

Rebel as/in Creative Annihilator: Resistance in Nazrul Islam and Bairagi Kainla

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Abstract

Background: Bangladeshi poet Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) and modern Nepali poet Bairagi Kainla (1939-) invent their unique position to envision the contour of the rebel in “The Rebel” (1922) and “Drunk Man’s Speech to the Street after Midnight” (1960) respectively: their rebels voice for complete annihilation of the old order in search of the new one.

Methods: Using Marxist dialectics as implied in later Foucault and David Jeffer’s concept of resistance, this study examines the modes of resistance that enable creative writers to uphold the contour of the rebellious self-seeking of the space of creative anarchy.

Results: The rebellious self recognizes the space akin to the primordial universe which both the poets assert sets the ground for an entirely new order. As nonconformist poets, Islam and Kainla delve into the structure until they uncover the last remnant of the oppressive order to expose the inequalities such structures promote in each society.

Conclusion: The mode of resistance that the poetic persona adopts to view the existing social order presents a novel way of responding to the tyranny of their contemporary time. Islam’s rebel takes up the form of anarchist, debunking the firm structure of the British Raj. On the other hand, Kainla’s persona poetically gets intoxicated to issue an order to the intellectuals to walk out on the street in search of change. Kainla knows that the society is well-prepared to ward off the ghost of the existing tyranny of King Mahendra. In both cases, the revolting self emerges larger than the political order.

Novelty: Approaching the poetic texts from the perspective of resistance helps understand the attempts and vision of creative genius to fight against the oppressive power structure of their times.

Keywords: Resistance, Dissent, Authority, Critique, Oppressive Order

Introduction

Bengali poet Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) and Nepali poet Bairagi Kainla (1939-) project their poetic persona in the form of the rebel to awaken the people and explore the socio-political reality of their society to dismantle the existing, repressive order. Their poems present the rebel aiming at scrutinizing the infinite space akin to primordial reality, allowing the persona to invent the world afresh. In other words, the rebel aspires to bring about total annihilation of the prevailing order, preparing a ground to set up a fully unique system. Through the analysis of the contents of Islam's "The Rebel" (1922) and Kainla's "Drunk Man's Speech to the Street after Midnight" (1960) (referred to as "Drunk Man's Speech" hereafter), the paper explores the contours of the rebel and the use of annihilation as a creative impetus in the vision of social transformation in South Asia: Islam responds to the British Raj in India, while Kainla addresses King Mahendra's coup d'état imposed on December 15, 1960. Such literary response places the readers in a unique position to examine the socio-historical dynamics: colonial India displays the tension between the foreign and the native, while King Mahendra's partyless political system instigates conflict within the ruler and the ruled in the native context. The study further explores that the poets develop the rebellious self into the form of an agent first and then into an absolute annihilator in order to set the ground ready to start the whole order anew.

Texts, Contexts, and Critics

Kazi Nazrul Islam's "The Rebel" (1922) and Bairagi Kainla's "Drunk Man's Speech" (1960) have attracted the attention of various critics. Firstly, the critics view both the creative minds addressing the political context in their respective societies. Nazrul Islam calls for socialist revolt to dismantle the colonial imposition and establish a native social system in his poem; he attempts to awaken the Bhairav in people to gobble up all forms of prevailing inequalities and discriminations; and he enters into the deepest core of the Indian ways of life to derive meaning in contemporary context through the myths. Kainla identifies in the contemporary tension the source of modern Nepali political contradiction: he knows that the historical circumstances require a high degree of political intervention in the situation to bring about equality and a sense of public welfare in the making of polity in modern Nepal. Islam's colonial India and Kainla's Nepal have different ends to achieve to ascertain both people's right to freedom. Islam's poem has gathered a larger response as compared to Kainla's poem under discussion in this study; still, both poets view social reality in equally critical ways.

Nazrul Islam synthesizes all the great Asian traditions in his poetry by transcending beyond his Islamic culture. He locates his poetry in the intersection of all the prevailing major traditions so as to find an effective voice that can awaken the spirit in the people and directly challenge the colonial authority as such. He employs poetry as a means to reach beyond the cultural rigidities in order to fight against the British Raj. For instance, [Nag \(2006\)](#) has stated that the poet has documented a special ability to merge both the Arabic-Persian spirit in Sanskrit Bengali. In a way, Islam synthesizes multiple traditions in his celebrated poem "The Rebel." As Nag has further analyzed,

Nazrul followed up the sensational start which "Vidrohee" provided with equal

rebelliousness and enriched Bengali literature by his easy utilization of Arabic-Persian words within Sanskritic Bengali. Being a Muslim he was familiar with the usage of such words but what was astonishing was its acceptability by his readers. ([2006, p. 5185](#))

The poem appears as a composite whole of all the existing cultural strands as an appeal to all the people of India to understand the need for change. Similarly, he seeks an absolute annihilator to dismantle the existing oppressive order of colonial rule. [Chaman \(1977\)](#) has stated that state atrocities function as the core of the guiding poetic expression for Islam, for the forces had hit both the society in general and the poet in specific, leading to the formation of the rebel as a persona heralding the change. As he has argued, "The rebel in Kazim Nazrul-Islam sought expression through all kinds of writings and that's why the British government proscribed collections of his poems, stories, and journalistic pieces and even put him behind the bars" ([1977, p. 112](#)). For Islam, the call for change implies both the personal and the national in a single space. Also, he upholds the voice that opposes the foreigners disciplining Indian mindset as such.

Still another of the themes, nationalism is taken as one of the lenses to study Islam. The political vs the cultural divide always emerges at the forefront of such discussion in that the 1920s witnessed a much larger India where the philosophers were trying to address nationalism both culturally and politically. Such critics attempt to bring into the discussion other great poets like Tagore as well. [Hossain and Khan \(2006\)](#) have equated Nazrul Islam with Rabindranath Tagore in terms of their contribution to national awakening. Assessing the writings of both of the poets, the critics have claimed that "The writings of the rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Thakur ... have inspired the Bangalis to achieve freedom" ([2006, p. 328](#)). Islam's nationalism holds on the other side the struggle against the imperialist forces. Assessing his writings in general, [De \(1995\)](#) has explored,

Composing poems, novels, and articles, Nazrul Islam strengthened the anti-imperialist struggle and encouraged people to fight religious sectarianism for a common cause. He conceived of the 'Bengali nation', constituted jointly by the Hindus and the Muslims, in the background of Indian nationalism. ([p. 28](#))

His energetic words echo the spirit of people who observed a unique bond among themselves. So too, people acknowledge Islam's poems expressing their sentiment when they sang his words at the birth of Bangladesh in 1917 ([Wedde, 2012, p. 24](#)). Islam knows the methods of delving into the bottom of society to decipher their ethos and invent expressions to articulate them in aesthetic ways. Indeed, he gives voice to the people to bring them under one ethos of his age.

Postcolonial critics have focused on his writings that challenge Europe as the center of the universe. In the time of Indian political awakening, such a challenge implied that India holds agency of her own, rewriting her fate for her posterity. Islam's nonconformist attitude helps realize an abyss for equality and freedom in his poetry. [De \(2002\)](#) has read Nazrul Islam in the larger political context of the era of imperialism in which he opposed the existing order that he

knew would never liberate the subjugated people. She has further argued that Islam was an anarchist who refused to appropriate anything from the colonial order and emerged himself in the form of an absolute rebel. She has written that Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Kazi Nazrul Islam had attacked the racist perspective of Europe. As she has critiqued,

Reflecting upon worldwide experience of subjection, these radical modern intellectuals tried above all to avoid reinventing separatism by declaring non-Western cultures to be unilaterally superior to Western imperialist culture. Driven by activist ethics, they attempted instead to correct the roots of separatism through objectively evaluating, against a common frame of reference, right and wrong, relatively successful or failed practices of human empowerment and community. (2002, p. 43)

For the complete liberation of the people at the bottom of colonial India, he sees it necessary to move beyond the limitations set in the European worldview. Therefore, Roy (2006) has seen Kazi Nazrul Islam's socialist urge in his poetry for the liberation of peasants and workers (p. 72). Anticipating a new era, Islam envisions his poetic persona who transcends the quotidian regularities of life. Majumder (2016) has stated that Kazi Nazrul Islam's "Bidrohi" ("The Rebel") celebrates "the birth of the 'new human,' anticipating the poetic voices of Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, and Ernesto Che Guevara elsewhere" (2016, p. 419). The obedient mass aspiring to appropriate the whole of the colonial system does not make sense to Islam in that he cannot catch any glimpse of hope in such people. Rather, he wants to revive the spirit of progress that tears asunder the old obstacles in the realization of the human self. The celebration of progressive spirit in Islam's poetry becomes the key to understanding the intensity of his creative expressions in South Asian literature.

Like Nazrul Islam, Bairagi Kainla holds much-celebrated space in Nepali literature. Kainla also critically observes the political development in his nation and resists the tyrannical ethos as such. His "Drunk Man's Speech" fiercely responds to the existing repressive order in which the poet finds it impossible to liberate individual freedom and equality. In the discussion of the poem on *Nepal*, Kainla (2018) has accepted that the poem was a creative response to King Mahendra's coup in 1960. As the poet himself has recalled,

Human freedom is fundamentally advocated more than aligning oneself with the cause of the exploited and the tortured in the class-based society in the poem. This poem maintains hope in human beings' freedom. It stands against tyranny and tyrants at any level. The poem expresses its voice of solidarity towards human rights and fundamental values. (2018, p. 6)

The poem responds to the political context that developed after King Mahendra's coup in 1960. The political change was an unbearable torture to sensitive creative souls of the time: Khatiwada (2021) also examines the response of Bairagi Kainla to the time in which he had to "camouflage the persona" (2021, p. 2) to oppose the tyranny of the King. Such readings set the poem in the historical and political context, and examine the relationship between the historical events and literary response.

The first feature of the organic society resides in its creative, intellectual response to political

happenings in the society. In other words, the social realities seek critical attention in order to deep into them in Kainla's "Drunk Man's Speech." Kainla's speaker does not accept the existing order as such: the speaker transcends beyond the existing ways of reasoning. He sees what the prevailing morality cannot accept as the proper means to treat the people with. He critically analyzes the limitations of such an order. [Hutt \(1991\)](#) has also argued that his poems express "the resentment of social and moral conventions" of his time ([p. 101](#)). An avid advocate of the literary movement called the third dimension in Nepali literature, he creates a round/changing character in the poem to discuss the social and political reality ([Hutt, 1991, p. 100](#)). On the other hand, a detailed discussion of [Khati \(2022\)](#) evaluates that Bairagi Kainla's drunkard metaphorically revolts against the system to express the suffocation from the tyranny. The major contradiction of the age emanates from the political complexities in Mahendra's vision of polity which Khati analyzes in the formation of narrative to respond to the problem of Kainla's age.

The postcolonial reading of [Islam's "The Rebel"](#) or the historical reading of [Kainla's "Drunk Man's Speech"](#) reveals the creative response to the demands of the time in each society. Islam's poetry composed a century ago continues to inspire generations of both creative writers and readers. His poetry has explored the line of argument that moves beyond contemporary reality and projects the message of awakening the whole society. Similarly, Kainla's call for social change still becomes a mantra to people even after six decades: his poem functions as a lens to resize the picture of our social reality now. Compared to Islam, Kainla's poem has not been adequately studied in relation to its response to the spirit of the time. The existing studies have not brought into discussion the formation of self in respective poems. This study examines the nature of the political self that both the poets create to critique their contemporary realities. Also, this study analyzes resistance in Islam and Kainla as evidenced in "The Rebel" and "Drunk Man's Speech" so as to comprehend the contours of South Asian rebels.

Person vs. Polity: Subjection and Resistance

This analysis derives the conceptual frame from the theoretical insights derived from the later development of critical ideas in New Historicist, French critic Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and contemporary scholar of critical theories [David Jefferess \(2008\)](#) who have extensively discussed the relationship between the person and polity in exercising power from each of them. For [Foucault \(1982\)](#), power grows as an attractive site of study in that the self undergoes the process of subjection through the denial of liberty and equality while regulating power in society. He views the state very critically as the instrument of coercion as he observes,

The reason this kind of struggle tends to prevail in our society is due to the fact that, since the sixteenth century, a new political form of power has been continuously developing. This new political structure, as everybody knows, is state. But most of the time, the state is envisioned as a kind of political power which ignores individuals, looking only at the interests of the totality or, I should say, of a class or a group among the citizens. ([1982, p. 782](#))

The state enforces the domination upon the people in its territory in order to maintain order in

society. Such a higher goal of the state may sound like it is oriented toward the general welfare of the people on the surface; however, the coercion also results from this attempt of the state to organize the people in a 'proper' (?) way. Subsequently, the state of affairs between the people and the polity turns into tension in which each responds to the other, thereby formulating a relationship of stress between the person and the polity.

Often the state appears to hold much greater momentum on the self of the people. However, the people also gradually turn their aspirations into a political force that intermittently challenges the use of organized force upon the masses. The resultant tension curtails equality and freedom as long as the state maintains its influence of power on the people. [Jefferess \(2008\)](#) has stated that “Colonial identity is a function of, rather than prior to, the dominance /privilege of the colonizer and the suffering/subjugation of the colonized in the colonial political economy” ([p.13](#)). The system of power invents a way of rationalizing the issues that appear before it. Foucault has argued that we must begin “analyzing power relations through antagonism of strategies” ([1982, p. 780](#)) in order to expose the internal rationalization functioning in the deeper core of the society and exercising coercion upon others. He strongly puts forward that only the investigation in the field of resistance helps understand the nature of power relations in society. By using the Foucauldian approach to power and its impact on human beings and Jefferess’s conceptual discussion of postcolonial resistance as such, this paper examines both Kazi Nazrul Islam and Bairagi Kainla to explore the mode of resistance they have applied in their poems to draw the outline of the revolting self.

Creative Annihilator in/as the Rebel

Bangla poet Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) and Nepali poet Bairagi Kainla (1939-) treat the rebellious self firstly as the agent holding firmly the ability to redefine the existing order and then annihilating the very order to begin everything anew. The destroyer in creative artist penetrates into the foundation of the political setup in both of the poems in quest of origin for a new configuration, which the poets envision implementing after churning the prevailing frame of society into dust. Colonial India and King Mahendra's Panchayat stand as the institutional structure of the repressive political system that promotes injustice in society, curtailing people's rights. Bangla poet Islam’s [“The Rebel” \(1922\)](#) and Nepali poet [Kainla’s “Drunk Man’s Speech” \(1960\)](#) percolate into the depth of the foundation of each society, whereby reinventing the new reality for the succeeding age. The nonconformist attitude in both aesthetic expressions searches through the bottom of each political order to dismantle the last foundation brick and tear asunder the oppressive political system as such. Both of the poems present the politically intoxicated poetic persona who transforms himself into an immense personality, standing erect larger than the polity and challenging its ways of treating the people. Islam's speaker addresses the tension as rooted in the foreign rule in India in 1922. The inhuman treatment originates in the cultural, racial, and philosophical ways of two societies: Britain and India. Similarly, Kainla opposes the home-grown tyrant who curtails the fundamental rights of the people by imposing a coup d'état in Nepal in 1960, dissolving the democratically formed parliament and government for the first time in Nepali history. The poets display self akin in

stature and dynamism to respond to the critical needs of their contemporary time in India and Nepal respectively.

Islam's poetic persona commands the people to awaken in quest of bravery and dignity. An anarchist poetic persona challenges the colonial order that does not allow any possibility of novelty in his society: the poem sings of a hero who can drastically transform the prevailing situations. Hence, the rebel repeats "Say, Valiant, /Say: High is my head!" ([lines 1-2](#)) in multiple junctures as the refrain of the poem, for he aims at enforcing the sense of bravery and dignity in the mass. The anarchist persona realizes that the colonial order had first robbed the people of their sense of bravery and dignity, reducing them into mere selves without volition. Similarly, Kainla begins with the drunk man who emerges out of the wine shop long after midnight, almost close to the dawn. He hears the cockerels' crow, indicating the daybreak. He narrates the events in the following words:

When I emerge from the wine shop,
long after midnight has passed,
cockerels crow their welcome
from every coop and perch,
flapping their wings in rebellion. ([lines1-5](#))

The man realizes the lifelessness in the system –unable to regenerate serving the purpose of life. Kainla sees the newly introduced system as the most infertile one in that it fails to acknowledge the ethos of the people from the bottom of the society and in turn serve the collective welfare of the people residing therein. However, he sees great mansions and the tower the political system has erected as its achievement. Both the poet and his persona agree at one point: the whole system has to collapse ([line 11](#)) to give way for a completely a new system to emerge in its place. The creative artist runs after annihilation as the basic point of departure to setting up a society in the aspiration of the people. The early indications of the awakening in the rebel set the mood for the readers to expect the upcoming devastating tension between the polity and the rebel in both poems.

The rebel rises above the existing order in the beginning, sees the suffering subjects in the world, and finally devises a method to rescue them. In this sense, the South Asian rebel emerges as an agent of liberation for the suffering mass, devoid of civil rights. Nazrul Islam's persona rises above the regularities of the existing social order by tearing apart the wide sky. The narrow lanes of the prevalent colonial society cannot provide him with adequate space to exercise his creative energy in its ultimate form. Even while destroying the old order, the rebel must not lose track of the historical development of his society along with the cultural tenets that add to the meaningful presence of the people. The tension between the polity and the person reaches a new height as the rebel realizes his immense stature in society. Such a person can intervene into the erroneous social structure and fix the course of society in a just way. Kainla takes his poetic persona to a new height from which he can exhibit his rebellious self by proclaiming that he grows larger than society. In the poem, the drunk man proclaims that he stands larger than the society where they do not allow him to breathe properly. He stamps all over the road.

As he declares, "Today I am more immense than the world,/ my breath is shut in by the ground of this street,/I stamp all over the road" ([lines 22-24](#)). As a rule, the police implement the rules and regulations to best serve the seat of power in the prevailing order: at times, they adopt coercive measures to maintain the peace in society. The drama of resistance is witnessed in such opposing quests of the polity and people. To [Foucault \(1982\)](#), "the main objective of these struggles is to attack not so much 'such or such' an institution of power, or group, or elite, or class but rather a technique, a form of power" ([1982, p. 781](#)). In this sense, the rebel collides with the power structure and raises his voice to make it audible to everyone in the society. Hence, the rebel invites all the people to walk out on the street, disobey the order of the state, and break free from the chains of tyranny as such. Nazrul Islam lists out the qualities of the rebel in three key adjectives: "irresponsible, cruel and arrogant" ([line 18](#)). Then, he equates the rebel with "the king of the great upheaval" ([line 19](#)), "cyclone" and "destruction" ([line 20](#)), and "the curse of the universe" ([line 21](#)). The treatment of words implies the absolute anarchist who aspires to create a society where kindness and mercy find no space at all. Further, the rebel proclaims:

I am disorderly and lawless,
I trample under my feet all rules and discipline!
I am Durjati, I am the sudden tempest of ultimate summer,
I am the rebel, the rebel-son of mother-earth! ([lines 24-27](#))

When the rebel reaches at the first foundational brick of the colonial society, he will certainly shake it first. Disobeying all the social conformist attitudes and moral behavior of the age, the rebel challenges both the spirit and the ways of the age. The poet compares the rebel to the natural phenomenon that does not generally follow the regular course of action in that colonial India requires breaking down the quotidian course in order to achieve self-rule.

The classical resources also provide the authors with references and models to discuss the defunct state of polity at their time. Kainla uses an allusion from the Mahabharata in which he compares the Nepali people to the sixty thousand cursed sons of King Sagar in the Hindu Scripture ([line 93](#)). He expects them not to suffer the same fate by repeating the classical mistake: now, they are a politically, intervening self. Under the new political system, the poet sees everyone must remain crushed in that it is built on the personal ambition of the King who believes he knows everything and who concludes he is always right. As a modern critical mindset, the persona questions both the attitude and the conclusion of the King –in short, he rejects the King's political vision to lead society to modernity. A society filled with unquestioning devotees never attains its full realization in that its attempts are usually directed towards generalizing the wrongs of the rulers. He redeems everyone with the wine of rebellion from the bottle to redeem the curse that has befallen upon the people. The rebel says: "I pour the heavenly Ganga's waters / from the firmament of a bottle, / down over you with the faith of Bhagirath, onto your foreheads, eyes and chests" ([lines 95-97](#)). His speech has become the wine for the people to drink to fully accomplish the responsibility entrusted upon them by their ancestors like King Bhagirath who succeeded in bringing the Ganges from the Himalayas into

the plains, paving the road of new settlement at her banks. For the poet, such ruptures imply the break of modernity at different points in history. The rebel displays anger ([line 14](#)), holds zeal to fight against the conservative mindset, and secretly harbors the dream to bring about complete transformation for his people. He sings that the self has risen, "Piercing the earth and the heaven/ Pushing through Almighty's sacred seat" ([lines 11-12](#)). Such an agent has observed the inner core of the society with the fresh vision of the creator, identifying all the lapses in it. The awakened self can relate to the ethos of the people and their time to adjust the mechanism of polity towards functioning in the interest of the people.

The outburst of the rebel into the absolute anarchist reveals the poetic aspiration for a complete transformation of society after setting the people free from the torture and tyranny of the time. The complete annihilation may sound very impractical idea in that it requires an epochal shift from the existing order. In this sense, it stresses the thinking agent by posing the challenge of designing a new layout out of complete chaos. The complexity of Kainla's poetic vision is rooted in the play of annihilation of the old and the implementation of the new in its place. Such creative response projects a social vision beyond the expectations of the people. "Drunk Man's Speech" presents the rebel in his largest size to add maturity to the public spirit for change. The rebel asserts:

I will cover them with my immensity.
For otherwise I will not fit in,
otherwise, at nine 'o'clock, when it's time for school,
how will the little boy's mother and I
send him to school from this place
if the road cannot hold the sole of one foot? ([lines 79-84](#))

The drunk man's immensity convinces the people that he can fill in any cracks on the road, that can consequently pop up from the aspiration of people during the revolt. Besides, the future generation requires the wide road to reach their destination for liberation –the road must widen itself; the buildings must collapse themselves; and the right hour must reveal itself. The forceful agency worries about posterity: the poet indicates it by bringing in a boy who walks to school along the road. The rebel has captured the full vision of creative annihilation, acknowledging no limitation, no order, and no dictation from the outside. The old structures turn into materials for the annihilating persona to start everything anew, placing the people's rights, liberty, and aspirations in the center of the new political order. Only reason can revive the full dynamism that restores the necessary tunes of life automatically once the rebellion accomplishes its goal. Kainla expresses his shock at the suspension of B. P. Koirala's popularly elected government in Nepal on December 15, 1960. King Mahendra's coup d'état cannot convince the poet that it would reach out to the people in their service as such. The poet directs his interrogation at the contradictory political vision of the King who hopes to achieve political equilibrium through the implementation of a new political system. Under the rule, people's participation was given the least priority, for the King was the center of all knowledge in it. In "Drunk Man's Speech," Kainla's rebel opposes King Mahendra's coup d'état, erecting the poetic persona who

questions, "...how have I lived to such an age/ in these cramped and crumbling houses, /too small for a single stride?" ([lines 14-16](#)). The man's steps erupt like an earthquake, stumping on the ground in an attempt to result in a volcano. The drunk man awakens to his pure self to challenge the existing order. He views his age as a narrow space –too slender for people to enjoy the freedom of being born as human. Against the expectation of the polity in the ideal sense, the self grows larger than the social structure that contains the same self: the self and the polity confront each other as the intoxicated persona sees the roads grow so narrow that he cannot walk even a single stride. Still, he sees other people walking around –he calls them self-defeated people ([line 18](#)) who have delayed the awakening of society. They have remained silent for hours, for the critical sense of reasoning still does not activate in them. The realization of the events surrounding one and their implication as such makes a difference: the subjects gain the momentum of the agency after such realization. Kainla's drunken man meets up with the subjects of King Mahendra's political system, bowing before the King for the bliss of collective living. The rebellious self calls for breaking the narrow lane and chain of the political system in the quest for critical sensibility in people.

The dominant ideology of the British Raj comfortably posits itself at the top seat of the nation, grinding the people at the bottom in their own land. Freedom and equality remain the mirage for the native people until they assume the rebellious self, crush the discriminatory order into dust, and establish their own rule for themselves and their posterity. Islam's rebel knows that India holds the capability of completely annihilating the foreign administration to set up self-rule. [Islam](#) celebrates the choice of the people through the rebel in the following words:

I am ever restless,
I caper and dance as I move!
I do whatever appeals to me, whenever I like,
I embrace the enemy and wrestle with death,
I am mad. I am the tornado! ([lines 36-40](#))

Kainla's persona delves into the nonrational space after political intoxication, while Islam's rebel declares himself a mad person who does not accept the regular ways of foreign rule. Challenging authority poses a danger to one's own existence: he calls himself the tornado that changes the picture in such a way that the old arrangement has to give way to the new one. The self who identifies himself with "hurricane" and "cyclone" ([line 30](#)) can dance at its own pleasure ([line 33](#)), playing the intoxicated rhythm ([line 32](#)) on its own. The nonconformist self does not heed the existing set of rules, running the society, for the foreign has maintained the upper hand in deciding the fate of the native. He knows he has to fight everywhere and break the rules that the elite section of society constructs to serve their interest. This maddens him and he assumes the form of "the tornado" ([line 36](#)) as [Foucault \(1982\)](#) has argued that "The relationship between power and freedom's refusal to submit cannot...be separated" ([1982, p. 790](#)). In society, both subordination and resistance move simultaneously in that one assumes the presence of the other. The Raj promotes domination, whereby turning all the people into politically stable subjects. On the other hand, Islam projects a politically awakened self who travels

into the core of the social organization to herald the need for complete transformation through annihilation. The anarchist self emerges in the utilitarian form to accomplish the goal of setting everything anew in his society that has been infested with foreign values.

The ruling elite rejects the agenda for change because the existing social order serves their interest in the most comfortable and convincing ways. The administrative units and the towers perfectly reward the upper class of society, subjugating the call for revolt from the bottom. Kainla employs two symbols, “sky-kissing mansions and towers” ([line 32](#)) to refer to the comfort of the ruling elite which is symbolically represented through “blue, blue bulbs” ([line 34](#)). The blue bulb refers to the royalty who enjoy the light in the high mansions and towers in the nation. The drunk person knows that the ruling class is watchful because they have foreseen the impending calamity. The rebellious self knows that the ruling class has turned dysfunctional: the obsolete rules make sense to one section of the obedient people who have lost their identity because they hold no zeal for resistance, no power to assert their agency. Kainla calls them the “faceless men” ([line 37](#)). They follow the dictation of power and ever aspire to fulfill the quest of the tyrannical political system ([lines 41-42](#)). They live life like that of a machine with all the commands of bureaucracy. Since power chiefly subjugates the people by bringing them under control or dependence and creating a narrative about the people to impart self-knowledge in them ([Foucault, 1982, p. 781](#)), Islam also drives his rebel towards the complete demolition of the prevailing order. The annihilation and the creation function as twins simultaneously present forces for Nazrul Islam. He yokes the opposites together, for he sees society always finding a new course after putting an end to the one. As the poet writes, "I am creation, I am destruction, / I am habitation, I am the grave-yard, / I am the end, the end of night!" ([lines 46-48](#)). The rebel synthesizes both the polarities to begin the world afresh. Therefore, the anarchist rebel holds both “the tender flute” ([line 52](#)) and “the war bugle” ([line 53](#)) in his two hands. The social mores fail to address the emergent needs of the people at the bottom who just end up serving the elite section. In such context, the total annihilation of the old order organically develops as the political sensibility of the time. To state differently, the complete demolition of the old order prepares the ground for the rebel to commence the configuration of his society in the native, original way which does not accept the colonial legacy of the British Raj.

As the poet unfolds the development of the drunk man’s journey in the poem, his political self grows gigantic, shrinking the road to the corners and the verges. The politically intoxicated persona questions the King’s position, vision, and perceptions of the needs of the people. For the rebellious self, only people’s participation enhances the spirit of both democracy and polity. The road that King Mahendra’s coup in 1960 had set for public welfare had curtailed the fundamental rights of the people. Kainal's disagreement with the King thus pours out when the drunk man utters his voice thus in his speech:

And so the street is shrunken today:
who steals its corners and verges?
Who tears life in chunks from its sides?

Why is the street more narrow each night?

"Tear up this road and widen it!..." ([lines 44-48](#))

Symbolically, the political system appears insufficient to contain the rebellious self, paving the road for the rebellion. Even though the man acknowledges the physical presence of the police, he does not feel any threat from them, for he is intoxicated with the political spirit of revolt. "The vastness" implies the anarchy at sight when complete demolition occurs: the view of the infinite possibility of enforcing order gives birth to a new rebel. In other words, the absolute anarchist emerges out of the drunk man who breaks the cocoon surrounding him and takes the form of an actor. This birth of agency delivers a speech to the street.

The rebel derives various attributes from the Hindu tradition. For instance, he becomes the thunder as indicated by "Brahma's sound in the sky" ([line 57](#)), "the great trident of Pankpani" ([line 59](#)), and "the Chakra and the great Shankha" ([line 61](#)). On top of it, the rebellious self says: "I am the mighty primordial shout!" ([line 62](#)). Nazrul Islam documents his intimacy with both the Hindu and the Arabic heritage in the rebel so as to transcend the regularities of everyday life, rewriting a secular self who can understand the real meaning of staying in a truly multicultural society. As he writes, "I crush under my feet the vain glory of the Almighty!" ([line 73](#)). The awakened self of rebellion travels at a huge pace to play the bugle of change for the masses. The hope of liberation excites him and he erupts in excitement with the fire of wrath to turn the foreign raj into ashes. The poet thus sings:

The mighty Borrak is the horse I ride.

It neighs impatiently, drunk with delight!

I am the burning volcano in the bosom of the earth,

I am the wild fire of the woods,

I am Hell's mad terrific sea of wrath! ([lines 116-120](#))

The creative energy of the rebel discharges in the spread of consciousness throughout the nation. The first condition for rebellion lies in identifying the suppression imposed upon the masses. Most importantly, the rebel must make the whole society understand the rationale behind the struggle for a new order. The rebel can decide, command, and choose a new course of action in society. He orders to dismantle the existing order that only shrinks the possibility of emerging into an acting self. Such agency renders the self into the form of a rebel who can calculate the impact of hitting at the illogical power relations in the society. Kainla sings it in the following words:

A man walks upon you,

he is too great for you, he commands you:

crack and split and widen yourselves,

rupture and tear down those buildings

which encroach upon your borders, ([lines 61-65](#))

As a nonconformist self, the rebel drives the masses into a desired action by commanding them as a leader. His vision becomes the impetus for the people to move forward. Most importantly, the mass also begins to obey his command which is embedded in the promise of the wider road

to freedom and equality. He asks the people to demolish the centers of the tyranny so that history can present new meaning; otherwise, the victor's history continues its rule as the true grammar of human life. Kainla refers to *Kotparva* (a historical massacre that took place in the court of Nepal on 14 September 1846, preparing a ground for the rise of a tyrant ruler, Jung Bahadur Rana) as the darkest turning point in Nepal's history that still maintains its posture in the course of political development in Nepal. Indicating the rise of King Mahendra and his political system in Nepal in 1960, Kainla makes a public call to "tear" it asunder into pieces. Such a structure does not allow any sort of freedom and equality. His major concern lies in delivering justice from such a system that upholds defunct values.

Essentially, an agent must awaken the society first in order to bring about change as such. The rebel knows that he has to hit the inner core of society to widen the road to equality and freedom by dismantling the ethos of the partyless system. In other words, the revolting persona draws the attention of all intellectuals like the engineers, the leaders, the teachers ([lines 55-56](#)), and the poets directly as he delivers the speech from the pavement of the street at the post office. In a metaphorical sense, the streets represent the common people who remain in society as the effect of social structure. The tyrannical structure has silenced them and the awakened agency talks to them to arouse the sleeping general public to raise again the tyranny of King Mahendra. To clean the society of human suffering, the rebel dreams of freedom and equality for everyone. In other words, the rebel emerges as the new human who knows the meaning of suffering and oppression imposed on the human self. Nazrul Islam states: "Weary of struggles, I, the great rebel, / Shall rest in quiet only when I find / The sky and the air free of the piteous groans of the oppressed" ([lines 143-145](#)). The rebel possesses the ability to peep into the infinite universe to enforce a new order. The eternal space implies the possibility of beginning everything anew. Islam concludes: "I am the rebel eternal, / I raise my head beyond this world, / High, ever erect and alone!" ([lines 149-151](#)). In quest of both bravery and dignity, the rebellious self awakens the people, promising equality and freedom in a completely new order. The rebel locates himself in the intersection of the major cultural heritages in colonial India as the mode of resistance to establish his voice of rebellion. Kainla concludes the speech of the rebel in a very optimistic tone by merging the call for change with the hope of such a state in the near future. As he writes, "...there is a battleground for victory/and a radiant light of life" ([lines 106-107](#)). Only the anarchist can envision a society that can transform into a bright place, filled with justice and equality after the complete demolition of the prevailing social order. The drunk man transforms into an anarchist who holds the capacity for a total transformation in society. Hence, Kainla says that he has enlightened the people with the speech and given them a clear sight of the need to revolt against the tyranny imposed on them. He ends the poem in an optimistic tone that assumes that the people will revolt one day. The rebel takes the form of an anarchist who sees things in a completely fresh way like the first eye that observes the infinite creative possibility.

Both Islam and Kainla envision a political self that grows larger than the existing order in their respective poems. Even though Kainla writes four decades after Islam's poem, their rebels

complement each other in many respects: Kainla's rebel completes Islam's rebel by asserting the need to understand the foundation of the ethos of the time. Islam's rebel romanticizes both the Islamic and Hindu traditions and sets himself on an inward journey to reach the bottom of civilization. The emotionally excited rebel gains a very critically sound shape of the South Asian agency in Kainla's drunken man who stands on the pavement of the road after midnight and raises questions against the political vision of the home-grown tyrant. Both the rebels pose challenges against the tyrants, subjugating the political rights of the people and detaining the progress of the society. The South Asian who takes birth in Islam's 1922 aesthetic expression gains a full stature in Kainla's 1960 poem.

Modes of Resistance

The poetic personas in both Bangla and Nepali poets stand more immense than the existing socio-political order, for they know that they hold the responsibility to dismantle the whole rigid system, devoid of a sense of justice and freedom and equality for the people at the bottom. In 1922, the British Raj exercised the power to subjugate the native people into whom Islam's rebel adds vigor and enthusiasm. King Mahendra imposed a coup in Nepal in 1960, curtailing the rights of the people and imprisoning the people's representatives. Bairagi Kainla sees it as a major obstacle in the enhancement of participatory political culture in Nepal, for it paved the road to promulgation of partyless Panchayat as the most suited political system. His persona goes insane at such political behavior of the state. Both Nazrul Islam and Kainla send their protagonists beyond the existing domain of rationality, i.e., the nonrational space. Since general comprehension fails to distinguish between the nonrational and the irrational, both terms are synonymously treated by the public. However, both of the poets transcend the existing mores of rational practices to project the self of the questioning, critically aroused agency. They advocate that only such an agency can place public welfare at the center in the service of the people at the bottom. The general social understanding can term them intoxicated, mad, or crazy. However, the vision of creative anarchist emerges from both of them in the end because they develop the power to outgrow the shield of the political order and assert their challenge against the polity. In the true sense of the term, Nazrul Islam and Bairagi Kainla imagine the genuine self of the revolutionary, capable of bringing about total transformation through the annihilation of the prevailing political configuration.

Since Kainla's rebel completes Islam's rebellious self after thirty-eight years, the mode of resistance resembles in both of the poems. Colonial India must obtain her liberation by awakening the public that has undergone deep slumber. Islam alludes to both Hindu and Arabic sources to synthesize the ethos of the Subcontinent in the 1920s, while Kainla laconically places his persona in a timeless setting, critically assessing Nepal's quest for progress. Both rebels formulate their vision of annihilation as the first step to move ahead toward gaining a new order of progress and public welfare. Kainla's 'drunk man' shouts at the street to awaken the society and its intellectuals in quest for the wide road which he hopes will make it comfortable for his posterity to schools. The schools train in the future generation in the art and science of critical sensibility. The vision of complete demolition prevails in both poems,

meaning that the traditionally accepted patterns of rationality are insufficient for the attainment of freedom and equality, and the cause of justice for the people at the bottom. The rebellious self transforms into the agency who realizes the infinite space through annihilation to start everything anew in both poems

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