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OPPOSITION AND IMPLICIT EVALUATION IN THE SATIRICAL POETICS OF ZAVQIY AND CHARLES DICKENS

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Abstract
This article examines how semantic opposition and implicit evaluation generate satirical meaning in the poetry of the nineteenth-century Uzbek poet Zavqiy and Charles Dickens's novel Hard Times. The comparison addresses a methodological difficulty: Zavqiy's satire is concentrated within the couplet or stanza, whereas Dickens's evaluative design develops through narration, characterization, and extended context. To avoid equating unlike genres, the study compares the function and textual location of opposition rather than the external form of the works. The material comprises representative passages built on tazod and antithesis, oxymoron, kinoya and irony. Comparative-typological, functional-stylistic, and contextual-semantic analysis shows that both writers expose a discrepancy between public claim and actual condition. In Zavqiy, contrary lexical units are commonly placed side by side and the satirical judgment is completed within a short poetic unit. In Dickens, opposition often unfolds across a sentence or narrative episode; apparently positive expressions acquire negative force through context. Oxymoron is especially productive in Hard Times because it compresses the contradiction between performed identity and moral reality into a single phrase. The findings demonstrate that the major difference lies not in the presence of opposition itself but in the placement of evaluative negation: immediate and line-bound in Zavqiy, delayed and context-dependent in Dickens. This distinction provides a workable basis for comparing satirical discourse across lyrical poetry and the Victorian novel.

Keywords: Zavqiy, Charles Dickens, Hard Times, satire, tazod, antithesis, oxymoron, irony, implicit evaluation, comparative poetics

Introduction

Satirical discourse depends on a difference between what a person, institution, or ideology claims to be and what the text reveals it to be. That difference may be stated directly through lexical opposition, condensed into an internally contradictory phrase, or left for the reader to recover from context. The present article investigates these three realizations in works that are historically comparable but generically different: the satirical poetry of Zavqiy (1853-1921) and Charles Dickens's Hard Times (1854). Both writers respond to nineteenth-century social transformation, yet their means of evaluation are shaped by distinct literary systems. Zavqiy works within an Uzbek poetic tradition in which judgment can be completed within a couplet or stanza. Dickens distributes judgment across narration, dialogue, characterization, and plot. A useful comparison must therefore

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identify a common function without erasing the formal difference between lyric satire and the novel.

Scholarship on Hard Times has established the novel's critique of utilitarian education, industrial discipline, and the reduction of human life to economic calculation. Rathee (2012) reads the novel as a radical critique of industrial capitalism. Park (2016) connects its social satire with verbal and generic hybridization, while Zhu (2020) interprets satirical distortion as a means of making an implicit norm visible. Tomaiuolo (2015) draws attention to the impurity and internal contradiction of the novel's discourse, particularly where a language that rejects imagination nevertheless depends on figurative and rhetorical expression. These studies illuminate the social and discursive force of Dickens's satire, but they do not compare its linguistic organization with the resources of Eastern classical poetics.

The theoretical vocabulary of the two traditions also creates a problem of equivalence. In Uzbek classical poetics, tazod names the deliberate juxtaposition of semantically opposed words in order to create an expressive image or scene (Hojiahmedov, 1999, p. 83). In English stylistics, antithesis is similarly based on the opposition of contrasting features, but it is distinguished from broad narrative contrast by its realization in a specific linguistic construction (Galperin, 2014, pp. 222-224). These terms are not historically identical, yet they describe comparable textual operations. Their comparison is justified when the unit of analysis is not terminology itself but the function of opposition in producing satirical evaluation.

The study asks three questions. First, how do Zavqiy and Dickens linguistically construct the discrepancy between social appearance and moral reality? Second, where is the evaluative negation located in the lexical pair, the poetic line, the sentence, or the wider narrative context? Third, how does genre affect the completion of satirical judgment? The central argument is that the two writers share an opposition-based satirical logic, while differing in evaluative placement. Zavqiy usually makes contradiction immediately visible; Dickens frequently delays its completion and requires contextual reconstruction.

Theoretical Framework

Incongruity is widely treated as a central condition of verbal humor. Raskin (1985) explains humorous discourse through the overlap and opposition of semantic scripts, and Attardo (1994) develops this semantic account into a broader linguistic theory of humor. The present study retains the principle that comic meaning involves the collision of incompatible interpretive frames, but it does not apply a joke-based script model mechanically to a novel or a complete poem. Instead, it identifies the textual signs through which a claim and its negation are brought into relation. This adjustment is necessary because literary satire does more than produce a humorous switch: it directs evaluation toward a social target.

Three related devices organize the analysis. Tazod and antithesis create explicit opposition by placing contrary units within a parallel or closely connected construction. Oxymoron condenses opposition further by combining semantically incompatible words within one grammatical phrase, commonly an adjective and a noun (Galperin, 2014, pp. 162–163). Irony operates differently: the contradiction arises between a word's lexical value and the meaning assigned to it by context

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(Galperin, 2014, pp. 146-148). Uzbek stylistic scholarship describes kinoya, piching, and kesatiq as ways in which an ironical meaning may be expressed; the explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language likewise defines irony through a meaning that reverses or denies the overt expression (Sultonsaidova & Sharipova, 2009, p. 71; Madvaliyev, 2006-2008).

The distinction between explicit and implicit opposition is analytical rather than evaluative. Explicit opposition is not automatically more satirical, nor is implicit irony necessarily milder. Satirical force depends on the target and on the direction of the authorial judgment. A positive word may perform a strongly negative function when the surrounding event disproves it; conversely, an antonymic pair may merely describe difference unless it exposes a socially meaningful discrepancy. The analysis therefore considers three connected aspects in every example: the linguistic construction of opposition, the object of evaluation, and the point at which the negative judgment becomes complete.

Materials and Methods

The primary material is drawn from Zavqiy's poems Ajab zamona, Voqeai qozi saylov, Veksel, and Hajvi ahli rasta, published in the 2003 collection Ajab zamona, and from Dickens's Hard Times. The broader dissertation corpus contains 21 couplets or 42 poetic lines by Zavqiy and 44 passages from Hard Times. For this article, passages were selected only when opposition or implicit evaluation performs a demonstrable satirical function. The selection is qualitative: the aim is not to establish the frequency of every device, but to explain how each device organizes evaluation in comparable textual situations.

The research combines comparative-typological, functional-stylistic, and contextual-semantic methods. The comparative-typological procedure identifies functionally analogous devices without claiming direct literary influence. Functional-stylistic analysis determines what the device does in relation to the satirical target. Contextual-semantic analysis tests whether the evaluative meaning is present in the lexical units themselves or produced by the surrounding episode. Genre difference is treated as an explanatory variable: the couplet, stanza, sentence, and narrative episode are compared as different scales on which evaluation may be completed.

The analysis proceeds in four stages. First, the opposed or contextually reversed units are identified. Second, their literal meanings and syntactic relation are described. Third, the public claim, social role, or apparent value is compared with the condition disclosed by the text. Finally, the point of evaluative closure is established. This procedure prevents the interpretation from resting only on a general impression of comic tone and makes the basis of comparison visible in the language of each passage.

Results and Discussion

Explicit opposition between attraction and consequence. Zavqiy's Ajab zamona presents the social attraction of credit and its destructive consequence through the lexical tazod shirin-achiq, 'sweet-bitter'. The stanza describes disrupted trade, debt, tears, and collective loss before concentrating the judgment in one contradictory experience: *Bu may shirindur-achiq, har kishi totub qoldi.* (This wine is sweet and bitter; everyone has tasted it.) Both adjectives refer to the same

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metaphorical object, the 'wine' of financial dealings. Shirin encodes the initial appeal of borrowing, whereas achiq names its experienced result. The surrounding vocabulary - *qarz* 'debt', *ashk* 'tears', and the image of inactive markets - anchors the contrast in economic damage. The opposition does not require a later narrative correction: the promise and its negation occupy the same poetic line. The satirical judgment is therefore immediate and collective, since 'everyone' is represented as having tasted the same bitter result (Zavqiy, 2003, p. 140).

Dickens also uses explicit antonymic pairs to expose a system that remains indifferent to changing human and natural conditions. In the description of Coketown's machinery, *the 'wearisome heads' move 'at the same rate, in hot weather and cold, wet weather and dry, fair weather and foul'* (Dickens, 1854, Book II, Chapter I). The pairs hot-cold, wet-dry, and fair-foul cover opposed limits of weather, while at the same rate cancels the practical importance of every distinction. The machinery's constancy is not represented as efficiency alone. In combination with the earlier image of 'melancholy mad elephants', it becomes a satirical sign of industrial monotony.

The two passages share a structure in which contrary states are made simultaneously available. Their targets, however, differ. Zavqiy opposes the attractive surface of a new financial practice to its damaging social result. Dickens opposes the variability of the natural world to the mechanical system's unchanging rhythm. In the poem, the opposition completes a judgment within one line; in the novel, the antonymic sequence gains satirical force from the descriptive frame. Thus, explicit lexical contrast is common to both writers, but its evaluative sufficiency is genre-dependent.

Public role and moral reality. A second group of examples turns social status against moral conduct. In Voqeai qozi saylov, Zavqiy places the judge's public sermon and private intention in parallel lines:

Zohiran do'zax azobini so'zlab,	Outwardly speaking of the torments of hell,
Botinda fisq-fujur ishin ko'zlab,	Inwardly intending acts of vice,
Barakallo, ey xirqa-po'shi fosiq,	Bravo, you sinner dressed in a dervish cloak,
Va'zingizg'amu bu kor-bor loyiq.	Are such deeds worthy of your sermon?

The adverbs zohiran 'outwardly' and botinda 'inwardly' form the lexical axis of tazod. The syntactic parallelism extends the contrast from vocabulary to action: preaching punishment for sin is opposed to seeking the same sin. Barakallo, literally an expression of praise, becomes a cutting mock commendation after the contradiction has already been exposed. The phrase xirqa-po'shi fosiq, 'a sinner wearing a dervish cloak', brings the religious sign and moral corruption into immediate contact. The judge is condemned by the incompatibility of his own speech and intention rather than by an external accusation alone (Zavqiy, 2003, pp. 143-144).

Dickens constructs an analogous relation in the characterization of Slackbridge: *'He was above the mass in very little but the stage on which he stood. In many great respects he was essentially below them'* (Dickens, 1854, Book II, Chapter IV, p. 157). Above and below refer first to physical and then to moral position. Slackbridge's elevation on the platform performs leadership, whereas the

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second sentence withdraws the ethical authority implied by that position. The parallel syntax makes the reversal unmistakable: visual superiority is converted into moral inferiority.

The structural similarity is precise enough to support typological comparison. Zavqiy's *zohiran-botinda* and Dickens's *above-below* both divide performed identity from ethical substance. Yet the poetic and narrative realizations are different. Zavqiy names hypocrisy through opposed adverbs and closes the judgment with direct invective. Dickens lets the narrator recalibrate a spatial word into an ethical one. The Uzbek poem is openly accusatory; the Victorian narrative achieves the same exposure through semantic reclassification.

The same logic operates in Zavqiy's Veksel, where dushvor-oson, 'difficult-easy', does not produce alternative outcomes. Whether the official order is difficult or easy, the population has no choice but to obey. The stanza's vocabulary of regret, lament, helplessness, and loss reveals the practical consequence of the decree (Zavqiy, 2003, pp. 136–137). Dickens similarly uses a parallel quantitative antithesis in the narrator's judgment of Tom Gradgrind: *if Tom had been 'less of a whelp and more of a brother', he would have understood the betrayal involved in disclosing Louisa's private life* (Dickens, 1854, Book II, Chapter III, p. 156). Less-more organizes the contrast, while whelp-brother opposes selfish conduct to kinship responsibility. In both texts, the formal or biological role is retained in name but emptied of its ethical content.

Oxymoron and compressed contradiction in Hard Times. Oxymoron represents the highest degree of lexical compression in the selected material. Unlike antithesis, it does not distribute contrary units across parallel clauses. It forces them into one grammatical phrase. The selected Zavqiy corpus contains no independent examples that require an oxymoron classification; semantic opposition is realized through tazod or through an ironical reversal completed by the following line. Hard Times, by contrast, repeatedly joins incompatible qualities to depict identities that cannot sustain their own performance.

Bounderby's self-advertised humility is described as *'explosive humility'* (Dickens, 1854, Book I, Chapter IV, p. 21). Humility conventionally implies restraint and the absence of self-display; explosive evokes force, noise, and expansion. The adjective therefore cancels the social virtue named by the noun. Dickens does not merely say that Bounderby is not humble. The phrase reproduces the contradiction of a man who loudly performs modest origins in order to magnify himself. Satirical evaluation is built into the grammatical relation itself.

The phrase *'grown-up baby'* appears in the account of the *'leaden little books'* prepared for Coketown's children. These books mechanically reward the 'good grown-up baby' with the Savings Bank and punish the 'bad grown-up baby' with transportation (Dickens, 1854, Book I, Chapter VIII). Grown-up contradicts baby, while good–bad reduces moral experience to a rigid binary and invariably removes contingency from human development. The oxymoron exposes the didactic system's immature conception of adulthood: it addresses children through a model of the human being that is simultaneously adult in social function and infantile in moral complexity. Here oxymoron works with antithesis and repetition, a combination made possible by the space of narrative prose.

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After Bounderby's fabricated life story is exposed, the narrator *observes 'a blustering sheepishness'* upon him, *'at once extremely crestfallen and superlatively absurd'* (Dickens, 1854, Book III, Chapter IV, p. 300). Blustering denotes aggressive noise and self-assertion; sheepishness denotes embarrassed timidity. The phrase records two simultaneous states: Bounderby attempts to preserve his dominant posture while his shame discloses inner weakness. The oxymoron does not introduce an arbitrary verbal puzzle. It verbalizes the collapse of a public identity at the exact moment when that identity continues to be performed.

The absence of an equivalent category in the selected Zavqiy material should not be treated as a deficiency. It marks a difference in textual organization. Zavqiy's poetic satire usually places contrary meanings in adjacent lexical or syntactic positions and resolves evaluation rapidly. Dickens can sustain an unstable identity across narration and then compress it into an oxymoron that gathers the accumulated context. Oxymoron is therefore not simply a Western counterpart to tazod; it is one way in which the novel condenses a contradiction already developed by characterization.

Irony and the location of hidden negation. Irony shifts opposition from the relation between two overtly contrary words to the relation between expression and context. Dickens calls Bitzer *'this excellent young economist'* after explaining that the young man has asserted his mother's legal right to settlement so rigorously that she has been confined to the workhouse (Dickens, 1854, Book II, Chapter I). Excellent is lexically positive, but the consequence of Bitzer's conduct prevents literal praise. The word becomes a negative evaluation of an education that recognizes legal principle and economic calculation while excluding filial care.

The same mechanism appears when Mrs Sparsit, secretly watching Louisa in order to expose her, is called *'the amiable woman in ambuscade'* (Dickens, 1854, Book II, Chapter XI). Amiable proposes kindness and sociability; in ambuscade identifies concealment and hostile surveillance. The irony depends on the reader's knowledge of purpose. Without the episode, amiable remains praise. Within it, the positive adjective identifies the falsity of Mrs Sparsit's respectable exterior. Dickensian irony therefore expands the unit of analysis: judgment is completed not by the adjective alone but by the conflict between adjective, action, and narrative intention.

Zavqiy also uses positive religious or intellectual vocabulary in contexts that revoke its literal force. In Voqeai qozi saylov, Mulla Kamol borrows a large sum to retain judicial office, and the speaker comments:

Muncha aqcha olib birovdan qarz, *Go'yo ul bildi qozilikni farz.*	Borrowing so much money from another, As if he considered the judgeship a sacred duty.

Farz denotes a binding religious obligation, whereas the episode represents the office as a purchasable personal interest. *Go'yo,* 'as if', signals distance between the overt formulation and the actual motive. The line therefore converts the language of duty into a mock explanation of careerism (Zavqiy, 2003, p. 142). Elsewhere, the judge is addressed as a 'pure-spoken, distinguished leader', but his subsequent sexual proposal cancels the honorific language. In Hajvi ahli rasta, *zakiytab'*,

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'quick-witted' or 'intelligent', is similarly undermined by the speaker's immediate refusal to engage with the person so described (Zavqiy, 2003, p. 103).

The mechanism is shared: a positive lexical value is denied by textual evidence. The difference lies in where that denial is placed. Dickens normally distributes the contradiction across an episode. Excellent is refuted by the workhouse consequence; amiable is refuted by the ambush. Zavqiy places the signal of non-literal meaning and its correction within the same couplet or in the immediately following line. His irony is thus closely realized through kinoya, piching, and kesatiq - forms of insinuation, mockery, and cutting remark that allow a short poem to complete evaluation without an extended plot.

Comparative implications

The findings show that opposition is not merely an ornament in either corpus. It is the structural point at which satirical judgment becomes verifiable. In Zavqiy, sweet is answered by bitter, outwardly by inwardly, and difficult by easy; the lexical pair places the claim and its failure in immediate contact. In Dickens, above is recalculated as below, brother is contradicted by whelp, and positive attributes such as excellent and amiable are invalidated by conduct. These relations direct laughter toward specific social failures: harmful financial practice, judicial hypocrisy, coercive administration, false leadership, utilitarian morality, and self-serving respectability.

The comparison also clarifies the effect of genre. The couplet and stanza favor local completion. Their restricted space makes lexical opposition and rapid reversal especially productive, because a social judgment must become legible before the poetic unit closes. The novel favors distributed completion. It can establish a public identity, test it through action, and allow a later phrase or narrative comment to expose the discrepancy. Dickens's oxymorons often function as points of condensation for contradictions prepared elsewhere in the narrative.

This does not mean that Zavqiy is exclusively explicit or Dickens exclusively implicit. Zavqiy uses mock praise and religious vocabulary whose negative force is contextual, while Dickens employs clearly marked antonymic pairs. The distinction is one of dominant textual tendency, not an absolute division. Its value lies in identifying a reproducible comparative question: where does the text place the evidence that cancels the overt claim? Asking this question allows unlike genres to be compared without reducing one tradition's terminology to the other's.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis demonstrates that Zavqiy and Dickens organize satire through a common semantic operation: the exposure of incompatibility between appearance and reality, role and conduct, promise and consequence, or lexical praise and contextual judgment. Tazod and antithesis make the incompatibility overt; oxymoron compresses it into one phrase; kinoya and irony conceal one side of it until context supplies the negation. These devices are related not because their historical terminologies are interchangeable, but because they perform a comparable evaluative function.

The principal difference concerns evaluative placement. Zavqiy's satirical judgment is usually completed within a couplet or stanza by adjacent oppositions and rapid correction. Dickens often

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distributes the same operation across narrative context, so that the reader must compare a positive expression with a character's conduct or with the consequence of an action. Oxymoron is particularly significant in Hard Times because it compresses an extended contradiction into a verbal unit such as explosive humility, grown-up baby, or blustering sheepishness.

The study therefore proposes evaluative closure as a productive basis for cross-generic comparison. Rather than asking whether an Uzbek poetic device and an English stylistic term are formally identical, analysis can ask how each text constructs opposition, identifies its target, and completes authorial judgment. This approach preserves the historical specificity of tazod, kinoya, antithesis, oxymoron, and irony while explaining their comparable role in nineteenth-century social satire.

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