ISSN. 0972-8406

The NEHU Journal

Basil Griffiths
T. J. Joseph
S.N. Singh
Temsula Ao
Desmomd L. Kharmawphlang
Rana Nayar
Krishna Baruah
Esther Syiem
Awadesh K. Mishra

Vol II No 2
July 2004

The NEHU Journal

Editor : **T B Subba**
Associate Editor : **Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih**
Assistant Editor : **Bedarius Shylla**

Editorial Board Members

Mr. Jayanta Mahapatra, Editor, *Chandrabhaga*, Cuttack.
Prof. K. Satchidanandan, Secretary, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi.
Dr. Sreenivasan, Editor, *Journal of Literature and Aesthetics*, Kollam.
Prof. A.C. Bhagabati, Guwahati.
Prof. Sanjib Baruah, Bard College, New York.
Dr. Anindita Dasgupta, Managing Editor, *Journal of Peace and Democracy in South Asia*, Kualalumpur.
Dr. Phillipe Ramirez, National Centre for Scientific Research, Paris.
Dr. Stuart Blackburn, School of Oriental and African Studies, London.
Prof. Mahadev Chakravorty, Tripura University, Agartala.
Prof. Virginius Xaxa, Delhi University, Delhi.

The NEHU Journal is published bi-annually (January-July) by the North-Eastern Hill University Publications, Shillong. The focus of the journal is on India's Northeast and countries bordering it. Articles on other areas are also welcome. Contributors are advised to consult notes at the back.

The NEHU Publications reserves the copyright to all articles, communications and book reviews published and no article/ communication/review or a part thereof may be reprinted without written permission from the Editor.

All correspondence related to the journal may be addressed to the Editor, NEHU Publications, Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003 or at tbsubba@sancharnet.in.

Production Assistants : Surajit Dutta & Binod Rynjah
Layout and Design : Shongdor Diengdoh

The NEHU Journal

Vol.II, No. 2, July 2004

NEHU

Editorial

I begin this editorial with an apology for the delay in getting the present issue out. Actually it was not planned to be a literature issue, as it has turned out to be, courtesy the hard work put behind it by the Associate Editor. It was meant to be a social science issue that somehow could not happen, though not the least for lack of submissions. There were enough submissions, but they were not good ones, at least in the eyes of the demanding referees we have now in our editorial board. This is a hazard of going for peer review.

I note this with some sense of remorse that most of our contributors are, fortunately or unfortunately, not subjected to peer review, and when they are asked to revise/rewrite as per the referee's comments they are shocked and their egos are hurt. They decide not to revise/rewrite and send their articles to some 'better' journal. This is not only true of senior colleagues who have some reason to rebel against the referees' comments but even the younger ones do not seem to have the necessary courage and culture to be rectified. They live in a world of their own creation, as most of us often do, but they must look out of their window and see how much the world has changed outside.

Literature is quite a different cup of tea. It is about creativity, and any piece of creativity is an object of art. Hence at least worth having a critical look at it, if not appreciate it, particularly if the creator is not a celebrated figure. But one must move on with the belief that some of the best creations can come out of the fingers of the most ignoble, the most uncelebrated, the most unknown, and the most unexpected…

This issue is dedicated to such a possibility.

T B Subba
Editor

Contents

The Life and Work of the First Welsh Medical Missionary in the Khasi Hills 1

Basil Griffiths

Subversion of Conventional Morality in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure: A Post Modern Perspective* 45

T. J. Joseph

Anne Brontë as a Devotional Poet 77

S. N. Singh

Gender and Power: Some Women-centred Narratives from Ao-Naga 89

Temsula Ao

From Tigermen to Tourism: Changing Narratives 103

Desmond L. Kharmawphlang

Book Review 109

Anne Brontë as a Devotional Poet

S. N. Singh

The existence of God is not demonstrable. One has to believe that He exists in some form or the other. The great Hebrew poet of twelfth-century Spain, Jehuda Halevi, for instance, realized His existence, in a state of innocent, loving devotion:

> Lord, where shall I find thee?
> Thy place is high and hidden.
> And where shall I not find thee?
> *Thy glory fills the world.*[1]
>
> (italics mine)

That God is both unmanifest (avyakt) and manifest (vyakt), and that He is accessible to us through love constitutes a major thematic concern of Anne Brontë's verses, which read and sound like hymns dedicated to God.[2]

The world Anne Brontë creates in her poetry is her world 'within', something internal and intimate to her heart and soul — the region of her poetry — wherein she enshrines the object of her worship and loving devotion, God.[3] She knows her eternal deity as the God of love and grace her heart and soul need and seek. Hers is the One who inspires love and trust, service and devotion, reverence and loyal self-surrender. As a devoted lover, she is very much within her rights to have a personal God. She expresses her conviction thus:

> Eternal Power, of earth and air!
> Unseen, yet seen in all around;
> Remote, but dwelling everywhere;
> Though silent, but heard in every sound[4] [of the devotee]

Dr. S.N. Singh is Reader, Department of English, NEHU, Shillong.

God is imminent in the heart of His devotee. He is personal to His devotee, like a lover to his beloved. As long as she lived, Anne Brontë was such a soul to her Lord. I, therefore, intend to appreciate her poetry in what is called the devotional strain. The loving devotion, or the sentiment of love for God, called *bhakti* is an oriental as well as an occidental way of worshipping the Lord. My intention, however, is not to orientalise her, but to see her in the light of the orient, as also to place her in the occidental tradition for a better understanding of her poetry. It is with this in view that I see her in the congregation of Indian as well as English poets of like taste and temperament. Her poetry has not received adequate attention from this angle.

Loving devotion is preferred the world over by such devotees who believe, as does Anne Brontë, in the theistic traditions that require constant awareness of the Lord through service and devotion, prayer and repetition of His name from the core of the devotee's heart. These traditions do not consider salvation to be solely a matter of human effort. Those who believe that God is full of loving grace await His grace as the sweetest means to salvation, to absolve them from the burden of their sins and carry them safely ashore the ocean of existence. And such a loving and forgiving God is accessible to all His devotees -the weak and the lowly, the illiterate and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the saints and the sinners alike. David, the murderer and adulterer (*Psalms*), and Shabri, the *bhilni* (untouchable) woman (*Ramayana*) attained the benign bliss on the strength of their loving devotion. Anne Brontë, therefore, dislodges her heart to her saving God:

My God (oh, let me call Thee mine,
Weak, wretched, sinner though I be)
My trembling soul would fain be Thine;
My feeble faith still clings to Thee.[5]

Anne Brontë wonders if God would accept her, because, as she knows, He is all-powerful and perfect. But then she cannot claim her acceptability as a matter of right, because she knows it is

He who has to decide it, and He does it in the affirmative for His devotees. She, therefore, unlocks her heart and prays to Him to pardon her,

> With this polluted heart,
> I dare to come to Thee,
> Holy and mighty as Thou art;
> For Thou wilt pardon me.[6]

And then she makes her humble submission to Him so that He may punish to purify her (polluted heart), may imprison to free her (Donne's paradox), for the loving Lord exacts from the devotee undivided loving devotion to make her/him wholly His,

> Oh, make me wholly Thine!
> Thy love to me impart,
> And let Thy holy spirit shine
> For ever on my heart.[7]

The innocent devotee is always apprehensive of Satan's subtle wiles, of doubts, distractions and fears, called 'the world', 'the flesh', and 'the devil'. S(he), therefore, beseeches God "to give me the strength to surrender my strength to Thy will with love",[8] so that the devotee may feel spiritually secure in the hands of his/her Saviour. Anne Brontë reinforces this theme time and again, "Thou my strength, my Saviour be"[9]. This is reminiscent of what David wrote: "Oh Lord, my Strength and Redeemer" (Ps 19:14).

Confession of inability, of lowliness and wretchedness, and yet the desire to be His are two great qualities expected of a devotee. Naturally, her 'My trembling soul would fain be Thine', 'let me call Thee mine', and 'make me wholly Thine' express her tormenting desire, that in spite of her personal limitations and weaknesses she loves her God in total self-surrender and self-dedication. The relationship between her and God — between the devotee and the deity — is one of trusted mutual love and responsibility, for she ardently believes that God is love for those who love Him, and that He is a faithful lover, who helps them to attain salvation. She takes

refuge in Him,

> I cannot say my faith is strong,
> I dare not hope my love is great;
> But strength and love to Thee belong:
> Oh, do not leave me desolate.[10]

He is the ultimate and the only source of the devotee's 'strength and love'. He is the help of the helpless, and the strength of the strengthless. This theme is recurrent in all devotional poetry. By absolutely surrendering herself to God's loving grace alone can she expect her redemption and liberation. She, therefore, cries in agony, and requests her redeemer not to leave her 'desolate' - bereft and forlorn. That God is the source of the devotee's strength and love and redemption is well proven from a number of devotional hymns from *The Book of Psalms*. Therefore, the devotees sing praise and cry out in pain to the Lord for support, as in these verses:

> Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust (16:1),
> I will love You, O Lord, my strength (18:1), and,
> The Lord is my rock and my fortress and
> my deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom
> I will trust, my shield and the horn of
> my salvation, my stronghold (18:1I).

The evident comparability between these verses and those from Anne Brontë in terms of their textuality and tonality is proof enough that Anne Brontë, like the devotees in *The Psalms*, has no quintessential possession of her own. All that she is and has is His:

> I know I owe my all to Thee.[11]

The knowledge of the insignificance of the self in the devotee is her ultimate realization. She rejoices in the realization that He is her anchorage and strength. She then lives and sings to His tune. In this sense Christina Rossetti, who, like Anne Brontë, came through suffering to God, seems to have had similar realisation. Therefore, in a state of self-denying dedication, she gives her heart to God and

sings:

I take my heart in my hand —
I shall not die but live —
Before Thy face I stand:
I, for Thou callest such:
All that I have I bring,
All That I am I give,
Smile Thou and I shall sing,
But shall not question much.[12]

It is tempting here to invite comparisons from some Indian as well as English devotional poets. Nammalvar is one outstanding figure from the eighth-century Tamilnadu who is said to have had realized his mystic union with God, as did Anne Brontë, and expressed the same as in the following lines:

My Lord of the Celestials!
Thou hast made my heart Thy tabernacle
So, intimate and close is Thy union with me
That I beseech Thee never more to leave me,
Me so lovingly clinging to Thee.[13]

The relationship of love that exists between Nammalvar and his Lord is the one that exists between the loving soul and the loved Lord who dwells in the human heart as in His abode. As Anne Brontë clings to her Lord of love, so does Nammalvar to his in loving devotion, for the separation they feel is insufferable while the meeting, sings Kabir, is joyous to the point of no satiety:

There [in love] one loses one's self at His feet,
There one is immersed in the joy of
the seeking: plunged in the deeps
of love as the fish in the water .[14]

The imagery of 'the fish in the water' is expressive of the fact that the devotee lives on devotion and that deprived of it s(he) dies. Naturally, Kabir, who in his *bhakti* (devotion) is happy to

consider himself as the servant and lover of his Lord, is ultimately so emphatic about the clinging of his soul to his Lord as to demand the requital thereof, if not the blame of desertion and death would rest with Him,

If as my soul clings to Thee,
Thy soul should cling to me,
Like red-hot iron on the anvil,
The crack between us would be fused.[15]

Unlike the forgetful spouse, the Lord cannot forget His devotee. He will take a hundred steps towards his devotee if latter takes one step towards Him, and the apparent duality between the soul and God is fused like the crack between red-hot iron and the anvil. The intense craving for love relationship between the devotee and the Lord is repeatedly emphasised as much in the poetry of Anne Brontë, Nammalvar and Kabir. This quality in devotional poetry, expressed especially with the strong verb cling, is universal the world over. Again, the singleness of attachment to the loved One in the three poets as well as in *The Book of Psalms* is immune and intact from any aberrations, whatsoever, of the heart. And yet, the relationship between the *Bhagwan* (God) and the *bhakta* (devotee) is expressed by Kabir in the love symbolism of husband and wife. This is not expressly so in Anne Brontë, although she had to sublimate her earthly love of Weightman into the unearthly love for God. Unlike her, Kabir is assertive,

All my love is for Thee,
O my perfect husband.

As the wife's security is the husband's responsibility, the devotee's salvation is God's responsibility; if the devotee fails to obtain salvation, God alone should bear the shame. That is what Kabir says here:

If the faithful wife went naked
Would not her husband bear the shame?[16]

Love symbolism, especially its painful aspect — the pangs of

separation known in Indian tradition as *viraha* — is recurrent in Kabir as in the Sant (saint) tradition. Like George Herbert, an unofficial saint of Anglicanism[17] and known as a devotional poet, Anne Brontë, a priest of Anglicanism, is close to the Sant-Saint tradition, for a tormenting desire of the soul for the beloved God is always present in her poetry. As such, only through the tormenting-cum-purifying pangs of separation (fire of *viraha*) and ultimately giving up of her life in that inextinguishable fire can she experience that spiritual union her soul thirsts for, the fulfillment whereof may bring her love, joy and peace. I cite below a beautiful stanza to make this point:

> The fire is burning in the grate
> As ready as it used to burn;
> But still the hearth is desolate,
> Till mirth, and love, with peace return.[18]

The imagery of wonted burning fire in the soul propelling her absorption into the magnitudues of God's embrace is ultimately the devotee's sacrifice into eternity. With such a desire, the individual devotee seeks to establish a relationship of delicacy and dedication with God in such devotional poetry as Herbert's, in the following quintessential lines:

> Rain, do not hurt my flowers; but gently spend
> Your honey drops: press not to smell them here:
> When they are ripe, their odour will ascend
> And at your lodging with their thanks appear.[19]

The feeling of tenderness, delicacy and courtesy appropriate to the feminine heart with a desire to be of use to the Lord is characteristically Herbertian and yet equally Brontëan and Indian. Similarly, the imagery of flowers with sweet fragrance is wholly Herbertian, but rarely Brontëan, and profusely Tagorean. The flowers could symbolize oblation the devotee offers to the deity, or the devotee himself/herself. But the imagery of honey is always God's grace signifying nectar, the ambrosia to immortalize the devotee and make him of use to the Lord. In this sense Herbert

comes close to Tagore, the author of *The Gitanjali*, the illustrious book sub-titled by the author himself as *The Songs of Offering*, meaning the songs of *bhakti* in great Indian tradition. God-intoxicated with the love of the divine[20], Tagore pours his heart into his poetry of devotion as do Anne Brontë, Nammalvar, Kabir, Christina Rossetti and Herbert in theirs.

The flower imagery in Tagore symbolises the same longing heart as in Herbert turning in all its tenderness to God. The flower imagery in Anne Brontë is not as symbolically functional as in Herbert and Tagore. Tagore offers his flower-like devotee's heart to God:

> Pluck this little flower and take it,
> delay not !
> I fear lest it droop and drop
> into the dust[21].

The flower in Tagore, like the sweet-smelling flowers in Herbert, is the bridal oblation of his heart to the groom-like God, to beautify Him, to serve Him, and to glorify Him. Anne Brontë ardently desires, "Make me to Thy glory live"[22]. This is the prime desire of the devotee in his/her relation to God. Tagore is again rhetorically emphatic about the mutuality of this relationship: "O, Thou Lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not"[23]. If God is the object of love for the devotee, the devotee too, Tagore believes, is the object of love for God. The relationship is bilateral. But Anne Brontë would not be making such demands on God as does Tagore.

As a result of his/her devotion, the devotee in love sometimes enjoys bliss in his/her vision of God. That Anne Brontë had such a vision, a sort of mystic communion with God, is seen in what she says in the following lines:

> ...so blest did seem
> That calm communion then,
> That, when I found it but a dream,

I longed to sleep again[24].

To sleep was to wake up in the divine life and love, to enjoy the communion for some moments, and thus feel liberated while still alive —*jivanmukta*. This is the highest and the sweetest of all love. The devotee longs again and again for the communion, as does Anne Brontë, and until the communion is achieved and the duality dissolves the soul suffers in a state of alienation. The belief in the dualism of the loved God and the loving soul is the base of the religion of loving devotion. For them to be ultimately One they have to be two — *Thou and I*.

From the above discourse two things emerge. First, the devotee's attitude to his/her personal God in both the traditions - oriental and occidental — is a total, undivided, devotion in love in the tenderest and most feminine mood possible because love and devotion, tenderness and surrender, are more in women than in men. God is the only supreme Man and all else are like women[25]. That is why, barring Anne Brontë and Christina Rossetti, poets like Nammalvar, Herbert, Kabir and Tagore approach God in a tenderly womanly manner. And yet there is in Kabir something queer and contradictory, for when he treats himself as a loving soul in devotion he identifies himself with a chaste wife and God with a fidel husband but when he comes to womankind he equates them with the poisonous fruit responsible for the fall of man. When it is convenient to personate women and worship God as husband, we should also allow them the same conscience and capability as we claim for ourselves. It was not fair for an enlightened soul like Kabir to inferiorize and despiritualize women as he did in the following verses,

Woman ruins everything
when she comes near a man:
Devotion, salvation, and divine knowledge
no longer enter his soul[26].

The second point that emerges from the discourse is that the way of loving devotion is so universally profound as to absolve the

devotee under all circumstances. The loving God does not fail, Lord Krishna promises Arjuna in *The Bhagvadgita*:

Fix thy mind on Me; be devoted to Me;
Sacrifice to Me; prostrate thyself before Me;
So shalt thou come to Me.
I promise thee truly, for thou art
dear to Me[27]

Such is the promise from the God of love who seeks reciprocal commitment from the devotee. Anne Brontë's commitment to loving devotion was so profound as to claim universal salvation for all those who could sincerely repent and firmly repose their love in God, were they sensualists or sinners. She would allow no room for eternal damnation, because she was confident

That even the wicked shall at last
Be fitted for the skies;
And when their dreadful doom is past,
To life and light arise.[28]

A sensualist beyond repair, Huntingdon is a fallen creature in *The Tenant of the Wildfell Hall*, her second novel. And yet Anne Brontë is not prepared to see him perpetually suffering in the fires of hell, for "whatever fate awaits it, still it is not lost, and God, who hateth nothing that he hath made, will bless it in the end"[29]. Such claims are not so much the utterance of devotion as the confidence in devotion. But this is how she combines her philosophy of loving devotion with Christian conscience.

We may, therefore, draw the broad conclusion that Anne Brontë in her poetry amalgamates the sentiment of oriental and occidental loving devotion. This secures for her a permanent place in the annals of devotional poetry.

Though the Victorian world was very critical of her claim of universal salvation based on her faith in loving devotion, Anne Brontë would vindicate her conviction all the more, as in the following

verse of a poem called 'Believe Not Those Who Say', written at the same time as her second novel:

> What matter who should whisper blame
> Or who should scorn or slight?
> What matter if thy God approve,
> And if within thy breast,
> Thou feel the comfort of His love,
> The earnest of His rest?[30]

This is how the meekest could as well be the most defiant and assertive. The sweet rose could be a wild rose as well. Anne Brontë remains a fighter of the world 'without' with her world 'within', a true believer in the universal salvation of mankind through loving devotion, for "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy" (Psalm: 103:8).

Notes and References

1. David Daiches (quoted), *God and the Poets*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985, p.74.
2. S. N. Singh, "Brontë Sisters as Poets of Faith" in *The NEHU Journal*, Vol. II, No.1, January 2004, p. 113.
3. *Gitanjali*, Song IV.
4. Clement Shorter and C.W. Hatfield (ed.), *The Complete Poems of Anne Brontë*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1920, p. 38. Hereafter this shall be referred to as *The Poems* only.
5. *The Poems*, op. cit., p. 56.
6. *The Poems*, op. cit., p. 70.
7. Ibid, p. 71.
8. *Gitanjali*, op. cit., Song XXVI.
9. *The Poems*, op. cit., p. 56.

10. Ibid, p. 56.

11. Ibid, p. 56.

12. Arthur Quiller -Couch (choSen), *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, "Twice", Oxford University Press, 1912, Ely House London W, 1, p. 475.

13. Muhammad Hedayetullah (quoted), *Kabir*, Motilal Banarasi Das, Patna, 1977, p. 100.

14. Underhill E.(ed.) *Songs of Kabir* (tran. Rabindranath Tagore), Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1987, Song L V, p.1 00.

15. Ch. Vaudeville (tran), *Kabir*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1974, p. 191.

16. Vaudeville, op. cit., p. 213.

17. Michael Alexander, *A History of English Literature*, Foundations, New York, 2000. p.144.

18. *The Poems*, op. cit., p.97.

19. Louis L, Martz (ed.), George Herbert and Henry Vanghan, *Providence*, Oxford University Press, 1986, Walton Street, Oxford p. 107.

20. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1985, p. 110.

21. *Gitanjali*, Song VI.

22. *The Poems*, op. cit., p. 56.

23. *Gitanjali*, op. cit., Song L VI.

24. *The Poems*, op. cit., p.110.

25. S. Radhakrishnan, "Introductory Essay" on *The Bhagvadgita*, Blackie and Sons, Bombay, 1982, p. 62.

26. Chaudeville, *Kabir*, op. cit., p. 296.

27. S. Radhakrishnan (tran.) *The Bhagvadgita*, op. cit., XVIII: 65.

28. *The Poems*, op, cit., p. 37.

29. *The Tenant of the Wildfell Hall*, The Zodiac Press, London, 1980, p. 345. 30. The Poems, op. cit., pp. 146-47.

30. *The Poems*, op. cit., pp.146-47.

Book Review

Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih and Robin S. Ngangom (ed.), ***Anthology of Contemporary Poetry from the North-east.*** NEHU Publications, Shillong, 2003, pp.264, Rs.230.

For a long time now, the North-east has been the troubled zone, "a seething cauldron" torn by the ethnic crisis, economic failures, terrorist violence and mounting claims of regional autonomy and separatism. Lost in the haze and blur of contemporary history very often, it is usually conceived not so much as a landscape inhabited by real people but only as a fictional metaphor of a world gone awry. No wonder it lurks rather uncertainly at the edge of an average Indian's consciousness.

On reading this artistically packaged anthology, one is certainly disabused of a number of preconceived notions about the North-east and its rich cultural heritage. A world of eerie contradictions leaps out of these pages as tradition rubs shoulders with modernity, folk rhythms jostle uneasily with the western pop, virgin forests stand a mute testimony to the debauchery of urban life, and recalcitrant nativism co-exists with the 'otherness' of the outsiders. This anthology certainly does rip the mask off the multi-layered and complex history/culture of the region, revealing the face of the people and the landscape that is anything but just salubrious and enthralling.

This anthology also has a definite purpose beyond its immediate poetic appeal. If on the one hand it brings the 'gunshots' and 'the bloodstained faces' of the North-east within earshot distance, on the other it takes us right into the hearts of the people, their dreams and desires, myths and memories, and long struggles through history. By thus bringing us into direct contact with the cultural history of the people, it opens up the possibility of a dialogue

we may have thought never existed. If in our troubled times poetry can synergize this dialogue, it could be said to have achieved much more than it ordinarily does. For such a possibility alone can redress one of the understandable complaints of the editors that, for all the political rhetoric, this remains a "little known and largely misunderstood" region of India.

In all, this anthology showcases some forty-five contemporary poets of the region, reflecting not only myriad styles and trends but also diversity of concerns within "the Seven Sisters," which, in itself, is no mean achievement. However, the representation of each state is somewhat erratic. Meghalaya, the home-state of the editors, leading the way with as many as fourteen poets; Manipur a close second with eight; Arunachal and Mizoram struggling hard to catch up with barely two poets each. Tripura and Assam have seven poets each whereas Nagaland has only five. If space is a marker of identity, then this kind of unequal distribution does raise questions of internal hegemony of languages/cultures. Especially so, because the editors have chosen not to address this issue.

Interestingly, all the poets selected from Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland have one thing in common: they all write originally in English. While celebrating the "fading voices/of deaf (tribal) women," Mamang Dai, a journalist who belongs to the Adi community of Arunachal, does not forget to mourn the endless wait of "the silent hillmen" for "the long promised letters/and the meaning of words"(pp. 4-5). Her retreat into personal memories is only a way of reclaiming historical consciousness, and it is on the interstices of both that the political content of her poetry becomes manifest. Yumlam Tana, a teacher from the Nyishi tribe who is almost apologetic about writing in English, is acutely self-conscious about losing his tribal identity inscribed in *Porno* and *Jupung* to *kurta* and *pyjama*. It is another matter that he manages to counterbalance his loss through his universal claim "to the Bible/The Quran, the Gita/ And all human endeavours/In Science, Art and Commerce" (p.13).

Occasionally, he also dips into the archives of Nyishi myths, bringing out poetic pearls of astounding beauty.

Though the personal note dominates the poems of H. Ramdhintari, a poet from Mizoram who now lives in Maryland, U.S.A., she is conscious that "We're at the far end of the earth/ where the touch of the sun ceases to have meanings" (p.197). However, her contemporary Mona Zote, who lives in Aizawl, is more explicitly political as she ominously waits for the "bomb" to fall "on those of us, unaware under/The catastrophe of houses against trees," and is even eager to "leave words too and be/a gunrunner" (p.203). Though both T. Ao and Nini Lungalang from Nagaland are among the better-known and older voices, each bears an unmistakable individualistic stamp. While T. Ao's poems such as *The Epitaph* and *Rumour* pulsate with a definite fable-like quality, Nini Lungalang returns "to where I began," a world throbbing with social and political tensions, often caught through "neighbour's quarrel/over a strip of land" or the personal pain of "I too have a brother slain." Among the younger lot, Monalisa Changkija, a Dimapur based journalist, and Easterine Iralu, a lecturer at Nagaland University, impress by virtue of their uncanny ability to resurrect the social conscience. If Monalisa raises her voice in support *Of a People Unanswered,* Easterine Iralu regrets that "One day, my son/when you come to ask me/what colour was the sky/before it turned grey/I will no longer have the answers" (p.222).

Assamese and Manipuri poets distinguish themselves by their unswerving commitment to their respective languages, though it hardly ever takes the form of linguistic chauvinism. Most of the Assamese poets are fairly young, the only exception being Nilmani Phookan, a much older and well-respected Sahitya Akademi Award winning veteran. In his all-too-familiar romantic world, "the plantain leaf (still) trembles," "distant dreams of trees/move past," and "the afternoon sun melts/into the shoreless waters." Only very rarely does he surprise with an unexpected turn of a phrase or an image, and even when he does as in "In the frost-silent Japanese silk-night/if I could die" (p.57), the burden of existence is not much

lightened. Among the younger generation of Assamese poets, Jiban Narah and Prem Narayan Nath are apparently the only inheritors of Nilmani's romantic sensibility. Jiban discovers his own voice in intensely personal poems such as *Mother* and *Night's Portal,* and despite its long-winded invocations and veiled references to the ethos of the Mishing tribe, his poem *The Buddha* fails to make its mark. However, Prem Narayan has a deeper and richer resonance as he captures "the hum of *raga gandhara/in* darkness" with as much elan as he shows while recording the "rumblings from the earth's womb" that throw up "scores of dead bodies suddenly"(p.5O). Nilim Kumar, Anubhav Tulasi and Sameer Tanti combine a certain earthy rawness of passion with more contemporary staccato speech rhythms. If Nilim Kumar questions "where are you bound, brother/with all those dead birds/on your shoulder," Anubhav Tulasi shares his anxiety over a dog "barking long since/Fretting in my blood." But it is left to Sameer Tanti, who has also crafted *The Ballad of Bones,* to state: "How do I hold hunger guilty/Hunger is my mother's first miscarriage/the third world of my agony" (p.67). Although she is the lone woman poet from Assam, Anupama Basumatary is easily the most powerful of all voices in her language. In comparison to other women poets from Nagaland and Mizoram who write in English, it is she whose concerns are overtly and explicitly feminist. Not only is she interested in historicising the silence of women through the image of "the stone-body," but she also speaks of woman's essential exclusion and loneliness in her poetic ramblings *An Evening On the Banks of the Ganges.* Often she manages to transcend the politics of exclusion, thus revealing a strong universal strain in her poetry, which is self-evident when she says, "In the hope of achieving something/Every man is only losing himself' (p.22). A poetic sensibility that sees "a childhood dawn" "in the cluster of mushrooms" is certainly no ordinary talent.

Of the Manipuri poets, again only two are women, and the rest all men. Kunjarani Longjam Chanu and Atambam Ongbi

Memchoubi are both teachers by profession and have published more than two collections each. Kunjarani's "hunters" that "stand in front of you/Carrying poison arrows" and "black maidens" that fall "inside the deep ravines" "along with the white slabs of snow" fester in our memory as much as Memchoubi's *The Goddess of Lightning* and *My Beloved Mother* do. A popular children's writer and a much published poet, R K Bhubonsana, in his rather longish musings *Should Lights Be Put Out Or Minds Kept In The Dark,* exposes in a playfully sardonic manner the designs of the government in perpetuating the people's subjugation by not promoting literacy among them. Yumlembam Ibomcha's *For the Next Birth* and Raghu Leishangthem's *Politician and White Dove* are also poems in a similar vein, though lbomcha's *Story of a Dream* and Raghu's *The Old Woman's Pitcher* leave a much stronger impression because of their depth of feeling and sensitive portrayal of character/situation. Thangjam Ibopishak, who along with Ibomcha is a Sahitya Akademi Award winning poet, creates unfailing images of the land and its people. While gushing over his land in a manner least bashful, "Manipur, I love your hills, marshes, rivers/Greenfields, meadows, blue sky" (p.88), he does not allow himself to be blinded by the fact that it is also "the land of the half - humans" where "for six months just head without body, six months just body without head" (p.93). The mythology of the land interests him as much as does its poetry or its history. If Saratchand Thiyam, an engineer by profession, stands out by virtue of being able to sing of both *Shillong* and *Africa* with equal ease, Ilabanta Yumnam, a teacher, marks himself out through the tardy, prosaic rhythms of his poetic outpourings.

Of the seven sisters, the only two that betray a baffling sense of linguistic diversity are Meghalaya and Tripura. In Meghalaya, one comes across poets in languages as varied as Hindi, English, Khasi and Bengalee, whereas in Tripura, Bengalee and Manipuri happily co-exist with Chakma and Kokborok. Tarun Bhartiya, who is from Meghalaya and writes in Hindi, appears to have internalised

the ethics of postmodernism, and so celebrates the fragmentation of thought and being with a rare irreverence and panache. Just as he has no qualms about saying that "Cow Mother's thighs should be rubbed with pepper," he's equally blase about sniffing "reality of gunpowder in the breath of reporters" (p.114). Piyush Dhar, who writes in Bengalee, brings a razor-edged sharpness of a typical Bengali sensibility to bear upon his reflections on the mindless nuclear arms race in *Five Pokhran Poems*. There could not have been a more forthright indictment of Pokhran than this: "Infanticide ditches crisscross/your dreamy chest, too, Pokhran;/today your silent sands bury in their voice/an epitaph of vice" (p.121). Of several poets writing in English in Meghalaya none is so cosmopolitan as Ananya S Guha, who is very much at home, be it *In Calcutta, Mymensing* or his *Poem for Punjab*. If Anjum Hasan impresses with her deft use of the Japanese form in *November Haikus,* Robin S Ngangom sweeps us along by the sheer force of his haunting images in the searing evocation of the *Native Land*. But this, indeed, appears somewhat pale in comparison with the range, depth and intensity displayed by Khasi poets such as Paul Lyngdoh, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih and Bevan L Swer. As their effort is to explore the archeology of Khasi legends, folk-tales and customs, their poems often sizzle with a peculiar pungency of a purely local variety.

This variety of localism is also available in the poems of Niranjan Chakma, Sefali Debbarma and Chandra Kanta Murasingh, all from Tripura, though they practise their craft in Chakma and Kokborok languages respectively. While Sefali Debbarma celebrates the local sounds and smells in her intensely personal poems; Chandra Kanta's crisp, compact lyrical meditations slowly bring her into contact with "our beloved soil." In the poems of Niranjan Chakma one senses a definite rage born out of irrevocable 'silence' that most of the tribal communities have come to accept as their *fait accompli* over the centuries. In an intensely moving poem, Kalyanbrata Chakraborti captures the plight of Manirung Reang, "a girl from the hills" who falls prey to "the gun-toting belligerents,"

with only "the birds and the wind" grieving for her. A similar portrait of a "woman suffering this society's grievous hurt" bristles out of a poem by Gambhini Sorokkhaibam, who originally writes in Manipuri. However, the crowning glory of this collection are two poems by Krittibas Chakraborty, both of which could be regarded as the final tribute to the awesome linguistic plurality of the North-east in particular and our country in general. Originally written in Bengalee, for inclusion in this collection, these poems have been translated not directly from the language in which they were written but instead from Tripuri into English. More significantly, these two poems bring into sharp focus for us, once again, the complex issues of hybridised identity, belonging and homelessness. While wondering with the poet "How long you will burn, Northeast horizon!" (p.247), we feel as though we have come back full circle, once again. With apprehensions about the future of the North-east buzzing in our ears, we return from this mythopoeic journey, sadder and somewhat wiser as well.

Despite the fact that poetry often does not lend itself to an easy linguistic transfer, most of the translations in this collection have been competently handled. Often while reading these poems, one gets the impression as though all of them including the ones not originally written in English have been so written. The use of words or expressions from a variety of host languages, however, doesn't set up any jarring rhythms. On the contrary, it ties up rather well with the politics of translation that, in any case, should have informed the very spirit of such a collection. By preferring the "foreignising" mode of translation to the "domesticating" one, the editors have not only demonstrated their respect for the notion of linguistic plurality, but also made a significant statement of their ideology and intent. Of course, they deserve a full round of applause for their success in accommodating a vast "polyphony of voices," reflecting an equally bewildering range of thematic concerns and formal preferences. These are the voices that ought to be heard with passionate concern, even compassion and urgency. More than the ordinary lovers of

poetry across the country, this collection should strike a chord among those who wish to understand the cultural labyrinths of the North-east, and respond to the multiple challenges such an understanding often poses.

Rana Nayar is Reader in the Department of English,
Punjab University, Chandigarh.
The review article is published by arrangement with KAVYA BHARATI, Madurai.

Sujata Miri, *The Broken Circle*, London, New Delhi: Minerva Press, 2003, Price Rs 250).

The *Prologue* starts with the cries of a child. Then screams and protestations, of a mother thrown out and a baby's incessant crying. The beginning of the circle…

The child in Chapter One has grown up into a young woman:

"She had just turned fourteen and there were already two boys who claimed to love her, each proposing marriage..." This is Asha, nubile and full bodied, vivacious and full of beans. It is a delightful accentuation by the novelist as she opens the narrative with the trepidation relating to Asha's awakening sexuality. It is amazingly candid and acerbic at the same time. Every page in the novel is pulsating with warm figures, bristling with a rugged earthiness and racy sensuality.

As you read the novel, you are momentarily surprised by its clinical bluntness. This is solely Asha's story, a tale bold and brash. The setting is Lalchand Basti, the colony that is "home" to the

Nepali community of Shillong. The scene shifts to other localities, Lumparing, to "somewhere less Nepali & more cosmopolitan-Pokseh", then Umpling.

Asha is a wonderfully drawn character, very sensual and irresistible. She can twist men around her little finger, a truth she learns early in life. She is surrounded by her ridiculous Laban *Phuphu* and aunts. Crude, coarse and artless. She elopes, is brow bitten and bundled back home. Consequently a "respectable" marriage is arranged, with Golu Bahadur, a clerk, and Asha is ecstatic "She was one rare bride who thoroughly enjoyed her own wedding. The festivities, financed by her guilty father, were lavish and the meals rich with Nepali, Bengali and Khasi specialities...." Then follows some petty clashes with her in laws and another victim falls to her charms, her brother-in law Deepu. She is aware of her physical allure, and makes full use of it. Her desires are flimsy, but her needs are immediate. Money matters a lot to her, but her obsessive passion for a two timing, scheming older man, the highly exhibitionist Nirmal Chhetri leads her to plumb the depths of despair. She flings herself against him in secret rendezvous which carries her to bliss and destruction. Then follows more intrigues and shady deals of a surreptitious degree racket, where her husband Golu is involved. Then a murder, and the resultant trappings of the uncouth police probings and the emergence of an unsuspecting social worker. The circle widens. She is caught in a web spun by other men in her life and she cannot break free of debauchery and greed as she flaunts and lives as she pleases unabashedly. In her frantic search for physical fulfillment, she ruins her defenseless youngest daughter Lakshmi's vulnerable world too.

It is Sujata Miri at her best. She does not mince words in the dissection of sexual violence and the circularity of the dissolution of a woman's life based on greed and lust. Asha is no Emma Bovary, because she has no saving self-delusion. The familiar locales, Police Bazaar, Laban, Malki, Dreamland Cinema Hall and Guwahati add to the topicality of the issues involved. The reader would tend to

judge everything and everyone in this novel by a relentless straightforward uncovering of actions of a broad sample of men in relation to a woman — an interesting method. This is a world where time is measured with *Chitrahar* programmes on the TV, as well as revealing some attempt to people with objects, and the need for consumption as an outlet for anxiety: "We are not basti wallahs. You must dress the children well.... Now you have a TV, a tape recorder, a sewing machine, besides the new bed and almirahs. Does anybody else in our family have this?"

The story is tragic to the point of pathos and the indirect narration adds to the callous indifference of the events. Sujata Miri retains a distance that evokes objectivity but also seems disdainful. Asha remains a sad figure and an object of pity.

Neither can we call it a cultural study of an interpretative kind, so any notion of a *final* meaning is always endlessly put off. Probably a little amount of sociological inquiry is inevitably caught up in this 'circle of meaning'. Definitely the novel betrays very strong tenets of popular pulp fiction, but probably the title bespeaks of the irony where the unity, wholeness, and the feminine spirit or force denoting "the circle" is broken off.

Dr (Mrs) Krishna Barua teaches English Literature at IIT, Guwahati.

Selma K. Sonntag, *The Local Politics of Global English*, Lexington Books, New York, 2003, pp152.

This is a book that opens up one's understanding of the linguistic dimensions of globalization which, in the explanatory words of the author herself, "pushes forward global English hegemony." In doing so, however, it creates its own antithesis as it "politicizes

the language issue and hence "potentializes" a reaction. The burden is to ensure that the potential of this reaction is linguistically democratic." Immense scholarship has gone into mapping out the contradictions that are inbuilt in such a situation, dynamic and unique enough to this century, to initiate the kind of academic interest that would garner rich dividends at the political and the personal level.

Sonntag begins by drawing upon the linguist Braj Kachru's typology of concentric circles as a starting point, for differentiating the cases covered in the book according to the degree of global English usage. She then familiarizes the reader with certain key concepts of globalization, such as hegemony, resistance, elites, subalterns, and liberalization and democratization before launching into a discussion of the complexities of global English as it manifests itself in various countries.

The United States representing an English-speaking core corresponding to Kachru's inner circle sees language as a neutral tool for communication and not as an identity marker. Language rights have not been established under American law and there are, according to the author, several contending views among Americans on language politics. The overall picture that one has of the American scene is that it exudes both hegemony and democracy in economic as well as linguistic globalization.

Her next case study presents an interesting analysis of the politics of language in France. Whilst attempting to stamp out the Breton language, the French state puts forward the "same arguments and logic for its battle against global English that the Breton nationalists use against French linguistic hegemony". This transference between what she calls "local and global of oppressor and oppressed" is characteristic of the local politics of global English in France. Language politics in France remains a confrontation between regional languages and French linguistic hegemony. This has, however, been compromised, not only in global terms as English becomes the sole working language in Francophone countries, but

also internally in France. Sonntag views the local politics of global English in France as being post-modern by virtue of the shifting roles of hegemon and register .

Chapter Four looks at the subaltern language politics in India which has influenced the dynamics of English language usage in the country. Sonntag follows what she calls the "messy local politics of Indian democracy" from its colonial resistance in the 1920s when Gandhi convinced the Congress to organize along regional language lines, to the kind of vernacular language politics dominating the states of Bihar and UP in recent years. Perceptively so, she arrives at the conclusion that, in India the politics of the English language is essentially local. Although English was introduced by a global power, it has become part of the local, political and linguistic landscape of the country. The global face of English in India is Indian English. It has become synonymous with the elite class but it has also been appropriated by subalterns. And as a final comment she remarks that the subalterns can become the new local elite in India. However, the only valid conclusion that she can really come to is that, amidst reigning discordance there are truly multiple voices in India worth listening to, and she observes that some of these voices are subaltern ones.

In the penultimate chapter of the book, Sonntag compares the language politics of South Africa and Nepal, countries that are in democratic transitions. South Africa is part of Kachru's outer circle, an "official English" country, whereas Nepal is a "marginal English" country. In South Africa, English has been the language of liberation and democracy, hegemonic and liberatory, elitist and democratic. During apartheid, South African Blacks used English as the language of protest and resistance despite the different language policy preferences of various segments of the liberation movement. Multilingualism in the post apartheid years is valued by Black South Africans in the informal and private sphere. But in the public arena, the majority of Black South Africans would opt for English. However, the political debate on linguistic democratization

and globalization in South Africa is not yet over since the new South Africa reflects the tension between the ideal of pursuing a truly transformative South African political project and the reality of seeking improvement in a majority of South Africans.

There are several points of similarities between South Africa and Nepal but the important difference lies in the fact that English has never played the role that it did or currently does in South Africa. As in South Africa the democratic transition ushered in a new multilingual policy where the Nepalese were assuredly tolerant of global English. In South Africa multilingualism advocates actively resist global English. There is an emerging position of global English in Nepalese society which hints at a class based struggle as the more likely future for Nepal.

Sonntag concludes with a salient observation that global English represents the possibility of globalization from above as well as from below, especially in terms of a democratic subaltern resistance to linguistic hegemony.

Each case study presents the human face of a political conundrum, where the choices to be made are sometimes dictated by the linguistic policies of a larger community or as in the case of South Africa, chosen by the people themselves. Needless to say, it is a book to be read not only by language scholars but by all and sundry as it brings into focus the linguistic complexities of globalization. Sonntag has succeeded in employing the tools of culture, language and history to conceptualize a situation that is necessarily global.

Esther Syiem is Reader in the Department of English
NEHU, Shillong.

Robbins Burling, *The Language of the Modupur Mandi (Garo), Vol.I: Grammar*, NJ,: Bibliophile South Asia in association with Promilla & Co. Publishers, New Delhi, 2004. Pp. xiii + 406 (hardback); Price: Rs. 750.00.

This is the first descriptive study of the grammar of the "Mandi" dialect of Garo spoken in Bangladesh. The book under review is divided into fourteen chapters: (1) The language and the people, (2) Segmental phonology, (3) Juncture and prosody, (4) Morphophonemics and variation, (5) Core grammar: an overview, (6) Verbs, (7) Optional verb affixes, (8) Nouns, (9) Nominals, (10) Numerals, (11) Minor parts of speech, (12) Complex noun phrases, (13) Subordination, and (14) Restructuring. Besides these fourteen chapters, the book also contains three appendices: (A) Texts, (B) Questions for study, and (C) Glossary of linguistic terminology; references, and two indices: index of affixes and index of topics.

In the introductory chapter of the book, Robbins Burling (henceforth RB) outlines the goals/scope of the grammar of the Garo spoken in Bangladesh. He mentions three groups of people the book is intended for. The first group comprises the people "...whose goal is to learn one of the Garo dialects". "The second group is professional linguists and Tibeto-Burmanists". And the third group of people consists of "...people who speak Garo as their native language".

Although the book is a descriptive study of the grammar of the dialect of Garo spoken in Bangaldesh, the author has successfully tried to compare some of the structures of this dialect with those of the Garo spoken in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Each section of a particular chapter has been assigned "one of three levels, elementary, intermediate, and advanced'. In addition to assigning each section to one of three difficulty levels, the author has labeled the levels as A, B, and C respectively.

An inexperienced reader may find it confusing about the fact that similar things are not discussed under the same topic

(e.g., noun phrases are described in chapters 5, 8, and 12; different types of postpositions have been described in two different chapters, viz., chapters 8 and 9; etc.). Also, one finds a lot of repetitions (e.g., the minor word classes have been discussed twice in chapters 5 and 11). We perhaps cannot blame the author for this. RB clearly states in the introduction to the book that "...Do not try to work straight through the book from the beginning to the end. You would get hopelessly bogged down. This is not that sort of book" (p.6), and that "...As such, I have permitted myself a good deal of repetition" (p.7).

In the first chapter of the book, RB talks about the concepts the "Mandis" (of Bangladesh) have about the "A'chiks" (of Garo Hills in Meghalaya). He points out that the Mandis identify their dialect as "a form of "A'beng" and that Mandi has several mutually intelligible dialects spoken in Bangladesh. According to RB, the Garos of Garo hills are "less often bilingual in any language than those who live in Bangladesh..."

(p.15), and Mandi is heavily influenced by Bengali.

The second, third, and the fourth chapters are dedicated to the description of the phonology of Mandi. The phonological description is quite adequate. The *glottal stop* or "Raka", one of the prominent phonological features of Mandi/Garo, has been dealt in detail (pp.32-41). The description given is clear and comprehensive. It would have been better, at least from the point of view of a linguist, if the author had presented a detail description of the phonetic and phonemic aspects of the various segmental sounds, viz., consonants, monophthongs and diphthongs; consonant sequences/clusters; distinctive features of the segments, etc.

The section on morphophonemics (pp.71-76) gives a concise description of some prevalent morphophonemic rules in the language. Though some interesting morphophonemic rules of the verb patterning in the language have not been dealt with in detail, such patterning is covered in other places. This section presents a

beautiful description of the variations found among the various dialects. RB finally describes the changes in pronunciation due to the linguistic influence of Bengali and English on the Mandi language. For instance, the phoneme /s/ never occurs in word- or syllable-final position in older Mandi, but the "…Bengali borrowings have established /-s/.." (p. 87), and, as a result, now we find words like *dos* 'ten', *bas* 'enough', etc.

The fifth chapter attempts to provide a brief overview of the "core grammar" of Mandi, and describes the structure of simple sentences, verbs, noun phrases and minor word classes.

The description of the verbal structure of Mandi has been presented in chapters six and seven. The distinction between a "verb base", a "verb stem", and a "verb" (sic) is important in Mandi, and RB has explained the distinction very clearly (p.107). RB points out (p.112) that the Garo dialects do not have separate transitive and intransitive verbs. The transitive verb-forms are obtained by adding the causative affix *-et-* or *-it-* in Mandi and *-at-* in A'chik (Garo). The suffixes like sentence completing suffixes, tense-aspect suffixes, imperative suffixes, subordinating suffixes, nominalizing suffixes associated with verbs (pp.120-136), and adverbial affixes such as progressive *-ing-*, *-eng-*, *-ong-*; negative *-ja-*, etc. (pp. 139-153) have been discussed in great detail in these two chapters. One wonders why RB includes the 'causative' affix, *-et-* ~ *-it-* ~ *-at-*, which is generally associated with verbs, among the adverbial affixes. A detail study of the auxiliary verbs, conjunct verbs and compound verbs would have increased the usefulness of the book, especially for the language learners.

The eighth chapter deals with the nouns in Mandi. In this chapter, RB discusses the "category prefixes" (classifiers) associated with nouns, formation of plural, case markers, and final noun suffixes. I feel that some of the so-called final noun suffixes, e.g., *-sa* ~ *-ha* 'only' (p.205) should have been described as emphatic particles.

Chapter nine is on nominals, and describes the pronouns, question words, postpositions, and borrowed Bengali case markers and postpositions (such as *a-ge* 'before, ago', *po-re* 'after' etc.). The description of case markers and postpositions could have been presented along with the brief description of the same in the previous chapter. Also, the nouns and adjectives could have been described in this chapter as they, too, are nominals.

The Mandi numerals have been described in the next chapter (chapter ten). RB identifies *gip-a* as the ordinal numeral marker. Thus *sa* 'one': *sa-gipa* 'first (one)', *gin* 'two': *gin-ipa* 'second (one)', and so on.

The numeral classifiers (pp.247-256) such as *ak-* ~ *sak-* 'people', *mang-* 'animals', *rong-* 'round', *kol-* 'holes', *king-* 'thin flat things', etc. have been described under the headings 'core classifiers', 'shapes, materials, places', 'pieces, parts, groups, bundles, loads', 'containers', etc.

In the eleventh chapter, adverbs, locative words (e.g. -*cheng-* 'before'), defective nouns, "*gi*-type" adjectives, courtesy expressions, interjections, conjunctions, reduplication, echoes, etc. have been described as minor parts of speech.

The next chapter presents a brief description of the structure of the complex noun phrases in Mandi.

Chapter thirteen describes the structure of subordinated sentences in Mandi. Instead of having a separate chapter just on subordination and briefly mentioning the word order, the author should have discussed various processes like coordination, passivization (described in chapter fourteen, p.340), interrogation; negation; conjunctive participle construction (RB gives just one example without having mentioned the construction on p.346 in chapter fourteen) etc.; structure of conditional sentences; relative-correlative constructions (described in chapter fourteen, p.333) in one place, and he should have devoted a complete chapter on word order in Mandi describing the order of noun and adjective,

postpositions, noun and genitive, adjective and numerals, etc. The last section of the chapter talks about the equational sentences (p.329), but it does not consider the existential sentences.

In the last chapter titled 'restructuring', RB talks about the relative-correlative construction involving *je* and *ba* in great detail. Here, RB notes that je occupies the same position as the demonstrative pronoun in a noun phrase. Although je has been borrowed from Bengali, Mandi/Garo has "…not borrowed the full complexity of the Bengali relative system" (p.334). The *ba*-relatives, according to RB, "are less common than the *je* relatives". The other constructions discussed in this chapter include "balanced questions", passive, comparative with *-kal-* and *-bat-*, postposed noun phrases, postposed subordinate clauses, and subject fronting.

Appendix A contains four Garo folk-tales with interlineal translation. These tales "are taken from a book written by Kohima Daring called *Mandi Di sarangna Golpo*: *Stories for Garo Children"* (sic). Appendix B contains questions for study based on the contents presented in each chapter. In Appendix C, RB provides readers with a very useful glossary of linguistic terminology.

The sections dealing with various aspects of syntax are not comprehensive in scope. A separate section on word-formation in Garo/Mandi would have enhanced the beauty of the book. The way this book uses certain grammatical terms leaves the reader uneasy. One such term is "balanced questions".

One of the most distinctive features of the book under review is the overall approach used by the author to describe the categories and structures at the levels of syntax, morphology, and phonology. Various grammatical constructions (e.g. imperative, negation, etc.) and categories (subject, case suffixes, etc.) are described in terms of their form as well as their pragmatic function(s).

Additionally, the author's discussion on the interaction of grammatical structure with contextual factors such as the variation of styles and the social class/status of the speakers, etc. will be

valuable particularly for sociolinguists. This book is the first descriptive grammar, which includes analysis of syntax, morphology, and phonology of Garo/Mandi in one place.

On the whole, the author covers a wide spectrum of topics related to grammar of Modhupur Mandi (Garo). This is a good and worth reading book with lots of information on the grammatical structure of Garo, though there are a couple of small lapses that may be ignored when compared with its merits. RB deserves praises for writing a commendable book on the grammar of Garo providing the findings hitherto unexplored. RB has made an invaluable contribution to the Tibeto-Burman linguistics. This book will also be useful for the teachers/learners of Garo as a second language.

The efforts of the author are laudable and the book is worth collecting for the people interested in the study of languages and cultures of tribal population of India and its neighboring countries.

The printing of the book is clear and quite pleasing to the eye.

Dr. Awadesh K. Mishra is Reader in the Department of Linguistics, NEHU, Shillong

DECLARATION

Form IV Rule 8

1.	Place of Publication	:	Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003
2.	Periodicity	:	Biannual
3.	Printer's Name	:	Deputy Director, NEHU Publications
	Address	:	Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003
4.	Publisher's Name	:	Deputy Director, NEHU Publications
	Nationality	:	Indian
	Address	:	Bijni Complex, Shillong 793003
5.	Editor's name	:	T. B. Subba
	Nationality	:	Indian
	Address	:	NEHU Publications, Bijni Complex, Shillong 793003
6.	Name and Address of individuals who own the journal and partners or share-holders holding more than one percent of the total capital	:	North-Eastern Hill University, Permament Campus, Umshing, Shillong-793022

I, T. B. Subba, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

T. B. Subba

Indexed in the Guide to Indian Periodical Literature

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

1. All contributions should be sent in electronic form as well as hard copy printed on A4 size paper in double space and with adequate margin on the left side. Notes and references should be numbered in Arabic numerals, with details provided as endnotes. The title of the paper, the author's name and address should be typed on a separate cover-sheet. Telephone & fax numbers and e-mail ID's if available, should be provided.
2. Non-English words should be italicised or underlined. Spelling should be British. Quotations should be reduced to a minimum and where used should be put under double inverted commas or indented. Quotations of more than 50 words from published or copyright sources should have the permission of the author/ publisher enclosed with the manuscript.
3. Contributors shall be given a copy of the journal. Those interested in reviewing books or have received review copies from publishers should write to the Editor with some indication of their field of specialisation.
4. Contributions accepted for the journal are not normally returned. Authors are therefore advised to keep a copy of their articles to facilitate reply to any queries, the Editor and/or referee(s) may have. All articles, book reviews and enquiries should be sent to the Editor, NEHU Publications, Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003 at tbsubba@sancharnet.in.

The responsibility for the facts stated and opinions expressed is wholly that of the contributors and the Editor and the North-Eastern Hill University Publications accept no responsibility for them.