



Interpretations of National Family Values in Theatrical Art

Botir Sangirov

Associate Professor at the National Institute named after Kamoliddin Behzod of Painting and Design, Doctor of Philosophy in Art Studies, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article examines the representation and interpretation of national family values in theatrical art, focusing on how these values are conveyed through performance, character development, and dramaturgy. By analyzing selected theatrical works from different cultural contexts, the study explores how theater serves as a mirror of society's moral and ethical foundations, particularly in the sphere of family. The research highlights how national identity, intergenerational relationships, gender roles, and moral expectations are dramatized to reflect both traditional and evolving views on family. The findings demonstrate that theatrical art not only preserves and celebrates national family ideals but also questions and reshapes them in light of contemporary social dynamics.

Keywords: National family values, theatrical art, cultural identity, dramaturgy, social norms, intergenerational relations, tradition and modernity.

Introduction: Today, numerous staged productions convincingly demonstrate the significant role theatre plays as a synthetic art in reviving national traditions and instilling values into the public consciousness. This can be observed through the examples of past productions such as E. Khushvaqtov's *Chimildiq*, Qalliq O'yin, Qirmizi Olma, Andishali Kelinchak, Kh. Khursandov's *O'lding*, Aziz Bo'lding, and N. Abboskhan's *O'zbekcha Raqs*. These plays, rooted in interpretations of national customs, reflect the ancient worldview and unique character of the Uzbek people, giving special attention to family values and the role of the family as the backbone of society, as well as its importance in educating the younger generation.

Chimildiq (1996) is one of the plays from that period

which achieved great success, becoming a sensation and drawing full houses. Directors T. Azizov and M. Abdullaeva, through this production, highlighted the folkloric foundations of Uzbek theatre and the charm of the “tomosha” (folk performance) genre. The use of the “performance within a performance” technique provided the directors and actors with wide creative opportunities. This production, which stirred much debate, was staged over 300 times. Its success was not only due to its accessibility for audiences or its heightened entertainment value through comedic elements, but also because it touched the hearts of the people, reflecting deeply ingrained family traditions that represent the national identity and life of the Uzbek nation.

After its premiere, the play was performed repeatedly not only at the Uzbek National Academic Drama Theatre but also at regional theatres across the country. Structurally and thematically compact, the play begins with the Yor-Yor song and concludes with the *Kelin Salom* (Bride’s Greeting). The decoration designed for the production, as well as the actors’ dialogues and the masterful portrayal of character traits, contributed significantly to the play’s success.

The playwright does not focus on trivial domestic problems of everyday life. Instead, through portraying the *chimildiq* — the sacred canopy symbolizing the foundation of the family fortress and associated national customs — the play seeks to impress upon the audience its magical power and societal importance. The stage representation of the *chimildiq* and its centuries-old values emphasizes the profound social dimension carried by this symbol. Indeed, as long as humanity has existed, people have aspired to build happy families, have children, and create a household. Therefore, this topic is not merely domestic but fundamentally social. This makes it clear why labeling the production as a simple “domestic comedy” would be incorrect.

The director’s and playwright’s joint approach to the themes of love, family, and marriage from a social perspective convinces us that ethnic traditions hold great power in the life of our people and that they must be approached with seriousness and responsibility.

The play opens with a lively wedding ceremony scene. The entrance of the bride to the sounds of Yor-Yor creates a wedding atmosphere. Singing Yor-Yor is one of the oldest traditions of our people, elevated to the level of a national value. This folk song is precious because it is sung only once — when a virgin girl is married off. Every bride hears her own Yor-Yor just once in her lifetime.

There are various opinions about the origins of Yor-Yor.

Some sources suggest that the custom of singing Yor-Yor dates back to the advent of Islam, specifically to the wedding of the Prophet Muhammad’s daughter Fatima and Hazrat Ali. This is supported by the lyrics:

By the streams,
Washing spoons, Yor-Yor.
For the Prophet’s daughter,
Fell in love, Yor-Yor.
The Prophet’s daughter,
Ali married, Yor-Yor.
Singing Yor-Yor to us,
Comes from then, Yor-Yor.

Following this, the play presents wedding rituals and customs such as *poyandoz to’shash* (laying the wedding carpet), *kelin o’tirmadi* (the bride does not sit), and *kelin osh yemadi* (the bride does not eat pilaf). There are also symbolic actions like feeding honey to wish the couple a sweet life, offering sugar water, bringing in rice and mung beans to wish them unity, and presenting a knife and ring to the groom for fertility. Then comes the ritual of brushing the bride’s hair with a scarf. Additionally, the play features the southern regional custom of *toshak soldi* (laying the bridal bed), including humorous exchanges between *O’lanji* and *Momo* and the antics of “old women pretending to be young brides,” which evoke both laughter and interest among the audience.

According to D. Ikromova’s interpretation, the character *Momo* is eloquent, deeply knowledgeable about national customs, faithfully adheres to them, and has overcome many hardships in life with patience and resilience. She enjoys humor and jokes but is also conscientious and respected as a wise elder of the village. She rebukes the groom, who is dismissive of traditions and unwilling to follow rituals, emphasizing that the rise in unhappy couples stems from neglecting customs and that there is much wisdom in the teachings of the ancestors.

The playwright’s goal in *Chimildiq* was not merely to present wedding customs for spectacle, but rather to depict the national character through the figures of *Momo*, the Groom, and the Bride, and to show the role of national traditions in shaping ethnic identity and their importance in moral education. Thanks to *Momo*’s resolve and the instillation of national values into the younger generation through customs, the *chimildiq* remained unbetrayed.

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