipline: Philosophy and History. Philosophy explores basic, general ideas, such as truth, beauty and goodness. History attempts to ascertain what happened in the past and why it happened...The realm of literature is occupied by activities of three distinct powers: the power to create, the power to enjoy and the power to criticize. The chief distinction of the power to criticize from the other two is that it can be acquired.” (*Basic of Literary Criticism, I & 4*) and thus, we may call the ‘power to criticize’ literature is literary criticism. As Socrates said, ‘The life which is unexamined is not worth living,’ and hence analysis or examination increase awareness and understanding of life and it enhance our ability to analyse, understand and appreciation of artistic craftsmanship. It can be said that there is no work of art which is not preceded by criticism. Just as literature is the consciousness of life, criticism is the consciousness of literature. That is why, criticism cannot exist without literature and literature comes first, criticism next.

It is said that ‘Literary creation is almost as old as human history and literary criticism nearly as old as literature’ (*English Literary Criticism and Theory, 1*). In fact, the history of literary criticism runs parallel to the history of literature. Literature deals directly with life whereas literary criticism deals directly with a literary works like poetry, drama, novel and criticism itself from a theoretical framework. “If creative literature may be defined as an interpretation of life under the various forms of literary art, critical literature (literary criticism) may be defined as an interpretation of that interpretation and of the forms of art through which it is given,” (*An Introduction to the Study of Literature, 261*).

Literature and literary criticism are going hand in hand; they cannot be separated from each other. It is like the front and back face of the same coin. Literature cannot survive without literary criticism as well as literary criticism cannot exist without literature. It is said that ‘*There is no literature without criticism and there can be no criticism without literature*’. So, literature and criticism co-exists. It means that literary criticism is not outside literature, but within it. It is no more a supplement of creative activity, but by producing literature of its own becomes a kind of art form a ‘para-literature’, which is a mixture of creative and critical writing (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory, 4*).

In a sense, literary criticism indeed twin-born with literary creation, for all creation involves, in the sphere of art, the more or less conscious perception and selection of what is essential and contributes significantly to the beauty, power or truth of the resultant piece of art, and the rejection of all else. The silent operation of the critical sensibility of the creative artist is an inevitable. Thus, it becomes one of the major tasks of the literary critic to articulate what remains silent during the process of creation. In this sense, criticism is not a late birth of the creative spirit but is connate with it and guides and governs its operation (Mundhra & Agarwal, *Principles & History of Literary Criticism*, 3).

### Meaning and Definition of Criticism

Etymologically, the word 'Criticism' is derived from Greek verb *Krinei* which means 'to judge, to decide' and other related term in Greek words are *Krei*- 'discriminate/distinguish' and *Krisis*- 'judgement, a result of a trial'; and the Greek term *Kritikos* means 'a judge of literature' (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 339 & *English Literary Criticism and Theory*, 1).

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Criticism is "the act of expressing disapproval or something and opinions about their faults or bad qualities; a statement showing disapproval; the work or activity of making fair, careful judgements about the good and bad qualities of something, especially books etc" (362). Hence, "Criticism is the exercise of judgement, and literary criticism is the exercise of judgement on works of literature" (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1).

Therefore, the one who is skilled in judging or "a person who expresses opinions about the good and bad qualities of books, etc" (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 361) and "a person who judges the merits of literary or artistic work," (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 339) is known as 'Critic' in English. The word critic came from 'Kritikos (able to discern or judge)' or *Kritos/Krites* (Judge) in Greek and *Criticus* (Judge or decider)' in Latin (*Thu leh Hla Thlitfimna Lam*, 9).

According to Satish Kumar, "A critic is an ideal judge and reader who bring to bear a trained judgement on whatever he reads. He rationally and intellectually examines a works of art or literature and, then, passes his judgement about its worth and merit," (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1).

The Greek term for 'Criticism' originated as early as the Fourth century B.C. The English word 'Criticism' comes from the French *Critique* (analysis and assessment) based on Greek term *kritike tekhnē* ((*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 340) around Fourteenth Century and the word 'Criticism' first made its appearance in English in the early Seventeenth Century by John Dryden in the now accepted sense of 'any formal discussion of imaginative Literature'. In the preface to *The State of Innocence* he writes, "Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well". Criticism is, thus, distinct from creation and enjoyment and consists in asking and answering rational questions about literature (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1).

According to *Literary Terms: A Dictionary*, Criticism is "evaluation of literary works, including classification by genre, analysis of structure, and judgement of value," (*Beckson & Ganz*, 51).

According to *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, "Criticism is the critical assessment of a literary or artistic work," (340).

According to *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language*, "Criticism is the art of judging or evaluation with knowledge and propriety the beauties and faults of works of art or literature" (130).

According to *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, by Criticism means "the art of judging and defining the qualities and merits of literary or artistic work. Each age has its critics, who, by setting standard and affecting tastes, influence the work produced by artists and writers," (46).

Hence, we can simply say that criticism is the exercise of judgement on works of literature. So, 'Criticism is the play of the mind on a work of literature, and its function is to examine its excellences and defects, and finally to evaluate its artistic worth' (*History and principles*, 1) and judgement of its value.

According to *Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia*, "Literary Criticism is -discipline concerned with philosophical, descriptive, and evaluative inquiries about literature, including what literature is, what it does, and what it is worth". ("Literary Criticism". *Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia*. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008).

Literary criticism includes “evaluation, assessment, appraisal, appreciation, analysis, critique, judgement, commentary” (*Oxford Thesaurus Current English*, 100) and thus, it becomes “the branch of study concerned with defining, classifying, expounding, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating works of Literature” (*Classical to Contemporary Lit. Theory, 2 & A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 37).

The following definitions of literary criticism are stated by some literary critics:

“Criticism as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well, the chiefest part of which is to observe those excellences which should delight a reasonable person.” (John Dryden)

“Criticism is the play of the mind on the aesthetic qualities of literature, having for its object an interpretation of literary values.” (J.W.H. Atkins)

“Criticism is a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.” (Matthew Arnold)

“The true critic will dwell on excellences rather than imperfections.” (Joseph Addison)

“Criticism busies itself, with the goodness or badness, the success or ill-success, of literature from the purely literary point of view.” (Saintsbury)

“Criticism is a published analysis of the qualities and characteristics of a work in literature or fine art.” (Edmund Gosse)

“Criticism is the art of interpreting art. It serves as an intermediary between the author and the reader by explaining the one to the other.” (Walter Pater)

“Criticism is the commendations and exposition of works of art by means of written words. The end of criticism is the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste.” (T.S.Eliot)

“Criticism stands like an interpreter between the inspired and the uninspired; between the prophet and those who hear the melody of his words, and catch some glimpse of their material meaning, but understand not in deeper import.” (Thomas Carlyle)

“True criticism in itself is an organic part of the whole activity of art. Just as art is the consciousness of life so criticism is the consciousness of art.” (John Middleton Murry)

“Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the feeling produced upon critic by the book he is criticizing...We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and vital emotion and nothing else.” (D.H.Lawrence)

“Criticism is the exercise of judgment in the province of art and literature.” (B. Worsfold)

“Literary criticism is a form of literature, a critical study of literature through freedom of thought and reflection,” (Siamkima Khawlhing)

The different views of definitions above, throw light on the nature and functions of literary criticism. Raghukul Tilak expressed clearly his viewed on due to such diversity of definitions occur in the following ways:

Such diversity of views clearly brings out the complex nature of criticism and its functions. As a matter of fact, the view of criticism has varied from critic to critic and age to age. There are as many theories of criticism as there are critics. This is so because the attitude towards criticism is determined by a number of factors. It is determined, first of all, by the accidents of personal organization...The view of criticism is directly related to the critic's own intellectual preoccupation and his philosophy or outlook on life.

Secondly, the theory of criticism is closely connected with the theory of poetry. Therefore, the idea of criticism varies in accordance with the idea of literature.

Thirdly, critical theories are closely connected with the spirit of the age-the intellectual and moral environments in which the critic lives and has his being.

*(History and principles of Literary Criticism, 2)*

## Foundation of Literary Criticism

According to MS Nagarajan, “Literary Criticism encompasses three distinguishable fields of inquiry- literary history, literary theory and literary criticism,” (*English Literary Criticism, 2*).

Literary history is concerned with describing and explaining the expression in literature of a people during a period of time, in a place, in a language as part of history



Literary theory, which lay down principles of literature, its categories, criteria and describe features and forms of literature that make up a literary work.

Literary criticism, a practical application of literary theory, dealing with studying, interpreting, evaluating, appreciating literary work directly from a theoretical framework.

Each field of inquiry is an independent form of enquiry on one hand. But on the other hand, they are interdependent of each other while gaining knowledge from each other. Literary history can aid in understanding the purpose of individual author and can make comparison in assessing the totality of their achievements and their development understand and appreciated with some knowledge of their time. Nagarajan clearly stated the interdependence of literary history and literary criticism. He said that literary history and literary criticism enrich each other, and there can be no separation between the two because without an adequate knowledge of historical relationships of the texts, a critic is likely to go astray in his judgement.

Literary criticism and literary theory are also closely related to each other. *The John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* makes no distinction between literary theory and criticism and always describes them as the same concept (*Classical to Contemporary*, 2). Literary theory is the lens used to analyse literature. When literary theory has an application orientation it becomes literary criticism. Therefore, literary theory and criticism interacts each other and all integrated in literary studies. They are no more parasitical disciplines.

Therefore, when we talk about criticism, we cannot neglect the other field of inquiry: literary theory and literary history. Without acknowledging the literary history, we cannot clearly and rightly elucidate the life and times of the author. Likewise, we cannot go through the general ideas, theme, value and beauty of literary work, without the help of literary theory. All these three field of inquiry are interrelated, connected, and important for doing literary criticism. No clear line can be drawn between them because they refer continually to each other.

There are three cornerstone of literary criticism. Literary criticism was laid upon these foundations of literary criticism:-

Creative Mind- creating, making and inventing ideas.

Critical Thinking- being sceptical, reasonable, reflective and logical thinking about ontological literature.

Curiosity – asking and answering rational questions about literature.

Curiosity is basic to human activity, accompanied by creative mind and critical thinking. As the saying goes, ‘*The beginning of wisdom is wonder*’, the beginning of criticism is also curiosity. Criticism takes its origin from Philosophy. Philosophy is ‘search for beginning’ and ‘love of wisdom’. Criticism consists in asking rational questions about literature and answering them. Curiosity raises questions pertaining to art and offers some opinions on how to judge works of art.

Criticism enables man who have the creative power to make the most intelligent and efficient use of his creative mind. It also enables man to distinguish the ability to create and the ability to criticize literature. It has become apparent that the critical faculty is not subjugated to the creative one. While critical thinking can be acquired, a creative mind is considered to be inherent or innate. The process of productive thinking that skilfully combines creative and critical thinking could be called critical thinking.

Critical thinking is knowing how to do it, and deciding that you will do it, which requires motivation and do it consistently. Critical thinking promotes creativity. To come up with a creative solution to a problem involves not just having new ideas. It must be that the new ideas being generated are useful and relevant to the task at hand. Critical thinking plays a crucial role in evaluating new ideas, selecting the best ones and modifying them if necessary. Critical thinking is crucial for self-reflection. In order to live a meaningful life and to structure our lives accordingly, we need to justify and reflect on our values and decisions. Critical thinking provides the tools for this process of self-evaluation.

Alec Fisher states that “Critical thinking is sometimes referred to as ‘critico-creative’ thinking....critical thinking is a kind of evaluative thinking-which involves both criticism and creative thinking- and which is particularly concerned with the quality of reasoning or argument which is presented in support of a belief or a course of action...” (*Critical Thinking An Introduction*, 13) and also states the standard of critical thinking like “Clarity, relevance, adequacy, coherence....critical thinking requires the interpretation and evaluations, communications and other sources of information,” (14).

Creative mind is a process that contributes to, or assists in fostering creativity, and tries to create something new, that is literature; while critical thinking seeks to assess worth or validity in something that exists, it is a capacity to work with complex ideas whereby a person can make effective provision of evidence to justify a reasonable judgement, and that is called Criticism.

### Functions of Literary Criticism

“The evaluation of literary works, including classification by genre, analysis of structure, and judgement of value” (*Literary Terms*, 51) are the functions of literary criticism. Therefore, there are three main functions of literary criticism- the function of explanation, the function of interpretation and the function of judgement. If judgement be the real end of criticism for as conceived by majority of critics; interpretation would be a means to that end. William Hudson states that “The chief function of criticism is to enlighten and stimulate,”(*An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, 266).

Therefore, the main functions of literary criticism should be as states in the following way:

Literary criticism is the play of the mind on a work of literature and it consists in asking and answering rational questions about literature. Such an inquiry may be directed either *first* towards literature in general leading to a better understanding of the nature and value literature, and a better appreciation of the pleasure proper to literature. Such an inquiry by helping us to think rightly about literature, enables us to gain the fullest enjoyment from it... Thus, evaluation, interpretation, and explanation or elucidation are now considered as the chief functions of literary criticism

(*Literary Forms, Trends and Movement*, 171-173)

The primary function of Literary Criticism is the interpretation of literature. As Carlyle had already stated that ‘criticism stand like an interpreter’ and Critic stand like ‘a prophet’; literary critics explain the full meaning and value of a work of art to readers who cannot catch and grasp it without his help. He interprets its meaning and elucidates its artistic and aesthetic excellences to the reader. “Thus, by explaining, unfolding, illuminating, he

shows us what the book really is in its entirety,” (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism*, 3).

It is said that Literature simply means an ‘interpretation of life’ and Criticism is an interpretation of that interpretation. Therefore, one of the main function of criticism is to enlighten and stimulated by the proper interpretation of the works of literature, its form, genres, themes, and so on.

Walter Pater aptly said that ‘*Criticism is the art of interpreting art*’. So, the function of interpretation is an important function of literary criticism.

One of the other main functions of literary criticism is evaluation of the works of art or literature. When the critic attempts to judge the value of a work of art or literature, he can be said to have evaluated the work. Evaluations of the works of literature help to judge the merits, values and worth of that literature. Literary criticism is the exercise of judgement on works of literature. To examine the merits and demerits and finally to evaluate the artistic worth, is the function of criticism. Thus, literary criticism is the study, discussion, evaluation, and interpretation of literature. Literary criticism is the evaluation of literary works. This includes its classification by genre, structure, and judgement of value.

According to T.G. Williams, “The function of literary critic is the evaluation of what has been written, in terms of aesthetic principles appropriate to literature,” (*The Nature and Function of Literary Criticism*, 6).

Etymologically, the word criticism signifies ‘judgement’ and, criticism, in its strict sense of meaning, is also judgement. So, the chief and primary function of criticism is judgement of literature. The primary function of a literary critic is to arrive at and pronounce a meaningful judgement of value.

In this regard, B. Prasad states that “Throughout the Seventeen and Eighteen centuries the critic was looked upon as a judge with no other than to pronounce upon the faults or merits of a work, in accordance with a whole code of laws framed to guide him in his task. This idea still exists,” (*A Background to the Study of English Literature*, 241).

Rene Welleck says that, “Literary criticism is judgement of books, reviewing and finally the definition of taste, of the tradition, of what is a classic,” (*The Nature and Function of Literary Criticism*, 5).

Therefore, it is rightly refer with the verse of Alexander Pope:

*“A perfect judge will read each work of wit*

*With the same spirit that its author writ”.*

*(An Essay on Criticism, 40)*

## Approaches of Literary Criticism

There are different approaches and types of literary criticism. The following is a formal classification of some of the more important modes of literary criticism.

### Legislative Criticism

Legislative criticism is the earliest form of criticism. It provides rules and prescriptions for the guidance of the creative writers. It teaches the writers how to write creatively and laid down canons, rules, formulae of literary composition and that is why, it assumes that the critic is the law giver. This kind of criticism was practice during the Elizabethans and during the neo-classical period and died in the course of seventeen century with Dryden representing the point of change.

### Judicial Criticism

Judicial criticism seeks to pronounce judgement on work of literature on the basis of certain rules and in the light of a set of rules which have been generally derived from ancient Greek and Latin master, specially writers like Aristotle and Horace. 'If a work is found to adhere to these rules it is good, if not it is condemned as worthless'. Works were not considered on their own individual and distinctive merits and writers were not assessed on the basis of their performance, but on the basis of their adherence to the well-known classical rules of literary composition. Dr. Johnson may be regarded as the most powerful exponent of this kind of criticism.

### Theoretical Criticism

Theoretical criticism deals with literary aesthetics and it is also known as Aesthetic criticism. It studies the general principles of artistic beauty and truth underlying in a work of art. Instead of dealing with particular works, as the New Critics did, theoretical criticism

treats literature as an art and formulates principles concerning the nature of poetic truth and nature of creative art. This method of criticism was practiced by Phillip Sidney in his *Apology for Poetry*, followed principles of aesthetic by Dryden, Addison, Coleridge, Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde in their consideration of literature and initiated this method with their school of art known as 'Art's for Art's sake'.

#### Descriptive Criticism

Descriptive criticism is an art of analysing literary works that already exist, of their aims, methods and effects. This method is based on discussion, analysis, interpretation and appreciation of individual literary works. Descriptive criticism is directed to the readers while legislative criticism addresses to the writers. The most exponents of descriptive criticism is the poets themselves, who have analysed their own works with a view to explaining their aims and methods. Ben Jonson was the pioneer of this method.

#### Historical Criticism

Historical criticism begins with the idea that literature is an expression of society and examines a work of literature with reference to its social milieu. It assumes that all works of arts are historical objects and they cannot be treated as autonomous and self-explanatory. A literary artist works under the pressure of the age in which he lives and his works cannot properly be estimated without an understanding of the social, economics, religious, political and literary events and trends which impinged upon the writer. Therefore, historical criticism tries to explain a work of art taking into account all the various factors which influenced the mind of the writer.

#### Biographical Criticism

Biographical criticism seeks to evaluate a work on the basis of the facts of the life of its author. A detailed study is made of his family background, ancestry, friends, personal circumstances, ideas, beliefs etc to find out the personality of a writer behind his work. It establishes significant relations between the writer and his work from all biographical knowledge. The first prominent biographical critic was Dryden and, Dr. Johnson practiced biographical criticism in *The Lives of the Poets*.

The biographical approach proceeds on the assumption that by examining the facts and motives of an author's life, the critic can illuminate the meaning and intent of his work.

Thus, such a critic attempts to discover analogues between the work and the writer's life by identifying such elements as character modelled after real people and incidents derived from personal experience.

### Sociological Criticism

Sociological criticism seeks to explain a work of art in terms of its social environment. It examines a literary work in the context of the social conditions of its author and it studies its social effects. It regards a literary work as a product of social factors and forces prevailing in a particular society at a particular time. Marxist criticism is a special branch of sociological criticism. Therefore, sociological criticism sometimes uses Marxist interpretation and evaluation of social forces to study and examination of works of literature.

The sociological approach, as its name implies, assumes that the relationship between art and society is organic and indivisible, that a work of art is not a reflection but also a product of its social and historical milieu.

### Psychological Criticism

Psychological criticism is built up based on the Psychological theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. It deals with the analyses of the mind of the author while composing his works. It enables a critic to study the motives and impulses, the interior life of a writer in composing his work. It also seeks to interpret the value or significance of a piece of writing in psychological term. Edmund Wilson applied this method in his book *The Wound and the Bow*. But the most prominent practitioner of psychological criticism was IA Richard.

The psychological approach, chiefly inspired by the development of psychoanalysis in the twentieth century, has concentrated not only on the effect of the author's unconscious mental activity during the creative process but also on the interpretation of structure and character, frequently in psychoanalytic terms.

### Archetypal Criticism

Archetypal criticism is concerned with the way cycles and reiterating patterns of tradition, culture, inborn images, and beliefs affect literary works. It operates with the idea that certain symbols represent the same ideas no matter the time or place. Authors focus on symbols to utilize in literary works in order to strike readers' unconscious. Such symbols recur often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience

as a whole. It also deals with symbolism of nature and the cosmos. There is universality in literature, anthropology, psychology.

The archetypal approach involves a systematic analysis of universal motifs and patterns. Archetypes as Jung suggested, emerge from the collective unconscious and manifest themselves in myths, dreams, and literature.

#### Comparative Criticism

Comparative criticism seeks to evaluate a work by comparing it with other works of a similar nature, either in one's own language or in another language. This method is foreshadowed in the criticism of Dryden, but Matthew Arnold was its powerful advocate and exponent. Arnold suggested the 'touchstone method' for measuring the intrinsic excellence of a work of art. Comparative criticism requires a critic to acquire a thorough knowledge not only of the one literature but of a number of literatures. Comparison must be made between works of the same type and genre in order to taken difference between genius and temperament that differ from people to people and age to age while applying the comparative method.

#### Impressionistic Criticism

Impressionistic criticism is the record of personal response; it is a record of the critic's own appreciation of aesthetic beauty without considering any rules and regulations. The critic does not evaluate a work, he does not call it a good or bad; he only seeks to convey his own enjoyment of the work to the readers. The critic is concerned not with analysis, biography or abstract questions of aesthetics, but with presenting his own experience or impression of the work of art. Anatole France, Walter Pater and Oscar Wild are the most practitioners of impressionistic criticism.

The impressionistic or aesthetic approach, which gained widespread acceptance in the late nineteenth century, involves the critic's personal and subjective response to a literary work. ...Such a critic reveals his understanding of a work of art in artistic shaped prose, which he regards as an art in itself...

#### Inductive Criticism

Inductive criticism does not follow set of rules and principles in judging a works of literature. The law of art should be discovered in the practice of the artist himself. Inductive



critic is an investigator rather than hanging judge of literature. The critic evaluates a work of art as it is without being influenced by external elements. The profounder of Inductive criticism Richard Moulton says, “The Inductive critics review the phenomena of literature as they actually stand, inquiring into and endeavouring to systematize the laws and principles by which they are moulded and produce their effects and recognize no court of appeal to the literary works themselves.” (*Principles & History of Literary Criticism*, 15).

#### Textual or Ontological Criticism

Textual or Ontological criticism is one of the most important approaches to criticism in the modern age. For Textual or Ontological critic, the text under consideration is the thing in itself, and it is examined and analysed without any consideration of such extrinsic factors as biography, history, sociology, psychology etc. The critic concentrates on the structure of the text and on the various elements that go to make up that structure and closely studied on words, diction, language, image, metre, tone, theme, to arrive at the true meaning of the writer. Textual criticism brings the reader closer to what was written and aims to establish as closely as possible what an author actually wrote by explaining the obscurities of the text and reconstituting from the original text of a work.

#### A Brief Survey of Development of Literary Criticism

The history of literary criticism runs parallel to the history of literature and thus, it had a long history that can be traced back from ancient Greek literature. To grasp a historical development of literary criticism, a brief survey from Classical literary criticism and English literary criticism is a must. An overview of English and Classical literary criticism is necessary to understand the development of literary criticism.

#### Classical Literary Criticism

It is felt that the critical study of literature had begun in ancient Greece and the art of criticism began in ancient Greece during the age of Pericles. It was the ‘golden age’ of remarkable creative activity and intellectual awakening and also an age of unprecedented intellectual awakening in Athens when scholars and learned men, artists, poets and dramatists

like Aeschylus, Sophocles, Pindar, Euripides and Aristophanes lived in this age and raised critical questions relating to religion, philosophy, morality, politics, art and literature.

Socrates began an era of intellectual and critical enquiry. The writings of Homer, Aeschylus, Pindar, Sophocles and Euripides contain hints and suggestion of critical ideas, which were later developed by Plato, Aristotle, Horace and Longinus into systematic principles of literary criticism. Therefore, Greek Criticism dates back to Fourth Century B.C, but it is not systematic before Plato (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism*, 11-12).

Classical Literary Criticism takes its origin from classical philosophy. It was in the early fourth century by Plato and Aristotle, who, for the first time, made a sustained and systematic inquiry into the nature of art and its modes of existence (*English Literary Criticism and Theory*, 3).

Plato (c.a 427-348 B.C) was the most celebrated disciple of Socrates. After the execution of Socrates in 399 BC, he abandoned politics and founded the 'Academy'. He spend about forty years of his life for teaching Philosophy, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Practical Legislation etc at Academy. During those years, he wrote about 25 dialogues and the 'Apology'.

Though Plato was not a professed critic of literature and his critical observation are not embodied in any single work, he was the first Greek philosopher who expressed his views on Art and Poetry systematically. In his famous book 'Republic', he talks about an 'Ideal State' and 'Ideal Man'. Art or Poetry is subservient to morality and they contribute neither to the making of an ideal state nor to that of an ideal citizen. So, he condemned Poetry and banished all poets from his ideal state, in *Republic* Book 10.

As literature is art, like painting, sculpture and others, they reproduce but things 'as mere pastime'; the first in words, the second in colour and the last in stone. So, it merely copies a copy; it is thrice removed from reality. Ideas are the ultimate reality, according to Plato. So, the production of art helped neither to mould character nor to promote the well-being of the state- the two things by which Plato judged all human endeavour. His observations on Drama also apply equally with poetry. The representations of drama are as much removed from reality, as much a product of inspiration, as much emotional in appeal, and as much unconcerned with morality, as those of poetry.

Although Plato thought poorly of poetry and drama, he shows himself a discerning critic in both. He was also the first to see that all art is imitation or mimesis, imitating the object of life or nature, and that there are two kind of arts- the fine arts, like literature, painting, sculpture and music; and the useful arts, like medicine, agriculture etc. (*A Textbook of Literary Criticism and Theory*, 4, 6, 9).

Therefore, due to his contributions on the art of writing, Plato was the first literary critic of repute, a pioneer in literary criticism as well as literary theory and firmly established criticism, and placed it on a high pedestal.

“With him literary theory really begins, he set men thinking, he gave inspiration and direction to critical effort, and at the same time he supplied ideas for generations to come. It was in this way that he made later criticism possible,” (*History and Principle of Literary Criticism*, 17).

Aristotle (c.a 384-322 B.C) was the most distinguish pupil of Plato. He spent twenty years studying under Plato. T.S Eliot calls him a ‘*Perfect Critic*’ (*English Literary Criticism and Theory*, 8). He opened a school the ‘*Lyceum*’ at Athens and delivered lectures on diverse subjects. He wrote about four hundred volumes in all. One of the most famous treatises of Aristotle and the first authentic treatise on the art of poetry or literature is ‘*Poetics*’.

With Aristotle’s ‘*Poetics*’, an epoch making work and a storehouse of literary theory, we arrive at the first work of theoretical criticism devoted specifically to poetry in the Western tradition. The *Poetics* is intended as an investigation into the nature of poetry through the classification of its different kinds and analysis of their function and purpose (*Classical Literary Criticism*, xxx).

*Poetics* is composed in an esoteric style meant for the initiated ones. The first five chapters of *Poetics* are introductory chapters, the next fourteen are devoted to Tragedy; the next eight Diction; and the next four are on Epic; and the very last deals with problems in criticism (*English Literary Criticism and Theory*, 18).

If Plato was the first thinker we need attend to for his commentary on the human influence of imaginative literature, Aristotle was the first thinker to produce a work of literary criticism, the *Poetics*-a work which has influenced theorizing about literature ever since it was written. Where Plato’s doctrine of universal Forms focuses primary significance on to

the eternal, of which the natural is but a reflection or copy, Aristotle's thinking concentrates on the reality to be discerned in individual things (*A History of Literary Criticism*, 7).

In his Theory of Imitation, Aristotle defined Art as '*mimesis*' (*to imitate or imitative representation of the real world in art and literature*). The term '*mimesis*' is a complex concept and it can also be copying, mimicry, and an expression. According to Aristotle, the instinct for imitation is a basic element in human nature and we instinctively take pleasure in works of imitation. Hence, the pleasure and enjoyment of imitative arts like poetry and painting is rooted in human nature and has cognitive value in human life.

Therefore, Aristotle's *Poetics* is considered a treasury of ideas of lasting value. Modern critics consider Aristotle as the first of the systematic theorists and an early exponent of psychological criticism of drama. In the history of literary criticism, this treatise is considered as an important and fundamental text even after so many centuries (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 6).

"In the history of literary criticism, the contribution and importance of Aristotle is," Atkin rightly says that, "unquestionable and fundamental," (*Literary criticism in Antiquity*, 119).

Horace (65-8 BC), 'the greatest Roman poet-critic' (*English Literary Criticism*, 20) and 'of all the Roman poets, he was the best critic, and of all the Roman critics he was the best poet' (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism*, 36) was the author of one of the famous critical work called '*Ars Poetica*'. In the history of literary criticism, Horace's influence is next only to Aristotle because he is more practically oriented than Aristotle, giving practical advice through his '*Epistle to the Pisos*' which later came to be known as '*Ars Poetica*' (*The Art of Poetry*). Its main topics of discussion are Poet and Poetry, Poetic Diction and Drama.

Aristotle knew only the epic, tragedy, and comedy. Since Horace's time, more literary types like lyric, pastoral, ode, and satire had developed. When Horace wrote his *Ars Poetica*, he was well versed in these newer poetical forms. Therefore, his main aim was to improve the efforts and talents of his contemporaries. He always cites examples from ancient Greek poets for model to be followed. His basic requirement is sensibility or taste at once disciplined and flexible. Poetic decorum is primary for him, and this is the norm by which to judge all works. Poetry should conform to the principles of decorum, or what is congruous. Poetic license

should not stretched beyond limits. A writer should exercise judgement in his choice of words. Poets are born as well as made. He encourages aspiring poets to practice imitation by which is meant emulating and following in the footsteps of great models (*English Literary Criticism and Theory*, 21).

Horace stated that *'The poet's aim is either to profit or to please, or to blend in one the delightful and the useful'* (*A History of Literary Criticism*, 14). Thus, the ultimate aim of poetry is *'to instruct and give pleasure'* according to Horace, the ideal poet is one who combine these twin functions.

Horace was the first to set up his creed of classicism in connection with poetry by insisting on following the ancient Greek models. Abercrombie remarks about his place in the history of literary criticism: "Horace by transforming Aristotle's doctrine into critical rules, philosophically enlightened good taste without troubling his readers to philosophise about it. His immense influence in the history of criticism is, indeed, due to the fact that he made aesthetic theory appeal to good taste...what the history of criticism owes to Horace is quite inestimable" (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism*, 41).

*"Be Homer's work your study and delight*

*Read them by day, and meditate by night"* (by Horace).

Longinus (1 Century AD) introduced the great concept of 'sublimity' as the primary characteristic of great writings in his famous treatise called *'On the Sublime'*. For Longinus, sublimity is 'the echo of great soul' (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 7) and also 'an inspiring outburst of revelatory illumination. It consists in a certain distinction and excellence in expression, and that is from no other source than this that the greatest poets and writers have derived their eminence and gained an immortality of renown. The effect of elevated language upon an audience is not persuasion but transport' (*English Literary Criticism and Theory*, 24).

Therefore, the sublime style according to Longinus is a blend of great conceptions, noble passions and elevated diction. This grand or elegant style reaches the heights of imagination and eloquence. There is a close connection between nobility of soul and grandeur of speech. "Sublimity is the note which rings from a great mind," wrote Longinus. The purpose of poetry is to instruct and delight and, also to persuade. Longinus wrote, "Sublimity in literature has as its end not persuasion, but ecstasy,". He remarked that "Correctness

escapes censure; greatness earns admiration” (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 7).

Thus, the emphasis of Longinus is on the literature of power (as distinguished from the literature of knowledge whose purpose is to teach). The effect of this literature is achieved not by argument, but by revelation or illumination. Literature is not propaganda, not a sermon, nor entertainment. It is vision. The truly sublime has an uplifting effect (*English Literary Criticism and Theory*, 24).

Longinus finds five principal sources of the sublime (*Classical Literary Criticism*, *xlvi-xlviii*), the first two of which are largely the gifts of nature and the remaining three are the gifts of arts- Grandeur of thought, Capacity for strong emotion, Appropriate use of Figures, Nobility of Diction and Dignity of composition.

Longinus’s ‘Theory of Transport’ states that the test of great literature is not to instruction, delight nor persuasion but to transport which is the capacity to move the reader to ecstasy caused by the irresistible power of sublime language (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 8).

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), one of the ‘Three Crown’ of Italian literature, with Dante and Petrarch, was an well-known Italian poet and writer. *The Decameron* was his most notable works. Boccaccio in his *Life of Dante* speaks of religion as poetry. He calls the ancient poets are ‘teachers’. He calls the Bible, a literature work. He said ‘the truth’ that ancient poets write about are written in allegorical form in the same manner as the stories in the Bible. Since theology is the poetry of God poetry is theology. (*Literary Criticism: A New History*, 5).

His work *Genealogy of the Gentile Gods* (*Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*) is an important work on literary criticism which speaks of the ancient myths, a huge encyclopaedia of classical mythology in fifteen books. In the first thirteen books he attempts to compile, arrange, and offer allegorical interpretations of classical mythology. The last two books are devoted to a comprehensive defence of poetry, citing arguments for and against the art since the time of Plato. Hence, the book is not only an endeavour to expound the virtues of classical literature but also an attempt by a practicing poet to defend his art. As an encyclopaedia of both literature and literary criticism, its influence on poets as well as critics was broad, and endured for more than two centuries.

Boccaccio calls poetry a “fervid and exquisite invention,” in speech or writing, that “proceeds from the bosom of God.” Boccaccio cites the authority of Cicero to support his claim that poetry is an inspired art, for which there can be no rigid rules and formulae. And the fervour of poetry is “sublime in its effects: it impels the soul to a longing for utterance; it brings forth strange and unheard-of creations of the mind; it arranges these meditations in a fixed order, adorns the whole composition with unusual interweaving of words and thoughts; and thus it veils truth in a fair and fitting garment of fiction”. He sees poetry as derived from the Greeks, where it arose as a heightened form of language used for prayer and the praise of God, as well as for expressing “the high mysteries of things divine” (Nambrol “Literary Criticism of Giovanni Boccaccio”).

Boccaccio anticipates many of the Romantics in stating that poets prefer lonely haunts that are favourable to contemplation, especially contemplation of God (*Literary Criticism: A New History*, 6).

### English Literary Criticism

Literary Criticism, in the strictest sense of the term, was not actively practiced from during the Dark Ages until Sir Philip Sidney in the English Renaissance, With Sidney, this period of critical regressive comes to a grinding halt. Sidney is the first critic-and a critic of lasting significance-representing all that is superlative in Renaissance criticism because he drew from all the best that is available in Italian Renaissance thought. Sidney’s services to England are most remarkable and his *Apologie* is an epitome of the general Renaissance criticism (*English Literary Criticism and Theory*, 42, 47).

Sir Phillip Sidney (1554-1586) was the model of Elizabethan courtier and gentlemen. His work *An Apology for Poetry* (1595) appeared at a time when such a treatise was felt necessary because in his *An Apology for Poetry*, he did not only reply to Stephen Gosson’s long-titled pamphlet dedicated to Sidney, *School of Abuse: Containing a pleasant invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters and sush like Caterpillars of the Commonwealth* (1579); but defended the timeless value of poetry by attacking the hostile arguments of Plato against poetry. Therefore, Sidney’s *Apology* is a spirited defence of poetry against all the charges that had been laid at its door since Plato.

Sidney's method is that of logician; he examines it in whole and in parts, considers the points in favour and the points against, and then sets forth his main thesis that far from being despised it deserves 'the laurel crown' (*An Introduction to English Criticism*, 79).

In his *Apology*, Sidney laments the fact that the intellectuals of his day were highly hostile to poetry. He wrote, "Delightful teaching is the end of poesy". He called poetry, "a heart-ravishing knowledge". It was the product of inspiration and something more than mere copying or imitation of the facts of life (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 10).

Sidney thus attempted to define poetry in rational terms. The poet does not mechanically reproduce Nature or reality but he transmutes it by exercising his creative faculty to make things better than Nature has or through a process of elevation create a new form that is "never in Nature". He makes serious claims for the high cultural value of poetry in comparison not only to the physical sciences but also with philosophy and history. Poetry is superior to philosophy and history, because it combines the merits of both. It teaches the universal truths of philosophy as well as the facts of history presented through particular examples in a way intelligible to the common man. The world revealed by poetry was an ideal and perfect world for Sidney, a world made more significant than the world of raw experience (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 11).

'Father of English Criticism' John Dryden (1631-1700) wrote major treatise on criticism named *An Essay on Dramatic Poesy*. Dryden theorized mostly on the nature of poetry and dramatic poetry. As a classicist, Dryden adapted Aristotle's view of poetry as an imitation of facts past or present and things in their ideal form. He wrote, "Imitation pleases us because they present us with images more perfect than the life in any individual, and we have the pleasure to see all the scattered beauties of Nature united by a happy chemistry without its deformities or faults," (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 13).

In reading his essays and prefaces we find him aware of poetry in its threefold capacity-as the proper business of the poet, as the object of the critic's appreciation, and for society, as a force operating in its midst. In his work we have not only criticism, but criticism becoming aware of itself, analyzing its object with sympathy and knowledge, and knowing what kind of things it is looking for. He refuses to be cowed by the French playwrights and critics. He sees no reason why Tragi-Comedy should be forbidden because it mingles mirth with serious plot, nor will he join in blaming 'the variety and copiousness' of the English plays, with their 'under-plots or by-concernments' because they do not conform to the French



ideal of singleness of plot. He ridicules the ‘servile observation of the unities of time and place’ which needlessly limit the scope of the dramatist and often force him to resort to absurd contrivances. Even to Aristotle he refuses to render slavish homage. “It is not enough that Aristotle has said so, for Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides; and if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind,” (*The Making of Literature*, 128-129).

Due to his vast knowledge of literature, Dryden introduces a new field of Comparative Criticism. He not only read Greek classics, but also digested the Latin like Theocritus and Virgil and, English major poet-playwright like Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Fletcher too.

“Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare,” (“Shakespeare and Others” in *Ainawn Bu Thar*, 152).

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was one of the greatest romantic poet-critic and his *Preface to Lyrical Ballad (1800 & 1802)* is a landmark in the history of English Literary Criticism. His works became the target of very hostile criticism by Neo-classical critic and the *Preface to Lyrical Ballad* had been hailed as the proclamation of the manifestation of Romanticism in England; a loud call for a poetic revolution by creating a new school of poetry (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 16).

Wordsworth opposed the neo-classical practice of judging a work of art by the application of tests based on ancient models. These tests could at the most judge the external qualities of the work-its structure, diction, metre and the like. Wordsworth applied himself to this great question-the ultimate test of literary excellence and came to the conclusion that it lay neither in a particular diction nor in a particular mode of writing. It lay rather in the healthy pleasure it affords to the reader; and this may arise as much the use of common language as from the customary language of poetry, and as much from the writer’s individual mode of writing as from that laid down by neo-classicism. Therefore, his writing mark the end of the old school and beginning of a new or rather the revival of an older one-the Romantic school of the Elizabethans (*An Introduction to English Criticism*, 176-177).

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) was poet-critic of the Victorian Age and Arnold's criticism falls into two broad divisions: that on the art of poetry and that on the art of criticism (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism*, 225). His two most famous pieces of Literary criticism entitled "*The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*" (1865) and "*The Study of Poetry*" (1880) are his best contributions to English Literary Criticism.

One of the keywords in Arnold's criticism is 'disinterestedness'. The function of criticism according to Arnold is to prepare an atmosphere, a moment in which best ideas can be accessible to the creative genius. To make this possible, the function of criticism is, a "disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas" ("The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" in *Literary Criticism A Reading*, 100).

Arnold defined poetry (in fact, all literature) as a criticism of life. Arnold's didacticism reaches its mature and accurate formulation in the sentence so often quoted from the opening of the essay *The Study of Poetry*:

More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry...

...In poetry, as a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty, the spirit of our race will find...its consolation and stay.

(Matthew Arnold *The Study of Poetry*, 89-91).

Arnold is remembered best for advocating the "Touchstone Method" for the judgement of literature. This method is a modification of the Longinian test to determine the intrinsic worth of a work of literature. The Touchstone Method for Arnold is an 'infallible test of greatness in poetry'. At the same time, he cautions against adopting false standards of judgement. To conclude, one can safely assert that Arnold's greatest service to literary criticism was his introduction of a proper methodology and a system of critical evaluation of literature (*Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 22-23).

T.S.Eliot (1889-1965) is, perhaps the most important literary critic of the modern age. In his famous preface to *For Lancelot Andrews (1928)*, he described himself as a classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and an Anglo-Catholic in religion, Equalitarianism, progress and liberalism are detested by him. He is dogmatic. He understands that his beliefs in politics, religion and literature form a whole (*Literary Criticism: A New History, 26*). He is the successor of Matthew Arnold in the sense that he expects a minority audience for his criticism. He is like Dryden because most of his criticism is written in the form of prefaces to his works with the purpose of justifying his own poetic creations. He believes that the true critic will strive to build his impression into laws, and therefore, he follows the example of Aristotle, who, for Eliot, is the classic instance of such critical power (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism, 262*).

T.S. Eliot wrote the world famous essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), a very potent essay poignant with many concepts, among them poetry and tradition being the major one. This essay pioneers the new understanding of poetry, talent, tradition and even criticism. This essay heralds ‘The New Criticism’, the ‘Chicago School of Criticism’, and the ‘Practical Criticism’. At the base of the modern aesthetic and practices is Eliot’s concept of poetry and tradition in this essay (*Basic of Literary Criticism, 85-86*).

In many ways, Eliot has proved himself to be the most important critic of our century. He helped in correcting the taste of the poetry reading public; he re-evaluated the English poets. He initiated a critical theory of his own. His concept of the impersonal theory of poetry, unified sensibility, his emphasis on the perfection of the spoken idiom for poetry, and his formulae, such as, the ‘objective correlative’ are all invaluable aids to the understanding and appreciation of poetry. Though he had competence in abstract thinking, Eliot did not build a coherent system of aesthetics on poetry. He says that his criticism is ‘workshop criticism’, ‘a by-product of my private workshop’. He maintained three types of criticism: creative criticism, historical criticism and criticism proper (*English Literary Criticism and Theory, 110*).

## Modern Literary Criticism and Theories

Modern literary criticism is often influenced by literary theory, which is the philosophical discussion of literature's goals and methods. Though the two activities are closely related, literary critics are not always, and have not always been, theorists. Douglas T. Miller observes that “The 20<sup>th</sup> century has been an era of enormous expansion and diversity in literary criticism...A new and rigorous stylistic criticism has developed under the influence of modern linguistics,” (*Lexicon Universal Encyclopedia Vol 5*, 352).

The emergence of different theories during the twentieth century may be as follows- Russian Formalism, Archetypal criticism, New Criticism, Structuralist criticism, Post-structuralism/Deconstruction, Psychoanalytic criticism, Feminist criticism, Reader-response criticism, new Historicism, Marxist criticism and Postcolonial criticism. All these criticism and theories which emerged during the twentieth century as a whole can be characterised, by John Peck and Martin Coyle, as “displaying a shift on the author to an emphasis on the text, and then a shift from the text to the reader,” (*Literary Terms and Criticism*, 179). Traditional approaches of criticism emphasize the important of the author, treated author as god and originators of ideas, and consider his intention, feelings, motives, desires and his philosophy of life or author’s life important in interpreting a text. While, a new kind of critical analysis began to surface during the twentieth century gave more importance to the literary work than the author.

The modern critics are trying to give more intention to the text and the reader, but they cannot ignore the role of the author completely. So. author-oriented approach was gradually replaced by text-oriented approach to literature with the emergence of New Criticism which began in the 1920s and reached its height during 1940s and 1950s. New Critics did not give any importance to the biological details of the author or historical details of the era. They paid greater attention to the ‘close reading’ of the text and confined themselves to the words on the page.

From text-oriented approach, poststructuralist criticism emphasis on the role of reader in the production of the meaning of a text led to emergence of reader-oriented approach during 1960s and 1970s. The statement of Roland Barthes regarding ‘the death of the author’ has led to the emergence of ‘birth of the reader’ who is free to interact with the text in order to explore the multiple layers of meaning. (*Revisiting Literary Theory and Criticism*, 12). It is the reader who provides ‘real existence’ to the text and completes its meaning through proper

dialogue with the text. The reader is a co-creator, he/she provides new meanings and endless interpretation.

In the 1980s, the literary text was no longer regarded as self-contained, independent work of art and hence context-oriented approach emerged. Text and context thus entered into a dynamic, productive and inseparable relationship with each other. Most of the literary theories like Feminist, New Historicist, Postcolonial, Psychological, and Marxist are context-oriented (*Revisiting Literary Theory and Criticism*, 15). Therefore, it is felt that every context amends, deflects, alters and restructures the meaning of the text and hence literary works cannot be assessed in complete isolation from the political, socio-economic and cultural contexts, thus, texts and contexts stand in close relationship with each other reciprocally.

The brief survey of the origin and development of literary criticism covers a long span of time from ancient Greece to the Modern Age. The seeds of criticism were implanted in Ancient Greece and they first apply to a critical consideration of literature of their own; and the English literature was the most fertile area for the budding of literary criticism. The seeds of Western theories and criticism have influenced the minds of Mizo writers, and they attempt to introduce literary criticism into Mizo literature during the first half of the twentieth century through various forms of essays, articles, prefaces, and book reviews. Unfortunately, no important critical theories are not found in Mizo critical writings in the early stages of developmental period during 1911-1950s. However, in some critical writings after the 1950s, critical concepts and theories began appeared in some ways. After 2000, critical writings on Western theories were found in Mizo literature.

Therefore, a brief historical survey of the tradition of literary criticism from ancient Greece to modern literary theories and criticism is an attempt to underline the different approach to the study of literature which may also be useful for developing a new critical endeavour and critical activities for further interpretation of Mizo literature.

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## Chapter 2

### Emergence Period in Mizo Literary Criticism

The early Mizo writers were primarily engaged in creative writings, and they made significant contributions to translations, adaptations, and creative writings; criticism, on the other hand, which is an area of critical activity was not given much attention due to they are not critical, but in Mizo literature, as elsewhere in other literature also, criticism was a late birth of the literary spirit as well. Therefore, the first time they turned their attention to critical writing was in the field of poetry. It is due to the fact that Mizo literature is rich in poetry or songs.

“Mizo have had a rich variety of poem since the days of their forefather. Apart from folksongs, there are some songs or poems which originated from the soil” like “Devotional songs, Love songs, Patriotic songs, Satiric songs are the major branch of Mizo poetry” (*Tribal Culture, Folklore & Literature* 141). Mizo poetry developed from the folk songs. Zikpuii-pa states that Mizo have a lot of songs and poetry and the importance for Mizo people like that- “We, Mizo are lovers of song and have a great number of it considering the relatively small span of our history and population. The music department may well be the most developed among our arts. Since the time of our ancestors, we were born and grew alongside song and it became a means of expressing our likes and dislikes,” (*Zozam Par* 26).

So, in contrast to other literary forms like plays, novels, and other prose works, an analysis of Mizo poetry has contributed significantly to the growth of Mizo literary criticism up to this point. It is not unexpected that Mizo literary criticism sprang and emerged from the study of Mizo poetry and continues to make significant contributions to the field's advancement through its various stages of growth.

The development of Mizo literary criticism can be broadly divided into three phases, which are as follows:

1. The Emergence period (from 1911-1950)
2. Awakening period (from 1951-1990)

### 3. Enlightening period (from 1991-2011)

The faint beginning of critical activities and critical writings in Mizo literature appeared scattering in various form of essay, article, preface, introduction and appreciation to newspapers, literary journals, and magazines. The most astounding aspect of Mizo literary criticism's history is that it developed from poetry analysis or a study of poetry. As Matthew Arnold called poetry a “criticism of life” (*The Study of Poetry*, 90), it is a wonderful thing that literary criticism begins with a study of poetry. Therefore, poetry and literary criticism are inseparable in Mizo literature.

Siamkima Khawlhing made such observations about the beginnings and nature of literary criticism- “When we trace the origin and development of literature, we came to know that poetry was born earlier than drama, novel and short story. Such as, the first literary criticism was *Poetics*, the study of poetry,” (*Zalenna Ram* 22). In the same way, an analysis or study of Mizo poetry or song was the earliest literary critique in Mizo literature that can be traced back.

To put it more carefully on the observation of Siamkima Khawlhing, before Aristotle wrote his principles of literature *Poetics*, and before criticism was introduced to the field of academic studies, the critical writings and critical observation on poetry had already rendered by Aeschylus, Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes.

RA Scott James states that the main problem of criticism had already been stated before the Golden age of Greek literature had come to an end.

*‘Pray, tell me on what particular ground a poet should claim admiration?’*

It is the poet Aristophanes, who puts the words into the mouth of the poet Aeschylus in the *Frogs*, to which Euripides is made to reply glibly like that-

*‘By making men better in some respect’.*

Aristophanes was the one who, ‘for the first time, spoke of the rights and duties of the poet’. Xenophanes had long before complained that gods in Homer were fashioned too much like men. Aristophanes makes Aeschylus say that the poet should choose a great subject and great sentiments which lend themselves to magnificence of language’ (*The Making of Literature* 16,18,26 & *Thuhlaril* 92).

Plato's attack on poetry offer sustained critique of poetry. Plato found poetry to be false and imitative. He found poetry to be emotionally exiting and morally corrupting, and so, in Book 10 of *Republic*, he banished all poets from his ideal state. In *Ion*, Plato states 'The Muse first of all inspire men herself...For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed...so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains... and there is no invention in him (poet) until he has been inspired and out of his senses,' (*The Making of Literature* 27, 30). Then, as moralist, Plato has disapproved of poetry because it is immoral; as a philosopher, he disapproved of poetry because it is based in falsehood. However, "it is with him (Plato) that criticism truly begins!" in Greek literature, according to MS Nagarajan (*English Literary Criticism* 8).

Similar to how literary criticism in ancient Greece originated from Greek poetry, Mizo literature had its origin and also draws its inspiration from Mizo poetry. The critical observation on Mizo songs and poetry was the earliest critical activity that can be seen in Mizo literature. It can roughly be said that, like the critical observation and judgment upon Greek poetry by Plato and Aristotle, the first critical consideration and destructive criticism on Mizo poetry was also the origin and beginning of literary criticism in Mizo literature. Since *Puma Zai* (Puma Song) as the early critical considerations and critical activity that could be found in written text was on the subject of *Puma Zai*, it played an important role and placed in the origin and emergence of Mizo literary criticism.

The early twentieth century witnessed the sudden emergence of a new poetical movement called the *Puma Zai* which later developed into various forms of *Tlanglam Zai*. It became famous among the whole country during 1910s. The word *Puma* is the language of Biate clan. In Biate language, 'Puma or Pumapa' means 'Lalpa'(Lord) ("Biate Tawng" in *Mizo Tawng Khawvel volume 2*, 226). Chief Lalzika became so fond of *Puma zai* that he commemorates it by organizing a feast killing a mithun. From then on, the fame of *Puma zai* spread across each and every corner of Mizoram like a wildfire burning! (*Pi Pute Hla* 135). The spread of *Puma Zai* was so popular and fast spreading that it could really retard the spread of Christianity at that time. The Mizo church branded them as 'anti-Christian songs' associated with demonical power whereas L.Keivom branded 'Pumza Zai' as 'the first cultural revival in poetry' because 'like the boxer rebellion, we resisted the invaders of our national life with weapons and violence, but the spirit of our culture resisted us with the power of song through *Puma Zai*' (*L.Keivom Thukhawchang* 20-21).

According to RL Thanmawia, “*Puma Zai* displayed by the Mizos was purely secular in nature (...) It is important to note that many poetical forms developed out of *Puma Zai*” (*Mizo Poetry* 99). Ruth Lalremruati states the emergence and impacts of *Puma Zai* in the following way:

*Puma zai* captured the hearts of the Mizo people; the youths would sing and dance along with it even in the streets. It was enjoyed by all tribes and it brought harmony and unity among the people. It did not take long before it shook the entire Mizoram. It was also an important tool for the Chiefs of the non-Christian Mizo to use it against the Mizo Christians. They would compose songs relating to the disapproval of the gospel. It also hampered the growth of Christianity as the Christian missionaries find it hard to gather people who would listen to their preaching on the words of God. This influential nature of *Puma zai* which captivated the hearts of the people was described by Lalthangliana as —a kind of cultural revival which awakens a new dawn and which entails the true nature of the Mizo tribe!.. It is true that *Puma zai* can be regarded as one of the forms of Cultural Revival...Many of the Mizo folk songs which were aligned with the nature and culture of the Mizo may be subdued for some time by the advent of Christianity, but they still hold a special place in the hearts of the people. That is why when *Puma zai* originated, it re-ignited the traditional values and captured the heart of the Mizo and brought back the true colors of the Mizo culture which again captured the hearts of the people within a short span of its evolution.

(*Oral Literature*, unpublished thesis 70-71).

Three articles about *Puma zai* appeared in "Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu" published in 1911. The articles were published in 1911's May, June, and September issues, in that order. Those articles were the early critical writing found in written/printed text in a form of argument, debate and discourse on the subject of *Puma Zai*.

In “*Puma Zai*”, Hrangdawla appreciated *Puma Zai* so much and his writing could be called the first attempts of critical appreciation that could be seen in Mizo literature.

Lushei ramah hian hla tam tak a lo chhuak ta, keini naupang hriat theih chinah mai pawh hla hi nasha tak a chhuak ta; nimahsela, hla tam takte an chul zel,

rang takin miten an sha duh lo mai thin. Nimahshela, tunlai Puma Zai hi chu, reh ni a nei har fein ka ring e. He hla hi a pui a pang, a lian a tein tha an ti ber; an sha duh ber. Nulate tlangvalten mawi tak leh thiam takin an sha bawk thin. Chapter kutpui lo thleng mah sela, Chai hla sha lovin he hla bawk hi an sha ngun leh ber thin. Zo rama mihring nung tawh phawt chuan an lawm hle reng a ni. He hla anga Mizo ten he Lushei rama hla, tun hma lama chhuakte kha ai khan a tam zawkin an lawm, hei ang hi a la awm hek lo, an hla shak thinte chu hengte hi a ni-

1. *Thiani dawn ve rawh, ka lung lam vai*

*Aitenawn paa nu mawi thlangkhuan dim hmmain*

*Lem tul ang chaltuaia nang vangin.*

Nula leh tlangvalten an sak chuan a mawi em a ni.

(“Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu” May, 1911 p.94-95).

(Translation: There are many songs in Lusei country, even as far as we children can hear; but many songs are sung, and suddenly the people do not want to sing them anymore. Moreover, *Puma Zai* will not vanish sooner or later. All men, young and adult also like to sing it dearly. Young bachelor and maiden also sing beautifully. Even when the *chapchar* festival is held, they rather sung *Puma Zai* than *Chai hla*. Everyone who has ever lived in Zoram loved this song because none are there in Lushei land like this song ever. One of the songs they usually sung are these-...It is beautiful when young men and women sing it).

An article entitled “Puma Zai” was also published in the June 1911 issue in “Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu”. But this article is fragmented due to page missing and there could be no way to know who the author and how long the article is. However, based on what was still visible and readable, this piece also expressed admiration for *Puma Zai*. The writer pinpointed by name Awithang-pa and his verse; and some verses of *Puma Zai* were also highlighted.

The third article in the September issue of 1911 was different from the above two article mentioned because this article is about critical response rather than praise; destructive rather than appreciation. The title of the article is “Puma Zai Chhanna” (Response to *Puma Zai*) and the name of the author is Darhula. The text is as follows:

Ka thiante u, Puma Zai hi a tha in ti hle a, kei pawhin a tha chu ka ti bawk a; a that lohna chu hmun tam tak a awm a ni:- Kan ramah hian hla tam tak a chhuak tak na a, he hla anga mi tibuai leh hruai sual reng reng a la awm lo ve; amah lah hi a pung duh viau shi a. Eng vangin nge a pun duh? Sual hla a nih avangin a ni. Thu pakhat pawhin a tha lam kawng a chhova, a chhe lam kawng a phei, a tih kha. He hla pawh hi mihring rilru ti tha tur leh ti hausa tur chu a ni mawlh lo maiin ka ring a ni. He hla hi kei ka ngaih zia chuan hla tha lo berah ka ruat a ni. He hla avang hian kan Zo ram hi a mawi lo em emin ka hria a ni. Nula thenkhatin hur nan leh sual zawh nan an hmang bawkin ka hria a ni; thenkhat chang pawh a ni lo, mi zawng zawng an ni mai. Tuna kan Zo ram hi biak theih ni shela chuan, he hla hi a tilungngaitu leh a tizaktu pakhat chu niin ka ring a ni. Zu hmun a piangah hian an sa a, nula te, nu te, pa te, tlangvalten zah hre miah lovin an au an au mai a; an fate pawh tap mah sela an pawisha mang lo va. Hmanlaia kan pi leh kan pute kha chuan mi han hre theiin, mi han hmu thei shela, a en pawh mi en duhin ka ring lo a ni. Amaherawhchu, Sawrkarin kan ram an luah avang leh, Pathian khawngaihna avangin, kawng tam takah kan lo nuamin kan lo fing ta deuh va, a lawmawm hle a; nimahshela, kan Puma Zai mawlh hi a pawh a ni. Ram danga mi fing tak pawh lo kal shela, kan Puma Zai leh kan inzah vel zia hian a hruai sual zel ang a; kan sual zual tulh tulh ang tih pawh hlauawm a nih hi le! Fak ai chuan shim tawh ila a tha in ti zawk lo maw le? A that zawng shak mai mai a tha teh naa, kan ti lutuk a, kan uar lutuk a, thil a tha lai pawh tih luat tuk chuan a sual thei bawk e...

(“Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu” Sept.1911, p.246-248)

(Translation: My friends, you think that *Puma Zai* is really good, I also feel that same way too; but there are so many bad sides as well:- There has been various kind of songs in our country, but none is there unlike *Puma zai* which led astray the people; for it is increased day by day and becoming popular at an alarming rate. Why does it became so? Because it is a song of evil. There is a saying that the good way goes up and the bad way goes down. I think this is the worst song

I've ever heard. I know that some girls use it for prostitution and sin; not just some, but everyone. If Zoram could be able to speak, she would say that *Puma zai* make her grief and embarrassed. They sing in the place where alcohol is consumed together, and the young women, the mothers, the fathers, and the young men shout without respect; their children cry, but they don't care anymore. I don't think our ancestors would have wanted to see us if they could have heard us and seen us. However, thanks to the Government's occupation of our land and the grace of God, we have become wiser in many ways; but our *Puma Zai* is a painful thing. Even if a wise man from another country comes, he will be led astray by our *Puma Zai*. I'm afraid we'll sin more and more due to *Puma zai*. Do you think it is better to repent than to praise *Puma zai*? It may be good for just singing, but we sing too much and everything too much is not good)

In 1914, R Dala wrote an article entitled 'Mizo Hla' (Mizo Poetry) in December issue, "Kristian Tlangau", a monthly magazine published by the Presbyterian church of Mizoram since 1911. This article is also destructive in nature; the condemnation and rejection of Mizo songs and poetry from a moral and Christian point of view. In his writing, R.Dala clearly states on the reasons why he doesn't like and condemn Mizo song and poetry. A close reading of this article shows that it is as bold as Plato's rejection of the Greek poets and their poetry of his day

Pathian thu kan awi hnua engati nge kan Mizo zai kha shak ve a rem tak loh?  
Heng avang hian a ni:

1. Hla hian, eng hla pawh nishela miin ngaihtuaha an shakin a shatu thinlunga leh a ngaitu thinlunga a thawk nasha thei em em a. Pathian hnathawktu thenkhatin hla thiam taka thinlung tak nena sha ngawtin, thu shawi lo pawhin Isua hnena mi tam tak an hruai thei a, thinlung ngui tam tak a tiharh a...Pathian thu awi lote pawh, an tunlai inphuahna hla emaw, hmanlaia chanchin hla hlui tak shain emaw an lung a leng thei em em a. Hla hi thil duai a ni lo ve! Chuvangin, eng hla nge kan shak, fimkhur a ngai a ni.

2. Mizo hla hi hla bawlhhlawh tak a tam em em a, a then chu a thu reng reng a bawlhhlawh a; thenkhat chu a hla tluana a awmzia reng a bawlhhlawh a. Nula leh tlangval in-ngaih belna tur hla a tam em em a; a thena zah-mawh tak a tam bawk a. A then mihring inhnuai-chhiah a, indiriamna te, anih loh leh infaka

inchawimawi luat-tukna a ni a. Chuvangin,...hetiang thil bawlhhlawh hi ten nachang hre lo angin kan hmang ve tur a ni lo.

3. Mizo hla thenkhat erawh chu a thu a bawlhhlawh lo va, a awmzia pawh a bawlhhlawh hek lo... Hei avang hian:- 1) Hemite kher hi bawlhhlawh lo mahsela, a thluk anpui tam tak a bawlhhlawh thei, hei hi sha ila, a dang chu rilrua hriat belh a, kaa shak zel a awl a...khawvel mi nen ZAI KHAT kan lo zawm a ni ang a. Pathian kohhranho kan nih chuan kohhran kan nih tam theihna apiang kan zawng tur a ni. 2) Tin, chu lo pawh Mizo hla hi thinlung hluia kan shak nek hnu fo a lo ni tawh a, hla bawlhhlawh lote awm mahsela, tuna sha leh ila, hmanlaia kan nungchang hlui tam tak min hriatchhuahtir leh a, chumi thil hluia chuan thlemna leh thil chhia tam tak a tel thei a, chu chu kan tan thihna tur ang a lo ni thei a. Khawhar changa chanchin hlui hriatna a chuan lunglenna a tel thei a, chu lunglenna chu kan tan chhiat zawkna a tam thei a...

4. Mi phawk thenkhatin thinlung chhiat nan a hmang chuang lovin fiam thu thawh nan mai mai an sha a ni thei e.1) Nimahshela, chu pawh chuan chhiat nan a hmang hauh lovin kumkhuain ho tak hlirin a hmang fo thei dawn tih tu in nge hria ang? ‘A awm kang lovin miin mei a pawm thei em ni? 2) Amah kherin chhiat phah mah shuh shela, midangin an lo chhiat phah thei. Midangin shak a pawt tih an hriat loh phah thei.’ A tvisual tirtu chung a pik e’.

5. Kristian thenkhatin sa an kahin hla do an la chham 1) Hlado reng reng hian hnam a leh rethei, engmah ropui deuh la hmu ngai lo, kan vela rannungte la ngai ropui em em kan nih a tilang a. 2) Kristianin hlado an chhamin an thinlung a ra, sa mai mai ho an la ngai ropui em em tih a lantir a..an kahin an lawm em a, ‘Ka lawm ngawt mai’ tia au au em thu chu a awm shi lo va, dan hlui hmangin hladovin an au vak vak a ni. 3) Hlado hi uang tak leh chapo tak a ni, miin hlado a chhamin vantlang hriat turin, ring takin, ‘Ngai pek rawh u, pasaltha ka ni e, sa kah har tak leh sa hlauhawm pawh ka kap ta e, hre thin pek rawh u khai; tiin vantlang hriat turin a au a ni a. Kristianten chutia an au ve chu a nuam em ni?’

(“Kristian Tlangau” December, 1914, p.236-238)

(Translation: Why is not appropriate to sing Mizo songs after we became a Christian? For these reasons-



1. A song, whatever it is, is sung with the heart, it touch the heart and mind of the listeners...Songs is a great and powerful thing, it can conquer people, so we have to be careful about what we sing.
2. There are a lot of dirty songs in Mizo poetry, some of them are dirty in their lyrics and some of them are dirty in their meaning, some of them are obscene. Some of the songs are about human humiliation; some contempt for others; sometimes it is too much praise and honour. Therefore, we should not use those dirty things while knowing that they are filthy.
3. Some Mizo songs are not filthy and the meaning are not explicit. Even though some songs do not have filthy connotations, 1) others songs bearing similar tunes with such songs may have filthy implications. Therefore, it may be said we are connected to non-Christian people in terms of our songs. 2) The old Mizo songs evolve were sung from the heart of the old belief system that is pre-Christian times. Therefore, songs which were considered normally sung during its own time have now become inappropriate to sing with the changing of time. These songs often bring back memories from the olden days which may also have negative impacts.
4. A humorous person may use it a song as elements of humour. 1) However, even if affected that person, it may have not negatively impact to him always? Can a person embrace fire without burn himself? 2) Even if that person is not affected, it may still have negative impact on other.
5. Some Christian still chant *Hla do* when they hunt animal. 1) *Hla do* implies the primitive characteristic of the Mizo, it also emphasis on how the Mizo is worship by wild animals 2) If a Christian chants *hla do*, he is consider to be in a state of trance, impress by wild animals, when he hunts down, he is so happy. He expresses himself his inner joy through *hla do*.3) *Hla do* is very egoistical and self-patronizing in nature. *Hla do* is always proudly chanted by the hunter for the crowd to hear of his achievement proudly. Is this compatible with a Christian?)

As Phillip Sidney pleaded in his *Apologie* that all learning and all culture begin with poetry; and philosophy, religion and history herself, speak through the lips of poetry, (*History and Principles of Literary Criticism* 170), the Greek literary criticism appeared through and following subsequent to the writings of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Aristophanes (*Theory of Literature Bu Thar* 122); English literary criticism began with when , the first important

critical text in English literary criticism *An Apology for Poetry* was written by Sir Phillip Sidney for to refute Stephen Gooson's charge against poetry in *The School of Abuse* and to defence poetry; then in Mizo literatur, literary criticism appeared and developed subsequent to those early critical writings too. From discourse on the subject of *Puma Zai* and other Mizo poetry in appreciation, appraisal, and destructive in nature by Hrangdawla, Darhula and R.Dala, it may be say that the origin of Mizo literary criticism begun in the year 1911. Hence, the year 1911 and 1914 is a landmark for the origin and emergence of literary criticism in Mizo literature.

In addition to the above three early critical texts mentioned, a good deal of critical texts can be found during this Emergence period. Most of the critical writings and texts that could be seen during this period are from "MZP Chanchinbu", a monthly literary magazine for Mizo Zirlai Pawl during 1938-1978, which was started from 1938 as "LSA Chanchinbu" (later changed its name as 'MZP Chanchinbu'). This monthly magazine has contributed greatly to the development of Mizo literature by publishing good articles, essays and critical writings. Newspapers, journals and magazines published during this period like 'Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu' from 1902 to 1941; 'Kristian Tlangau' since October 1911, also contributed to the development of criticism during Emergence period. Similarly, 'Thu leh Hla' a monthly literary journal of Mizo Academy of Letters starting in 1965, 'Meichher' a monthly bulletin of the Social Education wing, Govt of Mizoram from 1973, 'Didakhe' a Christian Journal published by faculty of Aijal theological collge since 1972 also greatly contributed for the development of Mizo literary criticism during the Awakening period as well.

The primary subject matter of literary criticism during the Emergence period was on the subject of Mizo poetry or Mizo songs. The critics during this period primarily focused on Mizo poetry and songs only. It is due to the fact that the Mizo poetry and songs still impact on the mind and thought of the Mizo people while a new kind of Christian songs became more and more prevalent during this perid. Religious awakening and revival came in 1906, 1913 and 1919 resulted in the development of Christian songs and poetry. However, a conflict between secular Mizo songs and Christian hymnal songs led the emergence of critical observation about poetry and songs in the mind and thought of some early Mizo writers.

Three significant literary individuals during this Emergence period- Sangliana, J.Malsawma (Thanpuui pa) and C.Thuamluaia- made significant and important contributions

to Mizo literary criticism. Even if other minor critics like Rokunga, R. Buchhawna, James Lianmawia, and LR Sailo also made contributions, the works of those critics defined the Emergence period in Mizo literary criticism.

During the year 1950s, an important critical texts and insightful critical writings were emerged even after C. Thuamluaia's literary works appeared. C.Thuamluaia wrote three critical essays in "MZP Chanchinbu" during this period, viz- "Mizo Ram Nipui" (Summer of Mizoram) September & October issue, 1951 issues and "Tawng Hmasawn Nan" (For Development of Language) written in 1948 (*Kaphleia leh C.Thuamluaia Hnuhma* 106) but published in July, 1952 and "Kan Nun Khuarei An Chang Tur Hi" (Our Life will come to Lingering Memories) January & February, 1959 issues. His critical insight on Mizo poetry "Hmanlai Mizo Hla" (The Mizo Old Songs) may also be written in 1950.

"Mizo Ram Nipui" (Summer of Mizoram) and "Kan Nun Khuarei An Chang Tur Hi" (Our Life will come to Lingering Memories) are an eco-critical reading of Mizo poetry. In "Mizo Ram Nipui", C.Thuamluaia exaggerately wrote about the close relationship with Summer season and the flora and fauna of Mizoram.

In his first part of the essay "Kan Nun Khuarei An Chang Tur Hi" (Our Life will come to Lingering Memories), C.Thuamluaia wrote an eco-critical reading of Mizo poetry. He said that the Mizo native flowers like *Hawilopar*, *Ainawn par*, *Chawnpui*, *Chhawkhlei*, *Zamzo* placed an important placed in Mizo poetry. From Eco-critical reading, he shifted his writing to satirical poems and its historical background in Mizo poetry. He also appreciated Mizo traditional song called *Chheih hla* (Chheih songs). He commented like that "We have songs to overcome all kinds of life in the world and to suit all kinds of desires, we rich in this kind of song," (*C.Thuamluaia Hnuhma* 119).

One of an important discerning critical observation on Mizo poetry, stating by C.Thuamluaia on this essay is that: "Poetry is a good reflection of human mind and thought. The human mind is shaped by the lifestyle of the masses, young men and women. Therefore, poetry so well represented the desires of the human mind and the way we live our lives in general," (120). He concluded this essay in a thought provoking idea that "Natural death is the future of our old songs, they will die old," (127).

"Hmanlai Mizo Hla" (The Mizo Old Songs) is also one of the first historical approaches of Mizo songs that can be trace back. In this essay, C.Thuamluaia fixed the

beginning of Mizo folksongs in the year 1680 AD. He explicitly interpreted the Mizo folksongs, and point out the hindrance while interpreting it: “There is a problem with the Mizo folksongs, regarding the composers. How many composers are there? How skilled are they? What is their personality like? These are the things that make their songs interesting, but they cannot be clearly recognizeable,” (164).

“Tawng Hmasawn Nan” (For Development of Language) is all about the importance of not normal language, but beautiful language, especially when beautifully used in writings. He mentioned the names and quoted the beautiful languages from Bernard Show, William Shakespeare, Ruskin, Burke and Mrs Jameson to verify how beautiful language can impacts the man through his writings. This essay challenges the readers and the younger generation to improve and develop the Mizo language as beautifully as it can.

Two important critical texts titled “Poetry Hi Enge Ni?” (What is Poetry?) and an insightful writing “Poetry” respectively appeared from the pen of Mang N Mang (alias Thanpuii Pa) and Sangliana in the year 1950. These two articles strongly advocated the importance of poetry in Mizo and elaborated many aspects concerning poetry from a literature point of view.

“Poetry hi Enge Ni?” (What is Poetry?) by Mang N.Mang (Mang N Mang and Thanpuii pa is a pseudonym of J.Malsawma) is not lengthy enough, but it is a significant and valuable piece, particularly in light of the fact that it defines the line between poetry and song for the first time in a written document. The following are the essential passages that should be noted down:

Poetry (Zo tawngin hla sak loh chi) hi enge ni? Poetry chu mihring rilru leh ngaihtuahna, hriatna leh suangtuahna kal ding, hla phuah thiamin mite thinlung chawk tho thei tur leh mi mawl pawhin a phuahtu rilru kan tawmpui ve tura a ziak chhuah hi a ni. Thil suangtuah leh vei zawng sawi chhuah ngawt hi poetry a tling lo va; a lo chhiartute pawhin a phuahtu rilru ngei an tawmpui theihna kha a ni tur a ni.

Tichuan poetry ziak chu thil awlai a ni lo va, sikulahte zira thiam mai mi pawh a ni hek lo. Thil thlawn pek, a dawna dawn anih avangin chang ve lotute chuan an man lui thei lo va; a changtute hnen atangin a la lui thei bawk hek lo.

Khawvelah hian poetry ziak thiam (poet) te chu an hmingthang em em a, miin an ngaisang em em thin. Sap hla phuahtu (poet) ropui tak tak Milton te, Wordsworth

te, Shakespeare te leh mi dang tam takte chu an hla avangin an hmingthang em em a. English literature ti ropuitu an ni. Khawvelah an hming a dai ngai tawh lo vang.

A nih leh Zo ram hian mi chutiang hla phuahtu ropui (poet)-te chu an nei ve lo em ni? Nei e. Mizo zingah hla phuah thiam tam tak an awm a, kan hnam tetpuiah chuan hla ngah ber kan ni ang chu. Kan hla zawng zawng- tlanglam zai leh kaihlekte nen vek pheih chuan chhiar sen pawh a ni lo ang a, khawvelah hian kan vantlang hlein a rinawm. Nimahsela, kan hlata hi sak mi vek a ni mai a, sak loh mi (poetry) hi kan la ching lo hle a; a thatzia kan la hre lo nge, ziak nachang kan la hre lo reng reng aw! Hla sak mi aiin poetry hian awmze thuk zawk a nei/pai thin a; hla thu tha takte pawh hi thluk neia kan siam a, kan han sak/au chhuahpui chuan a mawina a bo zo vek thin asin!

Hla phuah thiamte chu poetry ziak turin ka sawm a; thluk neia hla an phuah theih chuan thluk nei lo pawhin an phuah thiam ka ring a. Poetry hi college-ah te leh zirna sang zawkah te subject pawimawh ber pakhat a ni fo tih hriain ziak thiamte chuan ziak teuh teuh sela a va lawmawm dawn em!

College-a kan thian Zikpui pa chuan High school-a a zir lai atang tawhin poetry ziak a ching thin a. Chung a hla ziate chu Zirlai Pawlah hian rawn chhuah fo theih a nih chuan mi tam zawkin an chhiar thei ang a, poetry hlutzia kan hriat deuh deuhna a nih ka ring (tiin Zikpui pa hla 'Tawn Loh Chhim Tlang Saw' tih a chhuahsak nghal a ni).

(“MZP Chanchinbu” September, 1950 p. 9-10)

(Translation: What is poetry? Poetry is the expression of human thoughts and ideas, knowledge and imagination, poetry is a poet who writes a poem that can stir the hearts of others and that even the ordinary can share the poet's thoughts. Poetry is not merely to express thoughts and feelings; but the reader should be able to share the poet's own thoughts.

So writing poetry is not easy, nor is it something you can learn in school. Because it is a free gift, those who do not receive that gift cannot write it; nor can he take it from those who receive it.

Poets are famous and respected in the world. Milton, Wordsworth, Shakespeare and many other great English poets were famous for their poems. They are the glorifiers of English literature. Their names will never be forgotten in the world.

Doesn't Zoram have such great poets? Ye, we have. There are many great poets among Mizo, and we have many songs and plenty of poetry. Our all songs and poetry-including *Tlanglam zai* and *kaihlek* are uncountable in numbers. Most of our songs are meant to be sung; so we don't tend to compose poetry that meant for not to be sung, poetry is not sung. Neither we don't know the goodness of poetry nor we don't know how to write it. Poetry has a deeper meaning than songs; even the best poetry are made with melody, and when we sing, their beauty is lost.

I invite poets to write poetry; I believe that if they can compose a song with a melody, they can compose a song without a melody. Poetry is one of the most important subjects in colleges and higher education.

Zikpuii pa, a college friend, had been writing poetry since high school. I believe that if his poems are published in the magazine occasionally, more people will be able to read them and know the importance of poetry and love it.)

Sangliana wrote about the meaning and nature of poetry from a theoretical point of view. In his essay "Poetry", Sangliana begins with the difficulty of explaining poetry. He try to explained the meaning of poetry from various definitions rendered by poet-critic like Coleridge, Wordsworth, JohnKeble, Hilare Belloc; he further explained the power of poetry, the differences between prose and poetry, the ways of how to compose poetry and how to read poetry, and the use of different poetic techniques like rhythm, rhyme, alliteration and assonance are clearly explained. This kind of theoretical study of poetry is the first text that can be found in Mizo literature. Consequently, it is imperative to draw attention to a few key passages from his texts.

A tirah chuan ka thu tlangpui atan "*Poetry* hi enge ni?" tih hi han hman ka tum zet a; nimahsela, ka chhang thiam dawnin ka inhre leh ta lo va, (...) mi dangin ngaihnaawm zawk leh fiah zawkin an la rawn chhunzawm em ang chu.

(...) Sam phuahtu tawng hmang takin, "*Poetry* hi enge maw a nih a, kan zir thin? Enge maw a nih a, kan ngaihven thin?" tih mai pawh a awl hle. He zawhna hi

hmasang ata tawh lo zawh ve fo tawh a ni ang; chhanna pawh a tam tawh hle a. Vawi khat chu Noswell-an Dr. Johnsona-a a zawt a, ani chuan “*Poetry* hi enge ni a? Enge a nih loh sawi a awl zawk ang chu. Eng hi mi tinin kan hre theuh va, enge a nih zawng sawi fiah a awl lo,” a tih san mai a. (...) A tam zawk chuan *poetry* chu chang nei thliah thliah a, a tlar bi zat neia han ziah tak bik hi ni deuh berin kan hria a; nimahsela, chutianga han ziah tak avanga thu tawh phawt chu *poetry* ni zo ta a nih si loh avangin *poetry* chu eng nge a nih a...eng nge maw a tulna ni ve a, a pawimawh ve dan ni ang le, tih hi sawi fiah thiam ta ila chu a tawh hle awm e.

Phuahtute ngei pawh hian *poetry* hi hrilhfiyah an tum zing hle tawh a; Coleridge chuan *prose* leh *poetry* chu hetiang hian a ti a- “*Prose*- tawngkam a tha thei ang bera rem khawm; *Poetry*- tawngkam tha ber ber a tha thei ang bera rem khawm.”. He hrilhfiyahna fiah tawh lohzia hi sawi sei ngaiin ka hre lo (...) Heta tanga lang fiah chu *poetry*-ah chuan thu hmante ngunthlak zawk leh duhtui zawka thlan leh rem a ni. A thianpa Wordsworth chuan hetiang deuh hian a sawi ve leh thung a:- “*Poetry* chu mihring thinlungina a vei lo put chhuak hi a ni,” a ti a. Chu chu han sawi fiah leh hret ngaiin a hria a. “Thinlunga kan vei dam diaia han fawm khawm leh hi a chhuahna a ni,” tiin a belh a. He hrilhfiyahna hi a fiah zo ti chu kan tamin ka ring leh lo va, thenkhat chuan nu thinrim ang pawh hi a thinlunga a vei alawm a an chhuahpui, *poetry* chu a ni si lo, an ti ang. William Freeman chuan, “Wordsworth-a hrilhfiyahna hi chu a mawl hle mai a (...) hrilhfiyahna hi a fiah tawh lo tih tilang hlein ka hria,” a ti a. John Keble chuan, “*Poetry* hi tawng hmang thiamna te, rilru finna leh chaknate mai hi chuan a hring zo lo, thinlungin chhungril tak atanga a veiarawn vei chhuah a ngai a ni,” a ti a. Hei pawh hi a dik leh hle mai; mahse, a fiah erawh chu a la fiah tawh lo kan ti ang (...)

Hilare Belloc thung chuan sawi fiah thiam hian a inring chuang lo va; “Chang neia tlar bi zat neia thu han phuah khawm ngawt hi chu han tih dan awm pawh ka hria a, *poetry* meuh hi chu engtia phuah nge a nih ka hre lo. Thu mawl te te ri mawl te te phuah khawm ve mai ni bawh siina lung a tilenga rilru a khawih ta em em mai hi a ngaihna ka hre mawlh lo,” a ti a. Heta lang leh ber chu eng dang a ni lo va, *poetry* hian riau a nei a, a hmanrua chu thu a ni mai a; mahse, a han hman dan chu themthiam thil ringawt pawhin a tlin lo va, mi lung kuai thei taka hman dan riau a awm leh bawh a ni. Tin, mi lung tileng thei khawpa phuah tur chuan a phuahtu a lung a len ve tak zet niin a lang bawh a. Mahse hetah hian zawhna dang a lo chhuak leh thei awm e. Engatinge hla tlar emaw hla chang khatte pawhina mi, thiamna leh

hriatna inchen rengte pawh, a khawih dan leh a thinlung len dan a dan thin ni ang? tih hi.

(...) tin, kawng khat ngaihtuahin hla phuahtute hi thlalatute leh milem ziaktute ang bawk an ni a (...) hla phuahtu erawh chuan a chei nan leh a lem ziaik ve nan khan thu a hmang a, a duh duhin a cheiin a tidanglam thei a, a mawi lo lai leh a rualrem lo laite pawh a duh duhin a chei tha thei a, thua lem a ziaik ngei aia mawi zawk pawhin a chei thei a, a mitthlaa awm mai pawh kha thlalatute chuan la ve thei lo mah se, ani chuan a la la thei a, milem ziaiku rawng khan chuan a daih lo thei a, ani erawh chuan a hman thiam chhung chuan a bawlhlo thu chuan a daih loh tih a awm ve lo. (...) churang chuan mitthlaa hmuh theih chi khan a hla chuan a ziaik a, a lo dawngtu chuan a ziaik bak hial pawh a lo la hmu thei fova, a ziaikuina mawi a tih leh tha a tihna aia sang zawk pawh chuan a lo a dawngtu chuan a lo chang thei a. Wordsworth-an a tih angin hla phuahtu chuan “Tui chung leh khawmual pawha awm ngai lo, ‘Eng’ te pawh a ziaik thei a ni”. Hei hi a ni phawt awm a, hla hi ngainat loh theih a nih lohna chu, kan chenna khawvel, kan khawsakna leilung, kan vela thil awm aia ropui leh mawi zawk, duhawm leh ngaihawm zawkte pawh hi hla hian min thlensak thei a, kan la hmuh ngai loh leh kan tawn phak ngai lohna hmunahte pawh thlarauvin min awmtir thei a, kan hrehawmna leh mangannate lak ata pawh min relh botir theih chang a awm a, sir Henry Newbol tih angin, “*Poetry* chu mihring nun tihdanglamna a ni, mihring thlarauvin khawvel he khawvel aia famkim zawk a dapna a ni,” tih theih niin ka hria.

Kan hla pakhat a chuan, “Ka thla thlawk la thuro angina, I tlan chhua hna ram fang teh,” a ti a. Hla hi mi chhuahtu a ni fo mai, kan vela mi diptute lak ata min chhua thei a, kan ngaih em em leh kan hmuh phak si lohte bula min awmtir theitu fo pakhat a ni bawk a, taksa khuahkhirhtute leh chelhbettute laka min tal chhuahtir theitu a ni bawk thin. Mizo hla pakhat chuan hei hi a tilang hlein ka hria.

(...) Hla phuahtu thiam chuan anmahin a mitthlaa a hmuh kha thuin a thiam a, a phuah laia amahin a vei ang kha mi a veitir ve niin a hriat a, a lung tilengtu emaw a tilawmtu emaw a tinatu emaw chu mitthlaa hmuh ve ngei thiam turin a chei thiam thin a ni.

*Poetry* chu a hmasa berin chang leh tlar bi zat nei a ni ngei tur a ni. Hei hian a ri kal dan a tiralremin a timawi a, kan Mizo hlate hi a *meter*- aw thluk bi kan la thliah chia hna chu ka la hre ve lo va; mahse, kan hla tha deuchte hi chu han sawi hian ri



ngawt pawh a rual thlap mai a, beng a den dan pawh a dam a. Chu chu *rhythm* tih a ni a, *prose*-ah pawh a awm ve thei tho va, poetry angin erawh chu bi mumal a nei lo chauh a ni. (...)

Tin, *poetry* hi prose ai chuan ngun zawka a ri rualrem bi neia phuah a nih avangin hriatreng pawh a awl zawk a ni. Hei vang hian khawvel hnam zawng zawng zingah lehkha lama hriat thui berte chu hla an ni fo. (...) chutiang chu a ni, Sap lehkhaha a un bera ngaih Beowulf pawh hi ni. Tin, hlaa an hman viau pakhat chu, a ri timawtuah chang ni lovin a vawn tiawlsamtu fawmah a thu bula a *consonant* ri hi an inti ang thin a, chu chu *alliteration* an ti a... “The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, the furrow followed free”... Tin, chu lovah chuan tlar tawpa thu ri inrem (rhyme) leh a kara *vowel* ri inrem (assonance) hman hi an chin pakhat chu a ni (...).

*Poetry* chuan thil reng reng hi a nihna a ngial a ngana sawi lovin zeldinna mitthla nen a mawi thei ang leh a ropui thei angina a thuam a, chu chu rimawi berin sawi a tum thin; a kala kal lovin a thlawhin a thlawk a, Shelley-an a tih angina, “Lei mawina inthup chhantu puan chu hlih luh sak a, lar berte pawh lar lo angina a lantir si,” (...).

(...) kan sawi hnem ta lutuk a, Lord Corell-a tawng hmangin ka titawp tawh ang a, Khawvel mihringte an boral hma chuan poetry pawh hi a thi bik dawn lo; a kalhmang dang thin mah se a dai dawn lo. Beidawinna karah pawh hla phuahtute chuan beiseinain min hnem a, chu thlarau chu a nun chhung chuan hla chu khawvel tiengtu, hnemtu leh mihring fate ropuina a ni zel ang.

(“MZP Chanchinbu” September, 1950 p.3-5 & October, 1950 p.6-8)

(Translation: Initially, my topic was “What is Poetry?” I'm trying to use it; I don't think I can answer it clearly, but others will continue in a more interesting and clear way.

Following the psalmist's words, “What is poetry that we study? What is it that we care about?” it's just a matter of time. This question has been asked since ancient times; there are many answers too. Once Noswell asked Dr. Johnson and Johnson said, “What is poetry? It's easier to say what it isn't. Everyone knows what light it is, but it is not easy to explain it,” he said. (...) Most of us think that poetry is written in verse and line, but any prose written in verse and libe are not poetry at all. Therefore, poetry is difficult to explain.

Poets themselves have always tried to explain poetry; Coleridge defined prose and poetry as “Prose- the best arrangement of words; Poetry- Arrangement of the best words in the best possible way,”. I don't think it's necessary to explain the insufficiency of this explanation (...) What is clear from this is that poetry is a more careful and tasteful choice of words. His friend Wordsworth said: “Poetry spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling.” He felt that he needed to explain that. “It takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility,” he added. I don't think many of us believe that this explanation is clear, and some will say that a mother's quarreling in anger is not poetry even though it springs from powerful feeling and emotion. William Freeman said, “Wordsworth's explanation is very stupid (...) and I think it shows that the explanation is not clear enough.” John Keble said, “Poetry is not born of language, intelligence and strength alone, it must come from the heart.” This is also true; but the clarity is not yet clear enough. Language skills and intelligence are not enough to become a poetry.

Hilare Belloc, on the other hand, didn't think he could explain; “I somehow know that how to arrange words into verse and lines; but I don't know how to write poetry, I cannot explain how the arrangement and combination of simple words and tune/rhythm can touch the heart of others,” he said. The most obvious thing here is that poetry has a character, its tool is words. Therefore, it is not enough to use it in a technical way alone. Therefore, it seems that the composer is very interested in composing a poem that will appeal to others. But another question may arise here. Why does a line of poetry or a verse of a poem affect a person with different skills and knowledge? that's it.

(...) and in a sense, poets are like photographers and painters (...) but the poet uses words to decorate and paint, and he can decorate and change them as he pleases a, a beautiful and irregular parts can be decorated as he wishes, and he can decorate them more beautifully than the pictures he painted. he can still take it, the sculptor's color may not last, but as long as he knows how to use it, there is nothing wrong with it. (...) Therefore, the poem is written in the way that can be seen in the eyes, and the recipient can see beyond what is written, even if it is higher than the writer's beauty and goodness the recipient can become. As Wordsworth said, the poet can “write 'Light' that never exists on water or on land”. Therefore, it is important to remember that the world we live in, the earth we live on, the things around us are greater and more beautiful, more beautiful than the things around us. Sir Henry

Newbol said, “Poetry is the transformation of human life, it is the soul's search for a world more perfect than this world.”

In one of our Mizo songs, “Fly my wings like a dove, Walk in the land of your redemption.” Poetry is always a liberator, it can free us from the oppressors around us, it can keep us close to those we love and cannot see, it can free us from the physical restraints and oppressions. I think a Mizo song shows this.

(...)A skilled poet is able to arm in words, what he sees in his own mind, and he feels that he is making others feel the same way he felt when he composed poetry.

Poetry must first of all have a number of verses and lines. That’s called rhythm, and it can be present in prose, but as poetry it just doesn’t have a regular bi. (...)

Poetry is also easier to remember because it is written in a more careful way than prose. This is why the most literate of all the nations of the world are songs. (...) Beowulf is the most famous character in English literature. The consonant sound of the word is called alliteration. “The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, the furrow followed free”... In addition, rhyme at the end of a line and assonance between vowels is one of their characteristics (...).

Poetry does not describe things in their own right, but dresses them in a beautiful and glorious way with the vision of progress. Shelley-an a tih angina, “The veil that hides the beauty of the earth is taken away, and the most famous are made unfamous,” (...).

(...) we have talked too much, and I will end with Lord Corell's words, Poetry will not die until the world is destroyed; even there’s a slight change and difference in different tradition, it will not vain. Even in the midst of despair, poetry comfort us with hope, and as long as that spirit lives, poetry will be the light of the world, the comforter and the glory of mankind.)

Sangliana doesn't have any other critical texts than "Poetry," his significant work that was already acknowledged. J.Malsawma, on the other hand, had written many works concerning critical observation on Mizo poets, Mizo songs and poems like “RL Kamlala”-about the poet RL Kamlala and his poems; “Ka Hla Duhzawng-1” & Ka Hla Duhzawng-2-critical observation on appreciation of Mizo poetry; “Ka Hla Chuam 1” & “Ka Hla Chuam

2”- critical appreciation of selected songs; “Hla Tha Ber Chungchang”- debate on best song; “Mizo Poems: Old & New. A critical Appreciation”- a comparative analysis from historical account of Mizo old and new songs; and the uniqueness of Mizo old songs; “Mizo Sakhua leh Hla” (Mizo Religion and Song)- a close observation on how the song played an important role in Mizo religion; “Leitlangpui leh Chhawntangpa”- Mizo traditional poet Chhawntangpa and his poems, “Hla Nge Nge!” (Songs will be songs)- a historical criticism on how the power of poetry could be seen and used; the works and consequences of songs and poetry; how songs and poetry are used by person, religion, politics etc are clearly analyse in this essay.

Despite not being a poet, J.Malsawma was a critic of poetry, due to his keen observation and appreciation of Mizo poetry and poets, all of his significant critical writings can be sum up as critiques of Mizo poetry and songs.

One of his significant critical writing of J. Malsawma that is worth analysing and expounding is “Mizo Hla” (Mizo Poetry). This essay is one of the earliest attempts to trace the historical development of Mizo songs and poetry. The essay begins at the Mizo had various kinds of songs and poetry. But to only have various kinds of songs is not enough; the reason is that what quality of songs and poetry that the Mizo had is an important one. Therefore, he states that it must be necessary steps to critically examine the Mizo songs and poetry.

The essay highlights one important aspect of Mizo songs and poetry that the unity and integrity of various clans of Mizo like *Lusei, Hmar, Ralte, Paihte, Pawi etc* could be seen from old Mizo songs and poetry. *Hlado and Bawhla* are originated from *Pawi* clans; ritual songs are from *Hmar* clans; *chai hla* and others songs are from *Lusei, Ralte* and *Paihte* clans.

J.Malsawma also states that Mizo measured their lives through poetry; they expressed their feeling, emotions and thought through songs. They knew that song and poetry is superior and influential than talking! (In Mizo- *Mizo chuan eng pawh ti ila, kan hlim pawhin, kan lungngaih pawhin, kan thinrim pawhin kan rilru thuk ber chu hlain kan hril thin.Tawngkam naran aiin hla hian mi thinlung a hneh duh bik tih kan hai lo va*). Therefore, all the Chiefs love poets and their poetry because the power of poetry and songs is as powerful as fire! (*Zo Nun* 141-183).

Debate on Mizo songs and poetry is an intriguing critical activity that takes place throughout this Emergence period. Rokunga wrote “Hla- A Thu nge A Thluk?” (Song- Its Word or Tune?) in 1939. This article talks about the raging debate on Mizo song and poetry and makes a judgement in favour of its word in Mizo songs and poetry. At the same year, R.Buchhawna wrote “Hla Phuah Dan” (How to Compose Poetry) and shows his side in favour of a Mizo way of composing poetry rather than English style of writing poetry. HK Bawichhuaka also contributed article titled “A Thu leh A Thluk” (Its word and Tune) in 1958, which was a judgment on the raging debate on whether the word or tune in Mizo Song.

The debating article of Rokunga “HLA- A Thu nge a Thluk?” (Song- It’s Word or Tune?) was appeared and published in “Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu”. His strongly advocated that the tune is not an evil one; but the word is. Therefore, the Mizo songs could not be classified as sacred and secular not by its tune, but by its words.

Mizo hi hlasak ngaina pawl tak kan niin a rinawm a, a-Pathian hla, a-khawvel hla hian kan uar hle mai. Amaherawhchu, hla reng reng hi Pathian hla emaw, khawvel hla emaw pawh a nihna ang tak hian kan hmangin kan la chiang hlel deuh niin rinna ka nei a ni.

Kohhran zingah te hian Mizo hnam hla (Khawvel zai) te hi sak thianga lo anga ngaiin kan inkhap a. Nimahsela, tunlaiin Mizo kohhranin khawbel hla sak a rem lo ve tia kan inkhap hi a eng hi nge ni? (...) Khawvel hla a lo nihna chhan bera kan ruat chu- “A thu nge a thluk?”

Tunlai hian khaw tin tih theih deuh thaw maiah hian kawthlerah leh hmun kil tinah-  
“Awmkhawhar lenkaw ka han thlir a/ Tlang a lang romei zam karah/Tahte sawn laitual a leng ang maw?/ Hmanah suihlung rualpui kha ngai ve maw?

tih hlate hi an sa a (...) Sap hnam hla thlukin an sa a (...) tin hei lo pawh hi hla dang tam tak Sap hla thluka thlukin nula leh tlangval hla lungleng urhsun tak tak maite hian hmun kil tin an tikhat reng mai a ni a. Nimahsela Kohhran hotute pawhin sak thianga lo sa leh khawvel hla saah ruat ngaihna reng reng in hre si lo (...) Chuvangin, hla hi, khawvel hla a lo nihna chhan chu eng nge ni ta ang le? A thu nge a thluk? (..) Tlangval pakhat chuan-

‘Fam khua em ni kan luh dawn ka lunglam vai/Ngaihban tlangpui a hnuai pial lung karah/ A mawi dar leilawn a chiah nghian e’

tih hi chheih zaiin a han sa a, Kohhan hotute chuan sak thiang lo saah an ruat leh ta ngei reng a. Chu hla chu ka han ngaihtuah chuan nula leh tlangval inphuahna hla lungleng pawh chu niin ka hre lo va, hmanah Mizo tlangval pakhatin Ngaihban tlang verha an luh thu a phuahna mai a ni si a. Nula leh tlangval inphuahna hla lungleng urhsun leh kulmut zawk em em te pawh Sap hnam hla thluka an sak chuan thiang lovah kan ruat si lo va, khawvel thil, khua leh ram, thilnung chanchin mai mai phuahna satliah zawkte pawh Mizo hnam hla thluk (Chheih zai thluk)-a an sakin thiang lo vah kan ruat leh ta chuang mai mai thin hi a ngaihna hriat a harsa. Hetiang a nih chuan kan Mizo hnam hla thluk hi Pathianin haw bikin kan ring a ni ang maw? (...) Kei ka ngaih ve dan chuan, (...) hla pawh hi tu hnam hla pawh ni sela, Kristian-te sak awm anih leh nih loh thu-ah chuan a thluk lam ni lovin a thua thu thu niin ka ring thin a ni. Kohhranin hla kan ngaih mawh dan leh kan ngaih mawh lohna dan hi enin, a thu lamah pawh niin a lang si lo va, a thluk dan ringawt hi kawngro su leh ngaih mawh ber tura ruat kan ang hle mai. Khawvel hla lungleng ni ngei hnam dang hla thluka an saka thiang kan tih si a, Mizo hnam hla thluka saka thiang lova kan ruat leh si avang hian. Chuvangin hla hi khawvel hla bawlhhlawh a nihna leh sak thiang lova kan ruatna chhan hi – “A thu nge a thluk?”

(“Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu” June 1939 p. 81-84).

(Translation: Mizos are fond lover of songs, whether it is a hymnal song or love song. Moreover, I believe that we still did not use any song as it is, whether it is God's song or the world's song.

Mizo sentimental song (Khawvel zai) is not allowed to be sung among the Mizo Christians. What is the reason why the Mizo church is not allowed to sing worldly songs? (...) The main reason why it became a world song is- “Its Word or Tune?”

These days, in almost every village, on the streets and in every corner, one love song was sung popularly. The song was sung in the tune of ‘Farewell to Thee’(...) and many other songs in the tune of western songs were sung too. But even the rulers of the church do not know that those songs are unclean songs for the member of the church. So, why is the song, it became the song of the worldly song? Which one make it worldly song, the word or the tune?

A young man sang a song in *Chheih zai* tune, but the church authorities considered it as unclean. The song was composed by a Mizo young man about when he entered Ngaihban mountain by train, located in Haflong, there is no erotic element in this song at all. While some of the most erotic and vulgar songs were sung by young men and women in the tune of English songs, the church authorities do not complain about it. But they regarded unclean song when the songs of worldly things, villages, countries and animals are sung in the tune of Mizo song (*Chheih zai* tune). Do you think that the Mizo tune *chheih zai* is hated by God rather than western tune? (...) I think, (...) a song is a Christian song, not by a tune, but by the lyrics or words. Therefore, the reason why we consider songs to be dirty songs of the world and not to be sung is – “Its Word or Tune?”)

R. Buchhawna wrote an article “Hla Phuah Dan” (How to Compose Poetry) in “MZP Chanchinchu”. R. Buchhawna compares the differences between English poetry and Mizo poetry, a comparative analysis on how English poetry and Mizo poetry is composed. Here’s how he writes it:-

Tunlai hla phuah thiamte hian hla an phuahin, sap dan an la zelin a lang; a then chuan thunawnte pawh a nei bawk a. Mizo hla dan pangngai chu thunawn awm lovin chang khatah tlar hnih emaw tlar thum emaw ni zelin a lang; a hmawr inang (rhyme) a tul lova, a ri tluang (rhythm) a pawimawh a.

Entirna han ziaak ila-

Chang khata tlat thum awm chi-

Chawngchen hla chi (Hlapui)

1. Ngaihin min au ve  
A thang viai e, thinlai nghawr dim e  
Ngaihin min au ve.
2. Ngaihlohvi au chu  
A thang thiam lo, mualpui a khum ta  
Ngaih lovi au chu.

Chang khata tlar hnih awm chi –Chawngchen hla (Khawhar zai)

1. Ami an than nan e vuitum lian lu an tlu

Vanduai kan than nan e ka hrai rihsang a kai.

2. Ka tuai a lenna e sumtual a hlui mawh e

Lam ang en mawh tang e chhingkhual kal lai ka rel.

Chang khat tlar lia siam theihte pawh a awm a; mahse, tlar hnih leh tlar thum hi a vantlang niin a lang. A pawimawh chu a ri tluang rem thu (rhythm) hi a ni.

Sap hla dan zawm mai hi nge tha ang, mahni hla dan pangngai hi le? Kei ka ngaih chuan mahni dan hi chin a tha ka ti zawk e. A remziaa tihdanglam chu a tulna pawh a awm zel ang a.

(“MZP Chanchinbu” January, 1939 p.9-10)

(Translation: The contemporary poets are writing poetry in the English way; some of them have chorus. The usual Mizo song is two or three lines per verse without a rhyme; rhyme is not necessary, rhythm is more important.

Let's write an example: Gives example two songs each from Three lines in a verse and Two lines in a verse.

There are also four lines of a verse; but lines two and three seem to be common in Mizo poetry. The important thing is the rhythm.

Is it better to follow the English rules of composition or to follow the rules of our own songs? I think it's better to follow our own law while composing song. Changes in the appropriateness will be necessary.)

It can be seen that the debate over poetry on its words and tune is still raging almost twenty years later in the writing of HK Bawichhuaka. The article titled “A Thu leh A Thluk” (Its word and Tune) was also published in “MZP Chanchinbu”.

Thil semsawm leh thendarh hi kan thiam hle ta mai le! Hla pawh then hran kan tum to to ta mai! Mahse, thluk neia thu dahkhawm hi HLA a ni. Thendarh aiin thil lakkhawm i ching teh zawk ang.

(...) Kan ngaih dana a THLUK nge a THU tihte hian, engangin sawi thiam mah ila, Pathian duh dan min thlen lo vang.(...) Hlaa Pathian chawimawi tur kan nih chuan a eng zawk nge tia thliar hran tur a ni thei lo vang. A THU leh a THLUK-in Pathian a chawimawi tur a ni e.



Sap phuah a ni emaw Mizo phuah a ni emaw hla a nih hrim hrim chuan a thu leh thlukah lak hran talh tum tur pawh a ni lo va, an inkawp chuan Pathian a chawimawi leh mawi loh kan ngaihtuah mai tur a ni...

Chuvangin, a THU leh a THLUK an tang kawp tur a ni, HLA a nih chhung chu. An tang kawpin Pathian a chawimawi chauhvin BIAK NAN kan hmang tur a ni. Thendarh lovin I dah kawp ang.

(“MZP Chanchinbu” July, 1958 p.8-9)

(Translation: We are very good at crushing and dividing things!. We're trying to separate and split the song! But, the arrangement of words with tune is SONG. Lets gather things rather than scatter them.

(...) There is no way to express God's will in our own way by dividing Tune and Word in a song. (...) If we are to praise God in song, we cannot distinguish between which one is better, its Tune or Word. It should glorify God with its WORD and its TUNE.

Whether it was composed by Westerner or Mizo, if it is a song, there no way split the word and the tune, we should think about only whether it glorifies God or not.

Therefore, the WORD and the TUNE should be work together as one, as long as it is a Song or Poetry. They should be used together for worship only to glorify God. Lets put it together without scattering it.)

Another worth mentioning critical works appeared in 1953 from the comoilation works of LR Sailo. LR Sailo compiled and published *Awithangpa Zai* in a book form. In his preface, LR Sailo talk about the peculiarity of Mizo poetry and poetic diction before and followed by critical anlaysis of the the poet and his poetry of Awithangpa.

“Thuhmahruai” (Preface) by LR Sailo in *Awithangpa Zai* was originally written on May 11, 1952.

Hmasang ata Mizote hi zai ngaisang hnam kan ni a. Kan khawtlang nunah, kan lungngaih kan hlim niah kan hlate hian kawng pawimawh tak a aw h fo thin a. Hman lai mite phei chuan hla hi infak nan te leh inhau nante pawh an hmang thin a. Chutianga hlate inhau nan emaw, inphuah el nan emaw miin an hman chuan mihring leh mihring

inkarah emaw, hnam leh hnam inkarah emaw buaina leh inhmelmakna tha lo takte a siam thin a, indoana hial pawh a thlen thei thin a ni.

Mizo hlate chuan tawng hran, hla thu kan tih hi a nei bik a; chung hla thute chu tawng pangngaih kan hmang ngai lova, hlaah chauh kan hmang thin a. Hnam dang tam zawk chuan an tawng pangngai chuktuah remin hlate an siam thin a, mahse Mizote chuan kan tawng pangngai leh hla thu kan tihte chu kaipawlhin hlate kan siam thin a. Hei hi kan hnam hla hnam dang hlate aia a danglamna a ni.

Hmanlai chuan dan naranin miten hla thu kan tih ang chu tun lai nena tehlin chuan an hre deuh bik a, mahse thangthar zingah kan hnam zaite chu chawisanna a awm tak loh avangin hla thu mawi tak kan neihte chu a chuai telh telhin a lo lang ta. Mahse thangtharte pawhin kan pi kan pu atanga kan neih, hla thu mawi takte chuan rilru a khawih theih bikzia chu kan hre hlein a rinawm. Chuvangin, hla lama hnam dangte aia kan danglamna leh hnam dangte aia kan chungchuanna chu hloh aiin chan fo a tul zawk a ni.

Kan hnam zai hla thua siam thiam mite chuan tawng pangngai sawi theih lohte kha mawi tak leh chiang takin, rilru khawih takin an phuah thei a. Chung chu hnam dang tawngin a tlukupui a dah theih loh chang ni lovin, Mizo tawng ngei pawhin a awmze thuk takte chu tawng pangngaiin dah a harsa thin a ni.

Kan hnam zai hla thu mawi tak hmanga phuahtute zingah chuan Awithangpa hi a hmingthang ber pawl a ni a. Hla tam tak a phuah a, mahse a phuah zawng zawng chu hriat sen a ni lo va, amah ngei pawhin a hre reng thei tawh bawh hek lo. Heng a hlate hi ama puih ngeia lawrkhawm a ni a, hun harsat lai ber, indo lai pawhin tlawmngai takin mi pui thin a, chuvangin, a chungah lawmthu sawi loh rual a ni lo.

Heng hlate hi ngun taka kan chhiar chuan Awithangpa hla phuah thiamzia chang ni lovin, kan pi kan pu nun dan tam tak pawh min hriattir thei a. Keini thangthar tan heng Awithangpa hla mawi tak tak leh hla thu thiam taka a hman dante hi zirtirtu tha tak a la nih beiseia heng a hla lawrkhawmte hi buatsaih a ni.

*(Awithangpa Zai 1-2)*

(Translation: Mizote are a nation that loves music songs. In our society, in our sorrows and joys, our songs play an important role. In ancient times, songs were

used to praise and insult each other. These songs are used to insult or inspire each other, causing conflict and enmity between people and nations, and even war.

Mizo poetry has a separate language called poetic diction; these dictions are not used in ordinary language, but only in poetry. Most of the other nations compose songs in their formal language, but Mizote compose songs in their own poetic diction. This is the difference between Mizo poetry anthem and others poetry like English.

In the old days, people usually knew what we call poetry compared to today, but the younger generation has not promoted our national songs . . . . But the younger generation is also aware of the beautiful lyrics of songs that we have inherited from our ancestors. Therefore, our difference and superiority over other nations in music should be lost rather than lost.

LR Sailo also critical analyse Awithangpa and his poetry. He first classified ‘Awithangpa Zai’ into five categories according to its themes.

Awithangpa hla awm dan:- Awithangpa hlate chuan tlangpui chi hrang hrang a huap a, chuvangin, mite rilru a khawih dan a danglamin a zau bik a. Hla phuahtu tam tak chuan tlangpui pakhat chauh neiin emaw an phuah a, lunglen lam ngawt emaw lungngaih lam ngawt emaw an thlur bing thin a; mahse, Awithangpa hi chuan a hun leh a hmuna thil hrang hrangte awm dan ang ang khan tlangpui chi hrang hrang neiin a hlate chu a phuah thin a. Hei hi hla phuahtu dangte hla aia a danglamna a ni.

Awithangpa hlate hi chu tlangpui chi hrang pangaah then theih a ni.

1. Lunglen zai: Nulat tlangval lam lunglenna hla
2. Khawvel thil a phuahna: Rannung leh Khawvel thil dangte a phuahna hla
3. Lusun zai: Khawhar zai emaw, mitthi ngaihna lam hla
4. Mihring a phuahna: Lalte emaw, thenawm khawveng chawimawia a phuahna hla
5. Inphuah elna: Inhuatna emaw, inelrelna emaw avanga a tha lo zawnga huat theih tura inphuah elna hla

Awithangpa hla thu reng rengte chu a thuk em em a, hla phuahtu naranten an hman phak ngai loh leh hman nachang an hriat lohte khan a hla tam takte chu a siam a. Hla thu rem taka chuktuah a thiam avangin mite hriat sa thu naran emaw tihte pawh

kha rem taka chuktuahin awmze thar neiin mawi takin a hmang thin a, A hla thute chu a bul bik a, mite hman naran ang lo tam tak a hmang thin a; chuvangin Awithangpa hi kan hnam hla phuahtute zingah chuan pawimawh leh hmingthang ber zinga chhiar turin a tling ve reng a ni.

*(Awithangpa Zai, 5-6)*

(Translation: Awithangpa hla awm dan:- Awithangpa's songs are of various kinds. Many poets have only one theme, focusing on sadness or sorrow; Awithangpa's poems are composed in various styles according to the circumstances of the time and place. This is what sets him apart from other composers.

Awithangpa's songs can be divided into five main categories.

1. Lunglen zai: A young man's song of love
2. Poems about the world: Animals and other things in the world
3. Lusun zai: Khawhar zai or funeral song
4. Human poetry: A song composed in honor of kings or neighbours
5. Satirical Poetry: A song composed to cause hatred or competition

Awithangpa's poems are so deep that ordinary poets cannot use them and do not know how to use them. Hetiang a nih avang hian a hla thute chu a bul bik a, mipui hman naran ang lo tam tak a hmang thin a ni. Hetiang a nih avang hian a hla thute chu a bul bik a, mipui hman naran ang lo tam tak a hmang thin a ni ; Therefore, Awithangpa is one of the most important and famous poets of our nation.

James Lian Mawia's article titled "Hla Phuahtute leh an Hla Phuah" (On Poets and their Poems) in 1956 is worth mentioning due to he dearly mentioned and quoted Vankhama and his poem in this article. This article "Hla Phuahtute leh an Hla Phuah" (On Poets and their Poems) highlighted the beauty of poems and it could be label as one of aesthetic criticism on Mizo poetry.

Mi thinslung a khawih nasat theihzia hriain hla phuahtu tam tak chuan hlachang hi thawnthu sawi nante pawh an lo hmang thin a ni...heng an hlachang phuahte hi anmahniin thih bosan tawh mahse thangthar lo lian zel turte rilruah chuan a lo thar

zel a, a phuahtute hian thlanah lo liamsan tawh mah se, an hlachang phuahte erawh hi chu mite thinlungah a thi thei tawh dawn lo va ni.

Miten an hun kal tawh an phuahnte hi hla (poems)-ah hian a tam em em bawh a ni. Hla phuahtute chuan an hun kal tawhte kha an han ngaihtuah chhuah leh chuan an lung a rawn ti leng em em mai a, chumi lunglenna chuan hla phuah chakna kha a rawn neihtir a, tah chuan anmahnia thilpek ropui tak mai hlaphuahtiamna an neih kha an rawn tar lang ta thin a ni. Khang an hun kal tawh han ngaihtuah chhuah lehna te khan an rilruah lunglenna a rawn pe a (...) an hun kal tawhte chu hla changin an rawn sawi chhuak ta thin a ni.

Keini kan Mizo zingah ngeite pawh hian hla chang mawi tak phuah thiamte chu kan nei ve reng asin! Mahsela chung kan hla phuahtute chuan hla chang phuah lam aiin sakmi phuah lam pang hi an uar zawk niin a lang. Kan hla phuahtu pakhat pawh chu thing pangpar vul mawi tak, a par zu savte leh khuaiten an tlan ham ham hnuuia a vah lai chuan (..) mawi a ti ve em em mai a, a mawi tihna chu hlathu mawi tak maiin a han auchhuak ta nih kha (...) mak ti em ema a thlir lai chuanin thil mawi dang zawng zawng pawh, hemi hi khawvelah hian, engatinge chatuana mi tihlim tura siam a nih loh tih hi a rawn ngaihtuah phak ta a. Chu chang chu a ni lo, engatinge nula hi biangno tak takte leh lenlai nite hi chul mai mai thei tura siam an lo nih:

“Aw engah mawi tin thang zawng pawh,

Chul mai tura Khuanun a siam le?”

a rawn ti ta a ni. CHutiang chuan hlaphuahtute chuanin kan mitina a hmuha kan rilru pawhina a hriat ve reng si kha, mawi takin an rawn ti chhuak thiam ta bik thin a ni...

Kei zawng “Poets” te leh an “Poem” te hi an mawi ka ti a, ka ngaina a ni.

(“MZP Chanchinbu” August, 1956 p.8-13)

(Translation: Knowing the power to appeal emotion, the poets used to composed their poem to tell a story. ..These poems are still alive in the minds of the younger generation. Even though they have passed away in the grave, but their poems will never die in the hearts of the people.

There are many poems about the past life of the poets. When the poets think back to their past, they are very lonely, and that melancholy gives them the strength to write poems, and then their hidden talent are exposed through poetry. These memories of the past gave them joy in their minds (...) and they expressed their past in poems.

Mizos themselves have a talented poets too! But, most of these poets are more interested in songs than in poems. One poet of ours was walking under a beautiful tree, the flowers of which the birds and the bees were running under (...) The beauty nature urge him to express in a beautiful poetry. He was amazed and wondered why all the other beautiful things in this world were not made to make us happy forever. That's not all, why are the beauty of girls and our days of spring made to become decay and fade so soon:

Therefore, the poets are able to express beautifully in poems what we see with our eyes and what we hear with our minds.

I think the “Poets” and their “Poems” are beautiful and I love them.)

There is a remarkable emergence of Biographical literary criticism during 1950s to 1960s in Mizo literature. In 1959, “Awithangpa Zai leh Pu Lalrinthanga Sailo” by Rokunga Lungleh appeared in April, “MZP chanchinbu”; four series in “Saikuti”, analysis of her life and her poetry by Selthuama during 1959 and 1960, “Lianchhiari” by “Mizo Hla Phuah Thiam-RL Kamlala” by C.Lalsangliana (“MZP Chanchinbu” November, 1960); “Mizo Hla Phuah Thiam R.Thanghuta” (“MZP Chanchinbu” December, 1960); “Pu Siamliana, Kristian Hlaphuah Thiam” by C.Rochhuma (“MZP Chanchinbu” July, 1961); and “Pu Siamliana, Kristian Hlaphuah Thiam” by C.Rochhuma in July, 1961. All these Biographical approach of criticism in Mizo literature were important for paving the way for the henchman of Biographical literary critics in Mizo literary criticism.

Biographical criticism on poets and their poems that it had seen during this period are as follows- “Mizo Hla Phuah Thiam-RL Kamlala” by C.Lalsangliana (MZP Chanchinbu November, 1960); “Mizo Hla Phuah Thiam R.Thanghuta” (“MZP Chanchinbu” December, 1960); “Pu Siamliana, Kristian Hlaphuah Thiam” by C.Rochhuma (“MZP Chanchinbu” July, 1961).

Apart from those critical writings using poetry as the subject matter, there are a lot of critical activities on the subject of Mizo language. From “Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu”, there are two articles relating Mizo language worth mentioning. The first one is in 1939, “Mizo Tawng Ziak Dan” (How to Write Standard Mizo Language) was appeared from editors Sainghinga & Lalkailuia Sailo and the second one is in 1940, “Mizo Tawng Spel Dan” (How to Spell Mizo Language), written by Zomawia pa. When we look into the “MZO Chanchinbu”, there are a lot of debate articles relating Mizo language. Some of them are- “Tawng hi Enge Ni? (What is Language?)” written by Ht Mizova and “Mizo Tawng Ziak Dan Hi” (The Writing System of Mizo Language) by Lalmawia, “Zo Tawwng” (Zo Language) by Lalthankima, “Tawng Intodelh- Duhlian” (Sufficient Language- Duhlian Dialect) by unknown, “Mizo Tawng” (Mizo Language) by Sapchhunga in June, August, October and December issue respectively in 1950. Zikpui pa wrote article titled “Hawrawp”, a response to Lalbiakthanga article in December, 1951. In 1960, three articles appeared from VL Zaithanga “Mizo A AW B” (Mizo Alphabet A AW B), R.Zuala “Mizo Hawrawp” (Mizo Alphabet) and KL Rey “Mizo Hawrawp” (Mizo Alphabet) in September, November and December issues respectively. All those critical activities regarding Mizo language are worth mentioning and importance because it paved the way for linguistic criticism proponent by JF Laldailova during the Awakening period.

The other subject matter on Mizo literature, two articles having the same titled “Mizo Literature Thanmawhbawk” (Problems and Hindrances of Mizo Literature) are also appeared in August and November issues, 1950 in “MZO Chanchinbu” from Darrikhuma and Lalrema. All those critical texts that could be seen are an important critical activities that contributed to the development of literary criticism during the Emergency period which brought to the further steps in Mizo literary criticism.

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## Chapter 3

### Awakening Period in Mizo Literary Criticism

The year 1966 marked a tumultuous period in the history of Mizoram. The Mizo Insurgency (Independence Movement) broke out in 1996 with an attempt to gain greater autonomy and independence which lasted for two decades from 1966 to 1986 that reshaped Mizoram's socio-political landscape in profound ways. The political history of Mizoram experienced a dark period- issues, challenges and difficult times due to insurgency and all activities almost came to a standstill during the insurgency period. However, the Awakening period in Mizo literary criticism began amidst the politically dark period.

The Awakening period in Mizo literary criticism was a pivotal phase that brings continued growth and development of Mizo literature. Notable figures and works emerged during this time, shaping the trajectory of Mizo literature literary criticism. Literary criticism in Mizo literature had grown more and more during this period not merely in the forms of appreciation, appraisal and essays on literary journals, but in the form of books as well.

There were three important literary key figures during the Awakening period, namely- Zikpuii-pa, JF Laldailova and Siamkima Khawlhing. Zikpuii-pa wrote an insightful and meaningful critical observation on Mizo literature during 1950s. JF Laldailova brought linguistic criticism through fastidious of Mizo language during 1960s. Siamkima Khawlhing brought awakened in the 1970s and 1980s through a critical analysis of Mizo literature through book review. Because to the works and contributions of Zikpuii-pa, JF Laldailova, and Siamkima Khawlhing, literary criticism in Mizo literature has continued to develop, the Awakening period in literary criticism may be referred to as the "Age of Zikpuii-pa, JF Laldailova, and Siamkima Khawlhing."

In Mizo literary criticism, Zikpuii-pa, JF Laldailova, and Siamkima Khawlhing's contributions and significance at this time are essential. Their critical writings were highly regarded and had a significant influence on the development of Mizo literary criticism.

### Works and Contributions of Zikpuii-pa (1929-1994):

Zikpuii-pa is the pseudonym/ *Nom de Plume* of K.C. Lalvunga. Zikpuii-pa was born on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1929 at Aizawl Venghlui. He was the second eldest son of Hrawva, Chief of Aizawl Venghlui. He became the first Mizo an IFS officer when he joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1962.

As he himself stated: “Due to the harshness of living standard and high thinking, we scattered all round the world in search of food and shelter, and after that, like a hornbill who searched food successfully moves straight towards their home-sweet home with flap the wings, we, too, would go back to our sweet home in Aizawl,” (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 207), after he retired from an Indian Foreign Services, Zikpuii-pa came home to Venglui, Aizawl and settled there till his death on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1994.

On account of his great contributions to Mizo Literature, Zikpuii-pa was awarded posthumously ‘Academy Award’ in 1995 by the Mizo Academy of Letters. And he was selected the ‘Writer of the Century’ in the year 2000 by the Mizoram Millennium Celebration Committee.

The contributions of Zikpuii-pa, in the field of Literary Criticism, was not much in quantity, but quality. His contributions are classified into three different group of his approach to Criticism, like Historical and Biographical approach to Criticism, Romantic approach to Criticism, and Book Review. The following are his important critical works listed in chronological order:

1. “Lushai Literature” (1954)
2. “Pu Rokunga Thlirna” (1960)
3. “Awithangpa Tan Thu Kam khat” (1965),
4. “Zosaphara Hla” (1973)
5. “Kan Mizia leh Insawiseln” (1973)
6. “Literature |ha” (1977)
7. “Mizo Rilrua Hla Hnathawh Dan” (1982)
8. *Ka Lungkham* book review (1990)
9. “Bible, Literature Hmanrawpui” (1991)
10. “Pu R.Lalthazuala Review on *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*” (1991)

11. *Lehkhabu Ramtiam* book review (1993)
12. *Zozam Par* bu “Thuhmahruai” ( 1993)
13. “Liangkhaia: Thu leh Hlaa Mi ropui” (1994)

The above mentioned are the milestones for Zikpuii-pa because those are his great contributions to Mizo literary criticism. His view on Literature, his observation on poetry and his judgement on books are clearly seen from the above of his critical works. To examine and study the importance, impacts and significance of his critical writings is a better understanding of the content and important of his critical works to assess and evaluate the contributions of Zikpuii-pa to Mizo literary criticism.

“Lushai Literature”:

The first contribution of Zikpuii-pa to Mizo Literary Criticism was “Lushai Literature”, written in the year 1954. This essay is one of the first Mizo Literary Criticism pieces in the history of Mizo literature. It is all about the historical approach of Mizo Poetry before pre-colonialization. He clearly stated that the quality of Mizo poetry before Christian era were not good enough at all in comparison with modern poetry, but they are really important to know it for a better understanding of the development of Mizo Poetry. In the following passages, Zikpuii-pa clearly states (in Mizo):

Kristianna a lo lan hmaa kan thu leh hlate reng reng chu ngun taka zu chhutin ngun lo taka phuah leh fawm chawp mai a nihzia a hriat theih...Chutih avang chuan hman lai hlaah reng reng khan hla thu tluang leh \ha leh ngaihtuahnaa cheimawi chu zaah panga lo liam a awm lo...Milton-a *Paradise Lost* te, *Pope-a Epistle on man* te kan chhiar chuan, keini hla chuan kawtchhuah a lo pel lo tih kan hria ang.

Tichuan, hmanlai hlaah chuan hmanlai mi rilru leh an chetna hmunte kha a lang Chiang em em a ni. An hlate chu tawi te te vek a ni a; mahse, a tlangpuiin sa leh ral te, nula leh hmangaihna te, mitthi ngaihna leh thilsiam (nature) lam a ni deuh ber. (...) Tin, indonaa kan chet tlat dante chu kan hlate hian a hril chauh a nil ova, a chang chuan hla ngeite pawh chuan indona a chawk chhuak bawk \hin. Chhim leh hmar indo hmingthang te, Khawnglung run rapthlak takte kha a bul chiah chu hla a ni.

Duhlian thu leh hla chuan mi fate literature angin lo Chiang ve kher mah suh selangin, mihring lawmna sang ber leh lungngaihna thuk berte pawh hi a lo hriatpui ve phak a ni. (...) an rilru kalna pakhat chu thilsiam (nature)-ah hian a ni.

Hla phuah mite chuan mihring nunn kawng chhuk leh chho, lungngaihna leh \ahnate hi an chik em em a, lawmna leh hlimna hlutziate hi an hre Chiang a ni, Mihring rilru ze hrang hrangte hi an hre Chiangin an dek thiam a...Saikuti leh Awithangpa \ahna leh lungngaihna hi Literature tan chuan hlawkna a ni.

(*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 133-145).

The important things that Zikpuii pa highlighted in this essay are sum up in the following ways:

- 1) In comparison with Lushai literature to English Literature, Lushai Literature did not pass out *Kawtchhuah* (fringe of a village).
- 2) From Lushai Literature, we can see the olden times and the olden Mizo people, their lifestyle and material, and their outlook. Their poetry is usually short (composed of Mizo traditional verse form-couplet and triplet) and the main themes are like- living standard, women and love, mourning and nature.
- 3) Sometimes, due to the satirical poetry composed by one party to their foe, there was conflict and later war between South and North which resulted in the raid of Khawnglung village.
- 4) In Lushai literature, we can also see the life, the life that the zenith and uttermost of human happiness and suffering.
- 5) Pi Hmuaki was the first composer of Mizo poetry, Saikuti was the best poet from Southern region and Awithangpa was the last composer of Mizo traditional verse form. "We should remember Pi Hmuaki, not like Suakliana and Rokunga, but due to her pioneer and pathfinder...The suffering and weeping of Saikuti and Awithangpa also enrich Lushai Literature," (145).

This Historical approach of Mizo Literature with special reference to olden Mizo poetry is one of the first Mizo Literary Criticism. The most important of the essay was not only that it is the first pieces of literary criticism, but also it is the first attempt to systematic and analytical study of Mizo poetry from historical approach of criticism by Zikpuii-pa.

"Literature |ha":

According to Zikpuii-pa, “Literature’ is the proclamation and expression of one ‘s thought and idea, view and observation in his own time” (*Mahni hun tawng azira mahni suangtuahna leh lungkham, khawthlir leh thil hmuh, mahni thiam ang tawka auchhuahpuina thu hi a ni. ‘Thu ro’ hi a awmizia tak pakhat chu niin ka hria,*) (“Literature |ha”, *Meichher*, 4).

Therefore, “Literature |ha” (good literature) has its own time and tradition. We should not judge literature by our own time; but by its own course of time and due to this, all classic literatures could be classic in their respective time and history, according to Zikpuii-pa.

Zikpuii-pa mentioned the two functions of Literature as well as two characteristics - one is to inform and make known other’s thought and anxious that lead readers to the author’s intention and position. The other function is the expression of one’s own feeling, thought, ideas and anxious to make known others (*Literature chuan a tlangpuiin ze kawng hnih a nei a; pakhat chu, mi dangte ngaihtuahna leh lungkham min hriattir a, an rilru leh dinhmunah min hrui lut a. Pahnihnaah chuan kan ngaihtuahna leh kan lungkham, kan duhdan leh kan beisei thlengin mi dangte hriattir nan kan hmang bawk,*) (*Meichher*, 6).

Again, there are two important things in literature- one is the ‘Subject’ and the other is the ‘art of expression or art of conveyance’. The subject could be choose from anything; but the art of expression of that subject is so important. Mizo literature is lacking in producing and is roo backward in forming or creating good and important subject. Thus, “the need of Mizo literature is to choose best subject, good subject which deals life, truth and *summum bonum* which can gives both pleasure and utility from literature,” according to Zikpuii-pa (*Meichher*, 8, 9).

Therefore, this essay is like the cord of a circular fishing net which haul all of Zikpuii-pa’s critical and creative writings.

“Bible, Literature Hmanrawpui”:

This essay “Bible, Literature hmanrawpui” was written in 1991 and highlighted the role, importance and impact of the Holy Bible as a means of Literature in every nations in the whole world (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 168). Zikpuii-pa clearly states that the Holy Bible is one of the greatest means of Literature because the Holy Bible itself is great literature, and great Literature workshop also; and the Bible is history which included the intervention of the hands and works of Almighty God to human; it is also a biographical record book of great

biblical leaders like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, Daniel, Nehemia, Ezra, Job, Esther and many more (189).

(In Mizo- *Bible hi Literature hmanraw ropui ber a ni...Bible hi literature ropui a ni a, Literature workshop ropui a ni nghal bawk...Bible hi history a ni a...khawvel inlumlet velah hian Pathian kut a lang zel a, chu mi ziahna history chu a ni...Biography (mimal chanchin) tam tak a awm a. Mi ropui chanchin...te a awm*) (189).

To claim that Bible as a means of literature, we should also add that how Bible influenced human mind and the world. Human acknowledgement of God, human concept and understanding of universe, worldly brotherhood and mutual understanding between humans are clearly stated in the Bible. “The human wisdom, critical thinking and creative mind are also come from the Bible,” (191).

The most interesting concept of Zikpuii-pa that we can drawn from this essay is that Bible is a sources of Mizo literature, which shape our mind, thinking, thought and words. “Therefore, the life of broken-hearted and soul of repentance is the most beautiful literature in the world which we had seen an example from the affairs of king David and Bathsheba, wife of Urea,” (194) according to Zikpuii-pa.

“Pu Rokunga Thlirna”:

Mizo Poet of the Century “Pu Rokunga Thlirna” was written in 1960 while Rokunga was still alive. This is one of the first and finest critical observations of Rokunga and his works from biological and romantic approach of criticism.

Zikpuii-pa -was fond of Rokunga’s poetry and he quoted about thirty eight different verse of Rokunga’s poetry in his about fifty-two essays (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*,viii). In this particular essay, he quoted one hundred and four lines from Rokunga’s poetry. So, it is clear that Rokunga’s poetry are popular and greatly influenced to Zikpuii-pa. Therefore, it is obvious and marvelous that Zikpuii-pa placed Rokunga in Mizo literature as the same placed and position of Shakespeare in English Literature (146).

So, Zikpuii-pa rightly remarks that in Rokunga’s mind and thinking, ‘Mizo’ indicates truth, courage, loyalty, altruism; every Mizo bachelor are ‘Vana pa’, the legendary hero of Mizos and every Mizo lady are ‘Chhingpuii’, the symbol for beautiful lady (*Pu Rokunga rilruah chuan ‘Mizo’ han tih hian Dikna, Huaisenna, Rinawmna, Tlawmngaihna a kawkh nghal a; tlangval zawng zawng hi ‘Vana pa’ an ni a, nula zawng zawng hi ‘chhingpuii’ an ni ta vek mai a*) (153).

Great houses had many sides and corners. Rokunga as a great poet had many sides and corners. “The most beautiful side of Pu Rokunga was his patriotic angle and nationalist corner. The physical appearance and physique of the love ones is the first beautiful things in the eyes of the lover. Likewise, Rokunga portrayed the landscape and topography of Mizoram like garden of Eden (*Chhawrpialrun*), and the social-cultural life of Mizo are the best society. All these happened because Rokunga’s spectacles are spotted and specked by love,” (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 152). These four lines of poetry that Zikpuii-pa quoted in this essay are patriotic song composed by Rokunga:

*“Lentupui kai vel leh romei chhumin  
A bawm kan Zoram nuam leh duhawm  
Aawmhar tinkim dawna han thlir velin  
A mawi zual Zofate kan lenna”*

“Zosaphara Hla”:

“Zosaphar Hla” is a defence of Zosaphara and his works by Zikpuii-pa, and also a response to J.F. Laldailova from a literary point of view. So, in this essay, Zikpuii-pa point out the four miss-mark of on the judgement of the life and works of Zosaphara by J.F. Laldailova (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 156):

1. J.F. Laldailova did not know that Zosaphara was pioneer and path-finder in Prose and Modern poetry for Mizo literature and that is why, it is not a matter that his works are good or bad. The new generations who try to continue construction of Lushai Literature should not forget Zosaphara and must not neglect his works, may be their sight is more than Zosaphara, instead they should remember that they sit and ride upon the shoulder of Zosaphara.
2. The second miss-mark of J.F. Laldailova was on his judgement of Zosaphara. Laldailova judged Zosaphara according to the standard of late 1960; not at the time of Zosaphara and his contemporary Mizo Literature. During the times of Zosaphara and his contemporaries, Mizo literature was critically backward and therefore, his works in Prose and Poetry are crucially important for Mizo Literature. Therefore, it is rightly said that due to his works in prose alone, Zosaphara could be called as ‘Father of Modern Mizo Literature’.
3. The third one of J.F. Laldailova’s missing is that Zosaphara composed ‘hymn’ not ‘poem’. The difference between poem and hymn lie in the fact that poem is for chant and should have rhyme and rhythm; good hymn is also good poem, but they have certain



different characteristics and uniqueness. While hymn song need tone and modulation, poetry need not.

4. To judge poetry by prose standard and grammatical rules were the fourth miss-mark of J.F.Laldailova according to Zikpuii-pa. If we judged poetry by grammatical rules, Shakespeare would be first eliminated from English literature. So, poetry is not prose nor information; neither logic nor science.

Zikpuii-pa rightly remark agained, “Literature is not only rhetoric and word-play; language is the main manifestation of literature indeed, but the more important one is the expression of human thought and feeling” (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 163).

Zikpuii-pa “Kan Mizia leh Insawiselna”, written in 1965, published in 1973.

College zirlai atana Vernacular text pakhat “Kan Mizia” Thanpuii pa ziaak khan ssawisel a hlawh ta hle a; a sawiseltute nek ve deuh ranin ngaihndan ka han vawrchhuak ve teh ang. A sawiseltuho hian ‘principles of criticism’ an man chiang lo deuh em ni chu aw te ka ti rum rum a...Mi thenkhat chuan amah Thanpuii pa te an khing deuh uai uai mai a; Mizo ze tha lai lai a tih lawrkhawmin Mizo Mizia han ziaak leh se engtin emaw ni an tih dawn ni?

Zirlai mi thiamn nih tumte chuan literature piece pakhat kan chhiarin chutah chuan thil zawng zawng inkhungah kan ngai tur a ni lo. Art object pakhat a ni ve mai a (...) Essay emaw poem emaw eng thil ziaak pawh a hmasa berin objective tak leh impersonal takin kan thlir tur a niah ka ngai. Hetiang hian a tlangpuii thu-ah en ta ila:...A thumal hman leh a tawngkam hman a dikin a sawi tum nen a inhmeh em? A ngaihndan a khalh chhuak thiam em? A bul a tan dan leh a hmawr a baw danin rilru a khawih em? A sentence a dikin a in balance tha em? A hmuh dan ang takin mi dang a hmuhtir thei em?...Tawngkam tul lo leh thil tul lo zeh telte a nei em?... A thu min hrilh hi eng chen nge kan pawm ang a, eng chen nge kan paih ang, a chhan leh vang fel tak nen. Chutiang chuan emotion tel hlek lovin, cool takin kan thlir turah ka ngai...

Thanpuii pa esaay ‘Kan Mizo’ hian danglamna deuh chu a nei a ni. English essay ni se Byron-a prose-work ni awm tak ani...’Kipling in sarcasm’ a ni ringawt a lawm ka ti...Thanpuii pa chuan political leh social science chu a hre meuh mai a, mahse sense of history a tlachham deuh a nih hi ka ti...

Literary criticism kan sawi a ni a, hetite pawh hian a thlir theih lawm ni? Thanpuii pan Mizo ze tha lo lai a ziaak chiam mai hi eng vang nge ni ang? Mizo society lakah vuina a nei em ni? Nge a thiante leh a chhehvela mite lakah lungawi loh riauna a nei em ni? tiin a

essay a ziak lai hun vela ama mimal chanchinte pawh thlur ta zawk ila, a chhan leh vangte pawh a lo awm mial mahna...

Chuvangin, keini zirlaite chuan, hnam siamthat tak tak kan tum a nih chuan, Thanpuii pa thu ang kak kak khan insawiselna te chu thu tluangtlamin kan ziak nge, a tiel deuh zawngin kan ziak nge, a nuihzatthlak zawngin em ni kan ziak? A enga pawh ni se, a pawh lo, kan tuar zo phawt mai tur a ni. Kan tuar zo mai tur pawh a ni lo, sawiselna awmze nei deuhte phei chu boruaka a thang bo 76ail oh nan kan fate kan zirtir ngei tur a ni...

(“MZP Chanchinbu” October 1973 p.6-14.)

“Liangkhaia, Thu Leh Hlaa Mi Ropui”:

“Liangkhaia, Thu leh Hlaa Mi Ropui” was the last work of Zikpuii-pa just before he suddenly passed away. Liangkhaia (1884-1979) had a great contribution to Mizo literature. He was poet cum hymn composer, writer, preacher, evangelist, reverend, translator, historian and scholar. Zikpuii-pa rightly comment on Liangkhaia, “Nevertheless, Liangkhaia’s fame and contributions were enormously in Mizo Literature, that is not the basic but merely a by product...All his effort and contributions on Mizo literature were a part of his work, one side of his life-house,” {*Thu leh hla (literature)-ah hian Liangkhaia chu eng ang pawhin ropuiin kutchhuak lo ngah mah se, chu chu a thil bulpui ber a ni lo va, a tangrah (by product) chauh a ni...luipui luangin tuifinriat a finna tur kawnga a hlet leh peng tam tak a nei ang hian, thu leh hlaa a hnathawh hi a thiltih peng pakhat, a insaka a sir kil khat, rawngbawlina mawi taka ni,}*(Liangkhaia Lungphun, 295).

Zikpuii-pa categorized Liangkhaia’s published works into three section, viz:

1) Christian Literature 2) Secular Literature and 3) Both a mixture of Christian Literature and Secular Literature (*Liangkhaia Lungphun*, 309).

His secular works includes- *Mizo History (Part 1 & 2)*, *Arsi Chanchin*, *Mizo mi leh thil hmingthang leh Mizo Sakhua*. Due to the contribution of the first book on Mizo history, C.Chhuanvawra called him as “Alpha of Mizo History” (*Liangkhaia Lungphun*, 322). Zikpuii-pa also rightly states that the greatness of Liangkhaia’s *Mizo History* book was not only being the first printed book of Mizo history, but also the quality of this book is outstanding till today. His others books like *Arsi Chanchin*, *Mizo Astronomy* and *Mizo Sakhua*, Mizo primitive religion were also a great books and had great contributions for the Mizo culture and history respectively.

So, Zikpuii-pa wrote worthy of acceptance and credible about the contributions of Liangkhaia to Mizo literature and that is why, the greatness of Liangkhaia from his life and works exposed soundly in this essay.

Preface to *Zozam Par* Book :

*Zozam Par* is a collection of Zikpuii-pa's seventeen poetry. The Preface, that includes from pages 1-53 were not merely a normal introductory preface, it is rather all about a good Literary Criticism pieces on poetry.

It includes about the view and concepts of Zikpuii-pa on definition and nature of poetry. So, he talked about what kind of poetry that western and civilized nations had? How they opined about poetry? And also explains different genres of poetry, techniques and devices, and who are poets? Zikpuii-pa trace back the development of poetry from Greek literary criticism (Aristotle's *Poetics*) to Mizo poetry and at last, an autobiographical and historical approach of his seventeen poetry (*He thuhmahruaia ka sawi duh chu hla hi eng nge a nih a, hnam ropui leh hnam upa zawkte pawhin eng angin nge an lo ngaih \hin a, eng angin nge an lo pawm \hin, eng ang hlate nge an lo neih \hin...Mizo hla lo \han chhuah dan leh hla kan \angkaipui dante ziakin heng hla chhe te te ka rawn chhuah vena chhante pawh sawi ila ka ti a ni*) (*Zozam Par*, 2).

Therefore, this 'Preface' is one of the most important pieces of Zikpuii-pa's literary criticism.

According to Zikpuii-pa, "Poetry is arts, which can please our mind and lead to truth and built one's good character. Therefore, the ultimate function of poetry is to make a new earth and heaven," (*Hla chu thil mawi, rilru thlima tilawma nun \ha leh nun thutaka min hruai theitu apiang chu a ni...Hla hnathawh tur chu a tawp berah chuan lei thar leh van thar siam a ni*) (*Zozam Par*, 14 & 25).

Generally Mizos are fond of singing a song. From time immemorial, before we have had written literature, oral poetry, which orally passed down from generation to generation, is the main sources of our history. So, most of our historian based mostly on Mizo poetry for authentic proof of their writings, and thus we should have more and more in-depth study and analysed Mizo songs and poetry (*Zozam Par*, 26-27).

Hence, Zikpuii-pa defines poetry and poet, traced a brief history of poetry, explains its different genres, techniques and devies, bring out the role and importance of poetry in *Zozam Par* preface.

### Book Review:

Book Review involves reading texts with an eye towards evaluating them, as opposed to reading merely for pleasure or to learn facts; it involves not only pinpointing the theme or message of the book, but also appraising and evaluating the style of the author, and the merits and demerits of the book.

Book review, after introduced it in Mizo literary criticism, became one of the most popular types of criticism. Zikpuii-pa wrote only two book review- *Ka Lungkham* and *Lehkhabu Ramtiam*- and one apology cum self-defence for his masterpieces *Nunna Kawng\huam Puiah*.

*Ka Lungkham (Introduction to Mizo Literature)*, written by B.Lalthangliana, was the first winner of Mizo Academy of Letters Book of the Year 1989.

Zikpuii-pa highlighted, in this review, the lack of critical writings in Mizo literature and he himself claimed that his critical writings of “Lushai Literature” written in 1954 was one of the first attempted to write and introduce critical review in Mizo literature (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 195). He further stated the need and importance of book review, “Writing critical review or book review is not easy, because there is no standard form to copy...in the world of literature, we need a good critics who can tell and show us which one is the bad book or good book...For the development of our own literature, good literary critics are the need of the hour. And at the same time, we are fortunate that we have good literary critics like Mr. B.Lalthangliana and Mr. Siamkima,” (*Critical review emaw Book review emaw ziak hi thil awlai a ni lo va, a chhan chu entawn tur standard form a awm tlat lo mai a...literature khawvelah hian thuziak \ha leh \ha lo min hrilh turin critical review min siamsaktu critic kan mamawh a...kan literature \hang chho zelah hian tun hma zawng aiin critic \ha kan mamawh a, chutih laia Pu B.Lalthangliana leh Pu Siamkimate kan nei hlauh hi thil vannehtlak tak a ni*) (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 196).

After it had gone through Zikpuii-pa’s book review, his critical appreciation and critical assessment on *Ka Lungkham* book, its content, subject, theme, and style of writing, are sound judgment. He appreciated the dedication and hard working of the author and evaluated the importance and significance of the texts. And he also suggested the lack and inadequate of the book like this- “Before I conclude my writing, I want to highlight the lack of this book that the author B.Lalthangliana missed out. *Ka Lungkham* put special stress upon poetry but give less attention to prose-work; except the first three Mizo novelists and their works...He also miss out all prose work in the form of essays and articles which came out from magazines...Lyrical hymns and songs in Poetry and essays in prose works are

important in Mizo Literature because the same place of lyrical songs in poetry, occupied essays in prose works,” (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 205, 205).

Likewise he comment about on B.Lalthangliana, it can also rightly said that we are fortunate that we have scholar, diligent and efficient writer like Zikpuii-pa, he who knew what to say and how to write book review like that!

The other book review written by Zikpuii-pa was review on *Lehkhabu Ramtiam*, written by Dr.Laltluangliana Khiangte. *Lehkhabu Ramtiam* traces the history from ancient Chaldean civilization to contemporary periods, how book become in the form of modern book form (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma*, 209).

All books can be classified as good books and bad books. Good books are like ‘armour of knowledge’ and the Holy Bible is the best armour of knowledge. The other influential books which have had impacts around the world like Karl Marx’s *Das Capital* and John Banyan’s *Pilgrims to Progress* are also highlighted in this book . Zikpuii-pa added, as suggestion, the other influential books like *Spirit of Laws* by Montesquieu and Rousseau’s *Social Contract Theory*, which led the French Revolution; Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nation* which led Industrial Revolution in Britain; Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* which alter and make a difference in the world of science and Freud’s *Psycho-Analysis* that reversely lead to sexual revolution (210).

Zikpuii-pa point out a number of corrigendum from this book and laid down suggestion from this book. “Generally, Dr.Tluangtea make a criteria for great books in terms of their quantity; the quality of books is less important than quality” (215). Zikpuii-pa accepted this criteria from a business point of view; but, if we try to make a good literature in Mizo, Zikpuii-pa give emphasis on “the quality and we should not neglected the quality of the book” (215).

Zikpuii-pa clearly remarks the greatness and strength of the author and his book *Lehkhabu Ramtiam* like this:

In his power of imagination, there is an ideal land, where nobody never seen; that is the land full of knowledge, understanding, application and wisdom, everyone lived without constrained and enjoy freedom and liberty, and this is the goal of *Lehkahbu Ramtiam*... Dr.Tluangte is rich in rhetoric and hyperbole; deep in abstract thinking...His environmental determinism determined him and that is why, his purpose on this book is magnificent and his art of expression also excellent...The whole book contains generally literature of knowledge as well as literature of power ( 217-218).

(In Mizo- *A mitthlaah ram nuam, tuma la hmuh ngai loh a awm a, chu chu hriatna, thiamna, finna ram, mitin zalen taka an lenna ram chu he lehkhahua laihlan a tum chu a ni...Dr.Tluangtea chu rhetoric leh hyperbole-ah chuan a hausa a, abstract thinking-ah pawh a thuk tawkin a lang...amah, a ziaktu hi finna tlangah hriatna, thiamna thlifim dawng \hang a ni a; a thu min hrilh tum hi a ropui a, mi hrilh dan pawh a thiam hle mai...a lehkhahu hian a pumpui thu-ah mi a tibengvarin rualel kawngah mi a ti\ang a, chutih rualin beiseina kawng thui tak min kawhmuh a)( 217-218).*

### The Value and Importance of the Contributions of Zikpuii-Pa

Zikpuii-pa shows himself a discerning literary critic in both prose and poetry. He was the first to write critical review on Mizo Literature. He was a good rhetorician and good oratory in his expression and is good in style. His observation on the sources of literature subjective and his contributions to the critical writing, and is considerable because it might be all together read like a systematic treatise on the art of writing.

His concepts on literature which is purely subjective is an interesting concept and this makes him that he was the ‘romantic critic’ among Mizo literary critics. His romantic concept are clearly seen from his impressionistic approach of criticism and historic sense, as T.S. Eliot had mentioned in his *Tradition and the Individual Talent* is one of the important concept of Zikpuii-pa also. His unique contribution is the importance of sublimity of the subject in writing literature. This is the echoes of the ‘sublimity’ of Longinus in Mizo literature.

The greatness of Zikpuii-pa lies in his utilitarian point of view between life and literature. He was one of the first literary critic of repute and pioneer in literary criticism and at the same time he left behind ideas for generations to come. His main idea in the field of literature as well as in criticism is truth, the truth of life. Therefore, all his endeavours and his contributions to Mizo literary criticism is to find out truth in Literary Criticism and dig out truth from literature and in this, value and importance of Zikpuii-pa is that in the truest sense a light bringer, ever guiding men’s step to the moral and utilitarian side of literature.

## The Works and Contribution of J.F.Laldailova (1925-1979)

Joseph Francis Laldailova could be said as “One man literary industry” (*German Ral run leh Thu Ngaihnaawm Dangte*, 41) in terms of a number of his quantity on published works. From 1954 till his death in 1979, he confined himself to his career as Editor and writer in various newspaper and magazines like “*Hun Thar*”, “*Thu leh Hla*”, “*Tunlai*” and “*Zoram Thupuan*”. He published about two hundreds books of *Thungaihnaawm* and translated about hundred classic literatures around the world into Mizo during those periods (41)

His scattered and fragmented works are compiled in six books, viz- *Bible Thlirna*, concerns about the wrong usages in Mizo Bible and *Kristian Hla Bu* (Mizo hymnal song book), compiled by R.Lalrawna; *J.F.Laldailova Thu Ngaihnaawm Bu*, contains interesting eleven articles and J.F.Laldailova’s “Editorial” during his serves as Editor at “*Thu leh Hla*” journal; compiled by J.F.L Junior (alias Peter Lalthangkima); the compilation book of *Zosaphara* on his life, works, and debate articles, compiled by B.Lalthangliana. This particular book contained the most important milestone in Mizo Literature, ‘Literary Debate on *Zosaphara Hla*’. In *Lurhpui Dingdi*, compiled by J.F.L Junior contains articles and Biblical and language criticism written by J.F. Laldailova.

From the year 1960s, a critical awakening in Mizo language through linguistic criticism come into arrive with the publication of ‘Criticism of Diction in the Poetry of *Zosaphara*’ in “*Zoram Thupuan*” (Weekly Newspaper) on May, 1964 (“*J.F.Laldailova leh a Sulhnu*” 10). Due his passion and affection for the Mizo language, he became very captious on the works of *Zosap* missionaries. JF Laldailova made a significant contribution to Mizo literary criticism in terms of linguistic critique. He was a critic, and both the Mizo language and Mizo literary criticism benefited much from his enormous efforts and contributions.

J.F.Laldailova earned fame and was famous all over Mizoram during his times in translation because most of his works are translated. But, as he himself had declared that he had sacrificed his “*passing popularity*” for something more valuable and precious which is language criticism- criticism of the influence of Colonial language in Mizo and Biblical criticism. He try the level of his best for restoration of being the downfall and decline of Mizo language for generations to come and he points out from Mizo Bible and *Kristian Hla Bu* (Mizo Devotional Hymnal Book), as correct as it can, the good usages of Mizo languages in prose and poetry.

As language critics, he should be highly considered and give first priority to the contributions of J.F. Laldailova to Mizo literary criticism in poetic diction and correct usage of language for Mizo Bible. The most interesting and significant contributions of J.F. Laldailova to Mizo literary criticism was “Literary Debate” on Zosapthara, Mizo Bible and Mizo *Kristian Hla Bu* (Christian Hymnal song book). All those Literary Debate could be said as language criticism because their main topic discuss were mostly concerned with Mizo language. Therefore, we could rightly said that the most important contributions of J.F. Laldailova was language criticism through Literary Debates.

J.F. Laldailova was Mover and also the best debator and best contributor in this Literary Debate. He alone stands in this debate. While his opponents were major literary figures like R. Zuala, C.Z. Huala, Zikpuii-pa, and many more from church leaders and prominent citizens. The topic they discussed mostly were about the correct usages of Mizo languages; the hymns and songs composed in Mizo and translated into Mizo by pioneer missionaries in Mizoram, especially Zosapthara and his works; and about the misuse of Mizo language in Mizo Bible and inappropriate diction in Mizo *Kristian Hla Bu* (Mizo Christian Devotional Hymn Book). Thus, we can rightly sum up that this Literary Debate was all about proper correct usages of Mizo language in poetry and prose.

#### Literary Debate on the Works of Zosapthara:

B. Lalthangliana and C. Vanlallawma said that this literary Debate was first propounded by J.F. Laldailova on the works of Zosapthara (Rev. Edwin Rowlands) and his debate article was first seen on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1964 at “*Zoram Thupuan*” (*Mizo Literature*, 343). Before he propounded, J.F. Laldailova clearly stated that this debate would impact on Mizo Literary Criticism like a ‘bomb-shell’-“*Ngawi tak rawh u, mipui zingah bomb-shell ka thlak dawn a, a mi nghawng nat turzia chu in lo hre mai ang*” (Translation: Behold, I would cast a bomb-shell upon the crowd, we will see its great effects and consequences) (*Bible Thlirna*, 7).

Zikpuii-pa responded J.F. Laldailova in this matter after a decade had gone like this in his “Zosapthara Hla”:

Chu Bomb puak chu a ringin mi mawl tan chuan a thlaphan thlak rum rum pawh  
a ni mai thei, mahse, rin angin thil a tiche lovang...Zosapthara hlate hi chu a



grammatical mistake sangkhat hre reng chung hian...kan la \ahpui dawn chauh a ni ta ve ang

(Translation: The sound of the explosion of that ‘bomb-shell’ was too loud and make us anxious and distress for layman, but, it won’t have great effects as we have had expected...Knowing and keep in mind the thousands grammatical mistakes Zosaphara in his poems, we still cherished and sang still. )

(*Zosaphara*, 252).

Lets take pinpoint analysis from some of the apology for Zosaphara and the reproach of J.F.Laldailova on the literary debate of Zosaphara:

- 1) “Zosaphara knew Mizo language very well, his expert in Mizo language could enrich our Mizo literature also. Therefore, his hymns and songs are acceptable after we had examined in prose standard as well as in poetry standard,” (*Zosaphara*, 210).

After he carefully studied on the works of Zosaphara, J.F.Laldailova confirmed that from out of his all hymns and songs, only four songs titled- “*Lalber chuan ruai\heh a peih*”, “*Kan Pathian kan Puipa pangngai*”, “*Kan inhmuh kan intawh leh*” and “*A lo kalin*” are acceptable after he examined and judged according to prose and poetry standards (*Zosaphara*, 221).

- 2) “All of Zosaphara songs had greatly inspiration. His songs are great because it touched the heart not reason. J.F.Laldailova could not comprehend the spiritual meaning of Zosaphara’s songs because he only judged from its diction. We like so much Zosaphara’s songs due to the following reasons-its spiritual meaning and its deep meaning of the word he choose for diction,” (*Zosaphara*, 211,214,228).

But, J.F.Laldailova clearly states for reproach like this:

Sapthara hla thukzia ropui ril hre pha tur hian thlarau lam lama chhiar tur tein min sawm a. Pu Kamlala thuknapui hre turin thlarau lam pun ve kan ngai em?...Mizo hla \awnghmang mawi tak, Shakespeare leh Milton-ate pawhin mawi an tih ve ngei tur chu Mizo kutah hlan rawh u! (*Zosaphara*, 233)

(Translation: Is it necessary to comprehend Kamala’s sublimity from its spiritual meaning? Certainly not! Why were they suggested me to read from its spiritual meaning to comprehend Zosaphara’s songs?...The beautiful diction and poetic word of Mizo, which Shakespeare and Milton also would like to use it, should belongs to

the Mizos and would find in Mizo songs and hymn also, not from Zosaphara's work!)

"Like others poets, Zosaphara also had the right to enjoy *poetic freedom* (220). Zosaphara would prefer coined words, but correct meaning rather than Mizo diction and poetic words and that is his specialized than others" (224).

J.F.Laldailova was not convinced in that matter also. His reproach was that, there should be also a grammatical rules in every language, and also in Mizo language. Therefore, *poetic license* did not mean for violating grammatical rules while composing a poems (233). Besides that, Zosaphara could not fully understand the aspects and rules of Mizo language and grammar; that is why while composing Mizo hymn songs, he composed as he wishes, and make Verb and Adjective in Mizo language as Noun (*Zosaphara*, 230-31).

- 3) "He who disqualified Zosaphara from 'qualifying word' would also be unqualified Critic also" (220)

J.F.Laldailova said that he think that Zosaphara did not fully comprehend Mizo language only due to some of his translation became out of context, but, it is the fact that he was not fluent in English, (*Lurhpui Dingdi*, 6). He also said, "I have had waiting a long time when someone would criticized me in my writings because I thought that they never read my writings critically...Shakespeare and his works are worthy to be criticize, but I am not worthy of criticized" (*J.F-a Love Letter*, 213). So, J.F.Laldailova was one of the best language critics among the Mizos.

- 4) Zikpuii-pa point out the four miss mark of J.F.Laldailova in his defense of "Zosaphara Hla" after Laldailova had passed away. So, C.Lalawmpuia Vanchiau clearly trip up Zikpuii-pa's four major point for the sake of J.F.Laldailova (*Zolife*, 44).

To sum up, debate on Zosaphara, as Zikpuii-pa clearly proclaimed the freedom of literature against Laldailova like, "Literature is not bound by any rules and regulation" (*Zosaphara*, 252) to defend J.F.Laldailova, it is also clearly proclaimed that language, the main tool for expression of human thought and feeling, that meant literature, is bound by grammatical rules and thus, it cannot be neglect the importance, rules and functions of grammar in language.

## Correct Usages of Mizo Language and Grammar:

One of the most significant contribution of J.F.Laldailova was his defense of correct usages of Mizo language and that is why he introduced debate on 'Mizo language', to have the best correct usage of Mizo language, as possible as it can, in writing and in spoken. Therefore, his entire 'mission' was an apology for Mizo language.

Mizo language, in the days of J.F.Laldailova, was likely to become downfall due to the incorrect usages in our everyday language. Thus, the first and foremost need for restoration of Mizo language, a fine and rich language is to get rid of all the inferiority complex which we have in mind due to colonial impact and worshipped our 'Zosap' Missionaries like a demi-god (*L.Keivom Thukhawchang*, 103). Most of our language in the Mizo Bible, Mizo hymn songs and also in the school syllabus-Mizo textbook are prepared by *Zosap* missionaries and their Mizo helper. Colonialism impact on the downfall of Mizo language and most of the Mizo people had courage in mid to resist colonialism, because our *Zosap* Missionaries were treated like 'demi-god'.

To get rid of Mizo local-made 'Zu' (fermented rice beer) as the first priority task for the *Zosap* Missionaries while they were serving in Mizoram was comparable to get rid of all the incorrect usages of Mizo language from Mizo Literature (*Bible Thlirna*,6). Thus, the task of J.F.Laldailova, to criticize the works of 'Zosap Missionary in their unacceptable usages of Mizo language in Mizo Bible as well as in Mizo Devotional Hymn books, would not be as easy as it seems because most people of the Mizos regarded that our *Zosap* Missionaries were who brings glad tidings of good things-Education and Gospel to Mizoram (*Bible Thlirna*,7).

Therefore, to eradicate the wrong usage and misused of Mizo language from Mizo Bible, Mizo textbook and also daily Mizo Newspaper was the need of the hour, because those thing had a great impact and great influence on our everyday language. So, there must be correct language, as much possible as it can, in Mizo Bible, Mizo textbook and daily Mizo Newspaper was crucially important for future Mizo Language. Let's see the comment of J.F.Laldailova on that matter:

Hnam pui apiang mai hian mahni \awng an ngaisangin an zah a; thikthuchhe takin an humhalh \hin...|awng dik apiang a zahawm. |awngkam dik hman thiam tura mi kan duh chuan \awng dik kan ZIRTIR hmasa tur a ni...Kan \awng hi tuihnai deuhva kan siam puitlin dawn chuan kan nitin \awnga kan uluk hle a ngai ang. Nimahsela, kan

Mizo Bible leh kan Zirlai bu leh kan nitin chanchinbuah hian \awngmang dik lo leh ulh pui pui a tam mai ...ziaka kan \awng chhim ber leh zirna ber kan Mizo Bible leh kan zirlai bute Mizo \awng hian a zir loh vang a ni... Kan Mizo Bible \awngmang tam zawk a ulhna chhan hi Sap \awng kalhmang zula Mizo \awng an chheh \hin vang a ni

(*Thu Ngaihnaawm*, 33, 35,54, 172, 182).

(Translation: Every civilized nation loved their mother tongue and preserved with jealousy...Correct usage of language had dignity. So, to used correct language, we must learnt the correct language...If we want to develop our language, we must take cautions in our everyday language. Unfortunately, there are a lot of incorrect usages in our Mizo Bible, Textbooks and daily Newspaper...so, we have to use the correct language as possible as it can in Mizo Bible and in Mizo textbook because these two things had greatly influenced our everyday language. Some of our language become incorrect due to the influence of English grammar.)

To propound the correct usages of Mizo language among the Mizos was difficult task because an improper usage of grammatical have had dominated about 80 years in Mizoram. Due to a long reign of improper grammatical of Mizo language in both religious and secular literature, most of the Mizos did not know that which one is the correct language and how we can say that it is corrected usage from a grammatical standard? Still this was like a matter happened in those days, J.F.Laldailova never give up his hopes to restore Mizo language at its right place.

Indo Pui Pahnihna hun lai kum 1941 sikul chawlh khan Zoramah ka lo haw ve leh a...Mizo grammar kalhmang bawhchhiaa puitlingho thu sawi chu a ulh a ulh chuan a d^n ve reng tur emaw ka lo ti \hin a ni. Chutiang grammar lawilohna d^n chuan kum 80 chhung dawn lai Zoramah lal a lo r^wn a nih chu! Mizo Union tana lal lalna paihthlak tumte kha chu nep t> a lo ni zawk a; kan thisena kan lo \hanhnan tawh, chu \awng dik lo lalna rorel chu \angruala kan hlih thlaka ngai kan awh leh a ngai dawn ta a ni. A khirhna chhan ber chu sakhua leh zirlai bu thu nena a lo inchiaphiah rei tawh >m vang hi a ni. Sakhua kher hi chu ni suh se, zirna lam ringawtah hi chuan keimah mimal pawh hian thil ka la khawih danglam theih chu ka inbeisei pha a ni.

(*Bible Thlirna* 145)

(Translation: During my vacation in Aizawl in the year 1941, while there was still going on World War II, I already heard that the improper grammatical usages in Mizo

language even among the adult Mizo people. Therefore, when considering back at that time, I found out that improper grammatical rules in Mizo language have had dominated over 80 years of ages in Zoram and that improper grammatical rules run over to our bloods...The most hindrances was that it woven that improper grammatical usages with both in religious and in secular literature.)

But, to lead back from its astray of Mizo language, there are so many obstacles and hindrances to conquer. So, to criticize severely at the point and at the same time, to show the right word and right usages of Mizo language is the best remedy for restoration of Mizo language. Thus, like a voice of one crying in the wilderness, J.F.Laldailova cried out to prepare and to restore Mizo Language:

Pi leh Pute \awng tluang dik tak a\anga kawng bo hnu hruai kir leh tumna kawngah hian, \hian \ha ber berte leh mahni unaupate ngei (...) pawh hmeh inhmuh leh tihrehawm tur khawpa kan dim loh an lo ngai a. Juda-ho duh loh tawp thil angin mahni pu leh pa te ngei ngei pawh zuah bik lo va kan sawisel tel bawrh bawrh an lo ngai ta a. Kan Zosap-hote pawh min hruai bona kawnga a puipa bera \ang anga kan dem phiar phiar an lo ngai ta a. (...) Pa dere sa hi kan intheh-Naia Pawisa zo ta a. Kan thu lah chuan thlalara au aw chu sawi loh, \hi-beh lo thu-ah pawh k<ngpuimu\hi leh choaka-\hi beh lo thu pawh a tluk tawh lo va, vut laka vawih ang hi a ni ber awm e.

*(Bible Thlirna 153).*

(Translation: Our modern usages of Mizo language astray from the correct usage and right used of our ancestors. So, to lead from its astray to the right way, my best friend and even my siblings would be criticized and harmed if it is necessary. Although, it is some kind of disrespect thing to our parents, we have had to criticized our parents also, because they are the main responsible for leading astray from the right usages of Mizo language with our Zosap Missionaries...Unfortunately, I am like the voice one crying in the wilderness..who would listen to my words?)

Therefore, while he was lying at the dying bed, his last wished was if he could have a chance for one year, without considering and did not think of what others would said about him, he should declared not only the misused of Mizo language by Zosap missionaries, but their devastation of Lusei (Mizo) language without regret.

Kum khat emaw tal thuziak thei tura ka la dam zui theih vaih chuan ka hmingchhiat zui dân tur pawh dawn chang tawh lovin kan Zosap leh an kaihhruaihote'na Lusei \awng min lo tihchhiatsak vek dân hi, ka eizawna kawnga ka \hahnem ngaih tluka nasaa \hahnem ngaiin ka puang phiar phiar tawh mai ang.

(*German Ral Run leh 19*).

(Translation: If I had a chance for one year to continue writing, I would revealed, with the same zeal in my profession, the devastation of our lovely Lusei language by Zosap Missionaries and their yes-man, without regret my bad reputation later. )

### Review on *Mizo Bible* and *Kristian Hla Bu*:

The Mizo Holy Bible (Old Testament & New Testament) was published in the year 1959. Most of the Mizos were fond of Bible scripture and that is why, in their everyday language and in their writing also, there was an impact of Mizo Bible language. So, we could rightly said that Mizo Bible is one of the most influential in Mizo language. Therefore, the Bible language must be the best correct Mizo language because some quoted and based that '*It was written like in the Mizo Bible also*'.

Kan Mizo Bible-ah hian Mizo \awng hmang dik lo leh mawi lo kan chelek tur a ni lo. (...) Bible hi a dik leh kim thei ang bera lehlin tum fo tur a ni... Sap\awng Bible engah pawh hian \awng hmang dik lo (grammatical mistakes) pakhat mah in hmu lo vang...Kan Mizo Bible ve lema \awng dik lo sang tam hmuh tur awm ta mai bik hi...An Mizo \awng hman dik loh avang ringawt pawhin Bible thuchanga inhniaina a tam thei emai!

Kan Bible hi kan sikul zirlai bu ai maha kan chelek ngun zawk a ni a; an Sap\awng Bible-a a thu chheh a dika a \awngkam a nalh ang bawh hian kan phu tawkah kan Bible-a kan Mizo \awng pawh hi nalh lama chhal em ni pha lo mah se a dik tal tur a ni... Kan Bible \awngkam hian kan nitin khawsakah mi a kaihruai hneh hle dawn a; a \awngkam hi uluk lehzuala chheh a ngai reng a ni)

(*J.F-a Love Letter, 61, 63, 67, 68*).

(Translation: In English Bible, there were no grammatical mistakes in it!..But, there were more than thousands of grammatical mistakes in our Mizo language...Due to the wrong usages of Mizo language in the Bible, it stir up unnecessary argument among the readers. Therefore, we should try the level of our best while translating

Mizo Bible and we must avoid as much possible as it can, the wrong usages of Mizo language.

Our Bible is make use of more than our textbook; therefore, the language we used in Mizo Bible should be as good as it can. It is very crucial because Mizo Bible language had influenced our everyday language more than any other things.)

As he was Language critic, J.F.Laldailova deeply considered why there were so many grammatical mistakes in Mizo Bible? He try to find out the clues and who was the responsibility for this. After carefully observed from different corners, he clearly concluded that one of the main reasons for grammatical errors of Mizo language in Mizo Bible was due to Welsh Missionaries (Mizos called them as ‘Zosap’) and some of our fellow Mizo, who are under the supervision of Welsh Missionaries (*Bible Thlirna*, 3).

This was the finding of J.F.Laldailova from the diction used in Mizo Christian Devotional Hymn Book, after he critically examined the diction used by Welsh Missionaries and their ‘Yes-Man’, when he compare to that of diction used by major Mizo poets and composers like Patea, Saihnuna, Damhauhva, Kamlala and Suakliana in their songs/hymns/poems. (*Bible Thlirna*, 1 & 3).

It could not point out all the correction and corrigendum for correct usages of Mizo language made by J.F.Laldailova from Mizo Bible and Mizo ‘Krsitian Hla Bu’; therefore, lets take a few example:

- 1) The word preposition ‘For’ is translated wrongly in Mizo word. They translated as ‘ai’ or ‘aia’ in Mizo. For example, in Romans 8:32 “...but delivered Him up for us all...”, 2 Korinth 5:20-“Now then we are ambassador for Christ,”; Ephesians 5:25- “...just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,”; John 15:13- “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends,” and Luke 22:19-“This is my body which is given for you,” are wrongly translated the word ‘for’ as ‘aia’; the correct translation should be ‘tana’ (*Bible Thlirna*, 18-20, 90-91).
- 2) If the grammar in English is correct, then the grammar in Mizo language would be correct; not in the syntax, but according to grammatical rules. But, if we used adverb *lawmin* in places of noun ‘lawmna’ (joy), it is wrong from grammatical rules. Let’s

take an example in Mizo sentence- “*Ka Thlarau lawmin a khat...Lawmin ka lo khat a ni*”.

These two sentences are not correct or incomplete because in English, “My soul in full of what? Full of joy. What is joy in Mizo-*lawmna* or *lawmin*? *Lawmna, for sure!* What does lawmin then mean? It’s the adverbial form of the noun lawmna. ‘*Ka thlarau lawmin a khat*’ means ‘My soul is full of joyfully’ (My soul is full of joy) (*Bible Thlirna, 62-63*).

- 3) The word ‘Buy’ means ‘*lei*’ in Mizo word, ‘Cow’ means ‘*bawng*’; so, ‘Buy cow’ means ‘*lei bawng*’ as it appears; likewise, the word ‘commit’ means ‘*ti*’ in Mizo word and ‘sin’ means ‘*sual*’ and ‘Commit sin’ would be ‘*tisual*’ in Mizo language. But, these are the wrong translation and the right translation should be like that ‘*Bawng lei*’ and ‘*sual ti*’. ‘*Thil sual ti*’ in Mizo word means ‘to commit sin’ in English and ‘*thil tisual*’ would be ‘to make a mistake’ or ‘to blunder’. Therefore, the Mizo word ‘*thil tisual*’ and ‘*thil sual ti*’ are not the same meaning or connotation (*Bible Thlirna, 181*).

So, the right translation word in 1 Kings 15:26 and Deuteronomy 20:17,18 should be ‘*thil sual tihdir*’, not ‘*thil tihsualtir*’ and ‘*thil tisual*’ and ‘*thil sual ti*’. Again, in Genesis 44:5 and in Jeremiah 23:2, the right word should also be both ‘*thil sual ti*’ (*181-182*).

- 4) The wrong usages in Mizo Bible were also bring along with Mizo Kristian Hla Bu (devotional song book). For example, song no 320- “*Isua awm nghengin rehna a ni e*” (*On Jesus’ bosom naught but calm is found*) could not be the right translation in Mizo language (*Bible Thlirna, 236*).

In this lines- “*Kete pawh I rawngbawl na/Tlang takin kal fo sela,*”, the word ‘*tlang*’ could not be the right word for ‘swift’ in English. Likewise, in Mizo conventional usage, the word ‘*zualko*’ indicates negative sense; so, in this lines, “*Kate zualkovah ka pe/Thu \hain tikhat ang che,*” the word ‘*zualkovah*’ is the wrong usages in the wrong place (*Bible Thlirna, 237*).

There were also a bundle of incorrect translation in hymn songs. For example, song no 41- “*Lal Isua tithawvengah* (*Oh, bless the name of Jesus*), song no 349- “*Lal Isua hming I pu ang u,*” (*Take tha name of Jesus*) etc were the wrong translation (*Bible Thlirna, 249-250*).



As he himself clearly states that, all the efforts and endeavours rendered by J.F.Laldailova to Mizo language is due to the zeal for Mizo nations and at the same time, he looked to the reward from new generations to come. He knew that more than half of his fans around Mizoram dislike him due to his works on Literary Criticism through language; but he did not care about his 'passing popularity' and sacrificed for exchanging more valuable things (*JF-a Love Letter*, 257). So, he valued Mizo language more than anything else and he care about the correct usages of Mizo language more than himself! So, without reluctance of criticizing others for the sake of both nation's glory and the betterment of Mizo language, J.F.Laldailova did not care about no one. His conscience clears about what he did and why he did!

Ka 'passing popularity' hi thil tlo zâwk lei nân chuan ka 'sacrifice' hreh hlei nem (Love Letter. 257). Kei chu mi insiam\hatna tura thil sawisel ka ni a, ka chil per a thlawn lo viau dawn ni pawhin ka hre \an ta e... Chutiang Chawimawina lung thlahlel lo chuan kan hnam than mawi lehzual theih nan mi sawisel lamah tu-mah ka dimd^wih dawn lo.

(*Thu Ngaihnaawm* 99-100).

(Translation: I don't hesitate to sacrifice my passing popularity for something better (Love Letter. 257). I am criticizing to make someone better, my words will not in vain. I don't seek stone of honor but I seek and try my level of best for the good of the nation and I am not be lenient with someone.)

### Importance of Language Criticism of J.F Laldailova

T.S.Eliot rightly said the need and importance of a good critic in his '*The Frontier of Criticism*':

The criticism of today, indeed,...take the same interest in the social sciences and in the study of language and semantics...There are two main causes that have led to the transformation of literary criticism in the present age. The first is the consideration of literature in the light of social and physical sciences, and the interest of the critics in the study of language and semantic; and the second is that due to the increasing attention given to the study of English and American literature in modern universities and schools a situation has arisen in which many critics are teachers of critics.

(*T.S. Eliot's Three Essa*, 78)

Therefore, one of the value and importance of J.F.Laldailova was that he was ‘God’s chosen vessel’ for Mizo people to bring about glad tiding things while the Mizo language is under the bondage of ‘colonial impact’. L.Keivom also rightly said that during times of troubles and hardship that human had faced, God made someone ‘genius’ to save from their trouble. “J.F. Laldailova is among one of the God’s ‘chosen vessel’ to bring salvation for Mizo Language,” (*L.Keivom Thukhawchang*, 101).

The importance of J.F.Laldailova lie in the fact that due to his Language criticism through Mizo language, our literature vivid again and due to his Biblical criticism, most of the Mizo people had curiosity in the language of the Bible; due to his debate on Zosaphara and his works, our inferiority complex upon *Zosap* Missionaries became less, and due to his pinpoint of the incorrect usages and ungrammatical sentence from Mizo Bible, *Kristian Hla Bu* (Devotional Hymn Song Book) and school Textbook, our Mizo language restore its right place. Due to his all efforts and work hardship on Mizo language, PL Liandinga considered him that he was “the best contributor for Mizo literature” (“J.F-a Nen” in *Zolife*, 46).

J.F.Laldailova considered Mizo language as ‘*the most beautiful language in the world*’ (*Bible Thlirna*, 37) because he loved most Mizo language than English and others language in the world. Thus, we can rightly called him that he was the ‘Defender of Mizo Language’ due to his works and contributions on Language criticism.

RL Thanmawia rightly comment that J.F.Laldailova was “pioneer in Mizo Literature...teacher of the right and correct usages of Mizo language to Mizo people...one of the best contributors in translation...thus, the greatness and glory of J.F.Laldailova could not be beyond recue to bury,” (*Lung Min Lentu*, 272).

L.Keivom agreed with B.Lalthangliana in case of J.F.Laldailova’s certificates of reputation- ‘the certificate of Pioneer in Newspaper; certificate of the main propounded of for using the correct usages of Mizo language among the Mizos; certificate of best contributors in translations; certificate of making good example for lexicographer’ (*L.Keivom Thukhawchang* 106).

Therefore, even though there was already one old saying, “No statues have ever been raised to a critic” (*J.F.Laldailova Thu Ngaihnaawm*, 99), after a number of decades had passed, the J.F.Laldailova’s statue had been raised by new generations as a language critic for

his valuable contributions and impact on Mizo language; his resistance of Colonial impact on Mizo and his efforts bring to upgrade Mizo language.

### Works and Contributions of Siamkima Khawlhing (1938-1992)

Siamkima Khawlhing was a consistent advocate for Mizo literacy and the growth of Mizo literature among the Mizo. Although he had only two books which leave for the Mizo, viz- '*Ka Zinna Ram*' (1979), a travelogue- an account of his brief autobiography and travels during 1970's, and '*Zalenna Ram*' (1986), a compilation of his twenty three essays on life and letters. His other articles and essays not included in his compilation book, mostly wrote for "MZP Chanchinbu" literary magazine and "Thu leh Hla" journal, where Siamkima both served as editor. Although his works are less in quantity, but rich in quality; his importance, impacts and significance of Siamkima and his literary works were greatly influenced to Mizo literature.

Siamkima Khawlhing has had a great impact and significant influence on Mizo literature through his insightful critical writings. He may be one of the most influential critics among the Mizo. He introduced systematic literary criticism in Mizo literature. Due to his keen observation, impartial and disinterested endeavour analysis on literature, his works and contributions became very popular. L.Keivom called him the 'Father of Mizo Literary Criticism' for his great contributions and influences in the field of Mizo literary criticism.

His anthology of critical and creative essays in '*Zalenna Ram*' is one of the best literary criticism book, and also one of the most influential book in Mizo literature. Therefore, it should have a thorough study on the great contributions of Siamkima Khawlhing to Mizo literary criticism from his critical writings.

#### *Zalenna Ram* "Thuhmahruai":

Preface to *Zalenna Ram* is a brief introduction and an overview of the development of Literary Criticism from ancient Greek Literary Criticism, Aristotle's *Poetics* to English Literary Criticism, Sir Phillip Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetries*; John Dryden's *An Essay on Dramatic Poesy*; William Wordsworth's *Preface to Lyrical Ballad* and Mathew

Arnold's *The Study of Poetry*, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, our Mizo literature also laid a foundation on Hebrew Bible (*Zalenna Ram*, 20-26).

In this 'Preface', Siamkima defined what literary criticism is. According to him, literary criticism is 'firstly, one of the genre of literature, and secondly, it is critical analysis of literature by using a free play on mind and thought' (*Zalenna Ram*, 20).

The goal of his book *Zalenna Ram* was clearly stated by Siamkima: "The aim and objectives of the author of this book *Zalenna Ram* are to widen the scope and view of Mizo world view, and to introduced literary criticism in our own language through this book," (29).

"Literature Kan Tih Hi":

Siamkima defined literature as-"any written expression, having relationship with human life, permanence and dignified in composition" (*Thu eng pawh, mihring nun nena inlaichinna nei chi, hun rei tak chhung hlutna nei tura fel fail eh \ha taka ziak hi a ni*) (*Zalenna Ram*, 32).

He further states that, to have a dignified composition, the diction and art of expression should be good enough; to have a permanence value for human life, it should be a mirror of life and human interests, its value and also its thought and feelings; above, the most important thing is that it should be a mixture of fact and fiction and true to real life (*Zalenna Ram*.32).

Literature is 'man-made beauty' and it is an expression of human life and its character. It covers not only the appearance world; but also as Milton had already said, 'where more is meant than meets the eye' (32).

We study literature to trace out its hidden message, behind every literature, there was human life, human history, their social and society. So, we study human character, human suffering and feelings, emotions and all its perspective from literature. So, to study a literature is not merely studying of history, culture and society; but rather a study of human life' (33).

"Hla Pakhat":

"Hla Pakhat" is a historical and ontological criticism of Rokunga's poem "*Lentupui Kai vel leh Romei Chhumin*".

Siamkima said, "Most of Rokunga's poem are not an expression of one feeling and thought like Saihnuna and Kamlala's poem; rather it is an expression of social and political

life. So, this particular poem “*Lentupui kai vel*” is also a kind of an expression of social and political life of Mizoam,” (*Zalenna Ram, 70*).

Siamkima make three ‘criteria’ or standard for making judgement on the quality of poetry in this essay: “To become a good quality of poetry, it should have universality, based on truth and permanence value of its message,” (71).

He was still confused by using these three criteria for making a judgement on Rokunga’s poetry. So, he used one of TS Eliot’s critical concept, ‘objective correlative’ (74). Perhaps, this would be the first used of ‘objective correlative’ for analyzing poetry in Mizo literature.

#### “Hla Pahnih”:

Siamkima’s *Hla Pahnih* is a comparative criticism of Rokunga’s poetry “*Hrai te, khaw nge I chun ve kha?*” and Vankhama’s poetry “*Khawngai Hnuchham*” (*Zalenna Ram, 48*).

When he compared Rokunga and Vankhama’s poetry, he make three criteria for judging a good poetry, these were- ‘*clear and vivid expression of the theme, simple but appropriate diction and good imagery*’ (*Zalenna Ram, 53*). From these criteria, Rokunga and Vankhama express their theme clearly and vividly; but, while Rokunga used simple poetic diction for expression of his thought, Vankhama used his own idiolect, which are ambiguous diction (54). Therefore, he concluded that when we read Vankhama’s poetry, it appealed our thought and reason; but Rokungs’s poetry touched our heart. Thus, while composing their poetry respectively, Vankhama composed from obligation but Rokunga composed from a ‘spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling’ (54).

#### “Thawnthu Pahnih”:

In *Thawnthu Pahnih*, Siamkima compared the similarity of plot construction and setting, and resemblance in the characterization of the two novels, *A Tlai Lutuk Ta* (1979) by Khawlkungi and *Tess of d’ Urberville* (1891) by Thomas Hardy. Siamkima never mentioned that Khawlkungi plagiarized Thomas Hardy’s plots construction; but, after carefully reading his whole essay, there were a number of similarity between the two, and also some slightly difference of the incidents too.

Therefore, as Siamkima had already mentioned in the beginning of this essay, “If we make a critical review on novel or poetry or play, we have to view from different angles and

sides; if one side of that particular work of novel/poetry/play have had similarity with another one, we have to investigate what are the similarity and difference of that two works,” (55). So, there are similarities between the above said novels in plot, setting and characters and he pointed out their similarity and difference truthfully and acceptable for the readers.

### “Pi Pu Chhuahtlang”:

“Pi pu chhuahtlang” is one of the most popular poem of Liandala and, is the outcome of ‘*Serkawn Concert*’, 1941 where Liandala worked at Serkawn ME school as a teacher.

‘Chhuahtlang’ is a poetical word for ‘kawtchhuah’ (the exit from or entrance to a village). Siamkima rightly comment that “Due to Liandala’s poem “*Pi Pu Chhuahtlang*”, the typical village of the Mizo and their simple way of life should be cherish and keep anew in mind,” (*Zalenna Ram, 116*). It seemed that due to the growth and development that changed our way of life, the importance of ‘Pi Pu Chhuahtlang’ became less in our mind; but, things are not like it seemed; after we have had learnt the wisdom and literature of other nation, it is obligation to know ourselves, who we are and who our ancestor and what are their way of living. In short, after we had advanced in many ways, we have to look back ‘Pi pu Chhuahtlang’ to know our history and culture.

The importance and value of ‘Pi pu chhuahtlang’ was rightly remarks by Siamkima in the following way-

What we had seen in Liandala’s ‘*Pi pu chhuahtlang*’ are Mizo identity, by birth and heritage of Mizo, the highest concept of the best way of living and highest value system by our ancestry, and also the typical Mizo way of living. The cultural equivalent of ‘*Pi pu Chhuahtlang*’ in others countries around the world are like ‘Westminster Abbey and St.Pauls’ Cathedral in London, Santa Groce in Florence and St.Peter’s Square in Rome...

Therefore, if we wish to know and study clearly about the Mizo origin, identity, value, culture, society, before Christianity and Westernization had spoiled the original and pure Mizo way of life, Liandala’s *Pi pu chhuahtlang*’ is the only place we should choose to visit. Thus, due to its good expression of purely Mizo culture, identity, and characteristic in this poem, ‘*Pi pu chhuahtlang*’ should always be *Iocus Classicus* in Mizo literature.

(*Zalenna Ram, 118, 121*)

“Hrawva”:

After critically studied the life and works of Hrawva, Siamkima proclaimed that Hrawva (1893-1956) was ‘Father of Mizo Poetry’ (*Zalenna Ram*, 189). Siamkima regarded Hrawva as the first creator of poetry by using poetic diction and pioneer of in Mizo poetry (176).

He compared Hrawva’s poetry with Mizo traditional verse form composed by Lianchhiari, Laltheri, Darpawngi, Saikuti and Awithangpa like that- “The status they occupied in Mizo literature by before Hrawva’s poetry are less important in comparison with Hrawva’s poetry ... Hrawva’s poetry are the expression of new life and new desire for Mizo which are not seen in Mizo traditional poetry...so, Hrawva occupied in Mizo Poetry the same place occupied by Geoffrey Chaucer in English poetry, that is ‘Father of Mizo Poetry,’” (177).

C.Z. Huala collect and compiled Hrawva’s poetry and published in book *Pu Hrawva Hlate* in 1970 (179). C.Z. Huala said that Hrawva composed poetry during he was studying Bachelor of Arts in Calcutta during 1920-1924.

Hrawva’s poetry are the ‘mirror of life’, unbreakable and indestructible mirror ; his poetry expressed love’s one another, firm relationship between human and siblings, and friendship. Hrawva’s poetry are ‘*poetry of experience*’ because he expressed from his own experience, and that is why, we could also said that his poetry are ‘*poetry of wisdom*’ (180).

The form of Hrawva’s poetry are mostly in Mizo traditional verse form (triplet) and this indicates that he was a brave and confident man because, during that period, all Mizo traditional verse form like *Puma Zai* and *Tlanglam Zai* are banned and condemned by the church. So, “Hrawva chose Mizo traditional verse form for composing poetry, he used old gourd of wine/ wineskin to put his new wine skilfully. This technique is Hrawva’s uniqueness and his poetry make special one from other. We can see the linkage between old life and new life” (181).

The same message and philosophy of love and mourning from Milton’s “*Lycidas*”, Shelley’s “*Adonais*” and Tennyson’s “*In Memoriam*” was seen from Hrawva’s “*Rairahtea*”, three lines each in 58 stanzas (183).

“The core of Hrawva’s poetry, all his poetry bring together in three words only is ‘*Khuanu Leng Chawi*’ (*Nature’s Darling Child*)” (184) said Siamkima due to his ‘poetry of experience’.

Therefore, Siamkima rightly placed Hrawva as ‘Father of Mizo Poetry’ in Mizo literature due to the quality of his poetry, not quantity, and due to his contributions in Mizo poetry. Hrawva was pioneer for introducing Mizo poetical word to composed Christian hymn songs and herald of freedom of using Mizo poetical word and diction for composing poetry (189).

“R.L.Kamlala Kutchhuak” & “Thil Nung Pathum”:

R.L.Kamlala was a born poet as well as bilingual poet, and this essay “R.L.Kamlala Kutchhuak” is a biographical approach of Kamlala and an analysis of his poetry by Siamkima.

PB Shelley said that ‘*Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought*’ (Zalenna Ram, 48). From Shelley’s word, Siamkima judged R.L.Kamlala’s poetry that they are stir up and motivated by the ‘saddest thought’ of Kamlala, because for Kamlala, life is full of misery and he was surrounded by despair, he live in this world beyond out of a ray of hope, but under sorrow of clouds and isolated (Zalenna Ram, 80-81).

Therefore, “Kamlala was obliged to composed poetry during his live of certain miseries and bad condition because his poetry are his only hope and comfort, and also his strength to conquer his miseries,” (81).

Siamkima compared R.L.Kamlala with Dante, composer of *Dvine Comdedy* from Italy and Milton, composer of *Paradise Lost & Paradise Regained* from England because they all have the same message, they enrich the language of their own and they expressed the meaning of life in a new way. All these three poets became a poet after they had miserable and tormented life. Dante was discharge from his work and expelled from his home town. While he became homeless wanderer, he write *Divine Comedy*. Milton also suffered from blindness after he became 44 years of age, and he was sent to prison many times during that day. But he wrote epic poems, the greatest poetry in English literature after he was blind. RL Kamlala had also suffered a misunderstanding from his relative and rulers, and sent him to prison as they regarded him as ‘fool and mad’. (82-83). But, how can a mad or fool man composed the core message of the Holy Bible from Genesis to Revelation in only 4 lines-

*“Aw, Min hrilh rawh thukna ropui  
Ran thleng leh thing anchhedawng leh  
Vana lallukhum a inzawm  
Lei Eden leh Salem thar nen”* (82).



“Thil Nung Pathum” is an analysis of three major poets Patea, Saihnuna and R.L. Kamlala, their life and their poetry. Siamkima called these three poets as ‘thil nung pathum’ (meaning ‘*three living creatures*’), he compared and contrast the similarity and differences of those three poets in this essay. An analysis of Kamlala had already seen from “R.L. Kamlala Kutchhuak”, no need to repeat it.

Patea, the first ‘living creature’ was one of the first who composed Mizo Christian songs, Mizo sentimental hymn song. He lived different places in Mizoram and also in Burma. But, at last, he spent his last day in Samthang, near Khawbung village (86). He composed 55 songs and all his songs are his testimony and therefore, Patea’s poetry could be said ‘*Songs of testimony*’. The highest reach of his songs was when he composed a song titled “*Aw Lalpa, Davida leh a thlah arsi*”. Due this particular song, Patea would be one of the greatest among Mizo poets (87).

Saihnuna, the second ‘living creature’ was chief of Leng village. His father Pazika was Chief of Khawhri, about 400 houses village. Saihnuna composed 59 songs, all his songs are mournful songs(a solemn dirge song sung in a house of mourning). Therefore, Siamkima point out that from his 59 songs, the word ‘cry or weep’ are used 42 times (91).

The third ‘living creature’ R.L.Kamlala was a nephew of Kawnpui Chief Saitulera and, he was highly educated among the three living creature, he passed Middle English (*Zalenna Ram,86*). Although he was highly educated, his 61 poetry could be summed up ‘*songs of lamentation*’ due to his life was full of misery and harsh living condition.

“Mi Hrang Chhura”:

“Mi hr<sup>^</sup>ng Chhura” is about the bravery and courage of the name ‘Chhura’, one of the greatest legendary hero among the Mizo. Siamkima portrayed the greatness of Chhura from a moralist point of view.

From the story of Chhura, we can see clearly the ‘social value’ of the Mizo (*Zalenna Ram, 100*). Siamkima depict courage as the most virtue of human value from ancient Greek literature, Roman literature and English literature, and even Indian literature. Then, in Mizo literature also, the courage of Chhura, who conquer human enemy, the fearful creature who threaten human, is praiseworthy. Therefore, the deeds and character of Chhura could not underestimated and he was comparable like Hercules/Achilles, Hector, Prometheus in Greek and Roman legend, Ulysses of Greek knight, Beowulf of English, Durga and Rama in Hindu mythology (101).

From this essay, Siamkima not only depicts the courage of Chhura, he also mentioned the witty character. Chhura knew how to catch ‘Phungpuinu’(ogress, goblin, spook). “Chhura was courageous man, we know, but courage is not sufficient in times of troubles and adversity, so, in addition, Chhura knew how to deal it when difficulty comes,” (104). So, he planned to catch ‘Phungpuinu’ and after he capture her, he deprived her ‘magic horn’ (*sekibuhchhuak*) skilfully. Due to his acted upon ‘*Phungpuinu*’, he freed those who are living a bondage by fear of Ogress/Goblin/Spook.

Thus, Siamkima rightly remarks greatness and significance of Chhura to Mizo literature: “The three most important virtue of human-Courage, Altruism and wisdom, which are the most human value around the world and depicted boast in their literature, are seen in Chhura’s character and his story,” (107).

“Book Review”:

“Book Review” is an introductory historical account of ‘Book Review’ as literary criticism in Mizo literature and it contained the art of book review that proposed by Siamkima.

Siamkima claimed that he was the first to introduce book review in Mizo literature; his motive were to introduce Mizo literary criticism through book review, and for the development of Mizo literature (*Zalenna Ram*, 168). Let’s see his statement in this essay:

Book Reiew in Mizo was first introduced by me in 1973 at “*Mizo Zirlai Pawl Chanchinbu*” while I was Editor at that time. If I underestimated, the review article of *Ka Ram leh Kei*, written by R.Vanlawma, which was published in MZP magazine, January, 1973 issue was the first book review witten in Mizo. My intention and aim of writing book review was to introduce Literary Criticism in Mizo and also for the development of Mizo literature as well.

*(Book review Mizo \awnga zia kan chin tak hi Mizo Zirlai pawl Chanchin Bu Edior ka nih lai, kum 1973 a\anga ka tih \an a ni a; R.Vanlawma lekhhabu ‘Ka Ram leh Kei’ tih review article ka zia MZP Chanchin Bu, January, 1973-a ka chhuah chu, ka hriat sual loh chuan, Mizo \awnga book review zia hmasa ber a ni. Ka zia kana chhan ber leh, tun hnuah ‘Thu leh Hla’ chanchin bua ka chhunzawm duhna chhan pawh kan \awnga Literary criticism tihchhuah ka duh vang leh, literature lam hmasawanna a nih ka beisei vang a ni a; mi lekhhabu zia a \hat lohna lai zawna a tui tla lo thei ang zawnga sawi tumna a ni lo).*

The aim and function of Book Review is not merely to advertise a book, rather to investigate the book is reliable or not; to study the content and the text of that book, to look about the art of writing of the book and its symmetry, and analyse the language it used.

*(Book review hian a tum ber chu lehkhabu a tlang tlak theihna tura vawrh lar (advertise) mai ni lovin, belh chian a dawl leh dawl loh te, a bu chhung thute chu thil dang thlir leh teh nan zel atan te pawh hman ngam tur a nih leh nih loh te, a ziak dan kalhmang a fel leh fel loh te leh a \awngkam hmante en chian a ni).*

Most of English *Letter of Man* used Literary Criticism and Book Review to distinguish a good and bad books because Literary Criticism played a very important role on that purpose, and their Literature had improved so much due to Literary Criticism. But, it is not a proper use of Literary Criticism as a means to find a fault only. So, we try to avoid the Pseudo-Criticism while doing book-review.

*(Lehkhabu \ha leh \ha lo hriat theih nan hnam fng zawk leh literature nei \ha em em, Sap-hote chuan literary criticism leh book review ziak hi an lo uar nasa hle a, an literature pawhin hma sawn phahna chhan pakhat a ni reng a...amaherawhchu, mi dang thuziak lo thlir dik thiam hi thil awlawi a ni lo va; Sapho zingah ngei pawh a \hatna lai tlangaupaina aw aiin an duh loh zawng leh rilrem loh lai tlangaupaina aw hi a ring zawk fo tih kan hria...Hetiang hi kan chin dan a nih chuan, book review chu, 'A tlin lohna leh \hat lohna lai zawwna leh a zawngtuin chutiang chu a hmuh chuan tlangaupaina' tih ang lek a lo ni ang.)*

We all studied how to write and how to review a book and thus, no one is bullying each other...to inspire and motivate each other is the best method for doing book review.

*(Thu ziak leh a review lo ziate hi kan zir tlang vek a, atuate mah innuihzat tur chuang kan awm lo va...a infuih zawng leh a intiphur zawnga kan kal zel a \ul a ni.)*

*(Zalenna Ram, 168-169, 170, 174-175)*

## “Novel”:

This essay “Novel” is about the nature and historical development history of novel, one of the genre of literature. Apart from its nature and characteristic of novel, Siamkima highlighted his concept on Novel, the importance and function of novel.

“Novel means an imaginative fictional work in the form of prose-work; detail depiction of the character and their surrounding, which are connected with the character;

written in narrative mode. Plot, theme, idea and thought are the main important elements of novel,” (*Thupui Zirbingte*, 73).

The word ‘novel’ comes from Italian word *Novella*. *Novella* is a short story, a means of depiction of human life and human character during medieval period. The word Novel is younger than the word ‘roman’ in European literature. There was also some differences in characteristic between Novel and Romance. While Roman/Romance includes things or incidents that can never happened in real life, novella includes only depiction of true to real life (*Thupui Zirbingte*, 74).

The most important function of novel, according to Siamkima was “ it broaden and enrich our knowledge of human nature, which could not given by other subjects like Psychology, History and Anthropology,” (78).

“I say ‘Literature is a cluster of words of wisdom. Novel is the most flexible form among different genre of literature; therefore, it is best suitable for to expand and expound the span of life and its different corners in different characters...behind and between many word are arranged to form novel, there lies a ‘word’. So, we should keep in mind while we read novel, to find out what ‘word’ were hidden in novel,” said Siamkima (79-80).

### The Value and Importance of Siamkima Khawlhing

“Among our seasonal songs, Christmas songs are the greatest songs we have had, as it motive and season are great,” said Siamkima in his “Krismas Hla” (*Zalenna Ram*, 129).

The first Christmas song for Mizo was composed by Zosap Missionaries {Pu Buanga (J.H. Lorrain) and Sap Upa (FW Savidge) titled “*Sebawng ina a piang ta*” (No.14 in First Mizo *Kristian Hla Bu*, 1899 edition}. Siamkima highlighted the contribution of major Mizo poets/composers with a number of their Christmas songs, viz- Patea (4 Christmas songs), R.L. Kamlala (1 Christmas song), Hrawva (2 Christmas songs), Lalhlira ( 2 Christmas songs), Zasiama (2 Christmas songs), Suakliana (1 Christmas song), Rakngama (1 Christmas song), Vankhama (1 Christmas song), Rokunga (16 Christmas songs). So, the historical and biographical approach of Mizo Christmas songs became one of the the important contributions of Siamkima Khawlhing because Siamkima applied successfully the Historicism to Mizo Literary Criticism.

Undoubtely, one of the value of the contribution of Siamkima Khawlhing was Book Review. Although, he was not the first who write book review in Mizo Literature, but he was the main proponent of the value and important of book review in Mizo Literary Criticism.

Through book review, the literary tastes among the masses lift high, the quantity of books increased at the same time, the quality of books become more and more quality. All those positive changes came into Mizo Literature due to Book Review.

Siamkima introduced Comparative Criticism into Mizo Literature through “Hla Pahnih”; “Thawnthu Pahnih”, “Anni leh Keini” for instances. So, one of the most important contribution and the most valuable contribution of Siamkima Khawlhing was his introduction of Comparative Criticism into Mizo Literature.

As we had already mention that due to the contributions of Siamkima to Mizo Literary Criticism, L.Keivom regarded him as ‘*Father of Mizo Literary Criticism*’ (*Thu leh Hla* journal, Jan.& Feb., 1993, 7), and many readers and scholars agreed with L.Keivom due to the value and importance of Siamkima and his great influenced during his contemporaries till today. It is to say that the value and importance of Siamkima lies in the fact that he was scholar, critic and academician. As he was double MA, studied in India and abroad, knew his own Mizo literature very well as English literature. Due to his vast knowledge, his clear mind, curiosity and keen observation on literature, he became a good critic and his works were also valuable and outstanding. His disinterested endeavour in literature, unprejudiced and impartial judgement on literature from rational thinking, and his effort to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, makes his contributions to Mizo literary criticism indispensable and he also became ‘Father of Mizo Literary Criticism’.

#### Works and Contributions of Other Critics:

Peter Lianhleia (1945-1997) Peter Lianhleia did not published his critical works in book form; but he was the first to write theory of criticism in Mizo titled “Criticism” in 1989 where he write meaning and definition of Criticism, the three functions of criticism, qualities of a good critic, principles of Criticism and forms of criticism. He was also the first who write theory of essay titled “BA Zirlai Essay” in Mizo with reference to BA Mizo elective course- selected essays in 1984 where he answer ‘What is Essay’ and ‘Characteristics of Good Essay’. We could also say that he was the famous critic who applied ‘Destructive Criticism’ when he writes book review on *Thla Hleinga Zan* in 1978.

#### “Criticism”

‘Criticism’ tih hi Greek tawng ‘Kritikos’ tih atanga lak a ni awm e, a awmzia chu ‘judgement’ tihna a ni an ti. English Literature-a a lanna hmasa ber chu Dryden-a thuziak “The State of Innocence” (1677) *Preface*-ah a ni a. Aristotle-a pawhin criticism a

hrilhfiannah chuan, “a standard of judging well” a lo ti ve tawh reng a ni... “Criticism hi eng chiah nge a nih a, Literature-ah hian eng nge a pawimawhna?” lo ti ta ila. A awmzia bul tak man tur chuan “Arts” kan tih awmzia hi hriatchian a ngai hmasa phawt awm e...

Mi thiamte hrilhfiyah dan chuan ‘Arts’ hrilhfiyahna tawi kim ber chu “Man-made Beauty” an ti mai a. Mihringten kan thluak ngaihtuahna leh suangtuahnate hmanga thil mawi leh thil tha kan siam leh din chhuah zawng zawngte hi *Arts* an lo ni ta vek mai a nih chu. Chutiang chuan ‘Literature’ hi Arts zinga pakhat a lo ni a...Chutiang chuan Arts chuan a huam zau em em mai a. ‘Literature’ chu Arts zinga pakhat a lo ni ve ta chauh va. A nih leh ‘Literature’ kan tih hi eng nge ni? han ti leh ta ila, Mizo tawng chuan ‘Thu leh Hla’ kan tih hi a ni mai awm e. ‘Literature’ hi a zau zawng chuan *thu leh hla* ziaka awm zawng zawngte hi ‘Literature’ chu an ni vek mai a...‘Literature’ chu hmun/hlawm thumah kan then leh a, ‘Prose’, ‘Poetry’, ‘Drama’ kan tihte hi a lo 104ail o ta a.

Criticism awmze dik tak leh Critic tha tak ni tur chuan ‘Literature tha’ awm dante kan hriat hmasak leh phawt a ngai a. *Literature tha* tehna tam tak awm a, sawi sen a ni vek lo ang a. Amaherawhchu, mi thiam tam berin a tehfung tha leh dik ber nia an ngaih chu – “True to real life”, “Reflection of true human life with all its perplexities” tih hi a ni a. Chu bakah thil dang tam tak- a *spontaneous*-in a *flow* a tha tur a ni tih te, a chhiartute tan hriat thiam a ni tur a ni lo, thil tha leh finna min puak chhuahtir theity a ni tur a ni a. Mihring nungchang siamthat theihna ‘Ennobling effect’ a nei tur a ni tih te a ni bawk a.

Definition of Criticism...

Functions of Criticism...

Qualities of a Good Critic...

Principles of Criticism...

Forms of Criticism...

(*Thupui Zirbing* 68-72).

R.Vanlawma (1915-2006) was also worth mentioning due to his contribution of a number of critical writings, most of his critical reviews are published in “MZP Chanchinbu” and “Thu leh Hla”. One of his important critical work in book form was *Awithangpa* (Biographical account of the life and works of Awithangpa) published in 1989.

VL Zaithanmawia wrote “History of Mizo Hla” in 1961. This historical approach of Mizo song and poetry won the first prize in MZP Essay Writing Competition on ‘History of Mizo Poetry’.

Hla hi ‘thu par’ a ni a, a kungpui chu ‘Thu’ a ni. Thlado lerah chawnpui a par ang hian, thu lerah hla a par a ni. Mahse, thu awm khawm satliah mai hi hla a tling lo; thu mawi chi tin rem taka chuktuah khawm hi hla a ni...hla pawh hi thu aiin mawi mah sela, thu nen chuan thlei hran theih mah se, thu tel lovin kan siam thei lova. Thu tell ova kan siam theih loh avang chuan THU a ni mai hek lo. Tuallen tawngkama kan hman ngai hauh loh hi hla chuan thu mawi tak tak a ngah a, hla thu mawi ber berte chu tuallen tawngkamah kan hmang ngai lo. Tichuan, thu chu pangpar kung nen tehkhin a ni a, hla chu pangpar par nen tehkhin a ni. Hei vang hian a ni hla hi ‘Thu par’ a ni kan tih ni.

Hla chuan thluk mawi tak tak a nei thin a, a thluk chu hla rim a ni...Hla thu mawi tak thluk mawi tak chu pangpar mawi tak, rimtui tak ang a ni a. Hei vang hian a ni, hla thluk chu ‘hla rim’ kan tih ni.

Hla chu, thluk nei lo pawhin an phuah ve bawk thin a...Mizo pawh hian hla thluk nei lo chi kan nei ve zeuh zeuh thin..hla pawh hi thluk nei hauh si lovin thu mawi tak tak nei a awm ve thin a ni.

Khawvel hmun tinah hla phuahtute hian hnam nun an tinuamin, hnam an chawimawi thin a. Zoram nun timawitu leh tinuamtu ber pawh Mizo hla hi a ni...keini Mizo tan hi chuan keimahni Mizo hla ngei phuahtute tluka ropui an awm lo...Zoram timawia tinuamtu ber chu ‘Mizo hla’ hi a lo ni.

*(Hranghluite Sulhnu 118-119)*

(Translation: “Poetry is ‘the flower of word’ and its main trunk is ‘Word’. As blossom of jharul blossoms in top of the jharul tree, so poetry blossoms in top of the word. But, a mere collection of words is not enough to become poetry; Poetry is the collection of beautiful words...poetry is more beautiful than words, but it can be separated from words, but without words we cannot make it. It is not a word because we cannot make it a word. There are many beautiful words in poetry that we don’t use in the local language. The most beautiful words in the poems are not used in the local language. Thus, the word is likened to stem of flowering plant, and poetry is likened to a flower. This is why we call poetry ‘Thu par’ (Flower of Word).

Poetry has a beautiful melody, and the melody is the scent of poetry...The beautiful melody of poetry is like a beautiful flower with having sweet scent. That is why we call the melody ‘the smell of poetry’.

Everywhere in the world, poets make national life pleasant and glorified the nation. Mizo poetry is the most beautiful and enjoyable thing that we had in Zoram...for us

Mizos, there is no greater than our own Mizo poets...Mizo poetry makes Zoram the most beautiful land and most pleasant life.)

Rev.Liangkhhaia (1884-1979) wrote an important critical essay on “Hla Thu” (Mizo Poetic Diction). He was admitted the mistakes that the early converted Mizo did regarding using Mizo poetic diction in Christian hymns. So, this was another milestone for awakening period.

Kan Kristian hla hi a siam hmasatu Missionary te khan Mizovin hla thu bik an nei tih hre lovin thu ziaak pangngai (prose) mai mai hi a thluk remin hla angina an ziaak a, kan sa ta mai a. Tuna keini upaho, Mizo hmasate lah khan, Pathian hla chu heti tur reng hi emaw kan ti a, kan hla thu pangngai chu khawvel zai emaw kan ti ta a...chu chu kan lo dik lo a ni tih tunah chuan kan hre tawh awm e.

Mizo hian hla thu bik (poetical words) kan nei nasa em em a, Saphote ai chuan kan ngah daih awm e. Kan hla thu, kan hla tawngte chu a tha em em mai a, a mawi em em mai bawk a, rilru a khawih thei em em a ni (...) Chuvang chuan, kan hla thu, kan hla tawng thlum tak mai khan Kalvari te phuah ila. Lal Isua leh a hmangaihna te phuah ila, kan hla chu a tha zawk em em ang tih a rinawm ta a ni. Kan Hla Thar bua Kamlala hlate kha chu a tha tawh hle hlawm mai ...

Mizo hla hluite hi a hla thu leh a kalhmang (flow) te chu a tha hle thin na a, a tlar hi a tlem lutuk a, tlar hnih emaw lekte a ni hlawm mai a, a tha tak tak tham lo a ni. Kan hla thu (poetic words) tha tak takte hi Pathian lam te, Chhandamna lam te phuah nan hmang ila, tlar li ngate pawhin kan ziaak thei ang a, a tha hle mai ang. Pu Hrawva pawhin “Tlanna a kim Kalvari tlang chungah//Thisen chhuakin a fam thing lenbuangah” a han ti a, a tha em em mai.

Mizo chu lehkha nei lo kan nih avangin kan hmasang chanchinte chu hriatna tur ziaak hluite awm hek lo, hla hi kan chhuina ber a ni thin. Hlaah hian an phuah hun laia an awm dante tlem azawng chu a lang thei a, chuta tang chuan an chanchin (history) a then a zar kan zir thei a ni...Hla hi a tangkai em em a, thil a ti thei em em bawk a, hnam tinin ram tinah hla hi an hmangin an chhawr a ni...

“Traces of Paganism” tuna kan Kristian hlaah hian a lang lo lutuk zawk a, kan hla hlui tawng mawi tak tak kha hla thar siam nan hmang ila, a tha ang e tih thu ka sawi a ni. Hla tawng (poetic words) te hi paganism emaw kan ti a, paganism a lo ni chuang lo ve tih thu ka sawi a ni bawk.

(“MZP Chanchinchu” June 1973 p. 7-11)



(Translation: The Missionaries who composed our Christian hymn did not know that Mizos had a special poetic diction for composing hymn/song/poetry; so they used prose for composing hymns and we sung that prosaic hymns. The early Mizo elders thought that God's songs were like this and condemned our own poetic word like ungodly songs...that is the mistake we committed we already known.

The supporting article on the use of Mizo poetic diction was written by Rev. Rokhuma. His article title is "Mizo Hla" :

Mizo hi hla thua hausaknaa vur nasat ber emaw kan nih hial lain, kan hausakna chu engemaw chenah kan rula raw neih mai main lai a awm.

Mahni tawng Kristian hlate kan lo neih hma chuan kan pi puten hla thu hmangin an puah thin a; an hla thenkhat chu sak tura an tih ve ngei bawk si, hla thu tuang fel lo, ulh titoh lutukte an ni nual a, thenkhat chu an tha nangiing hlawm a; sap pathlawi hla puah thiam chhuanvawrte kut chhuak ai pawha nalh zawk an nih loh vek pawhin an duai bik hauh lo, hla thua Zofate 107ail oh107 khawm an ni 107ail oh107 a.

Chutianga hla thu leh a hmanna lama Mizo hla thang mek chuan thui a thlen hmangin Kristiannain a rawn nang a, tawngkam pangngaia thusawina, hla anga siam, mi hnam hla thluka sakna chuan Mizo hla kal hmasawna a rawn tithuanawp nasa ta mai a. Kan hla thu leh a thluka kan hausakna hlu tak chu min petu Lal Isua duh loh zawng leh Amah lawm nana tling lova ngaiin, an kaihhruai khuangpui nen, zu rim an nam tlata ngaihna avangin, zu hmun lamah Setana pek a ni a, anin lawm takin lo pusem tel ta lawih a....Chuti tur a lo ni awzawng lo tih hriaa khuang chu Kohhranin Setana a chuhpui leh hnu pawhin kan hla thute chu kan la pumbiltir tha tho va...

Hla chu, a thu tuang tha leh a sawi leh a thluk tha hi a famkimna a ni si a. Engemawti lai hnuah chuan kan Mizo pa lunglenten thil an hmu chhuak a, kan Mizo hla thluk chu thim lal chanpual tur a ni ngawt hauh lo mai tih hriain Van Lal tan an hmang tan ta a. Chung chu Pu CZ Huala te leh mi dangteho an ni awm e...

Chung hnu engemaw lai atang chuan hla thu ro bawm an hawng zui ta a, a thenin an peipun belh bawk a. Hla atana a chipui pathum: hla thu, a thusawi leh a thluk ngei hmangin Mizo pa dik takin Lal a lo fak tan ta...

Mizo hla thu tuang nalh fahran mai a, Mizo thluk dik tak nena van lam thu dik ropui han zam ngei mai hi 'Mizo hla' atan kan duh a ni.

("MZO Chanchinbu" August 1973 p.5-8)

“Hla Phuah” by C.Z.H (CZ Huala)

Tunlai hian MZP hian hlaphuah hi an uar viau mai a. Hla Kutpui te an siam a, hla phuahtute pawh min chawimawi a, a lawmawm hle mai. A lawmawm lehzualna chu, a tiveltute hi kan hnam zinga kan mi thiam ber berte an nih avangin a ngaihsanawm lehzual a ni (...)

Hla ang reng renga mihring rilru hneh thei hi thu a awm thei lo. Hla tawng tawi te chuan vawilekhatah kan thinlung a hneh nghal thei a-Lunglenna a rawn kai chhuakin mittui a hruai nghal thei. Hla chi hrang tam tak a awm a; chungte chuan fahrah riangvai leh khawngai fa zawng zawng a awi tlei thin. Mizo hnam hi khawvela hla thu, hla tawng nei tha ber kan ni hial ang.

Kan chenna ho tlang ram, zo tui thiang leh thlifim lenna a ni bawk a, hnam lungleng ber pawl kan ni awm e (...)

Hla phuah dan hi chi hnih ang deuh a ni a- Pakhat chu Poems, hla thu poetical words hlir hmanga phuah a ni a. A dang chu Thu, hla hmel pua phuah hi a ni. Thiam ila chu hla thu tak taka phuah hi a mawi ber a, lung a len ber a. Mahse, a harsa em em a- Awithangpa te, Saikuti te ang tan lo chuan a har viau mai. Hla phuah thiamte hi, pianpui reng ‘born poet’ an tih hi an awm a, mahse, a zir theih a ni. Hla phuah thiam hi tawng zalenna (poetic license) an nei a, tuma’n an sawisel thei lo. Tawng -- an ni a, Grammarian an ni bawk. Shakespeare-a chuan English tawng chu a duh duhin a hmang a (...) tu man an sawisel lo. Mizo hla phuahtute pawh chuan thil dik lo pui pui an hmang. An lunglen thute chu, “Thing leh mau pawhin tuar sela hring bilin ka ring lo ve” te an han ti a. Thing leh mauvin na an hre lo. “Suanglungpui lerah” te an han ti a; lungin ler a nei hlei nem. Mhse hla phuah thiam an nih avangin an duh duhin an ti mai a ni. A lo mawi viau zel mai.

Tin, hla phuah danah hian kan hriat reng tur a awm a, chu chu a ‘flow’ a luang tha hi a pawimawh em em a ni. Sap hla phuahtu chuan a rhyme, a hmawr ri inhme hi an ngaihtuahin an uluk viau thin a, keini tawngah chuan chu chuan thu a nei vak lo tih mai tur a ni. Kan duh ber chu, a luang tha, a chham rem hi a ni. Mi tam takin hla kan phuah a, hla phuah thiam tak tak phuah chu han chham ila a luang tha zan a, a dam thlap a, hla thu (poetical word) hmang lo mah se a ni zan mai a ni. Thenkhat

phuah erawh chu, hla thu hmang teuh siin, han chhiar ila, a rem lo tutin a hriat a ni.  
Tunah heng hla phuah dan chi hnih hi I lo thlur hlek teh ang u.

1. Hla Thu Hmanga Phuah: Hei hi a mawi ber mai a, rilru a hneh ber thin. Kan Pathian hlate hi mi lehkha thiam tak tak chuan hetiang hian han dah thei se a tha em em ang. Mahse, kan la ching lo. Kan Pathian hla tam tak hi chu, hetiang chu sawi loh, ‘Thu, hla hmel pu’ kan tih pawh kha an tling meuh lo va, thlu tluang, prose ang mai hi a tam hle mai. Hla thu-ah hian tawng mawi chhiar sen loh kan nei a, hman thiam tam zir ila (...)
2. Hla Thu Hmang Lova Phuah: (...) Hla pawh chu hla thu tel miah lo mah se, a luang a that chuan a chham a nuam thin. (...) Mahse a bula ka sawi ang khan, hla thu tel zawng a tha zawk ngeiin a lang a; rilru a khawih zawkin a hriat a ni. (...) Mahse, Poet mi tak tak Pu Kamlala te chu, hla thu tel lo mah se a tha reng reng a ni. (...) A luang, a flow a that vang a ni.

(“MZP Chanchinbu” June, 1960 p.20-22 & July, 1960 p.6-7)

(Translation: MZP is a very popular party in the country. They organized the Hla Kutpui and honored the composers. The best thing is that the tivelute are the most talented people in the nation (...)

There is no word that can touch the heart of a person like a song. A short song can suddenly touch our hearts—it can bring joy and tears. There are many different types of songs; these are the joys of the fatherless, the poor, and the needy. Mizo hnam is the best language in the world.

Hetiang a nih avang hian kan hnam lungleng ber pawl kan ni awm e (...)

There are two types of poems: Poems, poetical words. The other is the Word, the song. Hetiang a nih avang hian hla thu hi a mawi ber a, lung a len ber a ni. But it is very difficult for those like Awithangpa and Saikuti. There are those who are born poets, but they can be learned. Poets have poetic license and no one can criticize them. They are language --- and they are Grammarians. Shakespeare used the English language at will (...) and no one criticized him. Mizo poets also use the wrong things. An lunglen thute chu, “I don't believe that even trees and soil can suffer,” te an han ti a. Thing leh mauvin don't know. “Suanglungpui lerah” is the name of the city; lungin ler is not available. But they are singers and they do whatever they want. It's beautiful.

There is something to remember about the flow of a song. The rhyme of the English song is very careful, but in our language, it doesn't have much meaning. We want it to flow well and smoothly. Many of us have composed songs, but the poems of the most talented poets are flowing well, healthy, poetic words are not used. Some of the poems are written in poems, but if we read them, it is not appropriate. Let us now examine these two types of poetry.

1. Hla Thu Hmanga Phuah: This is the most beautiful and touching song. Therefore, it is a good idea to put the songs of God in this way. Therefore, it is a good idea to put the songs of God in this way. But we haven't done it yet. Many of our God's songs are not even prose-like, not to mention 'Thu, hla hmel pu' There are many beautiful languages in the world.
2. 2. Hla Thu Hmang Lova Phuah: (...) A song is written without a lyric. (...) But as I said earlier, the lyrics seem to be better; it feels more touching. (...) Pu Kamlala, a poet, is a poet, even if he doesn't have a poem. (...) It flows, it flows well.)

Following are the list of critical works on Historical approaches of Mizo poetry during this period. "History of Mizo Hla" by VL Zaithanmawia and "History of Mizo hla" by Thanpuii pa (MZP Chanchinbu March 1961) and "Mizo Hla" by Thanpuii pa (J.Malsawma) *Zo Nun*, published in 1979; "Mizo Hla Hmasa Ber" by R.Vanlawma (Thu leh Hla December 1983); "Mizo Hla Hlui" by Lalruanga (Thu leh Hla March 1984); "German Ral Run Lai Mizo Hla" by RL Neihkunga (Thu leh Hla March 1985); "Pawnto Hla" by F.Chalthanga (Thu leh Hla June 1985); "Hmanlai Hlate Kha" by R.Chaldailova (Thu leh Hla September 1985); "Naupang Tualchai Hla" by Brig. Sapliana (Thu leh Hla January 1986); "Mizo Lengzem Hla Hmasa Ber?" by R.Lallianzuala & B.Lalthangliana (Thu leh Hla July 1988); "Mizo Hla Hlui leh Hla Dangte (Kaihlek, Lengzem)" by J.Liankhuma (1989, *Thupui Zirbingte* . 27-40).

Biographical criticism on poets and their poems that we had seen during this period are as follows- "Hla Phuah Thiam Pu RL Kamlala" by CZ Huala (1965, in *Hranghluite Sulhnu* p.103-109); "Pu Patea Khawbung leh A Hlate Part 1 & 2" by B.Lalthangliana (Thu leh Hla January & April, 1979); "Saihnuna Hla leh a Phuah Chhan" by Lalchuanga (Thu leh Hla February 1979); "Mizo Hla Phuahtute" by CZ Huala (Thu leh Hla Mach 1979); "Pastor Chhawna leh a Hla Phuah Thenkhat" by Lalnghakliana (Thu leh Hla September 1979);

“Krismas leh Hla Phuahtute” by Siamkima (Thu leh Hla November 1979 & December 1983); “Manhleia leh a Hlate” by Sangkima (Thu leh Hla December 1979); “Chhimtlang Zaikung Hausiampa” by T.Lalngkhakliana (Thu leh Hla January & February 1982); “Pahluta Zai” by T.Lalngkhakliana (Thu leh Hla March 1982); “Hla leh a Phuahtute” by KL Chhuanvawra (Thu leh Hla May & June 1982); “Lalduhzuala Hla Phuahte” by R.Vanlawma (Thu leh Hla July & August 1982); “Laithangpuia Hla Phuah Zinga Pahnhte Chhuina” by Lalngkhakliana (Thu leh Hla July & August 1982); “Thil Nung Pathum” by Siamkima (Thu leh Hla October 1982); “Serkawn School leh Concert Hlate” by RL Thanzawna (Thu leh Hla June 1984); “Ka Rilru Tibuai Thintu Hla Pakhat” by Siamkima (Thu leh Hla July 1984); “Pu Liandala ‘Pi Pu Chhuahtlang’” by Siamkima (Thu leh Hla August 1984); “Pu Hrawva (1891-1956) ‘Khuanu Leng Chawi’ Father of Mizo Poetry” by Siamkima (Thu leh Hla September 1984); “Hla Leh a Phuahtu” by C.Malsawma (Thu leh Hla May 1985); “Hla leh a Phuahtu” by Vanlalchhunga (Thu leh Hla June 1985); “Hla leh a Phuahtu” by J.Vanzika (Thu leh Hla July 1985); “Hla leh a Satu” by C.Zachhunga (Thu leh Hla August 1985 & May & June 1986); “Kan Mizo Hla leh a Phuahtute” by RK Ngurchhawna (Thu leh Hla August 1985); “Pi Nunchhungi Renthlei” by Prof. R.Biaksanga (Thu leh Hla May & June 1986); “Kamlala leh a Hlate” by Brig. Sapliana (Thu leh Hla August 1986); “Negative Capability leh Rokunga” by C.Lalramzauva (Thu leh Hla July 1988); “Wordsworth-a leh a Hlate” by Lalsangdeli Fanai (Thu leh Hla September 1988); “Patea leh Tlaitla Eng” by C.Lalsiamthanga (Thu leh Hla November 1988); “Zosaphara Hla” by Zikpui pa (Thu leh Hla February 1989); “Upa L.Kamlova leh a Hlate” by K.Mankunga (Thu leh Hla March 1989); “Mizo Hmeichhia leh Thu leh Hla” by Lalsangzuali Sailo (Thu leh Hla August & September 1989); “Vankhama leh a Hlate Zirna” by Darchuailova Renthlei (Thu leh Hla June 1990); “Hla Phuahtute Chanchin Tlem” by R.Lallianzuala (Thu leh Hla June 1989);

Impressionistic criticism of Mizo poetry are profound during this period; some of the impressionistic critical writings are listed below-

“Hla Thu” by Rev.Liangkhaia (MZP Chanchinby June, 1973); “Mizo Hla” by Rev.Rokhuma (MZP Chanchinbu August 1973); “Lengzem hla (love song) hi” by T.Zorampela (MZP Chanchinbu November & December 1973); “Hla leh Thu” by JF Laldailova (Thu leh Hla October 1974); “Hla Thu” by Remsangpui pa (Thu leh Hla October 1974); “Hla- A Ropuzia” by Dr.R.Doliana (Thu leh Hla February 1979); “Hla Review” by R.Vanlawma (Thu leh Hla August 1979); “Mizo Zai” by Remtluanga (Thu leh Hla November 1979); “Khaw Hlui Ngaih Hla Pahnih” by B.Lalthangliana (Thu leh Hla December 1979);

“Chhandamna Hla” by RL Kamlala (Thu leh Hla May & June 1982); “Hnam Hla: Hla Lenglawng- Nature Lam Phuahna” by Dr.HL Malsawma (Thu leh Hla September 1982); “Hla Lenglawng” by Dr. HL Malsawma (Thu leh Hla November 1982); “Hla Thu, a Thluk leh Rimawi” by B.Lalthangliana (Thu leh Hla December 1982); “Mi Hrang Chhura” by Siamkima (Thu leh Hla April & May 1983); “Rannung Lam Phuahna” by Dr. HL Malsawma (Thu leh Hla July 1983); “Hnam Dang Tawng Tela Hla Phuah” by Dr. HL Malsawma (Thu leh Hla August 1983); “Hla Phuah Hi” by Lalsangzuali Sailo (Thu leh Hla November 1983); “Mizo Kristian Hlaa Hnam Ziarang” by B.Lalthangliana (Thu leh Hla July & September 1984); “Kan Hlate hi” by C.Lalhmingthanga (Thu leh Hla August 1985); “Tehkhinna Hla Thu” by RL Thanmawia (Thu leh Hla August 1988); “Hla Ziarang” by RL Thanmawia (Thu leh Hla April 1989); “Hla Chhuanvawr:Review” by Darchuailova Renthlei (Thu leh Hla November 1990); “Mizo Hlaa Hmangaihna” by RL Thanmawia (Thu leh Hla December 1990).

Zikpuii-pa first critical writing titled “Lushai Literature” in the year 1954 was one of an important historical criticism; and his last critical work titled “Liangkhai: Thu leh Hlaa Mi Ropui” wrote in the year 1994 was a biographical criticism. He was involved and actively participated in the field of literary criticism around 40 years. During those 40 years, strictly counted, he contributed around 13 pieces of Literary Criticism. So, his contributions to Mizo Literary Criticism were less in quantity as we expected; but indispensable due to its good quality.

The contributions of Zikpuii-pa enriched and developed the outlook of Mizo Literary Criticism and at the same time, it aware among the masses the need of Literary Criticism. His area of outstanding contributions are fall into three categories- Historical and Biographical criticism like- “Lushai Literature”, “Rokunga Thlirna”, “Awithangpa Tan Thu Kam Khat”, “Liangkhaia:Thu leh Hlaa Mi Ropui” and “Introduction” on *Zozam*; Romantic approach of Criticism like “Zosaphara Hla”, “Kan Mizia leh insawiselna”, “Mizo Rilrua Hla Hnathawh dan”, “Bible, Literature Hmanrawpui” and Book Review.

Zikpuii-pa was ‘*Romantic Critic*’ and thus, he was *Longinus* to Mizo Literary Criticism for his romantic approach of criticism. He declared the Romantic maxim that was a basis of literature throughout the ages- ‘*Literature is not bound by any rules; its sublimity and beauty lies according to the readers’ feeling and outlook*’ (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma, 164*) and he

also gave us maxim that was a creed for criticism-‘For criticism, the door is already opened for those who wish to enter it,’ (*Lungrualna Tlang*, xii ).

The so called ‘*One man Literary Industry*’ J.F. Laldailova was ‘*Father of Mizo Lexicographer*’, translator, editor and one of the greatest *language critics* for the ages. His best contributions to Mizo literary criticism was a defense and an apology for Mizo language as a language critic.

‘Language’ is the medium for expression of thought and feeling. The thought and feeling expressed through language is Literature. They are indispensable to each other. To become a good literature, the language we used should be the best language at the level of its own. Thus, the role and importance of language should not be neglected. That is why linguistic criticism propounded by J.F.Laldailova was very important in Mizo literary criticism.

The contributions of J.F.Laldailova had greatly influenced for the development of a good usage of Mizo language in writing as well as in Mizo literature. For developed and defended of Mizo language, he propounded ‘Literary Debate’ as the means to achieve his goal. He sacrificed his ‘passing popularity’ for the sake of love’s of Mizo language. Due to his criticism on the Mizo Holy Bible and Mizo Kristian Hla Bu (Mizo Devotional Hymn Book), the downfall Mizo language due to our Zosap Missionaries had restored partly. Therefore, he had a great impacts on new generation for his defender of Mizo language and for his dearly loved of Mizo language.

Siamkima Khawlhing defined literary criticism as ‘*Zalenna Ram*’ (Land of Freedom) because literary criticism is born out of curiosity and it required an atmosphere in which questioning and inquiry are freely allowed. He also defined literature that was universally accepted definition throughout the ages. He wrote a book review and gave us a maxim for book review. He introduced an excellent pieces of Comparative criticism in Mizo literary criticism. Therefore, due to his great influenced and impact on Mizo literature as well as due to his outstanding contributions to Mizo literary criticism, Siamkima Khawlhing was Aristotle to Mizo literary criticism.

Among those three critics, Zikpuii-pa was well educated since his childhood and became literary diplomat; J.F.Laldailova was confined himself to language and became ‘Language Critic’; Siamkima was academician and scholar, and a literary critic. They came from different background and different times, but they worked at the same workshop called Mizo literary criticism and contributed their level of best at their respective times.

Hence, due to the contributions of Zikpuii-pa, J.F.Laldailova and Siamkima Khawlhing to Mizo literary criticism, the criticism of Mizo literature became prospers and

progress and at the same time, the development of Mizo literature reached Awakening period in Mizo literary criticism.

In Siamkima's *Zalenna Ram*, there was Zikpuii-pa's "Good Literature *Literature |ha)*" that made out of one of the "best and most beautiful language" in the world, i.e Mizo language, according to J.F.Laldailova. All their contributions to Mizo literary criticism by Zikpuii-pa, J.F.Laldailova and Siamkima Khawlhing were an epoch making contributions which brought a new chapter in the development of Mizo literary criticism.



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## Chapter 4

### Enlightening Period in Mizo Literary Criticism

The period from 1991 to 2011 was a dynamic and transformative era for Mizo literary criticism, marked by significant developments and changes in the field by adoption of new critical perspectives and a growing engagement with global literary and critical trend. So, between 1991 and 2011, we have reached an era of enlightenment.

Enlighten period is the most fruitful and most developed in the history of Mizo literary criticism. Scholar, academicians and academic institutions bring to enlighten period in Mizo literary criticism. A more detailed and systematic study of literature has brought about this enlightenment. Not only in magazines and journals, but also in book form, criticism is becoming increasingly popular. Literary journals and magazines still played a crucial role in promoting Mizo literary criticism. They provided a platform for scholars and critics to publish their essays and reviews.

During this period, new voices and writers emerged in Mizo literary criticism. Younger scholars and critics started contributing to the field, bringing fresh perspectives and ideas. Mizo literary critics began to incorporate a wider range of critical theories and approaches, and began to engage with and apply contemporary literary theories to analyse and interpret Mizo literature in more nuanced ways, contributing to the development and enrichment of Mizo literary criticism.

Some Mizo literary critics and scholars received recognition and awards for their contributions to the field during this period, further highlighting the importance of Mizo literary criticism. The recognition of Mizo literature through national and regional literary awards encouraged critical evaluation and discussion of Mizo literary works.

One of the most important factors that led to the Enlightenment period was academic research. Academic institutions began offering courses in Mizo literature and conducting research on Mizo literature, leading to the publication of dissertations and research papers that contributed to the development of Mizo literary criticism. Lalruanga "A Study on Mizo

Folk Literature” (1985), H.Lallungmuana “Themes and Techniques of Mizo Fiction” (1989), RL Thamawia “Development of Mizo Poetry” (1989), Laltluangliana Kiangte “Mizo Drama: A Thematic Approach” (1991) and Lalzama “Growth and Development of Mizo Language and Literature with Special Reference to Contribution Made by Christian Missionaries from 1897-1947 (1991) are worth mentioning in this field.

Introduction of undergraduate course in Mizo subject-BA (Mizo Honour) degree in 1993 under NEHU and postgraduate course- MA (Mizo) degree in 1997 under NEHU, and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) programmes under Mizo department from 2002 and 2010 under Mizoram University have been a milestones for Mizo literature and language, and played an important role in the development of literary criticism as well. The reason is that the study of Mizo literature in College and University led to the Enlighten period in Mizo literary criticism. Due to the limitation of time and space, it is not possible to elaborate every details of facts and figures concerning the scopes of syllabus, outputs and impacts of courses in Mizo literature and languages adopted taken by Mizo department.

It is clearly seen that during this period, the introduction of a courses in literary criticism in various programmes led to bring enlighten in Mizo literary criticism, and marked a great efforts made by Mizo literature students and scholars, and published a number of books relating to literary criticism till today. So, academic research and institutions are instrumental in advancing Mizo literary criticism by providing a structured framework for analysis, nurturing talents and promoting a deeper understanding of Mizo literature within the region and beyond. As we see in the Psalms, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes” (118:22-23). Therefore, the contributions made by during this period for the development of Mizo literary criticism will focus mainly on the works of Mizo literature teachers, students and scholars only.

In this particular period of the Enlightenment, the major critics and their works that contributed to the development of Mizo literary criticism during the Enlighten period are as follows:-

Laltluangliana Khiantge (b.1961):

For his remarkable and historical contribution to Mizo language and literature, and his exemplary contributions on the varied fields, he was awarded Padma Shree in 2006. Laltluangliana Khiantge is an accomplished playwright, poet, critic, essayist, folklorist and scholar. He has received many awards for his remarkable and invaluable contributions to the development and growth of Mizo language and literature.

As a scholar and critic, he has published more than hundreds research papers and published more than 30 critical books. He has been actively involved in the development of Mizo literature and language since 1985. He is also actively contributing to Mizo literary criticism to this day. Although he is a creative writer, and had published a number of creative writings; he had authored a number of books on literary criticism more than his creative writings. The important books on Mizo literary criticism that he had published are as follows-

- i) Thupui Zirbingte- *edited* 1989
- ii) Thupui Pawimawh Pali (*Four Important Themes*)- *edited* 1989
- iii) Lekhhabu Ramtiam (*The World of Literature, Culture & Arts*)- 1993
- iv) Mizo Drama- Origin, Development & Themes (*English version*)- 1993
- v) Kum Za Lamtluang (*Path to Centenar*) -*edited* 1994
- vi) Thuhlaril (*Literary Trends & History of Mizo Literature*) -1995
- vii) Biakliana Robawm (*Writer, Poet, Novelist & His Work*)- 1996
- viii) Mizo Thuziak Thlan Chhuahte (*Selected Essays*)- 1999
- ix) Mizo Hlahril Thlan Chhuahte (*Selected Poems of Mizo Poets*)- 1999
- x) Liangkhaia Lungphun (*Pillar of Rev.Liangkhaia*)- 2000
- xi) An Introduction of Mizo Literature (*Collection of Seminar Papers & Poems in English*) -*edited* 2001
- xii) Hamlet leh a Ziaktu (*Hamlet and Its writer*)- 2002
- xiii) Thlaler Nula (*Desert's Maid:Writer & her Works*)- 2002
- xiv) Mizo Songs and Folk Tales (*English version*)- 2002
- xv) Zalenpar-I (Collection of Fifty Literary Essays)- 2003
- xvi) Mizo Lekhhabu Zempui (*A compendium of Mizo Bibliography*)- 2005
- xvii) Khawlkungi leh a Kutchhuak (Authoress and her Works)- 2007
- xviii) Mizos of North East India (*An Introduction to Mizo Culture, Folklore, Languages & Literature in English*)- 2008

- xxix) Mizo Hla leh Chhamhlate (*Study of Songs & Poems*)- 2009
- xx) Tribal Languages and Literature (*English Version*)- 2010
- xxi) Unsung Tribal Pastor & Writer (*Memorable contribution of a Mizo Pastor in English*)- 2011
- xxii) A Brief History of Mizo Drama & Theatre (*English Version*)- 2012
- xxiii) Mizo Tawng Zirzauna Bu Thar (A Study of Mizo Language, New Edition)-  
*edited* 2012
- xxiv) Tribal Culture, Folklore and Literature (*English version*)- 2013
- xxv) A Study of Mizo Novel (*English Version*)- 2014
- xxvi) Kakpui Pathum (*Biography of 3 Honorary Doctorate Degree Holders*)- 2014
- xxvii) Thu leh Hla Thlitfimna Lam (*Literary Criticism*)- 2016
- xxviii) Thang-Zui (*Birth Centenary edition of Lalzuithanga*)- 2016
- xxix) Zonu Cheipar-1 Ngur-Lian (*H.Lalngurliani leh a Kutchuak*)- 2017
- xxx) Za-Thum (*Birth Centenary Volume of 3-Prose Writers*)- 2017
- xxxi) History of Mizo Literature Bu Thar (New Edition) – *edited* 2017
- xxxii) Theory of Literature Bu Thar (New Edition)- *edited* 2017
- xxxiii) Zacham Par-Chhuang (*Birth Centenary Volume of L Biakliana, the First Mizo Novelist*)- *edited* 2018

Apart from those critical books, Lalzuithanga Khiantge also wrote almost 40 book reviews and more than 90 Introduction, Preface and Message written and published. Due to his contributions in book review, an important field of literary criticism for Mizo, it could be said to be that he is the most book review writer among the Mizo. Much of his writing in book reviews is also directed at constructive criticism. Therefore, his contribution to Mizo literary criticism is worth remembering and studying. No one contributed more to this Enlighten period than he did.

#### Importance of Works and Contributions of Lalzuithanga Khiantge

Apart from his creative writings, the works and contributions of Lalzuithanga Khiantge as a scholar-critic of Mizo language and literature is his greatest achievement during this period. In his *Lehkhabu Ramtiam*, history of writings in general, origin and development of Mizo literature, development of writings in Mizoram and other critical writings like book reviews are carefully and scholarly studied. This book may be the first of

its kind and could be considered as the first formal history of Mizo language and literature and its related literary stories in the language of Mizo.

His *Mizo Drama- Origin, Development and Themes*, written based on his doctoral thesis, covers the origin and development of Mizo drama from its inception till 1990. It is one of the books where Mizo literature has been discussed and studied in English language, giving the book an unique quality. Before this book was published, no book on study of Mizo drama had been published. Therefore, this book is the first and foremost in the book of this kind.

*Thuhlaril* (Literary Trends & History of Mizo Literature) is a compilation of different topics for the students of Mizo language and literature in particular. This book provides fundamental ideas for the basic theory of different types of literary genre like poetry, drama, novel, essay and criticism to give better understanding for literature students. So, this book is also one of the first books on theory of literature in Mizo. The part two of this book is mainly confined the history of Mizo literature; it consists different periods of Mizo literature, history of Mizo prose writings and essays, history and development of Mizo poetry and origin and development of Mizo drama.

*Mizo Thuziak Thlan Chhuahte (Selected Essays)* is a collection of essays, articles, reviews and critical writings. It contains eleven book reviews and critical analysis. Apart from the definition of literature, the relation between literature and history, culture and language, and importance of literature is also included along with systematic analysis of literature. This book also highlighted the origin of book review in Mizo literature, first important book published in Mizo, and definition of literary criticism followed by eleven book reviews.

*Mizo Hlahril Thlan Chhuahte (Selected Poems of Mizo Poets)* is a collection of selected poet and their poems. But this book is not merely a collection of poetry; but, an insightful critical analysis on poetry, where Laltingliana Khiantge defined the meaning of poetry and explained the function of poetry. In the first part of this book deals in detail the definition of poetry, what is poetry, who is poet, classification of poet, hymn-writer and songwriter, and so it all about systematic analysis of poetic technique for students of literature in a new perspective.

*Zalenpar-1* is a collection of fifty essays. The book was divided into five sections under Imaginative essays, Biographical essays, Reformatory essays, Travelogue essays and Critical reviews. Each section contains ten essays. Most of the essays in this particular book can be considered as critical writing.

*Mizo Hla Leh Chhamhlate (Study of Songs & Poems)* is a systematic study of poetry including critical analysis of all about poetry that must be an eye opener for the students of literature. Since the poetic tradition of the Mizos is not exactly same with that of the Western poetic form, critical assessment of poetry as it appears in this book can be an understanding of literature in general and poetry in particular.

Thu leh Hla Thlitfima Lam (*Literary Criticism*) is all about the origin and development of Mizo literary criticism. It was divided into six sections; the first, second, fourth and fifth sections mainly focus literary criticism and book reviews. The other section also very informative and critical analysis on the development of prose writings. Therefore, this book is valuable for reading and can be used as teaching aids for teachers of Mizo literature and criticism.

Laltluangliana Khiantge is a promoter of Mizo women writer. He published four biographical criticism of the works and life of Lalruali *Thlaler Nula*, Kawlungi *Khawlungi leh a Kutchhuak*, Ngurliani *Zonu Cheipar 1- Ngurliani* and Buangi Sairo *Zonu Cheipar 2: Buangi Sairo Lunglen Zun Zam*. His other biographical criticism books like *Biakliana Robawm (Writer, Poet, and Novelist & His Work)*, *Liangkhaia Lungphun (Pillar of Rev.Liangkhaia)*, *Kakpui Pathum (Biography of 3 Honorary Doctorate Degree Holders)*, *Thang-Zui (Birth Centenary edition of Lalzuithanga)*, *Za-Thum (Birth Centenary Volume of 3-Prose Writers)* and *Zacham Par-Chhuang (Birth Centenary Volume of L Biakliana, the First Mizo Novelist)* are an important critical works that contributed for the development of Mizo literary criticism.

Laltluangliana Khiantge shows himself a discerning critic of both drama and poetry. His contribution in the field of drama and theatre as a noted playwright-dramatist has been recognised by regional and national level. His play *Pasaltha Khuangchera* awarded 'Book of the Year 1997'. His contribution for the development of Mizo drama is thus considerable. His critical analysis of poetry undertook a more serious and in-depth study on poetry systematically. For the growth and development of Mizo literature and language, his



contributions are immeasurable. Therefore, he was the key figure of literary critic during this period.

#### B.Lalthangliana (b.1943):

One of the most contributors in Mizo literary historian and biographical literary critic B.Lalthangliana published a number of books relating to Mizo literature and a critical observation on the works of Mizo literary giants like Kaphleia, C.Thuamluaia, Zikpuii pa, Thanpuii Pa, Rokunga and many more. As a literary historian, he has contributed to the research of Mizo literature and history. As a biographical critic, there is no one who has contributed more to the collection and publication of the works of great Mizo literary figures. As a literary critic, two books of his critical works *Ka Lungkham* and *Mizo Literature* won 'Book of the Year' 1989 and 1993. *Ka Lungkham (Introduction to Mizo Literature)* and *Mizo Literature* books are all about Mizo literature and literary criticism from a historical and critical approached. Therefore, his works and contributions are greatly contributed for the development of Mizo literary criticism during Awakening and Enlightening period in the history of Mizo literature.

Following are the list of his contributions for the development of Mizo literary criticism-

- i) Patea leh Damhauhva- 1985
- ii) Mizo Novel Souvenir- *edited* 1987
- iii) Mizo Hla leh A Phuahtute Volume 1- *edited* 1987
- iv) Ka Lungkham (Introduction to Mizo Literature)- 1989 (the first MAL 'Book of the Year' 1989)
- v) Mizo Literature (Mizo Thu leh Hla)- 1993 (MAL Book of the Year 1993)
- vi) Kaphleia Hnuhma- 1990
- vii) Zikpuii Pa Kutchhuak- 1990
- viii) C.Thuamluaia Hnuhma- 1991
- ix) Thanpuii Pa Kutchhuak- 1994
- x) Mizo Hun Hlui Hlate- 1998
- xi) Mizo Hla Leh A Phuahtute- *edited* 1999
- xii) Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma- 2000
- xiii) Mi Chungchuang Rokunga leh Zikpuii Pa- 2000

- xiv) Zosapthara- A Chanchin, Bible a Lehlin, A Lehkhabu leh Thu Ziakte, A Hla leh a Hlaa Debate- 2003
- xv) Chawnpui (Essay on Mizo History, Culture, Literature and Letters)- 2004
- xvi) Rev.Dr. Zairema leh Capt.C.Khuma Hnuhma- 2005
- xvii) Pi Pu Zun Zam (Mizo Hla leh Culture Zirna)- *edited* 2008
- xviii) Zopui (Studies in Mizo Identity & Literature)- *edited* 2011
- xix) Sutpui- *edited* 2014
- xx) Sem Sem Dam Dam (Studies in Integration, Poetry, Language, History & Criticism)- 2016

Some regarded B.Lalthanglian is one of the few people in Mizo today who is a ‘living encyclopedia’ due to his great and vast contributions in the field of Mizo history, culture, language and literature. All his literary works contributed for the development of Mizo literature and Mizo history as well. As a literary historian and literary critic, all his literary works are an important contribution for bringin Mizo literature an Enlightening period.

RL Thanmawia (b.1954):

R.L. Thanmawia is poet, essayist and critic; he was awarded Padma Shree in Literature & Education and ‘Academy Award 2016’ by Mizo Academy of Letters. As a researcher and scholar, his field of interest is on poetry. Due to his keen observation on poetry and deeply interest on poetry, as a poet-critic, most of his contributions in the field of literary criticism focus on study of Mizo poetry and critical assessment on the poet. So, all his critical works that had seen are related with poetry and poets. *Mizo Poetry* is a detailed and analytical study of Mizo poetry from Mizo folksongs to Christian hymnal songs to modern Mizo songs. His *Chuailo* series of 4 volumes contain his critical essays on various topics. As he was poet-critic, his contribution in the field of Mizo poetry criticism and study of Mizo poetry enriched the Mizo literature and bringin Mizo literature an Enlightening period as well.

He published his first literary works in 1987 ‘*Ka Thi Pek Che Kha* and *Hla Thu Hrilhfiahna* (later revised and enlarged in *Hla Thu Dictionary*) in 1988. Apart from his creative writings, his important critical works for the development of Mizo literary criticism includes the following:

- i) Zofate Rohlu- 1992

- ii) Zinkawng Rapthlak Zawhtute- 1994
- iii) Chuailo volume 1- 1997
- iv) Mizo Poetry (English version)- 1998
- v) Hla Thu Dictionary- 2004
- vi) Lung Min Lentu- 2006
- vii) Harhna – *edited* 2006
- viii) Chuailo volume 2- 2010
- ix) Mizo Hla Hlui -2012
- x) Zasiama leh Sialkhawthanga- 2012
- xi) Chuailo volume 3- 2015
- xii) Chuailo volume 4- 2018

#### L. Keivom (1939-2021):

Poet-Critic and Essayist L.Keivom (Lalthlamuong Keivom) published a number of books in Mizo and Hmar language. His ‘Zoram Khawvel’ enriches the worldview of Mizo. His important critical works includes- *Zoram Khawvel 2-* 1993, *Zoram Khawvel 3-* 1994, *Pherzawl Titi* (A Collection of Essays and Articles)- 1996, *Zoram Khawvel 4-* 1997, *Zoram Khaevel 8-* 2001

L. Keivom began writing and dreaming early. At 13 L.Keivom wrote his first song and a few years later, his first article on a topic praising the alphabet, so enamored was he of its worth. He admits, the inspiration for his award winning book "Zoram Khawvel ' I" came from his early schooling days in Pherzawl when students from Mizoram, Cachar, Tripura and the southern regions of Manipur converged each speaking different Zo dialects, co'existing harmoniously.

L.Keivom was a multi-lingual writer and so wrote in three language viz-Hmar language, Mizo language & English language. He was a diplomat but also a man of literature. He was a proponent of the reunification of Zo people, defined as Chin, Kuki & Mizo/Zomi (Chikumi) group, one linguistic ethnic community belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group. Due to his outstanding contributions towards integration of ‘Zo hnahtlak’ (descendents of Chikumi), he was labeled as ‘Father of the World of Zo People’. His book “Zoram Khawvel-

4” is sometimes compared with Hitler’s ‘Mein Kampf’ for its insightful and authoritative discourse on Zo nationalism and unification.

As a man of literature, he wrote a voluminous book of ‘ZORAM KHAWVEL’ and won the prestigious ‘Book of the Year 1991’ by Mizo Academy of Letters and posthumously awarded ‘Academy Award 2022’ by Mizo Academy of Letters for the contribution in the field of literature. Besides, he had won many awards for his literary works and towards Zo unification.

Darchuailova Renthlei (b.1962):

Darchuailova Renthlei is critic of poetry and drama; he interested in language criticism too. He contributed a number of critical works for the development of Mizo literary criticism. *Vankhama Hlate* and *Vankhama: Thulehthliah Thiam* are a detailed and analytical study of Vankhama and his poetry. *Rokunga: Tehkhinthu Thiam* is also a critical study of Rokunga and his poems, a systematic study of Rokunga’s poetry from literary techniques. His *Lecture on Drama* is all about the critical observation on drama. His other important critical writings are seen in *An Chul Lo* and *Tlang Thawveng*. Due to his keen observation on Mizo literature and due to his contributions in Mizo literary criticism, Darchuailova Renthlei is also a major critic in Mizo literature.

His important critical works are as follows:-

- i) Padma Shree Khawlkungi Zawlpala Thlan Tlangah Chhhui Zauna- 1989
- ii) Vankhama Hlate ( A critical Study)- 1990
- iii) Lecture on Drama- 2007
- iv) An Chul Lo- 2008
- v) Tlang Thawveng- 2009
- vi) Lenchawm (A Study of Mizo Lengkhawm Zai)- *edited 2017*
- vii) Cherchingkim (Hnam Zai leh Lam Zir Zauna)- *edited 2020*
- viii) Vankhama:Thulehthliah Thiam
- ix) Rokunga: Tehkhinthu Thiam

### KC Vannghaka (b. 1958):

KC Vannghaka is a diligent and hardworking critic who contributed for the development of Mizo literary criticism through his published works like *Literature Kawngpui* (Theory of Literature)- 2010, *Literature Zungzam*- 2014, *Influence of Christianity in Mizo Fiction*- 2015, *Mizo Novel Zirchianna* (A Critical Study of Mizo Novel)- edited 2015 and *Literature Zunleng*- 2020.

*Literature Kawngpui* is a complete work on theory of literature in Mizo language which is very useful for students of Mizo literature to attain deeper knowledge in literature. And this book may be regarded as the first complete book on theory of literature in Mizo. His *Literature Zungzam* is an important critical works on literary theory based on Mizo literature; an attempt to introduce different literary theories in Mizo literature. *Literature Zunleng* is also a criticism book and contains the tradition of English literary criticism from Neo-classical literary criticism to Romantic criticism, Victorian criticism and Modern criticism in Mizo language. As he was scholar and critic, his *Influence of Christianity in Mizo Fiction* is a study of Mizo fiction, its development, themes, genres and different kinds of Mizo novels. His other interested in the field of linguistic criticism also enriched Mizo literature and language. Therefore, all his critical works and literary works that made a huge contribution to the development of Mizo literary criticism made him a major critic in Mizo literature.

### C.Lalsiamthanga (b. 1958):

The contribution of C.Lalsiamthanga is very important because he was the first to write development of Mizo Literary Criticism in 1992. C.Lalsiamthanga besides his many critical articles on Mizo literature, his only published work in book form is *Zawlzawng* (Kutchhuak Duhthlan Thu Khawm Bu Khatna) in 2013 which is a collection of his critical essays of both English and Mizo literature. His insightful views and practice of juxtaposing his reading of Mizo writing with those of other literatures has contributed meaningfully to bringing in other critical perceptions and interpretations as well. His contributions in Mizo literary criticism are not measured in quantity, but quality.

## Contributions of Book Review for the Development of Mizo Literary Criticism

Book Review involves reading texts with an eye towards evaluating them, as opposed to reading merely for pleasure or to learn facts; it involves not only pinpointing the theme or message of the book, but also appraising and evaluating the style of the author, and the merits and demerits of the book.

Book review, after introduced it in Mizo literature, became one of the most popular types of criticism and it is now becoming the most prevalent form and popular tool for writing literary criticism till today. Book review contributed immensely for the development of Mizo literary criticism. Therefore, one of the Mizo literary critic, Siamkima Khawlhing, claimed that he introduced literary criticism in Mizo literature by his book review in 1973. The standard of book review shows and depicts the literary taste of the critic as well as the level of Mizo literature in some ways.

Siamkima Khawlhing claimed that, if he was not underestimated, he introduced Literary Criticism in Mizo Literature in 1973 through Book Review. But, before Siamkima had introduced literary criticism through book review; the first book review appeared in 1912 regarding the Mizo Bible. In 1912, the New Testament Mizo Bible, was revised and point out the weakness and injustice of the first four Gospel translations was published in the introduction. However, it is not meaningful and deep and if we talk about the basics, it is the first time we have seen this kind of book review.

After a few decades had gones, Rev.Beiseia wrote a number of book reviews from 1972 in *Didakhe*, a quarterly Christian Journal, published by the faculty of Aijal Theological College. In compare to Rev. Beiseia and Siamkima Khawlhing, the former contributed a number of quantity in book review while the latter contributed a number of quality in book review. We can rightly say in that way, Rev.Beiseia introduced summary review before Siamkima Khawlhing in 1972 and Siamkima Khawlhing introduced scholarly review/critical review in 1973. When Siamkima claimed that he was the first to introduce book review, his motive was to introduce Mizo literary criticism through book review, and for the development of Mizo literature through book review (*Zalenna Ram*, 168). Let's see his statement in his article "Book Review Hi":

Book review Mizo ṭawnga ziaƙ kan chin tak hi Mizo Zirlai pawl Chanchin Bu Edior ka nih lai, kum 1973 aṭanga ka tih ṭan a ni a. .. Ka ziaƙna chhan ber leh, tun hnuah ‘Thu leh Hla’ chanchin bua ka chhunzawm duhna chhan pawh kan ṭawnga Literary criticism tihchhuah ka duh vang leh, literature lam hmasawna a nih ka beisei vang a ni a; mi lehkhabu ziaƙ a ṭhat lohna lai zawna a tui tla lo thei ang zawnga sawi tumna a ni lo.

Book review hian a tum ber chu lehkhabu a tlang tlak theihna tura vawrh lar (advertise) mai ni lovin, belh chian a dawl leh dawl loh te, a bu chhung thute chu thil dang thlir leh teh nan zel atan te pawh hman ngam tur a nih leh nih loh te, a ziaƙ dan kalhmang a fel leh fel loh te leh a ṭawngkam hmante en chian a ni.

Lehkhabu ṭha leh ṭha lo hriat theih nan hnam fing zawk leh literature nei ṭha em em, Sap-hote chuan literary criticism leh book review ziaƙ hi an lo uar nasa hle a, an literature pawhin hma sawn phahna chhan pakhat a ni reng a...amaherawhchu, mi dang thuziak lo thlir dik thiam hi thil awlawi a ni lo va; Sapho zingah ngei pawh a ṭhatna lai tlangaupina aw aiin an duh loh zawng leh rilrem loh lai tlangaupina aw hi a ring zawk fo tih kan hria...Hetiang hi kan chin dan a nih chuan, book review chu, ‘A tlin lohna leh ṭhat lohna lai zawna leh a zawngtuin chutiang chu a hmuh chuan tlangaupina’ tih ang lek a lo ni ang.

Thu ziaƙ leh a review lo ziaƙte hi kan zir tlang vek a, atuate mah innuihzat tur chuang kan awm lo va...a infuih zawng leh a intiphur zawnga kan kal zel a ṭul a ni

*(Zalenna Ram, 168-169, 170, 174-175)*

(Translation: Book Review in Mizo was first introduced by me in 1973 at “*Mizo Zirlai Pawl Chanhinbu*” while I was Editor at that time. If I underestimated, the review article of *Ka Ram leh Kei*, written by R.Vanlawma, which was published in MZP magazine, January, 1973 issue was the first book review witten in Mizo. My intention and aim of writing book review was to introduce Literary Criticism in Mizo and also for the development of Mizo literature as well.

The aim and function of Book Review is not merely to advertise a book, rather to investigate the book is reliable or not; to study the content and the text of that book, to look about the art of writing of the book and its symmetry, and analyse the languageit used.

Most of English *Letter of Man* used Literary Criticism and Book Review to distinguish a good and bad books because Literary Criticism played a very important role on that purpose, and their Literature had improved so much due to Literary Criticism. But, it is not a proper used of Literary Criticism as a means to find a fault only. So, we try to avavoid the Pseudo-Criticism while doing book-review.

We all studied how to write and how to review a book and thus, no one is bullying each other...to inspire and motivate each other is the best method for doing book review.)

From his statement, it is clear that Book Review is not merely to advertise a book, rather it is to investigate whether that book is worthy of being trusted or not; analysis of the texts and evaluate the art of expression is symmetrical or not and to look carefully the language it used are appropriate or not. Siamkima strongly propound that the most important thing to remember while writing book review is that book review is not a fault finding; rather it is evaluation, analysis and judgement on the merits and demerits of that particular book.

Siamkima advised critics to avoid 'destructive criticism' which can harmed both the author as well as readers; so, he advocated 'critical appreciation' which can motivates and inspires the author as well as readers for the developing literature of the Mizo. The Mizo literary critics- the one who is skilled in judging or "a person who expresses opinions about the good and bad qualities of books," (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 361) and a person who judges the merits of literary work rationally and intellectually examines a works of art and, then, passes his judgement about its worth and merit of literature- are the need of the hour for the development of Mizo literary criticism. So, the art of book review that proposed by Siamkima through book review is still relevant still important for the Mizo literary cum book critics.

#### Book Review from DIDAKHE journal:

During 1972-1974, Rev. Beiseia wrote a total of eleven book reviewed; five book reviewed in 1972, two book reviewed in 1973 and four book reviewed in 1974. These are the list of book reviewed written by Rev. Beiseia during 1972-74:

- i) *Kristian Chhungkua (Christian Family)* by Leslie & Winifred Brown Translated by HKL Thanga & Rev. C.Pazawna
- ii) *Kohhran Pianhmang leh a Kohna* by Rev.Wiliam Steward, M.A, D.D and Translated by Rev. PD Sena
- iii) *Bible Dictionary* published by Regional Theological Literature Committee
- iv) *Zawlnei Isaia Lehkhu Hrilhfiahna* by Rev. Lalsawma
- v) *Zawlnei Jona Lekhhabu Hrilhfiahna* by Rev.Lalsawma



- vi) *Tirhkohte Thuvawn Bu* by Rev.Lalsawma
- vii) *Thuthlung Hlui Hlate leh Thufingte* by Rev. Lalsawma
- viii) *Kohhran Enkawl dan* by Rev.Saiaithanga
- ix) *Khawvel Kohhran Inzawmkhawm* by Upa R.Zobela
- x) *Lal Isua Chanchin A Lenlai Nite* by C.Rokhuma
- xi) *Thilmak Chhuisen Loh* by Rev. Lalthanga

Book Review- *Kristian Chhungkua* by Leslie & Winifred Brown.

Letlingtute: HKL Thanga & Rev.C.Pazawna, Regional Theological Literature Committee, p. 92 Rs. 2.40

He lehkhabi ziaktu Dr. L.W. Brown-a chu India chhimah kum 14 lai missionary hna thawk tawh a ni a, a nupui pawh Doctor puitling a ni. An nupain Kristian chhungkaw din hi an vei a. Brown-a chu kum 1953 khan East Africa-a Uganda Bishop atan serh hran a ni ta. Engin nge chhungkua hi ti Kristian a, eng kawngah nge Kristian chhungkua chu chhungkaw dangte aia a danglamna tih zawhna pawimawh tak chhangtu chu he lehkhabu hi a ni.

A bu chhunga thu hlawm lian deuchte chu hengte hi an ni:

- 1) Kristian chhungkua hi engnge ni?
- 2) Inneihna
- 3) Nu leh pa leh fate: Naupan lai
- 4) Sikul kai rual leh puitlin hun
- 5) Inrim leh inneih
- 6) Kristian in
- 7) Chhungkaw lian zawk.

He lehkhabu hi chhiar chhuah a har lo, India rama lehkhaha chhiartu tam zawkte duh ang chi a ni. Lehkhabu lian leh chhah kan chhiar peih lo, kan duh tawk chauh tur a ni. A bu a len tawk loh avangin kan hriat duh apiang kan hmu lo vang tih hria ila, Mahse, he lehkhabu ka fakna ber chu hetiang lehkhabu bei tham teah hian kan tana mamawh tlangpui a leng vek thei hi a ni. Kristian chhungkua siam tura mamawhte a hre em em a ni. A bu chhung khawi lai mah hi kilkhawr lutuk leh tangkai mang lo kan tih tur ang chi a awm lo, chuvangin, a bu hi pan deuh mah se I tangkaipui hle ang. Thalai, kawppui zawnglaite tan phei chuan pumpelh loh tur a ni. Kristian chhungkua tha din tak tak I tum lo a nih erawh chuan thu dang ni se. Nu leh pate tan chanvo tam tak a awm bawk.

During 1975-1979, there are 15 book reviews written by different critics. Some of the review articles are very insightful and meaningful. Lets take a look by chronological order:

- i) *Tawngtaina Awmzia leh A Hman Dan* by Sister Carol Graham, Trans.by Pastor Thansiamia. Reviewed by Rev. Beiseia ('Didakhe' Vol IV No 1 Jan-March 1975)
- ii) *Chhandamna* by Rev.Beiseia & Rev.Lalnghinglova. Reviewed by Prof. K.Lungmuana ('Didakhe' Vol V No 1 Jan-March 1976)
- iii) *Isua Thilmak Tihte* (Miracles of Jesus) by Cecil Hargreaves. Trans.by Pu Muka. Reviewed by Rev.Beiseia ('Didakhe' Vol V No 2 April-June 1976)
- iv) *Mizo Kohhran Chanchin* by Rev. Saiaithanga. Reviewed by Rev.Beiseia ('Didakhe' Vol V No 3 July-September 1976)
- v) *Israel Leh Arab Indo Thu* by C.Rokhuma. Reviewed by Biakmawia ('Didakhe' Vol V No 3 July-September 1976)
- vi) *Exodus* by Rev.C.Pazawna. Reviewed by Rev.Beiseia ('Didakhe' Vol V No 4 October-December, 1976)
- vii) *Sakhaw Dang Chanchin* by Rev.R.Lalengkima. Reviewed by C.Biakmawia ('Didakhe' Vol VI No 1 Jan-March, 1977)
- viii) *KLH Hla Bu* by KL Hela. Reviewed by Lalsawma ('Didakhe' Vol VI No 2 April-June, 1977)
- ix) *Uar Bik Nei Pawlte* by Rev. Lalbiaktluanga, Rev. Zairema & Rev. Saiaithanga. Reviewed by Zaihmingthanga ('Didakhe' Vol VI No 3 July- September, 1977)
- x) *Khawvel Hun Tawng Ropui* by C.Vanlalpeka. Reviewed by Lalchhuanliana ('Didakhe' Vol VI No 4 October-December, 1977)
- xi) *Thu Puan Hrilhfiahna* by Rev.Lalbiaktluanga. Reviewed by C.Biakmawia ('Didakhe' Vol VII No 2&3 March-June, 1978)
- xii) *Thilmak Sawmsarih* by Rev.Thansiamia. Reviewed by Upa C.Sangzuala ('Didakhe' Vol VIII No 2 & 3 March-June, 1979)
- xiii) *An Sulhnu* by Rev.C.Ronghinga. Reviewed by Rev.H.Zalawma ('Didakhe' Vol VIII No 4 July-August, 1979)
- xiv) *Normal Christian Life (Kristian Nun Thuang)* by Watchman Nee. Trans.by Upa Lalroenga. Reviewed by Upa C.Sangzuala ('Didakhe' Vol VIII No 5 September-October, 1979)
- xv) *Thawnthu Min Hrilh Rawh* by Khawlkungi. Reviewed by H.Sangkhuma ('Didakhe' Vol VIII No 6 November-December, 1979).

### Book Review From “MZP Chanchinbu” 1973:

Siamkima was the first to write a book review in ‘MZP Chanchinbu. During 1973, we had seen five book reviewed written by Siamkima, K.Lawmzuala, Lalthankaia, Satinmana and R. Vanlawma. Siamkima reviewed two books *Ka Ram leh Kei* and *Mizo Pi Pute leh an Thlahte Chanchin*. These two books are historical account of the Mizos and they belong to ‘Literature of Knowledge’ according to Thomas De Quincey

- 1) Book Review on *Ka Ram Leh Kei (My Country and I)* by R.Vanlawma published by Zalen Printing House, pages 300 Rs 6 (Second Impression 1972) Reviewed by Siamkima.

He lehkhabuah hian Pu Vanlawma hian Mizo thlahtute a bul theihtawpa chhuiin, hnam dang chim buai lohva an awm thu leh, Vai lo len hnua Kumpinu sawrkar hnuaia kan lo awm dan te, am apian leh murna te pawh chhuiin, India independence tirh atanga politics lamah ngaihtuahna a lo sen dan te, ram buai tirh laia thil kal vel dan leh Union Territory-a kan lo awm tak thleng thu a ziak a ni.

(...) Lehkhabu chhiar nuam tak, tawngkam mawl te te hmang a, a thu sawi duh tilang chiang hle sia ziak a ni a. A ‘Thuhmahruai’ hi chhiar hmaih hauh loh chi a ni. A ziaktu hian thu sawi tur pawh a hria. Rem lo deuh chung a ama chanchin sawi telnate pawh awm bawk mah se, tam takah chuan a tingaihnawm zualtu a ni. MI tam tak hriat ngai loh leh lo ngaihtuah ngai loh thil leh thu, he lehkhabuah hian hmuh tur a awm. Amaherawhchu, Chanchin Tha zara kawng tam taka kan ram tiengtu, Kristian missionary te leh an hnathawhte sawina a awm lo. Ram tana a lo thawh tawh nge Mizo hnam tan tangkai ang a, a lehkhabu hrim hrim hi tih pawh khaihkin tham a ni mai thei.

A tawp berah chuan, he lehkhabu atang mai hi chuan, Pu Vanlawma’n “Ka Ram” a tih hian a huam chin chiah a hriat theih loh. Tuna Mizoram ai hian a zim zawk ang nge a zau zawk ang tih a hriat theih loh va, India ram ai pawhin a lo zau zawk reng mai thei a ni.

(Kum 33-na January 1973 Bu 1na p.17-20)

- 2) Book Review on *Mizo Chanchin* by Zatluanga p.215 First edition 1966 Reviewed by K.Lawmzuala

He lehkhabuah hian Pu Zatluanga hian Mizo history leh kan pi leh pute nundan te ziaikin, tunlai thangthar huna politics lam te, sawrkar hnathawhna lamah te leh zirna peng hrang hranga “hmasa ber”-te khawn khawmin, ram buai hma chiah huamin a ziak a ni. (...)

Pu Zatluanga lehkhabu hi a ngaihnaawmin, hnam hrang hrangte chanchin a chhui danah a thu a lai hle. Pu K.Zawla lehkhabu, Kawlni history nge a ngaih pawimawh zawka Mizo history tih hriat har tak ai chuan a pawmnaawm zawkin ka hria.

(Kum 33-na February 1973 Bu 2na p.19-22)

- 3) Book Review *Pi Pu Nun (Hmasang Mizo Awm Dan)* by Pastor Challiana, published by The Trio Book House Aizawl First edition 1969 p.45 Reviewed by Lalthankaia

He lehkhabuah hian Pastor Challianan Kristian sakhua Mizorama a lo luh hmaa Mizote chanchin a ziaak a (...) Mizo sakhua te, hnam nunphung leh thil chin thinte a chuang kim hle. Mizo nunphung lam chauh a thlur a (...) History anga chhiar tur a ni lo.

(...) Pi Pu Nun (Chanchin Thain kan ram a tihen hmaa kan pi pute nun dan) ziaak ni siin, an Sap ram zin thua a tlang a kawm hi a inhme lo lam deuh a ni mai thei.

A bu a pan leh tet ngaihtuahin pi pute nun a chuang kim hle a. A tawng hman a ulukin, Mizo twang lehkhabu chhuak hmasa pawl si, tun thelgin a chhiar nuam ber pawl a ni.

(Kum 33na March 1973 Bu 3na p. 21-23)

- 4) Book Review- *Mizo Pi Pute leh An Thlahte Chanchin* by K.Zawla published by the author, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1964 p.350 Reviewed by Siamkima & Satinmana

A bu hming a vuah ang hian, he lehkhabuah hian Pu Zawla hian, Mizo bul leh inthlahchhawn zel dan nia a hriat dan leh, Mizo zinga mi hmingthang deuh deuhthe chanchin a ziaak a; Mizo thufing te, hla phuahtu thenkhat leh an hla thenkhatte ama duhzawng leh ngaihpawimawh zawngte a lawr tel bawk (...)

Lakher (Mara) te, Pawih leh Tlanglau te pawh a ziaak tel ve lo va. He bu hi Mizo pum history tlinga ngaih theih a ni lo. (...)

A ziaaktu taimakna leh thil chhinchhuah peihna leh Mizo nun hlui thu vawn him a duhnaah hian a fakawm lo thei lo va, a thu uar lutuk deuhna leh, rinthu sawi a huai lutuk deuh hian a chhiartute beng a tithlep deuh tih mai loh chu bengvarthlak tak chu a ni.(...) Zirlaite chang ni lovin, hman lai kan pi leh pute nun leh an chanchin te, an lawm zawng leh ngaihsan zawng te, an huat zawng leh tih duh loh zawngte hre duh mi tan chuan he lehkhabu hi chhiar chhuah ve ngei chi a ni.

(Kum 33-na April 1973 Bu 4na)

- 5) Book Review- *Lusei leh a Vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin* by Vanchhunga First edition 1955 pages 324 Reviewed by R.Vanlawma

He lehkhabuah hian a ziaaktu hian Mizote chanchin hi a bul thei ang bera chhui a tum hlein a beisei nasa hlein a lang a. Pastor Vanchhunga hi Mizo zinga Kristian hmasa ber pawl a ni a,

kum 1903-a tirhkoh hmasa ber pathumte zinga pakhat a ni a...Chutia Pathian thu hrila a vah vel pah chuan Lusei leh a vela hnam dangte chanchin hi a ngaihtuah zelin a lo ziak khawl thin a ni. (...) Mahsela, amah hi ama insawi danah pawh mi mawl, lehkha thiam lo a intih ang hian, a lehkhabu han chhiar hian chuan a ziak tha tawk lo deuh reng a ni. Thu a inkalthelh tam lutuk a, thu ngai sawi nawn a tam lutuk bawk (...) A lehkhabu ziakah hian Pu Saphluia tawngkam hman dan a lang hnem hle mai. (..) chuvangin, lehkhabu a nihna ang turah chuan a hlawhtling vak lo ni berin a lang.

(...) He lehkhabu hi tha tawk lo hle mah se, Mizo chanchin mi tiphuisuitu berte zinga mi a ni a, hetiang bu kan lo nei hi a lawmawm tak meuh a ni...

(Kum 33na June 1973 Bu 6na. p.17)

### Book Review from “Thu leh Hla” (Literary journal of Mizo Academy of Letters):

Book Review and review articles are increasing year by year. After ‘MZO Chanchinbu’ was break from 1978, ‘Thu leh Hla’ journal became the main platform for book review. During 1978 to 1991, more than thirty review article were published in ‘Thu leh Hla’. The main contributors are R Vanlawma, Siamkima, Peter Lianhleia, Sangliana, Lalzuia Colney, RK Ngurchhawna, C.Lalkhawliana, TC Jonunsanga, C.Lalsiamthanga and many more. Following are the chronologically lists of review articles during 1978-1991:

- 1) Book Review- *Thla Hleinga Zan* by James Dokhuma 1<sup>st</sup> ed.1977 Published by J,Kapthuanga pages 312 Reviewed by Peter Lianhleia (March, 1978)
- 2) Letter to Editor- “Chhiartute Ngaih Dan (Book Review Chungchang)” by Lalzuia Colney (April 1978)  
 “Pu James Dokhuma, a mi mal nihna a um zui thui deuh tih loah chuan, heng ka sawi bak Pu Lianhleian a sawi hi awm ka ti ve nual a. Mahse, College zir atan hian iaiawm se, iaiawm lo chu khawiah nge? Pu Lianhleia hian a Book Review hi rawn bei tha leh sela ka duh ngawt mai.”
- 3) Book Review- *Mizo Chanchin* by Hrangthiauva & Lalchungnunga Published by Lalrinliana & Sons, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1979 pages 384 Reviewed by R.Vanlawma (April 1979 p. 13-21).
- 4) Book Review- *Pi Pu Len Lai* by Seletthanga 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1977 p.172 Reviewed by Lalzuia Colney (May 1979, p.14-19)
- 5) Book Review- *Sangi Rinawmna* by Khawlkungi Publised by Zoram Writers’ Club, p.64 Reviewed by Sangliana (June 1979 p.17-21)

- 6) Book Review- *Mizo Pi Pute Khawsak Dan* by Remkunga Published by R.Buchhawna p.148 Reviewed by RK Ngurchhawna (July 1979 p.24-28)
- 7) “*Mizo Chanchin* Book Review Chhanna” by C.Chhuanvawra (August 1979 p.12-18)
- 8) Book Review- *History of Mizo in Burma* by B.Lalthangliana p.108, ed.1975 Reviewed by Dr.FK Lehman, Professor, University of Illinois (September 1979 p.13-26 medium of language-English)
- 9) Letter to Editor: “Topic- Book Review” by James Dokhuma (September 1979, p.32)
- 10) “Book Review Thlirna” by Siamkima (October 1979 p.1-9)
- 11) Book Review- *Lusei Grammar* by Rochhung Buchhawna Khiangte 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.1975 p.96 Reviewed by Lalzuia Colney (October 1979, p.29-32)
- 12) Book Review- *A Tlai Lutuk Ta* by Khawlkungi Published by Zoram Writers’ Club, p.98 Reviewed by C.Lalkhawliana (December 1979 p.25-27)
- 13) “*History of Mizo in Burma* Review Kha” by Ralkapthanga (March 1982 p.3-7) A Response to R.Vanlawma reviewed article on October, 1980
- 14) Book Review- *Pasal Duhthlan* by Khawlkungi 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1982 p.84 Reviewed by Zohmingi Pa (April & May 1983 p.14-19)
- 15) “Hla Bu Hmasa Ber (1899)” review by Siamkiam (August 1983 p.1-14)
- 16) “Zawlpala Thlan Thlangi by Khawlkungi- An Introduction” by Siamkima (November 1983 p.1-7)
- 17) “RL Kamlala *Thlarau Entlang*” reviewed by C.Lalramzauva (January 1984 p.1-6)
- 18) “RL Kamlala *Pialral Zawn Thu*” reviewed by C.Lalramzauva (June 1984 p.7-10)
- 19) Book Review- *A Search for Mizo Identity (Brig.T.Sailo Chanchin)* by Brig. T.Sailo 1983 edition. Reviewed by R.Vanlawma (July 1984)
- 20) “JF Laldailova leh Hamlet” review by C.Lalsiamthanga (October 1984 p.19-29)  
---There is no Book Review article during 1985...
- 21) Book Review- *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* by Khawlkungi p.293 Reviewed by TC Jonunsanga (April 1986 p.9-17)
- 22) Book Review- *Aw Zawlkhawpui* by R.Thanhkira 1<sup>st</sup> ed.1983 p.127 Reviewed by PC Biaksiana (May & June 1986 p. 6-11)
- 23) “*CC Coy No 27: Zikpuii Pa* Introduction” by Siamkima (August 1986 p.1-6)
- 24) “Mizo Tawng Lekhhabu Hmasate” Reviewed by C.Vanlallawma (October 1988 p.15-23)
- 25) Book Review- *Zalenna Ram* by Siamkima Khawlhiring 1986 edition. Reviewed by B.Lalthangliana (January 1989 p.12-20)

- 26) Book Review- *Ka Lungkham* by B.Lalthangliana Reviewed by Zikpuii pa (January 1990 p.7-15 & February 1990 p.11-17)
- 27) “Siamkima *Zalenna Ram*” Review by R.Vanlawma (May 1990 p.14-19)
- 28) Book Review- *Kaphleia Sulhnu* Thlirna by R.Vanlawma (September 1990 p.14-21)
- 29) *Zikpuii Pa Kutchhuak* Thuhmahruai by B.Lalthangliana (November 1990 p.26-29)
- 30) Zikpuii Pa *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* by R.Lalthazuala (September 1991)
- 31) “Pu R.Lalthazuala Review on *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*” by Zikpuii Pa (November 1991)

Those entire listed book reviewed were classified into two categorised- Summary Review and Scholarly or Critical Review. Critical reviewers make a further qualitative improvement by not only providing a summary of a book but by giving their own critical evaluation. Critical reviewers render their best services by tell us what they think of the book not only tell us what the book is about. By providing a critical evaluation of the book by such reviewers helps us to decide which are relevant to our need. However, critical reviewers are more helpful than summary reviewers because they tell us what the book is about, make some assessment of the author’s treatment of the subject and give reasons for their assessment. Such critical reviews enable us to learn something about the content of the book and the adequacy of the author’s treatment of the subject in his book.

So, book reviews play a crucial role in the development of Mizo literary criticism. Book reviews provide a platform for Mizo authors and their works to gain recognition and reach a wider audience. This is essential for promoting Mizo literature, encouraging authors to produce more works, and sustaining the literary tradition.

Book reviews allow for in-depth critical analysis of Mizo literary works. They provide insights into the themes, writing styles and narrative techniques used by authors, helping readers understand and appreciate the nuances of Mizo literature.

Constructive criticism in book reviews offers valuable feedback to the authors. This feedback can help them improve their writing, develop their skills and contribute to the evolution of Mizo literature. Positive book reviews can encourage budding Mizo writers to pursue their literary aspirations, while constructive criticism can guide them in honing their skills.

Book reviews stimulate discussion and debate within the literary community. Readers, authors and critics can engage in conversations about the merits and demerits of Mizo literature, enriching the discourse.

By comparing Mizo literary works to other regional or international literature, book reviews contribute to a broader understanding of Mizo literature's place in the global literary context. This aids in shaping the identity of Mizo literature.

Book reviews serve as an important resource for archiving and preserving Mizo literary history. Scholars and researchers often rely on the book reviews as primary sources of information about Mizo literature. These reviews aid in academic research and the development of Mizo literary criticism as a field of study. Therefore, book reviews are instrumental in promoting, analysing and critiquing Mizo literature. They contribute to the growth and development of Mizo literary criticism by fostering critical engagement, by offering a platform for literary discussion, critical examination and appreciation of Mizo literary output.



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## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

A study of the development of Mizo literary criticism over the past hundred years (1911-2011) reveals that Mizo literary criticism has come a long way since its inception and continues to develop; it is apparent that literary criticism is the Achilles' heel in Mizo literature. Literary criticism has made moderate growth in comparison to other literary genres such as poetry, drama, novels, and other forms of creative writings this century. Despite the early onset of literary criticism in the history of Mizo literature, its subsequent development was modest, and even at its present state leaves much room. Mizo literary criticism confronts a number of issues that must be addressed in order to foster a more robust and inclusive critical conversation surrounding Mizo literature. The research revealed that three aspects contributed to the development of Mizo literary criticism: the works and contributions of major and minor critics, book reviews, and academic institutions.

After extensively studying the development of Mizo literary criticism throughout the twentieth century, it was discovered that criticism of Mizo poetry began as early as 1911. Poetry has played a vital role in Mizo literary criticism since the beginning. Critique on Mizo language stepped into the fray in the 1960s and became one of the most engaging fields on Mizo literary criticism. Since the 1970s, book reviews have become an integral component of Mizo literary criticism as Mizo literature has grown in tandem with the annual exponential increase in publication.

The study explains why Mizo literary criticism began with criticism of poetry and songs and contributed significantly to its development. While Mizo drama originated and developed from the year 1912 and the first Mizo novel, *Hawilopari*, was written in 1936, poetry and songs are deeply embedded in the Mizo spirit, since literary criticism began with written arguments and debates on *Puma Zai* in 1911. Although the Mizo ancestors lost the parchment, their only means of written knowledge, their songs were so deeply carved in their hearts that they are still the best source for Mizo literary history.

In *Lusei leh a vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, Vanchhunga states that "If we trace our history as far back as possible, we can say that we did not spend much time apart from song. Every event in our history went side by side with a song," (111) and Liangkhaia also states that "The Mizo had no mode of written literature, so songs became the only vessels for knowledge and history in particular from which we can at least, to some extent, get an idea of history. Songs have high utility, they have power and are used by all people everywhere," ("Hla Thu" 10). Therefore, a study of Mizo poetry mostly contributed in compare to other literary genres, like novel, drama and other prose writings, for the development of Mizo literary criticism till today.

Zikpuii-pa also states that, "We, the Mizo are song-loving folk. We have such a large number of songs of every genre that it is almost disproportionate to our small population and short lineage; we may have made most progress in songs among all the arts. We, like our ancestors, were born in song, grew up with song and even expressed our hatred and desires in song," (*Zozam Par* 26).

It is apparent that poetry and songs played a vital role in researching the development of Mizo literary criticism, and a study of poets, poetry, and songs accurately reflects the origin, growth, and development of Mizo literary criticism. It is not surprising that Mizo literary criticism emerged and developed from the study of Mizo poetry, and it continues to make significant contributions to the development of Mizo literary criticism at various times.

According to the findings of the study on the development of Mizo literary criticism, there are various obstacles and avenues for development opportunities exist still. The difficulty with Mizo literary criticism is that it assumes literature refers mainly to written documents. Mizo only began using their alphabets in 1894, which highlights the obvious problem with claiming that any "unwritten" material prior to that date cannot be deemed literature. C. Lalsiamthanga valiantly defended oral literature in his critical essay on "Mizo Hnam Zai leh Hla Thlvang Hauhna," (A Defence of Mizo Song and Oral literature) where he wrote, "Therefore, those who try to categorize Mizo literature exclusively as that produced using writing tools seems to be laying down borders where they do not exist," (*Ziak Mite Pholeng* 417). According to him, "That literature, which settled in the minds and hearts of our ancestors before we used writing tools, particularly in song, was transferred into books.

This does not mean that it was not literature before it was in written record. On the contrary, it is currently our richest genre in literature. It is in fact, the source of almost all of the songs we have till date and anyone who seeks to nullify this truth must surely be anti-nationalist,"(418). In this regard, the two major critic Zikpuii-pa and Siamkima Khawlhring could be blame for their writings.

In his essay on "Lushai Literature", Zikpuii-pa begins by stating, "For a fact, our oral literature, since it was unwritten, could not have been considered 'Literature' in any sense," (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma* 131), but he quickly goes on to say, "Literature has always been a sort of measurement for differentiating civilized people from the uncivilized. We Mizo too, on this dimension alone, cannot be considered uncivilized due to our oral literature," (*ibid* 132) and in his assertion of Oral literature as a source of glorification, goes on to introduce Pi Hmuaki. And in the introduction of his book *Zoram Par*, he seems again to agree to the richness we had in song even before written literature as he states, "We Mizo are lovers of song and have a great number of it considering the relatively small span of our history and population. The song department may well be the most developed among our arts. Since the time of our ancestors, we were born and grew alongside song and it became a means of expressing our likes and dislikes," (26). Moreover, in his writing on, "Mizo Rilrua Hla Hnathawh Dan (The effect of song and poetry on the Mizo mind)" he appears again to constantly rely on oral literature as a source.

Siamkima Khawlhring also states that, "The Europeans also recognized the existence of oral literature; but what we Mizo call literature, and that which we claim to lack, points more towards the written," (*Zalenna Ram* 31-32). After having established the frontier of literature by written; he explains, "Literature is any form of word that forms a relationship with human life, systematically written with the objective of carrying it's worth through time," (32). He stressed on the contribution of Lorraine (Pu Buanga) and Savidge (Sapupa) by stating that, "Hebrew literature played a vital role in the origin of our literature such that we can now trace Mizo language and the roots of its literature to that of the Greeks and Romans," (26) and even claimed that Hebrew literature, "...stood uncontested against the existing literature of these lands who gave way to its unstoppable forcing, thus leading not only to their impotence but almost absolute stagnation by backing them up into a suffocating corner." That 'existing' literature was an oral literature. It is for this reason that C. Lalsiamthanga saw it as his responsibility to stand up for oral literature, saying, "For our expert to so denigrate the wealth of our literature before we had the means to write it, is a

means to lead astray the future generations of those interested in literature,” (*Ziakfung Zalen 176*).

Given that the enormous amount of Mizo oral literature served as an important source for the written literature to follow, it can be simply stated that the reason the border of literature was formed by the written is because the Mizo ancestors lost the parchment. The ancestral parchment which held knowledge and history was eaten by a stray dog leaving the Mizo ancestors without literature. Even if parchment is a myth, illiterate people without access to written language were forced to rely on oral tradition to transmit knowledge and information. R. Zuala stressed on this saying, "It is a tragedy that the parchment was lost. It is impossible to imagine what would have happened if all that knowledge was kept preserved. But the dog ate it all and left us with no education as those with the knowledge passed on leaving nothing behind," (*Khawithlar 36*). Owing to the tale of the 'Lost Parchment,' Mizo have come to consider only 'written works' to be literature.

Even if the Mizo ancestors had lost the parchment, the literature of Mizo people that was etched into their hearts would still be the greatest source of literary history. Vanchhunga went to the extent of saying, "As I trace back the history of our forefathers to the earliest point, it is almost as if that in no point in time were they ever without song. All the information on our earlier society comes from songs... even if it were for a brief period, the primary means of recording was in song," (*Lusei leh a vela hnam dangte 112*). Liangkhaia also said, "Since we Mizo did not have written literature, the only source of our history was in songs. We can get a glimpse of the past through songs from which we can study a portion of that history. Songs are essential and powerful and remain a vital instrument for people all over the world," (*Thu leh Hla Thlitfimna lam 222*). Therefore, apart from our categorization of literature, even in the study of Mizo literary criticism, we can never ignore the importance of oral literature as they remain to be the main and most important source of our literature.

The research also reveals that one obstacle against the development of literary criticism is the misconception on its nature and essence. The nature and foundation of literary criticism lies in factors like the 'thorough study and observation of literature', 'a critical view towards literature', 'categorization of literature', 'a microscopic observation of literature in accordance with the world and human life.' As a result, Literary criticism must encompass the presentation of literature's wonder as art, the unearthing of buried wisdom and its influence on humanity, the unravelling of the truth buried within, the exposition of literature's value

and glory, the appreciation of the author's skill and potential up to the extent of gauging his/her morality and intellectual value, observation from all angles and suggestions to even amend areas where it may fall short. As such, it is a shame that ignorance on the actual meaning of literary criticism has many thinking it is only confined to book reviews.

The misconception on book reviews as the core of literary criticism is a problem in Mizo literary criticism. In this regard, C. Lalsiamthanga states that, "The main reason behind our erroneous blending of book reviews and literary criticism is that we had a started on the wrong note. We could say that the progenitor of this fallacy was Pu Siamkima," ("Literary Criticism" in *Thu leh Hla*, 41). To presuppose that book reviews are the identity and core facet of literary criticism is part of the 'Siamkima' Hangover'. In his essay, "Book Review", Siamkima Khawlhing states that, "The reason I write book review and eventually the reason why I want to continue in *Thu leh Hla* journal is that I want to introduce literary criticism in my native language and in the hopes that it may lead to a development in literature as a whole," (*Zalenna Ram* 168). C. Lalsiamthanga comments on this that- "[his] breed equally ignorant and blind to the true meaning of literary criticism started writing book reviews. It appears that many of us are still trapped in Pu Siamkima's spirit even today" ("Literary Criticism" in *Thu leh Hla* 32). This reply clearly demonstrates that the aforementioned misperception stems from Siamkima's fallacy, which has led many people to believe that literary criticism only refers to book reviews.

The study clearly states that book reviews were not, in effect, the beginning of Mizo literary criticism. However, Mizo literature did in fact come into bloom from book reviews because they are the mode through which Mizo literature gained a revival and rebirth in criticism, and by which most critics expended the majority of their thought and effort on criticism. Book review is not the only avenue and source of literary criticism and its development but the movement had undoubtedly led to progress in literature and served as a catalyst for creative writers who produced myriads of good and beautiful work that could withstand critique. So, book review contributed hugely for the development of Mizo literary criticism.

The research reveals that lack of critical discourse and lack of critics are the hindrance for the development of Mizo literary criticism. There is a lack of critical discourse in Mizo literary criticism, as there are very few forums or platforms for literary critics to exchange ideas and engage in constructive debates about the interpretation and analysis of literary texts.

Critical discourse involves thoughtful and analytical discussions about literary works. Without critical discourse and debates, literary ideas and styles may become stagnant. Critical discourse brings diverse perspectives and interpretations to literary works which enrich the understanding of literary texts. Lack of critical discourse can limit the depth of understanding and exploration and can lead to reduced engagement with Mizo literature, as reader may not have the opportunity to delve deeper meaning and understanding within the texts. Even before criticism was taught in higher education and literary criticism began to develop as a discipline in academic institutions, only literary journal and magazine (likes ‘MZIP Chanchinbu’ and ‘Thu leh Hla’) provided a platform for literary discussions and debates. So, since 2000s, fostering a culture of literary criticism, promoting literary workshops and seminars, and encourages scholars to engage in critical analysis, Mizo literary criticism has developed and continued to evolve, with a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches and a broader engagement with global literary theories and it makes growing interest in writing a strong theoretical framework and conceptual apparatus in Mizo literary criticism.

The scarcity of skilled Mizo literary critics in comparison to creative writers stifles the development of Mizo literary criticism by limiting the different views and constructive comments required for growth and refinement within the Mizo literary community. As Zikpuii-pa states, “In the world of literature, we need critics who produce critical reviews to tell us which pieces of literature are good and which are not so... in the developing process of literature, the need for critics has never been so great,” (*Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma* 196) the need for critics with clear foresight and understanding, to provide meaningful criticism keeps on increasing. And the value of good critics who gauge literature for overall development stands in par with the need for good writers. Without skilled literary critics, literary creativity may stagnate since there is no external input to promote growth and innovation. Critics play an important role in examining and critiquing literary works, assisting authors in honing their craft and creating a greater understanding of literature across the community. Without a strong presence of good literary critics, Mizo literature may struggle to reach its full potential in terms of quality and cultural significance. Critics often play a role in promoting talented authors and their works. Their reviews and assessments can bring attention to deserving writers, helping them gain recognition. To address this issue, efforts can be made to encourage and train literary critics by institutions, promote literary discussions, and provide platforms for critical analysis of Mizo literature. This can help foster the growth and development of Mizo literary criticism.



The research reveals that misconceptions on the function of literary criticism have posed problems in the development of Mizo literary criticism. That, to be precise, is the ‘pseudo-function of criticism,’ which assumes that the sole work of literary criticism is fault-finding, exactly what K.C. Vannghaka meant when he wrote, “A majority of the criticism we undertake is fault-finding – a pseudo function of criticism,” (*Literature Kawngpui* 360).

John Dryden, who was considered, ‘the Father of English Criticism,’ also denounced fault-finding alone when he wrote, “They wholly mistake the nature of criticism who think its business is principally to find fault,” (*Thu leh Hla Thlitfimna Lam* 17)

Mafaa Hauhnar also stressed on the pseudo-criticism that is based wholly on fault-finding, “Many critics have the so-called ‘schoolmaster syndrome’ which causes them to be intolerant of errors, the ability to criticize others for their wrongdoing and to point out their mistakes and fault with enthusiasm and diligence,” (*Tapchhak Theory* 9).

H. Laldinmawia also said that, “In the Mizo mind, criticism is essentially the skillfull pointing out errors and the adroit condemnation of it,” and stated that it is not the sole purpose of criticism, “Criticism is not solely the pointing out of errors but an addition of value using commentary,” (*Literature Lamtluang* 318).

Using fault-finding as a principle and using criticism for criticism’s sake is a major drawback because of which Painter wrote, “Criticism does not end with the discovery of fault but of the truth,” (*Thu leh Hla Thlitfimna lam* 17) and Addison wrote, “A true critic must not dwell in the imperfect writing of others but rather in the merit and value of it,” (*Literature Kawngpui* 360).

Hence, it is crucial that instead of limiting ourselves to fault-finding or mere praise, it must implement criticism as a means of unearthing the truth using prudent decisions. Therefore, according to John Dryden, "They wholly mistake the nature of criticism who think its business is principally to find fault," (Mundhra & Agarwal, 5) not knowing that criticism based solely on fault-finding is nothing short of petty; this usually entails the strong desire to gleefully expose whatever fault is found with no scope for improvement whatsoever.

In focusing on fault-finding over the crucial functions of criticism- judgment, interpretation and evaluation- to examine the merits and demerits or defects of a work of art and finally to evaluate its worth and make a sound judgement to enlightens and stimulates the author and readers, they create a chamber ending at praises and criticisms, thus becoming in

themselves a large barrier against progress. The function of criticism is not to identify fault, as the layperson assumes. Its purpose is not to find flaws in a given work of literature, but constructive criticism can identify possibilities for improvement. Indiscriminate praise is as detrimental as indiscriminate criticism. Rather, criticism is the discipline of generating and expressing accurate judgements about the value and merit of works of literature. Only critique allows for informed appreciation and clear understanding. Fault-finding is not the end of literary criticism, but truth. The critic should try to discover and make known whatever is commendable and excellent more than a censor or caviller. At its best, criticism is not biased or vitiated by prejudice, ignorance or self-interest; but proceedings according to well-defined principles which it reaches its ultimate conclusion of sound judgement.

When T.S. Eliot wrote "Function of Criticism," he stated that, "Critics must always profess an end in view, which, roughly speaking, appears to be the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste," (*Eliot's Three Essays* 71) thus asserting that criticism should not end at profession of taste alone. "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry" as stated by TS Eliot in his "Tradition and Individual Talent," to avoid pseudo-function and mal-function of literary criticism, we have to acquire adequate knowledge about the true nature and true functions of literary criticism.

The research finds that 'Fallacy of ad hominem' remains a large barrier against the development of Mizo literary criticism. 'Fallacy of ad hominem' is a focus on the writer as opposed to the written work or work of art. This is especially in the case when critics are personally attacked for their critiques rather than weighing their observations. The fallacy of ad hominem is nothing new in Mizo literary history, and it may be accurate to say that it is committed by both critics and writers alike. This habit of targeting an individual's inadequacy instead of judging the art independently leads us into mindless debate rather than on the path of development.

It was for no other reason that J.F Laldailova himself write, "It was a senseless thing to criticise our European missionaries. If it were not for the love of my people and their future, I would have had enough of my share of admirers and rather spent the remainder of my time brooding on a good epitaph," (*Bible Thlirna* 7). This was a result of a comment in his own newsletter targeted towards him which read: "That your JF. Laldailova dared to criticize the European missionaries in such a manner seems only to be the sentimental effect of his liquor," (9). Rather than meditating on the reason behind his criticism or the accuracy

of it, their main motive seem to have been in Laldailova himself! Naturally, even as he tried his best to, “Stitch up the torn trousers of the European missionaries lest the younger generations come to spot them,” their staunch supporters, rather than considering the accuracy of JF’s writings accused him from all angles, claiming that, “Their trousers are not torn; they are but the imaginations of a man drowning in liquor,” (10). However, Laldailova tightened his fists and re-established his position by writing, “Why do I only criticize the songsters that lean towards the church? Not because they are members of the church but because of the errors in their language; this is widely known. Do they believe that I, who so much fears that people will disregard my opinions, would be bold enough to constantly criticize the dormant truth only to humiliate myself?” (214)

The most important thing then is that when critics study written work and criticize the imperfection and shortcomings, it is wrong and counter-intuitive to strike back personally rather than considering if the accuracy of their criticisms. Once our literature has entered into the public domain, writers should remember that whatever critics may say, they should be taken with a grain of salt and a sound mind regardless of whether the remarks are positive or otherwise.

Laltluangliana Khiantge states the condition and room for improvement on this regard; “It seems that among us Mizo, the criticism of writings and lyrics is often seen as antagonism. It would be wrong to use it as a means to instil personal hatred and the denegation of each other’s work. Literary criticism is not a tool for hatred and enmity. Everyone has opinions on the system of literature and along those lines preferences and differences in taste. We criticize due to differences in what we consider the right path to a theme or the points of stress due to differences in thoughts and imaginations,” (*Mizo Thuziak Thlan Chhuahte* 94-95). The expression of opinion and taste does not necessarily entail the devastation of another’s crop or the deliberate destruction of anyone. Literary criticism should be used as a means to learn how to mutually inspect systems of writing and lyrics. It would be most helpful to use it as a way to correct mistakes of imperfect artists and to gauge one’s own condition.

It is improper for a critic to include *ad hominem* attacks and other trivial details when one can simply inspect, dissect and criticise while suggesting constructive ways to improve the original work. We should abstain from trying to force a connection between the writer and his work remembering that they are two different entities and abstain from criticism

loaded with *ad hominem* remarks as such criticisms can undeniably be offensive for the recipient. Be it the work of an alcoholic, an addict or a church elder, irrespective of his education and status, the written work should be criticized independent of the writer and without bias in order to bring out its true worth. Once any piece of work, especially of literary works, enters the public domain it is open to criticism, both positive and negative and should not lead to critics being threatened or vilified to no longer write reviews as that would make it an anti-progressive element for writers and critics alike. To be fair, it is also equally unprofessional for critics to commit *ad hominem* fallacy instead of sticking to the work of art in question. Critics too should be aware that critiques rife with cheap shots towards the creators are inherently offensive and that the piece of work should be treated separate from the source to the farthest extent in order to be professionally objective.

Therefore, the writer writes what he sees and knows as he does while the reader delves into those words with curiosity so that he may point out the shortcomings and possibilities for improvement, criticizing and commending where necessary, and finally publicizing what he deems will be of utility to the public. Such an organized series of critique and praise, as is deserved, will put the writer and his work on a pedestal and in turn will empower and motivate the writer to produce more work of ideally better quality. Others too, as witnesses to such beautiful work of literature will in turn be inspired to invest effort and time into creating something similar. The writer plants, the critic waters and weeds the plant and the cooperation between the two gives birth to the tree of literature which forms branches, fruits and sweet nectar for the readers. As TS Eliot rightly said in his *Function of Criticism* that he maintain even that the criticism employed by a trained and skill writer on his own work is the most vital, the highest kind of criticism. Criticism, being the cornerstone, the giver of water and soil to the tree of literature, should therefore be free from pseudo-function and the *ad hominem* fallacy so that literature may take its roots and grow its branches.

The research shows that progress in the theory of literary criticism goes hand-in-hand with progress in criticism of Mizo literature, it is vital that we make more ventures into the study of various literary theories and their utility. Literary theories provide structured frameworks for analysing and interpreting literary texts and offer different lenses through which literary works can be understood, allowing for a more nuanced and comprehensive assessment. Literary theories offer critics a set of tools and methods to examine literature from various angles- historical, cultural, thematic etc. perspectives and help critics explore

different critical perspectives like feminist, postcolonial, marxist and more. This diversity of viewpoints allow for a more comprehensive understanding of literature and leads to Mizo literary criticism a more comprehensive and vibrant literary landscape. By employing literary theories, critics can delve deeper into Mizo literary works, fostering a more profound appreciation of the artistry involved, and enables Mizo literary critics to engage in dialogues with the wider literary world and gain insights from diverse literary traditions. Many literary theories draw from other disciplines such as psychology, sociology and anthropology. Integrating these insights into Mizo literary criticism can lead to richer and more multifaceted interpretations of Mizo literature.

Literary works would have both literal and super literal meanings. The super-literal meaning of a literary text is its ideological implication, which criticism seeks to resolve. Literary theories can help to resolve the issue that literary texts have created. So, literary theories are intended to assess and evaluate literary works in order to expose their in-depth consequences. Hence, literary theory and criticism are unavoidable components of literature studies, with the goal of explaining, entertaining, stimulating, and challenging students. A deeper study of the developments in literary criticism in the early 21st Century will show that it is a result of the practical use of literary theories, especially contemporary ones, on our own literature. Therefore, literary theory plays a vital role in deepening the understanding and appreciation of Mizo literature, it enriches Mizo literary criticism by providing analytical tools, critical perspectives, and a broader intellectual framework. It enhances and fostering the depth and breadth of critical discourse contributing to its development. So, we must give for effort to actually learning the theories and their application which is essential for the development and appreciation of Mizo literature and will automatically drive positive progress in literary criticism.

The research find that it is a challenge for Mizo literary criticism that the traditional view of the author as the sole authority on the interpretation of a text should shift to focus more on the literary text itself as proposed by Roland Barthes in his essay “Death of the Author”. The essay is an influential text in the field of literary theory and criticism. Its ideas are relevant for the development of Mizo literary criticism in Mizo literature.

Barthes’ essay challenges the traditional emphasis on the author’s intentions and biography in interpreting literary works. This shift of critical approach can encourages Mizo literary critics to prioritize the text’s inherent meaning and cultural context over authorial

intent. But it appears more and more necessary in modern literary criticism to adopt a more varied approach, in which the reader-critic relationship enriches the original text with the input of each person's unique perceptions. As a result, the main text becomes more valuable due to its increased accessibility for additional interpretation. By encouraging inclusive and varied interpretations of Mizo literature, this transparency can enhance Mizo literary criticism.

In literature, meaning is not something that must be found once and translated exactly; rather, it develops on its own through the reader's active engagement with a work and is then shared by the critic. According to this point of view, the author no longer has the main role after the material is published. The reader and the critic are left to interpret this from a variety of perspectives. In the contemporary literary world as well as among readers in general, the role of the literary critic is one that cannot be denied. Literary criticism frees the reader from the constraints of the author's original intentions and enables them to engage in a variety of interpretations of a piece. This supports a fresh and improved approach to literature; a work of writing is no longer constrained because the critic fosters an infinite number of interpretations for the written word. This concept can foster a more independent and democratic literary discourse by enabling Mizo critics and academics to examine and critique Mizo literary pieces without being unduly influenced by the author.

Barthes's "Death of the Author" encourages interdisciplinary analysis by looking beyond the author's biography that can enable Mizo literary critics to draw connections between literature and other fields of subjects, enriching their interpretations. It also encourages a shift in focus from the author to the text, potentially leading to a deeper understanding of Mizo literary works. Therefore, it can be important and relevant for the development of Mizo literary criticism by challenging established notions of authorship, empowering readers and writers, fostering intertextual exploration and promoting a more contextually aware and diverse approach to the interpretation of Mizo literature.

The research shows that for the development of Mizo literary criticism, the contributions of major critics like Zikpuii-pa, Siamkima Khawlhring, JF Laldailova, Laltluangliana Khiantge, B.Lalthangliaba, RL Thanmawia, L.Keivom, Darchuailova Renthlei and KC Vannghaka and minor critics like J.Malsawma (Thanpuii pa), Sangliana, C.Thuamluaia, Peter Lianhleia, C.Lalsiamthanga and others are equally important; although there are significant differences in their contributions regarding a number of quality and

quantity. The contributions of minor critics bring to the origin and Emergence of Mizo literary criticism and, the contributions of major critics bring to the Awakening and Enlightenment in Mizo literary criticism. Both major and minor Mizo literary critics are essential for the growth and development of Mizo literary criticism, and collectively contributing a rich and multifaceted discourse on Mizo literature. Therefore, their critical works and deeds are great and cannot be forgotten in the history of Mizo literature. As the poem says, “Little drops of water,/Little grains of sand,/Make the mighty ocean/And the pleasant land,” the combination of minor critics and major critics' works has contributed to the development of Mizo literary criticism.

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**ABSTRACT**

**A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIZO LITERARY  
CRITICISM**

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**MZU REGISTRATION: 3089 of 2010-11**

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**DEPARTMENT OF MIZO  
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**JUNE, 2025**

A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIZO LITERARY  
CRITICISM

By  
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Submitted  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Mizo of Mizoram University, Aizawl

# A Study of the Development of Mizo Literary Criticism

## (Abstract)

‘A Study of the Development of Mizo Literary Criticism’ is a historiographical study of Mizo literary criticism. The main focus in the research is the historical development of Mizo literary criticism from its inception till the early decades of twentieth first century. The study covers over the past hundred years (from 1911 to 2011) of Mizo literary criticism. For the convenient of the research and based on the research findings, the developmental stages of Mizo literary criticism are divided into three periods namely- Emergence period 1911-1950; Awakening period 1951-1990 and Enlightening period 1991-2011. This classification and division of developmental stages in Mizo literary criticism is the first attempt made in the history of Mizo literature.

A brief survey on the origin and development of Mizo literature shows that the early Mizo writers were mostly interested in creative writings and their contributions were mostly in the areas of translations, adaptations and creative writings whereas criticism which is an area of critical activity was not given much attention due to the fact that they are not critical, but in Mizo literature, as it is in other literature, criticism was a late birth of the literary spirit as well. Many attempts were made to introduce literary criticism into Mizo literature during the first half of the twentieth century by Mizo writers through various forms of essays, articles, prefaces, and book reviews. The early critical texts are important for the emergence of Mizo literary criticism. The contributions made by critics during the emergency period are fragment and scattered and also less in numbers. And the critics during the emergence period are called minor critics. Then, the contributions made by critics during awakening period and enlightening period are much in numbers and more meaningful. Therefore, the critics are also called major critics. So, the contributions made by minor and major critics for the development of Mizo literary criticism are studied in this thesis.

### Chapter 1: Introduction

Literary criticism involves the studying, defining, analysing, classifying, interpreting and evaluating the works of literature. Literature and literary criticism are

going hand in hand; they cannot be separated from each other. Literature and criticism co-exist.

The word criticism has been derived from the Greek word “*Kritikos*” which means ‘able to discern and judge’ and whoever does the act of judging is called a critic. The English word ‘criticism’ comes from the French *Critique* (analysis and assessment) around the fourteenth century and the word ‘criticism’ first made its appearance in English in the early seventeenth century by John Dryden in the now accepted sense of “any formal discussion of imaginative literature”. In the preface to *The State of Innocence* he writes, “Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well,” (*History and Principles* 1). Literary criticism includes commentary, appreciation, appraisal analysis, critique, evaluation, assessment, judgement and it becomes “the branch of study concerned with defining, classifying, expounding, analysing, interpreting and evaluating works of literature,” (*A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 37).

The history of literary criticism runs parallel to the history of literature; thus, it has a long history that can be traced back to ancient Greek literature. To grasp the historical development of literary criticism, a brief survey of Classical literary criticism and English literary criticism is conducted in this chapter.

When the origin and development of Mizo literature was traced the literature of Mizo till the late nineteenth century, before the coming of the Christian missionaries, was mostly oral literature. Before the advent of Christianity and the *Zosap* missionaries, the beginning of the Mizo written literature was initiated with the works and publications of Thangliana (TH Lewin)’s *Progressive Colloquial Exercise in the Lushai Dialect of ‘Dzo’ or Kuki Language, with Vocabularies and Popular Tales* in the year 1874 (*History of Mizo Literature*, 82). Therefore, “it seems that this book is the first ever written document on the Lushai (Mizo) language” and also “claim the existence of any Mizo literature prior to that year, i.e.1874” (*Writings in Mizo Manuscripts* 2).

Then, “the subsequent literary works done by Christian missionaries ushered in the growth and development of Mizo language and literature,” (*Mizo Language and Literature: Emergence and Development* 129). Most of the publications and literary works done by the *Zosap* missionaries were related to the religious teaching like Christian literature and educational purpose like textbooks. They could produce a number of literary works within a short period of times that paved the way for the development of Mizo literature in written form. From a humble beginning, the literary works of the *Zosap* missionaries greatly helped the Mizo language and literature to flourish; and the Mizo

literature over the years witnessed a steady growth with a hard work, commitment and dedication rendered by the *Zosap* missionaries.

From the turn of the twentieth century, the early Mizo literates and man of letters like Thanga, R.Dala, Vanchhunga, Liangkhaia and many more contributed an important literary works. The first Mizo novel *Hawilopari*, written by L.Biakliana appeared in the year 1936. Biakliana also wrote the Mizo first short story *Lali* in 1937. Novelists like Kaphleia, Lalzuithanga Capt.C.Khuma and C.Thuamluaia also appeared during 1940-'50s. The dramatists and playwrights like Ch.Pasena, Lalkailuia, Chawngzika, Lalzuithanga, Lalhmuaka, Lalthangfala Sailo, Khawlkungi, James Dokhuma, H. Lalsiama, K.Saibela, Liansailova and Laltluangliana Kiangte made a good and significant contributions to the development of Mizo drama from the 'budding period' to the 'flowering period' (*Mizo Drama* 32). In the works of prose writings like essay and other critical writings, Kaphleia, C.Thuamluaia, Zikpuii pa, J.Malsawma, J.F. Laldailova, Siamkima Khawlhing, Dengchhuana, R.Zuala, Darchhawna, L.Keivom, R.L. Thanmawia, Laltluangliana Kiangte and other younger generations have contributed a great deal to the field till today. Several poets and song writers like Patea, CZ Huala, Lalmama, Liandala. Chhuana, Vankhama, Rokunga, L. Biakliana, Kaphleia, Lalzuithanga, Laltanpuia, V.Hawla, PS Chawngthu, Nuchhungi and others contributed to the enrichment of Mizo poetry during 1920s to 1950s.

The development of Mizo literature attains greater height in maturity from its infant stage, maintain its steady and considerable growth with a new and younger generation of more and more Mizo writers who immensely contributed towards the development of Mizo literature.

## Chapter 2: Emergence Period in Mizo Literary Criticism

The faint beginning of critical activities and critical writings in Mizo literature appeared scattered in various forms of essays, articles, prefaces, introductions and appreciation to newspapers, literary journals, and magazines. A remarkable thing is that literary criticism emerged from the study of poetry.

Mizo literary criticism had its origin in Mizo poetry like ancient Greek literary criticism had its origin in Greek poetry. The critical observation of poetry was the earliest critical activity that was seen in Mizo literature. It may be said that, like the critical

observation and judgment of Greek poetry by Plato and Aristotle, the first critical consideration of Mizo poetry was also the beginning of literary criticism in Mizo literature. *Puma Zai* (Puma Singing or Puma Songs) played a significant role in the origin of Mizo literary criticism. The early critical considerations and critical activity that was found in written text was on the subject of *Puma Zai*. According to R.L. Thanmawia, “*Puma Zai* displayed by the Mizos was purely secular in nature (...) It is important to note that many poetical forms developed out of *Puma Zai*,” (*Mizo Poetry* 99).

In 1911, three articles on *Puma zai* were published in “Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu”. Those articles were the early critical writing found in written/printed text in the form of argument, debate and discourse on the subject of *Puma zai*. In 1914, R. Dala wrote an article entitled “Mizo Hla” (Mizo Songs) in “Kristian Tlangau”, a monthly magazine. This article is destructive in nature; the condemnation and rejection of Mizo songs and poetry. A close reading of this article shows that it is as bold as Plato’s rejection of the Greek poets and poetry of his day.

As Phillip Sidney pleaded in his *Apologie* “all learning and all culture begin with poetry; and speak through the lips of poetry” (Lisa Roy, 170); Greek literary criticism appeared through and following subsequent to the writings of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Aristophanes. Similarly, it has been observed that in Mizo literature, literary criticism appeared and developed subsequent to those early critical writings too. Consequently, it may be said that the origin of Mizo literary criticism began in the year 1911.

During the Emergence period, the main concern of the critics and the subject matter of literary criticism is the subject of Mizo poetry, Mizo songs and the Mizo poets as well. The three important literary figures who had notable contributions to criticism during this Emergence period are Sangliana, J.Malsawma (Thanpuii pa) and C.Thuamluaia. Sangliana writes “Poetry” and J.Malsawma writes “Poetry Hi Enge Ni?” (What is Poetry?). These two articles/essays strongly advocated the importance of poetry in Mizo and elaborated many aspects concerning poetry from a literature point of view. An insightful critical writings of C. Thuamluaia during 1950s are an important critical texts during this period. The critical writings of C.Thuamluaia like “Kan Nun Khuarei An Chang Tur Hi” (Our Life will come to Lingering Memories) and “Hmanlai Mizo Hla” (The Mizo Old Songs) are worth mentioning.

All these critical works during this period are significant for paving the way for the Awakening period in Mizo Literary Criticism.



### Chapter 3: Awakening Period in Mizo Literary Criticism

Awakening period in Mizo literary criticism was a pivotal phase that laid the foundation for the continued growth and development of Mizo literature, critics started examining Mizo literature in a more systematic and scholarly manner in their writings, and notable figures and works emerged during this time, shaping the trajectory of Mizo literary criticism.

During this period, Mizo literary critics began to incorporate a wider range of critical approaches to analyse and interpret Mizo literature in more nuanced ways, contributing to the development and enrichment of Mizo literary criticism. There were three important key figures that led to this Awakening period namely- Zikpuii-pa, J.F. Laldailova and Siamkima Khawhling.

Zikpuii-pa shows his critical insights on Mizo poetry in his “Lushai Literature” in 1954. This essay is all about the historical approach of Mizo Poetry before pre-colonialization. This Historical approach of Mizo Literature with special reference to olden Mizo poetry is one of the first Mizo Literary criticism pieces. The importance of the essay is that it is the first attempt to systematic and analytical study of Mizo poetry. His others critical works includes “Pu Rokunga Thlirna”, “Awithangpa Tan Thu Kam khat”, “Zosaphara Hla”, “Kan Mizia leh Insawiseln”, “Literature Ṭha”, “Bible, Literature Hmanrawpui”, “Liangkhaia: Thu leh Hlaa Mi ropui” and many more. His contributions to the field of Mizo literature made the development of Mizo literary criticism.

The language critic J.F. Laldailova contributed to Mizo literary criticism through Linguistic criticism. His scattered and fragmented works are compiled in six books, viz- *Bible Thlirna*, concerns about the wrong usages in Mizo Bible and *Kristian Hla Bu* (Mizo hymnal song book); *J.F.Laldailova Thu Ngaihnaawm Bu*, contains interesting eleven articles and J.F.Laldailova’s “Editorial” during his serves as Editor at “*Thu leh Hla*” journal; the compilation of ‘Literary Debate on Zosaphara Hla’ in *Zosaphara*; and *Lurhpui Dingdi*, contains articles on Biblical and language criticism written by J.F. Laldailova. L.Keivom rightly said that during times of troubles and hardship that human had faced, God made someone ‘genius’ to save from their trouble and “J.F. Laldailova is among one of the God’s ‘chosen vessel’ to bring salvation for Mizo Language,” (*L.Keivom Thukhawchang*, 101).

Siamkima Khawlhiring has had a great impact and significant influence on Mizo literature through his insightful critical writings. His anthology of critical and creative essays in *Zalenna Ram* is one of the best literary criticism books that Mizo literature has had so far. Preface to *Zalenna Ram* is a brief introduction and an overview of the development of Literary Criticism from ancient Greek Literary Criticism, Aristotle's *Poetics* to English Literary Criticism. The goal of his book *Zalenna Ram* was clearly stated by Siamkima like that "The aim and objectives of the author of this book *Zalenna Ram* are to widen the scope and view of Mizo world view, and to introduce literary criticism in our own language through this book," (29).

The contributions of Zikpuii-pa, J.F. Laldailova and Siamkima Khawlhiring during this period had a great influence and praised their critical works for the development of Mizo literary criticism. Hence, due to their contributions to Mizo literary criticism, the criticism of Mizo literature became prospers and meaningful. Their works and contributions to Mizo literary criticism were epoch-making which brought a new period called the Awakening in the history and development of Mizo literary criticism.

#### Chapter 4: Enlightening Period in Mizo Literary Criticism

The period from 1991 to 2011 is a dynamic and transformative era for Mizo literary criticism, marked by significant developments and changes in the field through the adoption of new critical perspectives and a growing engagement with global literary and critical trends. Therefore, between 1991 and 2011, Mizo literary criticism reached an era of Enlightening period because the period is fruitful and developed in the history of Mizo literary criticism. A more detailed and systematic study of literature has become more prevalent during this period. Not only in magazines and journals but also in book form, criticism is becoming increasingly popular in compare to other period, while literary journals and magazines still play a crucial role in promoting Mizo literary criticism. They provided a platform for scholars and critics to publish their essays and reviews.

During this period, new voices and writers emerged in Mizo literary criticism. Younger scholars and critics started contributing to the field, bringing in fresh perspectives and new ideas adopted from Western theories. Mizo literary critics began to incorporate a wider range of critical theories and approaches, and began to engage with and apply

contemporary literary theories to analyse and interpret Mizo literature in more nuanced ways, contributing to the development and enrichment of Mizo literary criticism.

The major critics and their works that contributed to the development of Mizo literary criticism during the Enlightening period are- Laltluangliana Khiangte, B. Lalthangliana, RL Thanmawia, L. Keivom, Darchuailova Renthlei, C.Lalsiamthanga and KC Vannghaka.

For his contribution to the Mizo language and literature and his contributions to the varied fields, Laltluangliana Khiangte is an important critic during this period. An important critical works and contributions of Laltluangliana Khiangte as a scholar-critic of Mizo language and literature in a book form are *Thupui Zirbingte*, *Thupui Pawimawh Pali*, *Lehkhabu Ramtiam*, *Mizo Drama-Origin, Development and Themes*, *Thuhlaril*, *Mizo Thuziak Thlan Chhuahte*, *Mizo Hlahril Thlan Chhuahte*, *Zalenpar-1*, *Mizo Hla leh Chhamhlate*, *Thu leh Hla Thlitfimna Lam* and many more.

Literary historian and biographical literary critic, B.Lalthangliana published a number of criticism books like *Ka Lungkham (Introduction to Mizo Literature)*, *Mizo Literature*, *Chawnpui*, *Zotui*, *Sem Sem Dam Dam*, *Pi Pu Zun Zam*, *Mizo Hla leh A Phuahtute etc* and a biographical critical observation on the works of Mizo literary giants like Kaphleia, C.Thuamluaia, Zikpuii-pa, Rokunga, Zosapthara, Capt.C.Khuma, Zairema etc.

Poet-critic R.L. Thanmawia also contributed a number of critical works in book form like *Mizo Poetry*, *Chuailo 1*, *Chuailo 2*, *Chuailo 3*, *Chuailo 4*, *Lung Min Lentu*. His contributions in the field of literary criticism are an important critical works for the development of Mizo literary criticism.

L. Keivom (Lalthlamuong Keivom) published a number of books in Mizo and Hmar languages. His *Zoram Khawvel* enriched the worldview of Mizo and developed Mizo's literary criticism through his critical writings. His important critical works published in book form are *Zoram Khawvel 2*, *Zoram Khawvel 3*, *Zoram Khawvel 4*, *Pherzawl Titi*.

Darchuailova Renthlei contributed in the field of poetry, drama and linguistic criticism. His critical works published in book form are *Zawlpala Thlan Tlangah Chhuizauna*, *Vankhama Hlate*, *Lecture on Drama*, *An Chul Lo*, *Tlang Thawveng etc*.

The contribution of C.Lalsiamthanga is important because his insightful views and practice of juxtaposing his reading of Mizo writings with those of other literatures have

contributed meaningfully to bringing in other critical perceptions and interpretations as well.

K.C. Vannghaka contributed to the development of Mizo literary criticism through his published works like *Literature Kawngpui*, *Literature Zungzam*, *Literature Zun Leng*, *Influence of Christianity in Mizo Fiction*, etc.

In the area of critical discourse, the writings of all these major critics, who have contributed meaningfully to the field of Mizo literary studies and criticism with their publications, brought an Enlightening period in Mizo literary criticism.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Even though literary criticism was introduced early in Mizo literature, its subsequent development was gradual and it still has a lot of room to grow. A study of the development of Mizo literary criticism over the past hundred years (1911-2011) reveals that Mizo literary criticism has come a long way since its inception and continues to develop; it is apparent that literary criticism is the Achilles' heel in Mizo literature. Literary criticism has made moderate growth in comparison to other literary genres such as poetry, drama, novels, and other forms of creative writings.

The field of Mizo literary criticism faces several challenges that need to be addressed in order to promote a more robust and inclusive critical discourse around Mizo literature. There are inadequate forums or platforms existing for literary critics to exchange ideas and engage in constructive debates about the interpretation and analysis of literary texts in Mizo literary criticism. Without critical discourse and debates, literary ideas and styles may become stagnant. Critical discourse brings diverse perspectives and interpretations to literary works which enrich the understanding of literary texts. So, fostering a culture of literary criticism, promoting literary workshops and seminars, and encourages scholars to engage in critical analysis, Mizo literary criticism has developed and continued to evolve, with a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches and a broader engagement with global literary theories and it makes growing interest in writing a strong theoretical framework and conceptual apparatus in Mizo literary criticism.

The research finds that major obstacle against the development of literary criticism is the misconception of its nature and essence of literary criticism. This misconception is also known as the pseudo-function of literary criticism, one example being the assumption

that the sole purpose of literary criticism is fault-finding. Therefore, according to John Dryden, "They wholly mistake the nature of criticism who think its business is principally to find fault," (Mundhra & Agarwal, 5); this usually entails the strong desire to gleefully expose whatever fault is found with no scope for improvement whatsoever. Fault-finding is not the end of literary criticism, but truth and beauty. The critic should try to discover and make known whatever is commendable and excellent rather than censoring or being a caviller. At its best, criticism is not biased or vitiated by prejudice, ignorance or self-interest; but proceedings according to well-defined principles which it reaches its ultimate conclusion of sound judgement. To avoid the pseudo-function and malfunction of literary criticism, the critics must acquire adequate knowledge about the true nature and functions of literary criticism.

The research finds that 'Fallacy of ad hominem' remains a large barrier against the development of Mizo literary criticism. 'Fallacy of ad hominem' is a focus on the writer as opposed to the written work or work of art. This is especially in the case when critics are personally attacked for their critiques rather than weighing their observations. The fallacy of ad hominem is nothing new in Mizo literary history, and it may be accurate to say that it is committed by both critics and writers alike. This habit of targeting an individual's inadequacy instead of judging the art independently leads us into mindless debate rather than on the path of development. Laltluangliana Khiangte states the condition and room for improvement on this regard; "It seems that among the Mizo, the criticism is often seen as antagonism. It would be wrong to use it as a means to instil personal hatred and the denegation of each other's work. Literary criticism is not a tool for hatred and enmity. Everyone has opinions on the system of literature and along those lines preferences and differences in taste. We criticize due to differences in what we consider the right path to a theme or the points of stress due to differences in thoughts and imaginations," (*Mizo Thuziak Thlan Chhuahte* 94-95). Therefore, the writer writes what he sees and knows as he does while the reader/critic delves into those words with curiosity so that he may point out the shortcomings and possibilities for improvement, criticizing and commending where necessary, and finally publicizing what he deems will be of utility to the public.

The research finds that it is a challenge for Mizo literary criticism that the traditional view of the author as the sole authority on the interpretation of a text should shift to focus more on the literary text itself as proposed by Roland Barthes in his essay "Death of the

Author". The essay is an influential text in the field of literary theory and criticism. Its ideas are relevant for the development of Mizo literary criticism in Mizo literature.

Progress in the theory of literary criticism goes hand-in-hand with progress in criticism of Mizo literature. Literary theories provide structured frameworks for analysing and interpreting literary texts and offer different lenses through which literary works can be understood, allowing for a more nuanced and comprehensive assessment. Literary theory and criticism are an unavoidable part of studying literature and aim to explain, entertain, stimulate and challenge students of literature. Therefore, literary theory plays a vital role in deepening the understanding and appreciation of Mizo literature, it enriches Mizo literary criticism by providing analytical tools, critical perspectives, and a broader intellectual framework. It enhances and fosters the depth and breadth of critical discourse contributing to its development. Therefore, it must make efforts to actually learn the theories and their application which is essential for the development and appreciation of Mizo literature and will automatically drive positive progress in literary criticism.

The research shows that for the development of Mizo literary criticism, the contributions of major and minor critics mentioning their names and works from chapter two to four are equally important; although there are significant differences in their contributions with respect to quality and quantity. The contributions of minor critics bring forth the origin and emergence of Mizo literary criticism and, the contributions of major critics bring to the Awakening and Enlightening in Mizo literary criticism. Both major and minor Mizo literary critics are essential to the growth and development of Mizo literary criticism, and collectively contribute to a rich and multifaceted discourse on Mizo literature. Therefore, their critical works and deeds are great and cannot be forgotten in the history of Mizo literature. As the poem says, 'Little drops of water,/Little grains of sand,/Make the mighty ocean/And the pleasant land' the combination of minor critics' and major critics' works has contributed to the development of Mizo literary criticism. As a result, Mizo literature is proud of its advancement and development in the field of literary criticism during the previous century.

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