

ISSN: 0976-8165

IMPACT FACTOR 7.86

# THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN  
ENGLISH

Bi-Monthly Peer-Reviewed eJournal

VOL.14 ISSUE 5 OCTOBER 2023

14 Years of Open Access

Editor-in-Chief  
Dr. Vishwanath Bite

Managing Editor  
Dr. Madhuri Bite

www.the-criterion.com

AboutUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

ContactUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

EditorialBoard: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal  
[www.galaxyimrj.com](http://www.galaxyimrj.com)

## **Homing in Writing: Diasporic Redemption of Home and Self in Ngangom and Tsundue**

**Rajkumari Smejita Devi**  
Department of English,  
Gargi College,  
University of Delhi.

**Article History:** Submitted-13/09/2023, Revised-13/10/2023, Accepted-14/10/2023, Published-31/10/2023.

### **Abstract:**

Writing about home or homeland is a creative exercise where the feeling of home is invented, imagined and reclaimed. The rubrics of a diasporic journeying to an ensconced past, for unison and affirmation, driven by a desire for home, rely heavily upon the ways in which the 'self' enacts performances that resound its identity in a continuum. To the diasporic imagination, home is fragmented, multiplied and internalized by the self. Robin S. Ngangom and Tenzin Tsundue reflect on diasporic homing and the probing of identity and the self. The former, in a state of self-imposed exile, and the latter, wrestling with his being a refugee, calls into question the conventional ideas of home, permanence, identity and the unified self.

**Keywords:** Home, Identity, culture, refugee, community, desire, performance, diaspora.

### **Locating Home as a Redemptive Return**

Home or accommodating with the idea of homing is a satiating performance. The notion encapsulates familiarity, cognisance and acceptance of feelings and their reciprocity. Writing about home or homeland is a creative exercise where the sense of home is invented, imagined and reclaimed. The writer's felt moment is transferred to his literary work and purely left to the reader's subjectivity to relive the conscious moment of the writer's creation. It is in the pure act of writing that the writer performs his sheer action of homing. It is this accustomed space where one reconciles both ruptures and movement of freedom to create and adapt. Home, in this sense, is a paradox as the imaginings continue with the readers, and the writer can only revisit an essentialized past to his text. The relation of the writer to his work of art is one that of a redemptive and

transformative suture in the journey of homing oneself. Writing takes the tropes of memories, nostalgia, lament, grief, hope, and desire to accentuate imagination. Stuart Hall engages the idea of what constitutes the formation of cultural identity in the diasporic context. One of his understandings of cultural identity is that it is a safe anchor, a referential point, unison and associations of place, people, objects, feelings, and experience. It is the moment of presentness, albeit historical times wrap. The question Hall puts forward is what led people to migrate and eventually settle in fragmented locations far beyond the comfort of their roots. Hall's analysis in the aftermath of the dispersal of so-called diasporic identities who are caught in the struggle with forms/representations of the notion of identity is sustaining. To quote, "cultural identity *is* fixed by birth, part of nature, imprinted through kinship and lineage in the genes, constitutive of our innermost selves" (Hall 2009: 208). This unification of one true self amongst many selves is the outcome of finding stability and anchor after the ruptures and displacement of identities from their roots. In doing so, cultural identities across shifting timelines recapitulate the eternal presence of the self with a referential marker of shared history, culture, community, experience, and feelings. For a chaotic diasporic experience in its own fragmentary and different experience of power/knowledge paradigm, cultural identity redefines the precincts of sameness and oneness.

In redrawing the lines of associations and remapping identity from a reservoir of shared affinities and experiences, cultural identities reshaped a pristine notion of an indivisible identity. The conscious exercise of returning to the past may not always be fulfilling and opens to the realm of desire, memory, myth, discovery, melancholia and symbolic representation. In this process of recovering the past, the self-encountered invariable ways to acquire a position that could affirm its undeniable connections.

The rubrics of journeying to an ensconced past for unison and affirmation rely heavily upon the ways the self-enacts performances that resound its identity in a continuum. This play act, straddling the past milieu across history, culture and experience, is also ridden with a profound responsibility of recovering a past which gives the present its essence. Moreover, the ways of reclaiming cultural identities allow the self to regain a sense of loss, a way to rehabilitate and a conscious act of redemptive return. Nonetheless, this return is essentialized not only for associations and reflections but also to comprehend the patterns in which invariable positionalities

of the self also emerge in the process. The return of the self is a vital trope that bridges language with its emotion, homes in the precinct of eternal exile, and the writer with his work.

Robin S. Ngangom's *My Invented Land* and Tenzin Tsundue's *Nowhere to Call Home* takes up this arduous task through the measure of poetic expression. Ngangom affirmed in his writings the commitment of the writer to his work of art. For him, poetry is about feeling which can be shared, comfort and heal the heart. It all started in the process of reclaiming one's voice to be heard and accepted; Ngangom divulged from personal to varied influences that shaped and honed his inspiration. With other counterparts of writers of Northeast India who have consciously rendered in their work the turmoil of contemporary socio-political scenario, he has also witnessed and reflected the same in his poetry. The garrison of law and order, systematic atrocities of power and state, secessionist and self-determined ethos, religious and ethnic strife, tradition and materialist worldview, indigeneity and the other, corruption and terror, to mention a few of the banalities of the existence of the present geopolitical conditions in Northeast India. Ngangom, in the initial phase of his writing, explored the romanticized landscape of Manipur and heavily dodged it in a more personal lyrical form. In the latter part, he gleaned over the scattered part of his self and place, infusing in his work what surmounts the poetry of witness: of mourning, desire, and redemptive return through his work. He fiercely advocated the notion of liberty for writers to express the truth of the terrible times and supported the works of Thangjam Ibopishak and Y. Ibomcha,<sup>i</sup> who started the 'poetry of survival'. He declared poets as natural dissidents, neither conformists nor anarchists. If we take a different direction where Tenzin Tsundue explores the profound journey of being a refugee in India, it is clearly shown in Tsundue's writings that he affirms the Tibetan identity as homing in the most uprooting loss of home scattered across the world. Freedom is his only source of inspiration, and his commitment to freedom to be home everywhere features in his writings. Born and bred as a political refugee in India, Tsundue lives and dreams in his imaginary homeland and the quest for free Tibet. The poet encounters the notion of home and the idea of homing from varying points of suture transcending, redrawing and amalgamating. The journey is marked as witnessed in his writings of withdrawal and acceptance, homing and exiling, freedom and resistance.

Ngangom's work, *My Invented Land*, can be located in an intricate experiential dissemination of self in another land, another culture. The quest for a desirous route for exile is

contemporaneous with the redemptive search for a return. The seeming binaries of past and present, home and exile, language and feelings, experience and knowledge, however, collapse into one another when the poet's desire to return is painted with ellipsis, deletions, memories, ecstasy, grief, lament, desire and redeeming. The redeeming in the form of writing about the return, writing as the return, is what Ngangom relentlessly strives for in his poetries. To find the idea of home/native land as chronicled in the contemporary Manipuri society, the poet traverses in his memories and angst about the same memory. His travel in his poetry is a desirous interplay of past and present in the multilayered edifices of what had been defined and determined as being a Manipuri. His writings produce the requisites of return as a responsive journey inward, probing possibilities of reclaiming a part of his lost self, thereby making the significance of return redemptive. Memory provokes the poet to feelings of alienation, loss, and mourning. The way the poet relegates to the contemporary turmoil of Manipuri society inflicted with violence and inhumanity posed the alarming grounds where the self undergoes meaningful insights of discovery, knowledge, and experience of a constitutive identity. How an essentialized past coalesces with fractal disharmonies of the present is witnessed by the poetic self. This part of the collection reinforced what has been caught, chronicling the flux, the point of suture, and that of homing identities.

For Tenzin Tsundue, being a refugee, home is natural; only he is far away from it. Tsundue, in his essay 'My kind of exile', reflected on his existential condition of waiting eternally for a place called home. Being a Tibetan, for him, is an indivisible bond which underlies the spirit for realizing the quest for a land they can call home. The shared memory, as recounted by the Tibetan community, refers to the idea of a faraway home, and Tsundue's poetries imagine this collective memory as a natural home that he struggles to reside in. Tsundue reflects his narrative of displacement in the different parlance of identity formation and conformation as he witnessed his life as a refugee in India. The associations to his Tibetan ancestry, which he forlorn, and continual performances of this primordial code are what he reconciles in his many oeuvres. It is this long exile of statelessness and belongingness that procreates the many closures and openings in Tsundue's writings; the idea of home is quintessential. For him, the return is always referred to as a quest, a political act, or a humane, ethical understanding. Significantly, his oeuvres witnessed his account for rootedness in the way he represents his cultural identity. This is the space where he consciously practised his indomitable journeys of return, real and symbolic, to refuge his

ancestry, a resilience against passivity, a reclaiming against denial, delivering an unseen future from a deprived past. Tsundue's writings, personal at times, evolve to a much larger dilemma and experience of tribulations and predicament of a known life of a refugee. Nostalgia and a deep quest for freedom and longing for homeland/home run through his writings. The return is redemptive as it beholds the essence of his identity and his pursuit of what he associates as freedom. For him, the reconstruction of his past is through the lineage of ancestry, kinship, history, and reliving the experience of his people, who have given meaning to what freedom is meant to be. The return is personal as well as political, and thus, his writings witness the dream of the future over the canvas of a prolonged struggle of the past.

### **Diasporic Imaginings**

Hall discussed how thinking about cultural identity leads to points of recognition where the form of representation enables to constitute new emergent subjects and thus empowering places from which to speak (Hall 1990: 225). In this context, cultural identity no longer traverses the space of referent marker, the essentialized past; somewhat, the closure in many of the diasporic experiences is affected by the emergent multiplicity of self. The experience of identity among the diaspora is always multiple transformations of belongingness while the longing for preservation blends in the lived experience, multiplying the embodiment of self. In diasporic imagination, home gives space for multiple perspectives, and homing takes place across the taxonomies of physical, psychological, and symbolic diversifications. "Home", for Tsundue, "is not a house, but that takes place sometimes away from our own home" (Tsundue, 2023). This disjunction between the home and house, its differential locations in the spatial scape of desire and memory, and the distant incongruence is emblematic of the refugee existence. However, Tsundue's home is not merely an imaginary desirous one; he also finds it in his condition of refuge. Home for him is real, but much away from it. "It is the home of my grandparents and parents left behind in Tibet", he observed (Tsundue 2023: 16). Home emerges as both virtual and actual, real but far away enough to merge into imagination. It is a becoming of two. Living in a country as a political refugee, Tsundue's quest for a place to call one's home while his 'own home' is an experience of homing. This is close to making structures of materials into a place of feeling called home. Home, as Richardson observed, is not even bound within a structure but can be within us wherever we are (Richardson 2019: 5). Home is not restricted to a static and unilocular matter. Tsundue's writings seek to liberate

home from a constricted belongingness to reveal an affective habitation. Fluidity takes place in homing. His poetries construct a home not primarily as a structure founded on the root but as a vine. Living for a long in a borrowed address, his lived reality encountered the vignettes of detachment and wistful dreams. It is in this milieu of temporality that refugees learn to adapt, transform, assimilate and internalize the multiple ideas of homing. The numerous homes is embodied by a disseminated self. The materiality of such existence has a profound impact on the way a refugee eulogizes and performs the reenactment of desires for a home in different planes.

In Ngangom's poem 'When You Do Not Return', the persona talks about the condition that has usurped when one leaves his native land for lapses of time. The vivid visual imagery, symbolism and metaphors added to the intensity of these conditions. Young men and students lost principles, political propaganda was hurled on, citizens proclaimed thieves as leaders, and the poor worsened only. In addition, when one has gone long, the changes are drastic; the mind, over time, breeds poison, and the sound of guns echoes through the hills, and every window instead of wildflower guns blooms brightly. As such, there is utter depravity as one only enters a reign of violence and limbo surrounded by barbed wire and continued purging of death and decay.

*When you leave your native hills  
I can only speak of lost times,  
And of sorrow and blood. And I write  
These letters of winter, asking you  
To return again to the hills.*

The persona urges the immediacy for the long-gone 'you' to return home, sending his wishful happiness since it has long deprived/eschewed from their native land.

In 'A personal reconnaissance', Tsundue take cognizance of the temporality of any refugee's stance of no man's land; the outward gaze transforms the landscape to an inward ennui of existential halt of here and there where the poetic self pursues to traverse. The sensory experience of seeing, touching, smelling, and listening is all ordained to reconfirm the feeling of being at home in its most rudimentary sense.

*From Ladakh  
Tibet is just a gaze away.*

*For the first time, I saw  
my country Tibet.  
In a hurried hidden trip  
I was there at the mound.  
I sniffed the soil,  
scratched the ground,  
listened to the dry wind  
and the wild old cranes.  
I didn't see the border,  
I swear there wasn't anything  
different, there.  
I didn't know  
if I was there or here.*

Sensory capabilities and haptics trigger memories of home, which is a sensation, a figment but also not absolutely unreal. It is not unreal in the sense that the eyes can see and the ear can hear the desired object; it is real, an incontestable material entity. However, access to the real is denied; the only available route to the home, the real, is through the imaginary. The imagination comes in the form of a dream for Tsundue ('Yet I dream of dying there') and as memories for Robin S Ngangom. From his early collection, 'Words and Silence' (1988), Ngangom drew on a reservoir of images, sounds, colours, landscapes, and feelings to recreate the refuge for a nostalgic way wanderer in the quest for his home. In 'Homeland I Left', he cast on the long-lost sunshine of adolescent heydays. The vivid rhapsody of coming-of-age playful times privy to youth and boldness is transformed into an inability to recall, take cognizance, and dim alluring sounds, scents, and feelings.

The nomadic home is also crossed by feelings of alienation, obscurity, and unsettling. The diasporic reconstruction of belongingness as imagined, re-enacted, and which constitutes the lived experience of everyday diasporic lives, is mapped on a bipolar movement between hope and loss. 'Imphal' beckons Ngangom like a ritual every winter. '*Here I am, both native and illegal migrant*'. There is internal assimilation and identification with the usual parlance that the landscape is portrayed: youthful people, haggard daily earners, and doleful riches. Imphal, the ancestral land of

the poet, escalates its prospect through neoliberalism in art, literature, culture, and capital enterprise, yet a foreboding prophecy is caught up in this land. The array of representations is numbed by a lurking design of distraught that robbed of a long-desirable dream.

*Land of my childhood*

*I can no longer pretend to love.*

Ngangom contemplates the mishappening and the lacunae of his momentary absence in the ritualistic visit to his homeland. Recovery of this lost self in a seeming sensory delight of sounds and sights, a lack of his own self which has robbed his equally powerful and deniable presence of his expropriated self in the sojourn.

*I should have been there*

*To keep track of hidden paths*

*That led to the jungle*

*I should have monitored*

*the boys are shot down and*

*counted the soldiers*

*they ambushed*

*I should have been there*

*In a deserted hamlet in Ukhrul*

This projection of an anguished and grieved self against the backdrop of crucial violent phases in the homeland highlights the speaker/poet's sense of a misplaced association with his at once discontinued identity in the larger domain of what constitutes cultural identity. The representational mode of cultural identity put up on grand display at the beginning of this poem took a reversal at the end. The interplay of desire/resistance, object/subject of violence, absence/presence, and displace/rootedness all played in redefining the positionality of the speaker. Like any displaced self, caught up in the rudiments of homing oneself, the speaker performed the desirous act of being one with the rest and, at the same time, routing/questioning the agency of violence and terror.

In 'Time Crosswords' (1994) collection of poems, Ngangom poured out his lament of a land he called his home. 'From the Book of Grievances', the poetic persona talks about incessant

violence, citing the incidents of Oinam and Ukhrul. Beginning in the 1990s, the sporadic cases of violence in the state of Manipur leashed terror and human rights conditions, culminating in the war waged between the tussle of state and non-state actors. The persona witnessed impassively,

*The smoking fields,  
 Prodded with clubs, the bruised vagina,  
 The shocked testis. We become  
 Impotent in the face of mortifications.  
 Today we will bury tradition's foetus.  
 We will not weave unparalleled history  
 We the worthy henchmen of tyranny  
 Will embrace the villain's principles*

The desire for revenge and state machinations of terrorism unleashes havoc on the lives of youth who in turn become 'the long sacrificing brother of night with his rifle', which only increases the rampant loss of innocent people, sufferings of children and women. Ngangom vehemently opposed modern statecraft and warfare, which jeopardized and nullified basic human conditions and rights. As such, the home is always strayed; the fields are barren, where maimed hands struggle for an empty belly. The constitutive idea of identity, which immerses the self with the overall notion of community, history, tradition, legacy, and heir, has been brutalized. The persona agonizes over the discontinuity of his permeable identity, which is caught in the rupture of politics of identity, that of secured traditionalism and state-of-the-art governmental technologies, self and other, victim and perpetrator.

The diasporic longing for return in Ngangom assumes a lamentation and regret. Resentment turned against the self; his essentialized home was engulfed in deaths and violence, removed far away from his joyous childhood. However, in Tsundue, this longing manifests in a more affirmative tone. He communicates a strong desire for return that is exemplified in his poem, 'Exile Home'. Every lived experience of the exiled forged the unanimity of return as the ultimate call for homeland and freedom.

*I am Tibetan.  
 But I am not from Tibet.*

*Never been there.  
Yet I dream  
of dying there.*

The homing in the diasporic experience also speaks volumes of the taxonomies of homing in real-time, the material aspects, familiarity, living with difference, and homing in exile. The rupture and the pause in the narrative of this long past is what confounded the persona in a fix as to what could possibly contain the idea of home to his younger lots. That the desire for roots is intertwined, transcended, and proliferated in the lapses. Tsundue is reflected in the following lines,

*Our tiled roof dripped  
and the four walls threatened to fall apart  
but we were to go home soon....  
our house seems to have grown roots.  
The fences have grown into a jungle,  
now how can I tell my children  
where we came from?*

This is further compounded by his being a refugee in a land which is home but inexplicably also a foreign space. 'My Tibetanness' and 'Exile House' evoke and protest the plight of the Tibetan refugees. The lived experience of a foreigner born in India, people belonging to a lost nation, scattered all over, mixing hegemonies, '*Tibetans: the world's sympathy stock*'. The poet encounters his Indian-Tibetanness in the hegemonic spheres of race, class, region, and geopolitical markers. What Hall emphasized was how cultural identity in the diasporic experience also transformed and was in the process of 'becoming' amidst the ruptures of the materiality of time, history, or culture. As such, the diasporic identity experiences the multilayered ways of transcending, assimilating, and positionalities that the play of identity concurs with.

*At every check-post and office  
I am an "Indian-Tibetan".  
My Registration Certificate  
I renew every year with a salaam.*

*A foreigner born in India.  
I am more of an Indian...*

The poet earnestly laments that the quintessential marker is always missed, "*but never the question – "Tibetan?"*" Nevertheless, the essence of home is further removed to an eternal referent in dreams and desires. The poised remark of being an outsider born out of a nation in exile and the present purport of an identity that languished and longed to home or homes are inseparably performed. For Tsundue, home is a mediation of his many selves born, assimilated, lost and longed, redeeming past to a promising future.

The bipolarity between loss and hope that marks the being of a refugee's search for home manifests further in that the lament is always followed by joyous affirmation. In a singular voice of protest and commitment, the poet expresses his referential identity as that of a Tibetan Refugee titled with the same name 'Refugee'. With such profound feelings, he narrativizes the birth of Tibetan identity in an exile landscape, as a born refugee, the foreignness, and the difference. Embossed, branded, committed. The pride and predicament of a refugee is the journey from 'R' refugee to gaining 'R' of Rangzen, freedom for Tibet.

*When I was born  
My mother said  
you are a refugee....  
I am born refugee.  
I have three tongues.  
The one that sings  
is my mother tongue.  
The R on my forehead  
between my English and Hindi  
the Tibetan tongue reads:  
RANGZEN  
Freedom means Rangzen*

In 'Losar Greeting', Tsundue rests hope at the beginning of the new year in Tibetan culture with the soulful aspiration that every folk can redeem and renew. The bond that unites them, the cord that is unbreakable, a past which nurtures their reality, and the commonality of aspiring free hearts all conjoins in these lines. In the poem, the persona is encouraged to keep up the good work for a reward that will be reaped in a tangible timeline. The life of a refugee is marked with a reward to be gained at the end of the day. In a borrowed space, one learns to accommodate, assimilate, perform, produce, relate, and most undeniably dream and aspire.

*Though in a borrowed garden  
you grow, grow well my sister.*

*This Losar*

*when you attend your Morning Mass,  
say an extra prayer  
that the next Losar  
we can celebrate back in Lhasa.*

*When you attend your convent classes,  
learn an extra lesson  
that you can teach children back in Tibet.*

*Send your roots  
through the bricks,  
stones, tiles and sand.*

*Spread your branches wide  
and rise above the hedges high.*

Ngangom is much sober. The passage of time with the repetitious arrival of new time draws him to the haplessness of the distant home. 'The Quest as Beginning' explores the anxiety of a passing age, compounded with what the generation has accomplished so far.

*And what will we find  
Before the passing of our race.*

The act of speaking 'Let us only speak of what reached our ears', the legit and what has been told/ passed on from the past, of myths and heroism. In stark contrast, Ngangom hinges on

the essence of speaking up, *'Let us also speak of what we found' 'parchments written in blood, alphabets buried with shrunken heads, crumbling flesh of corruption, generations of groaning slaves'*. The ruins of civilization are stained with men's utter callousness, greed, vanity, violence, and corruption, forging the present to take cues from the past. With the maxim for those who will continue the quest, *'There is no antidote for the bite of the man.'*

Returning full circle to the diasporic search for homeland and the inquiry over in actual time frame of what it becomes of, Ngangom carries on his melancholic journey through the wonderment in yet another poem, 'Poem for Joseph',

*It is never too late to come home.  
But I must find a homeland  
Where I can find myself  
just a map or even a tree or a stone  
to mark a spot I could return to*

The poem bemoans the loss of continuity from his romantic nostalgia for open fields and joyful grass and of associations with one's native land. Ethnic cleansing, amplified notions of martyrdom and patriotism, incessant insurgency movements, and draconian state laws riveted a series of turbulent events which collapsed the political and socio-economic lives of the people. The pogrom in ethnic cleansing has been normalized that poor Joseph did not mind leaving all objects of desire except for the mournful photograph. He will strut like a migrant, uprooted, displaced for survival in Imphal, the melting pot and to find a solid reason that he had ever lived. Internal displacement is not new in this part of the region. The poet/persona's quest for home resonates in the arrays of objects, images, and feelings in the poems. The intensified experience of refuge and futile escape in the pursuit is noticeable. When the land is suckled with blood, where brothers took arms against each other, where love is a forgotten word, where patriotism honoured martyred people who died in confusion, where history became a fearful narrative, and abhorring laws ruled, silence is the order of the day, and freedom is forlorn. The poet/persona mourned at the malign state of his native place and experienced the paradox, the strange, uncanny feeling of being imprisoned with the ethos that defines his idea of homing yet his continued absence. In this constant role play of a quest or a poignant abandonment, the imagination of a displaced/diasporic

identity is revolting in the periphery of the poet's yearning and melancholia that often collapses in the former.

What transpires when things that hold one's identity as a solid affirmation of one's existence collapse into veritable questions of belongingness, trust, love, and reciprocity? Ngangom probed the notion of desire and his object of desire in the overture of his continued quest for his homeland. In any diasporic writings, the trope of desire and nostalgia runs deeply. The burden of the past hangs heavily.

In 'Native Land', he relayed and revealed the volatile scenes of violence, arsons and killings like a media report. It concisely captured the violent affect generated in such episodes. A hardened feeling that leaves him strayed from humanity, numbed, indifferent at the end. Violence and terror continued to be internalized. In 'Everywhere I Go,' the poet carried his homeland with him. To quote, *'I make imaginary journeys to its little world every day'*. He consoled himself to overcome agony and melancholy and continued his journey carrying it wherever he refused. Closely connected with these themes of homing and identity, the chaotic forces of lawlessness are seen in many shades in 'My Invented Land'. Ngangom eulogized a pristine native soil that knew no boundaries, a travelogue without end against a land injured by arms conflicts, nationalist rhetoric, corrupt statesmen, and perjury to innocence. With a sinister design, the present is confounded with lurking nocturnal visits of men with guns, young falling for narcotics and outfits, and violation of rights of many men, women, young and old. Greed, nepotism, sycophancy, corruption, and disharmony are depicted ruling firmly over the land of his imagined home, which he can never dispose of.

There must be a conscious effort to sustain the idea of homeland or native land through the trajectory of past and present, a lost self and a self that is evolving, assimilating, and transforming in the process. For Ngangom, finding and redefining his homeland became a quest, and this is profoundly expressed in his writings. In doing so, it is not always a redemptive return to salvage the continuity of his lost 'self' but also intertwined with a desirous route of redefining what likely constitutes his idea of home and homing. In the process, the poet transforms from a mere observer and chronicler of time to the actual part of seeing himself enacted in the sojourn. The agonizing and mournful experience of homing the continued past corresponds to a derelict present. What it

was and what it has become. The inability, stasis, lacunae, and absence of his other in the convoluted dramatic real-time events profoundly affect his re-definition of his homeland. He is now a '*native and an illegal migrant*' in a land, a prisoner barnacled by 'criminal words', whose freedom regained in words. Such are the conditions that transform the position of the poet to find the sense of identifying self within the domain of homeland and of home. There is rhapsody and vigour in the retellings. Homing oneself is not always a personal recovery but essentially a surrender to invent and resurrect the same with or without dent.

But it is in this surrendering that what Sartre called the 'writer's commitment to freedom regains another quality. As he observed in *What is Literature?*, literature can be a liberating force from all forms of alienation. Literature is a form of social action. Literature of praxis allows the writer to create a literary object out of her subjectivity, but it is only through the readers' conscious reflection that the writer can stamp their relation to her work of art. A writer aligns a shared space with the readers where creative force amalgamates with the imaginary, language with feelings, subject and object, self and other. The art of writing, according to Sartre, is a movement and a flow born out of the freedom of creative impulse of the writer and the reenactment of the same on the part of the reader (Sartre, 2016, xiv). Poetries of Ngangom and Tsundue can be traced to the kind of praxis that Sartre talked about, that is, the necessity of freedom both writers and readers can exercise together. Writers, as Sartre suggested, can only project; it is the reader's subjectivity that will bring the work of art its meaningful existence. The approach is to reflect a collective consciousness of social action that literature can produce based on a free mind and spirit. Ngangom's writings revisit the aspects of reflective consciousness on the part of the readers by traversing past and present and chronicling in the narrative the verisimilitudes of the history, culture, and socio-economic stances of Manipur. His poems recount the anguished pain and desire of a chronicler in his journey to his homeland or homing himself. How Ngangom constructs his yearning for home in his invented literary objects is catapulting; he lives in his poetry to be home in his imagined texts. He partakes a community of affective sharing with the readers of his poetry, and there, he builds his home with many who read his poetries. His writing appeals to the readers to witness the social action of collective reflection on society. Home, identity, freedom, belongingness, and art are no customized assets but cultural artefacts that become meaningful only through sharing, reflecting, transmitting, transforming, and retrieving. Tenzin Tsundue embarked on the journey of finding his roots and his desire to behold freedom across the scattered vagaries

of branded, embossed, stigmatized, routinized and normalized markers of identity. What transpired in this journey is the poet's profound lived experience of homing away from home. The taxonomies in varying proportions affect both psychological and physical spaces. Tsundue's poetries question the referential significance of absolute markers of home identity. If the idea of home is irreducible, then for any diaspora, it is always deferred to loss in the realms of signifiers and thus an outsider with nowhere to call one's home. The life of a Tibetan refugee in India, as we see in Tenzin Tsundue's riotous writings, invokes conscious reflection of readers, reiterating that any literary object needs a sharper conscience of freedom to contemplate and interpret. Tsundue honed his desirous root of homing through his writings as resistance, and through this, he could reclaim his being more than himself as his identity as a Tibetan. The writings of both Ngangom and Tsundue took cognizance of their redemptive return through their oeuvres, and through this, they created an affective community where readers and writers produce home together, empathetic, reflective, resilient and emancipating at the same time. In their imagining texts, Ngangom and Tsundue have constructed a yearning for home, and they write to be at/with one's home/s.

**End Note:**

1. Thangjam Ibopishak and Y. Ibomcha, two well-known Manipuri poets who have rendered the pain and anxiety of contemporary Manipuri society in their poems often marked with absurdist ironies, dystopian worlds, satirical and surrealistic.

**Works Cited:**

Jean-Paul, Sartre. *What is Literature?* Trans. Bernard Frechtman. Reprint. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Ngangom, Robin S. *My Invented Land: New and Selected Poems*, New Delhi: Speaking Tiger, 2023.

Richardson, Joanna. *Place and Identity: The Performance of Home*, London: Routledge, 2019.

Stuart, Hall. "Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts from Abroad", *Essential Essays: Identity and Diaspora*, Volume II, (ed) David Morley, Duke University Press, 2009, 206-226.

Stuart, Hall. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", *Identity, Community, Culture and Difference*, (ed) Rutherford Jonathan, London: Lawrence & Wirshat Limited, 1990, 222-237.

Tsundue, Tenzin. *Nowhere to Call Home*, Blackneck Book, 2023.

---