1

METHOD, DEFINING SARCASM, AND THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

This chapter will begin with a discussion of method before moving on to review Pauline scholarship on irony and sarcasm. We will be in a better position to assess Pauline scholarship having first treated irony and sarcasm in their own right. The first two sections, then, will survey ancient and modern treatments of these subjects.

These surveys will make an important methodological contribution to this study by defining my approach to irony and sarcasm and by focusing the scope of the project. Beginning with ancient discussions will ground the study in terminology relevant to Paul's linguistic context, providing a theoretical vocabulary for analyzing different forms of irony, including sarcasm, in language from Paul's day. Ancient treatments of irony and sarcasm, however, are not systematic accounts of language and there is much helpful nuance to be gained from modern scholarship. The first methodological contribution of modern irony research will be in narrowing the scope of this study by defining the relationships between different forms of irony. I will define sarcasm as a subcategory of verbal irony, which is itself distinct from other forms of irony. We will then go on to discuss the major paradigms for describing verbal irony that have been significant in recent scholarship before developing a working definition of sarcasm. I will not adopt a single approach to verbal irony but will instead consider each of the modern accounts as exegetical tools that can be used to explain why a given utterance is or is not sarcastic as we move forward with the study. Our working definition of sarcasm will aim to encapsulate as much of the insights of recent scholarship as possible while still maintaining continuity with the way sarcasm was defined in the ancient world.

Although surveying ancient and modern treatments of sarcasm and irony will provide a methodological framework for analyzing instances of sarcasm in ancient Greek texts, we will continue to develop our method for detecting sarcasm and evaluating its effects

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throughout this study. Determining how ancient Greek speakers normally communicated sarcasm and what its typical rhetorical functions were will be the major tasks of Chapters 2 and 3. These findings will create a baseline for comparison when we turn to the Pauline corpus itself.

Having surveyed ancient and modern discussions of sarcasm and irony, we will be well situated to evaluate the contributions of previous Pauline scholarship. Our review will focus on dedicated studies of irony or sarcasm in Paul, establishing which scholars will serve as conversation partners in discussing specific letters of Paul, and in what capacity past scholarship on Pauline irony will be relevant for our analysis of sarcasm. The background in modern irony research provided in §1.2 will enable us to fit Pauline scholarship into a chronology of developments in irony studies. This contextualization shows scholarship on Paul to have been significantly out of date in its understanding of irony, an issue that the present chapter aims to remedy.

1.1 Ancient Discussions of Irony and Sarcasm

We begin by overviewing ancient treatments of irony (*eirōneia*, εἰρωνεία). The concept of *eirōneia* develops over time, referring to patterns of behaviour in earlier works before becoming a dedicated figure of speech or trope as we move closer to Paul's historical context. We will focus on irony as a figure of speech in greater detail, as here we find specific reference to sarcasm (*sarkasmos*, σαρκασμός) as well as other forms of irony that will play a role in this study.

1.1.1 *eirōneia* from Aristophanes to Aristotle

The meaning of *eirōneia* changes over a few generations across the earliest extant texts to employ the term. Lane argues that in Aristophanes, *eirōneia* means something like 'concealing by feigning', an act associated with deception.[1] Aristophanes' *Wasps* provides an apt illustration: when Philocleon, who is obsessed with sitting on juries, is locked in his house to prevent him from sitting on a jury, he makes several desperate attempts at escaping (*Wasps*, 110–64). At one point, he claims he needs to take his donkey to the

[1] Lane 2006, 54–56; 2010, 248; cf. Vlastos 1987, 80–81.

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market (*Wasps*, 165–173). Seeing through the scheme, one of his captors remarks to another: 'What a pretext he dangled in front of you [i.e. like bait on a hook], how cunningly deceptive' (οἵαν πρόφασιν καθῆκεν, ὡς εἰρωνικῶς, *Wasps*, 174–75 [Lane]). Here Philocleon is behaving 'with *eirōneia*' (εἰρωνικῶς) because he is attempting to hide his true motives by deceptively pretending they are otherwise, making the scene fit well with Lane's definition of *eirōneia* in Aristophanes.[2]

The description of the *eirōn* (εἴρων), the person characterized by *eirōneia*, in Theophrastus lies closer to the Aristophanic meaning of *eirōneia* as concealing by feigning than it does to Aristotle – whose definition we will discuss presently.[3] Theophrastus portrays the *eirōn* as someone who hides his real opinions and motives, 'he praises to their faces those whom he has attacked in secret, and commiserates with people he is suing if they lose their case' (*Char*. 1.2 [Rusten, LCL]). Theophrastus assesses the *eirōn* negatively, characterizing him as a non-committal coward who deceives to avoid responsibility (*Char*. 1.2–6). We also find *eirōneia* depicted as the cowardly avoidance of responsibility in Demosthenes (*Orat. 4 [Phil 1]*, 7, 37; *Ex*. 14.3).

With Aristotle, *eirōneia* comes to mean self-deprecation: 'disavowing or downplaying qualities that one actually possesses'[4] (cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1127a: ὁ δὲ εἴρων ἀνάπαλιν ἀρνεῖσθαι τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἢ ἐλλάττω ποιεῖν). Aristotle's ethical works set virtues in contrast to their corresponding vices. Aristotle depicts *eirōneia* as a vice, a deficiency in truthfulness (ἀλήθεια). Boastfulness (ἀλαζονεία) is *eirōneia*'s opposite vice, an excess compared to truthfulness:

> Ὁ δ' ἀληθὴς καὶ ἁπλοῦς, ὃν καλοῦσιν αὐθέκαστον, μέσος τοῦ εἴρωνος καὶ ἀλαζόνος· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐπὶ τὰ χείρω καθ' αὑτοῦ ψευδόμενος μὴ ἀγνοῶν εἴρων, ὁ δ' ἐπὶ τὰ βελτίω ἀλαζών
>
> The one who is truthful and straightforward, whom they call forthright, lies between the self-deprecator [*eirōn*] and the boaster. The self-deprecator is not at all ignorant of the

[2] For further discussion, and the above translation, see Lane 2006, 54–55. For other uses of *eirōneia* in Aristophanes, see *Av.* 1211; *Nub.* 449.

[3] Theophrastus' *Characters* discusses traits of character rather than character types in a literary sense (Rusten and Cunningham 1993, 12–13). The description of *eirōneia* in Theophrastus does not therefore provide evidence for the *eirōn* as a stock character in ancient Greek theatre or literature.

[4] Lane 2006, 79, cf. 77–80.

> fact that they are deceptively portraying themself as lesser than they are, while the boaster claims to be better than they are (*Eth. Eud.* 1233b–1234a; cf. 1221a).

And in *Nicomachean Ethics* (1108a):

> In respect of truth then, the middle character may be called truthful, and the observance of the mean Truthfulness; pretence in the form of exaggeration is Boastfulness, and its possessor a boaster; in the form of understatement, Self-deprecation, and its possessor the self-deprecator ([προσποίησις] ἡ δ' ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλαττον εἰρωνεία καὶ <ὁ ἔχων> εἴρων [Rackham, LCL]).

The *eirōn* therefore pretends (προσποίησις, *Eth. Nic.*1108a) to lack qualities they possess; *eirōneia* is an intentional misrepresentation (ψευδόμενος μὴ ἀγνοῶν, *Eth. Eud.* 1233b) of the truth (ἀλήθεια).[5] Aristotle's definition of *eirōneia* goes on to replace the earlier meaning of the term attested in Aristophanes, and influence how later writers would read Plato.[6]

This Aristotelean definition of *eirōneia* does not apply to Philocleon in Aristophanes, whom we discussed above. Philocleon does not downplay the truth about himself or his personal qualities but engages in concealing by feigning to trick his captors into believing he has completely different motives than those he has.

While *eirōneia* is portrayed predominately as a negative quality in Aristotle (see also *Rh.* 1382b; *Physiognomica*, 808a) – as it was in Aristophanes, Theophrastus, and Demosthenes – it receives some concession due to association with Socrates. Aristotle admits that self-deprecation is better than boastfulness (ἀλαζονεία), especially when done tastefully – as he considers Socrates to have done (*Eth. Nic.* 1127a–b).

The use of *eirōneia* in Plato, and with respect to Plato's Socrates, is a matter of debate. As in Aristophanes, *eirōneia* remains a negative quality; when the term is applied to Socrates, it is used as an insult,[7]

[5] The initial definition of *eirōneia* in Theophrastus corresponds to Aristotle's definition: '*eirōneia*, in a nutshell, would seem to consist of pretending that one's deeds and words are worse than they are' (ἡ μὲν οὖν εἰρωνεία δόξειεν ἂν εἶναι, ὡς τύπῳ λαβεῖν, προσποίησις ἐπὶ χεῖρον πράξεων καὶ λόγων, *Char.* 1.1). This clashes with Theophrastus's own description of *eirōneia* (*Char.* 1.2–6, see p.11), and is probably a later addition dependent on Aristotle (Rusten and Cunningham 1993, 50n.1).

[6] See Lane 2010, 239–41.

[7] *Grg.* 489e; see Vlastos 1987, 82.

and as an accusation.[8] Lane argues that the Platonic references still carry the Aristophanic meaning,[9] whereas Vlastos sees something closer to Aristotle.[10]

At the very least, because the term *eirōneia* in Plato is used against Socrates rather than by or in support of Socrates, interpreters should not assume *a priori* that Plato means to associate Socrates with *eirōneia*.[11] Plato's Socrates is certainly accused of using *eirōneia*, but the exegetical question remains whether Plato portrays this accusation as valid. The use of the term 'Socratic irony' to describe Socrates' method of teaching or philosophical discussion also becomes problematic, insofar as it does not coincide with either the Aristophanic or Aristotelean definitions of *eirōneia* and should not be conflated therewith.[12]

We have now, agreeing with Lane, witnessed a development in *eirōneia*'s meaning from concealing by feigning in Aristophanes to self-deprecation in Aristotle. Much more could be said about early references to *eirōneia* and the behaviour of the *eirōn*, especially as they relate to Socrates in Plato. However, what is important to recognize for this study is that, despite common terminology, there is no necessary relationship between *eirōneia* as described from Aristophanes to Aristotle and the use of *eirōneia* as a figure of speech that we see in the later rhetoricians and grammarians. Because, as we shall see, sarcasm belongs to this second category of *eirōneia* as a figure of speech, it too should not be conflated with the use of the term *eirōneia* in early texts. Paul's use of sarcasm does not characterize him as an *eirōn* as described in Theophrastus or Aristotle. It does not set him in the tradition of Plato's Socrates, nor does it have anything to do with the modern literary construct 'Socratic irony'.

1.1.2 Sarcasm and Irony as Tropes: the Rhetoricians and Grammarians

We shall focus our treatment of *eirōneia* and sarcasm (*sarkasmos*, σαρκασμός) as tropes on the timeframe most relevant to Paul – the

[8] *Ap*. 37e–38a; *Resp*. 337a; *Symp*. 215a–222c.
[9] Lane 2006, 49–80; 2010, 247–49.
[10] Although he frames it in different terms (see Vlastos 1987, 87–95).
[11] Contra Nanos, who considers Plato to associate *eirōneia* with Socrates, and who considers this association positive (Nanos 2002, 35; cf. Forbes 1986, 10).
[12] For a strong critique of the concept of 'Socratic irony' as applied to Plato's Socrates, see Lane 2010, 237–57.

first century BCE to the second century CE.[13] By this time *eirōneia* has lost many of its negative connotations, largely thanks to association with Socrates.[14] Its meaning has also changed again. As we shall see, *eirōneia* discussed as a trope is distinct from the behaviour of the *eirōn* as defined from Aristophanes to Aristotle. Ancient treatments of irony as a figure of speech will be an important starting point for this project, because of how these texts associate irony with *sarkasmos*. Synthesizing these grammatical and rhetorical discussions of sarcasm reveals three significant patterns in how ancient authors go about defining it in relation to irony and other rhetorical techniques.[15]

The first pattern lies in how ancient authors connect sarcasm to other rhetorical techniques. Dating from as early as the first century BCE, the two grammars attributed to Tryphon contain the earliest extant treatments of *sarkasmos*.[16] Although neither of the Tryphonic grammars provide systematic taxonomies of tropes, there remains a clear connection between irony, sarcasm, and other comparable speech acts in these texts. Both group sarcasm and irony together along with a constellation of related terms such as self-deprecating irony (*asteismos*, ἀστεϊσμός), negation (*antiphrasis*, ἀντίφρασις), mockery (*myktērismos*, μυκτηρισμός), wit (*charientismos*, χαριεντισμός), and derision (*epikertomēsis*, ἐπικερτόμησις,[17] see Tryphon, *Trop.* 19–24; [Greg. Cor.][18] *Trop*. p). We may take this cluster of tropes as significant.

[13] Here I use 'trope' to refer to a constellation of terms employed by the rhetors and grammarians in describing sarcasm as a figure of speech (e.g. τρόπος, φράσις, λόγος). The differences in classification between these terms are slight and will not be a focus of this study. Quintilian also discusses *eirōneia* as a figure (*figura*), which differs from its use as a trope and which he connects to Socrates (*Inst*. 9.2.44–48). Quintilian's reception of Plato and Aristotle here certainly warrants further study. However, in this section we focus on irony as a trope, which provides the best inroad for investigating sarcasm.

[14] See Holland 2000, 87–90; Vlastos 1987, 84–85. Cf. Cicero, *De or*. 2.269–71.

[15] I begin to translate *eirōneia* and *sarkasmos* as 'irony' and 'sarcasm' here in recognition of the fact that in the rhetoricians and grammarians these terms start to coincide with what we in modern English refer to as irony and sarcasm; we will disambiguate modern constructions of irony in §1.2.1. To translate *eirōneia* as 'irony' in the early texts discussed throughout §1.1.1 would be misleading (cf. Lane 2006, 49).

[16] For discussion of the texts' dates and relationship to one another, see West 1965, 230–33, 235.

[17] See Chapter 3, n.90.

[18] The second Tryphonic grammar was originally (and erroneously) ascribed to Gregory of Corinth (see West 1965, 230–31).

These connections are even clearer in other treatments. Writing in the second century CE,[19] Alexander Numenius states, 'There are four sorts of irony: *asteismos*, *myktērismos*, *sarkasmos*, and *chleuasmos* (χλευασμός)'[20] (*Fig*. 18; cf. [Plutarch] *Vit. Hom*.II 706–8, 716–17, 721–22; Herodian, *Fig. Epitome* 16–17; Rhetorica Anonyma, *Trop*. 20).[21] Quintilian applies a multi-layered hierarchy, considering irony (*ironia*/*illusio*) a subcategory of allegory (*allegoria*/*inversio*)[22] and listing sarcasm[23] and related terms as species of irony (Quintilian, *Inst*. 8.6.44, 54, 57 [Butler, LCL]). The figure below summarizes how different authors draw connections between irony, sarcasm, and other tropes.

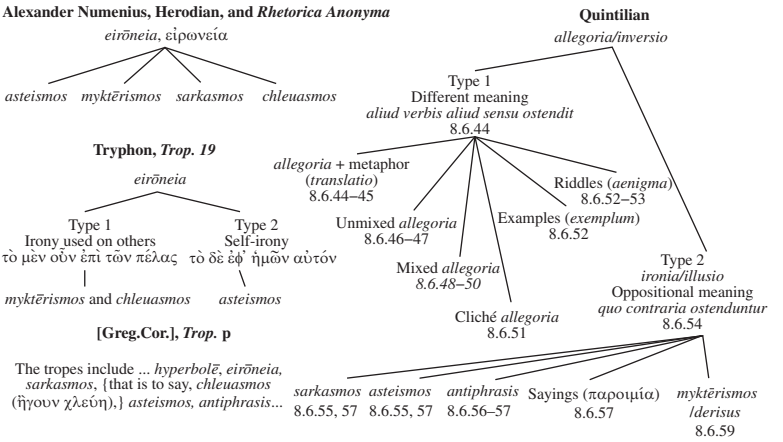

Figure 1 Categorization of tropes/figures of speech. Note that, in contrast to Alexander Numenius (*Fig*. 18), Herodian and Rhetorica Anonyma list irony's subtypes in the following order: *chleuasmos, myktērismos, sarkasmos, asteismos* (Herodian, *Fig. Epitome* 16–17; Rhetorica Anonyma, *Trop*. 20).

[19] Schmitz 1873, 1:123.

[20] Another form of mockery.

[21] Here Tryphon is less systematic, but still differentiates between self-irony (*asteismos*) and irony used on others (*myktērismos* and *chleuasmos*, Tryphon, *Trop.* 19, see Figure 1). The fact that Tryphon does not go on to define *chleuasmos*, but instead describes sarcasm (*Trop.* 20) may indicate that Tryphon sees *sarkasmos* and *chleuasmos* as basically synonymous (cf. n.26).

[22] Allegory here means a disjunction between the literal meaning of the words used and their intended meaning (*Inst*. 8.6.44; cf. Figure 1). It should not be confused with the modern English meaning of allegory.

[23] Which Quintilian leaves in Greek.

The close relationship between sarcasm and irony plays out in their definitions as well. In *De Tropis*, Tryphon, or someone writing in his name, defines irony as follows: 'Irony is a stylistic device that uses what is expressed literally to hint at an oppositional meaning, with pretence' (Εἰρωνεία ἐστι φράσις τοῖς ῥητῶς λεγο<μένοις αἰνιττο>μένη τοὐναντίον μεθ' ὑποκρίσεως, [Greg. Cor.] *Trop.* 15). Tryphon's definitions of sarcasm and irony here differ by only two Greek words. While irony is delivered 'with pretence' (μεθ' ὑποκρίσεως), sarcasm is spoken 'with mockery (*chleuasmos*)' (μετὰ χλευασμοῦ, [Greg. Cor.] *Trop*. 15–16). It is best to view this difference as additive. It is not that Tryphon considers sarcasm to lack pretence, but to communicate mockery in addition to pretence (ὑπόκρισις).[24] The expression of oppositional sentiment lies at the heart of other ancient definitions of irony and sarcasm as well (see [Plutarch] *Vit. Hom.*II 699–700, 716–7; Rhet. Anon. *Trop*. 20, 23).

It is important that we do not read Tryphon's 'oppositional meaning' (τοὐναντίον) too literally, as I have sought to do by avoiding the more restrictive translation 'the opposite'. The interpreter should not impose an unnecessary degree of rigidity on ancient definitions, which are brief and functional rather than systematic investigations into the nature of communication. Where we find more elaborated discussion in ancient authors, the focus is on the communication of affect rather than on strict semantic opposition. In Quintilian, sarcasm requires nothing more than 'censur[ing] with counterfeited praise' (*laudis adsimulatione detrahere*) or 'disguis[ing] bitter taunts in gentle words' (*tristia dicamus mollioribus verbis*, *Inst*. 8.6.55, 57, respectively [Butler, LCL]). This is a contrast in affect or evaluation – praise versus dispraise – not necessarily a difference in semantic meaning or contradiction in a matter of fact (cf. §1.2.2). Likewise, in Rhetorica Anonyma sarcasm 'expresses dishonour through kind words' (διὰ χρηστῶν ῥημάτων τὴν ἀτιμίαν ἐμφαίνων, *Trop*. 23).[25] Such sentiments are certainly oppositional to the literal message, but not necessarily its opposite.

[24] Consider the examples of irony and sarcasm in [Greg. Cor.] *Trop*. 15–16, which differ primarily in terms of the degree of mockery they express – the sarcastic being the greater – rather than in the presence of pretence (cf. Homer, *Od.* 17.397–408, 22.170–200).

[25] Cf. Phrynichus, *Praeparatio Sophistica*, A, concerning the expressions 'the noblest thief' (ἀριστος κλέπτειν), 'the noblest adulterer' (ἄριστος μοιχεύειν), and others like them: 'with the trope "sarcasm" such persons are praised in order to emphasize their wrongdoing' (σαρκασμοῦ τρόπῳ ἐπήνηται εἰς ὑπερβολὴν τοῦ κακοῦ).

The second significant pattern in ancient treatments of sarcasm is the way the grammarians connect it to different forms of mockery. We have already seen that in Tryphon sarcasm is expressed 'with mockery (*chleuasmos*)' (μετὰ χλευασμοῦ).[26] The overlap between sarcasm and different forms of mockery is most pronounced in the second-century grammar attributed to Herodian. While his definitions of the first three subcategories (εἴδη) of irony, *chleuasmos*, *myktērismos*, and *sarkasmos*, are quite distinct, the examples illustrating each term are similar. *chleuasmos* occurs, 'when laughing at the cowardly we might say, "what a manly soldier!"' *myktērismos*: 'What a deed you have done, friend, and a necessary one at that, that is, for so clever a man as yourself.' Both of these examples fit perfectly with the way Herodian defines sarcasm:

> Σαρκασμὸς δέ ἐστι λόγος τὴν ἀλήθειαν διὰ χρηστῶν ῥημάτων ἐμφαίνων, ὡς ὅταν τὸν ἐν προ<σ>λήψει τιμῆς κακοῖς περιπεσόντα καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀτιμαζόμενον ἐγγελῶντες εἴπωμεν 'εἰς μεγάλην δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἤγαγες σεαυτὸν, ἑταῖρε'.
>
> Sarcasm is an utterance that expresses the truth[27] through kind words, such as we might say while laughing at the person who in accepting an honour has fallen into wicked deeds and because of this is dishonoured: 'you, my friend, have won much glory and honour for yourself! (*Fig. Epit.* 16–17).

With the examples of three of Herodian's four species of irony fitting sarcasm's definition, a study of sarcasm has little to gain from trying to disentangle semantically these clearly overlapping speech acts. Instead, it will be sufficient to note that any given example of ancient Greek sarcasm could potentially be conceived of as an instance of *chleuasmos* or *myktērismos*. For our purposes, this is of no concern so long as it is also sarcastic. Ultimately, if we can take Herodian's word for it, the key difference between sarcasm and these other forms of mockery is a matter of delivery, that is, a distinction in the non-linguistic signals that accompany a given utterance.

[26] Cf. the gloss in Tryphon's list of tropes ([Greg. Cor.] *Trop.* p; Figure 1, p.15): 'sarcasm, {that is to say, *chleuasmos*}' (σαρκασμός, {ἤγουν χλεύη}).

[27] Rhetorica Anonyma's treatment of irony is so close to that of (Pseudo-) Herodian's that some sort of literary dependence must be the case. Here, Rhet. Anon. *Trop.* 23 has 'dishonour (ἀτιμίαν, cited p.16) instead of 'the truth' (ἀλήθειαν). This is probably a correction of Herodian, and not an unreasonable one.

We shall return to the issue of delivery presently; however, we must first concern ourselves with Herodian's fourth form of irony, which is simultaneously very like and unlike sarcasm. This last irony-type is *asteismos*, a speech act that we will encounter in Lucian, and that will play a significant role in our discussion of Second Corinthians.

In the Tryphonic tradition, *asteismos* is a self-deprecating form of irony (Ἀστεϊσμός ἐστι λόγος ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ διασυρτικὸς γενόμενος, Tryphon, *Trop.* 24),[28] 'a stylistic device that tactfully indicates something positive through words expressing oppositional meaning' (ἀστεϊσμός ἐστι φράσις διὰ τῶν ἐναντίων τὸ κρεῖττον ἠθικῶς ἐμφαίνουσα, [Greg. Cor.] *Trop*. 17). Classic examples include when 'someone who is rich says, "I myself am the poorest of all men," and the wrestler who defeats all his opponents claims to have lost to everybody.' (Tryphon, *Trop*. 24). Quintilian cites a more defensive example from Cicero, who employs *asteismos* to dismiss the accusations of others: 'We are seen as such typical "orators", since we've always imposed ourselves on the people' (*oratores visi sumus et populo imposuimus*, *Inst*. 8.6.55; cf. Cicero, *Letter Fragments*, 7.10).

asteismos is sarcasm's mirror image; instead of ironic praise used to mock another party, we have self-mocking irony for the sake of self-praise.[29] Resultantly, Quintilian requires only the words *et contra* to separate his examples of sarcasm and *asteismos* (*Inst*. 8.6.55).[30] While *asteismos* so conceived is similar to Aristotle's interpretation of *eirōneia* as discussed in §1.1.1, there remains an important

[28] Cf. Herodian, *Fig. Epit*. 16–17.

[29] The Greeks do not appear to have a specific term for the use of irony to compliment others, although this is possible. There is a whole class of insincere comments that Haiman describes as 'affectionate insults' that function similarly to *asteismos* but are targeted at others (see 1998, 22–23; see also Bruntsch and Ruch 2017, 1–13). Saying, 'You're just constantly underachieving', to ironically compliment a student who just got a distinction well illustrates the concept.

[30] There are textual difficulties in Quintilian's definition of *asteismos*. One variant reads, 'or with respect to a good thing' (*aut bonae rei*, *Inst*. 8.6.57). Following as it does a definition of sarcasm, this would have a similar function to *et contra* in 8.6.55, indicating that *asteismos* is similar to sarcasm, but is meant to compliment rather than criticize. Another variant may associate *asteismos* with *urbanitas* (for text critical notes, see Butler 1966, 3:332n.4, 3:333n.4). Such a connection fits with the definition of *asteismos* as witty quipping in the rhetoric ascribed to Demetrius (*Eloc*. 128–130). At the same time, *urbanitas* clashes with Quintilian's example of *asteismos*, which is clearly a case of self-deprecating irony. For this project we will focus on the more particular definition of *asteismos* as a self-deprecating form of irony rather than witty comments in general.

distinction.[31] Both the *eirōn* and the *asteist* downplay some positive trait that they consider themselves to possess. However, in *asteismos* the speaker's ultimate aim is to imply something positive about themself, while the *eirōn* communicates only their own modesty. Therefore, the *eirōn* and *asteist* alike might say, 'I am a mere fool', but only the *asteist* would thereby mean to imply 'I am actually wise'.

We now turn to the third significant feature of sarcasm particular to the ancient grammars. In discussing pseudo-Herodian we have already referred to certain performative features of ancient irony. These elements of tone and delivery are represented significantly enough across the grammars to suggest their being an integral part of how the Greeks conceived of sarcasm.[32]

We have already cited one of the definitions of sarcasm attributed to Tryphon. The other reads as follows: 'Sarcasm is showing the teeth while grinning' (Σαρκασμός ἐστι μέχρι τοῦ σεσηρέναι τοὺς ὀδόντας παραφαίνειν, Tryphon, *Trop.* 20). Here there is no description of what sorts of statements qualify as sarcastic, only a facial expression. This definition juxtaposes a degree of aggression ('showing the teeth', τοὺς ὀδόντας παραφαίνειν) with the ostensible positivity of a smile (σεσηρέναι).[33] The author of the *Vitae Homeri* also includes facial expression in their definition of sarcasm,[34] which reads like a synthesis of the two definitions attributed to Tryphon: 'There is a certain kind of irony, namely sarcasm, in which someone, through words of oppositional meaning, reproaches someone else while pretending to smile' (Ἔστι δέ τι εἶδος εἰρωείας καὶ ὁ σαρκασμός, ἐπειδάν τις διὰ τῶν ἐναντίων ὀνειδίζῃ τινι μετὰ προσποιήτου μειδιάματος, [Plutarch] *Vit. Hom.*II 716–717).[35]

[31] *asteismos* differs from Aristophanic *eirōneia* insofar as the former is not an attempt at concealment.

[32] That non-linguistic features are central to communicating irony in general is clear from Quintilian: '[Irony] is made evident to the understanding either by the delivery (*pronuntiatione*), the character of the speaker (*persona*) or the nature of the subject (*rei natura*)' (*Inst.* 8.6.54). Here *pronuntiatione* would be entirely a matter of how the ironic statement is performed. *Persona* could involve elements of both content and delivery; the speaker may characterize themself through words, gestures, tone, etc. *Rei natura* would function as a signal of irony in both written and spoken contexts.

[33] See Pawlak 2019, 551n.11. On sardonic smiling in ancient texts, see Lateiner 1995, 193–95; Halliwell 2008, 8–9, 93; Beard 2014, 73.

[34] For discussion and provenance, see Keaney and Lamberton 1996, 2, 7–10, 45–53.

[35] Interestingly, over a thousand years later, Rockwell found mouth movement to be significant for the expression of sarcasm (see 2001, 47–50).

In Herodian, the difference between sarcasm, *chleuasmos* (χλευασμός), and *myktērismos* (μυκτηρισμός) seems to be entirely a matter of delivery. Here we find *chleuasmos* delivered with insincere smiling (μειδιασμοῦ προ{σ}φερόμενος) and while laughing at the victim of a comment (ἐγγελῶντες). Sarcasm, too, is delivered with laughter directed at its target (ἐγγελῶντες, Herodian, *Fig. Epit*. 16–17). As for *myktērismos*, it involves the movement of the nostrils and something like a derisive snort (μετὰ τῆς τῶν ῥινῶν ἐπιμύξεως … πνεῦμα διὰ τῶν ῥινῶν συνεκφέροντες, Herodian, *Fig. Epit*. 16–17).[36]

Although nonverbal cues cannot help us exegete sarcasm millennia after the fact, these descriptions of a typical sarcastic facial expression reinforce the major features of how the ancient Greeks conceptualize sarcasm. The presence of an artificial smile concealing a look of hostility emphasizes the way sarcasm communicates a message oppositional to its literal appearance and the importance of pretence within that process. This pretence must be transparent enough to communicate the sarcast's negative message clearly, because the sarcast's ultimate aim is to express mockery, *chleuasmos* more specifically, as they laugh at (ἐγγελῶντες) the victim of their barb.

1.2 Modern Research on Verbal Irony

While ancient treatments of sarcasm and irony are an important starting point, the precision of modern research will be essential for developing the approach to irony that I will adopt throughout this study. We will create a focused scope for the project by elucidating the relationships between different forms of irony, namely situational and verbal irony, and by defining sarcasm as a subtype of verbal irony. We will then survey several paradigms for understanding verbal irony in modern scholarship. Because verbal irony is the broader category compared with sarcasm, most scholarship in recent years has focused thereon. However, most results are still generalizable to sarcasm.

In this survey, we will not have space to be fully systematic, but will instead focus on the concepts that have had the largest impact on the field. I will not adopt a single approach as the methodological lens for this study. While the accounts of verbal irony surveyed are

[36] Cf. Tryphon, *Trop*. 21.

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nuanced and well-fleshed-out systems in their own right, they each have their own strengths and drawbacks. These paradigms will contribute methodologically to this study as exegetical tools: concepts that can be used to explain why a given text is an example of verbal irony. From there, it will remain to narrow our focus again from verbal irony to sarcasm by developing a working definition of sarcasm that will serve throughout the study.

1.2.1 Narrowing the Scope: from Irony to Verbal Irony to Sarcasm

This section will concern itself with demonstrating the utility of treating specific forms of irony instead of attempting a single analysis of irony in general. In making this case we shall focus on the two forms of irony most discussed in recent research, verbal irony and situational irony. From there, we will go on to clarify sarcasm's relationship to irony by defining it as a subspecies of verbal irony. We will go no further than this in defining sarcasm until we have explored scholarship on verbal irony.

There are a great many phenomena described under the umbrella 'irony'. Muecke lists no less than 19 – including ironies of fate, chance, and character alongside better-known forms such as dramatic, situational, verbal, and Socratic irony.[37] Early critical studies of irony, which we will go on to designate the 'First Quest' for the nature of irony (§1.3.1), were broad in their scope, leading to generalizations from one form of irony to the next.[38] But conceptual problems arise when treating multiple forms of irony together.

The verbal/situational irony divide will be a helpful way of illustrating this issue. At present, scholarship remains divided over whether there is any significant connection between these two forms of irony. Utsumi's implicit display theory is one of the most thoroughgoing attempts at making verbal irony dependent on situational irony.[39] Utsumi argues that verbal irony arises when a speaker implicitly makes reference to an 'ironic environment' and expresses

[37] Muecke 1969, 4. Cf. Colston 2017, 19.

[38] Although Muecke is capable of making fine distinctions between different ironies, he goes on to generalize about 'the ironist' and irony's morality in ways that efface these distinctions (see ibid., 216–47; see also Kierkegaard 1966, 336–42).

[39] For other attempts at connecting verbal and situational irony, see Shelley 2001, 811–14; Colston 2017, 19–42. For scholarship on situational irony, see Shelley 2001, 775–814; Lucariello 1994, 129–44.

a negative evaluation thereof. This ironic environment consists of a situation in which the speaker's expectations at a given time have failed.[40] Utsumi illustrates his paradigm using the following example: 'a mother asked her son to clean up his messy room, but he was lost in a comic book. After a while, she discovered that his room was still messy.' She remarks, 'This room is totally clean!'[41] The mother alludes to her failed expectation (that the room should be clean), thereby communicating implicit negative evaluation.

But one can just as easily conceive of verbal irony without an ironic environment, that is, without any situational irony, as the following anecdote illustrates:

> It often rains in England. It rained yesterday. The forecast says it will rain today. Knowing these things, when I step outside into the rain, I still say, 'My, what lovely weather!'

While I suspect most interpreters would view this comment as an instance of verbal irony, even sarcasm, there is no irony in the underlying situation. My expectations have been fulfilled exactly. As such, it appears that verbal irony overlaps with situational irony in some cases, but not others.

Because there is no fundamental overlap between situational and verbal irony, it is methodologically problematic to draw conclusions about an author's use of irony in general without respecting the differences between different forms of irony.[42] Concerning the many forms of irony, Wilson writes, 'There is no reason to assume that all these phenomena work in the same way, or that we should be trying to develop a single general theory of irony *tout court* ... in other words, irony is not a natural kind.'[43] We cannot assume that two things are meaningfully related just because they share the label 'irony'. There is no *prima facie* reason why an ironic situation, such as a police station being robbed, and an ironic comment, such as saying 'How lovely!' after stubbing one's toe, should be formed by the same mechanisms or have comparable rhetorical effects when communicated. Indeed, situational irony is a matter of interpretation: situations can be construed as ironic independent of whether,

[40] Utsumi 2000, 1783–85, 1803–4.
[41] Ibid. 1779, 1783–84.
[42] This methodological issue remains even if some generic relationship or common underlying mechanism between situational and verbal irony could be demonstrated.
[43] Wilson 2006, 1725. Sperber and Wilson do, however, consider *verbal* irony a 'natural kind' (1998, 289–92).

in the case of written texts, the author considered the situation ironic. Verbal irony, however, is an act of communication from one speaker to another party.[44]

As we shall see in §1.3, failure to draw distinctions between different forms of irony has been a persistent problem in scholarship on Paul. As a corrective, this study will now narrow in scope from irony in general to verbal irony, leaving situational and other forms of irony largely behind. It remains now to briefly discuss the relationship between sarcasm and verbal irony before moving on to contemporary treatments of verbal irony.

In current scholarship, there is disagreement over sarcasm's relationship to verbal irony. Certain scholars see some but not complete overlap, arguing that sarcasm consists of intentionally hurtful utterances that can be ironic but need not be. Another perspective considers sarcasm a subtype of verbal irony. From this viewpoint, all sarcastic statements are instances of verbal irony, but not all instances of verbal irony are sarcastic.[45] In order to maintain continuity with the thrust of ancient thought, I will adopt this latter position. We have therefore left irony-in-general behind to avoid invalid generalizations between ironic comments and situations. Before moving on from verbal irony to a working definition of sarcasm, we will first explore contemporary scholarship concerning what verbal irony is and how it works.

1.2.2 Counterfactuality and Verbal Irony

English dictionaries often describe irony as 'the expression of meaning through the use of words which normally mean the opposite'.[46] This definition, which Colston terms a 'lay account' of irony,[47] has its basis in the sorts of descriptions we find among the ancient Greek rhetoricians and grammarians. But, as discussed in §1.1.2, it is important to remember that when pushed to a systematic account of verbal irony, this strict notion of opposition does not do justice to the ancient discussions, with their emphasis on pretence and on dispraise-through-praise.

[44] Cf. Haiman 1998, 20.
[45] For a review of perspectives, see Attardo 2000b, 795.
[46] E.g., Waite 2013, 484–85.
[47] Colston 2019, 112–13.

Although earlier modern treatises on irony are more nuanced than such dictionary definitions, they still conceive of irony semantically, that is, in terms of meaning. For Booth, the detection of verbal irony[48] begins with 'reject[ing] the literal meaning' of a statement.[49] However, this semantic account of irony, the idea that verbal irony consists of saying the opposite of or something conflicting with what one means, has been largely abandoned since the late 1970s (see §1.3.2).[50]

The first significant flaw with the semantic approach is worth illustrating with a short parable, as it will become essential to our exegesis of sarcasm in Paul later on:

> An undergraduate sits in lectures. As the talk carries on, she finds herself next to a student who treats the professor's questions like a game of University Challenge, chirping quick answers and dominating the conversation. In a moment of irritation at the end of class, she mutters, perhaps a little too loudly, 'My, aren't you clever!'[51]

This example, henceforth The Parable of the Disgruntled Undergraduate, represents a clear instance of verbal irony – sarcasm more specifically.[52] Sarcastic statements of this kind constitute a major problem for traditional semantic accounts of irony, which require the expression of meaning in conflict with the literal utterance. Inexplicable by these paradigms, the above example contains a sarcastic statement that also happens to be factually true; the irritating student clearly is clever. Verbally ironic statements therefore need not be false. They may simultaneously express their literal meaning and imply more.

The second flaw with semantic approaches to verbal irony is the fact that not all ironic statements are propositional; sometimes there is no opposite meaning. Wilson illustrates this problem as follows: 'Bill is a neurotically cautious driver who keeps his petrol tank full,

[48] Booth uses the term 'stable irony', a concept that is close to, but somewhat different from, verbal irony (see Booth 1974, 1–14).

[49] Ibid, 10; see also 39–41. Cf. Muecke 1969, 23, 52–54; 1982, 40–41, 100; Kierkegaard 1966, 264–65, 272–73.

[50] For an early refutation, see Sperber and Wilson 1981, 295–96.

[51] Example adapted from Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg, and Brown 1995, 4–6; cf. Wilson 2006, 1726; Camp 2012, 596.

[52] It also fits nicely with Quintilian's 'censur[ing] with counterfeited praise' (*Inst.* 8.6.55 [Butler, LCL]).

never fails to indicate when turning and repeatedly scans the horizon for possible dangers.' The following ironic imperative (uttered by Bill's passenger), 'Don't forget to use your indicator', and the ironic question 'Do you think we should stop for petrol?' are not declarative.[53] It is therefore difficult to conceive of imperatives and questions as having opposite meanings implied through irony, even though the above examples demonstrate that they can be used ironically.[54]

Because of the problems illustrated by these examples, scholars have had to move beyond semantics in describing verbal irony. But this is not to say that opposition cannot still feature in much verbal irony. Research has demonstrated that clearly counterfactual statements are significantly more likely to be interpreted ironically than their factual counterparts.[55] Therefore, while verbal irony may not require the inversion of meaning, obvious incongruity between what is said and what is meant remains an important signal of its presence.

1.2.3 The Echoic Account

The echoic account of verbal irony was developed in the late 1970s by Sperber and Wilson.[56] This account comes out of a broader approach to linguistics known as Relevance Theory (RT).[57] RT purports that effective communication seeks to obtain maximum relevance, to generate the greatest possible 'contextual effect', while requiring a minimum of 'mental effort' to understand.[58] One may illustrate this concept using two hypothetical SBL presentations: Presenter A reads his highly esoteric paper in monotone. It quickly becomes evident that the only people in the room listening are those with strongly overlapping research areas (high contextual effect); the rest consider checking their emails to require lower mental effort. Presenter B explains her research clearly and dynamically. Even those from unrelated fields tune in thanks to the accessibility of the

[53] Wilson 2006, 1726.
[54] See Popa-Wyatt 2014, 131; cf. Sperber and Wilson 1981, 295.
[55] Kreuz and Glucksberg 1989, 382; cf. Kreuz and Roberts 1995, 27; Katz and Pexman 1997, 30–32, 36–38; Pexman, Ferretti, and Katz 2000, 202–3, 220.
[56] See 'Les ironies comme mentions' (1978). Published in English as 'Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction' (1981).
[57] RT also owes its genesis to Sperber and Wilson (see Sperber and Wilson 1986; Wilson and Sperber 2012).
[58] Wilson and Sperber 1992, 67–68.

presentation (low mental effort), and for those whose work is directly related, we have reached optimal relevance (high contextual effect, low mental effort).

Sperber and Wilson argue that all verbal irony can be described as instances of echoic mention. In contrast to *use*, where the words employed are the speaker's own, *mention* makes reference to the statements, thoughts, or expectations of others.[59] This is the difference between a child who stubs his toe and yells, 'Ow, crap!' (use) and his older brother who runs off shouting, 'Mom, mom! Matt said a bad word!' (mention). But Sperber and Wilson do not consider every instance of mention to be ironic. The echoic account defines verbal irony as instances of echoic mention implicitly referring to the speech or perspective of another party, not for the sake of conveying information (as in the above example of mention), but to express evaluation – that is, an affective response to the statement/thought mentioned.[60]

These echoes should not be thought of as citations, or even as reasonable approximations of another person's position, but can be quite loose. Sperber and Wilson use the example of a rained-out country walk where someone comments, 'What lovely weather!' If someone in the party had predicted nice weather, the ironic echo would be explicit. However, even if no such comment had been made, the quip could still refer to the general expectation that people go on walks to enjoy nice weather.[61] Irony therefore obtains relevance not by conveying reliable information about the proposition mentioned, but by expressing a speaker's feelings or perspective thereon.[62]

The echoic account is not without its critics. Haiman considers the paradigm 'restrictive',[63] and attempts have been made to demonstrate that there are cases of verbal irony that are entirely non-echoic.[64] At the same time, recourse to more indirect echoes, such

[59] See Sperber and Wilson 1981, 303–6.

[60] Sperber and Wilson 1981, 306–11; see also Wilson and Sperber 1992, 53–76; Wilson and Sperber 2012, 123–45. This perspective develops over time. Wilson and Sperber go on to replace the notion of irony as echoic mention with the broader concept of irony as a subtype of 'echoic use', itself a subtype of 'attributive use' (see 2012, 128–34).

[61] Sperber and Wilson 1981, 310.

[62] Wilson and Sperber 2012, 128–29.

[63] Haiman 1998, 25–26.

[64] Clark and Gerrig 1984, 123; Seto 1998, 239–56. For Sperber and Wilson's response, see 1998, 283–89.

as the echoing of social norms or expectations, can make the paradigm feel rather vague. As Simpson puts it,

> [T]he problem is simply that we can never know what exactly it is that [the ironist] is echoing, which means that if the echoic argument is to be sustained, then some anterior discourse event has to be invented, come hell or high water, to justify the echoic function.[65]

At some point one wonders whether the ironic echo becomes too faint to be useful.

Despite these drawbacks, the echoic account continues to exert influence within irony studies and remains useful for our purposes. Throughout this study we will encounter several instances of sarcasm that are best explained as echoic, and we will find that the explicit use of echoic mention functions as a significant indicator of sarcasm in ancient Greek texts.[66]

1.2.4 The Pretence Account

Clark's and Gerrig's pretence account of verbal irony emerges in response to the echoic paradigm and aims to resolve some of its problems. Clark and Gerrig consider verbal irony to occur when a speaker pretends to make a statement sincerely and also pretends that their audience will receive it as such. But this pretence is meant to be transparent to the speaker's actual audience, who recognize the remark as ironic.[67] They illustrate this phenomenon using a speaker who exclaims, 'See what lovely weather it is', under drizzly conditions:

> [T]he speaker is pretending to be an unseeing person … explaining to an unknowing audience how beautiful the weather is. She intends the addressee to see through the pretense … and to see that she is thereby ridiculing the sort

[65] Simpson 2003, 116.

[66] See Chapter 3, §3.1.1.3. Cf. Pawlak 2019, 549–50. The echoic account has also become the starting point for a number of spin-off paradigms – such as the echoic reminder and allusional pretence perspectives – which take it in different directions or combine its ideas with other hypotheses (see Kreuz and Glucksberg 1989, 374–86; Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg, and Brown 1995, 3–21; Attardo 2000b, 793–824; Popa-Wyatt 2014, 127–65).

[67] Clark and Gerrig 1984, 122.

> of person who would make such an exclamation . . . the sort of person who would accept it, and the exclamation itself.[68]

This articulation of the pretence account has since been revised. The multi-layered pretence that Clark and Gerrig describe above is too complex to account for what is going on when many speakers engage in verbal irony. Every ironic comment need not involve the appropriation of another persona and an address to a pretended, naïve audience.[69]

Responding to various issues and critiques, Currie streamlines the pretence perspective.[70] Currie considers verbal irony to occur when 'pretending to assert or whatever, one pretends to be a certain kind of person—a person with a restricted or otherwise defective view of the world or some part of it'.[71] This pretence can be broken down into two distinct elements, the pretending itself, and the evaluation of the ironic utterance's target represented in the 'defective outlook'.[72] Currie's revised pretence account has the advantage of not requiring a pretended address to a credulous audience, nor does it require an audience at all.[73]

At its best, the pretence account can integrate examples of verbal irony where proposed echoes are vague or that are difficult to describe as echoic at all. It also has some affinities to Sperber and Wilson's account. The use of verbal irony to express evaluation remains constant across both paradigms, while here pretence replaces the echoic mechanism.[74]

Additionally, pretending features in ancient accounts of irony and sarcasm – creating continuity between modern and ancient discussions – recall Tryphon's 'with pretence' (μεθ' ὑποκρίσεως, *Trop*. 15) and *Vitae Homeri*'s insincere smiling (μετὰ προσποιήτου μειδιάματος, [Plutarch] *Vit. Hom*.II 717; see §1.1.2).

Just as echoic irony invites us to think less in terms of semantics and more in terms of mention and evaluation, the pretence paradigm enables us to consider verbal irony in terms of sincerity versus

[68] Clark and Gerrig 1984, 122.
[69] For further criticism of the pretence account, see Sperber 1984, 130–36; Kreuz and Glucksberg 1989, 384.
[70] For Currie's interaction with the echoic paradigm, see 2006, 111–13, 122–28.
[71] Ibid. 116.
[72] Ibid. 115–19.
[73] I.e., one can be sarcastic with no one else around (Currie 2006, 114–15).
[74] For Sperber and Wilson's critique of pretence theory, including Currie's revision, see Wilson 2006, 1734–41; 2013, 48–54; Wilson and Sperber 2012, 134–45.

insincerity –a distinction that will play a significant role in interpreting ancient sarcasm, both Pauline and otherwise.

1.2.5 Constraint Satisfaction: How We Process Verbal Irony

In addition to addressing verbal irony's nature, scholarship has also devoted considerable resources to exploring the ways in which humans process verbal irony. In an early study, Booth describes the interpretation of irony as a step-by-step process – even if these steps 'are often virtually simultaneous' – beginning when one finds reason to reject the literal interpretation of an utterance.[75] Recent research has so vindicated not Booth's steps but his intuition about the rapidity and seamlessness of verbal irony recognition that we may no longer speak of irony processing as linear at all. This revised understanding of verbal irony processing is known as the parallel constraint satisfaction approach (CS). It hypothesizes that irony processing occurs early and is non-linear.

Studies have shown that the interpretation of ironic cues begins 'in the earliest moments of processing the remarks, suggesting that participants were integrating all available information as soon as it was relevant'.[76] In an eye-tracking study, subjects presented with an ironic statement and visual prompts representing ironic and literal interpretations did not show a tendency towards looking at the object representing a literal reading first.[77] Katz's research adds a temporal dimension, finding that sarcastic statements are processed rapidly, often in less than a second. This does not require consideration and rejection of the literal meaning of an utterance, but instead, 'the same processes are involved in processing for literal and sarcastic intent on-line'.[78]

Early, simultaneous processing does not mean that the interpreter never processes the literal meaning of an utterance during irony

[75] See Booth 1974, 10–13. For a more recent, linear approach to verbal irony processing, see Giora 1997, 183–202; Giora and Fein 1999, 425–33; Giora 2007, 269–79; Fein, Yeari, and Giora 2015, 1–26. We will not treat this perspective in detail. The most recent, methodologically nuanced studies support constraint satisfaction (see n.77).

[76] Pexman 2008, 287; cf. Pexman, Ferretti, and Katz 2000, 201–20.

[77] Kowatch, Whalen, and Pexman 2013, 304–13. Studies on brain activity during irony processing have also supported CS (Akimoto et al. 2017, 42–46; Spotorno et al. 2013, 1–9).

[78] Katz 2009, 88.

recognition, only that they need not go through the literal to comprehend the ironic. This point is methodologically important. CS demonstrates that we cannot limit our search for verbal irony only to instances where one is forced to reject an utterance's literal meaning. To do so ignores both what verbal irony is (§1.2.2) and how we process it. Parallel processing means using all available data to reach the most plausible of several possible interpretations.[79] Neither the literal nor the ironic reading should be given an *a priori* advantage.[80]

Therefore, if we want our method for identifying verbal irony to respect the way humans actually process it, ironic cues – the linguistic and contextual means by which speakers and authors signal irony to their audiences – become essential. Here too we have much to learn from CS.

In 2012 Campbell and Katz used sarcasm production and rating tasks to test whether certain cues theorized as essential to the nature of verbal irony were necessary to the interpretation of sarcasm.[81] These cues included some of those already discussed, such as echoic mention and pretence, in addition to others.[82] Campbell and Katz found that while each irony-signal was important and in some cases sufficient to characterize a statement as sarcastic, no single cue was necessary.[83] This means that we can create neither a linear method for interpreting ironic statements, nor a checklist of essential cues. Instead, the 'comprehension of language, in general, including non-literal and sarcastic language, involves utilizing all of the information that a person has at his or her command at any one point in time'.[84]

With the cues of verbal irony being essential to its recognition, but not fixed, it becomes important to determine what signals can tip the balance in favour of an ironic reading. While studies such as Campbell's and Katz's (above) have made significant progress with modern English, ancient Greek is largely unexplored territory.[85]

[79] See Campbell and Katz 2012, 477.
[80] Cf. Sim 2016, 118.
[81] Campbell and Katz 2012, 462–76.
[82] Ibid. 2012, 459–62.
[83] Ibid. 468–73, 476–78. This finding does not necessarily invalidate previous models of verbal irony. Just because a participant does not recognize the presence of a specific feature, pretence for example, in a sarcastic statement does not mean that this feature was not present in the first place (cf. ibid. 477).
[84] Ibid. 477.
[85] Although Minchin's work on Homer is a helpful starting point (2010a; 2010b). For further work on modern English, see Attardo 2000a, 3–20; Haiman 1990,

Therefore, one of the major tasks of Chapter 3 will be elucidating the linguistic and contextual signals of sarcasm in ancient Greek texts.

1.2.6 Sarcasm: Towards a Working Definition

Although we have presented no definitive solution to the nature of verbal irony, each of the paradigms reviewed contributes conceptual information that will be useful in identifying and exegeting specific instances of sarcasm throughout Paul's letters. Recognizing the fundamental differences between forms of irony, such as situational and verbal irony, has led us to narrow the scope of this project from irony in general to verbal irony. Surveying contemporary accounts of verbal irony has also defined the approach to verbal irony that I will be adopting throughout this study. We have seen the deficiencies of semantic accounts, which see verbal irony as inhering in meaning inversion. While counterfactuality can function as a signal of verbal irony, not all ironic statements negate or invert their literal meaning. Indeed, as we saw with CS, the literal interpretation of an utterance does not have priority over the ironic, as all relevant signals are processed simultaneously. Shifting from semantic to pragmatic approaches is an important methodological step that will impact exegesis.

Beyond arguing for the utility of pragmatic approaches over semantics, I have not taken a strong position on the validity of the echoic and pretence accounts of verbal irony. While perhaps neither paradigm provides a complete account, both mechanisms are operative in much verbal irony. Both accounts can thereby make a methodological contribution to this study by functioning as interpretive frameworks for exegeting specific examples of sarcasm in the chapters to come.

Having now defined our approach to verbal irony, it remains to narrow our scope again and construct a working definition of sarcasm that will become the foundation of our analysis. Here we will take the overlap between the two pragmatic accounts surveyed as our starting point. Both the echoic and pretence accounts highlight

181–205; Gibbs 1986, 3–15; Katz and Pexman 1997, 19–41; Kovaz, Kreuz, and Riordan 2013, 598–615; Kreuz and Roberts 1995, 21–31; Rockwell 2007, 361–69; Woodland and Voyer 2011, 227–39. For work on other languages, see Adachi 1996, 1–36; Colston 2019, 109–31; Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti 2014, 309–42; Okamoto 2002, 119–39; Yao, Song, and Singh 2013, 195–209.

the importance of evaluation in verbal irony. The ironist's aim is not to be informative but to provide an affective commentary on their utterance.

Bailin's recent definition of verbal irony helpfully captures the importance of evaluation, by emphasizing attitude rather than meaning. I do not suggest that Bailin's is a perfect description of verbal irony, and some theorists may disagree with it. What is important is that, with its balance of specificity and breadth, it is complete enough to provide the foundation for a working definition of sarcasm that will hold up in all the cases treated in this study.

Bailin sees two conditions as necessary to produce verbal irony: inconsistency and implicitness. Inconsistency requires that 'we assume the utterance normatively or typically to imply a certain attitude on the part of the speaker, but assume as well that the speaker producing the utterance has an actual attitude inconsistent with what is normally or typically implied'.[86] Notice that this condition does not supply the mechanism by which inconsistent evaluation is communicated. This allows for the presence of echoic mention, pretence, or sundry other signals to explain how we get from attitude A to attitude B.

Implicitness means that 'the speaker's actual attitude is not directly stated by the speaker in the immediate context'.[87] I prefer a generous interpretation of implicitness. I do not regard statements that are explicitly signalled as ironic or sarcastic after the fact to thereby cease to be so. For example, in the utterance: 'Nice haircut! [pause] Not!' I consider the phrase 'Nice haircut!' an instance of sarcasm, despite its being obviously signalled as such.[88] Sarcasm can be subtle or obvious, but the sarcastic statement itself always conveys the speaker's attitude implicitly.

But how do we get from here to sarcasm? We have already, following the ancients, defined sarcasm as a subspecies of verbal irony. Bailin's definition will therefore only require slight alteration. I define sarcasm as a subset of verbal irony in which an utterance that would normally communicate a positive attitude or evaluation implies a negative attitude or evaluation.[89]

[86] Bailin 2015, 112.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Cf. Haiman 1998, 53–55.
[89] By reversing the evaluations (a negative statement implying a positive attitude) we arrive at 'affectionate insults' (see n.29), and by making these self-referential

The Parable of the Disgruntled Undergraduate from §1.2.2, despite the difficulty it presents to semantic accounts, provides an excellent illustration of this definition of sarcasm. With the utterance, 'My, aren't you clever!' – an ostensible compliment and therefore a statement that would normally express positive evaluation – our student implies (through her tone of exasperation) a negative attitude toward the other student's intellectual grandstanding.

1.3 Irony and Sarcasm in Pauline Scholarship

In organizing this review, it will be helpful to follow the progression of scholarship on Pauline irony chronologically, setting these works alongside significant developments in irony studies proper. This structure will enable us to gauge the extent to which Pauline scholars have interacted with the research on irony available to them. Overall, Pauline scholarship has been significantly out of date when it comes to modern scholarship on irony and has not always addressed a sufficient breadth of ancient discussions. Lacking this theoretical grounding can limit the utility of certain observations.

1.3.1 The First Quest for the Nature of Irony

It is difficult to find irony research that still cites work written before 1975, as around this time a shift to pragmatic models renders much earlier scholarship obsolete. However, because the monographs that most Pauline scholars draw on predate this advance in irony studies, we must trace our history back further.

There is little development of note within the semantic tradition between Kierkegaard's 1841 thesis *The Concept of Irony: With Constant Reference to Socrates* and Muecke's *The Compass of Irony* in 1969. Although such works were important contributions for their times, certain conceptual issues render them problematic as accounts of irony (see §§1.2.1–2.2, 1.2.5). Muecke's work and Booth's *A Rhetoric of Irony* represent the pinnacle of the semantic approach to irony. To borrow a principle of organization from elsewhere in New Testament studies, it will be helpful to think of these three monographs as a sort of First Quest for the Nature of Irony.

(a negative statement about oneself implying a positive attitude) we create *asteismos* (see §1.1.2).

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During this first-quest period, few authors take up the subject of irony in the letters of Paul. Reumann published 'St Paul's Use of Irony' in 1955. This short paper does not get caught up in discussion of ancient or modern theory on irony. At only five pages long, there is also little time for exegesis. The work consists primarily of brief identifications of different sorts of irony – including litotes, understatement, allegory, and others – following which Reumann concludes that Paul's use of irony in Second Corinthians is intended as 'a teaching device'.[90] For our purposes, the value of this piece lies in its presentation of a list of passages that a scholar has considered ironic and are thereby worth a second look.[91]

Still years before Muecke, Jónsson published *Humour and Irony in the New Testament*. For its time, Jónsson's work is noteworthy for its use of literary theory in addition to ancient discussion of irony and humour.[92] Jónsson focuses primarily on humour, considering irony a secondary interest that is difficult to disentangle from humour itself.[93] Jónsson defines humour as 'always sympathetic' in some way, while he considers sarcasm inherently unsympathetic.[94] He therefore seeks explicitly to study humour and irony to the exclusion of sarcasm. This fact significantly limits the utility of Jónsson's work for our discussion of Pauline sarcasm, but his identification of isolated ironic statements within Paul's letters will merit some reference.[95]

1.3.2 The Pragmatic Revolution: 1975–1984

Although subsequent research would find fault with his paradigm, Grice's pragmatic definition of irony, published in 1975, would begin a shift in irony studies away from semantic approaches.[96] The echoic

[90] Reumann 1955, 141–44.

[91] Linss's paper on humour in Paul, which touches briefly on sarcasm and irony, is similarly more helpful for identification than exegesis (see 1998, 196–97; see also Schütz 1958, 13–17).

[92] See Jónsson 1965, 16–34, 35–40, 41–89.

[93] For disambiguation, see ibid. 22–23.

[94] Ibid. 18–9, 23–4, 26.

[95] See ibid. 223–42.

[96] For reprints of Grice's influential 1975 and 1978 essays, see Grice 1989, 22–57. Grice considers irony as the intentional flouting of the expectation that a speaker in conversation should tell the truth. For example, if a professor who catches a student in clear plagiarism comments, 'I'm impressed by the originality of your argument', the obviousness of the falsehood signals that the statement, 'must be trying to get across some other proposition than the one [it] purports to be putting forward" (ibid. 34,

account follows soon after (1978; §1.2.3) and by 1984, pretence theory joins the conversation (§1.2.4). By this point, we have three competing pragmatic accounts of irony, which have rightly shown the deficiencies of earlier semantic paradigms (§1.2.2).

During this decade of sweeping change within irony studies, we find little work on irony in Paul. In 1981, Spencer published a study on irony in Second Corinthians' 'fool's speech'. Although it is reasonable that this paper should be unaware of a revolution in irony studies still very much in process at the time, Spencer's work also bypasses many of the 'first-quest' texts on irony, drawing primarily on Kierkegaard.[97]

Like Jónsson, Spencer wishes to avoid the term sarcasm in describing Paul's irony in 2 Cor 11:16–12:13, preferring the designation 'sardonic'. For both authors, this seems to be partly methodological; Spencer appears to consider sarcasm to be an element of tone ('in other words, sneering, cutting, caustic, or taunting') rather than a form of irony.[98] There also seems to be an apologetic element in such designations as well, insofar as avoiding the term 'sarcasm' excuses Paul from the use of tendentious rhetoric. Spencer ultimately argues that for Paul, the indirectness of irony functions as a stratagem for winning over a potentially unreceptive audience and ultimately works to 'expertly reinforce his central message'.[99]

1.3.3 The Second Quest: 1985–early 2000s

Over the following years, echo and pretence become greater while Grice becomes less. These former two paradigms expand, develop, and become the basis for hybrid accounts of irony that draw on both.[100] On the whole, the discipline starts shifting towards controlled laboratory experimentation rather than building paradigms on literary examples.[101] We do not reach anything like a consensus

cf. 28). This model, insofar as it requires the ironist to say something that is not true, suffers from the flaw illustrated by The Parable of the Disgruntled Undergraduate (§1.2.2).

[97] Spencer 1981, 349, 360.

[98] Ibid. 351. Cf. Loubser 1992, 509.

[99] Spencer 1981, 349–51, 60.

[100] See §§1.2.3–2.4, n.66. New hypotheses also emerge in this period. For the state of the field at the time, see Attardo 2000b, 797–813.

[101] I have cited several examples of such studies in §1.2.5.

on the nature of irony at this time, but irony studies makes significant gains and there is much insightful, relevant work for Pauline scholars to have drawn on had they chosen to.

Forbes's 1986 article on comparison, self-praise, and irony in 2 Cor 10–12 shows no interest in modern research on irony,[102] but focuses instead on ancient discussions. His citation of ancient authors is broad, including Plato, Demosthenes, Hermogenes, and Quintilian, to name a few.[103] Although I argue that any major study on irony in Paul has much to gain from interaction with both ancient and modern work, Forbes's focus on ancient discussions well suits the article's purpose and scope.

Forbes pushes the importance of Hermogenes for understanding Paul's irony in 2 Cor 10–12 and considers Paul's use of rhetorical techniques, including irony, as providing evidence that he 'may have had a full education in formal Greek rhetoric'.[104] While I am critical of Forbes's ultimate conclusions (see Chapter 7, §7.3.3), I consider his work one of the strongest pieces of scholarship on irony in Paul's letters to date. Forbes will therefore be a significant conversation partner in our chapter on Second Corinthians.

Published a year after Forbes's article, Plank's study of irony in 1 Cor 4:9–13 takes a very different approach to the subject. Like Forbes – though not to the same depth – Plank works through a number of ancient treatments of irony.[105] Unlike Forbes, Plank is convinced by the utility of (relatively) modern scholarship, using Muecke as his starting point for defining irony,[106] and drawing significantly on Kierkegaard and Booth.[107] Plank is thereby the first Pauline scholar to interact with a range of 'first-quest' irony scholarship.

Plank draws three major conclusions about Paul's use of irony. First, for Plank, Paul's irony is apologetic. Paul uses irony to turn the tables in his favour; weakness becomes strength, and thus criticisms of Paul on these lines only support his legitimacy. Second, Paul's irony is homiletic, encouraging the Corinthians to 'view their calling in a new way'. Third, Paul's irony seeks to influence his

[102] See Forbes 1986, 1.
[103] See ibid. 10–15.
[104] Ibid. 23, see 12–24.
[105] Plank 1987, 35–36.
[106] Ibid. 34.
[107] Amongst others, see ibid. 35, 42–45.

audience's theological convictions, affirming for his readers God's paradoxical salvific actions.[108]

Plank is concerned with two major forms of irony: dissimulative and paradoxical irony.[109] Plank describes dissimulative irony as 'a technique by which something *appears* to be other than it really is', an effect achieved through the use of exaggeration and pretence.[110] So defined, this form of irony has some affinity to verbal irony, and because I define sarcasm as a form of verbal irony, Plank's work on dissimulative irony in 1 Cor 4:9–13 will be worth some interaction.[111] However, Plank's greater interest lies in paradoxical irony, where what is said is not what is meant but ultimately turns out to be true on a deeper level.[112] This larger discussion will not figure in our analysis of sarcasm, since the irony of such a paradox would be a product of the situation.

In the early 1990s, Loubser releases a study that draws considerably on Plank. Essentially, what Plank does with 1 Cor 4, Loubser does with 2 Cor 10–13. As a result, both works share similar strengths and drawbacks. Compared with Plank, Loubser does cite a greater breadth and depth of modern work on irony,[113] and discusses a greater variety of irony-types.[114]

For Loubser, Paul's 'fool's speech' (*Narrenrede*) is permeated with verbal irony: it is an ironic discourse (dissimulative irony) underlain by the (paradoxical) irony of strength-through-weakness.[115] Loubser uses his analysis of irony in 2 Cor10–13 to argue that these chapters form a *peroratio* to the letter as a whole, thus supporting the integrity of Second Corinthians.[116]

At one point or other in this study I will push back on all these conclusions. As mentioned above, paradoxical irony is better thought

[108] Ibid. 92, cf. 33.
[109] See ibid. 38–42.
[110] Ibid. 39.
[111] See ibid. 48–51.
[112] See Plank 1987, 39–42, 51–69. Socrates – who pretends to know nothing, when in reality he is wiser than his contemporaries, precisely because he knows that he truly knows nothing – is the classic example of this form of irony (see ibid. 40). We have already discussed why Socrates' dissembling does not qualify as tropic (verbal) irony (§§1.1.1–1.1.2).
[113] Loubser 1992, 507–11. Loubser draws his definition of irony from an early pragmatic perspective, but not one that would become significant in irony studies. See ibid. 508–9; Warning 1985.
[114] See Loubser 1992, 509–11.
[115] Ibid. 517–18.
[116] Ibid. 518–19.

of as a form of situational irony rather than verbal irony. Partially because of this methodological difference, I will go on to argue that the fool's speech in 2 Cor 10–12 does not contain significant verbal irony or sarcasm. Furthermore, an analysis of Paul's irony in these chapters cannot provide significant evidence for the integrity of Second Corinthians.[117]

1.3.3.1 Glenn Holland's Divine Irony

To date, no one has produced a larger body of work on irony in Paul than Holland. His first paper thereon addresses the fool's speech and his second 1 Cor 1–4.[118] My review will focus on his monograph *Divine Irony*, because it is at once his most complete treatment of irony and also reiterates most of the material from the previous articles.

Holland begins *Divine Irony* with irony's definition. He provides a fuller discussion of contemporary scholarship than he had in his previous papers, although only one of the works cited falls within a decade of his own monograph.[119] The hallmarks of Holland's approach to irony in Paul are that 'Paul uses irony to build solidarity with the members of the church in Corinth by reinforcing their common values' and that Paul's irony invites his audience to consider the situation at hand from the 'divine perspective'.[120] At the same time, within the persuasive task, specific instances can have targeted rhetorical effects and the production of shame stands out as a feature of several cases of Pauline irony.[121] Holland uses Socrates and Paul as his major case studies,[122] concluding that:

> Paul and Socrates are alike in their use of irony as an indirect means of communicating the insights they gained from a revelation of the divine perspective. In both cases

[117] See Chapter 8, §8.3.
[118] Holland 1993, 250–64; 1997, 234–48.
[119] Holland begins with Muecke and Booth (Holland 2000, 19, 21–5). He also draws heavily on Kierkegaard (see ibid. 101–16), gets into reader-response theory (ibid. 25–32), but does not make it to the Pragmatic Revolution. He takes the semantic tradition as his starting point (ibid. 20; see also 79, 160; cf. 1993, 250n.4; 1997, 236n.8, 237n.13, 238n.14–16). To Holland's credit, his discussion of ancient irony is considerable (2000, 82–97).
[120] Holland 2000, 131, 148–49.
[121] Ibid. 136–37, 148.
[122] See ibid. 82–118, 119–56, respectively.

> their irony was meant to educate, to be recognized as irony, and appropriated by their audiences as a means for discovering divine truth.[123]

Because for Holland 'all irony is at root divine irony',[124] we will explore his concept of divine irony briefly. The basics of this outlook can be described as follows: In being ironic, the ironist adopts a detached perspective, much like that of an omniscient narrator. The divine perspective is also a detached perspective. Therefore, the ironist shares in the divine perspective.[125] Holland grounds his divine irony in a sort of ironic detachment discussed in Kierkegaard,[126] though divine irony is itself a novel paradigm rather than a mere distillation of Kierkegaard.

While there is no space to mount a thorough critique, divine irony suffers from conceptual problems. The jump from the detachment of the ironist to the detachment of the divine is not logically necessary. One's outlook can ascend high indeed without entering the realm of the gods. More significantly, I argue that the ironic perspective is not always detached. A Paul who sarcastically mocks 'very-super apostles' or ironically begs the Corinthians to forgive him the 'injustice' (ἀδικία) of not being a financial burden on them is very much a participant in the conflicts he responds to ironically (2 Cor 11:5,12:11, 13; see Chapter 7, §§7.2.2.2, 7.2.4.2). Furthermore, as we shall see in the next chapter, both Job and his interlocutors employ irony throughout the dialogues of *Job*, and it takes the appearance of God himself to reveal that none of them adequately expressed the divine perspective.[127]

Although we will not go further with divine irony, Holland's exegetical conclusions regarding irony in First and Second Corinthians will merit interaction in our treatment of the Corinthian correspondence.

[123] Holland 2000, 156.
[124] Ibid. 149.
[125] See ibid. 59–60. Of course, this summary is somewhat simplified.
[126] See ibid. 105–16. Holland dedicates significant space to discussing Kierkegaard (ibid. 101–18).
[127] Interestingly, Holland addresses God's use of irony in *Job*, but not the irony employed by Job and his friends (2000, 75–79). Lucian's character assassinations provide further examples of a more emotionally invested ironic perspective, although Lucian is more detached than Paul (see Chapter 3, §3.3.3).

1.3.3.2 Scholarship on Galatians

Nanos's *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* is not primarily a book about irony. Nanos's interest in irony is taken as far as necessary to characterize Galatians as a letter of ironic rebuke.[128] This characterization forms the foundation of his later argument, where he provides a rethinking of the identity of Paul's opponents and the nature of the situation in Galatia.[129] Although Nanos's discussion of modern theory on irony does not run much deeper than the First Quest, he cites a reasonable breadth of ancient discussions.[130] Because our interests lie solely in irony, we may limit our interaction to the relevant parts of Nanos's study in our treatment of sarcasm in Galatians.

Nikolakopoulos published a dedicated study on irony in Galatians in 2001. He begins with ancient authors in defining irony – Aristophanes, Plato, and Aristotle – and is also influenced by First Quest scholarship.[131] His main focus is rhetorical irony (*rhetorische Ironie*), which he defines after the semantic tradition as inhering in meaning inversion.[132] Additionally, Nikolakopoulos sees this rhetorical irony as always having a didactic element. Irony does not intend to hurt those on the receiving end, and because sarcasm does, Nikolakopoulos does not consider sarcasm a form of irony: '[Irony], in contrast to sarcasm, attempts to bring about pedagogical success in an indirect way.'[133] This exclusion of tendentious rhetoric from rhetorical irony seems to suit Nikolakopoulos's exegetical aims, as he ultimately concludes that Paul's goal in using irony is didactic and non-polemical.[134]

Nikolakopoulos goes on to treat three cases of potential rhetorical irony in Galatians (1:6, 2:6, 5:12).[135] I will discuss all these passages in my chapter in Galatians, where in contrast to Nikolakopoulos I will argue for the presence of sarcasm – although not in all cases.

[128] Nanos 2002, 49–56, 60–61.
[129] See ibid. 73–322.
[130] For his use of ancient authors and Muecke, see ibid. 34–39. For citation of Booth and Kierkegaard, see ibid. 305–9, 311.
[131] Nikolakopoulos 2001, 195–96, 196n.17.
[132] Although not in those words, see ibid. 197.
[133] '[Ironie] versucht, im Gegensatz zum Sarkasmus, auf indirektem Weg pädagogischen Erfolg zu erlangen' (Nikolakopoulos 2001, 196).
[134] Ibid. 207–8.
[135] Ibid. 199–206.

1.3.4 Recent Scholarship

I will not at this time attempt to demarcate a 'third quest' period in irony studies. More time and distance will be required to determine what the next significant movement in the field might be. The next steps could involve synthesizing different accounts of irony into a unified whole, or perhaps advances in neuroscience will shed light on how the brain processes irony.[136] Colston's recent survey argues that an important step for the field will involve weighing the conclusions of past scholarship, which has been largely Anglocentric, against the different systems for communicating verbal irony across languages.[137] Within this research agenda, the results of our study, especially related to the typical means ancient Greek speakers use to express sarcasm (Chapter 3, §3.1–3.2), can hope to be relevant not only to Pauline scholarship, but to the study of verbal irony as well.

Once we get into the 2010s, we start to see new developments in Pauline scholarship.[138] Schellenberg devotes a chapter to irony in his 2013 study of Paul's rhetorical education. Like the book as a whole, this chapter is an essentially negative project, which argues that Paul's fool's speech is not ironic[139] – although Paul does make 'isolated ironic statements' in 2 Cor 10–13.[140] Schellenberg is critical of Holland's work,[141] and his assertion that Paul's boasting is actual self-promotion delivered without irony is an interesting foil to interpreters such as Loubser and Spencer.[142]

[136] For this latter direction, see Akimoto et al. 2017, 42–46; Spotorno et al. 2013, 1–10.

[137] Colston 2019, 109, 124, 127–28.

[138] Duling treats the subject of irony in the fool's speech in a 2008 article. Not engaging with irony research beyond earlier Pauline scholarship, this paper adds little to the work of authors such as Forbes and Holland. Like previous exegetes, Duling conflates a number of phenomena under the umbrella term irony, characterizing Paul's appropriation of the fool's persona as ironic, while also pointing out a few isolated ironic statements in the fool's speech itself (see Duling 2008, 819, 826–28, 839).

[139] See Schellenberg 2013, 169–79. Heckel also considers the association of irony with Paul's appropriation of 'the role and mask of a fool' ('der Rolle und Maske eines Narren') problematic, considering this instead an example of parody (1993, 20–22). Lichtenberger's 2017 article on humour in the New Testament, which devotes about a page to sarcasm and irony in Paul, lists the fool's speech as an example of Pauline irony. Lichtenberger also considers Phil 3:2 and Gal 5:12 instances of sarcasm, though he does not dedicate space to defining sarcasm or irony (2017, 104–5).

[140] Schellenberg 2013, 170.

[141] Ibid. 170–75.

[142] See ibid. 170, 175–79.

Sim's work on verbal irony marks a significant moment in scholarship on irony in Paul. Approaching verbal irony from the standpoint of relevance theory, Sim brings ideas from the Pragmatic Revolution into the conversation.[143] Her discussion moves through both (largely) accepted and (more) contentious examples of irony in the Pauline corpus.[144] Sim then compares Paul's use of irony to that of Jesus and of Epictetus,[145] and also points out prophetic irony in the Hebrew bible.[146]

In line with Sperber and Wilson, Sim defines irony as '*an echoic utterance from which the speaker distances himself*'.[147] Unfortunately, the way that she simplifies the paradigm – perhaps for the benefit of her non-specialist audience – ends up creating a historical problem. Sim's interpretation of echoic mention assumes that irony involves re-presenting the speech or perspectives of another. As part of the process for identifying verbal irony, she recommends asking, 'Can we identify whose thought or utterance the speaker is echoing?'[148] While a more nuanced form of this hypothesis allows for more indistinct forms of mention (§1.2.3), this assumption leads Sim to consistently claim access to the actual perspectives of Paul's interlocutors by means of irony's echo.[149] Making these kinds of historical claims assumes too much about Paul's opponents and congregations, and does not account for the distorting influence of hyperbole and misrepresentation, which are absolutely common in verbal irony.

Despite this caveat, Sim's exegesis of verbal irony in Paul remains helpful, and her work deserves commendation as a first step in bringing the discipline up to date on developments in irony studies since 1975.

1.4 Conclusions

Scholars of Paul have never been scholars of irony. My somewhat tongue-in-cheek choice of 'quest' terminology from historical Jesus

[143] See Sim 2016, 53–70.
[144] Ibid. 56–65.
[145] Ibid. 67–68.
[146] Ibid. 65–66.
[147] Sim markets this approach as a new one, which, as we have seen, is not correct (ibid. 5–6, 54). To be fair, it was new to New Testament studies at the time.
[148] Ibid. 55.
[149] See ibid. 56, 58, 61–62.

studies to discuss stages in irony research has been an intentional way of communicating this methodological shortcoming. Most Pauline work stays fixedly in the First Quest period, that is, within the major monographs of the semantic tradition. Only in recent years has Sim broken into early pragmatic approaches. By treating the monographs of Kierkegaard, Muecke, and Booth as if they were the definitive works on irony, scholars of Paul's letters have made a methodological decision akin to reading only Schweitzer as preparation for writing on the historical Jesus.

Partially because Pauline scholarship on irony has been so out of date, there has been little consistency in terms of irony's definition. Some scholars do not consider sarcasm to be a form of irony (Jónsson, Spencer, Loubser, Nikolakopoulos). There is also an overall lack of clarity and consistency regarding how different terms, such as sarcasm, irony, verbal irony, dissimulative irony, and paradoxical irony, relate to one another. Furthermore, in drawing conclusions about Paul's use of irony in a given text, scholars have made generalizations about different forms of irony that, as we saw in §1.2.1, are not formed in the same way and have different rhetorical functions.

Sections 1.1 and 1.2 of this chapter have sought to address these problems. We extended the work of previous Pauline scholarship by creating a more detailed survey of ancient treatments of irony with an especial focus on σαρκασμός. Although there has not been space to be fully systematic with modern research, our survey in §1.2 provides biblical scholars with the resources to become up to date on theoretical discussions of verbal irony, in addition to elucidating some of the more important concepts within the field. We have also sought greater specificity in defining the relationships between different forms of irony. We drew distinctions between situational irony, verbal irony, and sarcasm (§1.2.1), and by focusing primarily on sarcasm, a single form of verbal irony, we will avoid making generalizations about Paul's use of irony that do not hold true for all forms of irony.

We are now equipped with a working definition of sarcasm and several paradigms for explaining how specific examples may be considered sarcastic, such as echoic mention and pretence. This will enable us to begin addressing sarcasm in ancient texts, but it will not be our final word on method. In discussing constraint satisfaction, I emphasized the importance of being able to recognize a diverse range of signals that indicate sarcasm to facilitate accurate identification.

With so little previous work done on sarcasm in ancient texts, it will be necessary to develop our understanding of how ancient Greek speakers communicated sarcasm as we go along. This will begin in the next chapter and will be a major focus of Chapter 3, which will bring together hundreds of examples to elucidate the common linguistic and contextual signals of sarcasm in ancient Greek.

We are also yet to address the rhetorical functions of sarcasm in an ancient context. Determining the situations in which sarcasm is typically appropriate or inappropriate, who may use it with whom and to what end will be an integral part of this project. One of the central aims of the next chapter will be to establish the normal rhetorical functions of sarcasm and also to begin describing less typical, more subversive uses. This work will continue through Chapter 3. By the time we come to discuss Paul, we will have a broad understanding of sarcasm's pragmatic functions within an ancient context as a baseline for comparison.