THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTRAYAL OF THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW IN ERKIN XUSHVAQTOV'S PLAY "SIZSIZ O'TMAS KUNLARIM"

Mamadaliyeva Gulnavozxon Dilshod qizi
PhD Student, Namangan State University
Email: gulnavozhan@gmail.com
Phone: +998 97 572 17 71

Abstract: This article examines Iroda, a character in Erkin Xushvaqtov's play "Sizsiz o'tmas kunlarim," at the intersection of her role as a daughter-in-law, family duty, and personal emotional needs. It demonstrates how the circumstances surrounding childlessness and Ismoil's second marriage transform an external family problem into an internal psychological conflict. Iroda's patience, jealousy, loyalty, and self-sacrifice are interpreted as complex emotional responses that emerge under pressure rather than as a fixed set of character traits. The article argues that the playwright portrays the daughter-in-law not merely as a bearer of tradition or a figure performing prescribed family duties, but as a dramatic individual who recognizes her own feelings and experiences the consequences of moral choices.

Keywords: Erkin Xushvaqtov, Uzbek drama, portrayal of the daughter-in-law, Iroda, psychological conflict, character, national ethical values, female psychology.

Introduction: In Uzbek drama, the daughter-in-law is often portrayed in relation to the expectations of the family and the wider community. In contemporary plays, however, the artistic function of this figure extends beyond the representation of everyday customs: her inner experiences reveal how family norms affect individual lives. "Sizsiz o'tmas kunlarim" is particularly significant in this respect. As Iroda, the central character, strives to preserve her family and her love for her husband, childlessness and the prospect of a second marriage compel her to reconsider her position within the family and her emotional security (Xushvaqtov, 2013, pp. 207–239).

Research Approach and the Formulation of Conflict

This article aims to identify how Iroda develops into a psychologically distinct character, demonstrate how dramatic conflict moves from an external family situation into her inner world, and explain the artistic functions of culturally rooted ethical concepts. The study employs close reading, character analysis, and structural-poetic analysis. The play is examined using the text published in Erkin Xushvaqtov's 2013 collection "Chimildiq: pyesalar," while secondary sources provide analytical frameworks.

Izzat Sulton associates conflict with the contradictions of life that drive the plot of a dramatic work, as well as with the struggle between characters and opposing views (Sulton, 2005, p. 110). This framework helps prevent the situation in the play from being reduced to a one-dimensional opposition between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, or husband and wife. Childlessness intensifies concerns about the continuation of the family line. The older generation views the situation in terms of the family's future, while Ismoil finds himself caught between filial duty and marital fidelity. For Iroda, however, the issue involves more than the desire to have a child: a second marriage may alter both her marital status and her unique place in her husband's affections. Thus, each side of the conflict draws upon a particular value. The continuation of the family line matters, but this aspiration does not invalidate Iroda's feelings. Although Ismoil's decision arises from the family's circumstances, its consequences are not the same for everyone. The playwright's psychological approach becomes evident in his treatment of the decision not simply as an event, but through the meanings it acquires in each character's mind. The ethical complexity

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.

of the conflict emerges precisely from these differing perceptions. Haydar Muhamedaliyev emphasizes that the credibility of a dramatic character depends on an understanding of human psychology and the consistent development of internal and external conflicts (Muhamedaliyev, 2009, pp. 6, 10, 60). From this perspective, Iroda's experience is examined not as a collection of isolated emotional reactions, but as a psychological process that changes as the situation becomes more acute. The study does not impose a predetermined psychological diagnosis on the play; its conclusions are drawn from the characters' actions, their positions as expressed in dialogue, and the structure of the conflict.

The Psychological Individualization of Iroda

Iroda's status as a daughter-in-law locates her within a network of family relationships, yet the substance of her character extends beyond that role. The play resists defining her through a single label such as "a patient daughter-in-law" or "a jealous wife." She simultaneously seeks to preserve the family, protect her love for Ismoil, and have her own emotional needs acknowledged. Because these desires come into conflict, Iroda develops from a generalized social type into a psychologically distinct individual. Her willingness to compromise should not be equated with inward acceptance. She may attempt to understand the situation, but understanding does not eliminate pain. Patience therefore functions in the play not as a predetermined moral judgment, but as a stance tested over time. Initially, it appears to be a quality that helps maintain family harmony; later, unspoken desires and accumulated suffering intensify her psychological distress. This dual perspective acknowledges the value of patience while also revealing its human limits.

Iroda's jealousy likewise acquires significance beyond that of a negative personality trait. It becomes an emotional response to changes in her marital relationship and growing uncertainty about her place within it. The entry of another woman into the family transforms the abstract idea of a second marriage into an immediate emotional reality. Accepting a situation intellectually and living through it are different psychological experiences. The play's psychological credibility lies in its representation of this discrepancy: accepting a particular view does not enable the character to control every feeling that follows from it.

For the same reason, Iroda's loyalty cannot be interpreted in a one-sided manner. While remaining attached to her husband and family, she suffers from the possibility that her pain will go unrecognized. Her strength emerges through her simultaneous experience of conflicting emotions. Viewed through Muhamedaliyev's account of internal conflict and character development, Iroda's changing reactions give her psychological depth (Muhamedaliyev, 2009, p. 60).

The Daughter-in-Law's Role and Culturally Rooted Ethical Expectations

Understanding Iroda's inner conflict requires attention to the cultural meaning of her status as a daughter-in-law. This role brings together expectations concerning entry into the family, relations with the older generation, household harmony, and mutual responsibility. The play, however, does not present these concepts merely as ethnographic decoration. They become criteria governing the characters' decisions and conduct, thereby shaping the dramatic situation. Tursunova emphasizes that folklore and traditional cultural material are reworked to serve new artistic functions in contemporary drama (Tursunova, 2020, pp. 5–10). This approach makes it possible to understand the play's family values as cultural codes that actively shape its dramatic structure. At the same time, "national ethical values" should not be treated as an unchanging set of rules understood identically by every character. The importance attached to the continuation of the family line may represent the household's future for the older generation; for Iroda, it is associated with the possibility that her marriage will be reorganized. The same value produces different emotional responses in different characters. By exposing this divergence,

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.

the playwright turns the national cultural setting into a source of internal psychological conflict. Tradition in the play is therefore more than an external demand: it is a complex ethical experience that the protagonist herself acknowledges, even as it causes her pain. Iroda's inner struggle does not amount to a simple choice between resisting the family's interests and submitting to them. She values the family, yet if the demand to "endure for the sake of the family" continues indefinitely, the question of how her feelings and dignity can be protected remains unresolved.

At this point, the play neither rejects patience and self-sacrifice nor presents them as absolute standards. Psychological suffering arises not from ethical values themselves, but from what their application demands of one individual in a particular situation and from the failure to acknowledge the consequences of those demands. This also explains the dramatic function of the family setting: it is a space in which private life and social expectations are inseparable. The daughter-in-law experiences her relationships not solely within the marital bond, but also in connection with the opinions of her elders and the family's future. These multiple layers prevent the conflict from being explained through the blame assigned to a single character. Psychological pressure arises from the system of relationships; accordingly, Iroda's tragic predicament cannot be attributed solely to individual weakness.

Internal Conflict and Dramatic Form

The relationship between external events and internal responses is central to the development of the play's conflict. Although childlessness and the question of a second marriage provide the visible causes of the plot, the principal psychological movement occurs through changes in the meaning Iroda assigns to the situation. Initially, she may retain the hope that compromise is possible; as the circumstances become part of everyday life, jealousy, anxiety, and a sense of loss intensify. Dramatic tension thus grows through the cumulative effect of external circumstances on the protagonist's consciousness (Xushvaqtov, 2013, pp. 207–239). In drama, psychological meaning is not conveyed exclusively through extended monologues. A character's choice of words, avoidance of an answer, silence, or changing relationships can also reveal an inner state. Izzat Sulton observes that the ideological and aesthetic significance of a stage work is expressed through its characters' speech and actions (Sulton, 2005, pp. 187–188). Following this theoretical principle, Iroda's inner world should be analyzed in conjunction with her stage actions. The analysis focuses on interpreting emotions arising from the existing dramatic situation rather than speculating about psychological details that the text does not explicitly provide.

The play's tragic trajectory complicates its artistic evaluation of patience and self-sacrifice. The protagonist's conduct may deserve respect, yet this does not alleviate her suffering. If family equilibrium is maintained only through Iroda's silence and the suppression of her own needs, the human cost of that equilibrium becomes open to question. The play's critical force lies in bringing tradition into contact with human psychology and revealing the cost of moral decisions. Similarly, reducing the relationship between Ismoil, Iroda, and Farida to a rivalry between two women narrows the meaning of the work. Such a reading oversimplifies each character's position within the family situation. The psychological focus is the tension between the collective demand for family stability and the individual's emotional integrity. Interpersonal relationships give this contradiction a visible stage form, while Iroda's internal conflict reveals its human consequences. Psychological individualization thus emerges through three factors: the movement of conflict from external circumstances into inner experience, the coexistence of contradictory emotions within a single character, and the representation of how culturally rooted ethical norms affect an individual's fate. This model allows Iroda to be understood as an autonomous dramatic character who feels the pressure of decisions and expectations, as well as a woman occupying the role of a daughter-in-law.

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.

Results and Discussion

The analysis identifies three interconnected layers of psychological development in the play. First, childlessness is introduced as a family problem. Second, the prospect of a second marriage redefines the ethical relationships among the characters. Finally, the conflict continues within Iroda's inner experience. These layers form a dramatic progression connected by cause and effect rather than a series of separate episodes. The work can therefore be read as a psychological drama that explores the clash between family norms and personal feelings.

Conclusion

In "Sizsiz o'tmas kunlarim," Iroda's character takes shape at the intersection of her social status as a daughter-in-law and her individual psychological world. The circumstances surrounding childlessness and a second marriage develop from an external family problem into an internal conflict involving loyalty, love, jealousy, patience, and personal dignity. Iroda's qualities are revealed as experiences that acquire new meanings under increasing pressure rather than as uniform and unchanging traits. The analysis demonstrates that the playwright develops the daughter-in-law beyond a conventional type defined by the fulfillment of traditional expectations. Iroda is a complex individual who values her family but cannot accept without suffering the processes unfolding in its name. Culturally rooted ethical values serve as more than a decorative background: they shape the logic of decisions and relationships while being tested against the human consequences of their demands. The play's artistic achievement thus lies in developing the daughter-in-law from a figure defined by an external social function into a psychologically distinct character with a complex inner life.

References

1. Muhamedaliyev, H. (2009). Ssenariynavislik mahorati: San'at va madaniyat oliy o'quv yurtlari uchun darslik [The craft of screenwriting: A textbook for higher education institutions of arts and culture]. Tashkent: Musiqa.
2. Sulton, I. (2005). Adabiyot nazariyasi [Literary theory] (3rd revised and expanded ed.). Tashkent: O'qituvchi Publishing and Printing Creative House.
3. Tursunova, N. X. (2020). Hozirgi o'zbek dramaturgiyasida folklor stilizatsiyasi [Folklore stylization in contemporary Uzbek drama] [Abstract of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) dissertation in Philology]. Tashkent: Institute of Uzbek Language, Literature and Folklore.
4. Xushvaqtov, E. (2013). Sizsiz o'tmas kunlarim. In Chimildiq: pyesalar [Chimildiq: Plays] (pp. 207–239). Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom Publishing and Printing Creative House.

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.