
Oscar Wilde's unique literary style and its interpretation by literary scholars

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Annotation *This article provides an in-depth analysis of the creative path of the renowned English writer Oscar Wilde, focusing on his distinctive literary style, artistic worldview and the interpretation of his works by leading literary scholars. Special attention is given to the concepts of the literary text and character, which serve as two core and interrelated components in Wilde's creative method. The study highlights how Wilde's pursuit of aesthetics, use of paradox, social criticism, and moral questioning shaped his artistic expression. Examples from Wilde's novels and plays demonstrate how characters function as carriers of ideological meaning and aesthetic principles. The article also reviews scholarly perspectives, including those of Richard Ellmann and Korney Chukovsky, who evaluated Wilde's life, artistic individuality, and stylistic innovations from different angles. Their interpretations emphasize Wilde's role as a paradoxical aesthete, a master of aphorism, and a critic of Victorian morality. Overall, the article explores the complex connection between Wilde's artistic ideals and the social realities that influenced his creative output.*

Keywords *Literary style, literary text, character, literature study, social criticism, paradox, aesthetics*

Особый художественный стиль Оскара Уайльда и его интерпретация литературоведами

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Аннотация *В данной статье всесторонне анализируются творческий путь известного английского писателя Оскара Уайльда, его самобытный художественный стиль и интер-претации его произведений литературоведами. Особое внимание уделяется понятиям художественного текста и персонажа, которые составляют две взаимосвязанные основы творческого метода Уайльда. Исследование показывает, как социальная критика, парадокс, эстетика и нравственные проблемы формируют уникальность его художественного выражения. На примерах из романов и пьес Уайльда демонстрируется роль персонажей как носителей идейного содержания и эстетических принципов. Также рассматриваются взгляды Ричарда Элмманна и Корнея Чуковского, которые по-разному оценивают личность Уайльда, его стиль и творческие новаторства. Эти исследования подчеркивают роль Уайльда как парадоксального эстетика, мастера афоризма и критика викторианской морали. В целом статья раскрывает сложную связь между эстетическими идеалами Уайльда и социальными реалиями его эпохи.*

Ключевые слова Художественный стиль, художественный текст, персонаж, литературоведение, социальная критика, парадокс, эстетика

Oskar Uayldning o'ziga xos badiiy uslubi va uning adabiyotshunoslar tomonidan talqin qilinishi

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Annotatsiya Ushbu maqolada taniqli ingliz yozuvchisi Oskar Uayldning ijodiy yo'li, o'ziga xos badiiy uslubi va uning asarlarining adabiyotshunoslar tomonidan talqin qilinishi har tomonlama tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda badiiy matn va personaj tushunchalari yozuvchi ijodining ikki asosiy va o'zaro bog'liq bo'lgan qismi sifatida alohida o'rin egallashi ko'rsatib beriladi. Uayld ijodida estetik, paradoks, ijtimoiy tanqid va axloqiy masalalar qanday badiiy ifoda topgani misollar orqali yoritiladi. Asarlaridagi personajlar yozuvchining g'oyaviy qarashlarini ifodalovchi asosiy vosita sifatida talqin qilinadi. Shuningdek, Richard Ellmann va Korney Chukovskiy kabi adabiyotshunoslarning Uayld shaxsiyati, ijodi, estetik qarashlari va badiiy mahorati haqidagi fikrlari tahlil qilinadi. Ularning izohlari Uayldni paradoksal estetik, aforizmlar ustasi hamda Viktoriya davri ma'naviy me'yorlarini tanqid qilgan ijodkor sifatida ko'rsatadi. Maqola Uayld ijodidagi estetik qarashlar va davrning ijtimoiy haqiqatlari o'rtasidagi murakkab munosabatni ochib beradi.

Kalit so'zlar Badiiy uslub, badiiy matn, personaj, adabiyotshunoslik, ijtimoiy tanqid, paradoks, estetika

Introduction

Every true creator has their own distinctive style of writing that allows the reader to distinguish their works from others. Oscar Wilde is one of the brightest representatives of English literature whose artistic worldview is reflected through paradox, aesthetic principles, and unique character portrayal. In each literary work, the writer's individuality, unique style, and original perception of the world are clearly felt. The literary text becomes a reflection of the author's worldview, aesthetic values, and personal stance on life. It can be said that certain elements hold a special place in a writer's creative work. Among these, the literary text and the character have a particularly important role.

As is known, a literary text is an expression of the writer's imagination, worldview, and style of artistic thinking. This text reveals its essence through various images and characters. In other words, a literary work does not describe specific events, but rather portrays life scenes through symbolic representations. The character serves as the main vehicle for conveying the author's core ideas. It is through the character that human emotions, social issues, and moral values are expressed. Without a character, a literary text remains a simple narrative and fails to deliver the necessary aesthetic impact on the reader (Jurayev, 2010).

A writer conveys their thoughts and reflections through the actions, speech, and

decisions of characters. A literary text is enriched with figurative language and stylistic devices, and the characters serve as the "bearers" of this language – they live within the work and give it aesthetic expression.

Moreover, through the characters, the reader becomes acquainted with the author's worldview, the spirit of the era, and social issues. This, in turn, lays the foundation for interaction between the reader and the author. As proof of these ideas, we can refer to one of the masterpieces of Uzbek literature – Abdulla Kodiriy's novel *"Days Gone By"*. Through the character of Otabek, the author reflects on national destiny, freedom, love, and social justice. The artistic power of the novel is also conveyed precisely through the inner world of this character (Hayitmetov, 1979).

Many scholars and linguists have proposed various theoretical ideas about literary texts. One of them is the famous linguist, theorist of poetics and semiotics, and a major contributor to the analysis of literary texts – Roman Jakobson. He considered one of the most important scholars who examined literary texts from a linguistic perspective. In his collection *"Работы по поэтике"* (*"Works on Poetics"*), Jakobson put forward several significant theoretical views regarding the nature of the literary text (Jakobson, 1987).

Jakobson's most essential idea can be summarized as follows: "The poetic function is characterized by the focus on the message for its own sake." In a literary text, it is not only what is being described those matters but also how it is described. In other words, the form of expression (word choice, sound repetition, rhythm, figurative language) constitutes the core meaning of the text (Jakobson, 1987). We can observe Jakobson's theoretical ideas even through examples from Uzbek literature: "Ko'z tegmasin, sening har bir qadaming, baland bo'lsin, baland bo'lsin – boshing!" (Vohidov, 1992). Here, the repetition "baland bo'lsin, baland bo'lsin" enhances the melody and the sense of pride. As Jakobson noted, meaning here is intensified through the repetitive form.

According to Jakobson, is not something separate from meaning; rather, it is the meaning itself. That is, "In an artistic work, form and content constitute an inseparable unity. Form is not merely a part of the content; it is the content itself." In a literary text, stylistic devices (comparison, metaphor, irony, poetic rhythm) play an active role in creating meaning. This is the essence of artistic language – it is not merely a tool for transmitting information (Jakobson, 1987).

Certainly, when a writer creates, their works embody a uniqueness that belongs specifically to that author – a certain distinctiveness, mystery, and artistic harmony. There are creators whose works can be immediately recognized by readers even when reading a particular piece or just a small fragment of it. One such writer is Oscar Wilde. His creative path is marked by variety and a distinctive personal style. Wilde's characters often embody the conflict between beauty and morality, as seen in *"The Picture of Dorian Gray"* (Wilde, 1890). Their psychological depth is revealed through the writer's use of aphorisms, symbols, and paradoxes. One of Wilde's masterpieces, *"The Picture of Dorian Gray"* offers clear proof of the ideas discussed above. In the novel, Lord Henry states: *"Beauty is a form of genius – is higher, indeed, than genius."* For Wilde, beauty is not merely external appearance but a unique way of perceiving life (Wilde, 1890).

Undoubtedly, Wilde's use of paradoxes and irony to critique society is one of the hallmarks of his literary voice. Through his creative characters, he delivers social criticism. He uses his characters to expose the hypocrisy of society. In *"The Importance of Being Earnest,"* the main character Algernon is portrayed as someone who constantly lies, yet through his lies reveals deeper truth (Wilde, 1990). In Wilde's plays, we can observe a critique of Victorian society – its hypocrisy, moral standards, and gender roles. For instance, he ironically states: "In married life three is company and two is none." (Wilde,

1990). Here, the character Algernon uses the excuse of his imaginary friend "Bunbury" to subtly suggest that a relationship between two people is insufficient, and that the presence of a third party adds excitement to life. Through this witty remark, Wilde humorously critiques the Victorian understanding of marriage and fidelity.

It is not secret that the writer criticizes the rigid and often inhumane social norms of society. As further evidence of this idea, we may refer to yet another ironic and paradoxical example from the play "The Importance of being Earnest". In it, Lady Bracknell states: "To lose one parent may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness." Through this remark, Wilde exposes the rigid and frequently dehumanizing social norms of his time. It is as if Lady Bracknell considers orphanhood to be a personal fault, which – through irony and paradox – reveals social stereotypes that contradict basic moral values. With this stylistic device, the author mocks the intolerance of aristocratic society and its tendency to judge individuals not by personal qualities but by social origin (Wilde, 1990).

The abundance of aphorisms in Wilde's writing style is another distinctive feature that sets him apart. Every page of his works contains lines that compel the reader to reflect: "I can resist everything except temptation." Taken from his play "Lady Windermere's Fan", this statement illustrates how the author blends human frailty with aesthetics in an ironic manner. Another passage from the same work reads: "Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes." Through this aphorism, Wilde uses irony and paradox to express truth in a sharp and distinctive way. According to him, people refer to the mistakes in their lives as "experience", thereby softening their true nature. Wilde consistently conveys serious themes through thoughtful humor (Wilde, 1905).

In Wilde's dramatic texts, characters often utter memorable, meaningful and frequently

humorous lines. One such example is: "Women are meant to be loved, not to be understood." This expression, taken from the author's collection of aphorisms, serves as a satirical critique of the gender relations in society, particularly the stereotypes of the Victorian era (Wilde, 2007). Wilde exposes the tendency of men to view women not as individuals to be understood but as mere aesthetic objects. The paradox of this statement lies in the fact that it functions simultaneously as a joke and as a criticism of a society that idealizes women, while also revealing the limited worldview of men.

Plays also hold an important place in Oscar Wilde's creative career. Several of his plays have been adapted into films by artists over the years. The dialogues in Wilde's plays are constructed with a distinctive satirical tone, through which the hypocrisy and moral contradictions of society are exposed. For instance, in his play "An Ideal husband", one of the main characters, Sir Robert, remarks: "Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people we personally dislike." Here, Wilde questions the moral standards of society and links them to personal interests (Wilde, 1895).

A great deal has been written about the life and work of Oscar Wilde. Scholars, literary critics, and researchers have analyzed his artistic style, his attitude toward irony, aesthetics, moral and social critique, as well as his approach to dramatic and epic works. One such researcher is Richard Ellmann, a renowned American literary critic, biographer, and writer. He holds a prominent position in 20th-century Anglo-American literary criticism.

In his groundbreaking biography titled *Oscar Wilde*, Ellmann provides a comprehensive analysis of the writer's life and work. This book is considered one of the most in-depth and mature studies of Wilde (Ellmann, 1988).

In it, Ellmann examines Wilde's childhood, his education, cultural formation, aesthetic views, and literary direction in great

detail. According to Ellmann, Wilde lived his life in two phases: first as the “carefree” individual, and then as the “victim”: “Wilde had to live his life twice over, first in slow motion, then at top speed. During the first period he was a scapegrace, during the second a scapegoat.” (Ellmann, 1988).

If we analyze this statement, the phrase “first in slow motion” refers to Wilde’s life up until the late 1880s. During this period, he created his greatest works, such as *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Lady Windermere’s Fan*; he promoted the ideas of aestheticism and decadence, became known as a “dandy” and a “witty” figure. The expression “slow motion” symbolizes his refined, sophisticated lifestyle with its own aesthetic rhythm. (Wilde, 510).

“Then at top speed” refers to the period after 1895 when Ellmann describes Wilde’s life shift. That year, Wilde was sued by the Marquess of Queensberry, convicted for immoral conduct, imprisoned, and his personal and creative life collapsed. Wilde’s life suddenly derailed, he became a social scapegoat – hence Ellmann’s description of him as a “scapegrace” (reckless youth challenging norms) and later a “scapegoat” (a victim punished by society).

Ellmann presents Wilde not only as a talented writer but also as a creator who transformed his personal life, inner conflicts, and emotional struggles into artistic expression. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Wilde’s life is a vivid artistic example of the complex struggle between individuality and broader social truths.

Russian literary scholars have also taken varied approaches to Wilde’s work. One of the most notable was Korney Chukovsky, a prominent Russian literary critic, translator, children’s author, and publicist. He paid close attention to literary aesthetics, style, and translation theory. From the early 20th century, Chukovsky analyzed major Russian and world authors, including Wilde. His essay *Oscar Wilde* became one of the first full-scale Russian works on Wilde – deep, analytical, and even

innovative. Chukovsky examined Wilde’s relationship to art, society, and life from a comprehensive perspective.

In his 1922 essay, Chukovsky labels Wilde a “paradoxical aesthete”: “Wilde is a paradoxical aesthete who laughs through tears, condemning society with exquisite sarcasm.” This phrase highlights Wilde’s aesthetic method of confronting hypocrisy (Chukovsky, 1922).

Chukovsky also regarded Wilde’s aphorisms as revolutionary instruments of his era, calling him a “master of artistic aphorism”: “His aphorisms are not textual decoration, but thought—philosophy in epigrams.” (Chukovsky, 1922). As illustration, he cites the famous line: “The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.” (Wilde, 1890).

Chukovsky places Wilde among “talents torn between personal life and creative ideals,” portraying him as a tragic hero – not a saint or martyr, but “an artist spurned by life itself”: “He was neither a saint nor a martyr. He was an artist rejected by life.” (Chukovsky, 1922). This idea illustrates how Wilde’s life came into conflict with the moral norms of society and how this ultimately led to a tragic end.

Wilde aimed to separate art from morality, and Chukovsky sees this as a “rejection of populist aesthetics.” According to Chukovsky, for Wilde, beauty was an autonomous value—art for pleasure, not instruction: “For him, art was not education, but a source of delight.” (Chukovsky, 1922).

In the final chapters, Chukovsky presents Wilde as a “talent sacrificed by society.” He refers to Wilde’s post-trial and prison years as “the collapse of an unparalleled gift.” He also reads *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* as his most profound anguished work: “He descended from the throne with a crown, but with shackles on his feet.” (Chukovsky, 1922).

Throughout, Chukovsky portrays Wilde as an artist who wielded aesthetic beauty and his “sharp tongue” and “paradoxical thinking” to critique society, using art as a vehicle for change.

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