Chapter Five

Reading Cultural Text:
Analysis of Genres and Expressions in Music and Literary Works

The work of art has been commonly analyzed through their products – a piece of music, a novel, or a painting. Although, the work of art like a novel has an individual author, or the music piece has a composer, the final product of their craft has not been considered just as the creation by an individual person. Literary theorists and historians also go beyond the text to see how a particular work came to be produced at a particular period and social situation and the context in which a particular work of art is made, therefore this methodology has been considered as equally important. In this study, the term performance includes text, auditory, and visual presentations. Jeff Todd Titon argues that to resolve the dilemma in folklore studies to choose between two different paradigms of studying art, as text or performance theorists have ‘embraced a new sense of the text’ (1995). He argues that: “Rather than trade text for performance, we treat text as performances and performances as text, blurring the distinction between them and thereby extending the meaning of text to cover any object of interpretation” (1995). The concept of performance has also been widened to include the artistic work of art, such as the painted picture and the novel.

The concept of ‘text’ has been defined in various terms and pertaining to the analysis that one is engaged with. Dietrich Hart holds that ‘the term text, like every other theoretically descriptive term, does not belong to the ‘facts’ but rather to the perspective of the researcher’, therefore, at the methodological level, ‘text operates as a heuristic model’ (Hart, 2004). Most commonly, text has been conceptualized as ‘written words, usually
words given some kind of authority’ (Titon, 1995). On the other hand, semiologist consider text as ‘mechanism constituting heterogeneous semiotic spaces, in whose continuum the message circulates’ (Lotman, 1994). In a more concrete level, text has been considered as ‘something made, created, produced…a materially perceivable thing that refers to a maker (author), to a set of rules for production (poetics) and to a person who is in want of the product (consumer)’ (Harth, 2004). A text does not exist on its own, even though it has its own internal structures and dynamics. The importance and significance of a text is realized only through its usages—reading and decoding. Barthes has described that ‘the Text is radically symbolic: a work conceived, perceived and received in its integrally symbolic nature is text’ (Barthes, 1977:158-159). Therefore, the text is conceptualized from various perspectives, as having a ‘materiality’, containing symbolic significance, and well established relations with the wider world out of its own existence. In certain societies, according to Malinowski, there exist an ‘intimate connection’ between the ‘word, mythos, sacred tales’ and the ‘moral deeds’, social organization and even the practical activities (Malinowski, 1948: 100). Further, he argued that in ‘primitive’ societies ‘myths’ are not ‘merely a story told but a reality lived’ (ibid). The novels and fictions of modern society may not function in the same powerful way as myths in ‘primitive’ societies; however, being a social and cultural product the text in literature and art serves the purposes of stretching the common beliefs and fantasies that are prevalent in society. And, even in modern societies there are instances where literary works, like science fiction, have initiated cultist groups.

Some scholars have further differentiated linguistic text and cultural text. According to Lotman and Piatigorsky: “The concept of text, in the sense in which it is used in the study of culture, is different from the linguistic concept of text. The point of departure for the cultural concept of text is precisely that moment when the fact of linguistic expression ceases to be perceived as sufficient to become a text” (1978). Apart from the influence and presences of cultural values and symbols in the text, the cultural text is not a monolithic ‘material’. Cultural text are pluralistic and heterogeneous, and does not restrict to the ‘written words’, but also varying works of arts and crafts. For a message to be considered

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1 The concept of text apparently varies from one field to another. Titon describes that: “For literary scholars a text is a work of literature; for historians, a text is a historical document; for musicologist, a text is the words to a piece of music. Scholars make sense of literary text using a combination of hermeneutic and structuralist approaches” (Titon, 1995).
as text, Lotman and Piatigorsky argue that the ‘message must be incomprehensible or barely comprehensible, and must need further translation and interpretation’ (1978). The distinctive features of cultural text lie in deeper understanding and significance, which goes beyond the linguistic meanings. ‘Incomprehensibility’ and ‘need for interpretation’ has been considered as the cardinal features of cultural text (Lotman and Piatigorsky, 1978).

Recently, not only the works of art and products of cultural practices, but also culture have been construed as ‘text’ and readable. Those who advocate this perspective have argued that interpreting social life ‘is like trying to read a manuscript’ and culture is seen as ‘text building’ practices (Geertz, 1973: 10). Further, Geertz holds that ‘once human behavior is seen as symbolic action’ it becomes equivalent to the ‘phonation in speech, pigment in painting, line in writing, or sonance in music’, and the question whether ‘culture is patterned conduct or frame of mind, lose sense’ (ibid). The method by which culture has been analyzed by using the ‘text-model’ have raised several questions. Such exercise reduces ‘culture’ to some specific ‘observable traits and traces’ as representative of the social life of a community (Harth 2004). If one has to read culture as text, each cultural action is one part of the religious, political or the aesthetic. Therefore, culture is maintained by the community, the communal culture being conserved by the community as a whole. Deviating from the common notion of ‘text’ as representation, Derrida argues that everything is ‘text’ and ‘there is nothing outside the text’ (Derrida, 1976: 158). His view on text projects that ‘there is noting prior to textuality’, then there is no such thing as representation (Lucy, 2004: 143). Text, for Derrida, is not the imitation of presence; but, instead presence is itself the effect of textuality.

Text, in any form, has been considered as mute and dead until it comes into being through the act of reading. The very existence of text presupposes reading and understanding of some sort. The nature of text is plural (Barthes), and even reading/interpretation of the text is also varied. Basically, reading has been considered as ‘understanding’ or further as interpretation and translation. However, according to Dietrich Harth ‘reading is never a pure or linear apprehension of something given, nor is it the
simple repetition of an intentional meaning’ (2004). Rather, reading has been conceptualized as ‘an imaginative and constructive process of building a virtual text with a new meaning by amalgamating the two worlds: the world of the book (text) and the world of the reader (consumer) (ibid). Reading has been considered as ‘reconfiguration’ of the text and completing the significance of the text (Ricoeur, 1988:158). It is also meditational, in the sense that this act completes and transcends the boundaries between the author, reader and the text. Reading is the moment and the time when the ‘fictive world of the text, the real world of the reader comes to confronts with each other’ (ibid). According to Ricoeur, ‘the ideal type of reading’ is marked by the ‘fusion’ and not ‘confusion’ of the ‘world of the text’ and ‘world of the reader’ (ibid: 179). In a more analytical and comprehensive approach, Barthes has formulated five codes of reading; (1) the hermeneutic (2) the ‘seme’ (3) the symbolic grouping, (4) actions, and (5) cultural codes (reference) (Barthes, 1990: 19-20). In one of his popular essays, The Death of the Author, Barthes argues the significance of the text lies in what the reader made out of the text, and once the author has created the text, the text has its own existence.

In analyzing the structural forms of the text, semiotic method had been considered as the most appropriate and suitable. But, of late, structural analysis of cultural text have been questioned and criticized from various quarters. Literary theorists like Bakhtin have objected to the ‘sequential formalization and depersonalization’ at the core of the structuralist method, where there is only one subject and things are transformed into concepts’ (Brandist 2002: 167). Bakhtin suggest that structuralism looks at dialectical, logical relations between elements of text, whereas he is interested in the dialogic relations between the texts that permeate the text as a whole (ibid). “Text”, according to Bakhtin, “lives on making the contact with another text (with context)” (ibid). This contact is seen as dialogical relations between the texts (utterances) and not mechanical oppositions within the single text. Further, this contact was characterized by ‘contact of personalities and not of things’ (ibid). Bakhtin had tried to bring the human nature of action and reaction to the mechanical analysis of cultural text as signs and symbols.

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2 Reading, as an act of going through the literary text, and reading as methodology differs. As a method, reading goes beyond what is presented, and transcends the boundaries of the text’s and readers’ world.
Bakhtin considers text not just as signs and symbols, but 'utterances'. He argues that 'every cultural artifact is an utterance that was created in life as a unique orientation towards the realm of objective validity from a particular location in the indefinite chain of utterances' (Brandist, 2002: 168). The 'sense' that is in the text is a product of this correlation, between the real experiences of life and the 'text'. Bakhtin says that in 'every word there are voices, sometimes infinitely distant, nameless, almost impersonal voices' (Brandist, 2002: 168). Therefore, the cultural text, in Bakhtin's sense, contains lived human experiences in form of 'voices' and 'utterances', which can only be comprehended by taking the context into consideration.

In this chapter, the approach is not to read the entire cultural practices as 'text', but to analyze the cultural representations on 'text' in the artistic works of the Tangkhuls, through the mediums of music and literature. The emergence of different genres of music and literature will be interrogated by taking into account the social and cultural changes that have occurred in Tangkhul society. However, as most of the contemporary Tangkhul cultural practices are adoptions from other cultures and society, the genres and modes of expression needs to be considered with the influences that the Tangkhul musicians have been influenced.

**Genres and Expression in Tangkhul Music and Literature**

The adoption of written culture by the literate Tangkhuls began to shape the modes of artistic expressions of the community. While on the one hand, we can see certain forms of continuity from the oral literature, the new forms of artistic activities were influenced by various factors and agencies. As it had happened with most of the non-Western societies, the Western form of education which was introduced during the colonial period was one of the 'crucial processes in the culture change' (Malinowski, 1945: 67). Since education is not just a 'formal learning' process, but with the socialization of an individual, it leaves lasting impact. The new genres of artistic works that emerged in Tangkhul society were shaped by the modes of education that was introduced by the Western Missionaries during the colonial period, which was largely based on the Western form of formal learning process.
Therefore, the poetics and novellas that emerge in written literature were immensely influenced by English literature. And, the music that has been produced also took inspiration from western music; which is not only in terms of musical instruments being used and styles of singing, but also forms of performances. However, the major impact in cultural practices of the Tangkhuls came from the religious practices that were held inside the church. The roots of contemporary artistic practices in Tangkhul society have emerged from the ritualistic practices inside the church. Recently, the adoption of new technology have contributed to the adaptation of different forms of artistic works; it has aided the music artists to cope with the new changes that are taking place in music scene. Tangkhuls music artist have been able to use the latest electronic devices and technology, and imitate Bollywood and Western pop songs.

The presence of folksongs is still felt and practiced during important occasions, especially during formal public functions and traditional festivals like Luiria Phanit (Seed sowing Festivals). Recently, Tangkhul musicians have attempted to create fusion of old Naga folksongs with the western rock genre. Notable among them are the works of Guru Reuben Mashangva, H. Kingsword, and V Aso. While Mashangva termed his music as ‘folk-blues’, he has also adopted western pop genre in his album Tantivy. To reach out to wider audience, he has also composed songs in English as well. Apart from him, there are also some artist like V Aso who perform the old folksong with the new musical accompaniments like guitar and piano. Thus, the old style of singing folksong has been re-invented to suit the modern aesthetic sense and listener’s choice.

Tangkhul music and literature could be broadly divided into ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ realms, the context in which the work of art is created. The demarcation of artistic domain into ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’ had been done by American Folklorists and further within this subdivision various forms of genres are classified (Harris, 1995). In Tangkhul art, the religious and secular realms remain distinct, even though certain genres of music like ‘protest songs’ and ‘patriotic’ songs are immersed in every genres of music. A gospel music album is usually made with religious themes with a hint of patriotism; however, the narratives do not deviate from the religious domain. And, one will not expect to find expressions of love or narratives of relationship problems in gospel albums. On the other
hand, in the music albums of pop and loves songs, the religious aspects are deliberately left aside. The religious and secular domains are kept separate, as Emile Durkheim describe it, in conventional cultural practices, where the sacred space is distinctively placed apart from the worldly desires and other activities which are considered as antithetical to religions beliefs and practices. In churches and religious functions, singing of love songs would became a sacrilege. People often talk about and responded with shock to those performers who had presented Don Williams’ number in the church as ‘praise songs’. Such acts of breach, between secular and religious domains, would only bring shame and disregard to the artist and would be considered as demeaning the entire functions of the church and religious worship. These divisions between the secular and religious realms in everyday practices are reflected in the genres of music that are made by the Tangkhul artist. The problems of demarcating these boundaries are more problematic and precarious in music than in literature. In literature, the boundaries remain distinct and well demarcated, and the writers put forward what they had intended to do. The authors choose their themes and subject according to their clear cut intention and the space within which their narrative is going to take place. However, beneath the actual artistic works, the religious aspects and the questions of morality are implicitly present in most of the novels and poetry.

The performance of love songs and worldly desires inside the church are considered as form of sacrilege, whereas the presence of religious tones in pop songs and rock music are often tolerated by the musicians and those who enjoy the music. Source Mashangva³, who sings soft rock music, remarked that some of the songs that he had made have religious themes. Songs like Lucifer, which Mashangva has released in the late 80s, narrates about the life-story of the most powerful evil spirit in Biblical text. However, there are certain differences between presenting religious oriented songs in a rock album, and those that are usually presented in gospel albums. The religious songs in rock genres are not as intensely in gospel music and these songs are presented in the manner that it will gel with the other songs in the album.

³ Source Mashngva is considered as one of the pioneers in Rock music in Tangkhul. His albums were known as Akui (Head), which is taken from the name of one of the Tangkhul chief, and which symbolically represents the past practices of the Tangkhuls.
Tangkhul music industry is dominated by 'cassette culture'. From the initial period of making music, Tangkhul artists have adopted the cassette as the medium through which their record could be marketed. It was in the mid 80's, when 'cassette culture' was growing all over India, that small communities like Tangkhuls also became the beneficiaries of what Peter Manuel has termed as 'new media technologies' (Manuel, 1993: 2-4). Recently, with the advancement in technology, CDs have been adopted by some of the artist. Still then, cassettes have been considered as more viable for the productions of music, since it is cheaper for the customers, and it cannot be easily copied like the MP3 format with the computers. Resource crunch has been described as one of the major impediments in creativity works by most of the artists who are engaged in music industry. This is not only the case with the music, but also the authors and writers. Most music artist and authors described that the work they are doing doesn't give them enough financial returns, but they are engaged with this work with the sheer will to make contributions to the cultural life of the community.

With the broad distinction between the 'secular' and 'religious' spaces in the artistic practice of the Tangkhuls; Tangkhul music and literature can be further divided into various genres. Genres have been basically defined as 'an umbrella concept that allows for many disparate, and often related, concepts to be conveniently divided and subdivided' (Harris, 1995). With the usage of the term genre, Derrida argues, that 'a limit is drawn' (Derrida, 1980). And, the laws of genres suggest that 'genres are not supposed to mix' (Derrida, 1980). Thus, the usage of the concept of genre facilitates in 'dividing' and 'limiting' the work of art and artistic practices. Whereas, Bakhtin holds that 'genres' have to be seen with the identification of the social class and the period (Bakhtin, 2002:115).

The emergence of genres in artworks among the Tangkhul could be seen within the historical and social context, the emergence of new social groups (elites) and cultural changes that have emerged in Tangkhul society. The emergence of a genre is on the other

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4 According to Peter Manuel 'cassette and cassette players are cheaper and more durable than records and turntables, and their power requirements are easily met', and this has been the main reason why cassettes have been more popular in the third world countries like India (Manuel, 1993:p.xiiv).
hand coterminal with the trend of cultural practice and the social situation which the society is undergoing.

**Genres in Tangkhul Music: Old Traditions and New Adoptions**

The categorization of Tangkhul music have been considered by most of the Tangkhul musicians as a difficult task. Reuben Mashangva remarked that the categorization of Tangkhul music can hardly be done, as there is lack of professionalism in a particular genre of music among the Tangkhul musicians. Expertise in a particular genre of music, whether in the form of pop or blues, is still lacking among the Tangkhul musicians. Although there are a lot of Tangkhul musicians, the problems in classifying music genre have remained, as most of the artists have learnt music through informal practice. Popular Tangkhul artist like Source Mashangva, H. Kingsword and Thangmeisco remarked that they have learnt the art of music by just practicing on their own, learning from friends and seniors. Young female artists like Sharon Ngakang, who is engaged in producing gospel songs, have been helped by senior musicians. She had learned to play the piano in Imphal before she released an album.

The classification of Tangkhul music can be attempted by taking the Bakhtinian analysis; whereby the ‘period’ when a particular genre emerged, the influence, and the social class is taken into consideration. Also, the genres could be classified pertaining to the styles of singing/playing music and the kinds of instruments employed. Tangkhul music in general is a combination of old and new forms of music, where they have continued the tradition of the past and also had been influenced by various other genres of Western music. The continuity with the past tradition still remains with folk practices of the Tangkhul, where folk songs are still incorporated and practiced. Otherwise, most of the genres of Tangkhul music are new adoptions, which have been embraced after the new singing style was learnt, and has been much influenced by the Western traditions.

It is only in few cases that some music artists have been influenced by, what they called, ‘Hindustani Music’. Tangkhul musicians have used the category ‘Hindustani Music’
to refer to the tradition of Hindi film songs, Ghazals, Indipop and other genres in Hindi language. The category of 'Hindustani music' has been apparently made with regard to the language and mode of singing, which is different from Western tradition: which has emerged as the dominant musical practices among the Tangkhuls. However, unlike the influence from Western music, which ranges from the musical notations and styles of singing, the influence of Hindustani Music, are in the tune and harmony of the songs, rather than the actual adoptions of musical rules. Taking the religion and secular as two disparate domains in art works and the influence that it has drawn from, Tangkhul music could be broadly classified into the different genres and sub-genres. The importance of 'genre' lies in the fact that it served the 'dual purpose' that it 'provided a system of classification' and a 'conceptual framework for articulating characteristic of the individual components or units within the classification' (Harris, 1995). Further, subgenres within a particular genre can be classified considering the style and mode of presentations (ibid).
This chart represents the broad classification of musical genre in Tangkhul music, which has been arranged according to the influences and dominant artistic practices. In the classification that has been made, the root of influence has been given major importance, as contemporary Tangkhul music has been dominated by the adoptions from Western musical traditions, rather than the growth from within. The influence of Western hymnal, after its adoption, have not been confined to the religious practices and sacred songs, but also extended to the popular culture and other forms of artistic practices.

Some scholars have argued that the adoptions of Western cultural practices by the tribals have been 'selective', rather than wholesome (Densmore 1938; Bara, 2007). In the process of acculturation, the indigenization of other cultures has been considered as one of the medium through which alien cultures are gradually incorporated by the receiving communities. However, the continuation of folk practices became difficult when the tribal community had adopted Western religious practices like Christianity. Thus, the old folk practices, being located in the past, stand as different from the new adoptions, which are influenced by the Western culture. This distinction has also been made categorically by Tangkhul musicians and the community. The music that is performed and practised in everyday life and those commercially marketed music varies in various terms. This peculiarity is specifically concerned with the folk genre of music and songs. While folksongs are still performed and practiced in the villages, during the traditional festivals and marriages, its presence in the market in the form of an album is very rare. While the new influences from the Western music are increasing, the folk tradition still remains resilient. In villages, the folk music and dance are still enacted during traditional festivals. On the other hand, those music artists who have interest in this genre are re-making folk music with modern taste. Such is the case with Tangkhul music artist like V Aso and Guru Reuben Mashangva who have re-created the old Tangkhul folksong by presenting the folksongs with western musical accompaniments, like guitars and piano etc. However, purist and old practitioners of folk music do not appreciate the re-production of folk music with western musical accompaniments. Such innovations were seen as a thread to the true identity of folk practices and a dilution of their pristine culture. Thus, there is a wide gamut of differences between album songs and the folksongs practiced in everyday life. Most of the traditional folk songs that are commonly performed during festivals have not
been commercially marketed; it remains with the people. The music which has been commercialized are dominated by popular genres of music like pop and country love songs.

In the religious domain of Tangkhul music Western Hymnal has been the base of most of the genres of music. In these aspects, the rendition of folk in the form of religious songs has been a recent innovation which Tangkhul musicians have done. However, the folk genre is not that popular, and it has become aligned with popular practices rather than being a part of Church music. The hymnal book published by the Tangkhul Christian organizations like ‘Tangkhul Baptist Church Association (TBCA)’ is the standard hymns performed during every religious functions and formal occasions. Choral singing, which is performed by choirs inside the church, has become the normative forms of musical performances.

Tangkhul hymnals are works of translations from the Western Hymn books, and it also includes some of the Hymns which have been composed by Tangkhuls. The indigenous compositions of Hymnals have been done by some of the choir masters and religious leaders to represent the religious orientation in the context of the Tangkhuls. The indigenously composed Hymns that are included in the standard hymnbooks are performed in the church along with other hymns; thus, these hymns got the canonical significance of serious worship songs. The genre of gospel pop and rock are closer to the popular culture than to the church rituals. The gospel pop numbers, which are sold in the market, are usually performed by some individuals as special numbers during the worship service in the church. Otherwise, as these songs are not a part of the standard Hymnbooks, these songs are not sung by the congregation. The popular gospel songs like Achalakhawui Jesu (Jesus of Ancient Times), which has been composed by Tangkhul musicians, is performed in public gathering, but hardly this song is performed by the congregation inside the church. But, this song has been presented in the church as ‘praise songs’ and special numbers in various occasions. Thus, the genre Gospel pop and rock songs are fluid as it could be accommodated inside the church and outside of it as well. Otherwise, most of the genres in religious realms remain within the ritualistic practices.
In the secular domain, the oldest genre of music is folk songs. Tangkhul folksongs were mainly concerned with the youth life and traditionally it has remained with the youth. Among the influences from the West, the Tangkhul country love songs are one of the oldest genre. Now, only few young people can sing the folksong, so it is confined with the old people in villages. And nobody can play the old instrument “Tinteila”, except music artists like Reuben Mashangva. The Country Love Song genre is melodiously sung with simple musical accompaniment of Hollow Guitar. Earlier, the Electric guitar and even drums were not used as musical accompaniments to the voice of singing. In the songs of Wungchan, one of the earliest Tangkhul musicians in this genre, the lyrics are simple and straight and the musical instrument employed was just the hollow guitar. However, later Tangkhul musicians like Raikhan and Assurance who sang in Country genre, began to use electric guitar and drums in country love songs as well. The novelty of Country love songs lies in the fact that the songs are much connected with the lifestyle and social situation of the common village folks, rather than being eclectic. In countries, like US, where country music has rich traditions, similarities have been drawn between the country music and rural folk music. The novelty of country music lies in the fact that ‘it deals frankly and openly with everyday trials, troubles, hopes, fears, and dreams of its audience’ (Lewis, 1989) Among the various genres of Tangkhul music, the Country songs were the first to emerge and it was adopted by the first generations of Tangkhul Christians, who were inspired by the records of old Western country love songs. However, country music also underwent various forms of changes along the way. In Western countries, Country music has adopted the ‘music video’ in-order to keep pace with the changing times and also to reach out the audiences like other genres of music (Fenster, 1988). Similar changes have taken place in Tangkhul Country love songs. The old audio ‘cassette album’ format have been replaced by music videos, where audio and visual narratives are given equal importance. Not only the new albums that are being released recently, but also old songs have been reformatted and consequently released in the video format.

The pop songs emerged later than the Country genre, and it has a larger following among the youth. The term ‘pop’ has been widely debated, and it has been categorized as ‘low art’ in comparison to the classical tradition in the West. There is much ambiguity with the term ‘popular music’ as a theoretical terms, as any form of music that is widely accepted, is considered to be ‘pop music’. However, the general understanding of ‘pop
music’ is that ‘it can be easily grasped’ and ‘it can be clearly retained in mind’ (Baker, 1933). The popularity of pop music lies in its quality of being easily understood and at the same time it is highly enjoyable. The difference of pop music with other genres of music lies in the fact that the ‘sounds of musicians are more important than the notes played, and where improvisation (rather than strict adherence to the text) is highly prized’ (Clooman, 2005). In Ukhrul, the pop genre has emerged along with the growth of Country love songs, and appears more of an improvisation rather than making music in a totally different form. Some artists like Thangmeiso and Assurance began their music carrier with the Country Songs and gradually moved to pop genre. The emergence of pop genre has to do with the knowhow and availability of new musical technologies as well. The line of distinctions between Country songs and Pop songs are very thin, except that the use of technology and the style of presentation are more leisurely and hip in pop songs. Most of the amateur Tangkhul musicians who have cut their album either choose between these two genres, as it is much easier for them to compose and perform in this genre than other genres of music. Therefore, the bulk of Tangkhul music falls within these two genres.

Rock music came much later than all other genres of music, which appeared in the late 80s. Basically, Rock music has been identified as more advanced than other genres of music as it ‘includes some elements of technical progress’ and that it ‘works with some styles and the composition of certain authors’ where ‘new artistic values can be found’ (Racic, 1981). Rock music has more technicality than other genres, as the use of electric guitar demands further expertise, and the emphasis is much on the styles of playing instruments. The genre of rock music has often been associated with the rebellious youth culture and the advancements that have taken in musical production (Wicke & Deveson, 1982). Tangkhul musicians have been listening to rock music of classic rock musicians like the CCR, Europe, Scorpion and Rainbow etc. However, the adoption of Rock music had taken much time. The first music artist to have made a foray into this genre has been Source Mashnagva. His cassette album of Akui series has not only made a new addition to the burgeoning music scene of the Tangkhuls, but also introduces initiated new musical style. The adoption of singing style of Western rock music, and heavy sound of electric guitar, drums, accompanied by Casio created a new era in Tangkhul music. It marked a dramatic shift from slow Country songs to fast and more complex music making. Initially, Source Mashangva remarked that the old people were perturbed by the kinds of music he
has produced. They had asked him what he was actually singing, and they could not make
sense of it. However, the youngsters who had been listening to Western rock music find
Akui albums quite interesting and enjoyable. The innovation of rock music marks a shift in
the musical taste and art of the Tangkhul community. Tangkhul music in the forms of
Western rock was seen as advancement not only in music, but symbolically it heralded the
ability of the entire community to improve in various aspects of their living conditions.

The musical innovation of the Tangkhul musicians attains a new height by the
emergence of fusion music, which have taken place in the form of mixing the singing style
of old folksongs with new musical instruments. Fusion music is a form of multiculturalism,
where the art and aesthetic are mixed and blended together in one form of art. It can be
considered as a form of 'hybrid culture' in music (Guilbault, 1994). In the case of fusion
music in Tangkhul, few music artists have been able to take up this genre in music making.
Perhaps, the lack of knowledge with two/three distinct forms of music could have been the
case and fusion music is just a recent phenomena. Reuben Mashangva has been the pioneer
in fusion music genre in Tangkhul. Initially, the audience had problems with Reuben
Mashangva's music. The audience reaction to Mashangva' music, as it was often
commented, was quite volatile. During concerts, the audience would throw eggs and rotten
tomatoes whenever he came on the stage to perform. Many see him as arrogant, but
innovative. R. Mashangva was trying to mix the old folk with the contemporary music
genres of Tangkhul and Western music, which was discerning for those who have been
following one genre of music. Finally, after years of practice and improvisation, with the
release of the album Tantivy in 1996, Reuben Mashangva got recognition not only among
the Tangkhuls but across the communities and even abroad. He had the opportunity to
perform in New Delhi, and the crowd in Delhi too was overwhelmed by his fusion music,
even if the audience did not understand the lyrics of his song. Later, some young artists got
inspired by Reuben's novel approach to music, and fusion music, specially blending of
Tangkhul folk and Western music became an accepted form of music. The novelties of
Reuben's music lies in the ability to blend not only the singing styles, but also the sounds
of traditional musical instruments like log drum and tintelia. Thus, Reuben's music is
creole and contemporary, at the same time deeply rooted with the cultural identity of the
Tangkhuls.
Most of the genres in Tangkhul music have remained side by side, with their own fan following and listeners. The emergence of different types of music genres coincided with the changing cultural practices of the Tangkhul society, and the emergence of youth culture which became much inclined towards the Western practices. The introduction of cheap cassettes and tape recorders in the 80s to India had also facilitated the Tangkhuls music to grow and also helped the music lovers to enjoy music in their own language (Manuel, 1988). Recently, Tangkhul musicians have stated adopting Rap songs and Hip hop styles in their music. However, this genre is yet to fully emerge as separate genres, and at present it has remain clustered within the pop genre. Adoption of video and CD format in releasing music has become a common trend among the Tangkhul musicians at the present. The extensive usages of new electronic technology and entertainment devices have compelled the music artist to keep pace with the times. With the adoption of this new form of producing and making music, the Tangkhul music entered a new period which is modern and contemporary.

**Genres in Tangkhul Literature: Writing about Love, Self, and Others**

Literature emerged late among the Tangkhuls, and most of the early literary works were translations from other languages and religious texts like the Holy Bible and Hymnals. Secular writings began in the form of ‘historical’ accounts and transcription of folktales. The novellas emerged later with the second generations of literate Tangkhuls, which was influenced both by the narratives of folktales. The adoption of ‘fixed’ literary works in oral societies has been considered as leading to a situation which leads to “primacy of ‘writing’ over the speech” (Ngal & Berong, 1977). The value and importance of written accounts in the form of electronically printed words became more important than what is spoken and narrated with speech in Tangkhul society.

In oral literatures, the distinction of literary works were made on the basis of ‘linked genres and complex genre’, which means that the division is made on the basis of the ‘presence and absence’ of ‘iconographic fixity of the formal structures’ (ibid). The works
of prose (legends, epic tales, and historical narratives etc.) are differentiated from riddles, anecdotes and proverbs. The adoption of scribal culture also gave rise to the emergence of the individual authorship of the 'text'. In oral literature, the 'work' exists only in the 'embodied performance'; therefore there is no 'author' (Kellog, 1973). Thus, in the literary works that emerged after the adoption of written language, the author became a significant person in the work of the 'text'. Most of the literary works in Tangkhul modern literature is identified with the author, even the works of transcription and translations were attached to the individual who created it. The emergence of individual authorship, as opposed to community ownership of the 'text', has not only been confined to the literature and similar changes have emerged in Tangkhul music and popular songs.

As the influence of Western literature has largely shaped the written culture of the Tangkhuls, the literary genres of the Tangkhul literature can broadly be divided into ningchan (novellas), mirinchon (biography and auto-biography), and laasem (poetry). These categories and divisions in the Tangkhul modern literature have some continuities, even if modern literary works like autobiography are totally new in Tangkhul literature, one can find parallels with the epic folktales of individual warriors. A senior member of Tangkhul Literature Society remarked that the prose literature of the Tangkhuls have not developed so much; whereas, in poetry there are notable works that have been done by some renowned and educated Tangkhuls. In poetry, the works of R. Suisa and Y K Shimray have been noted by most of the Tangkhuls who are engaged with literary works and the development of Tangkhul language. Even though, the standardization of Tangkhul language by the early white Missionaries like Rev. William Pettigrew has enabled the Tangkhuls to have a common spoken and written language for all the villages across the regions, the adoption of one village has created some problems within the literary circles. Most of the writers and language experts who belong to different villages expressed strong dissatisfaction that the local dialect of Ukhrul, the dialect which had been chosen by Rev. Pettigrew as common language for all the Tangkhuls, have dominated the usages in Tangkhul language. However, in one of the Literary Workshop on Tangkhul language held at Ukhrul, the Chairman of Tangkhul Literature Society (TLS) remarked that they are ready to accommodate the dialects of all the villages and enrich Tangkhul language. Some of the problems that Tangkhul language is facing is that every 'individual' author is using their
own style of language, which also indicates the ambiguity in the usages of Tangkhul language as well the problems in adopting written literature.

In the religious domain, the works of translations filled up most of the literary works in prose. Except that some poetry written by R. Suisa has not only strong religious emphasis, but also uses the names of characters from the Holy Bible. The fundamental emphasis of literary works in the religious domain had been to impart the moral and doctrinal aspects of Christianity to the lay believers. Thus, the literary works pertaining to religious discourse, written mostly by the theologians and pastors, became very popular among the Tangkhuls. Literary works of translation had appeared in various formats, popularly in the form of a small booklet and along with graphics as well. The most popular booklet among the Tangkhuls have been *Miwui Wuklung* (The Heart of Man), which was freely distributed across the villagers as a form of religious teaching to the literate Tangkhuls. The catchy part of this booklet is in the pictorial representations and the symbolic indications of the human heart in various conditions and the facial expressions accompanying the former images. The booklet became a source of information, even for the illiterates and children in the villages. However, apart from the works of translations, no serious literary works have emerged in the religious domain. Comparatively, the artistic works have been more of the music than the literature, not only in the religious domain, but also in the larger aspects of the Tangkhul culture.

The literary works in the form of novellas and short stories have been the most popular literary genre in Tangkhul literature. The emergence of the novel marks a significant shift from the oral literature that has been dominant in the past. Elsewhere in Western societies, the emergence of the ‘novel’ has been considered as a break from tradition and signifies the present times. John P Hunter argues that in English society “the novel represents a formal attempt to come to terms with innovation and originality and to accept the limitations of tradition; it reflects the larger cultural embracing of the present moment as a legitimate subject not only for passing conversation but for serious discourse” (Hunter, 1988). The emergence of ‘novel’ has been considered one of the significant indices of literary modernity in various societies. Similarly, the emergence of Tangkhul novels make the substantive shift in literary works, where fictional narratives are written from the present
context so that it can be sold. In narratives, novels mark a shift from old folktales where magic and the power of spirits dictate which is similar to the beliefs and practices of traditional religion. However, with novellas the representations of society and people moved to the contemporary situations, taking up subjects such as problems in relationships and thus, various societal issues come to the fore.

The autobiographical literary genre has created a sense of importance for the authors, who are writing about self, and the readers about the experience of an individual’s life in the society. In autobiographical writings one can see not only the life history of an individual but also the historical and social context of the society in different times (Viswanathan, 2007). Personal narratives in autobiography can be considered as a form of 'individual representations' (Visvanathan, 1993). Meanwhile, in poetry the conception of 'imagined land' and the critique of contemporary society began to emerge, giving a new fillip to Tangkhul Literature, which had been dominated by magic and realms of the other world.

**Expressions in Tangkhul Music and Literature**

In the realms of cultural expressions, music and literature occupy a special position as being a part of the 'popular culture' where the masses are engaged with and as a space where the authority of the state is relatively less. The underprivileged and subaltern communities have often used 'cultural expression' as a tool to articulate their position and define their social realities. Peter Worsley argues that 'those who experience discrimination, exploitation, and oppression react against a domination which always include cultural domination by generating their own forms of cultural self-expression’ (Worlsey, 1984: 55). Music and literature provides that space where the dominated and people at the ‘margins’ could express their ‘emotions’ and use the artistic creativity as a toll for resistances. Whereas sociological study of music and literature is concerned, representations in work of art have been considered as 'reflections' of wider social realities

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5 The term popular culture has often been associated with the ‘masses’, the heterogeneous and diverse group of people. According to Appadurai 'popular culture' is concern with the 'everyday practices of ordinary people' and serves as an 'antidote' to the 'grand events' and official sources and perspective (Appadurai 2003).
(Albrecht, 1954; White 1987). However, there has been wide ranging debate about the reflection theory; but the relationships between the artistic works and the common people and some form of relationships between the work of art and actual social situations have been generally accepted.

Textual analysis of music has conceptualized lyrics and songs in music as general ‘social attitudes’ of the time. Simon Frith holds that ‘the theory of lyrical realism means asserting a direct relationship between a lyric and social or emotional condition it describes and represents’ (Frith, 1987). It is generally understood that the words in music, like the text in literature, represents the thoughts and social situation that the society is going through. The lyrics in music do not only represent the social attitudes, but also provides the language for courting. According to Simon Frith “If music gives lyrics their linguistic vitality, lyrics gives songs their use” (Frith, 1987). For instance, pop songs not only ‘reflects’ the emotions, but give people the terms in which they can articulate their emotions (ibid). Some of the musicologists have argued that in the textual study of music, the significance of sound symbols should be integrated with the lyrics (Blacking, 1982). In textual analysis, the relationship between music and literature shared the similar structure – narratives.

The popular themes in Tangkhul literature and music are determined by the undercurrents in society; the changing values, conflict with the social conventions and customs are predominant issues. With the adoption and interactions with other cultures and societies, the younger generation began to questions those ideals that have been held high. However, artistic expressions among the Tangkhuls have also been dominated by universal themes of love, hate, and desires. These issues linger in all narratives that are found in music and literature. Something that is distinctive about Tangkhul artistic works is the domineering presence of patriotic devotions and conception of ‘imagined homeland’. These ideas are interpolated with the other themes like love and spiritual quest.
Songs of Love and Utterances of Pain

Tangkhul love songs and poetry are dominated by expressions of pain and sorrow over the loss of love. This form of expression has become a genre within the artistic domain of Tangkhul music and literature. Thangmeiso, a popular music artist, remarked that this form of expression that deals with agony over love is a genre which most of the Tangkhul artists have given maximum attention to and it will be difficult to get out of this. According to him, the extensive focus on one aspect of relationship is similar to the trend of Manipuri songs, which gives most of the attention to the face of the women in the popular songs. Songs of pain are not a contemporary emergence in Tangkhul music. From the early period of popular music, pain has been a dominant theme in popular modes of expression. The expression of pain in Tangkhul love songs and poetry are concerned with ‘abandonment’ of the partner by the other or unfaith-fullness. ‘Sentimentalism’ has been one of the distinctive features of all Tangkhul love songs, and some cassette albums come with the titles like ‘Sentimental Hits’. Instead of being a marketing gimmick, the use of ‘sentiments’ and deep emotions have been a common form and types of expression that both artists and the audience tend to find solace and joy. Donald Horton has demarcated the popular American loves songs into various stages, which were taken from different stages of courting (Horton, 1957). Horton has divided the stages of ‘courtship songs’ into four stages: (i) Prologue: Wishing and Dreaming, (ii) Act I: Courtship, (iii) Act II: The Honeymoon, (iii) Act III: The Downward Course of Love, (iv) Act IV: All Alone (Horton, 1957). In Tangkhul popular songs, the focus has been much on the ‘ending part’ of courtships, the pain that lovers face when their relationships are over and the feeling of ‘loneliness’. Such pain and anguish are often expressed with deepest emotions, and most of the love songs are made up of melancholic voice and slow rhythm. In most of the early Tangkhul love songs, the relationship between men and women are represented as fragile and short as the ‘blooming flower’.

Amei iniwui leikashi awon khawona sangmeihao
Khani thang rawonlakha Amei ngathum thuihao
Rawon miluilu Amei iram shilling thingpheili
Kathasi leikashiva mikli chara tahao
My Love (Amei), flower blooms longer than our love
It blooms for few days and you hide away
Bloom again, my love, at the foot of the oak tree
What to do, your lover has tears in her eyes

This song is sung by a female voice addressing the male lover, complaining about the non-seriousness and non-committal attitude of men in their relationships. This song, Amei Ini (My Lover and I/we) was made in the 70s, and performed in slow rhythm, similar to the hymnals. ‘Flowers’ and ‘tears’ have been extensively used as metaphor for expressing the love and pain in Tangkhul love songs. And, even though ‘flowers’ represents blissfulness and beauty of love, more often it has been used with negative connotations, such as shortness of time and fragility of love life. In this song, the reason of the men ‘hiding away’ is not explicitly mentioned, while the focus is given much on the pain of losing someone. Expression of pain sung by the women singers represents the acute state of helplessness. One of the most sentimental female singers in Tangkhul love songs comes from Diana Wungshek, who is rumored to have suffered in her love life and still remains as a spinster. In one of her songs Zairanso, she laments about the inescapability of fate.

I nali leiishya, kha okthuina maya rala?
Thuimi haolu Iwui eina, I shaprala?
Malai ngarok haosa, malai shaprala?
Khipawui khayon sashi, I nali leiishya
Na pheikar thak naya chi shikha?
I okthuili khara huinaya chi shitoh?
Makhamahai ini mirin rala?
Huinaya ini samkaphang chi rala?

I love you, but will the world give consent?
Go away from me, can I bear it?
Let us forget one another, can we forget?
Whose fault will it be, but I love you
Shall it be assumed that your steps are ahead?

6 In Tangkhul language, the word Amei is used for the elder brother as well as the lover by women. In songs and poetry, the word Amei is often employed as an addressed to men.
Shall it be assumed that I came to this world late?
Shall our life be considered as unfortunate?
Or have we met too late?

The narratives in this song expresses about the cruelty of fate and the norms of the society. The social norms and values, and the society at large have been metaphorically represented as the ‘world’. The condition of the narrator is presented as ‘acute helplessness’, who have became victim of fate and time (or age), for which there is no comeback. The position of women is depicted as submissive and passive, always at the receiving end of social norms, and man as the wanderer.

The songs of pain, which were sung by men and from men’s perspectives also shares similar view that the ‘world’ is always against the relationship of two lovers. The elders of the society are projected as the main stumbling block to the wishes of the youths, but they feel helpless as norms have been followed. In the album Machaplu Jen (Don’t Cry Jen), the ‘elders’ of society and the ‘world’ are considered as responsible for the problems that the lovers are facing.

Okathuiwui kararnao maleisashi kachia
Shimkhurwui wui kararnao maleisashi kachia
Ini hikatha kapang, kachot masamphang mara
Ining chingri eina manarim okthui sara
Okthuina mamaya...

If elders of the world were not there
If elders of the family were not there
We will not face this parting, and bear the pain
With peace in my mind, will live with smiles
The world does not consent...
Your actions are quite unpleasant
But, thanks, as you have done what you wish

Is great love like this?
Desolately, I have been left alone
Your thoughts and actions are too fast
Speak the parting words from your mouth
But, take along the love that I have

In these love songs, the other partner in relationships is depicted as ‘runaways’ from the course of united path, and to have taken some definite ‘steps’ leaving the other ‘desolate’ and ‘lonely’. But, as it is in the case of other songs, the reasons for running away are not given, and the phrase ‘your steps and thoughts are fast’ indicates that the other partner has already found some other and settled down. The demand ‘speak the parting words from your mouth’ indicates that betrayals and not informing the partner have been construed as one of the reason that such expressions are being made.

Tangkhul love songs are filled with emotions of pain and sorrows, and only few of the songs give focus to the ‘prologue’ stage, where the lover lives in illusion or infatuation of the other. And the emotion that deals with ‘honeymoon’ is completely left out. Even in the actual practice of courtships and marriage, the practice of going to ‘honeymoon’ is rarely done. However, the intention of relationships are still targeted on ‘living happily ever after’ the marriage. And the love songs supposedly make the pain of not realization of this dream as the most painful experience for lovers.

**Imagining Homeland**

The construction of a community’s identity began at the conceptual level and move on to the more concrete forms. The work of ‘imagining’ of an identity of a ‘nation’ or ‘community’ has often been mainly attributed to the emergence and role of literate middle class. However, Sugarman has argued that if the idea of a unified community (nation) is
disseminated through the medium in which people in rural areas could comprehend, then they also become part in constructing the identity of the community (Sugarman, 1999). Scholars like Benedict Anderson have already highlighted the importance of ‘print culture’ in the constructing of the image of a nation. The ideas presented in ‘print’ and songs cover much bigger space than the actual message that is given on the dais.

The concept of a unified Tangkhul has been presented through poetry and songs from the early period when Tangkhuls began to learn the new art singing and writing. In these patriotic themes one can see the strong presence of religious discourses. Although, Tangkhuls have become well entrenched with the nationalist project of the ‘unified Nagas’, one will find in the early songs and poetry, the emphasis was much more on the cultural identity and land of the Tangkhuls. In the works of early literate Tangkhuls, like Y. K Shimray the idea of blessed community had already begun. In his poetry “Tangkhul Ngalei” (Tangkhul Land), the geographic features and blessings of the Tangkhuls were explicitly represented.

Kaphungtungli dolan sada
Awon eina sari shaksai
Kathar masi khanim ura
Nawui naobing kalamahai
Kathemla haophok khavai ram
Kahorla shokphok khavai pam
Nawui eina haophok sera
Tangkhul ngalei, Ishava ram!

Palaces built on top of the mountain
Dressed with flowers
Fresh winds swirl around
Your children are fortunate
Land where knowledge began
Place where light emerge
Everything begins from you
Tangkhul land, my motherland!

The picturesque images of Tangkhul’s land and habitat have been well represented in this poem. The description ‘Palace built on top of the mountain’, lucidly presents the practice of Tangkhuls who chose to dwell on the top of the mountain, rather than the foothills or the valley. The land of Tangkhuls has been personified here and the term ‘motherland’ has been used to express the affection that one has for the land and the community. Y. K Shimray, the author of this poetry, belongs to first generation of literate Tangkhuls, and he had been a student of Rev. Pettigrew. Thus, the notion of community and land expressed here represents the initial period when Tangkhuls began to ‘imagine’ themselves as one community. The expressions of Tangkhul habitat as ‘land where knowledge and light began’ actually refers to the historical experience. Among the tribes and communities in Manipur state, the Tangkhuls were the first to embrace Christianity and receive Western education. Subsequently, they began to take the lead role in spreading Christianity and education to other tribes in Manipur. Thus, land of the Tangkhul was conceptualized as the most blessed, which is an indication of being different and ahead of other communities. This particular poetry, “Tangkhul Ngalei”, have been made into a song and commonly sung as ‘national anthem’ of the Tangkhuls during public ceremonies and functions. Dissemination of the idea of blessed and capable Tangkhuls through songs has ensured that this song is known by every Tangkhul, whether literate or illiterate.

The conception of unified Tangkhul territory despite regional divisions among the Tangkhuls have been strongly propagated in songs and music as well. In one of the early song composed by K. Wungachan, “Tangkhul Ramyoram” (Tangkhul Blessed Land), the regions of the Tangkhuls was construed as unified and people blessed.

Raphei Khaorei ram,
Kharao, Kamola
Kathur, Yangyirla
Ima Tangkhulser
Nawui ngaleili ina yaokazat
Leishi ningshok mei,
Wung-Tangkhul ngalei
Reisangchomina sokhami ramna
Nawui makali I phara kasang
Iwui khamahai, iwui khamathan
Hili phara da, hili thisangra

Raphei, Khaorei land
Kharao and Kamo too
Kathur and Yangyir as well
We all are Tangkhuls
When I wander in your land
Love and freshness comes to me
Wung-Tangkhul land!

Land, blessed by the Creator
In your lap, I was born
How blessed and happy I am!
Was born here and will die here

In this song, the names of the regions were lucidly used to denote different regions and divisions within the society, and to assert that Tangkhuls are ‘one’ despite all those regional differences. The name of the Tangkhul land was changed into ‘Wung-Tangkhul’, which is derived from the reconstruction of the Tangkhul’s past, and this term has been mostly employed by the Naga nationalist group. It was employed as the tool to contest the category imposed on the Tangkhuls by outsiders and also an attempt to present their own history and narratives of their past. The name of the “creator” (Reisangchomni) has been invoked here to assert that Tangkhuls have been blessed and looked after well. However, the term ‘Reisangchobnmi’ is not the name of ‘Creator’ usually used in the Bible, but closer to the traditional conception of ‘God’, and it is a term that has been indigenously conceptualized by Tangkhuls. The usage of first person ‘I’ in the narratives shows how the individual feels total affection for the land and community, which implies that even though
love for motherland is a shared emotion, the feeling are personal and it comes from deep within.

The main functions of these genre of music concerning with ‘patriotism’ and identity is arousing the sentiments of the people to come together. The ‘arousal theory’ of music holds that ‘music is expressive of an emotion when it arouses relevant emotion or feeling in the listener’ (Packalen, 2008). The songs that deal with the themes of ‘patriotism’ and ‘land’ are emotions shared by every member of the community. These shared feelings are further strengthened through songs and poetry, and when such songs are performed on public occasions and gatherings of the community, it heightens the emotion of oneness and unity in the community.

*Voices of Protest and Disenchantment*

The work of art deals with the pleasant and the unpleasant experience of ‘discontentment’ and ‘protest’ for change. Protest through music, like rap in US has been considered as ‘music with a message’ (Martinez, 1997). Protest songs deal with issues that are concerned with the daily life of the individuals, those issues neglected by the state. And through music the idea is to spread awareness about the perennial situation the society is undergoing through. Most of the protest songs are political in nature as it deals with identity and emancipations from domination and oppressions.

In Reuben Mashangva’s popular number “My Land and My People”, which is a fusion of folk and rock music sung in English, a scathing remarked is made on the phenomenon of domination and subjugation of the land and people. In this song, Mashangva made a clear political statement that:

*“It’s my land; I want my own*  
*Show-me-chain-me-not*  
*Tell-me-Teach-me-not”.*
The ‘message’ in this song is not just directed to the ‘oppressor’ as such, but it is significantly for his own people, to make them realize that ‘others’ should not be allowed to interfere in their land rights. The song is very political in the context of the Nagas, as it was implicitly related with issues of ethnic conflicts and the political problems of the Nagas, such as the demand for a ‘Unified Nagalim’. In Tangkhul music, the notions of ‘nationhood’ of the Nagas has been stressed explicitly. Being an artistic work and since most the songs ‘are in Tangkhul language, the Tangkhul musician have apparently taken advantage of the absence of the state’s intervention in this domain. A direct call for standing up for the cause of the ‘nation’ has often been made in most of the popular and gospel songs. In H. Kingsword’s patriotic rock song ‘Avaram’ (Motherland), made during after declaration of ceasefire between the Government of India and Naga political organization, the call for working for the nation is made directly. The lyric of this song ask the people to ‘Stand up for our nation!’ (Iyurvang ngakar thuilu), because the ‘color is different, boundary is different, and language is different’ (machu ngatei, leiret ngatei, tuila ngateiya). Although the ‘other’ is not directly named in the song, the image of the other is well articulated here – different in race, boundary and language. The tone and mood of the contents of this song is youthful and smeared with identity politics.

Apart from the ‘protest songs’, the disenchantment with the social inequalities and moral issues are articulated in popular songs. The disparity in society and the urge to live like the privileged families has in a way perpetuated disenchantment with life among the younger generations of Tangkhuls. These issues are hardly taken up in the religious discourses or political domain; however, some of the popular music songs have highlighted the perplexity of the present times in a very lucid manner. In Thangmeiso’s popular songs such as ‘Shipsai’ (Its Painful), ‘Miran hi Meithana’ (Life is a kiln). In an interview Thangmeiso has verified that all the lyrics of his songs are written by him. And, he has written the songs by taking the changing social conditions of Tangkhul society into considerations. He says that most of his songs are composed according to the situations that he as undergone. In the song Shipsai, the angst and perplexity of the present times are explicitly presented. It made no fuss about fundamental issues such as life and death, work and responsibilities.

**Thingai thi, ringai ring**
Chapngai chap, mangai ma
Lairikla matamlui mara
Otlà masa lui mara
Khi kana?

Ringkapha mirinli okthuida
khaleila maning
Nganuikachang eina arui
rashungda ot salala khangachei
Malei akha, khi kana?

Let die, die! Let live, live!
Let cry, cry! Let wrong, wrong!
Won’t seek for education again
Won’t work again
What’s the use?
Not living in a comfortable life
Working since childhood and no changes have taken place
What’s the use?

The perplexity and disenchantment of modern life is presented in this song in a crystal clear manner. Although, the crux of the problems appears to be ‘success’; however, if we analyze deeper, the problem is that of ‘existential crisis’. And, the narratives indicate that individualism is coming to the fore; what one does or does not do, appears to be losing its meaning. Comparisons and competitions in matters pertaining to career and life appears to have put heavy pressure on the individual. If seen from the context in which the song has been written, the disenchantment with the modern life is quite palpable. This experience of perplexity may not be the situation of all the members of the community, but it represents the situation of some section of the society, particular the younger generations.

In the song Mirin hi Meithana, Thangmeiso has made a satirical critique on Tangkhul community and the manner in which they have been treated by others. In this song the
The flamboyant lifestyle and attitudes of the Tangkhuls were analyzed as the reasons behind other community's attitude towards the Tangkhuls. The lyrics of the song states that:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Sara iwui kapen chi} \\
\text{Mizin hi meithana} \\
\text{Tangkhulnaova ning haklaka} \\
\text{Khaleilei Kathang shokser} \\
\text{Aruila tik maziranga} \\
\text{Yur kateina yangkharing lala} \\
\text{Theikhami shi maning} \\
\text{I will do what I desire} \\
\text{Life's a kiln} \\
\text{Tangkhuls are big hearted} \\
\text{They take out whatever they have} \\
\text{Even now, nothing matters} \\
\text{When other tribes hate} \\
\text{Nothing bothers us}
\end{align*}
\]

Thangmeiso said that this song has been written in the context of various political and social actions that have targeted the Tangkhuls. However, as lamented in the songs, the Tangkhuls have an unwavering attitude which has made them more unpopular with other communities. Thus, the music which was supposedly made for mass entertainment and leisure are more serious than they appear to be. The lyrics of the songs contain messages for the community to learn and find ways to mitigate the social dilemmas.

The cultural text of the Tangkhuls has not detached from the social and cultural life of the Tangkhuls. What we have seen in the cultural texts are 'utterances' of various individuals through songs and words about the social situations and realities. What Baktin has argued about cultural texts is that it is consists of 'voices'. The forms of expressions
and what is expressed in artistic works thus became the voices of the people, about their world and the problems that they face. Although, popular music has not been taken seriously by the state and often people listen to these songs just for leisure, the 'messages' and 'ideas' disseminated through this medium gradually became a part of the social conscience.

The musical lyrics and poetries are not just creation of artistic work, but description of social realities (Martinez, 1999). Unlike most the social realities presented by various agencies and body, the lyrics of the text comes from below and it's concern with the deepest thoughts and mindset of the people. The narrative style and language of the popular music have been closely related to the daily usages of language of the people, because pop music 'work on ordinary language' (Shepherd, 1987). But, the case is different when it comes to poetry and other kinds of work. Therefore, because of its appeal and comprehensibility in Tangkhul community, popular music has become the most sought after in the realms of art. Through literary and musical works, artists have contributed their due to the society. In the long run, the artistic works are not just mere representations of the community's identity, but it becomes constitutive of the identity of the community. The symbolic indications are that any artistic work in Tangkhul language came to be categorized as 'Tangkhul Music' or 'Tangkhul Novel'.

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