



BETWEEN REALITY AND ILLUSION: THE POETICS OF SELF-  
KNOWLEDGE IN “KO‘ZGU OLDIDAGI ODAM” AND “THE PICTURE OF  
DORIAN GRAY”

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**Annotation.** *The purpose of this paper is to compare the artistic representation of self-knowledge in the two works and to identify the literary techniques through which both writers expose the conflict between appearance and reality. The study employs comparative, descriptive, and interpretative methods, focusing on symbolism, psychological characterization, and philosophical discourse. The analysis demonstrates that both writers transform ordinary objects the mirror and the portrait into complex artistic symbols reflecting the deepest dimensions of human consciousness.*

**Keywords:** *reality, illusion, self-knowledge, comparative literature, symbolism, mirror, portrait, identity, conscience, psychological analysis, Omon Muxtor, Oscar Wilde.*

**Annotatsiya.** *Ushbu maqolaning maqsadi ikki asarda o'zlikni anglashning badiiy ifodasini qiyosiy tahlil qilish hamda har ikki adib tashqi ko'rinish va voqelik o'rtasidagi ziddiyatni yoritishda qo'llagan badiiy usullarni aniqlashdan iborat. Tadqiqotda qiyosiy, tavsifiy va interpretativ metodlardan foydalanilib, ramziylik, psixologik xarakter yaratish hamda falsafiy diskurs tahliliga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Tahlil natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, har ikki muallif oddiy predmetlar — ko'zgu va portretni inson ongining eng chuqur qatlamlarini aks ettiruvchi murakkab badiiy ramzlarga aylantiradi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *voqelik, illuziya, o'zlikni anglash, qiyosiy adabiyotshunoslik, ramziylik, ko'zgu, portret, shaxsiyat, vijdon, psixologik tahlil.*

**Аннотация.** *Цель данной статьи заключается в сравнительном анализе художественного воплощения самопознания в двух произведениях, а также в выявлении литературных приёмов, посредством которых оба автора раскрывают конфликт между внешней видимостью и реальностью. В исследовании применяются сравнительный, описательный и интерпретационный методы с акцентом на символику, психологическую характеристику персонажей и философский дискурс. Результаты анализа показывают, что оба писателя превращают обычные предметы — зеркало и портрет — в сложные художественные символы, отражающие глубочайшие измерения человеческого сознания.*

**Ключевые слова:** *реальность, иллюзия, самопознание, сравнительное литературоведение, символизм, зеркало, портрет, личность, совесть, психологический анализ.*





The problem of self-knowledge has remained one of the central philosophical and literary concerns throughout the history of world literature. Regardless of cultural background or historical period, writers have consistently explored the relationship between external appearance and inner reality, emphasizing the complexity of human identity and moral consciousness. Literature often presents symbolic objects such as mirrors, portraits, shadows, and reflections to reveal the invisible dimensions of the human soul. These artistic symbols help readers understand the psychological conflicts that arise when an individual's outward image differs from his or her inner self. Among the literary works devoted to this issue, Omon Muxtor's "Ko'zgu oldidagi odam" and Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" occupy a significant place because both investigate the tension between illusion and reality through profound symbolic imagery. Although these works belong to different literary traditions, they share a common philosophical foundation. Omon Muxtor represents contemporary Uzbek literature, where moral values, spirituality, and personal responsibility are closely connected with national identity and cultural memory.

Oscar Wilde, on the other hand, represents late Victorian English literature, in which aesthetic ideals frequently conflict with ethical principles. Despite these differences, both authors attempt to answer one fundamental question: Can a person truly know oneself while living behind illusions created by society, beauty, ambition, or personal desires? [7,30] In Omon Muxtor's "Ko'zgu oldidagi odam", the mirror is not merely a physical object but an artistic metaphor representing conscience and spiritual reflection. Whenever the protagonist confronts the mirror, he is forced to face not only his visible image but also his hidden emotions, memories, regrets, and moral dilemmas. The mirror therefore functions as an instrument of truth that cannot be manipulated by external appearances. It reveals the discrepancy between the image people create for society and the reality they conceal within themselves. Through this symbolic device, Muxtor argues that genuine self-knowledge begins only when an individual honestly accepts personal weaknesses and moral responsibilities. [1, 58] Unlike Muxtor, Oscar Wilde develops the same philosophical problem through the symbolism of a painted portrait. Dorian Gray's portrait gradually records every immoral act committed by its owner, while his own face remains extraordinarily young and beautiful. [6,29] This artistic contrast creates one of the most remarkable symbols in English literature. The portrait becomes the visible representation of the invisible soul, proving that ethical corruption cannot remain hidden forever. Although Dorian successfully deceives society through his attractive appearance, he ultimately fails to escape the judgment of his own conscience. Thus, Wilde illustrates that illusion possesses only temporary power, whereas reality inevitably reveals itself through psychological suffering and spiritual collapse.

**Comparative analysis.** A comparative reading of "Ko'zgu oldidagi odam" and "The Picture of Dorian Gray" reveals that both Omon Muxtor and Oscar Wilde regard self-knowledge as a painful yet unavoidable process. Although the protagonists live in different cultural and historical environments, they experience a similar psychological conflict between the image they present to the outside world and the reality they conceal within themselves.





[4, 122] This contradiction forms the philosophical foundation of both works and demonstrates that the search for identity is a universal human experience.

One of the most striking similarities between the two texts is the symbolic function of reflection. In Muxtor's work, the mirror acts as a silent witness to the protagonist's inner life. It neither judges nor forgives; instead, it reflects the truth that the individual often tries to ignore. The mirror encourages self-examination and reminds the protagonist that genuine freedom begins with honesty toward oneself. The psychological dialogue between the individual and the mirror gradually transforms into a dialogue between the individual and his conscience. In this respect, the mirror symbolizes moral awakening rather than physical reality. The portrait in Wilde's novel performs a comparable symbolic function but produces a different artistic effect. Unlike the mirror, which immediately reflects reality, the portrait gradually changes according to Dorian Gray's moral choices. [2, 148]

Every act of selfishness, cruelty, and hypocrisy leaves a visible mark on the painting, while the protagonist's appearance remains unchanged. This artistic contrast creates dramatic irony because readers understand the truth that other characters cannot see. Wilde therefore suggests that external beauty can deceive society, but it can never erase ethical responsibility. Another important aspect of comparison concerns the concept of illusion. In Muxtor's interpretation, illusion appears as a psychological barrier preventing individuals from recognizing their authentic identity. People often create idealized images of themselves in order to avoid confronting painful truths. However, such illusions eventually collapse because conscience continuously demands sincerity and moral accountability. The protagonist's encounter with the mirror becomes an opportunity to overcome self-deception and begin a process of spiritual renewal. Wilde presents illusion in a broader social and philosophical context. Dorian Gray becomes fascinated by the idea that youth and beauty are the highest values in life. Influenced by aesthetic ideals and the pursuit of pleasure, he gradually loses the ability to distinguish between appearance and reality. His beautiful face becomes a mask hiding moral corruption, while the portrait silently records the irreversible consequences of his actions. [3, 78] Consequently, illusion transforms from a source of satisfaction into the principal cause of tragedy. The artistic methods employed by both authors also deserve attention. Omon Muxtor relies on psychological narration, philosophical reflection, and symbolic imagery to reveal the protagonist's internal world. The narrative develops through meditation rather than dramatic action, encouraging readers to participate in the process of self-analysis. Wilde, by contrast, combines psychological realism with Gothic elements, symbolism, and aesthetic philosophy. [5, 225] His novel develops through dramatic events and conflicts, yet its central concern remains the exploration of the human soul. Despite these stylistic differences, both writers arrive at a similar philosophical conclusion. Human identity cannot be defined solely by physical appearance, social status, or public reputation. Authentic personality emerges only when individuals recognize their moral responsibilities and accept the truth about themselves. Self-knowledge therefore becomes both an ethical obligation and a spiritual achievement.





## TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G'OYALAR



The comparison also demonstrates the universal character of literary symbolism. The mirror and the portrait are not merely artistic objects but metaphors representing the relationship between the visible and the invisible, the physical and the spiritual, reality and illusion. Through these symbols, Omon Muxtor and Oscar Wilde encourage readers to reflect upon their own identities and to question the values that shape human existence. Their works remind us that every individual possesses both an external image and an internal reality, and genuine harmony is possible only when these two dimensions correspond with one another. The comparative analysis of Omon Muxtor's "Ko'zgu oldidagi odam" and Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" demonstrates that the opposition between reality and illusion serves as a fundamental artistic principle in both works.

In conclusion, Ko'zgu oldidagi odam and The Picture of Dorian Gray confirm that the search for self-knowledge is a universal human experience that transcends national and cultural boundaries. Their artistic treatment of reality and illusion enriches comparative literary studies by demonstrating how different literary traditions address similar philosophical questions through distinctive poetic forms. Therefore, these works remain highly relevant to contemporary readers, reminding us that authentic self-understanding is the foundation of both personal development and moral consciousness.

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