

Literary Criticism And Bhasa Literature

*A Study with Reference to
Khasi Literature*



D.R.L. Nonglait

2005

*This Book
is dedicated to
My Parents*

Mr. Dramwell Sohtun

and

Mrs. Dressina L. Nonglait

*who by their prayers have
pulled my small head, my
humble heart and my feeble
hands together to turn a few of
their dreams into reality.*

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Khasi Literature*

D.R.L. Nonglait, M.A, M.Phil, PGDTE, Ph.D.

2005

The Design (Sketch-maps) on the Front Cover Page contains some ideas for the development of critical thinking and it has no connection with the correctness of states or international boundaries.

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Foreword

I am thankful to Dr. D.R.L. Nonglait for the opportunity he has given to me to see his valuable contribution to the study of Khasi Literature - "Literary Criticism and *Bhasa* Literature". I have gone through it with a great deal of interest, and I have been impressed by the mark of studious scholarship that is apparent throughout the pages of this valuable study, which has left me with a sense of satisfaction and pleasure. Here I could see that serious concern for the healthy development of Khasi Literature, which itself comprises different genres of creative writing of comparatively recent origin, going back to the early 1840's, though it is also true that the Khasi language has established itself as a recognized language, incidentally, the first one to be so recognized among the tribal languages of North-East India. The importance of Khasi literary studies is obvious.

The role of Criticism in bringing about a conscious growth of literature is clear and indisputable. It has to be acknowledged, however, till very recently we had not seen enough of a critical approach to the study of Khasi Literature, apart from what would appear to have been passing remarks on their own works by the Khasi writers themselves, notably by the acknowledged King of Poetry, U Soso Tham, himself as in the Preface to his *Ki Sngi Barim U Hynniew Trep*. The need for a general and more comprehensive study is obvious and in this regard, I feel that Dr. D.R.L. Nonglait's present study serves this purpose at a very relevant point of time. As such the work is a valuable contribution to Khasi Studies and as such it merits the thoughtful attention of serious Khasi writers, teachers and students alike.

Dr. Nonglait has age in his favour, and I trust that in time he will come out with more studies of this type. This is my hope and expectation and I am confident that I shall not be disappointed.

I wish the author of this valuable study all success in the years that lie ahead, and for the personal satisfaction that I have derived from a perusal of his manuscript, I have this Word of Thanks to express : *Khublei!*

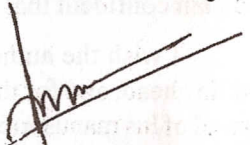

(Prof. I.M. Simon)
Mawlai-Umjaiur,
Shillong - 793 008

On The Book

First of all, I congratulate Dr. D.R.L. Nonglait for bringing out this outstanding book on Literacy Criticism. This book will provide the readers, the ideal step in understanding Literary Criticism and *Bhasa* Literature. Through this book, *Literary Criticism and Bhasa Literature A Study With Reference to Khasi Literature*, Dr. Nonglait a specialist on Khasi Literary Criticism has :

- enlightened the readers about the nature and functions of literary criticism.
- thrown to the readers (particularly students and scholars of Khasi literature) the major approaches to literature which are represented by Literary Criticism.
- shown the general development of criticism in its historical context.
- critiqued the development of Khasi Literary Criticism and focused on the need to develop the 'critical mind'.
- reviewed the Khasi M.A. syllabus on Literary Criticism and emphasized the need to revise and strengthen the present syllabus.

This is an ideal book for anyone who is interested in Literary Criticism in general and on Khasi literature in particular. The author has done an excellent job in bringing the gulf between literature and criticism. I sincerely hope this book will provide us with the basic foundation on the subject.


(Dr. (Mrs.) A. Kharmalki)
Reader
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Preface

Critical activities in Khasi had begun in the early decades of the twentieth century in the forms of appreciations, remarks, essays, prefaces, introductions etc. on various genres or books of literature. During the period between the second decade of the twentieth century and the 1960s, Owen Rowie, Soso Tham, H. Elias, D.N.S. Wahlang, Primose Gatphoh and F.M. Pugh were prominent among those who had made such contributions. Although these learned men were capable of critical thinking, a critical study of literature was not felt, as Khasi literature during that time was at its infant stage. Thus, the period may be called a period of pre-critical response. However, the seeds planted by the above few writers in the arable area of literary criticism have now begun to attain greater heights.

*It was since the 1970s that literary criticism in Khasi began to take its firm steps. With the exception of F.M. Pugh's publication entitled *Ka Prosodi bad ka Retorik* in 1970 and B.L. Swer's *Katto katne Shaphang ka Sonnett* in 1979, H.W. Sten appeared as a lone influential critic of the period when he brought out four books of criticism including (i) *Ki Poetry u O.M. Wahlang* (1976) (ii) *Ka Poitri u Primose Gatphoh* (1979), (iii) *Ki Sur Khasi Na Ka Duitara Ksiar* (1979) and (iv) *Ka Jingbishar Bniah* (1979). The period between 1970 and 1979 has undoubtedly marked the real beginning of Khasi literary criticism.*

The period between 1980 and 1999 takes another kind of growth. This period witnesses a more rapid growth and development when many writers, teachers and scholars of Khasi literature including women contributed more substantially for the enrichment of Khasi literary criticism. Over 20 critical works have been brought out during this period. Many of these works are critical analyses of literary texts, while some of them are concerned with literary theories on different types of literature. This period may be called a period of critical awakening. The major critics who belonged to this period are H.W. Sten himself, B.L. Swer, S.S. Majaw and J.S. Shangpliang among many others. In the first decade of the twenty first century, literary criticism in Khasi seems to maintain its steady growth when some new and promising writers appeared on the scene.


Khasi is one of the major Indian languages which do not have much affinity with any other famous or more developed languages of the country. However, as of now, it has emerged as one of the developed bhasas. With Shillong as the centre of education in the region since the time of the British rule, one cannot deny the fact that Khasi language has comparatively made good progress over the years. Now when criticism has been growing side by side with creative writings, Khasi language is asserting itself to places held by other developed Indian languages.

This study is a brief survey of the development of literary criticism in Khasi which is one of the new bhasas. Its finding is that, a balanced growth of both creative and critical writings is inevitable. While trying to achieve this goal, this study also suggests that the teaching of language and criticism components at the College and University levels needs to be strengthened.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. I.M. Simon for the pains he has taken in reading the manuscript of this book, for his valuable advice and his words of encouragement and good wishes. I express my gratitude to Dr. (Mrs.) A. Kharmalki for her comment and her words of appreciation that have been contained in this book.*

My sincere gratitude is also due to Prof. K.C. Boral, my teacher and my guide who has rightly suggested to write a book of this kind. Last but not the least, much thanks go to my friend, Andrew Marbaniang for his kind help, without which the publication of this book may not be possible at this point of time.

*Dated Lumdiengjri, Shillong,
The 30th May, 2005.*


(D.R.L. Nonglalt)

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CHAPTER V

Literary Criticism and Khasi Literature

In order to present a clear picture of the role of literary criticism in the development of Khasi literature, this section may be divided into two subsections, i.e. (1) The background and the kind of growth of critical activities in Khasi, and (2) Introduction of literary criticism in the college and university syllabi.

5.1. The background and the kind of growth of critical activities in Khasi:

An account of the origin and development of Khasi literature shows that most of the early Khasi writers up to the 1960s were only interested in creativity and in language development. Their contributions were mostly in the areas of translation, transcreations or adaptation and creative writings which had developed considerably in various ways, whereas criticism which is a new area of literary activity was not given much attention. This does not imply that the Khasi writers are not critical. Traditionally, the Khasis believed that human mind is endowed with both the creative and critical faculties. In social life, it is assumed that a man who has attained a mature age, say about 30 years old and above is capable of critical thinking. At this age, the Khasis believe that any right thinking person can see things around him correctly and can decide what is wrong and what is right. He/She can reasonably accept things which is good for him and the society, and anything which is against the ideology of good living and right thinking can be rejected straight away.

With the influence of the English missionaries, there had been many social changes in the Khasi community. People started neglecting their traditional virtues and heritage. The native Christians and non-Christians began to imitate western life style and do not care much about their own traditional ideology and customs. But then alarmed by such a cultural invasion, there happened a cultural awakening where many Khasi writers including Christians and non-Christians who criticized the negligence of Khasi tradition in Anglo-Khasi literatures. They reacted against the attempt to change the marriage customs of the Khasis. In their attempt to uphold their own tradition, Khasi writers such as Rabon Singh, Jeebon Roy, Radhon Sing Berry, Sib Charan Roy, Soso Tham, and Homiwell Lyngdoh Nonglait had made great efforts to put into writing whatever they knew from their forefathers. These writers were equipped with the critical mind and had resisted outside influence to preserve the Khasi traditional virtues. However, since literary criticism has not been considered to be a very significant among the Khasis during that time, the above writers did not develop sound critical theories.

When we talk of critical theories in the true sense of the term, there was actually no attempt towards formulating any critical theory. Prior to 1970, no critical text in Khasi was published. This does not mean that the Khasi writers in those days were not interested in critical activities. The reality was that they had to fill up the vacuum in the school and college syllabi, which laid stress only on language, culture and other main branches of literature, such as poetry, drama and fiction. Since the components of critical study was not included in the school syllabus, the need for critical works was not strongly felt in those days.

A spark of critical writing in Khasi was emitted in 1919, when Sib Charan Roy reacted against reading a novel which he considered as a mere story about sex. He also expressed his unfavourable attitude towards reading the *Bible*, the *Mahabharat* and the *Koran*.¹ According to him, the reading of these books including the novel might cause the moral virtues of the Khasis to sink down to foreign cultures. In 1925,

Edrenel Chyne shows his critical insights on poetry in his “*Ka Jingai Khmat*” (Foreword) to Soso Tham’s *Ki Poetry Khasi* (1925), where he explained the functions of poetry, and the difficulties faced by the Khasi poets. The functions of poetry, he said are: “To reveal the truth and beauty as an iris of the things in nature”.² In his understanding, poetry gives peace and consolation to the human soul, which we cannot find in any other branch of literature. However, his *Ka “Jingai khmnat”* may not be acceptable to some critics as the real beginning of critical writings on Khasi Poetry. M.B. Jyrwa who has tried to go to the root of critical activity in Khasi reported of an anonymous critical appreciation on poetry published in the Khasi News Paper ‘*U Lurshai*’ (March-April, 1920) where the poet discussed about the rhythm and accent in a poem.³ Seint Singh an evangelist by profession in 1934 expressed his unfavourable attitude towards reading certain love stories. His critical expression was recorded in *UNongialam Khristan* (October 1934). In 1937, Owen Rowie appeared to be one among the Khasi writers who tried to develop their critical thinking in the study of literature when he wrote his essay entitled “*Ka Literature*” which was published in *Ka Syngkhong Jingtip* (April 1937). The remarkable Khasi poet, Soso Tham himself in 1935-36, ventured to define poetry in his “*Ka Jingpynshai*” (Introduction) to *Ki Sngi Barim U Hynniewtrep* (1935) and in his note “*Ha ki Nongpule*” (To the readers) contained in *Ki Poetry Khasi* (1936). To him, poetry is a spirit, a musical instrument and a two-edged sword. He believes that poetry comes from God. Its function is to enlarge the thoughts, strengthen the heart and to express life. Soso Tham studied a lot about English poetry, when he confesses – “Many years have I spent – what is poetry?”.⁴ Though he was influenced by many English poets and critics, Soso Tham upholds his own native thoughts and experiences.

In the same year, H. Elias also had contributed to critical activity in writing his essay “*Kaei ka Poitri?*” (What is Poetry?) which was published in a magazine *Ka Syngkhong Jingtip* (October, 1937). This writer elaborated many aspects concerning poetry. He seems to have

gained much understanding from W. H. Hudson’s *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*. Laborious Nongrum reported that Theodore Cajee in 1939 wrote his critical appreciation on some of Elias poems which was the first of its kind.⁵ D.N.S. Wahlang also in his *Ki Sur Khasi* (1954) published his radio speech “*Ki nongthoh poetry bad ki kam jong ki*” in the preface of the book. Another Khasi poet, Primrose Gatphoh, in 1928 wrote his essay “*Balei ngi dei ban pule poetry?*” (Why is it necessary to read poetry?), but this was published only in 1961 in his book *Ki Umjer Ksiar*. Though it is a very short essay, his deep experience and insights of poetry and its value makes him higher than Chyne, Tham and Sohlia. S. Khongsit also, in his *Ki Sur Ha La Ri* (1966) presents his critical understanding on poetry and published his essay “*Kaei ka poetry?*” (What is poetry?). In the year 1967 Wilson Reade wrote a note “*Ki Umpohliew Na Mihsngithiang*” in the form of an introduction to Morkha Joseph’s *Ka Ryngkap*. In his note he expresses his critical appreciation to the poet’s work. Owen Rowie in his observation of D.S. Khongdup’s *Na Lum Khasi* (1968) shows his critical insights on the types of poetry. Besides Rowie reveals his critical understanding on the dramatic techniques when he wrote his introduction to Khongdup’s drama entitled *U Baieit Donshkor* (1967) and to S.J. Duncan’s drama *Ka Tiewlarun* (1968). While in his “*Ktien Lamkhmat*” (Foreword) to Duncan’s “*Phuit ! Ka Sabuit* (1968) expressed his critical observation that the short stories contained in this book are comparable to the short stories of other languages.⁶ F.M. Pugh also in his “*Ka Jingsngew*” (Apprehension) to Duncan’s work considers the story “*Phim Ngeit II*” as a novelette and calls Duncan as an inborn naturalist, innate psychologist and born story teller.⁷ Besides, between 1966 and 1968, Pugh wrote a number of comments and introductions to different books of literature which have been published during those years, including his “*Ka Jingkynthoh*” (Comment) on V.G. Barih’s *Ka Drama U Tirot Singh* (1966); His introduction to S. Khongsit’s *Ki Sur Na La Ri* (1966); A preface “*Sha ki Nongpule*” (to the readers) in his drama entitled *Ka Sawangka Ki Saw Ngut Ba Iap Mynsaw*” (1968). All these writings reflect his deep insights of various types of literature.

From 1919 till 1968, critical activity in Khasi had appeared scatteringly in various forms of essays, prefaces, introductions and forewords to different books of literature. Nevertheless, such writings cannot be undermined, as some among those articles are included in the College and University Syllabi in later years till today when literary criticism in Khasi has attained greater heights. It was only when F. M. Pugh undertook a more serious and indepth study on poetry and drama in his work *Ka Prosodi Bad Ka Retorik* (1970) that literary criticism came of age. H. W. Sten, another important critic had in 1976, published his first critical work, *Ki Poetry U O. M. Wahlang*. In 1979, he published three important critical works, including *Ka Poitri U Primrose Gatphoh*, *Ki Sur Na Ka Duitara Ksiar*, a study of Soso Tham's poetry and *Ka Jingbishar Bniah*, where he discusses the meaning and forms of criticism; and the functions of a critic. In these books, he had also highlighted the literary concepts of the world's eminent critics from Plato to Wordsworth and the Khasi critics from Edrenel Chyne, to F. M. Pugh.

B. L. Swer had also worked in this field and made his contribution through his book *Katto Katne Shaphang Ka Sonnet* which he published in 1979. In 1980, H. W. Sten published another critical work on Soso Tham's *Ki Sngi Barim U Hynñiew Trep* in his book *Na Ka Hyndai Sha Ka Lawei*. Another Khasi scholar, R. S. Lyngdoh published his book *U Sier Lapalang Kumba Paw Ha Ki Nongthoh Bapher* in 1981. In that year B. L. Swer contributed another critical work through his book *Katto Katne Shaphang Ka Lyric*. With this book, he raises himself as one of the eminent Khasi critics on poetry.

H. W. Sten who took the lead among the Khasi critics published his important book *Shaphang Ka Novel* in 1982. The same year, S. S. Majaw brought out his first critical work *Ki Syrwet Jingshai* in which he critically studied some of the poems of Soso Tham and V. G. Bareh. Next came Herman Roy Bareh when he

published his critical work entitled *F.M. Pugh: A Study of Plot and Character* in 1983. Laborious Nongrum published his *Ka Jingbishar Bniah Ia Ka Literature Khasi* (1961-70) in the year 1984. M. S. Kharsyntiew also appeared on the scene when he published two of his works in 1984. One is *Ki Khyndai Jylla* which is a critical analysis on H. W. Sten's poetry *Ka Burom Ba Lajah*, and the other is *U Amjad Ali: Ka Synshar bad Bishar Khasi* which is a critical study of one of the themes in Ali's poems. In 1985, H. W. Sten, B. L. Swer and B. War published their critical essays in a booklet *Ki Snap Ka Bishar Bniah*. Another noted Khasi writer, J. S. Shangpliang brought out his book *Leslie Harding Pde As A Novelist* (1988) in which he critically examined the techniques used by Pde in his four novelettes. In 1989, Rajjesh K. Lyngdoh published his *Ka Jingpynshai Ia U Kynjri Ksiar*. In the same year, S.S. Majaw brought out a book entitled *Ki Ese bad ki Poem* which includes two critical essays namely "Ka Ballad u La" and "Ka Philosophy bad ka Drama Khasi". Another thematic study of Amjad Ali's poems appeared in 1990 when Weily Meris Majaw published her work entitled *U Amjad Ali kum u Nongkysiew*. While making a more substantial contribution towards literary criticism on Khasi poetry H. W. Sten published his *Khasi Poetry (Origin and Development)* in 1990. H. W. Sten, J. S. Shangpliang and D. Mawroh brought out another book *Na Kiwei Bad Na Lade Bad Ki Snap Ka Novel*, in 1991. S.S. Majaw made some more contributions in the field of criticism between the year 1990 and 1993 when he brought out three critical works, namely, *U Nongtem Duitara bad ka Jingpynshai* (1990), *Ka Sohlyngngem bad ka Jingpynshai U Oskar Wahlang* (1992), and *Ka Tragoidia bad ki Poem* (1993). Critical studies on drama were obviously lacking behind. B. L. Swer took the initiative and published in 1994, *Na Pneh Ka Rymsan*, a work on drama criticism. A year later, Loloshon Marbaniang published his critical work on Khasi poetry entitled, *Ki Balad u Bronath Thangkhiew bad u Oscar M. Wahlang* (1995). H. W. Sten's last publication, *An Introduction to Aristotle's Poetics*

appeared in the same year. The year 1998 also marked another significant achievement when two women scholars, Streamlet Dkhar and M. B. Jyrwa appeared on the scene. Streamlet Dkhar published her *Ka Jingbishar Bniah Ia Ka Shangkawiah Ki Rang*, while M. B. Jyrwa brought out her critical study on H. W. Sten's poetry *Ka Burom Ba Lajah Bynta I*. Another valuable work of criticism was brought out by I. War Pakma in 2000 through his book *Ka Pyrshiauw* which contains some critical essays on the novel as well as on the drama. In the same year, S.S. Majaw who appeared to be one of the eminent Khasi critics published his *Ka Kitab u Job kum ka Drama*. His critical study on "The Book of Job" made him one of the important Khasi critics on the Khasi drama. Majaw also added one more critical work to his credit when he published his *Ki Sdad ka Jingtup* in 2001 within which he contained a number of critical articles. M.B. Jyrwa's book *Ki Nongrim Literature bad ka Jingbishar Bniah* which was published in 2002 is another important critical work. However, her attempt to conceptualize the word "Nongrim" in the study of literature in Khasi needs for further speculations. Besides interpreting the inherent meaning of the term, critics will have to also examine its theoretical implications. And the latest publication is *Ka Jingbishar Bniah ia ka Novel U F.S. Lyngdoh Ka Jingieit Ba Nylla*, published by D.R.L. Nonglait in 2004. His is a critical analysis of one of F.S. Lyngdoh's novels.

5.2. Introduction of Literary Criticism in the College and University Syllabi:

Having given a brief account of the development of literary criticism in Khasi, it is necessary to trace when and how the papers in literary criticism was introduced by the university at college and university levels. Prior to 1976, there was no paper in literary criticism at the undergraduate syllabus. It was only when the North Eastern Hill University introduced the Honours Course in Khasi during 1976, that one paper in literary criticism was included at

the Honours course. St. Mary's College, Shillong, started teaching for the Honours course from that year, which was followed by Synod College, Shillong in 1977. As there was hardly one or two critical texts in Khasi, most of the course components for the paper were selected from critical writings found in the forms of prefaces, essays, and introductions. Because of the nature of the course material, the weightage of marks given to this paper was only 50 marks. The rest 50 marks was covered with critical works of English critics such as William Wordsworth, John Dryden and Matthew Arnold.

The introduction of a course in literary criticism has excited many of the leading Khasi authors, and the need for more critical texts in Khasi was strongly felt. The period from 1970 to 1999 marked a great effort made by the Khasi writers in this new area. About 25 books related to criticism were published during this period. With this achievement, the vacuum in the syllabus at the undergraduate and Honours courses was filled in, and English texts were no longer used up to the Honour courses. However, considering the quality of the study materials, there are lots more to be improved. Besides the teaching and learning of the more difficult areas of the Khasi language study and criticism should be up-dated, so as to keep pace with the standard of the more developed *bhasas* in the country. Topics such as standardisation of the Khasi language and phonetics should be included in Honours courses in Khasi. For criticism paper, the teaching of modernism and colonialism should also be started right from the honours level, the objective of which is to make the learners more capable both in critical thinking and in creative writing as well.

When the postgraduate course in Khasi was offered by the North Eastern Hill University in 1981, it was found that there is a dearth of the course materials at the M.A. level. In view of the situation, six English courses were offered in order to provide the required

number of courses for the fulfilment of an M.A. Degree in Khasi. The components of literary criticism were offered both in English and Khasi. Papers in English were taught by the teachers of English. Whereas the teachers for the papers in Khasi were taught by those having their M.A. Degree from different disciplines like History, Political Science, English and Philosophy. One may understand that it is not easy for the teachers of Khasi to teach a subject concerning the study of language, culture and literature including literary criticism. But despite many irregularities, the support offered and contributions made by the teachers of English had helped the Khasi Department to grow up to its present stature.

In this study due to the limitation of space, it is not possible to elaborate every detail of facts and figures, concerning the scope of syllabus adopted by the Khasi Department. But the fact remains that the syllabus has been revised from time to time and the English textbooks were in due course of time replaced by the Khasi textbooks. However, it is important to note that the need for the enrichment and development of Khasi language is also strongly felt. So some courses in English linguistics were also offered by the Department with the aim to help develop the Khasi language study. Considering the contents and context of literary criticism and the significance given to it much is needed to be done to strengthen the area of critical analysis and evaluation. The question arises, whether the nature of a syllabus can help achieving the objective of the development of Khasi language and literature?

In order to understand the present situation and the scope of literary criticism at the postgraduate level in Khasi, it is necessary to look at the number of courses offered at the M.A. level. The courses were divided into three main areas concerning language, culture and literature including literary criticism. The description of the syllabus is as follows.

M. A. (Khasi) Syllabus

| Semester | I | II | III | IV | No. of Papers |
|--|---|----|-----|----|-----------------------|
| 1. Linguistics | I | II | III | IV | 4 |
| 2. Culture & Khasi Literature | - | - | I | II | 2 |
| 3. Literature: | | | | | |
| - Khasi Poetry | I | II | - | - | 2 |
| - Khasi Fiction | I | - | - | II | 2 |
| - Khasi Drama | - | I | II | - | 1 |
| - Khasi Literary Criticism | I | - | - | - | 1 |
| - Literary Theory & Criticism | - | I | - | - | 1 |
| - Literature in Translation | - | - | I | - | 1 |
| - Environmental Awareness in Khasi Literature & Khasi Poetry | - | - | - | I | 1 |
| Total No. of Course | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 Courses/ Papers |

Having a look at the above course distribution, it is obvious that much emphasis is given on the study of language. The references are all in English, except B. War's essay "*Ka Dur Ki Sur Ha Ka Ktien Khasi*" which is relevant to the aspects of Khasi phonology for the language component. This situation poses tough challenges to the students in their studies, but at the same time the English texts broaden their knowledge of different language theories which are useful in the study of Khasi. The components in the two courses of culture and Khasi literature are properly selected. However, in order to cope with the challenges posed by the changing patterns in respect of family structure, social and economic activities as well as the life styles of the people, the courses on culture need to be strengthened by replacing some course materials or by adding one or two relevant texts to each of the two courses as the existing ones are not that difficult.

Considering the components for the courses in literature papers; the course materials selected for Khasi poetry and Khasi fiction are to be appreciated. On the one hand, Khasi poetry is catching up with the mainstream Indian poetry. Judging the texts prescribed in the syllabus, it

may not be wrong to state that Khasi fiction has grown up to the stature which are comparable to other well developed *bhasa* literatures. Good novels, such as D. S. Khongdup's *U Donputit Bad U Khlieh Ka Khnap Masi*, W. Tiewsoh's *Ka Kam Kalbut* and H. W. Sten's *Kwah Bymjukut* are included in the syllabus. Khasi drama, on the other hand, is lagging behind. Perhaps, due to the dearth of good textbooks, or if that is not the case, courses on drama need to be revised. Coming to another paper, Literature in Translation, it may be said that translation is an important area of Khasi literature. However, since there are only few good translations deserving for postgraduate study, these few had been prescribed after many revisions of the syllabus.

Since the primary objective of this paper is to look at the components of literary criticism at the M.A. (Khasi) syllabus, it is necessary to briefly discuss each course of literary criticism. There are two courses on Literary Criticism, i.e., Course III and Course VII. Course III called "Khasi Literary Criticism" comprises of the following Khasi texts:

Unit I

1. H. W. Sten: *Ka Jingbishar Bniah*, Chapters 1-7; "Ka Theori Bad Criticism" from *Khasi Studies* (April-June) 1991.

Unit II

1. D. N. S. Wahlang: "Ki Nongthoh Poetry Bad Ki Kam Jong Ki" from *Ki Sur Khasi*.
 2. H. Elias: "Shaphang Ka Poetry" from *Ka Hamsaia Ki Por*.
 3. P. G. Gatphoh: "Balei ba ngi dei ban pule ia ka Poetry" from *Ki Umjer Ksiar*.

Unit III

1. S. S. Majaw: *Ka Tragoidia* – Part I.
 2. B. L. Swer: *Na Pneh Ka Rynsan*, Chapters, I, II & IV.

Unit IV

1. J. S. Shangliang: *Ki Snap Ka Novel*.

If the texts included in this paper are given to the students of English literature, they will find that most of the Khasi critics have drawn their understanding from the English texts. They might also say that although this paper is called Khasi literary criticism, the only fact that can support the claim is that the texts are written in Khasi. Of course, all the texts are influenced by the western theories, such as Greek, Roman and English, nevertheless, if one goes a little deeper, he will find that these works also contained the inherent thoughts derived from the Khasi tradition. Besides other critics, the attempt of B. L. Swer in his *Na Pneh Ka Rynsan* deserves appreciation, for he writes about the traditional concepts of the Khasi folk dramatic performances in various religious and social functions. Thus, the significance that one may find in this paper is that the Khasi critics are trying to make useful applications of the western theories while at the same time they maintain the values and practices of the tribe. It is also important to note that the criticism paper in Khasi should have more components which includes the entire development of literary criticism in Khasi so as to voice the thoughts and contemporary intellectual development of the Khasi people.

Course VII, on the other hand, called "Literary Theory and Criticism" includes only the English texts as mentioned below:

Unit I

1. Aristotle: *The Poetics*.

Unit II

1. William Wordsworth: "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads".
 2. Mathew Arnold: "The Study of Poetry" and "The Functions of Criticism at the Present Time".
 3. T. S. Eliot: "Tradition and the Individual Talent".

Unit III

1. Henry James: "The Art of Fiction".

Unit IV

1. Northrop Fry: "The Archetype of Literature".

Since the inception of the Department of Khasi in 1981, English texts were included in the M.A. Course in Khasi, especially for the papers in literary criticism. The obvious reason for the inclusion of English texts was that the number of critical works published in Khasi was not adequate to provide the required materials for the M.A. syllabus. Besides, it is also felt that, there is a significant need to introduce to the students of Khasi literature some of the western literary theories, in order to help them acquire the basic critical concepts. But, depending on what is acquired through a partial study of western theories without moulding the traditional ideas will not help the Khasi critics to formulate any significant literary theory. In fact, the knowledge of at least one or two literatures of other languages will contribute more substantially for the enrichment of the native literature and criticism.

It may not be wrong to state that the components contained in these two criticism papers are not far inferior to that of the English Department, NEHU. However, in view of the contemporary developments in the field of criticism, these courses need to be strengthened. The English essays included in Course VII of the syllabus are not enough to provide good theoretical knowledge for the students of Khasi literature. Besides, when emphasis is laid only on a few books or essays, the scope of knowledge for the learners is limited. Hence, there is a need for a wider critical approach. While aiming for a wider scope of studying literary theory and criticism, the present syllabus needs to be revised where modern theories such as modernism, post modernism, structuralism, post structuralism and many more up to new historicism and British cultural studies may be taught perhaps in an introductory approach. And the selection of the course materials for the paper in English should avoid any sort of duplication on the same theories which are already part of the other paper in Khasi. If necessary, the Department can offer one optional paper relating to contemporary critical theories. The students of Khasi literature need to have a clear view of the critical theories that have a bearing on intellectual practices, so that in due course they will be able to evolve their own process of thinking, and shape a theory which will

embody original thoughts and universal ideas as well. Such attempt will ensure that the students of Khasi literature are able to keep pace with new developments in the field of literary criticism around the world.

References :

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2. Edrenel Chyne. "Ka Jingaikhmat" (Foreword) in Soso Tham's *Ki Poetry Khasi* (1925) and reprinted in *Na ka Thiar ki Longshuwa* (Prose), (First Edition, 1984).
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6. S.J. Duncan, *Phuit ! Ka Sabuit bad kiwei de ki Khana*, (Shillong, NEHU Publication, Reprinted, 1994, p.
7. *Ibid.*, p. v.