

Disclosing the Double Discourse of Terror and Tradition of the North-East: A Selective study of Robin S. Ngangom's Poetry

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Abstract

Writing poetry in English from North-East India is relatively a new literature which provides an insight into a region that has a different culture zone in comparison to mainland India. The area is full of multi-ethnic people with multi-layered cultures and customs, trends and traditions, myths and methods of living. The poetry of this area reflects the tradition, multi-ethnicity and diversity of the region. On the other hand, the multi-ethnicity and multi-layered status of this region tend to create a clash amidst peoples on regional and hegemonic cause which brings a tremendous regional challenge – from insurgency to state sponsored terrorism and negligence which also reflect in the poetry. Thus, poetry from the North-east India reflect two opposite worlds – the world of myth and tradition in one hand and the world of terror and bloodshed on the other. These paradoxical representations and double discourse of terror and tradition have been skillfully delineated in his poetry by Shillong based Manipuri poet Robin S. Ngangom. This paper examines the things and thoughts behind the discourses based on the select poetry of the concerned poet.

Keywords: *North-East India, Discourse, Hegemonic, Regional, Terror, Tradition, Robin S. Ngangom.*

Introduction

The Northeastern part of India comprising eight states is characterized by its ethnic, linguistic, literary and cultural diversity which makes the entire Northeast region a homogenously heterogenous. It is homogenous in respect of its geographical location, forests' flora and fauna, indigenous life and lifestyle, the rootedness to the soil and the pristine past of its populace. On the other hand, it is heterogenous in respect of its land, locality and livelihood which is marked as per the variety of ethnicity and ethnic culture, customs, rites, rituals, belief in myth and mythology, language and dialects. The poetry of the poets from this region are heterogenous in nature but homogenous in notion. Poetry may be variant in respect of composition and content but echo the same tone and context of rootedness and rootlessness, the cultural loss and recovery. Thus, Tilottoma Mishra in his "Introduction" of his poetry anthology writes: "An intense sense of awareness of the cultural loss and recovery that came with the negotiation with 'other' cultures is a recurrent feature of the literatures of the seven north-eastern states." (xiii). Along with that, the identity crisis and a sense of alienation are some of the dominant features that make room in the contemporary poetry of India's Northeast raising altogether the voice of anguish and aspirations.

The poets of this peripheral zone who are writing in English and their own regional languages about the 'recurrent feature' and the overall scenario of this region, are hailing from the multifarious ethnic groups representing their land and society. This is why these poets have been called 'ethnic poets' (Guha 119). They are generally known as multi-ethnic poets and their poetry as multi-ethnic poetry. Their poetic credos intend to destabilize the existing images of occasional and dispersed violence and to establish the rich cultural pristine past and tradition. The search for halcyon days thus echoes in *The Strange Affairs of Robin S Ngangom*, where Ngangom writes in lamentation,

Our past, we make believe, is pristine

even as we reaped heads and took slaves. (Ngangom 68).

However, it is for the search of roots and rootedness that these ethnic poets committed in their writings so interconnectedly with the existing intricacies and emergencies that they seek a way out from the unwanted happenings as a part of conflict resolution so that a peace-making process could be resumed with all sorts of dialogues and delegations. The main motto of all that is to recover the lost culture and tradition, replacing the separatist tendencies and terrors that used to be accompanied by it. K. Satchidanandan in his article *Voices from the Hill* writes: "The poets from the north-eastern region have to meet the double challenge of truth and liberty, of identity and unity, of cultural loss and recovery, of ethnic specificity and aesthetic universality." (Frontline online). With the quotation, the addition of the catchwords from this paper title 'disclosing the double discourse of terror and tradition' perfectly matches the sole intention of the poetic outputs from this 'trouble-torn zone'. Again, tracing the root of the trouble and tension, eminent north east poet and critic Ananya S. Guha says: "North East Indian poetry is marked by the kind of tension that generates all great poetry; it may be at one level the poetry of violence, of torpidity and fear but it is also the poetry of searching, soul searching for peace." (Verseville).

Thus, the initiation of disclosing the double discourses of terror and traditions and many other such paradoxical flickering issues take its origins from the practical experiences and naked expositions emerging out directly from the marked tensions and turbulences generated amidst the feverish apocalyptic fragmented moments of eighties and nineties of the past century. The longed negation and neglectful attitude towards this peripheral zone from the center and from the mainstream politics take an abrupt and uncontrolled turn in the cursed eighties and nineties that brought about a drastic change in the socio-political and ethnic lives of the people. In this period, the violence and insurgency as well as secessionist and militant activities reached atop in the region which completely marred the social harmony as well as the co-habited co-existence between peoples from different beliefs and backgrounds. As a result, the community culture, tales and traditions irrespectively received a decaying and deadening effect replacing the glorious pasts and possessions. On the other hand, the violence, bloodshed, insurgencies, counter-insurgencies and all sorts of unrests take a deep intensity with its roots imprinted in all life forms unleashing manifold troubles and traumas around the region thereby transforming the whole region into what Rana Nayar called it in his essay *Poetry from the Troubled Zone* as a hotspot of "troubled zone, 'a seething cauldron' torn by ethnic crisis, economic failures, terrorist violence and mounting claims of regional autonomy and separatism. (Kavya Bharati 125). Besides, the clash of cultures and hegemonic invasion due to massive infiltration since pre-

colonial to post-colonial period led the orientalist in a state of fear and psychosis of being cornered and marginalized. It did more damage to internal ethnic politics and positions only to polarize the populace in different ethnic groups. Some of those groups were actively indulged in extreme militant activities and insurgencies in the name of autonomy and separate body aggravating the internal ethnic clash and conflicts to the top and fueling more on to the demands of separatist and radicalistic ideologies only to secure each ethnic group's identity assertion and their ideologies within the targeted territories of the region. Mishra's observation in his "Introduction" narrates:

The clash of cultures has often led to the loss of traditional forms and the adoption of new cultural icons that threatened the existing ones. While there have been attempts at reviewing and critiquing one's own society and culture in the light of the new ideas that have invaded the region from time to time, yet whenever the xenophobic fear of the 'outsider' has seized a community, a tendency to retreat into the cocoon of cultural isolation has been quite evident." (xiii-xiv).

It is in this backdrop of series of events and the existential precedence of essence that a group of young writers and poets emerged out as a dissenting voice of the situation disclosing the double discourses of terror and traditions and decoding the deformed, distorted version of mal-practices and mal-cultures that so far have been ripping through the region towards deterioration and dismalness. The new poetic lines dedicatedly and deliberately delivering a sort of practical writing driven by a demanding force that hearkens back to the ennobling and refreshing past with the uniformed amalgamation of the present for a certain and certified future. Tilottoma Mishra's line again seems relevant in this regard: "People whose history and civilization had been pushed to the margins... took up the task of re-creating their past and re-inventing tradition so as to represent the present as a stage in the continuous process of marching from the past to the future." (xvii).

However, with the passing of time and with the pressing situation, North East Indian poetry as well as the overall writings from this region started arresting attention to the rest of the nations and mainstream readers, writers, anthologists, publishers altogether by virtue of the poets-writers practical realistic writings with universal theme of oppression and alienation as well as the search for roots and identity assertion that to a large extent goes with practical writings of the Third World hard-edged modernists. The literary circle of poets that originated in Shillong city during the pressing and pessimistic times of the mid-eighty and nineties by a handful of pioneer poets including Robin S Ngangom, have accepted warmly by all and sundry and garnered new interests widely nationally and internationally beyond the region. Their fearless and bold depiction of 'eye of witness' of both terror and traditions in their poetry make them a staunch realist and pragmatist that distinctly differs them from the mainstream poets and their writings. Thus, in the 'Introduction' from the *Anthology of Contemporary Poetry from the North-East*, Ngangom and Nongkynrih write:

The writer from Northeast India, consequently, differs from his counterpart in the mainland in a significant way. While it may not make him a better writer, living with the menace of the gun does not permit him to indulge in verbal wizardry or wooly aesthetics, but is a constant reminder that he must perforce master 'the art of witness'." (NEHU xi).

Though it would be a great opportunity to write in details about the entire North East Indian poets who play active role in constituting the Shillong literary circle and their influence on nation-state politics for restoring normalcy, due to constraint of time and space, this paper will set to focus on only one such influential poet, Robin S Ngangom and his practical writings on the commitments of minimizing terror and maximizing traditional installation in the North East India's overall socio-political scenario.

Robin S Ngangom (1959-) who was born in Imphal, Manipur, is actually a bilingual poet writing in English and in Manipuri dialect, Meitei. It was due to some unwanted happenings in his birthland, Manipur, he comes to reside at the capital city of Meghalaya, Shillong and settled there permanently. He has been living in Shillong from 1980s onwards and teaching in NEHU in English language and literature. In 1988-89 at the tough times and under the pressing need of the hour, the 'Shillong Poetry Circle' was established by Ngangom and his contemporary Desmond L Kharmawplang, along with like-minded poets and writers who include Kynpham S Nongkynrih, Ananya S Guha and Anjum Hasan. These poets write fluently on the themes and motifs of contemporary burning issues and happenings in and around the entire Northeast region. They started publishing a little magazine 'Lyric' after two years of the formation of their literary circle. Their sole purpose was to make awareness to the common people of their rights and legalities and to arouse a sense of unity amid ethnic diversity and through cultural legacy.

Ngangom understands well about the bitter experience of alienation and dissociation as he himself had to face the same in his life when he parted permanently from his homeland, Manipur. Instead, he has a special attraction and dedication for his native birthplace which occasionally finds space in his writings. His moods and expressions swing as per his native place's status and in respect to its goodness or badness. His complaining mode of lamentation features in his autobiographical essay, *Poetry in the Time of Terror* where he writes:

Manipur, my native place in Northeast India, is in a state of anarchy, and my poetry springs from the cruel contradictions of that land. Manipur boasts of its talents in theatre, cinema, dance and sports. But how could you trust your own people, when they entrust corruption, AIDS, terrorism and drugs to their children? (422).

Though it is a fact that Ngangom starts his career in his teens by writing poetry about "the gentle hills and folk traditions of yore" (52) which by tone and form follow the English romantic traditions of lyricism and aestheticism. But over the years, the real scenes of brutality and insurgency that continue to exist in the region only to deteriorate and damage things with more intensity and leave a bizarre mark of deep scars in everything could not but bring the poet back to stark reality from his trance like state of romanticism. Under these sorry circumstances and surroundings all around, Ngangom driven by an inner force, is bound to write poetry of his homeland and its contemporary issues. He dismissed such romanticism as artless and inoffensive without shocking any sensibilities. Ngangom confesses later in his autobiographical essay *Poetry in a Time of Terror*, stating:

I wrote my first faltering line in the relative innocence of childhood. I was about eleven or twelve years old then and caught as I was in the flush of youth, I wanted to explore the world by writing ornate and sentimental poetry. Since life was ignoring me, I thought I could engage the attention of kindred hearts through friendly and softhearted verse. Naturally, my poems were mostly inspired by romance and adventure stories, especially

The Thousand and One Nights, but it was essentially dreamy-eyed adolescent stuff. I still haven't grown out of it. (422).

Today when any of Ngangom's friends ask him to write poetry in romantic trends, the words of Latin American poet, Pablo Neruda echo with him, "Come and see the blood in the streets." (qtd in Dev and Bhalla 52). With the passing of time and as per the pressing need of the hour, Ngangom's poetry becomes 'an outlet of pent-up feelings and desires.' (423). He could no longer remain in his ivory tower of airy thoughts and throngs but becomes an active observer of the daily affairs and occurrence linked with the common peoples and their reactions. These all serve as the important tools and subject matters of his poetry along with his contemporary counterparts. Preeti Gill writes while discussing about the contemporary Northeast writers, "Having grown up in a shadow of the gun, their desire to analyze the common peoples' reactions to insurgency is as strong as ever." (Wikipedia, Literature from Northeast India).

It is due to the reactionary response from the common peoples of the entire region against the existing violence and terror and for the restorations of rich traditional pasts that Ngangom depicts in his poetry which in turn arouses a sense of awareness about their ancestral traditional cultures and heritage that have been facing random exploitation almost to the extinction by the ongoing destructive damages and devours. The lamentation and angst of common peoples generalize in the last lines of his *Poem for Samir* where he says,

I come from a country where they took our past and
returned them as terrible dreams. (Ngangom 34).

Almost all the poetry of Ngangom in some ways or others delineates with the theme and reflection of declining past in comparison to the dreadful and dwindling present. The recollections of the region's illuminating bygone days which left an enriching legacy to the historical, anthropological records thereby enriching the traditional and cultural reservoir help to knit a binding grip to the respective ethnic communities for their roots from generation to generation. A sea difference and dissimilarity are painfully felt when comparing and reckoning the 'get and lost' perspectives. The intermediary internal conflicts and clashes for numerous issues related to power and politics totally shaken and shattered the pattern of thoughts and understandings. So has been done to the social structure also. At the end, when realization and self-explanation occur in nerves and sensory organs, it is found that an uncompensatory 'loss' is experienced in respect of almost nothing 'gain'. The poets-writers now seem to be taking charge in reviving and relocating the 'lost' spirits amidst the disorders and dismality. The oral ancestral folk traditions and folktales and other boosting ingredients seem to be making inspiration to the poets-writers in this regard. Thus, poetry from India's Northeast reflects two opposite worlds – the world of myths and traditions in one hand and the world of terror and bloodshed on the other. Shillong based Manipuri poet Robin S Ngangom very judiciously and skillfully applies these paradoxical worlds in his poetry. While talking and writing with the harsh issues of the region like insurgency, militancy, violence, unrests, curfew, corruption, military torture and the overall terror and turbulence as well as ethno-political turmoil and troubles, his poetry also reveals his love and longing for his homeland, its culture and tradition – past and present, myth and legends, folklore and folktales. The synonymous depiction of both terror and tradition, traumas and transition in one breath about his homeland and the homely affairs is what make him a poet of staunch realist-sensitivist. Rajlakshmi Bhattacharaya in her review article about

Northeast poetry in the twentieth century discusses Ngangom's evolution as a poet and analyses his poetic credo under the light of his pragmatist approaches. She mentions Ngangom's reaction to contemporary Manipuri poetry from his autobiographical essay *Poetry in a Time of Terror* where Ngangom plainly comments that it has a preponderance of bullets and he is surprised to see the young poets of the region talk of "blood, bullets and flowers all in the same breath." (The Telegraph, Sep 19, 2003). But Ngangom eventually justifies the stand of the poets in choosing to write about the 'gun and bullets' rather than the 'breath-taking landscape and the sinuous dance' (qtd. in Sanjeeda Aheibam 110) saying that it is all pervasiveness and prevalence of violence and vehemence in everyday lives in the society that a poet cannot but depict the grim pictures of mayhem and mindless acts in their poetry. The condition is so traumatic and tensioned that 'red remains a favourite colour with the new generation of writers.' (Rajlakshmi). In the case of Robin S Ngangom and his poetic styles, he deals with the contemporary subject matters of both his native land, Manipur and his invented land, Shillong from where he observes the entire scenario of the Northeast and writes profusely only to cast a reformatory, recreational-revival spell on life and society. While talking about his Manipuri connection and his responses to the concurrence of events from the same, Rajlakshmi again says:

When life for the Manipuri poets gets too oppressive, he takes refuge in self-directed irony, satire and parody. What emerges is a brand of black humour to portray, what Robin calls, "an absurd picture". But it is not as if all poets talk of violence. Some of them tend to explore myths and their own mindscapes. (ibid).

In this connection, Ngangom's poetic style in depicting myth, traditions and his own mindscapes is unique and uniform as well. His uses and applications of satiric devices and oblique narratives in his poetry in narrating and recollecting the 'pristine past' amid the prevalent troubled torn scattered images are explored in such a way that the interface and interpretation of history, polity, anthropology of the entire region – all blend altogether resonating and reverberating the very existential essences of human lives and values in the preceding as well as the practical context and contours. Ngangom intermixes the past with the present and laments for the land's present disjointed and disputed state under the devastating insurgency and militancy. Besides, some corrupt people's black marketeering tendency and mad chase for currency earning in whatsoever means make matters worse which in other way corrupt the 'once prime land' and its legends. Ngangom reiterates the same in his poem *I am Sorry to See Poetry in Chains*.

Once prime land, beneficent and fabled
and now playground of black-marketeers,
haven for future hunters where
none misses a heartbeat
as you feed money, sell honour, peddle justice.
My love, night upsets us however,
heightening the day's fears. (qtd. in Raju Ta 206 'Unmasking Terror...').

Mammon, the god of money is, according to Ngangom, the root cause of all corrupt mal-culture and malpractices in the region. It destroys peace, panorama, patriotism and breaks the past traditional legacy bringing forth only terror and racial enmity. Money seems to play the active role in finalizing things howsoever it opposes the community's sentiment or sanctity or whatever method it applies. The peace-loving community is subjected to accept the distorted and disfigured things under the calculated and tricky strategy of outside force which are intentionally employed only to procure power and possessions and which brings nothing except damages and devastations. Ngangom's resentment is felt in *The Strange Affairs of Robin S Ngangom* where he writes:

With cargoes of sand and mortar

Mammon came to inspect the city.

He cut down the remaining trees

and carried them away

like cadavers for dissection.

Morning papers like watered-down milk

hawk the same bland items:

rape, extortion, ambushes, confessions,

embezzlement, vendetta, sales, disappearances,

Marriages, obituaries, the usual. (69-70).

Again, the mad rush for money and power of 'the enemy of the people' (Strange...70) and the miseries and insecurities of the peace-loving people can be understood through the lines of Ngangom's yet another ironical poem, *Racial Progression*.

here everything is bought and sold

to the highest bidder.

the gunpoint, the hypodermic needle, and currency

notes: these are the only languages we know.

Brothers buy brothers and fathers sell sons as a way of life. (qtd. in Raju Ta, 207).

The same sense reiterates again in *The Strange Affairs of Robin S Ngangom*.

Nothing is certain:

Oil

Lentils

Vegetables

Food for babies

Transport

The outside world.

Even

Fire water and air

Are slowly becoming commodities. (ibid)

Ngangom tries to show through these lines how people under the fabricated impressions of money and power become puppets of external malicious ominous forces and act totally opposite to traditional bindings and benign. He laments man's deviated path of becoming commodities and bringing monopolies remaining oblivious to the glorious past or denying their ancestral rich legacy and legitimacy. Remembering the generations of ancestors and their rich traditions, the poet is worried about the lost heritage. Thus, he says,

What is tradition and our history

But death with a long memory?

For how long will we make

Our forefathers walk as ghosts?

To-day with grief sitting on our hearts.

We will sing of clouds that do not come home;

We will sing the songs of those

Banished in the mountains,

We will drink deep from bamboo mugs

And wipe memory from our lips. (qtd. in N. Das, 111)

Restoration of lost culture and tradition as well as the ramification/assertion of original history and ethnic identity is believed to be the central concern of Ngangom's poetry. At the same time, the rapid replacement of traditions with terror, violence and 'make believe history' from the hitherto peaceful, harmonious and community living with myths, beliefs and their historical legacy, too, seem to be haunting his memory and conscience which nostalgically finds space in his poetry. The displacement and in some cases wiping out of indigenous tribal race and

civilization at the hand of modernization and outsiders' infiltration very painfully get depicted in his poetry which altogether help to arouse a collective consciousness among the peoples for their land and legends. Ngangom resentfully alleged that their history is intentionally distorted and deleted. They are altered and modified for harmful purposes by barbaric forces and hence their placid past obliterates quickly. He states,

When we write make-believe history
with malicious intent,
memory burns on a short fuse. (Strange Affairs...68).

But it does not obstruct Ngangom to ruminate over the glorious past of his land. The sweet old tales and memories thus resonate in one of his poems mentioned in Nigamananda Das's seminal essay *Many Worlds of Robin S. Ngangom*.

Let us only speak of what reached our ears
In Kangleipak once upon a time
the royal beast of Kangla bit his tail
and the land lay snug within his coils
and there was no dearth of mundane things
fish was as cheap and in the fields
ears of rice danced to the rhythm of the soil
From the minstrel's song at the dead of night,
we heard winter yearns of warrior kings,
men who assumed the land and the women no fear,
of mwn with untiring sword-arms
We were sung of extra-terrestrial maidens
descended to earth and lost: *Ingallei* and *Kombirei*
elusive wild flowers, falling before anyone
Could wear them, telling all in destroying love
We destroy ourselves. (qtd. in N. Das 107).

Time and again, Ngangom tries to warn the stakeholders that the paths they have taken could bring nothing but enmity and insurgency which would destroy everything including the coming

generation. His warning and prophecy turn into real when the armed forces and the local militants-insurgents of his homeland, Manipur and some parts of the Northeast region is at its most violent and bloody. The entire region gets shaken and shuttered at the enforcement of cursed AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) at Manipur and parts of the region to curb and counter militancy and insurgency operations. But in reality, it is alleged that it aggravates the situation towards deterioration which brings the reign of terror into every aspect of life and livelihood. Ngangom is sheer against violence throughout his life as he sees closely the stormy aftermaths and havoc of such violence. He addresses these issues in his poetry with fierce passion and moral outrage. His poetic persona transcends his own self and irrespectively of time and space depicts the bitter truth of man's suffering and groaning amid havoc and hostility. At the same time, his inability to do anything solid with immediate effect for them makes him remorseful and repentant. He says ironically:

Not once can I say

I am the captain

behind the wheel of fire. (The Strange Affairs...55)

Ngangom's heart gets heavy and horrified when he sees people stand totally opposite to each other and always daggers down with desperateness. He feels no solace finding himself at the labyrinth of death and devastation all around amid heavy boots and bullets.

When I turn with a heavy heart

towards my burning land,

the hills, woman, scream your name.

Soldiers with black scarves

like mine artists

turn them in seconds into shrouds.

For the trucks carrying

the appliances of death and devastation. (The Strange...69)

Now the newly turned chaotic and cancerous social order with the discomfiting and draconian law seems to unbox all sorts of unrests, disbelief, intolerance and the broken images of society and surroundings. They freshly open up the long-suppressed ethno-racial clash and conflicts and other life complexities which bring about the racial and communal enmity and animosity among the communities. Besides, the civil disobedience movements against the forced imposition of armed forces and their special power to roam freely anywhere at their will in the region and arrest, detain, destroy or kill anyone they suspect, literally impact heavily on life and society which costs heavy toll on them at intervals in the name of death and devastations. In the poem *Native Land*, Ngangom brings forth the crude picture of such entanglements.

First came the scream of the dying
in a bad dream, then the radio report,
and a newspaper: six shot dead, twenty-five
houses razed, sixteen beheaded with hands tied
behind their backs inside a church...
As the days crumbled, and the victors
and their victims grew in number,
I hardened inside my thickening hide,
until I lost my tenuous humanity. (84).

The bitter harvest of violence and terror last long with manifold implications on future generations who, according to the poet, would reap distorted and deviated history and stories of their past as a result of the suspicion and hatred that the present generations have been sowing. He writes in one of his poems quoted in Das's *Many Worlds of robin S Ngangom* about how the discourses of both terror and tradition get entangled and intermixed under the aegis of rampant corruption and convulsion that forcefully converting the generations of groaning men and slaves forgetting all about the lands past heroic deeds and history.

Instead of pages of heroic deeds or undying love,
We read parchments written in blood, our history
stained by illicit love and betrayal;
We found our alphabet buried with the shrunken heads
Of enemies, ghosts who died long ago laughing
at the attempts at civilization.
Just outside the ramparts of the city of arts,
not dances, music or literature
but generations of groaning men and slaves. (107).

The strength of Ngangom's poetry lies in the fact that they are anchored with the roots of his homeland and its traditional past. His poetry repeatedly verbalizing the same. His earnest desire for roots and harkening back to the shadowy past strongly arouses especially at the time of terror and precarity that make him nostalgic as well as patriotic from his inner self and that he feels to be in prison like state unable to move on either side. It disclose his mind's double

discourses of terror and tradition for the time being – one for the sake of tradition and heritage that his heart and soul is inextricably linked with and that hold him fixed in his viewpoint and position reminding him repeatedly his love and liability for his homeland; and the other is for the ongoing terror and fear in his homeland and across the entire North East region that he feels he could never slide away alone or cocooned himself selfishly in a safe zone ignoring all the frontier intricacies and hostilities and making his fellow citizens in utmost trouble and in tragedy. It is out of such love and hatred for both tradition and terror that he helplessly but exhortingly questions,

But where can one run from the homeland,
where can I flee from your love?
They have become pursuing prisons
which hold the man
with criminal words. (The Strange Affairs...73)

To sum up, it needs to be stated that Ngangom focusses particularly on the fact of Northeast poetry being directly connected to the past and plainly statemental to the present irrespectively. He also discloses the distinguishing discourses and the recent traits and trends of the corpus of Northeast poetry writing in English which is actually steeped with a plethora of images and motifs drawn from nature and culture, folklore and folktale, myth and mythology in contrast to the broken and bespattered images of contemporary beleaguered events and fallout of violence. Ngangom, being the represented poet of the entire Northeast India relates and relocates the same in his poetry. Besides, his quest for roots, essentializing for an identity, establishing normalcy and destabilizing all the intricacies and uncertainties in the peripheral Northeast - all set to make his poetry truly autobiographical and unashamedly apologetic, if not confessional. Ngangom himself describes his poetry as “mostly autobiographical, written with the hope of enthusing readers with my communal or carnal life – the life of a politically-discriminated-against, historically-overlooked individual from the nook of a third world country.” (qtd. in Subramaniam). In this case, Ngangom draws inspiration from the practical writing of the pragmatist-realist poets such as Neruda, Lorca, Sefaris, Arghezi, Milosz and other hard-edged modernist poets of the Third World countries. Thus, by birth and by choice, considering the whole North East India as his homeland, Ngangom writes his poetry profusely and painstakingly disclosing the double discourses of terror and tradition of the region and decoding all the troubles in attempting to restore and reinvigorate the past with a long-lasting impact of what Nigamananda Das exactly calls the “social and personal costs of terrorism and violence”. (Muse India).

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