

Asian Voices of Rebellion: A Comparative Content Analysis of Kazi Nazrul Islam's *Bidrohi (The Rebel)* and Lu Xun's *A Madman's Diary*

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article history:</i> Date of Submission: 25-10-2025 Date of Acceptance: 15-04-2026 Date of Publication: 12-05-2026</p> <hr/> <p><i>Keywords:</i> Kazi Nazrul Islam, Lu Xun, <i>Bidrohi (The Rebel)</i>, <i>A Madman's Diary</i>, comparative literature, revolution and resistance, China & Bangladesh.</p> <p>ISSN: 3079-1855 http://doi.org/10.71253/jsd-iswr.dec25.34.1.011</p>	<p>This paper conducts a comparative literary content analysis of <i>Bidrohi (The Rebel)</i> by Kazi Nazrul Islam and <i>A Madman's Diary</i> by Lu Xun, focusing on the two as the masterpieces of the modern Asian literature, although they are set in different historical, cultural, and political settings. The background of the writing of <i>Bidrohi</i> is the British colonial rule in Bengal and it is a furious poetic protest and declaration of identity both personal and social. On the contrary, the image of the Madman was used in <i>A Madman's Diary</i>, produced in the period when May Fourth Movement in China occurred, and it helps to criticize the feudal tradition and unveil the cannibalistic character of the social order. Although they are different in terms of literature form-poetry and prose, they join at some point in terms of themes, revolution, resistance, identity, and social transformation. Both the <i>Bidrohi (The Rebel)</i> and the <i>Madman</i> become symbolic metaphors against oppression, reflecting the events of their time and speaking with a vision of the future of freedom. This paper analyzed the works of Nazrul and Lu Xun to understand how they can bridge national lines to provide information on cultural awakening, anti-oppression, and human freedom in the twenty-first century world.</p>

1. Introduction

Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899–1976) and Lu Xun (1881–1936) were anti-colonial poets who committed their literary talents to a “culture of rebellion”. Through their writings, they forged a literary path against colonial and feudal systems. Kazi Nazrul Islam, who became a cultural hero of the anti-colonial movement and, later, the National Poet of Bangladesh. In China, Lu Xun reached a similar level of fame. In the 20th century, Both China and Bangladesh had colonial and feudal periods. Colonial oppression was hard to ignore for poets like Nazrul and Lu Xun, who were famous for their anti-colonial writings. Nationalism played a central role in their writings that looked down on an effort for the anti-colonial

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fight and a refusal to drown in the colonial order. However, both writers were equally interested in the feudal aspects of their societies. They expressed strong disapproval of the dominant morals in society. Back then, the system was colonial, neo-colonial, or feudal, and it was run by incorporation rules that discouraged nationalistic resistance while also weakening the system. Therefore, it is very important to look at the ideas behind anti-colonial and anti-feudal fights using two twentieth-century literary figures as examples: Lu Xun (Zhou Shuren), the Father of Modern Chinese Literature, and Kazi Nazrul Islam. The writings of both authors pushed for national warrior-hood and the desire for people to fight for their land and against colonialism. They also agreed that revolution was needed beyond just reform and called for an end to feudal society. Their writing was formed by related ideas, but under the influence of different periods in history and society.

1.1 Significance of the Study

A theoretical analysis of the two writers, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Lu Xun, is a strategic move in terms of understanding the pan-Asian culture of rebellion that influenced most of the twentieth-century modernism. Recognized respectively as the National Poet of Bangladesh and the Father of Modern Chinese Literature, they are key figures who dedicated their literary skills to the creation of the way out of the colonial and feudal orders. The *Bidrohi* by Nazrul and the *A Madman's Diary* by Lu Xun are the most exemplary literary works that can be considered as a powerful expression of this common urge. Although differing in form—one being a passionate poetic cry and the other a strongly condemning prose critique, they both lead to the same theme of building a national warrior-hood to withstand any systemic oppression.

The general idea of this paper is that despite the fact that both texts are the powerful shouts of revolution against the deep social and political injustice, they offer a fundamentally different way to a new world order. *Bidrohi* serves as a manifesto of revolution, an expression of high driven egoism capable of destroy and reforming the universe through simply will. On the contrary, *A Madman's Diary* is a call to revolution of the repressive society by moral diagnosis and social critique. Its frame narrative, in which a lifelong friend gives the diary to medical research, thereby showing the decay of a cannibalistic feudalism that was thought to be deeply rooted in the human soul, is one of its strengths because of the ironic energy it generates.

This analysis provides an insight into how Nazrul and Lu Xun differ in their ideological conceptions on the nature of resistance as a result of a contrast between their visionary voice of resistance and prophetic voice of madness respectively. It is essential to comprehend the fundamental historical contexts

that influenced them before explaining why one vision resulted in a refining fire and the other in a desperate diagnosis.

1.2 Research Methodology

The present study is purely comparative in manner, focuses on content analysis. A content analysis utilizing a close reading of Kazi Nazrul Islam's renowned poem "*Bidrohi*" (*The Rebel*) and Lu Xun's significant piece "*A Madman's Diary*" was conducted using a quality-focused approach. This research is fundamentally based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are Kazi Nazrul Islam's *Bidrohi (The Rebel)* and Lu Xun's *A Madman's Diary*, further supported by various articles and books as secondary materials.

1.3 Literature Review

It was a revolutionary literary movement that took place in Asia in the early twentieth century. It was marked by a common renaissance of the self as a response to colonial oppression and social corruption within the country. Kazi Nazrul Islam and Lu Xun were at the center of this transformation. Their writings questioned established hierarchies and sparked modernism in their own traditions. (Lu, 2025; Uddin, 2025) This review of literature presents the works of Kazi Nazrul Islam on *Bidrohi* and Lu Xun on *A Madman's Diary* as it is contextualized by other works on modern Asian revolutionary literature and provides a very important gap in comparative literature research. Kazi Nazrul Islam, widely known as the *Bidrohi Kobi* (revolutionary poet) transformed Bengali literature by incorporating revolutionary spirit with spiritual universalism. His masterpiece poem *Bidrohi (1922)* is known as a weapon that can change lives against the British colonialism and systematic social injustice (Biswas, 2022). Scholars have pointed out how Nazrul used the subjective "I" to speak for the oppressed people as a way to unite everyone in the fight, and how he turned the subjective "cry" into a national liberation slogan, (Hoque & AlQahtani 2024). Thematically, *Bidrohi* integrates Islamic spiritual humanism with diverse mythological references to counter the isolation imposed by colonialists. The object of the rebel was to conquer all the discord and upheavals that pervade this visible universe and human existence in general, and to conquer them, as quoted by prominent philosopher Dewan Mohammad Azraf in his write-up named "*Nazrul Sahitye Biswa Manush*". Nazrul emphasizes an uncompromising personal will that refuses to submit to external or divine authority when it appears to be oppressive. This disobedient self is an ethical engine of social reform, which requires the elimination of the hierarchy of classes and communalism (Biswas, 2022; Hasan, 2021; Rahaman, 2022; Uddin, 2025).

Similarly, Lu Xun's *A Madman's Diary* (1918) is widely recognized as the father of the modern Chinese literature, specifically for its new application of the vernacular (baihua) to undermine feudal ethics. Largely The dominant scholarly consensus opinion on the metaphor of cannibalism in the journal spends the metaphor upon what Lu Xun sees as an allegorical attack on the Confucian order, which, he feels, has been feasting on people over the course of four millennia (Yu, 2019). The story talks about Diagnosis warfare, which is the conflict between the official classical (Wenyan) preface and the informal vernacular diary. This conflict shows how custom and enlightenment conflicted in modernist times. The main character's madness is rethought as a better understanding or a modernist awareness that shows the horrible face of an outdated system that is dehumanizing. However, some people disagree with Lu Xun's use of this broken inner being to describe the spiritual sickness of a country stuck in its own traditions (Tang, 1992). Modern Asian literature has long been studied through the lens of a common subaltern modernism, in which authors in the colonial or semi-colonial experience write back to Western imperial imaginary spaces (Haque, 2018). Asian resistance literature tries to restore a sense of national identity by depicting the self and the divine as a deliberate response to the dominance of colonizers (Hoque & AlQahtani, 2024). The current comparative strategies have managed to associate Nazrul to other revolutionary writers like Walt Whitman, P.B. Shelley, and Aimé Césaire (Awal, 2022; Chen, 2022; Hasan, 2021; Rahman, 2025).

A methodological lack persists despite the substantial amount of literature concerning these authors. No prior research has been conducted that directly compares the literary content of Bangladeshi and Chinese literature, specifically focusing on *Bidrohi* and *A Madman's Diary*. This research addresses that gap by subjecting these two seminal works to a common transcultural paradigm, highlighting the similar functions that they undertake in the construction of a justice-based Asian modernity. Thematic textual analysis and interpretive methods make it possible to find common themes across societies, such as fire, madness, and the Rebel. Such approaches guide the study that goes beyond summary to reveal how the two poets use metaphorical language to get people to take active, revolutionary action in a unique approach to understanding the study. Ultimately, this comparative content analysis discloses how the two writers turned in rebellion into art and poetry into a liberation weapon, building a collective bluestone of a blueprint of a Justices based Society in Asia.

2. Historical Context

A Comparative Content Analysis of the *Bidrohi* by Kazi Nazrul Islam and the *A Madman's Diary* by Lu Xun is a comparison content analysis of two literary works, which are produced in different historical settings. The poem *Bidrohi* was

written during the period of British colonial rule in India and a revolutionary wave was enveloping the youths and he sent his message of revolt towards the British rulers via this poem. Similarly, the message of revolution and resistance that is passed along in *A Madman's Diary* by Lu Xun does so in a different dimension. It is the earliest and most renowned work of fiction among the Chinese literature in modern times. Both works express the opposition of a person and a surrounding circumstance or a stronger entity the Rebel in *Bidrohi* and the Madman in *A Madman's Diary* are individuals in search of freedom and happiness within a restrictive social structure and rules.

Bidrohi was written with a revolutionary spirit, and its revolutionary theme and rebellious mood represent the poet's rejection of oppressive and unfair governments in both the family and society. The poem has themes of revolution, resistance, rebellion, the individualism of an ideal human, and the inner conflict of existence emerge from the poem. *A Madman's Diary* is likewise a narrative on revolution and resistance, but from a different viewpoint. Notably, it is the first and best-known work of prose in modern Chinese literature. Lu Xun wrote the story after following the Russian ideology after the loss of his father. As a pioneer of the Chinese Revolution and the mentor to Chinese Communist leaders such as Mao Zedong, Lu Xun was heavily influenced by Marxist ideology and beliefs.

3. Kazi Nazrul Islam's and Lu Xun's Era

The time when Kazi Nazrul Islam lived and worked can help you understand his poem *Bidrohi*. As Nazrul was growing up in the early 1900s, the British Empire, which was the largest imperial power in world history, was facing a huge nationalist uprising in its Indian colony. These movements would eventually split the subcontinent into two countries, India and Pakistan, which would later split into Pakistan and Bangladesh. The powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia all fought in the First World War. It was the first time that modern technology and industrial production were used for mass destruction. In every direction, these events called for active uprisings against violence and oppression.

Bengali writing has a long history of poetry, which comes in many forms and appeals to a wide range of tastes. *Bidrohi* makes it easy to understand Nazrul's ideas on a very broad level of history and culture. As the main text of a language and culture spoken by more than 200 million people, and in the historical context of decolonization in the 20th century, as well as having the unique qualities of an existential stance and an individual voice, it talks about what it means to be a human being deprived of dignity during times of systematic violence and oppression.

In China, when the Qing dynasty ended in 1911, things began to move toward freedom and republicanism. Even though the Republic of China was established, democracy didn't last long. In 1915, Yuan Shikai declared himself emperor, ending the democracy (Lu, 2025). The New Culture Movement started as a protest against Yuan. It called for a change from empire to nationalism, from feudalism to democracy, and from social freedom to freedom of the individual. During this period, Confucianism was also called into question by Chinese writers who thought that its established values had let China down in times of trouble.

Lu Xun, China's leading leftist, was the first to respond. In the proletarian literature to which he studied, traditional values are seen as a prison, with madness serving as a metaphor for the oppressed people's uprising against such oppression. Lu Xun's 'A Madman's Diary' was published during this period of dynastic decline and social awakening. It marked the beginning of what is now known as the May Fourth Movement. Both writers make it clear that they see the people rising up against hundreds of years of rules and injustice.

4. Literary Background

Poetry occupies a position of great significance in Bengali literature, particularly in Bengal and Bangladesh. In Nazrul's immense collection of work, "*Bidrohi*" stands out like a lighthouse. In the same way, prose is an important part of Chinese literature. "A Madman's Diary" is one of Lu Xun's several significant short stories that has received a lot of praise. Lu Xun's writings are an appeal for revolution, while Nazrul's writings are acts of rebellion and revolution. The prose of "A Madman's Diary" warns of the dangers of an irrational world, while "*Bidrohi*" glorifies change and rebellion. The main character in "*Bidrohi*" appears to be an angry rebel who shouts out rough poems to inspire people who are being mistreated. In contrast, the main character in "*A Madman's Diary*," on the other hand, thinks that there is a narrative and cannibalism going on in the dark of a normal street, so he stays awake and aware. Poetry plays a "remarkable and important role" in Bengali literature, a fact underlined by the status of Kazi Nazrul Islam. The prestige of poetry within Bengali literary culture makes the revolutionary message of the poem *Bidrohi* especially fitting. While Kazi Nazrul Islam's emphasis lies with poetry, Lu Xun uses prose to address comparable themes, aiming to expose cruel behaviors and promote societal change through metaphor and symbolism. In China, prose essays played a similar position in affecting the modern society, which was best described by Lu Xun. Zhou Shuren (Lu Xun 1881-1936) was a writer who used the pen name Lu Xun and expressing his politics in the vernacular fiction made him one of the leading figures of the 1919 May Fourth Movement. His novel *A Madman's Diary* of 1918 is generally credited with being the first vernacular Chinese prose. The narrative is heavily

charged with ironic energy and political urgency, which are still recognizable in Lu Xun's writing. It is composed of the writings of a man who suffers from severe delusions. The central theme is a cannibalistic civilization that is unable to hide its demise. It narrates the tale of a madman who is able to see but unable to perfectly understand how isolated and confusing his reality is. Thus, there is an obvious difference between the madman's inner world, where he is rational in contrast to the horror surrounds him, and the outside world, which is unaware of their cannibalistic behavior. Because the people who are persecuting the madman always agree with each other and don't let any view of society into the narrative, there is never a consistent and fair alternative point of view.

Although the Bengali literature has traditionally been known as a literature of poetry, Chinese literature is known to have expanded the prose narrative, which determines the formation of the literary identity of the respective culture. During eras of change, literary works are created that show how the human spirit can stay strong in the world even when people try to destroy it. Kazi Nazrul Islam undertook the task of building modern Bengali identity in synthesis of both political and creative energy. His reputation rests largely on the poem *Bidrohi*, a work that articulates the vision of a unified and universal humanity uniting against authoritarian imposition. The poem's unpredictable rhythms were composed after the Great War and effectively combined political, philosophical, and historical factors to produce a reaction against colonialism on a regional and global scale.

5. Comparative Content Analysis of *Bidrohi* and *A Madman's Diary*

This comparative analysis examines the themes, symbols, characters, poetic techniques and stylistic elements in Kazi Nazrul Islam's *Bidrohi (The Rebel)* and Lu Xun's *A Madman's Diary*, utilizing the texts to explore the relationship between South Asian and East Asian revolutionary modernism.

5.1 Themes Analysis of *Bidrohi*: Revolution and Resistance

The *Bidrohi* is a poem centered on revolution, both in essence and form. The poem was composed in 1921 during a period of anti-colonial unrest in British India, serving as a strong protest of political oppression, social inequality and moral stagnation. *Bidrohi* does not aspire to cultivate an emotion or through a gradual change, as traditional nationalist poetry typically does. *Bidrohi* shows that revolution is an essential, almost fundamental thing. From the very beginning, the poem tries to establish a rebellious subjectivity that does not give up in any manner. Nazrul builds resistance as an inherent process and rebellion becomes in agreement with cosmic energy and not human institutions. The Rebel proclaims:

"I am the cyclone"

"I am thunder"

"I am the wild fire of the woods." (The Rebel, 1922)

Here, revolution is not discussed as a political movement, which is planned, but a sudden burst of oppressed energy. Thunder, cyclones, and wildfires all imply urgency, devastation, and cleansing. Through these metaphors, Nazrul is suggesting that the rebellion is a justified one; it is a necessity in the same way the storm is a necessity to purify the stagnant air. Similarly, as a heroic figure and with a broad rebel image, *Bidrohi* also presents an appeal to the oppressed and marginalized masses to reject the British oppression with courage and resistance:

"Say, Valiant,

Ever high is my head!

I am creation, I am destruction,

I am habitation, I am the grave-yard,

I am the end, the end of night!" (The Rebel, 1922)

These lines demonstrate Nazrul's strategy of bold self-assertion method, which turns the poetic voice into a group of people shouting. The resistance in *Bidrohi* is also explicitly anti-authoritarian. The Rebel declares:

"I trample under my feet all rules and discipline!" (The Rebel, 1922)

This line carries deep political significance. Colonialism operates based on law, discipline and surveillance; by the denial of all kinds of laws, the Rebel symbolically destroys the moral authority of the imperial power. Nazrul does not make a distinction between unjust laws and sacred laws-any system that limits the freedom of human beings is the target of rebellion. Resistance therefore becomes complete, not just in the colonial regime, but also in feudalism, religious orthodoxy and social hierarchy.

In addition, Violence is another point that the poem emphasizes on many times being not cruelty but a necessity of revolution. The Rebel declares himself:

"I am the enemy of creation, the mighty terror!" (The Rebel, 1922)

The line that comes after the one that was just quoted embodies the essence of revolution and resistance. Nazrul demonstrates the rebel as one that is unafraid of oppressive systems and societal values. The rebel upsets the stagnant structures by making a breach between the old and the new, by placing himself as a great terror, to tear down as a way of letting the individuality, freedom and new creation. This verse embodies the revolutionary nature of the rebel, which is heroic and imperative to change.

Notably, Nazrul makes resistance universal. The Rebel proclaims:

“I am the rebel eternal.” (The Rebel, 1922)

Through this declaration, Nazrul transforms rebellion into a perpetual ethical stance. Wherever injustice exists, rebellion will follow. In this respect, *Bidrohi* leaves the context of colonialism and passes to the sphere of modernism of the world revolution.

5.2 Themes Analysis of *Bidrohi*: Individualism and Identity

Although *Bidrohi* represents a rebellion of individuality as well as a call to action for the entire society. The poem was organized in the form of the constant repetition of the statement “I am”, making the first-person pronoun a defiant action. The declaration of selfhood is in itself a revolutionary declaration in the context of a colonial society where the native subjectivity is systematically denied. Nazrul enlarges the identity of individuals by means of mythological and religious synthesis:

*“I am the son of Indrani
With the moon in my head
And the sun on my temple
In one hand of mine is the tender flute
While in the other I hold the war bugle!
I am the Bedouin, I am the Chengis,
I salute none but me!” (The Rebel, 1922)*

Here, Nazrul constructs an imaginary individualism. The combination of goddesses and cosmic things makes the Rebel a universal being that rejects traditional mythological identities for the purpose of building a new universe filled with joy and peace. By having many gods at once, the Rebel refuses to fit into one single character category. Hindu, Islamic, and universal mythic traditions coexist within the same voice. This mixing of different ideas goes against colonial and communal ideas that try to split people along religious or cultural lines. The Rebel’s identity is plural, transparent, and inclusive.

More importantly, the Rebel does not separate himself from society. He declares:

“I am the pain and sorrow of all homeless sufferers” (The Rebel, 1922)

Here, the personal identity dissolves with the general misery. The Rebel becomes the representative of the oppressed masses, and individual consciousness is converted into the voice of rebellion. In this way, Nazrul resolves the apparent contradiction between individualism and collectivism: the liberated self is the means of expressing the freedom of the whole society.

The main message of *Bidrohi* is the restoration of the human dignity by means of the broad, multi-dimensional “I” that includes the creative and the destructive. Nazrul’s Rebel is a type of character, but it is a universal one, and this character realizes itself in the whole universe.

The Rebel declares:

*“I am the rising, I am the fall,
I am consciousness in the unconscious soul,
I am the flag of triumph at the gate of the world” (The Rebel, 1922)*

This line, demonstrates that the Rebel’s identity is a form of self-sovereignty in an existential celebration. The claim to be the “rising” and “fall” raises the Rebel above the success-failure divisions of colonial or social power, creating a spirit of resilience that is not unmoved by slavery.

There are also existential undertones of the poem. The Rebel declares self-realization:

“Suddenly I have come to know myself” (The Rebel, 1922)

This demand of knowing oneself foreshadows existentialist thinking, and *Bidrohi* is an early expression of anti-colonial existentialism. The identity is not the one that is inherited or enforced but the creation that is the result of the struggle, suffering, and defiance.

Ultimately, *Bidrohi* possesses no definitive or fixed identity. The Rebel keeps on changing, into fire, storm, God, lover, destroyer, resistant to categorization. This shifting nature constitutes Nazrul’s main conviction: the freedom one pursues requires the rejection of any externally imposed identities and the courage to rediscover oneself newly.

Finally, We may argue that the central idea of *Bidrohi* is the celebration of unique empowerment and the collective resistance of humanity against oppressive authority if we wish to sum up the major themes of the *Bidrohi* Revolution, Resistance, and Individualism. Nazrul creates a figure he refers to as Universal, who is aware of the world’s capacity for both creation and destruction. The Rebel declares:

*“I am king of the great upheaval
I am cyclone, I am destruction...
I break all regulations and discipline with my feet! “(The Rebel, 1922)*

In certain settings, this is not merely a political attitude, it is an existential revolt, which denies the character of an unmoved slave. The Rebel goes on to emphasize his independence by saying;

“I am the Bedouin, I am the Chengis,

"I greet no one but me!" (The Rebel, 1922)

This attitude is a strong protest against rulers and the pain of a heart that has been hurt. Rebels don't have the calm, closed-minded personalities that people in a normal society do. Instead, they are angry, complex, and interesting. Nazrul makes mythical and symbolic art. He calls himself Brahma and Vishnu, Shiva and Durga, Lucifer and Christ, etc., to break the myth of colonial truth, which is just a social and cultural illusion. Because these labels and images are used over and over, the poem is like a mask that the Rebel falls off to find his strong spirit. Ultimately, this resistance wants a new world full of peace and happiness. This ideal is bright, full of hope and optimism, that the Rebel will rest in silent peace when the air and sky are filled with the cries of the oppressed.

5.3 Themes Analysis of *A Madman's Diary*: Madness, Sanity & Social Critique

The short story *A Madman's Diary* (1918) by Lu Xun is considered to be a pillar of the modern Chinese literature and one of the most prominent works of East Asian modernism. The story was composed in the period of New Culture Movement and breaks down the moral order of traditional Confucian society and reveals its underlying violence through realization of a madman. In contrast to Nazrul's revolutionary voice in *Bidrohi*, Lu Xun employs a tranquil, ironic, and psychologically fragmented narrative style. Thematically, the text centers on madness and sanity as philosophical ideas and emphasizes social critique as its primary revolutionary role. Instead of insisting on immediate action, *A Madman's Diary* seeks to promote moral consciousness by, on one hand, diagnosing society as fundamentally diseased.

5.3.1 Madness and Sanity

Lu Xun employs madness to make political and social commentary to turn the tables on moral values. Ironic wisdom of the Madman allows him to perceive cannibalistic character of a sane and silent world.

The best-known revelation of the Madman is the one when he reads between the lines of books about history:

"I read intently half the night, until I began to see words between the lines, the whole book being filled with the two words—'Eat people'"(A Madman's Diary, 1918)

This metaphor cannibalism stingingly criticizes the rottenness of the feudal system and the insanity of history. This cannibalism metaphor is not a literal one, but ethical and historical. Lu Xun brings out how the Confucian morality that is widely accepted as a source of harmony and order has over centuries been used

to hypocritically rationalize exploiting people, the existence of hierarchy and cruelty. In this respect, madness is a means of historical demystification. The normalized tradition only allows the mad individual to see what is hidden by the normalized tradition.

The horror increases when the Madman understands that the past is not the only place where cannibalism may occur:

“They want to eat me.” (A Madman’s Diary, 1918)

This is a wise yet insightful statement. It is a psychological outburst on one side; on the other, it is a metaphor of the way in which the society destroys the people who are unconventional. The Madman fear highlights the criticism by Lu Xun on social order that imposes moral violence in the name of order.

Notably, madness is not idealized by Lu Xun. The Madman by Lu Xun is a troubled character as compared to the excesses and rebellion in Rebellion by Nazrul. His insight isolates him:

“If one is to understand it” (A Madman’s Diary, 1918)

Madness in this case is not empowering but it is painful and lonely. It is the devil of a truth but does not provide a quick way of change. This tragic aspect is what makes the modernism of Lu Xun more modern than revolutionary lyricism: the awakening comes before the action, and the sense of awakening comes accompanied by hopelessness.

The story’s final plea,

Save the children... (A Madman’s Diary, 1918)

The concluding appeal of the narrative "Save the children" changes the theme of reason and irrationality. The Madman recognizes that his current generation may be profoundly affected by cannibalistic morals, yet he has not provided his successors with any grounds for fear. Sanity is therefore redefined as adherence to societal norms coupled with a moral awakening. The condition of madness constitutes a form of hell, an essential disruption within the process of enlightenment.

5.3.2 Social Critique

Fundamentally, *A Madman’s Diary* is a crushing critique of the Chinese traditional society, especially the Confucian moral philosophy. The novelty of Lu Xun is that we can see the existence of ethical systems that teach benevolence and propriety within the framework of cruelty in the system. The Madman also finds out that his “elder brother” is also a member of this conspiracy:

"The eater of human flesh is my elder brother!"

"I am the younger brother of an eater of human flesh!" (A Madman's Diary, 1918)

This shows the inhuman nature of ancient society where even people of the same group can also eat each other. He is "furious" because he is a social outcast that has been "rejected" by those who have become "hardened their hearts" toward crimes. He recognizes the "poison in their speech" and the "daggers in their laughter," noting that their bright, gleaming teeth belong to man-eaters. Lu Xun presents a conflicting view of human nature within society, wherein fathers and sons, as well as husbands and wives, are all involved in this conspiracy. The conflict of insanity and sanity is at the center: the Madman perceives the societal disease, while the sane impose a routine that makes them blind to the illness.

The frequent mention of faces and eyes spying on him by the Madman are indicative of social surveillance:

"Their eyes were all the same" (A Madman's Diary, 1918)

This visual imagery is an indication of a group consciousness that imposes conformity. The social power is not only worked out by the institutions but internalized norms. The fear of the Madman thus shows the extent to which oppression reaches in day-to-day life.

To sum up, *A Madman's Diary* is a diagnosis modernism. It never builds up revolt through passion, but through irony, breakdown, and psychological realism, it shows how society is broken. Lu Xun's change begins in the mind, not in the street.

5.4 Character Analysis: The Rebel vs. The Madman

In *Bidrohi*, the Rebel is an unbeatable hero who claims to have complete freedom and power over nature and the world. He declares:

*"I am the dance-intoxicated rhythm,
I dance at my own pleasure,
I am the unfettered joy of life!" (The Rebel, 1922)*

Nazrul is an invincible person, who possesses a power over nature, over his destiny. He is a warrior-poet, whose blood holds all passions, and he is "insane with extreme happiness. He aligns himself with a rhythmic intoxication of dance and the unrestrained enthusiasm of life, moving with a pleasant sense of impatience. The character of Nazrul is characterized by boldness, bravery, fierceness, and strength, which elevates him "beyond this world, High, ever erect and alone!" He is the cruel axe of Parsurama, which will "kill warriors, and bring peace and harmony in the universe".

In contrast, a madman in a Lu Xun narrative is a persecuted realist who feels destroyed and alone. The Madman emerges as a persecuted realist and social outcast:

"The eyes of the fish were white and hard, and its mouth was open just like those people who want to eat human beings" (A Madman's Diary, 1918)

The Rebel lives in a state of happiness, while the Madman lives in a state of anxiety and doubt. There is a lot of social and psychological pressure on the rising soul, and he is a symbol of that pressure. He is very sensitive, critical, and self-conscious, and he is so fearful that even the Chao family dog is part of the plan to eat him. The Rebel is a universal being that connects with everyone in the universe. On the other hand, the Madman is badly affected by social exclusion because he lives on the edges of world. He feels the weight of society's flaws on his chest as the pillars and walls of custom crush him. Even though he is scared, the Madman is brave and has good morals. He laughed at the killer who disguised up as someone who could feel his pulse. He is an early philosophical figure, like those of Kafka or Orwell, who is trying to be reborn and revolutionized with his insanity.

5.5 Stylistic Comparative Features: Lyrical Myth vs. Vernacular Allegory

Two different approaches to revolutionary modernism can be seen in the changes in style between Kazi Nazrul Islam's "The Rebel" and Lu Xun's "A Madman's Diary." Nazrul uses a style called lyrical-mythic, which is a burst of vibrant colors of poetic images, ideas, and metaphors meant to break down colonial ideas of what reality is. His writing is full of deep, vivid, and powerful words that are meant to impress the reader with their pure artistic power. He tells us:

*"I am the mighty roar of Israfil's bugle,
I am the great trident of Pinakpani,
I am the staff of the king of truth,
I am the Chakra and the great Shanka,
I am the mighty primordial shout!" (The Rebel, 1922)*

Here, the words used by Nazrul in this text demonstrate the skill of the writer to combine different religious and cultural icons, Islamic (Israfil), Hindu (Pinakpani/Shiva), and prehistoric, to form a universal man. The stylistically uncertain rhythms and rhythmic chant serve as a powerful, natural heartbeat, which makes the readers reach the revolutionary enthusiasm.

On the contrary, Lu Xun uses a vernacular-allegorical mode, which is considered to be the first vernacular Chinese prose. Leaving behind the feudal literature and the classical mode of tradition, Lu Xun attains the feeling of political urgency with a personal, close, and public style of diary.

"The writing was most confused and incoherent, and he had made many wild statements; moreover, he had omitted to give any dates... I have not altered a single illogicality in the diary" (A Madman's Diary, 1918)

This figure of speech helps Lu Xun hide his harsh criticism of feudal society by making it seem like he or she is crazy, which is a weapon that the author can use. Whereas the style of Nazrul is one of an angry rebel screaming incoherent poems, the cry by Lu Xun is more of a chaotic scream that is based on a mad scream against the horror of a cannibalistic civilization.

5.6 Imagery and Symbolism: Mythic-Symbolic and Social-Allegorical.

Nazrul's Mythic Mode: Nazrul weaves a web of myth and symbolism. He links the Rebel to destructive and cosmic energies, which stand for the end of the old world.

*"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!
I ride on the wings of the lightning with joy and profound" (The Rebel, 1922)*

Burning volcano and Hell's mad terrific sea reveal the force that must be used to break down oppression. Nazrul also uses Parsurama's deadly axe to kill fighters and Balarama's plowing blade to work the miserable earth to show a complete change in society. There are bright, sad pictures of violence that are matched by pictures of peace and heaven. The Rebel is shown as a universal animal that both creates and destroys things that are similar.

Similarly, Nazrul also employs a mythic-symbolic mode, which combines different icons, like the bugle of Israfil, the trident of Pinakpani, Chengis, and the Bedouin.

*"I am the mighty roar of Israfil's bugle,
I am the great trident of Pinakpani,
I am the staff of the king of truth" (The Rebel, 1922)*

Symbols such as the circle of symbols (for Shiva) and the bugle of Israfil (for Islam) come together to make a new identity. This combination destroys down religious and society dogmas that aren't true. To sum up, these kinds of symbols hide social and cultural truths behind a mask of falsehood, and the Rebel breaks the colonists' sense of what is real. He talks about himself as a volcano that is on fire, Hell's mad, terrible sea of anger, and Orpheus with his flute. As he walks on the proud glory of God with his feet, the Rebel is a mysterious figure, a fire that burns everything in its path. There is a mix of violent strength and anger with peaceful and heavenly images in this colorful outburst of references. For

example, the dark, glassy hair of the virgin or the soft breeze in the south are both examples of peaceful and heavenly images.

Lu Xun's Allegorical Mode: Lu Xun demonstrates his social-allegorical critique of feudalism through the use of straightforward and stereotyped images.

The eyes of the fish were white and hard, and its mouth was open just like those of people who want to eat human beings. After a few mouthfuls, I could not tell whether the slippery morsels were fish or human flesh" (A Madman's Diary, 1918)

The white and hard eyes of the fish functions as a metaphor for an aggressive and dehumanized society. The scene extends to include the Chao family dog and a leopard that feeds on dead bodies. Together, these metaphors suggest a conspiratorial social structure in which fathers, sons, husbands and wives symbolically consume their victims. This critical remark is grounded in the symbolism of animals: lion, rabbit, and fox, which help to expose the inhumane nature of the ancient society as a rotted and cruel structure. Lu Xun also utilizes commonplace objects within his horrific imagery to symbolize feudalism.

"The Chao family dog has started barking again. The fierceness of a lion, the timidity of a rabbit, the craftiness of a fox" (A Madman's Diary, 1918)

The dog symbolizes the idea to keep things the same. Animalistic images, like wolves and hyenas, are used as is a metaphor for a society that is full of crime. Lu Xun writes in a way that is both social and allegorical. The aggressive nature of feudalism is shown by everyday pictures that look like animals. The white and hard eyes of the fish resemble the people who would like to eat human beings. The man-eaters conspiracy is represented by such animals like the dog at the Chao house, the wild wolves, and the hyena. According to the Madman, the society is so fierce like a lion, timid like a rabbit, and crafty like a fox. This mean statement comes from a mix of envy and mistrust, where the bright moon is the representation of a harmful awakening which shows the bodies of dead people in the cold and dark center of feudal society. When Nazrul uses symbols, they are bright, colorful, and fierce. But when Lu Xun uses symbols, they are narrow and bitter, and they are meant to show how cruel old society was.

5.7 Narrative and Poetic Techniques

The Rebel (Bidrohi) : The technique of Nazrul is based on the repetition and first-person narrative, which creates a revolutionary manifesto.

*"I am creation, I am destruction,
I am habitation, I am the grave-yard,
I am the end, the end of night!" (The Rebel, 1922)*

Saying "I am" over and over is a way for people to hide their social and cultural lies. After that, the Rebel gives it up to find a strong spirit. Readers are forced to feel happily restless, just like the Rebel in the poem, by the choice of words with medium tones and the rhythm of the heartbeat. The Rebel lives beyond colonial life-death boundaries by describing himself as both habitation and grave-yard.

A Madman's Diary: In contrast, *A Madman's Diary* is the unreliable narrator and the use of a diary style reflect the madness of history that Lu Xun uses.

"I realized all the poison in their speech, all the daggers in their laughter. Their teeth are white and glistening: they are all man-eaters" (A Madman's Diary, 1918)

The author makes a direct, personal, and society point of view. The mix of entries is the awakened soul being pushed around by those who want to hurt it. Coming out as mad, Lu Xun changes the moral values and asks the readers to read between the societal lines to see what is really going on in the society, and to find out the cannibalistic reality. The consequence is an ironical wakeup call, to wake out of a feudal, moonlit dream.

5.8 The Position of Madness, Rebellion and Individual Consciousness

In both works, madness makes the characters think deeply about themselves, which lets them look into how bad the world and social norms are. Nazrul says that this kind of craziness is violent, mixed, full of joy and release.

*"Maddened with an intense joy I rush onward,
I am insane! I am insane!
Suddenly I have come to know myself,
All the false barriers have crumbled today!" (The Rebel, 1922)*

Madness is a point of both political and spiritual enlightenment where social and cultural blindness is broken. It's the revolutionary spirit that has been waiting for any indication that the so-called "sane society" will remain quiet.

In case of Lu Xun ironic wisdom is diagnosed as madness.

"I too am a man, and they want to eat me! You should change, change from the bottom of your hearts! You must know that in future there will be no place for man-eaters in the world" (A Madman's Diary, 1918)

The Madman's honesty and bravery in the face of an ill society are actually what keep him alive. A depressed state of mind is harshly made by being on the outside, which sees how bad society is while everyone else is running away from it. Both authors ultimately come to the conclusion that the only way to get away

from pain is through resistance. The newly awakened soul turns into a rebel, having an inner urge to resist injustice, oppression, and ignorance. In Both Texts, The madness as a source of self-reflection, and the study of the world beyond is also present. In *Bidrohi*, madness is violent, mixed, and dominating; the state permits this rebel to abruptly realize himself and view that all deceptive boundaries have collapsed. When this gets really intense, it helps the Universal Man connect with the awareness in the unconscious soul. Nazrul's madness isn't just religious inaction; it's a revolutionary rage that can't be contained in the so-called "sane world."

In "A Madman's Diary," the main character is the only one who can see how unhealthy society is, which is a kind of ironic knowledge. The mad man's awareness is his scrambled defense against cruelty, his madness is his freedom, and the normal world is not being a man. The big question, he puts is: is it right because it has always been so? He is afraid because he lives in a world where people of the same race can still eat each other. In such a world, a decent person who sees the truth might appear to be a real madman, according to Lu Xun. Both authors think that the only thing people can't get away from without fighting is enduring suffering. This soul that has been awakened turns into a rebel to fill its inner need and excitement, and it uses madness as its most powerful tool to turn morals on their heads.

6. Philosophical Underpinnings: Existentialism and Socialism

The philosophical tone *Bidrohi (The Rebel)* has is based on existentialism and emphasizes on the freedom and responsibility of the individual. The rebel is the one who made the whole world, which is made up of one ego, which is the person who is what they are by their own free will. Nazrul disagrees with the stereotypical identity and instead provides a message of identity and pride to the people who have been denied dignity. The rebel is an endless wonder of mother earth, rising to the Almighty throne as a flag for man's victory.

The work of Lu Xun is deeply colored with the socialist and Marxist ideology, having an anti-capitalistic socialist voice. The Madman's fear of being eaten by cannibals shows that he can't stand up to capitalism, and his call to kill cannibals sparks a socialist revolution. He speaks for China's socialists and wants to bring about knowledge that will end the cruel feudal system of eating each other. His last, haunting cry was a socialist call to fight: "Save the children!" This is a socialist call to hit the cannibalism order strongly in order to protect freedom for future generations and keep them from becoming part of the cannibalism order. In Nazrul's story, the rebel is the one who created the universe. Whereas, the rebel in the case of Nazrul is the creator of the whole universe, in the case of Lu Xun, the rebel is an individual who looks backward into his place in the world

of the big ones in an attempt to bring a new world order with a social transformation. The verdict of both is the same, the unconquerable spirit of humans must battle over their land, and put an end to feudal society.

7. Discussion

This research aimed at comparing the poem of Kazi Nazrul Islam titled *Bidrohi* (*The Rebel*) and the short story of Lu Xun titled *A Madman's Diary*. Our intention was to discover in which subjects and to which forms the two pieces are united, and how they became the seeds of revolution in colonial Bengal and feudal China. Close readings of the texts and applicable literature were used in the research to present how the authors opposed oppression and traditional authority and how the ideas transcend national boundaries to enlighten the current 21st-century discourse of freedom and cultural awakening.

First, the study examined the theme of revolution and resistance. The two works are both strong cries of revolution, only that they follow different courses toward social transformation. The poem, *Bidrohi*, is a call to arms and the poet is introducing rebellion as an impulsive, cosmic burst of power, characterized by the symbols of cyclones, thunder, and fires. The hero employed by Nazrul manages to smash the colonial power and social classes through a heroic self-assertion strategy. The resistance presented in the diary of Lu Xun, by contrast, is moral in nature, and internal and psychological. The madman discovers the cannibalistic character of feudal tradition, which he gets to know after reading between the lines of books on history. The latter findings are justified by the former researches: Biswas (2022) describes the work of Nazrul as a weapon against institutional injustice, whereas Yu (2019) views the metaphor of cannibalism by Lu Xun as an image of an allegorical attack on the long-standing Confucian order, which had fed on people. Both scholars concur that revolution was required more than just reform, and that both authors relied on their writings to destroy feudal society and colonialist systems.

Second, the study explored individualism, identity and stylistic expression. A universal, defiant mode is what Nazrul writes in a lyrical-mythic mode. The repetition of "I am" in the poem, *Bidrohi*, is a revolution in a colonial world that negated the subjectivity of the natives. He incorporates Islamic, Hindu, and prehistoric imagery- such as the of Israfil, the of Shiva, etc- in the creation of a Universal Man who cuts across the boundaries of religion and culture. Lu Xun on the other hand employs a vernacular-allegorical style, whereby he writes the first modern Chinese prose in baihua to subvert feudalism. The incoherent and fragmented diary entries of a mad man give the clue of the spiritual illness of a nation trapped into tradition. These findings resonate with Haque (2018) who writes about the role of Asian authors in employing the term subaltern

modernism as a reaction to Western imperialism and Hoque and AlQahtani (2024) remark on how the subjective I of Nazrul turned into a national liberation slogan. As pointed out by the sources, the angry rebel voice of Nazrul, as well as the chaotic screaming of Lu Xun, are directed toward the same objective which is social change.

This study is a gap in knowledge since it is the first direct transcultural study of Bangladeshi and Chinese revolutionary literature. The comparisons of Nazrul with western authors like Walt Whitman and Shelley were made before however there were few comparisons drawn with other East Asian authors at that time like Lu Xun. The novelty is depicted in the expression of a pan-Asian culture of resistance that influenced the definition of modernism in the 20th century. Using a shared interpretive model between *Bidrohi (The Rebel)* and *A Madman's Diary*, the paper demonstrates how the metaphors of the madness and the rebel separately worked in various parts in attaining parallel justice-based modernity. It demonstrates that the Rebel and the Madman are the two sides of the same coin one is the outer outburst of revolutionary power the other the inner awakening to become aware of the social devastation.

Lastly, the discussion delves into the philosophical difference between the works. *Bidrohi* is based on existentialism, which has been focused on the individual freedom and the duty to recreate the world through personal will. The Rebel proclaims himself as being the creator of the entire universe and is proud of people deprived of dignity. The work by Lu Xun, in its turn, is driven by socialist and Marxist concepts, where the social order is devoured by the other characters and the conclusion is marked by the socialist appeal to save the children, preventing the future generations to become feudalists. Although one of them is concerned with the ego and the other with the social transformation, both authors arrive at a similar conclusion that human spirit cannot be conquered and must struggle in order to take its land and put an end to feudal society.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper highlights that literature played an integral part in Asian liberation movements. Through a comparative analysis of Kazi Nazrul Islam and Lu Xun, the paper has shown that both their Rebel and the Madman metaphor was a strong weapon of cultural awakening and anti-colonial action. Even though the authors employed contrasting styles: Nazrul had written vibrant, mythic poetry and Lu Xun ironic, vernacular prose, both of them transformed rebellion into art and poetry into a weapon of liberation.

The work enriches the knowledge about Asian modernism. It shows that a soul having awakened is bound to be a rebel as there is an inner desire to fight against injustice. In this case, madness is not a medical condition but ironic wisdom, a

revolutionary fury that allows people to see the truth in society that condones oppression.

In the end, this comparative analysis also provides a new model of the justice-based society in Asia. It demonstrates that human dignity can be restored only through the aid of the visionary voice of resistance, as well as the prophetic voice of madness. Through its connection of literary histories of Bangladesh and China, the paper concludes that searching the freedom is universal, and the heritage of both authors can still be applied as a lighthouse to the people who are going through the hardships of social and political inequality in the 21st century.

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