

# Voices of Change: Social Criticism in Jadid Playwriting

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**Abstract:** Behbudi's work is examined as a significant literary phenomenon that reflects the social realities of the country, marking the first Uzbek drama. In the play "Parricide", Behbudi condemns a wealthy man as an indifferent father who neglects the upbringing of his son. In contrast, Qodiriy highlights another aspect of the issue through the portrayal of the selfish and greedy Fayziboy in "Unhappy Groom". This article argues that the representation of both wealthy men as self-serving individuals, solely pursuing their own interests, introduces a novel concept. Furthermore, it discusses the congruity of the ideas and interpretations presented in the dramas of Behbudi and Qodiriy, as well as their distinctiveness.

**Keywords:** National unity, traditional education, new Uzbek literature, progressive, the basis of the ideal, the tragedy of the youth, literary grief, great scholars.

**Introduction:** The Jadids, united under the idea of national unity, considered the struggle for the freedom of the Motherland as a sacred duty. They did not spare their lives or property in the struggle and mobilised their strength in this direction. A need for renewal arose in the nation's thinking. Waves of national revival manifested themselves in various forms in Turkestan on all fronts. Intellectuals who worked for the independence of the country initially put forward the idea of reformism.

The need for renewal that arose in the wake of revolutionary waves created great personalities on the stage of history. One of such great personalities is Mahmudkhoja Behbudi. The owner of encyclopaedic sciences M. Behbudi developed a program of the idea of national revival, which was the basis of the Jadid movement in Turkestan. The main problems of the program include the formation of the nation-state, the creation of a national army, a national language and literature, national drama, and national schools. The preservation of religious and national identity was also the main goal of the Jadid Enlightenment. Behbudi, as a distinguished scholar, embodies the attitudes of an Islamic personality.

M. Behbudi was famous not only in Turkestan but also in countries such as Central Asia, Turkey, Iran, and Crimea for his reform of the traditional education

system, creation of textbooks, and his sharp publicist speeches explaining scientific and legal issues. He is considered the creator who laid the foundation stone of new Uzbek literature, and particularly the national theatre.

The representatives of the Enlightenment, who travelled the world and were aware of world news, considered it possible to quickly and effectively influence the public through art. Art and literature played a significant role in the propaganda work of the Jadids. In 1911, he wrote the first Uzbek drama, the play "The Case of Parricide or an Uneducated Boy (A Lesson from Turkestan Life)" (3 acts, 4 scenes). The drama is structured simply by the genre's requirements. The author defines his work as "the first national tragedy". As a literary critic, the author, who understood the power of tragedy well, used this poetic method effectively in his work. The Jadids realised that only the path of knowledge and enlightenment could lead the homeland out of crisis. This idea is embedded in the core of the drama. The tragedy of Tashmurod in the drama is portrayed as a national issue. Behbudi, as a highly experienced specialist, conveys the Jadid idea, which is the idea he wants to convey, in a concise scene.

Considering that the drama genre in Uzbek literature is a new "spider", Behbudi's work was a serious literary

phenomenon that reflected the social reality in the country. As soon as the first Uzbek drama was written, staging it was not easy. The authorities did not allow the drama to be published. Finally, a way was found that would please the tsarist censorship, and it was published in 1913. On January 25, 1914, it was staged in Samarkand. The drama was received with great interest by the people. The audience had a stronger impact on the public than expected. The drama shows how the greed and ignorance of the rich man's lover, Tashmurod, lead to tragedy. Behbudi reveals his new ideas through the image of a teacher and an intellectual. The intellectual attempts to teach wealthy individuals the importance of educating their children and the value of knowledge and enlightenment. The rich man is depicted as a person who thinks only of the world. The Jadids encouraged the local wealthy to establish schools, sponsor children's education, and provide financial support for education. These thoughts set the tone for the drama.

The nation received the first drama with outstanding goodwill. The tragedy revealed in the live footage greatly inspired the people. There is information that the theatre was filled, and the play was staged repeatedly. The impact of the drama affected not only the people but also the creators, resulting in several works of art emerging.

After M. Behbudi's "Parricide", several dramatic works imitating it appeared in Uzbek national literature. In his article dedicated to the theatre, Kadiriyy emphasises that the history of the stage begins with "Parricide" in 1912. Following M. Behbudi, one can point to works such as Nusratullo Kudratullo o'g'lu's "Wedding" (1914), Abdulla Badri's "Deathblow" (1915), Haji Muin's "Old School, New School", "Oppressed Woman" (1916).

Abdulla Qodiriyy writes: "Under the influence of the play "Parricide" which published in 1913, I did not even notice that I had written a theatre book called "Unhappy Groom". Although "Unhappy Groom" differs in content from M. Behbudi's drama, an educational idea still dominates it, and the literary and aesthetic aspects of the genre are not fully revealed. The Jadids believed that it was possible to awaken the nation from its heedlessness by getting rid of customs that had become heretical, eliminating vices such as weddings, marriages, gambling, drinking, and womanising, and increasing the number of new schools that would teach "worldly" sciences alongside religious knowledge. Works in this spirit reveal that following procedures not prescribed by the Sharia, yielding to innovation and superstition, leads to a spiritual crisis. Both dramas intersect at one point in their focus on revealing the ideas of the Jadids. However, the authors' attitudes towards the characters differ.

In the play "The Unhappy Groom", he calls on the local rich to be progressive and generous, and proposes the idea of fighting against old customs that pave the way for extravagance at weddings. The consequences of not paying enough attention to child upbringing and education are illustrated through the events of the drama, highlighting the effects of ignorance. The events of the play are based on the story of the marriage of a young man named Salih. Having borrowed money from a rich man and unable to repay it on time, the groom Salih and the bride Rahima commit suicide due to depression. The play ends with the tragic death of the young people. Behbudi in the play "Parricide" condemns the rich man as an indifferent father who is indifferent to the upbringing of his children. Qodiriyy, on the other hand, draws attention to the other side of the issue through the interpretation of the image of the selfish and greedy Fayziboy in "The Unhappy Groom". The fact that both rich people are portrayed as selfish individuals who only care about their own interests also demonstrates the influence of this new idea.

There is such a scene in the drama "Parricide".

"- I think, the reason for the world, the honour is wealth. As for the hereafter, it will be the fate that God has made." A rich person is a person who has been given wealth in this world and has forgotten the sorrow of the hereafter. A believing servant eats the sorrow of the hereafter in this world; he is content. Although gaining knowledge is obligatory, he does not send his child to school. He does not care about the time; he only thinks about his pocket—an arrogant person who interprets the requirements of Sharia in his own favour.

In "The Unhappy Groom" Fayziboy:

"- I will explain to you, the grains that I asked for go to both the wedding feast and the bread. Sheep and horses are slaughtered, and the fat and meat go to the soup. There are also chariots and showmen. For money, copper tools, two field paths, two flower blankets, a neck amulet for my daughter, an arm amulet, a gold chain, and earrings. It is completed with other small things. If there is bread, it is distributed to those who come to the wedding. And other things too. Do you understand now what is left for me from this?"

The rich in the dramas face tragedy due to their ignorance and lack of knowledge. Although the works differ in content, they complement each other ideologically in their shared desire to save the nation from the scourge of ignorance.

The ellikbashi in "The Unhappy Groom" is a remarkable character. Even in his time, he attracted the attention of critics. The author depicted the image of the ellikbashi based on his ideal, that is, as a nationalist, generous, rich man. However, since it was challenging

to find ellikbashi with such an image among local rulers in historical and social conditions, literary criticism assessed the image of the ellikbashi as somewhat contrary to the logic of life. M.Solihov criticizes that "the image of the ellikbashi is a representative of the Uzbek progressive rich, but in life, it is the opposite," comparing the hero with the image of the ellikbashi in Ayni's work "Black days in history".

In "The Unhappy Groom", the author portrays a man who can see the times in the image of the fifty-year-old: "You have seen the harm of waste, learn from Fayziboy, have you seen what happened to you after wasting? Obey the Sharia, now open your eyes. Educate your sons, who squandered their wealth on weddings, which is an innovation, or donate it to charity in society. Educating a son is good and obligatory, but wasting it on weddings is an innovation," he says.

Although "The Unhappy Groom" differs in content from Behbudiy's drama, the idea of Jadids is dominant. However, the plot of the story "Deathblow" is very similar to "Parricide." The main character in Kadiri's story, "Deathblow," is about the fall into misguidance of Sadulla, the son of Raufboy, who is engaged in large-scale trade. Without acquiring knowledge or studying, he loses all the wealth of his father and family to satisfy his pleasures. As a result, he kills a person, gets his hands wet with blood, and loses his own life.

The plot of "Deathblow" is close to "Parricide" in that, due to ignorance, Sadulla and Tashmurod fall into pleasures, creating a tragedy in both families. Regardless of the genre, there are similar situations in which the heroes in the two works meet with tragedy, waste their lives, devote themselves to entertainment instead of learning, and engage in corrupt activities of a child raised in a Muslim family. The work attracts attention because it is a common occurrence in the nation these days.

Izzat Sultan expressed the reasonable opinion that "Qodiriy's poems "Our state" and "To my nation" and the drama "Deathblow" were written in imitation of Behbudi. It is natural to be influenced by Behbudi, the nation's leader. The idea put forward in Qodiriy's work "Deathblow" (novel) reflected the ideas of the Jadids. Science The tragedy of young people being given to a life of poverty instead of earning a living is the fault of fathers, and the lack of support from local investors in raising children.

Just as in "The Father-in-Law" a tragedy occurred in the family due to ignorance, in "The Unhappy Groom" the drama ends in disaster due to the ignorance of the rich and Salih. Because the rich are given to vanity and arrogance. He does not even follow the rules of Sharia.

He prioritises his own interests above all else. A. Qodiriy wrote in his article "The Progress of Theatre in Our Country" in 1919: The treatise "The Father-in-Law" was staged in almost every large and small city of Turkestan, and the purpose of theatre was realised to some extent for our youth. After that, the issue of theatre began to arise in our country, and we began to write half-hearted theatre treatises" [Qodiriy A. The progress of our theatre work. *Ishtirokiyun*, December 11, 1919]. A. Qodiriy's thoughts on theatre and theatrical work are seen as a direct continuation of M. Behbudiy's thoughts. In particular, "The theatre is a mirror that embodies the deficient and excess areas of life. "That's how it is, when we see our theatre, we should see a reflection of our lives," he says, urging our writers who are entering the theatre field to have a high regard for literature.

In "Parricide", he says this from the language of an intellectual to the rich.

- Now is a new and different time. At this time, just as the wealth, land, and tools of a people without knowledge and crafts are lost day by day, morality and reputation are also eroded, and even religion is weakened. For this, we must strive to educate ourselves, as our religious law has made it obligatory for us to study all kinds of beneficial knowledge from birth to death. This ruling is based on Sharia law. "Behbudi's instruction "The value of religion is knowledge, the value of knowledge is in its benefits" is repeated in the works of Qadiri. In fact, the goal of the Jadids is to follow the dictates of religion and to turn away from heresy.

This is what was said about Qodiriy's work. In the drama, "the characteristic features of Jadid literature, namely, the replacement of the artist by a preacher, exhortation, "whitening", etc., are clearly visible in "The Unhappy Groom" [Qosimov B., Yusupov Sh., Dolimov U., Rizayev Sh., Ahmedov S. *Uzbek literature of the era of national revival*. - Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 2004. - P. 402.].

The basis of Jadid dramaturgy is the national idea, propaganda and agitation. Jadid literature played a significant role in the national revival that occurred in Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century. This fact is confirmed by every creative boutique that appeared on the scene at that time. In the centuries created by the Jadids, the desire to reflect the pain of the nation and be a balm is clearly felt. The primacy of national grief over literary grief is a leading sign of modern literature. Behbudi's creative heritage has an artistic aesthetic significance, as it has left a special mark on the nation's thinking. In each of his works, the author describes the ways to see Turkestan free and

prosperous, shows the way, and calls for preserving national identity. The creative heritage of such great personalities as Behbudi and Qodiriy is valuable as a national treasure.

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