THE REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS IN "BYGONE DAYS" BY ABDULLAH QODIRIY: FAMILY, MARRIAGE TRADITIONS, DAILY LIFE AND NATIONAL VALUES

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Annotation. This thesis explores the representation of national traditions and customs in Abdullah Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar, with special attention to family and marriage traditions, ritual practices, everyday life, and the artistic expression of national values. This study argues that the novel is not only a literary masterpiece, but also an important cultural text reflecting the moral, social, and spiritual world of the Uzbek people. Drawing on the ideas of scholars in linguoculturology and translation studies, including V.A. Maslova, V.V. Vorobev, Peter Newmark, Eugene Nida, and Mildred Larson, the article examines how culturally marked elements such as nikah, mahr, kinship roles, hospitality, and domestic customs contribute to the construction of national identity in the novel.

Keywords: O'tkan kunlar, national traditions, marriage customs, Uzbek culture, family values, linguoculturology, cultural identity

Abdullah Qodiriy's "O'tkan kunlar" occupies a special place in Uzbek literary history because it combines artistic mastery with a deep representation of the life, traditions, customs, and worldview of the Uzbek people. The novel has long been appreciated as the first major Uzbek realist novel and as a powerful depiction of love and tragedy, yet its value is also inseparable from the national cultural material embedded in it. Abdullah Qodiriy does not simply narrate events; he reconstructs a

whole cultural universe in which family honor, marriage institutions, domestic etiquette, hospitality, and religious values shape the behavior of individuals and communities. For this reason, “O‘tkan kunlar” may be approached not only as a literary text, but also as a cultural text that preserves the ethnographic, moral, and symbolic dimensions of Uzbek life.

The study of such literary texts through a linguocultural perspective is especially relevant today. As V.A. Maslova explains, linguoculturology is a discipline that studies language in close connection with culture, both synchronically and diachronically. In her view, language preserves the cultural memory of a people and reflects its worldview, mentality, and value system. This idea is highly important for the interpretation of O‘tkan kunlar, because the novel contains many culturally marked units, social rituals, and symbolic forms of communication that cannot be fully understood outside the cultural context of Uzbek life. V.V. Vorobev, who introduced the concept of the linguocultureme as a central unit of linguocultural analysis, also emphasizes that cultural meaning is encoded in words, expressions, customs, and texts. From this perspective, the marriage rituals, family relations, forms of greeting, religious terminology, and domestic practices in Qodiriy’s novel may all be regarded as linguoculturemes because they reflect specific aspects of Uzbek cultural consciousness.

The relevance of this topic is further supported by translation studies. Peter Newmark notes that one of the most difficult aspects of translation is the rendering of culture-specific items, since such units often carry meanings that are deeply rooted in the source culture and have no full equivalents in the target language. This observation is directly applicable to O‘tkan kunlar, where terms such as nikah, mahr, yanga, domla, and salovat embody not only denotative meaning but also social, religious, and emotional associations. Eugene Nida similarly argues that translation is not only the transfer of words, but the transfer of cultural meaning, while Mildred Larson stresses

that genuine equivalence requires the translator to understand the conceptual world behind the lexical item. These theoretical positions help explain why Qodiriy's novel is so important for the study of national customs and also why such

customs become a challenge in translation. Therefore, this article aims to analyze how national traditions and customs are represented in O'tkan kunlar through the depiction of family and marriage traditions, rituals and daily life, and the artistic expression of national values. This thesis also seeks to show that the observations of scholars such as Maslova, Vorobev, Newmark, Nida, Larson, Catford, and Proshina provide a valuable methodological basis for understanding how literary language reflects culture and how culture-specific realities are preserved in literary discourse.

One of the most important aspects of national culture represented in O'tkan kunlar is the family. In the traditional Uzbek worldview reflected in the novel, the family is not merely a private unit of emotional life; it is the central institution through which morality, social hierarchy, kinship loyalty, and national values are maintained. Qodiriy portrays the family as a moral space in which respect for elders, responsibility toward relatives, obedience, reputation, and domestic dignity are constantly negotiated. Through this representation, the novel reveals that family life in Uzbek society is inseparable from the broader structure of social order. This aspect of the novel may be understood through the ideas of cultural scholars such as Clifford Geertz, who argues that culture is a system of inherited meanings embodied in symbols through which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge and attitudes toward life. If we apply this idea to O'tkan kunlar, family customs may be seen as symbolic practices through which Uzbek society reproduces its ethical norms. Respectful forms of speech, deference to elders, the role of mothers and fathers in marital decisions, and the importance of kin approval all function as cultural signs that communicate the deeper structure of social relations. Qodiriy's narrative shows that the family is not only where people live together, but where cultural values are transmitted and tested.

At the same time, Qodiriy presents family life with psychological realism rather than idealization. He shows that family can be a site of tenderness, loyalty, and social cohesion, but it can also become a source of pressure, rivalry, and suffering. This complexity is important because it reflects what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls the hermeneutic nature of understanding: social institutions and traditions cannot be interpreted mechanically, since they contain multiple layers of historical and human meaning. In O‘tkan kunlar, family tradition is neither fully praised nor entirely condemned. Instead, Qodiriy represents it as a living force that shapes destiny, preserves order, and at times constrains human freedom.

Marriage occupies a central place in the novel as one of the most culturally rich and symbolically loaded institutions of Uzbek life. Qodiriy presents marriage not as a single event but as a multi-stage process involving kinship, consultation, ritual, religion, and public recognition. The novel demonstrates that in traditional Uzbek culture, marriage is not merely a personal choice between two individuals. It is also a social alliance, a moral contract, and a collective concern. Such an understanding of marriage corresponds to the linguocultural approach proposed by Maslova and Vorobev. In their works, customs and rituals are seen as carriers of collective cultural information. Marriage traditions in O‘tkan kunlar - from matchmaking to nikah - therefore function as cultural texts in themselves. They reveal how society understands gender roles, family continuity, material obligation, and spiritual legitimacy. Through these customs, the novel preserves the cultural logic of the society it depicts. Qodiriy’s treatment of marriage also invites reflection through translation theory. According to J.C. Catford, translation becomes especially difficult when linguistic units are tied to specific cultural contexts and cannot be replaced by straightforward lexical correspondences. In O‘tkan kunlar, marriage-related terms are precisely such units. They are embedded in Islamic law, Uzbek custom, and domestic ritual practice. Zoya Proshina similarly notes that non-equivalent words often require explanatory

translation because they reflect unique features of the source culture. This is especially relevant to terms such as nikah, mahr, and yanga, whose meanings are broader than their

closest English substitutes.

One of the most important marriage-related traditions represented in O‘tkan kunlar is the role of family mediation and matchmaking. Marriage is arranged not through individual autonomy in the modern sense, but through the participation of elders, relatives, and social intermediaries. This practice reflects a collectivist understanding of social life in which the well-being of the family and the moral suitability of the match are considered as important as the feelings of the individuals involved. The question of the bride’s consent in the nikah process is particularly significant. Qodiriy’s depiction of Kumush’s hesitant agreement reveals the tension between formal consent and social pressure. The repeated questioning by the mullah and the influence of surrounding women show that the bride’s voice is recognized in principle, yet constrained in practice.

The role of yanga is also important here. According to Mark Reese’s explanatory note, the word literally refers to a sister-in-law or the wife of an elder brother, but in the wedding context it may also be understood as a female witness, guardian of custom, and protector of traditional values. Newmark’s discussion of culture-bound terms is especially relevant here, because he argues that such words often require either transliteration or explanatory rendering. The example of *yanga* demonstrates that a national custom is often embodied not in a general concept, but in a culturally specific social role.

The nikah ceremony is one of the clearest examples of how religion and national custom are united in O‘tkan kunlar. The ceremony is not only a religious requirement but also a culturally meaningful event that defines the moral legitimacy of marriage. In the Uzbek Muslim context represented in the novel, a wedding without nikah would be

incomplete, because nikah marks the formal and spiritual establishment of the marital bond. This aspect of the novel can be better understood through the theory of "realia" developed in translation studies. L.L. Nelyubin defines realia as words and expressions that denote objects, concepts, or situations specific to one people's culture and absent in another's practical experience. Nikah clearly belongs to this category. It is more than the English word "marriage" and more specific than the word "wedding." It refers to a contract, a religious rite, and a socially recognized union. O.S. Akhmanova's distinction between the reality-word and the reality-thing is useful here as well: nikah is both a term and a real institution embedded in social life.

In the theoretical materials you provided, the scholars discussing religious realities emphasize that such terms must be translated with great care because they preserve the national spirit of the original text. This point aligns with A.V. Fedorov's argument that realities may be rendered through transliteration, descriptive translation, or approximate equivalents depending on the context. In the case of O'tkan kunlar, Carol Ermakova uses "nikokh," while Mark Reese uses "nikah," and Reese further explains it in his notes as a Muslim wedding ceremony. The difference between these strategies shows the translator's attempt to preserve both comprehensibility and cultural identity.

In literary terms, nikah in Qodiriy's novel is not merely a ritual inserted for ethnographic effect. It is dramatized through speech, hesitation, witness, obligation, and solemnity. The presence of the domla, the recitation of prayers, the formulaic acceptance, and the blessing all contribute to the emotional and symbolic density of the scene.

Another important feature of marriage tradition in O'tkan kunlar is mahr. In Islamic tradition, mahr is the gift or property given by the groom to the bride at the time of marriage. It expresses not only generosity but legal and ethical obligation.

From the perspective of linguoculturology, mahr is a culture-specific word carrying both legal and symbolic meanings. It reflects a system in which marriage is understood as a contract and in which the bride's material rights are acknowledged. Mark Reese explains mahr as "bride price," while Carol Ermakova conveys it through descriptive translation as "the property the groom should give his future wife, in full ownership." Of the two, Ermakova's version better captures the legal nuance of ownership, while Reese's gloss risks oversimplifying the concept. This difference supports Larson's argument that accurate translation requires sensitivity not just to lexical meaning but to the cultural content behind the word. In addition to marriage customs, O'tkan kunlar richly depicts daily life and everyday ritual culture. Among the most important elements of Uzbek daily culture represented in the broader materials related to the novel is the symbolism of bread, or non. Bread occupies a special place in Uzbek life and is associated with blessing, hospitality, livelihood, and respect. It appears in ordinary visits, engagement ceremonies, and family gatherings. As the explanatory dictionary of Uzbek indicates, the word non has long cultural and lexical significance, and in the Uzbek worldview even a small piece of bread deserves respect. This symbolism may be understood through Geertz's theory of culture as a system of symbols. Bread is not merely food; it is a cultural sign. Customs such as non sindirish in fatiha-tuyi demonstrate how food becomes ritualized and how daily objects become carriers of social meaning. In this custom, bread symbolizes agreement, family union, and the public recognition of future marriage. Such scenes reveal how deeply culture is embedded in material life.

Qodiriy's representation of daily life is central to the artistic power of O'tkan kunlar. National identity in the novel is expressed not only through spectacular ceremonies but also through speech etiquette, kinship interaction, neighborhood relations, domestic behavior, and religious awareness. The world of the novel is textured by everyday details that reveal how culture is lived rather than merely

declared. Maslova's view that linguoculturemes can include words, phrases, texts, speech clichés, and verbal behavior is especially useful here. In O'tkan kunlar, national identity is encoded in everyday discourse. The ways characters address one another, invoke religious expressions, observe modesty, or display respect are all part of the cultural code. Such details create authenticity and make the novel a rich source for understanding the social psychology of Uzbek life.

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