

The Craft of Eerie Atmosphere in Lalzuithanga's Horror Fiction

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Abstract

Lalzuithanga's contribution to Mizo horror fiction lies in his subtle yet powerful construction of eerie atmosphere, which functions as both a literary device and a cultural expression of fear. His narratives employ light and darkness to destabilize perception, silence and sound to heighten psychological tension, and the manipulation of time to distort readers' sense of reality. Such strategies move beyond conventional plot-driven horror, emphasizing instead the slow build of dread that lingers in familiar yet unsettling spaces. Rooted in Mizo folklore and belief systems, Lalzuithanga's works illustrate how supernatural fear is inseparable from cultural imagination, while also revealing how human malice often hides behind the mask of the otherworldly. By blending folkloric tradition with modern horror techniques, his fiction demonstrates how atmosphere becomes an active agent of fear, shaping both character experience and reader response. Situating Lalzuithanga within broader discourses of horror theory, this study argues that his craft of atmosphere not only enriches Mizo literature but also dialogues with global traditions of the eerie and uncanny.

Keywords: Mizo literature; Lalzuithanga; horror fiction; eerie atmosphere; supernatural; folklore

1. Introduction

Horror fiction in Mizo literature is unique because it combines traditional folk beliefs with modern narrative techniques. Among the leading writers of this genre, Lalzuithanga stands

out for his careful craft in creating an eerie atmosphere. Eeriness, as a literary effect, does not rely on immediate shocks or grotesque images but on a slow and unsettling feeling that something may not be as it seems. Mark Fisher explains that the “eerie” is often linked to the sense of “something missing” or “an unexplained presence” (61). In Lalzuithanga’s novels, this is achieved through disguise, cultural belief, supernatural figures, and carefully using settings.

Noël Carroll defines horror as a genre that produces a particular emotional state—fear mixed with curiosity and unease (Carroll 18). Lalzuithanga uses this principle to shape his stories in ways that make the reader question the boundary between the real and the supernatural. Instead of simply presenting ghosts or spirits, he blurs the line between human deception and supernatural possibility. This strategy connects directly with Mizo culture, where folktales about spirits, *lasi*, and unseen beings continue to influence collective imagination (Pachau 142).

The following discussion looks at three of his major works—*Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, *Thlahrang*, and *Aukhawk Lasi*. Each text shows a different technique in the creation of eeriness: disguise and uncertainty, crime and supernatural belief, and the ambivalent figure of the supernatural feminine. Finally, the essay also considers how setting and pacing help Lalzuithanga sustain the eerie mood.

2. Setting as a Source of Fear

One of Lalzuithanga’s strongest tools is his ability to use setting as an agent of fear. In *Thlahrang*, the rural environment—forests, villages, and lonely paths—creates a backdrop where danger is both expected and concealed. These settings reflect what Punter calls the “haunted landscape” of Gothic literature, where ordinary places are imbued with dread and mystery (Punter 21). The familiar is transformed into the uncanny, a space where one is never sure whether the rustle of leaves or the flicker of shadows hides a human intruder or a supernatural presence.

In *Aukhawk Lasi*, the forest is not just a location but a living force, filled with supernatural presence. The figure of the *lasi*, a spirit associated with the wilderness in Mizo folklore, renders the natural landscape inseparable from the spiritual and the threatening (Pachau 87). Lalzuithanga’s forest is a site of both livelihood and terror—villagers depend on it for survival, but it simultaneously represents a world that resists human mastery. This dual function of setting ties his fiction to the folk horror tradition, where landscapes hold cultural memory and become “repositories of the uncanny” (Scovell 18).

By embedding horror in spaces that are part of daily life, Lalzuithanga blurs the line between safety and threat, making the atmosphere eerie and unpredictable. Such use of setting creates what Carroll calls “art-horror”—a reaction grounded not in spectacle but in the audience’s awareness that the familiar world has been invaded by forces that defy reason (Carroll 27). In this sense, the terror of Lalzuithanga’s settings lies not only in supernatural beings but also in the possibility that one’s home or surroundings may suddenly turn hostile.

Furthermore, his landscapes are culturally specific. Unlike the castles or abbeys of European Gothic, Lalzuithanga’s fear emerges from the Mizo hills, villages, and forests—spaces that already carry folkloric weight in oral traditions. This localization of Gothic space resonates with what Botting describes as the adaptability of Gothic to new environments, where “the unfamiliar is constructed within the familiar” (Botting 8). In doing so, Lalzuithanga establishes a horror atmosphere that is uniquely Mizo yet linked to a broader global tradition.

3. Disguise and Uncertainty in *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*

In *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, the eerie atmosphere grows from the relationship between Phira and Ngurthanpari. Phira pretends to be a supernatural being in order to secretly meet her. At first, the deception is successful, and the reader, like the characters, is left to wonder whether a ghostly presence is real. This creates hesitation between natural and supernatural explanations. Tzvetan Todorov calls this hesitation the essence of “the fantastic” (25).

The use of disguise here is not simply a narrative trick but reflects a deeper cultural fear of the unseen. Mizo folklore is full of stories where spirits take on human form, and people often worry about whether a stranger might in fact be a supernatural being. Phira’s disguise makes use of this cultural belief, showing how superstition can be manipulated for personal reasons. The effect is eerie because it feels believable in the cultural setting, even though it later proves false.

Another element that deepens the eeriness is the secrecy of the meetings. Lovers meeting at night, in quiet places away from the community, are already crossing into liminal space. The boundary between ordinary human action and supernatural fear is thin. Lalzuithanga uses silence, darkness, and secrecy to build tension. The reader is drawn into the same uncertainty as the characters, unsure whether to expect romance or horror.

This balance of love and fear makes the story different from typical Western horror, where the supernatural is often more direct and violent. Here, the supernatural remains in

suggestion, and the fear grows from not knowing. This is a key feature of Lalzuithanga's craft: horror is not immediate, but it lingers in the imagination

4. Fear and Crime in *Thlahrang*

If *Phira leh Ngurthanpari* creates eeriness through disguise and secret meetings, *Thlahrang* takes a darker turn by combining violent crime with the community's belief in spirits. The story revolves around Parmawii's disappearance and death, and the suspicion that supernatural forces might be involved. Kawla, the true murderer, hides his crime by disguising himself as a ghostly being. This deception makes the villagers believe in the presence of a spirit, showing how quickly supernatural explanations can take root in the absence of clear evidence.

The eerie atmosphere of *Thlahrang* comes from this mixture of crime and belief. As Mark Fisher argues, the "eerie" is felt most strongly when there is either "a failure of presence"—something missing that should be there—or "an excess of absence"—an unexplained gap that creates unease (61). In the novel, the absence of a known killer makes the villagers suspect something otherworldly. Instead of seeking rational explanations, they lean toward a supernatural cause, which deepens the atmosphere of fear.

Lalzuithanga carefully delays the revelation of Kawla's guilt, allowing the community and the reader to remain in suspense. This slow unfolding of truth builds tension, since each unexplained event could be interpreted as ghostly intervention. Horror, as Noël Carroll explains, thrives on this balance between curiosity and dread (18). The villagers' curiosity about the strange events mixes with their dread of the supernatural, and the reader shares this experience.

The setting also plays a key role in sustaining the eerie mood. Much of the action takes place in isolated, shadowed areas—forests and quiet village paths—where the boundaries between human and supernatural are uncertain. These liminal spaces intensify the fear, since crimes that occur there are more easily attributed to spirits than to humans. This reflects what Stephanie Wytovich describes as central to folk horror: atmosphere and setting combined with cultural practices and legends ("The Rise of Folk Horror"). In *Thlahrang*, the setting mirrors the characters' uncertainty, making the crime appear even more ghostly.

What makes *Thlahrang* especially powerful is how it reflects social fears within the community. The villagers' quickness to accept a supernatural explanation shows the deep influence of folklore on Mizo society. At the same time, the eventual revelation—that the crime

was human—shows how belief in spirits can be used as a mask for human evil. Kawla manipulates cultural fears to protect himself, and this manipulation is what makes the atmosphere so eerie. The story suggests that the most frightening aspect of horror is not always the supernatural itself, but the way humans exploit belief in the supernatural to commit violence and hide the truth.

Thus, in *Thlahrang*, Lalzuithanga's craft of eeriness comes from the tension between belief and reality. The villagers' faith in spirits, the shadowy settings, and Kawla's disguise work together to produce a mood where the supernatural feels possible at every turn. This mixture of cultural imagination and human deception makes the narrative both unsettling and culturally meaningful, showing how horror in Mizo literature often reflects the dangers of both unseen worlds and human actions.

5. The Role of Light and Darkness

Another important craft that Lalzuithanga employs in creating an eerie atmosphere is his symbolic use of light and darkness. In *Thlahrang*, night often becomes a stage for fear, where the absence of light allows human imagination to run wild. Darkness cloaks the villain Kawla as he impersonates a supernatural being, allowing his crimes to appear like acts of the otherworldly. In this way, Lalzuithanga makes darkness not just an environmental condition but an accomplice to horror. It becomes a space where deception, violence, and superstition flourish because the eye cannot fully discern what lies ahead.

Darkness in his fiction corresponds to what Freud calls the *unheimlich* or “uncanny”—the return of the familiar in strange and threatening ways (Freud 241). For villagers used to walking paths at night, the same familiar routes suddenly become infused with terror when the lantern light grows dim or shadows take unnatural forms. Lalzuithanga exploits this psychological tension between the known and the unknown, so that even silence or a flicker in the dark carries an ominous weight.

By contrast, moments of light in his novels are often short-lived, fragile, or deceptive. In *Aukhawk Lasi*, light occasionally breaks through the forest canopy, but instead of offering safety, it highlights the uncanny presence of the *lasi*. This reflects what Punter calls the “ambiguity of illumination” in Gothic writing, where light reveals only partial truths and deepens, rather than dispels, the mystery (Punter 44). In other words, the rare appearance of light does not guarantee security—it often confirms that something terrifying is present.

From a broader perspective, Lalzuithanga's manipulation of light and darkness resonates with the folk horror tradition, which relies on contrast between visibility and obscurity. Scovell notes that folk horror thrives in "liminal moments—dusk, twilight, or shadow—where reality seems thinnest" (Scovell 36). Similarly, in Mizo cultural imagination, twilight and nighttime are considered spiritually charged times, when spirits and supernatural beings are most active (Pachau 92). By situating his horrors in these liminal spaces, Lalzuithanga aligns literary craft with cultural belief.

Ultimately, Lalzuithanga's use of light and darkness heightens suspense and reinforces the uncanny. It is not only the absence of light that terrifies, but the uncertainty of what little light reveals. This interplay sustains the eerie mood of his fiction and situates his works within both Mizo folklore and the global Gothic tradition.

6. Silence and Sound as Psychological Tools

Silence and sound are central to Lalzuithanga's craft of creating an eerie atmosphere. Where silence suggests the unknown, sound becomes the trigger that unsettles the mind. In *Thlahrang*, long stretches of silence in the village or on forest paths generate tension, as readers are forced to anticipate what might emerge from the stillness. When Kawla impersonates a ghostly being, his presence is often marked not by words but by sudden noises—the rustle of leaves, the crack of twigs, or footsteps in the dark—that break the silence in chilling ways. These auditory cues manipulate both the characters and the readers, forcing them into a heightened psychological state where imagination completes what is left unseen.

Silence in Lalzuithanga's fiction functions like what T. S. Eliot once described as "the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings" (Eliot 20), except here it is a wrestle with absence. Silence becomes oppressive, not peaceful, because it suggests that something is deliberately withholding itself. In Mizo folklore, moments of quietness in the forest are often interpreted as signs of a spirit's presence (Pachau 114). Lalzuithanga draws on this cultural association to make silence itself uncanny.

The combination of silence and sound also connects Lalzuithanga's writing to Gothic and folk horror traditions. As Punter notes, Gothic fiction often thrives on the contrast between "the mute and the audible, where silence becomes a space of projection and sound becomes a disturbance" (Punter 61). In folk horror, too, silence before ritual or sound within ritual (chants, cries, drums) play with the audience's expectations of threat (Scovell 73). Lalzuithanga adapts

this global technique into a Mizo setting, using natural and cultural soundscapes—forest silence, spirit voices, village sounds—to heighten his readers’ psychological involvement.

Ultimately, silence and sound in Lalzuithanga’s fiction are not mere background details. They are psychological instruments that manipulate fear. Silence sharpens the imagination by withholding certainty, while sudden sound jolts the mind into shock. Together, they create a rhythm of suspense that sustains the eerie atmosphere of his works.

7. Manipulation of Time and Temporal Disruption

Another important craft that Lalzuithanga employs to heighten eeriness is his manipulation of time. In his narratives, time often appears suspended, accelerated, or strangely fragmented, which destabilizes the reader’s sense of normal progression. Such disruption of temporal order places characters in unsettling situations where the ordinary flow of life is altered by supernatural or human intrusion.

In *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, Phira’s secret meetings with Ngurthanpari occur at night, a liminal period associated with both romance and fear. Darkness slows down the sense of time, making every encounter appear prolonged and filled with suspense. The cover of night not only hides Phira’s impersonation but also intensifies the feeling of danger, since time itself seems stretched into a perpetual moment of secrecy and dread.

In *Thlahrang*, the manipulation of time is even more pronounced. Parmawii’s disappearance and the villagers’ fear unfold across days, but the killer Kawla uses disguise to blur the line between past and present encounters with the supposed supernatural being. Memories of earlier ghostly sightings are carried into the present moment, producing an atmosphere where time seems cyclical rather than linear. This echoes Todorov’s concept of the “hesitation” in fantastic literature, where the narrative moment hangs between natural and supernatural explanations (41).

Aukhawk Lasi also reflects temporal disruption in its depiction of magical journeys. The characters move through space at unnatural speeds, flying or teleporting in seconds rather than walking for hours. Such distortions of time and space collapse the ordinary perception of reality and reinforce the uncanny. Freud’s notion of the uncanny highlights how the familiar becomes frightening when natural laws are broken; here, the distortion of time intensifies that uncanny sensation (Freud 150).

Through his manipulation of time, Lalzuithanga constructs atmospheres where the reader feels disoriented, as though caught in a dream where the hours do not pass normally. This

temporal instability contributes directly to the eerie tone of his novels, showing how horror often arises not only from what is seen but also from how time itself is experienced.

8. Setting and Suspense as Tools of Eeriness

In all three novels—*Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, *Thlahrang*, and *Aukhawk Lasi*—Lalzuithanga demonstrates a careful craft of using setting and suspense to create an eerie mood. The landscapes he describes are not simply backgrounds but active participants in generating unease. Forests, riversides, and mountain paths—ordinary parts of Mizo life—become stages for supernatural or deceptive events. This use of landscape recalls Wytovich’s definition of folk horror, where atmosphere and place are central: “it typically references the occult in the form of cultural practices, urban legends, religion, or witchcraft” (“The Rise of Folk Horror”).

For instance, in *Thlahrang*, the eerie atmosphere is amplified by Kawla’s ability to use the forest as a hiding ground while impersonating a spirit. The physical environment mirrors the uncertainty of the narrative: dense trees, shifting shadows, and echoing sounds make it difficult to distinguish natural from supernatural. Similarly, in *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, the eerie comes from hidden nighttime meetings, with secrecy heightened by dim, unsettling environments. In both cases, the setting becomes inseparable from the suspense, allowing Lalzuithanga to prolong tension and unsettle readers.

Suspense in these novels is generated not through sudden shocks but through anticipation. As Carroll notes, horror relies heavily on the “drama of disclosure,” where fear builds as readers wait for the revelation of something monstrous or uncanny (28). Lalzuithanga’s narratives delay such revelations, often layering rumor, suspicion, and gradual hints before the truth—whether supernatural or criminal—is unveiled. This narrative pacing deepens the eeriness, because the unknown always feels more threatening than what is immediately revealed.

What makes Lalzuithanga’s use of setting and suspense distinctive is its grounding in Mizo cultural imagination. Unlike Western Gothic novels, which rely on castles, graveyards, and ruined abbeys, Lalzuithanga situates eeriness in familiar landscapes—forests, hills, and villages that his readers recognize. These spaces become uncanny not because they are exotic, but because they reveal a hidden dimension of danger. Fisher’s theory of the eerie is again useful here: the sense of something unexplained, of an unknown agency shaping familiar surroundings, captures exactly how these novels transform ordinary settings into sites of unease (61).

By blending culturally familiar landscapes with suspenseful storytelling, Lalzuithanga crafts a style of horror that feels both local and universal. His work shows that the eerie is not limited to ghosts or monsters but can emerge from how people perceive their surroundings, their relationships, and the possibility of unseen forces at work.

9. Cultural Beliefs and Supernatural Fear

A central reason Lalzuithanga's works create such powerful eerie atmospheres is their deep connection to Mizo cultural beliefs about the supernatural. Unlike imported Gothic conventions that rely on castles or medieval ruins, Lalzuithanga draws on local cosmologies where the boundary between human life and the spirit world is fragile. This cultural grounding gives his horror an authenticity that speaks directly to Mizo readers while also resonating with universal themes of fear.

In *Thlahrang*, the fear of the supernatural stems from villagers' belief that spirits can impersonate humans or mislead travelers. This belief is not simply decorative but shapes how characters interpret events: when Parmawii disappears, suspicion quickly turns to supernatural causes before the human culprit is revealed. As Botting notes, Gothic terror often arises when "the unseen becomes a presence" (Botting 2). Here, the unseen is powered by Mizo tradition itself, where impersonating spirits (*thlahrang*) are part of accepted folklore.

Similarly, in *Aukhawk Lasi*, the forest spirits (*lasi*) represent both allure and danger. They are not monstrous in the Western sense but reflect animistic traditions where non-human beings share agency with humans. As Pachuau observes, the *lasi* are seen as guardians of the forest, sometimes benevolent and sometimes dangerous, embodying the ambivalent role of nature in Mizo thought (Pachuau 125). Lalzuithanga uses this belief system to blur the line between natural environment and supernatural terror, making the landscape itself feel alive and unpredictable.

Anthropologists like Tylor describe animism as the belief that natural objects and forces are animated by spirits (Tylor 94). Lalzuithanga adapts this cultural framework into his fiction, showing how trees, forests, and unseen presences carry power and danger. In doing so, he transforms ordinary spaces into haunted ones, where fear arises not from an external monster but from cultural memory itself.

This integration of cultural belief with narrative horror also reflects what Scovell identifies in folk horror: a genre where the past and the supernatural remain embedded in local traditions and continue to shape the present (Scovell 44). In Lalzuithanga's novels, fear is never

abstract—it is rooted in the collective imagination of the Mizo people, where spirits and human beings coexist in fragile tension.

By weaving Mizo supernatural beliefs into his stories, Lalzuithanga creates an atmosphere that is both eerie and culturally resonant. The horror does not simply imitate Western Gothic but emerges from within the community's worldview, making his fiction a unique contribution to both folk horror and supernatural literature.

10. Human Villainy Behind the Mask of the Supernatural

One of Lalzuithanga's most striking narrative techniques is his use of the supernatural as a mask for human villainy. In both *Thlahrang* and *Aukhawk Lasi*, what at first seems to be evidence of ghostly or spiritual activity is later revealed to be orchestrated by human hands. This strategy deepens the atmosphere of fear because it plays on the tension between belief and reality, while also exposing darker truths about human nature.

In *Thlahrang*, Kawla manipulates the villagers' belief in spirits by disguising himself as a supernatural being. His impersonation creates terror, allowing him to commit murder and mislead others. This device reflects what Todorov calls the "fantastic hesitation," where characters and readers are caught between supernatural explanation and rational discovery (Todorov 25). The eventual revelation that the horror was human-made adds another layer of dread, because it suggests that cruelty and deception are more dangerous than spirits themselves.

Similarly, in *Aukhawk Lasi*, the forest is filled with unseen forces, but Lalzuithanga complicates this atmosphere by weaving in human motives of greed, betrayal, and violence. The *lasi* may be feared, but the true threats often emerge from within the human community. This aligns with Julia Kristeva's idea of the abject—the horrifying recognition that the greatest threats often come from within the familiar, not the alien (Kristeva 4). By showing how humans exploit cultural fears of the supernatural, Lalzuithanga turns folklore into a mirror that reflects the darkness of human psychology.

This craft choice is also consistent with broader patterns in folk horror. As Wytovich observes, folk horror often blends cultural myth with human cruelty, showing how tradition can be manipulated for violence or control ("The Rise of Folk Horror"). In Lalzuithanga's novels, the supernatural is never dismissed; rather, it functions as a cultural backdrop that allows human villainy to hide in plain sight. The real terror, therefore, lies in the recognition that belief itself can be weaponized. By unmasking the supernatural as a disguise for human

actions, Lalzuithanga not only builds suspense but also raises questions about morality, trust, and the fragility of community bonds. His eerie atmospheres thus carry both psychological and cultural weight, making the horror resonate on multiple levels.

11. The Role of Cultural Beliefs in Shaping Eeriness

A key feature of Lalzuithanga's craft lies in how he draws from Mizo cultural beliefs to create an atmosphere of eeriness. The narratives do not simply invent supernatural elements for entertainment; they embed them in existing traditions of spirits, omens, and unseen forces. This cultural grounding makes the eerie feel more convincing to readers who are familiar with Mizo folklore and oral narratives.

In *Aukhawk Lasi*, the presence of supernatural elements such as flying, teleportation, and magical cups reflects traditional Mizo cosmology, where the natural and supernatural were not seen as separate domains but as interwoven realities. Such details, though extraordinary, are presented without excessive explanation, which reinforces their eerie quality. As Tylor explains in his theory of animism, "the belief in spiritual beings" forms the foundation of early human religion and worldviews (12). Lalzuithanga employs these animistic structures to frame his narratives, thereby enhancing their uncanny force.

Similarly, *Phira leh Ngurthanpari* and *Thlahrang* show how social fears and communal beliefs become central to the eerie mood. Villagers readily accept supernatural explanations before logical ones, revealing how cultural traditions shape perception. This resonates with Turner's concept of liminality, where belief systems create a threshold between the real and the unreal, generating uncertainty and fear (95). Lalzuithanga harnesses this liminal zone to blur the line between rationality and faith, between human agency and supernatural power.

By weaving cultural beliefs into his storytelling, Lalzuithanga ensures that the eerie does not feel artificially constructed but organically emerges from the worldview of his characters and readers. This not only preserves cultural identity but also demonstrates how folk horror operates: the fear comes not only from ghosts or criminals but from the deep cultural memory that validates their possibility. As Dégh argues, folklore transmits social anxieties through narrative, allowing communities to articulate and confront their fears (67). Lalzuithanga's novels exemplify this process, using cultural belief systems as a foundation for atmosphere

12. Conclusion

The eerie atmosphere in Lalzuithanga's works emerges not from one isolated technique but from a careful layering of multiple literary strategies. By weaving together characterization, impersonation, silence, suspenseful setting, cultural beliefs, and manipulation of time, he creates a narrative texture that both frightens and fascinates. These techniques, while simple on the surface, achieve a profound effect by unsettling the reader's expectations of reality and destabilizing the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural.

Through characterization, Lalzuithanga crafts figures whose actions are unpredictable and mysterious, pulling the reader into their fear and uncertainty. Impersonation and disguise extend this sense of unease, as the line between human intention and supernatural force becomes blurred. Narrative gaps and silences compel the reader to imagine what is left unsaid, allowing horror to grow in the shadows of uncertainty. Similarly, eerie settings—haunted forests, lonely villages, and the quiet of night—serve as atmospheric backdrops that reflect both cultural memory and psychological fear. Cultural beliefs surrounding spirits, curses, and magical journeys amplify this eeriness, as readers familiar with Mizo traditions recognize echoes of oral folklore embedded in modern storytelling. Finally, the manipulation of time—stretching, suspending, or disrupting its flow—leaves characters and readers alike in a state of temporal disorientation, as if trapped in a dream where natural laws no longer apply.

Taken together, these elements highlight how Lalzuithanga adapts the universal grammar of horror to a distinctly Mizo context. While Western theorists such as Todorov and Freud frame the fantastic and the uncanny in terms of hesitation and repressed fears, Lalzuithanga's writing demonstrates how these psychological concepts gain new life when infused with Mizo cultural traditions and beliefs. His novels do not merely imitate global horror forms but enrich them with local mythologies, making the eerie atmosphere both culturally specific and universally resonant.

Moreover, Lalzuithanga's craft shows that the power of horror often lies in restraint rather than excess. His eerie atmosphere thrives not on graphic violence or overt supernatural displays but on suggestion, ambiguity, and cultural resonance. This aligns with what Wytovich observes about folk horror: that its strength lies in atmosphere, setting, and the lingering unease it creates ("The Rise of Folk Horror"). Lalzuithanga proves that horror need not rely on spectacle to be effective; instead, it can emerge from the silence of a night, the pause between spoken words, or the confusion of a manipulated timeline.

In conclusion, Lalzuithanga's novels, including *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, *Thlahrang*, and *Aukhawk Lasi*, reveal the sophistication of Mizo horror literature. His creation of eerie

atmosphere demonstrates the universality of horror's emotional effect while showcasing its rootedness in Mizo culture. By blending folklore, psychological suspense, and narrative artistry, he crafts works that are not only important for Mizo literary history but also valuable contributions to the global study of horror fiction. His craft reminds us that horror is not only about monsters or violence but about atmosphere—the unseen, the half-said, and the intangible—that continues to haunt the reader long after the story ends

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